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Shropshire Council

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

Date: Tuesday, 2 June 2026

Committee:
Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 10 June 2026
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

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

If you wish to attend the meeting please email democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check that a seat will be available for you as seating is limited.

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

Members of Cabinet
Heather Kidd
Alex Wagner
Roger Evans
Andy Hall
Ruth Houghton
Sarah Marston
James Owen
Rob Wilson
David Vasmer
David Walker

Tim Collard Service Director – Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Your Committee Officer is:

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

When attending this meeting, Members are reminded of the three principles of the Jo Cox Foundation and Compassion in Politics Civility Pledge:

1. *Use a civil and constructive tone in debate*
2. *Act with integrity, honesty and compassion*
3. *Behave respectfully towards others, including those I disagree with*

(*Please note that while we strive to live stream meetings, technical issues may occasionally occur. In the event of a technical disruption, the meeting will be paused to try to resolve the issue. Should it not be possible to resume the live stream, the meeting will proceed as scheduled, and a backup recording will be made available after the meeting. Any disruption to the live stream does not affect the legality of the meeting)

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Interests

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

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2026.

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is not later than 12 noon on Thursday 4 June 2026.

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions from Members of the Council. Deadline for notification is not later than 12 noon on Thursday 4 June 2026.

6 Scrutiny Items

a **Scrutiny Item - Report of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee-Health in All Policies and Planning** (Pages 7 - 36)
Lead Member: Councillor Dawn Husemann, Chair of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) & Planning Task and Finish Group

Lead Officer: Sophie Foster, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

7 Aquamira Learning Disability Day Service (Pages 37 - 168)

Lead Member: Councillor Ruth Houghton, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Lead Officer: Natalie McFall, Interim Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)

8 Helena Lane Older Peoples Day Service (Pages 169 - 302)

Lead Member: Councillor Ruth Houghton, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Lead Officer: Natalie McFall, Interim Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)

9 Financial Outturn 2025/26 (Pages 303 - 346)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Clare Williams, Deputy S151 Officer

10 **Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2025/26** (Pages 347 - 370)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Cheryl Sedgley, Head of Financial Management & Reporting

11 **Q4 Performance Report** (Pages 371 - 396)

Lead Member: Councillor Heather Kidd, Leader

Lead Officer: Jess Edwards, Business Intelligence and Insight Manager

12 **Local Transport Plan - Consultation** (Pages 397 - 406)

Lead Member: Councillor Rob Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Transport & Regeneration

Lead Officer: Victoria Merrill, Highway Policy & Strategy Manager

13 **Commissioning and Procurement Strategy** (Pages 407 - 446)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Laura Tyler, Service Director - Commissioning

14 **Children's Services Reforms** (Pages 447 - 634)

Lead Member: Councillor Andy Hall, Portfolio Holder for Children & Education

Lead Officer: Natasha Moody, Families First Partnership (FFP) Strategic Lead

15 **St. Andrews, Shifnal – Asset Decision** (Pages 635 - 642)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Steve Law, Head of Property & Development

16 **Town and Parish Council Asset Transfers (Verbal Update)**

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Steve Law, Head of Property & Development

17 **Improvement Plan - Progress Report** (Pages 643 - 656)

Lead Member: Councillor Heather Kidd, Leader

Lead Officer: Paul Clarke, Service Director – Strategy & Change

18 **Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement & Civil Penalty Policies** (Pages 657 - 716)

Lead Member: Councillor James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Lead Officer: Paula Mawson, Service Director – Communities & Customer

19 **Adoption of Design of New Dwellings and Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** (Pages 717 - 1012)

Lead Member: Councillor David Walker, Portfolio Holder for Planning

Lead Officer: Eddie West, Planning Policy & Strategy Manager

20 **Hills Ford Rally**

Lead Member: Councillor David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways & Waste

Lead Officer: Andy Wilde, Service Director – Infrastructure

REPORT TO FOLLOW – This is due to more information being required

21 **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8 July 2026.

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Shropshire Council

Committee and Date

Cabinet

10 June 2026

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2026
In The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 am

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

Present
Councillor Heather Kidd (Chairman)
Councillors Alex Wagner, Bernie Bentick, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, Ruth Houghton, James Owen, Rob Wilson, David Vasmer and David Walker

165 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Dawn Husemann (deputised by Councillor Brandan Mallon – Reform UK) and Tanya Miles, Interim Chief Executive (deputised by Rachel Robinson, Interim Deputy Chief Executive).

166 **Disclosable Interests**

No interests were declared.

167 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

168 **Public Question Time**

One question had been received:

William Briggs, in relation to hydrogen storage and distribution.

The full question and response can be found on Response to Public Questions - Cabinet 6 May 2026.pdf

169 **Member Question Time**

There were no members' questions.

170 **Scrutiny Items**

Although no scrutiny items had been received, the Leader made a statement regarding ongoing issues with bin collections and grass cutting services, acknowledging that performance under the current contract had been inadequate. It was noted that the contractor had failed to deliver services effectively, including missed bin collections, delayed grass cutting, and a lack of proper planning, equipment, mapping of assets, and contract management.

Members were advised that the situation had arisen from an inherited contract arrangement, with particular difficulties following the contractor ceasing some services prior to the contract end. This had led to service disruption across the county, with some areas experiencing significant backlogs.

Cabinet expressed concern regarding the contract management arrangements and the impact on residents, and an apology was issued. Immediate steps were being taken to improve service delivery, including increased operational efforts and work to properly map service requirements.

It was confirmed that the Council intends to bring the service back in-house, subject to the necessary processes, in order to ensure greater control and improved performance in the future.

171 **Shropshire Council Corporate plan 2026/27-2030/31**

The Leader introduced the report which sought approval of the Corporate Plan for 2026-2030 by Cabinet and Council.

Cabinet noted that it had been developed rapidly to reflect the Council's current financial position and to provide a clear strategic direction. It was emphasised that the Plan would be a living document, supported by an action plan and delivery commitments to be refreshed annually to ensure alignment with financial sustainability.

Members highlighted the importance of the Plan in guiding future decision-making, particularly in prioritising resources and improving customer responsiveness. Amendments were proposed to strengthen references to customer service, transport integration, housing delivery, economic strategy, and inclusion of the library strategy. Members noted that these amendments would be incorporate in the appendix which will be taken to full Council for adoption.

During discussion, Members broadly supported the strategic intent but raised concerns regarding presentation, prioritisation of economic growth, and the need for clearer emphasis on prevention, integration with partners, and place shaping. The financial constraints facing the Council were acknowledged as a key challenge impacting delivery, including limitations on capacity and missed economic opportunities.

It was also noted that the effectiveness of the Plan would depend on the forthcoming action plan and measurable outcomes, with strong Member support for ongoing scrutiny involvement and cross-party engagement.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Considered and recommended the draft Corporate Plan 2026-30 (with amendments) to Council for approval
2. Noted the underlying need for financial recovery and sustainability, the need to align delivery commitments to the Council's financial position, and the potential impact on service standards
3. Noted that a performance framework will be developed (and presented to Cabinet on 10th June 2026) providing a basis for reporting progress, delivery and impact against the priority outcomes – including:
   (i) a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including the relevant Local Outcome Framework measures
   (ii) a set of key delivery commitments against each of the priority ambitions
   (iii) an annual review report, summarising delivery over the previous 12 months, and refreshing the commitments for the next 12 months (to ensure alignment with our financial position and sustainability)

172 **Shropshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy**

The Portfolio Holder for Social Care presented the report, noting the statutory requirement under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the need to update the previous 2018 strategy to reflect legislative changes, updated needs assessments and learning from domestic homicide reviews.

Members were advised that the Strategy had been developed collaboratively with partners, informed by public consultation and input from individuals with lived experience. It adopts a whole-system approach, balancing prevention, protection and accountability across victims, perpetrators, the workforce and the wider community.

Members welcomed the Strategy but raised questions regarding the scope of consultation, representation of specific groups, and the balance between prevention and treatment activity. The importance of early intervention, partnership working and public awareness was emphasised.

Clarification was also provided that delivery would be supported through existing resources, including ring-fenced government grant funding, and overseen through established governance arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Agreed the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy 2026-2029 (Appendix 1) and recommended its approval to Full Council
2. Noted that delivery of the Strategy will be overseen by the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board through an accompanying action plan, with regular monitoring and review by the Community Safety Partnership.

173 **Local Plan – Notice of Intention to Commence Plan Making and Scoping Consultation**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report which outlining the commencement of the new Local Plan process, including the proposed timetable, scoping consultation, and supporting documents. It was noted that the new plan would establish a long-term spatial strategy for Shropshire to 2046 and would be prepared under a revised national planning framework with a compressed timescale.

Members were advised of the importance of progressing the Local Plan to ensure a robust, locally-led policy framework for future development and to reduce the risk of speculative planning applications. The report set out that the current stage focused on early engagement with stakeholders and did not yet include specific site allocations.

Members emphasised the need to ensure the plan is sound and deliverable, recognising the risks of progressing too quickly. Concerns were raised regarding infrastructure provision, housing targets, protection of rural areas, and the importance of aligning the Local Plan with other strategies, including the Corporate Plan and forthcoming Local Transport Plan. The need for transparency, cross-party involvement and effective scrutiny throughout the process was also highlighted.

It was confirmed that existing evidence from the previous plan would be utilised where appropriate and updated as required, and that the process would involve ongoing consultation with residents, partners and stakeholders.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Agreed the publication of the Plan-Making Timetable (Appendix 1) and that any subsequent changes to this timetable are delegated to the Interim Service Director for Place Shaping in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.
2. Agreed the publication of the Notice of Intention to Commence Plan Making (Appendix 2) in May 2026.
3. Agreed the Local Plan Project Initiation Document (PID) (Appendix 3), including the governance and decision making arrangements included in Figure 4.1 of the PID, and that any subsequent changes to the PID are delegated to the Interim Service Director for Place Shaping in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.
4. Agreed the publication of the Local Plan Scoping Document (Appendix 4), the Draft Community Hierarchy (Appendix 5), the Draft Site Identification and Assessment Methodology (Appendix 6) and the SEA Screening Report (Appendix 7) for public consultation in line with the engagement strategy outlined in the PID, and that any minor changes to these documents ahead of publication are delegated to the Interim Service Director for Place Shaping in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.
5. Agreed that delegated responsibility is given to the Interim Service Director for Place Shaping, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, for the preparation and consultation of an SEA/SA Scoping document within the Local Plan 'notification and scoping' stage.
6. Noted the Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) Stage One Screening Record (Appendix 8)

7. Agreed, that delegated authority is given to the Interim Service Director for Place Shaping in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to agree the completion of Gateway 1 (Self- Assessment) upon the completion of the 'Scoping' stage, in order to commence the formal commencement of the plan making in September 2026.

174 **Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 10 June 2026.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....

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Cabinet

Item

Public

Report of the Committee-

Responsible Overview and Scrutiny Officer:	Sophie Foster		
email:	sophie.foster@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 255248
Overview and Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr Rosie Radford		
Task and Finish Group Chair:	Cllr Dawn Husemann		

1. Synopsis

L1: To report the findings and recommendations of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) & Planning Task and Finish Group following their investigation into how health and wellbeing can be more effectively embedded within planning policy and practice in Shropshire.

2. Executive Summary

L2: This is the report of the Health in All Policies & Planning Task and Finish Group which the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to be presented directly to Cabinet. The report sets out the key findings, conclusions and recommendations arising from a detailed review of the relationship between planning policy, place shaping and population health outcomes in Shropshire.

L3: The Task and Finish Group was commissioned to consider how planning policy and practice can act as an upstream public health intervention, supporting prevention, independence and reduced demand on Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Particular attention was given to Shropshire's rural context, dispersed settlements, housing affordability, social sustainability, and the needs of vulnerable groups including disabled adults, families with complex needs, carers and care leavers.

L4: The Group undertook a comprehensive programme of work including a desktop review of policy and national best practice, benchmarking with comparator councils, evidence sessions with council officers, portfolio holders, developers, housing providers and partners,

lived experience input from residents and carers, and a site visit to Telford and Wrekin Council to examine whole-council approaches to healthy place shaping.

L5: Evidence considered by the Group highlighted that while there is strong organisational commitment to Health in All Policies, current arrangements rely heavily on early engagement and individual practice rather than consistently enforceable policy. National planning reform and uncertainty around policy tools further limits the ability to embed health requirements without clear Local Plan support.

L6: The Group concluded that planning is a critical determinant of health and wellbeing and that clearer articulation of health, prevention, rural social sustainability and deliverability within the emerging Local Plan is essential to achieving consistent application of Health in All Policies in practice.

L7: The Task and Finish Group has made a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening early cross-service engagement, embedding HiAP as a core planning principle, improving policy support for accessible and adaptable housing, reflecting rural social sustainability, supporting rural exception sites, improving deliverability and transparency, strengthening viability expertise, and developing proportionate approaches to monitoring the health impacts of planning.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet Members are asked to:

L8: Consider and comment on the report and recommendations of the Health in All Policies & Planning Task and Finish Group attached at Appendix I.

L9: Endorse those recommendations of the Task and Finish Group which relate to Shropshire Council, as set out in Section 8 of the appended report.

L10: Provide a formal response to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including an action plan setting out what will be done, by when, for recommendations that are accepted, and reasons for any recommendations that are not accepted.

Report

4. Financial Implications

L11: There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, should Cabinet agree to implement any of the recommendations, appropriate financial and viability advice should be sought to understand resource implications and ensure deliverability.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

L12: The work of the Task and Finish Group has identified opportunities where improved planning policy and practice could contribute positively to climate change mitigation and environmental outcomes. These include supporting compact and socially sustainable communities, reducing the need for travel through appropriate location of development,

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improving energy efficiency and adaptability of homes, and embedding green and open spaces as integral components of healthy place making.

6. Background

L13: Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had highlighted the impact of housing, planning and place-based decisions on health, independence and demand for health and social care services. In response, the Committee commissioned the Health in All Policies & Planning Task and Finish Group to examine how health can be more effectively embedded within planning policy and practice in Shropshire.

L14: The Task and Finish Group structured its work around reviewing policy and evidence, hearing from officers, partners, developers and portfolio holders, gathering lived experience evidence, and benchmarking with other councils. The Group's findings, conclusions and recommendations are set out in full in the report attached at Appendix I.

7. Report Recommendations

As set out in Section 8 of Appendix I

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Report of the Health in All Policies & Planning Task and Finish Group (Appendix I).

Local Member:	All

Appendices
Appendix I: Report of the Task and Finish Group

Contact: Sophie Foster- sophie.foster@shropshire.gov.uk

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Appendix 1

Shropshire Council

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Health in All Policies and Planning Task and Finish Group

10th June 2026

Acknowledgments

The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the officers, members, partners, developers, service users, carers and other contributors who provided evidence and practical examples to support this review. The Group appreciated the constructive engagement across Planning, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and housing delivery partners, and for the lived experience contributions which grounded the recommendations in the realities experienced by residents and families in Shropshire.

Members of the Task and Finish Group

Cllr Dawn Husemann (Chair)
Cllr Donna Edmunds
Cllr Teri Trickett
Cllr Colin Stanford
Cllr George Hollyhead

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1. Context

Health outcomes are shaped not only by healthcare services but also by the wider determinants of health, including housing quality and affordability, neighbourhood safety, social cohesion, access to services and green space, connectivity and transport.[1]

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore commissioned this Task and Finish Group to examine how health and wellbeing are embedded within planning policy and practice in Shropshire, and to identify opportunities to strengthen planning's contribution to prevention. Recognising the significant influence of planning policy on health outcomes, particularly for residents supported by Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

Shropshire's predominantly rural geography, dispersed settlements and reliance on small scale development mean that national, "urban centric" planning assumptions can unintentionally exacerbate health inequalities. Evidence heard by the Group highlighted that planning decisions in villages and hamlets directly affect people's ability to remain close to family, access services and sustain independence, with long term consequences for Adult Social Care and Children's Services demand.

The Task and Finish Group heard evidence that, in a rural county such as Shropshire, sustainability must be understood in a broader and more nuanced way than is often reflected in national planning frameworks. The Task and Finish Group and Administration witnesses emphasised that sustainability should not be assessed solely through urban-focused indicators such as frequency of public transport or density thresholds but must also reflect the social sustainability of rural communities.

For the purposes of this review, the Group understands social sustainability to mean the ability of communities to remain viable over time by retaining families, carers and support networks; sustaining essential local services such as schools, shops and community facilities; and enabling people to live close to those who provide informal care and support. The Group heard evidence that socially sustainable communities are associated with better mental wellbeing, reduced isolation, and lower long-term demand for Adult Social Care and Children's Services.[2]

The Group concluded that planning approaches which do not adequately recognise social sustainability risk undermining prevention objectives by unintentionally displacing families and support networks, particularly in rural areas.

Evidence received by the Group highlights rising and changing demand for specialist and supported accommodation. Local projections indicate significant growth in the older population and increasing needs across cohorts including adults with learning disabilities/autism, adults with mental health needs, young people leaving care and key workers.[3]

Evidence heard from the Portfolio Holder for Health highlighted that unmet housing need is itself a significant and current public health issue in Shropshire. It was emphasised that prolonged housing insecurity and lack of access to suitable, affordable homes contribute directly to deteriorating mental health, delayed hospital discharge, increased demand for Adult Social Care and poorer outcomes for children and families. The Group therefore considers the availability of social and affordable housing to be an important factor influencing health and wellbeing, rather than solely a housing or planning issue.

The Group's work has taken place alongside significant national and local planning reform, at a point of transition and uncertainty within the planning system. Shropshire Council formally commenced preparation of the next Local Plan[4] in January 2026, following the introduction of a new national plan-making framework and associated reforms[5]. Evidence heard by the Group highlighted that, while the direction of travel nationally places increased emphasis on outcomes such as health, inclusion and sustainability, important aspects of the new system including the status of Supplementary Planning Documents, the scope for locally specific policy, and the degree of flexibility available to reflect rural circumstances are still being confirmed and clarified.

As described by the Service Director for Place Shaping in her evidence to the Group, local authorities are currently required to progress plan-making in advance of full national guidance being issued, creating a degree of ambiguity around how health-related objectives will ultimately be expressed, weighted and examined within Local Plans. In particular, uncertainty remains regarding how far local plans will be able to go beyond the National Planning Policy Framework without repetition, how qualitative and place-based evidence will be assessed, and what mechanisms will replace existing forms of supplementary guidance. The Group heard that this has resulted in a "watch-this-space" environment for plan-making, requiring councils to interpret emerging policy intent while retaining flexibility to respond to further national clarification.

The Group therefore recognised that its work sits within an evolving policy context, where opportunities to embed Health in All Policies more firmly within planning policy exist, but where the precise tools, weight and form of future policy interventions are not yet fully settled. This uncertainty reinforces the importance of early engagement, strong evidence-bases and cross-service collaboration in the interim, while ensuring that the emerging Local Plan is sufficiently adaptable to respond to further national direction as it becomes clearer.

The Group therefore distinguishes throughout this report between measures that can be strengthened immediately through planning practice and engagement, and those that require clear articulation and policy weight within the emerging Local Plan to achieve consistency and longevity.

2. Scope of the work

The Group focused on the intersection of HiAP and planning policy, with a particular lens on:

- the impact of planning decisions on Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care needs.
- how Local Plan development can promote and sustain healthier living environments.
- the role of planning in ensuring the longevity and suitability of housing for vulnerable populations including consideration of multigenerational living, small scale rural development and the importance of enabling families and support networks to remain together.
- healthier and adaptable living environments that enable people to stay in their own homes for longer, including consideration of multi-generational living and innovative housing models.
- as part of its agreed Terms of Reference, the Task and Finish Group undertook benchmarking with comparator councils to understand how Health in All Policies principles can be embedded through planning, housing delivery and place shaping. The review considered planning policy and guidance, development management practice, delivery constraints (including viability and infrastructure), and lived experience evidence from carers and service users.

3. Objectives

In line with the agreed Terms of Reference, the Group's objectives were to:

1. Review how current and proposed planning policies address (or could better address) the health and wellbeing needs of adults and children requiring social care.
2. Identify opportunities to embed HiAP principles in planning policy to support healthier living at home, including design standards (accessibility and adaptability), location and connectivity, and the longevity and sustainability of housing stock.
3. Produce practical recommendations for strengthening the health impact of planning policy, with a focus on prevention, early intervention and reducing inequalities.

4. What the Task and Finish Group have done?

To conduct this review, the Group:

- completed a desktop review of current planning policies, planning guidance and national best practice on embedding health into planning;
- heard evidence from Planning and Public Health officers on current and emerging local guidance, including development of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) approach;
- heard evidence from Adult Social Care, Children's Services and council housing delivery leads on current demand, gaps and the prevention case for adaptable housing;
- the Group examined how STAR Housing and Cornovii deliver accessible and adaptable homes, scrutinising costs, policy levers and viability for M4(2) and M4(3) standards[6], and complemented this evidence by making a site visit to view a STAR/Cornovii-built M4(3) home;
- gathered evidence from developers on deliverability, viability and infrastructure constraints;
- heard evidence from Portfolio Holders for Health and Planning to understand how health considerations and inequalities could be embedded more systematically into planning policy, exploring issues such as neighbourhood planning, community empowerment and viability, and the application of Marmot principles[7], early intervention, social housing, transport and health hubs[8];
- reviewed case studies and gathered resident and carer lived experience evidence, including a targeted survey on Housing, Health and Independence in Shropshire (31 responses);
- visited Telford and Wrekin Council's Station Quarter regeneration scheme to examine how planning, housing delivery, regeneration, education, transport and public realm investment are coordinated through a whole council approach, and how this supports health, independence, accessibility, digital inclusion and long-term prevention outcomes (Appendix 2) and
- heard evidence from the Leader of the Council on how planning policy and local plan development can better support rural and social sustainability, drawing on practical examples of exception sites, mixed tenure housing, local lettings policies and community led approaches to keeping rural communities viable and reducing downstream health and care impacts.

5. Who the Task and Finish Group Heard From?

The Task and Finish Group heard from a wide range of people and organisations via written submissions, questionnaires and through attending their meetings, providing the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience of Health and Planning. Please see Appendix 1 for the full list of whom the group heard from during their considerations and meetings.

6. Key Findings

The significance of planning as a determinant of health and wellbeing

The evidence gathered by the Task and Finish Group demonstrates that planning policy and planning decisions can act as an upstream public health intervention, shaping health and wellbeing outcomes for residents in Shropshire[9]. Across all evidence sessions, witnesses consistently emphasised that planning is not merely a neutral or technical process, but one that directly influences people's ability to live healthy, independent lives, particularly those supported by Adult and Children's Social Care.

Officers and partners highlighted that housing quality, location, accessibility, connectivity and proximity to services all affect physical health, mental wellbeing, independence, public safety, safeguarding, and demand for statutory services. Poorly designed or poorly located housing can lead to avoidable health deterioration, increased isolation, family stress, and higher long-term demand for social care and health services. Conversely, well-planned development can support prevention, early intervention, and healthier living environments that enable people to remain independent for longer[10].

The Group identified a consistent theme across its discussions and evidence sessions that while planning policy necessarily contains mandated and technical requirements, planning practice can focus on compliance with these requirements rather than on the people who will ultimately live in the homes being approved. As summarised by the Chair, "the Group has heard planning decisions described as about the boxes, not the people in the boxes, and that this mindset needs to change."

The Group recognised that policy frameworks and national requirements set important parameters for decision-making. However, Members were concerned that an over-emphasis on meeting minimum standards or policy tests can result in housing that technically complies with planning policy but does not adequately support independence, family life, care needs or long-term wellbeing. The Group emphasised that planning decisions should start from an understanding of who homes are for, how people live, and the support networks they rely on, particularly in rural communities. Embedding this people-centred perspective was seen by the Group as fundamental to delivering Health in All Policies through planning.

The Group heard clear evidence that the costs associated with reactive responses to poor housing and place based decisions (such as emergency placements, residential care, or family breakdown) can be reduced by embedding health considerations at the planning stage. This reinforces the principle that planning functions can act as an upstream public health intervention rather than a purely downstream technical control [11]. User experience case studies demonstrated the personal impact when suitable, well located housing is not available, with one carer describing how prolonged uncertainty and inappropriate housing options had left their daughter "scared where she is living,

desperate to be near her family," and had contributed to a "deterioration in her mental health".

Applying the Marmot Principles to Health in Planning

The Group heard evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Health that the Marmot Principles provide a robust, evidence-based framework for integrating health and wellbeing into planning policy and practice. The importance was emphasised of adopting the six original Marmot Principles set out in *Fair Society, Healthy Lives* (2010) [7], alongside the two additional principles introduced in *The Marmot Review: 10 Years On* (2020) [12], which place greater emphasis on addressing structural drivers of inequality and strengthening prevention across the life course.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted that these principles are relevant to planning decisions, particularly in shaping access to suitable housing, social and affordable homes, connectivity, safety, and community infrastructure. He shared that more recent policy thinking has further reinforced the importance of parks, green and open spaces as fundamental determinants of physical health, mental wellbeing, social connection and resilience. The Group heard that such spaces should be treated as integral components of healthy place-making rather than discretionary design features [13].

The Group also considered that while the Marmot Principles provide a comprehensive framework for embedding health and wellbeing across all local authority functions, the scope of this review was deliberately limited to planning policy and practice, in line with its agreed Terms of Reference. The Group therefore did not undertake a wider assessment of how the Marmot Principles are applied across all council strategies or partnership arrangements.

The Group notes that Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Board has committed to working towards becoming a 'Marmot Place'. The findings of this review are therefore intended to complement that wider programme of work by demonstrating how planning, as a key upstream lever, can make a practical and measurable contribution to prevention, reduced inequalities and improved health outcomes for residents.

However, the Group also recognised concerns raised by some members and witnesses regarding the practicality and interpretation of these ambitions. As while the Marmot Principles are widely respected for their focus on reducing health inequalities, the Group noted that their application should be balanced and carefully interpreted, as highlighted in Marmot's own work, many of the principles draw upon broader arguments for systemic change. The Group therefore emphasised the importance of tailoring these principles pragmatically to local circumstances.

Limitations of the current policy framework in embedding Health in All Policies

Officers explained that, although there is strong organisational commitment to embedding health and wellbeing within planning, the ability to require health-related considerations is constrained by national planning policy, the current status of local policy documents, and an evolving national reform context. Recent reforms and emerging guidance were described as creating uncertainty and potentially tightening parameters around the extent to which local authorities can introduce or mandate local validation requirements unless these are clearly provided for through an adopted Local Plan.

In particular, the Group heard that Health Impact Assessment approaches cannot currently be relied upon as a consistent tool through the validation process unless clearly embedded within Local Plan policy. Supplementary Planning Documents[14] can encourage and guide developers but cannot introduce policy, and their future status (or successor mechanisms) under the new system remains unclear. As a result, health-supportive design and placemaking principles are often dependent on early engagement, individual negotiation, and professional judgement rather than enforceable requirements.

Public Health and Planning officers stressed that, given capacity constraints, any future use of Health Impact Assessment approaches must be proportionate and clearly targeted. Evidence cautioned against checklist-driven or universal application models, which risk diluting impact and placing unsustainable demands on limited specialist resources. Instead, officers emphasised the greatest value lies in strategic application through plan-making and higher-impact schemes.

Accessible, adaptable and sustainable housing as a foundation for independent living

There was strong consensus across evidence sessions that accessible and adaptable housing is essential to supporting independent living, reducing demand for care, and improving quality of life for residents with disabilities, long-term conditions, or changing needs over time.

Adult Social Care, housing providers and Public Health officers provided evidence of growing unmet demand for homes that can be adapted as people age or experience changes in health with the Shropshire Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment affirming this. Retrofitting existing housing stock poses challenges such as cost, technical challenges, and viability, particularly in older or rural properties. Witnesses emphasised that designing adaptability into new homes from the outset represents best value for money and better outcomes for residents.

The Group heard that accessible and adaptable housing standards can only be applied consistently where they are explicitly set out in Local Plan policy. In the absence of such

policy, development defaults to minimum Building Regulations, which do not adequately support independent living over the life course. Planning officers advised that if the Council wishes to secure M4(2) and M4(3) standards at scale, this must be clearly evidenced, viability-tested and incorporated within Local Plan policy.

At the same time, witnesses cautioned against overly prescriptive or blanket application of standards. Evidence from developers, housing providers and lived experience highlighted that adaptability and flexibility are crucial. In many cases, better outcomes are achieved through early engagement and off-plan adaptation to meet specific needs, rather than rigid numerical targets which can increase costs, reduce choice and undermine viability.

The Group therefore concluded that policy approaches which prioritise flexibility, enabling accessibility and adaptability to be tailored to site context, local needs, and viability are most likely to deliver both preventative health benefits and viable development.

Further comparator learning from Telford and Wrekin Council demonstrated how a local authority acting as both planner and housing provider can accelerate delivery of accessible and adaptable homes. Through its wholly owned housing company, Nuplace, Telford and Wrekin Council have delivered M4(2) and M4(3) homes at scale, with adaptations designed in from the outset and allocations linked to demonstrable need. This approach was evidenced as supporting independent living, reducing reliance on crisis adaptations, and enabling residents to remain in their homes or access appropriate new homes as needs change.

Lived experience evidence reinforced the preventative value of accessible and adaptable housing designed around individual needs. A Shropshire Council tenant who lives in an M4(3) wheelchair-accessible home, described the impact of purpose-built accommodation on independence and the ability to live their life the way they want to:

“I have lived in different types of accommodation, both shared and private rented. This property has been designed around me, and it lets me live without interruption.”

When asked what could be improved, he highlighted ongoing supply and choice issues, stating:

“There is a shortage of accessible housing, with not much choice currently. I’d love to see a portfolio of accessible housing so there’s more choice.”

The Group heard from Housing Officers that demand for homes requiring adaptations is recorded by household across a range of indicators, including wheelchair-accessible or level-access accommodation, level-access showers, sheltered housing and medical priority. At the writing of this report, 993 households had been assessed as requiring level-access accommodation, 772 as requiring a level-access shower, and 56 as

requiring wheelchair-accessible accommodation, alongside households with urgent, serious or moderate medical need[15].

The Group considered this combined qualitative and quantitative evidence to demonstrate that, while accessible and adaptable homes can significantly support independence and reduce reliance on services, current supply and limited choice remain a constraint, reinforcing the importance of embedding adaptability and accessibility within planning policy to prevent avoidable escalation into care.

Affordability and security of tenure as a determinant of health and independence

Alongside physical accessibility and adaptability, the Group heard that affordability and security of tenure are important for independent living. Prolonged housing insecurity and lack of access to suitable, affordable homes were evidenced as contributing to deteriorating mental health, delayed hospital discharge, increased demand for Adult Social Care and poorer outcomes for children and families. The Group therefore considers access to social and affordable housing to be a health and wellbeing issue, as well as a housing and planning issue.

The Group heard evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Health that the Administration has articulated an ambition for up to 40% of new homes to be delivered as social and affordable housing, reflecting the scale of unmet need locally. Comparator examples were referenced, including Bath and North East Somerset Council[16], which has adopted a similar strategic ambition within its planning policy framework. Evidence presented to the Group indicated that such approaches are increasingly framed as health-led interventions, with social and affordable housing recognised as a core mechanism for addressing health inequalities and supporting prevention.

However, the Group also recognised concerns regarding deliverability within a market-led housing context, reflecting challenges being experienced nationally as well as locally in Shropshire. Evidence indicates that delivery of social and affordable housing through Section 106 agreements has become increasingly constrained, with developers reporting difficulties securing registered provider partners, delays in agreeing contracts, and schemes being stalled as a result of affordability pressures within the wider housing market.

The Group acknowledged that under current conditions, ambitions for higher proportions of social or affordable homes may not be achievable on all sites without significant intervention, and that rigid or undeliverable requirements risk slowing build-out, discouraging smaller and medium-sized developers and worsening overall housing supply. The Group therefore emphasised the importance of a pragmatic, evidence-led approach which aligns ambition with local viability evidence, applies policies flexibly where justified, and monitors outcomes to ensure that planning requirements translate

into homes being delivered, supporting improved health outcomes rather than contributing to stalled sites or land being held without development[17].

The evidence suggests that policy approaches which prioritise flexibility, early engagement with delivery partners, adaptability in tenure mix, and collaborative working between local authorities, developers and registered providers are more likely to secure both affordable housing delivery and viable development. National evidence highlights that overly rigid quota-based approaches, particularly on smaller or marginal sites, can unintentionally suppress delivery, while proportionate and negotiated solutions are more effective in bringing forward both market and affordable homes. The Group considers that such an approach is essential to balancing the health benefits associated with affordable housing provision with the practical realities of delivery, particularly in rural and mixed-viability contexts[18].

Multigenerational living and adaptability as preventative planning

The Group heard consistent evidence that planning barriers to multigenerational living, including restrictions on extensions, annexes and adaptable layouts, can have unintended consequences for health and social care demand. Witnesses described how families are sometimes prevented from adapting homes to accommodate changing needs, resulting in people being separated from support networks or placed in more intensive and costly care settings.

Evidence from councillors and lived experience highlighted the benefits of mixed and inclusive communities, where people with different needs and at different life stages live alongside one another. This approach was described as supporting wellbeing, reducing isolation and avoiding the risks associated with clustering people with similar needs in isolated settings.

The Group concluded that planning policy needs to be an enabler of adaptable homes and multigenerational living. This approach would support prevention, independence and resilience, and would align closely with the objectives of Health in All Policies.

Rurality, place and health inequalities

The Group heard extensive evidence that rurality significantly shapes health outcomes and can amplify existing inequalities[19]. In a county such as Shropshire, dispersed settlements and reliance on informal support networks mean that the relationship between place, health and wellbeing differs from urban contexts and is not always well reflected in national, urban-centric planning assumptions.

Evidence highlighted factors affecting lived experience in rural areas, including access to public transport, digital connectivity, distance from services and community infrastructure such as GP practices, schools and local hubs. Residents described practical challenges associated with these factors, for example: *“It’s hard to find a personal assistant for my son due to inadequate public transport,”* and *“all the opportunities for SEN are located far away. Public transportation is very poor.”*

The Group stressed that such evidence should not be interpreted as indicating that rural development is inherently unsustainable or inappropriate. Rather, it reinforces the importance of a holistic, place-based approach which considers how housing, connectivity, services and support networks operate together in rural communities.

Public Health officers highlighted that rural deprivation is often masked within aggregate data, making need harder to identify and respond to effectively.

Evidence from Adult Social Care and Children’s Services demonstrated that where planning does not adequately reflect local context and support networks, unintended consequences can arise, including increased isolation and greater reliance on statutory services.

Witnesses emphasised that these issues are most effectively addressed at the plan-making and site-allocation stage, using shared intelligence across the Council to inform settlement strategy, housing mix and infrastructure priorities. The Group was concerned that rigid application of urban-focused assumptions around transport, walkability or density, without scope for justified local discretion, risks undermining rural social sustainability and exacerbating health inequalities rather than reducing them.

Community hubs and clusters as a mechanism for social sustainability

The Group heard evidence from the Leader that the hubs and clusters approach used in previous Local Plans provides a practical and health positive framework for supporting rural sustainability in Shropshire. Under this model, development is focused around a more sustainable settlement acting as a community hub, with surrounding villages and hamlets forming a functional cluster that collectively supports services, facilities and social networks.

Evidence highlighted that this approach enables smaller settlements to remain viable by contributing to the sustainability of shared schools, shops, transport links and community facilities, even where individual settlements would not meet conventional sustainability thresholds in isolation. The Group heard that this collective approach to sustainability helps retain families, carers and informal support networks, which in turn supports wellbeing and reduces isolation.

The Group noted that this approach aligns closely with the operation of Shropshire's Place Plans[20], which already organise growth, infrastructure priorities and community investment around hubs, clusters and their wider rural hinterlands. The Group therefore considers that clearer recognition of the hubs and clusters model within planning policy would support more consistent application of Health in All Policies principles across rural areas.

The role of rural exception sites and local needs housing

The Group heard evidence from the Leader of the Council that rural exception sites and local needs housing play an important role in supporting health, independence and social sustainability in Shropshire's villages and hamlets. Describing how exception sites can enable the delivery of affordable housing for local people who would otherwise be unable to remain in their communities, including carers, key workers, younger families and older residents seeking to downsize.

Evidence highlighted that, when appropriately located on the edge of existing settlements and supported by local lettings policies developed with parish councils, exception sites can sustain schools, local services and informal care networks. This approach was described as reducing isolation, supporting multigenerational living and helping to avoid the downstream costs associated with people being forced to relocate away from their communities and support networks[21].

The Group noted concerns that without clear policy support within the Local Plan, the authority's previous success in utilising rural exception sites may be lost and local needs housing risk being constrained. The Group therefore considers this approach to be an important planning lever for supporting healthier, more resilient rural communities.

Viability, deliverability and unintended health consequences

The Group heard consistent evidence that viability is central to whether planning permissions translate into homes built. Officers and developers emphasised that cumulative policy requirements, if not carefully balanced, risk reducing land values, stalling delivery and encouraging land banking. Witnesses cautioned that aspirational policy targets which are not supported by local market evidence and viability assessment can result in planning approvals without corresponding build-out, ultimately worsening housing shortages and health outcomes.

While the ambition to increase the supply of affordable housing was acknowledged, the Group's evidence did not support a fixed percentage approach where this would undermine delivery. Witnesses emphasised the importance of viability-led, evidence-based policy, supported by ongoing monitoring, to ensure that planning ambition results in homes delivered rather than permissions stalled.

Viability emerged as a central and complex theme throughout the evidence sessions. Developers, planning officers and housing partners all recognised the importance of improving health outcomes through planning but cautioned that cumulative policy and regulatory requirements can undermine the deliverability of development if not carefully balanced.

Developers provided evidence of rising costs associated with Community Infrastructure Levy (particularly in rural areas), affordable housing contributions, building regulations, future standards, environmental requirements and the complexity of Section 106 agreements. They emphasised that while many health-promoting design principles are supported in principle, the cumulative impact of multiple requirements can reduce land values, deter investment, and delay or prevent schemes from being built.

The Group noted the paradox highlighted by several witnesses: if policy ambition results in fewer homes being delivered, the overall impact on health outcomes may be negative, as housing shortages, affordability pressures and unsuitable accommodation persist. Several witnesses warned that an over-reliance on aspirational policy without sufficient regard to viability risks increasing planning approvals without corresponding delivery, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure constraints are greatest.

The Group concluded that the recruitment of a dedicated operational officer to assist the planning team with viability assessments, working collaboratively with developers as part of Shropshire Councils new pre-application model could ensure that more planning approvals get 'built out' in a timely manner. The Group also concluded that active engagement between this person and relevant officers in the areas of public health and social care is vital and would mean that known needs could be identified and form part of the assessment process.

The value of early, collaborative engagement

One of the most consistent findings across all evidence sessions was the value of early, collaborative engagement between planning, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, housing providers and developers. Witnesses described examples where early, round-table discussions enabled better design outcomes, improved understanding of health and care needs, and reduced conflict later in the planning process Developers in particular contrasted these collaborative approaches adopted by Shropshire Council with

checklist-driven or late-stage requirements, which were seen as less effective and more adversarial.

Public Health officers emphasised the importance of clarity regarding expectations and capacity. While early Public Health input was evidenced as adding significant value to planning outcomes, witnesses highlighted that this must be proportionate and targeted. Evidence suggested that Public Health involvement should prioritise strategic policy development, plan making and higher impact or complex schemes, rather than routine review of all planning applications, to ensure that limited specialist capacity is used effectively. Furthermore, the Group recognised that officer capacity is a key consideration not just for Public Health, but across all council services involved in the planning process. It was agreed that resources should be deployed where they can add the most value, ensuring that specialist input is focused on areas of greatest need and impact, and avoiding unnecessary duplication or overextension of limited staff.

The Group heard that where health considerations are discussed early, they are more likely to be embedded meaningfully into site layout, housing mix and design, rather than treated as add-ons. This approach was seen as particularly important given the current limitations of policy weight.

The Group observed at Telford and Wrekin Council how early, cross-departmental engagement is embedded structurally rather than relying on informal relationships. Evidence from the Station Quarter development illustrated how Planning, Housing, Regeneration, Adult Social Care and Education work collaboratively from project inception, enabling health, accessibility, connectivity and prevention outcomes to be designed into the master planning stage rather than mitigated later. This whole-council approach was seen to reduce downstream costs, support deliverability and provide greater certainty for developers.

Drawing on this learning, the Group recognises that developing strong cross-service communication and a shared whole-council mindset is a key part of Shropshire Council’s ongoing improvement journey, supported by both the Administration and senior officers. The Group considers this approach essential to achieving improved health outcomes and more effective, deliverable planning decisions in Shropshire.

Measuring impact

The Group found that, although there is a strong shared understanding of the relationship between planning, place and health, this is not yet matched by a clear or consistent approach to measuring the health impacts of planning decisions in practice.

Public Health officers advised that high-level population measures, such as life expectancy, are too blunt to reflect the contribution of planning policy over the short to

medium term. Instead, the Group heard that a more meaningful assessment of impact would focus on place-based and intermediate indicators that sit closer to planning decisions and the lived experience of residents. These include measures such as housing quality and energy efficiency, fuel poverty, accessibility and adaptability of homes, digital connectivity, access to services, green space and transport, and the stability and affordability of housing.
The Group heard that relevant data already exists across the Council, Public Health and NHS systems, including national Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators and local datasets relating to cost of living pressures, fuel poverty and housing need. However, this information is not routinely linked to planning decisions, site allocations or development outcomes, nor is it consistently monitored in a way that enables trends over time to be assessed or lessons to be drawn about which planning approaches are having the greatest preventative impact.

The Group heard that data sharing barriers, fragmented systems and the use of health data aggregated at wider geographies remain significant challenges, limiting the ability to draw direct causal links between specific planning interventions and health outcomes. However, the Group concluded that this should not preclude a more systematic approach to monitoring. Without clearer expectations, agreed indicators and baseline data, it remains difficult to assess whether Health in All Policies is being embedded consistently through planning practice, to understand where policies are working well, or to identify where targeted adjustments are needed to strengthen prevention and reduce future demand on health and care services.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates strong support for embedding Health in All Policies (HiAP) within planning. Planning is clearly a critical lever for improving health, independence and equity in Shropshire, particularly for adults and children supported by social care. However, the Group found that current arrangements rely heavily on goodwill, early engagement and individual practice, rather than being underpinned by consistent and enforceable policy.

The interaction between health objectives, rural realities and development viability remains complex and, at times, unresolved. Without stronger alignment between planning policy, health outcomes and deliverability, there is a risk that planning decisions will continue to generate avoidable demand for health and care services rather than preventing it. The evidence highlights the importance of early, collaborative engagement to support better design outcomes, but also demonstrates the limitations of relying on process rather than policy to secure health benefits.

Whilst Shropshire's draft design guidance provides a strong foundation for healthier, inclusive and multigenerational communities, including proposals to increase the provision of accessible and adaptable homes through Building Regulations Part M standards. The Group heard that clear and explicit intent within the Local Plan is critical to ensuring that Health in All Policies principles are consistently applied in practice. Witnesses emphasised that a strong statement of purpose at the outset of the Plan can help articulate what the Council is seeking to achieve for Shropshire residents, including prevention, independence and reduced health inequalities, and can provide officers with the confidence to apply appropriate discretion within national policy parameters.

Evidence suggested that, in the absence of clear intent, planning decisions risk defaulting to narrow interpretations of national policy that may not reflect Shropshire's rural character or the Council's health and wellbeing objectives. The Group therefore considers that explicit articulation of health, social sustainability and local needs within the Local Plan is essential to embedding Health in All Policies in planning decision making.

Comparator evidence from Telford and Wrekin Council demonstrates that where Health in All Policies principles are embedded as part of whole council place shaping, housing delivery and planning alignment, it is possible to achieve both improved health outcomes and delivery at pace. The Group concludes that Shropshire can draw on this learning to inform its own approach, adapted appropriately to rural context and governance arrangements.

Lived experience evidence reinforces the urgency of increasing the supply of suitable, safe and adaptable homes, particularly for younger disabled adults and families with complex needs. Evidence from carers and residents demonstrates the direct harms that arise when appropriate housing is unavailable, including safety risks, loss of independence and disconnection from family and support networks. This evidence underlines the preventative value of designing adaptability into homes from the outset.

The Group concludes that clearer articulation of the hubs and clusters approach, alongside a stronger emphasis on social sustainability and the role of Place Plans, would strengthen the Local Plan's ability to embed Health in All Policies in rural planning decisions. This would support prevention, independence and reduced demand for health and care services, while reflecting Shropshire's rural character and community structures.

The Group concludes that Health Impact Assessment approaches can add value by supporting consistency, transparency and early consideration of health impacts. However, evidence from Public Health and Planning officers highlighted that recent national planning policy changes now limit the ability to mandate such assessments through local validation requirements.

The effectiveness and enforceability of any HIA approach is therefore dependent on it being clearly embedded within Local Plan policy, rather than applied through standalone guidance or checklist based processes. Any future HIA approach should be proportionate, clearly defined and aligned with national planning requirements to ensure clarity for applicants, decisionmakers and service areas involved.

The Group therefore supports a phased approach which focuses on strengthening existing design guidance in the short term, while considering whether additional health related policy provisions could add value through the emerging Local Plan once national requirements are clearer.

Overall, the Group concludes that embedding HiAP within planning policy supported by clear standards, proportionate assessment tools and deliverable requirements offers a significant opportunity to improve health outcomes, reduce inequalities and support independent living, while ensuring that planning decisions contribute to prevention rather than avoidable demand on health and care services.

Any recommendations arising from the Task and Finish Group report would need to be considered and, where appropriate, taken forward in a way that is consistent with the statutory planning framework, national policy, the Council's evidence base, viability and deliverability. Not all recommendations will necessarily be capable of being translated into enforceable planning policy and some may be more appropriately addressed through guidance, operational practice or wider corporate action.

The Group concludes that planning can only deliver Health in All Policies outcomes consistently where it is informed by timely intelligence, aligned strategies and shared ownership across the Council and its partners. Evidence demonstrated that without structured collaboration and clear policy intent, opportunities to embed prevention, social sustainability and inclusive design risk remaining fragmented and reactive, rather than systematic and preventative.

Recommendations

1. **Formalise Strategic, Early, Cross-Service Engagement as Part of the Planning Process**

   Cabinet is recommended to support the formalisation of early, structured cross-service engagement between Planning, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Housing as a standard part of plan-making, through agreed governance, roles and trigger points, taking a coordinated whole-Council approach. Ensuring that whole-Council intelligence informs plan-making and site allocation at the earliest possible stage.

This should ensure that:

- people, families and communities are considered in the round, rather than through service silos;
- planning decisions reflect health, care, housing and economic impacts collectively; and
- collaboration moves beyond informal goodwill to a consistent, expected process.

2. Embed Health in All Policies as a Core Purpose of Planning

Cabinet is recommended to confirm that Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a core objective and guiding principle of planning policy and practice in Shropshire, recognising planning as an upstream public health intervention that supports prevention, independence and reduced demand on Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Taking the opportunity to clearly articulate this intent within the emerging Local Plan and reflected consistently in planning decision-making.

3. Improve Information and Early Advice for Foster Carers and Adopting Parents

Cabinet is recommended to ensure that clear, accessible information on pre-application planning advice is proactively provided to foster carers and adopting parents. This action supports placement stability, prevention and better outcomes for children and families.

4. Strengthen Policy Weight for Accessible and Adaptable Housing within the Local Plan

Cabinet is recommended to support the inclusion of clearer Local Plan policies on accessible and adaptable housing, including clear Local Plan expectations for Building Regulations Part M standards (M4(2) and M4(3)), justified by evidence and viability, and applied flexibly to reflect site context and local need, as opposed to a fixed percentage of adaptable homes.

Policy should:

- prioritise designing adaptability into homes from the outset;
- allow flexibility based on site context, local need and viability; and
- be supported by clear guidance to give confidence to decision-makers and applicants.

5. Reflect Rural Social Sustainability Explicitly within Planning Policy

Cabinet is recommended to ensure that the Local Plan explicitly reflects rural social sustainability, recognising Shropshire's geography and community structures.

This should include:

- clear articulation of the hubs and clusters approach;
- stronger alignment with Place Plans; and
- recognition of the role of local services, informal care networks and digital connectivity in supporting health and independence.

6. Reinforce Policy Support for Rural Exception Sites and Local Needs Housing

Cabinet is recommended to ensure that the Local Plan provides clear and supportive policy for rural exception sites and local needs housing, recognising their role in:

- enabling people to remain within their communities;
- supporting multigenerational living;
- sustaining local services and support networks; and
- preventing avoidable escalation into health and care services.

7. Deliverability and Transparency

Cabinet is recommended to ensure that Shropshire Council improves transparency and timeliness around CIL/S106 and related processes, addressing identified delays and improving understanding of local benefit and reducing barriers that risk undermining timely delivery of housing and infrastructure critical to health, independence and social sustainability, to support the delivery of healthy communities.

8. Ensure Specialist Viability Expertise within the Planning Process

Cabinet is recommended to ensure access to a dedicated specialist viability function to enable consistent and transparent assessment of development viability, particularly where health, accessibility and social sustainability objectives are relevant. This will:

- enhance early and constructive engagement with developers;
- provide decision-makers with greater confidence to balance policy ambition with deliverability; and

- address viability challenges on smaller and rural sites, supporting both housing delivery and positive health outcomes.

9. Measure and Monitor the Health Impacts of Planning

Cabinet is recommended to support the development of a proportionate approach to monitoring the health and wellbeing impacts of planning policy and planning decisions, using place-based and intermediate indicators (such as housing accessibility and adaptability, affordability, connectivity, access to services and community infrastructure), drawing on existing Council and Public Health data, to support transparency, learning and continuous improvement in embedding Health in All Policies through planning.

In developing its recommendations, the Task and Finish Group has deliberately focused on planning policy, guidance and governance arrangements, in line with its agreed Terms of Reference. While the Group heard wider evidence relating to housing allocation and lettings systems, housing delivery models and the operation of housing- and care-related processes, these matters sit outside the formal scope of this review and have therefore not been developed into recommendations.

The Group notes, however, that evidence in these areas raised substantive and recurring issues with clear implications for health, independence and prevention. These included the interaction between housing delivery and care needs, the practical operation of viability and delivery mechanisms, and the important role of parish-level engagement in shaping locally appropriate housing outcomes.

In particular, the Group heard evidence regarding the contribution of locally-based housing delivery partners, including STAR Housing and Cornovii Developments Ltd, in delivering accessible, adaptable and specialist homes aligned to local need. While housing delivery, ownership and allocation mechanisms fall outside the scope of this review, the Group considers that there would be value in further examining how such partners might play a more strategic role in supporting the future supply of specialist and supported housing.

This could include consideration of how planning policy, land identification, funding models and partnership arrangements might better enable locally-led delivery of homes that support independence, prevention and reduced demand for health and care services, particularly in rural areas. The Group therefore considers that this is an

appropriate area for further exploration through relevant scrutiny committees or other governance routes with responsibility for housing delivery and investment.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Below is a list of the witnesses that the Group heard from over the course of their work:

Cllr David Walker-Portfolio Holder for Planning (in person)
Amanda Allcock- Service Manager- Mental Health, Learning Disability, Preparation for Adulthood, Emergency Social Work Team (in person)
Louise Forbes- Service Manager, All Age Commissioning (in person)
Natasha Moody- Families First Partnership (FFP) Strategic Lead (in person)
Cllr Bernie Bentick-Portfolio Holder Health (in person)
Philip Northfield-Public Health Integration & Inequalities Officer (in person)
Tabitha Lythe-Planning and Development Services Manager (in person)
Edward West -Planned Policy & Strategy Manager (in person)
Andy Wigley-Policy and Environment Service Manager (in person)
Harpreet Rayet-Managing Director of Cornovii Developments Ltd (in person)
Jeremy Shingler-Managing Director Shingler Group (in person)
Adam Turnell-Shingler Group Architect and Landscape Architect (in person)
Richard McEvilly-Shingler Group Head of Land and Planning (in person)
James Dunn - Director - Prosperity & Investment, Telford and Wrekin Council (in person)
Kate Callis - Head of Service - Housing Investment Programme Telford and Wrekin Council (in person)
Joanne Cornwell - Housing Strategy and Commissioning Programme Manager Telford and Wrekin Council (in person)
Cllr Heather Kidd-Shropshire Council Leader (in person)
Richard Amos- STAR Trustee (in person)
Mark Feeney-Senior Development Manager for STAR (in person)
Kassandra Polyzoides- Service Director - Place Shaping (in person)

Appendix 2

Comparator Learning: Telford and Wrekin Council

As part of its evidence gathering, the Task and Finish Group visited Telford and Wrekin Council to examine how Health in All Policies principles are applied through planning, regeneration and housing delivery. The visit focused on the Station Quarter regeneration scheme and the role of the Council as project sponsor, planner and housing provider, including the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes through its wholly owned

housing company. The learning from this visit informed the Group's findings on early engagement, place shaping, deliverability and prevention.



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Cabinet

10th June 2026

Item:

Public

Aquamira Learning Disability Day Service

Responsible Officer:	Natalie McFall		
Email	Natalie.Mcfall@Shropshire.gov.uk	Tel	01743 253719
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Ruth Houghton		

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report presents a proposal to transfer the Aquamira day service to the Abbots Wood site. While the Council is committed to achieving improved outcomes for residents and ensuring value for money, the provision of such services through in-house arrangements is not a statutory requirement; rather, it is one available approach to delivering support to residents.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report asks Cabinet to determine the future direction of Aquamira Learning Disability Day Service, within the context of the Council's financial emergency and its continuing duties under the Care Act 2014 to meet eligible needs and agreed outcomes. Aquamira is a specialist day service in Shrewsbury for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex physical, neurological and health-related needs. It is valued for its calm, sensory friendly environment, multi-sensory provision and staff capability to support complex personal care and health interventions. The service operates from a council owned building. The current building-based model includes a hydrotherapy pool which, while valued by some individuals, is not a general requirement for the Council to provide. The NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Policy 'Value Based Commissioning & Evidence Based Interventions Policy' also states that hydrotherapy is not considered an essential service. Where local provision is not available, patients should receive land-based physiotherapy.

2.2. All other activities would continue following the transfer, including creative and sensory sessions; one-to-one and group audio-visual and IT activities; sensory garden activities; active sessions such as percussion, music, seated exercise and outdoor time; independent living activities such as preparing, cooking and eating; life skills and social interaction; interactive storytelling and communication work;

reminiscence and sound-based activities; health and wellbeing support, including postural management and relaxation; and community-based and outdoor projects.

2.3. To manage expenditure, the day service have facilitated private hire of the Hydro pool to generate income over a number of years. This is forecast to return £22,400 in 26/27. This is how the pool is predominantly used at this time.

2.4. The principal driver for change is a review of in-house provision and financial sustainability. Budgeted running costs for Aquamira in 2026/27 are £405,970, driven by staffing costs (£300,150) and building costs (£93,560), Forecast non-care-related income is £22,240. Internal Market Recharges of £27,040 and running costs of £7,460.

Item	**Baseline: Aquamira building retained**	**Recommended: transfer to Abbots Wood + close Aquamira building**
Ongoing annual running cost (2026/27 budget)	£405,970	£334,650 (full year effect)
One-off implementation costs	£0 (assumes no relocation), but ongoing pool repair/maintenance remain likely.	£TBC – estimated at £20,000.
Net recurrent saving (and when realised)	£0 (baseline)	-£71,320.
Aquamira building: closure / asset position and holding costs	Building retained with ongoing utilities, security, compliance checks, and pool liabilities.	£0 additional cost.

2.5. This proposal to move the service to Abbots Wood reduces the Days Service spend by £71,320 per year, every year. Future use of the council building will need to be considered separately by Property Services.

2.6. The Council recognises the proposal involves balancing the benefits of the current environment against the affordability and sustainability of the building-based model, and will monitor whether implementation creates material offsetting costs or pressures.

2.7. An 8-week public consultation (ending 26 March 2026) recorded opposition from people who use the service and carers to transferring the service and closing the hydrotherapy pool (95% opposed overall; 73% reported they would be affected “a lot”). Professional feedback was more mixed, recognising therapeutic benefits for some individuals while also noting the pool’s staffing intensity in maintaining the pool, faults and periods of unplanned closure. The feedback has been opposition has been carefully considered and has directly informed the equality analysis, mitigation plan and implementation safeguards, but Cabinet must weigh those impacts alongside the Council’s statutory duties and the financial sustainability of the current building-based model.

2.8. The report recommends transferring Aquamira Day Service to the Abbots Wood site and closing the Aquamira building, as this is the option which directly addresses the underlying structural cost driver associated with continued operation of the building, whilst retaining the ability to provide a specialist day service offer from an alternative venue. The proposal is to continue the specialist service in a different venue, not to withdraw support.

2.9 If approved by Cabinet, the transfer will take place following implementation of the feasibility actions at Abbots Wood site (including accommodating the multi-sensory equipment and providing access to a small kitchenette in the main activity room), together with careful planning of transport and routines to minimise disruption for a small number of users. The day service is not proposing to end specialist its specialist day service offer, and the Abbotts Wood site is continuing to offer that specialist model. This proposal is about redesign and sustainability.

2.10 The Council will continue to meet eligible needs and agreed outcomes for both individuals and their carers through Care Act assessment, care and support planning, and individual reviews and transition plans. The Council recognises that some individuals' current support arrangements may refer to hydrotherapy, pool access or related therapeutic input. As hydrotherapy is not itself a statutory service the Council is required to provide, and any clinical or therapeutic intervention is properly a matter for relevant health professionals, the Council cannot pre-determine a universal replacement arrangement. Instead, before implementation, the Council will complete a person-centred review of the individual's assessed needs and agreed outcomes, and will involve health partners where relevant to consider any clinical or therapeutic issues. This will inform transition planning and ensure that the Council continues to meet Care Act eligible needs lawfully, safely and appropriately.

2.11 Where care planning documentation may describe the way support has historically been delivered at Aquamira, including references to hydrotherapy or pool use. As part of implementation, the Council will review whether such references reflect a current assessed need, a preferred method of meeting need, or the historical operation of the service. This review will ensure that care planning remains needs-led and person-centred.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Cabinet is asked to:

i. Agree to transfer Aquamira Day Service to the Abbots Wood site.

ii. Agree to delegate the practical arrangements to the Director (DASS) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. Given the strength of consultation feedback opposing relocation/closure, Cabinet must be satisfied that the decision is evidence-based, takes account of consultation responses, and demonstrates due regard to equality impacts, while also meeting Best Value duties in the context of financial pressures. 95% opposition is a highly material consideration. The council has considered not only the volume of opposition, but also the substance of the concerns raised which have informed the ESHIA, the mitigation plan, the transition safeguards and the review of hydrotherapy references in care plans.

4.2. The Council has considered (and will keep under review) the Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) for this proposal, to ensure Members are able to demonstrate due regard to the public sector equality duty (section 149 Equality Act 2010).

4.3. Following public consultation, the current stocktake assessment indicates likely negative equality and social inclusion impacts in two of the Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act, i.e. Age and Disability, and in the local protected characteristic groupings of Carers and of Social Inclusion, recognising vulnerabilities and intersectionality's in and across groupings. In order to ensure that service user input was gained, they were contacted directly about the consultation, rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels, and their responses are included in the total responses received. The Council has also considered evidence including demographic data, recognising the importance of making decisions based upon all the information currently available including likely equality impacts now and into the future.

4.4. Those affected are particularly adults with what may be a range of profound and multiple learning disabilities, autism, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility and complex health needs, and carers and families of existing service users whose caring roles may be affected by changes to routine, respite, confidence in the suitability of the environment, and travel arrangements. There may also be negative impacts in relation to age where younger adults and older carers are affected, and in relation to social inclusion where households face transport, access or financial pressures.

4.5. The service area will review and monitor the equality, social inclusion and health impacts of the proposed change throughout decision-making, transition planning and implementation. This will include ongoing oversight of individual Care Act reviews, reassessments where required, carers' assessments where relevant, and person-centred transition plans, together with monitoring of whether the receiving site continues to meet assessed needs relating to accessibility, sensory environment, specialist equipment, personal care, staffing and transport.

4.6. Particular attention will be given to impacts on people with disabilities, carers, younger adults and households who may face access, rurality or financial pressures. Feedback from consultation has already identified strong concern among service users and carers, and engagement will therefore continue directly

with people who use the service, families, carers, advocates and staff, using accessible formats and non-digital routes as needed to reduce the risk of exclusion. The service will collect and review evidence before implementation and at regular intervals following any move, including feedback, attendance, travel and transition issues, incidents/complaints, and any themes arising from care reviews or post-move monitoring, so that further mitigations can be identified and acted on promptly. Review activity will be undertaken with relevant council officers and informed where appropriate by ongoing liaison with health and care professionals, elected members and other stakeholders involved in supporting affected individuals.

4.7. Retaining the Aquamira building (and associated pool-related expenditure) does not address the structural cost driver identified in the business case and carries ongoing affordability and volatility risk.

4.8. Risk table

Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Failure to properly consult on potential changes to In-House provision could result in legal challenge, particularly under the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and public law principles	Ensure a robust, transparent, and inclusive public consultation process is undertaken, with all affected stakeholders given the opportunity to contribute. Document all engagement activities and outcomes and update impact assessments accordingly.	Failure of Officers and Members to adhere to Governance arrangements
Changes to services may affect vulnerable groups, leading to adverse outcomes in health, wellbeing, or social inclusion.	Complete and regularly update an Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA). Use findings to inform decision-making and develop targeted support or transition plans for those most affected	Impact of pressures upon partners for example social care, health services
Failure to achieve planned savings or to deliver services within budget could undermine the council's financial position.	Undertake detailed financial modelling and scenario planning. Monitor costs and savings throughout implementation, and adjust plans as necessary to ensure financial objectives are met	Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year

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 financial case for change is driven by the high and rising cost base of the Aquamira building and the operational and maintenance demands associated with the hydrotherapy pool. Budgeted running costs for 2026/27 are £405,970, comprising staffing costs of £300,150 (including on-costs), building costs of £93,560, and other running costs of £7,460, internal recharges of £27,040. Forecast non-care-related income is £22,240 (from renting out the pool and sensory room).

5.3. There would be one-off associated costs of converting a room at Abbots Wood into a multisensory room and adding a kitchenette, in line with the recommendation from the feasibility assessment.

Item	Baseline: Aquamira building retained	Recommended: transfer to Abbots Wood + close Aquamira building
Ongoing annual running cost (2026/27 budget)	£405,970	£334,650 (full year effect)
One-off implementation costs	£0 (assumes no relocation), but ongoing pool repair/maintenance remain likely.	£TBC – estimated at £20,000.
Net recurrent saving (and when realised)	£0 (baseline)	-£71,320.
Aquamira building: closure / asset position and holding costs	Building retained with ongoing utilities, security, compliance checks, and pool liabilities.	£0 additional cost.

5.4. The consultation evidence recorded in the business case identifies the hydrotherapy pool as a major cost pressure and highlights that it is staff intensive to operate and has been subject to faults and periods of unplanned closure, creating further cost and service disruption. While private hire has previously been used in an attempt to offset operating costs, the evidence in the business case indicates this has not generated sufficient income to materially reduce the financial burden.

5.5. Cabinet is asked to consider the financial implications alongside statutory duties to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014. The Council does not have a general obligation to provide access to a hydrotherapy pool. Where this is a requirement assessed and provided by the NHS, this would need to be offered by the NHS at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt (RJAH) near Oswestry. The Council remains responsible for meeting eligible needs and agreed outcomes through Care Act assessment and care and support planning. What happens to the building after closure will be for the Council to determine. While the building remains empty, there are likely to be interim holding costs, such as security costs. These will vary depending on future decisions and timescales.

5.6. The business case outlines various options, but transferring the service to Abbots Wood is the option that directly addresses the underlying structural cost driver associated with continued operation of the Aquamira building, including recurring pool-related expenditure, whilst maintaining the ability to deliver a specialist day service offer from an alternative venue.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1. The proposal may change travel patterns for service users, carers and staff due to relocation of the service to an alternative venue; this could increase or decrease fuel use depending on individual journeys. As Abbots Wood is located in Shrewsbury and the buses are based at the Abbots Wood site, any change should be minimal.

6.2. No direct impact has been identified in relation to renewable energy generation as part of this proposal.

6.3. No specific climate change adaptation measures are included within this proposal.

7. Background

7.1. Shropshire Council provides support to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014. It is not a statutory requirement to meet Care Act assessed needs through in-house arrangements or to deliver support through a particular building-based model; rather, in-house day services are one of the ways the Council can deliver support.

7.2. Aquamira Day Service is a specialist day opportunities service in Shrewsbury supporting adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex physical, neurological and health-related needs. The service is described as a calm, sensory-friendly environment with multi-sensory provision and staff capability to support complex personal care and health needs (including

Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy [PEG] and medication support, and one-to-one supervision). Aquamira also has access to a hydrotherapy pool. For clarity, PEG means a feeding tube inserted directly into the stomach through the abdominal wall, usually to support someone who cannot safely eat or drink enough by mouth.

7.3. The case for change set out in the Aquamira business case arises primarily from the high and rising cost base of the building and the operational and maintenance demands associated with the hydrotherapy pool, rather than concerns about service quality. The business case is framed in the context of severe financial pressures and the Council's Best Value duty, while continuing to meet eligible needs and agreed outcomes through Care Act assessment and care and support planning.

7.4. The wider context is that adult social care day services have changed significantly over time, moving away from traditional building-based models towards more person-centred approaches and community-based opportunities. The Care Act 2014 reflects this shift by focusing care planning on how eligible needs will be met (rather than specifying a particular service), including through informal support, universal services, community networks, direct payments and, where required, traditional services. In relation to people with a learning disability, national policy direction (including Valuing People 2001 and Valuing People Now 2009) promoted social inclusion, employment and lifelong learning, contributing to a move away from large day centres towards more flexible community-based support.

7.5. Cabinet previously agreed to undertake an 8-week public consultation on the potential transfer of Aquamira Day Service to an alternative location. The consultation ran for 8 weeks and ended on 26 March 2026. All current service users were contacted directly rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels. Engagement routes included online surveys (separate surveys for clients/carers and professionals), written responses, one-to-one conversations where requested, and meetings/discussions facilitated with partners, councillors and officers. Consultation materials were made available in Easy Read formats where appropriate, and advocacy support was available to help individuals and families to engage.

7.6. Consultation feedback relating to Aquamira indicates strong opposition from users of services and carers to transferring the service and closing the hydrotherapy pool. In the clients and carers survey, 95% of respondents who provided an overall view opposed the proposal and 73% of respondents who answered the impact question said they would be affected "a lot". Key themes included the importance of a calm, sensory-friendly environment, continuity of staff/ support, concerns about travel/transport, and concerns about the suitability of alternative sites. Professional and stakeholder feedback was more mixed, recognising therapeutic value for some individuals while also highlighting the pool's cost, staffing intensity and periods of unplanned closure.

7.7. The consultation feedback in relation to the proposed changes at Aquamira has been carefully considered, and the Council has taken account of the issues raised alongside its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Respondents emphasised the importance of the calm, sensory-friendly environment and continuity of staff and support, noting that a change of site could lead to anxiety or deterioration in wellbeing. In response, the Council will

ensure that no individual transitions until a full Care Act review and transition plan confirms that their needs and outcomes can be safely met at Abbots Wood (or where necessary an alternative day service suitable to meet need), with any transition undertaken in a phased way that prioritises continuity of staff, established routines and communication approaches.

7.8. Councillor Dartnall reports “It is clear that the council is not required to provide hydrotherapy and that such provision lies more appropriately with health agencies. It is also clear that continued provision of hydrotherapy and other specialist services at Aquamira is unsustainable, given Shropshire Council's financial position. This decision must proceed therefore. On behalf of residents who currently benefit from the service, my hope is that the mitigations provided for in this report facilitate ongoing hydrotherapy for those who rely on it.”

7.9. Concerns were also raised regarding travel and transport, including the potential impact of longer journey times on both individuals and carers. The Council has therefore considered likely journey changes and will plan transport on an individual basis, including the sequencing of pick-up and drop-off arrangements and tolerance of journey times, with reasonable adjustments and contingency plans in place where issues cannot be fully mitigated. Respondents further questioned whether Abbots Wood could replicate the specialist environment currently provided at Aquamira, particularly in respect of space, equipment and day-to-day facilities.

7.10. Given the significance of the proposal, the feedback and the equality implications identified, the Council expects this proposal to proceed through the appropriate scrutiny arrangements as part of its wider governance and assurance process. Any implementation would remain subject to completion of that process, alongside site readiness actions, individual Care Act reviews and transition planning.

7.11. The Council has assessed site feasibility and would make the move conditional on completing specific readiness actions, including accommodating multisensory equipment and ensuring access to appropriate facilities such as a kitchenette within the main activity space, so that the specialist offer can continue to be delivered. Finally, while some respondents highlighted the benefits of the hydrotherapy pool and the significance of its potential loss, the Council has balanced these views against professional opinion, operational constraints, staffing requirements, reliability issues and overall affordability. Where hydrotherapy forms part of an individual’s current support, this will be reviewed as part of the care and support planning process alongside our health partners, including consideration of alternative ways to meet the intended outcomes. The Council recognises the weight of opposition; however, opposition is not the only relevant consideration; the Council must also weigh legal duties, affordability, Best Value and whether the impacts can be mitigated.

7.12. The business case notes that the Council is not under a general obligation to offer access to a hydrotherapy pool. Where this is a requirement assessed and provided by the NHS, this would need to be offered by the NHS at the (RJAH) near Oswestry. The Council remains responsible for meeting eligible needs and agreed outcomes as determined through Care Act assessment and care and support planning, including through individual reviews and transition planning where service changes are implemented.

8. Additional Information

8.1. Implementation is dependent on completion of the feasibility and readiness actions for the receiving site, individual Care Act reviews and transition planning.

8.2. The Council will use Care Act assessments and care and support planning to ensure eligible needs and agreed outcomes continue to be met, including individual transition planning where service change is implemented.

8.3. No move would take place until the site is ready and reviews completed. In the unlikely event that Abbots Wood site cannot meet someone's needs, alternative provision will be identified.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The evidence set out in this report and attached business case demonstrates that Aquamira provides a specialist day service offer for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs, and that people who use the service and their carers place significant value on the calm, sensory-friendly environment, continuity of staff/support and (for some) access to the hydrotherapy pool. The consultation feedback recorded in the business case shows strong opposition to transfer and closure of the hydrotherapy pool, with many respondents reporting that they would be significantly affected. The consultation feedback is a significant factor, but Cabinet may still lawfully conclude that the recommendation should proceed where it is satisfied that impacts have been properly assessed, consultation has been conscientiously considered, and mitigation and review arrangements are sufficient.

9.2. At the same time, the report evidences that the financial sustainability of the current Aquamira building-based model is the primary driver for change, including the high and rising running costs associated with the building and the operational and maintenance demands of the hydrotherapy pool. Cabinet is therefore asked to take a balanced decision which gives due weight to consultation feedback and equality impacts, while meeting the Council's Best Value duties in the context of severe financial pressures. If Cabinet agrees the recommendation, officers will track and report on implementation costs, closure costs and delivery of net savings for the service in line with monthly budget monitoring and will escalate if slippage occurs. The expected budget reduction for In-house provision from this proposal is £71,320 year on year. Cabinet is being asked to weigh two imperfect options; retain a valued but financially unsustainable building-based model; transfer the service to a more sustainable site-based model that requires mitigation and careful transition. The Council considers the latter to be the more proportionate and sustainable option overall.

9.3. On that basis, it is recommended that Aquamira Day Service is transferred to the Abbots Wood site and the Aquamira building is closed. Based on the feasibility assessment, some minor alterations will be needed at the Abbots Wood site to accommodate the multisensory equipment and provide access to a small kitchen in the main room. This proposal allows the council to continue to provide a

specialist day service in a different and more sustainable way. This is not a withdrawal of support, but a redesign of where it is delivered.

List of Background Papers:

Provider Services Redesign in-house

Local Member: **Councillor Rosemary Dartnall**

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Background information – Provider Services Redesign in-house

Appendix 2- Aquamira Business Case

Appendix 3- Day Centres Consultation report April 2026

Appendix 4- Day Centres Consultation Executive Summary

Appendix 5- Shropshire-council-updated-eshia- Aquamira Updated May 2026

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Cabinet 21st January 2026

Cabinet

Public

Provider Services Redesign (in-house)

Responsible Officer:	Natalie McFall		
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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Ruth Houghton		

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report presents a proposal regarding the future direction of Shropshire Council's In house Day Services, inviting Cabinet to consider the recommendations set out. While the Council is committed to achieving improved outcomes for residents and ensuring value for money, the provision of such services through in-house arrangements is not a statutory requirement; rather, it is one available approach to delivering support to residents.

1.2 Following the financial emergency declared in September 2025, it has been essential to reassess all services, especially those with high costs or that are potentially not financially viable. In light of that financial review, as explained in more detail below, Cabinet is asked to approve: a consultation on a proposal to fully close Helena Lane Day Centre and a consultation on a proposal to close the Aquamira site and relocating its Day Service to another location. In addition, Cabinet is asked to approve a broader engagement about reshaping In-House Day Services. This engagement is distinct from, yet related to, the recent broader consultations regarding externally provided Day Care services.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 In line with Shropshire Council's Improvement Plan, a thorough review of In-House Day Service provision is essential to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable, focused on clear priorities, and able to deliver best value for

residents. The Improvement Plan sets out the need for immediate action to address significant financial pressures, strengthen governance, and align resources with strategic objectives. Reviewing In-House Day Services will enable the Council to assess quality, efficiency, and alignment with the Council's future direction, ensuring that provision is both effective and affordable. This approach supports the Council's ambition to be a modern, responsive, and high-performing organisation, as well as meeting its statutory duty to deliver services in the most efficient, economical, and sustainable way.

2.2 On 10th September 2025, Cabinet declared a financial emergency prompting a comprehensive review of all non-statutory services to ensure financial sustainability and alignment with strategic priorities. This report presents a proposal for the future direction of the Council's In-House Provider Services, with a particular focus on the sustainability and suitability of current day service provision for adults with learning disabilities and older people.

2.3 It is not a statutory requirement to provide services to meet Care Act assessed needs through In-House arrangements. Financial analysis, set out in more detail below, demonstrates that two centres in particular, Helena Lane Day Centre and Aquamira Day Centre, in their current forms have high operational costs, and reduced demand. Specifically, Aquamira's high costs are driven by the maintenance of a hydrotherapy pool, while Helena Lane operates at a substantial deficit due to a significant lack of demand for the service.

2.4 Whilst this financial analysis suggests that neither Helena Lane or Aquamira Day Centres are viable, no final decisions have been taken on them. The report emphasises the need for robust, transparent consultation and engagement with all stakeholders, including service users, families, staff, and unions, to provide an opportunity for alternative options to be raised and reduce adverse impacts on vulnerable groups. An Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) has been completed to inform decision-making. In line with the Council's statutory duties, the report recommends an eight-week public consultation on the potential closure of Helena Lane Day Centre and the relocation of the Aquamira Day Service to an alternative venue. As stated above, no final decision has yet been taken on either day centre, and the Council remains receptive to solutions which could keep them open in a financially sustainable manner.

2.5 If following the period of consultation, the proposed closure of the Helena Lane Day Centre and the closure of the Aquamira site are approved then the closures are expected to deliver an approximate saving of £222,380 per year, supporting the Council's commitment to fiscal responsibility and the development of a modern, sustainable model of care. Transition planning and proactive engagement will be essential to safeguard continuity of care and support for affected individuals.

2.6 While it wouldn't necessarily bring further savings, the council still needs to further modernise day services by focusing on more flexible, person-centred support. Alongside traditional day care, individuals will have access to employment,

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supported work, and volunteering through partnerships like the 'Enable' team. Taking a tiered approach, matches support to individual needs and aims to improve independence, social inclusion, and well-being, while ensuring efficient resource use and statutory compliance. As such, this report also recommends that cabinet endorse an eight-week public engagement on the reprovision of the remaining In-House Day Services.

2.7 This report invites Cabinet to agree the commencement of the recommended consultations and engagement processes, with the overall aim of ensuring that future provision is both effective and affordable, and that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in the most efficient and equitable manner.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Cabinet is asked to:

(i) agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the future of Helena Lane Day Service, including the potential option to close the service. New admissions should be paused during the consultation period to avoid further impact.

(ii) agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the potential transfer of the Aquamira day service to the Abbots Wood site.

(iii) endorse public engagement for 8 weeks on the reprovision of the remaining In-House Day Services Provision.

3.2 Following the period of consultation, final recommendations will be presented to cabinet for determination.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1 The council has declared a financial emergency and the external auditors (Grant Thornton) recommendation calls for urgent action, including a thorough review of all services to identify the costs of delivering statutory responsibilities. Therefore, In-House provision should be reviewed in this light.

4.2 In the past twenty years, the approach to care provision has evolved significantly, moving from a 'care' model toward one focused on 'support'. The Care Act 2014 acknowledged this change, shifting care planning from simply specifying the 'provision of services' to articulating 'how eligible needs will be met'. Meeting these needs may involve informal support, universal services, community networks, direct payments, and if needed, traditional services.

4.3 In the late 20th Century, there was a programme of deinstitutionalisation that saw changes in policies promoting integration and normalisation, moving away from large institutions toward community care services. Day services were the focal

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points for social inclusion, offering structured activities, education, and sometimes supported employment. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and later the Care Act 2014 reinforced rights-based, person-centred approaches, emphasising independence and choice. The 1990's saw traditional building-based day centres redesigned to take a more person-centred approach, offering more flexible, community-based activities rather than fixed attendance at a day centre.

4.4 Day Services for Older People has transformed over recent years, moving away from passive, building-based provision towards active, personalised support that enhances quality of life. For older adults, this change means greater choice and control, opportunities to maintain independence, and access to stimulating activities that reduce loneliness and cognitive decline. Community-based hubs and flexible outreach models enable social connections, promote physical activity, and foster a sense of purpose through volunteering or learning. This shift aligns with the Care Act's emphasis on prevention and wellbeing, ensuring older people can age with dignity, remain active citizens, and feel valued within their communities.

4.5 For People with a Learning Disability, Valuing People 2001 and Valuing People Now 2009 were pivotal strategies that set out the vision for people with a Learning Disability, challenging traditional building-based centres, promoting social inclusion, employment and lifelong learning. This saw a move away from large day centres, to services creating community-based opportunities, enabling friendship through natural connections in jobs, college and leisure activities, rather than through attendance at a single Day Centre.

4.6 With the introduction of direct payments, personal budgets, personalisation and self-directed support, people were empowered to access support in different ways, maximising the use of community activities and employing personal assistants to access them. In Shropshire there are 439 people accessing day centres across 29 facilities that offer support to people with a learning disability. 178 of those people access In-House Day services.

4.7 There are eight In-House Day Centres and one Voluntary Service:

Abbots Wood	Aquamira	Albert Road	Avalon	Wild Teams
Greenacres Farm	Wayfarers	Helena Lane	Maesbury Metals	

4.8 As part of the council's aim of modernising day services, the reprovision of remaining in-house services should focus on delivering more flexible, person-centred support that aligns with contemporary models. This approach would ensure that, alongside traditional day care and day activities, individuals have clear pathways to access employment, supported employment, and volunteering opportunities. By fostering collaboration with employment support services such as the council's 'Enable' team, the reprovision aims to enhance outcomes for people with additional needs, supporting them to achieve greater independence, social

inclusion, and well-being. A future model should recognise that while some individuals will always require structured day care, others can benefit from supported or independent work, and the service will be redesigned to provide a tiered approach that matches support to individual capabilities and aspirations. This will enable the council to deliver statutory duties efficiently, maximise value for money, and ensure that resources are allocated to services that deliver the greatest benefit to service users and the wider community.

4.9 An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been completed to identify the likely impact of any proposed change across the Protected Characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010, ahead of the proposed consultation.

4.10 At this stage the impacts are considered to be neutral to low negative across groupings with a potential to be low to medium negative for those in the grouping of Age and Disability. Proposals for mitigation will be scoped and informed by the results of the consultation.

4.11 The impacts in terms of health and wellbeing for the individuals likely to be affected will also need to be informed by the results of the consultation.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to properly consult on potential changes to In-House provision could result in legal challenge, particularly under the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and public law principles	Ensure a robust, transparent, and inclusive public consultation process is undertaken, with all affected stakeholders given the opportunity to contribute. Document all engagement activities and outcomes and update impact assessments accordingly.
Changes to services may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, leading to adverse outcomes in health, wellbeing, or social inclusion.	Complete and regularly update an Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA). Use findings to inform decision-making and develop targeted support or transition plans for those most affected
Failure to achieve planned savings or to deliver services within budget could undermine the council's financial position.	Undertake detailed financial modelling and scenario planning. Monitor costs and savings throughout implementation, and adjust plans as necessary to ensure financial objectives are met

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Service changes may lead to a reduction in quality or interruptions in care.	Develop robust transition plans and maintain clear communication with service users and families
Changes may result in workforce instability or insufficient market capacity to meet needs, especially if services are outsourced or reconfigured.	Engage early with staff and unions. Develop workforce retention and redeployment strategies, and conduct market engagement to ensure sufficient, quality provision.
Poorly managed changes could damage the council's reputation with the public, partners, and regulators.	Communicate openly and proactively with all stakeholders, providing clear rationales for decisions and demonstrating commitment to quality and fairness.

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 financial review for Aquamira demonstrates that the building costs are disproportionately high, primarily due to the operation and maintenance of the hydrotherapy pool. Excluding internal market recharges, the total annual cost of operating Aquamira stands at £374,325 minus income of £19,200, with an average cost of £211 per person per day. This is substantially above the market benchmark of approximately £170 per day for comparable services. While Aquamira has a hydro pool that has been valued by some individuals who attended the service, it should be recognised that the council does not have a statutory duty to provide such a facility, and its maintenance represents an unnecessary additional financial burden. Councils operate leisure services under discretionary powers rather than a legal duty.

5.3. There is a strong network of alternative support available locally to Aquamira, including alternative day services, direct payments, personal assistants, and various community and voluntary sector services. Day Service to an alternative venue such as Abbots Wood would reduce the costs of running the day service by £85,920, minus £25,620 of projected income from external income, making an overall projected reduction of £60,300 per year. As this site is council owned, a further savings calculation would be required to establish how much would be saved overall by the council, as this will depend heavily on the future use of the site.

5.4. The financial analysis for Helena Lane demonstrates that, despite the absence of accommodation costs in the reported figures, the service is not financially sustainable in its current format. The annual cost of running the service stands at £180,190, minus a projected income of £18,110, which gives an average running cost of £244 per person, per half day. It is important to note that the true cost of running the service is even higher, as building costs are not incorporated due to the centre's location within a larger council facility. Generally people are now using alternative provision. Seven out of the eight attendees pay privately for the service at an agreed fee, but this has been heavily subsidised. Fees and charges are currently under review for 26-27. People's needs could continue to be met in an alternative way. If the service were to close, it would generate an annual saving for the council of £162,080.

5.5. A range of alternative support options is available locally, including direct payments, personal assistants, and a diverse selection of community and voluntary sector services. The nearest equivalent Day Service is approximately 10 miles away, with a daily charge of £50. While there are no other local day centres within Ludlow itself, an increasingly community-inclusive approach has led to the development of various local services. Examples include luncheon groups supporting individuals with additional needs, such as Hands Together Ludlow, which provides befriending services, Men's Shed, digital inclusion initiatives, community lunches, Food Hub, and Community Fridge.

5.6. Ludlow Assembly Rooms offer not only theatre and film but also a wide variety of community classes, complemented by other services , providing assorted meal options. Community services in Church Stretton deliver additional services, such as 'meet and eat' programmes. Ludlow Library acts as a vibrant community hub, delivering a broad spectrum of social and wellbeing activities aimed at reducing isolation and promoting inclusion. Regular sessions include Knit and Natter, Rhyme Time for families, Sitting Ballet for gentle movement, and Ludlow Gaymers for LGBTQ+ engagement, alongside learning opportunities like digital support drop-ins, creative writing groups, and the Community Clay Club. Furthermore, monthly poetry socials, Citizens Advice sessions, and councillor surgeries enhance access to support and foster community engagement.

5.7. All other spending is continually monitored on other days services, ensuring efficiency in operations. It is not suggested that a reprovision/ redesign of the remaining services would generate any further additional savings. However, this will provide better value for Shropshire residents accessing services.

5.8. While In-House services may be exempt from public procurement rules, the council must still ensure fairness and transparency with consideration of the Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999.

5.9. Based on financial analysis of the potential changes, reduction in costs could be significant:

Financial Year	Quarter	Projected savings
26-27 - Q1	£0 (redundancy costs)	£111,190
26-27 - Q2	£0	
26-27 - Q3	£55,595	
26-27 - Q4	£55,595	
27-28	-	£222,380
28-29	-	£222,380
29-30	-	£222,380

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 While the aim is to provide services locally to where people live, changes to service provision could result in people having to travel further afield to access suitable facilities that could increase vehicle emissions.

7. Background

7.1 The Council has offered In-House services for many years. Prior to 'Compulsory Competitive Tendering', most care was delivered internally, guided by public sector principles. While not legally required, Councils use In-House provision to meet obligations under the Care Act 2014 to address or prevent care needs. Operated directly by the council, these services are strictly non-profit.

7.2 There are eight Day Services and a volunteer service.

i. Abbots Wood is a progressive day centre in Shrewsbury for adults with learning disabilities. The service offers a wide range of activities, including arts and crafts, quizzes, exercise (with a small gym), gardening, cooking, music, and computer sessions. There are also outdoor activities such as cycling and gardening, and regular community outings. Abbots Wood operates a person-

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centred approach, supporting independence and individual outcomes, and works closely with the Wild Teams for nature-based activities.

ii. Albert Road Day Service, also in Shrewsbury, is a smaller centre supporting around 27 adults with learning disabilities. It provides both onsite and offsite activities, such as gardening, arts and crafts, group cooking, travel training, and community engagement. The service is known for its supportive environment, flexible approach, and involvement in local projects like LovelyLand and the Wild Team, promoting health, wellbeing, and outdoor adventure.

iii. Aquamira, based in Sutton Park, Shrewsbury, specialises in supporting adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The centre offers a holistic and therapeutic approach, multi-sensory experiences, gardening, arts and crafts, cookery, and digital activities. The service is highly person-centred, with keyworkers supporting everyone's health, wellbeing, and independence. The service has onsite access to a hydrotherapy pool and Sensory Room.

iv. Avalon Day Opportunities in Oswestry provides a broad range of activities for adults with learning disabilities, including gardening, crafts, sensory room sessions, bingo, karaoke, photography, and shop-and-cook groups. The service also supports offsite voluntary work and community projects, aiming to promote independence, social inclusion, and personal development in a relaxed and supportive environment.

v. Greenacres Farm, near Baschurch, is a 16-acre working farm offering day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. Attendees learn skills in horticulture, agriculture, animal care, catering, woodwork, and concrete production. The farm also features a sensory garden, outdoor gym, and accessible cycle path. Greenacres promotes independence, social inclusion, and community engagement, and provides opportunities for recreation and skill-building in a safe, supportive setting. There also a house on site that is currently not used.

vi. Helena Lane Day Service is specifically designed to support older people. The service offers a range of daytime activities and support, aiming to promote independence, social engagement, and wellbeing for its attendees. More recently due to a lack of demand, the service has reduced its offer to half days, three times a week.

vii. Maesbury Metals in Oswestry is a specialist day service focused on upcycling, metalwork, and woodwork for adults with learning disabilities. Service users develop skills in welding, woodworking, arts and crafts, and mosaicking, producing items for sale at craft markets and community events. The centre also supports social skills, community access, and self-advocacy, fostering independence and creativity in a workshop environment.

viii. Wayfarers Day Centre in Market Drayton provides a variety of meaningful activities for adults with learning disabilities, including independent living skills,

physical and leisure activities, gardening, arts and crafts, and sensory sessions. The centre emphasises inclusion, choice, and community participation, offering regular outings, fundraising events, and opportunities to develop life skills and independence.

ix. The Shropshire Wild Teams are volunteer conservation groups for adults with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs. Participants engage in countryside management tasks such as habitat management, ground clearance, hedge laying, and wildlife surveys. The programme promotes physical activity, wellbeing, confidence, and social skills, using Shropshire's natural environments as a therapeutic and educational resource. Sessions rotate between day centres and are tailored to participants' interests and abilities.

8. Additional Information

8.1. A broader review of all other in-house provisions will be conducted. If additional changes are suggested that need cabinet approval, they will be presented in future cabinet reports.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The financial analysis suggests that both Helena Lane and Aquamira have excessive running costs that could be mitigated. Helena Lane operates at a substantial financial deficit. Similarly, Aquamira's running costs are hampered by excessive building costs, particularly those linked to the hydro-pool, further compounding its financial unsustainability. Declining attendance and reduced demand for these services underscore a potential need for future change.

9.2. No decision has yet been made about the future of the In-House Day services. The council is open to alternative suggestions. To thoroughly assess these services, a consultation will be required to consider potential changes, such as possibly closing Helena Lane Day Centre and moving Aquamira Day Service to another location. Careful transition planning and proactive involvement with service users and their families are crucial to ensure continuity of care and support. The focus remains on the council meeting people's eligible needs through relocation and reprovision, while maintaining financial sustainability.

9.3. There are 23 individuals who access the two services that could be mostly affected. A social work assessment would be offered to all affected individuals, with a focus on a strengths-based approach to promote independence and facilitate access to community-based activities as appropriate.

9.4. If there were any changes that would affect the overall use of the pool by private users, individual discussions will take place.

9.5. The total reduction in spend from the potential changes is approximately £222,380 per 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 1- Equality, Social Inclusion and Health impact Assessment (ESHIA)

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Aquamira Lane Business Case – May 2026

1. Executive summary

Purpose and Context

This business case sets out options for the future delivery of Aquamira Day Service in Shrewsbury, in the context of the Council's financial emergency and Best Value duties. This business case explores options and identifies a preferred option for maintaining a specialist day service offer for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs, while addressing the financial sustainability of the current Aquamira building. At this stage, the decision is focused on whether the Aquamira Day Service should transfer to an alternative venue, not to make a separate decision on the long-term future of the building as a corporate asset, or on any wider estates proposal. However, for transparency, the report should also recognise that the current day service is integral to the practical operation and management of access to the pool, including private hire arrangements. In practical terms, if the day service transfers and no separate management arrangement is in place, continued operation of the pool may not be feasible, even if the formal future of the building is treated as a separate matter.

Aquamira is a specialist, calm, sensory-friendly service environment with multi-sensory provision and staff capability to support complex personal care and health needs. The case for change arises primarily from the high and rising cost base of the building and the operational and maintenance demands associated with the hydrotherapy pool, rather than from concerns about service quality. It should also be recognised that the pool is not a consistently available asset in its current condition. The evidence referred to in this business case points to repeated breakdowns, periods of closure and ongoing maintenance issues, such that Cabinet is not being asked to withdraw a fully reliable and consistently available provision, but to consider the future of a facility that is already operationally fragile and likely to require further investment if it is to remain in service.

Consultation and demand headline findings

Consultation evidence indicates strong opposition from clients and carers to transferring the service and closing the hydrotherapy pool (95% opposed; 73% reported they would be affected "a lot"), with key themes including the importance of a calm specialist environment, continuity of staff/support, and concerns about travel and suitability of alternative sites. Professional and stakeholder feedback is more mixed, recognising the therapeutic value for some individuals while also highlighting the pool's cost, staffing intensity and periods of unplanned closure.

Options and recommendation.

Four options were considered:
(1) retain Aquamira and operate the hydrotherapy pool;
(2) retain the day service but place the pool into inactive status;
(3) transfer the day service to an alternative location and close the Aquamira building; and
(4) explore partnership/shared-use models.

On balance, and subject to the safeguards set out in this business case, Option 3 is recommended not on cost alone, but because it provides the strongest overall basis for a lawful and sustainable decision. The recommendation reflects the Council's Best Value duty, the need to secure longer-term service sustainability, the evidence that eligible needs can continue to be met through alternative arrangements, and the consultation and equality information that must inform Cabinet's public law balancing exercise.

Key risks and safeguards.

The principal risks relate to suitability of any receiving site for a highly complex cohort (including sensory environment, accessibility, specialist equipment and safe staffing), the potential impact on carers, and the loss of a discretionary hydrotherapy facility for some individuals. These risks will be managed through:

(i) a completed feasibility and readiness assessment of the proposed alternative venue, which supports that the service can be successfully re-provided subject to the mitigations and any identified adaptations;
(ii) individual Care Act reviews and transition planning;
(iii) an Equality, Social and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) completed prior to consultation, alongside an updated, service-specific ESHIA that is being completed in parallel with this business case and will be finalised to inform mitigations and the transition plan prior to implementation; and
(iv) an approach to hydrotherapy mitigation through care planning and signposting where linked to outcomes, noting there is no statutory duty to provide access to a hydrotherapy pool.

2. Case for change

The Council must decide whether to transfer the service to another venue as proposed, maintain the current model, or determine whether there could be additional options to ensure the service is financially viable as well as meeting people's eligible needs under the Care Act. This decision is required in the context of severe financial pressures and Best Value duties, while also meeting statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 (prevention and support for carers), and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and consultation law.

It is important to clarify that the Council does not have a general obligation to offer access to a hydrotherapy pool. Nonetheless, the Council remains responsible for meeting eligible needs and agreed outcomes as determined by Care Act assessments and care and support planning.

Key drivers and objectives are to:

- ensure any in-house day provision delivers value for money and is sustainable within the Council's financial constraints;
- maintain access to specialist support where alternative provision may not be suitable;
- protect carers' wellbeing and maximise preventative impact (avoiding or delaying higher-cost packages and admissions where possible);

- provide Cabinet with a defensible decision record that demonstrates consideration of realistic options (including the status quo) and consultation evidence.

Aquamira Day Service provides specialist day opportunities for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex physical, neurological and health-related needs. Aquamira supports individuals who use a specialised environment, including multi-sensory provision, intensive personal care, PEG and medication support, one-to-one supervision, and access to a hydrotherapy pool.

Feedback from consultations indicates that a quiet, calm, and sensory-friendly environment is highly valued. Some alternatives are viewed as unsuitable for individuals with sensory sensitivities, autism, or profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). This insight comes from themes raised by clients and carers, as well as face-to-face discussions about the importance of a calm, predictable setting.

The case for change arises not from concerns about the quality or appropriateness of the service, but from financial and sustainability pressures. In particular, the hydrotherapy pool is cited as a major cost pressure, requiring significant ongoing expenditure, specialist staffing and maintenance.

The rationale for change is focused on how the Council can uphold its Care Act obligations to individuals with complex needs, while also managing financial challenges and maintaining sustainable service delivery. Feedback from the consultation claims that low utilisation rates are primarily attributable to staffing limitations, eligibility and referral processes, and recurring maintenance issues; these factors reflect operational constraints rather than a lack of therapeutic benefit. The business case should also be open that the hydrotherapy pool is not a fully dependable operational asset in its current form. Consultation and officer discussion refer to repeated breakdowns, unplanned closures and ongoing maintenance concerns, which mean the service has at times been unable to rely on the pool being consistently available. This in turn weakens the case for continued reliance on the existing model and points to a material risk that further capital or revenue investment would be required to sustain safe and reliable operation.

The consultation and wider discussion indicate that accessible hydrotherapy or equivalent pool-based provision for people with severe physical disabilities may be limited locally, particularly where individuals require hoisting, specialist changing facilities, warm-water access, close staff support, or a setting suited to profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex health needs. Where this is a requirement assessed and provided by the NHS, this would need to be offered by the NHS at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt (RJAH) near Oswestry. The business case should acknowledge that this may mean the loss of the Aquamira pool has a significant practical impact for some individuals and carers. However, the legal issue for the Council is not whether hydrotherapy must be provided as a facility in its own right, but whether the Council can continue to meet eligible needs and agreed outcomes lawfully through care and support planning, including by considering other ways in which those needs and outcomes can be met where hydrotherapy is not available.

3. Background and strategic context

Strategic drivers

A January 2026 Cabinet report set out the requirement to review in-house day provision in the context of severe financial pressures and a declared financial emergency. This includes the Council's Best Value duties under the Local Government Act 1999 and the need to ensure that services remain effective, affordable and aligned with future demand. Aquamira Day Service was included within this review due to the high operating costs associated with the building and, in particular, the hydrotherapy pool.

The service model includes multi-sensory provision, adapted equipment (including positioning beds), and staff skilled in complex personal care and clinical support needs (for example PEG feeding, medication administration and seizure management). Feedback indicates that these characteristics are central to suitability for many Aquamira users and are a key factor in concerns about relocation to alternative sites.

Strategically, the consultation evidence points to a tension between the requirement to reduce or control high running costs and the need to retain specialist day provision for a cohort whose needs may not be met through mainstream, community-based or employment-focused models without significant adaptation and mitigation.

Local demographics and potential demand for day services of this type

Demand for specialist provision such as Aquamira is influenced by the prevalence of learning disability and, within that, the smaller group of adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex physical or neurological needs. Available national datasets vary due to definitional differences and recording practices. GP learning disability registers, for example, record a lower proportion of the population than wider prevalence estimates in published research, reflecting known under-recording and differences in criteria.

While precise local forecasting is outside the scope of the consultation, the demographic context supports the expectation of an ongoing cohort requiring highly specialist, sensory-friendly day support, including individuals with profound disability, significant mobility limitations and complex health needs. This reinforces the importance of treating Aquamira as a specialist service within the wider day opportunities system, rather than assuming needs can be met through generic provision.

There is often confusion around how a learning disability is described and the difference between a learning disability (as defined in Valuing People 2001) and learning difficulty (as defined in educational law). These terms are often used interchangeably, but they are not quite the same. Using prevalence data for people who have PMLD might be more reliable data when trying to identify the cohort of people who would benefit most from a service like Aquamira.

Using demographic information, including Shropshire's 2021 Census population of 323,600, it is estimated that approximately 366 individuals in the county may have profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). However, this figure should not be considered definitive when assessing demand for specific services. Individuals' needs are met through a variety of means, including informal care, Personal Assistants, Supported Living, and Residential or Nursing care.

Demand implications

Evidence from the Clients and Carers Survey confirms that Aquamira supports a small but highly complex cohort, with many respondents describing the service as part of a consistent weekly routine rather than occasional attendance. Among respondents who reported using Aquamira, attendance was most commonly once a week or two to three times per week, indicating reliance on predictable provision and continuity of environment, staff and support.

Respondents identify a range of benefits derived from Aquamira. These include creative and sensory activities, access to multi-sensory and relaxation spaces, one-to-one and small-group support, physical movement sessions, and (for some individuals) use of the hydrotherapy pool. Taken together, these responses suggest that demand relates not only to activities, but to Aquamira's specialist model of support, including staffing expertise, adapted facilities and a calmer, sensory-friendly environment.

When asked about the proposed transfer of the service and closure of the building, most respondents who answered the question reported that they, or the person they care for, would be negatively affected, and nearly three-quarters of those respondents said the impact would be "a lot". In addition, almost all respondents who provided an overall view opposed the proposal. Impacts most frequently described as "considerable" included loss of the hydrotherapy pool, reduced access to experienced staff, reduced one-to-one support, extended travel times, and anxiety associated with environmental change.

Professional feedback recognises that while demand for specialist day provision is clear, current utilisation of the hydrotherapy pool is described as limited. Consultation feedback attributes this to operational constraints, including staffing requirements to run sessions safely, changes to referral patterns, and periods of pool unavailability due to maintenance issues. This suggests that low utilisation should not be interpreted as an absence of therapeutic value, but as a constraint on delivery capacity at the time of the consultation.

With client numbers continuing to decline over the years, the average cost per service user has increased. Staff reductions have managed to counteract this to a degree. However, the cost of running the building has continued to rise to a point where running costs are now financially unsustainable. The internal aesthetics of the building need modernising, such as the changing facilities and the training kitchen, and maintaining specialised facilities such as the hydro pool adds further financial strain. While forecast income for 26/27 is £22,240, in 24-25 repairs to the hydro pool cost approx. £21,000.

Service budgeted running costs for 26/27 are:

Type	**Cost**	
Staffing costs	£300,150	Includes on-costs
Building costs	£93,560	Council owned site
Running costs (other)	£7,460	(Excluding internal recharges)
Internal recharges	£27,040	Internal recharges – Finance, Audit, IT, HR & office accomm.

(non-care related income) Income 25-26	-£22,240	From renting out the pool and sensory room
Total	**£405,970**	

Utilisation

There are 15 individuals who use this service. 10 of the individuals who attend the service live at home with family support and 5 individuals live in 24 hour supported accommodation. Attendance records for Aquamira shows a marked decrease in utilisation over a period of years.

Current attendance levels:

Day	Attendees
Monday	6
Tuesday	6
Wednesday	6
Thursday	8
Friday	7

Staffing:

- 5.6 FTE Day Service Workers
- 0.8 FTE Locality Lead

4. Consultation Feedback Overview

Please see the Consultation feedback report for a more detail.

The Consultation for Aquamira Day Service -

On the 21-01-26, Cabinet were asked to:

> "(i) *agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the future of Helena Lane Day Service, including the potential option to close the service. New admissions should be paused during the consultation period to avoid further impact.*
>
> *(ii) agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the potential transfer of the Aquamira day service to the Abbots Wood site.*
>
> *(iii) endorse public engagement for 8 weeks on the reprovision of the remaining In-House Day Services Provision.*

It was agreed that following consultation, any final recommendations would be to cabinet for determination. The consultation ended on the 26-03-26 as planned. For the purpose of this business case, only point (ii) is relevant.

How was the consultation supported?

All current service users were contacted directly about the consultation, rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels. Written letters were issued to ensure people without digital access were able to engage, including follow-up correspondence when the Cabinet timetable changed. Consultation documents were made available in Easy Read formats where appropriate, including easy read introductions and of the survey

People could engage with the consultation through multiple routes:

- Online surveys (separate surveys for clients/carers and for professionals).
- Written responses.
- One-to-one conversations, where requested.
- Meetings and discussions facilitated with councillors and officers, including locality-based engagement to reflect community concerns.

Officers confirmed that advocacy support was available to help individuals and families understand the consultation process and their options, particularly where people may have difficulty engaging independently. Officers reiterated that anyone affected by the consultation could request a Care Act needs assessment, ensuring that individual circumstances were considered alongside the strategic proposal. It was explicitly stated that people could be supported through assessments, information provision and advocacy regardless of the outcome of a Cabinet decision.

Participants were kept informed about progress, including changes to the Cabinet decision timetable, to avoid misinformation and anxiety where possible. Improving clarity where people struggled to understand what was, and was not, within the scope of the consultation.

<u>Who responded</u>

There were 77 respondents to the consultation in total. 19 responses relating to Aquamira were received that expressed a view on the proposal. Respondents included:

- People who use the service;
- Family members and unpaid carers;
- Staff from the service;
- Professionals with direct knowledge of the service;
- Local residents.

Consultation feedback relating to Aquamira indicates strong opposition from clients and carers to transferring the service and closing the hydrotherapy pool. In the clients and carers survey, 95% of respondents who provided an overall view opposed the Aquamira proposal, and 73% of respondents who answered the impact question said they would be affected ‘a lot’. The most frequently cited reasons for opposition were the perceived essential role of hydrotherapy, the importance of Aquamira’s calm and sensory-friendly environment for people with complex needs, concerns that Abbots Wood would be busier and noisier, and travel/transport implications.

Free-text responses reinforce these findings. Respondents describe the hydrotherapy pool as supporting pain management, mobility and wellbeing, particularly for individuals who are unable to access other forms of exercise. Many respondents also report that

suitable alternatives are limited or inaccessible in practice, citing barriers such as eligibility criteria, distance, water temperature, lack of hoists or appropriate changing facilities, and limited capacity. Respondents express concern that loss of hydrotherapy and/or relocation to a busier setting could contribute to deterioration in physical and mental health, increase anxiety and sensory overload, and place additional pressure on carers and wider health and social care services.

The consultation also indicates that Aquamira is used as routine provision by a number of respondents who attend weekly or two to three times per week, and that users value a combination of specialist activities and facilities, staff expertise, one-to-one support, respite, and opportunities for social interaction.

Professional and stakeholder feedback is more mixed. While many respondents recognise the clinical and preventative value of hydrotherapy and the lack of accessible alternatives for some individuals, others emphasise that the pool is expensive to operate, staff-intensive, and under-utilised, with some noting that a single session can require multiple staff for extended periods, impacting wider service delivery. Some professional respondents therefore support closure or placing the pool into inactive status as a proportionate response to financial constraints.

5. Financial considerations

The consultation feedback indicates that the hydrotherapy pool is perceived by staff and professional respondents as the primary cost pressure within Aquamira. Respondents refer to annual building running costs of approximately £85,000 for 25/26, alongside additional indirect staffing requirements associated with safe operation, supervision and compliance. Professional feedback also highlights recurring operational challenges, including condensation, plant room management and periods of unplanned closure linked to faults, which can create further cost and service disruption. Taken together, this indicates that the pool is not a consistently reliable asset in its current state. Therefore, this isn't a decision about the future of a facility that is operating dependably and continuously without interruption, but of one that is already operationally fragile and likely to require further investment if ongoing use is to be maintained on a safe and sustainable basis.

Professional respondents describe the pool as staff-intensive to deliver in practice. Several comments state that a single hydrotherapy session can require multiple staff for an extended period, and that routine testing, backwashing and plant-room tasks draw staff time away from wider service delivery.

The consultation also notes that private hire has previously been used in an attempt to offset operating costs. However, feedback suggests this has not generated sufficient income to materially reduce the financial burden, with some respondents indicating that hire costs are unaffordable for charities and smaller organisations, limiting take-up. The report should also be candid that these arrangements are presently managed through the day service operating model. In practical terms, the day service currently organises and enables access to the pool, including external hire arrangements. If the day service transfers to another site, there may be no workable management arrangement in place

for ongoing pool access unless a separate operator, governance model and operational process are established.

A number of respondents proposed alternative operating models, including partnership, shared use, rental arrangements or a community hub approach. While these suggestions indicate potential avenues for future exploration, the consultation evidence does not set out a sufficiently developed alternative on which the Council could presently rely. In particular, there is no confirmed delivery model, no settled governance arrangement, no costed implementation plan, and no identified operator for the pool were the day service to transfer elsewhere. There is also no fully developed position on liability, compliance, staffing, insurance, procurement or how residual building and operating costs would be managed. As a result, any income-generating or partnership approach would require structured feasibility work and risk assessment before it could be treated as a realistic financial alternative to the current proposal.

The financial analysis should distinguish between the savings arising from transferring the day service and any residual costs associated with the building pending a separate decision on its future. While transfer of the service would remove the need to continue operating Aquamira for day service delivery, some holding, maintenance, utilities, compliance or estates costs may remain unless and until the building's future is separately determined.

Consideration has been given to whether health funding could contribute to the pool costs; however, this is not included in the 'Value Based Commissioning & Evidence Based Interventions Policy' page 37 which states that hydrotherapy is not an essential service:

> *15C. The choice of land or water-based NHS physiotherapy is at the discretion of the provider service. As outcomes for land and water-based physiotherapy are equivalent, providers will deliver either service within the agreed standard land-based physiotherapy first and follow up tariff prices i.e., NHS STW will not pay a separate tariff for Hydrotherapy.*
>
> *NB: Since hydrotherapy is not considered to be an essential service, this policy applies only where local provision is available. Where local provision is not available, patients should receive land-based physiotherapy.*

6. Options appraisal

Option 1: Retain Aquamira day service at its current location with the hydrotherapy pool

Advantages

- **Maintains continuity for a complex cohort.** Retaining the current service model avoids disruption for people attending Aquamira, including those with profound

and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex health needs who may find environmental change difficult.

- **Retains specialist facilities including hydrotherapy.** Consultation feedback indicates that some respondents consider hydrotherapy to have therapeutic and wellbeing benefits and that suitable alternatives may be limited or inaccessible in practice.
- **Aligns with expressed client and carer preference.** Consultation evidence shows strong opposition to transferring the service and closing the pool, reflecting the importance placed on the current environment, staff support and facilities.

Disadvantages / Risks

- **Affordability and Best Value risk.** Retaining the building and pool does not address the principal cost pressures identified in this business case (including building costs, utilities and recurring pool-related expenditure/repairs). In 26/27, total service running costs are estimated at £405,970 against non-care income of £22,240. While hydrotherapy may support wellbeing for some individuals, access to a hydrotherapy pool is discretionary rather than a statutory requirement for the council, and any decision should be framed around how assessed eligible needs and outcomes will continue to be met. Where it is necessary to meet a need using Hydrotherapy by the NHS, this would need to be provided at the RJAH.
- **Operational fragility, deterioration and investment risk.** Professional feedback highlights repeated pool faults, periods of unplanned closure and ongoing maintenance concerns. This means the Council is not considering whether to withdraw a fully reliable and consistently available facility, but whether it is proportionate to continue relying on an asset that is already operationally fragile. Continued retention is likely to expose the Council to further repair, maintenance or modernisation costs, alongside ongoing disruption to service delivery when the pool is unavailable.
- **Staffing intensity and limited utilisation.** Consultation feedback indicates hydrotherapy sessions can be staff intensive to deliver safely and that pool utilisation has been limited at times due to operational constraints (staffing, eligibility/referrals and maintenance), raising questions about value relative to cost.

Mitigations

- **Time-limited cost and utilisation review.** Undertake a defined review of hydrotherapy eligibility/referral routes, scheduling and staffing model to maximise benefits within safe staffing levels and clarify whether utilisation can be improved sustainably.
- **Planned maintenance and contingency arrangements.** Strengthen planned maintenance and contingency arrangements to reduce unplanned downtime and manage impacts on service users when the pool is unavailable.
- **Income and partnership feasibility (if pursued).** If hire/partnership models are pursued, develop a costed feasibility case with confirmed partners and clear

governance; consultation feedback indicates that hire income has not, to date, materially reduced the financial burden.

Option 2: Retain Aquamira Day Service but place the hydrotherapy pool into inactive status

Advantages

- **Reduces a primary cost driver while retaining the specialist day offer.** Aquamira's financial pressure to high building/pool running costs; placing the pool into inactive status could reduce utilities, repairs and compliance overheads whilst retaining core day opportunities.
- **Retains the familiar environment for current attendees.** This avoids the disruption associated with relocation and preserves the building layout.
- **Clearer statutory boundary.** The consultation report notes that in-house day centre provision is not a statutory service; similarly, the pool can be framed as discretionary rather than an assessed Care Act service outcome, provided eligible needs continue to be met via an appropriate care and support plan.

Disadvantages / Risks

- **High stakeholder and reputational risk (pool is a focal point).** Consultation feedback shows the pool is central to many responses; closing it may be perceived as loss of a valued local health/wellbeing resource, even where the day service remains.
- **Risk of challenge if equality impacts are not robustly addressed.** Where respondents describe the pool as integral to wellbeing (including anxiety reduction and physical benefit), removal may have disproportionate impact for some disabled people unless properly assessed and mitigated.
- **Reduced ability to generate income from external hire.** Existing and proposed pool hire arrangements (contracts, timetables, invoicing) indicate a revenue stream which would cease if the pool is inactive.
- **Residual premises costs remain significant.** Even without the pool, the building still carries ongoing fixed costs and may remain inefficient if attendance remains low.

Mitigations

- **Alternative pathways for hydrotherapy access (where clinically indicated).** Where hydrotherapy is identified as beneficial, ensure individuals are supported to explore alternative providers/venues as part of care planning (recognising the separate statutory responsibilities of health and social care). This would start with Assessment from the NHS with possible use of the RJAH hydropool where determined as necessary.

- **Secure the building and manage risk on not using the pool.** If the pool is inactive, ensure a compliant approach to safety, access controls and maintenance to avoid deterioration and future liability.

Option 3: Transfer Aquamira Day Service to an alternative location and close the Aquamira building

Advantages

- **Addresses the core affordability issue by removing high premises costs.** Aquamira's high and rising building costs, particularly pool linked, are a key reason the current model is financially unsustainable. Closing the building tackles that driver directly.
- **Potential to re-provide the day service in more efficient premises.** Relocation can be used to redesign delivery around outcomes and reduce fixed overheads.
- **Creates a clearer separation between discretionary 'asset' and Care Act duties.** This option supports a decision record that focuses on how eligible needs will be met, rather than attachment to a specific building.
- **Addresses concerns raised win the consultation relating to reduced access to experienced staff, reduced one-to-one support, extended travel times.** All existing staff would transfer with the service, there would be more access to a vehicle that is currently shared between the services, and there is little to no additional travel time, as this is also a Shrewsbury service.
- **Reduction in cost pressure**. Reduce the principal service cost pressures associated with operating the Aquamira building and hydrotherapy pool for day service delivery. However, the full value of any saving will depend on the extent to which residual building-related costs continue to fall to the Council pending any separate decision about the future of the site.

Disadvantages / Risks

- **Potential of impact for individuals with complex needs.** Consultation notes and responses describe the current environment as calm/secluded and warn of anxiety and reduced wellbeing if moved; the pool and sensory facilities are cited as particularly important.
- **Transition and capacity risks.** Relocation requires sufficient space, transport planning, staffing resilience and individual reviews.
- **Access and operational dependency.** Accessible hydrotherapy or equivalent pool-based provision may be limited locally for some individuals with severe physical disabilities and complex needs. The principal legal question is therefore not whether the Council must retain the Aquamira pool as a facility, but whether eligible needs and agreed outcomes can continue to be met lawfully through alternative arrangements, individual review and mitigation. The report should also be explicit that the current day service is closely tied to the practical management of the pool, including day-to-day access and private hire. If the service transfers,

continued access to the pool may in practice cease unless and until a separate management and operating arrangement is established.

Mitigations

- **Individualised review and transition arrangements before implementation.** No implementation should take place until each person affected has had their care and support plan reviewed and, where the review indicates that needs, circumstances or risks have changed, any necessary reassessment completed. This should include explicit consideration of carer impact, transport, moving and handling, personal care, communication, behavioural presentation, and how assessed eligible needs and agreed outcomes will be met at the receiving site and during the transition period.
- **Feasibility assessment completed (delivery assurance).** A feasibility and readiness assessment of the proposed receiving site has been completed and supports that the move is deliverable, subject to completion of identified actions (for example any minor adaptations, equipment relocation and agreed operating procedures) ahead of transition.

Option 4: Explore partnership, shared use or alternative operational models

Advantages

- **Responds directly to external ideas and consultation themes.** There is explicit stakeholder interest in partnership/rental models (including from organisations currently hiring the pool) and this option demonstrates the Council has considered realistic alternatives.
- **Potential to retain community benefit while reducing Council subsidy.** Existing pool contracts and timetables demonstrate that the pool is already hired externally; partnership could expand this model.
- **Creates flexibility: separate decisions for (a) day service delivery and (b) the asset.** Consultation update notes that the day service and pool are “difficult to separate” operationally; exploring alternative operating models could test whether separation is feasible.

Disadvantages / Risks

- **Not sufficiently developed to be relied upon at this stage.** Although partnership and shared-use models were raised in consultation, they remain suggestions rather than developed proposals. There is currently no confirmed delivery model, no settled governance arrangement, no costed implementation plan, and no identified operator for the pool if the day service transfers. In the absence of those core elements, Cabinet cannot be satisfied as to how the model would work in practice, who would hold responsibility for delivery, or whether it would provide a lawful, safe and financially sustainable alternative.

- **Governance, compliance and liability remain unresolved.** Any partnership or shared-use arrangement would require clear decisions about legal responsibilities, operational control, health and safety compliance, staffing and competency requirements, insurance, procurement, asset responsibilities and decision-making governance. It would also require clarity about how day service delivery would be separated from pool operation, who would carry the associated risks and liabilities, and how ongoing building, utility and maintenance costs would be apportioned. Those matters are not presently settled, and without them the Council cannot assess deliverability, risk or Best Value with sufficient confidence.
- **Risk of creating an unstable hybrid model.** Partial solutions may preserve some costs (building, utilities) without delivering a viable long-term operating model if utilisation and income remain insufficient.

Mitigations

- **Clarify operating model and accountabilities.** If shared use proceeds, document who is the operator, how NOP/EAP compliance is assured, and what staffing/qualification requirements apply, building on the existing contract framework.
- **Alternative option.** Set clear milestones: if partnership cannot be evidenced as viable (financially and operationally) by a specified point, proceed to a defined fallback option to avoid drift and unmanaged cost exposure.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

The Council must take a lawful and balanced decision about the future delivery of care currently provided at Aquamira, in the context of acute financial pressures and the Council's Best Value duties. The evidence in this business case demonstrates that Aquamira supports a small but highly complex cohort, including adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and significant health-related needs, and that the service model, particularly a calm environment and specialist staffing, has material value to people who use the service and their carers.

However, the evidence also demonstrates that the current cost of the Aquamira building is financially disproportionate in its present form. The reported annual service running cost for 26/27 is £405,970, against non-care related income of £22,240 (pool and sensory room hire). In addition, this business case records that hydrotherapy pool repairs were approximately £21,000 in 24/25, with the hydrotherapy pool cited as a major cost pressure and driver of volatility. Importantly, Cabinet is not being asked to weigh the future of a fully reliable and consistently available facility. The evidence points instead to an asset that has experienced repeated breakdowns, closures and maintenance issues, and which is already operationally fragile. That matters to decision-making because it means the benefits of the pool must be weighed alongside the

practical limitation that continued reliance on it is likely to require further investment and may still carry ongoing risk of disruption.

The consultation evidence recorded within the business case shows opposition to the proposal, with respondents emphasising the importance of the current environment, specialist facilities (including the hydrotherapy pool), and concerns about anxiety, sensory overload, and practical travel/transport implications.

For the avoidance of doubt, this is a decision about the model and location of service delivery for Aquamira Day Service. It is not a standalone decision on the future use, disposal, repurposing or wider estate treatment of the Aquamira building or hydrotherapy pool as corporate assets. However, the decision record should be transparent about the practical relationship between the two. The current day service is materially bound up with the management of pool access, including private hire arrangements. Accordingly, whilst the formal future of the building may be treated as a separate issue, transfer of the day service is likely in practical terms to have direct implications for continued operation of, and access to, the pool unless a separate management arrangement is identified and put in place.

Notwithstanding the opposition, the Council is not under a general duty to provide access to a hydrotherapy pool, and must focus its decision on how it will continue to meet eligible needs and agreed outcomes under Care Act assessment and care and support planning. The question for Cabinet is therefore not whether Aquamira is valued, but whether it remains proportionate and sustainable for the Council to continue operating this building-based model given the cost base, and whether eligible needs can be met through a specialist day offer delivered from an alternative venue with appropriate mitigations and care planning to meet needs met using the hydrotherapy pool in a different way.

While the Council is not under a general statutory duty to provide access to a hydrotherapy pool, it would work with health partnerships to ensure that where this is an assessment need, the NHS provide access to the hydropool in at the RJAH. The decision should therefore distinguish clearly between hydrotherapy as a particular facility and the broader statutory duty to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014.

Why Option 3 is recommended.

Having considered the options:

Option 1 (retain the building and pool) does not provide a credible route to Best Value given the scale of ongoing costs and volatility described in the financial section of the business case.

Option 2 (retain the day service but place the pool into inactive status) may reduce some costs, but it does not remove the wider fixed building costs identified as financially

unsustainable, and would retain an inefficient estate footprint without resolving the fundamental affordability challenge.

Option 3 (transfer the Aquamira Day Service to an alternative location and close the Aquamira building) is recommended because it provides the strongest overall basis for a lawful, proportionate and sustainable decision. It addresses the underlying structural cost pressures associated with the Aquamira building and recurring pool-related expenditure, but the recommendation is not advanced on cost alone. Rather, it reflects the Council's Best Value duty, the need to secure a sustainable model of provision, the evidence that eligible needs can continue to be met through a specialist day offer delivered from an alternative venue with appropriate safeguards, and the requirement to take proper account of consultation responses and equality impacts in reaching a balanced public law decision. While Aquamira Day Service's current environment is highly valued and purpose-designed, the evidence does not establish that its benefits are intrinsically inseparable from the specific building, provided equivalent sensory, staffing and support requirements are met elsewhere.

Option 4 (partnership/shared use) is noted as an idea raised by stakeholders, but it cannot presently be relied upon as a realistic alternative for decision-making. The consultation evidence does not identify a confirmed delivery partner, a settled governance structure, a costed implementation plan, or an identified operator who could lawfully and safely assume responsibility for the pool if the day service transfers. Nor is there a sufficiently developed position on liability, compliance, staffing, insurance, procurement, or the practical separation of day service delivery from pool operation. In those circumstances, partnership or shared-use models would require a separate feasibility and development stage before they could properly be treated as realistic alternatives within this business case.

It is recommended that the Council transfer the Aquamira Day Service to Abbots Wood, subject to the completion of the key safeguards below, so that the Council can demonstrate a lawful, evidence-based and proportionate decision that continues to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, and that has due regard to equality impacts. It should be noted that the recommended option addresses the principal cost driver associated with the current service model, namely the continued operation of the Aquamira building and hydrotherapy pool for day service purposes. However, the precise scale and timing of any financial benefit will depend on the extent of any residual costs that remain with the Council pending a separate decision on the building's future.

Required safeguards / implementation conditions

To ensure the recommendation remains legally robust and operationally deliverable, the following conditions of implementation will need to be met:

1. **Feasibility and readiness assurance**:

A feasibility and readiness assessment of Abbots Wood has now been completed and indicates that the site can safely and realistically meet the needs of the current Aquamira cohort (including space, accessibility, specialist equipment requirements, staffing ratios, and environmental suitability). Any actions identified through the assessment (for example minor environmental adjustments, equipment moves, or process changes) will be completed prior to any transition.

2. **Equality, Social and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)**:

   An ESHIA was completed prior to consultation to inform the consultation activity and identify initial mitigations. A new, service-specific ESHIA is underway in parallel with this business case.

3. **Individual care and support plan reviews**:

   A programme of timely reviews must be completed before implementation so that Care Act assessments and care and support plans are up to date and clearly specify eligible needs and outcomes. Where a review identifies a material change in need, risk or circumstances, any necessary reassessment must also be undertaken. The review process should explicitly consider the impact on unpaid carers and confirm the transition arrangements required for each individual.

4. **Hydrotherapy mitigation**:

   The Council is not under a statutory duty to provide a hydrotherapy pool. However, before any transfer is implemented, there must be confirmation of specific mitigation arrangements for those whose outcomes are currently linked to hydrotherapy, the sensory qualities of the current environment, specialist accessibility for physical disability, or the stabilising effect of the current model on carer resilience. This should be recorded through individual care planning and transition arrangements, including any alternative support, environmental adaptations, equipment provision, phased transition steps, and post-move review.

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Shropshire Council

Day Centres Consultation

Consultation Feedback Report

April 2026



www.shropshire.gov.uk
General Enquiries: 0345 678 9000

1 Background

Shropshire Council is aware that the services provided by the Day Centres are valued by local residents who access them and by their carers and family members. They provide a social environment and aim to increase a person's independence, ultimately reducing and delaying the need or future services. They also provide respite to carers. However, use of Day Centres has changed over recent years and this, coupled with funding pressures, means that Shropshire Council must, like all local authorities, work to review provision and ensure value for money.

In-house Day Centre provision is not a statutory (legally required) service. It is something the council can choose to provide itself or meet needs through other services (we need to ensure Care Act assessed needs are met).

Following the declaration of a financial emergency by Shropshire Council in September 2025, it has been essential to reassess all services, including statutory and discretionary services to manage costs and ensure that services are designed in a way that best balances costs and benefits.

In Shropshire there are 439 people accessing day centres across 29 facilities that offer support to people with a learning disability. 178 of those people access In-House Day services. There are eight In-House Day Centres and one voluntary Service:

- Abbots Wood
- Aquamira
- Albert Road
- Avalon
- Wild Teams
- Greenacres Farm
- Wayfarers
- Helena Lane
- Maesbury Metals

Shropshire Council would like to modernise the service offer by delivering more flexible, person-centred support. Alongside traditional day care and day activities, individuals should have clear pathways to access employment, supported employment, and volunteering opportunities. A future model should recognise that while some individuals will always require structured day care, others can benefit from supported or independent work, and the service may be redesigned to provide a tiered approach that matches support to individual capabilities and aspirations. Shropshire Council's Enable service may form an opportunity to enhance outcomes for people with additional needs, supporting them to achieve greater independence, social inclusion, and well-being.

Shropshire Council proposed service changes to Day Centres within a consultation which ran from 29th January 2026 to 26th March and invited responses from people who use day centres, their family members, carers, members of the public, professionals, and other stakeholders.

This consultation proposed to deliver better value within the in-house Day Centres. The proposals were:

- **Proposal 1:** Close the Day Centre service at Helena Lane (the building will remain open and is used for other services).
- **Proposal 2:** Transfer the Aquamira Day Centre service to Abbots Wood (excluding the hydrotherapy pool which would close) and offer those using the site support at Abbots Wood or another location if appropriate.
- **Proposal 3:** Explore the re-shaping of some Day Centre support to modernise the offer and enhance outcomes for individuals.

The proposals included within the consultation were designed with the aim of making the Council's In-house Day Centres more sustainable and suitable for the longer-term needs of adults with learning disabilities and older people.

The consultation background information explained that Helena Lane Day Centre and Aquamira Day Centre, in their current forms have high operational costs, and reduced demand. Helena Lane operates at a loss, while the costs of maintaining the hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira are not offering value for money. The proposed changes would deliver an approximate saving of £222,380 per year. The benchmark value of comparable day centre services is £170 per person a day. The cost per person a day in Aquamira is currently £211 and at Helena Lane £244 per person per day. It was explained that the rationale for selecting the 2 Day Centres extends beyond the financial costs of these services and potential savings. The proposals were designed to reduce impact on any many people as possible. 23 people would be directly affected by the 2 closure proposals in total.

Any service changes and reductions are difficult, and public feedback is essential before decision making by councillors. This report summarises the feedback obtained through:

- An online survey.
- Email and letter consultation responses (all those affected were written to).
- Feedback meetings (those directly impacted were given the opportunity to meet with Shropshire Council lead officers to discuss concerns).

This report brings together all the feedback obtained and describes the survey findings within 6 main sections:

- **Section 1: Background** (this section) provides an overview of the survey and how it was promoted.
- **Section 2: Clients and Carers** covers the consultation feedback from people who use the services, either as a client or a carer.
- **Section 3: Professional and stakeholders** covers the results of a survey designed to capture feedback from professionals either within Shropshire Council's day centres, external day opportunities or other stakeholders with an interest in these services.
- **Section 4: One to one respondents** considers users and their families who engaged with the consultation in a face to face meeting.
- **Section 5: Recommendations** highlights recommendations based on the analysis of the online surveys and face-to-face engagements.
- **Section 6: Summary and Conclusion** provides a brief summary and conclusion based on the overall analysis of the feedback received.

2 Clients and carers

There were two surveys used as part of the consultation, one for professionals and stakeholders, and the other for clients and carers. These surveys were published to gather lived experiences from both the people who benefit from the use of the services, and those providing services. This section focuses on the feedback from the clients and carers survey.

The clients and carers survey was responded to by 53 people. The first question asked how the respondents found out about the consultation. This is helpful in understanding how people prefer to receive important information and the information can inform the design of future engagement. Figure 1 shows the results.

Figure 1 –How people found out about the consultation.

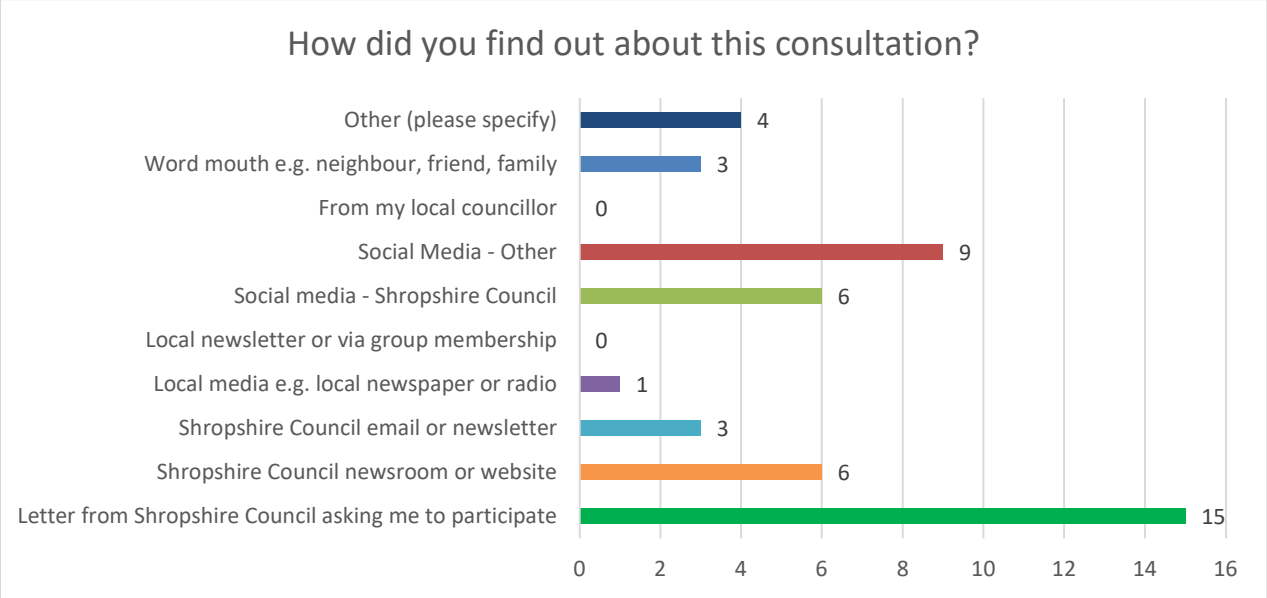


Figure 1 shows that in general 32% (15 responses) of people were asked to participate via a letter from Shropshire Council asking them to engage. This direct approach and other Shropshire Council-based approaches such as newsroom or website and social media from the council has yielded the most responses overall. After engagement with the council either directly or indirectly, people found out about the consultation from social media (non-Shropshire Council) 19% (9 responses); local media 2% (1 response) and word of mouth and other; 7% respectively. The question was answered by 47 people.

If 'other' was answered the respondents were asked to specify. There were 3 comments:

- *Connection to Helena Lane.*
- *Facebook.*
- *PACC on Facebook.*

The respondents were then asked in what capacity they were responding to the survey and Figure 2 displays the results in full.

Figure 2 –Type of survey respondent

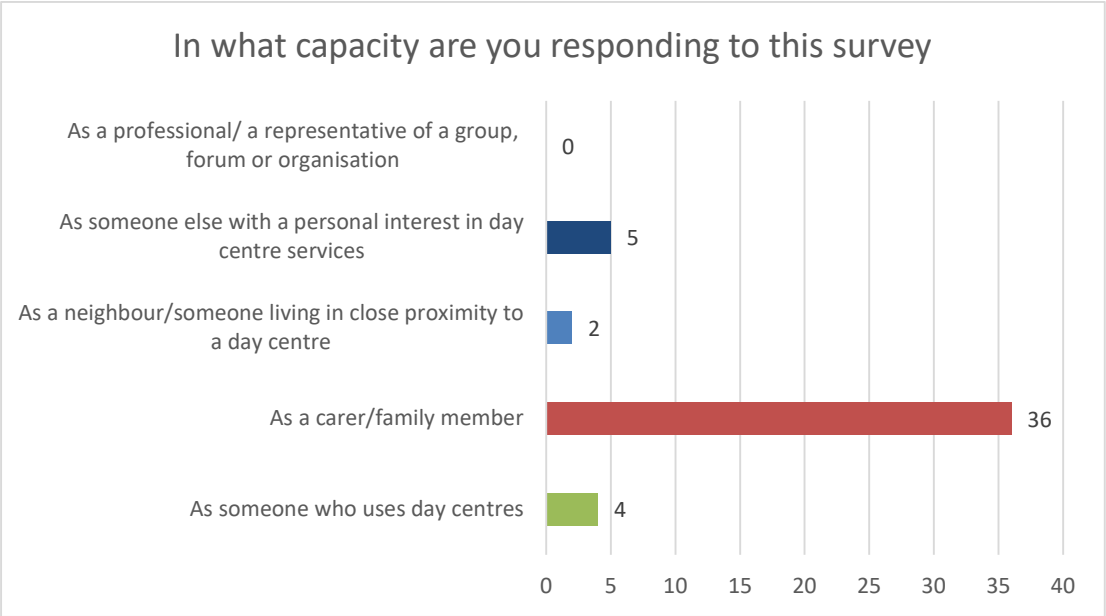


Figure 2 shows that overwhelmingly people were responding as a carer/family member; out of 47 people who answered, 77% answered as a carer or family member. 11%, 5 responses, were from someone else who has a personal interest in day centre services, and 9% (4 responses) were from someone who uses the day centres and 5% (2 responses) were from a neighbour/someone living in close proximity to a day centre.

Question 3 asked which Shropshire Council provided day services the respondents use.

Figure 3 –Which day services people use.

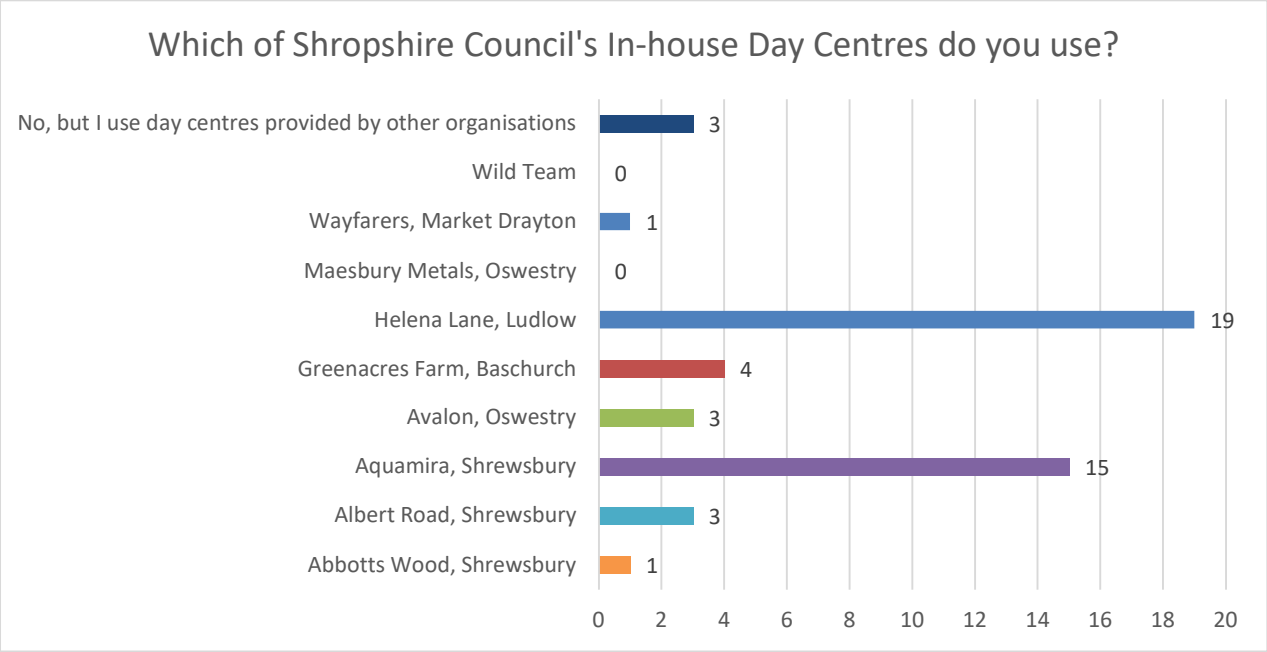
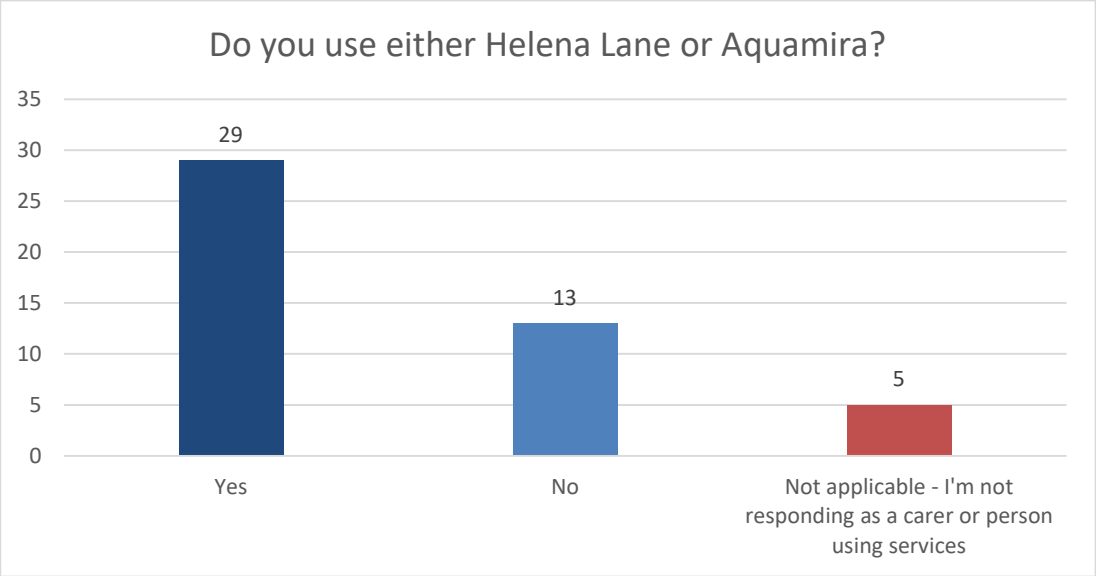


Figure 3 shows that 39% of the 49 respondents attend Helena Lane, Ludlow. Thereafter, 31% used Aquamira. It is useful that the most responses are from the people that the consultation has actively sought out; these are the opinions that will contribute to the final decision on the proposals.

Question 4 followed the above responses to ask whether respondents used the day

centres that feature in the proposed amendments; Helena Lane or Aquamira.

Figure 4 –Whether people use either Helena Lane or Aquamira.



62% (27 responses) of the 47 people who answered this question use either Helena Lane or Aquamira. 28% (13 responses) answered no and 11% answered that it was not applicable.

Question 5 then asked if respondents had answered yes to the previous question, how their use of either Helena Lane or Aquamira was funded.

Figure 5 –How respondents fund their attendance at Helena Lane or Aquamira.

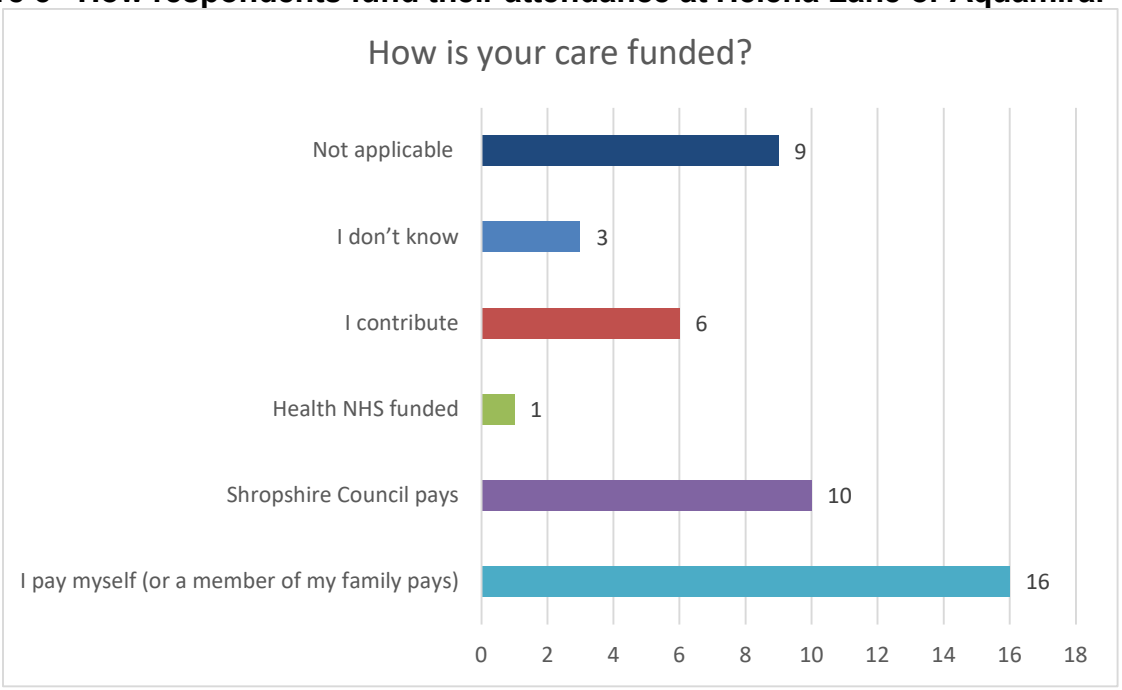


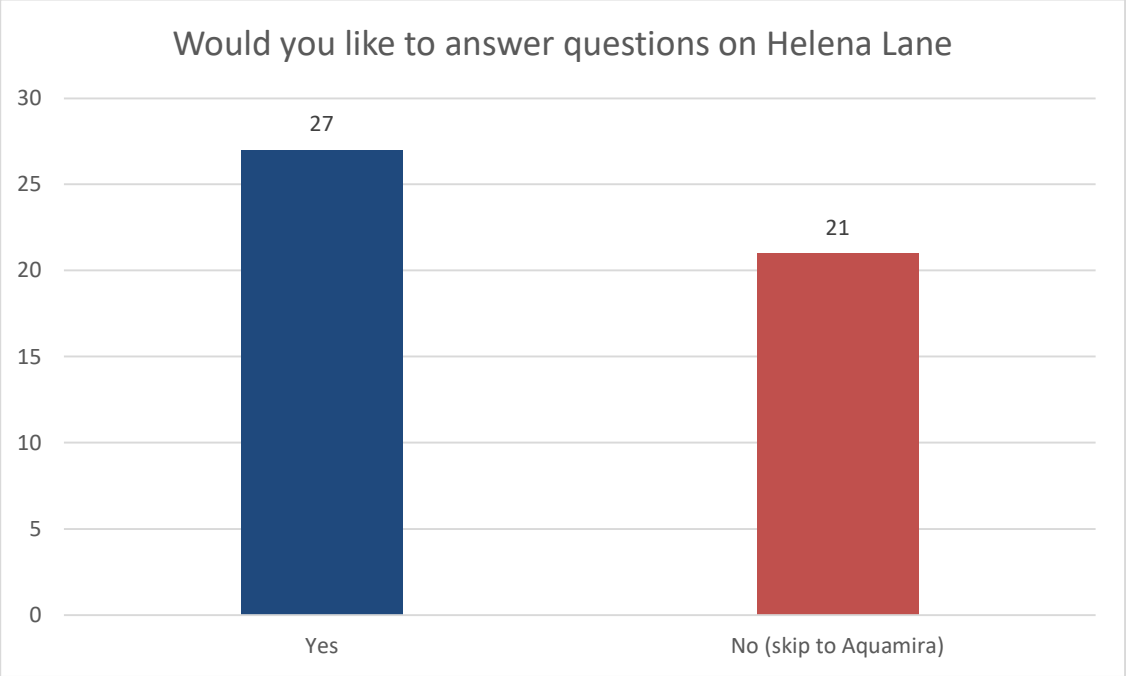
Figure 5 shows that 36% (16 responses out of 45) who use the day centres, pay for themselves (or a member of their family pays). Then 22% (10 responses) answered that Shropshire Council pays, 13% (6 responses) stated that the service user contributes, 7% (3 responses) answered they don't know and 2% (1 response) are NHS funded. There

were also 20% (9 responses) that answered not applicable.

The questions then were split between question sets about Helena Lane and Aquamira, with people choosing whether they wished to answer both, one section or neither. Helena Lane questions were answered first. It is important before analysing the questions about Helena Lane to have a reminder about the proposal for this service. It was proposed that the day centre service would be closed, with the building remaining open for use by other services.

Question 6 asked whether people would like to answer on Helena Lane and figure 6 shows the split in full.

Figure 6 –Interest in the Helena Lane proposal.



The majority, 56% (27 responses), wished to answer questions about Helena Lane and 44% (21 responses) wished to skip this question to answer questions about Aquamira.

As Shropshire Council has proposed closing the day centre service at Helena Lane, it is important to understand how often it is used, therefore question 7 sets out to capture those responses.

Figure 7 –How often Helena Lane is used

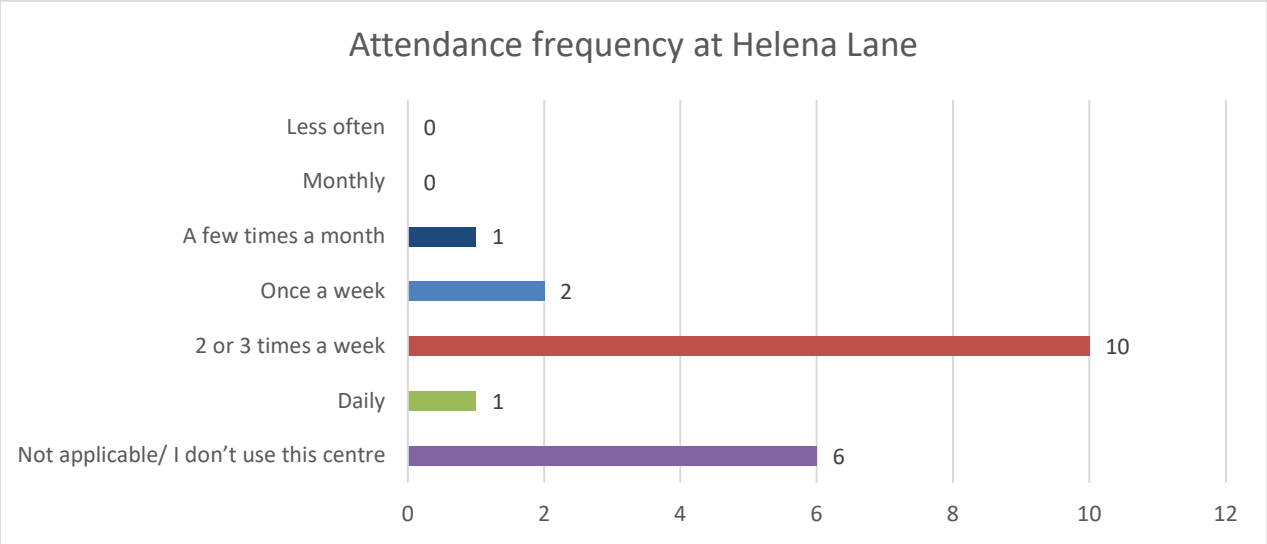


Figure 7 shows that 50% (10 responses) attend 2 or 3 times a week. 10% (2 responses) attend once a week and 5% (1 response) attend a few times a month and daily respectively. 30% (6 responses) of people answered the question was not applicable or that they don't attend the centre. It is helpful to have 13 very regular users of Helena Lane contributing to the consultation.

When asked about what activities or services the respondents benefit from at Helena Lane, there was a mix of responses from the 19 people who responded.

Figure 8 –The variety of activities service users partake in at Helena Lane.



As seen in figure 8, there is a mixture of activities undertaken by service users at Helena Lane with the majority, 58%, answering arts and crafts/ making things. Where the 42% of people have responded 'other', there are responses to support that choice. They are as follows:

- *Supervised care. My husband has moderate dementia. As far as I know most of the activities listed above do not take place at Helena Lane.*

- *Supervised care.*
- *Having social work team on site makes access easy. Socialise with other service users. Having a cooked meal 3 days a week. Having an assisted bath. Hairdressers on site. Easy parking. Building all on one level. I feel safe in the building even though there is never anyone on reception. Day care staff are always there to greet us on arrival.*
- *Social interaction in a supported environment due to mobility issues.*
- *1. Respite care for husband. 2. Day services used to take services users out into the community in their bus, but due to Shropshire Council removing the bus, this is no longer possible.*
- *Different celebrations e.g. D Day, Christmas, Easter. The company and companionship of other clients and staff.*
- *Eye tests for my child with additional needs.*
- *I do not, at present, but all of the above should be available as it's the only Day Centre in Ludlow. [to show missing sentence] If you want to close any down, close some of the ones you have in Shrewsbury instead. We all know the Council's money always stays in Shrewsbury, and is never spent in south Shropshire.*

Question 9 asked whether the respondents would be negatively affected by the proposal to close the Day Centre service at Helena Lane. It was answered by 20 people and overwhelmingly people would be negatively affected.

Figure 9 –Whether people would be negatively affected by the closure of Helena Lane.

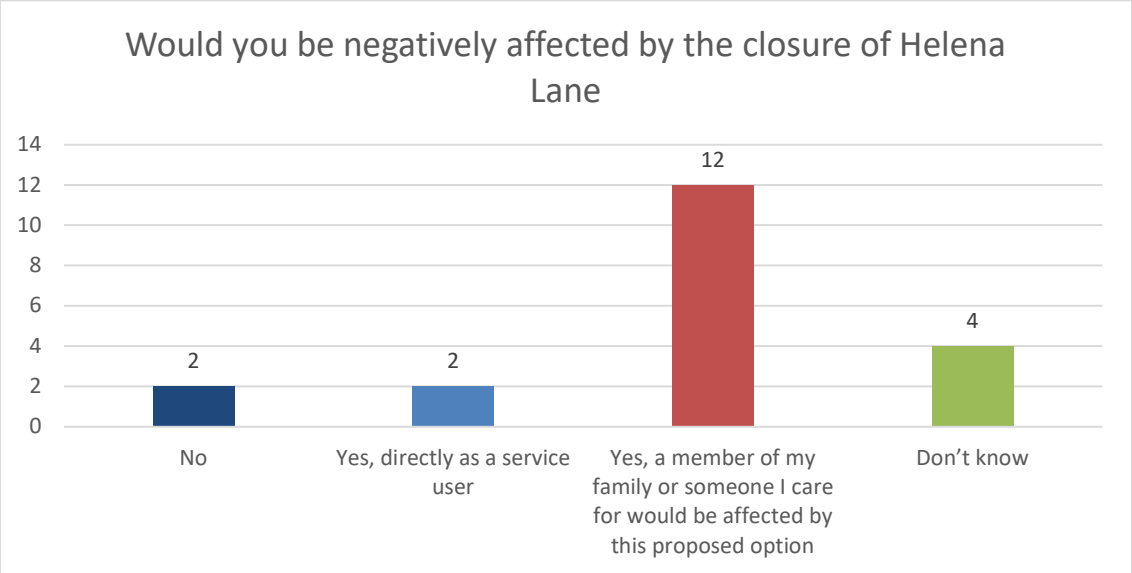


Figure 9 shows that 60% (12 responses) answered that someone they cared for or a member of their family would be affected and 10% (2 responses) answered yes as a direct service user, they would be affected. 20% (4 responses) answered they didn't know and 10% (2 responses) answered 'no'.

The respondents were then asked to what degree they would be negatively affected if they had answered yes. 17 people answered this question and figure 10 shows the result in full.

Figure 10 –How much people would be negatively affected by the closure of Helena

Lane.

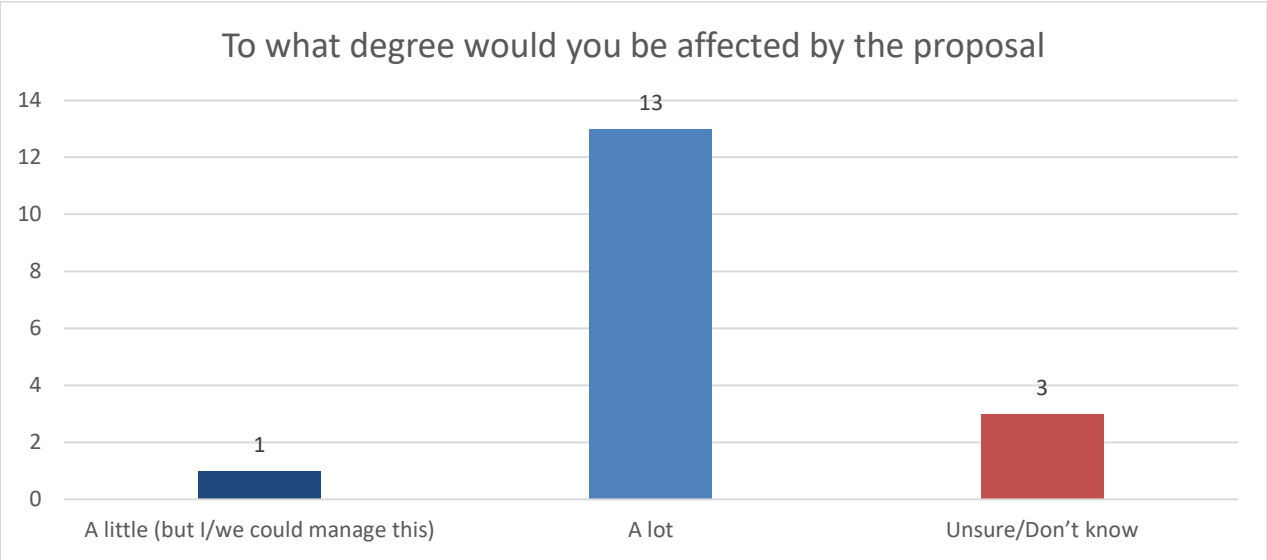


Figure 10 shows that 77% (13 responses) of people would be affected a lot by the proposed closure of Helena Lane, 17% (3 responses) are unsure/don't know and 6% (1 response) answered they would be affected a little, but it would be manageable.

When asked about the overall opinion of the proposed closure of Helena Lane, 20 people answered in the main that they oppose that proposal. Figure 11 displays the division between the responses in full.

Figure 11 –Whether people support or oppose the proposal for Helena Lane.

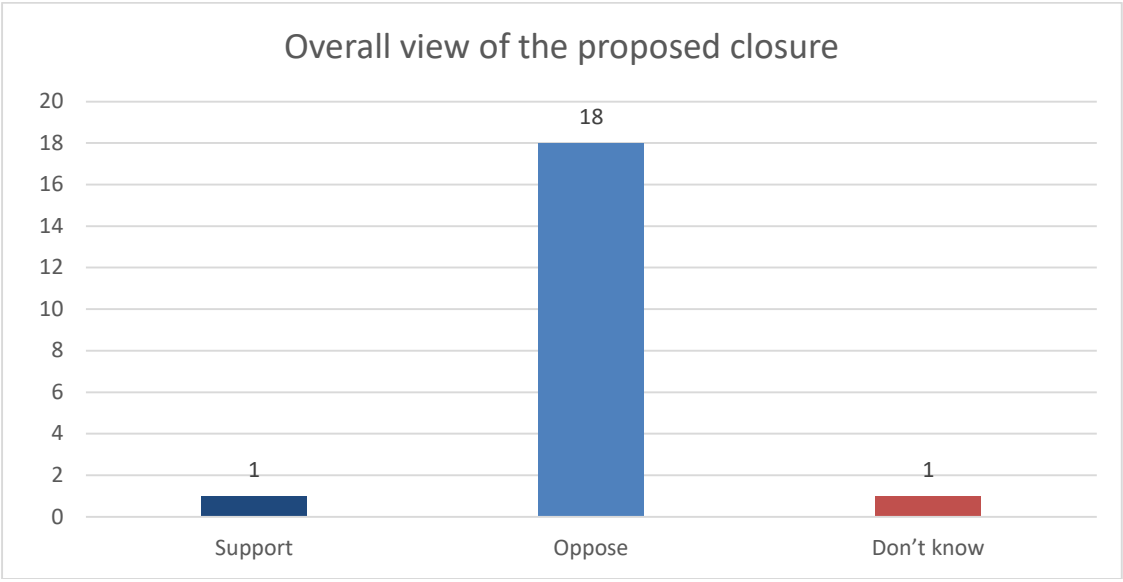


Figure 11 shows that 90% (18 responses) oppose the proposal, with the remaining 10% made up of one response in support and one response that didn't know.

The next question allowed for further expansion on respondents' views on the proposal, particularly if they responded in support or opposition. 20 people responded and the key insights are seen in Table 1, with comments to follow.

Table 1 –Key themes from comments on the proposed closure of Helena Lane.

Theme	Explanation
Perceived loss of an essential, irreplaceable local service	Respondents overwhelmingly oppose the proposal because Helena Lane is seen as the *only* day centre in Ludlow and South Shropshire that can meet the different and varied needs of the people who attend. Closure is seen as a removal of support altogether.
Strong emphasis on dignity, personal care and wellbeing	Helena Lane is viewed as playing a central role in maintaining dignity and personal care, that cannot be safely provided at home or through voluntary community services. Respondents argue that the removal of these elements would undermine basic standards of care.
Impact on carers and increased pressure on families	Respondents describe the service as a lifeline, providing essential respite. Without Helena Lane, carers/families would be providing care 24/7 with what they describe as negative consequences for their own health and ability to care.
Concerns about accessibility, transport and rurality	Opposition is strongly linked to geography. Respondents emphasise rural isolation, limited transport options, and the impracticality of travelling long distances to alternative centres. For many service users, fatigue, mobility issues, or medical conditions make longer journeys unrealistic, meaning attendance would likely reduce or cease altogether.
Under-use is due to under-investment, not lack of need	A recurring comment is that respondents do not accept low attendance figures as evidence of lack of demand. Instead, they argue that attendance has fallen because of reduced referrals, loss of transport, removal of meals, staffing constraints, and lack of promotion. Closure is therefore viewed as unfair, premature, and avoidable, with respondents calling for better use of the building, active promotion, and alternative income-generating uses rather than withdrawal of the service.
Perceived inequity	Some respondents express opposition rooted in distrust of decision-making, questioning whether savings will genuinely be achieved and raising concerns about fairness between different parts of the county. There is a perception that South Shropshire is disproportionately affected and that decisions are driven by financial considerations without sufficient weight given to social value, prevention, and long-term costs.

Comments

- *Care provided provides stimulation and contact for my sister-in-law in a safe environment whilst giving me much needed respite for my brother as her carer. This supports his mental health and enables him to continue caring for her at home. Without this, he would not be able to continue and thus would mean full-time care required at much greater cost to the council.*

- *Helena Lane is the only day centre in Ludlow. The Council have purposely cut and removed services from Helena Lane to make the figures look bad, so these figures can be used as an excuse to close the centre. It is obscene that you should target Helena Lane for closure. It is the only Day Centre in Ludlow (which has the highest population of older people in Shropshire). Not only is it a Day Centre where its users can socialise and engage in the activities, but the bathing services are essential for people's wellbeing, those who use it will be unable to maintain their hygiene, along with easy parking to drop off family or park.*
- *If you utilised the building to its full potential, you could cover the cost of the day centre, which is a vital support to clients and caregivers. Greed has stopped other services using the building. You need a good manager to promote the building and bring in business.*
- *It is easily accessible.*
- *The day care users at Helena Lane are predominantly older people with serious conditions who need either supervision or physical support or both. The list of activities above is in most cases not applicable so I am not sure why they are listed. The day care service is invaluable but sadly has not been promoted by the Council - I have asked for additional days but cannot be supported because there are too few staff - numbers have been allowed to run down so now we have a chicken and egg situation - there would be plenty of demand if it was promoted. I know of people who now can't get a place because Helena Lane has stopped recruiting clients because of this proposal. That is outrageous. The day care service seems to be singled out unfairly - I should like to see detailed costs which include the total of activities, staffing, room rentals etc. How can it be that this expensive PFI building will remain, but this vital service will be cut. The service is a lifeline for carers who want a break from caring.*
- *This is the only place in Ludlow where someone with mild - moderate dementia can be supervised for a few hours. All the other community services provided by hands together Ludlow are not able to this. Unless a family member of carer stays with the person which defeats the purpose of having respite care. It's an essential service that is badly advertised and under-resourced. I asked for extra days but could not have them.*
- *I am writing on behalf of someone who attends Helena Lane twice weekly. She has advanced Alzheimers and relies on the day centre for stimulation and company. It is close to where she lives, which means that the travelling to and from the centre isn't too much for here as she tires very easily. If Helena Lane closed it would have an effect on her mental wellbeing as the stimulation she gets from it is very satisfying for her, as is the feeling of independence from carers and her home environment. She also experiences a huge sense of achievement bringing home things which she has made.*
- *What other centres are in Ludlow? People can't use as a lot haven't transport which is when the numbers went down.*
- *Helena Lane is a lifeline for me as I live in the country and have few visitors. Since attending it has improved my mental wellbeing and outlook on life. I get a chance to do activities I wouldn't normally be able to do. I can socialise with other people who have become good friends. I have a bath once a week which aids my personal care and staff can monitor and advise on skin issues. Staff are on hand to support me if I get low or depressed and always lift my spirits with positivity and encouragement.*
- *As a personal assistant for adults with additional needs, this feels like the council is trying to shift these adults into volunteering etc. so the council will save money.*

However, many of these adults will require someone to support them. This would mean a PA attending, or someone else who would also require pay. Many PAs are paid by the council, so I don't see how this saves money.

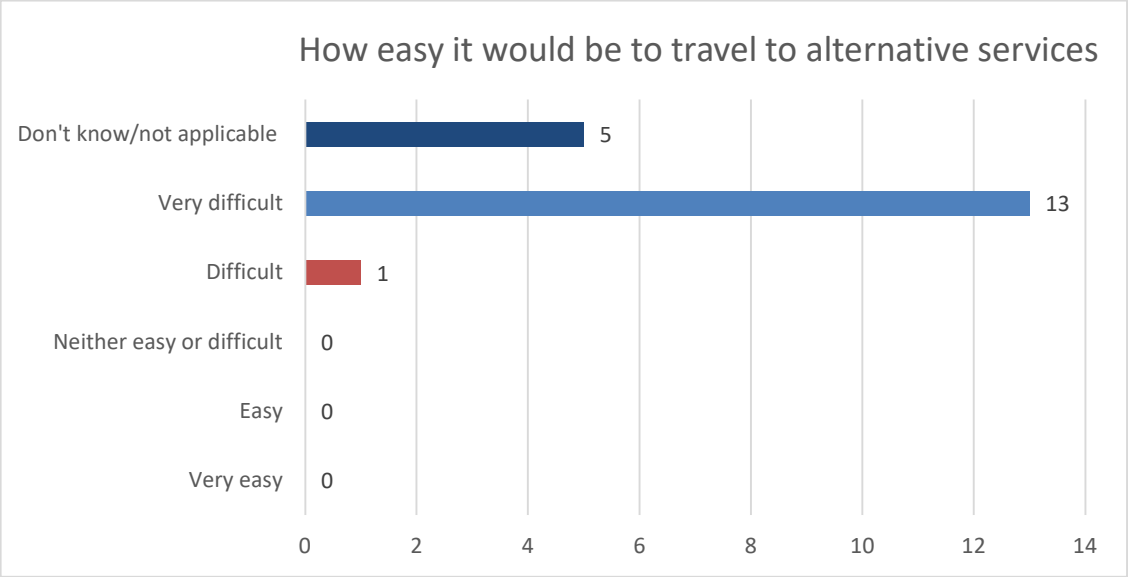
- *We are very rural and these services are needed to support those in the area. Travelling to other areas isn't always easy, or an option. This could make a huge difference to someone who relies on this service for either care and/or the respite this provides.*
- *Respite. I am totally opposed to the closure of the Helena Lane Day Centre facilities. My wife, who suffers from Multiple System Atrophy, attends the centre 2 days a week. Some of her symptoms mean she requires constant supervision when moving around as she's prone to falls. If she did not have the respite of attending then she would be with me 24/7, which is not great for promoting a healthy caregiving/marriage relationship. Her visits to the day centre give her a great sense of self-esteem and she thrives by mixing with others. She looks forward to attending and the range of activities keeps her mentally agile and gives her a great sense of being part of a community. The respite that the sessions provide are not only for but also for me. The few hours give me time to catch up with life admin without having to worry about [name redacted] and it improves both our quality of life. If the facility moved to another location nearer Shrewsbury, then these few hours of respite would be eroded by the additional travelling time. It would also not be practical to add an extra 2 hours of sitting in a car with [name redacted] condition. The Helena Lane facilities are purpose-built for providing the service that the attendees need, whether that be company, mental stimulus, a hot meal or even a bath and the staff are second to none. To take this facility and service away from the residents of Ludlow is absurd and certainly not what you would expect from a council that is supposed to be for the people. As always, I am assuming that this is about money saving and not providing an essential service to those that need it. To increase income the facility and what it provides could be better advertised, most people I have asked don't even know Helena Lane exists. Another option would be to investigate if a suitable location in Ludlow is available at cheaper running costs. This consultation should consider that this is vulnerable people's wellbeing that is being threatened and not just about a few pounds saving to please the bean counters. Note, these views are echoed by [name redacted] my wife, whose communication skills are affected by her condition.*
- *The only service like in Ludlow for dementia and their carers, my parents. This is so valuable to enable them to live independently in Ludlow. They can't travel far at all, and I work so I can't take them.*
- *The day centre at Helena Lane has provided significant support to my mother who has a degenerative brain condition at a young age - she has used the services for several years since the age of 65 - far too young to consider care home assistant. Helena Lane provides her connection with the wider community (both other attendees and staff), emotional support and stimulation plus this allows my father a few hours a week for himself where he is currently full-time carer to a person who is not mobile. Closing the centre I am strongly opposed too - the nearest service would be over 45 minutes in Shrewsbury, which is not practical for anyone in the Ludlow area to attend for a day centre offer. My view is the service should be more widely advertised and encouraged to be attended by a wider audience to make it more sustainable or make a small increase to the cost per-day as this would be acceptable. I doubt the space will be used for anything else and as said this would be a significant loss to Ludlow for future generations. If the cost of the building is a challenge - are there other facility options which are cheaper, i.e. the Mascal*

centre?

- *1. If [name redacted] did not attend Helena Lane I would be caring for her 24/7 with no respite. 2. There are no other day care centres in Ludlow. 3. Other care users make use of Helena Lane so closure would be a complete disaster, taking away an important resource for the community. 4. Removal of day care from Helena Lane would cause isolation for [name redacted] and her wellbeing and mental health. This is the only socialisation she gets and has made long-lasting friendships through attending day care. 5. Some care users that attend Helena Lane make use of the bathing facility (as they are unable or due to safety reasons not able to use bathing facilities at home. So, closure of Helena Lane would deprive them of taking a bath so basic hygiene would be taken from them.*
- *If the council allowed the service to take on more staff, then more clients could be taken on. If they provided a minibus, then more adventurous trips could be arranged for clients. The county of Shropshire does not end in Church Stretton, if you close Helena Lane then there will be no council run day care provision in the area. The staff here do a great job with the little provision they have from Shropshire Council.*
- *The cost of Helena Lane is High due the cost of the PFI contract. Closing the day service will not affect the cost of the PFI contract as the council is locked into the contract. Therefore, the estimated savings are not correct. Please clarify the alternative uses of Helena Lane & how it will be funded.*
- *Yet again the council not thinking about the impact on disabled community.*
- *If changes have to be made, then this option is the one that affects the fewest people, especially if as you say in your proposal, it already has low attendance and high costs to keep it open.*

The respondents were asked to rate how easy or difficult it would be to travel to alternative day centres or similar opportunities should the decision to close Helena Lane be made. As seen in figure 12, the majority of respondents felt it would be very difficult.

Figure 12 –How easy or difficult people would find it to travel to alternate day centres/opportunities.



68% (13 responses) of the 19 people who responded would find travel to alternative services very difficult, 26% (5 responses) didn't know or it was not applicable and 5%

would find it difficult. Those that would find it difficult or very difficult support the sentiments of the previous comments.

With a view to seeing what elements at Helena Lane people benefit from, the next question asked if there were any particular elements that are needed in Ludlow that could be delivered at alternative locations. There is a strong core theme throughout the comments; Helena Lane is the *only* day centre in Ludlow and South Shropshire. It is purpose built, with essential and accessible facilities and there is no viable option nearby, especially given rural transport and access concerns. Helena Lane is seen as fundamental rather than supplementary and closure is there perceived as a complete loss of provision.

Comments

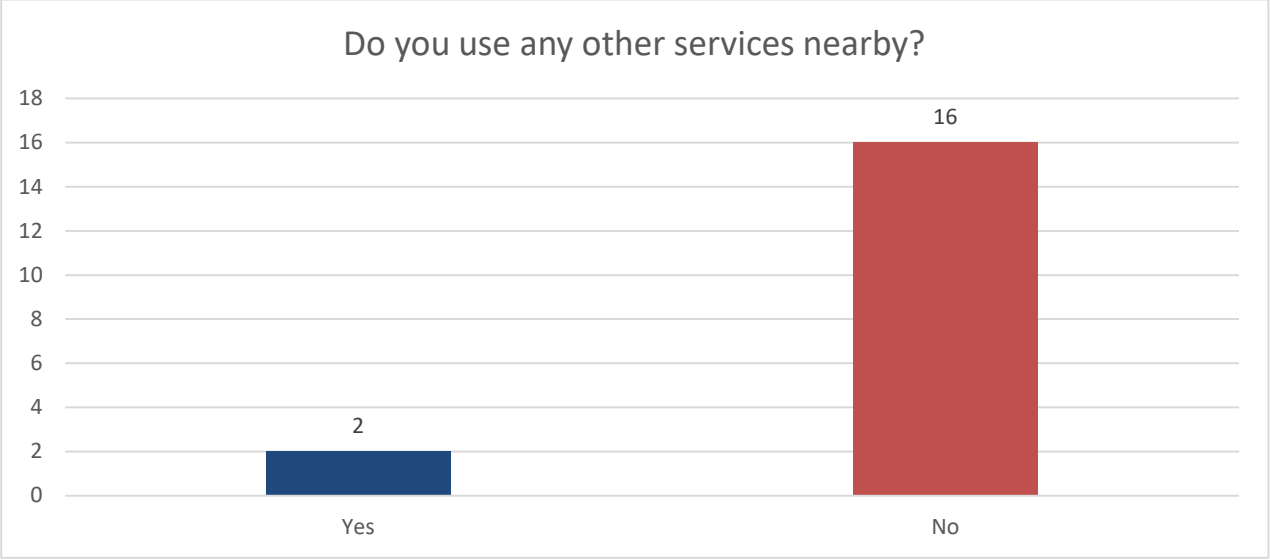
- *No.*
- *No-Helena Lane was built for the purpose of helping and caring for the elderly Helena Lane was left as a legacy to the elderly people of Ludlow.*
- *All services given at the Day Centre in Helena Lane are needed in Ludlow. It is the only Day Centre in Ludlow (which has the highest population of older people in Shropshire). It has brilliant purpose-built bathing facilities, baths with hoists. The staff are fully trained and provide excellent care service. It is unthinkable that you wish to prevent people from maintaining their dignity by preventing them from bathing. In addition, is it a Day Centre where its users can socialise and engage in the activities. All of these services are essential for people's health and wellbeing, both physical and mental health.*
- *No, you have a brilliant building with parking, get out of your office and make it work.*
- *The idea that in Ludlow there are voluntary sector alternatives to the professional care service offered at Helena Lane is fanciful. There are no private, affordable alternatives.*
- *As mentioned, 'other' providers are not able to deal with dementia.*
- *I don't know what services are available elsewhere, but it would be very difficult for her to adapt to a change and venue and change in people and environment due to her Alzheimers condition which means that any change at all is very upsetting and disturbing for her.*
- *Yes, lots of people if they can get there.*
- *Helena Lane is the only day service in Ludlow. It has all the facilities required, car park, one level, bathing facility, own kitchen for homemade meal. Excellent staff who are not just carers but have become friends and always on hand should I need support on matters. Hairdresser on site, accessible garden in the summer. We have a local care home who support us with coffee mornings and fetes and have become friends.*
- *I only hear good things about the service that is delivered from Helena Lane. This is a very valued service and much needed by those who need it/use it.*
- *Not aware of any other facilities that could provide the same service as Helena Lane.*
- *There is nothing similar.*
- *The loss of day centre or moving to a location any more than 20 minutes from Ludlow makes it too difficult for carers to manage - they would spend the hours the person they care for was in respite travelling. Another Ludlow location i.e. Mascal*

centre could be an option but would still need to support the activities and meal creation as these are key aspects of the day for the persons attending to get the support and extra engagement needed.

- *If Helena Lane were to close, we would be deprived of day care. The time spent travelling to another venue would take away valuable respite i.e. 1 hour travel to Shrewsbury and travelling back another hour would take away at least 1 hour from 4-hour respite so the time to go back to pick her up would only allow me 1 hour out of the 4-hour respite. 2 hours respite out of the 4 hours would have a negative impact on respite care. To take away the only day care unit in Ludlow would be a disaster for its 10-15,000 residents.*
- *How much will Enable charge to travel train the service users? Has the cost of travel to alternative services been factored into any savings.*

The following question asked whether the respondents used any other services that were nearby. As seen in figure 13, most respondents answered that no they do not.

Figure 13 –Whether people use any other services nearby.



89% (16 responses) of the 18 respondents answer ‘no’ they do not use any other services nearby and 11% (2 responses) do use other services.

The following questions relate to Aquamira. The proposal for Aquamira is to transfer the Aquamira Day Centre service to Abbots Wood (excluding the hydrotherapy pool which would close) and offer those using the site support at Abbots Wood or another location if appropriate.

The first question asks whether people would like to answer questions on the proposal.

Figure 14 –Interest in answering questions about Aquamira.

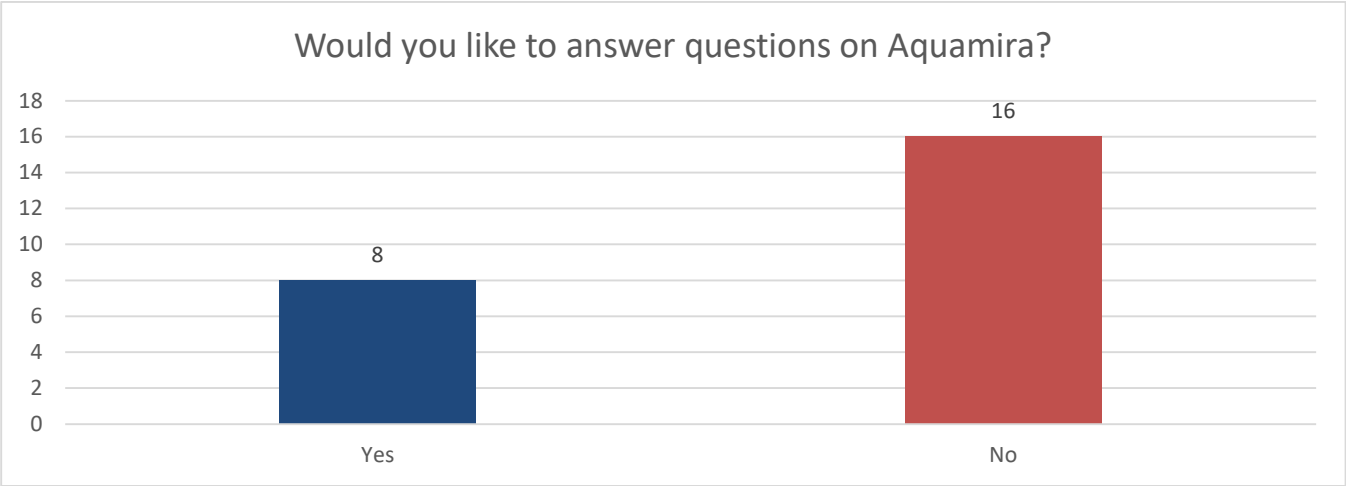
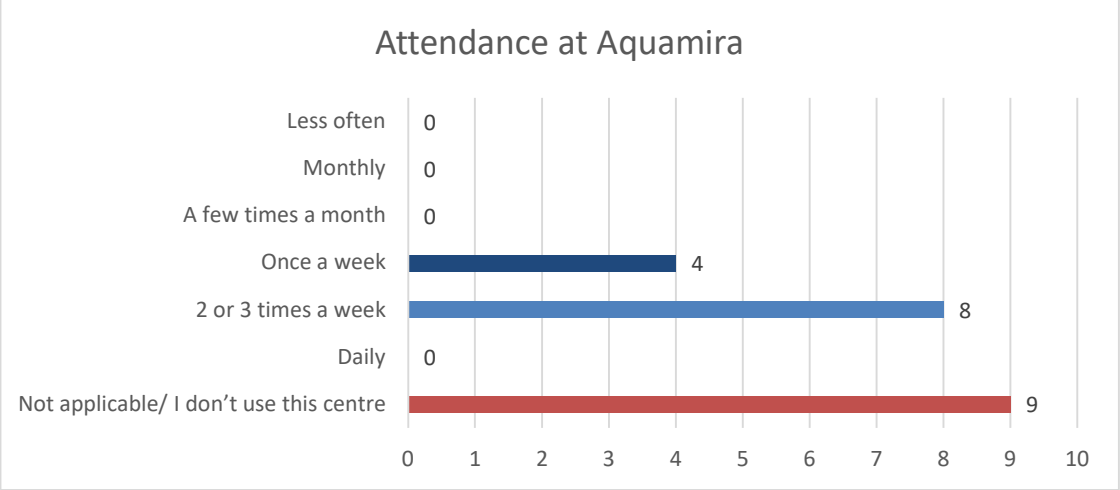


Figure 14 shows that 67% (16 responses) stated they did not want to answer questions on Aquamira and 33% (8 responses) did.

The respondents were then asked how often they, or the person they care for, use Aquamira. 21 people answered and 32 people skipped the question. Figure 15 shows the results in full.

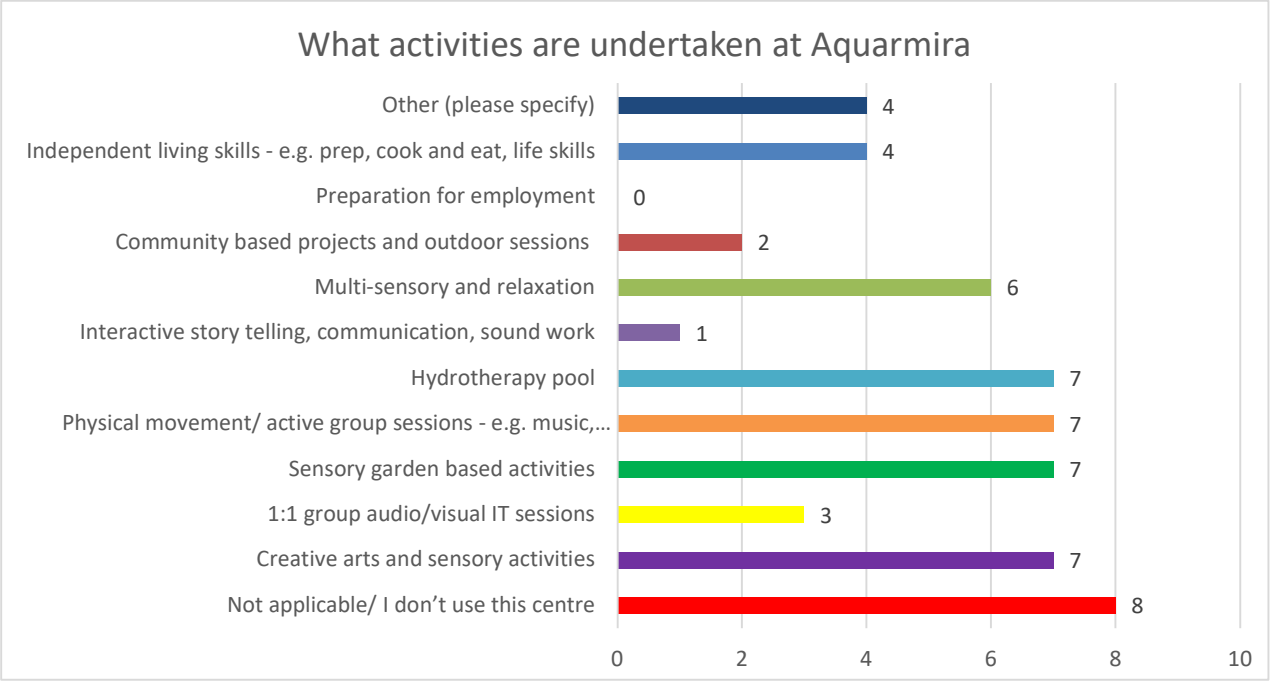
Figure 15 –How often people attend Aquamira



As seen, notwithstanding the 43% (9 responses) who answered that the question was not applicable or they didn't attend this centre, of the people who do attend Aquamira, 38% (8 responses) go 2 or 3 times a week and 19% (4 responses) attend once a week.

Question 18 asked what services or activities people benefitted from at Aquamira. The respondents could choose as many as applicable. 19 people answered and 31 skipped the question. It is important to see how many people use the hydrotherapy pool (7), as this is the part of the service that would be closed as part of the proposal.

Figure 16 – graph to show which activities people benefit from at Aquamira.



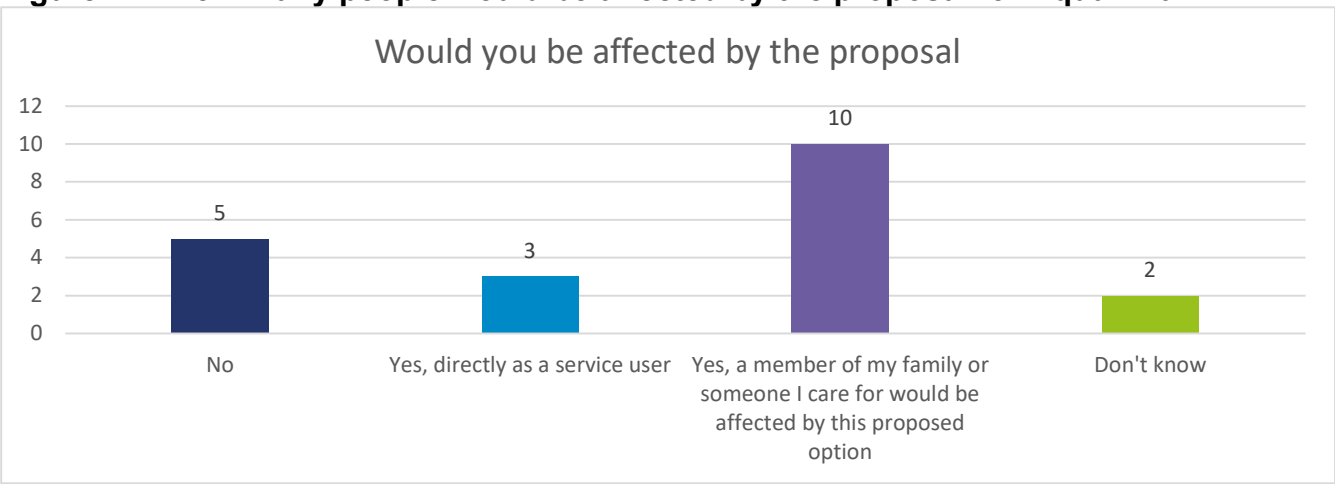
Where people could answer other, they could also specify what other meant. This received 4 responses which are:

- *Hydrotherapy pool (2)*
- *Mixing with people and joining in doing activities like games.*
- *Sensory regulation and social interaction.*

As seen in figure 16, the hydrotherapy pool, creative arts and sensory activities, sensory garden based activities and physical movement/active group sessions are popular activities, with 37% respectively.

When asked if they would be negatively affected by the proposal to close Aquamira and transfer the service to Abbots wood, 20 people answered and in general people would be affected, either as a direct user or as the person the respondent was answering on behalf of.

Figure 17 –How many people would be affected by the proposal for Aquamira.

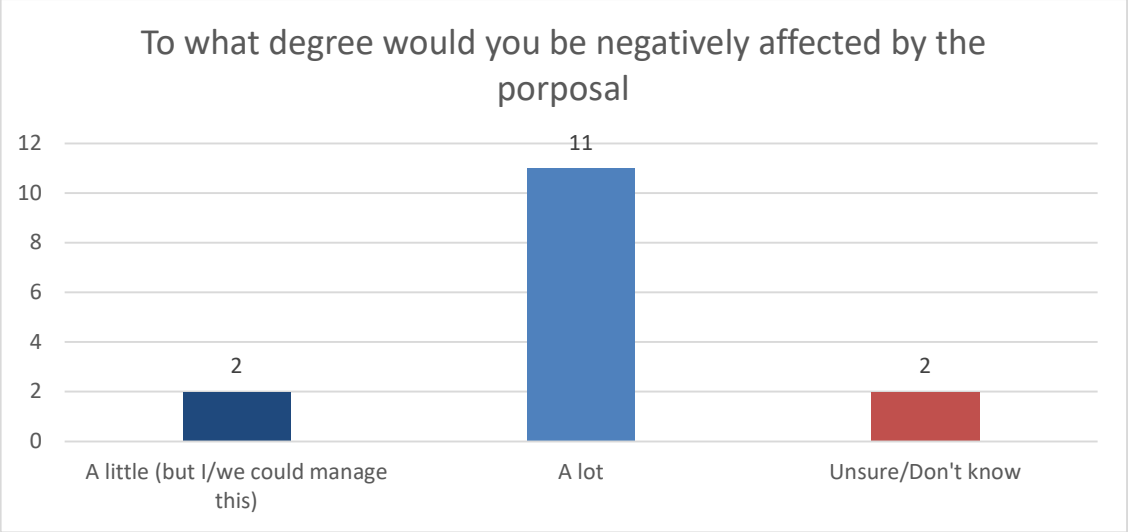


Generally, whether directly as a service user or as a member of family or someone they

care for, people would be affected by the proposal than not. 50% (10 responses) answered as someone whose family member or the person they care for would be affected, which supports the above figures that most people answering this survey are carers or family members and not direct service users. 15% (3 responses) are direct service users.

The respondents were then asked how much they would be affected by the proposal. Overwhelmingly they answered that they would be affected a lot.

Figure 18 –How much people would be affected by the proposal.



15 people answered the question about the level to which they would be affected and 73% (11 responses) would be very affected by the proposal. 13% (2 responses) felt they would be somewhat affected, but it would be manageable, and 13% (2 responses) were unsure of the impact.

When asked their overall view on the proposal, 95% of respondents opposed the proposal.

Figure 19 –Whether people support or oppose the proposal.

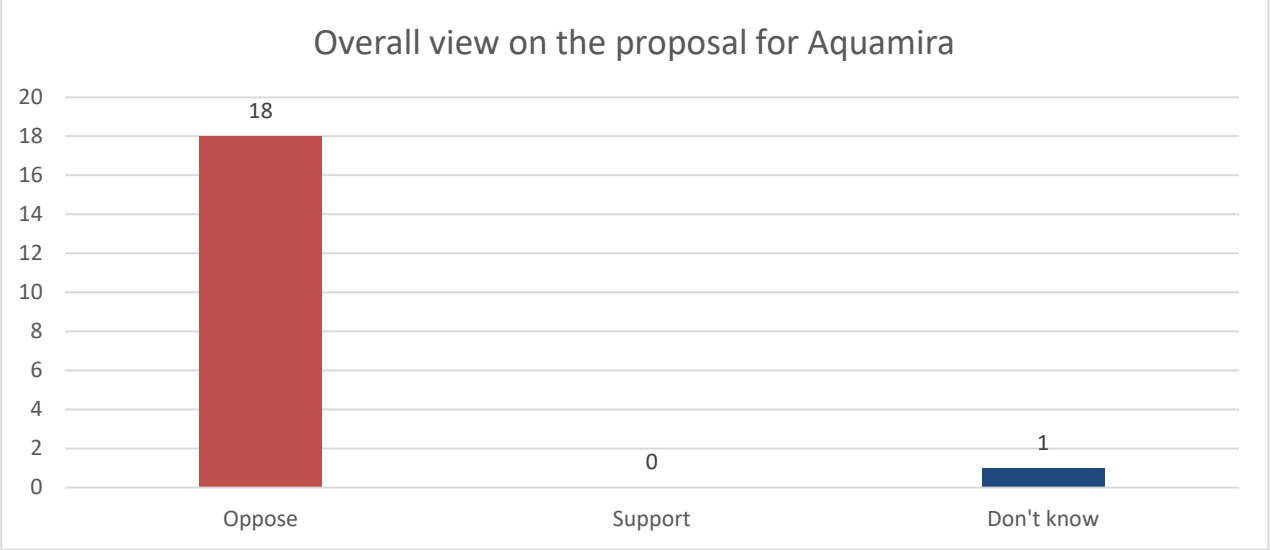


Figure 19 shows that of the 19 people who answered, the overwhelming majority, oppose

the proposal, no one supports it and 5% (1 person) does not know either way.

The respondents were then asked for comments on the proposal, especially if they had answered either support or opposed to the previous question. 17 people answered, and though that it not necessarily a high level in engagement, strong themes come across and the key themes are shown in Table 2 below, with the following comments:

Table 2 – table to show the key themes of support or opposition to the closure of Aquamira.

Theme	Explanation
Hydrotherapy is essential, not optional	Hydrotherapy is consistently described as vital to reduce pain, support mobility, improve mental wellbeing and maintain quality of life. Respondents emphasise that there are no realistic local alternatives.
Aquamira provides a specialist environment	Many respondents highlight Aquamira's quiet, low-stimulus setting, specialist facilities and one-to-one support which would be lost if transferred to a busier centre.
Opposition is rooted in concern about suitability of alternatives	While a small number of comments acknowledge that relocation *might* be acceptable, this is only where **equivalent facilities, space, staffing, and atmosphere** could be guaranteed. Respondents' express uncertainty that alternative sites can offer the same specialist provision, particularly hydrotherapy, sensory support, accessibility, and parking.
Preventative value and cost avoidance	Respondents frequently link Aquamira's services to prevention—maintaining independence, avoiding health deterioration, supporting carers, and delaying the need for more intensive (and expensive) care. From this perspective, closure is seen as undermining long-term value for money, even if it delivers short-term savings.
Inequality and vulnerability of disabled groups	Several comments frame opposition within a wider concern that people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by service reductions. There is a strong narrative that those with profound or complex needs are being asked to absorb cuts despite having the fewest alternatives, reinforcing feelings of marginalisation and unfairness.

Comments

- *I have previously attended Abbotts Wood until I was asked/told I had to leave as they could not cater for my complex and multiple needs. Including my physical and mental health. I am a wheelchair user and rely on transport provided by Shropshire Council for days I attend the day service. I am unable to weight bear without 24/7 1/2/1 support.*
- *There is no suitable alternative. Nowhere else has a hydrotherapy pool, a very important part of my daughter's health and well-being. When Aquamira was built it was a requirement to have a pool for the people who would be going there. They have been used to having lots of access to a Hydrotherapy pool at school. We have experience of how it affected my daughter when she couldn't have access to*

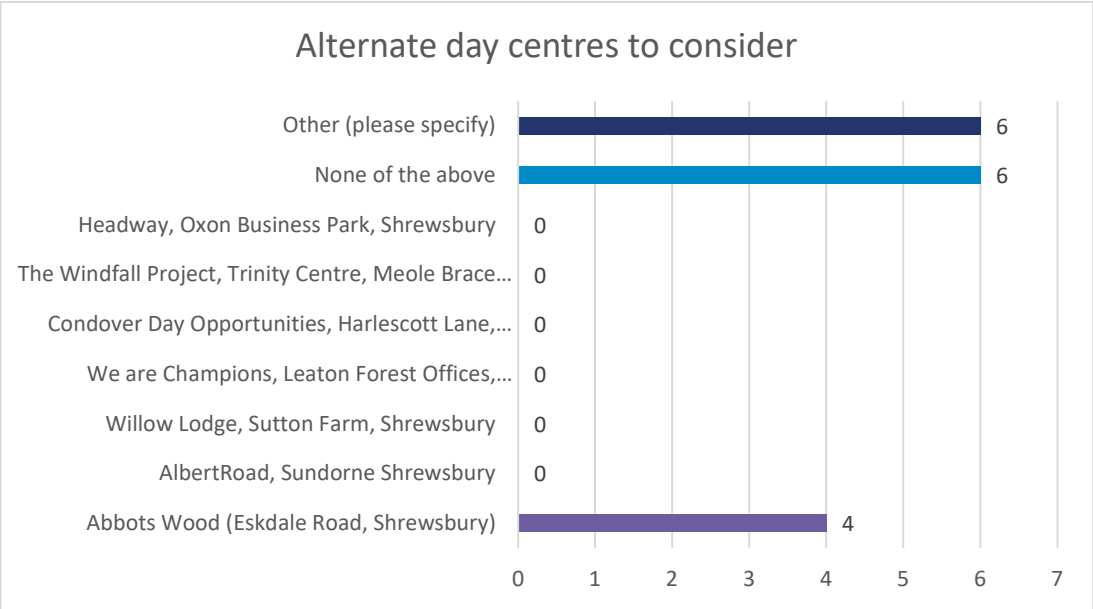
a pool during lockdown. I don't want this repeated. My daughter needs to mix with like-minded people, not people who are more disabled. The aims are different for the 2 groups of people.(2)

- *Aquamira is a vital centre for those with the severest of disabilities. It's multisensory and hydrotherapy facilities cannot be offered by an alternative provision.*
- *I have complex chronic health conditions, and the hydrotherapy pool reduces my pain and gives me some quality of life back that I don't have without it.*
- *I have a nephew who will be using adult day services in the future. I have previously supported individuals who have attended Aquamira and I feel that the service they provide is invaluable. It is highly specialised with both staff and the facilities. Where else would they be able to access appropriate hydrotherapy? Unfortunately, those with disabilities are so often sidelined within our society and both adult and children's SEND services seem to be at the forefront of the council's cuts. These are the most vulnerable and marginalised individuals who need person centered support, not just a general approach.*
- *My son attends music and sensory sessions at Aquamira. Abbots wood is further away. We have not visited it, so I don't know how it compares. Aquamira has ample parking, a big sensory room and is not crowded. As long as Abbots Wood offered the same then that would be acceptable.*
- *At the moment Hydrotherapy is paid for by service users as originally it was part of his care package but now it's paid for as an extra with Medi sec as a private arrangement because it wasn't available anymore due to staff shortage and out of order pool. Hydrotherapy pool is a vital asset. No other day service can offer this facility. Please do try to find a buyer to continue this service, do not knock it down.*
- *[Name redacted] doesn't like change.*
- *We feel that Aquamira has a quiet calming environment for our daughter, set in a secluded area with one-to-one supervision by staff and amenities including a well-established multi-sensory room and hydrotherapy pool which our daughter enjoys, so moving away from Aquamira setting is likely to make her anxious. The multi-sensory room provides relaxation for our daughter when she experiences sensory overload in noisy places. It reduces anxiety in her when she is overwhelmed and helps in reducing her stereotyped behaviours. The hydrotherapy pool in Aquamira which our daughter enjoys helps her improve her social interaction while playing in water and reduces her anxiety.*
- *There is no other hydrotherapy pool accessible for miles and miles. Hydrotherapy is so important for movement and when disabled individuals have access to it has huge benefits to health and mental wellbeing. Long term if you closed this pool would be a very short-sighted strategy, healthcare costs would ultimately increase as disabled individuals who use the pool wouldn't be able to access one.*
- *Aquamira is close and in our neighbourhood. The services there are excellent, the staff are friendly and the premises are welcoming. The hydrotherapy pool has been a godsend; we miss it when it's out of use for repair or maintenance. It's the daughter of a close friend who uses the day centre. As council papers state, only 6% of adults with autism have employment in Shropshire. These are people with disabilities with profound needs; they're not going to get employment. They need Aquamira, to be in their community and to have access to the services that remain. Abbots Wood does not offer comparable facilities and is further to travel. Work is only manageable with a very tight schedule; add travel time and this person will end up in full-time council care - costing far, far more than the cost of a space of a day centre.*

- *The building is set up for caring for severely disabled adults. It already has everything on site like the interactive light room and the hydrotherapy pool, so it makes no sense to move to Abbots Wood which has none of these facilities. My daughter loves the interactive room at Aquamira. It is a safe space for vulnerable wheelchair users.*
- *See my previous response re Helena. Also, the council is absolutely inept, not fit for purpose. The fact that they waste so much money i.e. Planners etc. for relief road which cost tens of millions, the bodge jobs done for fixing potholes which then require more money to be spent to fix them properly, the money spent on the railway station gyratory and so on and so forth. It would be better more financially viable to sack the people who decide how things are funded etc. and employ people who can actually do the job properly. But instead, you are trying to save money by, surprise, hitting the more vulnerable people in the county.*
- *As a carer / family member with the said relocation of Aquamira I strongly disagree. The centre accommodates my brother's needs perfectly well. It is a quiet centre which suits him to the ground. Abbots wood has a lot of service users there already, added clients? Staff will be noisy and will not give the care and attention my brother needs. He really enjoys his time at Aquamira and a lot of money has been spent there to improve services for the users. If my brother's needs and mental status suffer due to any move, I will not be happy. As always Shropshire Council will do what they want to do so there is no point to this survey.*
- *Aquamira is owned outright by Shropshire council whereas Abbotswood is PFI. The cost of the PFI contract is enormous, the pool at Aquamira is expensive to maintain. Whilst in this financial difficulty, could the pool be mothballed, saving a huge amount each year. The service users who attend Abbotswood could be accommodated at Aquamira, there is space in the unused commercial kitchen if extra space is needed. Has the cost of transporting clients to alternative services been factored into future costs? I note the consultation relates only to in-house Day Services and not the services which have been outsourced and locked into expensive contracts with Bethpage etc. Is there a plan to review these contracts?*
- *Can imagine it's valued by its users and their families.*
- *Council trying to save money, first option is to always look at cutting disability services.*

Question 23 asked what other locations people would be interested in using, though Abbotts Wood is the preferred option in the proposal. There were mixed responses from the 15 people who responded, there was an equal number of responses for none of the above and other and then Abbots Wood was the second choice. If people chose other, they were asked to specify, and the results will be shown in full after figure 20.

Figure 20 –Other preferred locations for the day service.



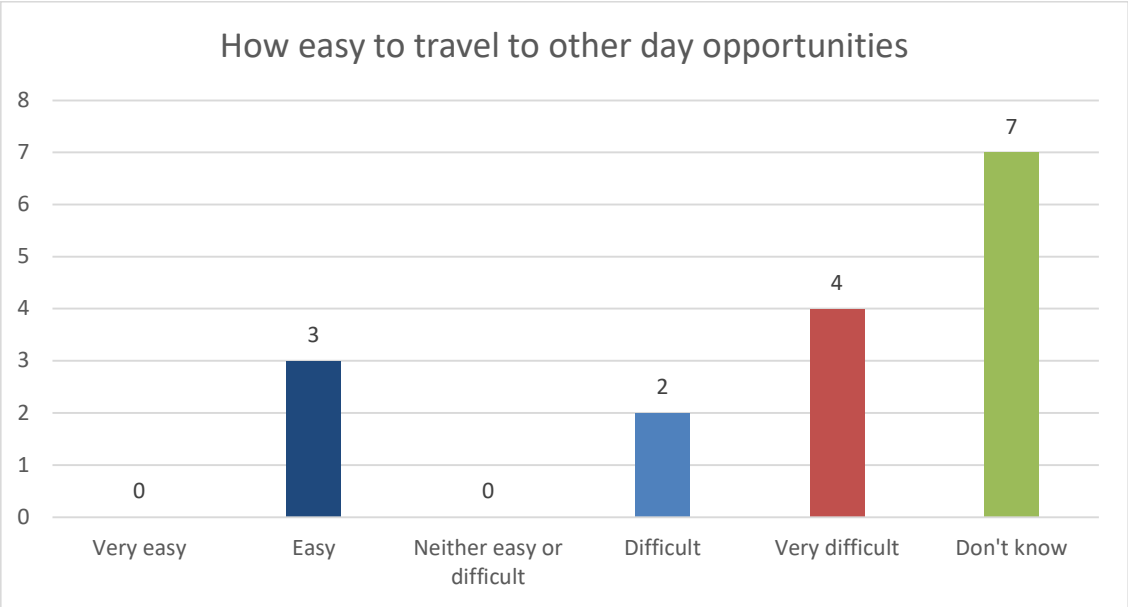
These mixed responses show that 38% people oppose the closing of Aquamira by choosing the option of none of the above. This supports the comments of the previous question. 38% also chose other, and commented:

- *None have hydrotherapy pools.*
- *I know nothing about the other services or what facilities they have so cannot comment.*
- *Not applicable.*
- *Aquamira needs to stay open.*
- *How will the cost of travel be met?*
- *Albrighton Moat.*
- *I am willing to go wherever (in Shrewsbury) they are able to provide the care and wellbeing and understanding that Aquamira has provided for me over the last 12 months, as one of my conditions is progressive Dementia which is, and will have, a severe impact on my abilities.*

Excepting one comment for Albrighton Moat, most oppose the closure of Aquamira. 25% then chose Abbots Wood, which supports some comments from the previous question that suggests if Abbots Wood had the same facilities as Aquamira, the transferring might be acceptable.

When asked if the respondents did not want to transfer to Abbotts Wood, how easy they would find it to travel to other day opportunities or centres, out of the 16 people who answered, 44% did not know.

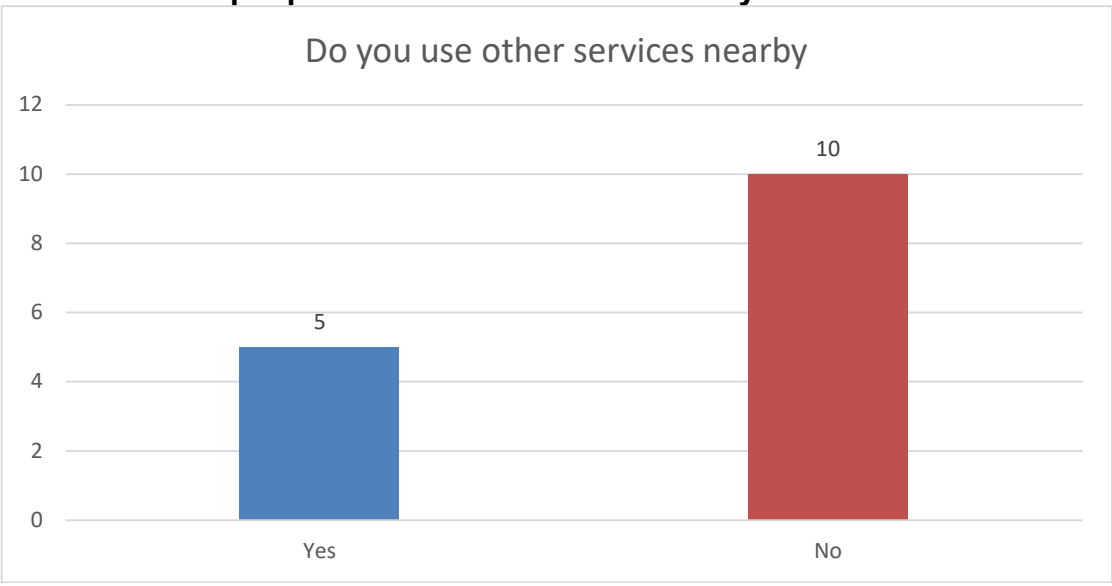
Figure 21 –How easy people might find it to travel to other day opportunities/centres.



Whilst most answers don't know, there are more answers for difficult or very difficult collectively, than easy. This supports the opposition seen in the previous questions. 19% (3 responses) of people answered they would find it easy, which is positive.

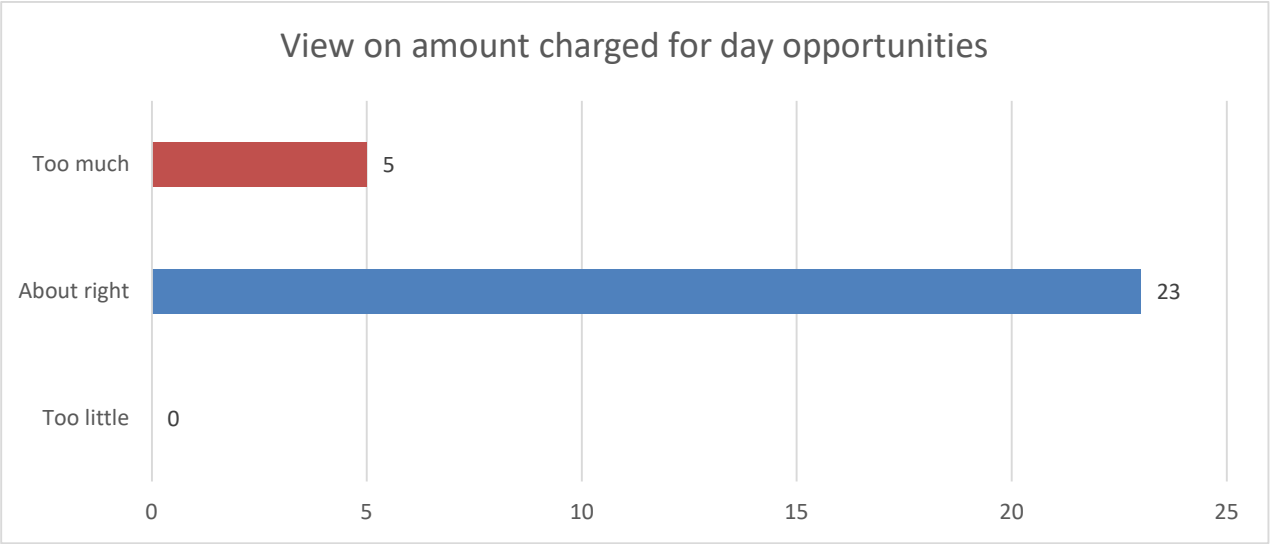
Respondents were also asked if they used any other services nearby. 15 people answered, and 67% of respondents answered no.

Figure 22 –Whether people used other services nearby.



The next question asked about the amount people were charged for the day opportunities and whether it was too much, too little or about right. In general, of the 28 people that answered, 82% feel it is about right.

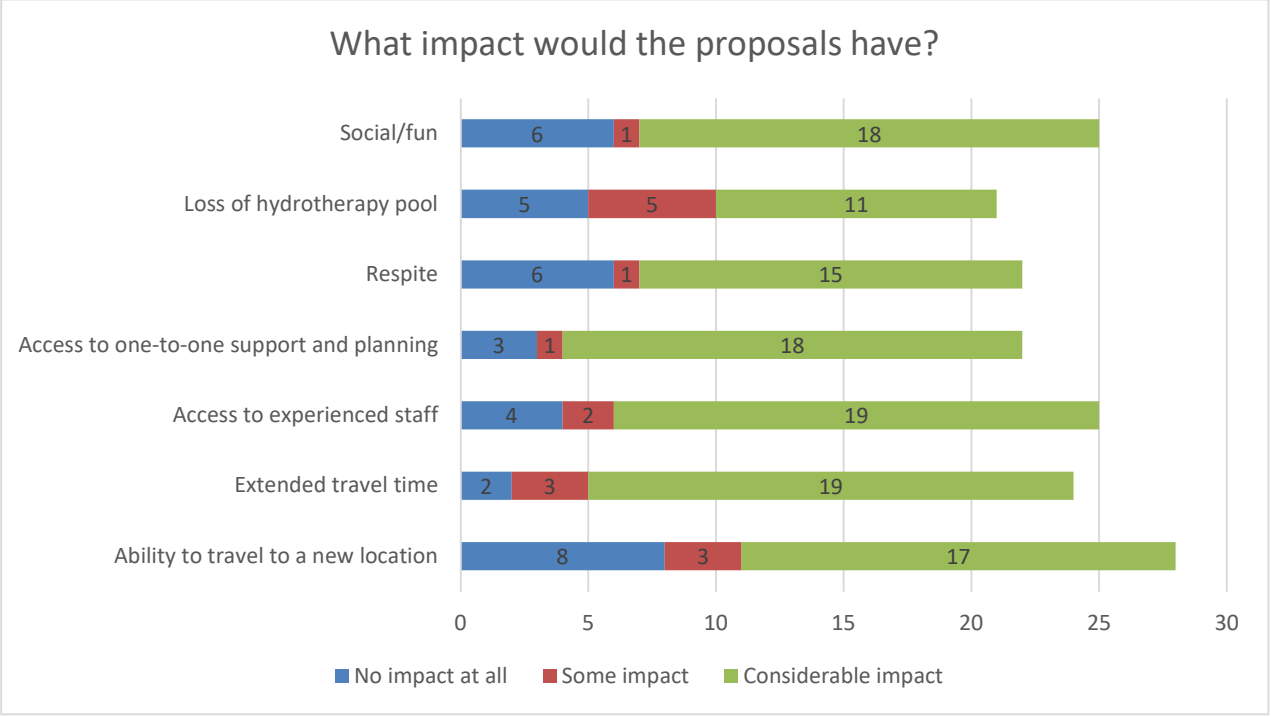
Figure 23 –Respondents' views on amount charged for then day opportunities.



An encouraging amount of people feel the amount is satisfactory (84%).

Question 27 then asked in which ways service users would be affected by the closure of Helena Lane and the transfer of services from Aquamira. 30 people answered and there were 3 additional comments.

Figure 24 –In which ways people would be affected by proposals for both Helena Lane and Aquamira.

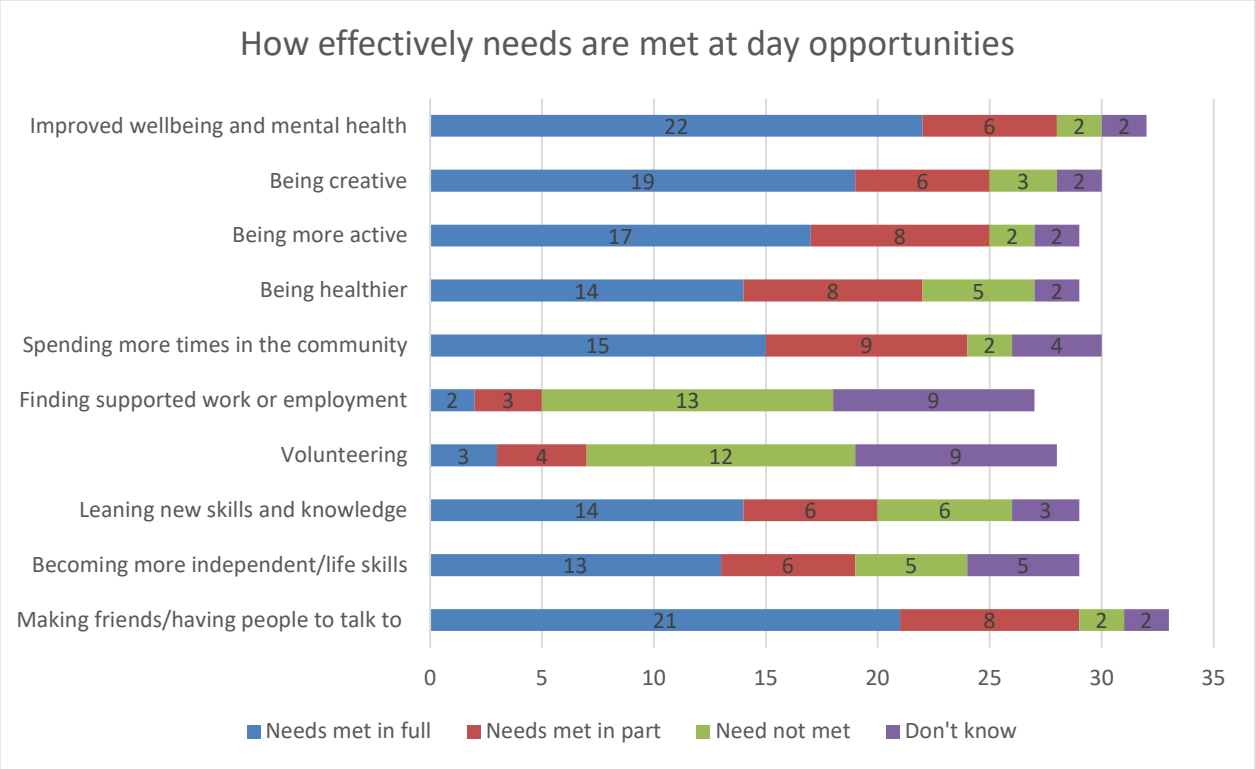


Overall, across the categories the proposals would have considerable impact. The 3 comments were:

- *Not applicable.*
- *Meals and bathing.*
- *She's happy there and is nonverbal. Suggesting volunteering or living skills to someone who has her needs is just inappropriate.*

The next question asked how effectively day opportunities meet the following needs; making friends/ having people to talk to; becoming more independent/ life skills; learning new skills and knowledge; volunteering; finding supported work or employment; spending more time in the community; being healthier; being more active; being creative; and improved wellbeing and mental health.

Figure 25 –In which ways day opportunities meet the needs of their clients.



As seen in Figure 25, in general day opportunities meet the needs of their clients in full. This is encouraging on one hand as it suggests that the day opportunities are working well, but on the other hand it can support why people are in such opposition to the proposals; because their needs are being met and they don't want that to change.
The only two categories where needs are not met are finding supported work or employment and volunteering. This could support some previous comments where people have said that employment and volunteering are not applicable or appropriate to the people receiving care.

Question 29 was designed to explore which needs people might want to have met, which might happen because of saving money. 20 people answered and respondents were able to choose as many as applicable.

Figure 26 –Which different needs people might be interested in.



As seen in Figure 26, there are several additional needs that people would be interested in, particularly increasing activities at other day centres, trips to swimming pools, access to other forms of respite and opportunities for membership at leisure centres.

Question 30 expanded on respondents' suggestions regarding the proposals, whether they had any alternative suggestions that might help Shropshire Council meet needs whilst achieving savings and better value for money. 19 people responded and the main themes are:

- **A perception that financial mismanagement is driving the proposal** – There is a recurring narrative that financial pressures are the result of poor strategic decisions elsewhere, and that reducing or closing specialist services for disabled and older people is seen as unjust and avoidable.
- **Preference for service retention through adaptation –** Rather than supporting closure, respondents repeatedly suggest alternative cost-saving or income-generating approaches.
- **Underuse due to lack of promotion, not lack of need** – Similar to the above theme, several comments suggest that Aquamira's perceived under-use reflects historic under-investment, poor promotion and limited awareness, rather than limited demand.
- **Specialist provision is seen as essential and not interchangeable** – Respondents emphasize that Aquamira supports people whose needs are not well met by generic, mainstream care provisions.
- **Strong theme around equity**– Respondents argue that people with disabilities and older people are being disproportionately affected, despite having limited alternatives.

Comments

- *Rent out hydro-pool to family members of those with disabilities. Reduce budget spent on surveys and feedback forms.*

- *It is a well-known fact that Shropshire Council wastes money, for example, spending £38,000,000 on the Shrewsbury shopping centre, which was only valued at £12,000,000. An immediate loss of £26,000,000. Building unsafe, unfit and unusable bus stops - again in Shrewsbury. Paying the new Chief Executive an eye watering, obscene salary of £176,000! If you stopped wasting money on worthless things, you would then have more to spend on important services, like services for older people. You could also try employing competent employees who actually understand something of Shropshire Council's own services and funding. (2)*
- *If the service at Helena Lane was better advertised and better resourced, they could do even more.*
- *Attending Aquamira to keep pool and make building into a gym especially for people with physical disabilities. Using out of normal hours Aquamira for public use. Most local people don't know it's there and what the possibilities could be.*
- *Rather than closing Aquamira building we would suggest Aquamira be used to provide more opportunities for more learning-disabled people. Given the space and the facilities that ae available in Aquamira and its setting, in a quiet secluded area, could the council not find more users for it from elsewhere?*
- *I have not answered some questions because they ae not applicable to the people who go to Aquamira. I think the people making these decisions have no idea about the people or their families. The questions that are asked are more for able disabled. I have already written to the council outlining a couple of suggestions but no doubt they will not be considered as it is clear you have already decided to close Aquamira whatever happens. May I point out I had a letter from adult services dated 24/10/13. Why was this not sorted out then. It has been allowed to get worse for another 12 years. Bad management I say.*
- *Please merge with Telford and Wrekin. Save money by merging back-office costs, not on this.*
- *It is not my role to tell the council how to save money, but I do know that this council wastes a lot of money on pointless things. It also angers me that this council wants to save money by cutting services for the most vulnerable disabled people in society. These people need decent services more than anybody else and day centres are vital. Not all disabled people can work or do voluntary work.*
- *SC should promote the existing service at Helena Lane. Put up signage indicating where the centre is and advertise the service and activities on offer. A bus would help get more people into the centre as not many 80+ year olds drive with dementia or physical restrictions and mobility.*
- *Stop spending money employing new people, go work out where the money is spent. There are some services which can't be cut, due to the negative impact that would have on people in your area. Stop spending money at the top, and this will have provided the money for these services lower down.*
- *Increase charges slightly to offset costs. Find a new location within Ludlow with lower overheads.*
- *There needs to be a day centre in Ludlow, there is an ageing population, the one in Tenbury has closed. There is nothing within an hour's drive.*
- *Reduction in days or broadening scope to encourage more attendance and make it more cost effective.*
- *My brother contributes money for his care needs and support so his contributions from government has been severely reduced to the above. He pays his food/utility bills out of 2 payments he has 4 weekly. As it is our parents who left him the property he resides in now. Otherwise, the government would be paying a lot*

more money for his housing requirements with adaptations for the rest of his life. We all know that Shropshire Council and others are in financial difficulties but why pick on the weak and vulnerable clientele, they have not asked to be born different from the rest of us. Clients and families/carers need support from centres like Aquamira. I have no idea where monies can be saved to allow the said centres to stay open but for goodness' sake there are plenty of managers, experts that can find a way forward to resolve matters.

- *1. Open Helena Lane to other groups/care users at the cost of hiring out Helena Lane facilities would increase income for Shropshire Council. 2. There is no signage or advertising for this service. 3. This is not only the only day care centre in Ludlow but also the only day care centre for the elderly in South Shropshire that also provides a bathing and laundry service.*
- *The council would save a lot of money if they turned off the heating systems down. You don't need a constant 34 degrees 24 hours a day 365 days a year.*
- *Yes....I think that Service Users could be supported by the Staff and use their skills to help with Community Projects such as maintaining Community areas and litter picking. Greenacres Farm is already Garden for the Vicarage. Why not expand this and any monies made can be used to lower costs to the Local Authority.*

Question 31 asked for any other comments the respondents might have, including anything they would like considered for the future of day opportunities in Shropshire. 16 people answered and the comments are below:

Comments

- *Totally immoral to save money by making cutbacks that affect the most vulnerable members of the community.*
- *Stop spending all of Shropshire Council's income on Shrewsbury. Money is never spent in south Shropshire, so for the future of day opportunities - keep Helena Lane open in south Shropshire. It is scandalous that you would even think about expecting users of Helena Lane to travel any distance in order to use another Day Centre outside of the area! (2)*
- *Dementia care in the community needs special support.*
- *Make access for general public, arts classes for the general public.*
- *It will be good and useful if Abbotts Wood and similar day centres have multisensory rooms which help users who have autism and profound learning disabilities, in reducing anxiety in them which gives them relaxation periods whenever they want a quiet environment.*
- *Have some consideration of how difficult it's been to navigate Social Services, especially EHCPs.*
- *Vulnerable disabled people need day centres where they can socialise with others, learn new skills and be part of the community. They need a safe space where they have all the facilities they need, including an interactive light room and hydrotherapy pool. Aquamira has all of this already on site. The other day centres don't have these facilities. It is also a safe space for wheelchair users.*
- *Helena Lane is the only older person centre in South Shropshire. The building was left for the older people of Ludlow and yet SC want to remove us or close us. All facilities are in place, i.e. baths for the purpose of the elderly to use in the building as it was purposefully built for the elderly community. We are family-orientated and support each other, staff are professional, friendly and well trained and there is nothing too much trouble for them. Always a friendly ear to hand.*

- *This is a service for those who really need it. It doesn't matter if it's for 5 or 30 people, it is not a profit-making service and must be provided for the benefit of all that require it.*
- *Helena Lane has significantly benefited the quality of life of both my parents. My mum loves going to the centre - it has improved her mentality and social - I do feel her condition has not decreased rapidly due to the engagement. It has also allowed my dad to have a few simple hours to himself, which as a full-time carer is priceless. I don't feel a 1 1/2 round trip to attend other day centres for a 4-hour session is a fair request or demonstrates support from the local community.*
- *1. I would appreciate increasing the number of hours for the day care from 4 to 5 or 6 hours. 2. I would appreciate Helena Lane having the use of a minibus for trips out for care users. This was taken from them last year. 3. Day care at Helen Lane is not only required for my wife's health/mental health but also for mine. The cost of providing care for both of us would be more than the cost of just for my wife. 4. Without the respite that Helena Lane provides my health and mental health would decline as caring for my wife 24/7 is mentally and physically draining.*
- *The proposals for the alternative day services are not clearly explained. For example, Greenacres is currently a significantly underfunded day service which has the potential to be excellent if appropriate investment were made. Increased funding could allow for more animals, expanded gardening and vegetable-growing activities, and greater opportunities for meaningful community engagement. My son is a wheelchair user and requires a personal assistant wherever he attends. He already volunteers two days a week, and even with this, finding suitable placements has been extremely difficult. Employment is even more challenging when two people need to be accommodated within a workplace. There is also no clear explanation of how people will be supported by volunteering or employment in a realistic and sustainable way, including how appropriate placements and the correct level of ongoing support will be provided.*
- *Day Services transform service users' lives and those of their families. Greenacres Farm and I am sure other Day Services also are an absolute lifeline.*
- *Day Service transformation happened in 2013 resulting in the closure of Hartley, Sabrina Court & Ellesmere Town Hall. Never forget Micheal Breeze who tragically died during the transformation of services. Many of the service users who attended these services had greatly reduced services offered as replacements. Enable may find volunteer opportunities but were unable to provide sustained travel training for affected people.*

Based on these comments, the following key insights emerge:

- **Strong place-based equity concerns** – There is a clear perception that South Shropshire is disadvantaged compared with Shrewsbury. Proposals that require people to travel long distances are viewed as unreasonable, inequitable, and disconnected from the realities of rural living.
- **Day centres are seen as essential community infrastructure** – Respondents consistently frame day centres as core services for vulnerable people, not optional or profit-driven provision.
- **Specialist environments are critical** – Those with complex care and health needs require specialist, well equipped and calm environments. Both Helena Lane and Aquamira have these facilities and are not replicable.
- **Lifeline and carer-support role** – Day centres are repeatedly described as lifelines for both service users and carers. There is a clear concern that removing this support would accelerate carer burnout.

- **Alternative are perceived as under-developed and insufficiently explained** – Respondents express concern that proposed alternatives lack clarity, investment and realism.

Written consultation responses

During the consultation there were alternative ways to respond and engage with the survey. There were 3 emails and 2 letters received from clients or carers, and all personal details have been redacted.

Email 1 - themes

- Helena Lane has great facilities but is underused – "*Helena Lane in Ludlow is an under-resourced facility already, despite being a perfectly good building with parking and modern facilities but hardly any services provided there."*
- South Shropshire is targeted before Shrewsbury – "*I am disappointed but not surprised that adult services in South Shropshire are those first on the list to be targeted by Shropshire Council for reduction or closure."*
- Closure of Helena Lane is representative of wider problems in South Shropshire – "*Ludlow and its surrounding villages are suffering for the lack of financial control within Shropshire Council, which uses resources to support Shrewsbury and North Shropshire to the detriment of the rest of the County."*

Email 2 – themes

- Suggestions to future proof the services – "*To potentially future proof the service it would be beneficial to have more flexibility regarding hours of working, to consider other client groups, to consider carers groups and possibly offer ad hoc opportunities for clients to have day service hours , this could reduce carer burn out and encourage shared lives carers to offer further respite. Could day centres be used to offer meetings for health and social care evenings and weekends which could bring in revenue and enable potential opportunities to increase collaboration with health and social care".*

Email 3 – themes

- Employment is not an option for everyone – "*Do what some of your councillors have suggested that we get up and go to work, I would love to but as I am 80 years old [and] disabled, I cannot do…"*
- The service gives good quality of life – "*Please don't condemn me to a life of sitting in front of the television on my own in need of things."*
- Helena Lane has good facilities – "*Centre built on one level plenty of car parking with things to do."*

Letter 1 – themes

- Helena Lane has all the facilities people need – *The model of one stop day care under one umbrella is one that suits my mother but seemingly also all those who use the service.*
- Improve the services as facilities are underused – *Somebody should be tasked with promoting the service and fill the vacant chairs, following the proven model that works for the service users already.*
- Closure or relocation means lack of access – *Relocation of services for the elderly at Helena Lane would ultimately mean that my mother would not be able to access*

services, given her lack of mobility and transport issues.

Letter 2 – themes

This was a lengthy letter authored by service users, carers, and a campaigner, addressing the proposed closure of Helena Lane Day Service for Older People in Ludlow, Shropshire. The key themes have been set out here:

- **Legal Issues:** The response references legal guidance (Luke Clements, Disability Law Service) indicating that financial problems are not lawful grounds for reducing care. Any alternative arrangements must be real and meet assessed needs.
- **Council's Proposal:** The closure is driven by a declared financial emergency. If approved, it would end the only council-provided day service for older people in Shropshire.
- **Equality Impact Assessment:** The assessment is criticized for inaccuracies, especially regarding the age and needs of Helena Lane users. Most users are in their 70s and 80s with severe disabilities, not the 30–50 age range stated.

Impact on clients

- **Loss of Specialist Care:** Helena Lane provides specialist support for older people with severe disabilities, including dementia and limited mobility. Community alternatives (lunch clubs, Men's Shed, etc.) are not suitable substitutes.
- **Social Isolation:** Closure would lead to loss of social life, accessible bathing, laundry, and meals, severely impacting wellbeing.
- **Statements from Users:** Personal accounts highlight the essential role of Helena Lane in their lives, expressing fear and distress about the closure.

Impact on carers

- **Respite Loss:** Carers rely on Helena Lane for respite. Its closure would remove the only venue in Ludlow where people with significant dementia can attend without their carer.
- **Statutory Rights Ignored:** The response notes the Council's failure to recognize carers' statutory rights and the significant negative impact on their wellbeing.

Alternative and Accessibility

- **Community Initiatives**: While local voluntary services are valuable, they cannot replace specialist care for those with high needs. Accessibility issues (buildings, toilets) further limit options.
- **Employment & Volunteering Messaging:** The Council's repeated suggestion that users should seek employment or volunteering is seen as insensitive and inappropriate for this population.
- **Lack of Publicity:** The Council does not actively promote its in-house services, contributing to low uptake.

Financial and Demand Issues

- **Cost Arguments:** The Council claims high costs and low demand. The response challenges these figures, noting a 30% reduction in spend and questioning the accuracy of demand assessments.
- **Managed Decline:** The response suggests that reductions in service (days, hours, staff) have artificially lowered attendance and demand, justifying closure.

Unmet needs

- **Ageing Population:** Shropshire has a growing elderly population with significant rates of disability and dementia. The response argues that closing services is short-sighted given these trends.
- **Under-diagnosis:** NHS and Council data likely underestimate the need for specialist support due to under-diagnosis and poor care plan reviews.

Rural and Inequality Issues

- **Rural Proofing:** The closure disproportionately affects rural, low-income, and disabled residents, increasing vulnerability and social isolation.

All the emails and letters provide an important insight into clients and carers opinions on the proposals. These responses consistently highlight Helena Lane as a valued but under-utilised service, with low attendance attributed to reduced referrals, limited promotion and constrained service delivery rather than a lack of need. Respondents express strong concern about place-based inequality, particularly the perceived disproportionate impact of service reductions on South Shropshire compared with Shrewsbury. Helena Lane is repeatedly described as a unique, one-stop service providing specialist care, dignity, social connection and essential respite for carers, which is not seen as replaceable by voluntary or community provision.

There is also clear challenge to assumptions around employment and volunteering, which respondents view as inappropriate for many older people and those with complex needs. Concerns are further raised about legal duties, the accuracy of the Equality Impact Assessment, and the longer-term risks of increased isolation, unmet need and pressure on carers and statutory services if specialist provision is withdrawn.

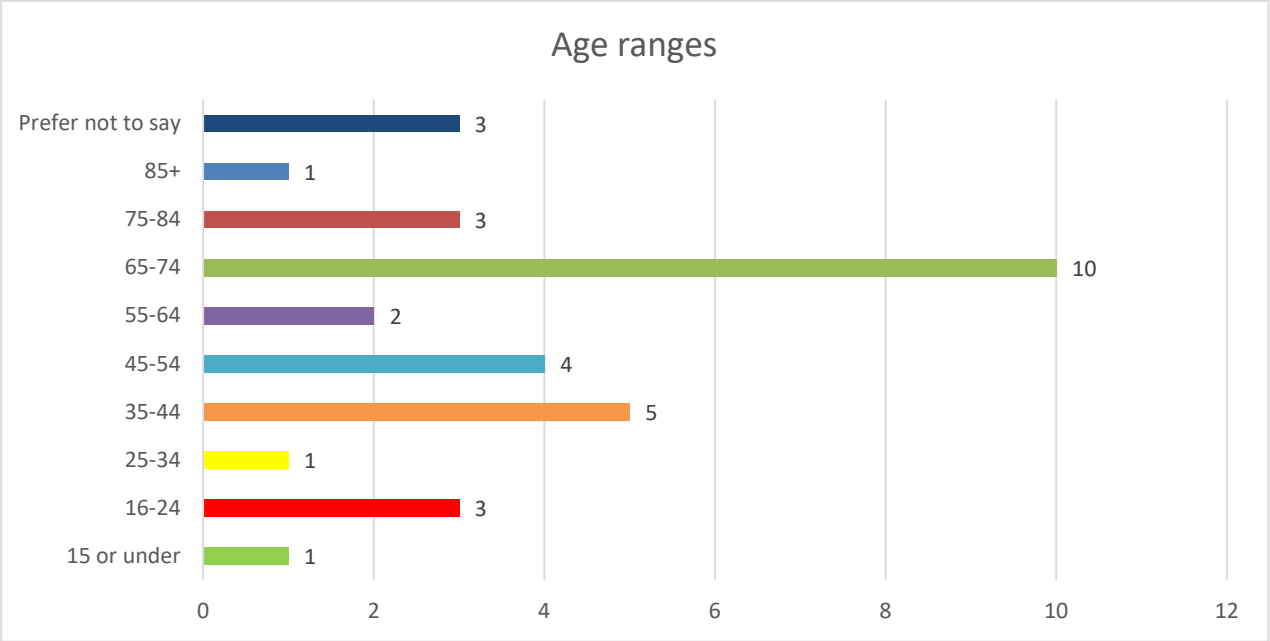
About the respondents

In this section of the survey, the questions focused on online respondents and finding out more about the people who have responded.

From the question whether they were female or male, 34 people answered and the majority of the respondents were female: 68%. 24% were male, 9% preferred not to say and no one self-described their gender.

There were mixed responses to the question of age ranges, as seen in figure 27 below.

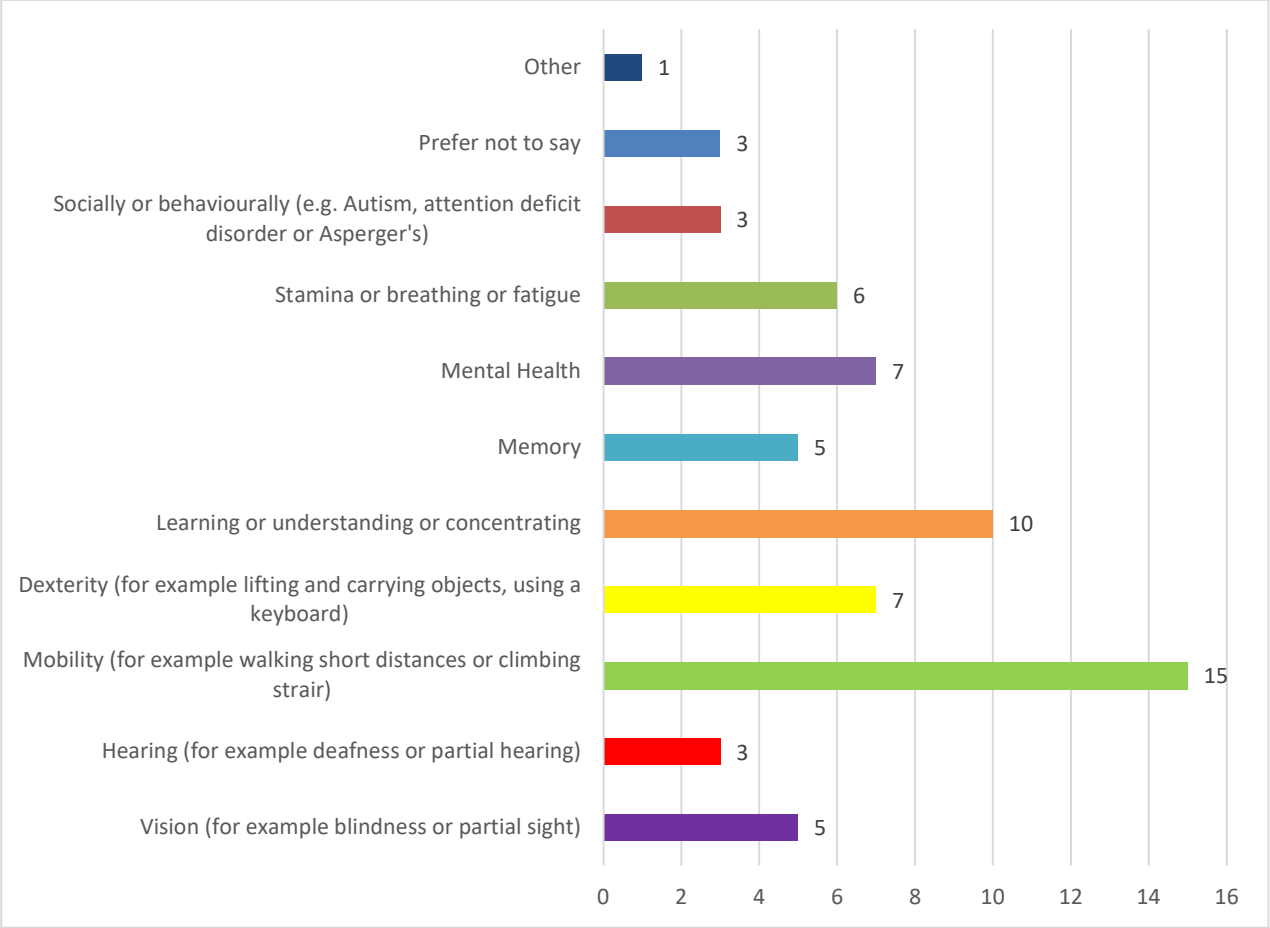
Figure 27 – The age ranges of the respondents.



As seen in figure 27, there is a mixture of ages, with the majority of respondents being in the age range of 65-74. This is not a surprise as there is a high proportion of respondents that are responding on behalf of people who use the service.

When asked whether the respondents had any long-standing illness or disability that limits their daily activity, most of the 30 respondents answered yes; 53%. 27% answered no and 20% answered preferred not to say. Figure 28 shows the descriptions of those illnesses or disabilities.

Figure 28 – The illnesses or disabilities the respondents have



Most respondents (81%) have mobility issues, with 57% having learning or understanding and concentrating problems.

The respondents were then asked their ethnic groups and in general, the respondents are of white British, Irish or Welsh descent (82%).

They were then asked if they belonged to any particular religion or held any particular beliefs, and of the 30 people who answered, 53% were Christian, 33% were of no religion, 7% preferred not to say, and 3% practiced Buddhism.

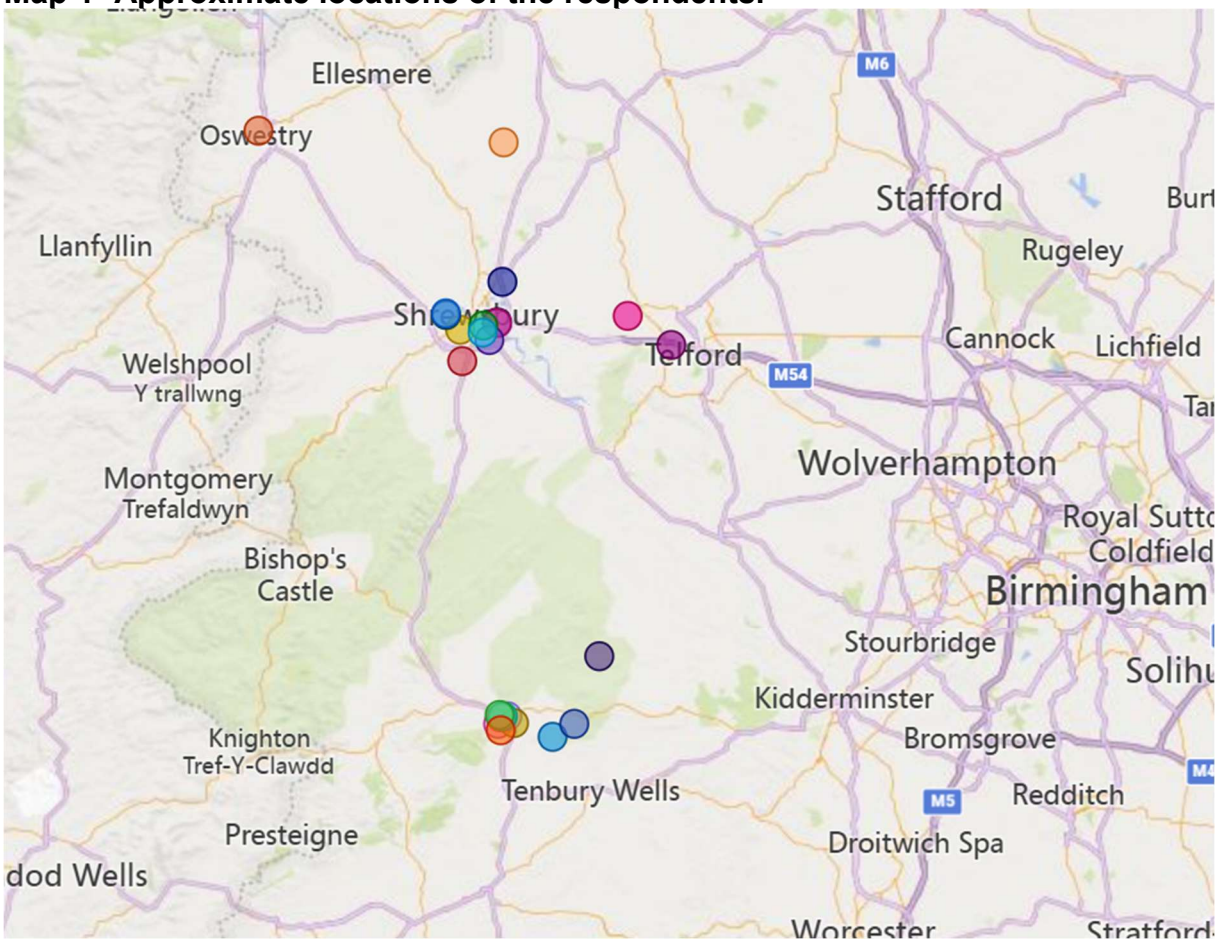
As part of this consultation, Shropshire Council carried out an Equalities and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment (ESIHIA) and the respondents were asked whether they anticipated any other impact or risks of the proposals, and to describe any issues they would like Shropshire Council to consider. This was answered by 2 people and their comments are below

- *Treating the elderly with respect and dignity.*
- *Closure of Aquamira would be discrimination against people with limited movement [and] you would be directly impacting their access to a facility which hugely benefits their health.*

The next question focused on employment. 37% were retired, 13% worked full-time and 13% part-time. Small percentages (3%) work a zero-hour contract and were unemployed (7%). 20% chose other as an option.

The last question asked for their postcode which is seen in Map 1 below.

Map 1 -Approximate locations of the respondents.



We can see that the survey responses were from respondents in Shrewsbury and Ludlow, the two towns most affected by the proposals with a smaller number of responses from other locations.

Section summary

In total, 53 people responded to the clients and carers survey, with the majority participating as carers or family members (77% of respondents to that question). Responses were largely from people with direct experience of the services under review, particularly Helena Lane and Aquamira, which accounted for the highest levels of reported use. Overall, respondents indicated that day opportunities are meeting needs well, especially in relation to social connection, wellbeing, creativity, staying active and mental health. Supported employment and volunteering were the main areas where respondents felt needs were less relevant or not well met, reflecting the complexity and level of need among many service users.

Feedback on both proposals showed strong opposition and a high perceived level of negative impact. For Helena Lane, most respondents expected the closure to affect them significantly, with nearly eight in ten saying they would be affected a lot and around nine in ten opposing the proposal. Key themes included the loss of an irreplaceable local service in South Shropshire, the importance of dignity and personal care (particularly bathing), the central role of respite for carers, and the practical challenges of rurality, transport and accessibility. For Aquamira, responses followed a similar pattern, with most

respondents anticipating a significant negative impact and almost all opposing the proposed transfer and closure of the hydrotherapy pool. The hydrotherapy pool and the specialist, calmer environments were consistently described as essential for physical health, pain management, sensory regulation and wellbeing, with respondents expressing concern that alternative provision would not offer equivalent facilities or support.

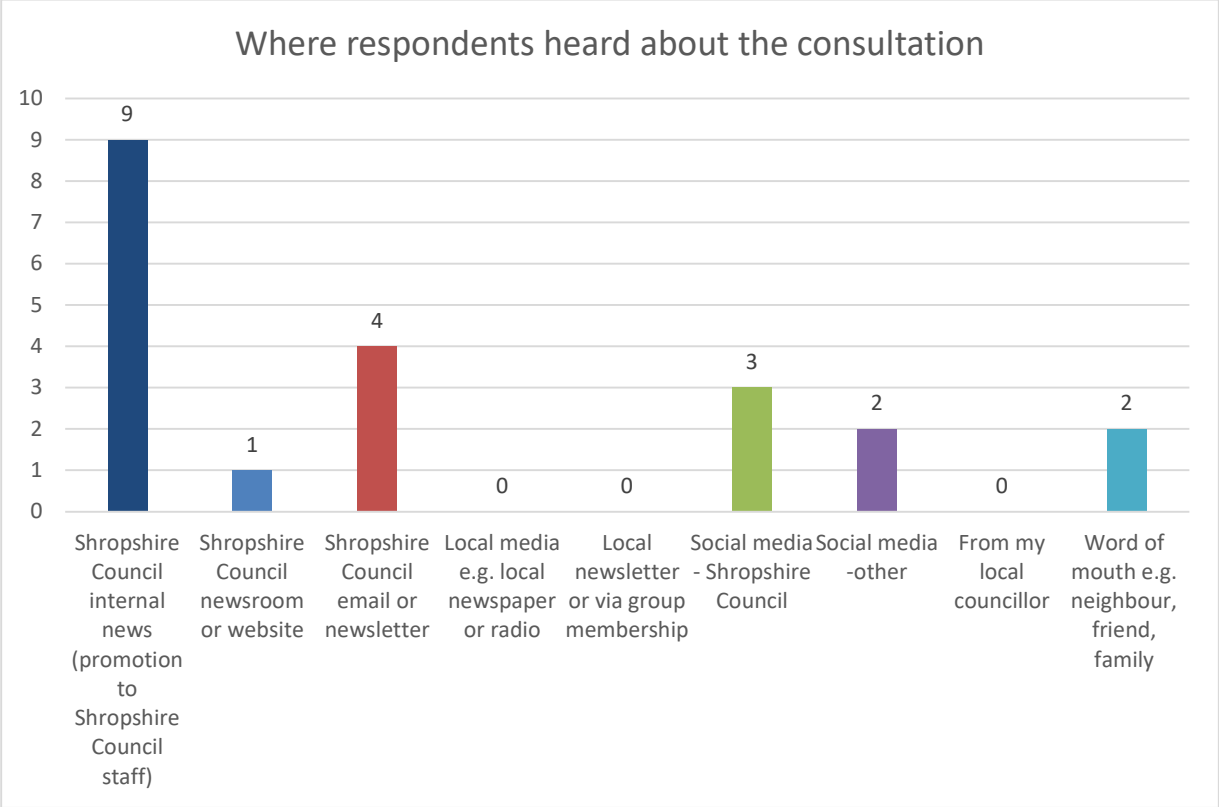
Across both proposals, respondents emphasised the preventative value of day services in maintaining independence, supporting carers, and delaying the need for more intensive or residential care. Many suggested that lower attendance reflected reduced referrals, transport constraints and limited promotion rather than a lack of need and expressed concern that closing or relocating services would result in increased isolation, deterioration in wellbeing and greater long-term costs to the wider health and care system.

3 Professionals and stakeholders

The Day Centres consultation included a survey of the professionals and stakeholders to explore their opinions on the proposals. The survey included similar questions as seen in the clients and carers survey. This survey gained 24 online responses and there was also an email response.

Question 1 asked how the professionals and stakeholders found out about this consultation. 21 people answered and in general, they found out via Shropshire Council internal news: 43%. Figure 29 shows the results in full.

Figure 29 –How professionals and stakeholders found out about the consultation.



As the figure shows, in general the respondents heard about the survey through Shropshire Council internal news, but also by other Shropshire Council based promotion. The respondents also found out by Shropshire Council email or newsletter, and Shropshire Council based social media; 19% (4 responses) respectively. 5% (1 response) also heard from Shropshire Council website or newsroom. The rest heard from word of mouth or other social media; 10% respectively (2 responses). This shows that overall, the respondents found out via Shropshire Council, which might suggest that the respondents will be mainly Shropshire Council employees or part of the service Shropshire Council provides.

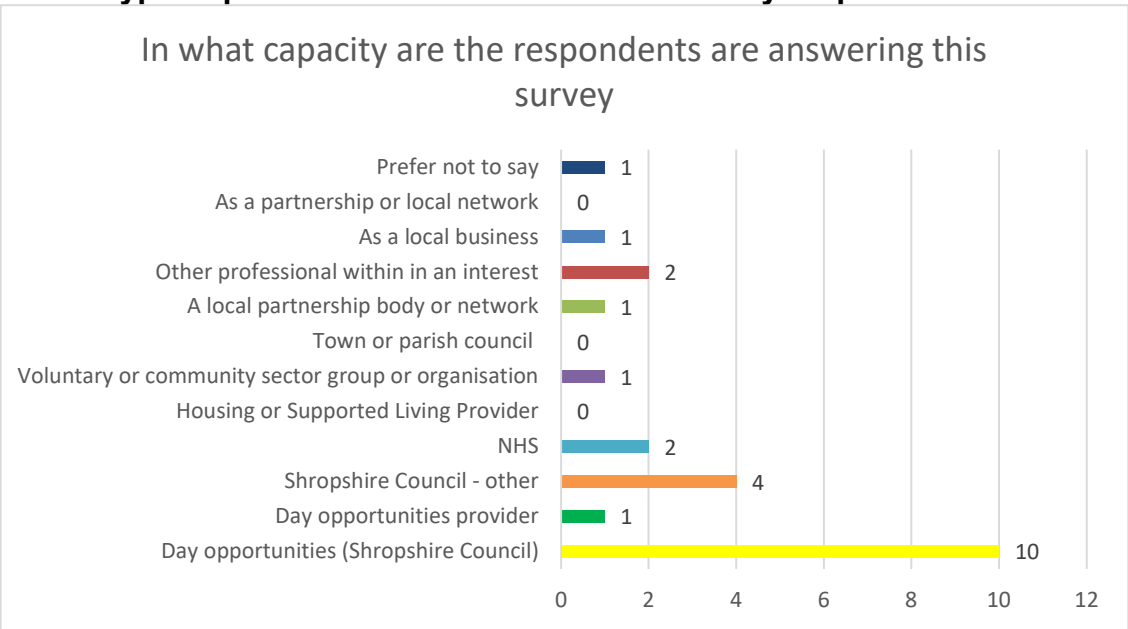
There were 2 comments as well, which are:

- *Shropshire Council staff.*
- *Through work.*

Question 2 asked in which capacity they were answering this survey, and overall, of the

23 people who responded, the majority were answering as providers or facilitators of Shropshire Council managed day opportunities. Figure 30 shows the full split.

Figure 30 –Type of professional and stakeholder survey respondents.



This shows that most of the respondents are answering in the capacity of Shropshire Council; 45% (10 responses) are answering as Day Opportunities (Shropshire Council) and 18% (4 responses) answering as Shropshire Council (Other). After this, 9% (2 responses) are other professionals with an interest and NHS, and 5% (1 response) each are from a Day Opportunities provider, a voluntary or community sector group or organization, a local partnership body or network, as a local business and those that would prefer not to say.

There was one comment on this section, which was:

- *As a friend and LPOA [Lasting Power of Attorney] to someone who attends and relies on Helena Lane Day Centre.*

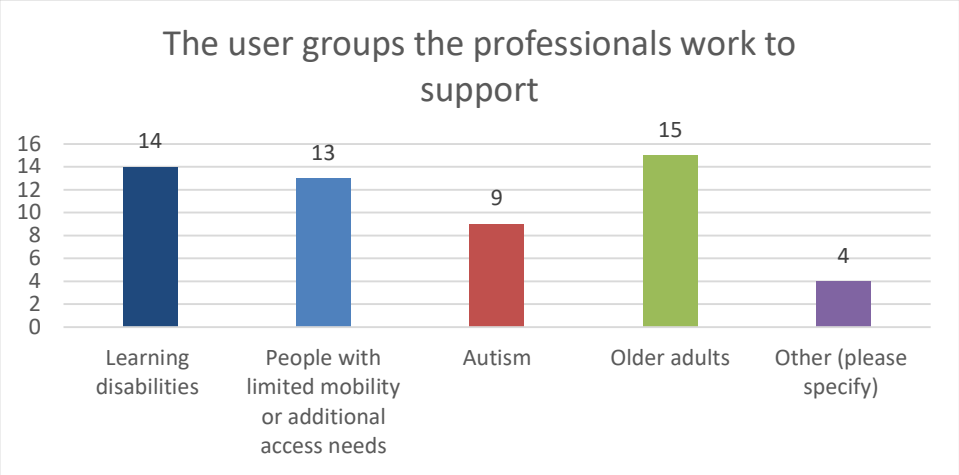
It is not possible to ascertain whether this comment belongs truly to a professional or stakeholder. It is possible that a professional is also a friend and power of attorney to someone, but this might suggest that it is a carer and they might have completed the wrong survey. It does not necessarily need to be disregarded but there should be a balanced awareness.

The professionals were asked if they wanted to name the organization they were responding on behalf of and be included in the consultation. 8 people answered and the responses were

- *Helena Lane (3)*
- *Aquamira (1)*
- *Healthsec Rehab (Healthsec Solutions Ltd)*
- *[name redacted] Indep Case Manager and Rehab services for clients with complex physical disabilities and brain injury [email redacted]*
- *Adult Learning Disability Community Service (Shropshire Telford and Wrekin) - Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation*
- *N/a*

Question 4 asked whether the professionals worked to support any particular user groups and they could choose any that applied. There were mixed responses from the 23 people who answered, which figure 31 shows in full.

Figure 31 –The user groups the professionals support.

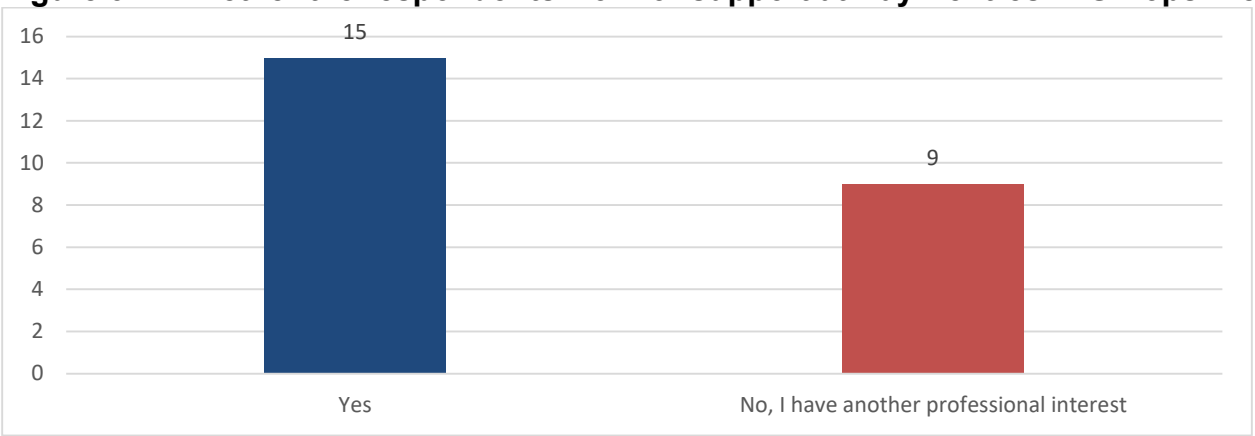


As seen in Figure 31, as people were able to choose all that apply, there is no set group of people the professionals support. It is apparent that older adults make up most of the people that the professionals support; 65% (15 responses), 61% (14 responses) have learning disabilities, 56% (13 responses) have limited mobility or additional access needs, 39% (9 responses) have autism and 17% (4 responses) answered other which were specified in the 3 comments below:

- Vulnerable or isolated local people.
- People with neurological and catastrophic injuries and conditions.
- People with medical requirements, PEGG, Nasal Gastric, skin integrity, etc.
- N/a.

When asked whether they work or provide support at a Day Centre in Shropshire, the response from the 24 people who answered, was ‘yes’ they did; 63% (15 responses).

Figure 32 –Whether the respondents work or support at Day Centres in Shropshire.

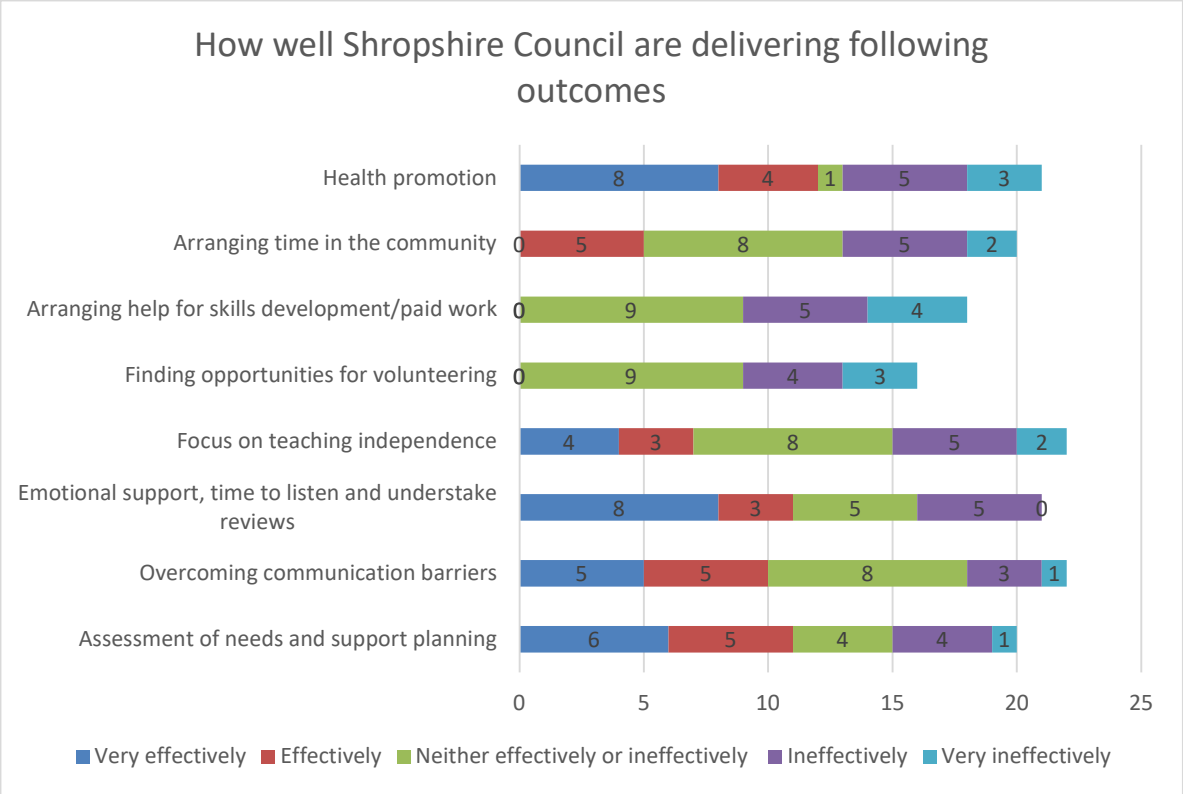


38% (9 responses) answered ‘no’ they didn’t work or support at Day Centres in

Shropshire but have another professional interest.

Question 5 asked how well the professionals feel Shropshire Council's Day Centres are delivering outcomes. They were asked to answer a range between effectively or ineffectively on 8 statements.

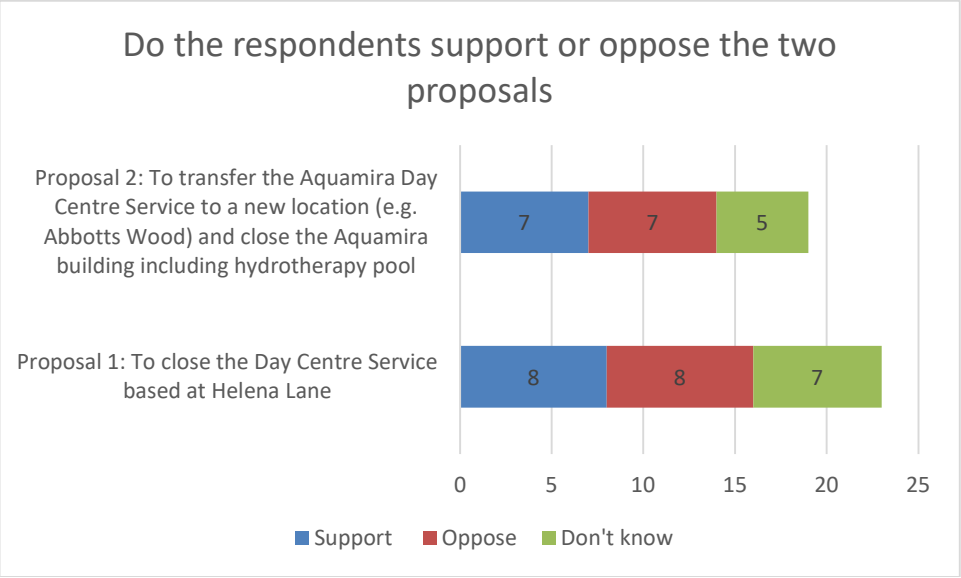
Figure 33 –How effectively professionals feel Shropshire Council delivers outcomes



There are mixed opinions across the statements but overall, there are more neutral and negative feelings towards the statements than positive. There are 5 statements that the respondents feel are neither effectively nor ineffectively delivered. Those are arranging time in the community, arranging help for skills development/paid work, finding opportunities for volunteering, focusing on teaching independence, and overcoming communication barriers. All statements have answers that support ineffectively or very ineffectively. Health promotion, emotional support and assessment of needs and support planning are considered to being delivered effectively.

They were then asked for their overall view on the proposals for Helena Lane and Aquamira. Figure 34 shows a mixed response to the proposal for Helena Lane but support for the proposal for Aquamira.

Figure 34 –Whether the professional support or oppose the proposals.



23 people answered this question and from figure 34, we can see that there are equal responses of support and opposition for the proposal for Aquamira; 35% (7 responses) and 30% (5 responses) do not know. This is similar for Helena Lane; qual responses of support and opposition for the proposal; 38% (8 responses) and 24% (5 responses) who don't know.

They were then asked to explain their view. There were 19 responses which are shown after a table of key themes.

Table 3 – table to show key themes of professional's views.

Theme	Explanation
Balance between modernization and protection of existing provision	There is a divide between those that see the services, especially Helena Lane, as outdated and would be better replaced by community-based models, and those who view the services as irreplaceable for people with high levels of dependency.
Concern about loss of specialist support	Hydrotherapy emerges as a key issue. Many respondents emphasize its therapeutic value and highlight the lack of alternative provision locally. Others acknowledge the benefits but argue the pool is financially unsustainable, staff intensive and underused.
Lack of viable alternatives and rural access issues	Respondents question whether realistic alternatives exist, particularly in South Shropshire. The comments underline anxiety that service changes may increase isolation, reduce preventive support, and accelerate the need for residential care.
Financial pressures acknowledged but contested	Respondents recognise the Council's financial constraints and the high operating costs of buildings and facilities; there is disagreement about how value is defined. Some argue that services should not be judged purely on financial performance, emphasising long-term preventative value and cost avoidance. Others support rationalisation, closure of specific elements (such as the pool), or consolidation as unavoidable given budget pressures.
Workforce culture, skills and	Some respondents raise concerns about service culture and

service quality concerns	delivery, particularly within day opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Themes include insufficient focus on independence, inconsistent quality of activities, limited training, and a need for more person-centred, skilled approaches. In contrast, others strongly defend staff expertise and commitment, especially in services supporting older people, highlighting high levels of training and specialist care.
Calls for alternative models rather than full closure	Rather than a binary choice between closure and retention, many comments propose middle-ground solutions. These include closing or repurposing specific elements, shared-use or partnership models, rental income, community hubs, or asset transfer arrangements. This reflects a desire to retain community value while addressing financial sustainability.
Emphasis on dignity, wellbeing and preventive outcomes	Underlying many responses is a strong values-based theme: the importance of dignity, social connection, independence, and mental and physical wellbeing. Respondents frequently link day services to prevention—reducing loneliness, delaying residential care, supporting carers, and maintaining health—arguing that these outcomes should be central to decision-making.

The key themes show mixed responses, which corresponds to the mixed responses to whether the professionals support or oppose. Concerns about the potential loss of specialist provision are prominent, especially in relation to the hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira. Many respondents highlight its therapeutic and preventative value and note the limited availability of accessible alternatives locally, while others acknowledge the benefits but question its financial sustainability. There are differing views on whether current services, particularly at Helena Lane, remain appropriate or whether more community-based and independence-focused models would better meet future needs. Alongside this, respondents raise concerns about the availability and suitability of alternative services, particularly in South Shropshire, with transport, accessibility, and rurality identified as key challenges.

Comments

- *Aquamira Day Opportunities for profound and multiple disabilities - In the first instance I oppose this but am open to a change of mind. Firstly, I am not wholly convinced a consultation can take place when there is not a clear outline of how this will work in the Abbots Wood environment. I think both the Aquamira manager and senior should have had time to look around the building to see if it will work sufficiently for the vulnerable adults that attend our service. Also, the logistics of the environment - Where will be position the specialist equipment such as Acheeva beds, multi-sensory furnishings etc. Will the care areas be sufficient to our requirements, is the building safe for people who may abscond or may be vulnerable when using bathroom spaces in a building that other more independent S/Users? I think both the manager & senior should have been able to visit the space and have time to consider the logistics. Speaking regularly with parents/carers there has been a serious concern that there will be no space for a quiet sensory area due to people with sensory sensitivities such as Autism.*
- *Helena Lane: services currently offered to individuals can be far better met within the local community of Ludlow. People with LD are currently isolated/segregated at Helena Lane ~ accessing community services would not only meet needs but*

would increase the profile of service users. Aquamira: all current services offered can easily be replicated at Abbots Wood with the added benefit of integration. It could be argued that hydrotherapy would be a loss however, for individuals to truly benefit from this therapy, individuals require a targeted regime of exercise as opposed to "leisure/relaxation" sessions.

- *Helena Lane provides support & some normality & independence to those who are totally dependent on others to care for them and would others be confined to their own homes. It offers stimulation via art & craft & opportunity to meet others. Invaluable to the elder's infirm.*
- *Within the consultation proposal it does not state what alternative measures for accessing activities such as hydrotherapy have been considered. Many of the service users are unable to access community leisure centres due to a lack of changing spaces, lack of wheelchair accessibility and a lack of warm water swimming pools that would allow someone with temperature regulation difficulties to access a pool. The world health organisation recommends 150 minutes of activity for all adults for health and wellbeing purposes. Many of the day-service service users are unable to achieve this due to a lack of facilities that meet their needs within the community. The hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira is a facility that allows certain people to access an activity that would meet their health and wellbeing needs.*
- *This is a wonderful facility which has been underused for years and charities can't afford to use it so much of it remains unused. It is a disgrace the council has not supported the community for which it was built. A cynical proposal to further reduce use and allow a different agenda.*
- *I can see both sides on Aquamira, it is an expensive building to run with the pool, my suggestion is to shut the pool as there is no external interest in purchases, 3 staff oversee its day-to-day running, and also takes 3 staff per session.*
- *The atmosphere in Helena Lane is nonexistent. The staff are not approachable, warm or proactive.*
- *The pool is bleeding excess amounts of money, staff are providing the pool and plant room support and getting nothing back, e.g. no extra pay, staff come in early occasionally to check the pool especially if problems the day before, a weekly backwash takes the staff 2 full mornings usually a Monday and a Friday. When the pool has been used by Aquamira in the past it swallows up 3 staff with one S/U for up to a hour or more, impacting on other activities, personal care and the support of other needs e.g., drinks and morning PEG flushes and support.*
- *Helena Lane: the day centre is a service, it is not run like a business, inevitably it won't make money like a business, but what it will do is support the community, people who are alone or have a lack of support both physically and socially. Whether that is a requirement to bath or to socialise (amongst many other reasons), people have a right to a service, just like people have a right to a service like the police or ambulance. For the service to thrive and for it to realistically work: - staff need to be replaced when they have left. So that the service isn't stretched when people need to go AL or sickness and we can do open days for the public. - There needs to be a minibus service so that people who cannot travel can attend and so that we can offer trips or days out. - There needs to be a regular community kitchen. - If there is a lack of resources for media, then allow staff to make and print leaflets - there needs to be a front of house receptionist at least 8 hours a week, not to do key working admin but for the actual day service to operate well and for welcoming people in. - All services at Helena lane need to operate here like hairdressers, voluntary serrvice etc. so that people can be sign*

posted. Rooms need to be opened up, especially the inner garden instead of shrinking to a small size and not offering sports in the physio room unless booked and paid, the rooms are not being used. - Cooking groups and other groups like art etc. need to operate again. - Allow singers and reptile people in etc. for entertainment - reconnect with the community. These are just a few examples of things that we used to offer and under the guise of its not making money the council has systematically closed them down one by one, so that the service for older people (and ALD) has now shrank to the bare bones, also other services were either closed down or relocated like Hands Together. We are always told what we can do and the onerous is put on us, when it has been the council who has shrunken it, again it's not a business it never was, it is a service!

- *Helena Lane provides Day Services to elderly people, but I feel that Shropshire Council have let us down with no support or any input on supporting the existing day care service. This service provides highly skilled care; all staff are fully trained in all aspects of care which are used every day with the service users. There is no other Elderly Day Care Service in South Shropshire. If this service is removed, then the vulnerable with become more vulnerable. It delays the process of person having to go into full time care (residential); which in turn saves the council money in the long run! Removing the service will cause high risk of isolation and loneliness, which in turn can cause depression and poor mental health. Our aim at the centre is to provide and encourage independence for people to stay in their own homes as long as possible.*
- *This is the only day service in south Shropshire for the elderly. Ludlow being elderly retiring town the need is great if the council took time to invest and promote this service.*
- *I've worked at Helena Lane for 14 years in Day services. We provide a very high standard of care and support in promoting independence and wellbeing. All staff are fully trained in all aspects of care from dementia training to dysphasia training and all other necessary training needs to provide a safe place for these elderly people, to give their loved ones/carers piece of mind and a necessary break they need. There is no other day care centre in south Shropshire that offers what we do! I feel Shropshire Council have let us down, we have no back up from them, no referrals mainly as Transport has been removed. How many 80-year-olds do you know that can drive themselves to day care?? After the pandemic in 2020 our numbers dropped dramatically so we decided to make a leaflet to hand out in the community. Shropshire council need to invest and promote our service, with Leaflets, signage to where we are as so many people didn't even know we are even here! even some locals didnt know of the building!. Ludlow is a retirement town and with the right advertising and support from the council this situation can be turned around.*
- *I appreciate that the pool is coming an awful lot of money, close the pool, keep the building open and rent it to others, we use the building in our operating hours.*
- *P1 Closure of any service is a concern due to the lack of alternative solutions or care providers in the South of Shropshire; it is difficult weighing this up with the financial crisis and the requirement for immediate budget cuts. There have been numerous opportunities to develop the service and co-work with other organisations to build a dementia/ageing people health and social care hub in the South, but this would require solid project planning, commitment and time which sadly no longer seems viable. P2 A loss of a resource (pool) is preferable to full closure and if there are alternative suitable, under-utilised locations this makes financial sense.*

- *I refer especially to Aquamira, as I have several clients who attend there using the services via Healthsec/Hydrotherapy/ Aquatic therapy is a well evidenced and documented therapy, which benefits those clients who cannot access gyms or other exercise venues. There are limited venues available in Shropshire, and to lose this facility would be yet another deprivation for the disabled people of Shropshire. The facility is underused and under supported but only because it has not been advertised nor made available to therapists and disabled. No thought has been given to making this a viable proposition as I know many Neuro and MSK therapists who would value access to such a facility for their clients. Can the Council not think of this in another way to make it an opportunity, and a partnership with those who will make use of it.*
- *Expensive and underused.*
- *I have previous experience working within Shropshire council's day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. I have worked in many services across the country and was shocked when I started in Shropshire at how dated and unprogressive the services are…There is minimal focus on development, independence and offering experience, too many staff work as carers (and) do not support workers... Lack of transport and staffing means social community activities can't happen as readily as people would like…training. More training needs to be made mandatory, such as autism training, disabilities training, and person-centred active support training...The services need to invest in staff with specialist skills to run meaningful sessions, such as drama, crafts, cooking, photography, pottery, life skills, education and these staff need to be focused on running and planning sessions and the support workers can concentrate on supporting…NB the pool at Aquamira would be a real loss if used correctly if could be a real pull for people to use internal services.*
- *Purpose of this submission I am writing to formally respond to the current consultation regarding the proposed closure of the Aquamira Day Centre site, with particular emphasis on the hydrotherapy pool, and to request that the Council actively explores viable alternatives to closure. This submission proposes that the Council consider retaining Aquamira in its current form, or partnership-based, rental, shared-use, or community asset transfer models, either to preserve the hydrotherapy facility specifically or to repurpose the wider building as a business-led community health and wellbeing hub. As no final decision has yet been taken, there remains a short but critical opportunity to explore credible, deliverable alternatives that could prevent the irreversible loss of an important local asset. 2. Our organisation has seen steady growth in rehabilitation activity, including: • Increased utilisation of hydrotherapy sessions and reflecting rental payments to the council. • Rising referral interest for complex neurological and orthopedic rehabilitation. • Growing demand for integrated, non-NHS therapeutic provision. This pattern reflects a wider unfulfilled need within the community for clinician-led, accessible, preventative rehabilitation services and demonstrates that the hydrotherapy pool is not underutilized but increasingly relied upon as part of effective rehabilitation pathways. The growing use of the facility indicates both clinical value and operational viability, strengthening the case for retaining the hydrotherapy pool as part of any future use of the site. 4. Importance of the Hydrotherapy Facility The hydrotherapy pool is not an ancillary or recreational feature; it is a critical therapeutic resource. Warm-water therapy is clinically recognised to: Improve mobility and joint function. • Reduce pain, muscle spasm, and stiffness. • Support respiratory function. • Enhance mental wellbeing. • Enable safe movement for individuals unable to exercise on land. For some of our service*

users, hydrotherapy is the only environment in which meaningful physical activity is possible, helping to prevent further decline and reducing reliance on more intensive health or care interventions. This certainly includes those who are unable to walk. The loss of this facility would remove a key preventative resource and is likely to increase downstream pressure on NHS and social care services. 5. Potential for Alternative Use and Sustainable Operation Beyond its current function, the scale, layout, and location of the Aquamira site present a strong opportunity for alternative or expanded use. The building could realistically support a business-led community hub model, incorporating: • Rental consulting, therapy and office rooms for health, rehabilitation, and wellbeing providers. • Shared space for charities and voluntary organisations. • A community café and supported employment opportunities. • Facilities for skills development, supported work, and independent living training • Inclusive community activities aimed at reducing isolation and improving resilience Such a model would allow the Council to: • Retain community benefit • Offset operational costs through rental income • Encourage collaboration between statutory, private, and voluntary sectors • Align with preventative health, wellbeing, and inclusion strategies. 6. Rationale for Retention or Repurposing Community need does not exist in neat categories. Individuals may require support temporarily or long-term due to: Injury or illness. • Disability. • Caring responsibilities. • Ageing. • Sudden life changes. Local, flexible, inclusive facilities enable communities to respond early, compassionately, and cost-effectively. Removing such spaces reduces choice, limits preventative options, and shifts pressure elsewhere in the system. Once lost, facilities of this nature are extremely difficult and costly to replace. 7. Request to the Council I respectfully request that the Council: 1. Pause irreversible decisions relating to the hydrotherapy facility. 2. Actively explore: Rental partnerships. o Shared-use agreements. o Business-led or community asset transfer models. 3. Engage with interested businesses, charities and community organisations to assess feasibility. Healthsec Rehab would be interested in hearing any proposition. 4. Consider an exploratory, time-limited meeting to evaluate whether a sustainable alternative to closure can be developed. Any such meeting would be focused on deliverability, particularly within the consultation timeframe. 8. Conclusion Closing Aquamira would not only affect current service users, including those with the most complex needs, but would also remove a vital option for future members of our community who may one day require support themselves. The increasing use of the hydrotherapy pool and the growth of rehabilitation services on site underline that this facility meets a real, growing, and ongoing need. The current consultation period offers an opportunity to preserve that value through collaborative, sustainable alternatives rather than irreversible closure. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute constructively to discussions within the next 14 days and am happy to meet in person or online.

- *To better use the council funding and to allow individuals an opportunity to explore different opportunities that will help promote independence.*

As Shropshire Council has carried out an Equalities and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment (ESIHA), the professionals were asked to comment on whether there would be any other impact or risks to the proposals. The following comments reflect concerns raised by professionals and stakeholders regarding the potential impacts of the proposed service changes, particularly in relation to Helena Lane and Aquamira. The feedback focuses on anticipated risks to individuals with complex and high-level needs, including impacts on mental health, wellbeing, safety, and continuity of care. Respondents highlight

issues relating to vulnerability, access to specialist support, the suitability of alternative provision, and the potential for increased isolation and inequality. Several comments also raise concerns about the adequacy of current impact assessment and the potential for increased pressure on health and social care services if preventative provision is reduced. Together, these comments provide insight into the perceived risks and unintended consequences that respondents believe should be carefully considered as part of decision-making.

Comments

- *See notes above - specifically in relation to the disproportionate effect on individuals and their families / carers who have Profound and Multiple Disabilities (PMLD).*
- *Risks - S/Users with no road awareness who have a likelihood of absconding or tailgating onto the car park. S/Users who when supported to bathroom areas and require time alone may be vulnerable if Abbots Wood service users are going independently to the toilet areas. Behaviours from S/users who do not wish to be in busy crowded areas with lots of noise and movement. Also, the manager/senior offices are quite a distance from the suggested main area that may become Aquamira, I suggest the office has alarm buttons so that staff can call them if needed.*
- *I can confirm on behalf of one of the attendees that the effect of Helena Lane closing would have a disastrous effect on her mental health & wellbeing.*
- *Please consider ensuring all equipment that is regularly used is transferred if Aquamira is to be closed, such as the sensory room, positioning beds and personnel care equipment.*
- *The transfer to another location could be distressing for some of our service users and there could be health and safety issues for certain service users.*
- *Aquamira struggles to go out as we support individuals who need personal care at certain times, people who need flushes and medication. Activities here are based around sound, sight, smell and touch. I feel inclusion has not been thought of for our client group, due to the nature of their care and medical needs they can't always go out to the shops or a farm etc, just for a trip out, are these trips out necessary to a coffee shop for all centres, then for Aquamira it would be a insult to take NIL by mouth people to a coffee shop.*
- *Depression, suicide, bad health, dissolution of community, distrust and contempt for the powers that be, potential to pass problems onto future generations, lack of support and bearing on families and carers.*
- *If this service is removed, then the vulnerable will become more vulnerable. Removing the service will cause high risk of isolation and loneliness, which in turn can cause depression and poor mental health.*
- *If Helena Lane closes it will leave people venerable and isolated from the community.*
- *Other organisations do not have the appropriate training to assist our service users.*
- *The people we support are very vulnerable, they have no voice, we advocate for them, we support them in daily skills, care, eating, PEG tube feeding, medications, seizures. There is more to Aquamira that people don't see, we can't always be in the public eye with the care and feeding tube process.*
- *I do not think the council has considered a wide enough scope for their*

assessment and it is very narrow and short-sighted. A wider and longer consultation is required to reach out to the disabled population, and more so with a high number of young people / adults who were brain injured at birth within the county.

- *No there are alternative services.*
- *Anticipated Additional Impacts and Risks Yes. In addition to those identified within the Equalities and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment, there are further significant impacts and risks arising from the proposed closure of Aquamira and the hydrotherapy facility that Shropshire Council should consider: 1. Increased pressure on health and social care services: The hydrotherapy pool provides preventative, non-NHS therapeutic support for individuals with complex, long-term conditions. Its loss is likely to result in deterioration in physical and mental health for some users, increasing reliance on GP services, hospital outpatient care, pain management pathways, and social care packages. This represents a shift from preventative provision to higher-cost, reactive services. 2. Disproportionate impact on people with complex and non-standard needs: Many individuals who rely on hydrotherapy and flexible rehabilitation services do not fit neatly into NHS eligibility criteria or standard care pathways. Closure risks excluding people whose needs are complex, fluctuating, or long-term, particularly those living with neurological conditions, chronic pain, profound disability, or post-injury rehabilitation needs. 3. Reduced access due to transport, capacity, and suitability constraints: Alternative facilities, where they exist, are often limited by long waiting lists, restricted eligibility, unsuitable environments, or significant travel distances. For individuals with mobility limitations, fatigue, or support needs, travelling outside the local area may be impractical or impossible, resulting in effective loss of access rather than simple displacement of provision. 4. Increased health inequality and loss of preventative capacity: The closure would remove an accessible, flexible, community-based facility at a time when demand for rehabilitation and well-being support is increasing. These risks widen health inequalities, particularly for those unable to self-fund private alternatives, and undermine early intervention and prevention objectives. 5. Impact on independence, wellbeing, and social inclusion: Beyond physical rehabilitation, Aquamira supports independence, confidence, and social connection. Loss of this space risks increased isolation, reduced independence, and deterioration in mental wellbeing for individuals who rely on structured, supportive environments to remain active and engaged. 6. Loss of a viable and increasingly utilised asset: The hydrotherapy pool is now not underutilised; use is increasing alongside growing rehabilitation activity, referrals, and demand for non-NHS therapeutic provision. Closure would remove a functioning, in-demand asset without fully exploring viable partnership, rental, or shared-use alternatives that could preserve community benefit and reduce financial risk. 7. Risk of irreversible loss before alternatives are explored: Once specialist facilities such as hydrotherapy pools are closed or decommissioned, they are rarely replaced. Proceeding without fully exploring sustainable alternatives risks a permanent loss of capacity that cannot be easily recreated in the future. In summary, the proposed closure presents risks not only to equality and inclusion, but also to preventative health provision, system-wide demand, community resilience, and long-term cost effectiveness. These impacts reinforce the importance of exploring partnership-based, business-led, or community-use alternatives before any irreversible decisions are made.*

Question 10 asks whether the professionals or their organisations provide any services

that support people with learning disabilities, older adults, and those who benefit from day opportunities.

Figure 35 –Activities or services provided by the professionals or their organisations.

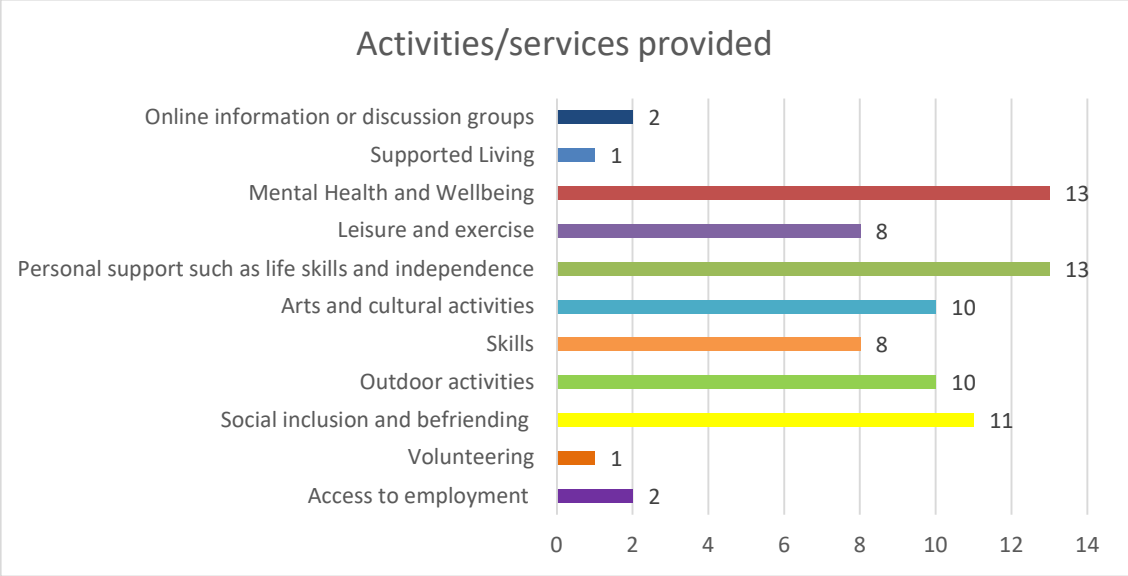


Figure 35 shows a focus on mental health and personal support as they make up 81% of the responses respectively. Supported living and volunteering are provided less, 6% respectively.

There were also 10 comments, which are below in full:

- *We are a specialist multidisciplinary (MTD) health service for adults who have a learning disability - and often concurrent physical disability. We offer specialist assessment and interventions from a range of disciplines Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Psychiatry, Psychology, Nursing, and Dietetics.*
- *Aquamira provides a high level of support for those with profound and multiple disabilities. This includes specialist food preparation and drinks. PEGG and nasal gastric trained. Medication and high levels of personal care and support throughout the day. We also offer person centred creative/sensory activities that are suitable for particular preferences/needs. This includes all aspects of the list above, but we are also centred on maintaining health and well-being and work with health professionals to achieve a high standard of support.*
- *I support my friend by organising her care and wellbeing and dealing with her finances.*
- *LD physiotherapy.*
- *Activities within Aquamira.*
- *My involvement with the facility ceased some time ago because of the increased cost of providing a service of social inclusion in the building.*
- *Personal care, support to feed, PEG feeding, medications, some people may need 1-1 support at certain times of the day for toilets. Drum for fun sessions, the group we support like chat and quiet time, enjoy the sensory room, story sessions.*
- *Outdoor garden leisure/exercise we encourage movement the best way we can with people who may lack mobility.*

- *Private bespoke rehab packages, trial for independent living.*

Question 11 asked if the respondents were service providers, could they offer alternative support to any individual and their carers/families impacted by the proposals. They were asked to consider any opportunities they feel are viable. Out of the 10 people who commented, there are mixed responses with some respondents stating there are no alternative provisions for either Helena Lane and Aquamira, and some respondents give some alternative options such as Mayfair and Hands Together Ludlow, and Albert Road and Abbotts Woods for Aquamira.

Comments

- *Aquamira has had opportunities/suggestions of room hire, particularly in the evenings for local community classes etc. but due to red tape this does not happen. It is unbelievable how often the pool is not able to run despite the high level of maintenance and cost it takes to keep it running. It swallows up both money and staff time and has become a drain on resources. It will be very sad to see it go but the cost & time to keep it running is no longer an option.*
- *I think the 8 people will have a better experience at Mayfair in Church Stretton or Hands Together Ludlow. Four Rivers or other care homes could also diversify into offering some day care/ bathing.*
- *A conversation today from the advocates who visited, suggestion: Albert Road and Abbots Wood, merge the able centres together, Aquamira move across to Albert Road, and have a look at all centres and look and reassess people's needs, if lack of mobility, want a quieter service etc. to move to Aquamira.*
- *There is no other service like Helena Lane that has trained staff, Purpose built building with all the facilities in place such as adapted baths, laundry, all on one level, and good car parking. This building was left to the elderly people of Ludlow by William George Lane, in memory of his wife Helena.*
- *There is no other day service like Helena Lane in South Shropshire.*
- *To rent out the pool at Aquamira, for Aquamira not to run and provide the pool any longer. 20 minutes a week is of no benefit to our clients, it takes 3 staff and at least an hour to support 1 client. Which sadly parents and carers outside Aquamira appear not to understand this and want their individual in the pool as often as they can.*
- *The only other accessible hydro facility is in Telford (Hadley) and oversubscribed - please look at this model and think outside of the box to develop Aquamira centre.*
- *There are alternative more cost-effective options.*
- *Without Aquamira there will be no hydro for those who need it.*

More people answered the following question (18 responses), which asked for ideas and aspirations for improving and modernizing day opportunities provision in Shropshire. The comments highlight a strong call for needs-led, differentiated provision, emphasising that people with profound disabilities require quieter, specialist environments that cannot be accommodated within more active or generic service models. Respondents stress the importance of retaining accessible service bases and better using existing facilities through investment, promotion, partnership working, and modernisation rather than closure. Overall, there is support for reform and cost-effectiveness, but with decisions grounded in realism about individual capabilities, safeguarding, and long-term sustainability. The 18 comments are seen in full below:

Comments

- *Supportive of a modern approach to day services, that support access to individual local communities and amenities, as well as social interaction with peers. We are supportive of equitable access to resources such as hydrotherapy pools. We are supportive of creative problem-solving to enable ongoing and future hydrotherapy access.*
- *Perhaps an alternative base could be used for people from other services that regularly access community activities, regular bus trips and outdoor walking groups. And the people who are most vulnerable, seniors or choose a quieter pace of life due to mobility, health needs etc. should have bigger space. I also think day services could hire out community based activates and earn some money that way. Yoga groups, reading groups, creative art sessions etc. This would generate extra income and highlight council spaces as places for the community. Pay as you go sessions may also be easier for people rather than contracts and vast amounts of paperwork, more like a village hall rental. As for improving and modernising.... It's doubtful that will happen for a while, Aquamira is re-locating & downsizing due to lack of Shropshire Council funding and cost effectiveness....so I hardly think things are going to improve or modernise for a very long time!*
- *Use and manage the facilities you have, advertise availability and liaise with others working with the client groups. And make services affordable.*
- *If Aquamira has to close, these people need a quieter service, AW is a very noisy service with very able clients, which Aquamira is not. Clients at Aquamira have profound disabilities and some are not mobile and, in a wheelchair, we do not need clients at AW rushing around and bouncing into our area and disturbing, falling over the chairs, or any behaviour issues occurring. I feel that no thought has been put into this. Could Abbots Wood and Albert Road merge, both active mobile services. Aquamira moves to Albert Road say, and then individual packages are looked at, at Abbotts Wood and Albert Road on if any of their client's need and benefit from a quieter service. I feel that our clients at Aquamira don't have a voice, some do not have people to speak up for them, we are an easier group to move as there will be no come back, tick boxes to say you have and that's that.*
- *More cost effective, busier and fuller of life.*
- *Look at people's needs, not all fits one box, individuals at Aquamira will never be able to volunteer in the community or apply for a job, these are their parents' aspirations but not realistic. We do not all fit in the same box.*
- *Shropshire Council needs to invest and promote in the day service. With other agencies and professionals.*
- *Shropshire council should invest in and promote this service instead of forgetting it due to being out of Shrewsbury and having done for many years.*
- *Helena Lane is the perfect setting and originally built for the older people of Ludlow and Surrounding areas. It has facilities especially for day care i.e. bathing laundry, all on one level good car parking.*
- *Aquamira offers a service to individuals with profound disabilities, we look after these people in a very good manner, they are safe, we carry out sensory activities that stimulate, provide feeding through tubes, give medication that can be life treating if they don't receive it.*
- *The service needs a base: an accessible, open building which is run by adults with learning disabilities. Examples of activities- on site working cafe, gardening group (Thrive model of therapeutic gardening), targeted social skills/independent living learning, regular social, art and craft, exercise, wellbeing support-a much wider*

programme of activities-some could run for specific periods of time and could be certificated. Staffing needs to be more flexible, operational hours are currently very short Mon-Fri. Majority of staff are 'support workers' and not trained in delivering specific activities, a wider range of staff posts recruited to suit the service need (sports trained, art trained etc.). More specific programme planning could also attract volunteers and students training in these areas. Own transport/drivers like council run transport is unreliable with inflexible times.

- *I am a trustee for Headway Shropshire - a charity which provides services for those who cannot obtain what they want via social services and the NHS. There are many organisations who want to do a better job in better facilities - to lose this will be another loss to the county.*
- *Modernise them. They are antiquated and not suitable for people attending.*
- *Discuss rental of the facility in some way rather than closure.*
- *The opening hours of services bring these in line with external providers and reduce to 6 hrs. per day, further savings can be made to the proposed outlined in the consultation by reducing staffing and running costs by considering this. If service users are out from the service base, e.g. for activities, why pay running costs of a base? Could a social hub be used instead for meetings (to) start at end of day? 10 plus years ago there were activity groups supported off base but due to various reasons these activities no longer take place (mainly staffing), it would be good to explore these again as these activities were held in venues away from bases.*
- *N/a*
- *See above (2)*

Question 13 then asked how effective supported employment options are within Shropshire of which 18 people answered and figure 38 shows the results.

Figure 36- How effective the respondents feel supported employment options are.

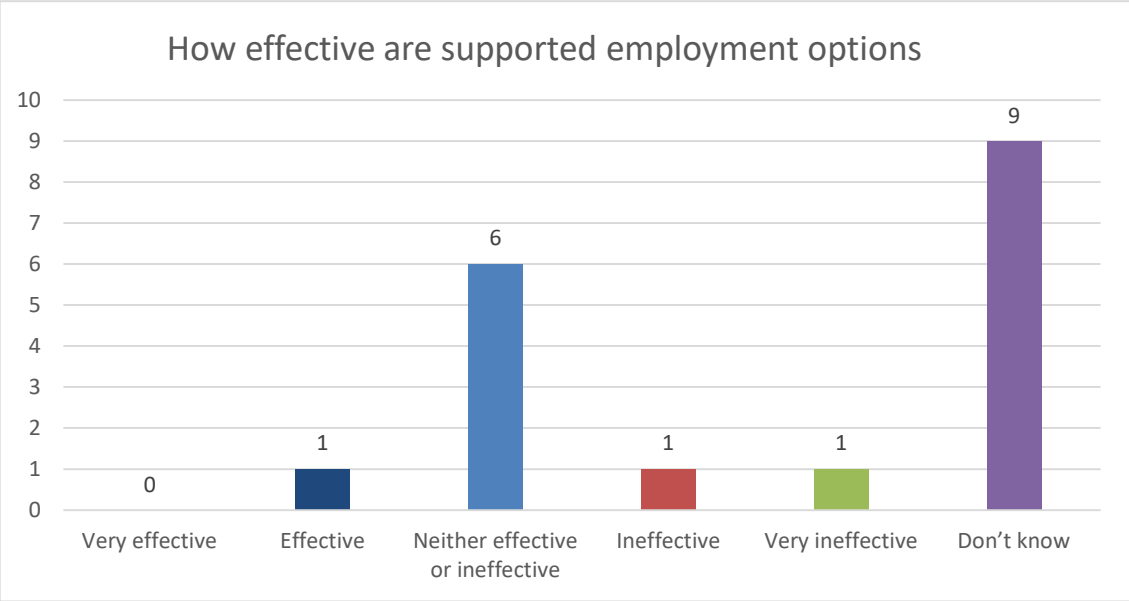


Figure 36 shows that 50% (9 responses) don't know and 33% (6 responses) feel it is neither effective nor ineffective. There are more negative responses, either ineffective or very ineffective, than positive responses.

This was followed by asking the respondents to comment whether they knew of any good practice models or opportunities around supported employment that do not exist currently in Shropshire. Generally, in the 10 responses, the respondents did not have applicable answers. Some comments were more positive, but most respondents do not give any options, which supports the results of the above question.

Comments

- *Perhaps the cabinet would like to discuss supported employment directly with the service user group that attends Aquamira, this is a question you could put to them. You could also speak to parents/carers about supported employment opportunities; it would be interesting to hear the responses. What do you think?*
- *Some of the people attending day centres are also in supported employment through Enable.*
- *I think it's a good service, but the referral process is not clear.*
- *Services users at Aquamira cannot access employment and it is patronising to these people to expect them to.*
- *Not applicable for Aquamira client's base.*
- *See above.*
- *N/or No (4).*

Question 14 asked for further suggestions from the professionals; alternative options to the proposals that would help Shropshire Council to meet needs whilst achieving savings and better value for money. There were 13 responses which suggest that respondents favour reconfiguration, better utilisation, and partnership-based solutions over closure, with a strong emphasis on safeguarding care quality, supporting carers, and improving efficiency through smarter use of existing resources rather than service withdrawal. The comments are seen in full below.

- *The pool has run at an extortionate cost over the years and a drain on staff resources. I am sure the contractors will be very sad if it goes.*
- *Instead of closing the centres why don't the council let out the premises for private functions and events to generate income?*
- *Look at reducing transport costs as many service users have mobility vehicles and are collected on fleet transport.*
- *Use what you have more effectively.*
- *See above for a move to a quieter site, say Albert Road, Louise House etc.*
- *See above with the suggestions of Albert Road and Abbots Wood. Or close the pool fully at £80.000 over head and cost to run and repairs, pool is taking far too many staff, too much money staff to check pool readings. Close the pool fill it in and offer this building/pool covered area as an evening dance studio, yoga classes, Sunday biblical groups. This building is in the middle of a housing estate, why is it not being offered to private people in the evening for a charge, they would learn to open up/ lock up and being charged for any damage they would pay for it. Thus, building is not used enough to the estate.*
- *It's a service, it requires a completely different mindset.*
- *Shropshire Council should invest and work with local GP as they have care coordinators who could direct people to the service and increase numbers. Hands Together was mentioned as an alternative, but this charity is run by volunteers, NOT trained staff. They do not do any PC or 1:1 support which the service users need at Helena Lane. None are trained in Dysphasia Epilepsy Dementia Diabetes*

M&H etc. This is not a like for like option! Service users require a carer/ family to stay with them, and this defeats the object of giving the carers/ family a break that is so needed. At least [at] Helena Lane knows that their loved ones are safe and well cared for and can leave them with confidence.

- *Advertising the centre and promoting the service.*
- *Good project management and consistency are key to modernising the services.*
- *Providing more effective day services in a coordinated way linking to social workers , charities and other private providers could be a way forward here - this may help with supporting those who are isolated and do not have opportunity to exercise - there is likely to be benefit to their mental and physical health, which has wider reaching benefits - healthier people, less care needs and greater participation in life.*
- *As above (2)*

Question 16 asked for any final comments the respondents had to make. There were 8 comments. They are generally mixed but there is general feeling expressed among professionals opposing the proposal out of concern for the people it services, calls for investment in staff, and that it could be retained if promotion was prioritized.

- *Hiring out premises for classes such as yoga during the day as they are always oversubscribed & full in Ludlow. Also hire for meetings and private parties.*
- *Sadly, as stated above there are 3 services in Shrewsbury, and I feel that Aquamira has been targeted due to the lack of communication for the people that are supported. Albert Road renewing the lease?? Could have been stopped and saved money there. Buildings are not being rented out enough.*
- *My concern is if we close what will happen to the people that attend. It is making the vunerable more vulnerable and will cause unnecessary isolation. It will remove any support for the care givers at home and make them at breaking point to then have their loved ones put into residential homes which in turn will cost the council more money.*
- *Low staff morale and sickness are a drain to day ops, so staff need to feel invested in.*
- *I feel that this consultation does not reach all those that this will affect - if it were asked in another way, asking if they would use facilities would gain a different response.*
- *We need a society that realizes growth and is looking after the most vulnerable.*
- *Helena Lane needs to be advertised and promoted and some signage to inform public where we are as so many have stated they didn't know this place existed. Shropshire Council need to invest in and not discard a much-needed service.*
- *N/a.*

Email responses

Like the clients and carers section, there was also an emailed response to the consultation. All personal details have been redacted. This response is also based on experience at Greenacres, though this is also helpful to understand the service Shropshire Council provides as a whole.

The key themes are:

Key gaps/concerns in Shropshire Council day centres (as observed via Greenacres):

- Need more structured progression (e.g. John Muir / Duke of Edinburgh-style challenges), not just "maintenance."
- Limited structured curriculum to build independence with measurable skill hierarchies; Systematic Instruction (TSI) and task adaptations.
- Communication support could be stronger—more consistent use of AAC and clarity on whether "Taking Part" still promotes empowerment through communication.
- Emotional support generally happens, but there's a risk someone could miss out without planned mechanisms.
- Off-site volunteering often depends on proactive parents/carers and declined after COVID—creating inequity.

Employment pathway realism:

- Support for the aim of employment pathways, but warns against false hope when placements don't convert to jobs.
- Notes some employers may be more receptive (examples given), but highlights client vulnerability to exploitation and social-awareness risks in the community.

Strong objection to Aquamira hydrotherapy pool closure:

- Frames hydrotherapy as essential, not a luxury, especially for people with paralysis/complex needs.
- Suggests commissioning an alternative provider if the council can't run it.
- Raises discrimination concern and asks what barriers exist besides cost and how many pools exist locally.

The author of the email also gives some recommendations, which is helpful as it is a recommendation based on real lived experience from a professional standpoint.

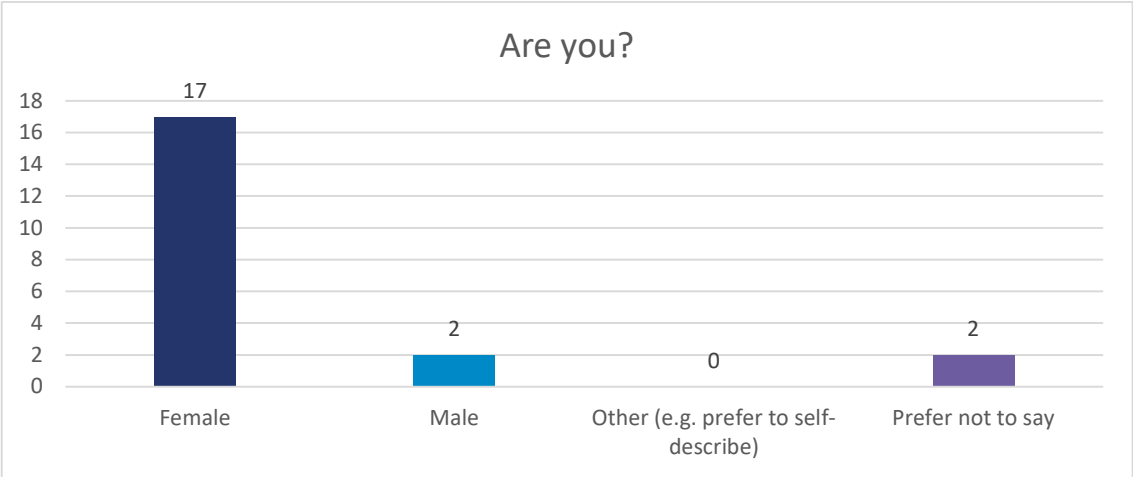
- Implement TSI/Systematic Instruction consistently.
- Build partnerships (e.g. Attingham Park, Food Hub, Friends of Shrewsbury Cemeteries, Landau Talking Therapies, Westhope College, Age UK, dog walking/garden services).
- Explore transport savings via public transport training (reduced reliance on mobility vehicles).
- Expand inclusive fitness options (Keep Fit/Yoga/Pilates) and shift emphasis toward healthy living.
- Ensure access to "success/placements/experiences" isn't limited to those with proactive parents.

About the respondents

The following questions take a similar route to the questions in the client and carers survey, in asking more about the respondents who replied online.

Question 17 asked if the respondents were female or male. In general, like the clients and carers survey, the respondents were female; 81%.

Figure 37 – Gender of the respondents in the professionals and stakeholders survey.



There is more of a mixture of age groups in this survey; 38% (8 responses) are in the 35-44 group, 24% (5 responses) are in the 55-64 group, 14% (3 responses) in the 45-54 group, 10% (2 responses) in the 75-84 group and 5% (1 responses) respectively in the 65-74 group and 'prefer not to say'.

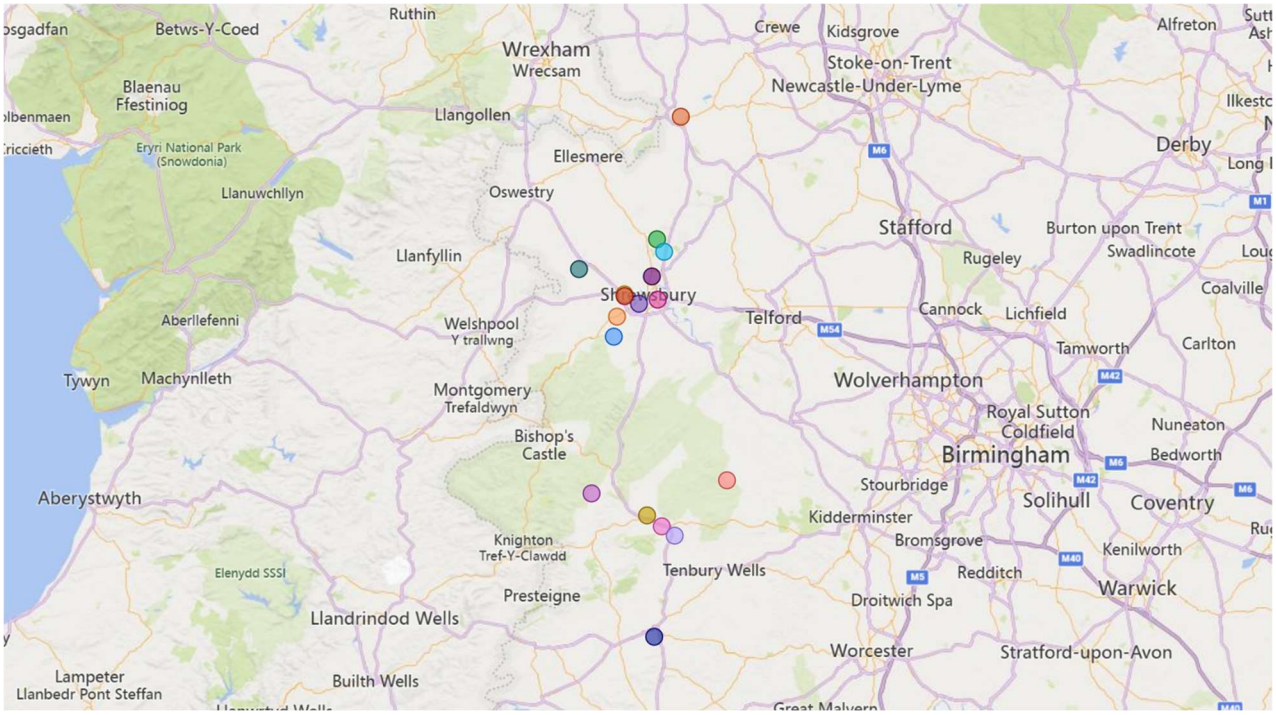
When asked if they regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone, 21 people answered and the majority, 48% (10 responses), answered no. 33% (7 responses) answered yes and 14% (3 responses) preferred not to say.

Question 20 asked for the respondents to state their ethnic origin, and of the 21 people who answered, overwhelmingly 81% (17 responses) describe themselves as white of British, Irish or Welsh descent. The remaining 19% (4 responses) chose to prefer not to say or don't know.

21 respondents answered the religion question and 43% (9 responses) answered Christian, 33% (7 responses) preferred not to say, 19% (4 responses) stated they were of no religion, and 5% (1 response) answered that they practiced Buddhism.

The last question sought to map out where the respondents are based.

Map 2 –Where the respondents of the professionals and stakeholders survey are based.



Section Summary

Professionals and stakeholders raised a broad and interrelated set of concerns about the potential impacts of the proposals, particularly for individuals with high levels of dependency, complex health needs, and limited ability to access alternative provision.

A recurring concern was the loss of specialist and preventative support, most notably in relation to the hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira. Respondents consistently emphasised its therapeutic value for people with complex physical, neurological, and mobility needs, highlighting that suitable alternatives are scarce, often oversubscribed, or physically inaccessible. Many stressed that hydrotherapy is not a discretionary or leisure activity for these individuals, but a critical intervention that supports mobility, pain management, mental wellbeing, and the prevention of further deterioration, with concerns that its removal could increase reliance on NHS and social care services.

There were also strong concerns about the availability and suitability of alternative services, particularly in rural parts of Shropshire. Respondents questioned whether proposed alternatives could realistically meet the needs of people with profound disabilities, dementia, or complex medical requirements, noting issues such as lack of trained staff, insufficient facilities for personal care, sensory needs, or medical interventions, and environments that are too busy or unsuitable for quieter, specialist support. Transport was repeatedly identified as a barrier, with respondents warning that increased travel distances, reduced transport provision, or reliance on carers could lead to reduced attendance, increased isolation, and inequitable access to services.

Another significant theme related to mental health, wellbeing, and safeguarding risks. Professionals expressed concern that changes or closures could have a destabilising effect on vulnerable individuals who rely on routine, familiarity, and trusted relationships with staff. Several respondents anticipated increased risks of loneliness, anxiety, depression, and deterioration in wellbeing if services were withdrawn or relocated without appropriate, individualised transition planning. Concerns were also raised about the

potential impact on carers, with respondents noting that day services provide essential respite and that their loss could place additional strain on families, potentially accelerating the need for residential care.

While many respondents acknowledged the financial pressures facing the Council, there was unease about services being judged primarily on short-term cost rather than long-term value. Professionals highlighted the preventative role of day services in maintaining independence, delaying residential care, and supporting carers, arguing that these outcomes represent cost avoidance rather than inefficiency. Several respondents felt that underuse of certain facilities reflected historic under-investment, limited promotion, and reduced transport rather than a lack of need, and cautioned against closure without fully exploring options to improve utilisation.

Concerns were also raised about service quality, workforce capacity, and culture, particularly within some learning disability provision. Some respondents described outdated models of support, limited focus on independence, and insufficient access to meaningful activities or skills development, while others strongly defended staff expertise, training, and commitment, especially in services supporting older people and those with complex needs. This divergence reinforced the view that a one-size-fits-all approach would be inappropriate, and that different groups require different environments, staffing models, and levels of specialism.

Finally, many professionals expressed frustration that the proposals appeared to present a binary choice between closure and retention, rather than fully exploring alternative operating models. There was strong support for approaches such as reconfiguration, shared use, partnership working, rental or income-generating activity, and community-based hubs that could retain specialist provision while improving financial sustainability. Across these concerns, respondents consistently emphasised the importance of dignity, inclusion, prevention, and realistic assessments of need, urging that decisions should be grounded in the lived realities of the people who rely most on these services.

4 Face-to-face engagement sessions

There were several feedback sessions that took place in order to gather real-life experience and opinions on the proposals. They face to face engagement sessions were designed for clients, carers and professionals. The feedback sessions, allowed for conversational flow, giving more flexibility than the online survey for people's voices to be hear but the discussions were based around a similar structure in questions to the online surveys to ensure all key elements could be covered.

The key themes are set out here. It is useful to note that most feedback was related to the proposal for Aquamira.

Continuity, familiarity, and emotional safety

- Strong emphasis on service users feeling *settled* at current provision, with concern that change could be distressing—especially for people with complex needs, sensory sensitivity, dementia, visual impairment, and PMLD.
- Repeated preference for a "lift and shift" approach (keep staff, routines, and peer groups together) if relocation happens.

The environment matters (quiet, predictable, low stimulation)

- Aquamira is repeatedly valued as calm, spacious, and predictable.
- Abbots Wood is repeatedly described as potentially busier/noisier, raising concerns about dysregulation, distress, and reduced engagement.

Specialist facilities are seen as essential (especially sensory provision)

- The sensory room is the single most consistent "must-have" across family and professional feedback.
- The hydrotherapy pool is viewed as clinically beneficial (especially for PMLD), with concern about loss of access and limited suitable alternatives locally—despite acknowledged underuse linked to staffing/operational constraints.
- Wider concern about whether specialist equipment and spaces can realistically be replicated elsewhere.

Accessibility, dignity, and personal care requirements

- Concerns about whether alternative sites can safely support:
    - wheelchair users and independent movement
    - specialist personal care (e.g., changing beds) with dignity
    - separate/controlled entrances and quieter eating arrangements for people with aspiration/sensory needs

Carer impact and respite

- Day services are described as providing critical respite for carers and essential social contact for service users.
- Fear that closure/relocation could reduce respite (especially if travel increases), pushing families toward unaffordable private care or unsuited community options.

Transport as a major barrier/risk

- Transport is repeatedly flagged as limiting attendance already, and as a key risk to

routine, access, and equity—especially in rural areas.
- Multiple notes that transport should be included in any equality impact assessment.

Financial pressures vs. quality/sufficiency of provision

- Clear understanding that the council faces severe financial pressure and is seeking best value.
- Stakeholders repeatedly stress that cost-saving must not undermine safety, outcomes, and statutory/equality duties.

Need for robust planning, assessment, and co-production

- Calls for thorough options appraisal, equality impact assessment, and joint work across health/social care (including ICB/system-wide discussion).
- Repeated emphasis that decisions should be shaped through co-production with families, service users, and professionals—and that engagement needs a "final push."

Section summary

The face-to-face engagement sessions provided rich qualitative insight into the lived experiences of service users, carers and professionals, reinforcing and expanding on themes identified through the online surveys. Participants consistently emphasised the importance of continuity, familiarity and emotional safety, particularly for people with complex needs, dementia, sensory sensitivities and profound and multiple learning disabilities. Existing day centres were valued not only for the activities they provide, but for the calm, predictable environments, trusted staff relationships and specialist facilities that support dignity, wellbeing and effective care.

Strong concerns were raised about the suitability of alternative locations, especially in relation to increased noise, reduced quiet space, accessibility for wheelchair users, and the ability to provide specialist personal care and sensory support. The hydrotherapy pool and sensory provision, particularly at Aquamira, were repeatedly described as essential rather than optional, with participants highlighting their therapeutic, preventative and wellbeing benefits and the lack of comparable local alternatives. Carers consistently described day services as a vital source of respite, expressing concern that increased travel times or loss of provision could significantly reduce respite and place unsustainable pressure on families.

Transport and rural accessibility emerged as major barriers, with participants stressing that these factors should be fully reflected within equality and impact assessments. While there was clear recognition of the Council's financial pressures, participants emphasised that cost-saving measures should not undermine safety, dignity, equality duties or long-term preventative value. Across sessions, there were strong calls for thorough planning, realistic options appraisal, and genuine co-production with families, service users and professionals, with a preference for solutions that retain specialist expertise, staff teams and familiar routines wherever change is unavoidable.

5 Recommendations

Based on the evidence and themes throughout the Day Centre Consultation Report, the following recommendations can reasonably be suggested. They are grounded directly in the consultation feedback from clients, carers, professionals and face-to-face engagement, and are framed to be a summary of the feedback rather than operationally prescriptive.
Where appropriate, they balance financial realities with statutory duties, equality considerations and long-term preventative value. It is acknowledged that there will be budget and staffing constraints and other limiting factors that may prevent these recommendations from being taken forward and implemented.

The recommendations are presented as an ambition for the future and readers are asked to recognise the council's budget situation (like many local authorities across the UK) and the financial emergency announced in September 2025, do not form the economic conditions necessary for significant service investment. Despite this, the recommendations can form ambitions should funding and other resources increase in future.

1. Retain and prioritise specialist provision where needs cannot be met elsewhere

The consultation demonstrates that some services—particularly Helena Lane for older people with high support needs and Aquamira for people with profound and complex disabilities—are perceived as specialist, non-interchangeable provision. Respondents consistently emphasised that voluntary, community or more generic day opportunities cannot safely or realistically meet the needs of these groups.

It is therefore recommended that decisions explicitly distinguish between *specialist* and *non-specialist* provision and avoid assumptions that all day opportunities can be replaced by community-based alternatives.

Possible Measures:

- Proportion of service users with *complex/profound needs* remaining in specialist settings.
- Number of placements identified as requiring specialist environments following review.
- Evidence from care reviews that assessed needs are being met post-decision.
- Number of safeguarding concerns or incidents relating to inappropriate placement.

2. Recognise and embed the preventative value of day services in decision-making

Respondents consistently described day centres as preventative services that maintain independence, safeguard dignity, reduce isolation, support carers and delay the need for residential or higher-cost care.

It is recommended that cost avoidance and system-wide impacts on health, social care

and carers, are included within the considerations made by Councillors as part of decision making, rather than focusing solely on short-term savings from service reduction or closure.

Possible Measures:

- Assessment of the delay/prevention of residential or increased care packages.
- Assessment of the stability of carer arrangements over time.
- Qualitative evidence from carers on ability to continue caring.
- Where possible ensure financial decision making takes into account prevention and cost-avoidance and the cost increases that could be incurred from service loss.

3. Continue to embed equality, rurality and accessibility considerations into future work

Significant concerns were raised about rural access, transport barriers and place-based inequality, particularly in South Shropshire. Many respondents indicated that increased travel distances would result in reduced attendance or withdrawal from services altogether.

It is recommended that equality and health impact assessments are updated and the work already undertaken is built on to explicitly reflect transport, rurality, disability-related fatigue, and the cumulative impact on carers, ensuring that alternative provision is genuinely accessible in practice.

Possible Measures:

- Average travel time before and after service change (by geography)
- Attendance rates post-change, particularly in rural areas
- Proportion of service users withdrawing due to transport or distance
- ESIHIA actions reviewed with evidence from the consultation findings.

4. Protect dignity, personal care and sensory support as core service elements

Across the consultation, dignity-related services—such as assisted bathing, personal care, space for sensory regulation, quiet environments and specialist equipment—were repeatedly identified as essential.

Any service redesign or relocation should be guided by the principle that these elements are **core requirements**.

Possible Measures:

- More detailed assessment of future access to:
    - Assisted bathing
    - Personal care
    - Quiet/sensory spaces
- Service user/carer feedback on dignity and wellbeing.

5. Consider the feedback concerning lack of promotion, referrals and transport

Many respondents challenged the assumption that low attendance reflects low demand, citing reduced referrals, lack of promotion, staffing constraints and the removal of

transport as contributory factors.

It is recommended that the Council considers this impact prior to decision making because these factors may be contributing to bias within the financial assessments undertaken to date.

Possible Measures:

- Referral numbers over time
- Attendance and occupancy rates
- Evidence of:
    - Referral pathways
    - Active promotion/signposting
    - Transport availability or mitigation
- Comparison of demand before and after promotion changes.

6. Take a differentiated approach to independence, employment and volunteering

While the Council's strategic direction towards independence, volunteering and employment was understood, respondents stressed that these outcomes are **not appropriate or achievable for all service users**, particularly older people and those with profound or complex needs.

It is recommended that future service models adopt a differentiated, needs-led approach that avoids one-size-fits-all expectations and ensures aspirations around employment and volunteering are realistic, person-centred and supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Possible Measures:

- Presence of **individualised outcomes** in care plans (not generic employment goals)
- Proportion of service users with:
    - Social / wellbeing outcomes
    - Independence outcomes
    - Employment/volunteering *only where appropriate*
- Feedback indicating appropriate expectations.

7. Ensure meaningful co-production and transition planning

Across surveys and engagement sessions, respondents called for genuine co-production, clear communication and careful transition planning, particularly where change is unavoidable.

It is recommended that engagement continues with service users, carers and frontline professionals in relation to final decisions and any implementation plans, with clear reassurance around continuity of care, familiar staff, routines and peer groups if the decisions made mean change will be implemented.

Possible Measures:

- Number of service users/carers involved in any transition planning.

- Evidence of individual transition plans where services change.
- Retention of:
    - Staff continuity
    - Peer groups
    - Familiar routines
- Post-transition feedback on how well any agreed change was managed.

6 Summary and Conclusion

This consultation has highlighted the strong value placed on Shropshire Council's in-house day centres by people who use the services, their carers and families, and a wide range of professionals and stakeholders. Across all engagement routes—online surveys, face-to-face sessions, emails and letters—respondents consistently described day centres as essential provision that supports dignity, wellbeing, social inclusion and independence, while also providing vital respite for carers. The findings show that, for many individuals with complex, profound or age-related needs, these services are not discretionary or easily replaceable but form a critical part of their care and support arrangements.

Feedback on the proposals relating to Helena Lane and Aquamira demonstrated high levels of concern about the potential impacts of closure or relocation. For Helena Lane, respondents overwhelmingly opposed the proposed closure, citing its role as the only council-run day centre for older people in South Shropshire and emphasising the importance of its specialist facilities, accessible environment and local availability. For Aquamira, opposition was strongly linked to the proposed loss of the hydrotherapy pool and the specialist, calm environment that respondents felt was essential for people with profound and multiple disabilities. Across both proposals, respondents repeatedly questioned whether alternative provision could realistically meet assessed needs, particularly in relation to personal care, sensory support, medical needs, transport and travel distances.

A consistent theme throughout the consultation was the preventative value of day services. Respondents described how current provision helps to maintain physical and mental health, reduce isolation, support carers to continue in their caring roles, and delay or avoid the need for more intensive or residential care. Many participants expressed concern that changes leading to reduced access or withdrawal of services could result in deterioration in wellbeing, increased pressure on families, and greater long-term demand on health and social care services. These concerns were reinforced by professionals, who highlighted risks associated with disruption to routine, loss of specialist environments and limited availability of suitable alternatives, particularly for highly vulnerable groups.

The consultation also surfaced wider issues relating to equality, rurality and trust in decision-making. Respondents frequently raised place-based concerns, with a strong perception that rural and south Shropshire communities experience disproportionate impacts from service reductions. Transport, distance and accessibility were repeatedly identified as barriers that could result in effective loss of provision, even where alternatives exist in theory. Alongside this, many respondents challenged assumptions that low attendance reflects lack of need, pointing instead to reduced referrals, limited promotion, staffing constraints and loss of transport as contributory factors.

Overall, the feedback demonstrates strong resistance to a one-size-fits-all approach and highlights the need to recognise the diversity of needs across different user groups. While there was some support for modernisation and reform, this was conditional on changes being realistic, needs-led and co-produced, with safeguards in place to protect specialist provision, continuity of care and dignity. The consultation provides a clear evidence base to inform decision-making, emphasising that any future changes should carefully balance

financial pressures with statutory duties, equality considerations and the long-term preventative role of day services within Shropshire's wider health and care system.

Many thanks are extended to all the respondents for their thorough and well-considered responses.

April 2026

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Email: TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk

Shropshire Council Lead Service Area: Adult Services

Day Centres Consultation April 2026
Executive Summary: Consultation Feedback Report

This report summarizes consultation feedback on proposed changes to Shropshire Council in-house day centre provision. A full report of all consultation findings is available.

1. Context and scope

In-house day centre provision is discretionary (non-statutory) but contributes to prevention, independence, social inclusion and respite for carers. Following a declared financial emergency (September 2025), the Council is reassessing both statutory and discretionary services to manage costs and value for money.

439 people access day centres across 29 facilities supporting people with learning disabilities; 178 people use Shropshire Council in-house day services across eight in-house centres plus one voluntary service.

The consultation ran from the 29th January 2026 to 26th March 2026. The proposals consulted on were:

- **Proposal 1:** Close the day centre service at Helena Lane (building retained for other uses).
- **Proposal 2:** Transfer Aquamira day centre services to Abbots Wood or a similar alternative; close the hydrotherapy pool; offer alternative support where appropriate.
- **Proposal 3:** Explore wider reshaping/modernisation of day centre support towards more flexible, person-centred pathways (including employment, supported employment and volunteering, where appropriate).

The financial case presented within the consultation included estimated savings of ~£222,380 per year. The reported cost per person per day at Aquamira is £211 and at Helena Lane £244, with an average benchmark from available data cited at £170. The review prior to consultation identified that 23 people would be directly affected by the two closure proposals.

The consultation sought to involve as many people as possible to obtain community feedback using online surveys; written submissions (emails/letters); and by holding face-to-face feedback sessions.

2. Overall engagement and response

- **Clients and carers survey:** 53 responses. Where respondent type was provided, most responses were from carers/family members (reported as 77% of those answering that question).
- **Professionals and stakeholders survey:** 24 online responses, with respondents largely connected to Shropshire Council day opportunities and related services.

- **Written submissions:** 14 emails and letters were received (the full report summarises themes and ensures personal details are redacted).
- **Face-to-face engagement:** 11 engagement sessions were held to gather qualitative feedback, with the report noting a substantial focus on Aquamira as feedback obtained in these discussions.
- **Overall sentiment:** Feedback from clients and carers shows strong opposition to both Proposal 1 (Helena Lane closure) and Proposal 2 (Aquamira transfer and hydrotherapy closure). Professionals/stakeholders are more mixed, with many recognising financial pressures but raising material concerns about suitability, safeguarding and the availability of alternatives.

3. Key findings – clients and carers

3.1 Proposal 1 – **Helena Lane** (closure of the day centre service and transfer to another location).

Among those responding in relation to Helena Lane, the report indicates most respondents feel they would be negatively affected, and a large majority say they would be affected “a lot”. A clear majority of respondents oppose the proposal to close Helena Lane (with 90% opposition among those answering the support/oppose question). The reasons for concerns are set out within the full report and include:

- **Travel and rural access:** Respondents commonly describe alternative provision as difficult to access due to rurality, limited transport, fatigue/mobility issues, and the risk that longer journeys would reduce attendance and erode respite time.
- **Dignity, personal care, and wellbeing:** Repeated emphasis is placed on the importance of on-site support for people (including bathing, meals, supervision, and a safe environment), viewed as not replicable through informal community services. Community services are viewed as inadequate replacements because they lack specialist equipment and skills to meet the needs of service users.
- **Carer respite and sustainability of home care:** Helena Lane is described as a “lifeline” that enables carers to continue caring; respondents warn that closure would increase carer burnout and may accelerate need for higher-cost care.
- **Perceived ‘managed decline’:** Several comments argue that attendance has fallen due to reduced referrals, transport changes, staffing constraints and limited promotion—rather than reduced need—leading to calls for better utilisation rather than closure.
- **Equity and place-based concerns:** A recurring theme is that South Shropshire (and Ludlow) would be disproportionately impacted compared with Shrewsbury, raising trust and fairness issues.

3.2 Proposal 2 – **Aquamira** (transfer to Abbots Wood; hydrotherapy pool closure)

Respondents commonly report they (or the person they care for) would be negatively affected by the proporal, and t an overwhelming majority oppose the Aquamira proposal (95% opposition). Reasons given within the comments and analysis set out in the full report include:

- **Hydrotherapy as a critical issue:** A subset of respondents specifically identified use of the hydrotherapy pool as an essential service. Across comments, hydrotherapy is consistently framed as necessary for pain relief, mobility and mental wellbeing. Respondents emphasize there are limited local alternatives.
- **Specialist environment and sensory needs:** Aquamira is repeatedly described as quieter and more suitable for people with profound or complex needs (including sensory regulation and the need for predictable, low-stimulus environments). Respondents express concern that Abbots Wood may be busier/noisier and therefore less suitable. Feedback highlights that the Abbots Wood service is not the same type of service as Aquamira and designed to meet the needs of a different client group.
- **Accessibility and logistics:** Parking, layout, equipment, and the ability to deliver personal care and specialist support are cited as factors that must be preserved if any transfer occurs.
- **Preventative value and cost avoidance:** Many respondents argue that removing hydrotherapy and/or changing provision could worsen health and increase reliance on NHS and social care, undermining long-term value for money even if short-term savings are achieved.
- **Alternative suggestions:** Common suggestions include commissioning/ partnering to keep hydrotherapy running, mothballing the pool rather than permanent closure, or exploring shared-use/rental models to generate income.

4. Key findings – professionals and stakeholders

Responses were largely linked to Shropshire Council day opportunities and related professional roles, alongside a small number of external stakeholders (e.g. health and rehabilitation organisations). When considering the impact of day services, responses suggest stronger confidence in effectiveness for health promotion, emotional support and assessment/support planning, with more neutral/negative views on independence skills, volunteering and employment pathways. The professional/stakeholder survey shows a split between support, opposition and “don’t know” for both Helena Lane and Aquamira proposals.

- **Hydrotherapy and specialist provision:** Among professionals, hydrotherapy is a central theme, with some professionals emphasising its evidenced benefits and limited alternatives in the wider-area, while others emphasise operational sustainability, staffing burden and cost.
- **Suitability and safeguarding risks at alternative sites:** Concerns include managing absconding risk, protecting vulnerable people in mixed environments, maintaining access to quiet/sensory spaces, and ensuring specialist equipment and care routines can be safely delivered. The professionals comments show concern about viable alternative locations for the service.
- **Rural access and lack of alternatives (Helena Lane):** Professionals echo concerns about limited local alternatives for older people’s day services in South Shropshire if Helena Lane were closed, and the impact of transport barriers meaning service users and their carers may be left without support.

- **Preference for ‘middle-ground’ solutions:** Many respondents call for options beyond closure vs. retention—e.g. repurposing, shared use, partnerships, rental income, and targeted redesign focused on person-centred pathways.

5. Key themes from face-to-face engagement

The letters to service users and their carers/families impacted by the proposals and the offer of discussion sessions was an important part of the consultation. This enabled less structured feedback to obtain a more in-depth understanding of concerns. The key themes from verbal feedback included:

- **Continuity and emotional safety:** Strong preference for stability of routines, staff and peer groups, especially for people with dementia, sensory sensitivity, visual impairment and profound/multiple learning disabilities.
- **Environment and sensory load:** Aquamira is repeatedly valued for being calm and predictable; Abbots Wood is perceived as potentially busier/noisier, which some feel could reduce engagement or increase distress.
- **‘Lift and shift’ preference if relocation proceeds:** Where change is unavoidable, participants emphasise keeping staff teams and service-user groupings together, and replicating key environmental features (quiet spaces, sensory equipment, safe layouts).

6. Decision implications and risks to consider

Any consultation which may lead to service change, service reduction or closure results in complex decision making and the consultation helps to ensure that all views are considered. The key points for consideration in the decision include:

- **Equality and inclusion:** Feedback highlights potential disproportionate impacts on older people, disabled people and rural communities. The Equality and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment can be updated prior to decision-making to ensure the it evidences the feedback and how equality impacts have been considered and mitigated.
- **Meeting assessed needs:** While in-house provision is discretionary, the Council must ensure Care Act assessed needs (and carers’ needs where applicable) continue to be met through suitable alternatives.
- **Clinical and safeguarding considerations:** For people with complex health needs, changes in environment and provision may introduce risks (e.g., safe personal care, medication routines, PEG feeding and specialist equipment; absconding risk; vulnerability in mixed settings).
- **Carer sustainability and downstream demand:** A consistent risk is increased carer burden, potential breakdown of informal care, and escalation into more intensive (and costly) services.
- **Transport and travel time:** Travel feasibility is a practical determinant of whether alternatives are genuinely accessible, particularly in rural South Shropshire; this affects attendance, respite value, and equality of access.

- **Hydrotherapy pathway risk:** If hydrotherapy provision is removed, the Council should anticipate and plan for impacts on mobility/pain management and the availability/cost of alternative provision.
- **Short-term savings vs. long-term value:** The consultation feedback reveals tension between immediate savings and perceived preventative value. A transparent articulation of the financial model (including any unavoidable fixed costs and transition costs) may be important when communicating the result of decision making, dependent on outcome.
- **Trust and legitimacy:** The 'managed decline' narrative and place-based equity concerns indicate a reputational risk given there is a perception among some respondents that decisions are predetermined or unfair.

7. Options linked to the consultation feedback

- **Option A – Proceed as proposed** (close Helena Lane day service; transfer Aquamira to Abbots Wood; close hydrotherapy), with a robust mitigation package covering individual reassessments, transition planning and transport.

- **Option B – Modify the proposals** to address high-risk elements raised in feedback, for example:
    - Retain or replace **hydrotherapy** via commissioning, partnership/shared-use, time-limited pilots, or alternative local access arrangements.
    - Create a **quiet/specialist provision** within the receiving site (or alternative site) for people with profound/complex needs, with appropriate staffing and equipment.
    - Explore partial repurposing (e.g. close/mothball the pool while maintaining the building/service functions, or vice versa), where this materially changes net savings and risk.

- **Option C – Pause/phase implementation** to test feasibility of alternatives and protect continuity (e.g. exploration of rental/partnership income; phased moves with 'lift and shift' staffing; piloting revised models).

- **Common mitigations referenced within feedback** (relevant for whichever option is chosen):
    - Individual transition plans co-produced with service users and carers.
    - Transport impact assessment and funded travel solutions to avoid eroding respite via travel time.
    - A request to maintain continuity of staff and peer groups wherever possible; prepare receiving environments to reduce sensory overload.
    - A request to offer transparent publication of the financial case, including transition costs, fixed/contracted costs, and how savings are calculated taking into account loss of preventative support can increase needs for other services.
    - Clear communication and referral pathways for remaining or alternative provision.

The full consultation report, along with this executive summary of the findings, will be made available for officer leads and Councillors to support formal decision making.

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Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2026

Please note that part A and part B of this document should be completed.

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Aquamira Learning Disability Day Service

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Daniel Powner

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		No

Assessment of likely neutral, negative impact or positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
The proposal is to transfer Aquamira Day Service to an alternative venue in Shrewsbury, currently proposed as Abbots Wood, and to close the Aquamira building, including the hydrotherapy pool, subject to completion readiness work, individual Care Act reviews and transition planning. Following public consultation, the current stocktake assessment indicates likely negative equality and social inclusion impacts in two of the Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act, ie Age and Disability, and in the local protected characteristic groupings of Carers and of Social Inclusion, recognising vulnerabilities and intersectionalities in and across groupings. In order to ensure that service user input was gained, they were contacted directly about the consultation, rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels, and their responses are included in the total responses received. The Council has also considered evidence including demographic data, recognising the importance of making decisions based upon all the information currently available including likely equality impacts now and into the future The evidence indicates that Aquamira is highly valued by people who use the service and by carers because of its quiet and predictable environment, specialist staff support, sensory facilities, and hydrotherapy access for some individuals. Consultation responses identify concerns about the loss of a calm setting, continuity of staff and support, longer or more difficult journeys, and whether an

alternative site can safely and appropriately meet the needs of people with profound disability, autism, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility, and complex health needs.

Those affected are particularly adults with what may be a range of profound and multiple learning disabilities, autism, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility and complex health needs, and carers and families of existing service users whose caring roles may be affected by changes to routine, respite, confidence in the suitability of the environment, and travel arrangements. There may also be negative impacts in relation to age where younger adults and older carers are affected, and in relation to social inclusion where households face transport, access or financial pressures.

For the grouping of veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families, to whom we are required to give ‘due regard’ under the Armed Forces Act 2021, there is potential for low to medium negative impact in the future where an individual from this grouping may present with needs that may be supported through hydrotherapy.

At this stage, there is no clear evidence of differential impact for the other protected characteristic groupings as defined in the Equality Act 2010, or for our further local protected characteristic grouping of Young People Leaving Care, albeit intersectionality is recognised.

Initial mitigation will include continued direct engagement with individuals and carers; accessible information and communication; completion of individual reviews, reassessments where required, and carers’ assessments where relevant; person-centred transition planning; confirmation that the receiving site can meet assessed needs for a calm sensory-friendly environment, specialist equipment, personal care and safe staffing; and review of transport and other access barriers so that reasonable adjustments and further mitigations can be identified before implementation.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

The initial assessment indicates likely negative health and wellbeing impacts for some people who use Aquamira, particularly where the current service contributes to physical wellbeing, sensory regulation, emotional security, social interaction, routine and carer respite. Consultation and wider evidence indicate that risks may include increased anxiety or distress associated with change, reduced access to a calm and familiar environment, potential loss of benefits currently associated with hydrotherapy for some individuals, and reduced wellbeing if travel, transition or the receiving environment are not managed appropriately.

There may also be negative wellbeing impacts for carers, including increased stress, reduced respite, uncertainty about the suitability of alternative

arrangements, and additional time or cost pressures linked to transport and support.

At a wider community level, there is a potential indirect risk that if needs are not effectively mitigated, pressure could increase on families, health services and social care. Initial mitigation will include individual Care Act reviews and reassessments where required; carers' assessments where relevant; person-centred transition planning; confirmation that the receiving site can safely meet assessed needs relating to environment, equipment, personal care and staffing; consideration through care planning of how outcomes currently linked to hydrotherapy or sensory support will be met in other ways where necessary; and ongoing communication, monitoring and post-move review to identify and respond to any adverse effects on health and wellbeing.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

The service area will review and monitor the equality, social inclusion and health impacts of the proposed change throughout decision-making, transition planning and implementation. This will include ongoing oversight of individual Care Act reviews, reassessments where required, carers' assessments where relevant, and person-centred transition plans, together with monitoring of whether the receiving site continues to meet assessed needs relating to accessibility, sensory environment, specialist equipment, personal care, staffing and transport.

Particular attention will be given to impacts on people with disabilities, carers, younger adults and households who may face access, rurality or financial pressures. Feedback from consultation has already identified strong concern among service users and carers, and engagement will therefore continue directly with people who use the service, families, carers, advocates and staff, using accessible formats and non-digital routes as needed to reduce the risk of exclusion. The service will collect and review evidence before implementation and at regular intervals following any move, including feedback, attendance, travel and transition issues, incidents/complaints, and any themes arising from care reviews or post-move monitoring, so that further mitigations can be identified and acted on promptly. Review activity will be undertaken with relevant council officers and informed where appropriate by ongoing liaison with health and care professionals, elected members and other stakeholders involved in supporting affected individuals.

It is important to clarify that the Council does not have a statutory obligation to offer access to a hydrotherapy pool. Nonetheless, the Council remains responsible for meeting eligible needs and agreed outcomes as determined by Care Act assessments and care and support planning.

Associated ESHIAs

This is the second ESHIA carried out following Consultation. The first ESHIA is attached to the Cabinet report from January 2026.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact, and actions to review and monitor overall impacts, with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts
At this stage the likely climate change impact is assessed as broadly neutral to uncertain pending implementation detail, because the proposal would reduce use of the Aquamira building but may also affect transport patterns for people who use the service, staff and carers. The associated Climate Change Appraisal for the report should therefore be read alongside this ESHIA. In economic and societal terms, the proposal is intended to address the financial sustainability issues associated with the Aquamira building and hydrotherapy pool, but it may also have negative impacts for some individuals and families if transport, travel time or other indirect costs increase, and for the wider community through loss of access to the current Aquamira site and hydrotherapy facility. At this stage there is no evidence base within this ESHIA to conclude wider economic growth benefits beyond the service sustainability objectives. Workforce impacts are expected to require careful management through the service change process, particularly if staff transfer with the service and new working arrangements, environments or travel patterns arise. There may also be human rights considerations, particularly in relation to dignity, private and family life, and the practical ability of individuals to access support that continues to meet assessed needs. These impacts will be reviewed through implementation planning, ongoing monitoring of travel and access issues, staffing arrangements, complaints and incidents, care reviews, and continued engagement with affected individuals, carers and staff so that any adverse effects can be identified and addressed promptly.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	**Signatures**	**Date**
Lead officer for the proposed service change		15-05-26
Officer carrying out the screening		15-05-26
*External support** *Mrs Lois Dale* *Senior Insights and Research EDI Specialist*		17-05-26

This refers to support external to the service and within the Council, e.g., the Senior Insights and Research EDI specialist, the Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health, other Insights and Research or Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, Climate Change specialists, etc.

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name		15-05-26
Service manager's name		15-05-26

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
This ESHIA relates to a proposed change to Aquamira Day Service in Shrewsbury. Aquamira is a specialist day opportunity service for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and other complex needs, including people who may require a calm sensory-friendly environment, specialist equipment, intensive personal care, PEG and medication support, one-to-one supervision, and access to facilities such as a multi-sensory room and hydrotherapy pool. Four options were considered: (1) retain Aquamira and operate the hydrotherapy pool; (2) retain the day service but place the pool into inactive status; (3) transfer the day service to an alternative location and close the Aquamira building; and (4) explore partnership/shared-use models. On balance, and subject to the safeguards set out in this business case, Option 3 is recommended not on cost alone, but because it provides the strongest overall basis for a lawful and sustainable decision. The recommendation reflects the Council's Best Value duty, the need to secure longer-term service sustainability, the evidence that eligible needs can continue to be met through alternative arrangements, and the consultation and equality information that must inform Cabinet's public law balancing exercise. The proposal being considered is to transfer the day service to an alternative venue in Shrewsbury, currently proposed as Abbots Wood, and to close the Aquamira building, including the hydrotherapy pool, subject to decision-making and completion of required safeguards. The purpose of the proposed service change is to consider how the Council can continue to meet eligible Care Act needs lawfully and safely for this specialist

cohort while addressing the financial sustainability of the current building-based model. The business case states that the case for change arises primarily from the high and rising cost base of the Aquamira building and the operational and maintenance demands associated with the hydrotherapy pool, rather than from concerns about the quality of the service itself.

The consultation material shows that Aquamira supports a small but highly complex cohort. Current attendance information in the business case shows between 6 and 8 attendees per day across the week, with 15 people attending the service overall, of whom 10 live at home with family support and 5 live in 24-hour supported accommodation. The staffing establishment is identified as 5.6 FTE Day Service Workers and 0.8 FTE Locality Lead. Consultation findings indicate strong opposition from clients and carers to the proposal, with 95% of respondents who gave an overall view opposing it and 73% of respondents who answered the impact question saying they would be affected ‘a lot’.

The evidence indicates that Aquamira is highly valued by people who use the service and by carers because of its quiet and predictable environment, specialist staff support, sensory facilities, and hydrotherapy access for some individuals. Consultation responses identify concerns about the loss of a calm setting, continuity of staff and support, longer or more difficult journeys, and whether an alternative site can safely and appropriately meet the needs of people with profound disability, autism, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility, and complex health needs.

Professional and stakeholder feedback is more mixed. While many respondents recognise the therapeutic and preventative value of hydrotherapy and the lack of accessible alternatives for some people, others also identify that the pool is expensive to operate, staff-intensive, and affected by repeated breakdowns and periods of closure.

The relevant legal and strategic context includes the Council’s duties under the Care Act 2014 to meet eligible needs and support carers, the Public Sector Equality Duty, consultation law, and Best Value duties in the context of the Council’s financial emergency. The Council is not under a statutory duty to provide access to a hydrotherapy pool as a facility in its own right. The key issue for decision-making is therefore whether eligible needs and agreed outcomes can continue to be met lawfully through alternative arrangements, supported by individual review, care planning, equality assessment and transition planning.

This ESHIA therefore considers the likely impacts of the proposed change on people who use Aquamira, carers, staff and the wider community, and records the actions currently anticipated to mitigate negative impacts. These include confirmation through feasibility and readiness work that the receiving site can meet assessed needs; individual Care Act reviews and reassessments where required; carers’ assessments where relevant; person-centred transition planning; and monitoring of impacts before and after any implementation.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The primary intended audiences and target groups for this proposed service change are the people who currently use Aquamira Day Service, their families, unpaid carers, advocates and representatives, and the staff currently delivering the service. This includes adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), autism, limited mobility, sensory sensitivities and complex health or personal care needs who may be directly affected by any transfer of service location and by closure of the hydrotherapy pool.

Wider audiences include relevant Adult Social Care and in-house day opportunity staff, social work and care management staff, health and care professionals involved in supporting affected individuals, and any organisations or professionals with a current connection to the Aquamira service or hydrotherapy provision. Local elected councillors are also an intended audience given their community leadership and representational roles, alongside Cabinet members and other decision-makers considering the proposal.

The proposal is not a change affecting the whole population, but it is of wider interest to the local community because it concerns a specialist council service and the future of the current Aquamira site and hydrotherapy facility. Partnership working is relevant where affected individuals also receive support from health services or other agencies, and ongoing liaison may therefore be required with relevant NHS and partner professionals as part of review, care planning and transition arrangements.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

The screening has been informed by the Aquamira business case, the Day Centres Consultation Feedback Report (April 2026), current service information and the ongoing feasibility and readiness work relating to the proposed receiving site. Evidence used includes current attendance and staffing data for Aquamira, financial information on running costs and income, consultation survey results, written responses, face-to-face engagement feedback, and professional and stakeholder feedback specific to the Aquamira proposal.

Key evidence points include that Aquamira supports a small but highly complex cohort; that current attendance recorded in the business case is between 6 and 8 people per day, with 15 people attending overall; that 10 attendees live at home with family support and 5 live in 24-hour supported accommodation; and that the staffing establishment is 5.6 FTE Day Service Workers and 0.8 FTE Locality Lead. Financial evidence in the business case identifies 2026/27 service running costs of £405,970 against non-care related income of £22,240, and also records hydrotherapy pool repair costs of approximately £21,000 in 2024/25. The consultation evidence further indicates strong opposition from clients and carers to the proposal, with 95% of respondents who gave an overall view opposing it and

73% of respondents who answered the impact question saying they would be affected ‘a lot’.

This evidence has informed both the proposal and the current assessment of impacts. It supports the view that the case for change arises from financial sustainability concerns and the operational fragility and cost of the hydrotherapy pool, rather than from concerns about service quality. It has also informed the identification of likely negative impacts for people with disabilities, carers and others, and the need for mitigations. As a result of consultation and subsequent review, the proposal is now framed more clearly around the need to continue meeting eligible needs lawfully through individual Care Act review, care planning and transition arrangements, rather than around cost alone. The current approach also places emphasis on safeguards, including feasibility and readiness assessment of the proposed receiving site, individual reviews and reassessments where required, carers’ assessments where relevant, transport and access considerations, and continued engagement before any implementation.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Specific consultation and engagement on the Aquamira proposal was undertaken as part of the wider Day Centres consultation which ran from 29 January 2026 to 26 March 2026, following the Cabinet decision in January 2026 to consult on the potential transfer of Aquamira Day Service to Abbots Wood. People directly affected were contacted individually and consultation was not limited to online methods. The consultation included online surveys for clients and carers and for professionals and stakeholders, written responses by email and letter, one-to-one conversations where requested, and face-to-face engagement sessions with clients, carers and professionals.

Engagement methods were designed to reduce barriers to participation. Consultation documents were issued directly to current service users and carers, rather than relying only on general publicity, and Easy Read material was made available where appropriate. Written correspondence was used alongside digital routes, advocacy support was available, and officers confirmed that people affected by the proposal could request assessment, advice and support during the process. This was intended to reduce the risk of digital exclusion and to support participation by people who might otherwise have difficulty engaging independently.

Responses relating to Aquamira were received from people who use the service, family members and unpaid carers, staff and professionals with direct knowledge of the service, and local residents. The consultation report records strong opposition from clients and carers to the proposal, with 95% of respondents who provided an overall view opposing it and 73% of respondents who answered the impact question saying they would be affected ‘a lot’. The main issues raised were the importance of a calm and specialist environment, continuity of trusted staff and

routines, concern about travel and transport, and the perceived value of hydrotherapy and sensory provision for some individuals. Professional and stakeholder feedback was more mixed, but also raised issues about accessibility, suitability of alternative provision, staffing intensity, pool reliability and cost, and the need for realistic mitigation and transition planning.

The consultation feedback has informed the current form of the proposal and the safeguards now identified within the business case and this ESHIA. In particular, it has reinforced the need for feasibility and readiness assessment of the proposed receiving site, individual Care Act reviews and reassessments where required, carers' assessments where relevant, person-centred transition planning, transport and access planning, and continued engagement with affected individuals, carers, advocates, staff and relevant professionals before any implementation. Consultation and engagement will therefore continue as part of decision-making and transition planning, using accessible and non-digital methods where needed.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have for a grouping, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).

Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Stage Two ESHIA required*	**High positive impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, young carers, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)			*There are likely impacts for younger adults with complex needs and for older carers, particularly where changes affect routine, travel and caring arrangements.*	
Disability (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's			*The proposal directly affects adults with what may be a range of profound and multiple*	

disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			*learning disabilities, autism, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility and complex health needs, with risks relating to environment, routine, specialist provision and access to hydrotherapy.*	
<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				*No evidence of differential impact for this protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				*No evidence of differential impact for this protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				*No evidence of differential impact for this protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				*No evidence of differential impact for this protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Religion or Belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism,				*No evidence of differential impact for this*

Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				*protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Sex</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				*No evidence of differential impact for this protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				*No evidence of differential impact for this protected characteristic within the available evidence.*
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness; and rural communities)			*Likely impacts where households face transport barriers, rurality, financial pressures or reduced access to services, potentially affecting inclusion and participation.*	
<u>Other: Carers</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)			*Carers may experience increased stress, reduced respite and additional time or cost pressures linked to travel and uncertainty about alternative provision.*	
<u>Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their</u>				*Potential for low to medium negative impact where an*

families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)				*individual from this grouping may present with needs that may be supported through hydrotherapy*
Other: Young people leaving care				*No evidence of differential impact for this grouping within the available evidence.*

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).
Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Part Two HIA required*	**High positive impact**	**Medium positive or negative impact**	**Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)**
Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation? .			*There are likely impacts for younger adults with complex needs and for older carers, particularly where changes affect routine, travel and caring arrangements.*	
Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing? For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking? .			*The proposal directly affects disabled adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities, autism, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility and complex health needs, with risks*	

			relating to environment, routine, specialist provision and access to hydrotherapy.	
Will the policy have a *direct impact* on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health? For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation? .			*There is a potential indirect risk that if needs are not effectively mitigated, pressure could increase on families, health services and social care, alongside impacts relating to transport, access and community inclusion.*	
Will there be a likely change in *demand* for or access to health and social care services? For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services? .			*There is a potential increase in demand on health and social care services if needs are not fully met through alternative arrangements, particularly where carer resilience reduces or individuals experience deterioration in wellbeing.*	

Initial health equity assessment	
For the following categories, please complete with the expected impacts of this service change on wider inequalities, not just those that are health-related (whether positive, negative, or neutral) – include any additional information you feel is pertinent or useful. **Consider and record which you can control, which you can influence, and which may be out of your control**.	
Which population groups/demographics will face health impacts as a result of this change (if any)? • Socio-Economically Deprived • Geographic Deprivation (inc. Rurality) – *if so, where?* • Inclusion Health & Vulnerable Groups[1] • Other	The groups most likely to face wider inequality impacts from this proposal are disabled adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities and other complex needs, together with their families and unpaid carers, particularly where households already face financial pressure, limited transport options or difficulty accessing specialist provision. There may be negative impacts for some socio-economically disadvantaged households if a change in location increases indirect costs such as transport, travel time or the amount of unpaid support required. Geographic and rurality issues are also relevant because some people travel into Shrewsbury for Aquamira and longer or more complex journeys could create additional barriers to attendance, routine and respite, particularly for those living outside the town or in parts of the wider Shropshire area with more limited transport options. Inclusion health and other vulnerable groups may be affected where individuals have multiple overlapping disadvantages, including disability, reliance on carers, communication barriers, sensory sensitivities, limited mobility or dependence on specialist support and predictable routines. At this stage, the main specific geographical focus is Shrewsbury as the location of both Aquamira and the proposed receiving site, with wider access considerations for those travelling from elsewhere in Shropshire. The service can directly control its review, reassessment, communication and transition planning arrangements; it can influence transport planning, accessibility mitigations and multi-agency support; but wider issues such as household income, availability of broader community transport and general rural access constraints are only partly within service control.
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	Mitigations already identified or planned include completion of individual Care Act reviews and reassessments where required, carers' assessments where relevant, and person-centred transition planning for each affected individual. Before any implementation, the service will need to confirm through feasibility and readiness work that the receiving site can meet assessed needs in relation to accessibility, sensory environment, specialist equipment, personal care, safe staffing and transport arrangements. The service will continue direct engagement with people who use Aquamira, families, carers, advocates and staff, using accessible and non-digital communication methods where needed to reduce exclusion. Transport and travel implications will be reviewed on an individual basis so that barriers can be identified early and reasonable mitigations considered. Where outcomes currently linked to hydrotherapy or the

	existing sensory environment are identified through review and care planning, the Council will need to consider how those outcomes can be met in other ways through lawful care and support planning, including alternative arrangements where appropriate. The proposal does not lend itself to digital replacement of the core day service, given the nature of the cohort and the support provided, but digital methods may still be used where appropriate to support communication, information sharing and engagement with carers and representatives.

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Cabinet

10th June 2026

Item:

Public

Helena Lane older people's day service

Responsible Officer:	Natalie McFall		
email	Natalie.Mcfall@Shropshire.gov.uk	Tel	01743 253719
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Ruth Houghton		

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report is presented to Cabinet following the external auditors Grant Thornton Report and Value for Money assessment, whereby the recommendation calls for urgent action, including a thorough review of all services to identify the costs of delivering statutory responsibilities. Cabinet is asked to approve closure of Helena Lane Older People's Day Service in Ludlow due to sustained low utilisation and high unit cost. Where eligible needs have been identified through assessment, they will continue to be met through reassessment and care planning.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report relates to the future of the Helena Lane Older People's Day Service in Ludlow and is framed within the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, its Best Value obligation, and the context of the Council's declared financial emergency.

2.2. Helena Lane Day Service currently provides a building-based day service offering structured activities, social interaction, personal care (including assisted bathing), and respite to unpaid carers. However, the service is operating at sustained low utilisation, with attendance levels significantly below the capacity required to support an efficient in-house model.

2.3. For clarity, this proposal relates to the closure of the Helena Lane day service. It does not in itself determine the future use of the space within the building that will continue to operate.

2.4. The financial position is a key consideration. Helena Lane Day Service has a forecast net annual cost of £169,738, driven largely by fixed staffing and overhead costs. Based on current utilisation of 10 attendance days per week across 5 individuals, this equates to an indicative average net cost of approximately £332.82 per attendance day. Even allowing for reprovision costs where eligible needs must continue to be met, the current in-house model represents poor value for money and is difficult to justify in the context of the Council's financial emergency. In this context, the Council must have regard to its Best Value duty, which requires it to make decisions that are economically, efficiently and effectively justified. The current model does not meet this threshold.

2.5. This proposal would reduce the current spend on Day Service Provision by £151,378.

2.6. Financial summary:

Financial Measure	Position
Forecast gross annual budget	£194,320
Forecast income	£24,582
Forecast net annual cost	£169,738
Current number of attendees	5 people
Current attendance level	10 Attendance days per week
Indicative average net cost per attendance day	£332.82
Indicative new saving, subject reprovision cost	Approx. £151,378
Current estimated reprovision cost	£18,360

2.7. An 8-week public consultation was undertaken between January and March 2026, which demonstrated clear and sustained opposition to closure, particularly from unpaid carers and families. Key themes included the importance of respite, access to assisted bathing, the need for dementia-specific supervision, and concerns regarding rural transport barriers. These themes have directly informed the Council's equality analysis, mitigation measures and transition planning approach.

2.8. In considering these responses, the Council must demonstrate conscientious consideration of consultation feedback and ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), particularly in relation to older people with dementia, those with limited mobility, and unpaid carers who may be affected. The key equality risks and the approach to mitigation are summarised in Section 4 (Risk Assessment) and reflected in the proposed transition and monitoring arrangements set out in Sections 8 and 9. While the Council will take reasonable steps to offer assessment and support engagement, it cannot determine or meet needs where an individual has declined assessment or review. In such cases, the Council's statutory duties are necessarily limited unless and until an assessment is accepted.

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2.9. While closure will remove a building-based service, the Council's legal duty is to meet eligible needs, not to provide a specific service model. Should Cabinet approve closure, these duties will be discharged through individual Care Act Needs Assessments and Review, person-centred transition planning, and the provision of alternative support arrangements, including personalised options such as direct payments and personal assistants.

2.10. It is also relevant to note that the current service cohort comprises predominantly individuals who self-fund their attendance. At the time of reporting, four of the five current attendees are not in receipt of Council-funded care and support. While the Council may provide services on a discretionary basis, it is not under a statutory duty to do so for individuals whose needs it has not assessed as eligible under the Care Act 2014. Furthermore, due to sustained low utilisation and the largely fixed-cost nature of the in-house model, the Council is effectively subsidising self-funding attendees, as the cost of provision is not met through income. This is a relevant consideration in the context of the Council's Best Value obligations and the requirement to prioritise limited resources towards the discharge of statutory duties.

2.11. Consultation feedback suggested risks associated with closure, including potential carer breakdown, increased demand for higher-cost services, and legal or reputational challenge. However, these can be mitigated through robust transition arrangements, clear decision-making records, equality analysis, and ongoing monitoring of outcomes.

2.12. The Council's statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 is to assess needs where required and to meet eligible needs identified through that process. This duty does not extend to maintaining a specific building-based service or delivery model. Should Cabinet approve closure, these duties will continue to be discharged through individual assessment, review and care planning, with alternative arrangements put in place where eligible needs are identified.

2.13. In summary, the service is operating at very low utilisation, with only five individuals attending, resulting in a high net annual cost of £169,738 and an indicative unit cost of £332.82 per attendance day. Due to the largely fixed-cost nature of the in-house model, this represents poor value for money. As explored in the business case, there is no evidence that a viable and sustainable redesign would significantly improve utilisation. In the context of the Council's financial emergency and Best Value duty, continuation of the current model is difficult to justify.

2.14. For the avoidance of doubt, the recommendations seek not only approval for closure, but also approval of the mitigation and support arrangements required to ensure a lawful and person-centred transition.

2.15. Closure of the service would not mean withdrawal of the Council's responsibilities to affected individuals. Where eligible needs have been identified, these will continue to be met through reassessment, care planning and alternative support arrangements where people choose to engage with the assessment process, otherwise, advise and information provided. The proposed approach includes active contact with current attendees and carers, Care Act reviews, carers' assessments where appropriate, person-centred transition planning, and

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monitoring to reduce the risk of unmet need, carer breakdown or avoidable escalation.

2.16. While the impacts identified are likely to be adverse, the Council considers that they can be mitigated to a reasonable and proportionate extent through the measures set out in this report, including assessment, care planning, alternative provision and monitoring arrangements. To mitigate the risks to individuals, the council already offered Care Act Needs Assessments to all people affected and their carers, to ensure that where someone has eligible need, a suitable way of meeting that need can be identified. In addition, the council is committed to:

- no person's current attendance will end before:
  - assessment/review is completed, where accepted
  - alternative arrangements are identified where necessary
  - transition planning is discussed
- support will be provided to access alternatives such as:
  - direct payments
  - personal assistants
  - commissioned services
  - utilisation of community-based options where suitable

2.17. The proposal has been developed in recognition of the Council's governance and scrutiny arrangements, and the need to ensure that decisions are transparent, evidence-based and capable of withstanding challenge. As Overview and Scrutiny did not take place before the publication of the report, recommendations will be noted at Cabinet separately.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Cabinet is asked to:

i. approve the closure of Helena Lane Older People's Day Service in Ludlow.

ii. delegate authority to the Director of Adult Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health to implement closure through a managed transition, including Care Act assessment and/ or review for individuals and carers to secure alternative arrangements.

iii. approve the mitigation and support arrangements set out in this report, including active engagement with current attendees and carers, Care Act assessment and/or review, carers' assessments where appropriate, person-centred transition planning, support to access suitable alternative provision, and monitoring during and after transition

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Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. There is a heightened risk of legal and reputational challenge if the decision does not clearly include conscientious consideration of consultation responses, realistic options, and mitigation of impacts. The consultation narrative in Section 7 (Background) is intended to support this by setting out the key themes raised and how these have been reflected in the report and proposed implementation approach.

4.2. These risks are capable of mitigation through active contact with affected individuals and carers, timely assessment and review, person-centred transition planning, consideration of respite, personal care, dementia-related needs and rural access, and monitoring during and after implementation.

4.3. Closure may remove a service relied upon by some individuals and unpaid carers. Without robust transition planning, there is risk of carer breakdown and escalation to higher-cost care. The proposed high-level transition approach (including reassessments/reviews, carers' assessments where appropriate, and monitoring during and after transition) is set out in Section 8 (Additional Information).

4.4. Consultation responses highlighted the impact on those that attend with dementia, people with limited mobility, unpaid carers, and those affected by rural transport barriers; mitigations must be specific and evidenced at individual level. The proposed mitigation approach (including Care Act reviews, carers' assessments where appropriate, transition planning and post-transition monitoring) is set out in Section 8 (Additional Information) and reflected in Section 9 (Conclusions).

4.5. A further Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)has been carried out following consultation.

4.6. Following the public consultation about this proposal, and on the feedback received and the evidence currently available, it remains the case that the original proposal as it stands is considered likely to have a negative equality and social inclusion impact, particularly for current service users, if the service is closed. To ensure their input was gained, the 5 individuals and their carers were contacted directly about the consultation, rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels, and their responses are included in the total of 27 responses received. Whilst this number is low, the Council has also considered evidence including demographic data in regard to current and projected need for a service of this type within South Shropshire, recognising the importance of making decisions based upon all the information currently available including likely equality impacts now and into the future, such as one to one support to access community activity.

4.7. In relation to the nine Protected Characteristic groupings to which we are asked to give 'due regard' in our decision making processes under the Equality Act 2010, the groupings that will be particularly affected if there is closure of the service are those of Age and Disability. Those who attend the service are older people, people with disabilities including people living with dementia and people with physical

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frailty or mobility impairments. These impacts may intersect, for example where an older person with a disability is also supported by an older carer in a rural area and may therefore also bring in the local groupings to which we give additional consideration as a matter of good practice, including carers.

4.8. A further grouping where impacts are likely to be adverse is our local grouping of Carers, bringing in unpaid carers who may be across a number of groupings. We are not obliged to consider this grouping under the Equality Act, as is also the case with our local grouping of Social Inclusion, where we consider impacts for people in regard to their household circumstances. This includes rural households who in rural South Shropshire who may face practical barriers to accessing alternatives. At this stage, no specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to the other Equality Act groupings, i.e. Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, or Sexual Orientation. The current assessment is also neutral for the further two local groupings of Veterans and Serving Members of the Armed Forces and their Families, and Care Leavers.

4.9. If a decision is taken to proceed with closure of Helena Lane Day Service, the council will keep equality, social inclusion and health impacts under active review through implementation and transition planning. Monitoring arrangements would include completion and recording of individual Care Act assessments or reassessments where accepted for current attendees, carers' assessments where relevant, and review of whether identified needs relating to respite, personal care, bathing, supervision, and access are being met through suitable alternative arrangements.

4.10. For all affected groups, mitigation should not assume that generic community provision will be suitable for everyone. Suitability would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly for older people, disabled people including people living with dementia, people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, and unpaid carers whose wellbeing depends on meaningful respite. The Council can mitigate some negative effects through person-centred assessment, timely care planning, clear communication, and continued engagement with affected individuals and carers during implementation. The Council can also influence how far transport barriers, rurality, and the practical impact of travel time are considered when identifying alternatives.

4.11. If no change is made, the current reduced model is likely to continue to experience low utilisation and poor financial performance, resulting in repeated short-term decisions and renewed closure proposals. This would prolong uncertainty for service users, carers and staff, while increasing the risk that access barriers (particularly transport and rurality) continue to suppress attendance and that avoidable pressures emerge elsewhere in the system through carer breakdown and crisis escalation.

4.12. Risk summary (key risks and mitigations)

Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Legal challenge or Ombudsman criticism arising from failure to demonstrate conscientious consideration of consultation responses, equality impacts, alternatives, and proportionality	Clear decision record referencing consultation themes; equality analysis; documented reasons why closure is justified despite opposition; assurance of individual reassessment and transition support	Failure of Officers and Members to adhere to Governance arrangements
Adverse impact on individuals with protected characteristics and on unpaid carers, including people living with dementia, mobility impairment, and those relying on respite and personal care support	Demonstrate due regard under the Public Sector Equality Duty; undertake and document individual Care Act reassessments/reviews; offer carers' assessments where appropriate; ensure tailored transition planning and monitoring for those at greatest risk of adverse impact	Impact of extreme pressures upon partners (social care, health, and criminal justice)
Workforce implications arising from service closure, including staff consultation, redeployment, wellbeing, and retention of relevant skills	Early HR involvement; compliance with staff consultation requirements; redeployment planning; communication and wellbeing support; workforce planning to maintain safe service continuity elsewhere	Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce; Critical skills shortage impacting on recruitment, retention, and succession planning
Reputational risk and increased complaint/member scrutiny arising from opposition to closure and concerns about service-user impact	Clear and consistent communications aligned to the decision record; timely and accurate complaint responses; nominated lead contact; clear record of commitments, reviews, and transition actions	Failure of Officers and Members to adhere to Governance arrangements

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.

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5.2. Finance overview:

Financial Measure	Position
Forecast Staffing costs	£162,240
Forecast running costs	£7,980
Forecast internal market recharges	£24,100
Forecast gross annual budget	£194320
Forecast income	£24,582
Forecast net annual cost	£169,738
Current number of attendees	5 people
Current attendance level	10 Attendance days per week
Indicative average net cost per attendance day	£332.82
Indicative new saving, subject reprovision cost	Approx. £151,378

5.3. The above demonstrates that the current service model carries a high fixed cost relative to very low utilisation, resulting in poor value for money and making the continuation of the service difficult to justify on a sustainable basis.

5.4. Helena Lane Older People's Day Service has a forecast gross running cost of £194,320 for 2026/27 (excluding building costs), made up of staffing costs £162,240, running costs £7,980, and internal market recharges £24,100. Forecast income totals £24,582 (including charges and food contribution), resulting in a net cost pressure of £169,738. The forecast gross running cost set out above excludes building-related costs.

5.5. The above is an indicative calculation for decision-making transparency rather than a fully allocated unit-cost model, but it illustrates the extent to which fixed staffing and overheads drive poor value for money at very low utilisation. While increased utilisation could reduce the average unit cost, the service has experienced sustained low utilisation over time and fees are materially below full cost recovery; consequently, the service currently represents poor value for money in the context of the Council's financial emergency and Best Value duties.

5.6. If Cabinet approves closure, the principal savings opportunity arises from reducing staffing and operating costs; however, the Council will remain responsible for meeting eligible needs through alternative care and support arrangements following reassessment/review. There is a risk of cost diversion if withdrawal of this offer contributes to increased demand for replacement support and/or escalation of need; this will be managed through person-centred transition planning and review.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1. The proposal to close Helena Lane Older People's Day Service is not expected to have a material impact on renewable energy generation or on climate change adaptation. Any changes to energy and fuel consumption associated with the Helena Lane building will depend on how the space is used following closure; this will be considered through normal council buildings management arrangements.

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7. Background

7.1. Helena Lane is an older people's day service in Ludlow providing structured day support, social interaction and meaningful activity, personal care (including assisted bathing), and respite for unpaid carers. Over recent years, the service has reduced to half-day provision, three days per week, Council-funded transport has been withdrawn, and staffing capacity reduced. Utilisation is currently very low, with just five people accessing the service across the three operating days (with new admissions paused during consultation).

7.2. Census and ONS age data suggests it shouldn't be assumed that because fewer people are using the service, fewer people need it. Shropshire has a significantly higher older population than the rest of England that is not marginal, whilst the locality around Ludlow is on average generally older. The absolute number of people aged 65 and over is high and rising and the ONS projections show this trend will intensify, not reverse. However, it does not necessarily mean that any of those people will need Helena Lane Day Services or that this is high demand for the specific service such as a traditional day service in this area.

7.3. On 21 January 2026, Cabinet agreed an 8-week public consultation on the future of Helena Lane Day Service, including the potential option to close the service, with new admissions paused during the consultation period to avoid further impact. The consultation ran for the agreed period and closed on 26 March 2026. Engagement was supported through direct contact with current service users, written communication, accessible formats where appropriate, and multiple response routes including online surveys and written responses.

7.4. An options appraisal has been considered within the attached business case that considered feedback from the consultation. While increased utilisation could reduce the average unit cost, the service has experienced sustained low utilisation over time, and there is no evidence to suggest that utilisation could increase to a level that would make the model financially sustainable.

7.5. Consultation responses relating to Helena Lane Day Service demonstrated clear and sustained opposition to closure. Since the consultation concluded there has been further requests for information reiterating the comments made to the consultation itself. There was also consultation and engagement with Ludlow Town Councillors and an offer to meet with Ludlow Councillors, although not all were able to attend. Key themes included:

i. the importance of Helena Lane Day Service as a source of respite enabling unpaid carers to continue caring;
ii. the significance of personal care and assisted bathing in maintaining dignity;
iii. concerns that community groups are not a like-for-like substitute for people requiring supervision and/or dementia-specific support; and
iv. the impact of rurality and limited transport options on accessibility. Respondents also highlighted that earlier reductions in operating hours and withdrawal of transport were perceived to have contributed to reduced attendance and that utilisation data should be interpreted in that context.

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7.6. Feedback from local elected members was also considered. Councillor Waite, as the local ward councillor, expressed the view that “the cabinet should not try to keep something that is so expensive running for so few when we could find an alternative offering.” This view formed part of the wider feedback considered alongside the concerns raised by current attendees, carers and other respondents.

7.7. The strength and consistency of opposition has been recognised and has informed the Council’s approach to mitigation, transition planning and equality analysis, although it does not alter the underlying financial and operational sustainability issues identified.

7.8. These concerns have been considered in full and have directly informed the updated Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA), the proposed mitigation measures, the transition arrangements, and the formulation of the final recommendation. In particular, the Council has considered the implications for carer respite, assisted bathing and personal care, dementia-related supervision, and rural accessibility in determining how any closure would be implemented and mitigated.

8. Additional Information

8.1. If Cabinet approves closure of the service, the Council will implement a managed transition for all individuals currently using Helena Lane Day Service. Subject to acceptance, this will include timely Care Act reassessments/reviews (and carers’ assessments where appropriate), review and update of care and support plans, and support to arrange alternative provision to meet assessed eligible needs. Transition planning will be person-centred and will include specific consideration of issues raised through consultation, including reliance on respite, assisted bathing and rural transport barriers.

8.2. The Council recognises that Helena Lane Day Service currently provides valued support to a small number of older people and their carers, including respite, social contact, personal care and support for people living with dementia. If Cabinet approves closure, the Council will not withdraw support from affected individuals. Instead, it will implement a managed and person-centred transition designed to ensure that eligible needs continue to be met and that the risks identified through consultation are actively mitigated.

8.3. This proposal relates to the delivery model of day services at Helena Lane and should not be interpreted as a decision regarding the future use of the building itself. Any future use of the building will be considered separately in line with the Council’s property and asset management arrangements.

8.4. The Council will take reasonable and proportionate steps to support each current attendee, and where appropriate their carer or representative, to engage with assessment, review and transition processes. This will include direct contact, clear explanation of available support and next steps, a clear route into further discussion or review, and appropriate recording of contact made, support offered and responses received. This is intended to reduce the risk of disengagement, unmet need and later dispute about whether support was made available. Alternative arrangements may include commissioned services, direct payments, personal assistants, community-based options or other forms of support suitable to the individual’s assessed needs and circumstances.

8.5. Transition planning will explicitly consider the issues raised through consultation, including the importance of respite for unpaid carers, assisted bathing and personal care, dementia-related supervision and safety, and the effect of rurality and transport barriers on access to alternatives. Suitability will not be assumed in the abstract or by reference to generic provision alone. It will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of dignity, wellbeing, safety, access, carer impact and the individual's wider circumstances.

8.6. The Council is required to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, but is not required to provide or maintain a specific building-based service. The Council is required to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, but is not required to provide or maintain a specific building-based service. In fulfilling these duties, the Council will undertake individual assessment and care planning and will arrange suitable alternative support where eligible needs are identified. The Council also has a duty to shape a sustainable and diverse local care market and may meet its statutory responsibilities through a range of provision rather than direct in-house services.

9. Conclusions

9.1 Helena Lane is operating at sustained low utilisation, with only five individuals attending, creating a mismatch between fixed costs and demand. This results in a high unit cost and poor value for money in the context of the Council's financial position and Best Value duty. There is no evidence of a viable alternative model that would materially improve sustainability. Closure is therefore considered the most sustainable option. This proposal would remove a current net annual service cost of £169,738, although reprovision costs will arise where eligible needs continue to be met. Based on costs identified to date from assessed need, this includes approximately £18,360 per annum for one individual, meaning the proposal still represents a significant saving while enabling the Council to continue discharging its statutory duties.

9.2 In reaching this recommendation, the Council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the impacts identified through the ESHIA. While the proposal is likely to result in adverse impacts for some individuals, particularly older people, disabled people and unpaid carers, the Council considers that, with the mitigation measures proposed, the decision represents a proportionate and lawful response to the identified financial and operational challenges.

9.3 Cabinet is therefore asked to approve closure of Helena Lane Day Service as the most sustainable option. The Council will continue to meet eligible needs identified under the Care Act 2014 through person-centred reassessment and managed transition planning, including support to access alternative support arrangements (for example through direct payments and personal assistants) and tailored mitigation for individuals and carers who may be affected (including those relying on respite, assisted bathing, and those facing rural transport barriers), with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the consultation evidence received.

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

Provider Services Redesign in-house

Local Member:	Councillor Waite

Appendices

Appendix 1- Background information - Provider Services Redesign in-house
Appendix 2- Day Centres Consultation April 2026 report
Appendix 3- Day Centres Consultation Executive Summary
Appendix 4- Helena Lane Business Case
Appendix 5- Shropshire-council-updated-eshia- Helena Lane Updated May 2026

Contact: Natalie McFall Natalie.Mcfall@shropshire.gov.uk

Cabinet 21st January 2026

Cabinet

Public

Provider Services Redesign (in-house)

Responsible Officer:	Natalie McFall		
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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Ruth Houghton		

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report presents a proposal regarding the future direction of Shropshire Council's In house Day Services, inviting Cabinet to consider the recommendations set out. While the Council is committed to achieving improved outcomes for residents and ensuring value for money, the provision of such services through in-house arrangements is not a statutory requirement; rather, it is one available approach to delivering support to residents.

1.2 Following the financial emergency declared in September 2025, it has been essential to reassess all services, especially those with high costs or that are potentially not financially viable. In light of that financial review, as explained in more detail below, Cabinet is asked to approve: a consultation on a proposal to fully close Helena Lane Day Centre and a consultation on a proposal to close the Aquamira site and relocating its Day Service to another location. In addition, Cabinet is asked to approve a broader engagement about reshaping In-House Day Services. This engagement is distinct from, yet related to, the recent broader consultations regarding externally provided Day Care services.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 In line with Shropshire Council's Improvement Plan, a thorough review of In-House Day Service provision is essential to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable, focused on clear priorities, and able to deliver best value for

residents. The Improvement Plan sets out the need for immediate action to address significant financial pressures, strengthen governance, and align resources with strategic objectives. Reviewing In-House Day Services will enable the Council to assess quality, efficiency, and alignment with the Council's future direction, ensuring that provision is both effective and affordable. This approach supports the Council's ambition to be a modern, responsive, and high-performing organisation, as well as meeting its statutory duty to deliver services in the most efficient, economical, and sustainable way.

2.2 On 10th September 2025, Cabinet declared a financial emergency prompting a comprehensive review of all non-statutory services to ensure financial sustainability and alignment with strategic priorities. This report presents a proposal for the future direction of the Council's In-House Provider Services, with a particular focus on the sustainability and suitability of current day service provision for adults with learning disabilities and older people.

2.3 It is not a statutory requirement to provide services to meet Care Act assessed needs through In-House arrangements. Financial analysis, set out in more detail below, demonstrates that two centres in particular, Helena Lane Day Centre and Aquamira Day Centre, in their current forms have high operational costs, and reduced demand. Specifically, Aquamira's high costs are driven by the maintenance of a hydrotherapy pool, while Helena Lane operates at a substantial deficit due to a significant lack of demand for the service.

2.4 Whilst this financial analysis suggests that neither Helena Lane or Aquamira Day Centres are viable, no final decisions have been taken on them. The report emphasises the need for robust, transparent consultation and engagement with all stakeholders, including service users, families, staff, and unions, to provide an opportunity for alternative options to be raised and reduce adverse impacts on vulnerable groups. An Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA) has been completed to inform decision-making. In line with the Council's statutory duties, the report recommends an eight-week public consultation on the potential closure of Helena Lane Day Centre and the relocation of the Aquamira Day Service to an alternative venue. As stated above, no final decision has yet been taken on either day centre, and the Council remains receptive to solutions which could keep them open in a financially sustainable manner.

2.5 If following the period of consultation, the proposed closure of the Helena Lane Day Centre and the closure of the Aquamira site are approved then the closures are expected to deliver an approximate saving of £222,380 per year, supporting the Council's commitment to fiscal responsibility and the development of a modern, sustainable model of care. Transition planning and proactive engagement will be essential to safeguard continuity of care and support for affected individuals.

2.6 While it wouldn't necessarily bring further savings, the council still needs to further modernise day services by focusing on more flexible, person-centred support. Alongside traditional day care, individuals will have access to employment,

supported work, and volunteering through partnerships like the 'Enable' team. Taking a tiered approach, matches support to individual needs and aims to improve independence, social inclusion, and well-being, while ensuring efficient resource use and statutory compliance. As such, this report also recommends that cabinet endorse an eight-week public engagement on the reprovision of the remaining In-House Day Services.

2.7 This report invites Cabinet to agree the commencement of the recommended consultations and engagement processes, with the overall aim of ensuring that future provision is both effective and affordable, and that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in the most efficient and equitable manner.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Cabinet is asked to:

(i) agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the future of Helena Lane Day Service, including the potential option to close the service. New admissions should be paused during the consultation period to avoid further impact.

(ii) agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the potential transfer of the Aquamira day service to the Abbots Wood site.

(iii) endorse public engagement for 8 weeks on the reprovision of the remaining In-House Day Services Provision.

3.2 Following the period of consultation, final recommendations will be presented to cabinet for determination.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1 The council has declared a financial emergency and the external auditors (Grant Thornton) recommendation calls for urgent action, including a thorough review of all services to identify the costs of delivering statutory responsibilities. Therefore, In-House provision should be reviewed in this light.

4.2 In the past twenty years, the approach to care provision has evolved significantly, moving from a 'care' model toward one focused on 'support'. The Care Act 2014 acknowledged this change, shifting care planning from simply specifying the 'provision of services' to articulating 'how eligible needs will be met'. Meeting these needs may involve informal support, universal services, community networks, direct payments, and if needed, traditional services.

4.3 In the late 20th Century, there was a programme of deinstitutionalisation that saw changes in policies promoting integration and normalisation, moving away from large institutions toward community care services. Day services were the focal

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points for social inclusion, offering structured activities, education, and sometimes supported employment. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and later the Care Act 2014 reinforced rights-based, person-centred approaches, emphasising independence and choice. The 1990's saw traditional building-based day centres redesigned to take a more person-centred approach, offering more flexible, community-based activities rather than fixed attendance at a day centre.

4.4 Day Services for Older People has transformed over recent years, moving away from passive, building-based provision towards active, personalised support that enhances quality of life. For older adults, this change means greater choice and control, opportunities to maintain independence, and access to stimulating activities that reduce loneliness and cognitive decline. Community-based hubs and flexible outreach models enable social connections, promote physical activity, and foster a sense of purpose through volunteering or learning. This shift aligns with the Care Act's emphasis on prevention and wellbeing, ensuring older people can age with dignity, remain active citizens, and feel valued within their communities.

4.5 For People with a Learning Disability, Valuing People 2001 and Valuing People Now 2009 were pivotal strategies that set out the vision for people with a Learning Disability, challenging traditional building-based centres, promoting social inclusion, employment and lifelong learning. This saw a move away from large day centres, to services creating community-based opportunities, enabling friendship through natural connections in jobs, college and leisure activities, rather than through attendance at a single Day Centre.

4.6 With the introduction of direct payments, personal budgets, personalisation and self-directed support, people were empowered to access support in different ways, maximising the use of community activities and employing personal assistants to access them. In Shropshire there are 439 people accessing day centres across 29 facilities that offer support to people with a learning disability. 178 of those people access In-House Day services.

4.7 There are eight In-House Day Centres and one Voluntary Service:

Abbots Wood	Aquamira	Albert Road	Avalon	Wild Teams
Greenacres Farm	Wayfarers	Helena Lane	Maesbury Metals	

4.8 As part of the council's aim of modernising day services, the reprovision of remaining in-house services should focus on delivering more flexible, person-centred support that aligns with contemporary models. This approach would ensure that, alongside traditional day care and day activities, individuals have clear pathways to access employment, supported employment, and volunteering opportunities. By fostering collaboration with employment support services such as the council's 'Enable' team, the reprovision aims to enhance outcomes for people with additional needs, supporting them to achieve greater independence, social

inclusion, and well-being. A future model should recognise that while some individuals will always require structured day care, others can benefit from supported or independent work, and the service will be redesigned to provide a tiered approach that matches support to individual capabilities and aspirations. This will enable the council to deliver statutory duties efficiently, maximise value for money, and ensure that resources are allocated to services that deliver the greatest benefit to service users and the wider community.

4.9 An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been completed to identify the likely impact of any proposed change across the Protected Characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010, ahead of the proposed consultation.

4.10 At this stage the impacts are considered to be neutral to low negative across groupings with a potential to be low to medium negative for those in the grouping of Age and Disability. Proposals for mitigation will be scoped and informed by the results of the consultation.

4.11 The impacts in terms of health and wellbeing for the individuals likely to be affected will also need to be informed by the results of the consultation.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to properly consult on potential changes to In-House provision could result in legal challenge, particularly under the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and public law principles	Ensure a robust, transparent, and inclusive public consultation process is undertaken, with all affected stakeholders given the opportunity to contribute. Document all engagement activities and outcomes and update impact assessments accordingly.
Changes to services may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, leading to adverse outcomes in health, wellbeing, or social inclusion.	Complete and regularly update an Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA). Use findings to inform decision-making and develop targeted support or transition plans for those most affected
Failure to achieve planned savings or to deliver services within budget could undermine the council's financial position.	Undertake detailed financial modelling and scenario planning. Monitor costs and savings throughout implementation, and adjust plans as necessary to ensure financial objectives are met

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Service changes may lead to a reduction in quality or interruptions in care.	Develop robust transition plans and maintain clear communication with service users and families
Changes may result in workforce instability or insufficient market capacity to meet needs, especially if services are outsourced or reconfigured.	Engage early with staff and unions. Develop workforce retention and redeployment strategies, and conduct market engagement to ensure sufficient, quality provision.
Poorly managed changes could damage the council's reputation with the public, partners, and regulators.	Communicate openly and proactively with all stakeholders, providing clear rationales for decisions and demonstrating commitment to quality and fairness.

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 financial review for Aquamira demonstrates that the building costs are disproportionately high, primarily due to the operation and maintenance of the hydrotherapy pool. Excluding internal market recharges, the total annual cost of operating Aquamira stands at £374,325 minus income of £19,200, with an average cost of £211 per person per day. This is substantially above the market benchmark of approximately £170 per day for comparable services. While Aquamira has a hydro pool that has been valued by some individuals who attended the service, it should be recognised that the council does not have a statutory duty to provide such a facility, and its maintenance represents an unnecessary additional financial burden. Councils operate leisure services under discretionary powers rather than a legal duty.

5.3. There is a strong network of alternative support available locally to Aquamira, including alternative day services, direct payments, personal assistants, and various community and voluntary sector services. Day Service to an alternative venue such as Abbots Wood would reduce the costs of running the day service by £85,920, minus £25,620 of projected income from external income, making an overall projected reduction of £60,300 per year. As this site is council owned, a further savings calculation would be required to establish how much would be saved overall by the council, as this will depend heavily on the future use of the site.

5.4. The financial analysis for Helena Lane demonstrates that, despite the absence of accommodation costs in the reported figures, the service is not financially sustainable in its current format. The annual cost of running the service stands at £180,190, minus a projected income of £18,110, which gives an average running cost of £244 per person, per half day. It is important to note that the true cost of running the service is even higher, as building costs are not incorporated due to the centre's location within a larger council facility. Generally people are now using alternative provision. Seven out of the eight attendees pay privately for the service at an agreed fee, but this has been heavily subsidised. Fees and charges are currently under review for 26-27. People's needs could continue to be met in an alternative way. If the service were to close, it would generate an annual saving for the council of £162,080.

5.5. A range of alternative support options is available locally, including direct payments, personal assistants, and a diverse selection of community and voluntary sector services. The nearest equivalent Day Service is approximately 10 miles away, with a daily charge of £50. While there are no other local day centres within Ludlow itself, an increasingly community-inclusive approach has led to the development of various local services. Examples include luncheon groups supporting individuals with additional needs, such as Hands Together Ludlow, which provides befriending services, Men's Shed, digital inclusion initiatives, community lunches, Food Hub, and Community Fridge.

5.6. Ludlow Assembly Rooms offer not only theatre and film but also a wide variety of community classes, complemented by other services , providing assorted meal options. Community services in Church Stretton deliver additional services, such as 'meet and eat' programmes. Ludlow Library acts as a vibrant community hub, delivering a broad spectrum of social and wellbeing activities aimed at reducing isolation and promoting inclusion. Regular sessions include Knit and Natter, Rhyme Time for families, Sitting Ballet for gentle movement, and Ludlow Gaymers for LGBTQ+ engagement, alongside learning opportunities like digital support drop-ins, creative writing groups, and the Community Clay Club. Furthermore, monthly poetry socials, Citizens Advice sessions, and councillor surgeries enhance access to support and foster community engagement.

5.7. All other spending is continually monitored on other days services, ensuring efficiency in operations. It is not suggested that a reprovision/ redesign of the remaining services would generate any further additional savings. However, this will provide better value for Shropshire residents accessing services.

5.8. While In-House services may be exempt from public procurement rules, the council must still ensure fairness and transparency with consideration of the Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999.

5.9. Based on financial analysis of the potential changes, reduction in costs could be significant:

Financial Year	Quarter	Projected savings
26-27 - Q1	£0 (redundancy costs)	£111,190
26-27 - Q2	£0	
26-27 - Q3	£55,595	
26-27 - Q4	£55,595	
27-28	-	£222,380
28-29	-	£222,380
29-30	-	£222,380

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 While the aim is to provide services locally to where people live, changes to service provision could result in people having to travel further afield to access suitable facilities that could increase vehicle emissions.

7. Background

7.1 The Council has offered In-House services for many years. Prior to 'Compulsory Competitive Tendering', most care was delivered internally, guided by public sector principles. While not legally required, Councils use In-House provision to meet obligations under the Care Act 2014 to address or prevent care needs. Operated directly by the council, these services are strictly non-profit.

7.2 There are eight Day Services and a volunteer service.

i. Abbots Wood is a progressive day centre in Shrewsbury for adults with learning disabilities. The service offers a wide range of activities, including arts and crafts, quizzes, exercise (with a small gym), gardening, cooking, music, and computer sessions. There are also outdoor activities such as cycling and gardening, and regular community outings. Abbots Wood operates a person-

centred approach, supporting independence and individual outcomes, and works closely with the Wild Teams for nature-based activities.

ii. Albert Road Day Service, also in Shrewsbury, is a smaller centre supporting around 27 adults with learning disabilities. It provides both onsite and offsite activities, such as gardening, arts and crafts, group cooking, travel training, and community engagement. The service is known for its supportive environment, flexible approach, and involvement in local projects like LovelyLand and the Wild Team, promoting health, wellbeing, and outdoor adventure.

iii. Aquamira, based in Sutton Park, Shrewsbury, specialises in supporting adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The centre offers a holistic and therapeutic approach, multi-sensory experiences, gardening, arts and crafts, cookery, and digital activities. The service is highly person-centred, with keyworkers supporting everyone's health, wellbeing, and independence. The service has onsite access to a hydrotherapy pool and Sensory Room.

iv. Avalon Day Opportunities in Oswestry provides a broad range of activities for adults with learning disabilities, including gardening, crafts, sensory room sessions, bingo, karaoke, photography, and shop-and-cook groups. The service also supports offsite voluntary work and community projects, aiming to promote independence, social inclusion, and personal development in a relaxed and supportive environment.

v. Greenacres Farm, near Baschurch, is a 16-acre working farm offering day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. Attendees learn skills in horticulture, agriculture, animal care, catering, woodwork, and concrete production. The farm also features a sensory garden, outdoor gym, and accessible cycle path. Greenacres promotes independence, social inclusion, and community engagement, and provides opportunities for recreation and skill-building in a safe, supportive setting. There also a house on site that is currently not used.

vi. Helena Lane Day Service is specifically designed to support older people. The service offers a range of daytime activities and support, aiming to promote independence, social engagement, and wellbeing for its attendees. More recently due to a lack of demand, the service has reduced its offer to half days, three times a week.

vii. Maesbury Metals in Oswestry is a specialist day service focused on upcycling, metalwork, and woodwork for adults with learning disabilities. Service users develop skills in welding, woodworking, arts and crafts, and mosaicking, producing items for sale at craft markets and community events. The centre also supports social skills, community access, and self-advocacy, fostering independence and creativity in a workshop environment.

viii. Wayfarers Day Centre in Market Drayton provides a variety of meaningful activities for adults with learning disabilities, including independent living skills,

physical and leisure activities, gardening, arts and crafts, and sensory sessions. The centre emphasises inclusion, choice, and community participation, offering regular outings, fundraising events, and opportunities to develop life skills and independence.

ix. The Shropshire Wild Teams are volunteer conservation groups for adults with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs. Participants engage in countryside management tasks such as habitat management, ground clearance, hedge laying, and wildlife surveys. The programme promotes physical activity, wellbeing, confidence, and social skills, using Shropshire's natural environments as a therapeutic and educational resource. Sessions rotate between day centres and are tailored to participants' interests and abilities.

8. Additional Information

8.1. A broader review of all other in-house provisions will be conducted. If additional changes are suggested that need cabinet approval, they will be presented in future cabinet reports.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The financial analysis suggests that both Helena Lane and Aquamira have excessive running costs that could be mitigated. Helena Lane operates at a substantial financial deficit. Similarly, Aquamira's running costs are hampered by excessive building costs, particularly those linked to the hydro-pool, further compounding its financial unsustainability. Declining attendance and reduced demand for these services underscore a potential need for future change.

9.2. No decision has yet been made about the future of the In-House Day services. The council is open to alternative suggestions. To thoroughly assess these services, a consultation will be required to consider potential changes, such as possibly closing Helena Lane Day Centre and moving Aquamira Day Service to another location. Careful transition planning and proactive involvement with service users and their families are crucial to ensure continuity of care and support. The focus remains on the council meeting people's eligible needs through relocation and reprovision, while maintaining financial sustainability.

9.3. There are 23 individuals who access the two services that could be mostly affected. A social work assessment would be offered to all affected individuals, with a focus on a strengths-based approach to promote independence and facilitate access to community-based activities as appropriate.

9.4. If there were any changes that would affect the overall use of the pool by private users, individual discussions will take place.

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9.5. The total reduction in spend from the potential changes is approximately £222,380 per 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 1- Equality, Social Inclusion and Health impact Assessment (ESHIA)

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Shropshire Council

Day Centres Consultation

Consultation Feedback Report

April 2026



www.shropshire.gov.uk
General Enquiries: 0345 678 9000

1 Background

Shropshire Council is aware that the services provided by the Day Centres are valued by local residents who access them and by their carers and family members. They provide a social environment and aim to increase a person's independence, ultimately reducing and delaying the need or future services. They also provide respite to carers. However, use of Day Centres has changed over recent years and this, coupled with funding pressures, means that Shropshire Council must, like all local authorities, work to review provision and ensure value for money.

In-house Day Centre provision is not a statutory (legally required) service. It is something the council can choose to provide itself or meet needs through other services (we need to ensure Care Act assessed needs are met).

Following the declaration of a financial emergency by Shropshire Council in September 2025, it has been essential to reassess all services, including statutory and discretionary services to manage costs and ensure that services are designed in a way that best balances costs and benefits.

In Shropshire there are 439 people accessing day centres across 29 facilities that offer support to people with a learning disability. 178 of those people access In-House Day services. There are eight In-House Day Centres and one voluntary Service:

- Abbots Wood
- Aquamira
- Albert Road
- Avalon
- Wild Teams
- Greenacres Farm
- Wayfarers
- Helena Lane
- Maesbury Metals

Shropshire Council would like to modernise the service offer by delivering more flexible, person-centred support. Alongside traditional day care and day activities, individuals should have clear pathways to access employment, supported employment, and volunteering opportunities. A future model should recognise that while some individuals will always require structured day care, others can benefit from supported or independent work, and the service may be redesigned to provide a tiered approach that matches support to individual capabilities and aspirations. Shropshire Council's Enable service may form an opportunity to enhance outcomes for people with additional needs, supporting them to achieve greater independence, social inclusion, and well-being.

Shropshire Council proposed service changes to Day Centres within a consultation which ran from 29th January 2026 to 26th March and invited responses from people who use day centres, their family members, carers, members of the public, professionals, and other stakeholders.

This consultation proposed to deliver better value within the in-house Day Centres. The proposals were:

- **Proposal 1:** Close the Day Centre service at Helena Lane (the building will remain open and is used for other services).
- **Proposal 2:** Transfer the Aquamira Day Centre service to Abbots Wood (excluding the hydrotherapy pool which would close) and offer those using the site support at Abbots Wood or another location if appropriate.
- **Proposal 3:** Explore the re-shaping of some Day Centre support to modernise the offer and enhance outcomes for individuals.

The proposals included within the consultation were designed with the aim of making the Council's In-house Day Centres more sustainable and suitable for the longer-term needs of adults with learning disabilities and older people.

The consultation background information explained that Helena Lane Day Centre and Aquamira Day Centre, in their current forms have high operational costs, and reduced demand. Helena Lane operates at a loss, while the costs of maintaining the hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira are not offering value for money. The proposed changes would deliver an approximate saving of £222,380 per year. The benchmark value of comparable day centre services is £170 per person a day. The cost per person a day in Aquamira is currently £211 and at Helena Lane £244 per person per day. It was explained that the rationale for selecting the 2 Day Centres extends beyond the financial costs of these services and potential savings. The proposals were designed to reduce impact on any many people as possible. 23 people would be directly affected by the 2 closure proposals in total.

Any service changes and reductions are difficult, and public feedback is essential before decision making by councillors. This report summarises the feedback obtained through:

- An online survey.
- Email and letter consultation responses (all those affected were written to).
- Feedback meetings (those directly impacted were given the opportunity to meet with Shropshire Council lead officers to discuss concerns).

This report brings together all the feedback obtained and describes the survey findings within 6 main sections:

- **Section 1: Background** (this section) provides an overview of the survey and how it was promoted.
- **Section 2: Clients and Carers** covers the consultation feedback from people who use the services, either as a client or a carer.
- **Section 3: Professional and stakeholders** covers the results of a survey designed to capture feedback from professionals either within Shropshire Council's day centres, external day opportunities or other stakeholders with an interest in these services.
- **Section 4: One to one respondents** considers users and their families who engaged with the consultation in a face to face meeting.
- **Section 5: Recommendations** highlights recommendations based on the analysis of the online surveys and face-to-face engagements.
- **Section 6: Summary and Conclusion** provides a brief summary and conclusion based on the overall analysis of the feedback received.

2 Clients and carers

There were two surveys used as part of the consultation, one for professionals and stakeholders, and the other for clients and carers. These surveys were published to gather lived experiences from both the people who benefit from the use of the services, and those providing services. This section focuses on the feedback from the clients and carers survey.

The clients and carers survey was responded to by 53 people. The first question asked how the respondents found out about the consultation. This is helpful in understanding how people prefer to receive important information and the information can inform the design of future engagement. Figure 1 shows the results.

Figure 1 –How people found out about the consultation.

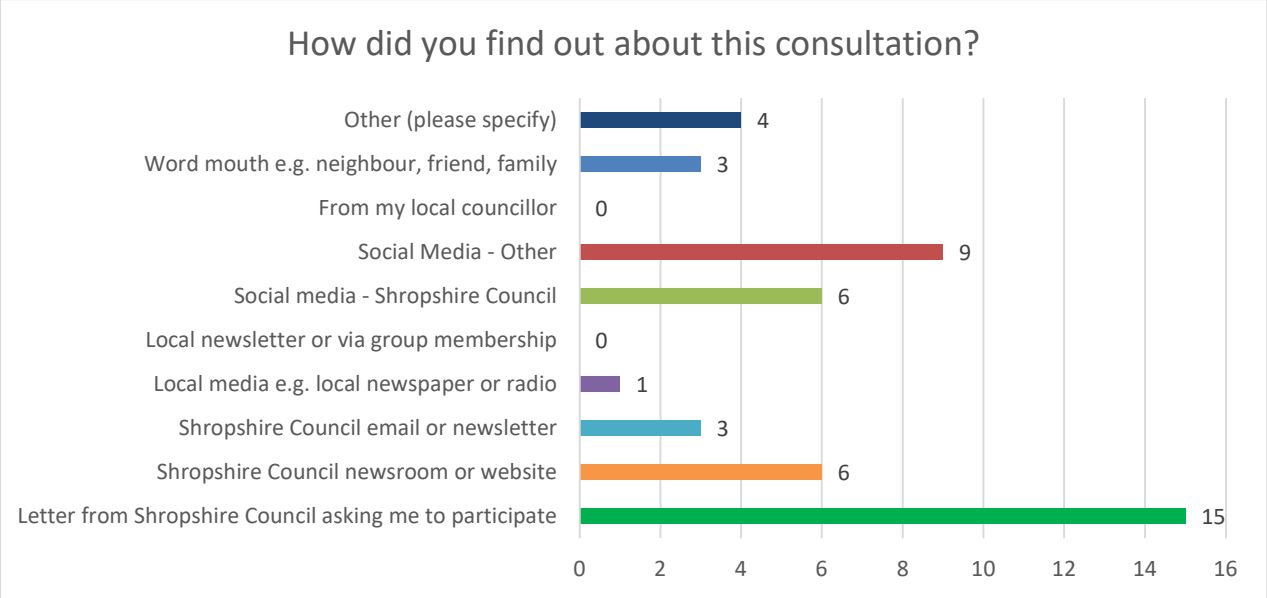


Figure 1 shows that in general 32% (15 responses) of people were asked to participate via a letter from Shropshire Council asking them to engage. This direct approach and other Shropshire Council-based approaches such as newsroom or website and social media from the council has yielded the most responses overall. After engagement with the council either directly or indirectly, people found out about the consultation from social media (non-Shropshire Council) 19% (9 responses); local media 2% (1 response) and word of mouth and other; 7% respectively. The question was answered by 47 people.

If ‘other’ was answered the respondents were asked to specify. There were 3 comments:

- *Connection to Helena Lane.*
- *Facebook.*
- *PACC on Facebook.*

The respondents were then asked in what capacity they were responding to the survey and Figure 2 displays the results in full.

Figure 2 –Type of survey respondent

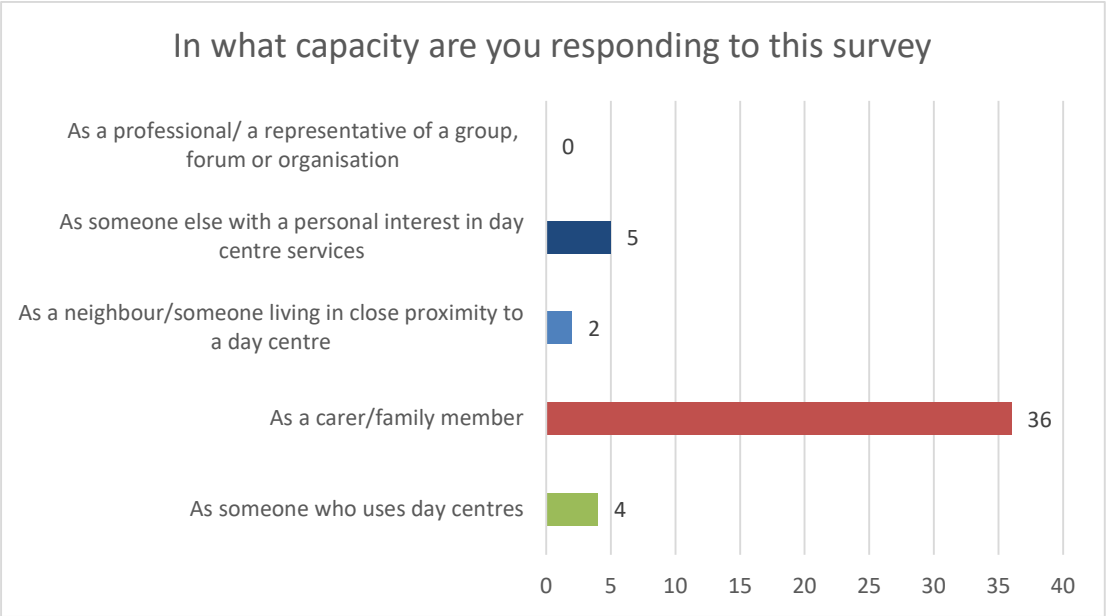


Figure 2 shows that overwhelmingly people were responding as a carer/family member; out of 47 people who answered, 77% answered as a carer or family member. 11%, 5 responses, were from someone else who has a personal interest in day centre services, and 9% (4 responses) were from someone who uses the day centres and 5% (2 responses) were from a neighbour/someone living in close proximity to a day centre.

Question 3 asked which Shropshire Council provided day services the respondents use.

Figure 3 –Which day services people use.

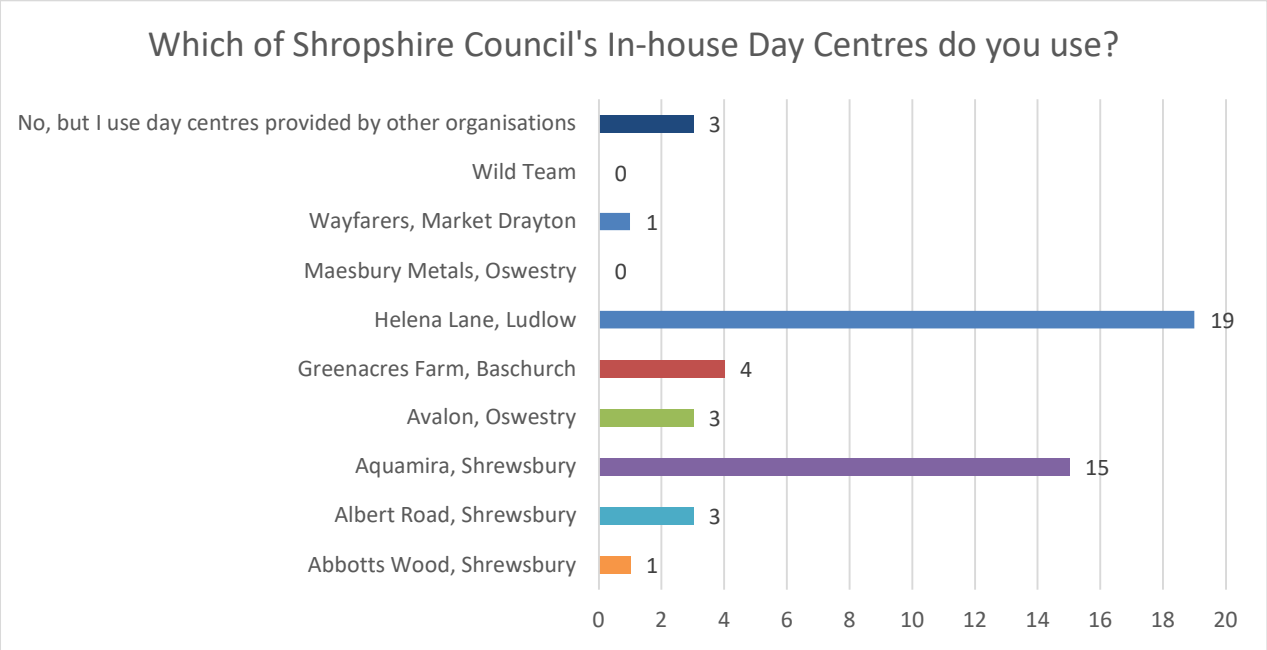
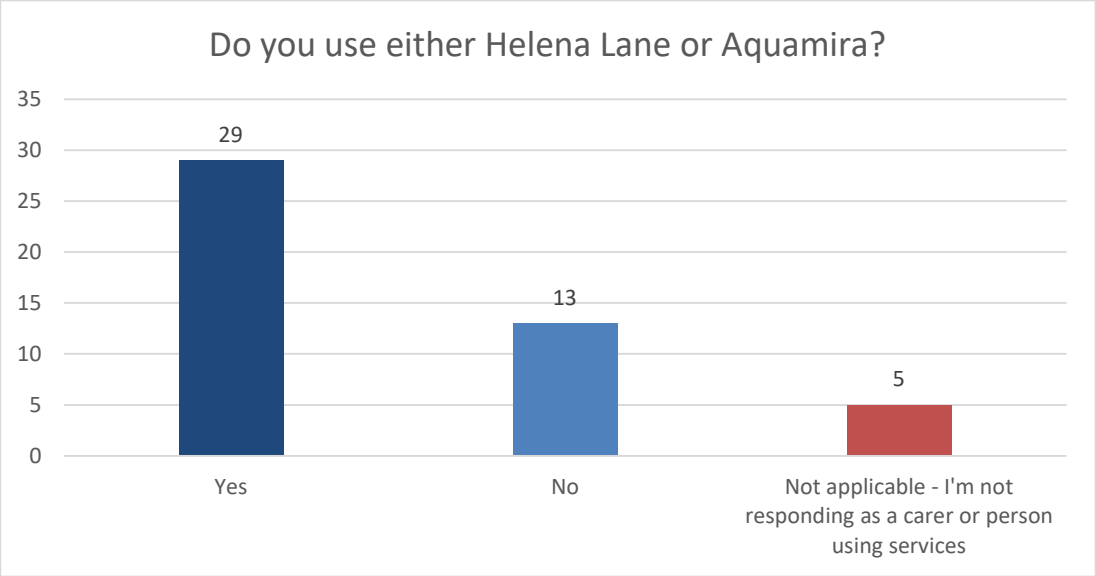


Figure 3 shows that 39% of the 49 respondents attend Helena Lane, Ludlow. Thereafter, 31% used Aquamira. It is useful that the most responses are from the people that the consultation has actively sought out; these are the opinions that will contribute to the final decision on the proposals.

Question 4 followed the above responses to ask whether respondents used the day

centres that feature in the proposed amendments; Helena Lane or Aquamira.

Figure 4 –Whether people use either Helena Lane or Aquamira.



62% (27 responses) of the 47 people who answered this question use either Helena Lane or Aquamira. 28% (13 responses) answered no and 11% answered that it was not applicable.

Question 5 then asked if respondents had answered yes to the previous question, how their use of either Helena Lane or Aquamira was funded.

Figure 5 –How respondents fund their attendance at Helena Lane or Aquamira.

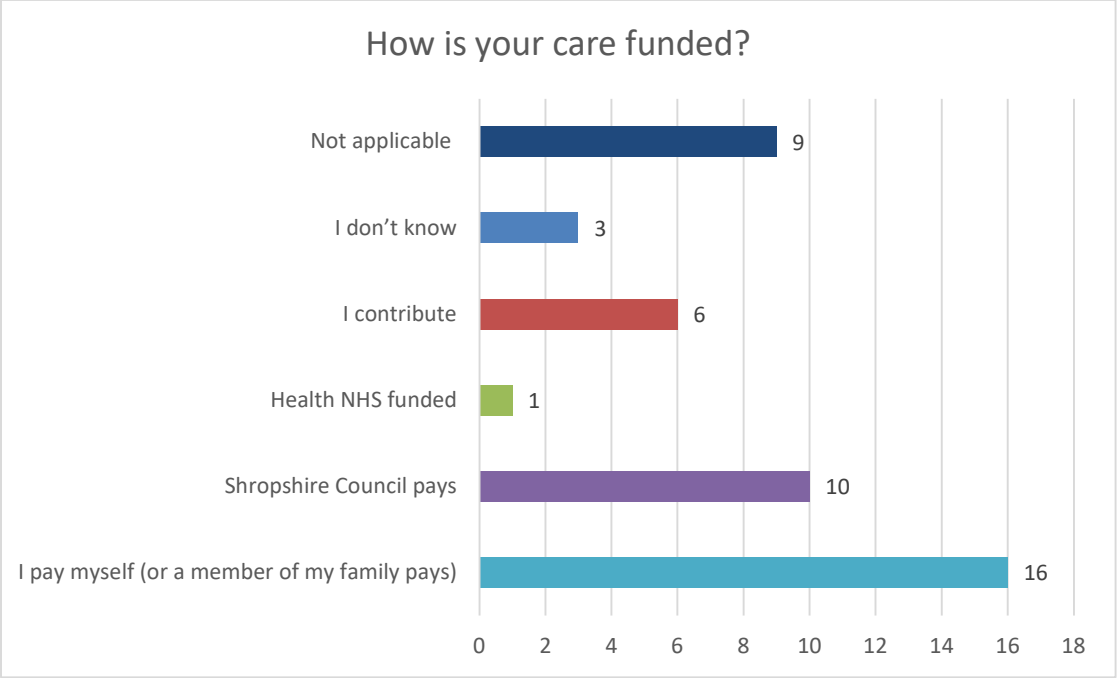


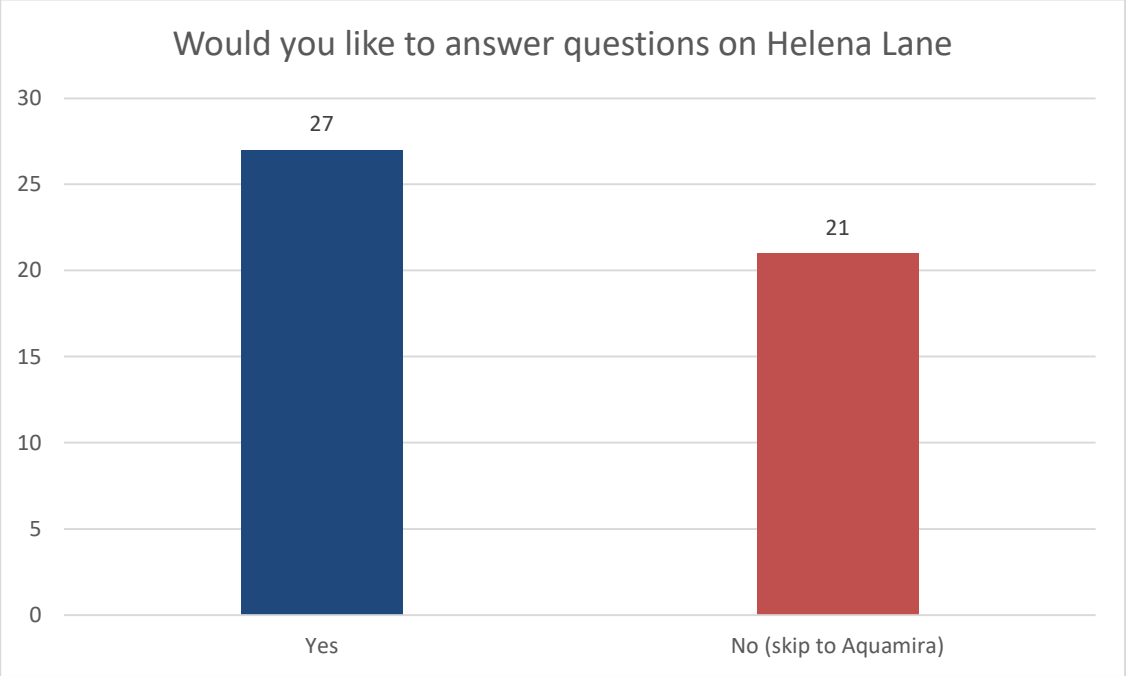
Figure 5 shows that 36% (16 responses out of 45) who use the day centres, pay for themselves (or a member of their family pays). Then 22% (10 responses) answered that Shropshire Council pays, 13% (6 responses) stated that the service user contributes, 7% (3 responses) answered they don't know and 2% (1 response) are NHS funded. There

were also 20% (9 responses) that answered not applicable.

The questions then were split between question sets about Helena Lane and Aquamira, with people choosing whether they wished to answer both, one section or neither. Helena Lane questions were answered first. It is important before analysing the questions about Helena Lane to have a reminder about the proposal for this service. It was proposed that the day centre service would be closed, with the building remaining open for use by other services.

Question 6 asked whether people would like to answer on Helena Lane and figure 6 shows the split in full.

Figure 6 –Interest in the Helena Lane proposal.



The majority, 56% (27 responses), wished to answer questions about Helena Lane and 44% (21 responses) wished to skip this question to answer questions about Aquamira.

As Shropshire Council has proposed closing the day centre service at Helena Lane, it is important to understand how often it is used, therefore question 7 sets out to capture those responses.

Figure 7 –How often Helena Lane is used

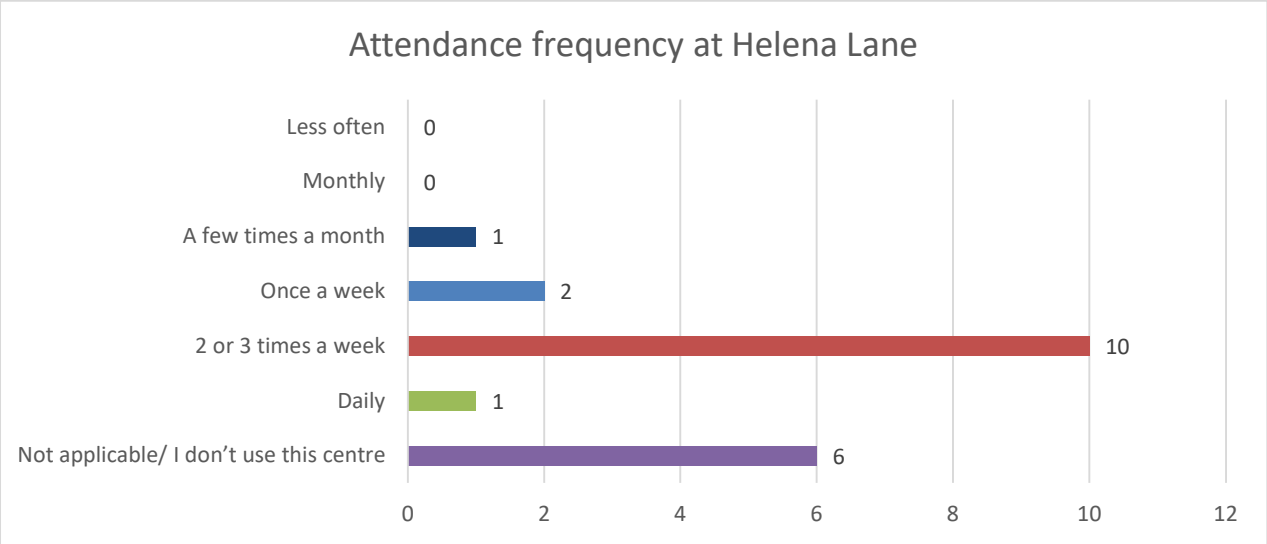


Figure 7 shows that 50% (10 responses) attend 2 or 3 times a week. 10% (2 responses) attend once a week and 5% (1 response) attend a few times a month and daily respectively. 30% (6 responses) of people answered the question was not applicable or that they don't attend the centre. It is helpful to have 13 very regular users of Helena Lane contributing to the consultation.

When asked about what activities or services the respondents benefit from at Helena Lane, there was a mix of responses from the 19 people who responded.

Figure 8 –The variety of activities service users partake in at Helena Lane.



As seen in figure 8, there is a mixture of activities undertaken by service users at Helena Lane with the majority, 58%, answering arts and crafts/ making things. Where the 42% of people have responded 'other', there are responses to support that choice. They are as follows:

- *Supervised care. My husband has moderate dementia. As far as I know most of the activities listed above do not take place at Helena Lane.*

- *Supervised care.*
- *Having social work team on site makes access easy. Socialise with other service users. Having a cooked meal 3 days a week. Having an assisted bath. Hairdressers on site. Easy parking. Building all on one level. I feel safe in the building even though there is never anyone on reception. Day care staff are always there to greet us on arrival.*
- *Social interaction in a supported environment due to mobility issues.*
- *1. Respite care for husband. 2. Day services used to take services users out into the community in their bus, but due to Shropshire Council removing the bus, this is no longer possible.*
- *Different celebrations e.g. D Day, Christmas, Easter. The company and companionship of other clients and staff.*
- *Eye tests for my child with additional needs.*
- *I do not, at present, but all of the above should be available as it's the only Day Centre in Ludlow. [to show missing sentence] If you want to close any down, close some of the ones you have in Shrewsbury instead. We all know the Council's money always stays in Shrewsbury, and is never spent in south Shropshire.*

Question 9 asked whether the respondents would be negatively affected by the proposal to close the Day Centre service at Helena Lane. It was answered by 20 people and overwhelmingly people would be negatively affected.

Figure 9 –Whether people would be negatively affected by the closure of Helena Lane.

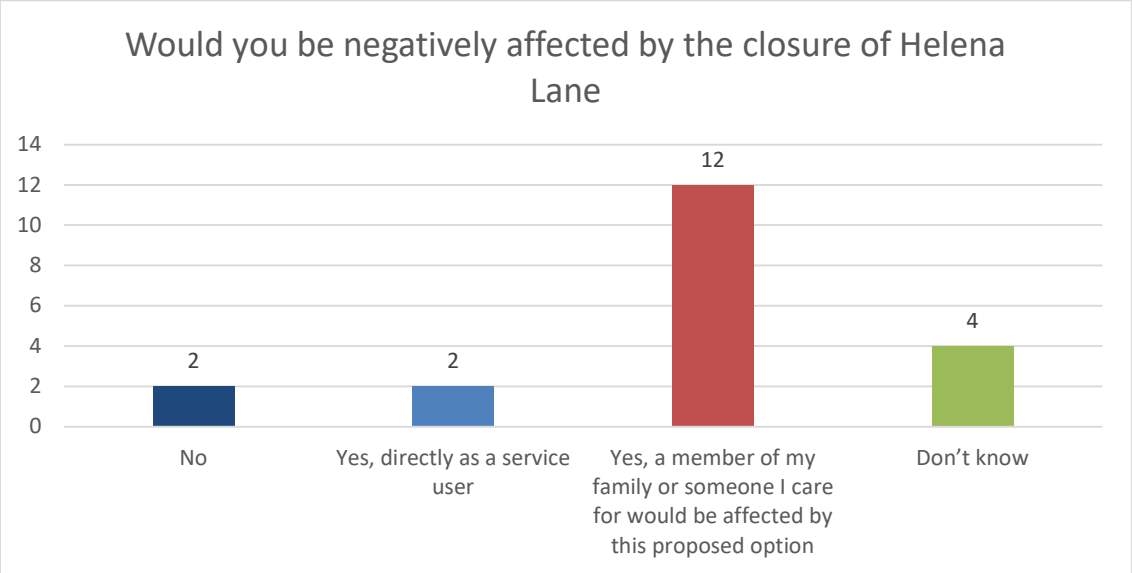


Figure 9 shows that 60% (12 responses) answered that someone they cared for or a member of their family would be affected and 10% (2 responses) answered yes as a direct service user, they would be affected. 20% (4 responses) answered they didn't know and 10% (2 responses) answered 'no'.

The respondents were then asked to what degree they would be negatively affected if they had answered yes. 17 people answered this question and figure 10 shows the result in full.

Figure 10 –How much people would be negatively affected by the closure of Helena

Lane.

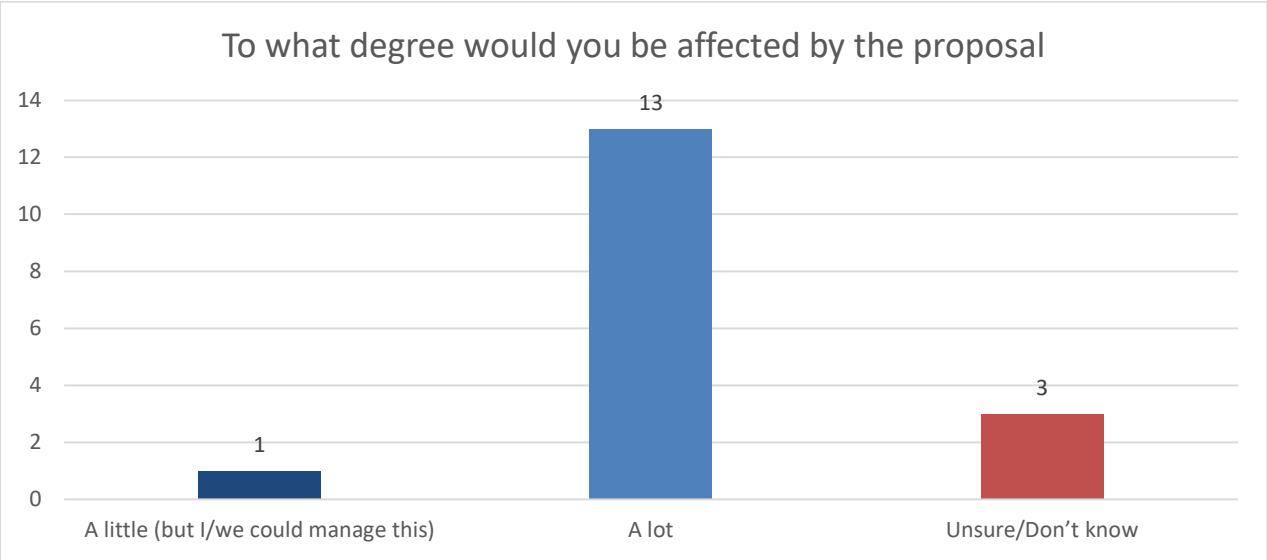


Figure 10 shows that 77% (13 responses) of people would be affected a lot by the proposed closure of Helena Lane, 17% (3 responses) are unsure/don't know and 6% (1 response) answered they would be affected a little, but it would be manageable.

When asked about the overall opinion of the proposed closure of Helena Lane, 20 people answered in the main that they oppose that proposal. Figure 11 displays the division between the responses in full.

Figure 11 –Whether people support or oppose the proposal for Helena Lane.

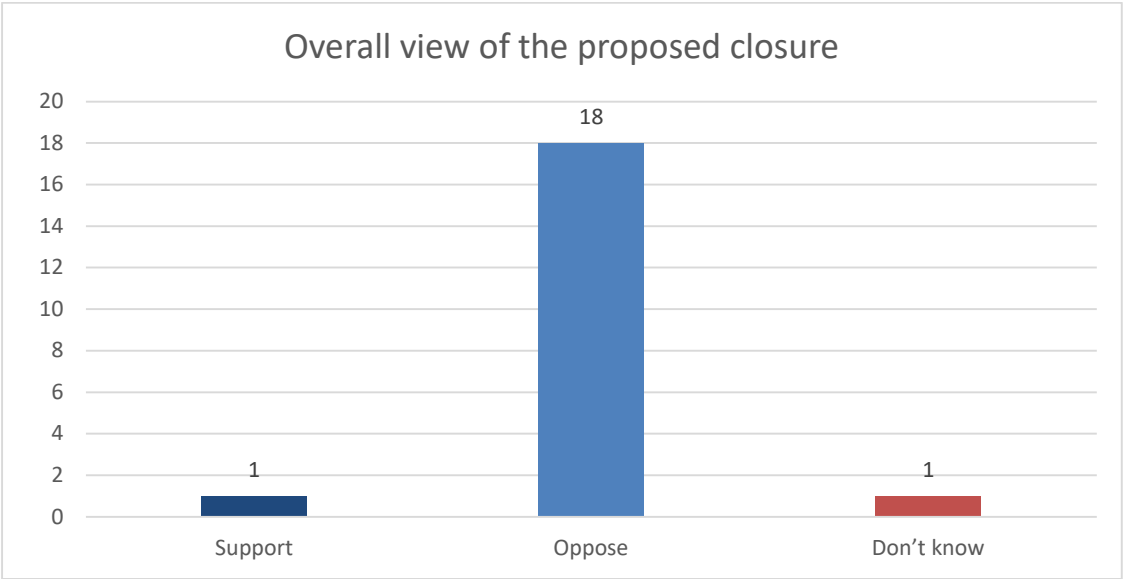


Figure 11 shows that 90% (18 responses) oppose the proposal, with the remaining 10% made up of one response in support and one response that didn't know.

The next question allowed for further expansion on respondents' views on the proposal, particularly if they responded in support or opposition. 20 people responded and the key insights are seen in Table 1, with comments to follow.

Table 1 –Key themes from comments on the proposed closure of Helena Lane.

Theme	Explanation
Perceived loss of an essential, irreplaceable local service	Respondents overwhelmingly oppose the proposal because Helena Lane is seen as the *only* day centre in Ludlow and South Shropshire that can meet the different and varied needs of the people who attend. Closure is seen as a removal of support altogether.
Strong emphasis on dignity, personal care and wellbeing	Helena Lane is viewed as playing a central role in maintaining dignity and personal care, that cannot be safely provided at home or through voluntary community services. Respondents argue that the removal of these elements would undermine basic standards of care.
Impact on carers and increased pressure on families	Respondents describe the service as a lifeline, providing essential respite. Without Helena Lane, carers/families would be providing care 24/7 with what they describe as negative consequences for their own health and ability to care.
Concerns about accessibility, transport and rurality	Opposition is strongly linked to geography. Respondents emphasise rural isolation, limited transport options, and the impracticality of travelling long distances to alternative centres. For many service users, fatigue, mobility issues, or medical conditions make longer journeys unrealistic, meaning attendance would likely reduce or cease altogether.
Under-use is due to under-investment, not lack of need	A recurring comment is that respondents do not accept low attendance figures as evidence of lack of demand. Instead, they argue that attendance has fallen because of reduced referrals, loss of transport, removal of meals, staffing constraints, and lack of promotion. Closure is therefore viewed as unfair, premature, and avoidable, with respondents calling for better use of the building, active promotion, and alternative income-generating uses rather than withdrawal of the service.
Perceived inequity	Some respondents express opposition rooted in distrust of decision-making, questioning whether savings will genuinely be achieved and raising concerns about fairness between different parts of the county. There is a perception that South Shropshire is disproportionately affected and that decisions are driven by financial considerations without sufficient weight given to social value, prevention, and long-term costs.

Comments

- *Care provided provides stimulation and contact for my sister-in-law in a safe environment whilst giving me much needed respite for my brother as her carer. This supports his mental health and enables him to continue caring for her at home. Without this, he would not be able to continue and thus would mean full-time care required at much greater cost to the council.*

- *Helena Lane is the only day centre in Ludlow. The Council have purposely cut and removed services from Helena Lane to make the figures look bad, so these figures can be used as an excuse to close the centre. It is obscene that you should target Helena Lane for closure. It is the only Day Centre in Ludlow (which has the highest population of older people in Shropshire). Not only is it a Day Centre where its users can socialise and engage in the activities, but the bathing services are essential for people's wellbeing, those who use it will be unable to maintain their hygiene, along with easy parking to drop off family or park.*
- *If you utilised the building to its full potential, you could cover the cost of the day centre, which is a vital support to clients and caregivers. Greed has stopped other services using the building. You need a good manager to promote the building and bring in business.*
- *It is easily accessible.*
- *The day care users at Helena Lane are predominantly older people with serious conditions who need either supervision or physical support or both. The list of activities above is in most cases not applicable so I am not sure why they are listed. The day care service is invaluable but sadly has not been promoted by the Council - I have asked for additional days but cannot be supported because there are too few staff - numbers have been allowed to run down so now we have a chicken and egg situation - there would be plenty of demand if it was promoted. I know of people who now can't get a place because Helena Lane has stopped recruiting clients because of this proposal. That is outrageous. The day care service seems to be singled out unfairly - I should like to see detailed costs which include the total of activities, staffing, room rentals etc. How can it be that this expensive PFI building will remain, but this vital service will be cut. The service is a lifeline for carers who want a break from caring.*
- *This is the only place in Ludlow where someone with mild - moderate dementia can be supervised for a few hours. All the other community services provided by hands together Ludlow are not able to this. Unless a family member of carer stays with the person which defeats the purpose of having respite care. It's an essential service that is badly advertised and under-resourced. I asked for extra days but could not have them.*
- *I am writing on behalf of someone who attends Helena Lane twice weekly. She has advanced Alzheimers and relies on the day centre for stimulation and company. It is close to where she lives, which means that the travelling to and from the centre isn't too much for here as she tires very easily. If Helena Lane closed it would have an effect on her mental wellbeing as the stimulation she gets from it is very satisfying for her, as is the feeling of independence from carers and her home environment. She also experiences a huge sense of achievement bringing home things which she has made.*
- *What other centres are in Ludlow? People can't use as a lot haven't transport which is when the numbers went down.*
- *Helena Lane is a lifeline for me as I live in the country and have few visitors. Since attending it has improved my mental wellbeing and outlook on life. I get a chance to do activities I wouldn't normally be able to do. I can socialise with other people who have become good friends. I have a bath once a week which aids my personal care and staff can monitor and advise on skin issues. Staff are on hand to support me if I get low or depressed and always lift my spirits with positivity and encouragement.*
- *As a personal assistant for adults with additional needs, this feels like the council is trying to shift these adults into volunteering etc. so the council will save money.*

However, many of these adults will require someone to support them. This would mean a PA attending, or someone else who would also require pay. Many PAs are paid by the council, so I don't see how this saves money.

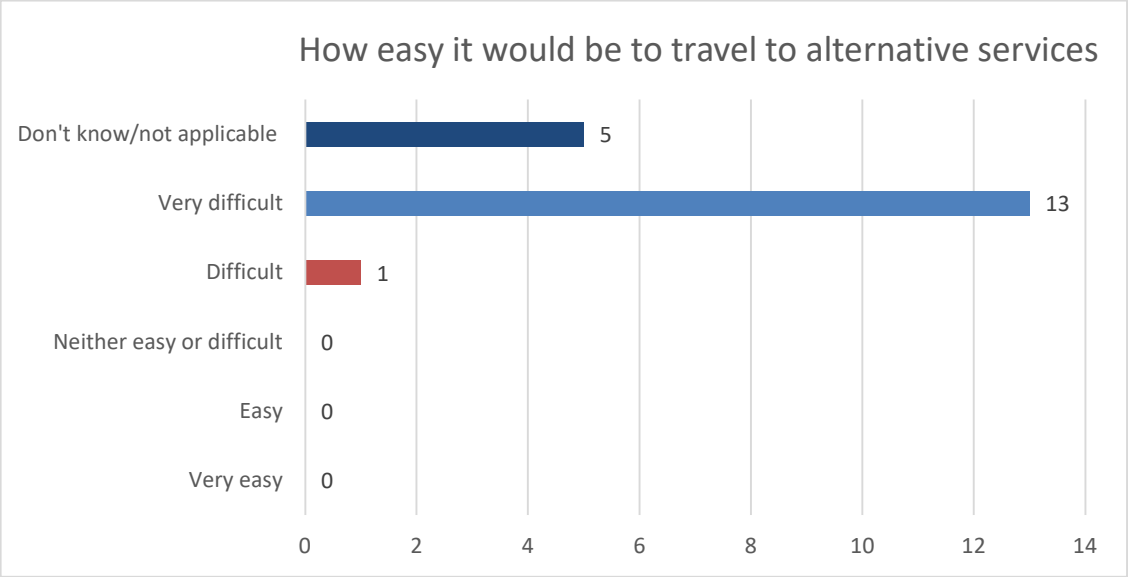
- *We are very rural and these services are needed to support those in the area. Travelling to other areas isn't always easy, or an option. This could make a huge difference to someone who relies on this service for either care and/or the respite this provides.*
- *Respite. I am totally opposed to the closure of the Helena Lane Day Centre facilities. My wife, who suffers from Multiple System Atrophy, attends the centre 2 days a week. Some of her symptoms mean she requires constant supervision when moving around as she's prone to falls. If she did not have the respite of attending then she would be with me 24/7, which is not great for promoting a healthy caregiving/marriage relationship. Her visits to the day centre give her a great sense of self-esteem and she thrives by mixing with others. She looks forward to attending and the range of activities keeps her mentally agile and gives her a great sense of being part of a community. The respite that the sessions provide are not only for but also for me. The few hours give me time to catch up with life admin without having to worry about [name redacted] and it improves both our quality of life. If the facility moved to another location nearer Shrewsbury, then these few hours of respite would be eroded by the additional travelling time. It would also not be practical to add an extra 2 hours of sitting in a car with [name redacted] condition. The Helena Lane facilities are purpose-built for providing the service that the attendees need, whether that be company, mental stimulus, a hot meal or even a bath and the staff are second to none. To take this facility and service away from the residents of Ludlow is absurd and certainly not what you would expect from a council that is supposed to be for the people. As always, I am assuming that this is about money saving and not providing an essential service to those that need it. To increase income the facility and what it provides could be better advertised, most people I have asked don't even know Helena Lane exists. Another option would be to investigate if a suitable location in Ludlow is available at cheaper running costs. This consultation should consider that this is vulnerable people's wellbeing that is being threatened and not just about a few pounds saving to please the bean counters. Note, these views are echoed by [name redacted] my wife, whose communication skills are affected by her condition.*
- *The only service like in Ludlow for dementia and their carers, my parents. This is so valuable to enable them to live independently in Ludlow. They can't travel far at all, and I work so I can't take them.*
- *The day centre at Helena Lane has provided significant support to my mother who has a degenerative brain condition at a young age - she has used the services for several years since the age of 65 - far too young to consider care home assistant. Helena Lane provides her connection with the wider community (both other attendees and staff), emotional support and stimulation plus this allows my father a few hours a week for himself where he is currently full-time carer to a person who is not mobile. Closing the centre I am strongly opposed too - the nearest service would be over 45 minutes in Shrewsbury, which is not practical for anyone in the Ludlow area to attend for a day centre offer. My view is the service should be more widely advertised and encouraged to be attended by a wider audience to make it more sustainable or make a small increase to the cost per-day as this would be acceptable. I doubt the space will be used for anything else and as said this would be a significant loss to Ludlow for future generations. If the cost of the building is a challenge - are there other facility options which are cheaper, i.e. the Mascal*

centre?

- *1. If [name redacted] did not attend Helena Lane I would be caring for her 24/7 with no respite. 2. There are no other day care centres in Ludlow. 3. Other care users make use of Helena Lane so closure would be a complete disaster, taking away an important resource for the community. 4. Removal of day care from Helena Lane would cause isolation for [name redacted] and her wellbeing and mental health. This is the only socialisation she gets and has made long-lasting friendships through attending day care. 5. Some care users that attend Helena Lane make use of the bathing facility (as they are unable or due to safety reasons not able to use bathing facilities at home. So, closure of Helena Lane would deprive them of taking a bath so basic hygiene would be taken from them.*
- *If the council allowed the service to take on more staff, then more clients could be taken on. If they provided a minibus, then more adventurous trips could be arranged for clients. The county of Shropshire does not end in Church Stretton, if you close Helena Lane then there will be no council run day care provision in the area. The staff here do a great job with the little provision they have from Shropshire Council.*
- *The cost of Helena Lane is High due the cost of the PFI contract. Closing the day service will not affect the cost of the PFI contract as the council is locked into the contract. Therefore, the estimated savings are not correct. Please clarify the alternative uses of Helena Lane & how it will be funded.*
- *Yet again the council not thinking about the impact on disabled community.*
- *If changes have to be made, then this option is the one that affects the fewest people, especially if as you say in your proposal, it already has low attendance and high costs to keep it open.*

The respondents were asked to rate how easy or difficult it would be to travel to alternative day centres or similar opportunities should the decision to close Helena Lane be made. As seen in figure 12, the majority of respondents felt it would be very difficult.

Figure 12 –How easy or difficult people would find it to travel to alternate day centres/opportunities.



68% (13 responses) of the 19 people who responded would find travel to alternative services very difficult, 26% (5 responses) didn't know or it was not applicable and 5%

would find it difficult. Those that would find it difficult or very difficult support the sentiments of the previous comments.

With a view to seeing what elements at Helena Lane people benefit from, the next question asked if there were any particular elements that are needed in Ludlow that could be delivered at alternative locations. There is a strong core theme throughout the comments; Helena Lane is the *only* day centre in Ludlow and South Shropshire. It is purpose built, with essential and accessible facilities and there is no viable option nearby, especially given rural transport and access concerns. Helena Lane is seen as fundamental rather than supplementary and closure is there perceived as a complete loss of provision.

Comments

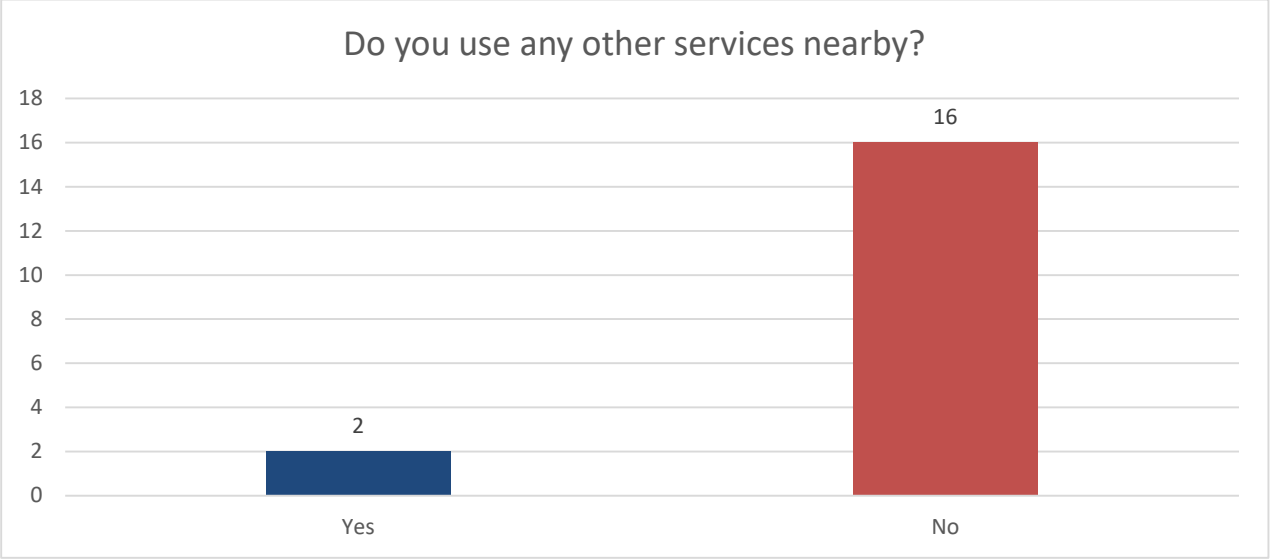
- *No.*
- *No-Helena Lane was built for the purpose of helping and caring for the elderly Helena Lane was left as a legacy to the elderly people of Ludlow.*
- *All services given at the Day Centre in Helena Lane are needed in Ludlow. It is the only Day Centre in Ludlow (which has the highest population of older people in Shropshire). It has brilliant purpose-built bathing facilities, baths with hoists. The staff are fully trained and provide excellent care service. It is unthinkable that you wish to prevent people from maintaining their dignity by preventing them from bathing. In addition, is it a Day Centre where its users can socialise and engage in the activities. All of these services are essential for people's health and wellbeing, both physical and mental health.*
- *No, you have a brilliant building with parking, get out of your office and make it work.*
- *The idea that in Ludlow there are voluntary sector alternatives to the professional care service offered at Helena Lane is fanciful. There are no private, affordable alternatives.*
- *As mentioned, 'other' providers are not able to deal with dementia.*
- *I don't know what services are available elsewhere, but it would be very difficult for her to adapt to a change and venue and change in people and environment due to her Alzheimers condition which means that any change at all is very upsetting and disturbing for her.*
- *Yes, lots of people if they can get there.*
- *Helena Lane is the only day service in Ludlow. It has all the facilities required, car park, one level, bathing facility, own kitchen for homemade meal. Excellent staff who are not just carers but have become friends and always on hand should I need support on matters. Hairdresser on site, accessible garden in the summer. We have a local care home who support us with coffee mornings and fetes and have become friends.*
- *I only hear good things about the service that is delivered from Helena Lane. This is a very valued service and much needed by those who need it/use it.*
- *Not aware of any other facilities that could provide the same service as Helena Lane.*
- *There is nothing similar.*
- *The loss of day centre or moving to a location any more than 20 minutes from Ludlow makes it too difficult for carers to manage - they would spend the hours the person they care for was in respite travelling. Another Ludlow location i.e. Mascal*

centre could be an option but would still need to support the activities and meal creation as these are key aspects of the day for the persons attending to get the support and extra engagement needed.

- *If Helena Lane were to close, we would be deprived of day care. The time spent travelling to another venue would take away valuable respite i.e. 1 hour travel to Shrewsbury and travelling back another hour would take away at least 1 hour from 4-hour respite so the time to go back to pick her up would only allow me 1 hour out of the 4-hour respite. 2 hours respite out of the 4 hours would have a negative impact on respite care. To take away the only day care unit in Ludlow would be a disaster for its 10-15,000 residents.*
- *How much will Enable charge to travel train the service users? Has the cost of travel to alternative services been factored into any savings.*

The following question asked whether the respondents used any other services that were nearby. As seen in figure 13, most respondents answered that no they do not.

Figure 13 –Whether people use any other services nearby.



89% (16 responses) of the 18 respondents answer ‘no’ they do not use any other services nearby and 11% (2 responses) do use other services.

The following questions relate to Aquamira. The proposal for Aquamira is to transfer the Aquamira Day Centre service to Abbots Wood (excluding the hydrotherapy pool which would close) and offer those using the site support at Abbots Wood or another location if appropriate.

The first question asks whether people would like to answer questions on the proposal.

Figure 14 –Interest in answering questions about Aquamira.

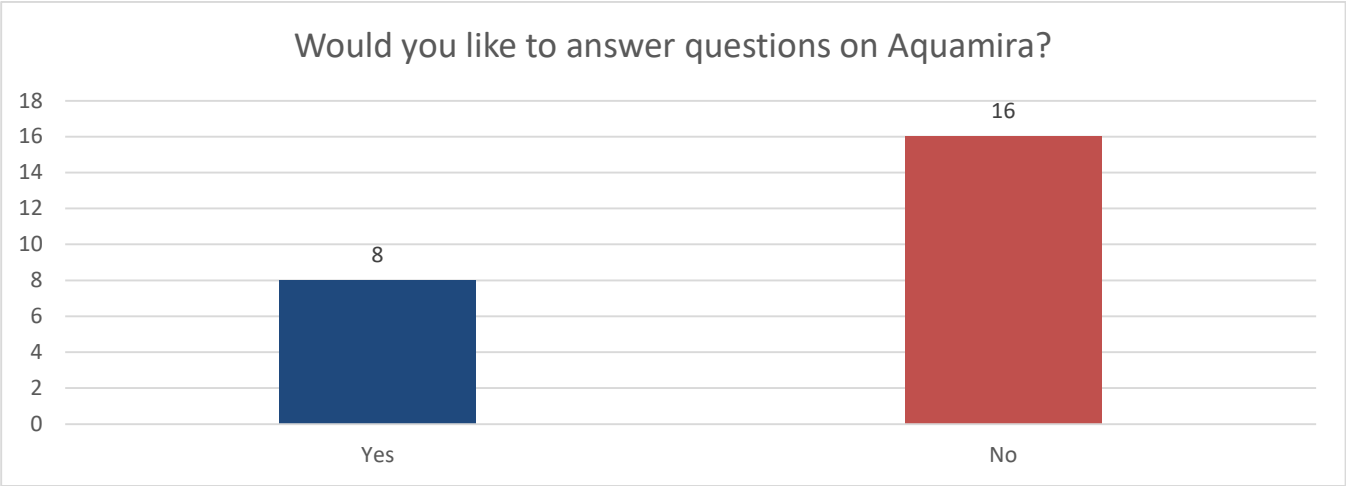
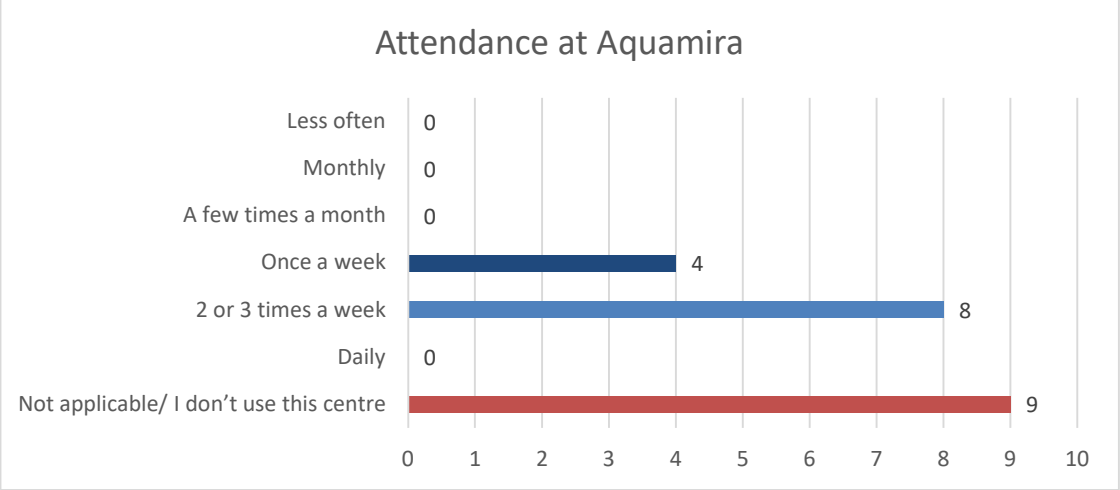


Figure 14 shows that 67% (16 responses) stated they did not want to answer questions on Aquamira and 33% (8 responses) did.

The respondents were then asked how often they, or the person they care for, use Aquamira. 21 people answered and 32 people skipped the question. Figure 15 shows the results in full.

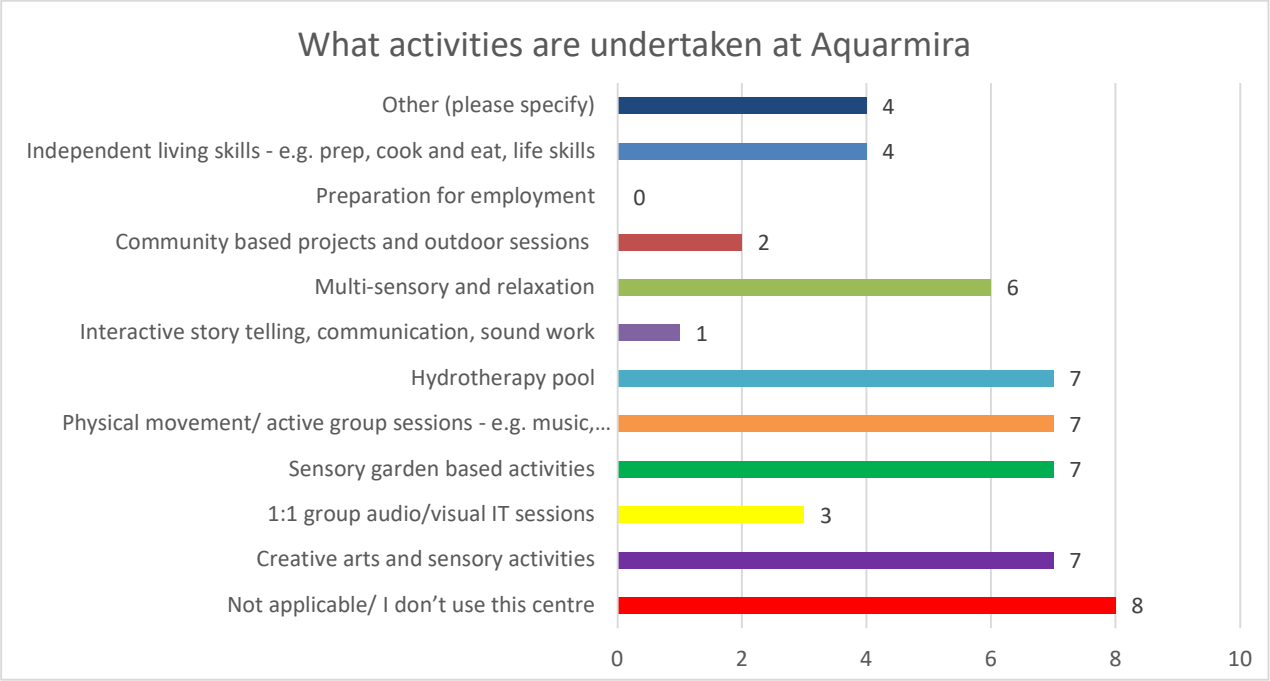
Figure 15 –How often people attend Aquamira



As seen, notwithstanding the 43% (9 responses) who answered that the question was not applicable or they didn't attend this centre, of the people who do attend Aquamira, 38% (8 responses) go 2 or 3 times a week and 19% (4 responses) attend once a week.

Question 18 asked what services or activities people benefitted from at Aquamira. The respondents could choose as many as applicable. 19 people answered and 31 skipped the question. It is important to see how many people use the hydrotherapy pool (7), as this is the part of the service that would be closed as part of the proposal.

Figure 16 – graph to show which activities people benefit from at Aquamira.



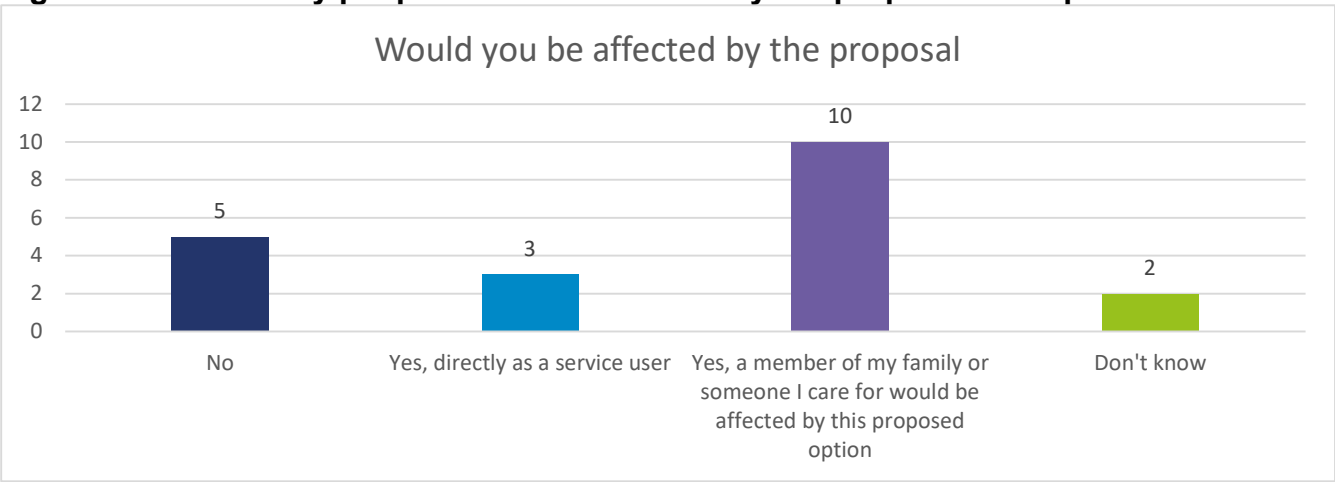
Where people could answer other, they could also specify what other meant. This received 4 responses which are:

- *Hydrotherapy pool (2)*
- *Mixing with people and joining in doing activities like games.*
- *Sensory regulation and social interaction.*

As seen in figure 16, the hydrotherapy pool, creative arts and sensory activities, sensory garden based activities and physical movement/active group sessions are popular activities, with 37% respectively.

When asked if they would be negatively affected by the proposal to close Aquamira and transfer the service to Abbots wood, 20 people answered and in general people would be affected, either as a direct user or as the person the respondent was answering on behalf of.

Figure 17 –How many people would be affected by the proposal for Aquamira.

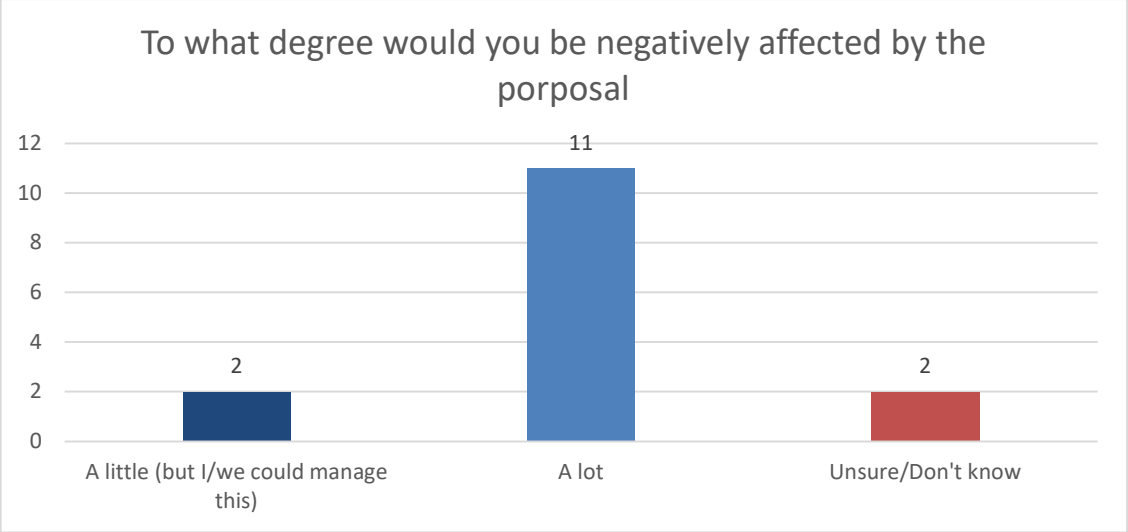


Generally, whether directly as a service user or as a member of family or someone they

care for, people would be affected by the proposal than not. 50% (10 responses) answered as someone whose family member or the person they care for would be affected, which supports the above figures that most people answering this survey are carers or family members and not direct service users. 15% (3 responses) are direct service users.

The respondents were then asked how much they would be affected by the proposal. Overwhelmingly they answered that they would be affected a lot.

Figure 18 –How much people would be affected by the proposal.



15 people answered the question about the level to which they would be affected and 73% (11 responses) would be very affected by the proposal. 13% (2 responses) felt they would be somewhat affected, but it would be manageable, and 13% (2 responses) were unsure of the impact.

When asked their overall view on the proposal, 95% of respondents opposed the proposal.

Figure 19 –Whether people support or oppose the proposal.

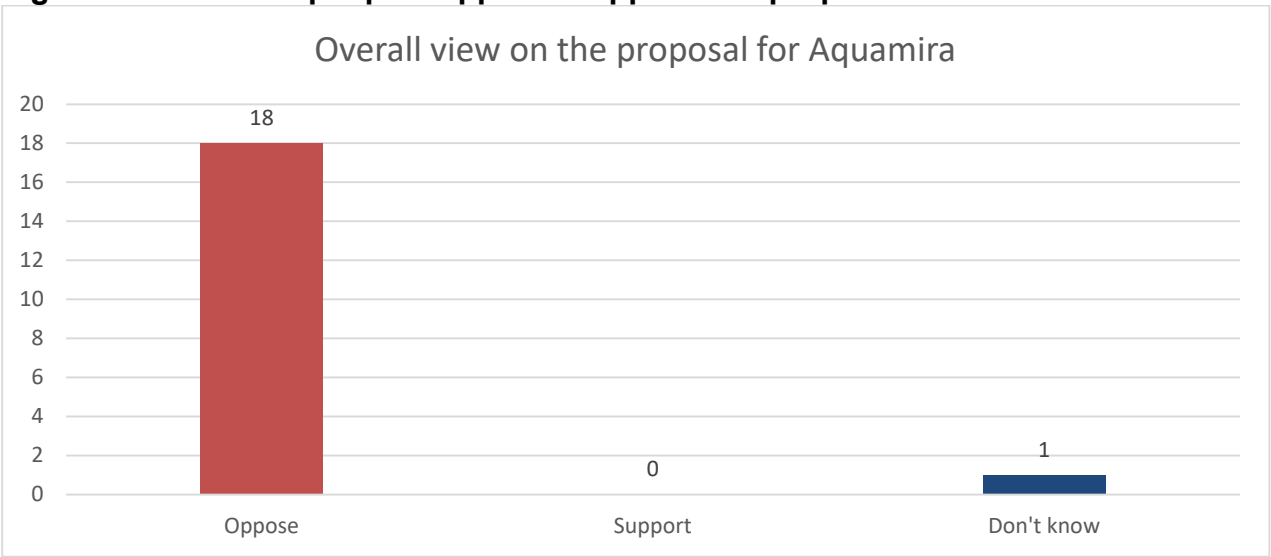


Figure 19 shows that of the 19 people who answered, the overwhelming majority, oppose

the proposal, no one supports it and 5% (1 person) does not know either way.

The respondents were then asked for comments on the proposal, especially if they had answered either support or opposed to the previous question. 17 people answered, and though that it not necessarily a high level in engagement, strong themes come across and the key themes are shown in Table 2 below, with the following comments:

Table 2 – table to show the key themes of support or opposition to the closure of Aquamira.

Theme	Explanation
Hydrotherapy is essential, not optional	Hydrotherapy is consistently described as vital to reduce pain, support mobility, improve mental wellbeing and maintain quality of life. Respondents emphasise that there are no realistic local alternatives.
Aquamira provides a specialist environment	Many respondents highlight Aquamira's quiet, low-stimulus setting, specialist facilities and one-to-one support which would be lost if transferred to a busier centre.
Opposition is rooted in concern about suitability of alternatives	While a small number of comments acknowledge that relocation *might* be acceptable, this is only where **equivalent facilities, space, staffing, and atmosphere** could be guaranteed. Respondents' express uncertainty that alternative sites can offer the same specialist provision, particularly hydrotherapy, sensory support, accessibility, and parking.
Preventative value and cost avoidance	Respondents frequently link Aquamira's services to prevention—maintaining independence, avoiding health deterioration, supporting carers, and delaying the need for more intensive (and expensive) care. From this perspective, closure is seen as undermining long-term value for money, even if it delivers short-term savings.
Inequality and vulnerability of disabled groups	Several comments frame opposition within a wider concern that people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by service reductions. There is a strong narrative that those with profound or complex needs are being asked to absorb cuts despite having the fewest alternatives, reinforcing feelings of marginalisation and unfairness.

Comments

- *I have previously attended Abbotts Wood until I was asked/told I had to leave as they could not cater for my complex and multiple needs. Including my physical and mental health. I am a wheelchair user and rely on transport provided by Shropshire Council for days I attend the day service. I am unable to weight bear without 24/7 1/2/1 support.*
- *There is no suitable alternative. Nowhere else has a hydrotherapy pool, a very important part of my daughter's health and well-being. When Aquamira was built it was a requirement to have a pool for the people who would be going there. They have been used to having lots of access to a Hydrotherapy pool at school. We have experience of how it affected my daughter when she couldn't have access to*

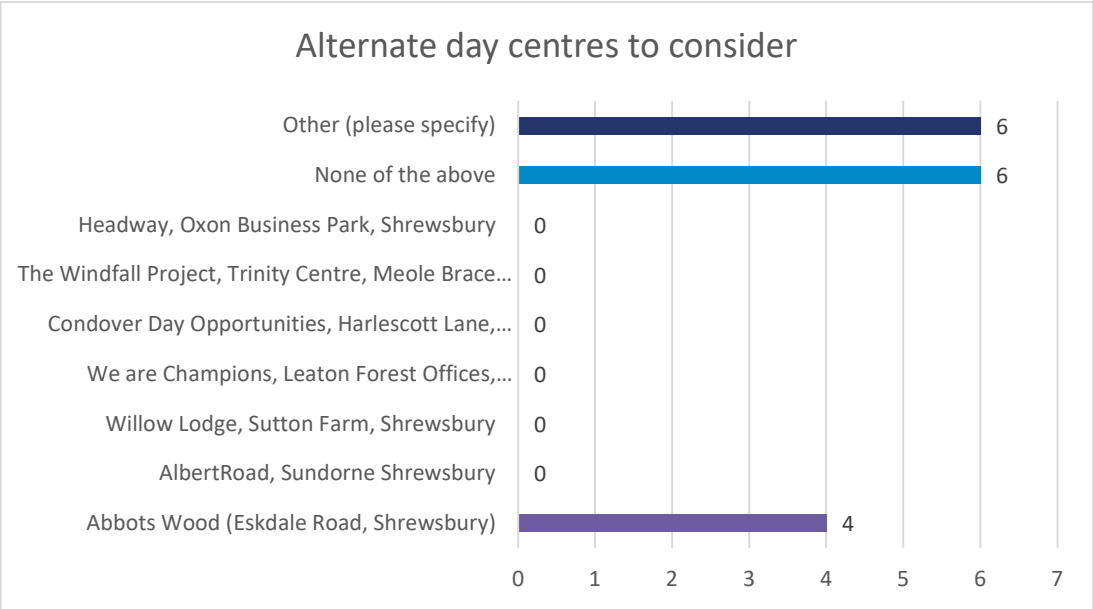
a pool during lockdown. I don't want this repeated. My daughter needs to mix with like-minded people, not people who are more disabled. The aims are different for the 2 groups of people.(2)

- *Aquamira is a vital centre for those with the severest of disabilities. It's multisensory and hydrotherapy facilities cannot be offered by an alternative provision.*
- *I have complex chronic health conditions, and the hydrotherapy pool reduces my pain and gives me some quality of life back that I don't have without it.*
- *I have a nephew who will be using adult day services in the future. I have previously supported individuals who have attended Aquamira and I feel that the service they provide is invaluable. It is highly specialised with both staff and the facilities. Where else would they be able to access appropriate hydrotherapy? Unfortunately, those with disabilities are so often sidelined within our society and both adult and children's SEND services seem to be at the forefront of the council's cuts. These are the most vulnerable and marginalised individuals who need person centered support, not just a general approach.*
- *My son attends music and sensory sessions at Aquamira. Abbots wood is further away. We have not visited it, so I don't know how it compares. Aquamira has ample parking, a big sensory room and is not crowded. As long as Abbots Wood offered the same then that would be acceptable.*
- *At the moment Hydrotherapy is paid for by service users as originally it was part of his care package but now it's paid for as an extra with Medi sec as a private arrangement because it wasn't available anymore due to staff shortage and out of order pool. Hydrotherapy pool is a vital asset. No other day service can offer this facility. Please do try to find a buyer to continue this service, do not knock it down.*
- *[Name redacted] doesn't like change.*
- *We feel that Aquamira has a quiet calming environment for our daughter, set in a secluded area with one-to-one supervision by staff and amenities including a well-established multi-sensory room and hydrotherapy pool which our daughter enjoys, so moving away from Aquamira setting is likely to make her anxious. The multi-sensory room provides relaxation for our daughter when she experiences sensory overload in noisy places. It reduces anxiety in her when she is overwhelmed and helps in reducing her stereotyped behaviours. The hydrotherapy pool in Aquamira which our daughter enjoys helps her improve her social interaction while playing in water and reduces her anxiety.*
- *There is no other hydrotherapy pool accessible for miles and miles. Hydrotherapy is so important for movement and when disabled individuals have access to it has huge benefits to health and mental wellbeing. Long term if you closed this pool would be a very short-sighted strategy, healthcare costs would ultimately increase as disabled individuals who use the pool wouldn't be able to access one.*
- *Aquamira is close and in our neighbourhood. The services there are excellent, the staff are friendly and the premises are welcoming. The hydrotherapy pool has been a godsend; we miss it when it's out of use for repair or maintenance. It's the daughter of a close friend who uses the day centre. As council papers state, only 6% of adults with autism have employment in Shropshire. These are people with disabilities with profound needs; they're not going to get employment. They need Aquamira, to be in their community and to have access to the services that remain. Abbots Wood does not offer comparable facilities and is further to travel. Work is only manageable with a very tight schedule; add travel time and this person will end up in full-time council care - costing far, far more than the cost of a space of a day centre.*

- *The building is set up for caring for severely disabled adults. It already has everything on site like the interactive light room and the hydrotherapy pool, so it makes no sense to move to Abbots Wood which has none of these facilities. My daughter loves the interactive room at Aquamira. It is a safe space for vulnerable wheelchair users.*
- *See my previous response re Helena. Also, the council is absolutely inept, not fit for purpose. The fact that they waste so much money i.e. Planners etc. for relief road which cost tens of millions, the bodge jobs done for fixing potholes which then require more money to be spent to fix them properly, the money spent on the railway station gyratory and so on and so forth. It would be better more financially viable to sack the people who decide how things are funded etc. and employ people who can actually do the job properly. But instead, you are trying to save money by, surprise, hitting the more vulnerable people in the county.*
- *As a carer / family member with the said relocation of Aquamira I strongly disagree. The centre accommodates my brother's needs perfectly well. It is a quiet centre which suits him to the ground. Abbots wood has a lot of service users there already, added clients? Staff will be noisy and will not give the care and attention my brother needs. He really enjoys his time at Aquamira and a lot of money has been spent there to improve services for the users. If my brother's needs and mental status suffer due to any move, I will not be happy. As always Shropshire Council will do what they want to do so there is no point to this survey.*
- *Aquamira is owned outright by Shropshire council whereas Abbotswood is PFI. The cost of the PFI contract is enormous, the pool at Aquamira is expensive to maintain. Whilst in this financial difficulty, could the pool be mothballed, saving a huge amount each year. The service users who attend Abbotswood could be accommodated at Aquamira, there is space in the unused commercial kitchen if extra space is needed. Has the cost of transporting clients to alternative services been factored into future costs? I note the consultation relates only to in-house Day Services and not the services which have been outsourced and locked into expensive contracts with Bethpage etc. Is there a plan to review these contracts?*
- *Can imagine it's valued by its users and their families.*
- *Council trying to save money, first option is to always look at cutting disability services.*

Question 23 asked what other locations people would be interested in using, though Abbotts Wood is the preferred option in the proposal. There were mixed responses from the 15 people who responded, there was an equal number of responses for none of the above and other and then Abbots Wood was the second choice. If people chose other, they were asked to specify, and the results will be shown in full after figure 20.

Figure 20 –Other preferred locations for the day service.



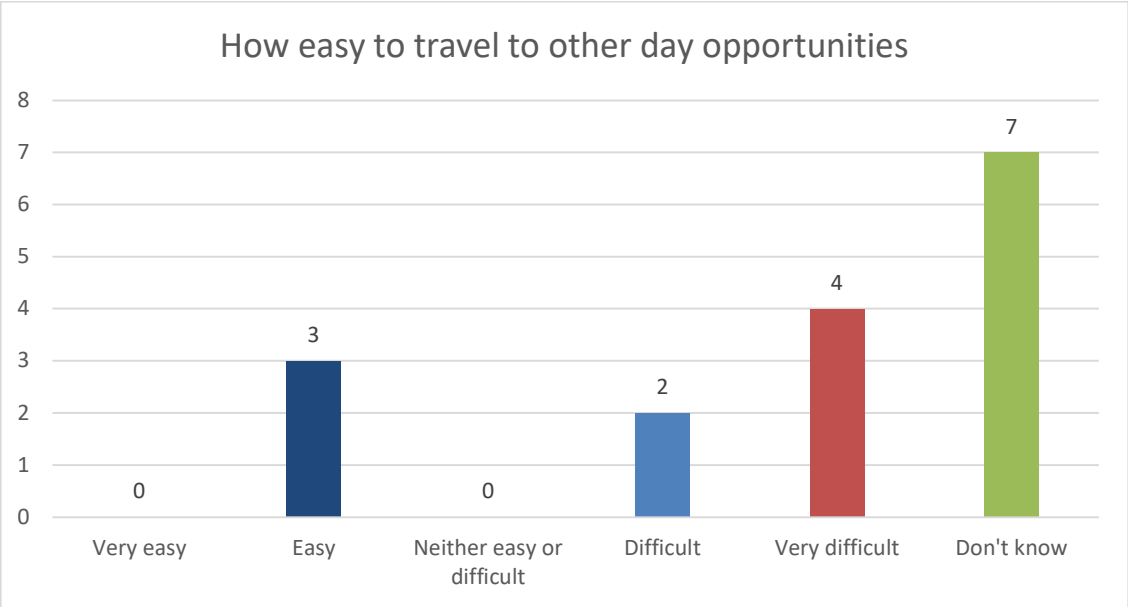
These mixed responses show that 38% people oppose the closing of Aquamira by choosing the option of none of the above. This supports the comments of the previous question. 38% also chose other, and commented:

- *None have hydrotherapy pools.*
- *I know nothing about the other services or what facilities they have so cannot comment.*
- *Not applicable.*
- *Aquamira needs to stay open.*
- *How will the cost of travel be met?*
- *Albrighton Moat.*
- *I am willing to go wherever (in Shrewsbury) they are able to provide the care and wellbeing and understanding that Aquamira has provided for me over the last 12 months, as one of my conditions is progressive Dementia which is, and will have, a severe impact on my abilities.*

Excepting one comment for Albrighton Moat, most oppose the closure of Aquamira. 25% then chose Abbots Wood, which supports some comments from the previous question that suggests if Abbots Wood had the same facilities as Aquamira, the transferring might be acceptable.

When asked if the respondents did not want to transfer to Abbotts Wood, how easy they would find it to travel to other day opportunities or centres, out of the 16 people who answered, 44% did not know.

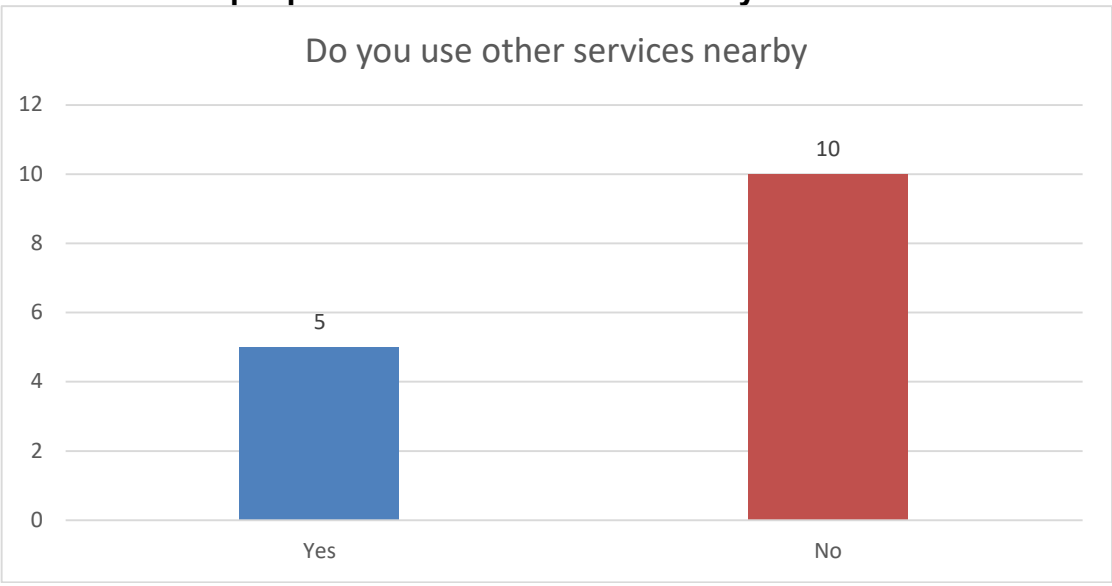
Figure 21 –How easy people might find it to travel to other day opportunities/centres.



Whilst most answers don't know, there are more answers for difficult or very difficult collectively, than easy. This supports the opposition seen in the previous questions. 19% (3 responses) of people answered they would find it easy, which is positive.

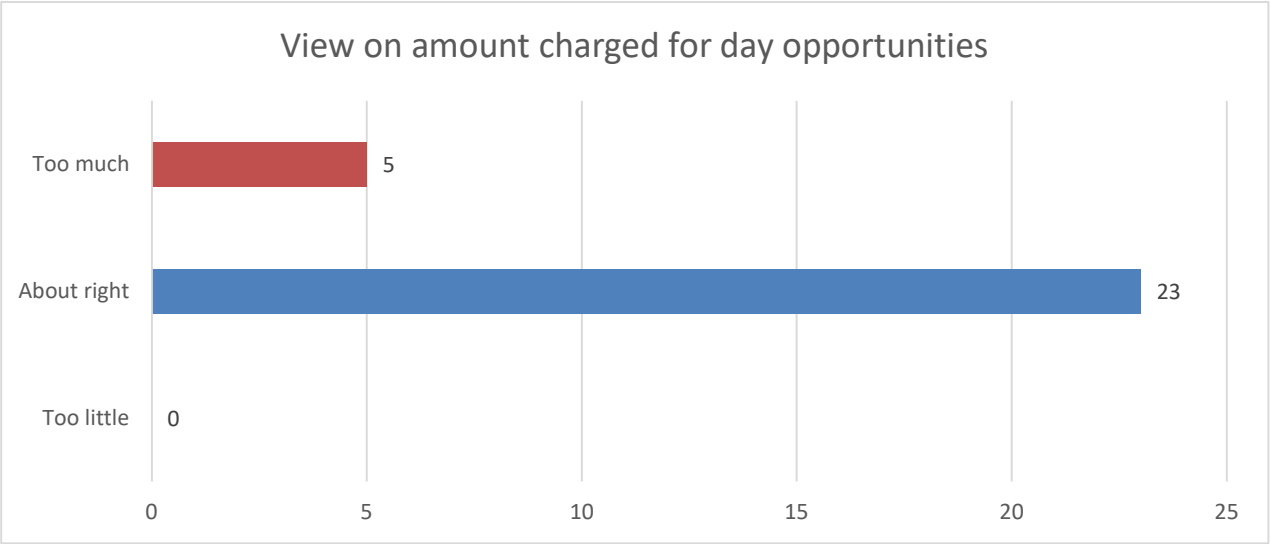
Respondents were also asked if they used any other services nearby. 15 people answered, and 67% of respondents answered no.

Figure 22 –Whether people used other services nearby.



The next question asked about the amount people were charged for the day opportunities and whether it was too much, too little or about right. In general, of the 28 people that answered, 82% feel it is about right.

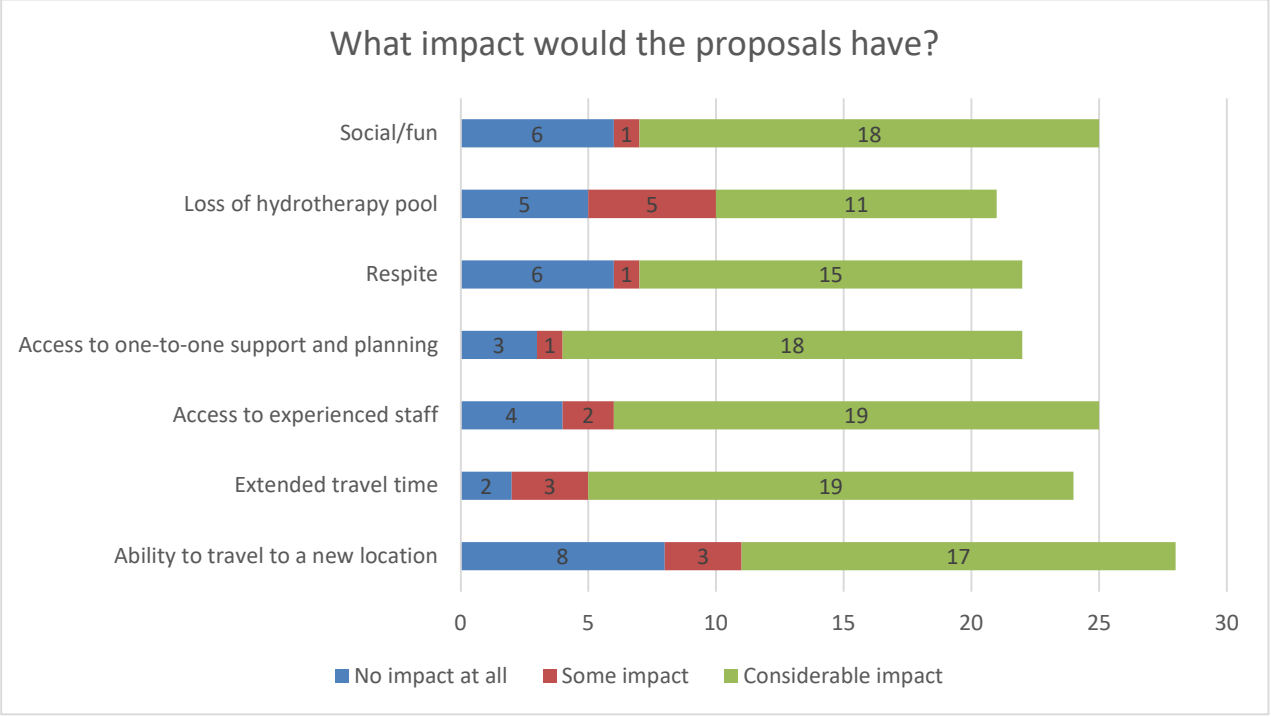
Figure 23 –Respondents' views on amount charged for then day opportunities.



An encouraging amount of people feel the amount is satisfactory (84%).

Question 27 then asked in which ways service users would be affected by the closure of Helena Lane and the transfer of services from Aquamira. 30 people answered and there were 3 additional comments.

Figure 24 –In which ways people would be affected by proposals for both Helena Lane and Aquamira.

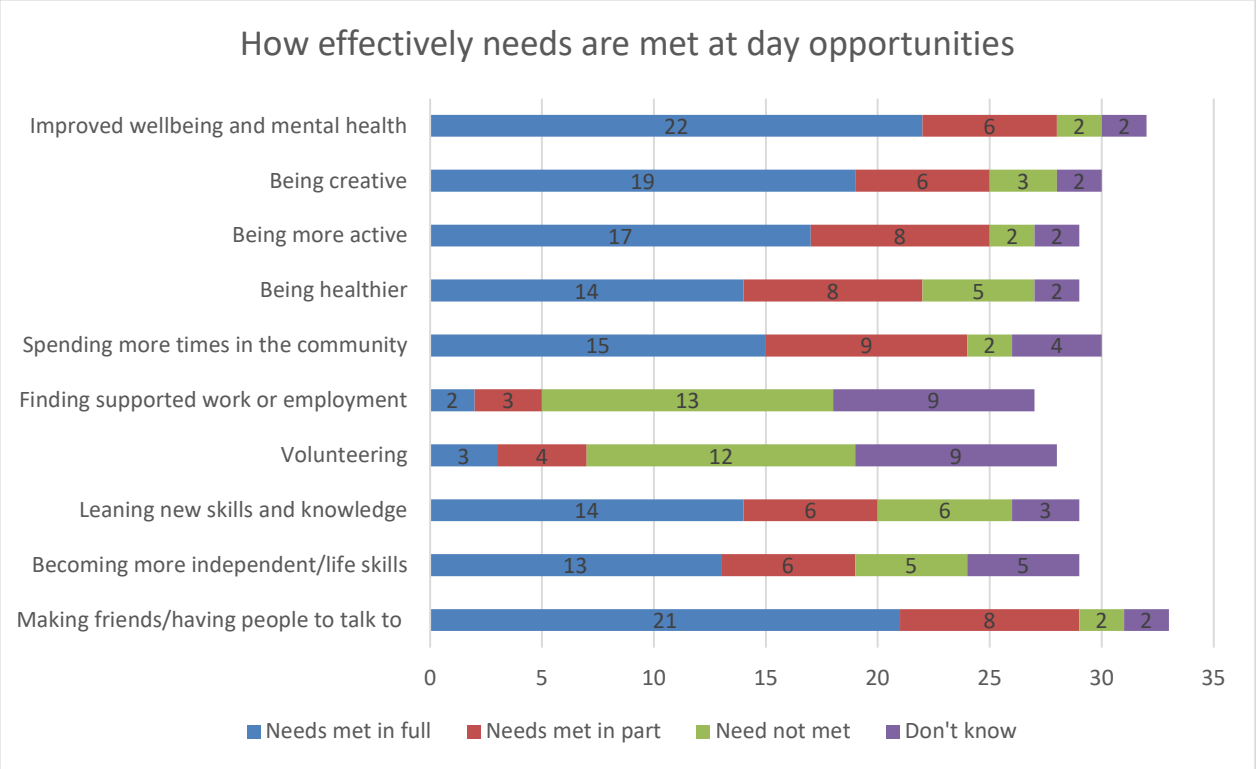


Overall, across the categories the proposals would have considerable impact. The 3 comments were:

- *Not applicable.*
- *Meals and bathing.*
- *She's happy there and is nonverbal. Suggesting volunteering or living skills to someone who has her needs is just inappropriate.*

The next question asked how effectively day opportunities meet the following needs; making friends/ having people to talk to; becoming more independent/ life skills; learning new skills and knowledge; volunteering; finding supported work or employment; spending more time in the community; being healthier; being more active; being creative; and improved wellbeing and mental health.

Figure 25 –In which ways day opportunities meet the needs of their clients.



As seen in Figure 25, in general day opportunities meet the needs of their clients in full. This is encouraging on one hand as it suggests that the day opportunities are working well, but on the other hand it can support why people are in such opposition to the proposals; because their needs are being met and they don't want that to change.
The only two categories where needs are not met are finding supported work or employment and volunteering. This could support some previous comments where people have said that employment and volunteering are not applicable or appropriate to the people receiving care.

Question 29 was designed to explore which needs people might want to have met, which might happen because of saving money. 20 people answered and respondents were able to choose as many as applicable.

Figure 26 –Which different needs people might be interested in.



As seen in Figure 26, there are several additional needs that people would be interested in, particularly increasing activities at other day centres, trips to swimming pools, access to other forms of respite and opportunities for membership at leisure centres.

Question 30 expanded on respondents' suggestions regarding the proposals, whether they had any alternative suggestions that might help Shropshire Council meet needs whilst achieving savings and better value for money. 19 people responded and the main themes are:

- **A perception that financial mismanagement is driving the proposal** – There is a recurring narrative that financial pressures are the result of poor strategic decisions elsewhere, and that reducing or closing specialist services for disabled and older people is seen as unjust and avoidable.
- **Preference for service retention through adaptation –** Rather than supporting closure, respondents repeatedly suggest alternative cost-saving or income-generating approaches.
- **Underuse due to lack of promotion, not lack of need** – Similar to the above theme, several comments suggest that Aquamira's perceived under-use reflects historic under-investment, poor promotion and limited awareness, rather than limited demand.
- **Specialist provision is seen as essential and not interchangeable** – Respondents emphasize that Aquamira supports people whose needs are not well met by generic, mainstream care provisions.
- **Strong theme around equity**– Respondents argue that people with disabilities and older people are being disproportionately affected, despite having limited alternatives.

Comments

- *Rent out hydro-pool to family members of those with disabilities. Reduce budget spent on surveys and feedback forms.*

- *It is a well-known fact that Shropshire Council wastes money, for example, spending £38,000,000 on the Shrewsbury shopping centre, which was only valued at £12,000,000. An immediate loss of £26,000,000. Building unsafe, unfit and unusable bus stops - again in Shrewsbury. Paying the new Chief Executive an eye watering, obscene salary of £176,000! If you stopped wasting money on worthless things, you would then have more to spend on important services, like services for older people. You could also try employing competent employees who actually understand something of Shropshire Council's own services and funding. (2)*
- *If the service at Helena Lane was better advertised and better resourced, they could do even more.*
- *Attending Aquamira to keep pool and make building into a gym especially for people with physical disabilities. Using out of normal hours Aquamira for public use. Most local people don't know it's there and what the possibilities could be.*
- *Rather than closing Aquamira building we would suggest Aquamira be used to provide more opportunities for more learning-disabled people. Given the space and the facilities that ae available in Aquamira and its setting, in a quiet secluded area, could the council not find more users for it from elsewhere?*
- *I have not answered some questions because they ae not applicable to the people who go to Aquamira. I think the people making these decisions have no idea about the people or their families. The questions that are asked are more for able disabled. I have already written to the council outlining a couple of suggestions but no doubt they will not be considered as it is clear you have already decided to close Aquamira whatever happens. May I point out I had a letter from adult services dated 24/10/13. Why was this not sorted out then. It has been allowed to get worse for another 12 years. Bad management I say.*
- *Please merge with Telford and Wrekin. Save money by merging back-office costs, not on this.*
- *It is not my role to tell the council how to save money, but I do know that this council wastes a lot of money on pointless things. It also angers me that this council wants to save money by cutting services for the most vulnerable disabled people in society. These people need decent services more than anybody else and day centres are vital. Not all disabled people can work or do voluntary work.*
- *SC should promote the existing service at Helena Lane. Put up signage indicating where the centre is and advertise the service and activities on offer. A bus would help get more people into the centre as not many 80+ year olds drive with dementia or physical restrictions and mobility.*
- *Stop spending money employing new people, go work out where the money is spent. There are some services which can't be cut, due to the negative impact that would have on people in your area. Stop spending money at the top, and this will have provided the money for these services lower down.*
- *Increase charges slightly to offset costs. Find a new location within Ludlow with lower overheads.*
- *There needs to be a day centre in Ludlow, there is an ageing population, the one in Tenbury has closed. There is nothing within an hour's drive.*
- *Reduction in days or broadening scope to encourage more attendance and make it more cost effective.*
- *My brother contributes money for his care needs and support so his contributions from government has been severely reduced to the above. He pays his food/utility bills out of 2 payments he has 4 weekly. As it is our parents who left him the property he resides in now. Otherwise, the government would be paying a lot*

more money for his housing requirements with adaptations for the rest of his life. We all know that Shropshire Council and others are in financial difficulties but why pick on the weak and vulnerable clientele, they have not asked to be born different from the rest of us. Clients and families/carers need support from centres like Aquamira. I have no idea where monies can be saved to allow the said centres to stay open but for goodness' sake there are plenty of managers, experts that can find a way forward to resolve matters.

- *1. Open Helena Lane to other groups/care users at the cost of hiring out Helena Lane facilities would increase income for Shropshire Council. 2. There is no signage or advertising for this service. 3. This is not only the only day care centre in Ludlow but also the only day care centre for the elderly in South Shropshire that also provides a bathing and laundry service.*
- *The council would save a lot of money if they turned off the heating systems down. You don't need a constant 34 degrees 24 hours a day 365 days a year.*
- *Yes....I think that Service Users could be supported by the Staff and use their skills to help with Community Projects such as maintaining Community areas and litter picking. Greenacres Farm is already Garden for the Vicarage. Why not expand this and any monies made can be used to lower costs to the Local Authority.*

Question 31 asked for any other comments the respondents might have, including anything they would like considered for the future of day opportunities in Shropshire. 16 people answered and the comments are below:

Comments

- *Totally immoral to save money by making cutbacks that affect the most vulnerable members of the community.*
- *Stop spending all of Shropshire Council's income on Shrewsbury. Money is never spent in south Shropshire, so for the future of day opportunities - keep Helena Lane open in south Shropshire. It is scandalous that you would even think about expecting users of Helena Lane to travel any distance in order to use another Day Centre outside of the area! (2)*
- *Dementia care in the community needs special support.*
- *Make access for general public, arts classes for the general public.*
- *It will be good and useful if Abbotts Wood and similar day centres have multisensory rooms which help users who have autism and profound learning disabilities, in reducing anxiety in them which gives them relaxation periods whenever they want a quiet environment.*
- *Have some consideration of how difficult it's been to navigate Social Services, especially EHCPs.*
- *Vulnerable disabled people need day centres where they can socialise with others, learn new skills and be part of the community. They need a safe space where they have all the facilities they need, including an interactive light room and hydrotherapy pool. Aquamira has all of this already on site. The other day centres don't have these facilities. It is also a safe space for wheelchair users.*
- *Helena Lane is the only older person centre in South Shropshire. The building was left for the older people of Ludlow and yet SC want to remove us or close us. All facilities are in place, i.e. baths for the purpose of the elderly to use in the building as it was purposefully built for the elderly community. We are family-orientated and support each other, staff are professional, friendly and well trained and there is nothing too much trouble for them. Always a friendly ear to hand.*

- *This is a service for those who really need it. It doesn't matter if it's for 5 or 30 people, it is not a profit-making service and must be provided for the benefit of all that require it.*
- *Helena Lane has significantly benefited the quality of life of both my parents. My mum loves going to the centre - it has improved her mentality and social - I do feel her condition has not decreased rapidly due to the engagement. It has also allowed my dad to have a few simple hours to himself, which as a full-time carer is priceless. I don't feel a 1 1/2 round trip to attend other day centres for a 4-hour session is a fair request or demonstrates support from the local community.*
- *1. I would appreciate increasing the number of hours for the day care from 4 to 5 or 6 hours. 2. I would appreciate Helena Lane having the use of a minibus for trips out for care users. This was taken from them last year. 3. Day care at Helen Lane is not only required for my wife's health/mental health but also for mine. The cost of providing care for both of us would be more than the cost of just for my wife. 4. Without the respite that Helena Lane provides my health and mental health would decline as caring for my wife 24/7 is mentally and physically draining.*
- *The proposals for the alternative day services are not clearly explained. For example, Greenacres is currently a significantly underfunded day service which has the potential to be excellent if appropriate investment were made. Increased funding could allow for more animals, expanded gardening and vegetable-growing activities, and greater opportunities for meaningful community engagement. My son is a wheelchair user and requires a personal assistant wherever he attends. He already volunteers two days a week, and even with this, finding suitable placements has been extremely difficult. Employment is even more challenging when two people need to be accommodated within a workplace. There is also no clear explanation of how people will be supported by volunteering or employment in a realistic and sustainable way, including how appropriate placements and the correct level of ongoing support will be provided.*
- *Day Services transform service users' lives and those of their families. Greenacres Farm and I am sure other Day Services also are an absolute lifeline.*
- *Day Service transformation happened in 2013 resulting in the closure of Hartley, Sabrina Court & Ellesmere Town Hall. Never forget Micheal Breeze who tragically died during the transformation of services. Many of the service users who attended these services had greatly reduced services offered as replacements. Enable may find volunteer opportunities but were unable to provide sustained travel training for affected people.*

Based on these comments, the following key insights emerge:

- **Strong place-based equity concerns** – There is a clear perception that South Shropshire is disadvantaged compared with Shrewsbury. Proposals that require people to travel long distances are viewed as unreasonable, inequitable, and disconnected from the realities of rural living.
- **Day centres are seen as essential community infrastructure** – Respondents consistently frame day centres as core services for vulnerable people, not optional or profit-driven provision.
- **Specialist environments are critical** – Those with complex care and health needs require specialist, well equipped and calm environments. Both Helena Lane and Aquamira have these facilities and are not replicable.
- **Lifeline and carer-support role** – Day centres are repeatedly described as lifelines for both service users and carers. There is a clear concern that removing this support would accelerate carer burnout.

- **Alternative are perceived as under-developed and insufficiently explained** – Respondents express concern that proposed alternatives lack clarity, investment and realism.

Written consultation responses

During the consultation there were alternative ways to respond and engage with the survey. There were 3 emails and 2 letters received from clients or carers, and all personal details have been redacted.

Email 1 - themes

- Helena Lane has great facilities but is underused – "*Helena Lane in Ludlow is an under-resourced facility already, despite being a perfectly good building with parking and modern facilities but hardly any services provided there."*
- South Shropshire is targeted before Shrewsbury – "*I am disappointed but not surprised that adult services in South Shropshire are those first on the list to be targeted by Shropshire Council for reduction or closure."*
- Closure of Helena Lane is representative of wider problems in South Shropshire – "*Ludlow and its surrounding villages are suffering for the lack of financial control within Shropshire Council, which uses resources to support Shrewsbury and North Shropshire to the detriment of the rest of the County."*

Email 2 – themes

- Suggestions to future proof the services – "*To potentially future proof the service it would be beneficial to have more flexibility regarding hours of working, to consider other client groups, to consider carers groups and possibly offer ad hoc opportunities for clients to have day service hours , this could reduce carer burn out and encourage shared lives carers to offer further respite. Could day centres be used to offer meetings for health and social care evenings and weekends which could bring in revenue and enable potential opportunities to increase collaboration with health and social care".*

Email 3 – themes

- Employment is not an option for everyone – "*Do what some of your councillors have suggested that we get up and go to work, I would love to but as I am 80 years old [and] disabled, I cannot do…"*
- The service gives good quality of life – "*Please don't condemn me to a life of sitting in front of the television on my own in need of things."*
- Helena Lane has good facilities – "*Centre built on one level plenty of car parking with things to do."*

Letter 1 – themes

- Helena Lane has all the facilities people need – *The model of one stop day care under one umbrella is one that suits my mother but seemingly also all those who use the service.*
- Improve the services as facilities are underused – *Somebody should be tasked with promoting the service and fill the vacant chairs, following the proven model that works for the service users already.*
- Closure or relocation means lack of access – *Relocation of services for the elderly at Helena Lane would ultimately mean that my mother would not be able to access*

services, given her lack of mobility and transport issues.

Letter 2 – themes

This was a lengthy letter authored by service users, carers, and a campaigner, addressing the proposed closure of Helena Lane Day Service for Older People in Ludlow, Shropshire. The key themes have been set out here:

- **Legal Issues:** The response references legal guidance (Luke Clements, Disability Law Service) indicating that financial problems are not lawful grounds for reducing care. Any alternative arrangements must be real and meet assessed needs.
- **Council's Proposal:** The closure is driven by a declared financial emergency. If approved, it would end the only council-provided day service for older people in Shropshire.
- **Equality Impact Assessment:** The assessment is criticized for inaccuracies, especially regarding the age and needs of Helena Lane users. Most users are in their 70s and 80s with severe disabilities, not the 30–50 age range stated.

Impact on clients

- **Loss of Specialist Care:** Helena Lane provides specialist support for older people with severe disabilities, including dementia and limited mobility. Community alternatives (lunch clubs, Men's Shed, etc.) are not suitable substitutes.
- **Social Isolation:** Closure would lead to loss of social life, accessible bathing, laundry, and meals, severely impacting wellbeing.
- **Statements from Users:** Personal accounts highlight the essential role of Helena Lane in their lives, expressing fear and distress about the closure.

Impact on carers

- **Respite Loss:** Carers rely on Helena Lane for respite. Its closure would remove the only venue in Ludlow where people with significant dementia can attend without their carer.
- **Statutory Rights Ignored:** The response notes the Council's failure to recognize carers' statutory rights and the significant negative impact on their wellbeing.

Alternative and Accessibility

- **Community Initiatives**: While local voluntary services are valuable, they cannot replace specialist care for those with high needs. Accessibility issues (buildings, toilets) further limit options.
- **Employment & Volunteering Messaging:** The Council's repeated suggestion that users should seek employment or volunteering is seen as insensitive and inappropriate for this population.
- **Lack of Publicity:** The Council does not actively promote its in-house services, contributing to low uptake.

Financial and Demand Issues

- **Cost Arguments:** The Council claims high costs and low demand. The response challenges these figures, noting a 30% reduction in spend and questioning the accuracy of demand assessments.
- **Managed Decline:** The response suggests that reductions in service (days, hours, staff) have artificially lowered attendance and demand, justifying closure.

Unmet needs

- **Ageing Population:** Shropshire has a growing elderly population with significant rates of disability and dementia. The response argues that closing services is short-sighted given these trends.
- **Under-diagnosis:** NHS and Council data likely underestimate the need for specialist support due to under-diagnosis and poor care plan reviews.

Rural and Inequality Issues

- **Rural Proofing:** The closure disproportionately affects rural, low-income, and disabled residents, increasing vulnerability and social isolation.

All the emails and letters provide an important insight into clients and carers opinions on the proposals. These responses consistently highlight Helena Lane as a valued but under-utilised service, with low attendance attributed to reduced referrals, limited promotion and constrained service delivery rather than a lack of need. Respondents express strong concern about place-based inequality, particularly the perceived disproportionate impact of service reductions on South Shropshire compared with Shrewsbury. Helena Lane is repeatedly described as a unique, one-stop service providing specialist care, dignity, social connection and essential respite for carers, which is not seen as replaceable by voluntary or community provision.

There is also clear challenge to assumptions around employment and volunteering, which respondents view as inappropriate for many older people and those with complex needs. Concerns are further raised about legal duties, the accuracy of the Equality Impact Assessment, and the longer-term risks of increased isolation, unmet need and pressure on carers and statutory services if specialist provision is withdrawn.

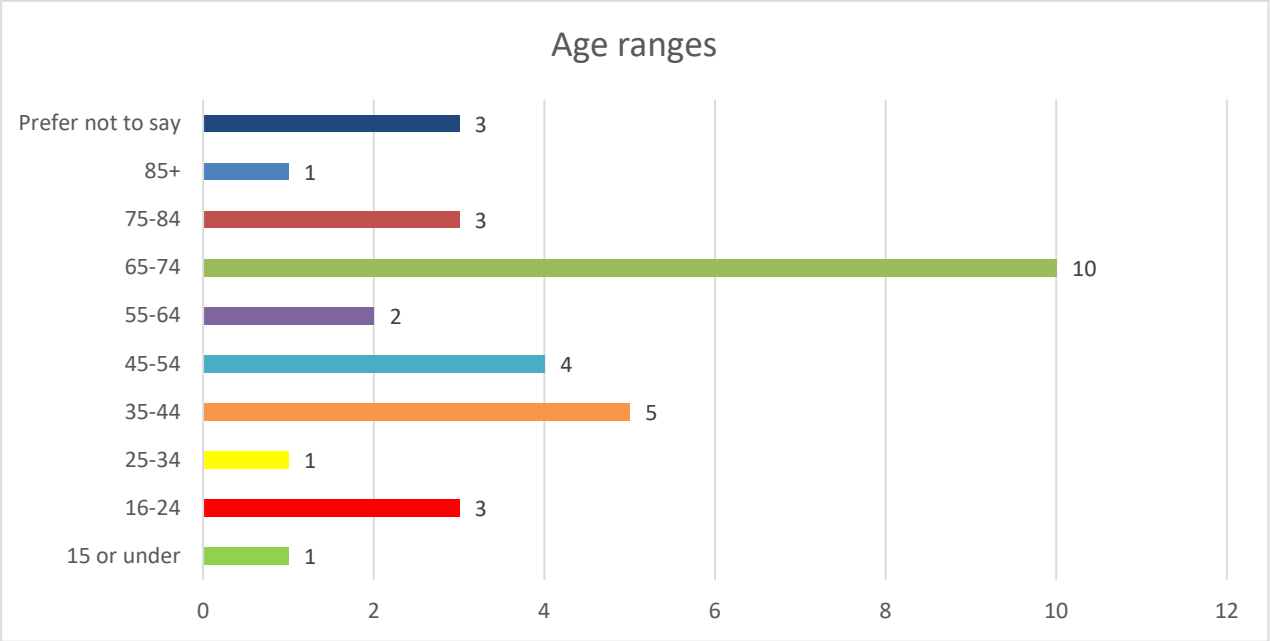
About the respondents

In this section of the survey, the questions focused on online respondents and finding out more about the people who have responded.

From the question whether they were female or male, 34 people answered and the majority of the respondents were female: 68%. 24% were male, 9% preferred not to say and no one self-described their gender.

There were mixed responses to the question of age ranges, as seen in figure 27 below.

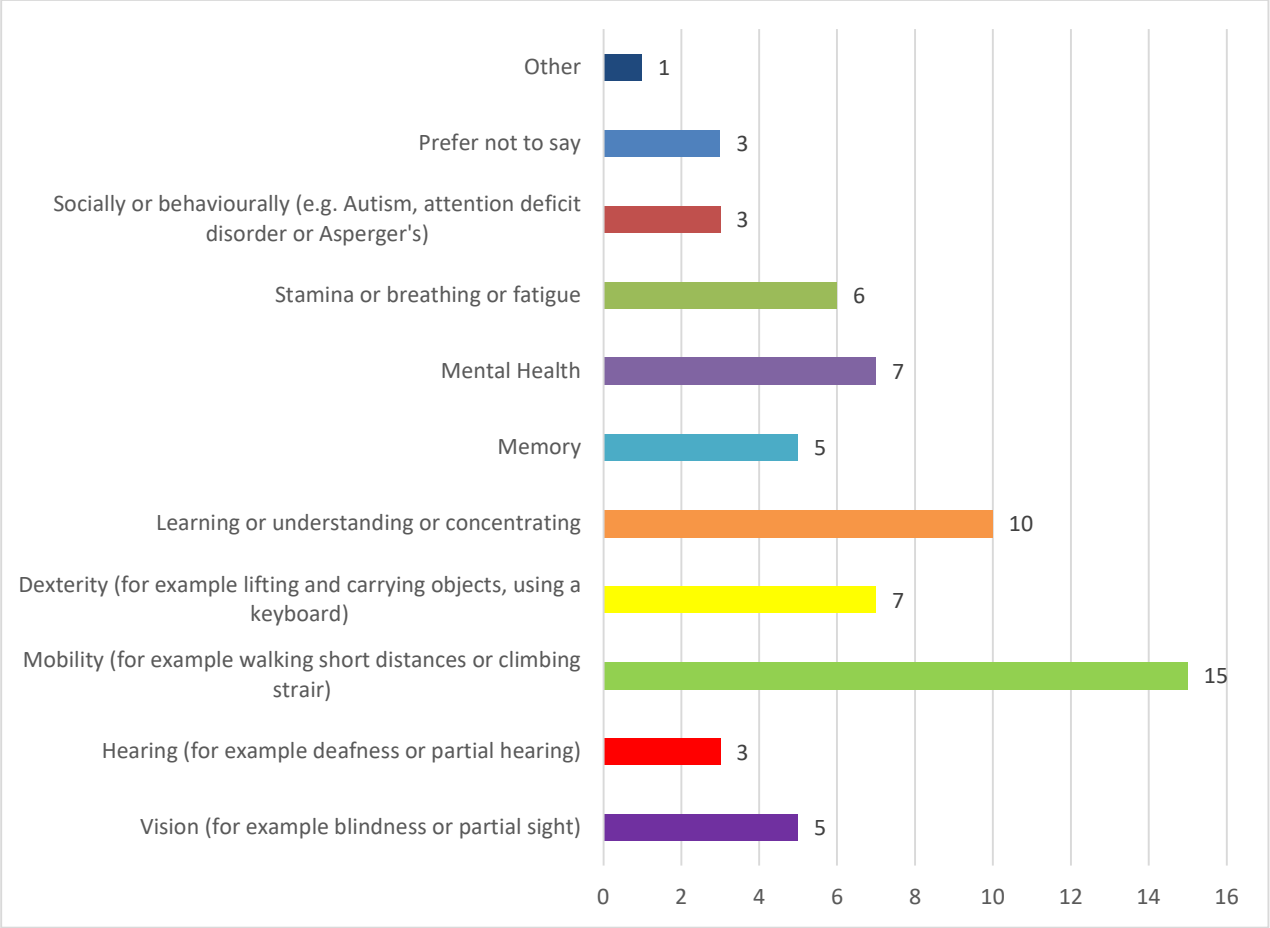
Figure 27 – The age ranges of the respondents.



As seen in figure 27, there is a mixture of ages, with the majority of respondents being in the age range of 65-74. This is not a surprise as there is a high proportion of respondents that are responding on behalf of people who use the service.

When asked whether the respondents had any long-standing illness or disability that limits their daily activity, most of the 30 respondents answered yes; 53%. 27% answered no and 20% answered preferred not to say. Figure 28 shows the descriptions of those illnesses or disabilities.

Figure 28 – The illnesses or disabilities the respondents have



Most respondents (81%) have mobility issues, with 57% having learning or understanding and concentrating problems.

The respondents were then asked their ethnic groups and in general, the respondents are of white British, Irish or Welsh descent (82%).

They were then asked if they belonged to any particular religion or held any particular beliefs, and of the 30 people who answered, 53% were Christian, 33% were of no religion, 7% preferred not to say, and 3% practiced Buddhism.

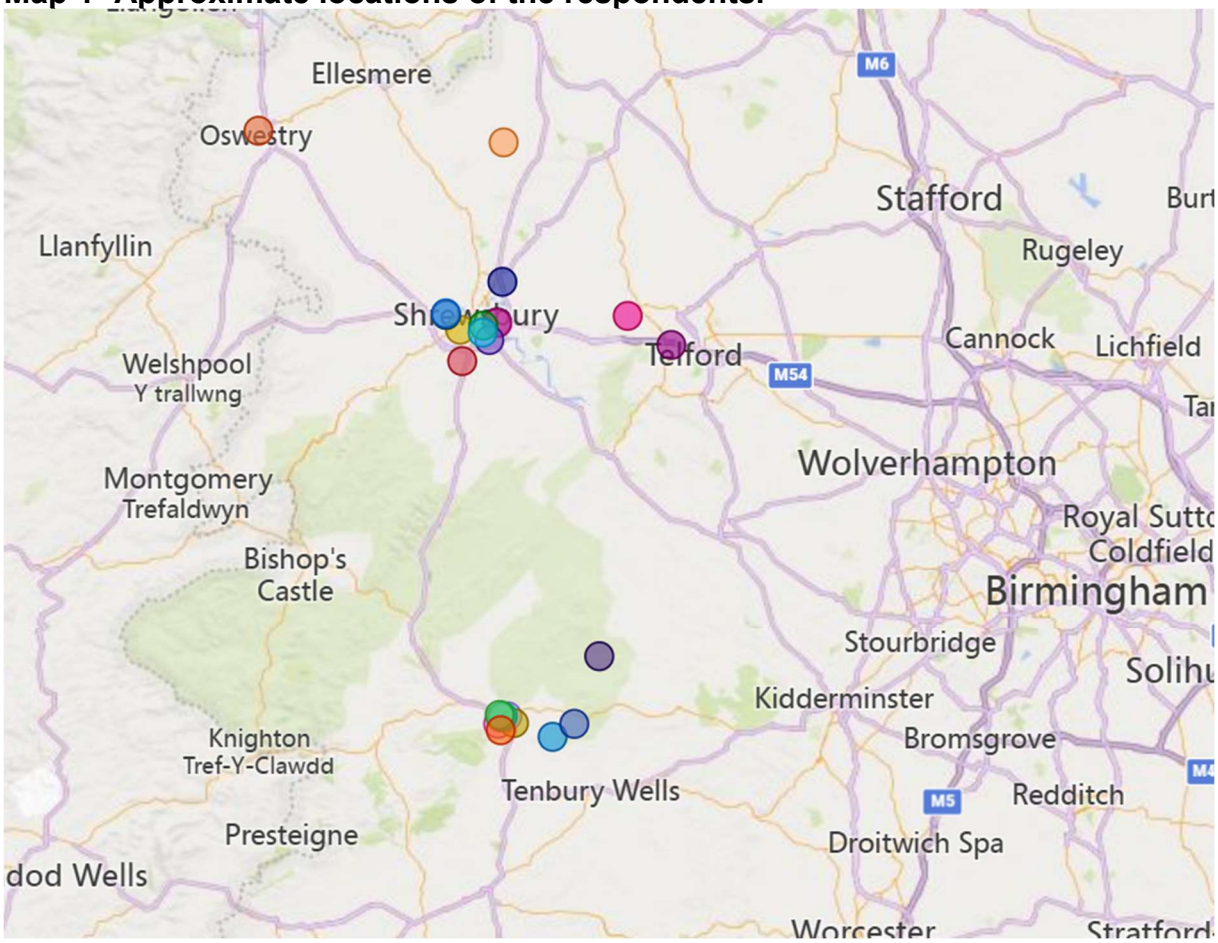
As part of this consultation, Shropshire Council carried out an Equalities and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment (ESIHIA) and the respondents were asked whether they anticipated any other impact or risks of the proposals, and to describe any issues they would like Shropshire Council to consider. This was answered by 2 people and their comments are below

- *Treating the elderly with respect and dignity.*
- *Closure of Aquamira would be discrimination against people with limited movement [and] you would be directly impacting their access to a facility which hugely benefits their health.*

The next question focused on employment. 37% were retired, 13% worked full-time and 13% part-time. Small percentages (3%) work a zero-hour contract and were unemployed (7%). 20% chose other as an option.

The last question asked for their postcode which is seen in Map 1 below.

Map 1 -Approximate locations of the respondents.



We can see that the survey responses were from respondents in Shrewsbury and Ludlow, the two towns most affected by the proposals with a smaller number of responses from other locations.

Section summary

In total, 53 people responded to the clients and carers survey, with the majority participating as carers or family members (77% of respondents to that question). Responses were largely from people with direct experience of the services under review, particularly Helena Lane and Aquamira, which accounted for the highest levels of reported use. Overall, respondents indicated that day opportunities are meeting needs well, especially in relation to social connection, wellbeing, creativity, staying active and mental health. Supported employment and volunteering were the main areas where respondents felt needs were less relevant or not well met, reflecting the complexity and level of need among many service users.

Feedback on both proposals showed strong opposition and a high perceived level of negative impact. For Helena Lane, most respondents expected the closure to affect them significantly, with nearly eight in ten saying they would be affected a lot and around nine in ten opposing the proposal. Key themes included the loss of an irreplaceable local service in South Shropshire, the importance of dignity and personal care (particularly bathing), the central role of respite for carers, and the practical challenges of rurality, transport and accessibility. For Aquamira, responses followed a similar pattern, with most

respondents anticipating a significant negative impact and almost all opposing the proposed transfer and closure of the hydrotherapy pool. The hydrotherapy pool and the specialist, calmer environments were consistently described as essential for physical health, pain management, sensory regulation and wellbeing, with respondents expressing concern that alternative provision would not offer equivalent facilities or support.

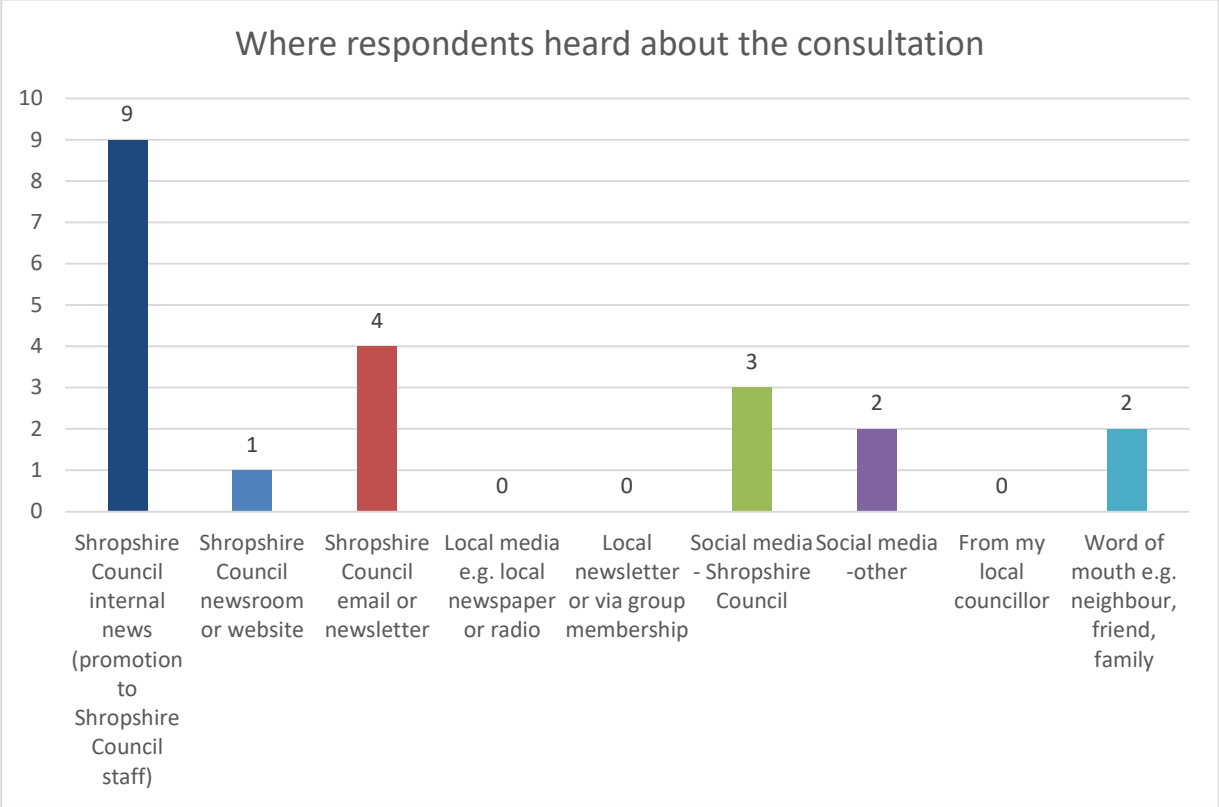
Across both proposals, respondents emphasised the preventative value of day services in maintaining independence, supporting carers, and delaying the need for more intensive or residential care. Many suggested that lower attendance reflected reduced referrals, transport constraints and limited promotion rather than a lack of need and expressed concern that closing or relocating services would result in increased isolation, deterioration in wellbeing and greater long-term costs to the wider health and care system.

3 Professionals and stakeholders

The Day Centres consultation included a survey of the professionals and stakeholders to explore their opinions on the proposals. The survey included similar questions as seen in the clients and carers survey. This survey gained 24 online responses and there was also an email response.

Question 1 asked how the professionals and stakeholders found out about this consultation. 21 people answered and in general, they found out via Shropshire Council internal news: 43%. Figure 29 shows the results in full.

Figure 29 –How professionals and stakeholders found out about the consultation.



As the figure shows, in general the respondents heard about the survey through Shropshire Council internal news, but also by other Shropshire Council based promotion. The respondents also found out by Shropshire Council email or newsletter, and Shropshire Council based social media; 19% (4 responses) respectively. 5% (1 response) also heard from Shropshire Council website or newsroom. The rest heard from word of mouth or other social media; 10% respectively (2 responses). This shows that overall, the respondents found out via Shropshire Council, which might suggest that the respondents will be mainly Shropshire Council employees or part of the service Shropshire Council provides.

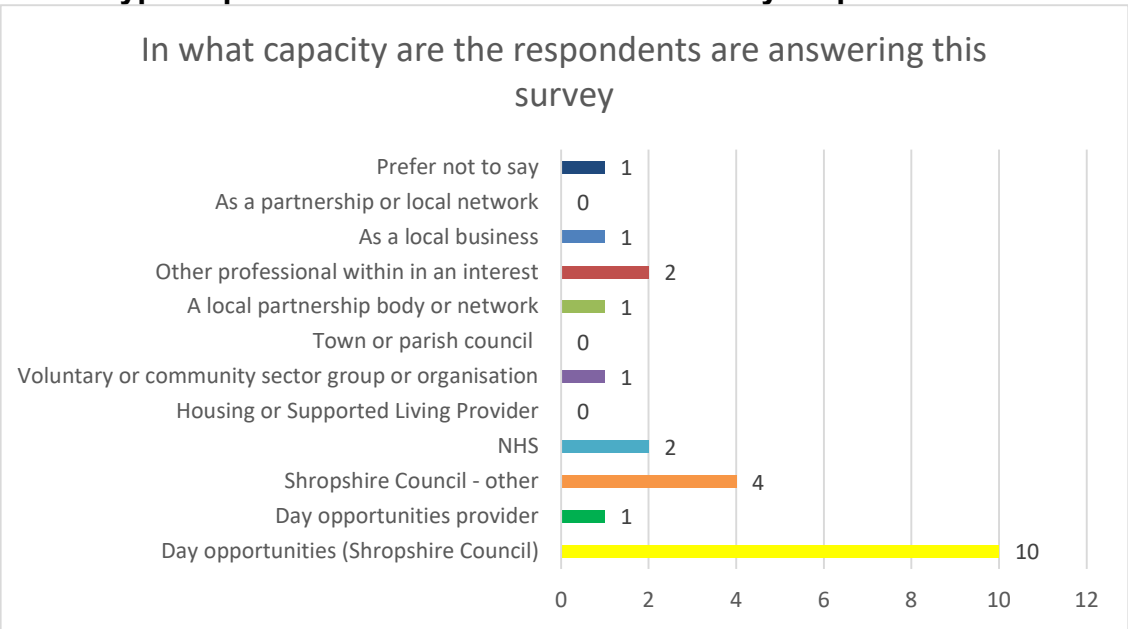
There were 2 comments as well, which are:

- *Shropshire Council staff.*
- *Through work.*

Question 2 asked in which capacity they were answering this survey, and overall, of the

23 people who responded, the majority were answering as providers or facilitators of Shropshire Council managed day opportunities. Figure 30 shows the full split.

Figure 30 –Type of professional and stakeholder survey respondents.



This shows that most of the respondents are answering in the capacity of Shropshire Council; 45% (10 responses) are answering as Day Opportunities (Shropshire Council) and 18% (4 responses) answering as Shropshire Council (Other). After this, 9% (2 responses) are other professionals with an interest and NHS, and 5% (1 response) each are from a Day Opportunities provider, a voluntary or community sector group or organization, a local partnership body or network, as a local business and those that would prefer not to say.

There was one comment on this section, which was:

- *As a friend and LPOA [Lasting Power of Attorney] to someone who attends and relies on Helena Lane Day Centre.*

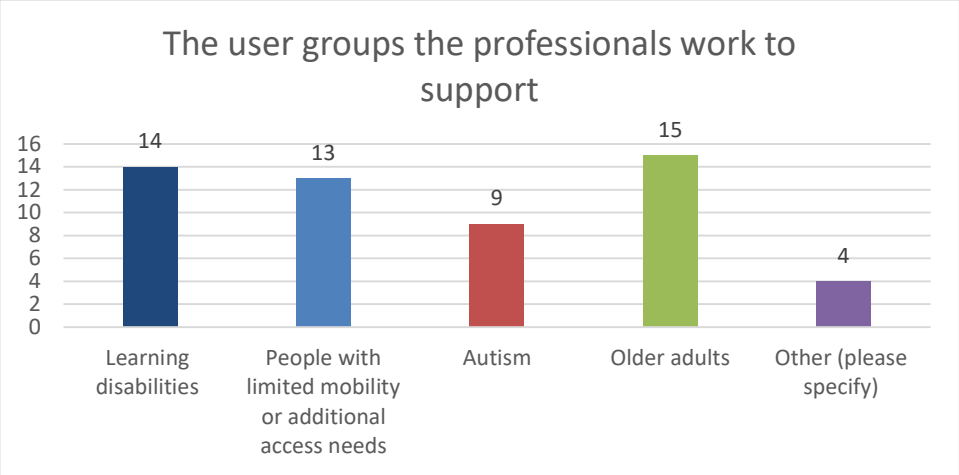
It is not possible to ascertain whether this comment belongs truly to a professional or stakeholder. It is possible that a professional is also a friend and power of attorney to someone, but this might suggest that it is a carer and they might have completed the wrong survey. It does not necessarily need to be disregarded but there should be a balanced awareness.

The professionals were asked if they wanted to name the organization they were responding on behalf of and be included in the consultation. 8 people answered and the responses were

- *Helena Lane (3)*
- *Aquamira (1)*
- *Healthsec Rehab (Healthsec Solutions Ltd)*
- *[name redacted] Indep Case Manager and Rehab services for clients with complex physical disabilities and brain injury [email redacted]*
- *Adult Learning Disability Community Service (Shropshire Telford and Wrekin) - Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation*
- *N/a*

Question 4 asked whether the professionals worked to support any particular user groups and they could choose any that applied. There were mixed responses from the 23 people who answered, which figure 31 shows in full.

Figure 31 –The user groups the professionals support.

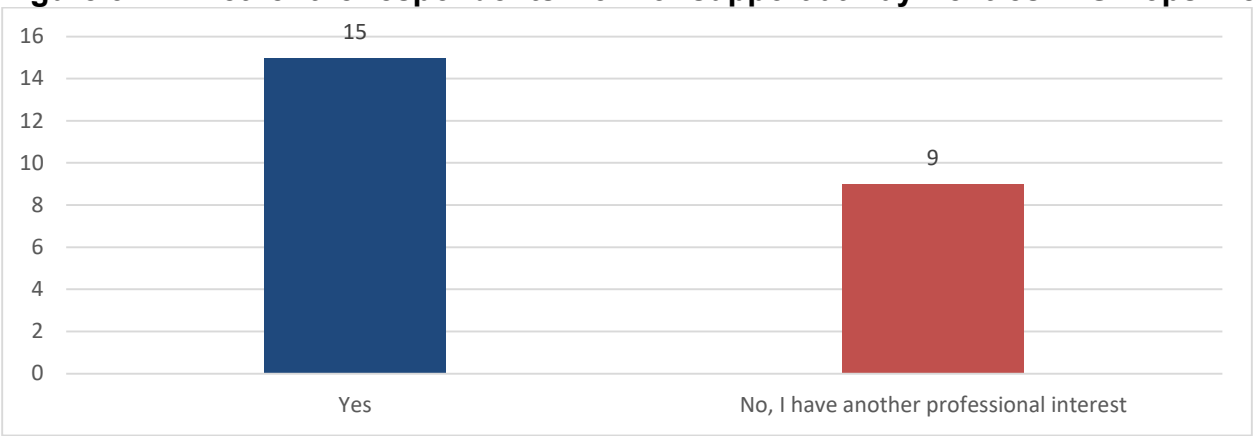


As seen in Figure 31, as people were able to choose all that apply, there is no set group of people the professionals support. It is apparent that older adults make up most of the people that the professionals support; 65% (15 responses), 61% (14 responses) have learning disabilities, 56% (13 responses) have limited mobility or additional access needs, 39% (9 responses) have autism and 17% (4 responses) answered other which were specified in the 3 comments below:

- Vulnerable or isolated local people.
- People with neurological and catastrophic injuries and conditions.
- People with medical requirements, PEGG, Nasal Gastric, skin integrity, etc.
- N/a.

When asked whether they work or provide support at a Day Centre in Shropshire, the response from the 24 people who answered, was ‘yes’ they did; 63% (15 responses).

Figure 32 –Whether the respondents work or support at Day Centres in Shropshire.

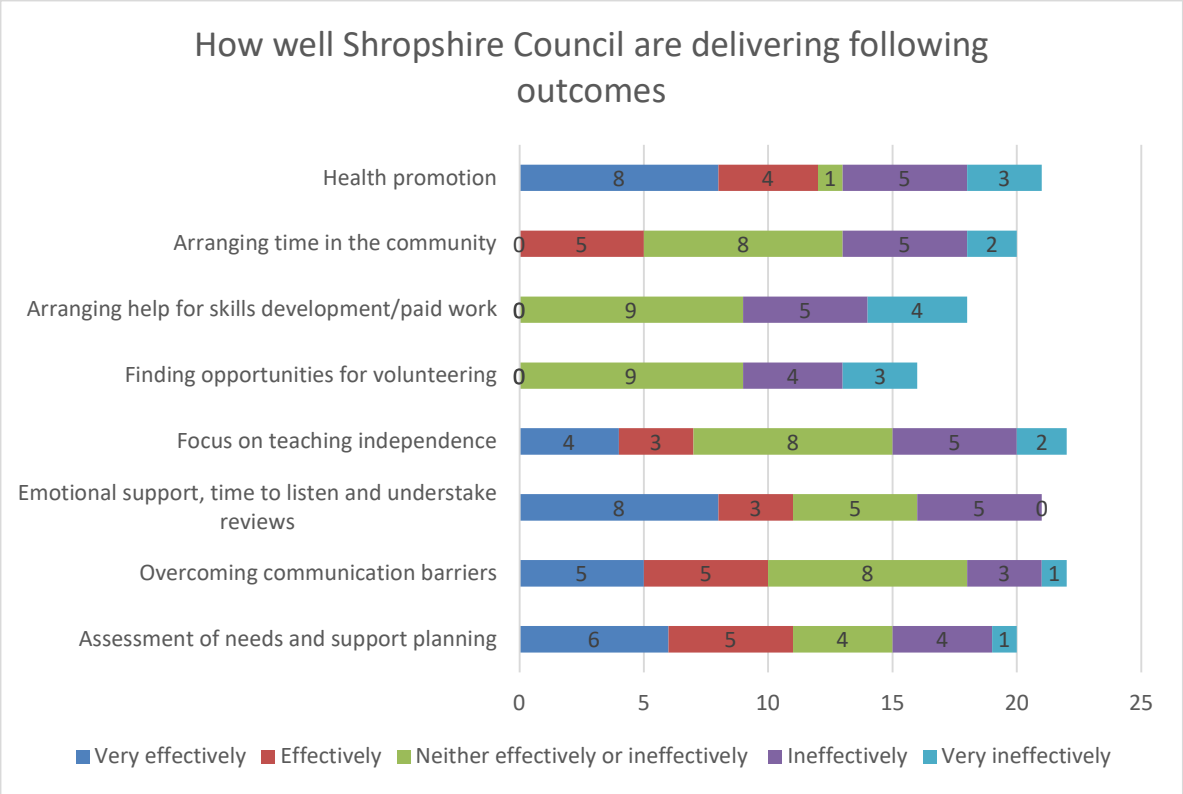


38% (9 responses) answered ‘no’ they didn’t work or support at Day Centres in

Shropshire but have another professional interest.

Question 5 asked how well the professionals feel Shropshire Council's Day Centres are delivering outcomes. They were asked to answer a range between effectively or ineffectively on 8 statements.

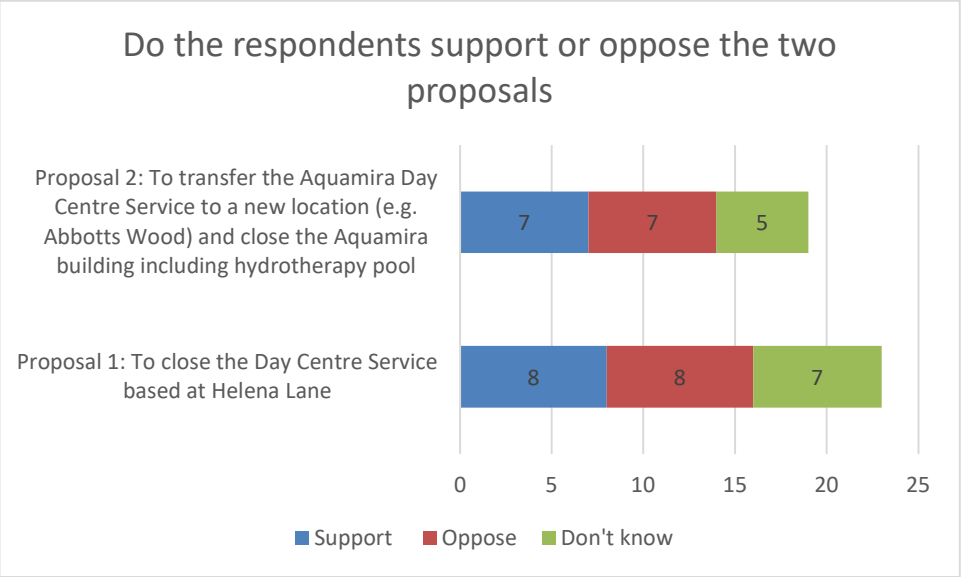
Figure 33 –How effectively professionals feel Shropshire Council delivers outcomes



There are mixed opinions across the statements but overall, there are more neutral and negative feelings towards the statements than positive. There are 5 statements that the respondents feel are neither effectively nor ineffectively delivered. Those are arranging time in the community, arranging help for skills development/paid work, finding opportunities for volunteering, focusing on teaching independence, and overcoming communication barriers. All statements have answers that support ineffectively or very ineffectively. Health promotion, emotional support and assessment of needs and support planning are considered to being delivered effectively.

They were then asked for their overall view on the proposals for Helena Lane and Aquamira. Figure 34 shows a mixed response to the proposal for Helena Lane but support for the proposal for Aquamira.

Figure 34 –Whether the professional support or oppose the proposals.



23 people answered this question and from figure 34, we can see that there are equal responses of support and opposition for the proposal for Aquamira; 35% (7 responses) and 30% (5 responses) do not know. This is similar for Helena Lane; qual responses of support and opposition for the proposal; 38% (8 responses) and 24% (5 responses) who don't know.

They were then asked to explain their view. There were 19 responses which are shown after a table of key themes.

Table 3 – table to show key themes of professional's views.

Theme	Explanation
Balance between modernization and protection of existing provision	There is a divide between those that see the services, especially Helena Lane, as outdated and would be better replaced by community-based models, and those who view the services as irreplaceable for people with high levels of dependency.
Concern about loss of specialist support	Hydrotherapy emerges as a key issue. Many respondents emphasize its therapeutic value and highlight the lack of alternative provision locally. Others acknowledge the benefits but argue the pool is financially unsustainable, staff intensive and underused.
Lack of viable alternatives and rural access issues	Respondents question whether realistic alternatives exist, particularly in South Shropshire. The comments underline anxiety that service changes may increase isolation, reduce preventive support, and accelerate the need for residential care.
Financial pressures acknowledged but contested	Respondents recognise the Council's financial constraints and the high operating costs of buildings and facilities; there is disagreement about how value is defined. Some argue that services should not be judged purely on financial performance, emphasising long-term preventative value and cost avoidance. Others support rationalisation, closure of specific elements (such as the pool), or consolidation as unavoidable given budget pressures.
Workforce culture, skills and	Some respondents raise concerns about service culture and

service quality concerns	delivery, particularly within day opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Themes include insufficient focus on independence, inconsistent quality of activities, limited training, and a need for more person-centred, skilled approaches. In contrast, others strongly defend staff expertise and commitment, especially in services supporting older people, highlighting high levels of training and specialist care.
Calls for alternative models rather than full closure	Rather than a binary choice between closure and retention, many comments propose middle-ground solutions. These include closing or repurposing specific elements, shared-use or partnership models, rental income, community hubs, or asset transfer arrangements. This reflects a desire to retain community value while addressing financial sustainability.
Emphasis on dignity, wellbeing and preventive outcomes	Underlying many responses is a strong values-based theme: the importance of dignity, social connection, independence, and mental and physical wellbeing. Respondents frequently link day services to prevention—reducing loneliness, delaying residential care, supporting carers, and maintaining health—arguing that these outcomes should be central to decision-making.

The key themes show mixed responses, which corresponds to the mixed responses to whether the professionals support or oppose. Concerns about the potential loss of specialist provision are prominent, especially in relation to the hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira. Many respondents highlight its therapeutic and preventative value and note the limited availability of accessible alternatives locally, while others acknowledge the benefits but question its financial sustainability. There are differing views on whether current services, particularly at Helena Lane, remain appropriate or whether more community-based and independence-focused models would better meet future needs. Alongside this, respondents raise concerns about the availability and suitability of alternative services, particularly in South Shropshire, with transport, accessibility, and rurality identified as key challenges.

Comments

- *Aquamira Day Opportunities for profound and multiple disabilities - In the first instance I oppose this but am open to a change of mind. Firstly, I am not wholly convinced a consultation can take place when there is not a clear outline of how this will work in the Abbots Wood environment. I think both the Aquamira manager and senior should have had time to look around the building to see if it will work sufficiently for the vulnerable adults that attend our service. Also, the logistics of the environment - Where will be position the specialist equipment such as Acheeva beds, multi-sensory furnishings etc. Will the care areas be sufficient to our requirements, is the building safe for people who may abscond or may be vulnerable when using bathroom spaces in a building that other more independent S/Users? I think both the manager & senior should have been able to visit the space and have time to consider the logistics. Speaking regularly with parents/carers there has been a serious concern that there will be no space for a quiet sensory area due to people with sensory sensitivities such as Autism.*
- *Helena Lane: services currently offered to individuals can be far better met within the local community of Ludlow. People with LD are currently isolated/segregated at Helena Lane ~ accessing community services would not only meet needs but*

would increase the profile of service users. Aquamira: all current services offered can easily be replicated at Abbots Wood with the added benefit of integration. It could be argued that hydrotherapy would be a loss however, for individuals to truly benefit from this therapy, individuals require a targeted regime of exercise as opposed to "leisure/relaxation" sessions.

- *Helena Lane provides support & some normality & independence to those who are totally dependent on others to care for them and would others be confined to their own homes. It offers stimulation via art & craft & opportunity to meet others. Invaluable to the elder's infirm.*
- *Within the consultation proposal it does not state what alternative measures for accessing activities such as hydrotherapy have been considered. Many of the service users are unable to access community leisure centres due to a lack of changing spaces, lack of wheelchair accessibility and a lack of warm water swimming pools that would allow someone with temperature regulation difficulties to access a pool. The world health organisation recommends 150 minutes of activity for all adults for health and wellbeing purposes. Many of the day-service service users are unable to achieve this due to a lack of facilities that meet their needs within the community. The hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira is a facility that allows certain people to access an activity that would meet their health and wellbeing needs.*
- *This is a wonderful facility which has been underused for years and charities can't afford to use it so much of it remains unused. It is a disgrace the council has not supported the community for which it was built. A cynical proposal to further reduce use and allow a different agenda.*
- *I can see both sides on Aquamira, it is an expensive building to run with the pool, my suggestion is to shut the pool as there is no external interest in purchases, 3 staff oversee its day-to-day running, and also takes 3 staff per session.*
- *The atmosphere in Helena Lane is nonexistent. The staff are not approachable, warm or proactive.*
- *The pool is bleeding excess amounts of money, staff are providing the pool and plant room support and getting nothing back, e.g. no extra pay, staff come in early occasionally to check the pool especially if problems the day before, a weekly backwash takes the staff 2 full mornings usually a Monday and a Friday. When the pool has been used by Aquamira in the past it swallows up 3 staff with one S/U for up to a hour or more, impacting on other activities, personal care and the support of other needs e.g., drinks and morning PEG flushes and support.*
- *Helena Lane: the day centre is a service, it is not run like a business, inevitably it won't make money like a business, but what it will do is support the community, people who are alone or have a lack of support both physically and socially. Whether that is a requirement to bath or to socialise (amongst many other reasons), people have a right to a service, just like people have a right to a service like the police or ambulance. For the service to thrive and for it to realistically work: - staff need to be replaced when they have left. So that the service isn't stretched when people need to go AL or sickness and we can do open days for the public. - There needs to be a minibus service so that people who cannot travel can attend and so that we can offer trips or days out. - There needs to be a regular community kitchen. - If there is a lack of resources for media, then allow staff to make and print leaflets - there needs to be a front of house receptionist at least 8 hours a week, not to do key working admin but for the actual day service to operate well and for welcoming people in. - All services at Helena lane need to operate here like hairdressers, voluntary serrvice etc. so that people can be sign*

posted. Rooms need to be opened up, especially the inner garden instead of shrinking to a small size and not offering sports in the physio room unless booked and paid, the rooms are not being used. - Cooking groups and other groups like art etc. need to operate again. - Allow singers and reptile people in etc. for entertainment - reconnect with the community. These are just a few examples of things that we used to offer and under the guise of its not making money the council has systematically closed them down one by one, so that the service for older people (and ALD) has now shrank to the bare bones, also other services were either closed down or relocated like Hands Together. We are always told what we can do and the onerous is put on us, when it has been the council who has shrunken it, again it's not a business it never was, it is a service!

- *Helena Lane provides Day Services to elderly people, but I feel that Shropshire Council have let us down with no support or any input on supporting the existing day care service. This service provides highly skilled care; all staff are fully trained in all aspects of care which are used every day with the service users. There is no other Elderly Day Care Service in South Shropshire. If this service is removed, then the vulnerable with become more vulnerable. It delays the process of person having to go into full time care (residential); which in turn saves the council money in the long run! Removing the service will cause high risk of isolation and loneliness, which in turn can cause depression and poor mental health. Our aim at the centre is to provide and encourage independence for people to stay in their own homes as long as possible.*
- *This is the only day service in south Shropshire for the elderly. Ludlow being elderly retiring town the need is great if the council took time to invest and promote this service.*
- *I've worked at Helena Lane for 14 years in Day services. We provide a very high standard of care and support in promoting independence and wellbeing. All staff are fully trained in all aspects of care from dementia training to dysphasia training and all other necessary training needs to provide a safe place for these elderly people, to give their loved ones/carers piece of mind and a necessary break they need. There is no other day care centre in south Shropshire that offers what we do! I feel Shropshire Council have let us down, we have no back up from them, no referrals mainly as Transport has been removed. How many 80-year-olds do you know that can drive themselves to day care?? After the pandemic in 2020 our numbers dropped dramatically so we decided to make a leaflet to hand out in the community. Shropshire council need to invest and promote our service, with Leaflets, signage to where we are as so many people didn't even know we are even here! even some locals didnt know of the building!. Ludlow is a retirement town and with the right advertising and support from the council this situation can be turned around.*
- *I appreciate that the pool is coming an awful lot of money, close the pool, keep the building open and rent it to others, we use the building in our operating hours.*
- *P1 Closure of any service is a concern due to the lack of alternative solutions or care providers in the South of Shropshire; it is difficult weighing this up with the financial crisis and the requirement for immediate budget cuts. There have been numerous opportunities to develop the service and co-work with other organisations to build a dementia/ageing people health and social care hub in the South, but this would require solid project planning, commitment and time which sadly no longer seems viable. P2 A loss of a resource (pool) is preferable to full closure and if there are alternative suitable, under-utilised locations this makes financial sense.*

- *I refer especially to Aquamira, as I have several clients who attend there using the services via Healthsec/Hydrotherapy/ Aquatic therapy is a well evidenced and documented therapy, which benefits those clients who cannot access gyms or other exercise venues. There are limited venues available in Shropshire, and to lose this facility would be yet another deprivation for the disabled people of Shropshire. The facility is underused and under supported but only because it has not been advertised nor made available to therapists and disabled. No thought has been given to making this a viable proposition as I know many Neuro and MSK therapists who would value access to such a facility for their clients. Can the Council not think of this in another way to make it an opportunity, and a partnership with those who will make use of it.*
- *Expensive and underused.*
- *I have previous experience working within Shropshire council's day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. I have worked in many services across the country and was shocked when I started in Shropshire at how dated and unprogressive the services are…There is minimal focus on development, independence and offering experience, too many staff work as carers (and) do not support workers... Lack of transport and staffing means social community activities can't happen as readily as people would like…training. More training needs to be made mandatory, such as autism training, disabilities training, and person-centred active support training...The services need to invest in staff with specialist skills to run meaningful sessions, such as drama, crafts, cooking, photography, pottery, life skills, education and these staff need to be focused on running and planning sessions and the support workers can concentrate on supporting…NB the pool at Aquamira would be a real loss if used correctly if could be a real pull for people to use internal services.*
- *Purpose of this submission I am writing to formally respond to the current consultation regarding the proposed closure of the Aquamira Day Centre site, with particular emphasis on the hydrotherapy pool, and to request that the Council actively explores viable alternatives to closure. This submission proposes that the Council consider retaining Aquamira in its current form, or partnership-based, rental, shared-use, or community asset transfer models, either to preserve the hydrotherapy facility specifically or to repurpose the wider building as a business-led community health and wellbeing hub. As no final decision has yet been taken, there remains a short but critical opportunity to explore credible, deliverable alternatives that could prevent the irreversible loss of an important local asset. 2. Our organisation has seen steady growth in rehabilitation activity, including: • Increased utilisation of hydrotherapy sessions and reflecting rental payments to the council. • Rising referral interest for complex neurological and orthopedic rehabilitation. • Growing demand for integrated, non-NHS therapeutic provision. This pattern reflects a wider unfulfilled need within the community for clinician-led, accessible, preventative rehabilitation services and demonstrates that the hydrotherapy pool is not underutilized but increasingly relied upon as part of effective rehabilitation pathways. The growing use of the facility indicates both clinical value and operational viability, strengthening the case for retaining the hydrotherapy pool as part of any future use of the site. 4. Importance of the Hydrotherapy Facility The hydrotherapy pool is not an ancillary or recreational feature; it is a critical therapeutic resource. Warm-water therapy is clinically recognised to: Improve mobility and joint function. • Reduce pain, muscle spasm, and stiffness. • Support respiratory function. • Enhance mental wellbeing. • Enable safe movement for individuals unable to exercise on land. For some of our service*

users, hydrotherapy is the only environment in which meaningful physical activity is possible, helping to prevent further decline and reducing reliance on more intensive health or care interventions. This certainly includes those who are unable to walk. The loss of this facility would remove a key preventative resource and is likely to increase downstream pressure on NHS and social care services. 5. Potential for Alternative Use and Sustainable Operation Beyond its current function, the scale, layout, and location of the Aquamira site present a strong opportunity for alternative or expanded use. The building could realistically support a business-led community hub model, incorporating: • Rental consulting, therapy and office rooms for health, rehabilitation, and wellbeing providers. • Shared space for charities and voluntary organisations. • A community café and supported employment opportunities. • Facilities for skills development, supported work, and independent living training • Inclusive community activities aimed at reducing isolation and improving resilience Such a model would allow the Council to: • Retain community benefit • Offset operational costs through rental income • Encourage collaboration between statutory, private, and voluntary sectors • Align with preventative health, wellbeing, and inclusion strategies. 6. Rationale for Retention or Repurposing Community need does not exist in neat categories. Individuals may require support temporarily or long-term due to: Injury or illness. • Disability. • Caring responsibilities. • Ageing. • Sudden life changes. Local, flexible, inclusive facilities enable communities to respond early, compassionately, and cost-effectively. Removing such spaces reduces choice, limits preventative options, and shifts pressure elsewhere in the system. Once lost, facilities of this nature are extremely difficult and costly to replace. 7. Request to the Council I respectfully request that the Council: 1. Pause irreversible decisions relating to the hydrotherapy facility. 2. Actively explore: Rental partnerships. o Shared-use agreements. o Business-led or community asset transfer models. 3. Engage with interested businesses, charities and community organisations to assess feasibility. Healthsec Rehab would be interested in hearing any proposition. 4. Consider an exploratory, time-limited meeting to evaluate whether a sustainable alternative to closure can be developed. Any such meeting would be focused on deliverability, particularly within the consultation timeframe. 8. Conclusion Closing Aquamira would not only affect current service users, including those with the most complex needs, but would also remove a vital option for future members of our community who may one day require support themselves. The increasing use of the hydrotherapy pool and the growth of rehabilitation services on site underline that this facility meets a real, growing, and ongoing need. The current consultation period offers an opportunity to preserve that value through collaborative, sustainable alternatives rather than irreversible closure. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute constructively to discussions within the next 14 days and am happy to meet in person or online.

- *To better use the council funding and to allow individuals an opportunity to explore different opportunities that will help promote independence.*

As Shropshire Council has carried out an Equalities and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment (ESIHA), the professionals were asked to comment on whether there would be any other impact or risks to the proposals. The following comments reflect concerns raised by professionals and stakeholders regarding the potential impacts of the proposed service changes, particularly in relation to Helena Lane and Aquamira. The feedback focuses on anticipated risks to individuals with complex and high-level needs, including impacts on mental health, wellbeing, safety, and continuity of care. Respondents highlight

issues relating to vulnerability, access to specialist support, the suitability of alternative provision, and the potential for increased isolation and inequality. Several comments also raise concerns about the adequacy of current impact assessment and the potential for increased pressure on health and social care services if preventative provision is reduced. Together, these comments provide insight into the perceived risks and unintended consequences that respondents believe should be carefully considered as part of decision-making.

Comments

- *See notes above - specifically in relation to the disproportionate effect on individuals and their families / carers who have Profound and Multiple Disabilities (PMLD).*
- *Risks - S/Users with no road awareness who have a likelihood of absconding or tailgating onto the car park. S/Users who when supported to bathroom areas and require time alone may be vulnerable if Abbots Wood service users are going independently to the toilet areas. Behaviours from S/users who do not wish to be in busy crowded areas with lots of noise and movement. Also, the manager/senior offices are quite a distance from the suggested main area that may become Aquamira, I suggest the office has alarm buttons so that staff can call them if needed.*
- *I can confirm on behalf of one of the attendees that the effect of Helena Lane closing would have a disastrous effect on her mental health & wellbeing.*
- *Please consider ensuring all equipment that is regularly used is transferred if Aquamira is to be closed, such as the sensory room, positioning beds and personnel care equipment.*
- *The transfer to another location could be distressing for some of our service users and there could be health and safety issues for certain service users.*
- *Aquamira struggles to go out as we support individuals who need personal care at certain times, people who need flushes and medication. Activities here are based around sound, sight, smell and touch. I feel inclusion has not been thought of for our client group, due to the nature of their care and medical needs they can't always go out to the shops or a farm etc, just for a trip out, are these trips out necessary to a coffee shop for all centres, then for Aquamira it would be a insult to take NIL by mouth people to a coffee shop.*
- *Depression, suicide, bad health, dissolution of community, distrust and contempt for the powers that be, potential to pass problems onto future generations, lack of support and bearing on families and carers.*
- *If this service is removed, then the vulnerable will become more vulnerable. Removing the service will cause high risk of isolation and loneliness, which in turn can cause depression and poor mental health.*
- *If Helena Lane closes it will leave people venerable and isolated from the community.*
- *Other organisations do not have the appropriate training to assist our service users.*
- *The people we support are very vulnerable, they have no voice, we advocate for them, we support them in daily skills, care, eating, PEG tube feeding, medications, seizures. There is more to Aquamira that people don't see, we can't always be in the public eye with the care and feeding tube process.*
- *I do not think the council has considered a wide enough scope for their*

assessment and it is very narrow and short-sighted. A wider and longer consultation is required to reach out to the disabled population, and more so with a high number of young people / adults who were brain injured at birth within the county.

- *No there are alternative services.*
- *Anticipated Additional Impacts and Risks Yes. In addition to those identified within the Equalities and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment, there are further significant impacts and risks arising from the proposed closure of Aquamira and the hydrotherapy facility that Shropshire Council should consider: 1. Increased pressure on health and social care services: The hydrotherapy pool provides preventative, non-NHS therapeutic support for individuals with complex, long-term conditions. Its loss is likely to result in deterioration in physical and mental health for some users, increasing reliance on GP services, hospital outpatient care, pain management pathways, and social care packages. This represents a shift from preventative provision to higher-cost, reactive services. 2. Disproportionate impact on people with complex and non-standard needs: Many individuals who rely on hydrotherapy and flexible rehabilitation services do not fit neatly into NHS eligibility criteria or standard care pathways. Closure risks excluding people whose needs are complex, fluctuating, or long-term, particularly those living with neurological conditions, chronic pain, profound disability, or post-injury rehabilitation needs. 3. Reduced access due to transport, capacity, and suitability constraints: Alternative facilities, where they exist, are often limited by long waiting lists, restricted eligibility, unsuitable environments, or significant travel distances. For individuals with mobility limitations, fatigue, or support needs, travelling outside the local area may be impractical or impossible, resulting in effective loss of access rather than simple displacement of provision. 4. Increased health inequality and loss of preventative capacity: The closure would remove an accessible, flexible, community-based facility at a time when demand for rehabilitation and well-being support is increasing. These risks widen health inequalities, particularly for those unable to self-fund private alternatives, and undermine early intervention and prevention objectives. 5. Impact on independence, wellbeing, and social inclusion: Beyond physical rehabilitation, Aquamira supports independence, confidence, and social connection. Loss of this space risks increased isolation, reduced independence, and deterioration in mental wellbeing for individuals who rely on structured, supportive environments to remain active and engaged. 6. Loss of a viable and increasingly utilised asset: The hydrotherapy pool is now not underutilised; use is increasing alongside growing rehabilitation activity, referrals, and demand for non-NHS therapeutic provision. Closure would remove a functioning, in-demand asset without fully exploring viable partnership, rental, or shared-use alternatives that could preserve community benefit and reduce financial risk. 7. Risk of irreversible loss before alternatives are explored: Once specialist facilities such as hydrotherapy pools are closed or decommissioned, they are rarely replaced. Proceeding without fully exploring sustainable alternatives risks a permanent loss of capacity that cannot be easily recreated in the future. In summary, the proposed closure presents risks not only to equality and inclusion, but also to preventative health provision, system-wide demand, community resilience, and long-term cost effectiveness. These impacts reinforce the importance of exploring partnership-based, business-led, or community-use alternatives before any irreversible decisions are made.*

Question 10 asks whether the professionals or their organisations provide any services

that support people with learning disabilities, older adults, and those who benefit from day opportunities.

Figure 35 –Activities or services provided by the professionals or their organisations.

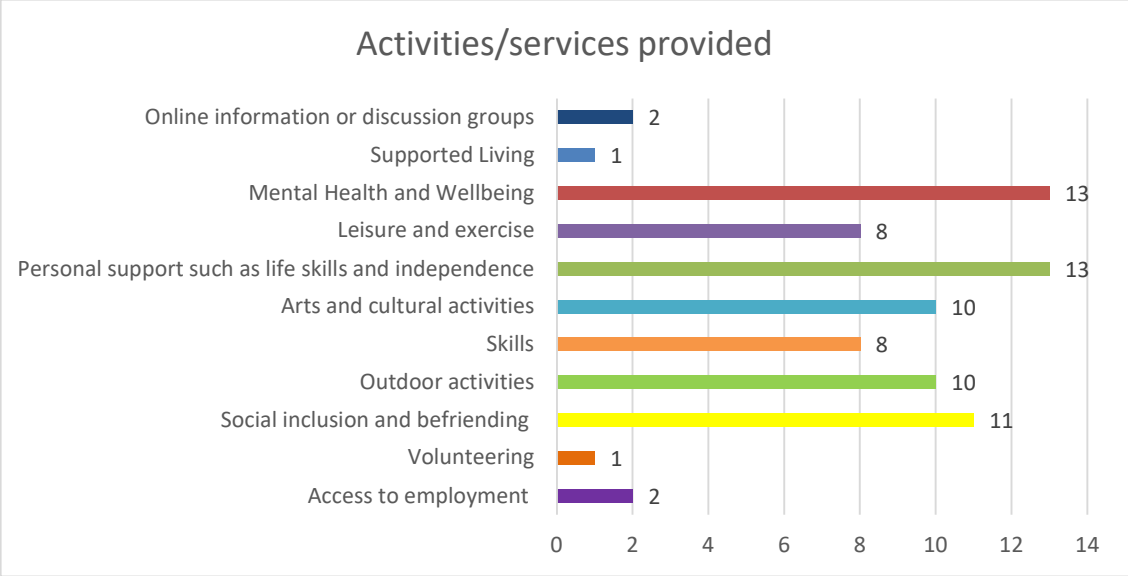


Figure 35 shows a focus on mental health and personal support as they make up 81% of the responses respectively. Supported living and volunteering are provided less, 6% respectively.

There were also 10 comments, which are below in full:

- *We are a specialist multidisciplinary (MTD) health service for adults who have a learning disability - and often concurrent physical disability. We offer specialist assessment and interventions from a range of disciplines Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Psychiatry, Psychology, Nursing, and Dietetics.*
- *Aquamira provides a high level of support for those with profound and multiple disabilities. This includes specialist food preparation and drinks. PEGG and nasal gastric trained. Medication and high levels of personal care and support throughout the day. We also offer person centred creative/sensory activities that are suitable for particular preferences/needs. This includes all aspects of the list above, but we are also centred on maintaining health and well-being and work with health professionals to achieve a high standard of support.*
- *I support my friend by organising her care and wellbeing and dealing with her finances.*
- *LD physiotherapy.*
- *Activities within Aquamira.*
- *My involvement with the facility ceased some time ago because of the increased cost of providing a service of social inclusion in the building.*
- *Personal care, support to feed, PEG feeding, medications, some people may need 1-1 support at certain times of the day for toilets. Drum for fun sessions, the group we support like chat and quiet time, enjoy the sensory room, story sessions.*
- *Outdoor garden leisure/exercise we encourage movement the best way we can with people who may lack mobility.*

- *Private bespoke rehab packages, trial for independent living.*

Question 11 asked if the respondents were service providers, could they offer alternative support to any individual and their carers/families impacted by the proposals. They were asked to consider any opportunities they feel are viable. Out of the 10 people who commented, there are mixed responses with some respondents stating there are no alternative provisions for either Helena Lane and Aquamira, and some respondents give some alternative options such as Mayfair and Hands Together Ludlow, and Albert Road and Abbotts Woods for Aquamira.

Comments

- *Aquamira has had opportunities/suggestions of room hire, particularly in the evenings for local community classes etc. but due to red tape this does not happen. It is unbelievable how often the pool is not able to run despite the high level of maintenance and cost it takes to keep it running. It swallows up both money and staff time and has become a drain on resources. It will be very sad to see it go but the cost & time to keep it running is no longer an option.*
- *I think the 8 people will have a better experience at Mayfair in Church Stretton or Hands Together Ludlow. Four Rivers or other care homes could also diversify into offering some day care/ bathing.*
- *A conversation today from the advocates who visited, suggestion: Albert Road and Abbots Wood, merge the able centres together, Aquamira move across to Albert Road, and have a look at all centres and look and reassess people's needs, if lack of mobility, want a quieter service etc. to move to Aquamira.*
- *There is no other service like Helena Lane that has trained staff, Purpose built building with all the facilities in place such as adapted baths, laundry, all on one level, and good car parking. This building was left to the elderly people of Ludlow by William George Lane, in memory of his wife Helena.*
- *There is no other day service like Helena Lane in South Shropshire.*
- *To rent out the pool at Aquamira, for Aquamira not to run and provide the pool any longer. 20 minutes a week is of no benefit to our clients, it takes 3 staff and at least an hour to support 1 client. Which sadly parents and carers outside Aquamira appear not to understand this and want their individual in the pool as often as they can.*
- *The only other accessible hydro facility is in Telford (Hadley) and oversubscribed - please look at this model and think outside of the box to develop Aquamira centre.*
- *There are alternative more cost-effective options.*
- *Without Aquamira there will be no hydro for those who need it.*

More people answered the following question (18 responses), which asked for ideas and aspirations for improving and modernizing day opportunities provision in Shropshire. The comments highlight a strong call for needs-led, differentiated provision, emphasising that people with profound disabilities require quieter, specialist environments that cannot be accommodated within more active or generic service models. Respondents stress the importance of retaining accessible service bases and better using existing facilities through investment, promotion, partnership working, and modernisation rather than closure. Overall, there is support for reform and cost-effectiveness, but with decisions grounded in realism about individual capabilities, safeguarding, and long-term sustainability. The 18 comments are seen in full below:

Comments

- *Supportive of a modern approach to day services, that support access to individual local communities and amenities, as well as social interaction with peers. We are supportive of equitable access to resources such as hydrotherapy pools. We are supportive of creative problem-solving to enable ongoing and future hydrotherapy access.*
- *Perhaps an alternative base could be used for people from other services that regularly access community activities, regular bus trips and outdoor walking groups. And the people who are most vulnerable, seniors or choose a quieter pace of life due to mobility, health needs etc. should have bigger space. I also think day services could hire out community based activates and earn some money that way. Yoga groups, reading groups, creative art sessions etc. This would generate extra income and highlight council spaces as places for the community. Pay as you go sessions may also be easier for people rather than contracts and vast amounts of paperwork, more like a village hall rental. As for improving and modernising.... It's doubtful that will happen for a while, Aquamira is re-locating & downsizing due to lack of Shropshire Council funding and cost effectiveness....so I hardly think things are going to improve or modernise for a very long time!*
- *Use and manage the facilities you have, advertise availability and liaise with others working with the client groups. And make services affordable.*
- *If Aquamira has to close, these people need a quieter service, AW is a very noisy service with very able clients, which Aquamira is not. Clients at Aquamira have profound disabilities and some are not mobile and, in a wheelchair, we do not need clients at AW rushing around and bouncing into our area and disturbing, falling over the chairs, or any behaviour issues occurring. I feel that no thought has been put into this. Could Abbots Wood and Albert Road merge, both active mobile services. Aquamira moves to Albert Road say, and then individual packages are looked at, at Abbotts Wood and Albert Road on if any of their client's need and benefit from a quieter service. I feel that our clients at Aquamira don't have a voice, some do not have people to speak up for them, we are an easier group to move as there will be no come back, tick boxes to say you have and that's that.*
- *More cost effective, busier and fuller of life.*
- *Look at people's needs, not all fits one box, individuals at Aquamira will never be able to volunteer in the community or apply for a job, these are their parents' aspirations but not realistic. We do not all fit in the same box.*
- *Shropshire Council needs to invest and promote in the day service. With other agencies and professionals.*
- *Shropshire council should invest in and promote this service instead of forgetting it due to being out of Shrewsbury and having done for many years.*
- *Helena Lane is the perfect setting and originally built for the older people of Ludlow and Surrounding areas. It has facilities especially for day care i.e. bathing laundry, all on one level good car parking.*
- *Aquamira offers a service to individuals with profound disabilities, we look after these people in a very good manner, they are safe, we carry out sensory activities that stimulate, provide feeding through tubes, give medication that can be life treating if they don't receive it.*
- *The service needs a base: an accessible, open building which is run by adults with learning disabilities. Examples of activities- on site working cafe, gardening group (Thrive model of therapeutic gardening), targeted social skills/independent living learning, regular social, art and craft, exercise, wellbeing support-a much wider*

programme of activities-some could run for specific periods of time and could be certificated. Staffing needs to be more flexible, operational hours are currently very short Mon-Fri. Majority of staff are 'support workers' and not trained in delivering specific activities, a wider range of staff posts recruited to suit the service need (sports trained, art trained etc.). More specific programme planning could also attract volunteers and students training in these areas. Own transport/drivers like council run transport is unreliable with inflexible times.

- *I am a trustee for Headway Shropshire - a charity which provides services for those who cannot obtain what they want via social services and the NHS. There are many organisations who want to do a better job in better facilities - to lose this will be another loss to the county.*
- *Modernise them. They are antiquated and not suitable for people attending.*
- *Discuss rental of the facility in some way rather than closure.*
- *The opening hours of services bring these in line with external providers and reduce to 6 hrs. per day, further savings can be made to the proposed outlined in the consultation by reducing staffing and running costs by considering this. If service users are out from the service base, e.g. for activities, why pay running costs of a base? Could a social hub be used instead for meetings (to) start at end of day? 10 plus years ago there were activity groups supported off base but due to various reasons these activities no longer take place (mainly staffing), it would be good to explore these again as these activities were held in venues away from bases.*
- *N/a*
- *See above (2)*

Question 13 then asked how effective supported employment options are within Shropshire of which 18 people answered and figure 38 shows the results.

Figure 36- How effective the respondents feel supported employment options are.

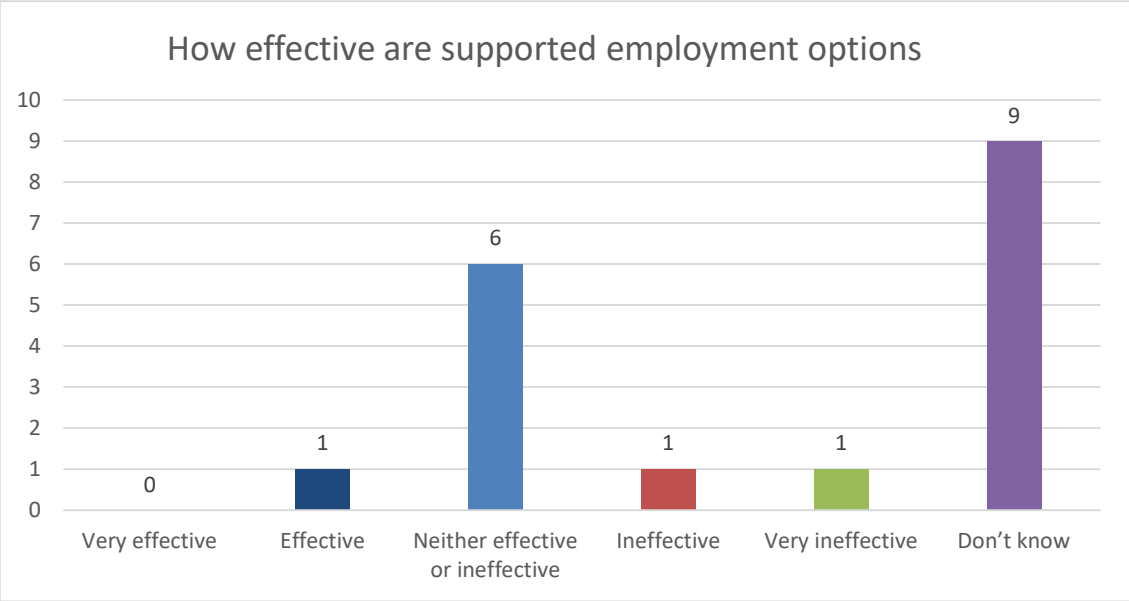


Figure 36 shows that 50% (9 responses) don't know and 33% (6 responses) feel it is neither effective nor ineffective. There are more negative responses, either ineffective or very ineffective, than positive responses.

This was followed by asking the respondents to comment whether they knew of any good practice models or opportunities around supported employment that do not exist currently in Shropshire. Generally, in the 10 responses, the respondents did not have applicable answers. Some comments were more positive, but most respondents do not give any options, which supports the results of the above question.

Comments

- *Perhaps the cabinet would like to discuss supported employment directly with the service user group that attends Aquamira, this is a question you could put to them. You could also speak to parents/carers about supported employment opportunities; it would be interesting to hear the responses. What do you think?*
- *Some of the people attending day centres are also in supported employment through Enable.*
- *I think it's a good service, but the referral process is not clear.*
- *Services users at Aquamira cannot access employment and it is patronising to these people to expect them to.*
- *Not applicable for Aquamira client's base.*
- *See above.*
- *N/or No (4).*

Question 14 asked for further suggestions from the professionals; alternative options to the proposals that would help Shropshire Council to meet needs whilst achieving savings and better value for money. There were 13 responses which suggest that respondents favour reconfiguration, better utilisation, and partnership-based solutions over closure, with a strong emphasis on safeguarding care quality, supporting carers, and improving efficiency through smarter use of existing resources rather than service withdrawal. The comments are seen in full below.

- *The pool has run at an extortionate cost over the years and a drain on staff resources. I am sure the contractors will be very sad if it goes.*
- *Instead of closing the centres why don't the council let out the premises for private functions and events to generate income?*
- *Look at reducing transport costs as many service users have mobility vehicles and are collected on fleet transport.*
- *Use what you have more effectively.*
- *See above for a move to a quieter site, say Albert Road, Louise House etc.*
- *See above with the suggestions of Albert Road and Abbots Wood. Or close the pool fully at £80.000 over head and cost to run and repairs, pool is taking far too many staff, too much money staff to check pool readings. Close the pool fill it in and offer this building/pool covered area as an evening dance studio, yoga classes, Sunday biblical groups. This building is in the middle of a housing estate, why is it not being offered to private people in the evening for a charge, they would learn to open up/ lock up and being charged for any damage they would pay for it. Thus, building is not used enough to the estate.*
- *It's a service, it requires a completely different mindset.*
- *Shropshire Council should invest and work with local GP as they have care coordinators who could direct people to the service and increase numbers. Hands Together was mentioned as an alternative, but this charity is run by volunteers, NOT trained staff. They do not do any PC or 1:1 support which the service users need at Helena Lane. None are trained in Dysphasia Epilepsy Dementia Diabetes*

M&H etc. This is not a like for like option! Service users require a carer/ family to stay with them, and this defeats the object of giving the carers/ family a break that is so needed. At least [at] Helena Lane knows that their loved ones are safe and well cared for and can leave them with confidence.

- *Advertising the centre and promoting the service.*
- *Good project management and consistency are key to modernising the services.*
- *Providing more effective day services in a coordinated way linking to social workers , charities and other private providers could be a way forward here - this may help with supporting those who are isolated and do not have opportunity to exercise - there is likely to be benefit to their mental and physical health, which has wider reaching benefits - healthier people, less care needs and greater participation in life.*
- *As above (2)*

Question 16 asked for any final comments the respondents had to make. There were 8 comments. They are generally mixed but there is general feeling expressed among professionals opposing the proposal out of concern for the people it services, calls for investment in staff, and that it could be retained if promotion was prioritized.

- *Hiring out premises for classes such as yoga during the day as they are always oversubscribed & full in Ludlow. Also hire for meetings and private parties.*
- *Sadly, as stated above there are 3 services in Shrewsbury, and I feel that Aquamira has been targeted due to the lack of communication for the people that are supported. Albert Road renewing the lease?? Could have been stopped and saved money there. Buildings are not being rented out enough.*
- *My concern is if we close what will happen to the people that attend. It is making the vunerable more vulnerable and will cause unnecessary isolation. It will remove any support for the care givers at home and make them at breaking point to then have their loved ones put into residential homes which in turn will cost the council more money.*
- *Low staff morale and sickness are a drain to day ops, so staff need to feel invested in.*
- *I feel that this consultation does not reach all those that this will affect - if it were asked in another way, asking if they would use facilities would gain a different response.*
- *We need a society that realizes growth and is looking after the most vulnerable.*
- *Helena Lane needs to be advertised and promoted and some signage to inform public where we are as so many have stated they didn't know this place existed. Shropshire Council need to invest in and not discard a much-needed service.*
- *N/a.*

Email responses

Like the clients and carers section, there was also an emailed response to the consultation. All personal details have been redacted. This response is also based on experience at Greenacres, though this is also helpful to understand the service Shropshire Council provides as a whole.

The key themes are:

Key gaps/concerns in Shropshire Council day centres (as observed via Greenacres):

- Need more structured progression (e.g. John Muir / Duke of Edinburgh-style challenges), not just "maintenance."
- Limited structured curriculum to build independence with measurable skill hierarchies; Systematic Instruction (TSI) and task adaptations.
- Communication support could be stronger—more consistent use of AAC and clarity on whether "Taking Part" still promotes empowerment through communication.
- Emotional support generally happens, but there's a risk someone could miss out without planned mechanisms.
- Off-site volunteering often depends on proactive parents/carers and declined after COVID—creating inequity.

Employment pathway realism:

- Support for the aim of employment pathways, but warns against false hope when placements don't convert to jobs.
- Notes some employers may be more receptive (examples given), but highlights client vulnerability to exploitation and social-awareness risks in the community.

Strong objection to Aquamira hydrotherapy pool closure:

- Frames hydrotherapy as essential, not a luxury, especially for people with paralysis/complex needs.
- Suggests commissioning an alternative provider if the council can't run it.
- Raises discrimination concern and asks what barriers exist besides cost and how many pools exist locally.

The author of the email also gives some recommendations, which is helpful as it is a recommendation based on real lived experience from a professional standpoint.

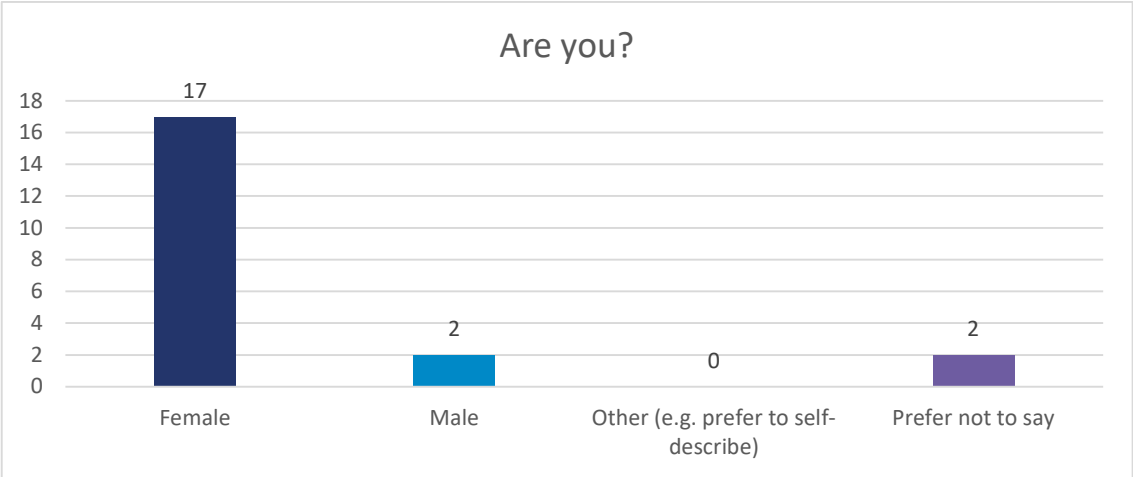
- Implement TSI/Systematic Instruction consistently.
- Build partnerships (e.g. Attingham Park, Food Hub, Friends of Shrewsbury Cemeteries, Landau Talking Therapies, Westhope College, Age UK, dog walking/garden services).
- Explore transport savings via public transport training (reduced reliance on mobility vehicles).
- Expand inclusive fitness options (Keep Fit/Yoga/Pilates) and shift emphasis toward healthy living.
- Ensure access to "success/placements/experiences" isn't limited to those with proactive parents.

About the respondents

The following questions take a similar route to the questions in the client and carers survey, in asking more about the respondents who replied online.

Question 17 asked if the respondents were female or male. In general, like the clients and carers survey, the respondents were female; 81%.

Figure 37 – Gender of the respondents in the professionals and stakeholders survey.



There is more of a mixture of age groups in this survey; 38% (8 responses) are in the 35-44 group, 24% (5 responses) are in the 55-64 group, 14% (3 responses) in the 45-54 group, 10% (2 responses) in the 75-84 group and 5% (1 responses) respectively in the 65-74 group and 'prefer not to say'.

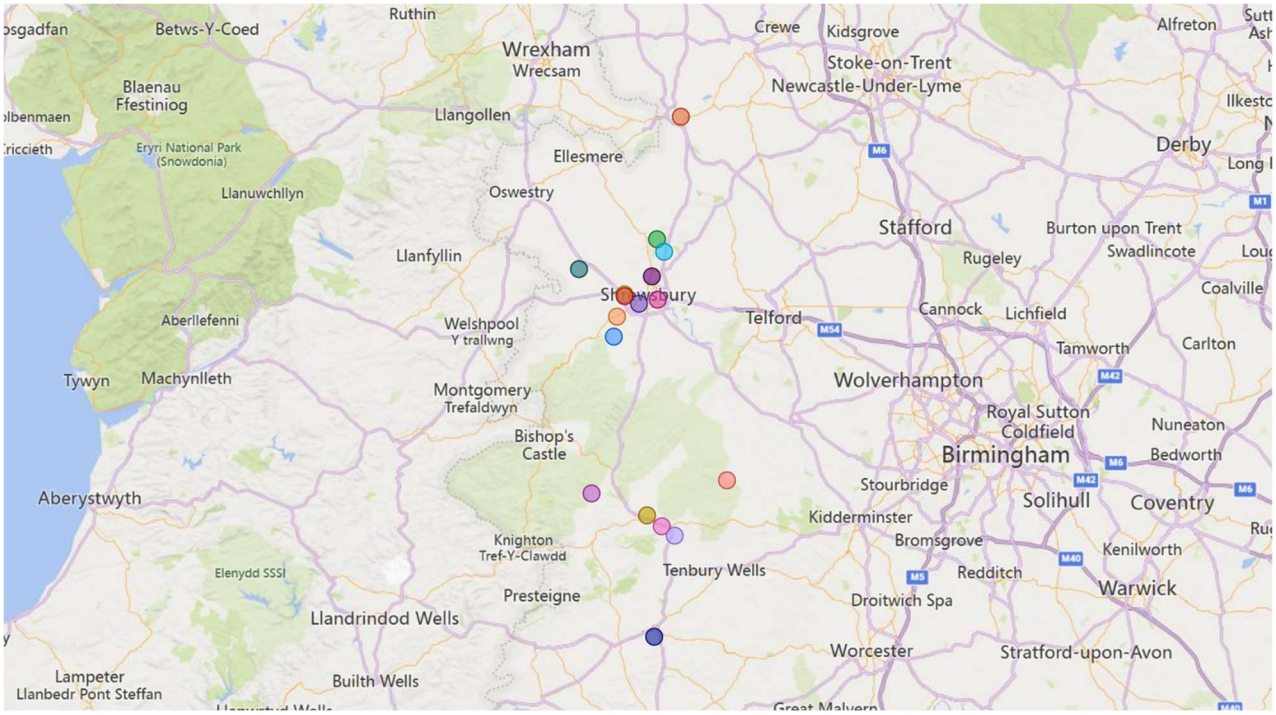
When asked if they regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone, 21 people answered and the majority, 48% (10 responses), answered no. 33% (7 responses) answered yes and 14% (3 responses) preferred not to say.

Question 20 asked for the respondents to state their ethnic origin, and of the 21 people who answered, overwhelmingly 81% (17 responses) describe themselves as white of British, Irish or Welsh descent. The remaining 19% (4 responses) chose to prefer not to say or don't know.

21 respondents answered the religion question and 43% (9 responses) answered Christian, 33% (7 responses) preferred not to say, 19% (4 responses) stated they were of no religion, and 5% (1 response) answered that they practiced Buddhism.

The last question sought to map out where the respondents are based.

Map 2 –Where the respondents of the professionals and stakeholders survey are based.



Section Summary

Professionals and stakeholders raised a broad and interrelated set of concerns about the potential impacts of the proposals, particularly for individuals with high levels of dependency, complex health needs, and limited ability to access alternative provision.

A recurring concern was the loss of specialist and preventative support, most notably in relation to the hydrotherapy pool at Aquamira. Respondents consistently emphasised its therapeutic value for people with complex physical, neurological, and mobility needs, highlighting that suitable alternatives are scarce, often oversubscribed, or physically inaccessible. Many stressed that hydrotherapy is not a discretionary or leisure activity for these individuals, but a critical intervention that supports mobility, pain management, mental wellbeing, and the prevention of further deterioration, with concerns that its removal could increase reliance on NHS and social care services.

There were also strong concerns about the availability and suitability of alternative services, particularly in rural parts of Shropshire. Respondents questioned whether proposed alternatives could realistically meet the needs of people with profound disabilities, dementia, or complex medical requirements, noting issues such as lack of trained staff, insufficient facilities for personal care, sensory needs, or medical interventions, and environments that are too busy or unsuitable for quieter, specialist support. Transport was repeatedly identified as a barrier, with respondents warning that increased travel distances, reduced transport provision, or reliance on carers could lead to reduced attendance, increased isolation, and inequitable access to services.

Another significant theme related to mental health, wellbeing, and safeguarding risks. Professionals expressed concern that changes or closures could have a destabilising effect on vulnerable individuals who rely on routine, familiarity, and trusted relationships with staff. Several respondents anticipated increased risks of loneliness, anxiety, depression, and deterioration in wellbeing if services were withdrawn or relocated without appropriate, individualised transition planning. Concerns were also raised about the

potential impact on carers, with respondents noting that day services provide essential respite and that their loss could place additional strain on families, potentially accelerating the need for residential care.

While many respondents acknowledged the financial pressures facing the Council, there was unease about services being judged primarily on short-term cost rather than long-term value. Professionals highlighted the preventative role of day services in maintaining independence, delaying residential care, and supporting carers, arguing that these outcomes represent cost avoidance rather than inefficiency. Several respondents felt that underuse of certain facilities reflected historic under-investment, limited promotion, and reduced transport rather than a lack of need, and cautioned against closure without fully exploring options to improve utilisation.

Concerns were also raised about service quality, workforce capacity, and culture, particularly within some learning disability provision. Some respondents described outdated models of support, limited focus on independence, and insufficient access to meaningful activities or skills development, while others strongly defended staff expertise, training, and commitment, especially in services supporting older people and those with complex needs. This divergence reinforced the view that a one-size-fits-all approach would be inappropriate, and that different groups require different environments, staffing models, and levels of specialism.

Finally, many professionals expressed frustration that the proposals appeared to present a binary choice between closure and retention, rather than fully exploring alternative operating models. There was strong support for approaches such as reconfiguration, shared use, partnership working, rental or income-generating activity, and community-based hubs that could retain specialist provision while improving financial sustainability. Across these concerns, respondents consistently emphasised the importance of dignity, inclusion, prevention, and realistic assessments of need, urging that decisions should be grounded in the lived realities of the people who rely most on these services.

4 Face-to-face engagement sessions

There were several feedback sessions that took place in order to gather real-life experience and opinions on the proposals. They face to face engagement sessions were designed for clients, carers and professionals. The feedback sessions, allowed for conversational flow, giving more flexibility than the online survey for people's voices to be hear but the discussions were based around a similar structure in questions to the online surveys to ensure all key elements could be covered.

The key themes are set out here. It is useful to note that most feedback was related to the proposal for Aquamira.

Continuity, familiarity, and emotional safety

- Strong emphasis on service users feeling *settled* at current provision, with concern that change could be distressing—especially for people with complex needs, sensory sensitivity, dementia, visual impairment, and PMLD.
- Repeated preference for a "lift and shift" approach (keep staff, routines, and peer groups together) if relocation happens.

The environment matters (quiet, predictable, low stimulation)

- Aquamira is repeatedly valued as calm, spacious, and predictable.
- Abbots Wood is repeatedly described as potentially busier/noisier, raising concerns about dysregulation, distress, and reduced engagement.

Specialist facilities are seen as essential (especially sensory provision)

- The sensory room is the single most consistent "must-have" across family and professional feedback.
- The hydrotherapy pool is viewed as clinically beneficial (especially for PMLD), with concern about loss of access and limited suitable alternatives locally—despite acknowledged underuse linked to staffing/operational constraints.
- Wider concern about whether specialist equipment and spaces can realistically be replicated elsewhere.

Accessibility, dignity, and personal care requirements

- Concerns about whether alternative sites can safely support:
    - wheelchair users and independent movement
    - specialist personal care (e.g., changing beds) with dignity
    - separate/controlled entrances and quieter eating arrangements for people with aspiration/sensory needs

Carer impact and respite

- Day services are described as providing critical respite for carers and essential social contact for service users.
- Fear that closure/relocation could reduce respite (especially if travel increases), pushing families toward unaffordable private care or unsuited community options.

Transport as a major barrier/risk

- Transport is repeatedly flagged as limiting attendance already, and as a key risk to

routine, access, and equity—especially in rural areas.
- Multiple notes that transport should be included in any equality impact assessment.

Financial pressures vs. quality/sufficiency of provision

- Clear understanding that the council faces severe financial pressure and is seeking best value.
- Stakeholders repeatedly stress that cost-saving must not undermine safety, outcomes, and statutory/equality duties.

Need for robust planning, assessment, and co-production

- Calls for thorough options appraisal, equality impact assessment, and joint work across health/social care (including ICB/system-wide discussion).
- Repeated emphasis that decisions should be shaped through co-production with families, service users, and professionals—and that engagement needs a "final push."

Section summary

The face-to-face engagement sessions provided rich qualitative insight into the lived experiences of service users, carers and professionals, reinforcing and expanding on themes identified through the online surveys. Participants consistently emphasised the importance of continuity, familiarity and emotional safety, particularly for people with complex needs, dementia, sensory sensitivities and profound and multiple learning disabilities. Existing day centres were valued not only for the activities they provide, but for the calm, predictable environments, trusted staff relationships and specialist facilities that support dignity, wellbeing and effective care.

Strong concerns were raised about the suitability of alternative locations, especially in relation to increased noise, reduced quiet space, accessibility for wheelchair users, and the ability to provide specialist personal care and sensory support. The hydrotherapy pool and sensory provision, particularly at Aquamira, were repeatedly described as essential rather than optional, with participants highlighting their therapeutic, preventative and wellbeing benefits and the lack of comparable local alternatives. Carers consistently described day services as a vital source of respite, expressing concern that increased travel times or loss of provision could significantly reduce respite and place unsustainable pressure on families.

Transport and rural accessibility emerged as major barriers, with participants stressing that these factors should be fully reflected within equality and impact assessments. While there was clear recognition of the Council's financial pressures, participants emphasised that cost-saving measures should not undermine safety, dignity, equality duties or long-term preventative value. Across sessions, there were strong calls for thorough planning, realistic options appraisal, and genuine co-production with families, service users and professionals, with a preference for solutions that retain specialist expertise, staff teams and familiar routines wherever change is unavoidable.

5 Recommendations

Based on the evidence and themes throughout the Day Centre Consultation Report, the following recommendations can reasonably be suggested. They are grounded directly in the consultation feedback from clients, carers, professionals and face-to-face engagement, and are framed to be a summary of the feedback rather than operationally prescriptive.
Where appropriate, they balance financial realities with statutory duties, equality considerations and long-term preventative value. It is acknowledged that there will be budget and staffing constraints and other limiting factors that may prevent these recommendations from being taken forward and implemented.

The recommendations are presented as an ambition for the future and readers are asked to recognise the council's budget situation (like many local authorities across the UK) and the financial emergency announced in September 2025, do not form the economic conditions necessary for significant service investment. Despite this, the recommendations can form ambitions should funding and other resources increase in future.

1. Retain and prioritise specialist provision where needs cannot be met elsewhere

The consultation demonstrates that some services—particularly Helena Lane for older people with high support needs and Aquamira for people with profound and complex disabilities—are perceived as specialist, non-interchangeable provision. Respondents consistently emphasised that voluntary, community or more generic day opportunities cannot safely or realistically meet the needs of these groups.

It is therefore recommended that decisions explicitly distinguish between *specialist* and *non-specialist* provision and avoid assumptions that all day opportunities can be replaced by community-based alternatives.

Possible Measures:

- Proportion of service users with *complex/profound needs* remaining in specialist settings.
- Number of placements identified as requiring specialist environments following review.
- Evidence from care reviews that assessed needs are being met post-decision.
- Number of safeguarding concerns or incidents relating to inappropriate placement.

2. Recognise and embed the preventative value of day services in decision-making

Respondents consistently described day centres as preventative services that maintain independence, safeguard dignity, reduce isolation, support carers and delay the need for residential or higher-cost care.

It is recommended that cost avoidance and system-wide impacts on health, social care

and carers, are included within the considerations made by Councillors as part of decision making, rather than focusing solely on short-term savings from service reduction or closure.

Possible Measures:

- Assessment of the delay/prevention of residential or increased care packages.
- Assessment of the stability of carer arrangements over time.
- Qualitative evidence from carers on ability to continue caring.
- Where possible ensure financial decision making takes into account prevention and cost-avoidance and the cost increases that could be incurred from service loss.

3. Continue to embed equality, rurality and accessibility considerations into future work

Significant concerns were raised about rural access, transport barriers and place-based inequality, particularly in South Shropshire. Many respondents indicated that increased travel distances would result in reduced attendance or withdrawal from services altogether.

It is recommended that equality and health impact assessments are updated and the work already undertaken is built on to explicitly reflect transport, rurality, disability-related fatigue, and the cumulative impact on carers, ensuring that alternative provision is genuinely accessible in practice.

Possible Measures:

- Average travel time before and after service change (by geography)
- Attendance rates post-change, particularly in rural areas
- Proportion of service users withdrawing due to transport or distance
- ESIHIA actions reviewed with evidence from the consultation findings.

4. Protect dignity, personal care and sensory support as core service elements

Across the consultation, dignity-related services—such as assisted bathing, personal care, space for sensory regulation, quiet environments and specialist equipment—were repeatedly identified as essential.

Any service redesign or relocation should be guided by the principle that these elements are **core requirements**.

Possible Measures:

- More detailed assessment of future access to:
    - Assisted bathing
    - Personal care
    - Quiet/sensory spaces
- Service user/carer feedback on dignity and wellbeing.

5. Consider the feedback concerning lack of promotion, referrals and transport

Many respondents challenged the assumption that low attendance reflects low demand, citing reduced referrals, lack of promotion, staffing constraints and the removal of

transport as contributory factors.

It is recommended that the Council considers this impact prior to decision making because these factors may be contributing to bias within the financial assessments undertaken to date.

Possible Measures:

- Referral numbers over time
- Attendance and occupancy rates
- Evidence of:
    - Referral pathways
    - Active promotion/signposting
    - Transport availability or mitigation
- Comparison of demand before and after promotion changes.

6. Take a differentiated approach to independence, employment and volunteering

While the Council's strategic direction towards independence, volunteering and employment was understood, respondents stressed that these outcomes are **not appropriate or achievable for all service users**, particularly older people and those with profound or complex needs.

It is recommended that future service models adopt a differentiated, needs-led approach that avoids one-size-fits-all expectations and ensures aspirations around employment and volunteering are realistic, person-centred and supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Possible Measures:

- Presence of **individualised outcomes** in care plans (not generic employment goals)
- Proportion of service users with:
    - Social / wellbeing outcomes
    - Independence outcomes
    - Employment/volunteering *only where appropriate*
- Feedback indicating appropriate expectations.

7. Ensure meaningful co-production and transition planning

Across surveys and engagement sessions, respondents called for genuine co-production, clear communication and careful transition planning, particularly where change is unavoidable.

It is recommended that engagement continues with service users, carers and frontline professionals in relation to final decisions and any implementation plans, with clear reassurance around continuity of care, familiar staff, routines and peer groups if the decisions made mean change will be implemented.

Possible Measures:

- Number of service users/carers involved in any transition planning.

- Evidence of individual transition plans where services change.
- Retention of:
    - Staff continuity
    - Peer groups
    - Familiar routines
- Post-transition feedback on how well any agreed change was managed.

6 Summary and Conclusion

This consultation has highlighted the strong value placed on Shropshire Council's in-house day centres by people who use the services, their carers and families, and a wide range of professionals and stakeholders. Across all engagement routes—online surveys, face-to-face sessions, emails and letters—respondents consistently described day centres as essential provision that supports dignity, wellbeing, social inclusion and independence, while also providing vital respite for carers. The findings show that, for many individuals with complex, profound or age-related needs, these services are not discretionary or easily replaceable but form a critical part of their care and support arrangements.

Feedback on the proposals relating to Helena Lane and Aquamira demonstrated high levels of concern about the potential impacts of closure or relocation. For Helena Lane, respondents overwhelmingly opposed the proposed closure, citing its role as the only council-run day centre for older people in South Shropshire and emphasising the importance of its specialist facilities, accessible environment and local availability. For Aquamira, opposition was strongly linked to the proposed loss of the hydrotherapy pool and the specialist, calm environment that respondents felt was essential for people with profound and multiple disabilities. Across both proposals, respondents repeatedly questioned whether alternative provision could realistically meet assessed needs, particularly in relation to personal care, sensory support, medical needs, transport and travel distances.

A consistent theme throughout the consultation was the preventative value of day services. Respondents described how current provision helps to maintain physical and mental health, reduce isolation, support carers to continue in their caring roles, and delay or avoid the need for more intensive or residential care. Many participants expressed concern that changes leading to reduced access or withdrawal of services could result in deterioration in wellbeing, increased pressure on families, and greater long-term demand on health and social care services. These concerns were reinforced by professionals, who highlighted risks associated with disruption to routine, loss of specialist environments and limited availability of suitable alternatives, particularly for highly vulnerable groups.

The consultation also surfaced wider issues relating to equality, rurality and trust in decision-making. Respondents frequently raised place-based concerns, with a strong perception that rural and south Shropshire communities experience disproportionate impacts from service reductions. Transport, distance and accessibility were repeatedly identified as barriers that could result in effective loss of provision, even where alternatives exist in theory. Alongside this, many respondents challenged assumptions that low attendance reflects lack of need, pointing instead to reduced referrals, limited promotion, staffing constraints and loss of transport as contributory factors.

Overall, the feedback demonstrates strong resistance to a one-size-fits-all approach and highlights the need to recognise the diversity of needs across different user groups. While there was some support for modernisation and reform, this was conditional on changes being realistic, needs-led and co-produced, with safeguards in place to protect specialist provision, continuity of care and dignity. The consultation provides a clear evidence base to inform decision-making, emphasising that any future changes should carefully balance

financial pressures with statutory duties, equality considerations and the long-term preventative role of day services within Shropshire's wider health and care system.

Many thanks are extended to all the respondents for their thorough and well-considered responses.

April 2026

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Shropshire Council Lead Service Area: Adult Services

Day Centres Consultation April 2026
Executive Summary: Consultation Feedback Report

This report summarizes consultation feedback on proposed changes to Shropshire Council in-house day centre provision. A full report of all consultation findings is available.

1. Context and scope

In-house day centre provision is discretionary (non-statutory) but contributes to prevention, independence, social inclusion and respite for carers. Following a declared financial emergency (September 2025), the Council is reassessing both statutory and discretionary services to manage costs and value for money.

439 people access day centres across 29 facilities supporting people with learning disabilities; 178 people use Shropshire Council in-house day services across eight in-house centres plus one voluntary service.

The consultation ran from the 29th January 2026 to 26th March 2026. The proposals consulted on were:

- **Proposal 1:** Close the day centre service at Helena Lane (building retained for other uses).
- **Proposal 2:** Transfer Aquamira day centre services to Abbots Wood or a similar alternative; close the hydrotherapy pool; offer alternative support where appropriate.
- **Proposal 3:** Explore wider reshaping/modernisation of day centre support towards more flexible, person-centred pathways (including employment, supported employment and volunteering, where appropriate).

The financial case presented within the consultation included estimated savings of ~£222,380 per year. The reported cost per person per day at Aquamira is £211 and at Helena Lane £244, with an average benchmark from available data cited at £170. The review prior to consultation identified that 23 people would be directly affected by the two closure proposals.

The consultation sought to involve as many people as possible to obtain community feedback using online surveys; written submissions (emails/letters); and by holding face-to-face feedback sessions.

2. Overall engagement and response

- **Clients and carers survey:** 53 responses. Where respondent type was provided, most responses were from carers/family members (reported as 77% of those answering that question).
- **Professionals and stakeholders survey:** 24 online responses, with respondents largely connected to Shropshire Council day opportunities and related services.

- **Written submissions:** 14 emails and letters were received (the full report summarises themes and ensures personal details are redacted).
- **Face-to-face engagement:** 11 engagement sessions were held to gather qualitative feedback, with the report noting a substantial focus on Aquamira as feedback obtained in these discussions.
- **Overall sentiment:** Feedback from clients and carers shows strong opposition to both Proposal 1 (Helena Lane closure) and Proposal 2 (Aquamira transfer and hydrotherapy closure). Professionals/stakeholders are more mixed, with many recognising financial pressures but raising material concerns about suitability, safeguarding and the availability of alternatives.

3. Key findings – clients and carers

3.1 Proposal 1 – **Helena Lane** (closure of the day centre service and transfer to another location).

Among those responding in relation to Helena Lane, the report indicates most respondents feel they would be negatively affected, and a large majority say they would be affected “a lot”. A clear majority of respondents oppose the proposal to close Helena Lane (with 90% opposition among those answering the support/oppose question). The reasons for concerns are set out within the full report and include:

- **Travel and rural access:** Respondents commonly describe alternative provision as difficult to access due to rurality, limited transport, fatigue/mobility issues, and the risk that longer journeys would reduce attendance and erode respite time.
- **Dignity, personal care, and wellbeing:** Repeated emphasis is placed on the importance of on-site support for people (including bathing, meals, supervision, and a safe environment), viewed as not replicable through informal community services. Community services are viewed as inadequate replacements because they lack specialist equipment and skills to meet the needs of service users.
- **Carer respite and sustainability of home care:** Helena Lane is described as a “lifeline” that enables carers to continue caring; respondents warn that closure would increase carer burnout and may accelerate need for higher-cost care.
- **Perceived ‘managed decline’:** Several comments argue that attendance has fallen due to reduced referrals, transport changes, staffing constraints and limited promotion—rather than reduced need—leading to calls for better utilisation rather than closure.
- **Equity and place-based concerns:** A recurring theme is that South Shropshire (and Ludlow) would be disproportionately impacted compared with Shrewsbury, raising trust and fairness issues.

3.2 Proposal 2 – **Aquamira** (transfer to Abbots Wood; hydrotherapy pool closure)

Respondents commonly report they (or the person they care for) would be negatively affected by the proporal, and t an overwhelming majority oppose the Aquamira proposal (95% opposition). Reasons given within the comments and analysis set out in the full report include:

- **Hydrotherapy as a critical issue:** A subset of respondents specifically identified use of the hydrotherapy pool as an essential service. Across comments, hydrotherapy is consistently framed as necessary for pain relief, mobility and mental wellbeing. Respondents emphasize there are limited local alternatives.
- **Specialist environment and sensory needs:** Aquamira is repeatedly described as quieter and more suitable for people with profound or complex needs (including sensory regulation and the need for predictable, low-stimulus environments). Respondents express concern that Abbots Wood may be busier/noisier and therefore less suitable. Feedback highlights that the Abbots Wood service is not the same type of service as Aquamira and designed to meet the needs of a different client group.
- **Accessibility and logistics:** Parking, layout, equipment, and the ability to deliver personal care and specialist support are cited as factors that must be preserved if any transfer occurs.
- **Preventative value and cost avoidance:** Many respondents argue that removing hydrotherapy and/or changing provision could worsen health and increase reliance on NHS and social care, undermining long-term value for money even if short-term savings are achieved.
- **Alternative suggestions:** Common suggestions include commissioning/ partnering to keep hydrotherapy running, mothballing the pool rather than permanent closure, or exploring shared-use/rental models to generate income.

4. Key findings – professionals and stakeholders

Responses were largely linked to Shropshire Council day opportunities and related professional roles, alongside a small number of external stakeholders (e.g. health and rehabilitation organisations). When considering the impact of day services, responses suggest stronger confidence in effectiveness for health promotion, emotional support and assessment/support planning, with more neutral/negative views on independence skills, volunteering and employment pathways. The professional/stakeholder survey shows a split between support, opposition and “don’t know” for both Helena Lane and Aquamira proposals.

- **Hydrotherapy and specialist provision:** Among professionals, hydrotherapy is a central theme, with some professionals emphasising its evidenced benefits and limited alternatives in the wider-area, while others emphasise operational sustainability, staffing burden and cost.
- **Suitability and safeguarding risks at alternative sites:** Concerns include managing absconding risk, protecting vulnerable people in mixed environments, maintaining access to quiet/sensory spaces, and ensuring specialist equipment and care routines can be safely delivered. The professionals comments show concern about viable alternative locations for the service.
- **Rural access and lack of alternatives (Helena Lane):** Professionals echo concerns about limited local alternatives for older people’s day services in South Shropshire if Helena Lane were closed, and the impact of transport barriers meaning service users and their carers may be left without support.

- **Preference for ‘middle-ground’ solutions:** Many respondents call for options beyond closure vs. retention—e.g. repurposing, shared use, partnerships, rental income, and targeted redesign focused on person-centred pathways.

5. Key themes from face-to-face engagement

The letters to service users and their carers/families impacted by the proposals and the offer of discussion sessions was an important part of the consultation. This enabled less structured feedback to obtain a more in-depth understanding of concerns. The key themes from verbal feedback included:

- **Continuity and emotional safety:** Strong preference for stability of routines, staff and peer groups, especially for people with dementia, sensory sensitivity, visual impairment and profound/multiple learning disabilities.
- **Environment and sensory load:** Aquamira is repeatedly valued for being calm and predictable; Abbots Wood is perceived as potentially busier/noisier, which some feel could reduce engagement or increase distress.
- **‘Lift and shift’ preference if relocation proceeds:** Where change is unavoidable, participants emphasise keeping staff teams and service-user groupings together, and replicating key environmental features (quiet spaces, sensory equipment, safe layouts).

6. Decision implications and risks to consider

Any consultation which may lead to service change, service reduction or closure results in complex decision making and the consultation helps to ensure that all views are considered. The key points for consideration in the decision include:

- **Equality and inclusion:** Feedback highlights potential disproportionate impacts on older people, disabled people and rural communities. The Equality and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment can be updated prior to decision-making to ensure the it evidences the feedback and how equality impacts have been considered and mitigated.
- **Meeting assessed needs:** While in-house provision is discretionary, the Council must ensure Care Act assessed needs (and carers’ needs where applicable) continue to be met through suitable alternatives.
- **Clinical and safeguarding considerations:** For people with complex health needs, changes in environment and provision may introduce risks (e.g., safe personal care, medication routines, PEG feeding and specialist equipment; absconding risk; vulnerability in mixed settings).
- **Carer sustainability and downstream demand:** A consistent risk is increased carer burden, potential breakdown of informal care, and escalation into more intensive (and costly) services.
- **Transport and travel time:** Travel feasibility is a practical determinant of whether alternatives are genuinely accessible, particularly in rural South Shropshire; this affects attendance, respite value, and equality of access.

- **Hydrotherapy pathway risk:** If hydrotherapy provision is removed, the Council should anticipate and plan for impacts on mobility/pain management and the availability/cost of alternative provision.
- **Short-term savings vs. long-term value:** The consultation feedback reveals tension between immediate savings and perceived preventative value. A transparent articulation of the financial model (including any unavoidable fixed costs and transition costs) may be important when communicating the result of decision making, dependent on outcome.
- **Trust and legitimacy:** The 'managed decline' narrative and place-based equity concerns indicate a reputational risk given there is a perception among some respondents that decisions are predetermined or unfair.

7. Options linked to the consultation feedback

- **Option A – Proceed as proposed** (close Helena Lane day service; transfer Aquamira to Abbots Wood; close hydrotherapy), with a robust mitigation package covering individual reassessments, transition planning and transport.

- **Option B – Modify the proposals** to address high-risk elements raised in feedback, for example:
    - Retain or replace **hydrotherapy** via commissioning, partnership/shared-use, time-limited pilots, or alternative local access arrangements.
    - Create a **quiet/specialist provision** within the receiving site (or alternative site) for people with profound/complex needs, with appropriate staffing and equipment.
    - Explore partial repurposing (e.g. close/mothball the pool while maintaining the building/service functions, or vice versa), where this materially changes net savings and risk.

- **Option C – Pause/phase implementation** to test feasibility of alternatives and protect continuity (e.g. exploration of rental/partnership income; phased moves with 'lift and shift' staffing; piloting revised models).

- **Common mitigations referenced within feedback** (relevant for whichever option is chosen):
    - Individual transition plans co-produced with service users and carers.
    - Transport impact assessment and funded travel solutions to avoid eroding respite via travel time.
    - A request to maintain continuity of staff and peer groups wherever possible; prepare receiving environments to reduce sensory overload.
    - A request to offer transparent publication of the financial case, including transition costs, fixed/contracted costs, and how savings are calculated taking into account loss of preventative support can increase needs for other services.
    - Clear communication and referral pathways for remaining or alternative provision.

The full consultation report, along with this executive summary of the findings, will be made available for officer leads and Councillors to support formal decision making.

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Helena Lane Business Case – May 2026

1. Executive summary

Purpose

In the context of severe financial pressures and the underutilisation of Helena Lane Day Service in Ludlow, it is necessary to determine the next steps for the service, considering Best Value duties, statutory responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 (including prevention and support for carers), the Public Sector Equality Duty, and consultation requirements.

Current position

- Helena Lane provides specialist older people's day support, including meaningful activity, respite for unpaid carers, personal care and assisted bathing.
- The service has reduced over time to half-day provision, three days per week, with council-funded transport withdrawn and staffing capacity reduced.
- Utilisation is very low, creating a mismatch

Options considered

- Option 1: Close the service.
- Option 2: Maintain the current reduced service (status quo).
- Option 3: Stabilise and redesign the service to improve access and utilisation.

Financial implications (headline)

- Forecast 2026/27 running cost: £194,320 (excluding building costs).
- Forecast income: £24,582
- Net cost: £169,738

At May 2026 utilisation levels, the average cost per attendance day is high; however, improved utilisation would reduce the average unit cost. Closure may not eliminate all costs and may shift demand and cost pressures elsewhere through carer breakdown and crisis escalation.

Key risks and equality considerations

- An Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been completed.
- Closure carries higher legal and reputational risk given the strength of consultation opposition.
- Potential disproportionate impacts on people with dementia and limited mobility, unpaid carers, and residents facing rural transport barriers.

Commented [RH1]: should this include a reference to eeh equality impact assessment

Next steps / review

Option 1 (closure) is recommended as the option most likely to secure Best Value when all relevant factors are considered in the round. The recommendation is not based on cost alone. In determining the future of Helena Lane, the Council must have regard to severe financial constraints, but also to its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, including prevention and support for carers, the Public Sector Equality Duty, consultation requirements, and the need to ensure that eligible needs continue to be met lawfully and proportionately. The current model has sustained low utilisation and a high unit cost, but closure may not remove all costs and may give

rise to displaced demand and expenditure elsewhere, including through carer breakdown, crisis responses, or increased reliance on higher-cost care arrangements. The Council will continue to meet eligible needs through person-centred reassessment and managed transition planning, including support to access alternative provision such as direct payments, personal assistants and community services, together with tailored mitigation for people with dementia, limited mobility and rural transport barriers. Consultation responses showed strong opposition to closure, particularly regarding respite for unpaid carers, and the lack of a like-for-like alternative in Ludlow.

2. Case for change

Helena Lane Day Service is an older people's day service in Ludlow providing structured day support, social interaction and meaningful activity, personal care, including assisted bathing, respite for carers. Over recent years, to manage costs in line with utilisation, the service has reduced to part day provision for three-days a week, alongside the removal of council funded transport and reduced staffing capacity. The service is currently operating at very low utilisation. This has created a mismatch between the fixed and semi-fixed costs of maintaining an in-house service model and the number of people able to access and benefit from the service.

The Council must decide whether to close the service as proposed, maintain the current model, or determine whether their could be a third option to ensure the service is financially viable as well as meeting need. The decision is required in the context of severe financial pressures and Best Value duties, while also meeting statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 (prevention and support for carers), and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and consultation law.

Key drivers and objectives are to:

- ensure any in-house day provision delivers value for money and is sustainable within the Council's financial constraints;
- maintain access to specialist support (including assisted bathing and dementia-specific supervision) where alternative provision may not be suitable;
- protect carers' wellbeing and maximise preventative impact (avoiding or delaying higher-cost packages and admissions where possible);
- address rural access barriers and ensure equality impacts are consciously considered and, where possible, mitigated;
- provide Cabinet with a defensible decision record that demonstrates consideration of realistic options (including the status quo) and consultation evidence.

If no change is made, the current reduced model is likely to continue to experience low utilisation and poor financial performance, resulting in repeated short-term decisions and renewed closure proposals. This would prolong uncertainty for service users, carers and staff, while increasing the risk that access barriers (particularly transport and rurality) continue to suppress attendance and that avoidable pressures emerge elsewhere in the system through carer breakdown and crisis escalation.

3. Background and strategic context

Strategic drivers

The January 2026 Cabinet report set out the need to review inhouse provision in the context of severe financial pressures and a declared financial emergency, Best Value duties under the Local Government Act 1999, and the need to ensure services remain effective, affordable, and aligned with future demand. Helena Lane Day Service was included within that review as an older people's day service with declining attendance and high costs.

Local demographics and potential demand for day services

Using the Shropshire Profile Shropshire's profile | Shropshire Council which draws data from the Census 2021 there were 82,000 people aged over 65 accounting for 25.3% of the population. This is 6.9% higher than England's national average. The number of people aged over 85 was 10.8% of the population. The ONS (Office for National Statistics) estimates that by 2032, 29% of the population in Shropshire are projected to be aged 65 years or over. Subnational population projections for England - Office for National Statistics.

The 2021 Census data reports that Ludlow North, Ludlow East, Ludlow South and Clee makes up 15,971 (4.93%) of the population of Shropshire. Of those people, 5278 (33.8%) were over 65. The 2022 based sub-national population projections Subnational population projections for England - Office for National Statistics, which estimates that the growth in population of people aged over 65 will likely grow by 51% by 2047.

The number of registered cases of people registered with Dementia aged over 65 varies month on month, but the mean number taken over a six-month period between Sept 2025 and Feb 2026 is 3643 people. Using the population data from the last Census would suggest that this accounts 1.13% of the population. Number of registered cases of dementia for people aged 65 and over in Shropshire | LG Inform The Alzheimer's society suggest that only 66% of people living with Dementia have a diagnosis and believe that 1 in 11 (9.09%) people aged over 65 have Dementia with prevalence rising to 1 in 6 (16.7%) for those over 80. How many people have dementia in the UK? | Alzheimer's Society. Applying this to the catchment area shown above, it would suggest that there are approximately 480 people living with Dementia within this locality.

NHS England data also suggest that 1 in 3 people will Care for someone with Dementia in their Lifetime. NHS England » Dementia

Equality analysis should be explicit that the proposal may have particular impacts on older people with dementia, older people experiencing physical frailty or mobility impairment, unpaid carers, and people living in rural areas with limited transport options. For people with dementia, the potential issues include disruption to established routine, anxiety associated with change, reduced access to specialist supervision and structured activity, and the loss of a familiar setting that may currently help sustain wellbeing and delay deterioration. For people with physical frailty or mobility impairment, the relevant considerations include whether alternative provision is physically accessible in practice, whether travel times and journeys are tolerable, whether personal care or bathing needs can be met safely and with dignity, and whether the absence of local provision would create a real barrier to access rather than a merely theoretical alternative. For unpaid carers, the likely equality impacts and Care Act implications include the possible loss of predictable respite, increased caring intensity, and heightened risk of carer stress or breakdown. Rurality is also material: where public transport is limited and journeys to alternative provision are

lengthy, closure may affect people in South Shropshire more severely than those in less rural parts of the county. These matters do not in themselves determine the outcome, but they must be identified with precision, evidenced where possible, and addressed through the Council's equality impact analysis and mitigation planning.

Demand implications

Taken together, this data does not demonstrate current demand equals 'x' day service places needed. However, it does suggest that there is an underlying need-base for older people's support in this area; that it is large; and that it's growing. Low utilisation cannot safely be relied upon as evidence of low demand for the service and there is a material cohort of older people (particularly with dementia) who are very likely under-represented in current service specific information. However, it should be noted that while Helena Lane Day Service does currently support some people with dementia, this is not a dementia specific service.

Commented [CC644682]: Do you mean "need"?

Commented [SC2291243R2]: No, I did mean demand for the service.

Census and ONS age data suggests it shouldn't be assumed that because fewer people are using the service, fewer people need it. Shropshire has a significantly higher older population than the rest of England that is not marginal, whilst the locality around Ludlow is on average generally older. The absolute number of people aged 65 and over is high and rising and the ONS projections show this trend will intensify, not reverse. However, it does not necessarily mean that any of those people will need Helena Lane Day Services or that this is high demand for the specific service such as a traditional day service in this area.

The Dementia prevalence data suggests that official systems are under-counting dementia meaning that the Council's "known demand" is not the same as actual demand. A substantial cohort of people with dementia exist outside routine service and assessment pathways. Applying prevalence rates to the Ludlow and surrounds yields hundreds of people likely living with dementia, but many are not visible. However, this does not necessarily mean that those 480 people would attend Helena Lane, or that they would choose an in-house day service over accessing community-based services with a personal assistant or support worker.

Catchment level analysis suggests that South Shropshire is not demographically "typical" and removing a specialist service here could have a greater impact than the same decision elsewhere in Shropshire.

Carer statistics suggest that Dementia demand has secondary demand effects. For every person with dementia, there is likely at least one carer whose wellbeing is implicated. For some people, services like Helena Lane will act as sustaining infrastructure, not just individual support. However, this does not necessarily indicate that carers need this particular service or that the Helena Lane Day Service is cost effective.

Overall, there is a large, growing, and partially hidden population of older people, particularly people with dementia in this area. In that context, low utilisation of a constrained service cannot safely be relied upon as evidence that a service like Helena Lane Day Service is no longer needed.

Demand vs Utilisation

In considering the future of Helena Lane Day Service, it is important to distinguish carefully between the utilisation of the service and underlying demographic demand for older people's day support in this area. These are not necessarily the same thing.

Recent utilisation information shows reduced attendance at Helena Lane over a prolonged period. However, consultation feedback and supporting evidence indicate that current utilisation levels cannot be interpreted in isolation as a proxy for lack of demand.

Over a period of years, Helena Lane has experienced a series of operational changes, including, a reduction in the number of operating days, a reduction from full-day to half-day provision, withdrawal of council-funded transport, reduced staffing capacity which has limited the number of people who can attend, a temporary relocation to alternative premises before returning to Helena Lane.

While these changes were made to manage the reduced utilisation of the day service, these changes could have affected the accessibility, capacity and visibility of the service. In that context, lower attendance levels may reflect constrained supply and discouraged access, rather than reduced need. Consultation responses further indicate that some existing service users have requested additional sessions but were unable to access them, staffing and capacity constraints have limited new admissions and the inconsistency of awareness of the service. This evidence suggests that there could be a presence of unmet and latent demand, which is not captured through attendance data alone.

In contrast to the NHS, Adult Social Care is not provided free at the point of delivery. Demographic data suggests an increasing demand for services among older adults, yet individuals deemed financially capable are expected to fund their own care. As a result, some may opt not to set aside funds for future needs or may pursue alternative forms of support, which could also explain the underutilisation of services such as Helena Lane Day Service.

Demand for Helena Lane Day Service must also be understood in relation to carer wellbeing and sustainability. Consultation material, supported by wider local carer survey data, demonstrates that respite provided by the day service is an essential enabler of continued caring at home. For many carers, often older partners or family members, access to a predictable period of specialist day support is the difference between coping and crisis.

Where carer support is withdrawn, demand does not disappear; rather, it may re-emerge elsewhere through carer breakdown, crisis intervention, or earlier admission to residential or nursing care. Equally, the Council must recognise that current utilisation may in part reflect the cumulative effect of historic service changes, including reduced operating days, shorter sessions, withdrawal of transport, reduced staffing capacity and periods of service disruption. It would therefore be unsafe to treat current attendance figures as a complete or neutral measure of underlying need.

However, that point does not by itself establish that restoring or expanding Helena Lane would now produce a viable and sustainable service model. While there is credible evidence of unmet or latent need, there is not presently sufficient evidence to demonstrate the likely scale, frequency or affordability of future demand for this specific in-house model, nor that increased provision would attract and retain enough attendance to secure Best Value within a reasonable period. In particular, there is no developed and costed proposal showing that additional operating days, longer sessions, transport restoration or wider reopening would be deliverable, financially sustainable and capable of meeting need more effectively than alternative forms of support. The demand/utilisation distinction is therefore an important caution in interpreting the data, but it does

not, on the current evidence, displace the overall conclusion that the Council must assess the future of the service on the basis of viability, sustainability and lawful discharge of its statutory duties in the round.

Accordingly, utilisation data should be considered in its full context, alongside demographic evidence, consultation feedback, equality impacts, carers' wellbeing and the Council's statutory duties. A balanced assessment requires both acknowledgment that historic changes may have suppressed attendance and recognition that this does not, without further evidence, provide a sufficient basis for concluding that restoration or expansion of the service would now be viable, proportionate or sustainable.

Service overview

Helena Lane Day Centre is a building-based day care service for up to 20 older people per day with lower-level need, through offering group activities and social support intended to reduce isolation, support wellbeing and provide respite for unpaid carers. Some people will also access additional activities such as bathing. The model is rooted in traditional day care rather than community based activity. The service operates over 3 days for 4 hours a day. Transport is no longer offered as part of the service.

There are currently five people accessing the service over the 3 days, albeit there was 8 at the start of the consultation. A decision was taken to freeze new admissions during consultation to reduce any potential impact. Mostly due to the closure of another day service locally, there is now a small waiting list of 3 people, but there is no guarantee that these people will attend. The number of service users has decreased significantly in recent years, as individuals have chosen alternative services, or more personalised or community-based support arrangements, or decided to not access services due to their personal financial circumstances.

Commented [CC644684]: Consultation?

While the demographic forecasts do suggest that there may be more people now requiring support then before, there has been an observed downward trend in the utilisation of Helena Lane Day Service. There is nothing to suggest that we should be expecting a resurgence in interest for a traditional day centre provision for older people. 5 individuals use the service over the 3 half days, totalling 10 half days of service in total on average. Most individuals now pay privately for the service at fee of £66.00 per half day. The fee is calculated by accumulating the costs of delivering the support divided by the number of potential attendees each day of operation. This is reviewed annually and is significantly less than the average cost of delivering the service.

It is important to distinguish between individuals who are self-funding and those whose needs are met or arranged by the Council. Self-funders are exercising choice within the local care market and are responsible for meeting the full cost of their care. While some currently choose to access Helena Lane, this does not create an ongoing obligation on the Council to continue to provide that service or to maintain any particular facility as the means by which personal care or hygiene needs are addressed. Any future duty on the Council would arise only following assessment and determination of eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, and those needs may then be met in different lawful ways depending on the person's circumstances.

Commented [RH5]: do we need to refernce the legislation around self funding vs an assessed contribution?

Day	Attendees
Monday	0
Tuesday	4 (3 self-funders)
Wednesday	2 (1 self-funder)

Thursday	4 (4 self-funders)
Friday	0

Current attendance:

Waiting list:

- 3 new people – although this is not guaranteed, nor do we know the volume of days requested.

Current staffing levels:

- 0.03 FTE Domestic Assistant
- 1.20 FTE Day Service Workers
- 0.81 Senior Support Worker
- 0.50 FTE Locality Lead

A minimum of three staff members will be scheduled to cover each day. It is important to acknowledge that any staff absences may significantly affect both safety and the quality of service delivery.

Alternative Provision Options

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to assess needs where requested, or where it appears that an adult may have needs for care and support, and to meet eligible needs where those needs meet the national eligibility criteria. The Act does not require local authorities to provide or maintain any particular service model, including in-house provision.

A number of current Helena Lane attendees are self-funders. This means they have chosen to purchase services privately and are not, by virtue of that status alone, entitled to Council-funded or subsidised provision. Where a self-funder requests an assessment, or where needs appear to arise, the Council retains a duty to assess and, if eligible needs are identified, to ensure those needs are met. However, this duty relates to the meeting of need, not the continuation of a specific service or provider.

In addition, the Council has a wider market-shaping duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure a diverse, sustainable and high-quality local care market. This includes facilitating access to a range of provision across the independent, voluntary and community sectors, rather than maintaining a particular in-house service where this does not represent Best Value.

Where, following assessment or reassessment, a person appears to have needs relating to personal care, hygiene, dignity or supervision, the Council must consider how those needs are to be met lawfully and appropriately in light of the individual's circumstances. Those needs may be met through a range of lawful mechanisms, including direct payments where appropriate, personal assistants or support workers, commissioned care and support, supported access to community opportunities, or other personalised arrangements. The legal duty is to meet eligible needs, not to provide bathing, personal care or day support in a particular building, through a particular in-house service, or in any single prescribed format. These mechanisms are not necessarily like-for-like replacements for Helena Lane itself; rather, they are different ways in which the Council may secure the meeting of eligible needs in a person-centred and proportionate way.

The nearest building-based day service of a more comparable type is in Church Stretton. There are no other local day centres in Ludlow itself. Local community and voluntary sector opportunities, such as luncheon groups and other community activities, may be relevant for some people where they are suitable and where any necessary support is in place. However, it should not be assumed that people with dementia, significant physical frailty, mobility limitations, personal

care needs or a requirement for close supervision can simply attend ordinary community groups without support. For some individuals, access to community opportunities would only be practicable through additional arrangements such as a personal assistant, support worker, transport assistance, direct payment, or another tailored package of support. Community groups should therefore be understood as one possible component within a broader personalised care arrangement, not as a universal or direct substitute for a specialist day service.

4. Consultation Feedback Overview

Please see the Consultation feedback report for a more detail.

Commented [CC644686]: Please summarise here the options consulted upon.

The Consultation for Helena Lane Day Service-
On the 21-01-26, Cabinet were asked to:

> "(i) *agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the future of Helena Lane Day Service, including the potential option to close the service. New admissions should be paused during the consultation period to avoid further impact.*
>
> *(ii) agree public consultation for 8 weeks on the potential transfer of the Aquamira day service to the Abbots Wood site.*
>
> *(iii) endorse public engagement for 8 weeks on the reprovision of the remaining In-House Day Services Provision.*

It was agreed that following consultation, any final recommendations would be to cabinet for determination. The consultation ended on the 26-03-26 as planned. For the purpose of this business case, only point (i) is relevant.

How was the consultation supported?

All current service users were contacted directly about the consultation, rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels. Written letters were issued to ensure people without digital access were able to engage, including follow-up correspondence when the Cabinet timetable changed. Consultation documents were made available in Easy Read formats where appropriate, including easy read introductions and of the survey

People could engage with the consultation through multiple routes:

- Online surveys (separate surveys for clients/carers and for professionals).
- Written responses.
- One-to-one conversations, where requested.
- Meetings and discussions facilitated with councillors and officers, including locality-based engagement to reflect community concerns.

Officers confirmed that advocacy support was available to help individuals and families understand the consultation process and their options, particularly where people may have difficulty engaging independently. In addition, current attendees and, where relevant, their unpaid carers were formally advised in writing of their right to request a Care Act needs assessment, a carer's assessment and, where applicable, a financial assessment. A written audit trail is being maintained to record when those offers were made, to whom they were made, whether they were accepted, declined or already in place, and any follow-up actions required to support transition planning.

Participants were kept informed about progress, including changes to the Cabinet decision timetable, to avoid misinformation and anxiety where possible. Improving clarity where people struggled to understand what was, and was not, within the scope of the consultation.

Who responded

There were 27 responses specifically relating to Helena Lane from:

- People who use the service;
- Family members and unpaid carers;
- Staff and professionals with direct knowledge of the service;
- Local residents.

A significant proportion of respondents were carers of people with dementia or complex physical needs.

Overall sentiment and key themes

- Consultation responses relating to Helena Lane demonstrate clear and sustained opposition to closure. Among service users and carers who expressed a view on the proposal, the overwhelming majority opposed closure, with 90% of respondents who would be directly affected stating they would be affected “a lot”, not just marginally.
- Respondents consistently described Helena Lane as a “lifeline” enabling continued care at home, safeguarding dignity through assisted bathing, and preventing carer breakdown.
- Limited support for closure, generally linked to financial realism rather than perceived lack of need.
- Consistent concern that consultation options underestimated the impact on carers and rural accessibility.

Respondents repeatedly stated that:

- There is no comparable alternative day service for older people in Ludlow;
- Voluntary and community groups (e.g. social cafés) are not suitable substitutes for people requiring personal care, supervision, or dementia-specific support;
- Travel to Shrewsbury or Church Stretton would significantly erode respite time and, for some, be unmanageable.

Prevention and avoidance of higher cost care

Many carers described Helena Lane as the factor that:

- Enables them to continue caring at home;
- Prevents carer breakdown;
- Delays or avoids permanent residential or nursing care.
- Respondents explicitly questioned whether closing a preventative service would lead to greater long-term cost pressures elsewhere in Adult Social Care.

Importance of bathing and personal care facilities

Consultation responses repeatedly highlighted the practical importance of Helena Lane’s on-site assisted bathing and personal care facilities to some current users and carers, particularly in relation to dignity, hygiene and respite. That evidence is relevant to understanding the impact of closure and the nature of people’s needs. However, the legal issue for the Council is not whether bathing or personal care must continue to be provided at Helena Lane itself, but whether any assessed eligible needs relating to personal care and hygiene are properly identified and met through lawful, suitable and person-centred arrangements.

- Important to dignity and hygiene for some current users;
- Not readily replicated through many ordinary community alternatives without additional support or different arrangements;
- A significant reason why some families currently choose Helena Lane.

Commented [RH7]: can we say how many responses were received

Commented [LD8]: to me this reads really well and makes robust use of evidence. I have changed text alignment to ranged left for overall readability, and picked out a couple of sentences to be altered. These are in yellow.

Impact of historic service reduction

A consistent theme was that:

- Attendance declined after transport was withdrawn and operating hours reduced;
- Referrals were perceived to have slowed during earlier transformation phases;
- The service has not been actively promoted despite demographic demand in Ludlow.
- Respondents argued that current utilisation should not be treated as a neutral indicator of demand.

While perceptions were expressed that referral activity reduced over time, the Council does not rely on anecdotal accounts alone. The consultation evidence clearly indicates that current utilisation levels cannot be viewed in isolation from these operational constraints. It is important to note that current utilisation levels could reflect a service model shaped by earlier operational decisions, including reduced days, hours and transport availability. While those decisions were taken as operational measures at the time, their cumulative effect is relevant to the fairness and proportionality of any closure decision now proposed. Current demand data must therefore be interpreted with caution and in the context of the service's reduced accessibility.

Equality and rurality

Consultation responses raised specific equality concerns about the effect of closure on older people with dementia, older people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, unpaid carers, and residents of rural South Shropshire who face transport barriers. Consultees challenged any assumption that ordinary community groups, more distant day opportunities, or alternative support arrangements would be realistically accessible or suitable for everyone affected. In particular, respondents disputed whether people with dementia could safely and consistently use non-specialist provision, whether people with significant frailty or mobility limitations could tolerate longer journeys or access alternative venues without additional support, whether carers would experience any meaningful equivalent to the respite currently provided, and whether travel from rural areas to Church Stretton, Shrewsbury or other locations would be practicable in reality rather than merely in theory. The Council's position is that alternative arrangements may be suitable for some people, but suitability cannot be assumed in the abstract and must be determined through individual assessment, reassessment, carer's assessment, transition planning, and consideration of transport, supervision, personal care, cognition, dignity and rural access on a case-by-case basis.

5. Financial considerations

Running costs and income

It's important to note the difference between the fees and charges and the running costs of the service.

Fees and Charges

At present, fees and charges are calculated by dividing the total forecasted running costs of the service (excluding building costs in this at the moment) by the annual total number of potential days of attendees. This year this has seen a notable increase in the previous charge for Helena Lane users rising from £37.50 in 25/26 up to £66.00 for 26/27 per half day. This was a significant increase. However, our fee model reflects a standard unit cost approach. We take the total cost of delivering the service and allocate it across the available delivery capacity, first by dividing by the number of operating days, and then by the maximum daily capacity (not attendance level) of the service. For Helena Lane, this equates to 20 places per day.

Commented [RH9]: I think we need to say that this is a consistent them in the responses

Commented [SC22912410]: 5. Equality, legal and consultation considerations

Care Act 2014

Helena Lane contributes to the Council's duties to prevent, reduce and delay the development of needs for care and support, support carers to maintain their own wellbeing and provide proportionate, preventative services.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Consultation responses suggest a potential disproportionate impact on older people, people with dementia, and carers. Therefore, any decision must demonstrate active, informed consideration of these impacts, not reliance on generic mitigation.

Consultation law

Given the strength and specificity of feedback relating to Helena Lane, any decision must clearly show:

- How consultation responses have been conscientiously taken into account;
- Why the chosen option is justified despite opposition (if applicable);
- That decisions are not predetermined by financial assumptions alone.

In circumstances where a specific service used by a clearly identifiable group is proposed for closure, public law requires that consultation responses are not only considered, but are demonstrably capable of influencing the outcome. Where consultation evidence overwhelmingly indicates disproportionate impact and lack of local alternatives, decision-makers must be able to evidence why those factors are outweighed by other considerations.

The consultation responses, taken cumulatively, were a decisive factor in concluding that immediate closure would be disproportionate and that Cabinet should instead be asked to consider a stabilise-and-redesign option.

This means the current fee assumes full utilisation of capacity. If we were to cost the fee on the basis of actual attendance (i.e. lower utilisation), the cost per individual place would increase materially, as the same fixed cost base would be spread across fewer attendees. If fees were instead calculated based on the actual cost per attendee (i.e. reflecting the number of people who attend in practice rather than full capacity), the charge per person would be significantly higher.

With current utilisation, the forecast for a full year income from fees is £23,562. Forecast Income from food contribution is £1020. This brings a total forecast income to £24,582 per annum.

Budget Breakdown 26/27:

Type	Cost	Notes
Staffing cost	£162,240	Includes staff on-costs, such as NI, pension etc.
Building cost	£0	There are no accommodation costs incorporated into this budget as it sits within a larger council building.
Running cost other	£7,980	Food, cleaning materials etc.
Internal Market Recharges	£24,100	including internal recharges for business costs, finance, IT, HR , office accommodation
Total	**£194,320**	

The overall forecast cost of running the service for 26/27 is £194,320 (cost) - £24,582 (forecast income) = £169,738. Based on the budget figures the average cost of delivery per day per person is currently £332.82 per day, using the May 2026 utilisation level of 10 days of attendance per week for 51 weeks a year. It is important to note that this does not include any building costs.

Commented [SC22912411]: If this were included, the average cost would be significantly higher still. If attendance levels increased to 10 attendees each day and we assumed that they were all self-funders, the average cost of delivery would reduce to £89.24.

The current charge of £66.00 per half day, based on 20 people attending each day, is significantly below the current average cost of operating the service at present utilisation levels. As the majority of current attendees are self-funders, there is a material question as to whether the Council is, in practice, subsidising private care arrangements through an in-house service model whose income does not recover its true operating cost. That is a relevant Best Value consideration. However, the legal and financial analysis should not be reduced to a simple proposition that closure is justified because the service is expensive. Best Value requires a broader assessment of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in light of the Council's statutory duties, including duties under the Care Act 2014, the need to consider prevention and carers' wellbeing, equality impacts, and whether closure would create displaced or deferred costs elsewhere in the system. If attendance were to increase materially, average unit cost would reduce; conversely, if closure were to contribute to carer breakdown, crisis intervention, or earlier admission to residential or nursing care, some costs may reappear elsewhere.

Consultation respondents repeatedly questioned whether closure of the day service would deliver meaningful net savings, particularly where some fixed or corporate costs may remain irrespective of service operation. As demonstrated above, building costs have not been incorporated into the running-cost calculation set out in this report. The financial case for closure must therefore distinguish between costs that would genuinely cease, costs that may remain, and costs that may be displaced into other parts of the Adult Social Care system.

It is therefore necessary to consider not only whether closure would reduce immediate expenditure, but whether it would represent Best Value overall when the Council's statutory obligations, the preventative value of the service, the impact on carers, equality implications, and

the risk of increased demand elsewhere in the system are taken into account. Best Value is not necessarily the same as the lowest short-term cost.

Other factors affecting costs
The current fees and charges are not individualised based on level of need. The fees and charges are based on everyone having the same level of need and do not currently accurately reflect the costs of support for individuals. Where the council are able to claim full recovery costs from people who have been assessed as being able to self-fund their own care, this is relevant, as it would be disproportionately financially benefiting some individuals across Shropshire over others. For example, if someone with higher level needs attends the service with significant 1:1 needs), under the current charging structure, it reduces the number of attendees able to attend, increasing the overall daily cost.

6. Options appraisal

Option 1 – Close the Helena Lane day service (retain building for other use)

Description: Cease older people's day provision in Ludlow;

Advantages
- Removes a high-cost, low-utilisation in-house service model that is not currently operating at a sustainable scale.
- Contributes to Best Value by reducing expenditure on a service that is delivering limited throughput relative to its cost base.
- Provides a clearer and more sustainable strategic direction, rather than prolonging uncertainty through repeated short-term reviews of an increasingly fragile model.
- Reduces ongoing operational fragility, particularly where low staffing resilience and very small attendance levels create vulnerability in service continuity.
- Avoids investment in a model for which there is currently no evidenced and costed viability plan.
- Clarifies that the Council's duty is to assess and meet eligible needs, not to maintain a specific building-based service, which supports a more flexible and legally robust approach to meeting need.

Disadvantages / risks
- Loss of the only building-based older people's day service in Ludlow, with no like-for-like alternative locally.
- Risk of adverse impact on current attendees, particularly people with dementia, physical frailty, mobility impairment, or personal care needs, for whom alternative provision may not be practically equivalent or accessible.
- Risk of reduced respite for unpaid carers, with consequent pressure on carer wellbeing, sustainability of caring arrangements, and increased risk of carer breakdown without identified mitigation.
- Risk of displaced demand and cost pressures elsewhere in the system, including crisis intervention, emergency respite, and earlier admission to residential or nursing care.
- Transition risk, including distress, disruption to routine, disengagement from support, or gaps in care if reassessment and alternative arrangements are not implemented in a timely and person-centred way.
- Risk that anticipated savings are lower than expected, if some costs remain, transition costs arise, or needs reappear in other forms elsewhere in Adult Social Care.
- Impact on current self-funders, who may experience disruption to existing arrangements and difficulty identifying suitable alternative provision locally.

Potential mitigations

- Before implementation of any closure decision, each current attendee would be offered an individual Care Act assessment or reassessment. Where there is an unpaid carer who appears to have needs for support, a carer's assessment would be offered. Where relevant, a financial assessment would also be offered.
- Transition planning would need to be person-centred and should not assume that ordinary community provision is a like-for-like replacement for Helena Lane.
- Particular regard would need to be given to people with dementia, physical frailty, mobility impairment, personal care needs, and those affected by rural transport barriers.
- Alternative arrangements may include direct payments, personal assistants, commissioned care and support, supported access to community opportunities, transport support, or other lawful and suitable means of meeting eligible needs.

Option 2 – Maintain current reduced service (status quo)

Description: Continue limited provision with no material change.

Advantages:
- Avoids immediate disruption to existing attendees.
- No additional investment required.

Disadvantages / risks:
- Does not address low utilisation;
- Does not respond meaningfully to consultation feedback;
- Likely continued decline and repeat of closure debate.
- Continued high level average costs for care delivery

Mitigations:
- Advertisement of the service locally to encourage further participation.
- Review of staffing hours to enable more attendees.
- Review of fees and charges structure

Option 3 – Stabilise and redesign the Helena Lane Day Service

Description: Retain Helena Lane Day Service, with targeted redesign to aim to restore viability and maximise preventative value.

Core elements could include:
- Re-establishing reliable access (including transport solutions), although full costs recovery would apply;
- Reviewing the charges and fees on to reflect individual need.
- Reviewing operating hours and referral pathways;
- Actively promoting the service locally (GPs, social work teams, carers);
- Maximising use of bathing, respite and dementia-specific support;
- Exploring complementary use of the building that does not undermine the core service.

Advantages:
- Responds directly to consultation feedback;
- Supports carers
- Retains local provision;
- Reduces legal risk by demonstrating genuine consideration of alternatives.

Disadvantages / risks:

- There is no sufficiently developed or evidenced redesign proposal at this stage which credibly demonstrates how the present financial gap would be closed within a reasonable timeframe.
- The current attendee cohort appears to present with higher levels of need than the charging model assumes, including needs that can reduce the number of people who can safely be supported at any one time.
- If the service were re-modelled around a higher-needs cohort, the fee structure would likely need to increase materially to reflect the true cost of delivery, which raises a substantial affordability and marketability risk, particularly for self-funders.
- There is already evidence that the recent increase in fees has further reduced take-up, which limits confidence that further redesign based on higher charges would improve viability.
- Accordingly, while consultees suggested alternatives and redesign ideas, there is not presently a realistic evidential basis on which Cabinet could conclude that redesign would restore viability and Best Value within a reasonable period. There is also a risk that, if redesign were pursued without resolving these issues, the Council would defer rather than resolve the underlying decision and may need to return to Cabinet following further cost and instability.
- Savings are indirect and preventative rather than immediate. There is a risk that, if the redesign does not materially improve utilisation within the review period, Cabinet may need to reconsider the service's future, at which point further consultation may be required.

Mitigation:

- Before this option could properly be recommended, the Council would need a fully developed redesign proposal supported by evidence on demand, cost, staffing model, charging implications, likely take-up, transport/access arrangements, equality impact, and a credible implementation timetable.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

Option 1 (closure) is recommended as the option most likely to secure Best Value overall, but that recommendation is reached only after consideration of the relevant matters in the round rather than by treating closure as a foregone conclusion. The Council recognises that closure is likely to have material adverse impacts for some people and carers, particularly older people with dementia, older people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, unpaid carers relying on predictable respite, and people living in rural areas where transport barriers may limit practical access to alternatives. Those impacts have been considered alongside affordability, long-term sustainability, the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and the consultation evidence. The recommendation is not based on cost alone. Rather, it reflects the Council's view, on the current evidence, that the present model is not financially sustainable and that eligible needs can still be met lawfully and proportionately through other mechanisms, including person-centred assessment or reassessment, managed transition planning, and alternative lawful ways of meeting need where those are suitable to the individual. Option 3 has been considered carefully in light of consultation feedback, but it is not currently the preferred option because there is no evidenced redesign proposal which credibly demonstrates that viability could be restored within a reasonable timeframe. In particular, the present cohort appears to have higher levels of need than the historic pricing model assumes; a redesign built around those needs would be likely to require materially higher charges; and there is already evidence that recent fee increases have impacted further on take-up. In those circumstances, on the current evidence base, it is not possible to conclude that redesign would realistically close the

financial gap while remaining lawful, deliverable and proportionate. The recommendation further recognises that a proportion of current attendees are self-funders and clarifies that the Council is not under a duty to continue to provide a specific in-house service or to subsidise privately funded care arrangements.

The Council will continue to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014 through person-centred assessment or reassessment and managed transition planning. That may include, where appropriate to the individual, direct payments, personal assistants or support workers, supported access to community opportunities, commissioned services, transport support, or other personalised arrangements. These are different mechanisms by which eligible needs may be met lawfully; they are not necessarily like-for-like replacements for Helena Lane as a specialist building-based day service. Any implementation of closure should be conditional on completion, or formal offer and recording, of appropriate individual Care Act assessments, carer's assessments and, where relevant, financial assessments for affected current attendees.

Consultation responses showed strong opposition to closure, particularly regarding respite for unpaid carers, assisted bathing and the lack of a like-for-like alternative in Ludlow. These concerns will need to be addressed through timely assessments or reassessments, supported transition planning, and the development of individual care arrangements that are suitable to the person's level of need. Where a person appears to have needs relating to personal care, hygiene or bathing, those matters must be considered through assessment and may be met in different lawful ways depending on the individual's circumstances. Nothing in this report should be taken as guaranteeing continued access to any particular building-based facility or practical arrangement unless and until that has been specifically determined.

Officers recognise that the proposal may have material impacts for some individuals, particularly older people with dementia, older people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, unpaid carers relying on predictable respite, and people living in rural areas where transport barriers limit practical access to alternatives. Where consultation responses challenge assumptions made in the equality analysis, those points should be expressly addressed by either accepting and correcting the analysis or by explaining clearly, with reasons, why the Council takes a different view. Any mitigation must therefore be tailored, evidence-based and case specific as part of managed transition planning, rather than relying on unsupported assumptions that alternative provision will be equally suitable or accessible for all affected people.

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Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2026

Please note that part A and part B of this document should be completed.

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Helena Lane Day Service, Ludlow

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Daniel Powner

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		No

Assessment of likely neutral, negative impact or positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
The proposal concerns the future of Helena Lane Day Service in Ludlow, an older people's day service providing structured day support, meaningful activity, personal care including assisted bathing, and respite for unpaid carers. A business case should consider closure of the service, continuation of the current reduced model, or stabilisation and redesign. Following the public consultation about this proposal, and on the feedback received and the evidence currently available, it remains the case that the original proposal as it stands is considered likely to have a negative equality and social inclusion impact, particularly for current service users, if the service is closed. In order to ensure their input was gained, they were contacted directly about the consultation, rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels, and their responses are included in the total of 27 responses received. Whilst this number is low, the Council has also considered evidence including demographic data in regard to current and projected need for a service of this type within South Shropshire, recognising the importance of making decisions based upon all the information currently available including likely equality impacts now and into the future. In regard to the nine Protected Characteristic groupings to which we are asked to give 'due regard' in our decision making processes under the Equality Act 2010, the groupings that will be particularly affected if there is closure of the service are those of Age and Disability. Those who attend the service are older people, people

with disabilities including people living with dementia and people with physical frailty or mobility impairments. These impacts may intersect, for example where an older person with a disability is also supported by an older carer in a rural area and may thus also bring in the local groupings to which we give additional consideration as a matter of good practice, including carers. In relation to Helena Lane, the consultation feedback strengthens that assessment: 90% of respondents who expressed a view opposed the proposed closure, 77% said they would be affected “a lot”, and 68% said travel to alternatives would be very difficult. This supports the view that likely adverse impacts are particularly concentrated on older people and those with disabilities.

A further grouping where impacts are likely to be adverse is our local grouping of Carers, bringing in unpaid carers who may be across a number of groupings. We are not obliged to consider this grouping under the Equality Act, as is also the case with our local grouping of Social Inclusion, where we consider impacts for people in regard to their household circumstances. This includes rural households who in rural South Shropshire may face practical barriers to accessing alternatives. At this stage, no specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to the other Equality Act groupings, ie Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, or Sexual Orientation. The current assessment is also neutral for the further two local groupings of Veterans and Serving Members of the Armed Forces and their Families, and Care Leavers.

No clear positive equality impact has been identified at this stage for existing and potential future service users, based on a closure of the existing provision. Initial actions to mitigate likely adverse impacts include offering and undertaking individual assessment or reassessment under the Care Act, carers’ assessments where relevant, financial assessments where relevant, managed transition planning, and case by case consideration of suitable alternative arrangements, including access issues, rather than assuming that generic community provision will be suitable for all. This is a screening assessment based on the current evidence and will need to remain aligned with the detailed table in section B and any further evidence arising through decision-making and ongoing engagement.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

The proposal is likely to have a negative health and wellbeing impact for some current Helena Lane attendees and their carers. The evidence indicates that Helena Lane currently provides structured day support, social interaction, meaningful activity, personal care including assisted bathing, and respite for unpaid carers. Consultation responses state that the service helps some people to maintain wellbeing, dignity and routine, and helps carers to continue caring at home. On that basis, closure may adversely affect some individuals’ wellbeing, independence, social participation, access to personal care arrangements, and continuity of support, particularly for older people living with dementia, older

people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, and people whose health and wellbeing are affected by disruption to familiar routines. The Helena Lane consultation feedback also supports the view that closure may have adverse effects on mental wellbeing, social connection and continuity for some individuals. Respondents described the service as supporting companionship, stimulation, routine and a sense of safety, and raised particular concern about the effect of change on people living with dementia, people who tire easily, and people whose wellbeing depends on access to familiar staff, surroundings and structured support.

For carers of existing service users, there is also potential for negative impact on carers' mental wellbeing, stress levels and ability to sustain their caring role, particularly where respite is reduced or lost. The consultation evidence also suggests that increased travel to alternative provision may reduce the practical value of respite for carers, because time spent travelling may materially reduce the limited period during which carers are able to attend to their own wellbeing, daily living tasks or other responsibilities.

For the wider community, there is a risk that unmet need or carer breakdown could contribute to increased pressure on health and social care services, although the scale of that impact cannot be quantified on the current evidence. Initial actions to mitigate likely adverse impacts include individual assessment or reassessment under the Care Act, carers' assessments where relevant, managed transition planning, consideration of personal care, bathing, supervision, and access needs on a case-by-case basis, and support to identify suitable alternative arrangements where these are appropriate.

This is an initial screening assessment and should remain aligned with the health and wellbeing ratings recorded in section B.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

If a decision is taken to proceed with closure of Helena Lane, the council will keep equality, social inclusion and health impacts under active review through implementation and transition planning. Monitoring arrangements would include completion and recording of individual Care Act assessments or reassessments where accepted for current attendees, carers' assessments where relevant, and review of whether identified needs relating to respite, personal care, bathing, supervision, and access are being met through suitable alternative arrangements.

The Council's position is that alternative arrangements may be suitable for some people, but suitability cannot be assumed in the abstract and must be determined through individual assessment, reassessment, carer's assessment, transition planning, and consideration of transport, supervision, personal care, cognition, dignity and rural access on a case-by-case basis.

Particular attention would need to be given to people most likely to experience adverse impact, including older people, people living with dementia, people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, unpaid carers, and people living in rural areas where travel and access barriers may be greater.

In the case of Helena Lane, this review should build upon the public consultation feedback to seek to further research and identify whether alternative arrangements are accessible in practice for people in Ludlow and the wider South Shropshire area, including whether journey length, rural transport limitations, fatigue, mobility needs, dementia-related distress or the erosion of respite time mean that alternatives are less workable than they appear in principle. The Council would also continue to review consultation feedback alongside any further evidence arising from transition activity, including whether any groups appear to have been less well represented and whether further targeted engagement is required.

Ongoing monitoring should include feedback from affected individuals and carers, liaison with local councillors and relevant partners, and review of any emerging pressures on health and social care services or evidence of unmet need. This should be undertaken at key points during transition and implementation, rather than treated as a one-off exercise, so that mitigation can be adjusted where evidence shows that impacts are different from those initially anticipated.

For all affected groups, mitigation should not assume that generic community provision will be suitable for everyone. Suitability would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly for older people, disabled people including people living with dementia, people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, and unpaid carers whose wellbeing depends on meaningful respite. The Council can mitigate some negative effects through person-centred assessment, timely care planning, clear communication, and continued engagement with affected individuals and carers during implementation. The Council can also influence how far transport barriers, rurality, and the practical impact of travel time are taken into account when identifying alternatives.

Associated ESHIAs

This is the second ESHIA carried out following Consultation. The first ESHIA is attached to the Cabinet report from January 2026.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact, and actions to review and monitor overall impacts, with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts

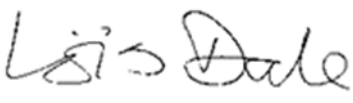
On the evidence currently available, no specific climate change impact can be concluded. In economic and societal terms, the proposal may have a negative impact for some individuals, carers and the wider Ludlow and South Shropshire

community because Helena Lane is a local service and its closure would remove a building-based day support offer from the town. The evidence indicates that there is no comparable older people's day service in Ludlow itself, and that travel to alternative provision may be difficult for some people, particularly where rural transport barriers apply. There may also be wider societal effects if the loss of a preventative service contributes to carer breakdown, crisis presentations, or increased reliance on other health and social care services, although the scale of those effects cannot be quantified on the current evidence.

However, if no change is made, the current reduced model is likely to continue to experience low utilisation and poor financial performance, resulting in repeated short-term decisions and renewed closure proposals. This would prolong uncertainty for service users, carers and staff, while increasing the risk that access barriers (particularly transport and rurality) continue to suppress attendance and that avoidable pressures emerge elsewhere in the system through carer breakdown and crisis escalation.

There would be likely workforce implications arising from closure through the removal of the current in-house service model, although this ESHIA should avoid making assumptions beyond the formal workforce processes that would apply. In human rights terms, the principal issues to keep under review are dignity, autonomy, family life, access to care and support, and fair, lawful and person-centred decision-making for affected individuals. Monitoring arrangements should therefore include review of the Climate Change Appraisal, continued consideration of rural access and transport issues, feedback from affected individuals and carers, monitoring of any emerging pressures or displaced demand elsewhere in the system, and review of whether transition arrangements are operating lawfully and proportionately for those affected.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change		15-05-26
Officer carrying out the screening		15-05-26
*External support** *Mrs Lois Dale* *Senior Insights and Research EDI Specialist*		17-05-26

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date

Lead officer's name		15-05-26
Service manager's name		15-05-26

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
Helena Lane Day Service is an older people's day service in Ludlow. It currently provides structured day support, social interaction and meaningful activity, together with personal care including assisted bathing, and respite for unpaid carers. Over a period of years, the service has reduced from a fuller model to half-day provision for three days per week. Council-funded transport has been withdrawn and staffing capacity has reduced. The service is currently operating at very low utilisation. Five people were using the service across the three operating days, with a small waiting list of three people, although future attendance from the waiting list could not be assumed. Current attendance data recorded shows no attendance on Monday or Friday, four attendees on Tuesday, two on Wednesday, and four on Thursday, with a majority of current attendees being self-funders. The purpose of the service change is to determine the future of Helena Lane in the context of severe financial pressures, Best Value duties, current underutilisation, and the need to ensure that the Council continues to act lawfully in meeting eligible needs under the Care Act 2014. The business case must have regard to the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, including prevention and support for carers, the Public Sector Equality Duty, consultation requirements, and the need to ensure that eligible needs continue to be met lawfully and proportionately through person-centred assessment, reassessment and transition planning. The business case considered the following three options: • Option 1: Close the service. • Option 2: Maintain the current reduced service (status quo). • Option 3: Stabilise and redesign the service to improve access and utilisation while retaining its specialist preventative role After consideration of the options and the consultation feedback, the reasons for the proposed change, which is to close the service, include sustained low utilisation of the current model, a mismatch between the fixed and semi-fixed costs of maintaining an in-house service and the number of people currently attending, and the need to consider whether the present model remains financially sustainable and represents Best Value. The forecast running cost for 2026/27 is £194,320, with forecast income of £24,582 and a net cost of £169,738, excluding building costs. At May 2026 utilisation levels, the average cost per attendance day

is high. Current utilisation should not automatically be treated as evidence of no demand, because current attendance may have been affected by historic service changes including reduced days, reduced hours, withdrawal of transport, reduced staffing capacity and service disruption.

Consultation responses showed clear and sustained opposition to closure, especially from service users, carers and others who said that Helena Lane supports dignity, routine, social contact, respite and the ability to continue caring at home. In relation to Helena Lane, 90% of respondents who expressed a view opposed the proposed closure, 77% said they would be affected “a lot”, and 68% said travel to alternatives would be very difficult. The evidence also states that there is no comparable older people’s day service in Ludlow itself, and that travel to alternative provision may be difficult for some people, particularly where rural transport barriers apply. Consultation responses also indicate that many respondents consider alternatives outside Ludlow difficult to access in practice because of travel distance, fatigue, mobility limitations and the reduced value of respite where a significant part of a short session would be lost to transport. The ESHIA therefore needs to be read alongside a business case as part of the Council’s effort to identify likely equality, social inclusion and health impacts, to consider those impacts conscientiously, and to ensure that any final decision is supported by lawful mitigation, individual transition planning and ongoing review.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Intended audiences and target groups include current Helena Lane attendees; their families, unpaid carers and advocates; people who may require similar older people’s day support in future within Ludlow and the wider South Shropshire area; Council staff involved in delivering or managing the service; Adult Social Care practitioners involved in assessment, reassessment, care planning and transition planning; and local voluntary, community and health partners who may have a role in supporting alternative arrangements for affected individuals.

The proposal is also relevant to local elected councillors because of their community leadership role and because consultation responses indicate significant local interest and concern. Wider interested parties may include local residents and community stakeholders in Ludlow and South Shropshire, particularly given the evidence that there is no comparable older people’s day service in Ludlow itself and that rural transport and access issues are material to the assessment of impact.

According to the Census from 2021 there were 3,923 people aged over 65 in Ludlow North, Ludlow South and Ludlow East. 27 respondents to the consultation specifically referenced Helena Lane Day Service.

Census and ONS age data suggests it shouldn’t be assumed that because fewer people are using the service, fewer people need it. Shropshire has a significantly higher older population than the rest of England that is not marginal, whilst the

locality around Ludlow is on average generally older. The absolute number of people aged 65 and over is high and rising and the ONS projections show this trend will intensify, not reverse. However, it does not necessarily mean that any of those people will need Helena Lane Day Services or that this is high demand for the specific service such as a traditional day service in this area.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Evidence used for this screening includes consultation material and consultation feedback, current service information on attendance, waiting list and staffing, and financial information for 2026/27 on running costs and income. Demographic and needs evidence relevant to older people's day support in Shropshire and South Shropshire, including Census 2021 information, Shropshire population profile information, Office for National Statistics population projections, and dementia prevalence information, has been used to assess the distinction between utilisation and underlying need, the likely effects on current attendees and carers, and the potential implications of closure, continuation of the current reduced model, or redesign.

The evidence has assisted the service area to identify the proposed service change by showing that Helena Lane is currently operating at very low utilisation, with high average unit costs, but also that current attendance should not automatically be treated as evidence of no demand because the service may have been affected over time by reduced days, reduced hours, withdrawal of transport, reduced staffing capacity and service disruption. The evidence also identifies relevant legal and policy context, including the Council's duties under the Care Act 2014, the Public Sector Equality Duty, consultation requirements and Best Value obligations. Taken together, this material has enabled the service area to assess both the financial and operational case for change and the likely equality, social inclusion and health impacts if the service were to close.

This screening has been completed following consultation. Consultation responses showed clear and sustained opposition to closure, particularly from service users and unpaid carers, and highlighted concerns about loss of respite, assisted bathing, dignity, routine, dementia-specific support, the lack of a comparable service in Ludlow, and rural transport barriers affecting access to alternatives. For Helena Lane specifically, the consultation report also provides quantified evidence relevant to this screening, including that 90% of respondents who expressed a view opposed the proposal, 77% said they would be affected "a lot", and 68% said travel to alternatives would be very difficult. The consultation material also provides qualitative evidence about likely impacts on dignity, routine, mental wellbeing, assisted bathing, respite and rural accessibility. The consultation evidence has informed the assessment of likely impacts.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Consultation on the future of Helena Lane Day Service was approved by Cabinet on 21 January 2026 and took place over an eight-week period ending on 26 March 2026. The consultation related to the potential closure of Helena Lane Day Service. Specific intended audiences included current people using the service, their families and unpaid carers, staff and professionals with direct knowledge of the service, local residents and other interested parties.

A range of consultation and engagement methods was used. All current service users were contacted directly rather than relying solely on general public notices or online channels. Written letters were issued, including follow-up correspondence when the Cabinet timetable changed. Consultation documents were made available in Easy Read formats where appropriate. People were able to respond through online surveys, written responses, one-to-one conversations where requested, and meetings and discussions facilitated with councillors and officers, including locality-based engagement reflecting community concerns.

These arrangements were intended to reduce the risk of digital exclusion and to support the participation of people who might otherwise be less able to engage. Advocacy support was available to help individuals and families understand the consultation process and their options, particularly where people may have difficulty engaging independently. Current attendees and, where relevant, their unpaid carers were advised in writing of their right to request a Care Act needs assessment, a carer's assessment and, where applicable, a financial assessment. Consultation responses were received from people who use the service, family members and unpaid carers, staff and professionals with direct knowledge of the service, and local residents. A significant proportion of respondents were carers of people with dementia or complex physical needs.

In addition to consultation feedback, the screening has been informed by wider demographic and needs evidence, including Census 2021 information, Shropshire population profile information, Office for National Statistics population projections and dementia prevalence information relevant to older people's support in Shropshire and South Shropshire.

The consultation received 27 specific responses regarding Helena Lane. The consultation evidence showed clear and sustained opposition to closure and highlighted concerns about respite, assisted bathing, dignity, routine, dementia-specific support, rural transport barriers and the lack of a comparable service in Ludlow. For Helena Lane, the consultation feedback showed particularly strong concern about the proposed closure. Respondents repeatedly referred to the service's role in supporting older people with dementia, frailty or mobility-related needs, and in providing carers with meaningful respite in a local setting. The consultation also highlighted concern that alternatives outside Ludlow may not be realistically accessible for everyone affected, particularly in light of rurality and travel time. The service area will continue to consider this feedback alongside any further engagement required during transition planning and implementation. There has been liaison with councillors and officers through locality-based engagement, and ongoing monitoring will need to take account of feedback from affected individuals and carers and any further evidence about access to suitable alternative arrangements.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have for a grouping, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).

Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Stage Two ESHIA required*	**High positive impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, young carers, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)			Likely adverse impact is concentrated on older people because Helena Lane is an older people's day service and closure could affect access to routine, social contact, meaningful activity, respite and local support. No specific differential impact is evidenced for children, young people, young carers, young people leaving care or people of working age beyond the	

			position reflected elsewhere in this table.	
Disability (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			Likely adverse impact for people with disabilities, particularly people living with dementia and people with physical frailty, mobility impairments or other disabilities affecting access, routine, personal care or social participation, because the service provides structured support, social contact, personal care including assisted bathing, and local accessible support.	
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to gender reassignment, including associated issues of safety, caring

				responsibility, bullying or harassment, on the information currently available.
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to marriage or civil partnership, including associated caring responsibilities or risks of bullying or harassment, on the information currently available.
Pregnancy and Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to pregnancy or maternity, including associated issues of safety, caring responsibility, bullying or harassment, on the information currently available.

Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to race, including ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, or Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, on the information currently available.
Religion or Belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to religion or belief on the information currently available.
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to sex, including associated issues of safety, caring responsibility, bullying or harassment, on the information currently available.

Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				No specific differential impact is evidenced in relation to sexual orientation, including associated issues of safety, caring responsibility, bullying or harassment, on the information currently available.
Other: Social Inclusion (please include households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness; and rural communities)			Possible adverse impact for people in rural households, peopel facing transport barriers, those on low income, social isolation, vulnerability, health inequalities or other overlapping disadvantage, because access to alternatives may be more difficult in practice and there is no like for like older people's	

			day service in Ludlow.	
Other: Carers (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)			Likely adverse impact as for Social Inclusion	
Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)				No specific differential impact is evidenced for veterans, serving members of the armed forces or their families on the information currently available.
Other: Young people leaving care				No specific differential impact is evidenced for young people leaving care. Helena Lane is an older people's day service and this grouping is not identified on the current evidence as specifically affected.

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).
Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Part Two HIA required*	**High positive impact**	**Medium positive or negative impact**	**Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)**
Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation? .			Likely adverse impact for some current attendees, particularly older people living with dementia and people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, because closure may disrupt routine, social contact, meaningful activity, dignity, personal care arrangements including assisted bathing, and continuity of familiar support.	
Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing? For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking? .			Likely adverse impact because loss of a local structured service may reduce opportunities for social participation, routine, stimulation and supported wellbeing, and may make it harder for some individuals to maintain independence and for carers to sustain their own wellbeing.	

Will the policy have a *direct impact* on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health? For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation? .			Likely adverse impact in Ludlow and wider South Shropshire because closure would remove a local building-based older people's day service and may worsen the practical effects of rurality, transport barriers, social isolation and reduced access to local preventative support.	
Will there be a likely change in *demand* for or access to health and social care services? For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services? .			There is likely to be some adverse effect on access to support and possible increased demand on health and social care services if unmet need, carer stress or breakdown, or loss of preventative support leads to greater reliance on other community, primary, mental health or social care services.	

Initial health equity assessment
For the following categories, please complete with the expected impacts of this service change on wider inequalities, not just those that are health-related (whether positive, negative, or neutral) – include any additional information you feel is pertinent or useful. **Consider and record which you can control, which you can influence, and which may be out of your control**.

Which population groups/demographics will face health impacts as a result of this change (if any)? • Socio-Economically Deprived • Geographic Deprivation (inc. Rurality) – *if so, where?* • Inclusion Health & Vulnerable Groups[1] • Other	The groups most likely to experience adverse impacts are current Helena Lane attendees and their unpaid carers, particularly older people, disabled people including people living with dementia, and people with physical frailty or mobility impairments in Ludlow and the wider South Shropshire area. The evidence indicates that the proposal may also have wider inequality impacts for people living in rural areas, where distance, limited transport options and longer journey times may reduce practical access to alternative provision. These factors may disproportionately affect people who are older, on lower incomes, less able to travel independently, or already at risk of social isolation. In inclusion health and wider social inclusion terms, the proposal is most relevant where vulnerability overlaps with age, disability, caring responsibility, rurality, low income, or limited access to services. On the current evidence, the Council can reasonably identify a likely risk of increased inequality for people who rely on a local, accessible and familiar service to maintain routine, social contact, dignity, personal care arrangements and respite. This includes the risk that some people may lose effective access to support in practice, even where an alternative may exist in theory. The most relevant geographical locations are Ludlow and the wider South Shropshire area, where consultation and screening evidence identify particular concerns about rurality, transport barriers and travel time to alternative provision. The Council can control the completion of individual assessment or reassessment, carers' assessments where relevant, transition planning, and the identification of suitable alternative arrangements. The Council can influence how clearly information is communicated, how far transport and access issues are considered in decision-making, and how far ongoing engagement helps identify unmet need during implementation. Some wider factors may be outside the Council's direct control, including the availability, location and accessibility of alternative community or market provision, individuals' personal transport arrangements, and whether wider rural isolation or deprivation increases the practical impact of the service change.
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	Mitigation already in place or planned includes direct written communication with current attendees and, where relevant, their unpaid carers; the availability of advocacy support to help people understand the process and their options; and the formal offer of individual Care Act assessments or reassessments, carers' assessments and financial assessments where relevant. If a decision is taken to proceed with closure, mitigation would include the offer of tailored advice and information, and where needs are assessed, managed transition planning, with specific consideration of needs relating to respite, personal care, bathing, supervision, routine, dignity, mobility, cognition and access. For all affected groups, mitigation should not assume that generic community provision will be suitable for everyone.

	Suitability would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly for older people, disabled people including people living with dementia, people with physical frailty or mobility impairments, and unpaid carers whose wellbeing depends on meaningful respite. The Council can mitigate some negative effects through person-centred assessment, timely care planning, clear communication, and continued engagement with affected individuals and carers during implementation. The Council can also influence how far transport barriers, rurality, and the practical impact of travel time are taken into account when identifying alternatives. Where suitable to the individual, alternative arrangements may include other ways of meeting eligible needs, such as direct payments, personal assistants or support workers, commissioned services, or supported access to community opportunities. However, the evidence indicates that there is no comparable older people's day service in Ludlow itself, and that alternatives outside Ludlow may be difficult to access in practice because of rurality, distance, fatigue, mobility limitations and the erosion of respite time through travel. No digital alternative has been evidenced as a substitute for the day service functions currently provided by Helena Lane. Monitoring should therefore include whether alternative arrangements are accessible and effective in practice, particularly for people in Ludlow and the wider South Shropshire area.

1- *Inclusion health is an umbrella term used to describe people who are socially excluded, who typically experience multiple overlapping risk factors for poor health, such as poverty, violence, and complex trauma. This includes people who experience homelessness, drug and alcohol dependence, vulnerable migrants, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, sex workers, people in contact with the justice system and victims of modern slavery. Health impacts for this wide grouping will therefore potentially be the same as those recorded under the Social Inclusion category in the equality impact table.*

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Committee and Date	Item
Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee 8th June 2026	
Cabinet 10th June 2026	Public
Audit & Governance Committee 15th July 2026	
Council 16th July 2026	

Financial Outturn 2025/26

Responsible Officer:	Duncan Whitfield		
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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans, Finance		

1. Synopsis

The report provides a detailed review of Shropshire Council's financial outturn results for 2025/26. These results show a significant adverse variation from the General Fund budget. This was directly and for a major part a consequence of a budget having been set that included ambitious savings targets and the failure to recognise embedded demand pressures across social care which proved to be unachievable. These targets were set within the approved Council Budget in February 2025.

Given the depletion of council reserves and balances and in the context of the declared financial emergency by the Council in September 2025, it became necessary to seek further Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from the government. This was required in order to retain a minimum level of reserves, to fill the structural deficit created by the inability to meet demand pressure and unachievable savings targets and to write back to the General Fund the capital costs of the aborted North West Relief Road project that had become unaffordable.

The financial outturn position considered within this report has also needed to withstand the continuing increase in demand and cost to the Council for social care services and reduction in government funding in real terms.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report sets out a detailed review of Shropshire Council's 2025/26 financial results for revenue, capital and reserves and balances. This includes those ring-fenced accounts such as the Housing Revenue Account and Dedicated Schools Grant.

2.2. For the General Fund, the net adverse variation to the budget for the year amounted to £49.428m. Table 1 in the body of the report sets out the detail across Council services and an analysis of how spending has been funded. This is represented by net spending of £338.014m against a budget of £288.586m.

2.3. The outturn position represented £54k change from P11. While there were a number of variations making up this change, the position does act to confirm some level of stabilisation of the financial position over the final quarter of the year and improvement in the quality of budget monitoring.

2.4. Although the total variation from P11 showed little change, the number of variations through period 12 to outturn have reinforced the need to continue the improvement journey and build on the good progress made to date including adjusted timescales to the closing period each month to allow better analysis of the figures, better analysis and sign off by Service Directors.

2.5. The key factors affecting the overall year end position were the adverse variations impacting on Care and Well Being and Children and Young People; net variations for the year of £26.3m and £12.2m respectively.

2.6. In addition, Corporate Budgets had net adverse variations of £19.8m which included £33.379m of unachieved savings targets. This variation has been reported consistently through to Cabinet during 2025/26.

2.7. The impact of these variations were offset by a number of positive variations across other services. Further details are set out in Table 1 and Appendix 1 of this report.

2.8. Cabinet received regular reports on budget variations throughout the year before and following the declaration by the Council of a financial emergency in September 2025. Despite spend controls, and management actions across all services, the scale of budget gaps That had been created largely by previously underfunded services, savings targets that were undeliverable and sustained increases in service demand, it was not possible to fill the structural deficits had therefore been created.

2.9. To contain the adverse variations for 2025/26, it was necessary for the Council to make an application to the Government for EFS to ensure that sufficient resources were available to balance the financial position in 2025/26. EFS is the government's preferred route for supporting Councils in financial difficulty and this year submissions were made by approximately 50 other Councils across England.

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2.10. In making this application, it was recognised that EFS will be required for multiple years until such time that net spending can be reduced to a level that matches resources available. It is recognised, but unfortunate, that EFS represents a 'permission' to borrow and that the consequential borrowing incurs the cost of financing that debt which needs to be provided for within revenue budget. It is however the only available option to the Council to avoid inflicting substantial short term reductions in service provision.

2.11. For 2025/26, an application for £71.4m was made, the details are set out in the report. The final requirement for EFS in year has now been calculated at £61.791m, a £9.609m reduction in the level of EFS that had been originally requested and approved in principle by the Government.

2.12. Moving forward, the MTFP for 2026/27 and beyond reported to Cabinet and Council in February 2026 removes a significant part of unachieved savings in 2026/27 and will relieve this specific budget pressure in future years. It is replaced by a more modest but achievable savings target of at least £5m, which has already been earmarked.

2.13. Some provision has also been made in the EFS application for further demand growth, pay and inflation; these will need careful monitoring and will be subject to ongoing challenge through monthly monitoring and quarterly reporting to Cabinet. An updated MTFP and financial sustainability plan will be submitted to Cabinet in July 2026 to include testing the assumptions made in February and reference to evidence of spending and income patterns for the first quarter of the year.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that Transformation and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

a) Consider this report and the recommendations made to Cabinet below and comment as appropriate.

3.2. It is recommended that Cabinet Members:

In respect of the revenue budget:

a) Note that the outturn variance in the year is £49.428m above budget.
b) Note that £19.637m has been funded by EFS, leaving £29.278m to be funded from the General Fund reserves and balances.
c) Note the consequent level of the General Fund Balance is £5.000m.
d) Note the increase of £5.658m in Earmarked Reserves & Provisions and the resulting level of earmarked reserves of £29.812m (£25.113m is the balances held by schools are excluded).
e) Note the £17.722m level of savings delivery achieved over the year.
f) Note that the current combination of earmarked and un-earmarked (General) reserves of £34.069m is at a level that is below that would normally seen as appropriate for a Council of this size.

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g) Note that the MTFP sets out an agreed plan to restore these balances to more appropriate levels over time, including further requests for Exceptional Financial Support in 2026/27 and beyond.
h) Note that £61.8m of EFS has been applied in 2025/26, some £9.6m less than what was requested originally and approved by MHCLG.

Related to ringfenced funding:

i) Note the performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) this is an account associated with shropshire Councils housing stock - £1.372m (5.75%) surplus outturn for 2025/26 on £23.861m turnover, and the resulting level of the HRA reserve of £13.489m.
j) Note the £28.029m overspend for the DSG and the consequent level of the DSG reserve of £45.655m in deficit.
k) Note that the level of school balances has decreased by £1.994m, from £6.693m in 2024/25 to £4.699m, in the financial year.

In respect of the capital programme:

l) Note the net budget variations of £26.932m to the 2025/26 capital programme (in Appendix 7) and the re-profiled 2025/26 capital budget of £77.375m.
m) Note the re-profiled capital budgets of £145.380m for 2026/27, including slippage of £15.258m from 2025/26, £129.536m for 2027/28 and £89.113m for 2028/29 as detailed in Appendix 11.
n) Accept the outturn expenditure set out in Appendices 8, 9 and 13 of £68.698m representing 88.79% of the revised capital budget for 2025/26.
o) Approve retaining a balance of capital receipts set aside of £22.309m as at 31st March 2026 to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.363m in 2026/27.

General

p) Note that these outturn results will now be incorporated in financial statements for external audit and oversight by the Audit and Governance Committee
q) Note that the Finance risk register is subject to review and will be incorporated in the July Cabinet report that will provide an updated MTFP?.

Report

4. 2025/26 Outturn Position

4.1. Table 1 below summarises the position by service area setting out an outturn variation from budget of £49.428m :

Table 1: 2025/26 Budget Variations by Service Area (£'000)

Service Area	Budget (£'000)	Outturn (£'000)	Net Variation (£'000)	(Under)/ Overspend (%)
Care & Wellbeing	138,454	164,851	26,397	19%
Children & Young People	90,963	103,192	12,230	13%
Commissioning	43,369	39,743	(3,625)	(8%)

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Communities & Customer	16,822	13,243	(3,578)	(21%)
Enabling	7,021	7,589	567	8%
Executive Management Team	2,592	2,745	154	6%
Infrastructure	43,847	43,558	(289)	0%
Legal, Governance & Planning	6,045	3,553	(2,492)	(41%)
Pensions	246	333	87	35%
Strategy	489	658	169	34%
Service Delivery Budgets	**349,848**	**379,467**	**29,619**	
Corporate	(61,262)	(41,453)	19,809	(32%)
Net Expenditure	**288,586**	**338,014**	**49,428**	
Funding:				
Council Tax	(219,283)	(219,283)	0	
Business Rates	(46,683)	(46,683)	0	
Top Up Grant	(11,025)	(11,025)	0	
Revenue Support Grant	(8,668)	(8,668)	0	
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(2,927)	(2,927)	0	
Total Funding	**(288,586)**	**(288,586)**	**0**	
Total	**0**	**49,428**	**49,428**	

4.2. There were three key factors affecting the year end position for overall service delivery.

Care & Wellbeing – within Adult Social Care Operations there has been a budget pressure of £21.899m on purchasing. £16.140m of this variance is on spot purchasing mainly due to a continued increase in the number of capital reductions coming through on residential care, an increase in nursing due to complexity and cases transferred from health to the local authority. £13.327m of the variance is on block purchasing which is mainly due to pressure on supported living and supported living individual service funds and an increase in complexity impacting on cost of care.

4.3. Children & Young People – despite an overall 7.5% reduction of the number of children looked after from 721 on 1st April 2025 to 667 on 31st March 2026, a combination of known, but unbudgeted pressures, aligned with demand led pressures within Children's placements leading to a £14.908m spend over budget on external residential placements. This is mainly an increase in external spot / framework placements but also an increase in the disabled children team residential costs due to an increase in numbers.

4.4. Savings and Corporate Budgets – the net favourable variance to the corporate budget is £19.809m. However, this includes £33.379m of unachieved savings targets; only 29.6% of the 2025/26 savings required have been delivered, amounting to £17.722m. The savings outturn in 2025/26 is presented in Appendix 2; variations were reported to Cabinet throughout the year. The MTFP for 2026/27 and beyond sets out the removal of most of the 70.4% of unachieved savings. New savings plans are being progressed for the next financial year to ensure that efficiencies can be delivered on an ongoing basis to reduce future calls on EFS.

4.5. In order to finance the adverse variation (overspend) there has been a need to make use of reserves and general fund balances. In total, £29.278m has been

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drawn down from Reserves Balances leaving just £5m in the General Fund Balance. A breakdown of transactions impacting on the General Fund in 2025/26 are detailed in Appendix 4.

4.6. The MTFP for 2026/27 approved in February 2026 includes provision to increase these balances to more appropriate levels over time and these assumptions will be reviewed as part of the updated MTFP to be received by Cabinet in July.

4.7. Mindful of the need for resources to supplement contributions from reserves, The Council made the decision to make an application to the Government for £71.4m EFS to manage the 2025/26 financial position. The application for £71.4m has been approved by government of which £21.5m was planned to be used towards the overspend. EFS enables the Council to borrow funds which will be repaid through increasing the capital financing revenue budget.

4.8. Approximately £39m of the 2025/26 EFS was scheduled to be used the financial consequences of the decision to abort the North-West Relief Road project owing to affordability issues. The remaining £10m was scheduled to be used to support the costs of transformation as required to enable the Council to undertake projects to transform services and reduce costs and support the Council to move towards a financially sustainable position.

4.9. The final use of EFS has now been calculated at £61.791m, a £9.609m reduction to the level of EFS that had been approved in principle by the Government. A breakdown of the utilisation of EFS is set out in the table below:

Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) Areas	EFS approved in principle £m	EFS utilised in 2025/26 £m	Reason for variance
North West Relief Road	39.900	32.154	Original application included the costs of the NWRR and Oxon Link Road (OLR). The OLR has remained as a capital programme and so the Council has been able to reduce the amount borrowed.
Transformation	10.000	10.000	As per application
Revenue Outturn	21.500	19.637	Reduction in projected overspend in final quarter resulted in less borrowing required.
Total EFS	**71.400**	**61.791**	

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5. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

5.1. The financial results for 2025/26 confirm the need for a fundamental review of key risks and mitigations for budget preparation, monitoring and control of Council finances.

5.2. These are subject to fundamental review and the primary elements include capacity and capability across finance and the wider organisation, the management of demand growth, unfunded burdens, the national and global economy (including inflation and interest rates), and market behaviour and stability for our largest contracts.

5.3. In particular, it should be noted that work is underway to make improvements to the Council's financial monitoring and budget setting arrangements, learning from lessons of the past. Important improvements in both of these areas have been made since the financial emergency was declared and these changes will continue to embed and evolve through 2026/27.

5.4. These risks and mitigations are currently subject to review by the Interim s151 Officer and will be reported to Cabinet in July as part of the MTFP update and again at Cabinet in September when the Q1 monitoring report will be considered.

6. Housing Revenue Account

6.1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn for 2025/26 shows a surplus of £1.372m against a budgeted deficit of £3.733m, giving a £5.104m variance against the approved budget. This was mainly due to a change in approach to the financing of the capital programme, with additional capital costs being met from the Major Repairs Allowance instead of revenue contributions to capital. As at 31 March 2026 the HRA reserve stood at £13.489m. A breakdown of the HRA is provided at Appendix 6.

7. Dedicated Schools Grant

7.1. The overall 2025-26 outturn against centrally retained DSG is a £28.029m deficit.

7.2. It should be noted that this figure is the in-year deficit and needs to be added to the £17.566m revised deficit carried forward from 2024-25 in order to give an overall cumulative DSG deficit position of £45.655m. This figure is currently managed through a Statutory Override agreed nationally by government for DSG deficits through to March 2028 and the Council will receive a "High Needs Stability Grant" in Autumn 2026 to write off 90% of the High Needs Block DSG deficit accrued up to the end of 2025/26, providing our Local Area SEND Reform Plan submission is approved by the Department for Education (DfE).

7.3. In 2025/26, Shropshire continued to face many of the same budget pressures as other Councils, with sustained high numbers of new requests for EHCPs combined with the ongoing duties for children and young people with existing EHCPs. This is compounded by **Shropshire being the 18 lowest funded Council** per pupil for High Needs out of 151 Councils nationally. There are three main areas of spend over budget, namely an increase in "top-up" funding to mainstream schools

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(£6.979m), increases to state-funded special school funding through a recent review of top-up funding banding levels (£7.008m), and further growth in children and young people placed with Independent Providers (£11.390m).

7.4. With the increased funding levels to mainstream schools and state-funded special schools, the Council is striving to minimise the increase in demand in the independent sector by building capacity in our mainstream settings through investing in SEND Hubs attached to mainstream schools and increasing top-up funding to our state-funded Special Schools; Severndale School, Woodlands School and Keystones School. This strategy is showing encouraging impact, with the number of children and young people with an EHCP educated in mainstream being above the national average and some steadying in the rate of placement in the independent special school sector, compared with sustained high levels of demand for EHCPs above the national average.

8. Reserves and Provisions

8.1. While the overall position for reserves and provisions is set out in the Statement of Accounts 2025/26, a detailed breakdown of the balances is contained at Appendix 6.

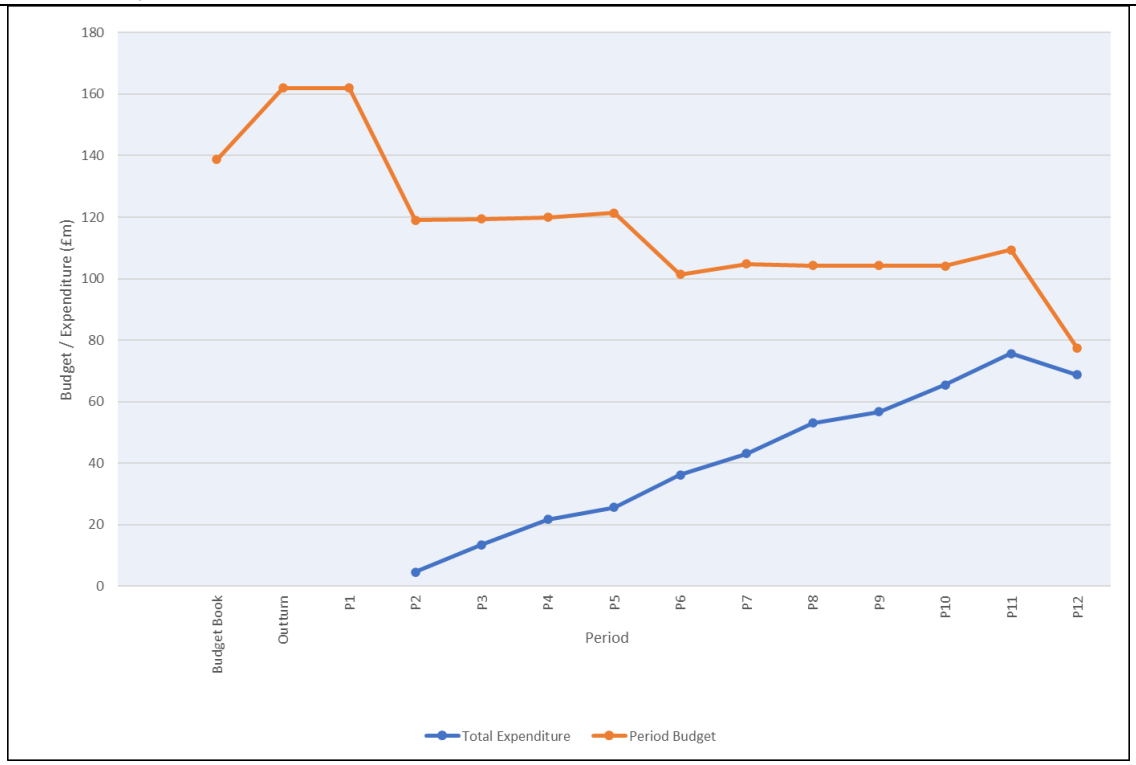
9. Original & Final Capital Programme for 2025/26

9.1. The capital budget for 2025/26 was subject to a review of all projects at Quarter 3 and re-profiling where required into future years with no further re-profiling into future years being anticipated during Quarter 4. Additionally, during Quarter 4 there has been a net budget decrease of £26.932m compared to the position reported at Quarter 3 2025/26. The bulk of this movement relates to the removal of the NWRR capital scheme from the budget following Council's decision to cancel the scheme on 26th February 2026. Appendix 8 summarises the overall movement, between that already approved and changes for Quarter 4 that require approval.

10. Original & Final Capital Programme for 2025/26

10.1. During the course of the year a thorough review was undertaken of the Capital Programme and many non-essential projects placed on pause in order to relieve the cost of borrowing. Outturn projections are incorporated into the capital monitor to enhance the monitoring information provided and allow the early identification where schemes are deviating from budget. Appendix 8 summarises the outturn position for 2025/26.

10.2. Total capital expenditure for 2025/26 was £68.698m, which equated to 88.8% of the re-profiled capital programme of £77.375m. The graph below shows actual expenditure by period and tracks the period-on-period changes to the budget.



10.3. There was a total variance of £8.677m between the revised Outturn Budget and the Outturn Expenditure. This underspend will be slipped to future years to facilitate completion of projects in delivery during in 2026-27 and beyond as required following a review of expected profiles. A summary of significant variances by directorate and service area are provided In Appendix 9.

10.4. Appendix 10 summarises the financing of the 2025/26 capital programme, changes made to Quarter 3 and to be approved to Quarter 4.

10.5. Within the financing of the Capital Programme £0.927m of actual expenditure has been funded from revenue contributions. The major areas of revenue contributions to capital are HRA house repurchases (£0.167m), essential repairs in relation to the Corporate Landlord estate (£0.079m), Highways schemes (£0.075m), Community Led Affordable Housing (0.351m), LUF 2 Project match funding (£0.150m) and Schools revenue contributions to various capital schemes (0.057m).

11. Projected Future Capital Programme

11.1. The updated capital programme and the financing of the programme is summarised by year in Appendix 11.

11.2. The Corporate Resources financing line is the element of internal resources through capital receipts and corporately financed prudential borrowing required to finance the programme. The Council continues to consider proposals for new schemes to invest in, with an emphasis on invest to save schemes and schemes that generate revenue savings as a result of either the generation of revenue income or the delivery of revenue savings.

12. Capital Receipts Position

12.1. Appendix 12 summarises the current allocated and projected capital receipt position across 2024-25 to 2027-28.

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

Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2029/30, Council – 26 February 2026

Financial Rules

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2025/26, Cabinet – 10 September 2025

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 2025/26, Cabinet – 19 November 2025

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2025/26, Cabinet – 11 February 2026

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – 2025/26 Budget Variations by Service

Appendix 2 – Update on Delivery of 2025/26 Savings Proposals

Appendix 3 – Amendments to Original Budget

Appendix 4 – General Fund Balance

Appendix 5 – Housing Revenue Account

Appendix 6 – Reserves and Provision 2025/26

Appendix 7 – Revised Capital Programme

Appendix 8 – Capital Programme Outturn Position by Directorate 2025/26

Appendix 9 – Summary of Significant Variances Between Revised Capital Budget & Outturn Expenditure by Service Area For 2025-26

Appendix 10 – Revised Capital Programme Financing 2025/26

Appendix 11 – Capital Programme 2026/27 To 2028/29

Appendix 12 – Projected Capital Receipts Position

Appendix 13 – Capital Programme Summary Outturn 2025/26

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APPENDIX 1

2025/26 BUDGET VARIATIONS BY SERVICE

1.1 Summary

Revenue variances are reported on an exception basis depending on the total variance from budget.

Service Area	Full year		
	Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	(Under)/ Overspend £'000
Care & Wellbeing	138,454	164,851	26,397
Children & Young People	90,963	103,192	12,230
Commissioning	43,369	39,743	(3,625)
Communities & Customer	16,822	13,243	(3,578)
Enabling	7,021	7,589	567
Executive Management Team	2,592	2,745	154
Infrastructure	43,847	43,558	(289)
Legal, Governance & Planning	6,045	3,553	(2,492)
Pensions	246	333	87
Strategy	489	658	169
Service Delivery Budgets	**349,848**	**379,467**	**29,619**
Corporate Budgets	(61,262)	(41,453)	19,809
Total	**288,586**	**338,014**	**49,428**

1.2 Summary

Service Area Summary

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
CARE & WELLBEING		**138,454,160**	**164,851,170**	**26,397,010**	R	
Care & Wellbeing	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Adult Social Care Management	Social Care	1,058,170	695,822	(362,348)	Y	• (£0.335m) capitalisation of posts
Adult Social Care Provider Services	Social Care	6,083,780	5,077,494	(1,006,286)	Y	• £0.192m Glenview costs previously purchasing expenditure • (£0.610m) spend below budget on salaries due to vacant posts in START team and Day Services • (£0.331m) additional income Four Rivers Nursing Home • (£0.180m) spend below budget on External Provider Services
Adult Social Care Operations	Social Care	128,127,160	155,085,838	26,958,678	R	• £21.899m pressure budget purchasing made up of: - £16.140m SPOT Gross purchasing - £9.004m Residential care demographic demand increases to budget set £6.061m increase in nursing due to complexity and cases transferred from health to local authority, £3.859m pressure on Individual Service Funds, £211 km pressure in college placement and short breaks, (£1.698m) additional contribution from income over budget from Direct Payment and Individual Service Fund clawbacks, - 13.327m BLOCK Gross purchasing pressure on supported living and supported living Individual Service Funds due to an increase in complexity of care and a £ associated costs provider market challenges around capacity and uplifts -(£0.210m) reablement and updated allocation of Better Care Fund - (£0.254m) reduction in Deferred Payment Agreement accrual - (£7.512m) increase income from client contributions including Deferred Payment Agreement contributions and joint funded packages and includes historic contributions • £4.491m reduction in Continuing Health Care funding arrangements reduction in recharges from 2022/23,

						2023/24 and 2024/25 • £1.463m previous year 2024/25 expenditure not forecast • £0.933m unpaid invoice being 50% of additional hospital discharge expenditure from 2023/24 • £0.342m reduction in forecasted income against telecare charging project • (£2.198m) spend below budget on salaries due to vacant posts
Professional Development Unit	Social Care	254,100	262,249	8,149	G	• Minor variance to Budget as at Outturn
Care & Wellbeing Projects	Social Care	108,980	315,152	206,172	R	• £0.198m Care Tech Programme
Enable	Social Care	704,450	761,860	57,410	A	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Service Director Care & Wellbeing	Social Care	2,117,520	2,652,755	535,235	R	• £0.492m provision for bad debt across Care & Wellbeing

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE		**90,962,860**	**103,192,395**	**12,229,535**	**R**	
Children & Young People	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Shire Services	Finance	2,707,810	2,508,121	(199,689)	Y	• (£0.119m) relating to Schools Budget Support Grant and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) Grant funding for centrally employed Schools Support staff • (£0.081m) remaining spend under budget related to traded surplus on Shire Catering
Learning and Skills	Children & Education	10,066,360	11,061,662	995,302	R	• £0.950m spend over budget relates to the EHCP Team where the service have recently appointed significant additional capacity (permanent and temporary) to manage increasing statutory demand. • £0.540m spend over budget relates to the Educational Psychology Service where the service have appointed additional capacity locum Educational Psychologists to undertake statutory assessments as a result of increasing demand, whilst permanent recruitment is completed. • £0.073m spend over budget relates to the fully-traded Schools Library Service that will cease operations during quarter 2 2026/27. • £0.071m spend over budget relates to the SEND & AP Change Programme whereby income received in

						2024/25 in relation to the programme should have been carried forward but was not so the spend in 2025/26 exceeded the external funding available • (£0.021m) spend under budget relates to the NEETs data tracking team • (£0.036m) spend under budget relates to ongoing pension compensation payments relating to former teaching staff that are above the level of the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) grant awarded to cover these costs. • (£0.041m) spend under budget relates to the fully-traded Schools Finance Team • (£0.052m) relates to Academy conversion income from schools exceeding expenditure • (£0.063m) relating to the capitalisation of a post as a one-off working on transformational projects within Learning & Skills Business Support • (£0.074m) relating to the maximisation of various external funding streams in Education Improvement Service • (£0.112m) spend under budget relates to elements of the Education Welfare Service • (£0.239m) one-off efficiencies across both staffing and non-staffing budgets within Learning & Skills Business Support.
Director Children's Services	Children & Education	399,130	413,062	13,932	G	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Service Director Children's & Young People - CSC	Children & Education	148,310	138,265	(10,045)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	Social Care	24,466,600	26,811,565	2,344,965	R	• £1.974m spend over budget on staffing budgets across the service relating to Agency Social Workers covering vacancies and additional staffing following the Ofsted Staff Improvement plan approved in December 2023. • £0.634m spend over budget in Disabled Children's budget area with £0.809m relating to Disabled Children's Team (DCT) prevention and Support payments offset by £0.031m spend under budget on DCT Short Breaks Contracts. £0.144m spend under budget relates to Disabled Children's Direct Payments. • £0.379m spend over budget relates to Adoption Services. £0.467m spend over budget on Adoption

						Allowances. The remaining (£0.088m) variance relates to the Together4Children (T4C) permanency hub where there was a £0.081m underspend on Intra-Adoption Adoption placements expenditure to other Local Authorities or Voluntary Adoption Agencies • £0.165m spend over budget on Social Worker Retention payments across the service • £0.059m spend over budget relates to taxi costs or other transport related costs across the Social Work teams. • (£0.301m) spend under budget relates Public Law Outline Support packages which includes legal fees, and other court ordered expenditure such as medical assessments • (£0.533m) more Home Office grant funding applied against 16-18 year old Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) expenditure than anticipated
Children's Placements	Social Care	50,215,360	59,902,283	9,686,923	R	• £14.908m spend over budget on External Residential Placements. £1.485m shortfall in anticipated savings from "Stepping Stones Project". £9.372m increase in External Residential Spot/Framework placements. £3.074m Disabled Children's Team residential expenditure - increase in numbers. The remaining £0.977m shortfall in anticipated contributions from other partners towards joint funded social care led residential placements. • (£0.033m) spend under budget on Placements Staffing • (£0.246m) spend under budget against Internal Residential Children's Homes due to Devonia being temporarily closed until late 2025. • (£1.958m) spend under budget relating to Stepping Stones Project which relates to a combination of one-off capitalisation of posts and also use of new Children's and Families grant to fund existing Family Group Conferencing posts within the team • (£2.984m) spend under budget on Fostering placements and Supported Accommodation placements. External fostering placements were anticipated to increase in 2025/26 hence growth was built into the budget, however instead numbers have decreased.

Children's Early Help	Health	2,214,680	1,841,512	(373,168)	Y	• (£0.200m) additional Public Health grant contribution towards the Council's Early Help Community and Family hubs • (£0.173m) through fully utilising various external grants including the Children's, Families and Grant, Children's Social Care Prevention Grant and the Best Start in Life Family Hubs Grant
Youth Support Services	Deputy Leader & Communities	744,610	515,925	(228,685)	Y	• (£0.229m) spend under budget Youth Support Team temporary vacancy management and maximisation of Local Youth Transformation pilot external funding

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
COMMISSIONING		**43,368,790**	**39,743,369**	**(3,625,421)**	**Y**	
Commissioning	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Adult Social Care Business Support	Social Care	4,891,340	4,541,113	(350,227)	Y	• (£0.217m) Spend under budget on staff salaries • (£0.133m) Spend under budget on Payments to contractors
Bereavement Services	Health	(241,320)	(271,455)	(30,135)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Leisure	Housing & Leisure	2,451,260	3,267,594	816,334	R	• £0.520m Unachieved savings targets • £0.183m Spend above budget on minor works across Leisure Facilities • £0.129m Spend above budget on Contract Tender Support • £0.108m Spend above budget at Meole Brace Golf Course • £0.156m Shortfall on income resulting from the temporary closure of Market Drayton Pool • (£0.280m) Spend below budget on utility costs across the Leisure Estate
Waste Management	Highways & Environment	34,828,900	30,498,111	(4,330,789)	Y	• £0.451m shortfall on Green Waste Income due to no price increase in 25-26 • £0.196m shortfall on PFI Grant income • (£2.705m) Contract Savings as a result of lower than budgeted inflationary increases • (£1.300m) Additional Energy Share & Royalty Payments through Annual Reconciliation • (£0.975m) Additional Extended Producer Responsibility Payments

Insurance	Finance	27,240	127,648	100,408	R	• £0.100m less charges for insurance overheads over Premiums, remainder over funds
Commissioning Development and Procurement	Finance	134,610	321,039	186,429	R	• £0.300m reduction in Income from Purchasing Rebates • (£0.114m) Spend under budget on staff salaries
Housing Development and HRA	Housing & Leisure	35,550	35,851	300	G	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Armed Forces Support	Housing & Leisure	8,990	631	(8,359)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Community Services	Social Care	465,420	454,027	(11,393)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Quality Assurance & Independent Review Unit	Social Care	474,900	455,635	(19,265)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Child Placement Service	Social Care	192,100	149,908	(42,192)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Service Director Commissioning	Finance	99,800	163,268	63,468	A	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
COMMUNITIES & CUSTOMER		**16,821,640**	**13,243,346**	**(3,578,294)**	**Y**	
Communities & Customer	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Housing Services	Housing & Leisure	4,408,040	3,749,547	(658,493)	Y	• (£0.482m) spend under budget in relation to vacancy management and additional grant funding (£0.349m) • (£0.148m) additional resettlement income received • (£0.114m) spend under budget for contractors due to bringing some services in house • (£0.078m) additional grant income applied • £0.086m spend greater than budget for Housing Compliance as this work was a new in year pressure for 2025-26 • £0.081m spend greater than budget for Temporary Accommodation, (a significant reduction from £0.442m at 2024-25 year end, achieved by the opening of new schemes and reducing the use of B&B)
Regulatory Services	Health	2,096,940	1,927,306	(169,634)	Y	• (£0.060m) spend under budget in relation to vacancy management • (£0.059m) savings through management charges regarding grant funded activity • (£0.039m) various savings against budgeted spend • (£0.020m) additional Household Support Fund income received

Business and Consumer Protection	Health	2,549,440	1,780,088	(769,352)	Y	• (£0.551m) payroll spend under budget through the Voluntary Redundancy programme and vacancy management • (£0.129m) additional income achieved against projection for licensing and penalty charge notices • (£0.053m) spend under budget against other non-pay expenditure
Ring Fenced Public Health Services	Health	1,438,300	1,439,314	1,014	G	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Culture, Leisure & Tourism Development	Housing & Leisure	66,090	15,890	(50,200)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Libraries	Housing & Leisure	3,537,610	3,351,508	(186,102)	Y	• (£0.200m) Additional Public Health Substitution
Museums and Archives	Housing & Leisure	1,268,170	1,137,072	(131,098)	Y	• (£0.120m) allocation of Museum Renewal Fund
Theatre Services	Housing & Leisure	503,890	(373,779)	(877,669)	Y	• (£0.877m) increased income generation across Theatre Services against budget
Head of Culture, Leisure & Tourism	Housing & Leisure	280,400	162,479	(117,921)	Y	• (£0.078m) spend under budget for salaries
Customer Services	Deputy Leader & Communities	610,100	(17,766)	(627,866)	Y	• (£0.487m) Net forecast spend under budget relating to Vacancy Management across Customer Services • (£0.106m) Transformation funding for Digital Skills engagement • (£0.035m) spend under budget against other non-pay expenditure
Service Director Communities & Customer	Housing & Leisure	62,660	71,687	9,027	G	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
Corporate Budgets		**(61,262,350)**	**(41,452,991)**	**19,809,359**	**R**	
Corporate Budgets	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Corporate Budgets	Finance	(61,262,350)	(41,452,991)	19,809,359	R	• £33.379m unachieved savings, remainder of savings that were unallocated to service areas • £2.736m net pressure against interest payable and receivable, mostly in relation to borrowing costs • (£0.264m) net spend under budget across QICS PFI unitary charges which includes the draw down of PFI grants • (£0.299m) Development Fund base budget not required, reserves met expenditure requirements in-year

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						• (£0.560m) increased income from profit share WME • (£2.400m) release of gain share from contract relating to Broadband project • (£2.178m) release of funds held to cover pay award on review of estimated costs • (£3.029m) contribution from financial strategy reserve • (£2.000m) contribution from capital reserve • (£2.539m) release of funds held for minimum revenue provision in relation to financing of capital investments • (£2.831m) additional Section 31 grants following closure of business rates position • (£0.200m) uncommitted corporate expenditure budgets

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
ENABLING		**7,021,140**	**7,588,537**	**567,397**	**R**	
Enabling	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Corporate Landlord, Property and Development	Finance	902,340	2,166,337	1,263,997	R	• Spend over budget reflects unachieved savings against a £3.000m savings target including a £1.096m of unbudgeted expenditure relating to Shirehall, pressures were partially mitigated by in-year management actions
Technology	Finance	414,130	(1,276,703)	(1,690,833)	Y	•£0.651m relating to savings target showing against management (being met across wider IT teams) •(£0.102m) spend under budget relating to rental costs. •(£0.400m) spend under budget on Hardware & Licences. •(£0.844m) capitalisation of staff working on transformation activity •(£1.037m) spend under budget relating to the IT restructure which is currently being implemented as a part of rightsizing.
Human Resources and Organisational Development	Finance	(5,090)	(158,125)	(153,035)	Y	•£0.166m income under budget relating to Service Level Agreement income. •£0.052m income under budget relating to legacy staff recharges. •(£0.015m) spend under budget relating to Occupational health private contractor consultations. •(£0.350m) net vacancy efficiencies across the service.
Health & Safety	Finance	21,530	(117,831)	(139,361)	Y	•(£0.139m) spend under budget relating to Voluntary Redundancy programme and vacancy efficiencies.

Finance	Finance	2,286,310	1,406,708	(879,602)	Y	•(£0.060m) Additional income from Employee Recharges •(£0.815m) spend under budget relating to Voluntary Redundancy programme and vacancy efficiencies.
Revenues and Benefits	Finance	2,761,250	4,702,079	1,940,829	R	• £2.059m unachieved savings. Savings target from previous financial year of £1m achieving £0.449m relating to cost reductions arising from improvement of in-house Temporary Accommodation provision, additional savings target in current financial year unachievable • £0.734m relating to income not achieved against overpayments recovery of Housing Benefits, income budget has been amended for 26/27. • £0.129m relating to spend over budget on Legal costs, postage and management fees relating to rateable value calculations work undertaken to identify additional Business Rates funding. • £0.097m Relating to Bad Debt provision. • (£0.050m) additional grant income from Household support fund to assist with the Discretionary Housing Payments • (£0.066m) spend under budget against systems costs for maintenance and support. • (£0.288m) Net spend under budget relating to DWP housing benefit allowances and rebates transactions. • (£0.636m) relating to spend under budget against vacancy management and Voluntary Redundancy programme.
Personal Assistants	Finance	44,180	24,516	(19,664)	Y	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Service Director Enabling	Finance	596,490	841,556	245,066	R	• £0.215m Provision for Bad Debt across Enabling Services

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM		**2,591,600**	**2,745,260**	**153,660**	**R**	
Executive Management Team	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Executive Management Team	Leader	2,591,600	2,745,260	153,660	R	• Salary payments in relation to exiting members of senior staff and recruitment expenses in relation to replacements.

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
INFRASTRUCTURE		**43,847,270**	**43,558,166**	**(289,104)**	**Y**	
Infrastructure	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Partnerships & Economic Development	Transport & Economic Growth	1,720,450	1,493,769	(226,681)	Y	• Additional Grant funding offsetting Core costs across a range of Projects; UKSPF, Connect to Work, Growth Hub, Careers Hub, LEP Legacy & Get Britain Working
Highways & Transport	Highways & Environment	12,651,230	11,541,658	(1,109,572)	Y	• £1.260m Parking savings targets not fully achieved (mid-year roll out) • £0.846m Staff recharge to capital not at budget level • (£0.115m) Additional income (recover from third parties) • (£0.125m) Spend under budget on Winter Maintenance resulting from less adverse weather in the winter period. • (£0.465m) Spend under budget on Streetlighting due to non-delivery of works by sub-contractor and spend under budget on Energy costs resulting from roll out of LED lighting. • (£0.536m) Staffing costs under budget due to vacancies, some of which are covered by Agency • (£0.712m) Street Scene service efficiencies delivered in 2025/26, preparation costs for devolution will now fall into 2026/27 • (£1.240m) Streetworks additional net income
Shropshire Hills National Landscape	Housing & Leisure	116,700	97,500	(19,200)	Y	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Outdoor Partnerships	Housing & Leisure	1,134,340	1,159,425	25,085	G	• Minor Variance to Budget as at Outturn
Highway Policy & Strategic Infrastructure	Highways & Environment	1,794,640	1,687,850	(106,790)	Y	• Spend below budget on staffing due to vacancies, some of which are currently covered by Agency Staff
Public Transport	Highways & Environment	7,350,850	6,038,774	(1,312,076)	Y	• (£0.397m) Additional Department For Transport (DfT) grant draw down • (£0.321m) Spend below budget on Concessionary Travel costs • (£0.314m) Administrative Costs recharged across Transport • (£0.127m) Spend below budget on Fleet Transport Costs • (£0.123m) Additional Income from third parties • (£0.030m) Other Minor Variances
Care & Wellbeing Transport	Social Care	1,422,420	1,538,177	115,757	R	• Recharge of transport administrative costs

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Home to School Transport	Children & Education	18,139,660	19,491,421	1,351,761	R	• £1.652m additional SEND transport costs • (£0.300m) Savings on primary & secondary travel
Service Director Infrastructure	Highways & Environment	(483,020)	509,594	992,614	R	• £1.000m unachieved savings target. Savings reflected elsewhere in Service

Service Area		Budget	Outturn	Variance	RAGY	
LEGAL & GOVERNANCE		**6,044,930**	**3,553,345**	**(2,491,585)**	**Y**	
Legal & Governance	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Registrars and Coroners	Health	737,000	573,658	(163,342)	Y	• £0.155m Spend above budget on Coroner staffing • £0.100m relating to unachieved savings target • £0.055m Spend above budget on various Coroner Supplies and Services. • (£0.055m) Spend under budget against registrars overtime as a result of removing Sunday working hours and streamlining of tasks • (£0.415m) Additional income from Registrars mainly Venue fee, Certificate Fees & Ceremonies as a result of implementing a public self service portal.
Planning Services	Planning	906,700	(539,284)	(1,445,984)	Y	• £0.170m Net spend above budget relating to Higways Development Control due to Highways Design Contract • £0.119m Spend above budget on consultancy marketing, legal and expected provisions as a result of increased planning income • (£0.258m) Additional income relating to Land Charges and a review of fees and charges on Building Regulations & Street Naming • (£0.299m) Net vacancy efficiencies across the service • (£1.223m) Additional income relating to Planning applications and a review of fees and charges.
Policy and Environment	Planning	2,182,020	1,953,203	(228,817)	Y	• (£0.204m) Spend under budget in relation to vacancy management • (£0.027m) Capitalisation of staff costs
Democratic Services	Leader	11,920	1,001	(10,919)	Y	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Elections	Leader	1,326,050	1,129,793	(196,257)	Y	• (£0.196m) spend lower than budgeted across Council Elections from the current financial year
Legal Services	Finance	129,250	(64,701)	(193,951)	Y	• (£0.120m) Spend under budget on Legal fees for Child care • (£0.060m) Spend under budget on Agency staff
Policy and Governance	Finance	66,530	(89,889)	(156,419)	Y	• (£0.159m) spend under budget relating to vacancy Management

Overview & Scrutiny	Leader	276,190	326,745	50,555	A	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Feedback and Insights	Leader	11,490	(22,263)	(33,753)	Y	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Service Director Legal & Governance (MO)	Finance	397,780	285,083	(112,697)	Y	• (£0.116m) Provision for Bad Debt across Legal & Goverance

Service Area		**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	
PENSIONS		**246,260**	**333,341**	**87,081**	**A**	
Pensions	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Pensions	Finance	246,260	333,341	87,081	A	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn - correction on non-controllable insurance account code is movement between controllable and non-controllable variances.

Service Area		**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	
STRATEGY		**489,400**	**658,140**	**168,740**	**R**	
Strategy	**Portfolio Holder**	**Budget**	**Outturn**	**Variance**	**RAGY**	**OUTTURN NARRATIVE - VARIANCE TO BUDGET**
Ring Fenced Public Health Services	Health	(1,080,990)	(1,079,802)	1,188	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Adult Social Care Training	Social Care	435,180	332,491	(102,689)	Y	• Additional transformation funding applied £0.091m
Children & Young People Learning & Development	Children & Education	353,160	285,023	(68,137)	Y	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Partnerships & Economic Development	Transport & Economic Growth	12,600	58,108	45,508	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Emergency Planning	Leader	45,710	78,573	32,863	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Broadband	Transport & Economic Growth	119,660	126,101	6,441	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Domestic Abuse	Health	36,130	38,539	2,409	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Communications	Deputy Leader & Communities	278,400	9,065	(269,335)	Y	• (£0.236m) Vacancy Management efficiencies achieved • (£0.033m) Additional Public Health Grant contributions
Business Improvement: Data, Analysis and Intelligence	Leader	55,210	95,261	40,051	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Risk Management	Finance	(13,960)	94,409	108,369	R	• Risk team no longer included in insurance recharges
Commercial Services Business Development	Finance	(57,360)	(15,162)	42,198	G	• Minor variance to budget as at Outturn
Climate Change	Transport & Economic Growth	(168,940)	188,274	357,214	R	• £0.295m shortfall on Pyrolysis and solar farm Income • £0.062m additional legal costs
Programme Management	Deputy Leader & Communities	308,190	420,938	112,748	R	• Transfer of service director's budgets from here to Service Director Strategy and Change

Service Director Strategy and Change	Deputy Leader & Communities	166,410	26,322	(140,088)	Y	• Transfer of service director's budgets from Programme Management to here

APPENDIX 2

UPDATE IN DELIVERY OF 2025/26 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Summary

The savings delivered for 2025/26 are summarised in the table below:

Savings Target	Delivered	Projected Delivery	Indicative Plans	Delivery to be Confirmed
£59,876,040	£17,722,405	£17,722,405	£0	£42,153,635
	% Delivered	% Projected Delivery	% Indicative Plans	% Delivery to be Confirmed
	29.60%	29.60%	0.00%	70.40%

29.60% of total savings have been delivered during the year. The MTFP for future years sets out removal of some of the 70.4% of unachieved savings with new financial year savings plans to be progressed to ensure that savings proposals can be delivered on an ongoing basis in order to eliminate any future savings pressures.

Details by individual savings are below:

Individual Savings List 25/26

Savings Name	Savings Target	Delivered to Date (One-off)	Delivered to Date (Ongoing)	Delivered to Date Total	Projected Delivery (One-off)	Projected Delivery (Ongoing)	Projected Delivery Total	Indicative Plans in Place	Delivery to be Confirmed
EFF45 - Charge staffing costs to capital budgets where possible and appropriate (capital project support or transformation of revenue services).	£1,790,350	£1,790,350	£0	£1,790,350	£1,790,350	£0	£1,790,350	£0	-£0
EFF81 - New Operating Model - Charge staffing costs delivering transformation to capital budgets where possible and appropriate (Workforce and Improvement).	£645,220	£468,760	£176,460	£645,220	£468,760	£176,460	£645,220	£0	£0
EFF83 - New Operating Model - Charge staffing costs to capital budgets where possible and appropriate (Legal and Democratic).	£57,330	£57,330	£0	£57,330	£57,330	£0	£57,330	£0	£0
EFF84 - New Operating Model - Charge staffing costs to capital budgets where possible and appropriate (Finance and IT).	£20,740	£20,740	£0	£20,740	£20,740	£0	£20,740	£0	-£0
MD001 - Further increase funding of public health reserves to support preventative initiatives at the children's, adults and customer front-door (earliest point of contact). Was included in the 2024/25 budget for one year only and is shown here as being removed.	-£200,000	£0	-£200,000	-£200,000	£0	-£200,000	-£200,000	£0	-£0
MD012 - Supported living - Reduce the need for 24 hour provision and increase independence through alternative resources such as technology	£873,190	£0	£345,794	£345,794	£0	£345,794	£345,794	£0	£527,396
MD016 - ASC - nighttime care and support service enabling people to stay at home	£520,000	£0	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£0	£250,000	£0	£270,000
MD019 - The council would need to encourage more people to foster across the county	£1,375,000	£0	£1,410,018	£1,410,018	£0	£1,410,018	£1,410,018	£0	-£35,018
MD020 - Stepping Stones	£3,758,000	£0	£2,273,473	£2,273,473	£0	£2,273,473	£2,273,473	£0	£1,484,527
MD021 - Increase in income from care contributions	£1,000,000	£0	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£0	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£0	£0
MD022 - Increase in in-house provider charges	£60,000	£0	£60,000	£60,000	£0	£60,000	£60,000	£0	£0
MD023 - Partnership working CHC and 117	£650,000	£0	£650,000	£650,000	£0	£650,000	£650,000	£0	-£0
MD026 - Shared lives cost avoidance delivered through increase in capacity	£300,000	£0	£111,090	£111,090	£0	£111,090	£111,090	£0	£188,910
MD027 - Supporting independence through Reviews (including LDSL/DPs and Tech etc)	£1,610,000	£0	£1,610,000	£1,610,000	£0	£1,610,000	£1,610,000	£0	£0
MD028 - Fee uplift review	£1,500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,500,000
MD029 - ASC contracts and performance management	£600,000	£0	£600,000	£600,000	£0	£600,000	£600,000	£0	£0
MD030 - Home to school transport - academic days	£178,900	£0	£178,900	£178,900	£0	£178,900	£178,900	£0	-£0
NI003 - ASC Telecare	£500,000	£0	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000	£0	£400,000	£0	£100,000
NI004 - Expand the Handy Person service to a wider range of customers, including fee payers, supporting independent living	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£10,000	£0	-£0
NI006 - Increase income from Museums and Archives services	£100,000	£81,440	£18,560	£100,000	£81,440	£18,560	£100,000	£0	£0
NI007 - Increase income from an enhanced memorial and ceremony offer at Council sites	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£10,000	£0	-£0
NI008 - Increase income from an improved range of wedding and partnership ceremony packages	£2,000	£0	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£0
PPR0 - Rightsizing	£11,723,400	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£11,723,400

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PRF&C0 - Income	£3,848,740	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£3,848,740
PRR1 - Legal & Governance Resizing	£100,000	£0	£34,680	£34,680	£0	£34,680	£34,680	£0	£65,320
PRR2 - Enabling Resizing	£1,256,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,256,000
PRR4 - Children's Rightsizing	£2,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,000,000
PRR5 - Infrastructure Resizing	£850,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£850,000
PRR6 - Care & Wellbeing Rightsizing	£1,300,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,300,000
PRTPS0 - Third Party	£12,991,240	£0	£1,785,449	£1,785,449	£0	£1,785,449	£1,785,449	£0	£11,205,791
RC003 - Further increase allocation of the public health grant to support preventative initiatives at the children's, adults and customer front-door.	£70,000	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£0
RC004 - Capitalisation of reserves as one off for staff and projects relating to transformation work to further increase funding of public health reserves to support preventative initiatives. This is for 2024/25, in addition to 1,000,000 in 23/24. This is being removed in 2025/26.	-£1,000,000	£0	-£1,000,000	-£1,000,000	£0	-£1,000,000	-£1,000,000	£0	£0
RC011/19 - Review and right size business support function	£312,500	£0	£312,500	£312,500	£0	£312,500	£312,500	£0	£0
RC016 - Agency Staff - reducing use of agency staff; promote permanent staffing.	£85,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£85,000
RC025 - Review and resize the Housing Services team	£64,000	£64,000	£0	£64,000	£64,000	£0	£64,000	£0	£0
RC026 - Review and potential reduction of some leisure provision to achieve cost reductions.	£100,000	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£70,000	£70,000	£0	£30,000
RC029 - Review staffing and resize the Rights of Way team	£6,460	£0	£6,460	£6,460	£0	£6,460	£6,460	£0	-£0
RC030 - Review staffing and resize the Outdoor Partnerships team	£13,840	£0	£13,840	£13,840	£0	£13,840	£13,840	£0	-£0
RC032 - Review Library Services to ensure maximum efficiencies including funding reviews and reshaping/reductions of services	£220,540	£49,340	£151,200	£200,540	£49,340	£151,200	£200,540	£0	£20,000
RC040 - Dispose of Shirehall quicker and relocate services	£1,300,000	£0	£1,005,540	£1,005,540	£0	£1,005,540	£1,005,540	£0	£294,460
RC074 - Anticipated cost reductions in Revenues & Benefits arising from improvement of in-house Temporary Accommodation provision.	£1,000,000	£0	£449,891	£449,891	£0	£449,891	£449,891	£0	£550,109
RC078 - New model for future delivery of the Council's Out of Hours calls triage and Shrewsbury Town Centre CCTV monitoring	£47,310	£17,310	£30,000	£47,310	£17,310	£30,000	£47,310	£0	£0
RC083 - Review and secure cost reductions in the pooled training budget	£17,270	£0	£17,270	£17,270	£0	£17,270	£17,270	£0	£0
RC087 - DSG funding of SEND pressures	£500,000	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£0	-£0
RC088 - Increased charges for car parking in Shrewsbury and Ludlow but retaining Park and Ride Services.	£250,000	£0	£250,000	£250,000	£0	£250,000	£250,000	£0	-£0
RC089 - Increased charges for car parking across the County.	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£500,000
RC090 - Residents' only parking will be enforced for an annual residents fee.	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
RC091 - More fixed penalties issued for dog fouling, littering and illegal parking.	£300,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£300,000
RC092 - Large scale switch off of street lights to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.	£150,000	£0	£226,000	£226,000	£0	£226,000	£226,000	£0	-£76,000
RC094 - Waste contract efficiencies across the waste service including review of garden waste collection costs and HRC opening times to be delivered through negotiated changes to the contract.	£987,000	£0	£387,000	£387,000	£0	£387,000	£387,000	£0	£600,000
RC096 - Asking other organisations (commercial companies) to manage our leisure centres for us.	£200,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200,000
RC097 - Management of green spaces and areas of outstanding natural beauty will be passed to town or parish councils, where they choose to take that on.	£200,000	£0	£200,000	£200,000	£0	£200,000	£200,000	£0	£0
SC002 - Review education transport arrangements - changes to policy and delivery models (mainstream and SEND)	£400,000	£0	£400,000	£400,000	£0	£400,000	£400,000	£0	£0
SC008 - Review staffing and resize the Empty Homes service	£47,010	£0	£47,010	£47,010	£0	£47,010	£47,010	£0	£0
SC013 - Rationalise property and buildings to secure revenue savings (e.g. utilities, security, repairs and maintenance etc). Use reductions to secure additional capital receipts.	£3,000,000	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£0	£2,500,000
TO001 - Explore shared emergency planning resource and resilience with partners.	£15,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£15,000
TO002 - Review the use of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to maximise grant funding	£60,000	£0	£60,000	£60,000	£0	£60,000	£60,000	£0	£0
TO004 - Review funding arrangements and contributions from external sources to higher cost placements	£500,000	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£0	-£0
TO009 - Review service synergies to secure cost reductions across Highways, Maintenance, and Outdoors services.	£1,000,000	£0	£250,000	£250,000	£0	£250,000	£250,000	£0	£750,000
Total	**£59,876,040**	**£2,549,270**	**£15,173,135**	**£17,722,405**	**£3,199,270**	**£14,523,135**	**£17,722,405**	**£0**	**£42,153,635**

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APPENDIX 3

AMENDMENTS TO ORIGINAL BUDGET 2025/26

	Total	Care & Wellbeing	Children & Young People	Commissioning	Communities & Customer	Corporate	Enabling	Executive Management Team	Infrastructure	Legal, Governance & Planning	Pensions	Strategy
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Quarter 2 Revised Budget (as a result of wholescale Council restructure implemented July 2025)	**288,586**	**136,184**	**90,785**	**42,646**	**16,678**	**(59,544)**	**6,580**	**5,160**	**43,737**	**5,847**	**228**	**285**
Quarter 3 Virement	**0**	**144**	**179**	**690**	**110**	**(1,684)**	**367**	**0**	**65**	**78**	**11**	**40**
Quarter 3 Structure Changes	**0**	**2,100**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**(2,100)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Quarter 4 Virements:												
Realign Apprenticeship Levy to new restructure of Service Director Cost centres	0	100	159	25	35	(50)	74	(470)	45	53	7	22
Correct pay award virement back to Public Health – ringfenced	0					16						(16)
Removal of historic Invest to Save funding	0		(159)									159
Redistribute Unison recharges to Executive Management Team cost centres	0	(75)		75	(3)			3				
Staffing virement in relation to Workforce Board Approval	0				1			(1)				
Quarter 4 Structure Changes:												
Final Revised Budget 2025/26	**288,586**	**138,453**	**90,964**	**43,436**	**16,821**	**(61,262)**	**7,021**	**2,592**	**43,847**	**5,978**	**246**	**490**

APPENDIX 4

GENERAL FUND BALANCE

4.1 The General Fund reserve at 31st March 2025 stood at £4.825m, below the target level which is £15m-£30m as a minimum. The 2025/26 budget strategy included a contribution of £29.455m to the General Fund balance which would then reach £34.280m.

4.2 It is essential that the Council retains the General Fund Balance to be able to mitigate any unforeseen shocks (such as ongoing inflationary increases, climate events such as flooding and drought, or rapid reductions in available resources due to changed national policy). Independent advice is that General Fund un-earmarked reserves should equate to 5%- 15% of net spending.

4.3 The outturn of £29.788m, following the application of Exceptional Financial Support, has been identified during the year as a cost pressure against the General Fund.

4.4 In 2019/20 – 2024/25, the General Fund was used to offset Shire Services' deficit outturn position, as the Shire Services' earmarked reserve had been fully utilised in 2019/20. This use of the General Fund effectively represents a loan to Shire Services which must be repaid. Shire Services have delivered a surplus in 2025/26 of £0.201m, which can now be used to repay an element of the General Fund contribution. Therefore, the total loan now stands at £1.043m, and it is still intended that this will be repaid within a reasonable time frame.

General Fund	**£'000**
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2025	4,825
Budgeted Contribution 2025/26	29,455
Budgeted General Fund Balance as at 31st March	**34,280**
Non controllable insurance underspend	507
Controllable Overspend*	(29,787)
Balance as at 31 March 2026	**5,000**

* The surplus generated for 2025/26 Shire Services referred to in para. 5.4 is included within the controllable overspend of £29.787m.

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APPENDIX 5

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2025/26

As at 31st March 2026	Budget £ (as reported May 2025)	Outturn £	Variance Adverse/ (Favourable) £
Income			
Dwellings Rent	(22,669,082)	(22,185,445)	483,637
Garage Rent	(102,700)	(98,007)	4,693
Other Rent	(33,182)	(7,824)	25,358
Charges for Services	(1,174,578)	(1,569,361)	(394,783)
Total Income	**(23,979,542)**	**(23,860,637.1)**	**118,905**
Expenditure			
ALMO Management Fee	10,863,882	10,807,039	(56,843)
Supplies and Services	1,272,420	2,321,013	1,048,593
Capital Charges - Dwelling Depreciation	4,910,332	4,573,910	(336,422)
Capital Charges - Depreciation Other	287,338	372,100	84,762
Interest Paid	3,254,302	3,988,739	734,437
Repairs charged to revenue	730,752	1,095,312	364,560
New Development Feasibility	190,179	48,789	(141,390)
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	108,826	93,952	(14,874)
Corporate & Democratic Core	551,214	368,547	(182,667)
Total Expenditure	**22,169,245**	**23,669,400**	**1,500,155**
Net Cost of Services	**(1,810,297)**	**(191,237)**	**1,619,060**
Revenue Financing Capital Expenditure	5,790,417	0	(5,790,417)
Loan repayments	0	0	0
(Surplus)/deficit for the year	**3,980,120**	**(191,237)**	**(4,171,357)**
Interest Received	(247,552)	(1,180,322)	(932,770)
Net Cost of Service/(Surplus) for Year	**3,732,568**	**(1,371,559)**	**(5,104,127)**
HRA Reserve			
B/fwd 1 April	(9,505,000)	(14,860,594)	
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	3,732,568	1,371,559	
Carried Forward 31 March	(6,788,000)	(13,489,035)	

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APPENDIX 6

EARMARKED RESERVES

6.1 The change in revenue reserves and provisions are detailed on the table below and shows a reduction in the overall reserves and provisions held.

Movement in Reserves and Provisions 2025/26

	Reserves £'000	Provisions £'000	Bad Debt Provisions £'000	Total Reserves and Provisions £'000
As at 31 March 2025	25,455	11,225	20,753	57,433
As at 31 March 2026	29,811	10,687	22,593	63,091
Increase/(Decrease)	**4,356**	**(539)**	**1,840**	**5,658**
Delegated School Balances Movement	(1,994)	0	0	(1,994)
Increase/(Decrease) (excluding Delegated Schools Balances)	**6,351**	**(539)**	**1,840**	**7,652**

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions:

Reserves	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward	Movement Out 2025/26	Movement In 2025/26	Balance Carried Forward
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Corporate Reserves					
Redundancy	Required to meet one-off costs arising from approved staffing reductions, allowing the full approved savings in salaries or wages to reach the revenue account.	0	0	0	0
Development Reserve	Required to fund development projects or training that will deliver efficiency savings.	1,204	-2,285	6,000	4,919
Invest to save Reserve	Required to fund invest to save projects in order to deliver the service transformation programme.	491	-88	164	567
External Fund Reserve	Reserves held where the Council is the administering body for trust funds or partnership working.	1,723	-230	962	2,455
		3,417	**-2,602**	**7,126**	**7,941**
Reserves retained for service departmental use					
Building Control	Required to manage the position regarding building control charges.	274	-2	0	272
Care Act & IBCF Reserve	Required to fund the costs of implementing the Care Act requirements within the Council. This will be committed to the costs of one off posts required to implement the changes and training costs for staff within Adult Services. Plus unspent IBCF monies required to fund the IBCF programme in future years.	79	-6	198	271
Debt Recovery Reserve	Established to provide resources for improving the recovery of debts across the Council and Collection Fund.	221	34	-2	253

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Reserves	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward	Movement Out 2025/26	Movement In 2025/26	Balance Carried Forward
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Economic Development Workshops Major Maintenance	Established to meet the costs of major maintenance of Economic Development Workshops.	163	0	0	163
Education Welfare Reserve	Eastblished from the traded Education Welfare Service for reivestment in the service.	0	110	0	110
Highways Development & Innovation Fund	Set aside funds for pump priming the Development and Innovation programme.	100	0	0	100
Housing Reserve	To fund known housing developments that will suppot the General Fund.	647	-551	3	99
Improvement Plan Reserve	Established from external funds received towards the Improvement Plan	0	0	115	115
Planning Reserve	Set aside to fund developments within the Local Plan and any planning inquiry costs.	0	79	0	79
Public Health Reserve	This reserve includes balances committed to specific public health projects.	3,118	-493	764	3,389
Repairs & Maintenance Reserve	Set aside for known repairs and maintenance required to Council owned properties.	214	0	0	214
Revenue Commitments from Unringfenced Revenue Grants	Established from unapplied unringfenced Grant balances. Commitments have been made against these balances in 2024/25	3,911	-1,403	2,112	4,620
Schools Building Maintenance Insurance	The schools building maintenance insurance scheme is a service provided by Property Services for schools. In return for an annual sum all structural repairs and maintenance responsibilities previously identified as the "authority's responsibility" are carried out at no additional charge to the school.	1,564	-37	0	1,527
Severe Weather	Required to meet unbudgeted costs arising from the damage caused by severe weather. The policy of the Council is to budget for an average year's expenditure in the revenue accounts and transfer any underspend to the reserve or fund any overspend from the reserve.	0	0	0	0
Shire Catering and Cleaning Efficiency	Built up from trading surpluses to invest in new initiatives, to meet exceptional unbudgeted costs or cover any trading deficits.	0	-2	2	0
Streetworks Reserve	Established from additional income generated within the service to be reinvested in the service	358	0	82	439
TMO Vehicle Replacement	Set up to meet the costs of replacement vehicles by the Integrated Transport Unit.	37	0	0	37
		10,685	**-2,270**	**3,273**	**11,688**
Capital Investment Reserves					
Revenue Commitments for Future Capital Expenditure	Comprises of underspends against budgeted revenue contributions available for capital schemes. The underspends have arisen due to slippage in capital schemes or because other funding streams were utilised during the year so as to maximise time limited grants.	3,210	-2,370	900	1,740
		3,210	**-2,370**	**900**	**1,740**
Insurance Reserves					
Fire Liability	Required to meet the cost of excesses on all council properties.	838	-476	163	526
Motor Insurance	An internally operated self-insurance reserve to meet costs not covered by the Council's Motor Insurance Policy.	611	-141	100	570
		1,450	**-617**	**263**	**1,096**

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Reserves	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward	Movement Out 2025/26	Movement In 2025/26	Balance Carried Forward
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Financial Risks					
Financial Strategy Reserve	Established specifically to provide one off funding for savings proposals in the Financial Strategy	0	5,677	-4,629	1,049
Financial Risk - Adult Social Care	Established to address the financial risk of additional unforeseen Adult Social Care Demand	0	700	0	700
Financial Risk - Children's Social Care	Established to address the financial risk of additional unforeseen Children's Social Care Demand	0	400	0	400
Financial Risk - Economic Risk	Established to address the financial risk arising from changing economic conditions that may impact on the Council	0	500	0	500
		0	**7,277**	**-4,629**	**2,649**
School Balances					
Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation	Schools' balances have to be ringfenced for use by schools and schools have the right to spend those balances at their discretion.	6,693	-6,716	4,721	4,699
		6,693	**-6,716**	**4,721**	**4,699**
Total Reserves		**25,455**	**-7,297**	**11,654**	**29,812**
Provisions					
Provisions - Short Term					
Accumulated Absences Account	Provision to cover potential future payments of employee benefits not taken as at the end of the year. This is required under IFRS accounting regulations.	3,213	-3,213	2,878	2,878
Other Provisions - Short Term	Includes a number of small provisions including Environmental Maintenance contract commitments and Shopping Centre rental payments	1,897	-1,721	172	348
Provisions - Long Term					
Other Provisions - Long Term	Includes a number of small provisions including S106 Accrued Interest, profit share agreements and Shopping Centre rental payments.	0	0	0	0
Tenancy Deposit Clawbacks	This represents deposits held for the economic development workshops that may be repaid at some point in the future.	244	-9	53	288
Liability Insurance	Provision to meet the estimated actuarial valuation of claims for public liability and employers' liability	3,968	-625	813	4,156
NDR Appeals	Represents the Council's share of the provision held for successful appeals against business rates.	1,904	-1,417	2,529	3,017
Council Tax Bad Debt	Held for potential write offs of Council tax debtor balances.	12,669	-208	2,156	14,617
NNDR Bad Debt	Held for potential write offs of NNDR debtor balances.	2,610	3	91	2,704
General Fund Bad Debts	Held for potential write offs of debtor balances for General Fund Services including Housing Benefits.	5,135	-1,075	789	4,848
HRA Bad Debts	Held for potential write offs of debtor balances for Housing Revenue Account rents and other debtor balances.	339	-10	94	423
Total Provisions		**31,978**	**-8,275**	**9,576**	**33,280**
Total Reserves & Provisions		**57,433**	**-15,572**	**21,230**	**63,091**

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Delegated School Balances

6.2 The movement in delegated schools balances are detailed in the table below.

Movement in delegated school balances 2025/26

	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Increase/ (Decrease) £'000
Schools:			
- Revenue Balances	4,703	2,256	(2,447)
- Invested Balances	1,211	1,289	78
- Extended Schools Activities Balance	780	1,154	374
Total Delegated Schools Balances	**6,694**	**4,699**	**(1,995)**

6.3 Schools' balances have to be ringfenced for use by schools and schools have the right to spend those balances at their discretion. Of the 77 schools with balances, 7 have deficit balances.

6.4 The Extended Schools activities allocations for schools have increased marginally during 2025/26. These balances are ringfenced to each individual school within School Balances.

6.5 In 2020, new reporting requirements were introduced to establish a new reserve for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balances. For those local authorities with a DSG balance surplus, the requirement is that the surplus is held in an earmarked useable reserve, and any deficit is held in an unusable reserve named the DSG Adjustment Account. In 2024/25 the Council held a DSG deficit of £17.651m, and this has increased further to £45.655m.

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APPENDIX 7

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Detail	Agreed Capital Programme - Council 27/02/25 £	Slippage & Budget Changes Approved To Quarter 3 2025/26 £	Quarter 4 Budget Changes to be Approved £	Revised 2025/26 Capital Programme Quarter 4 £
General Fund				
Care & Wellbeing	0.414	0.010	(0.000)	0.425
Children & Young People	12.461	(4.695)	0.025	7.792
Commissioning	1.522	1.492	0.000	3.013
Communities & Customer	5.808	1.571	0.322	7.701
Enabling	22.063	(13.659)	(0.722)	7.682
Infrastructure	88.916	(41.178)	(30.989)	16.748
Legal,Governance & Planning	0.636	0.612	0.003	1.250
Strategy	9.553	(3.422)	0.011	6.141
Total General Fund	**141.373**	**(59.269)**	**(31.350)**	**50.753**
Housing Revenue Account	20.687	1.52	4.42	26.622
Total Approved Budget	**162.059**	**(57.752)**	**(26.932)**	**77.375**

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APPENDIX 8

CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN POSITION BY SERVICE AREA 2025/26

	Revised Capital Programme - Outturn 2025/26 £	Actual Expenditure 31/03/2026 £	Variance £	Spend To Budget %
General Fund				
Care & Wellbeing	0.425	0.256	0.169	60.2%
Children & Young People	7.792	5.123	2.669	65.7%
Commissioning	3.013	2.880	0.134	95.6%
Communities & Customer	7.701	12.997	(5.296)	168.8%
Enabling	7.682	10.524	(2.842)	137.0%
Infrastructure	16.748	7.985	8.763	47.7%
Legal,Governance & Planning	1.250	0.994	0.257	79.5%
Strategy	6.141	6.462	(0.321)	105.2%
Total General Fund	**50.753**	**47.220**	**3.533**	**93.0%**
Housing Revenue Account	26.622	21.479	5.143	80.7%
Total Approved Budget	**77.375**	**68.698**	**8.677**	**88.8%**

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APPENDIX 9

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES BETWEEN REVISED OUTTURN BUDGET AND OUTTURN EXPENDITURE BY SERVICE AREAS FOR 2025/26

The overall capital programme, both General Fund and HRA, outturned at £68.698m expenditure against a budget profile of £77.375m for the 2025/26 financial year, a £8.677m underspend against expected profile or 88.8% expenditure against budget.

Care & Wellbeing – Total underspend against Care & Wellbeing was £0.169m which mainly related to a £0.122m underspend on Supported Living adaptations.

Children & Young People :
Devolved Formula Capital/Energy Efficiency Grant - spend of £0.783m against budget £0.998m. Expenditure from this programme is controlled by schools. In general schools use this funding for a variety of small and medium projects and procuring IT equipment. As with other programmes funded through standards fund grant, the expenditure is not immediately reflected in capital accounts, and unspent balances can be carried forward to subsequent financial years. Underspend £0.215m rephased to 2026/27 programme

Condition Funding – spend of £1.460m against a budget of £2.555m. This fund is used to maintain school buildings through a prioritised planned delivery programme. Most works have to be scheduled during school closure periods and natural rephasing of schemes occurs in order to enable this. Underspend of £1.1m rephased to 2026/27 programme.

Special Educational Needs – spend of £2.242m against a budget of £3.347m. This capital funding is used to develop the provision of special educational needs within primary and secondary schools.

Commissioning – Underspend of £0.153m in relation to Leisure capital schemes with a budget of £3.013m.

Communities & Customer – Housing service have had expenditure of £9.708m compared to a budget of £4.910m. Whilst this represents a significant overspend, this is in relation to the Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service and Disabled Facilities Grant and it was agreed that additional contributions would be received from partner organisations and the Better Care Fund to fully fund this expenditure.

Enabling
Corporate Landlord – Spend of £6.733m compared to a budget of £4.575m. The main underspend within the Corporate Landlord budget related to the Shrewsbury Town Centre Riverside Redevelopment, which was fully funded through the Levelling Up Fund.

Legal, Governance & Planning –

Infrastructure
Highways Maintenance - Spend on highways infrastructure amounted to £33.3m for this programme of work which includes Highways, Structures, Lighting and Drainage. This has

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been funded from Government Grants of £12.149m Road Maintenance Fund, £18.218m from the Government Pot Hole Fund and £2.289m Incentive Fund.

This service area outturned at £1.421m underspend. This was predominantly as a result of delays in structural maintenance of bridges. This underspend will be carried forward to 2026/27.

North-West Relief Road – The North West Relief road scheme has been cancelled during 2025/26, and so the budget and all expenditure incurred on the scheme over previous years, has been reversed out of the capital programme in 2025/26.

Flood Defence and Water Management - Outturn position overall £1.440m underspend against budget. Shropshire Council is acting as project lead on a number of Environment Agency funded Demonstrator Flood Prevention Projects and mitigations, including the Rea Brook project, and further innovation and technological intervention projects. This is grant funding that will be rephased into the 2026/27 programme for delivery.

Integrated Transport Grant - Outturn Position overall £1.994m underspend against budget. This is due to timing delivery of smaller schemes required to improve road safety and improvements across the County that have been delayed until the 2026/27 financial year.

Strategy - A small overspend of £0.321m against a budget of £6.141m which was due to additional costs for the Pyrolysis project which has been funded through borrowing which will be repaid through the income generated through the project.

APPENDIX 10

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCING 2025/26

Detail	Agreed Capital Programme - Council 27/02/25 £	Slippage & Budget Changes Approved To Quarter 3 2025/26 £	Quarter 4 Budget Changes to be Approved £	Revised 2025/26 Capital Programme Quarter 4 £
Financing				
Self Financed Prudential Borrowing *	27.374	(8.271)	(0.002)	19.102
Government Grants	101.189	(36.823)	(19.695)	44.671
Other Grants	0.489	0.003	0.000	0.492
Other Contributions	10.236	(5.857)	(4.638)	(0.259)
Revenue Contributions to Capital	1.277	0.237	0.080	1.593
Major Repairs Allowance	5.322	1.589	0.000	6.911
Corporate Resources (expectation - Capital Receipts only)	16.173	(8.630)	(2.677)	4.866
Total Confirmed Funding	**162.059**	**(57.752)**	**(26.932)**	**77.375**

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APPENDIX 11

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 to 2028/29

Detail	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£	£	£
General Fund			
Care & Wellbeing	-	-	-
Children & Young People	16,273,086	26,941,500	2,500,000
Commissioning	2,050,000	1,075,000	-
Communities & Customer	7,784,483	7,154,651	4,500,000
Enabling	23,602,310	7,980,000	3,110,000
Infrastructure	62,888,491	57,684,300	56,303,400
Legal,Governance & Planning	315,613	200,346	-
Strategy	5,300,000	4,000,000	-
Total General Fund	**118,213,983**	**105,035,797**	**66,413,400**
Housing Revenue Account	27,166,079	24,500,001	22,700,001
Total Approved Budget	**145,380,062**	**129,535,798**	**89,113,401**
Financing			
Self Financed Prudential Borrowing *	23,917,871	11,432,553	7,932,553
Government Grants	90,946,736	77,564,858	66,070,848
Other Grants	11,748	-	-
Other Contributions	3,467,524	14,400,253	-
Revenue Contributions to Capital	7,097,023	4,100,000	3,000,000
Major Repairs Allowance	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Corporate Resources (expectation - Capital Receipts only)	14,939,160	17,038,134	7,110,000
Total Confirmed Funding	**145,380,062**	**129,535,798**	**89,113,401**

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APPENDIX 12

PROJECTED CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

12.1 The current capital programme relies on the Council generating capital receipts to finance part of the capital programme. There is a high level of risk in these projections as they are subject to changes in property and land values, the actions of potential buyers and being granted planning permission on sites. The table below summarises the current allocated and projected capital receipt position across 2025/26 to 2028/29. A RAG analysis has been included for capital receipts projected, based on the current likelihood of generating them by the end of each financial year. Disposals rated marked "Green" are highly likely to be completed by the end of the financial year, those rated "Amber" are achievable but challenging and thus there is a risk of slippage, and those rated "Red" are highly unlikely to complete in year and thus there is a high risk of slippage. However, no receipts are guaranteed to complete in any financial year as there may be delays between exchanging contracts and completing.

12.2 The Council's requirement for capital receipts of £31.843m reported at Quarter 3 included funding the Council's transformational activities: the Voluntary Redundancy Programme, compulsory redundancies, specific transformation projects and the Council's Strategic Transformation Partner. In December 2025 the Council applied to the Government for Exceptional Financial Support, which has been approved in principle and creates the ability for the Council to borrow to fund its' transformational activities in 2025-26 and so protect capital receipts. An amount of £10.000m was approved for this purpose and this has been fully utilised in 2025/26. This successful submission, along with the reprofiling of the HRA capital scheme funded via capital receipts, has significantly improved the Council's capital receipts position as shown in the table below.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	7,518,022.05	14,939,160	17,038,134	7,110,000	4,326,000
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	-	18,301,066	9,054,000	6,181,991	-
Transformation activities	14,791,756	-	-	-	-
Transformation activities funded with EFS Approval	- 10,000,000				
Total Commitments	**12,309,778**	**33,240,226**	**26,092,134**	**13,291,991**	**4,326,000**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	24,432,326	22,308,833	3,701,548	- 22,325,586	- 35,617,577
Generated 2025/26 YTD	10,186,286	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	-	14,632,941	65,000	-	
Total in hand/projected	**34,618,611**	**36,941,774**	**3,766,548**	**- 22,325,586**	**- 35,617,577**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 22,308,833**	**- 3,701,548**	**22,325,586**	**35,617,577**	**39,943,577**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	-	25,012,122	12,931,170	-	-

12.3 Capital receipts of £10.186m were realised in year, resulting in an in-year capital receipts deficit of £2.123m and a cumulative capital receipts surplus of £22.309m in hand as at 31/03/2026. These receipts will be set-aside, enabling the Council to achieve an additional MRP saving of £0.363m in 2026/27. These capital receipts are required to finance schemes they are allocated to in the future years' capital programme.

12.4 Based on the current approved position, across the life of the programme there are significant shortfalls in capital receipt projections of £22.326m and £35.618m in 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively based on receipts rated green in the RAG analysis to fund the required budget in the capital programme. There is, therefore, the

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requirement to progress the disposals currently rated amber and red to ensure they are realised, together with realising the revenue running cost savings from some of the properties. Considerable work is required to realise these receipts, with generally a lead in in time of at least 12 to 18 months on larger disposals. In addition to the current expenditure commitments, the programme will also grow as new schemes are approved. Officers are continuing to explore the potential to accelerate the realisation of capital receipts and to identify additional opportunities to achieve further capital receipts.

12.5 It is important that work progresses, to avoid funding shortfalls in 2027/28 and 2028/29 and minimise any shortfall in future years. Failure to generate the required level of capital receipts will result in the need to further reduce or re-profile the capital programme, some of which will occur naturally as part of the review of the delivery of schemes; or undertake prudential borrowing, which will incur future year's revenue costs that are not budgeted in the revenue financial strategy.

12.6 The projected shortfall in capital receipts is purely based on the currently approved capital programme for the period 2026-27 to 2028-29.

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APPENDIX 13

Shropshire Council – Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2028/29
Capital Programme Summary Outturn 2025/26

Service Area	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 2025/26 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2025/26 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	2026/27 Revised Budget £	2027/28 Revised Budget £	2028/29 Revised Budget £
General Fund									
Care & Wellbeing Capital	424,762	0	424,762	255,599	169,163	60.17%	0	0	0
Children & Young People & Children's Social Care (CSC)	7,766,727	24,853	7,791,580	5,122,702	2,668,878	65.75%	16,073,086	26,291,500	2,500,000
Commissioning Capital	3,013,393	0	3,013,393	2,879,649	133,744	95.56%	2,050,000	1,075,000	0
Communities & Customer Capital	7,379,122	322,192	7,701,314	12,997,002	-5,295,688	168.76%	3,284,483	2,654,651	0
Enabling Capital	8,404,088	-721,720	7,682,368	10,524,302	-2,841,934	136.99%	23,602,310	7,980,000	3,110,000
Infrastructure Capital	47,737,216	-30,988,894	16,748,322	7,985,153	8,763,169	47.68%	62,888,491	57,684,300	56,303,400
Legal & Governance Capital	1,247,556	2,698	1,250,254	993,566	256,688	79.47%	315,613	200,346	0
Strategy Capital	6,130,565	10,678	6,141,243	6,461,890	-320,647	105.22%	5,300,000	4,000,000	0
Total General Fund	**82,103,429**	**-31,350,193**	**50,753,236**	**47,219,863**	**3,533,373**	**93.04%**	**113,513,983**	**99,885,797**	**61,913,400**
Housing Revenue Account	22,203,922	4,417,905	26,621,827	21,478,601	5,143,226	80.68%	27,166,079	24,500,001	22,700,001
Total Approved Budget	**104,307,351**	**-26,932,288**	**77,375,063**	**68,698,464**	**8,676,599**	**88.79%**	**140,680,062**	**124,385,798**	**84,613,401**

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Service Area Detail	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 2025/26 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2025/26 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	2026/27 Revised Budget £	2027/28 Revised Budget £	2028/29 Revised Budget £
General Fund									
Care & Wellbeing	**424,762**	**0**	**424,762**	**255,599**	**169,163**	**60.17%**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Adult Social Care Operations Capital	424,762	0	424,762	255,599	169,163	60.17%	0	0	0
Children & Young People & Children's Social Care (CSC)	**7,766,727**	**24,853**	**7,791,580**	**5,122,702**	**2,668,878**	**65.75%**	**16,073,086**	**26,291,500**	**2,500,000**
Children's Residential Care Capital	45,240	0	45,240	2,417	42,823	5.34%	0	0	0
Non Maintained Schools Capital	3,185,666	-68,875	3,116,791	2,321,688	795,103	74.49%	6,225,050	18,615,000	2,500,000
Primary School Capital	3,375,641	-84,731	3,290,910	2,192,053	1,098,857	66.61%	1,579,027	5,450,000	0
Primary School Managed Capital	1,202,460	-15,187	1,187,273	512,551	674,722	43.17%	130,000	0	0
Secondary School Capital	782	0	782	0	782	0.00%	0	0	0
Secondary School Managed Capital	58,236	0	58,236	0	58,236	0.00%	0	0	0
Shropshire Music Service Capital	105,727	0	105,727	66,032	39,695	62.45%	11,748	0	0
Special Schools Capital	23,281	-728	22,553	21,051	1,502	93.34%	4,972	0	0
Special Schools Managed Capital	8,354	0	8,354	6,911	1,443	82.73%	0	0	0
Unallocated School Capital	-238,660	194,374	-44,286	0	-44,286	0.00%	8,122,289	2,226,500	0
Commissioning	**3,013,393**	**0**	**3,013,393**	**2,879,649**	**133,744**	**95.56%**	**2,050,000**	**1,075,000**	**0**
Leisure Capital	3,013,393	0	3,013,393	2,879,649	133,744	95.56%	2,050,000	750,000	0
Waste Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	325,000	0
Communities & Customer	**7,379,122**	**322,192**	**7,701,314**	**12,997,002**	**-5,295,688**	**168.76%**	**3,284,483**	**2,654,651**	**0**
Community Hubs & Libraries Capital	279,189	0	279,189	261,347	17,842	93.61%	0	0	0
Housing Services Capital	7,090,237	317,752	7,407,989	12,580,739	-5,172,750	169.83%	2,709,483	2,654,651	0
Museums & Archives Capital	9,696	4,440	14,136	13,478	659	95.34%	0	0	0
Theatre Services Capital	0	0	0	141,438	-141,438	0.00%	575,000	0	0
Enabling	**8,404,088**	**-721,720**	**7,682,368**	**10,524,302**	**-2,841,934**	**136.99%**	**23,602,310**	**7,980,000**	**3,110,000**
ICT Infrastructure Capital	0	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	2,846,000	2,480,000	1,610,000
Property & Asset Capital	8,404,088	-721,720	7,682,368	10,524,302	-2,841,934	136.99%	20,756,310	5,500,000	1,500,000

Service Area Detail	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2025/26 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 2025/26 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 2025/26 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	2026/27 Revised Budget £	2027/28 Revised Budget £	2028/29 Revised Budget £
Infrastructure	**47,737,216**	**-30,988,894**	**16,748,322**	**7,985,153**	**8,763,169**	**47.68%**	**62,888,491**	**57,684,300**	**56,303,400**
Broadband Capital	1,610,626	348,000	1,958,626	1,482,734	475,892	75.70%	1,100,000	500,000	0
Environment and Transport (Public Transport) Capital	665,324	0	665,324	316,850	348,474	47.62%	2,424,800	1,453,400	1,482,100
Highways - Central Area Division Capital	265,000	-20,000	245,000	56,424	188,576	23.03%	270,000	0	0
Highways - Flood Defence & Water Management Capital	3,461,908	154,392	3,616,300	2,176,280	1,440,020	60.18%	1,904,413	0	0
Highways - Integrated Transport Capital	5,106,353	363,400	5,469,753	1,948,503	3,521,250	35.62%	20,348,130	10,217,900	11,329,300
Highways - North West Relief Road (NWRR)	269,477	-31,900,000	-31,630,523	-31,630,523	0	100.00%	0	0	0
Highways - Northern Area Division Capital	265,000	0	265,000	50,097	214,903	18.90%	270,000	0	0
Highways - Oxon Relief Road (OLR)	0	0	0	-717,884	717,884	0.00%	1,127,973	5,000,000	0
Highways - Southern Area Division Capital	365,000	0	365,000	253,726	111,274	69.51%	270,000	0	0
Highways - Street Lighting Capital	1,130,000	0	1,130,000	1,076,621	53,379	95.28%	1,100,000	0	0
Highways - Structural Maintenance of Bridges Capital	2,673,985	34,370	2,708,355	1,586,031	1,122,324	58.56%	2,500,000	0	0
Highways - Structural Maintenance of Roads Capital	29,997,935	40,242	30,038,177	30,287,675	-249,498	100.83%	31,276,297	40,504,000	43,492,000
National Landscapes and Outdoor Partnerships Capital	1,926,608	-9,298	1,917,310	1,098,620	818,690	57.30%	296,878	9,000	0
Legal & Governance	**1,247,556**	**2,698**	**1,250,254**	**993,566**	**256,688**	**79.47%**	**315,613**	**200,346**	**0**
Development Management Capital	148,847	2,698	151,545	114,857	36,688	75.79%	0	0	0
Planning Policy Capital	1,098,709	0	1,098,709	878,709	220,000	79.98%	315,613	200,346	0
Strategy	**6,130,565**	**10,678**	**6,141,243**	**6,461,890**	**-320,647**	**105.22%**	**5,300,000**	**4,000,000**	**0**
Climate Change Capital	1,697,865	0	1,697,865	2,433,745	-735,880	143.34%	1,300,000	0	0
Communications and Engagement Capital	76,029	0	76,029	76,029	0	100.00%	0	0	0
Growth & Development Capital	4,356,671	10,678	4,367,349	3,952,116	415,233	90.49%	4,000,000	4,000,000	0
Transformation Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0
Total General Fund	**82,103,429**	**-31,350,193**	**50,753,236**	**47,219,863**	**3,533,373**	**93.04%**	**113,513,983**	**99,885,797**	**61,913,400**
Housing Revenue Account	**22,203,922**	**4,417,905**	**26,621,827**	**21,478,601**	**5,143,226**	**80.68%**	**27,166,079**	**24,500,001**	**22,700,001**
HRA Dwellings Capital	22,203,922	4,417,905	26,621,827	21,478,601	5,143,226	80.68%	27,166,079	24,500,001	22,700,001
Total Approved Budget	**104,307,351**	**-26,932,288**	**77,375,063**	**68,698,464**	**8,676,599**	**88.79%**	**140,680,062**	**124,385,798**	**84,613,401**

Committee and Date Item

Cabinet
10th June 2026 Public

Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 - 2025/26

Responsible Officer:	Duncan Whitfield		
email:	duncan.whitfield@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 254928
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans, Finance		

1. Synopsis

The Council currently holds £54.2m investments and £460m of borrowing which includes new borrowing of £100m for the General Fund. This is aligned with the Council approved Mid-Year Treasury Strategy update and prudential indicators.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. The report outlines the treasury management activities of the Council in the fourth quarter of 2025/26. It highlights the economic environment in which treasury management decisions have been made. It also provides an update on the performance of the treasury management function.

2.2. During Quarter 4 the internal finance team achieved a return of 3.74% on the Council's cash balances, which was marginally lower than the benchmark by 0.28%. The returns amount to net income of £2.410m for the financial year which is included within the Council's Financial Outturn Report. Further details on this are provided in paragraph 8.3 of the report. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held the Bank Rate at 3.75% during the fourth quarter given the uncertainty arising from the Middle East conflict.

2.3. Reducing returns on cash balances is directly attributable to the overall reduction in available balances. As a result, the Council has undertaken new borrowing of £100m for the General Fund during Quarter 4. Further details on the borrowing undertaken is provided in paragraph 8.4, but it should be noted that the new borrowing included £61.8m relating to the capitalisation direction awarded by the Government during 2025/26. The Council also has borrowing to a value of £55.5m that has matured during the period, resulting in a net increase in borrowing of £44.5m.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Members are asked to review the position as set out in the report –

a) Note that new borrowing of £100m for the General Fund has been taken out during quarter 4, in line with the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26.
b) Note that this borrowing includes borrowing undertaken in line with the Council's approval from government for Exceptional Financial Support for 2025/26.
c) Note that the drawdown for Exceptional Financial Support was some £9.6m less than approved, thereby reducing future revenue costs by c £900,000 per annum over original estimates.
d) Noting the summary of the wider economic environment and the Council's borrowings and investments set out in Appendix A.
e) Noting the performance within prudential indicators for quarter 4, 2025/26 in Appendix B.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. The assessment and management of risk are key considerations for any Treasury Management approach. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council's Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance together with the rigorous internal controls will enable the Council to manage the risk associated with Treasury Management activities and the potential for financial loss.

4.2. The Council's Audit Committee is the committee responsible for ensuring effective consideration of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and policies.

4.3. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

4.4. There are no direct environmental, equalities or climate change consequences arising from this report.

Risk	***Mitigation***	***Link to Strategic Risk***
Security of funds	The Council maintains an Annual Investment Strategy which ensures that minimum acceptable credit criteria is applied for all investments to ensure that only highly creditworthy counterparties are used which enables diversification across all investments. The Council uses a treasury advisor, MUFG Corporate Markets/Link Asset Services to provide a creditworthiness service of all potential investment counterparties, which is continuously monitored and updated as needed	Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year. Failure of Officers and Members to adhere to Governance arrangements.

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Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Managing liquidity	The Council undertakes cash flow monitoring which highlights anticipated cash transactions for the upcoming 18 months. All departments are requested to provide details of large value income and expenditure transactions that may impact on the authority's cash flow position. This is tracked daily and continuously updated to ensure appropriate liquidity to match this profile.	Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year.
Achievement of investment benchmark	Investments undertaken by the Finance team are benchmarked against the 3 Month Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA). The key factors in tracking performance of investments, is the cash balance available to invest and the return that is achieved on investments made. When interest rates are rising in the economy, it may be that previous investments that were fixed have now become less favourable, and so there is a higher risk that the benchmark may not be achieved. The availability of cash for investing has also become a key factor, especially in a period where reserves and hence cash balances have reduced. During the months of February and March the Council does not collect Council Tax and so cash balances reduce during these months. To manage this period, cash is held in call accounts or highly liquid investments rather than being placed into longer term fixed interest investments. The main priority for the Council is always to maintain security and liquidity of funds in preference to investment returns.	Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year.

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 of 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 Quarter 4 performance is slightly below the benchmark however net income of £2.410m has been achieved on investments during 2025/26. Further details on the performance against benchmark are included in paragraph 8.

5.4. As at 31 March 2026 the Council held £54.2million in investments as detailed in Appendix A and borrowing of £465million at fixed interest rates. The ability to secure fixed rates helps to manage the uncertainty and risk of changes to interest rates.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy includes proposals to deliver a reduced carbon footprint for the Council therefore the Finance 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 those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks". The report informs Members of the treasury activities of the Council between 1 January 2026 and 31 March 2026.

7.2. For wider context and consideration of the global financial outlook, an economic and borrowing update for the third quarter is considered in Appendix D.

8. Additional Information

8.1. The Council receives its treasury advice from MUFG Corporate Markets (previously known as Link Asset Services). Their latest interest rate forecasts to 31 March 2027 are shown below. The Bank Rate remained at 3.75% during the fourth quarter of 2025/26, and it is currently anticipated the Bank rate will be held at this level for the 2026/27 financial year, however this will be influenced by the conflict in the Middle East and the resulting impact on the economy.

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 25.03.26												
	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29
BANK RATE	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
12 month ave earnings	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.20	4.20	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80
5 yr PWLB	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60
25 yr PWLB	6.00	6.00	5.90	5.80	5.60	5.40	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.10	5.10
50 yr PWLB	5.80	5.80	5.70	5.50	5.40	5.20	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90

8.2. The Council aims to achieve the optimum return on investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to:

- Keep investments short term (up to 1 year),
- Only invest with highly credit rated financial institutions using Link's suggested creditworthiness approach, including sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information provided by Link.

The Finance Team continue to take a prudent approach keeping investments short term and with the most highly credit rated organisations.

8.3. In the fourth quarter of 2025/26 the internal treasury team achieved a return of 3.74% on the Council's cash balances, which was marginally lower than the benchmark by 0.28%. As cash balances held remained low during the quarter, 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. 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 fourth quarter of 2025/26, its performance on investment were considered in line with the other organisations.

8.4. A full list of investments held as at 31 March 2026, compared to Link's counterparty list, and changes to Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's credit ratings are shown within Link's Monthly Investment Analysis Review at Appendix 1. None of the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were breached during the fourth quarter of 2025/26. Officers continue to monitor the credit ratings of institutions daily. Delegated authority has been put in place to make any amendments to the approved lending list.

8.5. As illustrated above it is unlikely that investment rates in the market will increase above the current level of 3.75%. The average level of funds available for investment purposes in the fourth quarter of 2025/26 was £45.8million.

8.6. As cash balances and reserves at the Council have reduced over recent years it is now necessary to take out new external borrowing, particularly where capital schemes have been funded through borrowing, or in some cases, to reverse internal borrowing agreed in previous years to save interest costs.

8.7. As planned, during the final quarter of the 2025/26, £100m of new external borrowing has been required including borrowing approved in principle by government for Exceptional Finance Support (EFS).

8.8. It should be noted that while the Council had originally made an application in 2025/26 for EFS for up to £71.4m in 2025/26, it is confirmed that only £61.8m is required. Borrowing to this required level is secured. This lower requirement of £9.6m will mean that debt financing costs to the General Fund of around £900,000 per annum will reduce further EFS demands in future years. At all times, EFS funding will be drawn down as late and as little as possible to avoid financing costs of the debt.

8.9. The remaining £38.2m related to new borrowing required for the capital programme in 2025/26 and to replace some short term loans that have matured during the year. All borrowing undertaken is in line with the Authorised and Operational Boundary for external debt as demonstrated in Appendix B.

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

Council, 27 February 2025 – Treasury Strategy 2025/26

Cabinet, 10 September 2025 – Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2025/26

Cabinet, 3 December 2025 – Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2025/26

Council, 11 December 2025 – Treasury Strategy 2025/26 Mid-Year Review

Cabinet, 11 February 2026 – Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2025/26

Local Member: N/A

Appendices

A. Shropshire Council Monthly Investment Analysis Review as at 31 March 2026 (provided by MUFG Corporate Markets)

B. Prudential Indicators for Quarter 4 2025/26

C. Prudential Borrowing Schedule

D. Economic Background and Borrowing Update

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Shropshire Council

Monthly Investment Analysis Review

March 2026

Monthly Economic Summary

General Economy
Following the outbreak of conflict in the Middle East, the last month has seen investors focus on the impact of energy price rises upon monetary and (to a lesser extent) fiscal policy. With that in mind, whilst the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to leave Bank Rate unchanged at 3.75% during the month, investors noted the following comments from the Committee highlighting the impact of energy price rises on inflation and GDP growth: "The MPC is alert to the increased risk of domestic inflationary pressures through second-round effects in wage and price-setting, the risk of which will be greater the longer higher energy prices persist. The MPC is also assessing the implications for inflation of the weakening in economic activity that is likely to result from higher energy costs." The MPC also stated that "It stands ready to act as necessary to ensure that CPI inflation remains on track to meet the 2% target in the medium term." By month's end, the market anticipated that the MPC would raise Bank Rate by at least 0.5% by year end, sharply contrasting the pre-conflict view that Bank Rate would be cut by the same amount through the remainder of 2026. Both MUFG Corporate Markets and Capital Economics also updated their respective Bank Rate forecasts, anticipating that the MPC will now leave Bank Rate unchanged in 2026 before lowering it in 2027.

The first insight into how the conflict might affect UK growth and inflation was provided by the fall in the UK Composite PMI to 51.0 in March from 53.7. The decline was seen across sectors, with the manufacturing PMI dropping from 52.5 to 50.1, whilst the Services PMI fell from 53.9 to 51.2. As Capital Economics noted, these figures are broadly consistent with GDP not growing at the end of Q1 and going into Q2. Among the sub-indices, it was notable that the rise in the manufacturing input price balance from 56.0 to 70.2 was the largest observed since 1992. Whilst the rise in the manufacturing output price balance from 51.9 to 56.8 was smaller, it reached its highest level since May last year. Such readings are consistent with core goods inflation accelerating from 0.8% y/y in January to about 1.5% in six months' time. The rise in the services output prices balance from 55.2 to 57.4, meanwhile, is consistent with services CPI inflation rising from 4.4% to 5.0%. Rounding out the month's PMI releases, the Construction PMI fell to 44.5 in February from 46.4 January – indicating a deepening of contraction in the construction activity during the month ahead of events unfolding in the Middle East.

February's CPI data, meanwhile, confirmed that the economy entered the conflict with headline inflation remaining at the 3% y/y rate recorded in January, matching forecasts. Notably, inflation slowed for transport (2.4% y/y compared to 2.7% in January), as the average price of petrol fell during the month. On a monthly basis, the CPI rose 0.4% as expected, reversing a 0.5% fall in January. Annual core inflation (which excludes which excludes volatile items like unprocessed food and energy) unexpectedly edged up to 3.2% from 3.1%.

News that real GDP grew by just 0.1% q/q in Q4 of last year confirmed that the economic backdrop is much weaker now than the last time energy prices surged in 2022 following the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine. This was also highlighted by Bank Governor Bailey following the MPC meeting, when he cautioned about markets pricing in a series of Bank Rate hikes in 2026. This perception was reinforced by the failure of the economy to grow in January this year, compared to forecasts of 0.2% m/m growth. This left economic output just 0.8% larger than a year ago. Services output did not grow during the month, whilst the manufacturing and construction sectors grew 0.1% m/m and 0.2% m/m respectively, suggesting that weakness was broad-based. On the trade front, the UK recorded a surplus of £3.92 billion in January, which represented a sharp reversal from a £4.34 billion deficit in December. This marked the first surplus since September 2024 as exports rose 7.2% m/m to a record £82.51 billion, while imports fell 3.3% to a one-year low of £78.59 billion.

Mirroring the weakness of the UK's economy, the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 5.2% in the three months to January, staying at its highest level since the three months to February 2021, albeit marginally below expectations of 5.3%. However, the 20,000 rise in payroll employment in the month of February and upward revisions to January's and December's data did suggest that the worst of the falls in employment due to the rise in labour costs in April 2025 are in the past. The number of job vacancies however continued to decline, from 730,000 in the three months to January to 721,000 in February. The wider loosening of labour market conditions was also underlined by the fall in average earning growth (including bonuses) to 3.9% y/y in the three months to January compared to 4.2% in the three months to

December. Notably, private sector wage growth cooled to 3.5% y/y from 3.8%, its weakest pace since early 2021, while public sector pay gains moderated from 7.0% to 5.9%. Finally, average earnings growth excluding bonuses fell similarly, to 3.8% y/y from 4.1%.

Whilst retail sales fell 0.4% m/m in February against this backdrop, news that January's gain was revised up from 1.8% m/m to 2% m/m indicated that activity held up relatively well ahead of the conflict. However, the fall in GfK consumer confidence from -19 in February to an 11 month low of -21 in March was the second consecutive monthly decline, suggesting that the twin threats of higher inflation and weaker activity have begun to hit household sentiment.

Elsewhere, UK public sector net borrowing (excluding public sector banks) rose to £14.3 billion in February from £12.1 billion in the same month last year, exceeeding expectations of £8.5 billion. Whilst missing forecasts, the borrowing overshoot was mainly due to timing effects relating to the government's debt interest payments, which led to a 12.3% y/y leap in spending. That said, the prospect of weaker real GDP growth, higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher gilt yields is likely to erode at least some of the Chancellor's £23.6bn fiscal headroom. Further, it may limit the scope for a large-scale fiscal support package like that seen when energy prices surged in 2022, as already indicated by the targeted measures announced to date.

US Economy
At its March meeting, the US Federal Reserve left the Federal Funds Rate target range unchanged at 3.5%–3.75% for a 2nd consecutive meeting. Policymakers noted that the implications of the war with Iran were uncertain, although PCE (Personal Consumption Expenditure) inflation forecasts were revised higher. Fed Chair Powell noted subsequently that the Fed's projections for a rate cut were conditional on "progress on inflation". Prior to the outbreak of conflict, the annual Consumer Price Index inflation rate in the US was reported at 2.4% in February, unchanged from January. Meanwhile, the second estimate confirmed that the US economy expanded an annualised 0.7% in Q4 2025, well below 1.4% in the advance estimate, following downward revisions to consumer spending, investment, government spending and exports.

EU Economy
Reflecting the impact of higher energy costs (which rose 4.9% y/y), Eurozone annual inflation climbed to 2.5% in March, up from 1.9% in February – albeit slightly below market expectations of 2.6%. Meanwhile, Q4 GDP growth was revised slightly lower, to 0.2% q/q and 1.2% y/y from 0.3% and 1.4% respectively. The European Central Bank kept interest rates unchanged at its March meeting, reaffirming its commitment to stabilising inflation at 2% in the medium term. Policymakers highlighted that the Middle East war has significantly increased uncertainty, creating upside risks for inflation (forecasts for which were raised) and downside risks for growth (forecasts for which were lowered).

Housing
The Halifax House Price Index rose 0.3% m/m in February, matching expectations and slowing from a revised 0.8% gain in January. On a yearly basis, prices rose 1.3% compared to 1.1% in January. The Nationwide House Price Index also rose 0.3% m/m in February, matching both expectations and January's monthly increase. On a yearly basis, prices rose 1%, matching January's increase.

Currency
Over the month, Sterling fell against the Dollar and rose marginally against the Euro.

March	Start	End	High	Low
GBP/USD	$1.3445	$1.3187	$1.3457	$1.3187
GBP/EUR	€1.1387	€1.1445	€1.1603	€1.1387

Interest Rate Forecast
As noted above, both MUFG Corporate Markets and Capital Economics revised their Bank Rate forecasts during the month.

Bank Rate	Now	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29
MUFG Corporate Markets	**3.75%**	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.50%	3.50%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%
Capital Economics	**3.75%**	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.50%	3.25%	3.00%	-	-	-	-	-

Shropshire Council

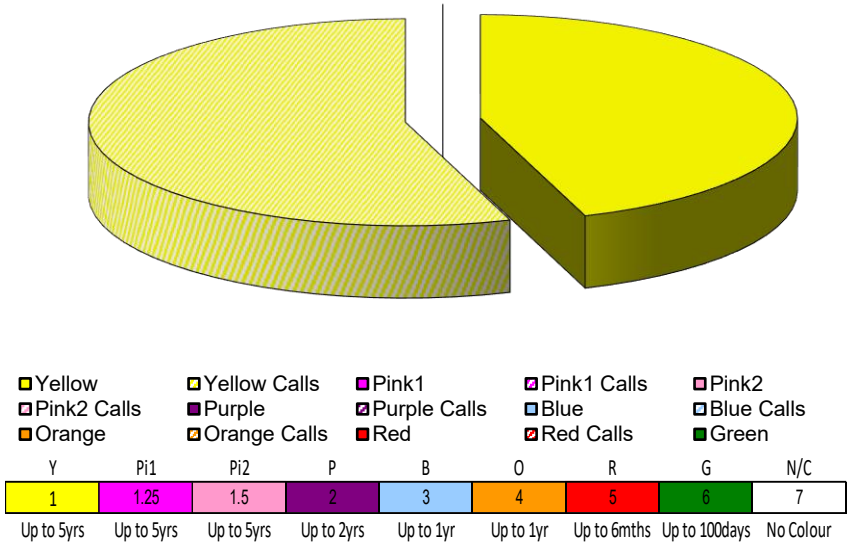
Current Investment List

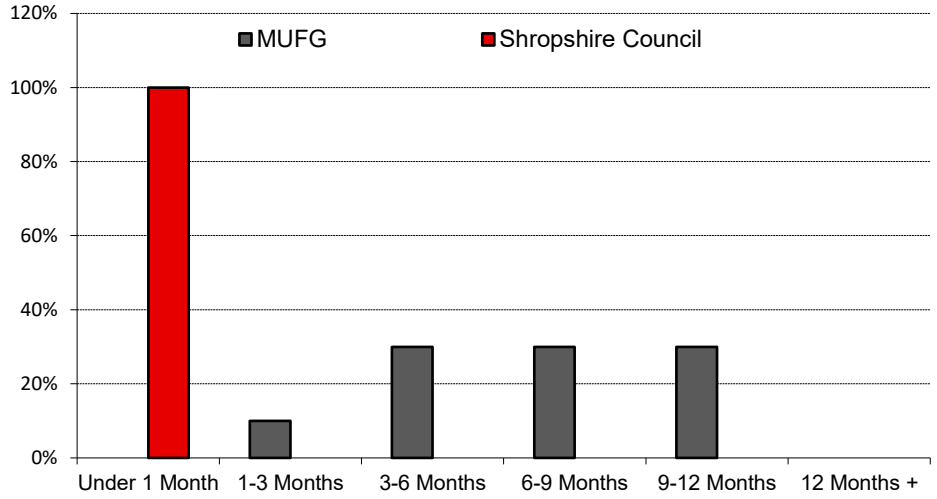
Borrower	Principal (£)	Interest Rate	Start Date	Maturity Date	Lowest LT / Fund Rating	Historic Risk of Default	Expected Credit Loss (£)
MMF Aberdeen Standard Investments	15,000,000	3.80%		MMF	AAAm		
MMF Insight	15,000,000	3.81%		MMF	AAAm		
DMO	5,400,000	3.70%	30/03/2026	01/04/2026	AA-	0.000%	0
DMO	5,000,000	3.71%	30/03/2026	02/04/2026	AA-	0.000%	0
DMO	3,800,000	3.73%	31/03/2026	17/04/2026	AA-	0.001%	0
DMO	10,000,000	3.73%	31/03/2026	20/04/2026	AA-	0.001%	0
Total Investments	**£54,200,000**	**3.77%**					£0

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 1990-2025 for Fitch, 1983-2025 for Moody's and 1981-2025 for S&P.
Where MUFG Corporate Markets have provided a return for a property fund, that return covers the 12 months to December 2025, which are the latest returns currently available.

Shropshire Council

Portfolio Composition by MUFG's Suggested Lending Criteria





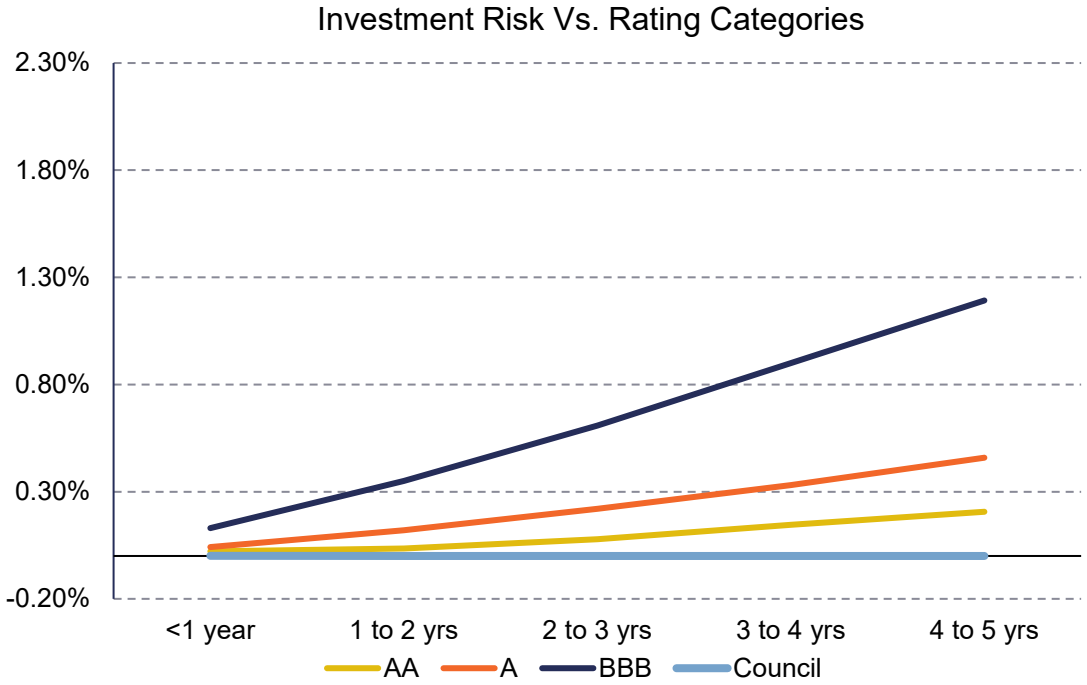
Portfolios weighted average risk number = 1.00

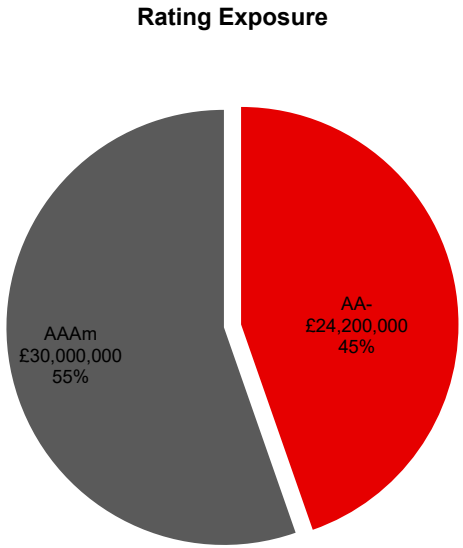
WARoR = Weighted Average Rate of Return
WAM = Weighted Average Time to Maturity

	% of Portfolio	Amount	% of Colour in Calls	Amount of Colour in Calls	% of Call in Portfolio	WARoR	WAM	WAM at Execution	Excluding Calls/MMFs/USDBFs WAM	Excluding Calls/MMFs/USDBFs WAM at Execution
Yellow	100.00%	£54,200,000	55.35%	£30,000,000	55.35%	3.77%	5	5	12	12
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	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
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
	100.00%	**£54,200,000**	**55.35%**	**£30,000,000**	**55.35%**	**3.77%**	**5**	**5**	**12**	**12**

Shropshire Council

Investment Risk and Rating Exposure





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%	0.08%	0.15%	0.21%
A	0.04%	0.12%	0.22%	0.33%	0.46%
BBB	0.13%	0.35%	0.61%	0.90%	1.19%
Council	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

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
05/03/2026	2115	Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA)	Australia	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'AA' from 'AA-'. The Viability Rating was upgraded to 'aa-' from 'a+'. The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Stable from Positive.
31/03/2026	2116	Qatar	Qatar	The Sovereign Rating was placed on Negative Watch.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes
S&P

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
				No actions to report.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes
MOODY'S

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
				No actions to report.

Whilst MUFG Corporate Markets makes every effort to ensure that all the information it provides is accurate and complete, it does not guarantee the correctness or the due receipt of such information and will not be held responsible for any errors therein or omissions arising there from. All information supplied by MUFG Corporate Markets should only be used as a factor to assist in the making of a business decision and should not be used as a sole basis for any decision. The Client should not regard the advice or information as a substitute for the exercise by the Client of its own judgement.

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APPENDIX B – PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR QUARTER 4

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	312	357
HRA CFR	111	103	103	103	103
Gross borrowing	566	420	420	415	460
Investments	75	39	44	24	54
Net borrowing	491	381	376	391	406
Authorised limit for external debt	748	420	420	415	460
Operational boundary for external debt	660	420	420	415	460
Limit of fixed interest rates (borrowing)	748	420	420	415	460
Limit of variable interest rates (borrowing)	374	0	0	0	0
Internal Team Principal sums invested > 364 days	70	0	0	0	0
Maturity structure of borrowing limits	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Under 12 months	25	19	19	19	13
12 months to 2 years	25	16	16	16	17
2 years to 5 years	50	3	3	5	15
5 years to 10 years	75	21	21	20	20
10 years to 20 years	100	14	14	15	13
20 years to 30 years	100	18	18	18	16
30 years to 40 years	100	4	4	4	3
40 years to 50 years	100	3	3	1	1
50 years and above	100	2	2	2	2

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APPENDIX C -PRUDENTIAL BORROWING APPROVALS

Prudential Borrowing Approvals	Date Approved	Amount Approved	Applied (Spent) 2006/07 - 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				2007/08	25	2031/32
William Brooks			3,580,000				2011/12	25	2035/36
Tern Valley			2,000,000				2010/11	35	2044/45
		8,580,000	**8,580,000**	**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	450,000				2007/08	6	2012/13
Accommodation Changes - Saving	31/03/2007	(200,000)							
		450,000	**450,000**	**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	25/02/2010	187,600	0					25	
- Desktop Virtualisation			187,600				2010/11	5	2014/15
Carbon Efficiency Schemes/Self Financing	25/02/2010	1,512,442	1,512,442				2011/12	5	2017/18
Transformation schemes		92,635	92,635				2012/13	3	2014/15
Renewables - Biomass - Self Financing	14/09/2011	92,996	92,996				2014/15	25	2038/39
Solar PV Council Buildings - Self Financing	11/05/2011	56,342	56,342				2013/14	25	2038/39
Depot Redevelopment - Self Financing	23/02/2012	0	0				2014/15	10	2023/24
Street Lighting - part night lighting - Self Financing	04/04/2012	0					2013/14	10	2022/23
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 Acqusition	26/02/2015	4,160,000	4,160,000				2015/16	25	2039/40
Mardol House Adaptation and Refit	26/02/2015	3,340,000	3,340,000				2016/17	25	2041/42
Oswestry Leisure Centre Equipment - Self Financing	01/08/2012	290,274	290,274				2018/19	5	2022/23
Car Parking Strategy Implementation	17/01/2018	590,021	590,021				2020/21	5	2024/25
JPUT - Investment in Units re Shrewsbury Shopping Centres	13/12/2017	55,299,533	55,299,533				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 Residental Care	28/02/2019	1,999,999	1,999,999				2020/21	25	2044/45
Pride Hill Shopping Centre Reconfiguration - LEP Match	19/12/2019	1,928,978	1,928,978				AUC	45	2070/71
Pride Hill Shopping Centre Reconfiguration - Feb 22 approval	01/02/2022	1,877,000	1,530,270	332,775			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	0	3,146,000			AUC	45	2070/71
Bishops Castle Business Park	19/09/2019	2,874,695	2,874,695				2023/24	25	2044/45
Whitchurch Medical Practice (Pauls Moss Development)	26/07/2018	3,778,228	3,540,978	237,250			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	4,013,702	1,386,298			AUC	25	
Maesbury Solar Farm		2,100,000	128,097	1,971,903			AUC	25	
Commercial Investment Fund	Fin Strat 19/20	0	0				2021/22	25	2044/45
The Tannery Development Block A - Land Acqusition		657,253	657,253				2022/23	25	2045/46
The Tannery Development Block A		6,356,606	12,735	3,843,871	2,500,000		AUC		
The Tannery Development - Block B & C		7,471,561	7,471,561				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

Prudential Borrowing Approvals	Date Approved	Amount Approved	Applied (Spent) 2006/07 - 2025/26	Budgeted 2026/27	Budgeted 2027/28	Budgeted 2028/29	First year MRP Charged	Asset Life	Final year MRP Charged
		£	£	£	£	£			
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project 1		535,000	-10,000	545,000			2026/27	25	2047/48
Biodynamic Carbon (BDC) Limited Share Holding		0	0				2025/26	25	
Biodynamic Carbon (BDC) Limited Working Capital Investment		0	0				2025/26	25	
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project 2		2,751,000	2,731,880	19,120			2026/27	25	
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project Framework		4,000	4,000				2025/26		
Recycling Bin Roll Out Programme		2,029,778	2,029,778				2022/23	10	2032//33
Highways Investment Programme	Capital Strat Feb 22	22,954,755	22,954,755				2022/23	25	2046/47
Oswestry Innovation Park		10,028,332	8,097,063	1,931,269			2022/23	25	2046/47
Cambrian Building Oswestry - UKSPF		270,107	258,039	12,068			2022/23	25	2046/47
Whitchurch Swimming & Leisure Facility	22/09/2022	13,100,282	13,078,251	22,031			2026/27	40	2065/66
Previous NSDC Borrowing		955,595	955,595				2009/10	5/25	2065/66
Capital Receipts Released By Additional Borrowing		8,226,507	8,226,507				2024/25	25?	2048/49
Shrewsbury Sports Village - Swimming Pool	26/09/2024	2,248,001	1,907,761	340,240			AUC		
Ptarmigan Building FRA & Refurbishment Works		415,306	415,306				2025/26	10	2035/36
Transformation Programme 2024-25 Expenditure Funded Through Borrowing Under EFS Approval		26,819,527	26,819,527				2025/26	25	
Transformation Programme 2025-26 Expenditure Funded Through Borrowing Under EFS Approval		61,791,241	61,791,241				2026/27	25	
		226,285,090	**260,758,508**	**13,787,824**	**2,500,000**	**0**			

Appendix D

Economic Background and Borrowing Update

Economic Background

The fourth quarter of 2025/26 saw:

- A 0.6% increase in real GDP in quarter 4 of 2025/26 compared to the previous 3 month period.
- Average wages excluding bonuses were 3.6% higher in the three months to February 2026 compared with the year before, and 0.4% higher after adjusting for inflation.
- CPI inflation increased to 3.3% in March 2026, up from 3.0% in February.
- The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) left interest rates unchanged at 3.75% during the quarter.
- Gilt yields have risen materially in March 2026, more than reversing the falls earlier in the financial year.

UK real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have increased by 0.6% in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026, following revised growth of 0.2% in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025. In output terms, all three sectors contributed to growth in the latest quarter; the largest contribution came from the services sector, growing by 0.8%.

Government borrowing in the 2025/26 financial year was £132 billion, which is £20 billion less than the amount borrowed in 2024/25. At the end of March 2026, public sector net debt was equivalent to 93.8% of GDP, compared to 93.2% a year before.

The loosening in the labour market continues to bear down on wage growth. The 3myy growth rate of average earnings including bonuses slowed from 4.2% in December to 3.9% in January. Meanwhile, excluding bonuses, private earnings growth continued to fall from 3.4% to 3.3%.

UK consumer price inflation (CPI) in the fourth quarter of 2025/26 showed a trend of initial easing followed by a sharp uptick in March, primarily driven by external energy price shocks. After holding steady at 3.0% in January and February, the annual inflation rate rose to 3.3% in March 2026, largely due to rising motor fuel prices and travel costs following the escalation of conflict in the Middle East. The March rise, fuelled by a sharp increase in oil prices, exceeded earlier expectations of a decline to 2%. The Bank of England has noted risks that could drive inflation higher, with some forecasts suggesting it could move between 3% and 3.5% in the first and second quarters of 2026/27.

10-year Gilt yields have been exceptionally volatile in the final weeks of 2025/26, troughing at around 4.23% in late February before shooting up to 5.00% (and well through that on an intraday basis). That spike was driven by the outbreak of war in the Middle East, which prompted a dramatic reassessment of investors' Bank of England policy rate expectations. Having been pricing in rate cuts in late-February, as many as four rate hikes were discounted by late-March. The 10-year yield ended the quarter at

4.92% with around 65bp of rate hikes priced in over the coming year. In addition to more hawkish monetary policy expectations, part of this increase in yields probably reflected an increase in term premia amid concerns that the government may react by loosening the fiscal purse strings.

As for equity markets, the FTSE 100 experienced another volatile quarter, surging to an all-time high of around 10,900 in late February, leaving it up 10% from the start of 2026, before giving back most of those gains in March after the outbreak of the Middle East conflict. That pullback leaves the index at around 10,176 at the end of the quarter.

A summary overview of the future path of Bank Rate

There were two Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings in the final quarter of the financial year. At the 4 February meeting, although disinflationary pressures remained, the committee noted that while inflation was above the 2% target, it was expected to fall back from April 2026. However, the economic impact of the escalating conflict was becoming a central concern and so the MPC voted 5-4 to hold rates at 3.75% rather than cut to 3.5%. The March meeting agreed unanimously to hold the bank rate at 3.75% acknowledging the conflict had caused swap rates to rise, leading to increased costs for fixed-rate mortgages. They emphasized a "gradual and careful" approach to any further withdrawal of monetary policy restraint, given that wage growth was slowing but services price inflation was still a factor.

Borrowing

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 fourth quarter of 2025/26 and have not been previously breached. The schedule at Appendix C details the Prudential Borrowing approved and utilised to date.

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 2 years to secure additional borrowing to reduce the under-borrowed position.

The Council has taken out £100m of new PWLB loans during the final quarter of 2025/26. This includes loans to replace loans that have matured, due to loans being taken over the last 2 years over a shorter maturity period whilst interest rates are higher. Also this encompasses £61.791m of borrowing relating to Exceptional Financial Support that was approved by the Government for 2025/26.

PWLB rates are based on gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through HM Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields. Inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last 30 years in lowering inflation and the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers: this means that

central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. This has pulled down the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last 30 years.

However, since early 2022, yields have risen dramatically in all the major developed economies, first as economies opened post-Covid; then because of the inflationary impact of the war in Ukraine in respect of the supply side of many goods. In particular, rising cost pressures emanating from shortages of energy and some food categories have been central to inflation rising rapidly. More recently, the Middle East conflict is likely to see inflation spike higher from late spring 2026 through to early 2027

Gilt yields have been volatile through 2025/26. The low point for long-term rates of 25 and 50 years' duration was reached early in April 2025 whilst the low points for short and medium dated rates were reached in early 2026, prior to the outbreak of the Middle East conflict.

At the close of 31 March 2026, the 1-year PWLB Certainty rate was 5.04% whilst the 5, 10, 25 and 50 year rates were 5.28%, 5.72%, 6.29% and 6.08% respectively.

The table below shows the high/low/average PWLB rates for the financial year.

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	4.25%	4.56%	5.13%	5.78%	5.46%
Date	27/02/2026	27/02/2026	02/03/2026	04/04/2025	04/04/2025
High	5.28%	5.47%	5.88%	6.43%	6.24%
Date	23/03/2026	23/03/2026	27/03/2026	27/03/2026	27/03/2026
Average	4.52%	4.82%	5.38%	6.06%	5.81%
Spread	1.03%	0.91%	0.75%	0.65%	0.78%

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Finance & Improvement Overview & Scrutiny - 8th June	Item
Cabinet - 10th June	Public

Q4 2025/26 Performance Report and New Corporate Plan 2026-30 Performance Framework

Responsible Officer:	Paul Clarke – Service Director, Strategy & Change paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Heather Kidd - Leader

1. Purpose of Report

This report has two purposes:

- To present the Quarter 4 (2025/26) performance position against 'The Shropshire Plan 2022-2025'.
- To present a proposed performance framework aligned to the new Corporate Plan 2026–2030 (Appendix 2). This framework includes a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and key delivery commitments for 2026/27 against each of the Plan's priority ambitions (Appendix 3).

2. Executive Summary

Looking back

2.1. The Shropshire Plan 2022-2025 (TSP) was created to clarify Shropshire Council's vision, priorities and strategic objectives. These objectives are the outcomes we aim to achieve within our available financial envelope. It is structured around four key priorities: Healthy People, Healthy Economy, Healthy Environment and Healthy Workforce. We monitor and understand delivery of our strategic objectives within each of those through a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

This report covers the performance in the fourth quarter of the 2025/26 financial year (January to March 2026). It will be the final performance report aligned to The Shropshire Plan. Performance is reported on an exception basis, where performance may not be meeting targets. The interactive The Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard is the main source of performance information enabling greater insight, transparency and scrutiny of the Council's performance and delivery of its outcomes. This report should be viewed in conjunction with the dashboard and its 'New Data This Quarter' page which visualises each KPI's trends and comparison to other local authorities where possible.

Moving forward

2.2. A new Corporate Plan 2026-30 has been developed to replace the Shropshire Plan and was approved by full Council on 14 May 2026. Aligned to the new Plan, a Performance Management Framework (PMF) will help demonstrate delivery against the priority ambitions through a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and 'delivery commitments' for 2026/27. The Performance Management Framework and the proposed suite of KPIs and delivery commitments are set out in **Appendix 2 and 3**.

2.3. The key features of the Framework are set out in paragraph 4.7. A suite of KPIs and delivery commitments, along with regular reporting, and a business planning approach and performance development reviews (PDRs) aligned to the Plan will ensure we are an evidence-led and performance-focussed council, with accountability at all levels of the organisation. Our KPIs and delivery commitments provide the basis to understand progress and impact in delivering the priority ambitions in the Plan, but they will need to adapt to respond to new developments as they arise, e.g. new government requirements and national policy.

2.4. A suite of approximately 50 strategic-level KPIs have been developed, aligned to the Corporate Plan 2026-2030 priority ambitions (**Appendix 3A**). These KPIs will help provide strategic assurance on the delivery against the Plan's priority ambitions and demonstrate improvement of outcomes for our residents.

2.5. The suite has been drawn from a pool of over 200 KPIs, made up of the existing Shropshire Plan KPIs and the national Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) metrics. The LOF was formally published in February 2026 and sets out the key outcomes that central and local government want to achieve together for people and places, focusing on results that matter most to residents. The KPIs have been reviewed through workshops and meetings with members of the Scrutiny Committee, Executive Directors and Service Directors during April and May 2026. Targets against KPIs (where it is relevant to set targets) will be done once the KPI suite is agreed.

3. Recommendations

That **Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee**:

3.1. Note the progress and position against the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan.

3.2. Review the proposed Corporate Plan 20206-2030 Performance Management Framework (**Appendix 2 and 3**) - and provide observations and any recommendations through a verbal report by the Chair to Cabinet at their meeting on 10th June 2026.

That **Cabinet**:

3.3 Note the progress and position against the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan.

3.4 Approve the proposed Corporate Plan 20206-2030 Performance Management Framework (Appendix 1 and 2) and delegate authority to the Service Director (Strategy & Change) in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any final amendments to KPIs and delivery commitments.

Contact: Paul Clarke paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk

Report

4. Performance summary

Looking back: Shropshire Plan 2025/26 Q4 performance: Key Findings and context

4.1 In Quarter 4 of 2025/26, a total of 36 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been updated in The Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard. 5 of these KPIs are grey, meaning that they do not have a target set for various reasons such as being contextual measures, see the table below:

KPI No.	KPI name	Reason for no target
HP36	Rate of people killed or seriously injured	Not appropriate to set a target for accidents, looking at trend over time with the aim to reduce.
HO15	% of staff who have completed their PDPs	No target has been set for Personal Development Plans (PDPs). While PDPs are being completed, recording within the ERP system is inconsistent. Staff and managers continue to be reminded to record PDP completion dates in the ERP. As the 'Role of the Manager' programme and wider compliance requirements are implemented, an appropriate target will be established.
HEn13	Number of volunteer hours supporting community, leisure and tourism services	A contextual measure and looking at trend over time.
HEn7	Tonnage of household waste recycled	A contextual measure which complements HEn6.
HEn10	Improve energy efficiency of Council buildings – Energy consumption per SqM	A target has not been set for this KPI because performance is influenced by a range of variables. In addition, comparability over time has reduced as the Council's operational building estate has changed.

4.2 Of the 31 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with targets:

- 71% (22 KPIs) are above their target (green).
- 6% (2 KPI) of indicators were similar to their target (amber).
- 23% (7 KPIs) are below their target and are showing as exceptions (red). Detail on each exception and the reasons are reported in the **Appendix** 1 of this report.

4.3 **Healthy People**: Demand for Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) statutory assessments for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities remains high. A six-month recovery plan is in place from 1 May 2026, including additional capacity to support timely completion of the statutory Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) process, which is being closely monitored and is currently on track. School readiness figures show an inequality driven by deprivation, with 43% of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception, compared with 68% of children overall in Shropshire. Addressing this is a key feature of the Best Start in Life (BSiL) transformation programme. Children's social care teams continue to complete the majority of assessments within 45 days, performing better than the national rate and in line with statistical neighbours. Placement stability for children in care remains strong, supporting improved outcomes, and the Council continues to maintain contact

with the majority of care leavers to provide ongoing support and guidance. The Early Help Team continue to deliver timely targeted interventions preventing escalation of need and future crisis. In adult health and wellbeing, deaths from drug misuse remain stable and uptake of breast cancer screening is improving. We continue to support people to live in their communities, with the latest admission rates to residential and nursing care remaining low (below the national rate in 2024/25) and with majority (81%) of people with learning disabilities living in their own homes or with family in Shropshire, maintaining their independence whilst reducing reliance on others.

Modified	Indicator Name	Latest	Shropshire	Target	On Target?	Indicator Trend
23/04/2026	(NEW) HP9 - C19d - Deaths from drug misuse (per 100,000 population)	2022/24	3.7	3.7	✓	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HP8b - B02a - School Readiness: percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception	2024/25	43.7%	48.8%	⚑	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HP8a - School readiness: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception	2024/25	68%	65%	✓	
23/04/2026	(NEW) HP5 - Uptake of breast cancer screening - PHE C24a	2025	77.9%	71.7%	✓	
28/04/2026	(NEW) HP36 - Rate of people Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) on our roads (rolling 3-year average)	Mar-26	120	-	–	
08/05/2026	(NEW) HP35 - Rate of people with Learning Disabilities that live in their own home or with family (aged 18-64, ASCOF 2E)	Mar-26	81.3%	81.4%	✓	
08/05/2026	(NEW) HP33b - Top quartile performer for the rate of admissions to residential and nursing care (65+)	Mar-26	587.7	592.5	✓	
08/05/2026	(NEW) HP33a - Top quartile performer for the rate of admissions to residential and nursing care (18-64)	Mar-26	15.2	17	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HP32 - HP32 - The proportion of long-term adult social care users in receipt of community-based services	Mar-26	66.6%	68.5%	⚠	
23/04/2026	(NEW) HP31 - % of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 weeks (exc exceptions)	Mar-26	26%	50%	⚑	
16/04/2026	(NEW) HP3 - Percentage of high-risk businesses, subject to a planned inspection, which were inspected to ensure compliance	Mar-26	100%	100%	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HP22 - % of care leavers the service remains in touch with	Mar-26	98%	96%	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HP20 - Targeted Early Interventions - All outcomes achieved	Mar-26	86%	80%	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HP19 - Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	Mar-26	72%	70%	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HP18 - % Assessment timeliness: within 45 working days	Mar-26	88%	90%	⚠	

4.4 **Healthy Environment**: The household recycling, reuse and composting rate declined this quarter. The position is broadly consistent with the same quarter last year and reflects the impact of a particularly wet winter, which reduced volumes of green garden waste. This has compounded the reduction observed following the introduction of the subscription service and the discontinuation of food waste collections. The validity and accuracy of the KPI measuring the proportion of premises with access to gigabit broadband (HEn17) is being reviewed.

Modified	Indicator Name	Latest	Shropshire	Target	On Target?	Indicator Trend
23/04/2026	(NEW) HEn7 - Tonnage of household waste recycled	Dec-25	16,513	-	–	
22/04/2026	(NEW) HEn6 - % of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting	Dec-25	47.4%	52.6%	⚑	
16/04/2026	(NEW) HEn17 - Increase the proportion of Premises with access to gigabit broadband (>1,000Mbps)	Mar-26	80.3%	77.3%	✓	
23/04/2026	(NEW) HEn13 - Number of volunteer hours supporting community, leisure and tourism services	Mar-26	8,555	-	–	
16/04/2026	(NEW) HEn10 - Improve energy efficiency of Council buildings – Energy consumption per SqM	Dec-25	10	-	–	

4.5 **Healthy Economy:** The Housing Service continues to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, with the number of households in emergency accommodation more than halving since September 2025. This reflects strengthened homelessness prevention activity and improved access to more suitable temporary accommodation. The Council also exceeded its target of delivering 350 new affordable homes in 2025/26, with 415 completions however, the five-year housing land supply position reduced slightly in early 2025. Wider economic indicators remain positive this quarter. The proportions of households in receipt of Universal Credit and of out-of-work claimants are favourable, at around half the regional and national rates. The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) continues to reduce, supporting improved economic, social and health outcomes. Performance against planning application timeliness remains within target, and food hygiene compliance remains high, supporting a vibrant food, tourism and leisure sector.

Modified	Indicator Name	Latest	Shropshire	Target	On Target?	Indicator Trend
16/04/2026	(NEW) HEc4 - Households in receipt of Universal Credit - to be lower than English and regional rates	Nov-25	16.9%	26.1%	✓	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HEc25 - Planning Applications - other	Mar-26	93.1%	70%	✓	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HEc24 - Planning Applications - minor	Mar-26	87%	70%	✓	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HEc23 - Planning Applications - major	Mar-26	80%	60%	✓	
23/04/2026	(NEW) HEc22 - Percentage of food establishments that are 'broadly compliant'	Mar-26	98.2%	97%	✓	
08/04/2026	(NEW) HEc18 - Reduction of households in B&B accommodation	Mar-26	36	40	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HEc17 - Delivery of affordable homes	Mar-26	415	350	✓	
23/04/2026	(NEW) HEc15 - Maintaining 5-year housing land supply	Mar-25	4.7	5	⚑	
16/04/2026	(NEW) HEc14 - Out of work claimant rates to remain lower than the Region and England	Feb-26	2.5	4.1	✓	
23/04/2026	(NEW) HEc13 - Young people (16 - 17) Not in Employment Education or Training	Mar-26	2.8%	3.4%	✓	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HEc11 - Paid employment for people with Learning Disabilities	Mar-26	2.1%	-	–	
16/04/2026	(NEW) HEc1 - Levels of investment – target £350 million – 2022 – 27	Mar-26	£338,419,291	£255,000,000	✓	

4.6 **Healthy Organisation**: FOI compliance rates are improving, up from 55% to 70% in the last 6 months however is still missing the target of 100%. Despite a reduction in the use of interim and agency staff and staff turnover rates, the council is experiencing rising rates of sickness absence.

Modified	Indicator Name	Latest	Shropshire	Target	On Target?	Indicator Trend
06/05/2026	(NEW) HO19 - Number of data breaches reported to the Information Commissioner	Mar-26	3	-	⚑	
06/05/2026	(NEW) HO17 - Responding to Freedom of information Requests within statutory timescales (20 working days)	Mar-26	70%	100%	⚑	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HO15 - % of staff who have completed their Personal Development Plans	Mar-26	28.5%	-	–	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HO13 - Average number of days lost to sickness absence per year	Mar-26	11.69	8	⚑	
30/04/2026	(NEW) HO11 - Staff turnover rates	Mar-26	6.1%	7%	✓	

Moving forward: Corporate Plan 2026-2030 Performance Management Framework

4.7 The proposed Framework is made up of several elements and principles:

- A suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - to demonstrate the outcomes we are trying to improve and impact we are making.
- Quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- An Annual Review Report summarising delivery and performance against the Corporate Plan
- An annual review of our delivery commitments (including associated KPIs)– ensuring what we are committing to deliver on aligns to our financial sustainability and are budgeted for.
- Business and budget planning – Directorates and Service Areas produce service plans setting out their contribution to delivery of the plan.
- Performance development reviews (PDRs) - ensures clear understanding of individual and team contributions to the councils' priorities.
- Regular communication and engagement with staff and members – to keep the plan firmly in focus.

4.8 The Framework will provide a basis to report progress, delivery and impact against the priority ambitions in the new Corporate Plan 2026-2030. Targets will be set for a number of the KPIs where relevant to do so and accountable officers and portfolio leads will be aligned to them and the delivery commitments. Quarterly monitoring and an annual report will provide opportunities to demonstrate and evidence progress, delivery, performance and impact beyond the activities and KPIs outlined in this framework

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5. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

5.1. The management of the Council's Performance Management Framework is a key process in ensuring strategic risks are mitigated and the Council can carry out business as intended and planned for within The Shropshire Plan, and moving forward, the Corporate Plan 2026-30.

5.2. The management of key performance indicators is a key process to monitoring progress in the delivery of outcomes. This provides insight into whether corrective action is required to bring performance back on track. The performance report and dashboard provide a high-level lens into the performance of Shropshire Council allowing for further targeted detail analysis to support the mitigation of any risks identified. Regular budget monitoring and financial reporting is also part of the wider performance management, governance and risk management approach within the Council.

5.3. Ultimately, the Council must risk assess the delivery of its strategic objectives and adjust, accordingly, to ensure an acceptable balance of outcomes are achieved at a strategic level while remaining focussed on financial sustainability. This may mean the prioritisation of some objectives over others to react to the evidence presented within the PMF or the financial position of the Council. It may not be possible to achieve optimal performance across all indicators and it may be necessary to oversee expected reductions in performance in some areas to remain within the overall financial envelope and ensure full focus is given to prioritised areas of activity by officers including significant management action required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival.

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 regularly presented to Cabinet. 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 stability and sustainability.

The performance report provides progress on key activity targets which correlate to financial performance. It should be noted that positive improvement on activity may not necessarily correspond to financial improvement, and this should be drawn out in the narrative of the financial and performance reports.

7. Climate Change Appraisal

7.1. The performance report includes KPIs for Healthy Environment with measures for monitoring Shropshire Council's direction of progress on climate change. Recommendations within the Climate Strategy and Action Plan Monitoring Report 2023 were agreed by the Council on the 18th of July 2024. Climate Change also has significant implications for Healthy People, a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Organisation. Measuring emissions also provides a baseline for setting climate targets and deciding where to start reducing emissions. Repeating the measurement process annually allows Shropshire Council

to track and report progress in a clear, transparent way to ensure that key stakeholders - members, regulators, employees, members of the public, other local authorities and system partners are informed about our collective climate action and impact.

8. Background

8.1. The focus of the Council in 2025/26 was necessarily directed at the delivery of a balanced budget, and is currently, therefore, the highest priority strategic objective within TSP balanced alongside protecting our most vulnerable children. Financial sustainability remains a key priority within the new Corporate Plan.

8.2. Information on each Shropshire Plan KPI is presented within The Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard, which is refreshed and published on a quarterly basis on the Council's website. This includes performance status (red, amber, green - currently reported based on variation from the target) and trends and benchmarking information, where available. See the 'Frequently Asked Questions' to view thresholds for variation. The dashboard is designed to be a dynamic tool, continuously improving based on user feedback and emerging requirements. Feedback on the design and usability of the dashboard and performance webpage is welcomed. A feedback form is available for questions and queries, which are reviewed regularly with responses provided and published where appropriate alongside the dashboard.

8.3. Targets, tolerances and benchmarks for the new Corporate Plan 2026-30 Performance Framework will be clarified over the coming months, where possible, with regularly updated monitoring information published via the Performance Shropshire Council. We aim to start reporting against the new suite of KPIs in September 2026.

9. Conclusions

9.1. Overall Q4 25/26 shows reasonable performance in achieving The Shropshire Plan and its objectives, with 77% of the 31 newly updated indicators this quarter meeting or exceeding their target.

9.2. The new performance framework proposed will provide a basis for reporting progress and impact against the Corporate Plan 2026-30 priority ambitions.

List of Background Papers

N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1. Shropshire Plan Q4 performance – Improvement and Exceptions commentary

Appendix 2: The Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework

Appendix 3. The Corporate Plan Performance Framework

(a) suite of KPIs

(b) delivery commitments for 2026/27

APPENDIX 1: Shropshire Plan 2025/26 Q4 performance – Improvement and Exceptions commentary

Q4 2025/26 Key improvements

HEc18 - Reduction of households in B&B accommodation. The number of households living in B&B accommodation more than halved between September to December 2025, reducing from 100 to 40 households. We continue to show a sustained reduction this quarter, with 36 households in B&B accommodation attributable to strengthening homelessness prevention activity and increasing access to more suitable temporary accommodation. A great achievement by Shropshire's Housing team.

HP3- Percentage of high-risk businesses, subject to a planned inspection, which were inspected to ensure compliance. This KPI relates to high risk food business inspections (Cat A and B). We have successfully completed 100% of inspections at the end of Q4.

HP8a - School readiness: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception. In 2024/25, more than two thirds (68%) of children in Shropshire achieved a good level of development at the end of reception, similar to nationally (68%) and regionally (67%).

Q4 2025/26 Exceptions

There are 7 exceptions reported in Quarter 4 2025/26:

- 3 KPIs continue to be exceptions this quarter:
  - EHCPs issues within 20 weeks (HP31)
  - Responding to FOIs within statutory timescales (HO17)
  - Staff sickness - Average number of days lost to staff sickness (HO13)
- 4 KPIs are new exceptions this quarter:
  - School readiness- % of children with free school meal status achieving good level of development at the end of reception (HP8b)
  - % household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (HEn6)
  - Maintaining 5-year housing land supply (HEc15)
  - Data breaches reported to the Information Commissioner (HO19) – the target remains zero. However, where breaches do occur, timely reporting is essential and supports effective risk management. While incidents can arise in practice, the Council's aim is to keep these to a minimum and as close to zero as possible.

Modified	Indicator Name	Latest	Shropshire	Target	On Target?	Indicator Trend
30/04/2026	(NEW) HP8b - B02a - School Readiness: percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception	2024/25	43.7%	48.8%		
23/04/2026	(NEW) HP31 - % of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 weeks (exc exceptions)	Mar-26	26%	50%		
06/05/2026	(NEW) HO19 - Number of data breaches reported to the Information Commissioner	Mar-26	3	-		
06/05/2026	(NEW) HO17 - Responding to Freedom of information Requests within statutory timescales (20 working days)	Mar-26	70%	100%		
30/04/2026	(NEW) HO13 - Average number of days lost to sickness absence per year	Mar-26	11.69	8		
22/04/2026	(NEW) HEn6 - % of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting	Dec-25	47.4%	52.6%		
23/04/2026	(NEW) HEc15 - Maintaining 5-year housing land supply	Mar-25	4.7	5		

(Source: The Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard)

Detail on each exception and the reasons are reported below.

Shropshire Plan 2025/26 Q4 performance – Exceptions commentary

Progress updates from officers regarding continuing exceptions from last quarter, as well as newly identified exceptions for this quarter. Red dots indicate where a KPI is not meeting the target (exception) and green dots indicate where the KPI is meeting the target.

Continuing exceptions

KPI No.	KPI name	Q3 2025/26	Q4 2025/26	Progress update from Council officers
HP31	% of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (excl. exceptions)	🔴	🔴	As of March 2026, 26% of EHCP's were issues within 20 weeks, not meeting the target of 50% however a significant improvement from 13.0% last quarter. The consistent inability to achieve the KPI has been recognised by SLT and a 6-month recovery plan is now in place, effect from 1st May 2026. To support sustainability of the ambitious recovery project, a growth model has also been agreed. This includes increasing number of Case Officers from 12 to 23 across the team and with the additional support of an integrated Business Support service, with growth shown in this area too. There will be an additional 5.5 FTE staff to support with processes aligned to the statutory assessment process – Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA).
HO13	Average number of days lost to sickness absence per year	🔴	🔴	Sickness absence in Quarter 4 increased compared with Quarter 3, rising from 10.97 days to 11.69 days. Days lost due to coughs, colds and influenza increased further, consistent with seasonal trends. However, overall days lost across all absence categories were uncharacteristically high and exceeded the Quarter 4 position in each of the previous two years (Q4 2024/25: 10.9 days; Q4 2023/24: 10.2 days). Absence attributable to stress remained broadly stable compared with the previous quarter, with a slight increase in days lost and continuing to account for approximately 30% of all absence. Musculoskeletal-related absence was also broadly unchanged. The year-end position for sickness absence is 10.7 days lost per FTE. This is marginally higher than the previous year, but slightly below the forecast. Sickness absence is recognised as a corporate priority and work is underway to strengthen absence management, including advice, tools and improved monitoring.
HO17	Responding to FOIs within statutory timescales (20 working days)	🔴	🔴	Overall compliance improved from 63% in Quarter 3 (October–November) to 70% in Quarter 4 (January–March 2026). This remains below the 100% statutory target. To streamline the process and reduce unnecessary escalation, the Information Governance Team (IGT) has issued FOI requests directly to the responsible service areas, rather than copying in Service Directors and PAs. Service Director sign-off is now required only in exceptional circumstances, as determined locally. Implementation has been affected by organisational change; however, arrangements are becoming more embedded. Work to strengthen awareness and guidance is being progressed through the New Operating Model agreed by Leadership Board on 7 October 2025. An awareness workshop was delivered to the Senior Leadership Forum in December 2025, attended by around 40 colleagues. Feedback was positive and further sessions can be arranged as required.

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				Service areas are being encouraged to publish information proactively where requests are frequent or where increased local interest is anticipated, to reduce avoidable FOI demand. IGT is engaging with service areas where compliance remains challenging to provide targeted support, including clarification of applicable exemptions and options for publishing information that is routinely requested. The new IG Extranet is now live, with additional guidance resources to be added in due course.

New exceptions this quarter

KPI No.	KPI name	Q3 2025/26	Q4 2025/26	Progress update from Council officers
HEc15	Maintaining 5-year housing land supply			The five-year housing land supply position reduced from 5.9 years to 4.6 years quarter-on-quarter, falling below the target of 5.0 years. The Shropshire Council Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (base date 31 March 2025) has recently been published. The Statement sets out the Council's assessment of housing land supply for the five-year period 2025/26 to 2029/30. As the strategic policies establishing the housing requirement in the adopted Development Plan are more than five years old, the assessment has been undertaken with reference to local housing need as calculated using the Government's standard methodology. For Shropshire, this results in an assessed local housing need of 2,030 dwellings per annum. The housing land supply assessment has been completed using a cautious and robust methodology, having due regard to Government policy and guidance. The assessment concludes that Shropshire currently has 4.61 years' supply of deliverable housing land. On this basis, the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.
HP8b	School Readiness: percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception			School readiness at the end of reception for children with free school meal status declined from 47.1% in 2023/24 to 43.7% in 2024/25. This is below the national average (51.3%) and below the average for our regional neighbours (53.6%), and remains below the local target of 48.8%. In March 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) requested the nomination of a Best Start in Life Family Hub site. Sunflower House has been submitted as the interim nominated site to meet this requirement. DfE has been advised that this designation may change as the local delivery model is finalised. Planning is underway to deliver the funded Home Learning Environment (HLE) groups, which form a statutory requirement of the Best Start in Life (BSIL) programme. Delivery will be undertaken through existing teams. Options are being explored to identify additional BSIL hub locations, to improve access and reach across communities. A Cabinet report is scheduled for June to review current arrangements, with the aim of ensuring capacity and governance are aligned to maximise support for children and families. The delivery model engages voluntary and community sector partners to support HLE and parenting provision within local communities, operating through a hub-and-spoke approach to maximise reach and accessibility. Delivery is being aligned with health and social care partners to ensure integrated, multi-disciplinary teams are located within hubs,

				supporting early identification of need and timely intervention. The Shropshire Early Years Team is prioritising support visits to settings with lower-than-expected Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile sessions are being delivered to support settings to strengthen assessment and moderation, in line with new DfE guidance.
HEn6	% Household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting			This indicator is reported one quarter in arrears. The recycling, reuse and composting rate decreased quarter-on-quarter from 52.8% to 47.4% and is now below the target of 52.6%. The position is broadly consistent with the same quarter last year and reflects the impact of a particularly wet winter, which reduced volumes of green garden waste. This has compounded the reduction observed following the introduction of the subscription service and the discontinuation of food waste collections. Reduced green waste (and previously mixed green and food waste) remains the principal driver of the lower recycling and composting rate. For context, in Q4 2023 the Council collected a combined 10,277.9 tonnes of green and food waste. In Q4 2024, following service changes, 7,361.2 tonnes of green waste were collected; in the latest quarter, this reduced further to 6,797.6 tonnes. The ongoing impact of service changes alongside weather conditions is therefore reflected in the reduced recycling and composting rate.
HO19	Number of data breaches reported to the Information Commissioner	-		In Quarter 4, three data breaches were recorded. The target is 0 breaches and 0 incidents reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). It is recognised that a zero-breach target is challenging; however, it provides a clear statement of the Council's risk appetite and expectation. **Actions underway to reduce incidents and strengthen compliance include:** • Intranet advice and guidance were updated in 2025, including a team briefing sheet. • The IG Extranet will include manager toolkits to support regular reinforcement of data protection in team meetings, particularly in areas with higher incident volumes. • IGT offers to attend team meetings to provide advice and address recurring issues. • Revised Data Protection and Cyber Awareness training was implemented from December 2025. • The IG Extranet will include 'Toolkits' for manager that asks them to include the topic on team meetings especially if their areas experience a high number of incidents. • IGT offers to attend team meetings and discuss any issues where areas are experiencing a high number of incidents • New and improved Data Protection and Cyber Awareness training was implemented from December 2025. IGT is also engaging with key enabling services (for example, business support teams) to ensure incident reporting routes are understood and that prompt corrective action is taken to minimise impact.

				Data breach statistics are currently reported quarterly to IGLOO. More frequent reporting to Service Directors (on a monthly basis) is intended, but implementation has been delayed due to staffing capacity within the team.

Last quarter exceptions- progress update

KPI No.	KPI name	Q3 2025/26	Q4 2025/26	Progress update from Council officers
HP3	Percentage of high risk businesses, subject to a planned inspection, which were inspected to ensure compliance			This KPI relates to high risk food business inspections (Cat A and B). High risk food hygiene performance shows we have completed 57% of inspections at the end of Q3. The statutory target of 100% has now been achieved.
HEc2	Reduce the workplace pay gap with the national average by 50% by 2027 (Annual figure)		-	Annually reported, no new data.
HP6	Reception: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity) – C09a		-	Annually reported, no new data.
HP7	Year 6: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)- C09b		-	Annually reported, no new data.
HO1	Number of compliments		-	No new data this quarter

APPENDIX 2:
CORPORATE PLAN 2026-2030 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Shropshire Council

Making sure we deliver

Performance Management Framework

Alongside this new Corporate Plan, a strengthened Performance Management Framework is being developed to ensure everyone in the organisation is working towards the ambitions set out in the Corporate Plan, our Improvement Plan, and our aim of financial sustainability.

The key features of the Performance Management Framework are:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** A set of KPIs helps demonstrate the outcomes we are trying to improve and the progress and impact we are making. These will draw on the nationally set Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) as well as including other measures we identify locally.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** Quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees against the Corporate Plan KPIs. Additionally, we will produce an *Annual Review Report* summarising delivery and impact against the Corporate Plan priorities.
- **Annual review of what we will focus on:** Will enable an agile response to changes and developments that require amendments to our priorities, ensuring that what we are focusing on aligns to the financial sustainability of the Council.
- **Business and Budget Planning:** Directorates and service areas produce a Service Plan, setting out their contribution to the delivery of the Corporate Plan
- **Performance Development Reviews (PDRs):** ensures a clear link between individual objectives, directorate/service plans and the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and Financial Plan. This is the 'golden thread' (figure 3) which enables staff to understand how they contribute to delivering the council's overall priorities.

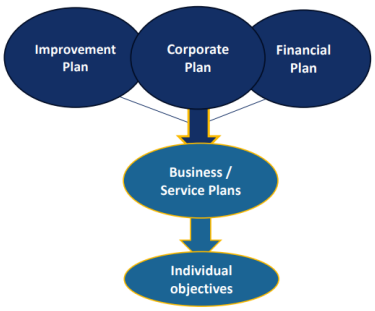


Figure 3: The 'Golden Thread'

Communication and engagement

Regular communication on the plan and progress and impact will take place to ensure that staff and Members are kept up to date. This will keep the delivery of the plan firmly in focus and partners and residents will also be kept informed about the delivery of the plan.

There will be ongoing engagement with staff as the plan rolls out which will form part of the Council's redeveloped staff engagement approach. There will also be engagement as appropriate and required with residents and those who receive services as projects to deliver the plan are implemented.

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Shropshire Council

Layers of Performance

A strong performance framework is layered, with each level serving a different purpose, and a different audience. Strategy flows down, delivery flows up, and accountability runs through.

The framework moves from priorities and outcomes at the top (priorities describe what the Council is focusing on, while outcomes describe the difference that focus is intended to make for residents and communities), to delivery in the middle, to day-to-day management and individual contribution at the base – ensuring everyone is working towards the same goals and pulling in same direction.

There are deliberately fewer KPIs at the corporate level and progressively more detail at operational level further down – all linked by the golden thread .



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APPENDIX 3: CORPORATE PLAN 2026-30 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK – KPI AND DELIVERY COMMITMENTS

Proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Priority Ambition	KPI	Alignment	Frequency of data	Rationale	Source
A financially sustainable council with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel (7 KPIs)	Council's Reliance on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)	New	Annual	Demonstrates increasing sustainability	Internal Council Data
	Financial sustainability: In-year revenue outturn variance against approved budget	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Demonstrates financial control	Internal Council Data
	Complaints: 1. Number of Complaints Received 2. Percent of Complaints Resolved within 15 Days 3. Percent of Complaints upheld by Ombudsman	Previous KPI New New	Quarterly	Acts as an organisation-wide barometer of resident experience and highlights systemic service issues.	Internal Council Data
	Income collection rate: 1. council tax 2. business rates	New	Quarterly	Supports financial sustainability by showing how effectively the council collects income owed.	Internal Council Data
	Staff engagement/perception (Pulse Survey measures): 1. % of staff that understand how they contribute to delivering Council priorities 2. % of staff that are proud to work for Shropshire Council 3. % of staff that feel valued in their role at Shropshire Council 4. % of staff that feel empowered working for Shropshire Council	New	Bi-annual	Measures workforce engagement and organisational culture, which underpin delivery of all priorities.	Internal Council Data
	Freedom of Information: 1. Number of FOIs overdue 2. FOIs timeliness within statutory target (%- two months arrears)	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Measurement of corporate governance	Internal Council Data
	Staff absence - average lost days per FTE	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Measure of staff health and well-being	Internal Council Data

Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport, and infrastructure (7 KPIs)	Road condition: Percentage of local authority motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance, split by road type (motorways and A roads; B and C roads; unclassified roads)	LOF & Previous KPI	Annual	Strategic measure of long-term infrastructure health and investment need.	Department for Transport Road Conditions Statistics
	Average number of bus journeys made per resident in a local authority area	LOF	Annual	Indicates accessibility, viability, and usage of public transport, especially in rural areas.	Department for Transport, Bus Statistics
	Percentage change in bus service mileage year-on-year - (this metric measures whether bus services are expanding or falling each year-passenger journeys or distance travelled or bus distances travelled)	LOF	Annual	Shows whether public transport provision is expanding or contracting.	Department for Transport, Bus Statistics
	Connectivity score for public transport to key services	LOF	Annual	Place-based measure of residents' ability to access employment, health and education.	Department for Transport Connectivity Tool, Connectivity Score: Overall (public transport)
	Killed or seriously injured casualties per billion vehicle miles - Rate of KSI (HP36)	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly	Core public safety outcome reflecting effectiveness of road safety interventions.	Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID), Public Health Outcomes Framework
	% of adults engaging in active travel at least twice in last 28 days	LOF	Annual	Links transport, health, climate and prevention agendas at a corporate level.	Sport England Active Lives Survey
	Public EV charging points per 100,000 population	LOF	Annual	Tracks progress in enabling low-carbon transport and supporting climate commitments.	Department for Transport Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure statistics

Safe inclusive places with home that meet people's needs (10 KPIs)	% of people experiencing loneliness	LOF	Annual	Corporate wellbeing indicator linked to prevention, independence and community resilience.	Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Community Lifestyle Survey
	% satisfied with their local area as a place to live	LOF	Annual	High-level place outcome reflecting housing, services, safety and environment.	Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Community Lifestyle Survey
	% who feel they can influence local decisions	LOF	Annual	Measures civic engagement, inclusion and democratic trust.	Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Community Lifestyle Survey
	Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000	LOF	Quarterly	Strategic indicator of community safety and quality of life.	West Mercia Police Data
	Crime incidents -responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty and through their statutory role in leading Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)	LOF	Quarterly	Provides oversight of public safety and partnership effectiveness.	West Mercia Police Data
	Housing supply (affordable homes completions - Developing new homes or agreed LOF measure)	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly	Measures progress against Local Plan ambitions and housing pressures.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Live tables on affordable housing supply
	% of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved	LOF	Quarterly	Indicates effectiveness of early intervention and housing prevention.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness live tables, Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved

	Use of unsuitable temporary accommodation: Percentage of households with children placed in B&B accommodation for longer than 6 weeks.	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly	It is a system-level indicator of how effectively the council is securing suitable temporary accommodation and reducing reliance on B&B provision. Corporate risk indicator linked to cost control, safeguarding and statutory duties.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness live tables, Households in temporary accommodation- Bed and breakfast hotels - total with children and resident more than 6 weeks
	% of local authority-owned housing deemed decent	LOF	Annual	Assures quality and safety of council housing stock.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Local Authority Housing Statistics
	% of private rental housing deemed decent	LOF	Annual	Shows influence over wider housing quality beyond council-owned homes.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Local Authority Housing Statistics
	Planning applications- major, minor and other- number of application decisions	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Shows our local economic / housing development activity.	Local Council Data

Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life (15 KPIs)	% of people who receive long-term support who live in their home or with family (ASCOF)	LOF	Quarterly	Core adult social care outcome evidencing independence and prevention.	Department for Health and Social Care, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, ASCOF 2E
	Permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population aged 65 and over (ASCOF)	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Tracks system pressure and effectiveness of community-based support.	Department for Health and Social Care, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, ASCOF 2B
	Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support (ASCOF)	LOF	Quarterly	Captures lived experience of people using adult social care services.	Department for Health and Social Care, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, ASCOF 1D
	% of section 42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified, and the reported outcome was that the risk was identified, and the reported outcome was that this risk was reduced or removed	LOF	Quarterly	Provides assurance that safeguarding arrangements are effective.	Department for Health and Social Care, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, ASCOF 4B
	% of people with a learning disability living independently (own home or family)	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Measures inclusion, independence and equality outcomes.	Department for Health and Social Care, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, ASCOF 2E (2B)
	% of people who received reablement with no further support required	LOF	Quarterly	Demonstrates effectiveness of short-term interventions.	Department for Health and Social Care, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, ASCOF 2A
	Healthy life expectancy at birth	LOF & Previous KPI	Annual	High-level summary of overall population health outcomes.	Office for National Statistics, Health and life expectancy at birth
	Slope index of inequality in life expectancy	LOF	Annual	Measures whether health inequalities are widening or narrowing.	Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID), Public Health Outcomes Framework, Inequalities

					in life expectancy at birth
	Child health: Percentage achieving good level of development at 2-2.5 year review	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly		Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID), Child development outcomes at 2 to 2 and a half years
	Year 6 obesity prevalence	LOF & Previous KPI	Annual	Early indicator of future health inequalities and prevention needs.	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), Child obesity and excess weight
	Rate of children becoming looked after	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly	Strategic indicator of safeguarding pressure and family support effectiveness.	Department for Education, Children Looked after by Local Authorities in England
	Repeat child protection plans (%)	LOF	Quarterly	Shows sustainability and impact of earlier safeguarding interventions.	Department for Education, Children in need and child protection
	% of care leavers in education, employment or training	LOF	Quarterly	Long-term outcome reflecting successful transition to adulthood.	Department for Education, Children Looked after by Local Authorities in England
	% of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (Statutory outcome)	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly	Statutory compliance and inclusion measure for SEND.	Internal Council Data
	Special Educational Needs (SEN): Percentage of SEN children supported in mainstream schools	LOF	Quarterly	Directly aligns to priority focus area	Department for Education, Special Educational Needs in England

A protected and adaptive environment that harnesses our natural assets and promotes wellbeing (6 KPIs)	% of household waste recycled, reused or composted	LOF & Previous KPI	Quarterly	Tracks environmental performance and public participation in sustainability.	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Local authority collected waste management
	% of local sites in positive conservation management	LOF	Annual	Aligns directly to priority on Delivering our statutory environmental duties including our Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Local sites in positive conservation management
	Deaths attributable to particulate air pollution (particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter)	LOF	Annual	Measures environmental quality, public health and inequality	Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID), Public Health Outcomes Framework
	% of food establishments broadly compliant	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Public protection indicator linked to resident safety.	Food Standards Agency Website
	Environmental permit inspections assessed as low risk (%)	Previous KPI	Quarterly	Assures regulatory compliance and environmental risk control.	Local Council Data
	Access to green and blue spaces	LOF	Annual	Links environment, health and wellbeing at place level.	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Access to Nature Statistics

A fair, dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits everyone (6 KPIs)	Employment rate (16–64)	LOF & Previous KPI	Annual	Headline indicator of economic participation and inclusion.	Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey
	18–24-year-olds in education or employment	LOF	Quarterly	Measures future workforce readiness and opportunity for young people.	Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey
	Skills Disparity: % of working-age population qualified to Regulated Qualifications Framework Level 4+	LOF & Previous KPI	Annual	Shows skills capacity to support economic growth.	Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey
	Births of new enterprises	LOF	Annual	Proxy for business confidence and economic dynamism.	Office for National Statistics, Business Demography
	Gross median weekly pay	LOF	Annual	Reflects productivity, income levels and affordability pressures.	Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (resident-based)
	% of premises with gigabit-capable broadband	LOF & Previous KPI	Bi-annual	Measures digital infrastructure readiness for growth and service access.	Ofcom, Connected Nations

APPENDIX 3B: Delivery commitments for 2026/27

The following sets out specific, measurable activities to be delivered during 2026/27, aligned with the priorities (what we will focus on) identified in the Corporate Plan and supporting the achievement of our key ambitions. It is not a comprehensive list of all Council activity; rather, it focuses on the activity that will enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and value for money of our statutory service delivery and overall organisation. Quarterly monitoring and an annual report will provide opportunities to demonstrate and evidence progress, delivery, performance and impact beyond the activities and KPIs outlined in this framework.

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Financially sustainable, etc	Connect communities	Safe and inclusive	Healthy and thrive	Environment and Well-being	Thriving economy
Continued delivery of the Improvement Plan, reporting progress and impact to the Improvement Board (ongoing)	✓					
A budget for 2027/28 and MTFP that reduces our reliance on EFS (by Feb 2027)	✓					
A new Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Strategy to deliver a consistent, compliant and outcomes-focused approach that improves value for money and resident outcomes. (June 2026)	✓					
A new council constitution (by December 2026)	✓					
Develop a customer charter that sets out how we work with residents and other customers (by December 2026)	✓					
Continued delivery of the People Plan to create a workforce that is supported and enabled to excel (ongoing)	✓					
Review of council relationship with Cornovii Development Limited (July 2026)	✓					
A single Children's Transformation Programme that responds to national reforms (including Families First, Best Start in Life, Local Youth Transformation, Private Law Programme and SEND Reform) and helps to support the realisation of a 'child friendly' Shropshire (developed by June 2026)	✓		✓	✓		✓
An Adults Social Care transformation programme with an emphasis on prevent, reduce and delay, and flexible market options (developed by Sept 2026)	✓			✓		
A new Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord function resetting how the Council's property is governed and managed (developed by July 2026)	✓		✓		✓	
New digital and cyber strategies that enable council services that are joined up, efficient, simple and tailored to resident's needs (July 2026)	✓					
A new Economic Growth Strategy that sets a clear direction for our economy to attract investment and deliver growth (by April 2027)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
An agreed approach to working with parish and town councils to deliver services and outcomes (by March 2027)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
A proposed approach to a Shropshire Partnership (by November 2026)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Financially sustainable, etc	Connect communities	Safe and inclusive	Healthy and thrive	Environment and Well-being	Thriving economy
A new Local Transport Plan (by March 2027)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop and shape a new operating model for highways services (by March 2027)	✓	✓				
Review of in-house provider services (Adult Social Care) (June 2026)	✓					
Develop and implement a financially sustainable library service (by March 2027)	✓		✓	✓		
A new Highways Maintenance Strategy and Inspection Policy to align with new DfT funding criteria (June 2026)	✓	✓				✓
Continued focus and delivery of highways maintenance statutory responsibilities and investment in preventative maintenance (measured by road condition KPI)		✓				
A new Adult Social Care Strategy – outlining key priorities and operating model for adult social care (Oct 2026)	✓			✓		
Produce and consult on our draft Local Plan (by June 2027) having: • Completed a Green Belt Review (July 2026) • Commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (October 2026) • Delivered an Economic Development Needs Assessment (November 2026) • Undertaken site assessment / development options ready for consultation/allocation (December 2026)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
An updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan providing a framework for managing, maintaining and developing our council housing stock (September 2026)	✓		✓	✓		✓
Review of cultural service offers to ensure financially sustainable delivery (October 2026).	✓			✓	✓	
Increase the number of households where homelessness is prevented to start to reduce our use of temporary accommodation (ongoing, measured by KPI)	✓		✓	✓		✓
Publish an annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategy that provides clear direction for and increased utilisation of CIL funding (December 2026)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review the Housing Allocations Policy and service in line with proposed national changes and timescales (December 2026)	✓		✓			
Agree policies to support and enable enforcement of the Renters' Rights Act, improving housing quality and reducing homelessness pressures (June 2026)			✓	✓		✓
Develop a Housing Strategy (for consultation) aligning with the Local Plan development (December 2026)			✓	✓	✓	✓

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Financially sustainable, etc	Connect communities	Safe and inclusive	Healthy and thrive	Environment and Well-being	Thriving economy
Strengthen Food Standards and Private Water Supplies delivery as part of our environmental health and protection services, in accordance with regulations. (ongoing)			✓	✓	✓	✓
Deliver (Year 1 of) the Local Area SEND Reform Plan including phase one of the Experts at Hand (by March 2027)			✓	✓		✓
A new Education Excellence Strategy which sets out how the council will support and guide the whole education system locally (July 2026)			✓			✓
A programme of accessible and inclusive sessions on economic abuse within the context of domestic abuse – enabling people to manage their finances (by March 2027)	✓		✓	✓		
Increase the proportion of premises in Shropshire with access to a gigabit capable broadband connection, working with broadband suppliers (measured by KPI)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expand community reuse/repair schemes and promote alternatives such as home composting for food and green waste to reduce household waste per household (by March 2027 measured by KPI).					✓	
Deliver 10 priority projects/sites (e.g. wetlands, hedgerows, green spaces) in line with our Local Nature Recovery Strategy (by March 2027)			✓		✓	
Deliver 10 new or improved access routes / green space schemes to improve access to green space and support wellbeing (by March 2027)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Deliver and/or encourage energy efficiency improvements to 100 properties across Shropshire, prioritising rural, low-income and off gas (by March 2027)			✓	✓	✓	
Work with DWP to support families on benefits and reduce the impact of child poverty e.g. by expanding free school meals (by April 2027)			✓	✓		✓
Ensure sufficient nursery places to enable parents to access work (by April 2027)						
Continue to implement the Statutory Community Safety Strategy – including targeted plans focused on hot spot areas and working with communities to become safer places to live, work and visit (March 2027).			✓		✓	✓
Expand community-based wellbeing and prevention services into library and community hub spaces (March 2027)		✓	✓	✓		
Expand integrated neighbourhood working through Community & Family Hubs (Best Start in Life) and VCSE partners for priority areas aligned to statutory requirements (September 2026)			✓	✓		

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Financially sustainable, etc	Connect communities	Safe and inclusive	Healthy and thrive	Environment and Well-being	Thriving economy
Recommission our mandatory public health service contracts – including: • community drug and alcohol services to provide support, treatment, and recovery options for individuals and their families struggling with substance use issues (from April 2027) • 0-19 Healthy Child Programme to provide support for young people and their families (from April 2027)	✓		✓	✓		✓
Deliver a refreshed Statutory Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWBS) focusing on the Marmot principles, incorporating our inequalities and prevention plans and setting out the long-term vision for improving health and wellbeing (April 2027)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work with partners to develop a system-wide strategic approach to neighbourhoods including neighbourhood health as part of the national mandate (December 2026).	✓		✓	✓		✓
Continue to develop and coordinate the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) delivery plan (ongoing)	✓		✓	✓		

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Cabinet 10 June 2026

Local Transport Plan

Public

Local Transport Plan – Consultation

Responsible Officer:	Andy Wilde		
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Cabinet Members (Portfolio Holders):	David Vasmer and Rob Wilson		

1. Synopsis

This report seeks Cabinet approval for the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Shropshire and supporting documents to be published for a six-week public consultation period commencing in September 2026. This consultation will be supported by a range of pre-consultation engagement activities with stakeholders.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. Under the Transport Act 2000, Shropshire Council as the Local Transport Authority (LTA) has a duty to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The next LTP for Shropshire will set out the long-term strategy for the development, management and maintenance of Shropshire's highway and transport systems and will run to 2037. The plan will have a direct link to how central government funding is allocated in Shropshire.

2.2. A draft LTP and supporting documents has been produced for Shropshire and reflects best practice, current government requirements and Shropshire specific evidence. It is intended that the LTP will also reflect the latest corporate priorities, as they emerge through the ongoing development and adoption of the new Corporate Plan 2026-2030.

2.3. The Transport Act 2000 also places a requirement on LTAs to undertake extensive consultation on their LTPs. A robust consultation exercise is crucial to:

- Ensure that communities and stakeholders across Shropshire have appropriate and equitable opportunity to understand, comment on and influence the emerging LTP.
- Enable Shropshire Council to clearly articulate the vision, objectives and benefits of the LTP to build understanding, trust and support amongst its stakeholders.

- Ensure that engagement is well-planned, inclusive and transparent and that it generates robust evidence.
- Demonstrates clear synergy and links to Council Corporate Plans and policy.

2.4. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Shropshire and supporting documents to be published for a six-week public consultation period commencing in September 2026. This consultation will be supported by a range of pre-consultation engagement activities with stakeholders commencing at the end of June 2026, subject to approval of this report.

2.5. Feedback and changes will be presented to Cabinet early in 2027 with a view to the final LTP being presented to Council for approval and adoption in February 2027.

2.6. An external peer review of the draft LTP may be considered utilising the LGA or another source before final approval at Full Council.

3. Recommendations

3.1. To approve the development of an engagement and consultation strategy and associated programme of activities on the draft Local Transport Plan for Shropshire 2027-2037.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. Under the Transport Act 2000, Shropshire Council as the Local Transport Authority (LTA) has a duty to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The Transport Act 2000 also places a requirement on LTAs to carry out consultation on their LTPs. The new statutory guidance on LTPs[1] outlines the requirements and provides a suggested list of stakeholders for local transport authorities to consult where appropriate.

4.2. Whilst the development of a consultation package and associated materials will be commissioned through third party specialists, it is wholly reliant on internal Shropshire Council staff resource to host consultation webpages, provide online questionnaires using existing platforms and to lead on statutory publicity and media relations.

4.3. The recommendation to carry out an appropriate public consultation exercise will result in the following risks:

4.4. Risk table

Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Risk of legal challenge and breach of statutory	• This formal request to Cabinet to approve a consultation exercise.	No links identified.

[1] Department for Transport (2026) *Local Transport Plans*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-plans/local-transport-plans (Accessed: 28 April 2026).

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duty if consultation is not carried out or is not compliant with guidance leading to lack of statutory LTP.	• Development of an Engagement and Consultation Strategy that outlines how the consultation duties will be met, that information is clear and accessible, and that reasonable time is given for participation / response.	
Risk of weak evidence base and failure to demonstrate an understanding of potential local impacts.	• Development of an Engagement and Consultation Strategy to ensure that a range of stakeholders, in line with statutory guidance, have the opportunity to comment. The Strategy must outline how the consultation package is reasonable and proportionate. • Develop appropriate feedback mechanisms to ensure that evidence can be robustly and efficiently collated and analysed.	No links identified.
Risk of failure to meet duties under Equality Act 2010 (amended 2020/21) and evidence that equality impacts have been understood and that protected groups have had reasonable opportunity provide feedback.	• Development of an Engagement and Consultation Strategy to ensure that a reasonable range of stakeholders, in line with statutory guidance, have the opportunity to comment. • Include an addition commission to carry out a specific Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the consultation activity. • An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been commissioned as part of the LTP development and includes an EqIA. A 'Population and Equalities' objective is included in the IIA Framework, which aims to assess whether the LTP would work to increase the capacity, connectivity and efficiency of the transport network to support demographic changes, including improving access for all groups inclusively and reduce inequalities across the plan area. • Seek support from Shropshire Council's Business Insights and Intelligence Team to ensure that appropriate equality actions have been	No links identified.

	carried out in the consultation design.	
Reputational risk where stakeholders feel that that they have been unable to provide meaningful feedback or influence change.	• Development of an Engagement and Consultation Strategy to ensure that a reasonable range of stakeholders, in line with statutory guidance, have the opportunity to comment. • Commission specialist support to ensure that the consultation content and purpose is easy to comprehend. • Ensure that appropriate expertise from Shropshire Council's Communications Team and Digital Services Team is engaged.	No links identified.
Reputational risk where stakeholders may not understand the need for a long-term strategic plan given the financial emergency that has been publicly declared, leading to negative feedback.	• Commission specialist support to ensure that the consultation content and purpose is easy to comprehend. • Ensure that appropriate expertise from Shropshire Council's Communications Team and Digital Services Team is engaged to support with appropriate narrative.	No links identified
Reputational risk where there is a disjoint between central government led statutory requirements and local aspirations.	• Commission specialist support to ensure that the consultation content and purpose is easy to comprehend and references a strong evidence base. • Development of an Engagement and Consultation Strategy that includes a period of pre-engagement activity to ensure that stakeholders feel that they have a meaningful opportunity to influence the plan.	No links identified.
Significant negative feedback may mean substantial re-working of the LTP which will incur additional cost to Shropshire Council, delay in developing a statutory plan and transparent priorities.	• Development of an Engagement and Consultation Strategy that includes a period of pre-engagement activity to ensure early insight into potential areas of contention and the opportunity to make changes prior to the statutory consultation period. • Ensure that appropriate expertise from Shropshire Council's Communications Team and Digital Services Team is engaged to support with appropriate narrative.	No links identified.

Risk of inability to adopt the LTP leading to reduced central government funding in the future – see Financial Implications.	• This formal request to Cabinet to consult.	No links identified.
Insufficient Shropshire Council resource to provide support and lead on consultation activities leading to work pressure on existing limited staff.	• The Service Director for Infrastructure is to work with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that sufficient resource is available to provide the necessary support from outside the Highways and Transport service area. • The Service Director for Infrastructure is to ensure that there is sufficient Transport and Highways staff resource to attend any in-person or virtual engagement and consultation events.	Health and Wellbeing of the Workforce

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 Department for Transport (DfT) has introduced a new multi-year local transport funding system for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs). The Integrated Transport Fund (LTF) is a consolidated grant for local transport enhancements and highway maintenance. It comprises both capital and resource funding from 2026-2027 onwards. The total value of the consolidated fund is £228.2M. The draft programme headings deliver against the 12 action areas of the LTP set out in 7.2. The Local Transport Grant resource funding element of the LTF is intended to help LTAs to build capability and capacity including:

- developing and updating Local Transport Plans, and

- to effectively deliver local transport infrastructure priorities[2].

5.3. The 2026/27 Local Transport Grant Resource funding settlement for Shropshire is £328,600. A proportion of this will be used to procure the support necessary to deliver the comprehensive consultation activity requested in this report.

5.4. The consolidation of previous funding streams by the DfT has been put in place to give LTAs flexibility to use funding more effectively and efficiently across programmes and packages of spend to deliver priorities set out both national and in their LTP. LTAs are required to provide a single Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP) that sets out how all of the available funding has been prioritised.

5.5. LTAs will be required to report to DfT on progress against their LTDP and also the government's Local Transport Outcomes Framework. The Local Transport Outcomes Framework outline measurable priority outcomes government wants LTAs to achieve, reflecting shared national and local priorities for transport. This includes Priority Outcomes 8 (Health and Well Being), 13 (Environment, Circular Economy and Climate Change) and 14 (Transport and Local Infrastructure). Our locally set KPIs within the Councils Corporate Plan will match the national requirements of the Framework.

5.6. The DfT will offer support and intervention to LTAs in meeting their requirements where appropriate and necessary. However, the ultimate sanction to not complying with the requirements set out against the funding allocation will be either claw-back of funding or reducing future funding allocations.

5.7. Failure to have an LTP, which has a statutory requirement for consultation, will mean that Shropshire Council cannot produce a robust LTDP that demonstrates links to strategic priorities, as specified by the DfT, and may ultimately result in reductions in funding available to progress local transport and highways initiatives in Shropshire.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

Energy and fuel consumption

6.1. There is potential for a negative outcome if there is significant opposition to the interventions contained in the LTP that are specifically aimed at reducing transport emissions. Alternatively, strong support for the LTP will provide Shropshire Council with a strong mandate from which interventions with positive climate outcomes can be progressed.

Renewable energy generation

6.2. The outcomes of this report are not considered to create opportunities to generate renewable energy.

Carbon offsetting or mitigation

6.3. LTAs must use carbon analysis to inform the development of their transport strategies and schemes, and quantify their carbon impact. The Department for Transport (DfT) has stated that LTAs must use their Quantifiable Carbon Guidance

[2] Department for Transport (2025) *Resource allocations: 2026 to 2027 and 2028 to 2029*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-grant-allocations/resource-allocations-2026-to-2027-and-2028-to-2029 (Accessed: 30 April 2026).

(2025) when developing LTPs. As a result, carbon reduction will be reflected in the consultation materials shared and in opportunities for feedback.

6.4. Environmental non-government organisations will have the opportunity to participate in the public consultation exercise and comment on the LTP from a climate change and decarbonisation perspective.

Climate change adaptation

6.5. The LTP has been developed using a place-based approach to identify outcomes that best suit the different transport requirements of people, places, and activities in Shropshire. This will vary between urban and rural settlements, however there is a key objective to decarbonise transport in Shropshire by reducing the need to travel, achieving mode shift and adopting low carbon technologies. A comprehensive consultation package for the LTP will ensure that communities and stakeholders from across Shropshire have the opportunity to understand, comment on what this means for them.

7. Background

7.1. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a place-based, holistic strategy that sets out the long-term vision for travel, transport and highways in Shropshire and evidences an investment and delivery plan that will help people and goods get to the places they need, safety, securely and affordably. The LTP has been informed by a robust evidence base and a detailed understanding of transport challenges and opportunities and how these might change in the future. The draft document has been developed in close consultation with wider Council teams, to ensure alignment with other key policies and strategies, including the Local Plan. The new Shropshire Local Plan and the LTP are deeply integrated strategies designed to align long-term spatial development with the county's infrastructure networks. To ensure sustainable community growth, the land-use allocations and housing targets specified in the Local Plan are directly underpinned by the active travel, public transport, and highway management frameworks detailed within the LTP. This place-led alignment ensures that new housing and economic developments are positioned and scaled alongside robust transport assessments, minimizing environmental impact while promoting healthier, better-connected communities across Shropshire's unique market towns and rural areas.

7.2. The council has followed the new LTP guidance issued by the Government (Guidance issued in April 2026) to match the requirements of the Department for Transport whilst delivering local outcomes in connectivity, housing, health, employment and education. The LTP's various programme areas are designed to impact on the wider determinants of Health such as reduction in Adult and Child KSIs, preventable cardio-vascular and non-movement issues and address inequalities around socio-economic issues such as access to services and education.

7.3. The draft LTP vision and objectives focus on the provision of an inclusive, safe and sustainable transport system that supports thriving urban and rural communities, driving improved health and wellbeing, better connectivity, good economic growth and a decarbonised transport network, as well as the wider protection of Shropshire's unique natural, built and historic environment. Twelve draft action areas have been identified:

- Active Travel
- Road Safety
- Public Transport
- Inclusive Accessibility
- Rural Accessibility
- Protection of the Natural, Built and Historic Environment
- Freight and Logistics
- Digitalisation and Digital Connectivity
- Demand Management
- Spatial Planning and Development
- Climate Change Resilience, Decarbonisation and Air Quality
- Asset & Network Management

7.4. Under each action area a series of interventions has been identified, assessed and sifted to form an initial five-year Implementation Plan. This draft plan has been used to help inform the Local Transport Delivery Plan (LTDP), referenced in Section 5, which is a requirement for receipt of central government funding.

7.5. A draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has also been developed and sets out how the Council will monitor progress against the LTP objectives and the Local Government Outcomes Framework, which is also a requirement of the new central government funding mechanism (Section 5).

7.6. The Transport Act 2000 places a requirement on LTAs to undertake extensive consultation on their LTPs. A robust consultation exercise is crucial to:

- Ensure that communities and stakeholders across Shropshire have appropriate and equitable opportunity to understand, comment on and influence the emerging LTP.
- Enable Shropshire Council to clearly articulate the vision, objectives and benefits of the LTP to build understanding, trust and support amongst its stakeholders.
- Ensure that engagement is well-planned, inclusive and transparent and that it generates robust evidence.

7.7. It is considered that it is now the right time in the LTP programme to engage with stakeholders with a view to initiating a formal consultation exercise in September 2026. It would therefore be expected that a report requesting adoption of the final version of the LTP could be reviewed by Shropshire Council at their meeting in February 2027.

7.8. Subject to the approvals sought in this report, an Engagement and Consultation Strategy would be developed to ensure that a reasonable range of stakeholders, in line with statutory guidance, has the opportunity to comment. This work will inform the scope of any pre-consultation engagement and the consultation itself. It will also inform the appropriate mechanisms to targeting stakeholders and the type of mediums and materials to be used. The size of Shropshire, its dispersed population and a low number of Shropshire Council officers available to represent the Authority in-person presents particular challenges in terms of developing an inclusive and equitable engagement and consultation package.

7.9. At this early stage, it is anticipated that the engagement and consultation could include the following general activities and timeframe to present a defendable consultation exercise that is reflective of Shropshire's demographics and dispersed population. An external peer review of the draft LTP may be considered utilising the LGA or another source.

Activity	Potential timescale
• Wide ranging engagement with key groups as an opportunity to influence draft LTP pre-consultation.	June 2026
• Cabinet approval of LTP for consultation.	Aug. 2026
• Preparation of consultation materials	July – Aug. 2026
• A six-week consultation period which could be supported by targeted information material, dedicated in-person school activity sessions, drop-in events in key towns and two virtual drop-in sessions.	Sept. – Oct. 2026
• Analysis of feedback, reporting and LTP revisions.	Oct. – Dec. 2026
• Present consultation feedback and LTP revisions to Cabinet.	Jan. 2027
• Member briefings on consultation feedback and LTP revisions to Cabinet.	Feb. 2027
• LTP approval by Full Council	Feb. 2027

8. Additional Information

Data management and governance

8.1. Robust data management is critical to ensure transparency, auditability and compliance with data protection legislation. Subject to the approvals sought in this document, a clear protocol will be set up for:

- Managing consultation responses;
- Coding and analysis of feedback, and
- Reporting and audit trails.

Integrated Impact Assessment: Preliminary Outputs

8.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been integrated into the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for the LTP, with a 'Population and Equalities' objective included in the IIA Framework, which aims to assess whether the LTP would work to increase the capacity, connectivity and efficiency of the transport network to support demographic changes, including improving access for all groups inclusively and reduce inequalities across the plan area. At this stage, the IIA has preliminarily concluded that there is potential for a significant positive effect on this objective, due to the number of policies and actions that are likely to have a positive impact, individually and cumulatively, on the objective.

8.3. The LTP is expected to improve access to community facilities including healthcare, and employment opportunities, and provide improved access to employment and healthcare for all residents, including the elderly and those with disabilities. Population and Equalities are inherently considered in the LTP's vision, which aims to provide an inclusive, safe and sustainable transport system, which supports thriving urban and rural communities, and are also considered in the Objectives of the LTP.

8.4. Many of the LTPs policies, and actions outlined in the Implementation Plan, would contribute to the improvement of inclusivity and access for all users of the transport network. Policies aim to improve the quality, reliability and accessibility of the transport network, and improve active travel routes, which will make them easier to use.

8.5. The IIA has also preliminarily concluded that there is potential for a minor negative effect on this objective, as construction of any new or improved infrastructure may negatively impact access to the transport network, as well as services and facilities, for some demographics in the short-term, as works may result in temporary diversions, as well as increased traffic. However, it is assumed that in line with national and local planning policy, any proposals would seek to avoid and minimise accessibility impacts and provide enhancements where possible.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The LTP for Shropshire will be a key document in securing future funding and in planning for and prioritising activities on the highways and transport network. It has strategic links to a number of wider Council agenda, including accommodated development through the next Local Plan. A public consultation exercise is an statutory requirement in the development of an LTP.

9.2. A substantial amount of evidence gathering has taken place to inform the development of the draft LTP. This has been supported by engagement with specialist officers from across the Authority, and a workshop with Cabinet Members in December 2025. It is now the right time to develop an engagement and consultation programme to share the draft publicly and seek wider feedback on this statutory long-term strategy for highways and transport in Shropshire.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
None

Local Member:	N/A : The proposal affects all of Shropshire

Appendices

None

Contact: Andy Wilde andy.wilde@shropshire.gov.uk

Cabinet
Wednesday 10th June 2026

Item

Public

Commissioning and Procurement Strategy

Responsible Officer:	Laura Tyler		
email:	Laura.tyler@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 253178
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans		

1. Synopsis

This Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management (CPCM) Strategy sets out how Shropshire Council will plan, procure and manage goods, services, works and concessions during 2026–2029 to deliver best value, improved outcomes for residents and full compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement (February 2025).
The Council faces increasing demand, ongoing financial pressures and heightened expectations around transparency, fairness and social value. At the same time, the new procurement regime provides an opportunity to modernise how services are commissioned, how markets are engaged and how contracts are managed to secure stronger and more sustainable outcomes.
This strategy establishes a clear, consistent framework to ensure public money is spent fairly, transparently and effectively, while supporting delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, economic regeneration priorities and commitments to sustainability and community wellbeing. Alongside this, the Government has now issued the new National Procurement Policy Statement Feb 2025.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. The Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Strategy (CPCM) 2026–2029 sets out how Shropshire Council will plan, procure and manage third-party spend to deliver best value, improved outcomes for residents and full compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement (February 2025). It set out clear commissioning priorities to focus on rising demand, financial pressure and increased expectations for transparency, fairness and social value, while using the new procurement regime to modernise practice and strengthen commercial capability.

2.2. The CPCM establishes a commissioning-led, outcomes-focused approach that embeds social value, sustainability and market engagement from the outset. It

prioritises early market engagement and pipeline visibility supporting the Voluntary and Community Sectors (VCS) and local suppliers; alongside consistent, risk-based contract management to improve performance, assurance and value across the full contract lifecycle. Better use of data, spend analysis and systems underpins evidence-led decisions, demand management and market shaping.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

3.1. Approves the Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Strategy (CPCM) in appendix 1;

3.2. Delegates authority to the Service Director Commissioning in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance to update the strategy annually aligned to any legislation change and best practice.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. Key Opportunities

1. **Improved value for money** through a commissioning-led, outcomes-focused approach and better use of spend analysis and data.
2. **Stronger social value and sustainability outcomes** by embedding climate, economic and community benefits into procurement and contract management.
3. **More resilient and diverse markets**, with greater engagement of VCS and local suppliers through early market engagement and procurement pipeline visibility.
4. **Enhanced governance, transparency and compliance** under the Procurement Act 2023, improving public confidence and audit assurance.
5. **Better contract performance and risk management** via consistent, risk-based contract management frameworks and clearer accountability.

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4.2. Risk table

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Insufficient capacity or capability to implement the strategy, particularly under the Procurement Act 2023	Multi-year workforce and training plan; targeted investment in procurement and contract management roles; use of standard tools, templates and guidance	Workforce capacity and capability
Non-compliance with new procurement legislation and Contract Rules during transition	Updated Contract Rules; clear governance gateways; mandatory training; strengthened audit trails and reporting	Governance, legal and regulatory compliance
Inconsistent adoption across services, limiting delivery of intended benefits	Corporate frameworks, mandated processes, central oversight, and performance reporting through dashboards and boards	Corporate governance and assurance
Poor data quality or system limitations undermining spend visibility, transparency and decision-making	Data cleansing; integrated systems; development of a single contracts register and improved spend analytics	Information management and decision-making
Market fragility or supplier failure, particularly in pressured or specialist markets	Early market engagement; market shaping activity; supplier risk assessment; proportionate contract management	Service continuity and resilience
Failure to realise value for money and social value outcomes	Outcome-based commissioning; use of MAT; embedded social value requirements; active contract performance management	Financial sustainability and value for money
Reputational damage from lack of transparency or fairness in procurement decisions	Enhanced transparency requirements; published pipelines; clear decision reporting; consistent application of rules	Reputation and public confidence
Change fatigue or resistance to new ways of working	Clear leadership sponsorship; phased implementation; practical guidance and officer support	Transformation and change delivery

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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 strategy requires targeted investment in skills, systems and governance to meet the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 and improve commercial capability. This upfront investment is expected to be offset by medium- to long-term financial benefits, including improved value for money, reduced duplication, better contract performance, increased cost avoidance, and stronger demand management. Over time, more effective market engagement, aggregation, and risk-based contract management are intended to protect the Council's financial position, improve budget control, and ensure that existing spend delivers maximum economic, social and environmental return.

5.3. The council spends in the region of £450m on third party buying services with the highest proportion of spend for children's and adult social care. It is imperative that the council gets value for money and refocuses on prevention to reduce current and future budget pressures.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1. The strategy has positive and material implications for climate change, as it positions commissioning, procurement and contract management as key levers for delivering the Council's net zero and sustainability ambitions. Climate and environmental considerations are embedded at the earliest stages of commissioning, ensuring that decisions about what is bought, how it is bought and who it is bought from explicitly consider carbon impact, environmental sustainability and climate resilience, rather than treating these as add-ons.

6.2. In practise, this means procurement activity will be used to drive carbon reduction across supply chains, require measurable environmental commitments in contracts and actively managed delivery through contract management arrangements. By strengthening data, reporting and supplier engagement, the strategy enables the council to track environmental outcomes, influence supply behaviour and support greener local markets.

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7. Background

7.1. The council has historically had two separate Commissioning and Procurement strategies both of which need to be reviewed and updated. The council took the decision to rewrite these strategies and align them onto one strategy in line with the current structure and resources.

7.2. Our vision is to ensure that all of the council's commissioning and procurement activity is delivered in a manner that considers our guiding principles and ambitions, not only from a procurement perspective but also considering the wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our Corporate Plan.

7.3. Shropshire Council operates in a context of rising demand for services, ongoing financial pressures and increased expectations around transparency, fairness and social value in how money is spent. At the same time, the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 and the National Procurement Policy Statement, February 2025 represents the most significant reform of public procurement in a generation. This requires new approaches to commissioning, procurement and contract management, alongside stronger governance and commercial capability.

7.4. This strategy has been developed to respond to these challenges and opportunities by providing a clear corporate framework for how the Council commissioned services, engages and shapes markets, procures goods and services, and manage his contracts through their life cycle. It builds on existing investment, improved activity, and governance with an outcomes focused approach that aligns procurement decisions with the Council's corporate plan. It will support economic regeneration and stability and ensure public the delivery of value for money for the council.

7.5. A self assessment on the Procurement activity on May 2025 identified several areas of improvement including the need to redefine the strategic vision. Aligning both commissioning and Procurement functions across the organisation it presented the opportunity to align both documents.

7.6. The council has embarked on an improvement journey across Commissioning, procurement and contract management and it is a key area within the current improvement plan.

7.7. The council in addition has increased resources across this portfolio to ensure the right capacity and skills are in place to implement the strategy and manage its third party spend. Alongside this further training and development will be implemented across the organisation to improve understanding and awareness of the processes to ensure transparency and accountability.

7.8. In addition, the council is currently implementing a Procurement and Contract system that will ensure all activity is captured in one place, therefore all contracts will be updated and will offer prompt reminders for contract end dates therefore starting the procurement process at an appropriate time allowing for collaboration and innovative change.

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7.9. The Strategy details eight commissioning priorities:

Priority 1: People Focused
Priority 2: Outcomes focussed
Priority 3: Effectively manage demand
Priority 4: Evidence based/data driven
Priority 5: Deliver social value
Priority 6: Market shaping
Priority 7: Commissioning culture
Priority 8: Commissioning together

7.10 It sets out a procurement vision to deliver high-quality, value-driven, socially responsible procurement and contract management that supports Shropshire Council's strategic objectives, enhances community wellbeing, and ensures sustainable economic growth.

7.11 Many of the council's key services are delivered by third-party suppliers. It is therefore vitally important to effectively manage these commercial relationships, ensuring that the organisation delivers better services, mitigates risk and has improved control over costs. Failure to manage contracts properly may lead to inefficiencies, poor contractor performance or commercial failure which can seriously damage the council's reputation and ability to deliver effective services. Contract management will be embedded throughout the contract lifecycle, providing the framework and tools to comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and to manage the exposure to commercial, contractual and reputational risk and focus on areas such as implementation of contracts and termination activities.

7.12 The strategy will also support the current Accord which details how commissioners need to support the VCS specifically working together and ensuring work is complete in a timely manner with realistic expectations and considers a wide range of organisations.

7.13 Social value is also a key part of the strategy. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was enacted to ensure public sector organisations are taking the social, economic and environmental value delivered by their contracts into account. The Act places a duty on the council to "consider, prior to undertaking the procurement/ commissioning process, how any services procured might improve economic, social and environmental well-being". Whilst we operate in a challenging environment, in which savings will always be a factor for consideration, we need a strategy which also focuses on achieving additional outcomes from our procurement activity, at no extra cost. By leveraging our procurement expenditure and engaging with suppliers we can help the council enhance outcomes for our communities through increased social, economic and environmental value. This will directly support the overall priorities of the council as set out in the Corporate Plan.

7.14 A section within the strategy describes 'Good Governance' and summarises the key actions the Council will take to address internal governance and learn from audit recommendations to strengthen the control environment for commissioning, procurement and contract management. It focuses on embedding clear accountability, consistent application of Contract Rules, improved record keeping and transparency, and a risk-based approach to monitoring and assurance so that decisions and outcomes are demonstrably compliant and deliver best value. This section summarises the key actions the Council will take to address internal governance

and learn from audit recommendations to strengthen the control environment for commissioning, procurement and contract management. It focuses on embedding clear accountability, consistent application of Contract Rules, improved record keeping and transparency, and a risk-based approach to monitoring and assurance so that decisions and outcomes are demonstrably compliant and deliver best value. Accountability for the delivery of the new Commissioning Strategy will rest collectively across the organisation, with all Directorates responsible for embedding its principles within their functions to ensure coherent, outcome-focused delivery and the achievement of best value.

7.15 The Council will implement the following good-practice enhancements to improve governance, compliance, transparency and assurance across commissioning, procurement and contract management activity to deliver:

1. Clear governance and decision-making controls
2. Contract Rules compliance
3. Robust contract documentation
4. Improved transparency, audit trail and management information
5. Supplier performance monitoring and assurance
6. Capability building and consistent practice

8. Conclusions

8.1. This strategy is a vital part of our transformation and improvement journey as the council strives to become financially sustainable. It is essential that Shropshire is outcomes focused to meet rising demand, financial pressures and heightened expectations for transparency, social value and sustainability. By aligning commissioning, procurement and contract management the Council establishes a clear, compliant framework that strengthens governance, improves value for money and supports local economic growth.

8.2. Successful delivery will depend on consistent implementation, strengthened commercial capability, effective use of data and systems and active market engagement. With clear governance, contract management and robust performance reporting, the Strategy positions the Council to manage risk, protect public funds and secure better long-term outcomes for residents, communities and the local economy.

8.3 The strategy will operate on a **three-year review cycle**, with annual reviews to reflect legislative change or organisational priorities.

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 1 Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Strategy (CPCM) 2026-2029

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Shropshire Council
Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy
(2026 – 2029)



Foreword from Portfolio Holder- Councillor Roger Evans



I am pleased to present this strategy which will set out the council's guiding principles and ambitions for our **Commissioning, procurement and contract management** activity, which will in turn support the **Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan.** We are at an important time for Shropshire Council; this area has been a priority for us as we set out our Commissioning intentions and respond to the budget pressures and continuing increases in demand.

The strategy will set out our vision for commissioning and define our organisational approach to procurement which will be in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and will provide assurance that we will spend public money in a way which is fair, accountable and achieves the very best value. It not only has been developed to consider both commissioning priorities and the new procurement regulations, but also lessons learned as an organisation. Supporting the development of a local market across Shropshire is vitally important and we will look at how we support the implementation of the Accord, which is a voluntary agreement between local public sector bodies and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups and organisations. It sets out shared values, principles, and commitments to better work together to serve local people and Shropshire's communities and describes how we work collaboratively and closely with our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and local Partners.

It is essential that all of the council takes accountability and understands commissioning, procurement and contract management. We need to cultivate a culture that focuses on demand informed by data; has strong governance; defined principles and works in collaboration to set strong foundations for the council. Growing a strong, resilient market across Shropshire will be key to ensuring choice, quality and value for money services are delivered with robust contract management.

Executive Summary

This Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management (CPCM) Strategy sets out how **Shropshire Council** will plan, procure and manage goods, services, works and concessions during **2026–2029** to deliver **best value**, improved outcomes for residents and full compliance with the **Procurement Act 2023** and the **National Procurement Policy Statement (February 2025)**.

The Council faces increasing demand, ongoing financial pressures and heightened expectations around transparency, fairness and social value. At the same time, the new procurement regime provides an opportunity to modernise how services are commissioned, how markets are engaged and how contracts are managed to secure stronger and more sustainable outcomes.

This strategy establishes a clear, consistent framework to ensure public money is spent **fairly, transparently and effectively**, while supporting delivery of the Council's **Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan**, economic regeneration priorities and commitments to sustainability and community wellbeing. This is a whole-council strategy. Responsibility for effective commissioning, procurement and contract management sits across service areas, budget holders, contract managers and senior leaders, with the Procurement and Contract Management Team providing specialist advice, governance and support.

What Will Change

The strategy introduces a step change in approach by:

- Training and awareness for officers across the council to improve accountability for services
- Strengthening a **commissioning-led model**, focused on clearly defined outcomes informed by data, evidence and resident insight.
- Embedding the **Procurement Act 2023** across all relevant activity, including use of the **Most Advantageous Tender (MAT)** approach and enhanced transparency.
- Improving **early market engagement** and visibility of the Council's procurement pipeline, with stronger support for SMEs, VCS and local suppliers.
- Implementing a **consistent, risk-based contract management framework** to improve performance, assurance and value for money throughout the contract lifecycle.

- Making better use of **data, systems and spend analysis** to support informed decision-making and planning.
- Strengthening **governance and accountability**, with clearer oversight and reporting arrangements.

Strategic Focus

The strategy is built around three interconnected themes:

- **Social Value** – embedding sustainability, climate action and wider social, economic and environmental benefits into commissioning and procurement, with delivery actively managed through contracts.
- **Procurement and Contract Management** – improving commercial capability, governance and compliance to ensure contracts deliver intended outcomes and manage risk effectively.
- **Delivery** – developing the skills, systems and processes required to implement the strategy consistently across the organisation.

These themes are supported by **eight commissioning priorities** that place residents at the centre of decision-making, focus on outcomes, manage demand, shape markets and promote collaboration across services and partners.

Measuring Success

Progress and impact will be measured through a clear performance framework, including:

- Improved organisational understanding of commissioning, procurement and contract management
- Improved Commercial Continuous Assessment Framework self-evaluation compared to baseline.
- Value for money and efficiency achieved
- Compliance with legislation and Contract Rules
- Delivery of social value and sustainability outcomes
- Contract performance, risk and assurance
- Engagement with local suppliers, SMEs and VCS

Performance will be monitored through quarterly dashboards and an **Annual Procurement Report** to senior management and Members.

Governance and Review

Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the **Commissioning, Procurement and Performance Board**, with appropriate reporting to Cabinet and Scrutiny. The strategy will operate on a **three-year review cycle**, with annual reviews to reflect legislative change or organisational priorities.

Approved Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	June 2026	Laura Tyler SD Commissioning	

Commissioning



- Assess Needs
- Define Dutcomes
- Shape the Market

Procurement



- Select Suppliers
- Conduct Tenders
- Award Contracts

Contract Management



- Monitor Performance
- Manage Risks
- Ensure Value

Content

Our vision for commissioning and procurement
Commissioning priorities
Priority 1: People Focused
Priority 2: Outcomes focused
Priority 3: Effectively manage demand
Priority 4: Evidence based/data driven
Priority 5: Deliver social value
Priority 6: Market shaping
Priority 7: Commissioning culture
Priority 8: Commissioning together

Procurement

Social Value

- Embedding Sustainability and Climate Action into all Procurement Activities
- Providing Opportunity for Economic, Social & Environmental Wellbeing
- Enhancing the Supply Market

Procurement & Contract Management

- Improving Contract & Commercial Management
- Delivering Best Value & Good Governance

Delivery

- Building Skills & Capability
- Utilising and Developing Systems & Processes
- Implementing, Monitoring & Review

Good governance

1. Our vision for commissioning and procurement

Commissioning is the strategic, cyclical process of assessing community needs, designing services, and deciding what to buy, while procurement is the transactional, technical process of purchasing those goods or services from a supplier. Commissioning shapes the market and sets outcomes.

Our vision is to ensure that all of the council's commissioning and procurement activity ensures quality, value for money and meets needs. It is delivered across all areas of the council in a manner that considers our guiding principles and ambitions, not only from a procurement perspective but also considering the wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our Corporate Plan:

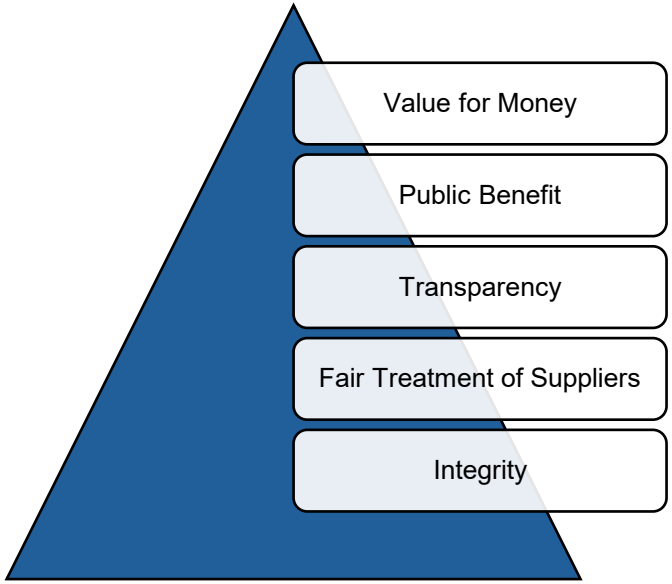
This is a shared corporate responsibility, with service areas, budget holders, commissioners, contract managers and senior leaders all playing a role in delivering effective commissioning, procurement and contract management.

- Sustainable, Connected and Resilient – ensuring the Council lives within its means, works closely with communities and partners, and helps build resilience so support is available when most needed.
- Financial sustainability, clear priorities and a workforce supported to excel – strengthening financial management (including procurement and contract management) so every pound spent delivers maximum benefit and impact.
- Connected communities – enabling well-maintained roads, accessible transport and the infrastructure people and businesses need.
- Safe and inclusive places with homes that meet people's needs – supporting the right mix of housing, safer communities, and prevention/early intervention with partners.
- Healthy people who can thrive at every stage of life – focusing on prevention, independence, and access to sustainable, high-quality services and support.
- A protected environment that promotes wellbeing – embedding climate action, nature recovery, waste minimisation and greener ways of working through commissioning and contracts.
- A fair and thriving economy – supporting sustainable growth, local skills and employment, investment, and improved digital/mobile connectivity (including in rural areas).

This strategy is to set out how Shropshire Council will commission, procure and contract manage goods, services, works and concessions in a way that:

- **Deliver sustainable outcomes for residents, businesses, and the environment.**
- **Complies with UK Public Procurement Act 2023**
- **Achieves value for money (VFM).**
- **Support the Council's wider corporate plan**

Key principles include:



These principles create the foundation for delivering long-term efficiency and quality in contracts that are safe, legal and compliant with the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23) and all connected other relevant legislation:

- New contract rules for Shropshire Council
- Process and documentation in line with best practice, providing proportionate governance and controls
- Data assimilation to categories, regimes and thresholds to support visibility of spend within supply chains and data driven insight-led decision making
- Onboarding of suppliers
- Improved value for money as combined opportunities are identified
- To procure and ensure efficient and effective management of all third party spend ensuring the Council is safe, legal and compliant with PA23

This will help the council:

- build on the already committed investment into the Procurement and Contract Management function
- system integration improvements underway
- data cleansing and meeting our transparency obligations
- delivering a consistent service offer and approach with clarity across council services
- to ensure that it is compliant but also delivers the best value for money in procuring what it needs

Commissioning

Commissioning is data and evidence led, it is collaborative and supports the strategic aims to deliver cost-effective, good quality and choice of services for our residents.

Definition of Commissioning

For the purposes of this document commissioning is defined as a cycle of assessing the needs of people and communities across Shropshire. Using these to design effective services and support and influence the market to shape and secure the right services at the right price. Importantly then monitoring and reviewing the impact of those services being delivered to assess whether we can learn and improve those services for the benefit of the people and communities of Shropshire'.

Commissioning Intentions

The principles adopted in our strategic commissioning framework will support the delivery of effective and efficient services over the short, medium and longer-term through:

- a culture that supports innovation, collaboration and partnerships
- effective resourcing and governance that ensures value for money.
- A market that thrives and delivers services that meet the needs of residents
- A versatile, cost effective and sustainable market.
- Promoting and developing inclusive access to all services.
- Investing in early help, prevention and community services.



Priority 2: Outcomes focused

Our Aim:
Through an Outcome-Based approach, we will focus on the difference we can make and not just focus on inputs and processes. We will promote innovation and make effective use of resources, specifically identifying multiple outcomes and delivering value for money.

How will we achieve this?

- Working with residents we will define the outcomes to be achieved in our Corporate Plan and Commissioning Intentions.
- Be clear about how the outcomes contribute to the Council's strategic priorities at the start of the commissioning process.
- Start with defining the outcomes and vision for what we are setting out to achieve before identifying the options for delivery.
- Ensure we embed robust mechanisms and monitoring processes to measure, and report based on SMART outcomes.

Priority 3: Effectively manage demand

Our Aim:
Forecasting, planning and developing a better understanding of demand for our services will be a key part of our commissioning approach.

How will we achieve this?

- Understanding what causes demand for services and identify opportunities for changing level of demand. This will be key for managing future pressures on services against available resources.
- Invest resources where it's needed
- Take a long term and strategic view of demand to avoid delivering false economy where reduction in provision in one area increase demand elsewhere.
- Understanding the impact of our intervention – what we are setting out to do and what difference has it made.

Priority 4: Evidence based/data driven commissioning decisions

Our Aim:

Data and insights play a key role in commissioning by enabling us to understand levels and types of need. We have a wealth of data – both within the Council and from our providers. We will actively harness and analyse the data at every step of the process to ensure the appropriate decisions and actions are taken.

How will we achieve this?

- Use Shropshire and Partner data to identify trends and understand demand
- Use our data to identify solutions and feed into commissioning plans and decision making
- Conduct robust review and evaluation of services commissioned before re-commissioning
- Continually review contracts and services to analyse and report on the effectiveness of our commissioning decisions
- Develop and analyse category level spend to feed into commissioning intentions

Priority 5: Deliver social value

Our Aim:

Commissioning should ensure the maximum benefit in delivering multiple outcomes for our residents. We will create opportunities that enhance our communities and improve the lives of our residents.

How will we achieve this?

We will develop a plan which sets out how we will enhance social value through our commissioning. This will include:

- Encouraging a diverse base of suppliers
- Maximising community benefits through encouraging suppliers to make social contributions to the area
- Promoting greater environmental sustainability
- Increasing employment and training opportunities through our contracts

Priority 6: Market shaping

Our Aim:

Our providers have a key role in achieving outcomes for our residents. Our aim is to take our relationship with providers, existing and new, a step further by shaping solutions with the market to respond to needs, support capacity building, encourage innovation and help build sustainable service models.

How will we achieve this?

- Regular market engagement activities with clear and coherent communication
- Analyse the current market and identify strengths, weaknesses and any gaps
- Shape the market for short, medium, and long term
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with providers, supporting them to be flexible to local needs

Priority 7: Commissioning culture

Our Aim:

Develop a 'commissioning culture' – empower our commissioners to be bold, ambitious and have confidence to explore new delivery models. We will not default to always procuring what we've had before – we will consider a full range of options.

How will we achieve this?

- Proactive management of existing contracts in order to develop innovative solutions
- We will undertake a holistic approach to forward thinking commissioning, looking at and building on good practice.
- We will support our commissioners to develop the skills and expertise required to deliver our commissioning principles

Priority 8: Commissioning together

Our Aim:

We will look to integrate commissioning (expertise, capacity and resources) across departments and with partners to maximise benefits for our residents.

How will we achieve this?

- We will develop a forward plan of commissioning activity and engage with our partners and across departments to focus on service users in a timely manner to ensure joint collaboration
- We will demonstrate open and honest communication and flexibility to work in an integrated way from planning to delivery
- We will look to avoid duplication and positively influence how collective resources are used, for example through pooled budgets or shared services
- We will work to shared values and goals and take joint responsibility for delivering outcomes

Procurement



Our vision is to ensure that all of the council's procurement activity is delivered in a manner that considers our guiding principles and ambitions, not only from a purely procurement perspective but also considering the wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our corporate plan.

Our procurement activity and decisions have a direct impact on the council's budget, the quality and cost of services to our citizens and delivery of our corporate and service objectives. The way in which we conduct our procurement activity also has an impact on our suppliers and potential suppliers to the council, and we hope that this strategy will enable us to provide greater transparency and consistency in our activities.

The council aims to deliver high-quality, value-driven, socially responsible procurement and contract management that supports Shropshire Council's strategic objectives, enhances community wellbeing, and ensures sustainable economic growth while delivering a clear Procurement Lifecycle see below:

Plan:

- Identify needs and requirements
- Conduct market research
- Develop procurement strategy
- Prepare budget and timeline

Define:

- Specify detailed requirements
- Draft procurement documents
- Establish evaluation criteria: Set criteria for evaluating bids, price, quality
- Obtain necessary approvals: Get approval from management for the procurement plan.

Procure:

- Issue procurement documents
- Receive and evaluate bids/proposals: Collect and assess bids based on the evaluation criteria.
- Conduct negotiations: Negotiate terms and prices with shortlisted suppliers.
- Award contract to selected vendor: Choose the best supplier and award the contract.

Manage:

- Monitor contract performance
- Manage supplier relationships: Maintain good communication and resolve any issues with the supplier.
- Process payments and manage invoices.
- Conduct post-procurement evaluation: Review the procurement process and supplier performance for future improvements

Procurement priorities

Principle	Description
Value for Money & Efficiency	Deliver services that balance cost, quality, and outcomes
Compliance & Governance	Ensure all procurement complies with relevant laws, internal financial regulations, and audit requirements
Fairness & Transparency	Provide clear, open, and equitable opportunities for suppliers
Local Economic Growth	Support SMEs, VCS, and local suppliers, developing local markets that deliver across neighbourhoods
Sustainability & Social Value	Embed carbon reduction, ethical sourcing, and community benefits in all procurements
Risk Management & Resilience	Identify, monitor, and mitigate any fraud or supply chain risks
Innovation & Collaboration	Identify and enable innovative solutions and partnerships with other authorities or agencies

Social Value

Embedding Sustainability and Climate Action into all Procurement Activities

Ambition

The council's spending can have a significant impact on helping the council to achieve its carbon net zero ambitions, influencing the approach to climate change mitigation and driving sustainability within the local authority area. Whilst we have made progress, we must try to do more. Therefore, the council's approach to procurement and contract management must be harnessed to support the council's plan on balancing short-term gains with long-term benefits. Our decisions about what we buy, who we buy it from and the way we buy it can have significant wider environmental, economic and social impacts, thereby contribute to achieving one of the council's corporate plan objectives.

Outcomes

- The climate and sustainability impact of the council's spending decisions are fully considered and appropriately built into procurement requirements, driving down carbon emissions and contributing towards the net zero ambition.
- Measurable sustainability and climate data is available in contracts and is used to improve services and drive change.
- Council contracting considers the changing climate and takes action to reduce detrimental impacts, influencing emission reductions from outsourced and contracted council services.
- A supply base that is aware of and embraces the council's declarations, policy and strategy in relation to sustainability, passing that commitment on to other organisations and supporting delivery.

Activities

- Explore the establishment of a methodology for measuring and reporting of climate and sustainability targets and impacts during contract delivery, creating data that can be used to improve services and drive change.
- Embed the effective use of sustainability led Social Value themes, outcomes and measures (TOMs) in procurements to capture and evaluate supplier commitments and ensure delivery.
- As part our market engagement activities and plans we will work with our supply markets to ensure they are aware of our ambitions and learn from them what constitutes current sustainability best practice.
- Align procurement outcomes with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Council's climate and inclusion priorities.

Providing Opportunity for Economic, Social & Environmental Wellbeing

Ambition

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was enacted to ensure public sector organisations are taking the social, economic and environmental value delivered by their contracts into account. The Act places a duty on the council to "consider, prior to undertaking the procurement/ commissioning process, how any services procured might improve economic, social and environmental well-being". Whilst we operate in a challenging environment, in which savings will always be a factor for consideration, we need a strategy which also focuses on achieving additional outcomes from our procurement activity, at no extra cost. By leveraging our procurement expenditure and engaging with suppliers we can help the council enhance outcomes for our communities through increased social, economic and environmental value. This will directly support the overall priorities of the council as set out in the Corporate Plan.

Outcomes

- A proportionate and effective approach to Social Value, with supporting methodologies / toolkit, is embedded across the council.
- The council is able to record and track Social Value outcomes delivered through contracts with third parties.
- Procurement processes consistently consider Social Value and are designed to ensure suppliers make worthwhile and deliverable Social Value commitments through the tender process.

- The council seeks to improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing from our contracts, over and above the delivery of the services directly required by exploring how those activities can deliver the council's wider strategic outcomes at no extra cost.
- Expenditure on contracts is leveraged, and suppliers are engaged to enhance our communities through increased social value.

Activities

- Review and re-launch the social value policy.
- Create a series of methodologies to follow in order to seek, evaluate and confirm delivery, of SV.
- Implement a clear impact measurement mechanism, for delivery of Social Value and wellbeing outcome.
- Ensure that Social Value is built into Contract Management processes, so that commitments made by suppliers during tender processes are delivered during the contract term.
- Explicitly link Social Value to the Corporate Plan to create a clear strategic link between council aims and outcomes.
- Require suppliers to demonstrate commitments to local employment, community engagement, and sustainability.

Enhancing the Supply Market

Ambition

Shropshire Council's external spend is in excess of £480million per annum. We recognise the importance of a supply market that has developed to meet our needs, and understand that by directing our spend effectively, and engaging with the market appropriately, we can help the market grow and create a vibrant and sustainable marketplace that can create innovative and lasting service solutions. We will seek to maximise the benefit offered by our local supply base, supporting our Corporate Plan:

Outcomes

- All suppliers are able to access opportunities to apply to work for the council if they wish to do so.
- The council works with our local supply market, helping to develop “a prosperous new economy”, in support of the council's Partnership plan and to support delivery of the council's sustainability targets, seeking to take advantage of legislation updates where appropriate.
- The supply market has early visibility of upcoming opportunities and a good understanding of how they access these opportunities.
- Supplier markets are appropriately engaged during the pre-tender phase, allowing input and development of Procurement Strategies and encouraging innovation that drives best value.
- The council engages with, and influences, the supply market and potential suppliers in order to drive innovation and develop new ideas around service delivery.

Activities

- Shropshire will regularly update and publish a pipeline of upcoming procurement opportunities and work with partners such the Economic Development Team to raise awareness across the market, Chambers of Commerce etc.
- Commissioners and procurers ensure an appropriate level of early market engagement is included in projects when developing Procurement Plans – Now a legislative requirement under the Procurement Act 23 for many procurements.
- Conduct a review of procurement documentation and processes to ensure suitability for all markets and suppliers.
- Analyse and assess the council's supply base to understand market pressures and composition.
- Maximise the opportunities offered by the Procurement Act 2023 in respect of engaging with local supply market where appropriate.
- Support SMEs, VCS, and local suppliers through simplified bidding processes and supplier engagement events.
- Promote supplier diversity and resilience by encouraging innovation and fair working practices.
- Use strategic supplier management to build long-term partnerships and mitigate market risks.

Procurement & Contract Management

Improving Contract & Commercial Management

Ambition

Many of the council's key services are delivered by third-party suppliers. It is therefore vitally important to effectively manage these commercial relationships, ensuring that the organisation delivers better services, mitigates risk and has improved control over costs. Failure to manage contracts properly may lead to inefficiencies, poor contractor performance or commercial failure which can seriously damage the council's reputation and ability to deliver effective services, support our communities and deliver against our corporate ambitions and priorities. We will embed improved contract management throughout the contract lifecycle, providing the framework and tools to comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and to manage the exposure to commercial, contractual and reputational risk and focus on areas such as implementation of contracts and termination activities.

Outcomes

- Contracts with third parties are robustly managed by the council, using an established and consistent corporate approach to contract management which includes the tiering of suppliers ensuring proportionality.
- Introducing a new contract management framework will improve contract management across the council with clear lines of reporting and responsibility, ensuring that contracts are delivering or exceeding their quality, service and cost targets.
- There is visibility of contract performance in relation to the council's key contracts and improved assurance on delivery.
- Contracts are proactively managed to ensure that the value secured through the procurement process is retained, continuous improvement is realised, and additional value is unlocked where possible.

Activities

- Introduce a consistent, risk-based contract management framework with accompanying tools, comprehensive training and support for all officers who are involved in managing contracts with third parties.
- All key contracts have a named contract manager who has clear responsibilities and understands the contract performance reporting requirements and the importance of developing appropriate relationships with suppliers.
- Contracts are based on terms and conditions which allow for appropriate and proactive contract management.
- Ensure that data on contract performance is reported on corporately for the council's key contracts. Introduce a consistent approach to commercial risk management using established tools and techniques.
- Improving Contract & Commercial Management by:
    - Appropriate training to build commercial capability and standardise best practices
    - Conducting regular performance reviews and risk assessments to ensure service quality and contract compliance.
- Develop Proportional Contract Management Frameworks covering:
    - Risk rating (High, Medium, Low).
    - Lifecycle stages: Mobilisation, Performance Monitoring, Risk Management, Change Management, Exit & Transition.
    - Performance tools: KPIs, SLAs, audits.
    - Relationship management: Strategic supplier partnerships, joint innovation.
- Provide Commercial Risk & Assurance by:
    - Risk Register for all major contracts.
    - Financial standing checks
    - business continuity planning
    - insurance and indemnity alignment.

Ambition

Delivering best value is at the heart of procurement and is of critical importance within the wider context of financial challenges and increased demand for services within local government. Achieving the very best value is about more than efficiency, savings and managing risk. The operating environment for local authorities has shifted significantly in recent years as a result of wider geo-political events, meaning less surety in the outcome of commercial contracting and greater financial risks. The council must ensure that procurement and contract management activity is robustly planned, to deliver the desired outcomes, deliver best value and to take advantage of collaborative opportunities available to us. Strong governance processes will ensure appropriate oversight of the council's procurement activity, alignment with the Corporate Plan, adherence to relevant legislation and the council's own Contract Rules.

Outcomes

- The expertise of the Procurement and Contract Management Team is currently focused on higher value, higher risk procurement processes, working with services across the council. The ambition is to gain visibility and control over the lower value spend, and 'touch' all procurement over £5,000 in order to be able to satisfy Transparency requirements, create consistency and aggregate for savings and efficiencies.
- Identify and optimise opportunities for contract consolidation, the creation of formal corporate contracts to leverage economies of scale to deliver best value to the Council.
- Council contracts are awarded and managed to optimise council funding, considering cost, delivery and whole life benefits.
- Verified spend data is starting to be used and informs our future procurements and current contracting in an appropriate and proportionate manner.
- Internal processes and procedures will need to be optimised and efficient, enabling the council to procure effectively.
- Opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities and public bodies will in time be explored and taken where appropriate.
- Improved visibility and transparency of council procurement options and decisions, to increase the opportunity for scrutiny and market engagement.

Activities

- Build upon and promote the use of spend data dashboards in the development of reports, business cases and options analysis across the whole council.
- Utilise Spend Analysis techniques to inform us of current spend and any future Procurement Pipeline projects to ensure we improve our contract management activity. The pipeline will allow us to interact with Service Managers and the supply market earlier to understand the latest offerings and enhance the planning of our opportunities and tendering programmes.
- Introduce Category Plans, Gateways, Procurement Decision Reports and Contract Award Reports into the governance processes to ensure all relevant factors are considered and relevant parties are engaged before spending decisions are taken.
- Implement procurement tools and methodologies for council officers, ensuring that they are able to maximise opportunities to deliver best value outcomes through the procurement lifecycle.
- Develop a series of operational KPI's to measure performance of the P&CM team and wider P&CM activity across the council.
- Adopt the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) approach under the Procurement Act 2023, balancing cost, quality, and social impact.
- Use data-driven insights to assess supplier performance and market competitiveness
- Promote early market engagement and robust business case development to ensure optimal procurement outcomes.
- Embed the Council's Contract Management Framework and Contract Rules across all departments.
- Maintain a single, accurate contracts register to support strategic oversight and compliance.
- Strengthen internal controls and audit trails to ensure transparency, accountability and safeguard resources.

Delivery

Building Skills & Capability

Ambition

Public procurement is a skills and knowledge grounded discipline which requires regular development to maintain an up-to-date skill set. We will ensure that we have a skilled and engaged procurement workforce that have the right skills and capabilities to support the council appropriately and effectively. We must attract, recruit, and retain excellent employees that yield results and deliver value for money.

The Procurement and Contract Management Team will provide advice, guidance and wider training to organisation to increase procurement and contract management skills and knowledge levels across the council, improving our overall compliance, governance and contracting strategies.

Outcomes

- All Officers are clear on their roles and responsibilities and accountable for services
- The Procurement and Contract Management Team have a clear understanding of their capabilities and development plans in place to support ongoing development of technical skills.
- The organisation has a good understanding of the Procurement Act 2023, is able to harness the opportunities presented by the new legislation and has embedded the requirements across the organisation.
- All Officers involved in procurement and contract management activity apply a commercial mindset, harnessing opportunities to secure best value and maximise added value in contractual relationships.
- Utilise technology, select and develop systems (such as finance and procurement systems) facilitate the correct approaches to procurement.

Activities

- Ensure that the team is right sized to the P&CM requirements of the council, and that roles and numbers of staff are adequate to perform those requirements.
- Develop clear multi-year training & development plans for the Procurement and Contract Management Team.
- A full suite of guidance, templates, advice and training is developed and made easily available for use.
- Team members keep fully abreast of the Procurement Act 2023 changes, become familiar with the new requirements and are able to provide support and guidance to stakeholders to ensure we maximise the opportunities and meet the various requirements of the legislation.
- Establish a structured training and development programme for all staff to improve understanding and compliance
- Use the National Procurement Strategy Toolkit and the LGA's maturity index to assess and improve team capability.
- Promote cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing across departments and with regional partners, with staff learning from and sharing knowledge with their counterparts in other organizations. Looking 'Up and Out.

Utilising and Developing Systems & Processes

Ambition

With the fast pace technological change, the Council needs to be aware of new opportunities to improve service efficiency both within our supply chains and internally.

- Utilise technology/systems that streamline workflows, improve transparency, and reduce administrative burden, while ensuring compliance to required legislation.
- Integrate procurement systems with financial and performance management tools for real-time monitoring.
- Ensure systems support flexible procurement procedures under the new regulatory framework.
- Centralised Contract Register linked to the Finance System.
- AI-driven spend analytics and supplier risk monitoring tools.

Outcomes

- More efficient systems with greater control to ensure the council can satisfy its legislative requirements.

- Systems that complement the teams' skills, and which provide guide rails via comprehensive workflows for developing team members.
- Ultimately, the aim is to enable many operational tasks in the Procure-to-Pay cycle to become automated and / or self-service

Activities

- Determine the requirements for an eProcurement platform.
- Comprehensively review the existing eProcurement platform against the requirements, identify deficiencies and whether they can be addressed through development.
- Review all market leading eProcurement platforms and identify options.
- Deliver a new eProcurement solution that supports and is compliant to the requirements laid out in PA23 through the full procurement lifecycle

Implementing, Monitoring & Review

Ambition

- Provide oversight by the Commissioning, Procurement and Performance Board, reporting to the Leadership Board and cabinet.
- Provide Performance Metrics that include VFM achieved, social value delivered, supplier diversity, contract compliance rates.
- Ensure the strategy is aligned with budget planning and service delivery priorities.

Outcomes

- Create a compliant set of rules process and guidance that supports the Procurement & Contract Management Team and internal stakeholder in deliver the requirements laid out in PA23
- To support Council's wider ambitions, focus areas and commitments in our Corporate Plan.

Activities

- Define Roles & Responsibilities through the Procurement and Contract Management Lifecycle by regimes and thresholds, in partnership with service areas.

- Provide an Annual Procurement Report to CMT and Cabinet/Scrutiny Overview Committee.
- Develop and Issue Quarterly dashboards for contract performance and risk.
- Undertake a 3-year review cycle of strategy, with interim updates.
- Develop KPI's that show:

    - % of spend with local SME/VCS.
    - % of contracts with embedded social value.
    - Reduction in procurement cycle times.
    - Savings and cost avoidance achieved.
    - Supplier satisfaction and relationship health.
    - Progress towards net zero and sustainability goals.
    - Number of exemptions

Good governance

This section summarises the key actions the Council will take to address internal governance and learn from audit recommendations to strengthen the control environment for commissioning, procurement and contract management. It focuses on embedding clear accountability, consistent application of Contract Rules, improved record keeping and transparency, and a risk-based approach to monitoring and assurance so that decisions and outcomes are demonstrably compliant and deliver best value. Good governance depends on shared accountability across the organisation

The Council will implement the following good-practice enhancements to improve governance, compliance, transparency and assurance across commissioning, procurement and contract management activity:

Clear governance and decision-making controls

The council has established clear delivery groups and a board which now oversee commissioning and procurement.
Establish and maintain consistent governance "gateways" across the procurement lifecycle (plan / define / procure / manage), including documented business cases and clear decision points and approvals proportionate to risk and value.

Introduce/strengthen the use of standard Procurement Decision Reports and Contract Award Reports to ensure key decisions are evidenced, auditable, and aligned to Contract Rules and the Procurement Act 2023.

Contract Rules compliance

Keep Contract Procedure Rules under active review to ensure they are legislatively compliant, clear to officers, and consistently applied and decisions are documented and risks understood and mitigated where possible.

Robust contract documentation

- Ensure all contracts are formally agreed and signed in a timely way, with clear ownership for contract completion and storage of the signed version.
- Strengthen controls to ensure contract terms support effective ongoing management (including performance measures, change control, pricing, remedies, and exit/transition provisions).
- Ensure all key contracts have a named Contract Manager with clear responsibilities and reporting expectations.
- Embed a risk-based contract management framework (tiering/segmentation) for stronger oversight, performance review, and assurance.

Improved transparency, audit trail and management information

Maintain a single, accurate Contracts Register to support transparency requirements, management oversight, and audit assurance.
Improve the quality of contract and supplier data to support reporting, assurance, and statutory transparency obligations.
Develop and use dashboards and reporting to provide visibility of performance, risk, compliance, and delivery of benefits.

Supplier performance monitoring and assurance

Standardise performance monitoring expectations (KPIs, service levels, review cycles) and record outcomes of review meetings and actions.
Use proportionate assurance activity (e.g., targeted checks/audits, financial viability checks where appropriate, and review of delivery against social value commitments).

Capability building and consistent practice.

Provide training, templates and guidance to ensure officers apply Contract Rules and the Contract Management Framework consistently.
Build commercial and contract management capability across the organisation, focusing on roles that manage contracts outside the central procurement function.

In summary, these actions will strengthen the Council's commissioning, procurement and contract management control environment and provide clear evidence of continued and sustained improvements.

Implementation will be embedded through updated rules, guidance and training, supported by accurate data and consistent documentation, and monitored through routine reporting and escalation routes. Progress will be reviewed through established governance arrangements to ensure continuous improvement, sustained compliance and delivery of best value.

More importantly it aims to change the culture of the council to train, upskill officers across the organisation to understand commissioning, procurement and contract management where appropriate and only then collectively will ensure good services, reduction of spending and wider market development. This will be essential to reduce the current budget deficit and put the council on a balanced and sustainable financial position.

Committee and Date **Cabinet** **10 June 2026**	Item Public	

Update on the Children's Services Reforms

Responsible Officer:	David Shaw	
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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Andy Hall	

1. Synopsis

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the major national Children's reforms now underway and sets out Shropshire's proposed integrated response through a single Children's Transformation programme and helps to support the realisation of a 'child friendly' Shropshire. It highlights the amended legal obligations being placed on the Council and partners (statutory and wider), the early progress to date, to support decisions required locally, and the anticipated benefits for children, families and the wider system—including earlier, more preventative "Family Help" and an education system that supports those with SEND through inclusive education and stronger multi-agency working, supported by a modernised digital offer. Overall, our approach in Shropshire is about creating a better future for children, young people and families. This means a simpler, more accessible system that works with families, helping children to thrive in their communities and reducing the need for more intensive interventions over time.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Department for Education have introduced significant reforms nationally that all Councils that provide Children's social care services must implement, following nationally prescribed changes and timescales, that will then be evaluated through regulatory inspection by Ofsted. Nationally, these reforms are intended to improve outcomes for children, young people and families as outlined below, whilst also reducing the number of children who need to enter the care system and supporting a more financially sustainable approach to Children's Services.

2.2 Shropshire is bringing together all of these changes into a single, community-based and partnership transformation programme to create a more child-friendly county, where families can access the right help, at the right time, as close to home as possible. This will mean services working successfully together providing one joined-up system across Shropshire, with Family Hubs and local multi-agency teams providing support in communities.

2.3 This means for children, young people and families, earlier help so problems are addressed before they escalate into crisis, support closer to home, through local Family Hubs and local multi-agency teams we will deliver joined-up services across health, education, social care and community partners. This will mean stronger support for families, helping children remain safely within their family networks wherever safe, more inclusive mainstream education for children and young people with better local support for children with SEND, improved outcomes for young people, including wellbeing, safety, local friendships, opportunities and strong qualifications that unlocks the pathway to their chosen career.

2.4 Shropshire currently has higher levels of demand for care and SEND support than our local context would suggest we should expect to see, with too many of our resources focused on support at the higher levels of escalation. These reforms challenge all Councils that deliver Children's social care services to rebalance their services towards prevention.

2.5 As Shropshire Council currently spends a very low amount on prevention services, we will use these reforms to address this position and reallocate resources within children services, whilst ensuring we improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Shropshire.

2.6 This includes significant investment nationally to fund up to 90% of the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs deficit in each Council area up to the end of 2025/26, once a successful Local Area SEND Reform plan has been developed and approved by the DfE. In Shropshire the 90% High Needs Stability Grant is worth c.£41m, leaving the Council to fund the remaining 10%. This is critical to develop Shropshire Council as the financially sustainable Council we describe in our Corporate Plan.

2.7 Overall, our approach in Shropshire is about creating a better future for children, young people and families. This means a simpler, more accessible system that works with families, helping children to thrive in their communities and reducing the need for more intensive interventions over time.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet;

3.1 Notes the work completed to rebalance the Children's Services budget for 2026/27, alongside managing the additional known pressures for this financial year.

3.2 Notes the successful work already undertaken to safely reduce the total number of children in care.

3.3 Notes the nationally prescribed children's reforms and programmes outlined in this report and the expectations they place on Shropshire Council and its multi-agency partnership arrangements.

3.4 Notes the investment requirements of up to circa £8million over 4 years to deliver an anticipated £21 million savings for the local authority contained in the report and instructs the Director for Children's Services and the Section 151 officer to make arrangements to include these estimates within the councils Medium Term Financial Plan for future consideration by Cabinet with a view to approval by Council.

3.5 Endorses that the Families First Partnership (FFP) requires multi-agency agreement of operating models and supporting business cases for Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), to drive earlier intervention and that these will be progressed through the relevant safeguarding partnership governance.

3.6 Endorses the Council's proposed integrated approach to deliver these reforms through a single Children's Transformation Programme ("one plan to guide them all"), aligned to the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and the thematic pillars (Point 4.32) set out in the report and recommends it approval to Council.

3.7 Endorses the draft Best Start in Life (BSIL) Family Hubs Delivery Plan (outlined in 4.45 of this report), including the requirement to enhance the supporting digital offer (including a GDPR-compliant registration/insight system) to enable effective engagement, communication and timely access to support for families.

3.8 Endorses that progress, delivery risks and mitigations will be monitored through the governance structure described in the report (Section 8 of this report) with at least annual updates provided to Cabinet and the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.9 Approves the proposed locations for the three BSIL Family Hubs in Shrewsbury (at The Lantern), Oswestry and Ludlow, and the proposed additional multi-disciplinary team (MDT) bases in Highley, Market Drayton and South Shrewsbury, to provide coverage across the county's rural geography.

3.10 Delegates authority to approve the final BSIL Delivery Plan for submission to the Department for Education (due 12th June 2026) to the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

3.11 Delegates authority for exploring and confirming premises options for Oswestry, Ludlow and the additional multi-disciplinary team bases to the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. Ensuring that they are considered in conjunction with the current Community and Family Hub locations, on-going Council Asset review and the development of the NHS Neighbourhood programme to strike a balance between efficient use of public sector assets and effective delivery across the county's rural geography.

3.12 Delegates authority to approve, on behalf of Shropshire Council, the Council's participation in, and commitments arising from, the Family First Partnership business cases (including any Council owned implementation decisions and associated resourcing or locality work base implications) to the Chief Executive (as Lead Safeguarding Partner), in consultation with the Director for Children's Services (as

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Delegated Safeguarding Partner) and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

3.13 Delegates authority to approve the Council's position on consequential updates required to the local safeguarding framework documentation, including the Threshold Document (including any renaming), Local Protocol, Escalation Policy, and Information Sharing Agreement, as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, to the Chief Executive (as Lead Safeguarding Partner), in consultation with the Director for Children's Services (as Delegated Safeguarding Partner) and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

3.14 Delegates authority to approve the Local Area SEND Reform Plan for submission to the Department for Education (deadline 19 June 2026) to the Director for Children's Services and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, working with system partners as required, particularly the Integrated Care System (ICS) Executive Lead for SEND, noting the financial implications described in the report (including eligibility for up to 90% High Needs Stability Grant historic deficit write-off subject to Department for Education approval). The latest draft versions are included as Appendix F and G.

Report

4. National Context

4.1 **Overview of the Changing Legal and Policy Landscape**
Since the new government formed, several initiatives, programmes and reforms related to children and young people have commenced. These have been initiated on the back of significant national preparatory work, a summary of this can be found here Executive Summary of 'Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation' and also in response to national challenges identified within the current SEND system Solving the SEND crisis: report calls for culture shift and funding to make mainstream education genuinely inclusive - Committees - UK Parliament.

4.2 These programmes are all focussed on how the children's partnership in its broadest sense help to deliver better outcomes for children, young people and their families. The focus is on how we intervene and support earlier and in doing so maximise how we engage children, young people and families in decision making and utilise technology to help us meet the needs of children, young people and their families sooner.

4.3 The five key programmes are,

- Families First Partnership The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide
- Best Start in Life Family Hubs Giving every child the best start in life Family Hubs and Start for Life programme - GOV.UK
- Local Youth Transformation The Local Youth Transformation Pilot - GOV.UK
- Private Law Pathfinder Private Law Pathfinder Delivery Update
- SEND Reform White Paper: Every child achieving and thriving - GOV.UK

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4.4 Each of these programmes seeks to transform the way we work preventatively with children and their families. Some are specific to age ranges where we see pressure in the system and others are more holistic. This is a whole system reform to rebalance the system (both activity and financially) towards more preventative Family Help and an education system with a broadened, more inclusive, role to play.

All of these programmes will result in changes to the statutory framework, guidance and inspection regimes over the coming years. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament** has now been published and we expect other updates within 2027.

4.5 These reforms signal the most critical changes within Children's Services and the partnership for decades. The ambition is to rebalance the system towards greater early intervention and prevention as opposed to later acute health, care or more specialist education. Options pertaining to what we deliver are not included in this paper as these are prescribed changes being set by the Department for Education and the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

4.6 **Local Context**

The case for change locally is clear, Shropshire's performance picture is mixed. We are comparatively strong on several key performance indicators our recent Ofsted judgement deemed we were outstanding, repeat demand back into social care is low. However, the number of children needing acute help and support is not what we would expect for the local demographic. This is placing a major sustainability pressure across our system that we want to address.

4.7 **Key pressures**

There are two key pressures being experienced locally, the high number of children in care and the high number of children requesting support from an education, health and care plan. Both are markedly higher than we would expect for our local area based on our demographic data, which is the data used to inform the allocations of the prevention grants nationally.

4.8 The Children in Care rate remains the defining sustainability issue: 111 per 10,000 (May 2026), well above the neighbour mean (61) and England comparator (67.1).

4.9 Placement mix adds to this pressure 15% of placements are in secure homes and children's homes (2025), compared with neighbours (12.6%) and the challenge with a budget of £44million for 2026/27.

4.10 Following an initial assessment of needs, the majority of children known to Children's Services will be due to the needs of their parents, hence the need for greater collaborative working with adults' services, public health and those services commissioned by the Local Authority and its partners.

4.11 A needs and harms assessment has been developed which enables us to see areas across the county with the highest demand for services and support. This will drive the composition of our teams.

4.12 The number of children with an Education Health and Care Plan has risen substantially, since the national reforms were announced the number of families requesting an education health and care plan has increased.

4.13 Whilst the local authority has invested in a recovery plan there is a need to develop a more inclusive system to prevent rising and escalating needs.

4.14 Statutory timeliness for the delivery of our education health and care plans is below benchmark: **36.5%** of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) in **2024** vs neighbours (**50.2%**) and England (**46.4%**).

4.15 Within the SEND system there is a recognition nationally that the High Needs Block DSG deficit is at unprecedented levels and is estimated to reach £5 billion at the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Shropshire's cumulative DSG deficit is £45.655m up to the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The Department are committed to rebalancing this system towards more inclusive systems of support building on the existing reforms.

4.16 These change programmes represent a chance to rebalance the system. However, it is important to recognise that the overall amount of funding spent on Children's Services (total budget across LA education, early help and social care services) is in line with the national average. Our priority is to reallocate the resources we have, so that we reinvest into earlier help and support to prevent rising demand and reduce children looked after numbers.

4.17 The number of children starting school meeting their developmental milestones has reduced making it harder for children to catch up later in their education.

4.18 For every child who lives in Shropshire we spend £1,400 per year, this is in line with the national average level of spend for Children's Services.

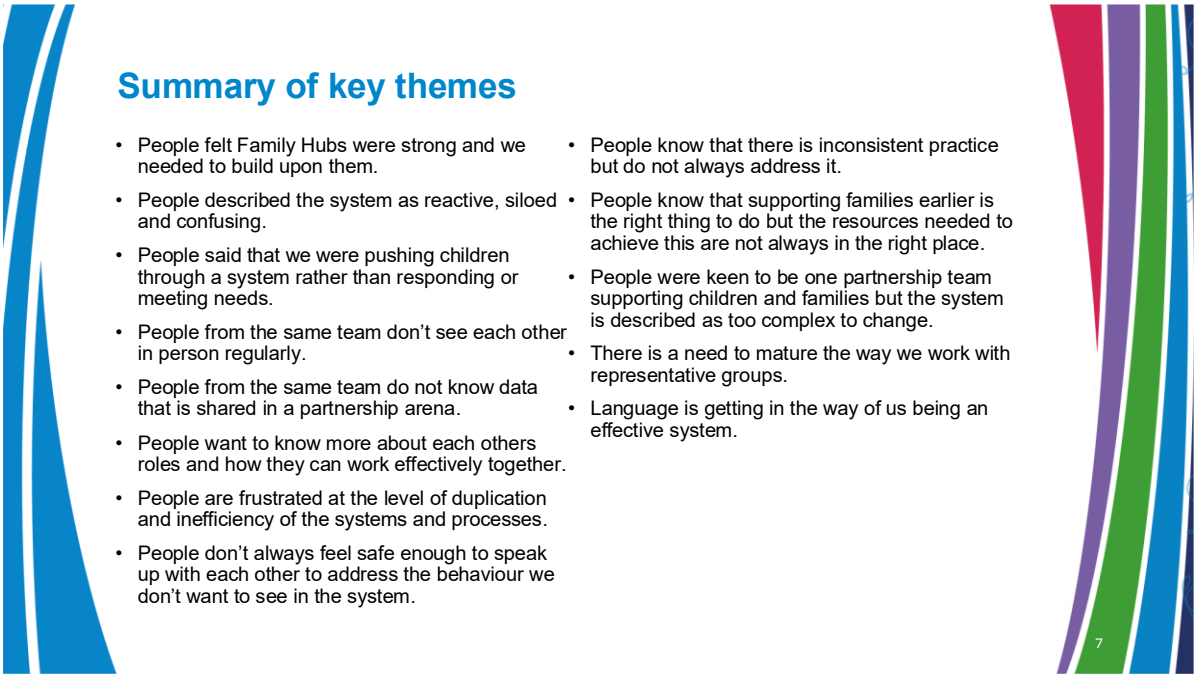
4.19 What is in stark contrast to the national picture is the proportion of this spend on Children's Social Care, in Shropshire we spend circa 80% of every pound on Children's Social Care whereas the average is 47% spent on Children's Social Care and 53% on preventative services and support this reflects the fact that Children's Services has a broad range of statutory duties outside of Children's Social Care.

4.20 As budgets have tightened, spend on earlier intervention and prevention services have reduced to such a low level that it has been ineffective at helping to prevent children coming into care resulting in unaffordable spend on children's care. Whilst we have recently seen some shift in this position, with fewer children entering the care system and more exiting safely than national, the net position on reducing children looked after numbers will take time to achieve a similar rate to our statistical neighbours. The transformation work proposed in this report seeks to accelerate and embed this positive change, with the two potential trajectories outlined in 12.5.

4.21 Work is already underway to explore and reduce the number of children and young people living in residential homes or accessing large packages of additional care provision through a combination of commissioning, process, data analysis, practice development and culture change. These changes will take time to work through to realise a financial impact over the next 5 years, but are helpful in informing future Medium Term Financial Strategy updates and developments.

4.22 Initial Stakeholder Feedback
These reforms are a step change from the way we may have previously worked where each organisations could design and deliver independently. These reforms are about a shared partnership responsibility as such we have been working with partners to understand their perspective to help influence and affect change.

4.23 We held stakeholder session to seek views on what was working well and what could be better. A summary is detailed below,



4.24 In addition we completed a maturity matrix for Families First Partnership and SEND (see appendix F) This was co-produced and has led to the development of our draft plan.

4.25 All of these assessments and information tell us that we have being doing foundational work which will help us to achieve the desired change, we need to maintain commitment to cultivating shared ownership across our partnership.
Our new Corporate Plan describes our ambition and focus for Shropshire council for the next four years. These reforms contribute to four of the ambitions, safe communities, healthy communities, thriving economy and sustainable council.

4.26 Our transformation also contributes to the Improvement Plan by investing in a preventative approach that will realise financial savings for the council and transforming the way we work. Our changes will only be successful if the people plan, getting the basics right and digital are embedded and maximised.

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Corporate Alignment



Aims	Priority programmes of action that will achieve the aims:
A Council that is financially stable and sustainable	Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy Programme 3: Strengthening financial management policy & practice
A Council that has clear priorities and purpose	Programme 4: Corporate Plan 2026-30 Programme 5: Future council – including: • Embedding principles and ways of working • Enabling partnerships and communities • Place shaping role Programme 6: Review and realignment of transformation programme
A Council that supports and enables our workforce to excel	Programme 7 : People Plan – including: • Employee engagement and involvement • New Ways of Working - services that support staff Programme 8: Getting the basics right (Strengthening corporate governance and compliance) Programme 9: Digital programme

4.27 The transformation is dependent on ensuring that our people are working to our organisational values and embedding the principles as these underpin the work we are doing.





Figure 3: principles that guide how we operate, improve and transform

4.28 A range of work aligned to the workforce strand will support us to realise this cultural change aligned to the corporate work on our people plan. This is included as part of our transformation plan.

4.29 **Our Approach to implementing these reforms: One Plan**

In order to deliver these ambitious changes, system leaders felt strongly that there should be one plan to guide them all. We believe that these programmes represent a change to the way we work as a whole system which means we need to see them as one integrated package of reforms. We shared this proposal with Lead Safeguarding Partners and People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members, who endorsed this approach. We have therefore worked to deliver the change needed through a single Children's Transformation Programme as part of the wider corporate improvement plan. A copy of the full document is included Appendix D.

4.30 We have agreed a thematic roll out approach and are currently in the scoping phase to understand more about how we may need to sequence some of this roll out to meet the needs of national departments and achieve local ambitions.

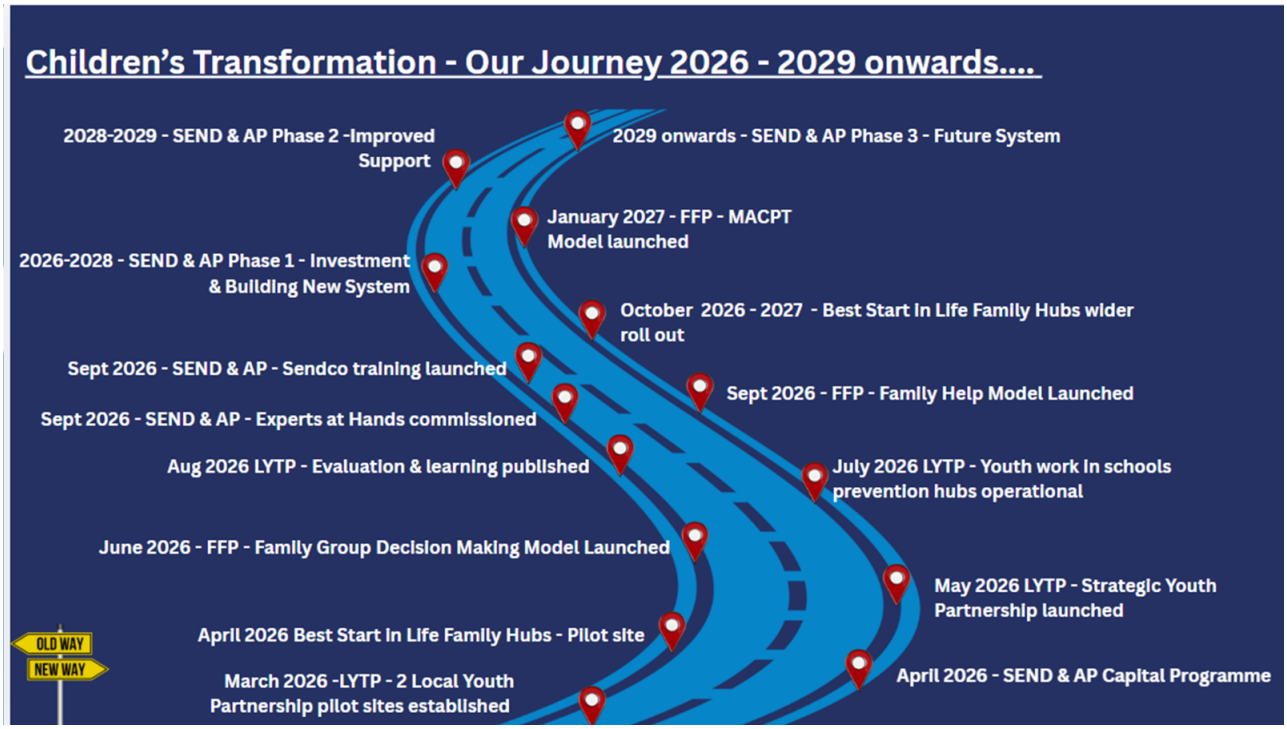
4.31 Our plan will reiterate as key milestones are met using a test and learn approach. Regular oversight and scrutiny from Members is welcome as we move throughout the delivery of this programme, with People Overview and Scrutiny Committee having confirmed that they expect to receive further updates as the programme develops.

4.32 The pillars of the changes will be,
a. Inclusive Practice & People - Workforce
b. Children and Family Voice
c. Data, Digital and Systems.
d. Inclusive Places and Spaces
e. Leadership, Governance and Commissioning

4.33 These are aspects of all the reforms that connect the key changes being sought corporately. We have outlined the priority work for each of these pillars (Appendix H) It is critical to acknowledge here the interdependency with the corporate improvement plan underway as these pillars are heavily reliant on corporate leadership and support from children's services.

4.34 Our Plan will be underpinned by a child friendly approach where we consider systematically children and young people in our decision making so that children's rights are embedded into our governance, policies, services and support.

4.35 The road map below provides a high level overview of what we will deliver and when across all of the reforms.



4.36 **Overview of what we are required to deliver**
Best Start in Life Family Hubs (BSIL): The Department for Education are rolling out Best Start in Life Family Hubs. These Family Hubs are seeking to provide a local hub where families can access a range of professionals and support to help meet their needs early.

4.37 The government have set deliverable targets for example we are tasked with improving early childhood outcomes, measured through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS.) By 2028 we need to ensure 77% of children are meeting the required standard. A clear focus is on reducing the impact of poverty and therefore stretch targets for families accessing Free School Meals (FSM) are also required (56%). An additional 32 children accessing FSM would need to reach the required level to meet this milestone.

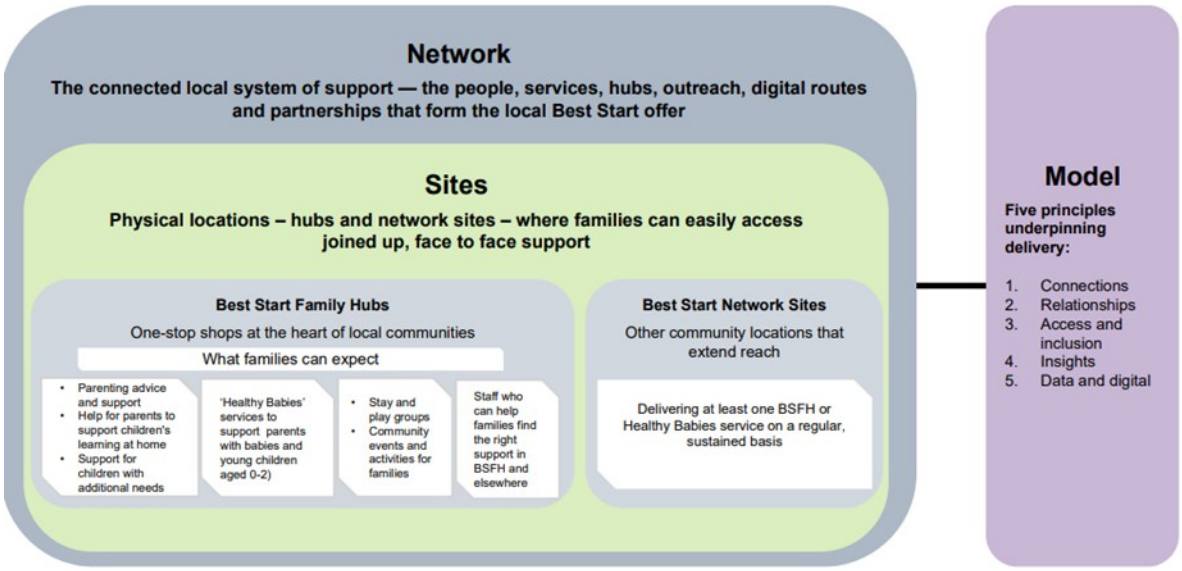
4.38 These hubs should be a one stop shop for families to access integrated health services, delivering core activities such as parenting programmes and home learning (outreaching into households to model a home learning environment within the family home and networked sites.)

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4.39 There is an expectation that we will deliver not just through the buildings themselves but through a range of services and support delivered by partners and voluntary and community sector organisations.

4.40 A key focus is about relationships with trusted adults to help improve the health, wellbeing, safety, cost of living support and family support services.

Figure 1: The Best Start Family Hubs Framework – overview



4.41 We are required to name our Family Hub sites. These will be required to deliver the full offer outlined in **Best start family hubs and healthy babies - guidance for local authorities**

4.42 Our funding is relatively low, reflecting the local demographic and therefore we are seeking to deliver the core Best Start in Life Family Hubs from three sites across the county. There is criteria that needs to be used to determine the site. This has been analysed (Appendix C) and our recommendation based on this data and to achieve a presence in North, Central and South Shropshire is that we have three sites, The Lantern in Shrewsbury would be the first to open in September 2026.

4.43 Sites for Oswestry and Ludlow are still being determined due to the delivery requirements it is likely that we have split site arrangements where we undertake front line delivery from one site and host the multi-disciplinary team in the other site.

4.44 In addition to this we will seek to work with Town and Parish Councils, the Voluntary and Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and the Integrated Care System (NHS ICS) alongside the development of the NHS national Neighbourhood approach, to map a range of networked sites where families can access services and support throughout their life journey.

4.45 The Best Start in Life Family Hubs are seeking to achieve ambitious targets to achieve this outcome, we have been required to publish a Best Start in Life Family Hub Plan as part of the programme Shropshire Best Start In Life plan | Shropshire Council The plan details the partnership action that will be taken.

4.46 The full guidance has a strong focus on brand awareness which means that whilst we will work as part of the Community and Family Hub model the community need to be able to identify and describe the role of the Best Start in Life Family Hub **Best start family hubs and healthy babies - guidance for local authorities**

4.47 This will have a strong focus on early communication and language which has been identified as an area of need and to develop the family navigator and BSIL inclusion practitioner roles within the hubs to support families in navigating and accessing local services, particularly those with children who have additional needs.

4.48 In order for us to demonstrate the impact of this work we need to enhance the current digital offer to ensure families access support when they need it. Develop a BSIL family hub registration system that is GDPR compliant and captures key insights and contact details enabling effective communication, signposting, and sharing of information about services, activities and up to date guidance e.g. screen time advice

4.49 Families First Partnership, We are required to:
Deliver a seamless system of support across **Family Help**, this is a newly defined continuum which would have previously been known as, 'Early Help and Children in Need.' There is a requirement of the Safeguarding Partnership to identify a broad range of partners who can deliver early help outside of the local authority. The partnership is required to deliver several key milestones (Appendix D) which will help us secure more effective earlier support for families.

4.50 Develop a **Multi Agency Child Protection Team** (MACPT) This is a completely new aspect of the system that the multi-agency partnership are being asked to develop. This should be a team that provides a 'second look' at the partnership support and provides 'high support, high challenge' to ensure that our practice is as effective as it can be to prevent poorer outcomes for these children.

4.51 Embed **Family Group Decision Making** (FGDM) throughout the system so that at the earliest point in a family's journey, opportunities to utilise and build upon the family's strengths including their widest family network are explored and built upon. The intention is that this enables children and young people to remain within their family network, rather than having to become a looked after child to the Local Authority.

4.52 There is a requirement for our teams and our partnership to work effectively together through co-located multi-disciplinary teams. Again using the data analysis we recommend that the locations of these multi disciplinary teams are in the three Family Hub sites and three additional sites,

- Highley,
- South Shrewsbury and
- Market Drayton

4.53 Each of these aspects has a partnership task and finish structure. Each is led by a multi-agency partner – education lead Family Help, MACPT is led by Police and FGDM is led by the Local Authority and Multi-Disciplinary Teams is led by Health. These task and finish groups have developed a shared business case that outlines

the vision, the principles and the way in which they will operate. These business cases are due to be signed off by the Lead Safeguarding Partners by the end of June, after the Cabinet meeting on the 10th June 2026.

4.54 The recommendations of the business cases will result in changes to the way we work as a multi-agency partnership, including the bases from which teams operate (aligned to the multi-disciplinary team bases), the structure of our teams, the practice frameworks and models we use and the partnership input into Family Help. It is envisaged that formal consultation may be needed to ensure the workforce are formally engaged.

4.55 This will require a change to the way we work placing much more focus on:

- Engaging Children and Families
- Multi-Disciplinary and Joint Working, there is a need to consider fully where the partnership should be building multi agency capacity rather than single agency responses.
- Operating systemically so that we understand the whole needs of the family and operate effectively together to meet their needs.

4.56 It is envisaged all of these changes will reduce the number of children in care and see more children being supported by professionals within Family Help and Child Protection.

4.57 All of these changes will need to be documented and will result in changes to the Safeguarding Children's Threshold Document (likely to be renamed, framework for action), the local protocol, the escalation policy and the information sharing agreement. This should be agreed by Lead Safeguarding Partners (**Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK)**

4.58 National Youth Strategy (precursor was the Local Youth Transformation Fund)
We are required to deliver:

Trusted Adults: We are required to upskill people working with young people to identify the early signs and intervene to help children feel connected and supported to be emotionally well. This could include mentors from the private sector alongside public partners. Placing Youth Workers in localities where there is a high level of need so that targeted interventions can take place.

4.59 Strengthening the Workforce: Developing and growing a skilled and sustainable paid and volunteer youth sector workforce, with the highest standards to meet young people's needs.

4.60 Friends and Relationships: Helping young people to develop positive social connections in schools and colleges, in their communities, and online.

4.61 Richer Lives: Providing enriching and meaningful activities for young people in and outside of education.

4.62 Good Work: Providing better education, guidance, training, and support for young people to get a great job.

4.63 Keeping Young People Safe: Intervening earlier to increase young people's safety in communities.

4.64 Health and Wellbeing: Supporting young people's physical and mental health to allow all young people to take up opportunities and live richer lives.

4.65 Engaging Young People in decisions: Putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives. This includes lowering the age at which they can vote.

4.66 **SEND Reforms**
The Government have committed to the reform of the SEND system; in December 2025 the Department for Education wrote to Local Authorities to ask them to start to work as a partnership to work towards a rebalanced more inclusive system of early intervention and support, to support them to achieve this they asked that local partnerships assess their maturity against seven key pillars,

- Co-Production with parents and carers and children and young people.
- Effective System's Leadership and Governance
- Accurate understanding of needs through effective use of data
- High quality deliver at all levels
- Effective partnerships across health, education and social care
- A skilled partnership workforce
- Targeted, judicious and sustainable use of resources

4.67 The Local Authority must submit a Local Area SEND Reform Plan to DfE by 19th June 2026. If this plan is approved, we will be eligible to have up to 90% of our High Needs deficit accrued up to the end of financial year 2025/26 paid by the DfE through the High Needs Stability Grant.

4.68 We are required to:

- **Submit Local SEND Reform Plans**: Prepare and submit an initial plan by the 19th June 2026, with quarterly updates, including financial forecasting, provision planning, and monitoring and evaluation.
- **Strategic oversight**: Move from direct case involvement to a strategic and partnership role with schools, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and other local stakeholders.
- **Implement the Experts at Hand (EAH) model**: Ensure mainstream schools and early years/further education settings have access to embedded specialist support from education and health professionals. This will include providing access to additional specialists whilst also playing a strategic role across some services such as speech and language therapy via advanced practitioners who will work with ICBs, universities and providers to ensure more support is available and more direct work is taking place.
- **Provide early intervention and inclusive support**: Strengthen capability in mainstream settings to identify and support SEND needs sooner, preventing escalation.

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- **Develop and embed tiered support**: Oversee the delivery of support across Targeted, Targeted Plus, and Specialist tiers, including new Individual Support Plans (ISPs) and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) where required.
- **Enhance workforce capacity**: Recruit and support new Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) advanced practitioners, and expand specialist education staff and aligned health professionals.
- **Ensure financial accountability**: Manage allocated funding responsibly, investing in prevention, specialist support, and transformation activities, without using it to replace statutory duties or individual EHCP provisions.
- **Data and systems management**: Implement nationally consistent digital EHCPs and ISPs, maintain shared local dashboards, and ensure joined-up data across education, health, and care services.
- **Support inclusion and local provision**: Guide mainstream schools to take increasing responsibility for SEND provision, including the creation of Inclusion Bases, and ensure support is delivered locally wherever possible.
- **Engage with families and stakeholders**: Co-produce plans with parents, carers, schools, and local partners, maintaining transparency and responsiveness to local needs.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands, through the application and use of significant exceptional financial support. This means that whilst there has been significant management action instigated at all levels of the Council to reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival, there is a need to demonstrate how these reforms will contribute to enabling the Council to become a financially sustainable organisation, in line with our Corporate Plan.

5.2 In 2025/26, Children and Young People's services ended the financial year with a £12.230m overspend against a budget of £90.963m. Despite an overall 7.5% reduction of the number of children looked after from 721 on 1st April 2025 to 667 on 31st March 2026, a combination of known, but unbudgeted pressures, aligned with demand led pressures within children's placements, largely explained by a £14.908m overspend on External Residential placements within the Children's placements budget where numbers had increased significantly in year. Growth of £19.342m has been built into the 2026/27 Children's External Residential placements budget to address this budget pressure going forward.

5.3 Whilst this is significant growth in one area of the Children and Young People's 2026/27 budget, several other budget pressures have been identified totalling £5.940m. This has been due to pressure caused by a growth in demand over and above what was expected for Education Health and Care Plans and therefore the staff capacity, agency costs and shortfalls potential shortfalls in income.

5.4 It is anticipated that these budget pressures can be mitigated through a combination of savings against External Residential placements through the collective work of Children's Services, including Stepping Stones, budget growth no longer required in

the Internal Residential Children's homes budget, the maximisation of external funding and one-off underspends anticipated from temporary vacancy management savings and other one-off efficiencies.

5.5 Whilst this is anticipated to deliver a balanced budget in the Children and Young People's budget in 2026/27, investment in prevention through the Families First Programme is required to deliver cost savings over the long term.

5.6 Moving forward work will continue in particular to achieve a net reduction in the number of children in residential placements. Progress is expected to be in line with current trends which will continue to take the number of children in care closer towards the statutory neighbours. However, the ambition is to accelerate the pace of this change and to do so there will be a need to invest further in the service, with the ambition that these costs will be offset overtime with savings realised through earlier help and support.

5.7 A submission has been made to Budget Transformation and Change Review Panel with a view to advising the panel of the service ambitions the potential costs and benefits of the transformation necessary. It is estimated that investment in staff and systems will be approximately £2 million per annum with effect from 2027/28. This funding will be required in order to accelerate the reduction in the number of children in residential care and over time will be redirected to rebalance the system with the objective of increasing the resource available for early intervention.

5.8 Given this level of investment, it is anticipated that the number of children entering residential care will be stabilised, and hopefully reduced, and by 2029/30 the total costs to the council for residential care will start to reduce as set out in the table below. Current estimates suggest that the MTFP can project savings in the Children's Services budget of £1.483m in 2029/30 rising to a further £3.709m in 2030/31. These estimates are on the assumptions,

a. Outcomes are modelled on pathfinder and comparator areas, however no comparator fully reflects Shropshire's rurality, corporate context, starting position (high numbers of Children in Care and very low Early Help investment), placement profile, or market context.
b. The financial model assumes performance towards the mid-range of national outcomes; actual savings may fall anywhere within the observed range of 1.9%–13.8%.
c. Reductions in Children Looked After numbers does not automatically translate into a similar reduction in cost or overall spend (eg Children in Care number have reduced by 5% between September 2025 and May 2026, but we have not seen a 5% reduction in costs).
d. Reductions in Children in Care numbers beyond Year 2 are based on modelled projections rather than observed trend data.
e. The model assumes that practice change is successfully implemented and sustained across the system.
f. Delivery assumes sufficient workforce recruitment, sustained capacity and capability throughout the period.
g. The model assumes alignment and sustained contribution from key partners as often the need for our services is because the system response is not effective.

h. Future demand is assumed to remain broadly stable, excluding unforeseen shocks.
i. Savings and impact rely on robust data tracking and attribution.
j. Not all reductions in demand will translate immediately into cashable savings; some benefits will be cost avoidance rather than budget reduction.
k. Savings from placements will be consistently reinvested into prevention as modelled.
l. The model assumes no significant deterioration in the external placement market (e.g. provider exits, price shocks, or increased use of unregulated provision).
m. Benefits are dependent on sequencing: Early Help impact → reduced escalation → reduced placements → cashable savings.
n. No significant changes in national policy, inspection framework, or statutory thresholds materially affecting demand.
o. No significant changes or increase to allocations of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People placed in Shropshire by the national Government through the National Transfer Scheme.
p. Service model effectiveness assumes that a prevention model can be delivered consistently across a large and rural geography.
q. Savings assume growth in local fostering sufficient to offset residential demand.
r. That corporate support is available with sufficient capacity.
s. That the return on investment is 3 years. This is in line with the pathfinder areas however the return could be realised sooner or take longer.
t. That the 9% remains stable in 2028/29 and 2029/30 however we anticipate this will change as we only have 2 years of data. For modelling purposes, we have assumed a 6% reduction in Children in Care in 2030/31 and 5% in 2031/32.
u. That the rate of children in care for our statistical neighbours is broadly reflective of our demographic factors. This has been calculated at a rate of 61 per 10,000 and this could change (compared with Shropshire at a rate of 111 per 10,000 as at May 2026). This should be reviewed and adjusted annually.
v. We will reduce escalation to high-cost placements;
w. The ability to shift placement mix away from expensive external residential options in a volatile market, there is a shortage of foster carers, it takes time to build this market capacity.
x. The time lag between practice changes and reductions in the care population.
y. Inflationary and market pressures on placement costs, including the prevalence of £10k+ per week placements nationally.
z. That there is contribution from key stakeholders this includes partners and internal services (often children become known to children's services owing to adults.)

5.9 All these assumptions mean that the implementation of the programme needs close monitoring, review and agile adjustment by Children's Services, the Council, political leaders and the wider partnership.

5.10 On the basis on these assumptions the payback on the investment will be achieved in 2031/32. As set out in the report this investment will have a significant impact on the outcomes for children and maintain compliance with both our statutory responsibilities and regulatory obligations.

5.11 Subject to the approval of this report the Director for Children's Services and the Section 151 officer will make arrangements to incorporate these estimates in the Medium Term Financial Plan being reported to Cabinet in July 2026. As part of these arrangements options will be considered for use of the council's transformation funds to underwrite part of the commitment.

5.12 The range of assumptions has led us to present two potential scenarios, a best case and a more realistic case. Each of these are presented below.

5.13 The best case scenario is based on an equal distribution of the reductions across all care types.

	Benefits realised by Investment in Prevention (Best Case Scenario)						
	2026/27	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Increase in Prevention Funding		2.000	0.900	-0.900			
In Year Savings projected on Children's placements through a reduction in Children in Care Numbers				-5.327	-3.118	-2.763	-2.210
Projected Increase/(Decrease) in Children and Young People Net budget		2.000	0.900	-6.227	-3.118	-2.763	-2.210
Cumulative Increase/(Decrease) in Children and Young People Net budget		**2.000**	**2.900**	**-3.327**	**-6.445**	**-9.208**	**-11.418**
Cumulative Increase in Expenditure		2.000	4.900	6.900	8.900	10.900	12.900
Cumulative Forecast Savings				-5.327	-8.445	-19.653	-33.071
Cumulative Impact		**2.000**	**4.900**	**1.573**	**0.455**	**-8.753**	**-20.171**

Table 1, Best Case Scenario

5.14 The realistic scenario reflects a more cautious position owing to level of change needed within our organisation, the partnership and the market to reach the more ambitious position.

	Benefits realised by Investment in Prevention (Realistic Case Scenario)						
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Increase in Prevention		2.000	0.900	-0.900			
In Year Savings projected on Children's placements through a reduction in CLA Numbers				-2.238	-2.520	-2.500	-1.953
Projected Increase/(Decrease) in Children and Young People Net budget		2.000	0.900	-3.138	-2.520	-2.500	-1.953
Cumulative Increase/(Decrease) in Children and Young People Net budget		**2.000**	**2.900**	**-0.238**	**-2.758**	**-5.258**	**-7.210**
Cumulative Increase in Expenditure		2.000	4.900	6.900	8.900	10.900	12.900
Cumulative Forecast Savings				-2.238	-4.758	-12.015	-21.226
Cumulative Impact		**2.000**	**4.900**	**4.662**	**4.142**	**-1.115**	**-8.326**

Table 2, Realistic Scenario

5.15 **Government Intervention in the High Needs Block**
The Department for Education have written to all local authorities and pledged to cover 90% of the historic SEND deficit accrued up to the end of 2025/26 through a new High Needs Stability Grant. Receiving the grant funding (up to 90%) is dependent on the submission of a local SEND reform plan which details the action we will take to rebalance the SEND system towards a more inclusive system, focussed on earlier intervention and prevention.

5.16 Our SEND Reform Plan is required to be submitted to the Department for Education to ensure that we can access this funding. DRAFT SEND Reform Plan (Appendix G.)

	£ m'
DSG Deficit carried forward from 2024-25	17.566
DSG Deficit Outturn 2025-26	28.090
DSG deficit to be carried forward into 2026-27 (without any High Needs Stability Grant applied)	**45.655**
DSG deficit with High Needs Stability Grant applied	**4.565**

5.17 This means that there is a deficit of £4.565 million deficit position and no known provisions for 2026/27 onwards.
There remains uncertainty on the approach nationally to provide support for deficits that arise in 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years, as the DfE are clear that in year deficits will likely continue to occur whilst the proposed changes to the national SEND system are implemented. However, the DfE have confirmed that they will continue to take an appropriate and proportionate approach to financial support for Local Authorities, though it will not be unlimited.

5.18 Given the 2025-26 outturn position for the DSG is a £28.090m in-year deficit. This demonstrates the scale of the on-going yearly risk whilst the impact of the Local Area SEND Reform plan embeds and national SEND reforms are implemented.

6. Government Funding

6.1 The budgets for all local authorities have previously been made via grant agreements for different programmes of work such as Holiday Activities and Food (HAF), Supporting Families, Children's Social Care Prevention Grant. From 2026/2027 financial year, these grants will be consolidated into a Children, Families and Youth Grant. This ringfenced grant is designed to strengthen local authority support for children and families across England, reducing inequalities and breaking down barriers to opportunity (Appendix A.)

Contact: Natasha Moody, natasha.moody@shropshire.gov.uk

6.2 The Department for Education (DfE) are investing earlier as Local Authorities have been clear they cannot reduce demand without twin tracking investment. We need to reinvest savings into prevention otherwise we will not be able to realise the full anticipated benefits for children, young people and families.

Programme of Work	**Funding Allocated 2025/2026**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**
Families First Partnership	£1.887m	£2.872m (all but £0.375m of this increase is due to the consolidation of a number of grants)	£2.872m
Best Start in Life	£0.152m	£1.057m (see full details Appendix B)	£1.136m
SEND (Note this does not include the High Needs Stability Grant)	£0	£1.943m (indicative – see funding guidance document linked in 2.4 above)	£3.375m (predicted based on the proportion of the total fund allocated in 26/27)

6.3 These grants have very clear memorandums of understanding which need to be reported to the Department for Education quarterly and restrict the use of the funds to specific activities to support the specific purpose of the grant.

6.4 The DfE have made the case to the Treasury that investment in prevention will realise a reduction in the high costs of care, however this is a 5-year plan to reduce the overall costs at the most intensive approach to supporting children and young people who have experienced significant harm.

6.5 The first Pathfinders such as Wolverhampton (which started in 2023) are seeing this reduction in care numbers within 2025/26 but later Pathfinders are not seeing this reduction yet.

6.6 If we anticipate that Shropshire would follow a similar trajectory where investment in this approach will start to realise the benefits 3 years after (2029/30) the reforms being implemented (2026/27) within the cost of care, based on the factors outlined below.

6.7 The investment we have received from the DfE is based on nationally identified demographic factors for Shropshire not actual demand in Shropshire. This means that the investment is not sufficient to reform the system, whilst meeting the current service demand in the system, therefore on the current investment levels it will take Shropshire longer to realise the benefits for children, young people and families and achieve financial sustainability.

6.8 The estimated cost of delivering the reforms required to meet the current and future levels of need in the system has been assessed on a **whole-council basis**. Whilst some of this capacity would be needed in Children's Services for example to support Mocking Bird Constellations so that we can ensure foster carers have adequate support the majority of the costs would support wider corporate services for example

to ensure that we had the digital capability, support from housing, the project managers to oversee a programme of a significant scale.

6.9 Our analysis has shown that the average decrease in Children in Care numbers across the pathfinders was 9%. This has not been split equally across care types as we recognise that there are existing market pressures. The financial impact of this investment could realise savings from 2029/30 as set out in the table below. This table shows the increase in base budget of £2.000m required in 2027/28 and £0.900m required in 2028/29, and also shows that forecast in-years savings are estimated to total £1.483m in 2029/30, increasing to £3.709m in 2030/31. 2030/31 is the financial year where we anticipate that the £2.000m initial increase in base budget will have been exceeded by savings achieved through the reduction in Children's placements budget resulting from a 9.2% reduction in CLA numbers. Further savings can be generated in 2031/32 and beyond as long as the projected reduction in CLA numbers can be sustained.

7. Benefits Realisation

7.1 There are two key benefits, the benefits to children, young people and families and the financial benefits to support the Council to become a sustainable organisation.

7.2 Children, Young People and Families.
Achieving better outcomes for children and young people in Shropshire is a priority, it contributes to four of our corporate ambitions. Council have also already agreed to implement the SEND Outcomes Framework and we will expand this to cover all children and young people, and align it to quantifiable metrics that helps the council to quantify the impact these changes have shropshire-send-and-ap-outcomes-framework-2025-final.pdf

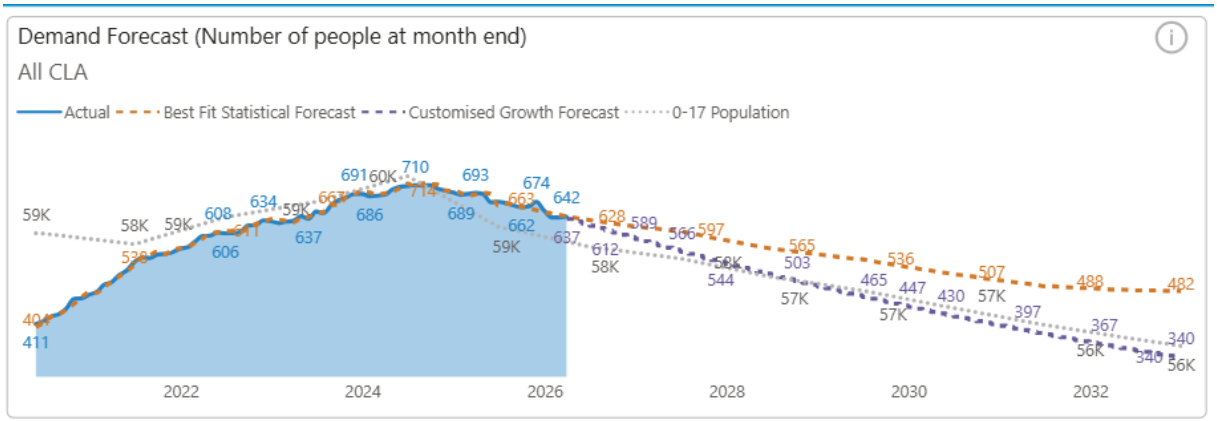
7.3 We have a range of tools nationally including the Children's Social Care Dashboard Children's social care dashboard - GOV.UK and the Local Authority Interactive Tool Local authority interactive tool (LAIT) - GOV.UK which we want to bring together to provide a Children's Services Scorecard to ensure visibility of the impact we are having (Appendix G: DRAFT Scorecard example)

7.4 Developing a Financially Sustainable Council
As well as improving outcomes we know that there is a financial imperative to ensure Shropshire Council becomes a financially sustainable organisation. These changes are being embarked upon as there is a wealth of evidence that earlier intervention, not only improves outcomes, but is more affordable. The Department for Education have made the financial case to the treasury for investment and therefore there is a need to ensure that we maintain scrutiny and oversight of local performance so that we can demonstrate the benefits and see the impact.

7.5 The below chart illustrates that the number of children in care has already started to reduce. However, this has not yet resulted in a significant financial benefit as the reduction has not been from children and young people living in residential homes. The key reason for this is that whilst there is a desire to ensure that children are at home when possible, for most children in care there needs to be investment to wrap more support around the earliest intervention and prevention and the market conditions within more affordable care options.

Contact: Natasha Moody, natasha.moody@shropshire.gov.uk

.3 11.4



7.6 The cost of maintaining this position as opposed to investing in earlier help and support is illustrated below, the cost of doing nothing and continuing at the current rate of entry and exit to care, the cost would be £1,707,000 per week by 2032. The Children's transformation programme will therefore deliver a reduction in the overall number of children in care somewhere between the orange 'best fit statistical forecast' and the purple 'customised growth forecast' depending on the choices made around investment, prioritisation, market management, impact of governance and sustained quality of practice.

7.7 If we invest to the level required to meet the demand the below table illustrates the financial impact. It we took the average cost of care (currently £2700 per week) we would see the weekly costs reduce to £927,000 per week by 2032. This would rely on an even saving across all types of care. This is a significant point as the cost of residential care can be 20 times higher than other types of care.

7.8 This local estimate is consistent with national evidence, with the Local Government Association identifying that investment in preventative family support can deliver savings of up to £3 for every £1 spent.[Investing in preventative support can save more than £3 for every pound spent | Local Government Association]

7.9 The Council recognises that invest-to-save in children's services is an established approach nationally, but that outcomes and the timing of savings can vary due to demand volatility, placement market conditions and the time-lag inherent in reducing the care.

7.10 The model assumes that financial benefits begin to be realised from Year 4 onwards, reflecting the time required for reductions in children entering care and the natural duration of care placements.

7.11 The national reforms are being rolled out using a **test-and-learn** approach, with independent evaluation underway, including impact and value-for-money. Published findings to date are primarily implementation/process evidence and indicate that full impact and return on investment evidence will mature over time.

7.12 Shropshire's approach mirrors this: the programme will use disciplined monitoring and evaluation and will adapt the delivery model where evidence indicates that adjustments are required to achieve intended outcomes safely and efficiently, while maintaining statutory compliance and safeguarding assurance.

7.13 The benefits of our transformation plan will be monitored through our performance scorecard which has been appended as well as robust monitoring of our financial performance. We have evidence from the national social care dashboard that local areas investing in prevention are seeing less spent on expensive care arrangements. As a council we know that the costs associated with care are a contributory factor to the financial challenges we face.

8. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

8.1 The key risks related to this programme of change are detailed below. There are many risks that are documented but the most critical is the priority of these reforms, when considered amongst the broader context the Council and partners face, in particular the financial challenges, combined with significant structural change underway within the ICS and West Mercia Police. This is undoubtably causing a tension between immediate savings and longer term preventative approaches.

8.2 The changes outlined in the report are due to become statutory obligations on the Council and partners, therefore our ability to remain statutorily compliant is critical. The DfE have clearly outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 that it is the responsibility of the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) to ensure that the Children's Services reforms are owned by each statutory partner (LA, ICS and Police) and suitable resources are made available by each organisation to effectively deliver their responsibilities.

8.3 There is a very real challenge that the Council faces with a high number of children already in care, as for this programme to be successful there is a key interdependency with practice for Children in Care and the market to support them being vibrant enough to meet our children's needs, particularly as most children's needs could be met in foster care but there are insufficient homes for our children currently. We recognise that reducing the overall number of children in care will help us to achieve the overall rebalance of the system, as circa 80% of Shropshire Children's Services spend is on Children's Social Care currently (for most Local Authorities this is closer to 50%.), however the direct correlation between overall numbers of Children in Care and rebalancing the way funding is spent is much more complex and indirect.

8.4 **Risk table**

Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Overwhelming Volume of Change There is change to the way aspects of Public Sector delivery takes place e.g. change of the footprint of the Integrated Care Boards, Local Government	• Ensure leaders across the system prioritise the delivery of the children's services transformation programmes, noting that this may require de-prioritisation of other activity during this period. • Ensure good communication and alignment with the other changes to ensure that where possible these dovetail together.	Impact of extreme pressure of partners.

Reform and removal of Police and Crime Commissioners. Whilst this change is critical it could be determined to be less important. All of this change alongside these service level changes can become overwhelming for people and there is a risk that we lose momentum as these changes are deemed as less important than other more strategic issues,	• Ensure that communications are sympathetic to the volume of change and make sure that the methods used to communicate are clear. • Ensure good feedback loops from a range of people to understand how well the changes are landing and if any barriers, or if there are pulls in different directions, to ensure these are escalated to the respective governance structures • Ensure the impact of risk is monitored closely and keep senior leaders informed via governance mechanisms.	
Financial: There is a risk that the budget is not sufficient to deliver the required change across the local authority and the broader partnership. . There is a risk that the short term funding is not extended beyond 2029.	• Grants being mapped and a clear breakdown of spend being developed. • Broader range of grants being drawn together to ensure that where possible the programmes align and income can be used efficiently to deliver all programme objectives. • Partners making necessary representation to raise this risk e.g. DfE if required. • Continue to monitor the spend and raise key concerns. • Seek exceptional arrangements for grant funding to enable swift spend against the agreed plan via BCTRP. Any deviation from plan would be subject to normal spend control processes. • Plan for sustainability of workforce once the transformation programme ends; commission from other providers where appropriate; seek to develop a traded model over time to offset the core, funded model of support.	Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year Inability to set a balanced budget for a given year within the MTFS
Scale of Culture Change: There is a risk that the scale of change needed at a time of considerable strain within the council and partner organisations is not achievable. There is a risk that the organisation and the partnership see this as a programme related to Children's Services missing the critical role that they need to play in these reforms	• Resources allocated to key partnership transformation roles (Police, health and Council) • Leadership buy in secured from Cabinet, Leadership Board and wider partnership. • Woven into the fabric of the partnership operating model (how we work around here) as part of the improvement plan, corporate plan and partnership plan. • Representation and deliverables from across the organisation and partnership secured. • Regular monitoring and progress by Leadership Board. • Partnership leads appointed. • Partnership support to develop the 'what good looks like' for us collectively. • Sequencing of the aspects of change. • Frequent monitoring and oversight by partnership and DfE and DCMS.	Critical skills shortage impacting on recruitment, retention, and succession planning. Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce
Risk to Safety: Rebalancing a system of support to children and families brings a risk that children and families needs are not met resulting in a risk of harm.	• Practice Lead a requirement of the programme. • Learning from pathfinders and other local authorities. • Regular check and challenge from Department for Education. • Sequencing of change and roll out approach considered thoughtfully. • Working with ICB and Police footprints means we have the opportunity to test and learn on some aspects of the programme. • More frequent oversight of the programme and reporting to the safeguarding partnership.	Impact of extreme pressures upon partners (social care, health, and criminal justice)
Delivery: There is a risk that this work is not prioritised meaning that key milestones are not met for example digital priorities may not include childrens.	• Regular reporting to Leadership Board, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Partnership Boards. • Children's Leadership Team oversight monthly to maintain visibility or risks and any delay. • Alignment with the overarching council improvement and partnership plan. • Project Management support secured.	Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce Critical skills shortage. Failure to set clear strategic direction

This is also pertinent to partners who are operating across up to four Local Authority Areas.	• Regular reporting to DfE to maintain progress and oversight of progress. • Investment in corporate support functions to enable the delivery.	
Workforce: There is a risk that the workforce are not equipped to support the changes, they are resistant to change and/or burnt out from the level of change.	• Developing a coherent narrative and approach to integrating reforms so we have a systematic way of enveloping all changes. • Skills Audit and Population Needs Analysis. • Engagement of workforce a critical component of the change programme. • Regular communication. • 'Go and See' partnership leaders to visit practitioners to ascertain the appetite and acceptance of change to refine the delivery methods. • Independent scrutineer utilised at critical points to check and challenge. • Engage corporate services early to secure buy in. • Create alignment with corporate transformation. • Raise the profile and statutory significance of the change with corporate support services.	Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce Critical skills shortage impacting on recruitment, retention, and succession planning
Reputation and Public Trust: There is a risk that the public lose faith or see the changes in a critical light. There is a risk that families expectations exceed what is affordable for the council.	• Co-production and measuring families perception is a key aspect of the programme. • Monitor feedback • Regular communications with members, MPs and community influencers such as Parent Care Forum. • Regular audits and reports to maintain an overview of practice. • Examples of the change and it's benefits shared widely. • Communications support secured. • Ensure the financial constraints are clearly set out so that expectations are clear.	Inability to set a balanced budget for a given year within the MTFS Failure of Officers and Members to adhere to Governance arrangements Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce Critical skills shortage impacting on recruitment, retention, and succession planning Impact of extreme pressures upon partners (social care, health, and criminal justice) Failure to set clear strategic direction.

9. Climate Change Appraisal

9.1 It is envisaged that these changes will have limited effect on Climate Change, the small impact will mean more locality working with teams based in local communities as far as possible.

10. Our Governance

10.1 Good governance will be critical for the success of the programme. Given the breadth of the change required the relationships with key external governance structures is critical.

10.2 There is a need for us to ensure good political oversight for the delivery. This will be via Cabinet annually, or more often as necessary, supplemented by People Overview and Scrutiny Committee who will be scrutinise progress of the implementation on an annual basis but taking the opportunity throughout the year to triangulate through other papers how well the change is embedded.

10.3 There is also a partnership governance structure which has statutory and regulatory requirements in this area. We have detailed the core partnerships, boards and workstreams which will help us maintain good governance.

10.4 Our proposed governance structure for internal delivery is outlined below, whilst recognising these key areas will be regularly reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board, People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet;

Meeting	Purpose	Role	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Children's Ambition Board	Strategic Partnership Board driving ambitious outcomes for children and families and developing 'child friendly' Shropshire.	Sets the vision, oversees the Children's Transformation Programme and ensures multi-agency alignment	Every 2 months	Tanya Miles – Chief Executive
Schools Forum	Strategic oversight of all education funding covering the Dedicated Schools Grant, on behalf of Shropshire Council, as a formal committee.	Schools forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision making powers.	Every 2-3 months	David Shaw - DCS
SEND and Inclusion Partnership	Providing Strategic Oversight and Assurance of SEND and Inclusion in Shropshire.	Sets the vision and strategy for SEND and assures itself that the delivery is effective and delivering outcomes.	Every 2 months	David Shaw and Vanessa Whatley
Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership	Statutory Safeguarding board for Children.	Overseeing the FFP Implementation. Decision making board for the Families First Partnership	Monthly	David Shaw - DCS
Internal Children's Transformation Board	**Internal** Governance ensuring delivery assurance and compliance for Children's Services Transformation projects.	Monitors progress, manages risks and aligns internal workstreams with strategic priorities. Internal Workstreams to provide updates monthly	Monthly	David Shaw - DCS
Operational Internal Workstreams	Thematic areas of delivery; •Places and Space •Children & Family Voice •Commissioning •Data, Digital& Systems •Inclusive People & Practice	Each internal workstream lead will co-ordinate their workstream regularly to deliver the specific objectives and deliver the work identified.	Monthly	Workstream leads

11. Conclusions

11.1 The national reforms set out in this report represent a whole-system shift in how Shropshire must support children and families—rebalancing away from late, acute intervention toward earlier, preventative and integrated "Family Help", strengthened multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, improved family and youth support pathways, and a modernised approach to SEND inclusion and early intervention. These developments will drive changes to statutory expectations, local protocols,

and assurance frameworks over the coming years and therefore require timely, coordinated action across the Council and its partnerships.

11.2 Shropshire's local context—particularly the proportion of spend currently absorbed by children's social care and the scale of demand pressures—means that the reforms also provide a critical opportunity to improve outcomes while creating a more sustainable system. The report outlines a clear intention to deliver the reforms through a single integrated Children's Transformation programme with robust governance, identified workstreams, and a focus on workforce, coproduction, places, and data/digital capability.

11.3 Cabinet endorsement and the proposed delegated authorities are required now to maintain pace, secure alignment with national timelines (including June 2026 submissions and approvals), and enable effective implementation across the partnership—particularly for Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Families First Partnership deliverables. With these decisions in place, the programme can proceed with clearer accountability, stronger assurance, and a coherent platform to manage risk, deliver measurable improvement for families, and support the longer-term financial sustainability of Shropshire Council.

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter from DfE Grant

Appendix B: Letter from DfE Best Start in Life Family Hubs

Appendix C: Best Start in Life Family Hub

Appendix D: Transformation Plan

Appendix E: DRAFT Performance Scorecard

Appendix F: SEND Maturity Matrix

Appendix G: DRAFT Local Area SEND Reform Plan

Appendix H: Pillars of Change

Appendix I: Needs and Harms Analysis

Contact: Natasha Moody, natasha.moody@shropshire.gov.uk

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Department for Education

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings,
Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0370 000 2288
www.gov.uk/dfe

Email enquiry form:
www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe

To: S151 officers
CC: PPP contacts

Date: 27 April 2026

Dear Colleague,

Re: S31 Grant Determination Letter for Basic Need funding (31/8219)

This Determination is made between:

1. **The Secretary of State for Education**; and
2. **Local authorities listed in Annex A of the published Grant Determination**.

This letter relates to your local authority's Basic Need capital funding payments for the 2026-27 financial year, which can be found published at the link provided in Annex A to this letter. This allocation was published in March 2025.

Basic Need capital funding allocations are paid to local authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new mainstream school places, whether by expanding existing state-funded schools or establishing new ones. This is un-ringfenced capital funding that is not time-bound so that local authorities can make the best decisions for their local area. Basic Need capital funding allocations for the 2026-27 financial year support the creation of school places for September 2027.

The Conditions of Grant applying to Basic Need grant payments made to your local authority during the financial year 2026-27 (and which are set out in the schedule of payments referred to above) are included in the Grant Determination attached on pages 3 and 4. The Grant Determination is also published at the link provided in Annex A and conditions apply from the date of the first instalment.

The conditions should be read in conjunction with the grant guidance document published in the same location. This guidance sets out:

- the intended purpose of this funding;
- issues local authorities should consider to ensure that they achieve best outcomes; and
- details of the payment and assurance arrangements attached to this funding.

If you have any queries, please contact the DfE grant manager via this email address: capital.allocations@education.gov.uk.

Please ensure this letter is copied to your Chief Finance Officer for information.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Dixon



Deputy Director, Central Capital Unit

CAPITAL grant determination (non-ringfenced)

BASIC NEED GRANT DETERMINATION (2026): No. 31/8219.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families ("the Minister"), in exercise of the powers conferred by section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, makes the following determination:

Citation

1) This determination may be cited as the Basic Need Grant Determination (2026) No. 31/8219.

Purpose of the grant

2) The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities in England towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them.

Determination

3) The Minister determines as the authorities to which grant is to be paid and the amount of grant to be paid, the authorities and the amounts set out in Annex A.

Grant conditions

4) Pursuant to section 31(3) and 31(4) of the Local Government Act 2003, the Minister determines that the grant will be paid subject to the conditions in Annex B.

Treasury consent

5) Before making this determination in relation to local authorities in England, the Minister obtained the consent of the Treasury.

Signed by authority of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families



Philip Dixon,

Deputy Director, Central Capital Unit

ANNEX A

Basic Need payments for 2026-27 can be found published in Table 2 of the spreadsheet available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-need-allocations

ANNEX B

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF GRANT

1. Grant paid to a local authority under this determination may be used only for the purposes that a capital receipt may be used for in accordance with regulations made under section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003.

2. The Section 151 officer / Chief Finance Officer of each of the recipient authorities are required to sign and return to the Capital Grant Assurance Team within the Operations and Infrastructure Group of the Department for Education a declaration, as part of the outturn statements in the Capital Grant Assurance return to be received no later than the date communicated by the team, in the following terms:

   "As the local authority's designated section 151 officer / Chief Finance Officer I certify that any capital grant provided through the Basic Need programme, that has been spent to date, has been used for a capital purpose."

3. If an authority fails to comply with any of the conditions and requirements of paragraphs 1 and 2, the Minister may:

   a. reduce, suspend or withhold grant; or

   b. by notification in writing to the authority, require the repayment of the whole or any part of the grant.

4. Any sum notified by the Minister under paragraph 3(b) shall immediately become repayable to the Minister.

Additional conditions of grant

5. A local authority may be required to provide such information as reasonably requested by the Secretary of State, to supplement existing data relating to expenditure on new school places as funded by this grant.

HM Government

Email: beststart.familyhubs@education.gov.uk

6 November 2025

Dear Tanya Miles,

As previously communicated you will receive funding from the Department for Education to deliver Best Start Family Hubs. This is a key part of the *Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life* strategy, which sets out the government's continued focus on enhancing early years and family services.

The integration of health services in Best Start Family Hubs is fundamental to delivering improved outcomes for babies, children and their families. This is why the Government will prioritise funding the continuation of existing Start for Life services. At this time, it is not possible to extend Start for Life funding for enhanced services to new LAs. The Government remains committed to supporting all local areas to strengthen and join up family services and we look forward to working with you to develop your Best Start local plans and neighbourhood health services.

This letter sets out the provisional funding allocations that you will be eligible to receive for the financial years 2026-27 to 2028-29. These are outlined in Annex A.

Payment of your funding allocations is subject to meeting the expectations of the programme. We reserve the right to withhold or reduce 2026-29 funding if local authorities do not meet these expectations.

We will share information in due course to support you and your partners in the delivery of the programme and we will also share further guidance ahead of April 2026 on service and delivery expectations, reporting and support.

If you have any questions about this letter, please email:
beststart.familyhubs@education.gov.uk

We look forward to working with you to continue to improve outcomes for babies, children and families through delivery of this important programme.

Yours sincerely,

Sachin Shah

Deputy Director,
Best Start Family Hubs Delivery,
Department for Education

Sarah Harriss

Deputy Director,
Start for Life Programme,
Department of Health & Social Care

Annex A: Provisional funding allocations for Shropshire Council

The allocations below are provisional. However, we hope that by providing this information now, you can begin planning delivery.

This annex provides you with information on the following:

1. Your provisional funding allocation
2. Your provisional funding allocations for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29
3. Your distribution of funding by strand

1. Your local authority's provisional programme allocation

Your provisional allocation for financial years 2026-29 of the programme is **£2,321,300.**

2. Distribution of funding by strand

To support you in planning delivery, we have also provided details of how the provisional allocation for your local authority is divided across the programme's strands.

We recognise that local authorities require flexibility through delivery and spending is unlikely to match the exact percentages set out in Table 1 below. We will expect spending to be broadly in line with the distribution in Table 1 (which is specific to your local authority) over the life of the programme. The only exception to this flexibility is for capital spend, which should only be used on capital activities.

Table 1: Distribution of your funding allocation across the relevant programme strands for financial years 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29.

Strand	%[1]	2026-27 Allocation [2]	2027-28 Allocation	2028-29 Allocation
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	47%	£406,900	£332,700	£341,700
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - capital	11%	£81,400	£83,000	£84,600
Parenting support	18%	£133,800	£135,500	£141,400
Home learning environment support	25%	£189,100	£191,400	£199,800
Total		£811,200	£742,600	£767,500

[1] The distribution of funding has been rounded to one decimal place. The sum of percentages across strands may not total 100% due to this rounding.
[2] The allocation for 2026-27, 2027-28, 2028-29 has been rounded to the nearest 100 pounds. The sum of the allocations across strands may not total the maximum funding allocation due to this rounding.

3. Methodology

In determining funding allocations for each local authority, we have taken into account the different pressures they face. These include variations in population size, which affect service demand, as well as fixed costs that remain broadly consistent across areas. To support the government's commitment to giving every child the best start in life, the funding model also prioritises areas with higher levels of disadvantage, ensuring that resources are directed where they are needed most.

Each local authority's total funding allocation is made up of two components:

1. **A fixed amount** for each strand of the programme (see Table 2).

Table 2: Fixed amounts allocated to each local authority for each programme strand

Strand	Fixed percentage	Fixed amount
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant – programme (DfE funded)	50%	£782,356
Parenting support (DfE funded)	22%	£167,435
Home learning environment support (DfE funded)	22%	£167,435

2. **A variable amount**, distributed with a 4:1 weighting between the population of children in relative low income to the general population of children not in relative low income. This adjustment for the relative level of deprivation is included as all local authorities in England will receive this funding.

The funded strands each target a specific age group. Therefore, the population figures used reflect the most relevant age ranges for each strand's objectives (see Table 3).

Table 3: Age ranges used when calculating each local authority's relative population size

Strand	Age range used[3]
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	0 to 19
Parenting support	3 and 4
Home learning environment support	3 and 4

To allocate funding within the deprivation element, we have used the Department for Work and Pensions' Children in Low Income Families[4] dataset.

[3] Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics

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Best Start Family Hub – Site Selection Data Analysis Report

May 2026

1. Executive Summary

This report provides the evidence which has informed our recommendation for the preferred location of the Best Start Family Hub (BSFH) in North Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Ludlow. It is based on;

- National guidance on Best Start Family Hub implementation.
- Shropshire wide deprivation data, population wide deprivation data, and education outcomes.
- Local data on Good Level of Development (GLD) and Free School Meals (FSM's)
- Mapping of 0–4 population distribution, IDACI, and IMD 2025 datasets.

It is the convergence of multiple factors, rather than any single dataset, that identifies North Shrewsbury (Sundorne in particular), Oswestry and Ludlow as the most appropriate and evidence-based location for a Best Start Family Hub pilot site.

These areas demonstrate the highest density of child poverty, the greatest overlap of disadvantage, and the strongest alignment with national requirements, ensuring that early intervention can have the greatest possible impact.

On this basis, Sundorne has been recommended as the pilot site for the North Shrewsbury Best Start in Life Family Hub, providing the most robust, evidence based and strategically justified location to deliver meaningful and sustained improvements for children and families.

In addition to the North Shrewsbury pilot, there is a strategic ambition to develop further Best Start Family Hubs in Ludlow and Oswestry. Both areas contain LLSOAs within the most deprived 30% nationally and demonstrate clear indicators of need, including relatively high proportions of children aged 0–4. They also act as central service locations for surrounding rural communities that include additional LLSOAs within the most deprived 30%, strengthening their suitability for future hub development and outreach delivery.

2. National Policy Expectations for Site Selection

The Best Start Family Hubs – Preparing for implementation in 2026 guidance requires that, at least 70% of BSFHs should be located in the most deprived 30% areas nationally, measured using Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index Data.

Sites should enable:

- Delivery of universal and targeted 0–5 support
- Strong outreach
- Accessibility for disadvantaged families
- Alignment with GLD improvement goals
- Use of consistent Best Start in Life branding

This selection process therefore prioritises areas where family need, deprivation, early years population, and school readiness outcomes converge.

3.1 Deprivation and Child Income Poverty

North Shrewsbury

The Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (IMD) shows that the most deprived LLSOAs in Shropshire are E01028957 located in Harlescott Electoral Division (ED) and E01028967 located in Monkmoor ED. These are both in decile 1, the 10% most deprived LLSOAs nationally. These areas are both in the Northern Shrewsbury area.

There are a further two LLSOAs located in or towards the North of Shrewsbury, E01028983 (Sundorne and Old Heath ED), E01028934 (Castlefields and Ditherington ED) and E01028962 (Meole ED). These are in Decile 2.

Oswestry

In Oswestry, multiple LLSOAs fall within Decile 2, placing them within the most deprived 30% nationally. In total 6 electoral districts in Oswestry sit within the top 50% most deprived LSOAs. Selattyn and Gobowen electoral LSOA (E01028912) which sits outside Oswestry falls within decile 2.

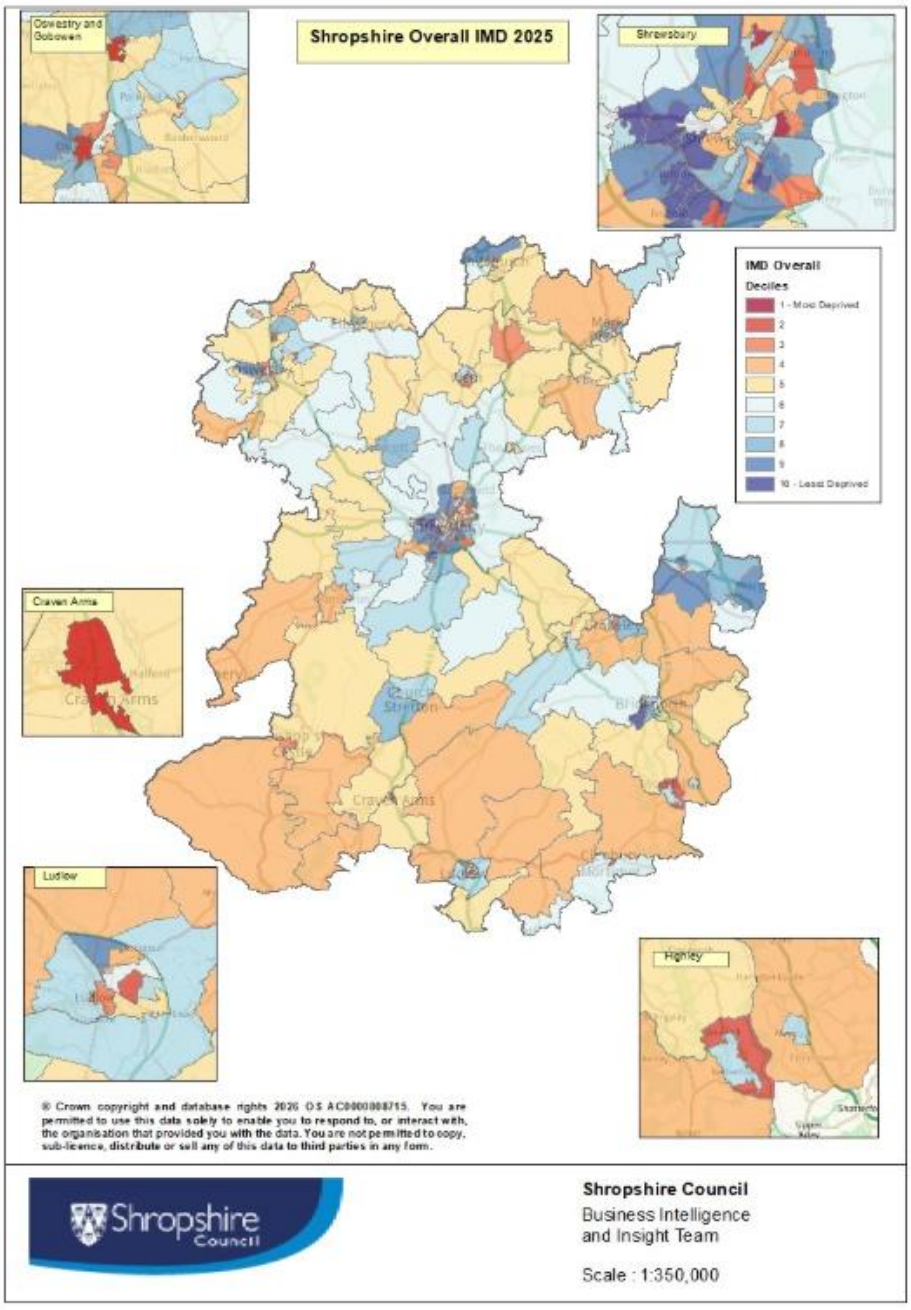
Ludlow

Although one electoral division in Ludlow (Ludlow East) falls within the top 20% most deprived LSOA'S, further electoral divisions including Ludlow North (E01033526) sits just outside the top 20% (decile 3). 5 electoral districts in Ludlow sit within the top 50% most deprived LSOAs.

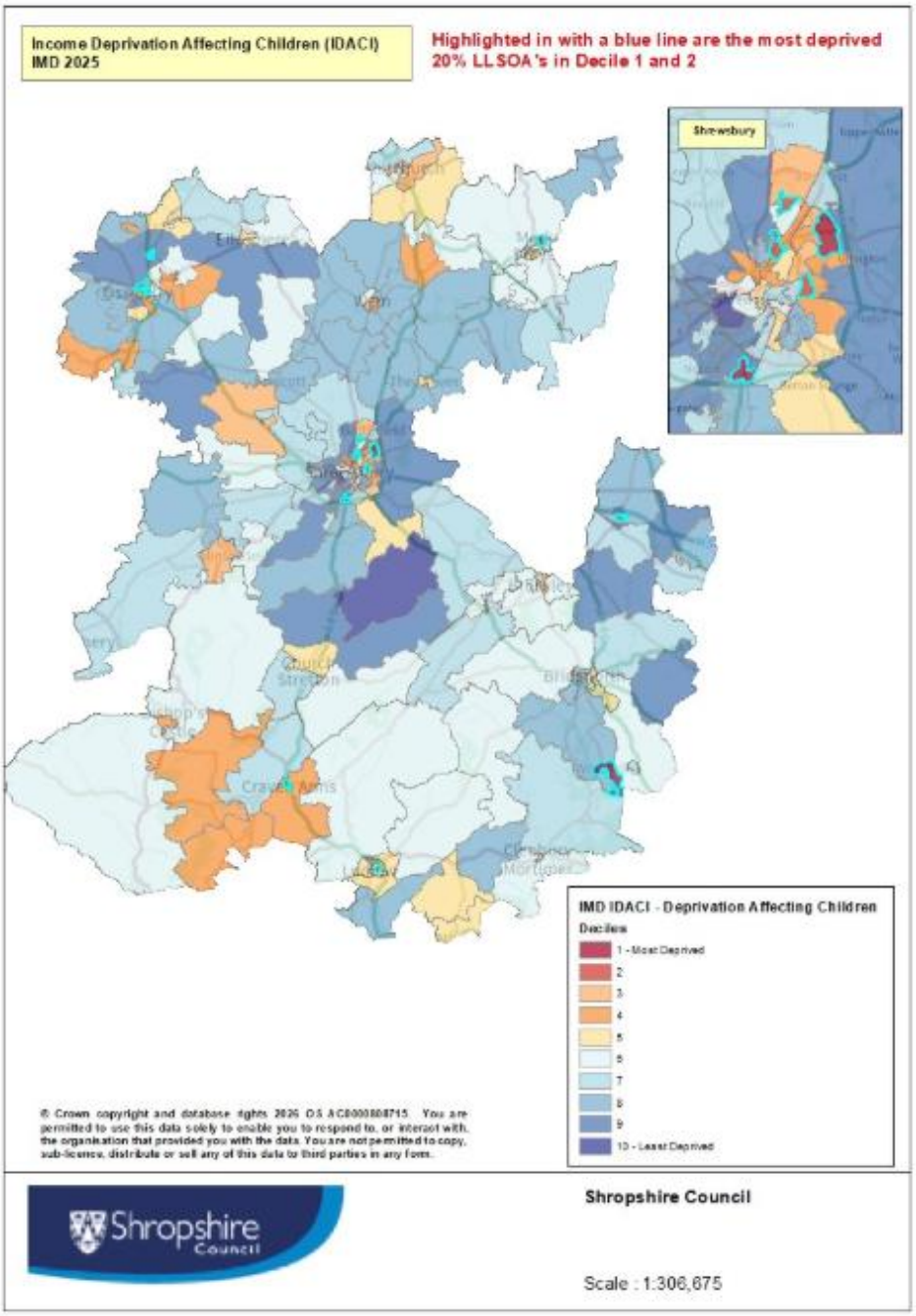
Craven Arms (E01029014) and Cleobury Mortimer electoral division (E01029002) represent two additional LSOAs in the top 30% most deprived nationally. Their locations on either side of Ludlow place the town at a central point for accessing support services.

Table: Top 20% most deprived LSOAs in Shropshire Overall IMD 2025 National Decile

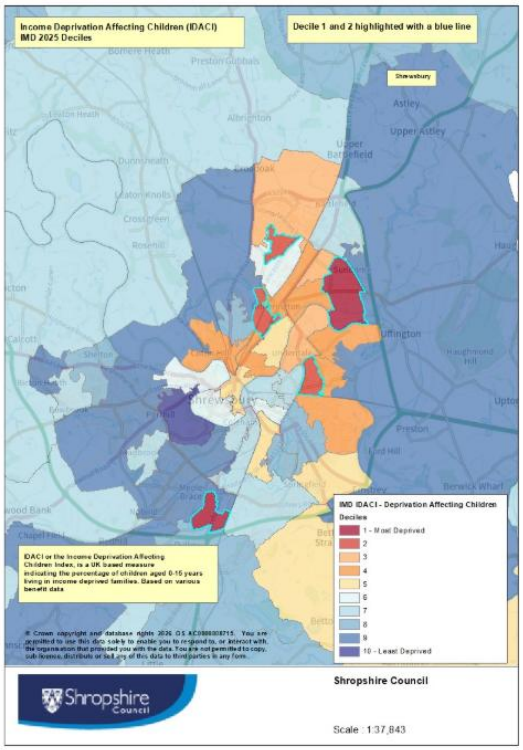
LLSOA	Electoral Division	Decile	Town
E01028957	Harlescott	1	Shrewsbury
E01028967	Monkmoor	1	Shrewsbury
E01028983	Sundorne and Old Heath	2	Shrewsbury
E01028934	Castlefields and Ditherington	2	Shrewsbury
E01028962	Meole	2	Shrewsbury
E01028912	Selattyn and Gobowen	2	Oswestry
E01028906	Oswestry South	2	Oswestry
E01028908	Oswestry North	2	Oswestry
E01029007	Ludlow East	2	Ludlow
E01028849	Highley	2	Highley
E01029014	Craven Arms	2	Craven Arms



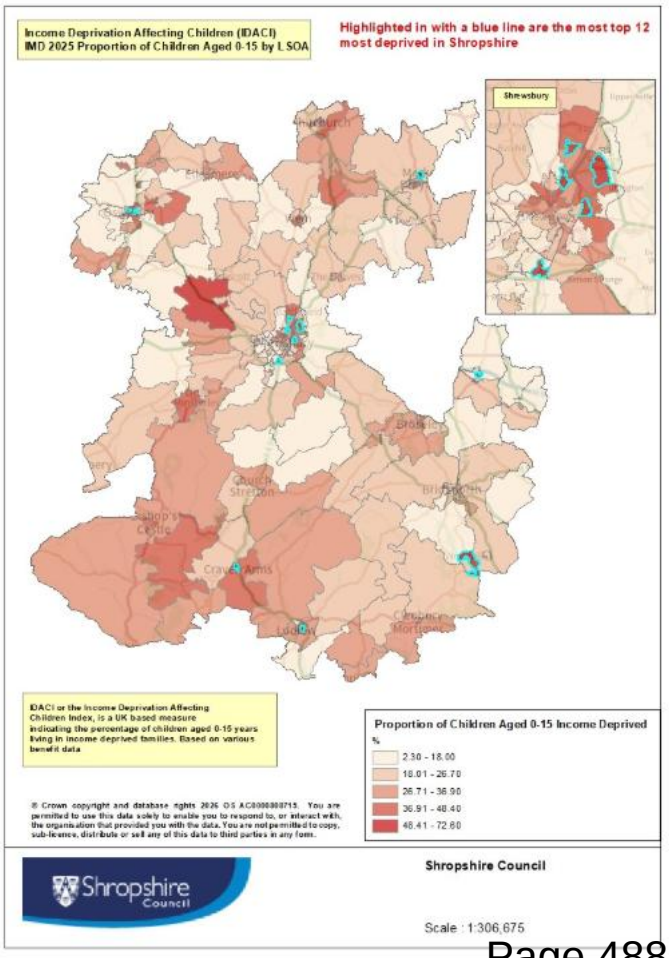
Map; Shropshire Overall IMD 2025



Map: (Above) Shropshire Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) IMD 2025



Map; (Right) Shrewsbury Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) IMD 2025



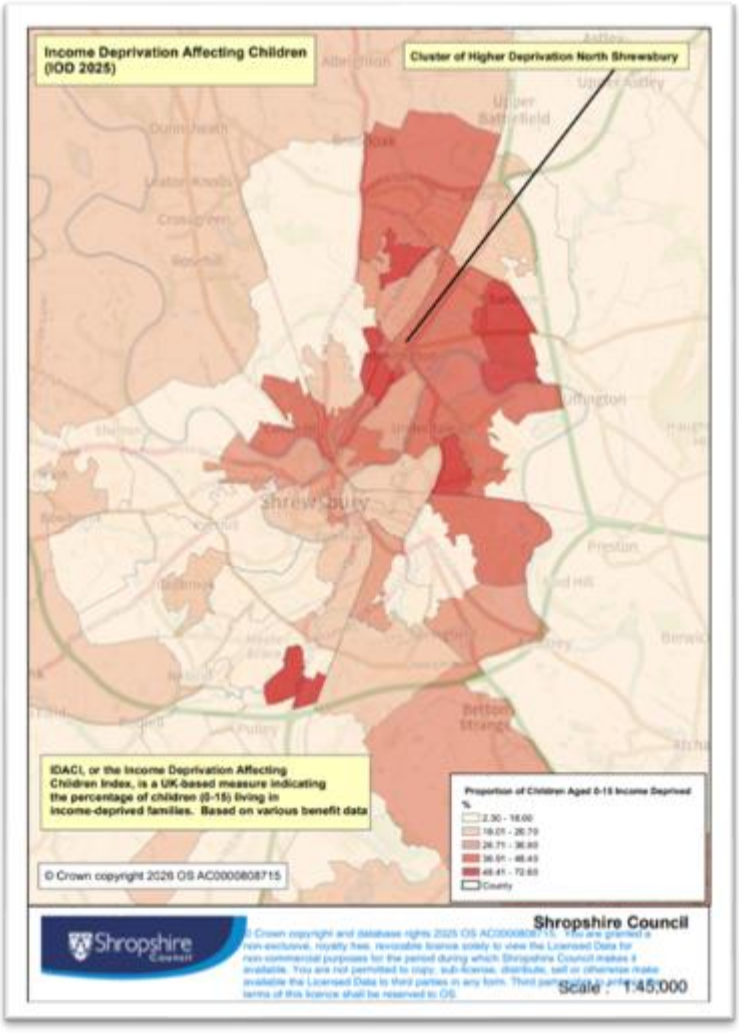
Map; (Left) Shropshire Income Deprivation affecting children (IDACI) Proportion of children aged 0-15 by LLSOA

The table below shows the most % of children income deprived Electoral Divisions in Shropshire for the IDACI.

Electoral Ward	IDACI % of Children Income Deprived
Sundorne & Old Heath	54.61%
Harlescott	49.28%
Oswestry North	46.38%
Highley	42.54%
Monkmoor	41.67%
Oswestry North East	41.62%
Craven Arms	41.03%
Castlefields & Ditherington	40.46%
Ludlow East	39.37%
Oswestry South East	38.23%

Map; (Right) Shrewsbury Income Deprivation

Affecting Children (IOD 2025)



When looking at the IDACI score (see maps above) this shows the proportion of children (aged 0-15) who are income deprived.

North Shrewsbury

The map shows the top 12 most deprived LLSOAs in Shropshire, 3 of these are in North Shrewsbury and one is in Monkmoor, Shrewsbury. These areas have 48% or more of children deemed as income deprived.

What distinguishes North Shrewsbury is the contiguous cluster of both Decile 1 and Decile 2 LLSOAs, as most of the LLSOAs in North Shrewsbury are in Decile 1, 2 or 3 in the IDACI. This area also has a large cluster of LLSOAs with the highest proportion/population of children living in income deprived households. This creates a wider geography of disadvantage affecting children and the most concentrated in Shropshire.

Oswestry

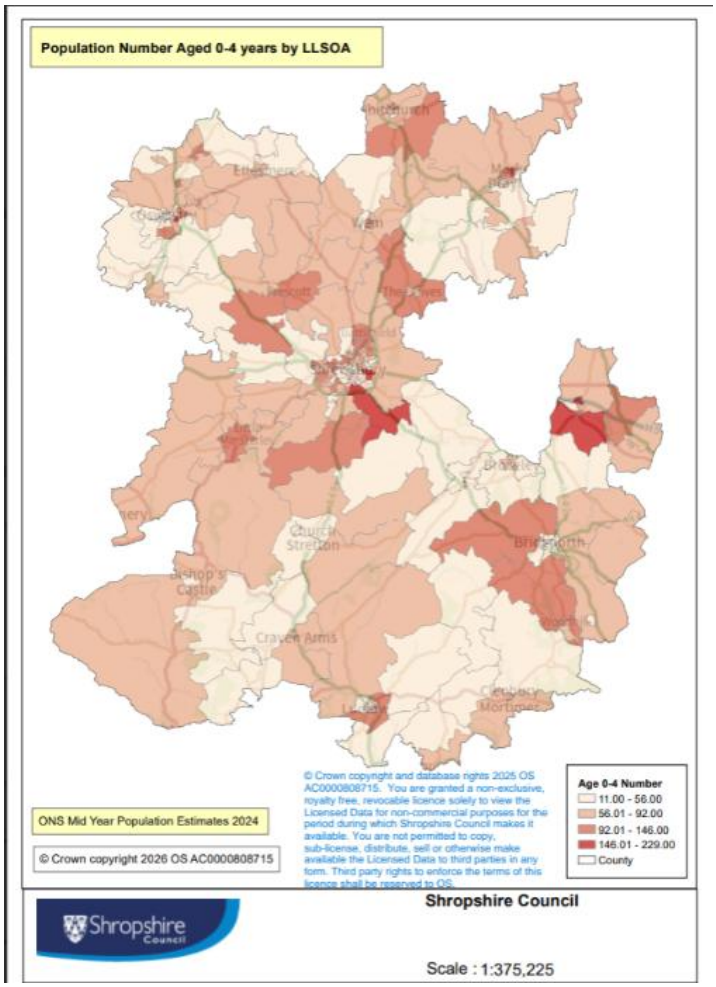
In addition, three of the LSOAs are located in Oswestry (Oswestry North, Oswestry South East, and Oswestry North East), where over 38% of children are considered income deprived. All electoral divisions in Oswestry fall within the top 50% of areas for income deprivation affecting children. In Oswestry North (E01028908 and E01028903), data indicates that more than 48% of children aged 0–4 live in relatively low-income families.

Ludlow

Ludlow East closely follows, with 39% of children considered income deprived. In addition, five out of the seven electoral divisions in Ludlow fall within the top 50% of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Data indicates that in Ludlow East (E01029007) and Ludlow North (E01033526), over 40% of children are from relatively low-income families. This compares with the neighbouring LSOA of Craven Arms electoral division, which is within the top 30% most deprived nationally, where approximately 26% of children are from relatively low-income families.

3.2 Early Years Population Distribution (0–4s)

Shropshire's 0–4 population shows considerable variation across the county, with the number of young children ranging from as few as 11 to as many as 229 per LLSOA, highlighting distinct clusters of early years demand across different neighbourhoods.



North Shrewsbury

A large concentration is found in North Shrewsbury, where a group of adjacent LLSOAs contains approximately 941 children aged 0–4, making it one of the most significant early years population areas in the county.

This area also overlaps with some of Shropshire's highest need neighbourhoods, including Sundorne and Harlescott, where high child income deprivation coincides with higher numbers of young children.

Oswestry

Oswestry demonstrates a notable early years population, with LSOAs in the area showing comparatively higher proportions of children aged 0–4 than other rural parts of the county. For example, Oswestry has a 0–4 population of 791.

The town is also geographically central to surrounding communities experiencing deprivation, meaning that a hub based in Oswestry—or alternatively in Ludlow—could effectively serve a wider population of disadvantaged families. This could be achieved through outreach and partnership delivery models, supported by additional satellite sites.

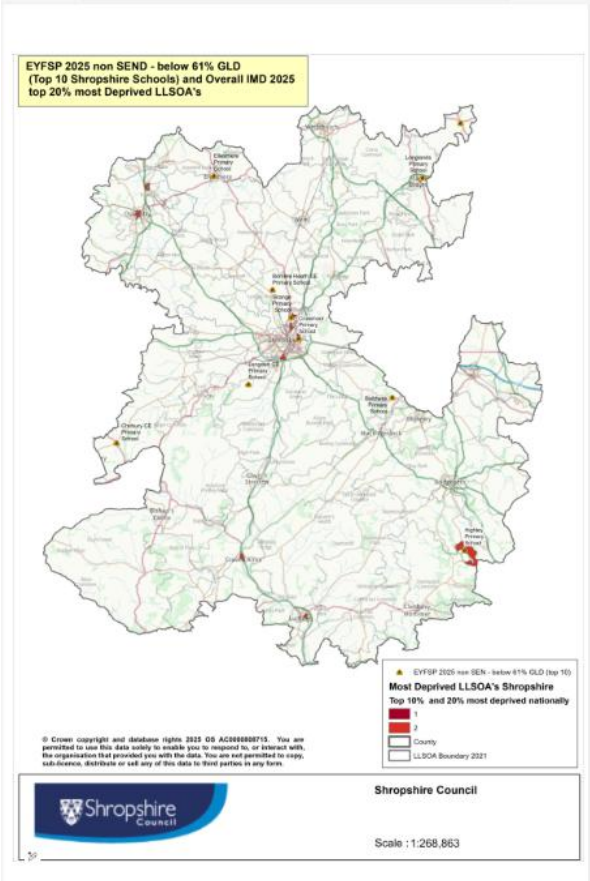
A neighbouring LSOA within the top 20% most deprived nationally (E01028912) has a 0–4 population of 226, who could also access support in Oswestry due to its central location.

Ludlow

Approximately 433 children aged 0–4 live within Ludlow. This is significantly higher than in neighboring LSOAs within electoral divisions ranked in the top 30% most deprived, such as Craven Arms, which has a 0–4 population of 171, and Cleobury Mortimer, with 262 children aged 0–4. However, Ludlow's location between these areas places it in a strong position to provide access to services for families across both electoral divisions.

3.3 School Readiness (GLD) and FSM Patterns

Good Learning Development Data in Schools & IMD 2025 Data

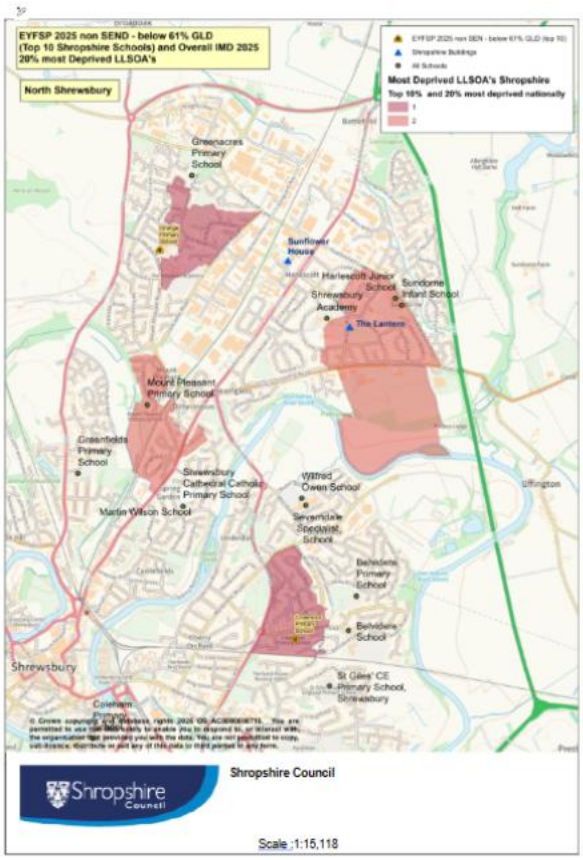


Map; EYSFP 2025 non SEND – Below 61% GLD (Top 10 Shropshire Schools) and Overall IMD 2025 top 20% most deprived LLSOAs

GLD School Top 10	Overall Decile	IDACI

Highley	2	8
Ellesmere	8	4
Longlands	8	1
Woore	7	8
Longden	6	9
The Grange Primary	1	2
Crowmoor Primary	1	2
Bomere Heath	6	7
Buildwas	5	7
Chirbury	4	7

The GLD table reveals a strong link between early educational outcomes and underlying socioeconomic disadvantage across Shropshire. The Grange Primary, Highley Primary and Crowmoor Primary all have a GLD score of less than 61% and are in the bottom 10 schools in Shropshire for Communication and Language.



Map; EYFSP 2025 - Non SEND – Below 61% GLD (Top 10 Shropshire Schools) and Overall IMD 2025 top 20% most deprived LLSOAs

This pattern is reflected more widely across the dataset, as Schools located in the most deprived LLSOA, particularly in North Shrewsbury and other high need localities, tend to show the weakest GLD performance alongside higher levels of Free School Meal eligibility. This is especially evident for The Grange Primary and Crowmoor Primary Schools.

Top Schools Percentage of Reception Children Entitled to Free School Meals.

Setting Name	IMD Overall Decile	IDACI Index
Wilfred Owen School	4	3
Crowmoor Primary School	1	2
Grange Primary School	1	2
Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	4 (near to area in decile 3)	3 (near to area in 1)
Martin Wilson School	5	5
Greenacres Primary School	1	4 (near to area in 1)
Longlands Primary School	8 (near to LLSOA in Decile 3)	7 (near to area in 2)
Tilstock CE Primary School	5	5

The Free School Meals table further highlights the primary schools in Shropshire, with the highest proportion of Reception children eligible for FSM, and it places these schools within the wider context of deprivation. Schools such as Crowmoor Primary, Grange Primary, Greenacres, and Holy Trinity (Oswestry) are situated within or near some of the most deprived LLSOAs nationally, as reflected in their low IMD and IDACI decile scores.

Sundorne Infant School also appears within the top 23 schools countywide for Reception Class FSM eligibility, further reinforcing the need in this locality.

These schools consistently demonstrate very high levels of FSM eligibility, which often corresponding with poorer early learning outcomes, including GLD performance.

The data analysis clearly shows that low GLD outcomes and high FSM prevalence cluster in the same neighbourhood:

North Shrewsbury

- The Grange Primary School (Harlescott):
    - Overall IMD Decile 1

    - IDACI Decile 1
    - Education, Skills & Training Decile 1
    - Among the lowest GLD schools in Shropshire and with high FSM levels.

- Crowmoor Primary School (Monkmoor)
    - Overall Decile 1
    - IDACI Decile 2
    - Also listed among low GLD-GLD schools with high FSM cohorts
    - Several other schools serving the North Shrewsbury area (e.g., Greenacres, Wilfred Owen) appear in the top FSM lists.

Oswestry

- Holy Trinity C Of E (Oswestry)
    - Overall Decile 4 (near to area in 3)
    - IDACI Decile 3 (near to area in 1)
    - Also listed among low GLD schools with high FSM cohorts

Furthermore the list below highlights schools located in or very near LSOA'S IN Shropshire within the most deprived 20% nationally. Highlighting several located near proposed BSIL hub sites of Oswestry, Ludlow and North Shrewsbury.

School	Family Hub area
Greenacres	Central West (Sunflower House-SH)
Harlescott Junior	Central East (The Lantern)
The Grange Primary	Central West (SH)
Sundorne Infants	Central East (The Lantern)
Mount Pleasant Primary	Central West (SH)
Crowmoor Primary	Central East (The Lantern)
Meole Brace Primary	Central West (The Lantern/ Louise House)
Greenacres Primary	Central West (SH)
Gobowen Primary	North West (Oswestry)
Woodside Primary	North West (Oswestry)

Our Lady and St Oswalds	North West (Oswestry)
Stokesay Primary (Craven Arms)	South west (Ludlow)
Ludlow Primary	South West (Ludlow)
Highley Primary	South East (Highley)

Together, the data illustrates a strong and consistent relationship between deprivation, FSM eligibility, and school readiness, as the schools with the highest FSM levels are overwhelmingly those located in areas experiencing the greatest socioeconomic disadvantage. This clear pattern strengthens the evidence base by showing how child poverty directly aligns with early educational inequality. It also highlights the neighbourhoods where early intervention is likely to have the greatest impact.

4. Summary of Findings

This analysis identifies North Shrewsbury (with a particular focus on Sundorne), Oswestry, and Ludlow as the most appropriate locations for Best Start Family Hub development, based on a strong convergence of deprivation, early years population, and educational need.

North Shrewsbury stands out as the area of highest need within Shropshire. It contains a concentration of LSOAs within the most deprived deciles nationally, including multiple areas in Decile 1 and 2 for both IMD and IDACI. The area also demonstrates a significant cluster of child poverty, with some neighbourhoods reporting over half of children living in income-deprived households. This is further reinforced by a high early years population (approximately 941 children aged 0–4), alongside poor school readiness outcomes and high levels of Free School Meal eligibility. The co-location of these factors creates the most acute and concentrated area of disadvantage in the county, supporting the recommendation of Sundorne as the initial pilot site.

Oswestry also shows clear and consistent indicators of need. All electoral divisions fall within the top 50% nationally for income deprivation affecting children, with some areas exceeding 40–48% of children living in low-income households. The town has a relatively large early years population (approximately 791 children aged 0–4) and includes LSOAs within the most deprived 20–30% nationally. In addition, Oswestry serves as a key geographic centre for surrounding rural communities with further pockets of deprivation, strengthening its suitability as a strategic hub location for outreach and wider service delivery.

Ludlow demonstrates moderate but still significant levels of deprivation, with five out of seven electoral divisions within the top 50% nationally for child income deprivation.

Certain areas, including Ludlow East and Ludlow North, show particularly high levels of low-income households among families with young children. While the early years population is smaller (approximately 433 children aged 0–4), Ludlow's geographic position between other deprived areas, such as Craven Arms and Cleobury Mortimer (both within the top 30% most deprived nationally), enhances its role as an accessible service hub for a wider rural population.

Across all three areas, there is a strong and consistent relationship between deprivation, child poverty, and poor early educational outcomes. Schools located in the most deprived neighbourhoods—particularly in North Shrewsbury and parts of Oswestry—show the lowest Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes and the highest levels of Free School Meal eligibility. This alignment highlights the direct link between socioeconomic disadvantage and reduced school readiness, reinforcing the importance of targeted early intervention.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that North Shrewsbury, Oswestry, and Ludlow represent the areas of greatest need and opportunity for impact. North Shrewsbury offers the strongest case for immediate investment due to the scale and intensity of need, while Oswestry and Ludlow provide strategically important locations for future hub development. Their population size, deprivation profiles, and geographic positioning support a hub-and-spoke model that would maximise access to services and improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and families across Shropshire.

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Childrens Transformation

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
Best Start Family Hubs	1. BSFH's model defined and agreed	1 BSFH's model defined in line with national BSFH minimum expectation	Milestone	1.1 Determine BSFH pilot site	Rosie Boardman	Discovery & design	• Review national BSFH site definition and minimum expectations.• Produce a Shropshire interpretation of BSFH requirements.	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Natasha Moody	Done	Blue	March 26 - CLT - BSFH's Site selection data report submitted for discussion. Approval for Sundorne area. Site visit planned for 20.03.26 to view buildings. Agreed The Lantern - meeting with estates team - 25.03.26.			01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Natasha Moody				31-Mar-26
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1 Multi-agency Practice Framework -	Milestone	2.2.5 - Tools and language aligned	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Align assessment and planning tools where possible Agree shared language and practice expectations Reduce duplication across agencies	Low	TBD	TBD	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber						Jennie Lowe				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1 Multi-agency Practice Framework -		2.2.6 - Update policies and procedures	Jane Rose	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Update Tri-X policy & procedures	High	TBD	31/08/2026	Jane Rose	Not Started	Amber					31-Aug-26	Jane Rose				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)		2.3.4 - Practitioner roles and functions finalised across partnership	MDT T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree how practitioners will function within MDTs, including: Direct family support Front door triage and advice Consultative support to FHLPs Acting as a link to home organisations Align role expectations with: FHLP model Team Around the Family (TAF) processes Document role clarity to support supervision and accountability. Partnership processes updated.	Medium	TBD	TBD	Ellie Lloyd	Not Started	Amber		Induction programme				Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)		2.4.4 - Workforce development plan in delivery	Inclusive People & Practice	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Deliver training and development programme Support practitioners into new roles Monitor impact on confidence, practice and outcomes	Medium	TBD	TBD	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber	In progress - to include data changes to system					Jennie Lowe				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)	Milestone	3.1.9 - System updated	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Roles & responsibilities updated in system	Medium	TBD	01/09/2026	Data Team	Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26	Data Team				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.1.14 - Explore other LA's JD's / PS	Gemma Onions	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Review other LA's JD & PS for FHLP (TEH & CIN Team)	Medium	01/02/2026	30/04/2026	Gemma Onions	Done	Blue		JD & PS for FHLP roles		01-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Gemma Onions				30-Apr-26
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.10 - DfE Data reporting requirements	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Build in DfE data requirements regarding assessments	Low	TBD	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.2 - Current staffing delivery mapped - CiN and EH model	HR	Discovery & design	Map existing roles, numbers and management arrangements	Medium	03/01/2026	30/04/2026	Debbie Smith	Done	Blue	Establishment list completed	Establishment list		03-Jan-26	30-Apr-26	Debbie Smith				30-Apr-26
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.9 - Update to process, pathways and protocols inc info for families	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Pathways, process updated to reflect the changes internal and external	Low	TBD	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.10 - DfE Data reporting requirements	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Build in DfE data requirements regarding plans	Low	TBD	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	**4.3 Consent Form –** Lawfull, respectful and family friendly practice	Milestone	4.3.1 Consent form clarified and embedded in assessment & plan	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Review and clarify consent guidance	Low	TBD	30/06/2026	Helena Williams / Donna Ward	Not Started	Amber					30-Jun-26	Helena Williams / Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.3 Consent Form – Lawfull, respectful and family friendly practice	Milestone	4.3.2 - Consent Form Approval	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Consent changes approved	Low	TBD	12/06/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber					12-Jun-26	TBD				
		1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.2.8 Approval of BC	DSP's	Discovery & design	Approval of BC's and Threshold doc	High	12/06/2026	12/06/2026	DSP's	In Progress	Green	workshop planned 12.06.26.			12-Jun-26	12-Jun-26	DSP's				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.10 - Policies and Processes updated	All	Mobilisation & Building readiness	All policies and processes updated	Medium	TBD	01/08/2026	All	Not Started	Amber					01-Aug-26	All				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.11 - DfE Data reporting requirements	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Build in DfE data requirements regarding plans	Low	TBD	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.9 - Training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Training for partners in front door	Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	Not Started	Amber						TBD				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)	Milestone	6.1.10 LCS ready for implementation	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Child Protection workflow to be reviewed to reflect changes / forms within system utilising CFR capabilities & best practice	Low	TBD	TBD	Data, Systems & outcomes	Not Started	Amber						Data, Systems & outcomes				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.12 training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	MACPT training	Low	TBD	TBD	TBD	Not Started	Amber						TBD				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.13 - Protocols updated	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Protocols and assessments updated	Low	TBD	TBD	SSCP	Not Started	Amber						SSCP				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.14- DfE Data reporting requirements	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Build in DfE data requirements regarding MACPT	Low	TBD	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.2 Integrated but distinct MACPT operating model (Minimum expectation 6.4 & 6.8)		6.2.3 System changes - MACPT interface with FH Front door arrangements	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	LCS changes to be made for CP workflows	Low	TBD	TBD	Data, Systems & outcomes	Not Started	Amber						Data, Systems & outcomes				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.2 Kinship Strategy Developed and Implemented (Minimum expectation 8.1-8.5)	Milestone	8.2.3 Kinship Strategy Approval	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	8.1.2 - Kinship Strategy approved	Medium	TBD	TBD	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber						Maxine Ellis				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1Multi-agency Practice Framework -	Milestone	2.1.1 Design Practice Frameworks agreed across partnership	Jennie Lowe	Discovery & design	develop a shared principles and practice framework across partnership for family help	Medium	29/10/25	30/06/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green	Timeline extended from 31.03.26 to 30.06.26. - within threshold Doc. Practice Framework is within this doc.			29-Oct-25	30-Jun-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.8 - Training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Assessment Training for workforce	Low	?	?	TBD	Not Started	Amber	timeline dates to be added when detail available regarding build time requirement.					TBD				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)	Milestone	6.1.15 - MACPT Live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery		Low	01/01/2027	30/11/2026		Not Started	Amber				01-Jan-27	30-Nov-26					
Best Start Family Hubs	10. BSFH data systems operational	10. Data systems in place to support attendance tracking, impact reporting and assurance.	Milestone	10. Data systems live.	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	• Implement attendance and impact recording system.• Configure reporting mechanisms.• Confirm information governance compliance.• Test digital and online elements of the offer.	High	20/03/2026	07/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Green	Met with other LA to discuss their reporting mechanisms.			20-Mar-26	07-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.4 Finances		12.4.1 Agency Spend	Divya Mistry	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Defined plan to reduce agency spend	High	28/10/2026	30/04/2026	Divya Mistry	Not Started	Amber				28-Oct-26	30-Apr-26	Divya Mistry				
Best Start Family Hubs	11. BSIL Plan Published	11. Best Start in Life plan published and communicated.	Milestone	11. BSIL Plan live	Rosie Boardman	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Publish Best Start in Life plan on SC website.• Communicate BSFH approach to partners and stakeholders.	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Rosie Boardman	Done	Blue	Plan published, initial meeting with working group planned with key partners.			01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Rosie Boardman				31-Mar-26
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	**4.3 Consent Form –** Lawfull, respectful and family friendly practice	Milestone	4.2.10 Consent form live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Consent form live	Low	01/09/2026	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber				01-Sep-26	01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)	Milestone	5.1.10 - Front door live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Live!	Medium	01/09/2026	01/09/2026	Ellie Lloyd	Not Started	Amber				01-Sep-26	01-Sep-26	Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)	Milestone	6.1.10 - Restructure of social care workforce to align with model	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	restructure workforce according to model design	Low	01/09/2026	01/11/2026	MACPT	Not Started	Amber				01-Sep-26	01-Nov-26	MACPT				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.9 - Process and protocos updated inc info for families	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	All processes and protocols updated in partnership	Low	01/08/2026	01/09/2026	SSCP	Not Started	Amber				01-Aug-26	01-Sep-26	SSCP				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.3 Practice Framework and Resourcing (Minimum expectatons 6.6, 6.10, 6.12 & 6.13)		4.3.4 training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Threshold training developed & rolled out	Low	01/07/2026	30/09/2026	Practice & people	Not Started	Amber				01-Jul-26	30-Sep-26	Practice & people				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.3 Practice Framework and Resourcing (Minimum expectatons 6.6, 6.10, 6.12 & 6.13)		4.3.5 - Process and protocos updated inc info for families	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	All processes and protocols updated in partnership	Low	01/07/2026	01/09/2026	SSCP	Not Started	Amber				01-Jul-26	01-Sep-26	SSCP				
Best Start Family Hubs	12. BSFHs pilot operating as a hub	12. Pilot BSFHs operating as physical, accessible hubs delivering the agreed offer.	Milestone	12. Pilot Hub live	Rosie Boardman	Implementation & Delivery	Operate BSFH pilot site as physical access points for families.	High	01/09/2026	07/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Green				01-Sep-26	07-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.7 - LCS changes	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Front Door Configuration on systems	Medium	01/07/2026	30/08/2026	MDT	Not Started	Amber				01-Jul-26	30-Aug-26	MDT				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.7 - MACPT as a Centre of Expertise and System Leader (Minimum expectation 6.13 & 6.14)	Milestone	6.7.1 - MACPT Consultation and advice function live	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Provide advice and consultation to practitioners Maintain an understanding of local patterns of significant harm Facilitate better communication and information sharing	Low	01/07/2026	30/11/2026	MACPT	Not Started	Amber				01-Jul-26	30-Nov-26	MACPT				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.7- Change management approach agreed	FH T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree transition and change management approach	Low	12/06/2026	31/07/2026	SSCP	Not Started	Amber	Once approval sought - change management approach for system to be agreed			12-Jun-26	31-Jul-26	SSCP				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan		12.1.4 - Staff engagement & feedback mechanism	PMO	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop padlet as central place to store information and for staff to engage via a two-way feedback loop	High	01/03/2026	31/03/2026	PMO	Done	Blue	In progress - completing final roadmaps	Padlet launched	Children's Services Change Programmes	01-Mar-26	31-Mar-26	PMO				31-Mar-26
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan		12.1.6 Templates for consistent comms	Comms & PMO	Implementation & Delivery	Develop a consistent set of templates to share information across the partnership	Medium	01/03/2026	30/04/2026	PMO	Done	Blue	In progress. others designed as and when required.	Monthly updates template launched.		01-Mar-26	30-Apr-26	PMO				30-Apr-26
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.2 - Refreshed threshold & Local Protocols - (Minimum Expectations 1.2 & 1.3)	Milestone	1.2.5 Publish and embed	SSCP Working Group	Implementation & Delivery	Publish threshold document and protocol Deliver multi-agency briefings and communications Update practice guidance and frontline tools	High	12/06/2026	30/06/2026	Jane Rose	In Progress	Green		Threshold document		12-Jun-26	30-Jun-26	Jane Rose				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)	Milestone	2.2.13 FHLP Role Operational	FH T&F Group	Implementation & Delivery	Appoint FHLPs across Family Help teams Ensure families have a named lead practitioner Embed FHLP role into supervision and QA	Medium	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	FH T&F Group	In Progress	Green				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	FH T&F Group				

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	**4.3 Consent Form** – Lawfull, respectful and family friendly practice		4.2.7 - Consent changes built into system	FH T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	LCS / EHM refected of change	Low	01/06/2026	01/08/2026	LCS project Team	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Aug-26	LCS project Team				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)	Milestone	4.2.7 - Plan changes built into system	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	LCS / EHM updated and pathways updated	Low	01/06/2026	01/08/2026	LCS project Team	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Aug-26	LCS project Team				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.8 training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Family plan training delivered to professionals	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	Practice & people	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	Practice & people				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	**4.3 Consent Form** – Lawfull, respectful and family friendly practice		4.2.8 training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Consent training updated	Low	01/06/2026	01/08/2026	Practice & people	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Aug-26	Practice & people				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	**4.3 Consent Form** – Lawfull, respectful and family friendly practice		4.2.9 - Process and protocos updated inc info for families	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Pathways, processes updated including privacy notice	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	SSCP	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	SSCP				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)	Milestone	6.1.9 - MACPT footprint agreed	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Confirm establishment structure, reporting lines and cover arrangements	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	MACPT	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	MACPT				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.2 Integrated but distinct MACPT operating model (Minimum expectation 6.4 & 6.8)		6.2.1 MACPT interface wth Court Teams & Children in Care	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define how the MACPT will integrate with the Court Teams and Children in Care	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	MACPT	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	MACPT				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.4 Finances		12.4.2 Grant funding allocation	Stephen waters	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Determine the total grant allocation for all reforms including what is allocated and where this is aligned to the future programme requirements or not	High	01/02/2026	31/01/2026	Stephen waters	Done	Blue	In progress			01-Feb-26	31-Jan-26	Stephen waters				31-Mar-26
FFP	12. Project set up	12.4 Finances		12.4.3 Define spend	Natasha Moody	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define the allocation of the funding for all aspects of the programme	High	01/02/2026	30/04/2026	Natasha Moody	Done	Blue	Not started			01-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Natasha Moody				30-Apr-26
FFP	12. Project set up	12.4 Finances		12.4.4 Exisiting budget	Stephen waters	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Prepare and share a summary of the existing children's social care and early help budget at a gross expenditure level, including the allocation between preventative and non-preventative spend, for use in the upcoming cabinet paper.	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Stephen waters	Done	Blue				01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Stephen waters				31-Mar-26
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.2 Integrated but distinct MACPT operating model (Minimum expectation 6.4 & 6.8)		6.2.2 - MACPT interface with FH Teams and Front door arrangements	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define how the MACPT will integrate with the Front Door & FH Teams	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	MACPT	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	MACPT				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.4 Finances		12.4.6 - Team Budget Breakdown	Stephen waters	Discovery & design	Send a budget breakdown for the three teams (Stepping Stones, EHAST, 0 to 5) to Natasha to support the evaluation of their value and impact.	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Stephen waters	Done	Blue				01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Stephen waters				31-Mar-26
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.3 Practice Framework and Resourcing (Minimum expectatons 6.6, 6.10, 6.12 & 6.13)		6.3.1 - Multi-agency Practice Framework agreed	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	design a single multi-agency practice framework covering: Understanding and analysing harm (including extra-familial) Risk assessment and decision-making Family and network engagement (FGDM) Proportional, timely intervention	Low	01/06/2026	TBD	46235	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26		01-Aug-26				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.4 Supervsion, Learning & Quality Assurance Framework (minimum expectation 6.11 & 6.12)	Milestone	6.4.1 - Supervision model agreed and implemented	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Design the management and supervision system for MACPT	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
Best Start Family Hubs	13. Pilot hub learning captured and agreed	13. Learning from the pilot BSFH is captured and used to refine the delivery model prior to scaling.	Milestone	13. Pilot learning review completed.	Rosie Boardman	Implementation & Delivery	review pilot performance, attendance and impact data.• Capture learning on site model, service delivery, data systems and user experience.• Identify any required refinements to the BSFH model, offer or processes.• Agree readiness to proceed to wider roll-out through programme governance.	Low		30/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Amber					30-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
Best Start Family Hubs	14. Roll-out of wider BSFH network	14 Wider BSFH sites are rolled out in a phased and controlled manner, applying learning from the pilot and ensuring consistency with national BSFH minimum expectations.	Milestone	14. Wider BSFH roll-out commenced.	Rosie Boardman	Implementation & Delivery	Confirm phasing and sequencing for additional BSFH sites.• Apply refined BSFH model and learning from pilot hub to new sites.• Complete site readiness checks for each new hub prior to go-live.• Extend BSFH branding, data systems and reporting to additional sites.• Monitor performance and impact across the expanding BSFH network	Low	01/10/2026	31/10/2028	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Amber				01-Oct-26	31-Oct-28	Rosie Boardman				
Best Start Family Hubs	15. BSFH network embedded and operating at scale	15 BSFH network operating county-wide as business-as-usual, delivering consistent services and evidencing impact.	Milestone	15 BSFH roll-out completed.	Rosie Boardman	Implementation & Delivery	Ensure all BSFH sites are operational and delivering the agreed offer.• Maintain consistent branding, data collection and reporting across all hubs.• Embed oversight of the BSFH network into BAU governance arrangements.• Use performance and impact data to drive continuous improvement.	Low	01/12/2026		Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Amber				01-Dec-26		Rosie Boardman				
Best Start Family Hubs	16. Development of BSIL Inclusion practitioner role	16 Role developed or created to support families with children with SEND needs to access further, timely support including accessing their entitlements	Milestone	Inclusion practitioner situated or accessible across the county	Rosie Boardman	Discovery & design	Ensure families have access to a BSIL inclusion practitioner within the hubs. Mapping out the role and developing JD.	Medium	01/09/2026	01/12/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Green				01-Sep-26	01-Dec-26	Rosie Boardman				
Best Start Family Hubs	17. Consider bid for match funding to develop partnership with YPF to support delivery of hub spoke model	17 submit bid, local groups identified and operationalise delivery of HLE groups in wider communities as part of BSFH spoke model	Milestone	16 Bid submitted, develop reporting structure on KPI's and QA. DFE provide funding manager and match funding. Identify community groups to deliver HLE groups as part of spoke model	Rosie Boardman	Discovery & design	Delivery of groups by the voluntary sector across wider communities. Met with YPF and attended DFE webinar, asked for further discussions to make bid with YPF.	Medium	07/09/2026	04/04/2027	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Green				07-Sep-26	04-Apr-27	Rosie Boardman				
Best Start Family Hubs	2. BSFH core service offer designed	2. BSFH service offer defined covering parenting, HLE, perinatal mental health, infant feeding, parent–infant relationship support, and additional needs.	Milestone	2.1. Core BSFH offer agreed.	Rosie Boardman	Discovery & design	• Map existing services against BSFH expectations.• Identify gaps and design the core BSFH service offer.• Confirm scope of services to be delivered through hubs.	High	01/09/2026	31/03/2026	BSIL Group	Done	Blue	Mapping in progress. Services offered in Shropshire mapped			01-Sep-26	31-Mar-26	BSIL Group				31-Mar-26
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.4 Supervsion, Learning & Quality Assurance Framework (minimum expectation 6.11 & 6.12)	Milestone	6.4.2 - Child protection plan QA framework operational	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Design the assurance processes for MACPT, inc chairing of meetings	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.7 - MACPT as a Centre of Expertise and System Leader (Minimum expectation 6.13 & 6.14)		6.7.2 Reporting aligned to safeguarding partner requirements,	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Maintain clear line of sight to the safeguarding partnership Meet Working Together reporting requirements	Low	01/06/2026	01/09/2026	MACPT	Not Started	Amber				01-Jun-26	01-Sep-26	MACPT				
FFP	11. Data, Systems & Outcomes	11.1 EHM / LCS	Milestone	11.1 - Undertake a health check on the EHM / LCS System	Data Systems and Outcomes	Discovery & design	Undertake a health check of the Case management system	High	11/05/2026	29/05/2026	Data, Systems & outcomes	Delayed	Red	System lead to be appointed. Teams saying System C need to complete or they need to see the to be model to complete/			11-May-26	29-May-26	Data, Systems & outcomes				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)		2.4.2 Training Needs identified	Inclusive People & Practice	Discovery & design	Identify gaps across agencies and roles Prioritise training linked to Family Help delivery Align development with new roles and responsibilities	High	09/05/2026	30/05/2026	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber	Awaiting analysis from Skills audit			09-May-26	30-May-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.11 - Training	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Training required for system changes	Low	01/05/2026	30/08/2026	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber	Awaiting Approval of BC			01-May-26	30-Aug-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.12- DfE Data Reporting	Data, Systems & outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Ensure all DfEdata reporting is embedded within new changes	Medium	01/05/2026	30/08/2026	Data Team	Not Started	Amber	Awaiting Approval of BC			01-May-26	30-Aug-26	Data Team				
FFP	11. Data, Systems & Outcomes	11.1 EHM / LCS		10.1.3 - Legal compliance	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	DPIA to be completed prior to live environment	Medium	01/05/2026	31/08/2026	Data, Systems & outcomes	Not Started	Amber				01-May-26	31-Aug-26	Data, Systems & outcomes				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)	Milestone	2.2.11 - QA process embedded	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Embed oversight expectations in guidance and supervision policy Align QA and audit processes Monitor effectiveness of oversight arrangements	Low	01/05/2026	30/08/2026	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber		QA Framework / Process & Supervision Policy		01-May-26	30-Aug-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.12 - Update partnership docs relating to FHLP role	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	All documents in the partnership require updating to reflect the FHLP role	Medium	01/05/2026	30/08/2026	All	Not Started	Amber				01-May-26	30-Aug-26	All				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.13 - DfE Data Reporting requirements	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Build into Processes DfE reporting requirement reagrdinf FHLP roles across partnership	Medium	01/05/2026	30/08/2026	All	Not Started	Amber				01-May-26	30-Aug-26	All				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.6 - Management structure & Supervision of role agreed	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Establish management & supervision structures of FHLP - Clarify when SW oversight is required. Agree supervision arrangements for FHLPs and social workers Define escalation and decision-making routes	Low	01/05/2026	30/06/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green				01-May-26	30-Jun-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)	Milestone	2.2.7 Statutory requirments & alignment to WT23	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Ensure statutory responsibilities are clear & Embed continuous learning and development into supervisions and team routines that enables confident values led practice	Low	01/05/2026	31/05/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green				01-May-26	31-May-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.8 - Escalation Routes	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree escalation and accountability routes	Low	01/05/2026	31/05/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green				01-May-26	31-May-26	Jennie Lowe				

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.9 FHLP identification process agreed	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree criteria for selecting the most suitable lead practitioner Ensure process applies across the Family Help continuum Align process with Section 17 arrangements	Low	01/05/2026	31/05/2026	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber				01-May-26	31-May-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)	Milestone	3.1.8 - Practitioner roles and functions finalised across partnership	MDT T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree how practitioners will function within MDTs, including: Direct family support Front door triage and advice Consultative support to FHLPs Acting as a link to home organisations Align role expectations with: FHLP model Team Around the Family (TAF) processes Document role clarity to support supervision and accountability. Policies and processes updated.	Medium	01/05/2026	TBD	MDT Lead	Not Started	Amber				01-May-26		MDT Lead				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.13 Operating model review	TBD	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Review operating model following approval	High	30/04/2026	31/07/2026	Natasha Moody	Not Started	Green	approval 12th June			30-Apr-26	31-Jul-26	Natasha Moody				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)	Milestone	5.1.3 Triaging arrangements	MDT T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree how contacts are triaged consistently across the system	Medium	30/04/2026	30/06/2026	MDT	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	30-Jun-26	MDT				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.4 Explicit routes to universal and community services	MDT T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define pathways to Family Help, safeguarding and universal services	Medium	30/04/2026	30/06/2026	MDT	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	30-Jun-26	MDT				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.5 Explicit routes clear for schools	MDT T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Defined pathways established these are unclear to some settings and schools	Medium	30/04/2026	30/06/2026	MDT	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	30-Jun-26	MDT				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.4 Agreed location and access points for families (Minimum expectation 5.4)	Milestone	5.1.6 Clear public facing access routes	MDT T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Determine physical and digital access points for families	Medium	30/04/2026	30/06/2026	MDT	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	30-Jun-26	MDT				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)	Milestone	5.1.8 - Staff locations defined	Natasha Moody	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Staffing arrangements in front door confirmed across the partnership for the integrated and ready for mobilisation	Medium	30/04/2026	30/08/2026	Natasha Moody	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	30-Aug-26	Natasha Moody				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.10 - DfE Data reporting requirements	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	DfE Data requirements embedded within changes	Low	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)	Milestone	8.1.5- Vision of FDGM approved	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	8.2.3 FDGM Vision approved	Medium	30/04/2026	12/06/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green	BC being drafted. Approval being sought on 12.06.26			30-Apr-26	12-Jun-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.6 - Offering FGDM at every decision point incldting at the point of reunification	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Ensure FGDM is positioned as a core offer rather than an exception	Medium	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)	Milestone	8.1.7 FGDM offer aligned across MACPT and care pathways	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Identify opportunities to expand the use of FGDM. Agree when FGDM should be routinely considered across: Section 47 enquiries, Child protection planning, Pre-proceedings and reunification	Medium	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)	Milestone	8.1.9 - LCS System ready for implementation	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Family group conferencing workflow updated to reflected changes	Low	30/04/2026	30/06/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	30-Jun-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)	Milestone	3.1.1. - Populations needs assessment completed (Minimum expectation 3.2)	Data Team	Discovery & design	Data team to compile the needs and harms assessment for the county	High	11/11/2025	31/03/2026	Data Team	Done	Blue	Initial draft shared. ISA / DSA's required to gather further data sets from Police & Health to add into N&H's analysis to provide a full assessment of need. 18.03.26 - Phase 2 completed being shared with steering group 19.03.26.			11-Nov-25	31-Mar-26	Data Team				31-Mar-26
Best Start Family Hubs	3. Evidence-based interventions (EBIs) agreed	3. BSFH delivery model includes agreed evidence-based parenting and HLE interventions.	Milestone	3.1 EBIs confirmed for delivery.	Rosie Boardman	Discovery & design	Identify available evidence-based parenting and HLE programmes.• Assess suitability against BSFH guidance.• Agree EBIs to be delivered through BSFH sites.	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	BSIL Group	Done	Blue	HLE & Parenting programmes mapped, parenting group planned for delivery in May. HLE meeting with PEEP team to discuss staff training.			01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	BSIL Group				31-Mar-26
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)		3.1.2 - MDT as is mapping	MDT T&F Group	Discovery & design	As is mapping of MDTs in Shropshire	High	01/02/2026	30/04/2026	Ellie Lloyd	Done	Blue	March - being completed by T&F Group			01-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Ellie Lloyd				30-Apr-26
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.3 FGDM Informed by Risk, Harm and Professional Judgement (Minimum expectation 8.3)		8.3.1 Guidance agreed on using risk and harm information to inform FGDM invitations	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Set out how FHLPs use information about: Safeguarding concerns, Risk and previous harm, Family dynamics, to decide which family members should be invited to FGDM	Low	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.3 FGDM Informed by Risk, Harm and Professional Judgement (Minimum expectation 8.3)		8.3.2 MACPT consultation and advice route for FGDM decisions operational	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Establish MACPT as a local centre of child protection expertise providing consultation on FGDM where safety or complexity is a concern Ensure FHLPs can access MACPT advice prior to FGDM being agreed	Low	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.4 Clear criteria of when FGDM is not appropriate		8.4.1 Criteria for not offering FGDM agreed	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Agree circumstances where FGDM would be unsafe or inappropriate Set this out clearly in line with Working Together and local protocols	High	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.4 Clear criteria of when FGDM is not appropriate		8.4.2 Criteria embedded into local protocol for assessment and support	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Ensure decisions not to offer FGDM are recorded, explained to families and subject to review	High	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.5 family Plans integrated and given weight	Milestone	8.5.1 Integration of FGDM plans into Family Help and CP plans agreed	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define how FGDM plans are incorporated into: Family Help plans, Child protection plans	Medium	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.5 family Plans integrated and given weight		8.5.2 Evidence of FGDM plans informing outcomes and actions	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Ensure FGDM outcomes carry appropriate weight in reviews and decisions Align FGDM documentation with One Assessment / One Plan	Medium	30/04/2026	31/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	Not Started	Amber				30-Apr-26	31-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.10 - Model - management defined	FH T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define management and supervision arrangements.	Low	01/04/2026	01/08/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	11.03.26 - CLT discussion around FHLP management / oversight	Supervision model		01-Apr-26	01-Aug-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.8 - Workforce professional development alignment	IMPACT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Embed continous learning into supervision, team routine and professional developement that enables confident values-led practice	Low	01/04/2026	TBD	IMPACT Board	In Progress	Green	In progress			01-Apr-26		IMPACT Board				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)	Milestone	2.4.3 Workforce development plan agreed	Inclusive People & Practice	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop multi-agency workforce development plan Agree governance, ownership and monitoring Align plan with recruitment and retention strategies	Medium	01/04/2026	01/05/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green	To be developed in May. CSC one completed.			01-Apr-26	01-May-26	Jennie Lowe				
Best Start Family Hubs	4. wider BSFH site model informed	4. Wider BSFH site configuration informed by local intelligence and usage		4. Evidence base for wider site decisions completed.	Charlotte Saywell	Discovery & design	Identify previous and existing Children's Centres.• Map current Family Hub delivery sites.• Collate attendance and usage data to inform configuration.	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Charlotte Saywell	Done	Blue	Mapping in progress. 19.03.26 Draft sent to NM and email to team managers for support with data gaps. Shared with RB.			01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Charlotte Saywell				31-Mar-26
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1Multi-agency Practice Framework -		2.1.4 End to end practice framework defined	Jennie Lowe	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop a partnership practice framework for each of the component aspects of the reforms - end to end system of help, support and protection in line wit National Framework & Working Together	Low	31/03/2026	01/08/2026	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber	SSCP supporting this. Threshodl workshop planned ofr 03.06.26 to align framework and business cases			31-Mar-26	01-Aug-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.2 Co-production and Lived Experience Embedded (Minimum Expectation 7.3)		7.2.1 Mechanism to capture lived experiences agreed	BA Allocation	Discovery & design	Map and Gap the mechanisms to engage children and young people to ensure that there is a clear plan to engage children (universal - specialist)	High	31/03/2026	30/04/2026		In Progress	Green	03.03.26 - As is mapping meeting to discuss scope and allocation to BA. 19.03.26 - meeting to catch up and discuss progress			31-Mar-26	30-Apr-26					
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)	Milestone	3.1.7 Local MDT Structure & locations agreed post model approval (minimum expectation 3.4)	Spaces & places	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Assess existing locality models and estate options. Agree where family hubs can be used as MDT bases. Determine whether teams are: Fully co-located / Partially co-located Networked through virtual arrangements Confirm alignment with accessibility for families.	Medium	16/03/2026	30/05/2026	Victoria Woodford	In Progress	Green	Meeting with VW - 17.03.26 to discuss scope of work. Estates scoping exercise commenced.			16-Mar-26	30-May-26	Victoria Woodford				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.1 - Parental Conflict data	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Ensure that the Parental Conflict data is in place through all assessments.	Low	16/03/2026	31/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				16-Mar-26	31-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.2 - Template designed	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Agree a single family help plan template, embedding statutory practice timescales	Medium	16/03/2026	30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				16-Mar-26	30-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.3 - Outcomes and measures defined	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Define minimum standards for measurable outcomes and determine how progress will be tracked and the frequency of the plan reviews	Medium	16/03/2026	30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				16-Mar-26	30-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.4 - Voice of the child embedded	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	VoC Embedded into plan	Medium	16/03/2026	30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				16-Mar-26	30-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.2.5 - Working together alignment	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Plan is aligned to WT243 and s.17 requirements	Medium	16/03/2026	01/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				16-Mar-26	01-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1.)	Milestone	4.2.6 - Plan Approval	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Family plan approved	Medium	16/03/2026	12/06/2026	DSP's	Not Started	Amber		One family plan		16-Mar-26	12-Jun-26	DSP's				

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
FFP	10. Places & Spaces	10.1 Estates availability		9.2 Sufficency Strategy aligned to workforce plans	Places and Spaces	Discovery & design	Map current estate for future FFP use.	High	16/03/2026	30/04/2026	Victoria Woodford	In Progress	Green				16-Mar-26	30-Apr-26	Victoria Woodford				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.1- Mapping	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Review existing Early Help, CIN and Family Help assessment tools against Working Together principles.	Medium	15/03/2026	30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green	Rapid action team focus			15-Mar-26	30-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.2 Design one assessment	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Agree a single Family Help assessment that has the ability to follow the child and family and aligned suite of tools	Medium	15/03/2026	01/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green	RAT - 09.04.26 - initial discovery meeting to discuss one assessment. One assessment in draft.			15-Mar-26	01-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.3 - Working Together & other assessment criteria alignment	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Build SEND and disability prompts into the assessment, coordinate with other assessments Require consideration of previous interventions and family history Align assessment expectations across Family Help and CIN. Embed statutory timescales into practice guidance Align Family Help assessments with EHC and other assessment processes Use existing assessments to build a full picture	Medium	15/03/2026	30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				15-Mar-26	30-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)		4.1.4 Embed voice of the child	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Embed voice of the child and family into assessment templates Ensure guidance distinguishes adult need from child impact Align with Team Around the Family (TAF) practice	Medium	15/03/2026	30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green				15-Mar-26	30-May-26	Donna Ward				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1.)	Milestone	4.1.6 - Approval	SSCP	Discovery & design	Approval agreed	Medium	15/03/2026	12/06/2026	SSCP	In Progress	Green	Workshop planned, BC's being amended. Threshold, doc being amended for approval on 12.06.26.			15-Mar-26	12-Jun-26	SSCP				
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.2 Co-production and Lived Experience Embedded (Minimum Expectation 7.3)	Milestone	7.2.1 Lived experience engagement approach agreed	BA Allocation	Discovery & design	Map the mechanism to engage those with lived experiences in the design of the reforms	High	03/03/2026	30/04/2026		In Progress	Green	April 26 timescale. 03.03.26 - As is mapping session to discuss the scope of this work and allocation to BA in PMO. 19.03.26 - BA check in booked to discuss scope and progress.			03-Mar-26	30-Apr-26					
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan	Milestone	12.1.1.5 - Formal launch of programme	Comms	Implementation & Delivery	Initial comms distributed and ongoing monthly updates	High	01/03/2026	01/01/2027	Comms Lead	In Progress	Green	Intial Comms launched, Monthly directors update being circulated with transformation updates.	Padlet & Monthly comms.		01-Mar-26	01-Jan-27	Comms Lead				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan		12.1.7 Ongoing comms	Comms	Implementation & Delivery	Local Networking events and opportunities to explore as a multi-agency	Low	01/03/2026	01/07/2026	Comms Lead	Not Started	Amber				01-Mar-26	01-Jul-26	Comms Lead				
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.1 information for families designed and implemented (Minimum expectation 7.1 & 7.2)		7.2.1 Lived experience engagement approach agreed		Discovery & design	Audit all existing information provided to families across Family Help, CIN, S47, MACPT and FGDM	High	01/03/2026			In Progress	Green				01-Mar-26						
FFP	11. Data, Systems & Outcomes	11.1 EHM / LCS	Milestone	11.2 One integrated service reflected in case management system	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Make changes to the system to reflect the single integrated system of support across TFH and CIN, starting at the front door. One plan, one assessment and one review form.	Low	02/02/2026	01/08/2026	Kay Fletcher	Delayed	Amber	Kat scoping the requirements and timescales to achieve go live date. No work completed on system. Options appraisal to be completed by 12.06.26 regarding system access and best option for FFP - EHM / LCS			02-Feb-26	01-Aug-26	Kay Fletcher				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan	Milestone	12.1.1 Communication plan agreed	Charlotte Saywell	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop a communication plan for the Children's Transformation Programme	High	02/02/2026	30/04/2026	Charlotte Saywell	In Progress	Green	Business Case being prepared for January 2026 Partnership Meeting. CS and LP meeting scheduled 03.02.26 to progress this work. 18.03.26 - Comms plan in draft. Awaiting Comms officer appointment	Comms plan		02-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Charlotte Saywell				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan	Milestone	12.1.2 Stakeholder mapping completed	Charlotte Saywell	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Roles and Responsibilities of different partners, roles and how the system works effectively	High	02/02/2026	30/04/2026	Charlotte Saywell	In Progress	Green	In progress with coms plan	Comms plan		02-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Charlotte Saywell				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.1 Programme Communication and delivery plan		12.1.3 SSCP Comminication	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Communication of changes and describe the change of SSCP	Medium	02/02/2026	31/05/2026	Jane Rose	In Progress	Green	meeting with SSCP to plan communication and link into Comms plan			02-Feb-26	31-May-26	Jane Rose				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)	Milestone	2.4.3 Induction agreed	Inclusive People & Practice	Mobilisation & Building readiness	There is a workforce plan that includes a SW induction programme	Medium	02/02/2026	30/04/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green	Draft completed			02-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.3 Practice Framework and Resourcing (Minimum expectatons 6.6, 6.10, 6.12 & 6.13)	Milestone	6.3.3- Approval Practice Framework	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Buisness case to be submitted-practice framework to be included with LSP BC.	Medium	02/02/2026	05/06/2026		In Progress	Green				02-Feb-26	05-Jun-26					
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.2 Co-production and Lived Experience Embedded (Minimum Expectation 7.3)	Milestone	7.2.3 - All material for families across the system is live	IMPACT	Implementation & Delivery	Updated on SC website and other partner platforms.	Low	02/02/2026	01/09/2026	IMPACT	Not Started	Amber				02-Feb-26	01-Sep-26	IMPACT				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.1 Expectations for identifying family networks agreed	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	Define clear expectations for FHLPs to identify and record family networks at the earliest point	High	02/02/2026	22/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				02-Feb-26	22-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)	Milestone	8.1.11- FDGM operationalised	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	FDGM Live - June 2026 -exact date tbc	High	02/02/2026	01/06/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				02-Feb-26	01-Jun-26	Maxine Ellis				
Best Start Family Hubs	5. BSFH data and digital requirements defined	5. Data, digital and evaluation requirements defined to support registration, attendance, impact reporting and assurance.		5. Data and digital requirements signed off.	Data Systems and Outcomes	Discovery & design	Define attendance, reach and impact measures • Identify required data systems and reports.• Identify information governance and data-sharing requirements.• Define expectations for digital and online access	High	01/04/2026	07/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Blue	Data lead identified. Reporting mechinisms to DFE confirmed. Further impact measures being developed with EY team and other teams.			01-Apr-26	07-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.2 Family network identification embedded into assessment and planning	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	Embed family network mapping into assessment and planning tools	High	02/02/2026	22/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				02-Feb-26	22-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.3 The role of Family Networks	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	Support practitioners to understand the role of family networks in safety, support and permanence	High	02/02/2026	22/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				02-Feb-26	22-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.4 FGDM offer aligned across Family Help,	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	Agree when FGDM should be routinely considered across Family Help, Align FGDM processes with Family Help Model	High	02/02/2026	22/05/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green				02-Feb-26	22-May-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.2 Kinship Strategy Developed and Implemented (Minimum expectation 8.1-8.5)		8.2.1 Develop a Kinship Strategy	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	8.1.1 – Draft the Kinship Strategy (define scope, vision and objectives)	High	02/02/2026	31/03/2026	Scott Chapman	In Progress	Green	Partners to identify reps for T&F group. Feb 26 - Draft ready for T&F group			02-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Scott Chapman				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.2 Kinship Strategy Developed and Implemented (Minimum expectation 8.1-8.5)		8.2.2 Stakeholder engagement of Kinship Strategy	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	8.1.2 - Stakeholder engagement and consultation. Update draft strategy and plan	High	02/02/2026	30/04/2026	Maxine Ellis	In Progress	Green	Family Survey live			02-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Maxine Ellis				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.3 – Model - escalation & de-escalation	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Define how escalation and de-escalation happens without service changing or worker	Medium	01/02/2026	25/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	Within BC, timeline extended for BC's	Escalation pathway draft		01-Feb-26	25-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.1.4 –Model meets the needs of the community	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Inclusion needs identified Analysis of how Family Help meets needs across: Pre-birth and infancy, Adolescents, SEND, Minority ethnic families, Children with a parent in custody.	Medium	01/02/2026	25/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green				01-Feb-26	25-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.1.5 – Future Family Help model designed	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	T&F Group - Design a single integrated service for EH and CIN	High	01/02/2026	25/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	Visioning currently ongoing - BC due 30.04.26 to FFP Steering Group. Further amendments being made - ready for threshold workshop. 28.05.26 - final amendments made - draft ready for workshop.	Family Help Model		01-Feb-26	25-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.1.6 - Locality team structure agreed	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Agree number of FH Teams and locality configuration	High	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	Locality area for teams being defined for BC - based on N&H's data	Locality and operating model for FH		01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.9 - Data System Changes for an integrated service	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Update the LCS system to reflect the workforce changes - assessment and plan	Low	01/02/2026	01/08/2026	David Baker	Not Started	Amber	18.03.26 - Workstream discovery meeting - no work has started with the system to date. Linked to Row 34.			01-Feb-26	01-Aug-26	David Baker				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.2.2 – Model gaps assessed	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Gaps and risks addressed	High	01/02/2026	25/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	Within BC	Clear on gaps and risks of model		01-Feb-26	25-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.2.3 - Business case	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	**Write Family Help Operating Model (Business Case)**	High	01/02/2026	25/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	In progress - timeline extended until 22.05.26 - BC in draft alignment occuring across all 4 BC's. Workshop being held to align to threshold doc. Approval being sought 12.06.26.	Business Case		01-Feb-26	25-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.3 Benefits Realisation	Milestone	12.3.2 - Outcomes Framework & KPI's agreed	?	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Determine the KPI's to measure outcomes and ROI for the programme. Define the success measures so that we have a robust measurement and evaluation framework	High	01/02/2026	30/04/2026	Project team	Delayed	Green	Meeting scheduled for 11.02.26 with Data team to explore KPI's and outcomes. Cost savings around Children Exiting Care. Capacity contraints, action not completed.			01-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Project team				
Best Start Family Hubs	6. Best Start in Life plan developed	6. Best Start in Life plan sets out BSFH approach aligned with Families First Partnership and Children's Transformation.		6. BSIL plan drafted and agreed.	Rosie Boardman	Discovery & design	Draft Best Start in Life plan.• Align BSIL plan with FFP, SEND and Children's Transformation priorities.• Secure plan sign-off.	High	01/01/2026	31/03/2026	Rosie Boardman	Done	Blue	Plan published 31.03.26. Ongoing review as part of test and learn approach.			01-Jan-26	31-Mar-26	Rosie Boardman				31-Mar-26
FFP	12. Project set up	12.4 Finances		12.4.5 - Impact and Value	Stephen waters	Discovery & design	Initiate evaluation of the impact and value for money of Stepping Stones, EHAST, and 0 to 5 teams, starting with Donna for EHAST and 0 to 5, and plan to include Maxine for Stepping Stones upon her return.	High	01/02/2026	15/05/2026	Stephen waters	Delayed	Amber	Capacity contraints			01-Feb-26	15-May-26	Stephen waters				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)	Milestone	2.2.1 - FHLP role defined	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Set Vision & develop FH Lead Practitioner Role & Criteria	High	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	timeline extended to 22.05.26			01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.2 - FHLP line mangement vision	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Consider line manager arrangements & SW oversight for FHLP in vision	High	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	to be built into BC vision, mission and operating model			01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)	Milestone	2.2.4 Business case approved	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Business case defining the FHLP role	High	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	In progress			01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Carla Whelan				

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)	Milestone	2.2.5 - FHLP Decision Making authority	Practice & people Workstream	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Define decision making authority of FHLP	High	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Gemma Onions	In Progress	Green	In progress - s.17 protocol -in draft			01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Gemma Onions				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1Multi-agency Practice Framework -	Milestone	2.2.7 - framework embedded & in use	Practice & people Workstream	Implementation & Delivery	Embed framework in supervision and management oversight Align audit and QA activity to the framework Monitor consistency of practice across agencies	Medium	01/02/2026	31/08/2026	Jennie Lowe	Not Started	Amber		Practice Framework for the Partnership		01-Feb-26	31-Aug-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)	Milestone	2.3.5. Workforce Development Plan operational	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Workforce Development plan live	Medium	01/02/2026	01/08/2026	Ellie Lloyd	Not Started	Amber		Workforce Development Plan for partnership		01-Feb-26	01-Aug-26	Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)		3.1.3 - Integration panels	Mel France	Discovery & design	Integration Consultation - review of panel effectiveness	Medium	01/02/2026	TBD	TBD	Not Started	Amber				01-Feb-26		TBD				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)	Milestone	3.1.95 - MDT operational	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Develop a plan to transition teams into locality, co-located teams	Medium	01/02/2026	30/05/2026	Ellie Lloyd	In Progress	Green				01-Feb-26	30-May-26	Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.2 - Needs and Harms assessment	MACPT	Discovery & design	Need & harms Assessment being completed. Develop and Use Local Needs and Harms Profile to inform the design of the MACPT	Medium	28/10/2025	30/04/2026	Data Team	Done	Blue	MACPT modelling underway			28-Oct-25	30-Apr-26	Data Team				30-Apr-26
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1)	Milestone	4.1.11 - Assessment - live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	One assessment is live	Low	01/02/2026	01/09/2026	Data Team	Not Started	Amber		One assessment		01-Feb-26	01-Sep-26	Data Team				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.2 Family Help Plan (Minimum expectation 4.1)	Milestone	4.2.11 Plan live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Family plan Live	Medium	01/02/2026	01/09/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber				01-Feb-26	01-Sep-26	TBD				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1)	Milestone	4.3.5 Lead Practitioner Agreements agreed	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Determine who the leads the assessments	Medium	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	Role of FHLP			01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.3 Practice Framework and Resourcing (Minimum expectations 6.6, 6.10, 6.12 & 6.13)	Milestone	4.3.6 - Practice Framework live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Practice Framework is live	Medium	01/02/2026	30/06/2026	SSCP	In Progress	Green				01-Feb-26	30-Jun-26	SSCP				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.1 As is mapping	MDT T&F Group	Discovery & design	Map current contact and referral routes	High	01/02/2026	30/04/2026	Ellie Lloyd	In Progress	Green				01-Feb-26	30-Apr-26	Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)		5.1.2 Draft model designed	MDT T&F Group	Discovery & design	Draft the front door model - establish the scope, structure and core functions of the front door	High	01/02/2026	22/05/2026	Ellie Lloyd	In Progress	Green	defined within BC			01-Feb-26	22-May-26	Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	5. MDT Operating Model & Integration Across System	5.1 A single Integrated front door for contacts and referrals (Minimum expectation 5.1)	Milestone	5.1.3 - Front Door Plan approved	SSCP	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Business case approved	High	01/02/2026	12/06/2026	Ellie Lloyd	In Progress	Green				01-Feb-26	12-Jun-26	Ellie Lloyd				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.1 - As is mapping of Child Protection	MACPT	Discovery & design	Map the current child protection pathways to define the current situation	Medium	01/02/2026	01/05/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	Draft one completed			01-Feb-26	01-May-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.3 - Core MACPT membership draft	MACPT	Discovery & design	Agree core MACPT membership (SW's incl. LCPPs, Police, Health, Education) with minimum experience and competency criteria	Medium	01/02/2026	05/06/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	MACPT modelling underway. BC's required for 05.0626 - timeline extended.			01-Feb-26	05-Jun-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.4 - Role of LCPP	MACPT	Discovery & design	Define the role of the LCPP	Medium	01/02/2026	05/06/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	04.03.26 - Raised at CLT - we have one but it does not reflect the roles we need. MACPT visioning session, designing this role.			01-Feb-26	05-Jun-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.5 - Wider agency membership confirmed based on harm profile	MACPT	Discovery & design	Map local demographics, harm and demand to identify additional agency involvement (e.g. probation, DA, youth, exploitation)	Medium	01/02/2026	05/06/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	MACPT modelling underway			01-Feb-26	05-Jun-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.6 - MACPT footprint - , number, location, staffing model draft	MACPT	Discovery & design	Determine the number, composition and location of the MACPT	Medium	01/02/2026	05/06/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	Agreed 1 MACPT for Shropshire/. MACPT modelling underway.			01-Feb-26	05-Jun-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)		6.1.7 - Shared MACPT Vision, function and principles agreed	MACPT	Discovery & design	Co-produce shared MACPT Vision, identify, function and practice principles aligned to Working Together and Families First	Medium	01/02/2026	05/06/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	MACPT modelling underway. Alignment to threshold - worskhop scheduled for 27.05.26.			01-Feb-26	05-Jun-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.1 MACPT Model and Workforce defined (Minimum expectation 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)	Milestone	6.1.8 MACPT Model approved	MACPT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Approve model June - approve vision, allocation and transparency	Medium	01/02/2026	12/06/2026	Natalie Arrowsmith	In Progress	Green	threshold alignmnet meeting 27.05.26 - BC required for this, with LSP's meeting w/c 08.06.26			01-Feb-26	12-Jun-26	Natalie Arrowsmith				
FFP	4. Family Help Assessment	4.1 Family Help Assessment (Minimum expectation 4.1)		4.1.7 - Assessment changes built into system	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	LCS / EHM changes required	Low	05/01/2026	30/07/2026	TBD	Not Started	Amber	Capacity is a concern			05-Jan-26	30-Jul-26	TBD				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)		1.1.1 - Current Process mapped - CIN and EH model	BA Allocation	Discovery & design	Map the "as is" for the CIN and EH model, including referrals pathways, handovers and duplication.	High	03/01/2026	22/05/2026	David A	Delayed	Amber	Mapping underway - meeting 19.03.26 as a check in. Capacity issues, will be 3 weeks delayed.	AS is mapping doc		03-Jan-26	22-May-26	David A				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner role (Minimum expectation 2.2 & 2.6)		2.2.3 - Identification, allocation and experience requirements	FH T&F Group	Discovery & design	Design processes to identify and allocate family help lead professionals . Define capacity and experience requirements	High	03/01/2026	22/05/2026	Carla Whelan	In Progress	Green	In progress			03-Jan-26	22-May-26	Carla Whelan				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.1 One Family Help Team (Minimum Expectation 1.1 & 1.4, 1.5)	Milestone	1.1.15 - Model implementation and operating	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery	Launch Family Help team	High	02/01/2026	01/09/2026	BAU	In Progress	Green		Family help team launched		02-Jan-26	01-Sep-26	BAU				
Best Start Family Hubs	7. BSFH sites agreed and ready	7. BSFH sites confirmed and compliant with the national BSFH site definition.	Milestone	7. BSFH pilot site location confirmed.	Rosie Boardman	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Finalise BSFH site locations.• Check each site against national BSFH site definition.• Confirm staffing, access and service coverage at each site.	High	01/01/2026	07/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Green				01-Jan-26	07-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)		3.1.4 - MDT Model - vision, scope & function draft	MDT T&F Group	Discovery & design	Draft the multi-disciplinary model - establish the scope, structure and core functions of the MDT, including the composition of the Family Help team and how they link with community services. Identify which practitioners will: Be embedded in MDTs Provide consultative or virtual input	High	02/01/2026	22/05/2026	MDT Lead	In Progress	Green	March - Vision of MDT being scoped through T&F Group. Timeline extended to add amendemnt following FFP SG on 30.04.26. 22.05.26 to align with BC's meeting on 03.06.26			02-Jan-26	22-May-26	MDT Lead				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)		3.1.5 - MDT Model composition draft	MDT T&F Group	Discovery & design	Agree minimum MDT composition aligned to FFP expectations (family support, social work, SEND, health, police, VCS etc.). Document the MDT operating model and governance route into safeguarding arrangements.	High	02/01/2026	22/05/2026	MDT Lead	In Progress	Green	March - Vision of MDT being scoped through T&F Group			02-Jan-26	22-May-26	MDT Lead				
FFP	3. Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (MDTs)	3.1 -Multi-Agency Disciplinary Family Help teams -(Minimum expectation 3.1)	Milestone	3.1.6 - MDT Model defined and agreed	MDT T&F Group	Discovery & design	Business case defining the model and structure	High	02/01/2026	22/05/2026	MDT Lead	In Progress	Green	Presented on 30.04.26 - comments to be added, new timescale22.05.26.			02-Jan-26	22-May-26	MDT Lead				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.2 - Refreshed threshold & Local Protocols - (Minimum Expectations 1.2 & 1.3)	Milestone	1.2.1 - Threshold principles agreed	SSCP Working Group	Discovery & design	SSCP Working Group designing new threshold document. Review the threshold document to reflect the transformation ambitions.	High	01/01/2026	06/06/2026	Jane Rose	In Progress	Green	Lisa Charles & JR absence Partners need to nominate reps (only Lareps identified) T&F Group - Commence w/c Draft at safeguarding partnership February 2026 delayed. March update - Co-Design Practice Principles with the partnership workforce. Part of threshold doc. Document in draft and ready for sign off. DfE timeline amended end of June. Workshop planned of 03.06.26 to align with BC's			01-Jan-26	06-Jun-26	Jane Rose				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.2 - Refreshed threshold & Local Protocols - (Minimum Expectations 1.2 & 1.3)		1.2.4 Local Protocol updated	SSCP Working Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Update assessment and support protocol Align early help, CIN and safeguarding processes Remove duplication and parallel assessment requirements	High	01/01/2026	12/06/2026	Jane Rose	In Progress	Green	24.03.26 - In draft. Awaiting T&F group BC's and RAT Outputs to finalise. Meeting on 03.06.26 to finalise and seek approval on 12.06.26.			01-Jan-26	12-Jun-26	Jane Rose				
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.2 - Refreshed threshold & Local Protocols - (Minimum Expectations 1.2 & 1.3)		1.2.6 - Partnership Sign off	SSCP Working Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Secure safeguarding partnership approval Agree governance ownership and review arrangements Finalise documentation for publication	High	01/01/2026	12/06/2026	Jane Rose	In Progress	Green	24.03.26 - discussed at board yesterday - not finalised unable to sign off. Virtual sign off agreed. 14.04.26 - timeline amended to align with DfE Deadline and T&F group BC's - sign off in June w/c 08.06.26.			01-Jan-26	12-Jun-26	Jane Rose				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.2 Governance	Milestone	12.2.2 - Governance agreed	Charlotte Saywell	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop internal and external governnace aligned to improvement Board	High	01/01/2026	31/03/2026	Charlotte Saywell	Delayed	Amber	14.01.26 - meeting with PMO to align internal boards. Draft Completed. Awaiting Improvement Board governance to make necessary amendments if required. 04.03.26 - CLT to approve internal governance structure. Neighbourhood workshop held - 09.04.26 governace action for system programmes to have clear reporting. 23.05.26 - FFP steering group stood down - decision by Safeguarding Board.			01-Jan-26	31-Mar-26	Charlotte Saywell				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.2 Governance		12.2.3 - Forward plan	Charlotte Saywell	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop a forward plan detailing key dates for all programmes of work	High	01/01/2026	30/06/2026	Charlotte Saywell	In Progress	Green	In progress. SEND reforms to be built in when finalised			01-Jan-26	30-Jun-26	Charlotte Saywell				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.3 Benefits Realisation		12.3.1 - Outcomes Framework - family voice embedded	IMPACT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Outcomes Framework Defined - integrated family voice	Medium	01/01/2026	30/04/2026	TBD	Delayed	Amber				01-Jan-26	30-Apr-26	TBD				
FFP	11. Data, Systems & Outcomes	11.2 Single View of the Child	Milestone	11.2.1 - Develop a Single View of the Child Platform	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	integrate a range of data and information to develop a household composition of need and information to support key workers to know who else is working with the family.	High	01/12/2025	31/03/2027	Laura Dowbiggin	In Progress	Green	Jo is comiling DSA's for this & the data team are reviewing the data structure requirements and what they already have built from EH Transformation. Digital infrasture being built.			01-Dec-25	31-Mar-27	Laura Dowbiggin				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.3 Multi-agency Workforce Development Plan - (Minimum expectation 2.4)	Milestone	2.4.1 - Workforce capability mapped	Jennie Lowe	Discovery & design	Undertake a skills audit to asses the skills of the partnership workforce (note RPC, DA). Skills Audit to be completed across the partnership	High	02/11/2025	09/05/2026	Jennie Lowe	Delayed	Green	Timeline - Skills audit to be completed in April. Skills audit template in draft ready for teams to complete - Julie Duncan. Being distributed w/c 30.03.26 with a smetime of 24.04.26 for workforce to complete and then a week for Julie to analyse. Update - delayed not being distributed until SM has agreed. SM approved and Skills audit distributed 13.04.26. Staff completion date 30.04.26. JD to analyse findings by 09.05.26. May meeting - partnership audit to be planned. analysis of internal in draft.			22-Nov-25	09-May-26	Jennie Lowe				

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
Best Start Family Hubs	8. BSFH service offer mobilised	8. BSFH services prepared and delivery-ready across all sites.	Milestone	8. Services ready for go-live.	Rosie Boardman	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Prepare parenting, HLE, perinatal MH, infant feeding and additional needs services for delivery.• Confirm operational delivery arrangements for EBIs.• Confirm referral and access routes into hub.	High	20/03/2026	07/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Amber				20-Mar-26	07-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.2 Governance		12.2.4 - Ownership	SSCP	Implementation & Delivery	Ensure that the reforms are owned by and implemented by the partnership	High	29/10/2025	01/09/2026	Natasha Moody	In Progress	Green				29-Oct-25	01-Sep-26	Natasha Moody				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.5 Exit arrangements	Milestone	12.5.1 - clear transition plan to BAU		Implementation & Delivery	Define the exit arrangements for the governance so that we are clear about when the additional project structure can stop and how we transition into BAU	Low	29/10/2025	30/05/2026	Tactical Delivery Group	In Progress	Green	March 26 - Conversation started with SSCP	Transition plan		29-Oct-25	30-May-26	Tactical Delivery Group				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1Multi-agency Practice Framework -	Milestone	2.1.2 Aligned to National Framework	Jennie Lowe	Discovery & design	align to National Outcomes Framework	Medium	29/10/2025	30/06/2026	Jennie Lowe	In Progress	Green				29-Oct-25	30-Jun-26	Jennie Lowe				
FFP	2. Establish Family Help Lead Practitioner Role	2.1Multi-agency Practice Framework -	Milestone	2.1.3 Partnership Endorsement	Jennie Lowe	Discovery & design	Secure multi-agency endorsement	High	29/10/2025	12/06/2026	SSCP	In Progress	Green	Deadline extended to12.06.26 Being discussed at DSP meeting 12.06.26 for endorsement			29-Oct-25	12-Jun-26	SSCP				
FFP	6 Multi-agency child protection teams	6.3 Practice Framework and Resourcing (Minimum expectatons 6.6, 6.10, 6.12 & 6.13)		6.3.2 - align practice framework to FH & working Together	Jennie Lowe	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop a partnership practice framework for each of the component aspects of the reforms - end to end system of help, support and protection in line wit National Framework & Working Together	Low	29/10/2025	12/06/2026	SSCP	In Progress	Green	SSCP including this in Threshold doc. - blended practice model			29-Oct-25	12-Jun-26	SSCP				
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.6 Consistent data Sharing & Information Flow	Milestone	7.6.1 Data-sharing arrangements confirmed	Jo Cox	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Establish the information sharing agreements required to secure effective information sharing	High	29/10/2025	13/02/26	Jo Cox	Delayed	Amber	02.03.26 - Jo progressing the DSA's with police & health. 18.03.26 - Health meeting held - 13.03.26 health clarifying who holds the data required. Jo to then approach each agency for signed DSA's. Ellie to approach GP's / PCN's.	ISA's and DSA's		29-Oct-25	13-Feb-26	Jo Cox				
FFP	12. Project set up	12.2 Governance	Milestone	12.2.1 - Leadership Commitment	Natasha Moody	Discovery & design	Seek leadership buy in and support for the change programme (internal and within the partnership)to secure the right support and for them to champion the change.	High	28/10/2025	31/03/2026	Natasha Moody	Delayed	Amber	In progress - Attended - Scrutiny 14 January 2026 - Health and Wellbeing Board 22.01.26 - Safeguarding Partnership December, February - Ambitions Board January 2026 - Lead Safeguarding Partners 05.02.26 - Cabinet 12.06.26			28-Oct-25	31-Mar-26	Natasha Moody				
FFP	9. Placement Sufficiency	9.1 Sufficiency Strategy and plan to be published		9.1 - Develop a Sufficency Strategy & plan that aligns to workforce plans	Commissioning Team	Discovery & design	9.1.1 - Draft the Sufficency Strategy (define scope, vision and objectives)	High	01/10/2025	31/01/2026	Allan Potter	In Progress	Amber	Being created - initial draft			01-Oct-25	31-Jan-26	Allan Potter				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.1 Family Help Network Identified and Engaged (minimum expectation 8.1)		8.1.8 FGDM offer mapped	FGDM T&F Group	Discovery & design	Assess the current use of FGDM,	High		01/12/2025	Jo Cox	Done	Blue	Completed				01-Dec-25	Jo Cox			01-Dec-26
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.3 Family Help Strategy		1.3.1 Draft FH Strategy		Discovery & design	Draft FH Strategy - engage with workforce & partners, families, children & young people	Medium				Not Started	Amber	To be built into the Delivery plan and timecsale generated following approval of BC's								
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.3 Family Help Strategy		1.3.2 Approval		Mobilisation & Building readiness	Align to threshold, FH model and other transformation programmes. Official sign off and approval	Medium				Not Started	Amber									
FFP	1. Family Help Model & Single Integrated Service	1.3 Family Help Strategy	Milestone	1.3.3 Publish and Embed		Implementation & Delivery	publish and embed within team s	Medium				Not Started	Amber									
FFP	11. Data, Systems & Outcomes	11.3 Data Reporting	Milestone	11.3.1 - Automate the data for the submission of the data returns	Data & Insights Team	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Automate the data for the submission of the data returns inc finance requirements	Medium				Not Started	Amber	Awaiting Digital Prioritisation for timescale of delivery								
FFP	11. Data, Systems & Outcomes	11.4 - Information Platforms	Milestone	11.4.1 Website	Data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Website reflects the changes across the services	Medium				Not Started	Amber	Awaiting Digital Prioritisation for timescale of elivery								
FFP	12. Project set up	12.3 Benefits Realisation	Milestone	12.3.3 - Outcomes Framework live	Go Live!	Implementation & Delivery		High				Not Started	Amber									
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.1 information for families designed and implemented (Minimum expectation 7.1 & 7.2)		7.1.2 MACPT Information	IMPACT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Provide clear, accessible information and signpost support for all parents and carers from the point a section 47 enquiry is initiated	Low		01/10/2026		Not Started	Amber					01-Oct-26				
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.2 Co-production and Lived Experience Embedded (Minimum Expectation 7.3)		7.2.1 Lived experience engagement	IMPACT	Discovery & design	Engage parents and carers with lived experience of child protection Target engagement with families from: Areas of high deprivation Diverse and minoritised communities Use feedback to shape content, tone, format and delivery method. Dedicate 4-6 months on Co-Design before implementation	High				In Progress	Amber	IMPACT is currently being reset								
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.2 Co-production and Lived Experience Embedded (Minimum Expectation 7.3)	Milestone	7.2.2 Co-produced improvements embedded into final materials	Jo Cox	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Coproduce a local offer for young people	Medium		01/09/2026		Not Started	Amber					01-Sep-26				
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.5 Child & Young Person Voice Embedded		7.5.1 Evidence of child voice embedded in planning and review	IMPACT	Mobilisation & Building readiness	VoC embedded into plans and assessments	Medium		30/05/2026	Donna Ward	In Progress	Green					30-May-26	Donna Ward			
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.6 Consistent data Sharing & Information Flow		7.6.2 Consistent information formats implemented across agencies	Jo Cox / data Systems and Outcomes	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Redesign of the Local Offer (co-designed with C&F) fix broken links	Low		TBD	TBD	Not Started	Amber						TBD			
FFP	7. Information for Families (Across All T&F Groups)	7.6 Consistent data Sharing & Information Flow	Milestone	7.6.3 - DSA's live	Jo Cox / data Systems and Outcomes	Implementation & Delivery	DSA live and in place	High		TBD		Not Started	Amber									
Best Start Family Hubs	9. BSFH branding and public readiness	9. BSFH sites and materials apply Best Start in Life branding, funding logos and naming conventions.	Milestone	9. Public-facing readiness completed	Rosie Boardman	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Apply BSL branding across all sites and materials.• Ensure use of "Funded by UK Government" logo.• Apply "Best Start Family Hub – [Location]" naming convention.	High	01/09/2026	07/09/2026	Rosie Boardman	In Progress	Amber				01-Sep-26	07-Sep-26	Rosie Boardman				
FFP	8. Family Group Decision-Making / Conferencing (FGDM)	8.2 Kinship Strategy Developed and Implemented (Minimum expectation 8.1-8.5)		8.2.4 Kinship Strategy's Action Plan	FGDM T&F Group	Mobilisation & Building readiness	8.1.2 -Develop the delivery and action plan	Medium		31/03/26	Scott Chapman	In Progress	Green	Draft completed				31-Mar-26	Scott Chapman			
FFP	9. Placement Sufficiency	9.1 Sufficiency Strategy and plan to be published	Milestone	9.1 - Develop a Sufficency Strategy & plan that aligns to workforce plans	Commissioning Team	Mobilisation & Building readiness	9.1.4 - Governance Sign off. Publish Strategy and plan	Medium		01/02/2026		Not Started	Amber					01-Feb-26				
FFP	9. Placement Sufficiency	9.1 Sufficiency Strategy and plan to be published		9.1 - Develop a Sufficency Strategy & plan that aligns to workforce plans	Commissioning Team	Discovery & design	9.1.2 -Develop the delivery and action plan	Medium				Not Started	Amber									
FFP	9. Placement Sufficiency	9.1 Sufficiency Strategy and plan to be published		9.1 - Develop a Sufficency Strategy & plan that aligns to workforce plans	Commissioning Team	Discovery & design	9.1.3 - Stakeholder engagement and consultation. Update draft strategy and plan	Medium				Not Started	Amber									
FFP	9. Placement Sufficiency	9.1 Sufficiency Strategy and plan to be published	Milestone	9.2 Sufficiency Stratgey aligned to workforce plans	Commissioning Team	Mobilisation & Building readiness	9.1.5 - Sufficiency Strategy and Plan which is aligned	Medium				Not Started	Amber									
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Business Case for long-term sustainability prepared and approved		Milestone	Plan long-term sustainability	Culture change & Workforce	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Prepare a Business Case for Sustainability of workforce development beyond pilot	Medium	01/07/2026	31/08/2026	Helena Williams	Not Started	Amber	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Business Case prepared and approved		01-Jul-26	31-Aug-26	Helena Williams				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Workforce Academy established via Joint Training / RYWU		Milestone	Establish Youthwork Academy	Culture change & Workforce	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Work with Joint Training to establish the Youth work Academy as system infratructure - Includes practice standards, supervision and QA, assessor and mentor model, placement governance and testing of pathways and training approaches	High	01/03/2026	30/04/2026	Helena Williams	In Progress	Green	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Workforce Academy established via Joint Training / RYWU		01-Mar-26	30-Apr-26	Helena Williams				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Evaluate findings and report		Milestone	Evaluate findings and report to Cabinet	Culture change & Workforce	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Produce evaluation report and present to Cabinet	Medium	17/03/2026	30/04/2026	Helena Williams	Not Started	Amber	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Evaluation findings reported to Cabinet		17-Mar-26	30-Apr-26	Helena Williams				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Reflection workshop held		Milestone	SLT /Portfolio holder reflections workshop	Culture change & Workforce	Discovery & design	Plan & deliver an SLT and Portfolio holder reflection workshop to apply learning	High	01/02/2026	01/09/2025	Helena Williams	In Progress	Green	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Peer review session delivered		01-Feb-26	01-Sep-25	Helena Williams				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Evaluate and share learning, refine Governance model		Milestone	Evaluate and share learning, refine Governance model	Participation & Engagement	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Capture learning, document sucesses, and develop a toolkit for ongoing participation and governance rollout	Low	01/06/2026	31/08/2026	Rachel Simmons	Not Started	Amber	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Evaluate governance work, develop toolkit		01-Jun-26	31-Aug-26	Rachel Simmons				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Strategic Youth Partnership launched		Milestone	Strategic Youth Partnership	Participation & Engagement	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Create and launch a county-wide partnership linking young people with Cabinet and scrutiny	High	01/03/2026	31/05/2026	Rachel Simmons	In Progress	Green	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Strategic Youth Partnership launched		01-Mar-26	31-May-26	Rachel Simmons				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Establish 2 Local Youth Partnerships initially		Milestone	Establish 2 Local Youth Partnerships initially	Participation & Engagement	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Establish LYPs and integrate youth voice mechanism within both LYP areas	High	01/02/2026	31/03/2026	Rahel Simmons	In Progress	Green	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	LYPs established in two areas with youth voice mechanism set up		01-Feb-26	31-Mar-26	Rahel Simmons				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Youth Democracy Worker in post		Milestone	Recruit Youth Democracy Worker	Participation & Engagement	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Advertise, recruit and start Youth Democracy Worker to lead on participation & engagement themes	High	01/01/2026	31/01/2026	Helena Williams	Done	Blue	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Youth Democracy Worker in post		01-Jan-26	31-Jan-26	Helena Williams				31-Jan-26
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Sustainability and Legacy Planning		Milestone	Sustainability and Legacy Planning	PM & Assurance	Implementation & Delivery	Prepare Business Case and plans for sustaining the youth offer after the pilot has completed.	Low	01/02/2026	31/08/2026	Helena Williams	Not Started	Amber	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Sustainability plan and Business Case. Will become higher priority as the pilot proceeds towards completion.		01-Feb-26	31-Aug-26	Helena Williams				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Sustainability & Investment Plan in place		Milestone	Sustainability & Investment Planning	Youth Infrastructure	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Develop business plan and funding strategy for post-2026.	Low	01/06/2026	31/08/2026	YPF	Not Started	Amber	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	Sustainability plan approved		01-Jun-26	31-Aug-26	YPF				
Local Youth transformation Pilot	Milestone: Launch LYPF as a new charity		Milestone	Recruit Independent Chair and Board, launch LYPF as a new Charity	Youth Infrastructure	Mobilisation & Building readiness	Appoint a multi-agency board with VCSE and young people's representation	High	31/12/2025	30/04/2026	YPF	In Progress	Green	LYTP CPMO Workbook.xlsx	LYPF Chair and Board appointed		31-Dec-25	30-Apr-26	YPF				
SEND & AP	Local SEND Reform Plan submitted		Milestone	Submit Local SEND Reform Plan	TBC	Phase 1	Secure internal approvals and submit Local SEND Reform Plan to DfE and NHS England by end of June 2026 to access/retain reform funding.	High	15/06/2026	30/06/2026	TBC	Not Started	Red		Plan submitted and acknowledged	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	15-Jun-26	30-Jun-26	TBC				

Programme	Programme Key Deliverables	Project Key Deliverable & Programme Minimum Expectations	Project Milestones	Project Tasks	Delivery Forum / Workstream	Phase	Task Descriptions	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Assigned to	Status	BRAG	Progress Against Actions and evidence	Deliverables	Links	Start Date (Calc)	End Date (Calc)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Date Completed
SEND & AP	Experts at Hand live		Milestone	Launch Experts at Hand offer	TBC	Phase 1	Mobilise and launch Experts at Hand across settings, including communications, referral pathways and reporting.	High	01/08/2026	30/09/2026	TBC	Not Started	Amber		EAH service live + access guidance	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	01-Aug-26	30-Sep-26	TBC				
SEND & AP	OAIP published to settings		Milestone	Publish OAIP guidance + comms	TBC	Phase 1	Publish OAIP guidance and supporting comms/briefings to all mainstream settings; confirm expectations and escalation routes.	High	01/01/2027	31/03/2027	TBC	Not Started	Amber		Published OAIP pack + briefings	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	01-Jan-27	31-Mar-27	TBC				
SEND & AP	SENDCO training live		Milestone	Deliver SENDCO training / inclusion CPD rollout	TBC	Phase 1	Deliver SEND and inclusion training programme; ensure SENDCO training is live from September 2026 and tracked.	High	01/09/2026	31/03/2027	TBC	Not Started	Amber		Training delivered + completion stats	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	01-Sep-26	31-Mar-27	TBC				
SEND & AP	Impact evidence (EHCP demand reduction)		Milestone	Evidence impact on EHCP demand	TBC	Phase 2	Deliver evaluation showing improved inclusion and reduced reliance on EHCPs for non-complex needs, using routine performance data and partner assurance.	High	01/04/2027	31/03/2028	TBC	Not Started	Amber		Impact report + trend evidence	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	01-Apr-27	31-Mar-28	TBC				
SEND & AP	System readiness for statutory transition		Milestone	Complete readiness assessment for 2029 transition	TBC	Phase 2	Conduct gap analysis and readiness review against the reformed statutory framework (processes, templates, data, workforce, governance).	High	01/04/2028	31/03/2029	TBC	Not Started	Amber		Readiness assessment + action plan	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	01-Apr-28	31-Mar-29	TBC				
SEND & AP	Reformed assessments go-live		Milestone	Go-live reformed needs assessments	TBC	Phase 3	Operational go-live for new needs assessments under the reformed system (national milestone, Sep 2029).	High	01/09/2029	30/09/2029	TBC	Not Started	Amber		Go-live + early assurance report	https://shropshirecouncil.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/ImPl/Shared%20Documents/Plan%20Development%20-%20Comms%20and%20Engagement/Transformation%20and%20change%20portfolio.pptx	01-Sep-29	30-Sep-29	TBC				

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Appendix X — DRAFT Children's Transformation Outcomes Scorecard

How to use: Populate the **Shropshire / Statistical neighbours / England** columns with the latest values. Benchmarking sources are the DfE **Children's Social Care Outcomes & Enablers dashboard** and **LAIT**, supplemented by local operational datasets where needed.

Outcome / Measure	Source (Benchmark / Local)	Freq	Shropshire	Stat Neighbours	England	Target / Trajectory	Lead (owner)
1) MY VOICE IS HEARD							
Standard influence question (pulse survey): "**I have opportunities to share my views and I can see how my views influence decisions made about services or support in Shropshire.**" *(% Agree/Strongly agree)*	Local participation pulse (aligned to Outcomes Framework expectations for voice, participation and feedback loops)	6-monthly				↑ year-on-year	Participation / Co-production Lead
"You said, we did" actions delivered *(count + examples)*	Local co-production audit trail (publish and track actions)	Qtr				↑	Programme / Comms Lead
2) I HAVE INDEPENDENCE							
Young people with SEND in EET *(destination measure)*	LAIT (post-16/SEND where applicable) + local destination tracking	Qtr				↑	SEND / Preparation for Adulthood Lead
Care leavers in EET *(17–18 and/or 19–21)*	DfE CSC Outcomes & Enablers dashboard (care leaver outcome indicators)	Qtr/Ann				↑	Care Leavers Lead
3) I AM ACHIEVING							
KS4 Attainment 8 *(headline cohort: CLA or CPPO – choose one and keep consistent)*	DfE CSC dashboard (educational attainment domains for CIN/CP/CLA)	Annual				↑	Virtual School Head / Education Lead

Outcome / Measure	Source (Benchmark / Local)	Freq	Shropshire	Stat Neighbours	England	Target / Trajectory	Lead (owner)
Attendance (SEND cohort)	LAIT attendance + local operational dashboard	Term/Qtr				↑	Education / SEND Lead
EYFS GLD / expected level (BSIL impact measure)	Local Early Years dataset; BSIL programme targets in report	Annual				**Target: 77% by 2028; FSM 56%**	Early Years / BSIL Lead
Children supported through mainstream top-ups *(with and without a plan)*	Local inclusion metric (schools/SEND funding support) aligned to inclusive provision ambitions	Mo/Qtr				↑ (inclusive mainstream)	Schools / SEND Lead
4) I AM HEALTHY AND HAPPY							
CYP/Parent-carer self-report improved wellbeing after support *(% improved)*	Local outcome tool / post-intervention review survey (experience + impact) aligned to Outcomes Framework feedback approach	Qtr				↑	Health / Family Help Lead
EP/SLT/OT support without a plan (EaH activity measure)	Local SEND/AP + health service activity (earlier support without waiting for a plan)	Mo/Qtr				↑	SEND / ICB Leads
BSIL hub reach: families engaged in parenting/home learning offer	Local BSIL delivery measures (including digital registration/engagement once implemented)	Qtr				↑	BSIL Lead
5) I AM SUPPORTED							
Independent placement rate *(count and % of EHCP cohort)*	LAIT SEND + local EHCP cohort reporting	Mo/Qtr				↓	SEND Lead

Outcome / Measure	Source (Benchmark / Local)	Freq	Shropshire	Stat Neighbours	England	Target / Trajectory	Lead (owner)
EHCP timeliness *(20-week measure)*	LAIT SEND + local operational reporting	Mo				↑	SEND Lead
Annual Review timeliness	LAIT/local QA route aligned to Outcomes Framework emphasis on timely reviews	Qtr				↑	SEND Lead
Repeat referrals within 12 months	DfE CSC dashboard (access to support / getting help)	Qtr/Ann				↓	Family Help Lead
6) I FEEL SAFE							
% CPP that are second/subsequent plans	DfE CSC dashboard (child safety – general)	Qtr/Ann				↓	Safeguarding Lead
% CPP lasting >2 years	DfE CSC dashboard (child safety – general)	Qtr/Ann				↓	Safeguarding Lead
Average travel time to placement **and % with "excessive travel" >60 minutes**	Local transport/placement data (+ LAIT context where available)	Qtr				↓	SEND / Transport Lead
SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY / ENABLERS (not an outcome)							
CLA rate per 10,000 *(and/or rate starting to be looked after)*	DfE CSC dashboard (CLA rates / flow)	Qtr/Ann				↓	DCS / Finance
% CLA in children's homes / residential *(and count)*	DfE CSC dashboard (placement type indicators)	Qtr/Ann				↓	Placements Lead

Outcome / Measure	Source (Benchmark / Local)	Freq	Shropshire	Stat Neighbours	England	Target / Trajectory	Lead (owner)
Residential care cost pressure: avg weekly cost + total spend (headline)	Local finance monitoring aligned to report's financial challenge context	Mo/Qtr				↓	Finance Lead
High-cost SEND pressure: DSG high needs deficit trajectory + independent placement spend (headline)	Local DSG/finance reporting + LAIT context	Qtr				↓	SEND / Finance

Shropshire: Maturity Matrix Assessment Tab

Pillar 1: Co-production with parents and carers and children and young people
Current RAG: 2 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress

There is clear evidence that co-production with parents and carers has been significantly strengthened in recent years, particularly through the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and targeted improvement activity such as PINS, CAMHS commissioning and work on short breaks provision. Strong frameworks and structures are in place, and the PCF is active, contributes regularly, and has supported the co-production of key elements such as the outcomes framework, with growing engagement from partners; however, practice is not yet consistently embedded across the whole system a recent thematic review identified that children and young people's co-production operationally and strategically needs to be improved. SENDIASS complement PCF co-production by providing impartial systemic insight from casework themes, including recurring barriers affecting SEND Support families, to help inform co-production priorities alongside structured engagement activity. While co-production with children and young people is evident at an individual level in areas such as Shropshire's children and young people's social prescribing service and within Education, Health and Care Plans, there remains an opportunity to further strengthen co-production with children and young people at a strategic, partnership-wide level.

There are positive examples of children and young people becoming involved in specific workstreams, such as the development of the ND workstream animation and emerging youth participation approaches such as Hear by Right and CAMHS STW (BeeU) led engagement, although this is less established and less consistent than parent and carer voice. Outcomes-focused thinking is beginning to shape decision making, with integrated impact assessments and service-specific work demonstrating movement towards outcomes-driven practice, even though this remains variable across services. Shropshire has co-produced and launched a co-production framework, setting out shared principles to support system improvement. The LGA SEND Peer Challenge (Feb 2026) recognised a dedicated Parent Carer Forum that is highly valued by the partnership , but recommended the importance of resetting and strengthening relationships as there were challenges embedding co-production into meaningful change that influences partnership work. A Youth Offer/Youth Transformation lens reinforces the need to use Local Youth Transformation Partnerships (LYTPs) to coordinate children and young people's participation and co-production, sustain engagement through youth work (including with seldom heard groups), and strengthen feedback loops ("you said, we did").

Gaps/Issues to Address

Despite progress, co-production is not yet systematic or consistently meaningful across the partnership. Practice is stronger and more established in education than in health and social care strategic decision making. Contributions are not always clearly linked to demonstrable impact, and feedback loops ("you said, we did") are underdeveloped. Children and young people's voice is not yet consistently embedded and is less well developed than parent and carer participation, with involvement often ad hoc, service-specific, or dependent on individual cases rather than routine, partnership-level structures (including gaps for children without EHCPs and those on SEND Support). In Shropshire SEND, "seldom heard groups" refers to children, young people, and families who are least likely to be included in usual engagement

processes. There is an explicit commitment to improving how these groups are identified and engaged, to ensure meaningful participation in co-production and decision-making; this includes further clarifying the definition and its practical application and ensuring all relevant groups across SEND are appropriately represented. There are some accessibility barriers around meetings including meeting timetabling, lack of clarity around anticipatory duties, and uncertainty about how training needs for partners should be identified and addressed.

Focus Areas for Improvement

- Priority should be given to ensuring what the expectation is in terms of co-production for example where time allows the expectation from the SEND and Inclusion Partnership should be that co-production should be embedded into service developments – this is particularly important from a children and young people's perspective where their views are critical to improving their lives.
- Strengthening feedback mechanisms so that families and children can clearly see how their views influence decisions is essential. This should include strengthening evidence of co-production impact and communicating it more clearly. A shared definition and mapping of underrepresented groups and a more deliberate, inclusive approach to identifying and engaging them needs to be developed.
- Further work is needed to fully embed the outcomes framework as the spine for monitoring, performance management and decision making, supported by measurable impact data over time and triangulated with lived experience and audit evidence – going forward, QAG will drive this work.
- The IMPACT Board provides a mechanism for developing a more coordinated, system-wide approach to CYP participation – including leadership capacity, alignment with Hear by Right, and consistent use of accessible engagement tools – will be critical to moving from emerging and developing practice towards a more mature, sustainable model of co-production.
- Embed a simple mechanism for SENDIASS to share quarterly systemic themes through governance, so recurring casework issues inform co-production priorities and improvement actions alongside PCF intelligence. Create a template and mechanism for feedback so that it will feed directly into the outcomes framework and data dashboard to provide us with both quantitative and qualitative information This will support triangulation of lived experience and strengthens accountability and learning loops.

Support needs

- Clarity from DfE around how we broaden the scope of parent carer engagement within the guidance around working with the named and delegated PCF from Contact.

Pillar 2: Effective system leadership and governance
Current RAG: 2 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress

There is clear evidence that the partnership is actively addressing system leadership and governance through significant review and redesign activity. Improvements have strengthened leadership and governance (particularly from the local authority perspective) over the past two years, including a permanent leadership restructure. SEND and AP governance arrangements, including board membership and quality assurance, are being reset to improve clarity and effectiveness, recognising previous areas for improvement; however, arrangements are not yet consistently understood or operating effectively across the whole system. Leaders across education, health and social care are increasingly engaged in regional and national networks, including regional SEND, AP, commissioning and DCO/DSCO forums, supporting shared learning and early improvement.
The LGA SEND Peer Challenge (Feb 2026) noted strong corporate and political support, with engaged elected members, and highlighted SEND and AP Board co-chairing (DCS and ICB Chief Nursing Officer). It also recommended reviewing Partnership Board membership and reporting lines and developing a single performance dashboard reviewed regularly – this has already been implemented and was commented upon favourably in the recent Thematic Review. Data is being gathered across workstreams and performance information from education, health and social care is available, indicating a growing commitment to evidence-informed decision making, even where this is not yet fully embedded. There is an opportunity to ensure that the Youth Transformation reinforces the importance of connecting LYTP delivery to ensure that SEND children have the ability to be part of decision-making routes. The thematic review also noted the following strengths: Leaders and staff are knowledgeable committed and reflective; education settings report a noticeable improvement; the local offer is well understood by staff; some examples of inclusive and improving practice were identified including support for speech and Language, EBSA , Outshine and training. CAHMS when in place is good; EHCP recovery is being prioritised

Gaps/Issues to Address

Governance arrangements are currently being reviewed and enhanced further and this process is supporting partners to gain clarity on their roles to influence both operational and strategic planning; however, this is not yet fully embedded or consistently understood across the system. Structural change, interim leadership roles, and significant transformation within the ICB have limited stability and collective confidence in decision making. Consultation is ongoing with roles and responsibilities evolving as part of the health restructure. Although data is collected, there is growing evidence that it is used to drive planning, prioritisation and improvement, and there remains a need to shift from the retrospective use of data towards proactive, insight-led decision-making to inform planning and service improvement.

Priorities and Support Needs

- **Key priorities**
  Embed SEND and AP governance arrangements so roles, decision making routes and accountability are clearly understood across the system.
- Strengthen strategic planning cycles and accountability arrangements, including clearer mechanisms for delivering and evidencing impact and co-production and feedback loops at a strategic level so engagement consistently informs decisions (“you said, we did”).
- Develop schools’ understanding of their commissioning roles, and strengthen joint commissioning across partners.
- Shift from retrospective use of data towards proactive, insight-led decision-making to inform planning and service improvement.

- Ensure clarity and consistency of ordinarily available provision (OAP) across the system Strengthen internal specialist support capacity so schools can access timely expertise for assessment, evidence gathering, and implementation of inclusive practice.
- Improve alignment of commissioning and workforce planning to ensure services are sustainable, appropriately resourced, and support inclusion and reintegration pathways.
- Align the data dashboard to the outcomes framework.
- Prioritise timeliness of waiting for any service offer including ECHNAs, Annual Reviews , EY support via the CDC, and health waiting lists
- Further develop the post-16 offer

Support needs
DfE to recognise that Funding calculations are based on demographics and not by demand. Our pace is compromised by not being given the funding we need to meet the demand in the system. As a local area we need understanding that there needs to be flexing the funding arrangements to allow areas to target need.

Pillar 3: Accurate understanding of needs and experiences of children and young people through effective use of quantitative and qualitative data
Current RAG: 2 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress
There is a growing body of quantitative data available across education, health and social care, including EHCP, early years, health contracts and social care data, which provides a developing picture of levels of need and demand. The JSNA contains wide-ranging data and demonstrates technical strength in analysis, and some services routinely use data to inform contract management and service-level decision making. Qualitative data is also being gathered through mechanisms such as multi-agency case audits, lived experience activity, and service-specific engagement. Since the LGA SEND Peer Challenge (Feb 2026) a single dashboard has been developed to bring together multiple data sets for regular Partnership Board and workstream review. The review recognised the SEND JSNA as a strong foundation for strategic planning, performance discussions and commissioning, with an opportunity to make more routine use of this intelligence in governance and decision making.

Gaps/Issues to Address
A significant issue to address is that a large amount of data sits outside of key systems and systems do not integrate/speak to each other. Data is available and there is growing evidence that it is consistently or systematically used to inform strategic planning, commissioning or partnership-level decision making but the lack of an integrated system poses significant challenges. JSNA intelligence, while strong, is not routinely applied to SEND strategic priorities, and qualitative data is often collected but not revisited or used to answer diagnostic questions. Data analysis tends to remain descriptive rather than analytical, with limited ability to triangulate need, provision, lived experience and outcomes or to understand risk across cohorts. There are also challenges with the timeliness and usability of key datasets, particularly EHCP-related data, which restrict the partnership's ability to respond proactively. Significant gaps remain in understanding and tracking outcomes and destinations for young people post-16 and post-18 (including 18–25), limiting the partnership's ability to evaluate impact and plan effectively for preparation for adulthood. Understanding of specialist provision quality, sufficiency and

placement patterns is uneven, with capacity constraints limiting routine quality assurance and oversight, particularly for less complex cases and health provision within education placements.

Priorities and Support Needs

The partnership needs to strengthen how data is actively used to drive strategic decision making, moving from collection and reporting towards deeper analysis that informs commissioning, sufficiency planning and improvement priorities. The Outcomes Framework should be used as the spine for data analysis, performance management and governance discussions, bringing together quantitative data, qualitative lived experience and audit evidence to evaluate impact. Further work and investment is needed to develop the infrastructure required to create and align dashboards and datasets (e.g., LAP data dashboard and statutory service data), and to align reporting to the Outcomes Framework in order to measure impact. Greater alignment is required between quantitative datasets and qualitative intelligence, including lived experience and case reviews, so that data meaningfully shapes understanding of need and service impact. Improving the timeliness and accuracy of EHCP and placement data will be critical. There is also a need to improve systemwide sharing and interpretation of data, including transparency with partners, to support shared planning and decisions.

Key priorities:

- Integration of data systems –this needs fully scoping and costing as a priority. Strengthen how the partnership tracks and understands the experiences of SEND children, young people and families in Shropshire over time (including lived experience feedback loops), and how this intelligence is used alongside quantitative data to shape priorities and improvement.
- Introduce a consistent approach to capturing and reporting family experience by structuring SENDIASS systemic casework themes and feeding them into outcomes monitoring alongside lived experience activity and case audits, to strengthen triangulation with performance data.
- Move from data collection to consistent, strategic use of data to inform commissioning, sufficiency planning and improvement priorities.
- Strengthen triangulation of quantitative data with qualitative intelligence, including lived experience and case audits.
- Improve understanding of placement quality, sufficiency and health provision within education placements.

Support needs

- Support with multiagency auditing to develop an effective MA Audit system that drives QA (currently working with Wakefield on sector led improvement work)

Pillar 4: High quality service delivery at universal, targeted and specialist levels to promote inclusion

Current RAG: 2 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress

There is evidence of growing awareness and improving practice around inclusive provision, particularly in parts of the system supported by targeted programmes such as ELSEC, PINS, APST and early years support services. There is also evidence of excellent inclusive practice in some schools and settings, which provides a strong foundation to build on. SENCO networks and professional forums are more established and better attended, supporting collaboration and shared learning across schools, although reach and consistency varies. The Inclusion Pathway, Integrated Practitioner Panels, Graduated Support Pathway and Early Years Advice and Guidance Forum provide challenge and support for schools and settings, promoting inclusion and the ordinarily available offer (both the local authority and health documents) as well as signposting to targeted support where appropriate. Some schools and services are beginning to gather structured evidence of children and young people's needs and adapt their responses accordingly, with increasing use of specialist advice and training, including complex needs and neurodiversity-related input. The LGA SEND Peer Challenge (Feb 2026) noted strengths in quality assurance and the potential impact of roles that provide supportive challenge to schools (including the EQA function), and described the graduated response and SEND Support offer as increasingly understood and valued by schools and settings. There are also positive developments in family support and early intervention, aligned with the Families First Partnership programme, and early progress in workforce collaboration across education and health, even though this is not yet fully embedded across all areas.

Gaps/Issues to Address

Practice remains variable across schools and settings, with over-reliance on diagnosis in some areas and inconsistent confidence in identifying and meeting needs without medical confirmation. Inclusion is not yet consistently embedded, creating reliance on a small number of inclusive schools and settings and contributing to uneven experiences and outcomes. Understanding of ordinarily available provision is not yet shared or embedded, leading to gaps in provision and inconsistent use of tiered support. Mainstream capacity remains a challenge, with continued reliance on specialist placements and long-term AP, limited reintegration, and uneven application of fair access and turnaround models. Schools' ability to evidence need is constrained by limited internal specialist capacity and reliance on traded or high-cost services, which some schools report being unable to afford. Transition planning, preparation for adulthood, family hub inclusion capacity, and statutory decision making quality assurance are identified as areas where practice is underdeveloped or inconsistent. There are also wider sufficiency challenges across education, health, social care and wraparound provision (including access to appropriate mental health support for SEND children and young people and the knock-on impact on families). The LGA SEND Peer Challenge (Feb 2026) highlighted continuing variability in EHCP quality (also identified in the 2022 inspection) and that current quality assurance arrangements are not yet driving sustained improvement; it also noted an opportunity to further integrate health and children's social care contributions into EHCPs so plans address children's holistic needs, with advice seen as limited in some cases and not clearly linked to educational impact or provision. The peer team noted the Annual Review Recovery Team as a positive step to reduce the annual review backlog, and suggested a stronger focus on key transition points (e.g., Year 9 onwards) to strengthen preparation for adulthood and post-16 planning; it also highlighted the EQA role as a notable strength for inclusion and system navigation, and observed growing impact from the SEND sufficiency programme in building system capacity to meet needs locally.

Where practice is variable, families experience confusion about SEND Support, thresholds, and what should happen without a diagnosis, which contributes to escalation and reduced

confidence in mainstream inclusion. This is also reflected in recurring concerns about annual review follow-through and implementation.
Some parent Carers report issues in social care support and sufficiency (including short breaks, and support for parent carers' wellbeing and mental health), as well as responsiveness to health needs such as mental health support for children and young people who are neurodivergent.

Focus Areas for Improvement

- Embed a shared, systemwide understanding of ordinarily available provision and tiered support, ensuring this is clearly articulated within the local offer and consistently applied across education, health and social care. Strengthening -quality first teaching and universal provision in mainstream settings is critical to reducing reliance on specialist placements and improving parental confidence.
- Develop internal specialist capacity to provide timely and high-quality advice on inclusion to schools and settings.
- Developing mental health services for the SEND community, including neurodivergent children and young people, should be progressed as part of wider inclusion and partnership improvement activity.

- **Key priorities**
  Further evaluate progress and impact to inform continuous system improvement.
- Embed a shared understanding of ordinarily available provision and tiered support across the system.
- Reduce reliance on specialist placements and long-term AP by strengthening mainstream capacity and quality first teaching.
- Improve consistency in statutory decision making, transition planning and preparation for adulthood.
- Improve EHCP timeliness and quality as a core service delivery priority.
- Strengthen shared expectations that all schools and settings take responsibility for inclusion, reducing reliance on a small number of providers.
- Recognise and strengthen the contribution of the voluntary and community sector in inclusive support (including navigator-type functions where used locally).
- ICB to consider utilising SEND QA tool: SEND Quality Assurance Framework

Support Needs
We are working with Wakefield on sufficiency work to understand universal, targeted and specialist capacity to meet outcomes; Support to continue this work.

Pillar 5: Effective Partnership working across education, health and social care
Education providers
Current RAG: 1 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress
Education leaders are increasingly engaged in partnership activity, particularly through shared workstreams, regional networks and joint responses following the WSOA and SEND reinspection. There is multiagency support for ICP and EHCNA panels with schools invited to attend ECHNA panel as well as presenting in person at GSP and ICP. GHSP panel is supported by staff from local Special and AP schools as well as the EP service. There is evidence that

schools and education leaders are contributing to discussions on workforce development, place planning and commissioning, and that collaborative forums are beginning to support more coherent system working. Relationships between education and local authority colleagues have strengthened, supporting a more constructive dialogue around SEND improvement priorities. FFP, BSIL and the SEND Reforms are beginning to be developed as an overarching piece of work within the LA's Children's Services Transformation work but this is not yet finalised or embedded. Our thematic review identified that relationships are improving and noted there was evidence that people were working together to offer multi-agency support.

Gaps/Issues to Address

Partnership engagement across education is inconsistent, with reliance on individual leaders or forums rather than embedded, system-wide processes. There is limited breadth of engagement across mainstream schools, and school-to-school networks are underdeveloped or inconsistent, creating a risk that current activity relies on the goodwill of the same contributors. Early years representation is limited or unclear within partnership governance, and not all education settings feel able to influence strategic planning effectively. Processes for joint place planning, transition planning and improving ordinarily available provision are still developing and are not applied consistently across the education system.

Themes indicate that inconsistency in understanding SEND Support and ordinarily available provision can contribute to avoidable escalation and undermine confidence in mainstream inclusion. A clearer route for systemic learning from family contact to reach education partnership forums would strengthen shared understanding and consistency.

More joint planning and commissioning across health, education and social care at both strategic and individual level could be developed.

Focus Areas for Improvement

Education partners need clearer, more consistent routes to influence strategic decision making-, with improved representation of early years, AP and post-16 settings within governance arrangements. Embedding systemwide processes for joint place planning, transition planning and ordinarily available provision will be critical to reducing reliance on individual forums and strengthening impact. Further work is needed to demonstrate how -education led- partnership activity improves outcomes for children and young people.

- EY representation at strategic level
- Improve access to multiagency discussions about children – strengthen EY advice and guidance forum
- Diversity of attendance and contribution from across health and social care
- Clearer mechanisms for comms, clarified roles and responsibilities of reps on the board and what/how they will communicate with the wider sector.

Key Priorities

Strengthen consistent engagement of education providers in partnership working, moving beyond reliance on individual leaders or forums.
Ensure all education sectors – particularly early years, AP and post-16 – are meaningfully represented in partnership governance and strategic discussions.
Embed joint approaches to place planning, transition planning and improvement of ordinarily available provision, so these are system-wide rather than variable by area or setting.
Embed the MA audit process and ensure learning is fed back to ensure a continuous learning and improvement cycle.

Support needs

Support to challenge schools and MATS that are not meeting their statutory responsibilities

Health Services
Current RAG: 1 Emerging

Strengths/Successes/Progress
Health partners are actively involved in strategic partnership discussions, including participation in regional and sub-regional networks and joint leadership conversations. There are examples of collaborative working across health and education, including contributions to workforce planning discussions and joint responses to improvement activity. The Designated Clinical Officer for SEND (DCO) attends the EHC Needs Assessment (EHCNA) panel and supports the quality assurance of advice. Multi-agency case audit activity provides further evidence of positive joint practice, helping to build trust and shared understanding between health and other partners.
Health provider colleagues have also been invited to participate in EHCNA panels and quality assurance sessions to strengthen understanding of processes and contribute expertise. The DCO provides training and support to the health workforce and is involved in the multi-agency training offer around EHCNAs and Annual Reviews (AR), which includes engagement with parent carers and professionals across the system. In addition, there is involvement from Portage and the Child Development Centre (CDC) within the Early Years Inclusion Panel.

Gaps/Issues to Address
The ICB are going through significant structural changes which may impact on the Partnership's ability to maintain momentum. Workforce strategy discussions are vulnerable to these capacity challenges, and there is limited evidence that joint health involvement consistently translates into improved outcomes across all SEND cohorts. Further analysis is required to understand health provider capacity in meeting the needs of the population, including the extent to which current provision can address demand and reduce long waiting times for assessment and intervention. Health engagement in some areas of place planning and ordinarily available provision remains underdeveloped. The LGA SEND Peer Challenge (Feb 2026) noted recognised gaps in health provision (including Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy) impacting schools and settings, and recommended using forthcoming ICB changes to address known commissioning gaps and strengthen strategic commissioning oversight; it also recommended improving health contributions (and social care contributions) to support planning and delivery, including within the EHCP process.

Focus Areas for Improvement
The focus should be on strengthening sustainable health engagement in partnership priorities, particularly in relation to workforce planning, place planning, and ordinarily available provision. Addressing capacity risks associated with ongoing ICB change will be essential to maintaining continuity and momentum across the system. The partnership should also strengthen how the impact of health involvement is evidenced, ensuring that joint working consistently translates into measurable improvements in outcomes and experiences for children, young people, and families. The ICB need to ensure that the partnership is cited on the CAMHS Transformation 3 Year Plan and signed up to what it entails.

Key Priorities
Develop stronger health input, both operationally and strategically, to support reform planning and delivery.
Strengthen health input into universal, targeted and specialist tiers of support.
Strengthen health provider workforce planning and capacity.
Improve timeliness, consistency, and quality of advice for the EHCP process and contribution to Individual Support Plans.
Strengthen sustainable health engagement in partnership activity, ensuring involvement remains

consistent and resilient despite ongoing ICB change.
Increase health's contribution to joint planning across place planning, transition planning, and ordinarily available provision.
Shift from participation in partnership forums towards clearer evidence of the impact of health involvement on SEND outcomes and lived experiences for children, young people, and families.

Support needs
Increased capacity and stability across the ICB and health providers to sustain delivery of SEND priorities.
Clearer governance, roles, and expectations for health within partnership working.
Stronger focus on evidencing impact and outcomes from health involvement.
Embedding consistent, system-wide co-production in health decision-making.
Coordinated, system-wide workforce planning across health, education, and local authority partners.
Improved demand modelling to inform planning and resource allocation.
Targeted investment to address workforce gaps and reduce waiting times.

Social Care/Local Authority
Current RAG: 2 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress
The local authority has played a central role in strengthening partnership working since the WSOA, with clear evidence of improved collaboration across education, health and social care and the voluntary and community sector, including PACC (PCF) and SENDIASS; a particular highlight is the co-production of training for the social care workforce and social care content on the Local Offer and the social care questionnaire for the EHCNA process. Shared workstreams and joint improvement activity have supported stronger relationships and a more aligned approach to SEND priorities; work around developing the Local Offer and using multiagency task and finish groups has been particularly successful.

Social care is engaged in partnership wide discussions around workforce development, place planning and ordinarily available provision, contributing to a more joined up system response. The DSCO attends EHCNA Panel and there is Early Help support for ICP and EHCNA panel, as well as the EHCP Cease panel; this provides an opportunity to proportionately provide social care information about individual children to support robust decision making. The Neuroaffirming Language Guide was developed across the partnership with specific contributions from the DSCO and there was social care involvement in the development of EHCNA and Annual Review training for SENCOs.

Transition of young people from children to adult's social care is supported by the strong working relationship between the DCT and the PFA team. There is a strong working relationship between the DCO and DSCO. There is a consistent social care presence at commissioning meetings and meaningful contribution to decision making, specifically recommissioning of short breaks.

Gaps/Issues to Address
While training activity has increased, including the development of e-learning, it is not yet systematically linked to a shared workforce strategy or embedded across the wider SEND system, limiting its overall impact.

There is also limited join-up between social care decision making and the SEND partnership: SEND needs greater visibility in Early Help, Family First, community hubs and Best Start for Life activity. In several areas, progress is reliant on a small number of key individuals (including DSCO) creating capacity risks where roles are stretched.

Social care advice into EHCNA/EHCP processes is variable in usefulness when children are not already known to social care, and does not consistently support families who are requesting help to understand routes to support. This limits the system's ability to identify and respond early to unmet need through joined-up planning. The thematic review highlighted there was insufficient evidence of how the social care provisions were supporting children's SEN needs.

Focus Areas for Improvement

The partnership needs to move from individual training initiatives towards a coherent, shared workforce strategy that is clearly aligned to SEND priorities and future demand. Further development is needed to embed SEND specific expertise- at a universal level and to ensure workforce planning is resilient to organisational change. To support the capacity of the DSCO, We need to ensure that the teams, managers and practitioners in social care understand their roles and responsibilities around SEND and are accountable for outcomes. Develop a sufficient and effective SEND offer for early help and Best Start for Life.

Key priorities

Develop alternative workforce model to address DSCO capacity risks. Upskilling of the social care workforce. to make the DSCO role more strategic and less operational.
QA of SC contributions to EHCNAS and EHCPs
Early identification – developing the early Help offer, linking with FFP and BSIL.
Improved understanding across the system of the legislative framework we operate in and how we can best use it to meet the needs of CYP.

Support needs

Strategic workforce planning capacity

Pillar 6: Skilled and organised workforce across local authority, education settings, health and social care

Current RAG: 1 Emerging

Strengths/Successes/Progress

There is growing recognition across the partnership of the importance of workforce stability, skills and training, with evidence of improvement activity underway. Joint and service-specific training offers are developing across education, health and social care, including improved SEND-related training for schools, early years settings and practitioners working with complex needs. Positive examples include co-produced EHCP training within children's social care, joint health education training initiatives, and increasing access to SEND-specific training such as AR, complex needs and neurodiversity-focused offers. The partnership has also developed workforce innovation in response to pressure, including the impact of programmes and roles such as LSEC, PINS, Outshine and assistant EP roles, alongside emerging initiatives such as "experts at hand" and targeted training delivered by specialist practitioners. While these strengths provide a platform for improvement, the reach and consistency of workforce development is variable across services and localities. .

SENDIASS provides a trained, established and impartial advice workforce that is trusted by families for clear, independent guidance, and this offers a stable workforce asset within the wider SEND system. Systemic casework themes can help inform targeted workforce development, supporting the move from ad hoc training towards more needs-led practice improvement.

Gaps/Issues to Address

Workforce challenges remain significant and systemic, with high vacancy rates, reliance on agency staff and staffing instability affecting key services, including EHCP, educational psychology and ICB commissioned provision and other family-facing statutory/impartial advice capacity. Recruitment and retention challenges remain acute, particularly for therapies and for maintaining equitable coverage in a rural geography. Capacity pressures within health services, linked to ICB restructuring, NEED TO BE MONITORED CLOSELY TO UNDERSTAND ANY POTENTIAL MPACT ON developing the workforce offer. Training and supervision are not yet consistent across all services or phases, with gaps particularly evident in post-16 provision and in multi-agency, co-produced training approaches. There is also a risk of losing newly developed expertise and change capacity as transformation funding ends, unless roles and learning are mainstreamed and retained.

Focus Areas for Improvement

The partnership needs to move from individual training initiatives towards a coherent, shared workforce strategy that is clearly aligned to SEND priorities and future demand. Whole system workforce planning (not siloed by agency) should address sufficiency, skills and deployment across education, health and social care, including the realities of rural coverage. Strengthening recruitment and retention, reducing reliance on agency staff and improving workforce stability across key services should be a key focus. Training and supervision must become more consistent, multi-agency and co-produced, ensuring practitioners at all levels have the relational skills, confidence and understanding of lived experience needed to support inclusive practice. Further development is needed to embed SEND-specific expertise at a universal level, particularly for specialist professionals, and to ensure workforce planning is resilient to organisational change, especially within health services. Retention strategies should also protect and mainstream newly developed expertise and change capacity as transformation funding ends.

Key priorities

Health to consider and reference the SEND training assurance framework to enable all health organisations to plan and monitor SEND training requirements across the workforce.

Develop and implement a coherent, shared workforce strategy aligned to SEND priorities and future demand.
Ensure there are mechanisms in place to deliver and monitor workforce training and compliance (links to dashboards).
Improve recruitment, retention and workforce stability across key services.
Ensure training and supervision are consistent, multiagency- and co-produced.

Support needs

Strategic workforce planning capacity across education, health and social care.
Investment in SEND specific- training, particularly post16 and -universal level specialist expertise-.
Mitigation of health workforce risks linked to ICB restructuring.

Pillar 7: Targeted and judicious use of resources including place planning, sufficiency and use of capital

Current RAG: 2 Developing

Strengths/Successes/Progress

There is a growing awareness across the partnership of the need to use resources more strategically and to improve value for money, with some early movement away from purely reactive decision making. There are positive examples of more planned investment, such as the Universal Autism Services contract, and improved transparency around DSG spend, including regular monitoring through Schools Forum and scrutiny arrangements. Performance data is increasingly reviewed to understand demand drivers, with some use of local, regional and benchmarking data to inform initiatives such as hubs, PINS, ELSEC and elements of the Families First Partnership programme. Collaboration between SEND, commissioning, finance and place planning teams is improving, supporting a more joined-up understanding of resource pressures and opportunities, and should continue to develop as a whole-system approach that includes health and social care contributions (including joint strategic commissioning where appropriate). There are also links to regional commissioning activity (for example around independent and non-maintained special school placements), which provides opportunities for shared learning and challenge.

In Sept 2025, the Local Authority added four EHCP Case Officers to strengthen sufficiency planning, improve outcomes and value for money, and increase scrutiny of commissioned and INMSS placements. This has improved annual review attendance, strengthened challenge on impact and cost, supported reviews of high-cost placements with families and settings, enabled moves into LA maintained provision or onward into mainstream/college, improved follow-up on actions, and informed forward place planning; with these posts now permanent within the EHCP Team model, the supporting strategy will be formalised.

A commissioning review of the costs of INMSS placements is underway to ensure value for money and equitable charges across neighbouring authorities. A Contracts Officer attends the West Midlands Pricing Panel to monitor cost increases and provide challenge where costs are increased outside of the panel. Alongside this, SEND commissioning and contracting posts are being confirmed to support, challenge, monitor and negotiate individual commissioning, including post-16 where reconciliation is often needed.

The Education Place Planning Board meets termly, with SEND now embedded in the process as an integral part of discussions. The annual SCAP (School Capacities) return includes five-year forecasts for specialist places (e.g., inclusion bases (currently hubs), special schools, INMSS, and AP (TMBSS)). Over the last two years the LA has developed more strategic oversight of need and capacity across settings, including the quality of provision delivered by schools with hubs.

Gaps/Issues to Address

Sufficiency planning needs to be more rigorous and evidence based, moving form a reactive to a proactive approach that is consistently aligned to long-term strategic priorities. Data quality issues, including limitations in EHCP data (such as accuracy of primary need), restrict the ability to fully understand demand drivers and forecast future pressures. While SEND is prioritised within the JSNA, cost sharing arrangements with health are not embedded, and joint commissioning with the ICB remains challenging, representing a significant system risk. Co-production and wider stakeholder engagement (schools, families and children and young people) is not yet consistently embedded within place planning and sufficiency decision making. DSG pressures continue, with improvement plans in place but not yet demonstrating a sustained or secure financial position.

Focus Areas for Improvement

The partnership needs to strengthen strategic financial planning so that resources are clearly aligned to SEND priorities, sufficiency planning and inclusion goals, rather than responding primarily to immediate pressures. Developing a clearer and shared understanding of unit costs across all provision types, including specialist and alternative provision, will be essential to support more effective commissioning and invest to- save approaches. Improving the quality and use of performance and demand data, particularly EHCP- related information, will enable more accurate forecasting and -decision making. Further work is also required to embed joint commissioning and -cost sharing- arrangements with health, strengthen DSG recovery planning, and ensure that financial decisions demonstrably support improved outcomes and sustainability across the SEND system.

Key priorities

Shift from reactive resource allocation to strategic, invest to save planning aligned with inclusion and sufficiency.

INVESTMENT IN PREVENTATIVE HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES (E.G. EAHO)

Embed co-production and stakeholder engagement (schools, families and children and young people) within place planning and sufficiency decision making.

Strengthen alignment between local and regional commissioning activity to support consistent challenge, value for money and shared learning.

Support needs

Improved financial and performance data to understand demand drivers and forecast pressures.

Stronger integration between SEND, finance, commissioning and place planning.

Support to strengthen DSG recovery planning and long-term financial sustainability.

Narrative Tab

Context

Shropshire's approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND reflects a clearly understood local context and an honest, best-fit self-assessment of partnership maturity. This narrative should be read alongside the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool (Assessment Tab), which identifies Shropshire as an emerging to developing partnership across the pillars of effective collaboration. The local area is characterised by a large rural geography, dispersed communities and variable access to services, creating ongoing challenges around accessibility, workforce capacity and timely access to provision. In response, the partnership has made deliberate system design choices, including the development of SEND hubs linked to mainstream schools, locality-based working and greater use of community and family hubs to reduce barriers for families. Evidence from self-evaluation indicates strengthening partnership working across education, health, care and the voluntary sector, with a shared commitment to inclusion as the default and increasing co-production with parent carers—supported by the Parent Carer Forum (PCF)—and systemic insight from SENDIASS. Co-production with children and young people is developing, with positive examples in specific workstreams, but it is not yet consistently embedded at a strategic, partnership-wide level. Alongside this, the partnership is developing its use of quantitative and qualitative data, with a clear ambition to use the Outcomes Framework as the spine for performance management and decision-making; however, data and lived experience are not yet used consistently across all parts of the system. Continued pressures relating to workforce capacity, health service demand and the timeliness and consistency of statutory processes are shaping priorities, including a sustained focus on strengthening early intervention, embedding inclusive practice through the Local Inclusion Support Offer, expanding local provision and using data and lived experience more systematically to drive improvement.

Where are we now?

Our current position reflects clear strengths in strategic intent, improving collaboration and a shared direction of travel towards greater inclusion, alongside persistent pressures that affect consistency and timeliness. Across the partnership's self-assessment, co-production and system leadership are strengthening but are not yet embedded consistently across all agencies and localities; parent carer voice is more established than children and young people's voice. Understanding of need and experience through data is developing, with increasing availability of evidence but less consistent use to shape commissioning and day-to-day decision-making. There is a shared outcomes-focused ambition and growing alignment between partners, including a clear intent to use the Outcomes Framework as the spine for performance management and governance. However, routines for accountability, feedback loops and system-wide consistency are not yet fully embedded.

There is evidence of progress in the provision mix and local capacity, including a sustained emphasis on supporting children and young people with SEND in mainstream settings and the continued expansion of SEND hubs. This aligns with a developing approach to place-based planning and sufficiency, but demand continues to outstrip supply in key areas, particularly statutory assessment and health services. Pressures on Educational Psychology and Speech and Language Therapy capacity contribute to delays within EHCP processes and constrain early intervention, increasing pressure on schools and families. Continued reliance on

independent special school placements and longer-term alternative provision pathways remains a financial and sustainability challenge, underlining the need for more strategic, invest-to-save commissioning and clearer understanding of unit costs across the provision continuum.

The local area demonstrates growing inclusivity through reduced exclusions, investment in early intervention and outreach, and increasing confidence in inclusive practice across many settings. However, inclusivity is not yet experienced consistently across all phases and localities. Variability remains in the quality and timeliness of support, and ordinarily available provision is not yet shared and embedded system-wide, which contributes to uneven access to the right help at the right time—particularly for children with more complex needs and those awaiting statutory or health-led intervention.

Stakeholder experience reflects this mixed picture. Many schools value the increased support, challenge and clearer expectations, but report uneven access to specialist input and differing confidence in evidencing need without diagnosis. Some families describe improved communication, involvement and transparency, while others continue to experience delay, frustration and uncertainty, with feedback loops not always demonstrating ‘you said, we did’. Health partners recognise progress in collaboration but continue to face workforce and demand constraints that limit consistent delivery at scale. Overall, while ambition and structures are increasingly inclusive, the system has not yet achieved consistently timely, equitable experiences for all children and young people, reinforcing the need for sustained focus on governance clarity, workforce stability, local sufficiency and more systematic use of quantitative and qualitative data to drive improvement.

Where have we come from?

A key positive turning point for Shropshire was the Area SEND inspection and subsequent revisit, which acted as a catalyst for greater system clarity, accountability and shared ownership. This external challenge prompted a renewed focus on honest self-evaluation, governance and partnership working, including co-production activity and the adoption of the refreshed SEND & AP Strategy and Outcomes Framework. These developments marked a shift toward a more coherent, outcomes-focused approach, with clearer priorities and strengthening alignment across education, health and care. Progress has also been supported by targeted investment in inclusion, including the expansion of SEND hubs, developing quality assurance activity and work to reduce exclusions. Co-production with parent carers—through the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and PINS activity—and insight from SENDIASS casework themes have increasingly shaped improvement activity; however, strengths are not yet consistently embedded across all agencies, and children and young people’s participation remains less established and less routine than parent carer voice.

Where do we want to go next?

Key priorities:

- Co-production with a wider group of parent carers and with CYP; close feedback loops
- Timeliness and quality of EHCPs and annual reviews
- Improvement in waiting times

- Improved understanding and implementation of OAIP
- Development of EAHO
- Improvement in sufficiency and place planning for SEND

True inclusion and sustainability in Shropshire would be evidenced by a SEND system in which the majority of children and young people are supported to thrive in their local mainstream settings, with timely access to specialist advice, confident staff and a consistently applied graduated response that prevents unnecessary escalation. To reach this, the partnership will need co-production to be routine and demonstrably influence strategic decisions (not just individual plans), with clearer feedback loops so families and children can see “you said, we did”. The partnership will also use the Outcomes Framework as the spine for performance management and governance, bringing together quantitative data, lived experience and audit evidence to judge impact and to plan proactively. By the end of FY 2027–28, progress toward this ambition will be demonstrated through measurable improvement:

Need to add target metrics here (Rebecca and Eugene – some advice on how many and how aspirational would be really helpful please)

- % EHCPs issued within 20 weeks
- % advice received within agreed timescales
- EHCP quality audit score (outcomes SMART, provision specified, clear link between need–outcome–provision)
- % annual reviews completed on time
- % transitions completed on time (phase transfers/post-16 planning)
- Parent/carer satisfaction with the EHCP process
- Independent placement rate (count and % of EHCP cohort)
- New local capacity delivered vs plan (e.g., Inclusion Bases opened, outreach capacity, specialist places)
- Average distance / travel time to placement (and % with “excessive travel” threshold)
- Cost avoidance / savings delivered from invest-to-save initiatives (cashable + non-cashable)
- Parent/carer experience of placement suitability (pulse survey / feedback theme)
- CYP with SEN not in Education
- CYP with SEN EHE
- % of settings implementing OAP/Graduated Response (self-assessment + validation)
- Demand signals: repeat requests / unresolved needs at SEND Support
- Attendance for SEND cohort (especially SEND Support)
- Ratings for ability to navigate LISO (pulse survey / feedback theme)
- EAHO
- coverage (% settings supported by phase/locality);
- median time to triage and first contact; volume supported and distribution by phase/locality;
- % cases de-escalated/closed without escalation;
- satisfaction from settings and families.

What will it take to get there?

The priority shifts required to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system in Shropshire centre on moving decisively from recovery and reactive practice toward prevention, early intervention and confident mainstream inclusion. This includes reducing reliance on statutory escalation and independent provision by strengthening ordinarily available provision, SEND hubs and local specialist capacity, alongside clearer pathways for targeted support and

reintegration. In parallel, the partnership needs to strengthen system leadership and governance so that decision-making routes, reporting and accountability are clear and stable, and so that self-evaluation is translated into a single, prioritised, measurable delivery plan (to avoid “everything is a priority”). Co-production expectations should be explicit within governance terms of reference and quality assurance arrangements, with stronger feedback loops and clearer evidence of impact. A further critical change is embedding outcomes-led accountability by using the Outcomes Framework as the spine for data analysis, performance management and governance discussions—aligning quantitative data, lived experience and audit evidence—so that partners can plan proactively and evaluate impact rather than activity.

To deliver these changes, Shropshire requires both local and national support. Locally, sustained commitment is needed across education, health, care and the voluntary sector to align commissioning, workforce planning and resources to shared priorities, including continued investment in SEND hubs, workforce development and data-led demand management. This also requires stronger integration between SEND, finance, commissioning and place planning to support more strategic, invest-to-save approaches and improve the partnership’s understanding of unit costs and demand drivers. Nationally, progress depends on action to address structural workforce shortages, alongside stable funding and policy alignment that enables early intervention and inclusion to be prioritised over escalation. Clear, consistent national SEND reform and inspection frameworks are essential to maintaining system momentum and supporting local areas to embed sustainable improvement.

Shropshire’s theory of change is grounded in the principle that earlier, stronger, more inclusive and localised support improves outcomes and reduces long-term demand. By strengthening mainstream provision, improving access to specialist advice at an earlier stage and building confident leadership and accountability across settings, fewer children will require statutory intervention or specialist placements. This enables resources to be reinvested into prevention, workforce capacity and local provision, creating a virtuous cycle of improvement. Co-production, transparent data, consistent quality assurance and joint commissioning are the mechanisms that will keep the partnership focused on impact, lived experience and value for money.

Department for Education

NHS England

The Local SEND Reform Plan

March 2026



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1. Introduction

Document Overview

This document is designed to support local area partnerships develop a **Local SEND Reform Plan** with most sections pertaining to the local area partnership as a whole, in particular, local authorities (LAs) and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), multi-academy trusts (MATs) and schools. Sections that pertain solely to local authorities are clearly marked **Local Authorities**.

While this document addresses local area partnerships, the government's expectation is that the local authority is the system 'convener'; taking the lead to bring together all system partners and ensure they work together to develop and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan. Similarly, the government has clear expectations on all system partners to proactively respond to the local authority's leadership, ensuring they commit resources and fulfil their responsibilities in the partnership. Central government will actively engage where system partners are not responding to the local authority's leadership.

The document contains the following:

1. **The Local SEND Reform Plan Guidance**
   Overview and a practical guide to help local area partnerships complete the plan.

2. **Local SEND Reform Plan Template – Annex A**
   The delivery plan that local area partnerships are expected to complete and return to the Department for Education and NHS England by **19 June 2026.**

3. **Supporting Documents – Annex B**
   A list of key resources and references including links to relevant policy documents, tools, and guidance referenced throughout.

The Local SEND Reform Plan

The 0-25 SEND system has been under significant and prolonged pressure, resulting in a system that is failing too many children and young people. Local services are overstretched, some children's needs are escalating unnecessarily to crisis point, and financial pressures have become unsustainable. Yet within this challenging landscape, many local area partnerships have demonstrated determination and leadership - working very hard to improve their local services and often developing compelling and innovative approaches to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. The government is committed to collaborating with local area partnerships to build on and scale what is working well.

We recognise that system-wide reform and investment is needed to deliver an inclusive and sustainable system that stands the test of time. However, realising this vision will only be possible if every local area takes full responsibility for driving significant improvement in the sustainable delivery of local services. It is imperative that all local areas begin this essential work through robust action plans that demonstrate clear ownership, ambition and accountability. This step change in the delivery of local services cannot be optional; it is a critical expectation of all local area partnerships.

As set out in the Schools White Paper, the government will reform the current SEND system, building on ongoing work to create a system that's rooted in inclusion, where every child and young person receives high-quality support early on and can thrive in their local early years setting, school or college. The government's plan is to ensure opportunity for all by delivering an excellent, inclusive education for every child with a world class education and highly trained workforce. This will be based on an inclusive mainstream education system, with professional support for children and young people that need it, and improved, efficient and effective local delivery, as detailed below.

- **Inclusive mainstream system**: most children and young people with SEND will be supported to achieve and thrive in mainstream education settings through high-quality teaching, inclusive practice, and targeted support. Settings will be equipped to create the right environments, and multidisciplinary professional support services will be commissioned at a group level to address needs efficiently.

- **Specialist support for children that need it**: Specialist settings will continue to play a vital role for children and young people who require a substantially different curriculum or highly individualised approaches that cannot be delivered in mainstream educational settings.

- **Efficient and effective local delivery**: investment in and improvement of local services, including health, care, and wider workforces and resources, will support the delivery of joined-up, place-based provision. Local authorities will work with Integrated Care Boards to commission multi-disciplinary professional support across early years settings, schools and post-16 providers, taking a whole school approach at group level, so children and young people can access the help they need. Improvement of local services eases the pressure on home to school transport, ensuring fewer children and young people with SEND need to travel a long way from home to attend a school or setting. Local authorities will work with all settings to plan and deliver the right physical spaces in mainstream nurseries, schools and colleges.

Delivering lasting change will take collective commitment and sustained effort from all of us; government, local authorities, health partners, early years, MATs, schools and colleges; working together with parents and carers to build the inclusive system our children and young people deserve.

The Local SEND Reform Plan is the key delivery and accountability vehicle for this collaborative commitment, with expectations that it is revised annually as proposed reform is rolled out. We recognise that delivery of the plan will be within the current statutory framework, as such, local area partnerships will not be required to implement any policy that is being consulted on or that will require legislative change.

This first iteration is about building on existing foundations and putting in place the groundwork for reform. It aims to:

- Support central government to understand how the SEND system is being transformed nationally, understand how investment funding is being used to achieve reform priorities, identify innovative practice that can be disseminated and scaled up, and identify where additional support may be required.

- Support local areas - local authorities, health partners, early years, MATs, schools and further education - to develop and deliver a clear pathway toward

an inclusive and sustainable local SEND system that identifies and supports needs **early**, meets needs within the **local** area, is **fair, effective** and **shared**; building on existing work and tailored to the unique context of the local area.

- Support local authorities to unlock investment funding and access support for historic and accruing deficits.

The Local SEND Reform Plan provides a framework that partnerships can use to establish a baseline for their local system and metrics against which transformation progress can be tracked.

The government, working alongside local area leadership, will use the plans - and the insights from regular progress reviews - to understand delivery, support decision-making on investment funding and access to the High Needs Stability Grant, and reflect progress on target metrics. The Department for Education, in particular, will use the plans - incorporating the data returns, local partnership maturity assessments and core local reform plan – to establish a baseline and ongoing monitoring of local area performance.

Throughout this process, DfE officials, health regional leads, SEND and financial advisers will support local area colleagues with access to tailored guidance and emerging insights to help shape and strengthen their plans. The Local Government Association (LGA) will also provide additional system leadership and transformation support through the children's and SEND improvement advisers.

2. Laying the Foundation for Reform

A central focus of this first iteration of the Local SEND Reform Plan is the introduction of the **Experts at Hand (EAH) Offer** and a strengthened approach to ensuring there are sufficient high needs places within mainstream settings, alongside a continued strengthening of effective partnerships and practice. Together, these initiatives aim to build a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system by ensuring mainstream settings, supported by collaborative and maturing partnerships, are equipped with both the right infrastructure and the specialist expertise needed to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The Experts at Hand Offer

The Experts at Hand Offer is a core pillar of the SEND reform programme, designed to strengthen the capability of mainstream education settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND more effectively and inclusively.

Local areas should provide a defined route for mainstream education settings to access specialist support, including from a range of experts with specialisms in education & health, such as in, educational psychology, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy, as well as through outreach from specialist settings. By adding support to shift to increased group-based models and whole setting advice and support, health and education professionals can deliver evidence-based support and intervention with greater impact and value, ensuring, where possible, needs do not escalate. This not only makes better use of a limited workforce but also reduces dependence on costly, individualised provision. There will continue to be children and young people with complex needs that will require individualised and tailored support to meet their needs.

We know that strong practice and effective joint working already exist in many local areas where settings are supported to strengthen inclusive practice. We are keen to ensure that local areas are building on these as they develop and scale up their offer.

Local area partnerships (Local Authorities, ICBs, and system partners including settings) are expected to build their Experts at Hand Offer so that it becomes an ongoing and embedded element of the SEND system.

In order to achieve this, as well as to support a more effective SEND system overall, we need:

- To maintain access and referrals for those children who need specialist referral pathways identified at triage based on educational and clinical need.
- Better joint working across ICBs, LAs, and local system partners including education settings, Best Start Family Hubs, Parent Carer Forums (PCFs), health providers and children and young people.
- More effective joint commissioning between LAs and ICBs, including strategic planning and co-production with children, young people and families and local partners.

- A strong universal offer and fluid layers of support which can be accessed from day one, one of which should include an offer of support for mainstream education settings giving them access to universal and targeted support from services across health and education – the new ‘Experts at Hand’ offer.

The aim of this offer is for mainstream early years settings, MATs, mainstream schools and further education providers to improve across the following areas:

1. Understanding the needs of children and young people in their setting.
2. Putting structures in place to build relationships and co-production with the parent/carer community.
3. Strengthening the baseline level of capacity of settings and staff to meet commonly occurring SEND needs.
4. Reviewing practice regularly to ensure current approaches are the most suitable.
5. Improving knowledge of when and how to draw down additional expertise when required.

This model allows for more efficient deployment of multidisciplinary professionals, promotes broader skill development across settings, and supports a more dynamic and sustainable workforce. It also puts a stronger focus on collaboration between health professionals and education settings, enhancing the role of health professionals in education and enabling them to focus on strategic support to schools and settings as well as system-wide impact.

The offer is designed to build capability within mainstream settings through joint working, empowering education staff to identify and meet a wider range of needs and enabling more children and young people to thrive in inclusive environments; and is expected to be jointly owned and resourced by the Local Authority and Integrated Care Board.

Local areas should consider how they will develop this offer to ensure there is support and appropriate provision across early years, primary, secondary, and further education settings. This should include developing effective models and partnerships for supporting young people with SEND who access further education in a different local area.

Local areas[1] have flexibility in how they commission or employ the multidisciplinary workforce required to deliver the offer. They are encouraged to explore, alongside other options, deployment through special schools and colleges, alternative provision schools, Neighbourhood Health Services, Best Start Family Hubs[2], and Multi-disciplinary Family Help Teams. Local areas will need to work with neighbouring local area partnerships and representatives of the further education sector to consider how best to deliver this service to all colleges and other post-16 providers their young people attend – including those out of their area.

Local systems are expected to begin building this offer using allocated investment funding as a core focus of their delivery in the first year, with the aim of having all Experts at Hand offers established and operational as the new reforms are introduced.

Guidance relating to the Experts at Hand offer is due to be published **in Spring 2026**.

Core minimum requirements

Experts at Hand Offer

Local area partnerships will be expected to clearly and succinctly set out in their plan:

- The delivery approach for this offer and the rationale for why the outlined approach is optimal for the local area. This will include setting out if delivery will be local authority-led, contracted to the ICB, in partnership with another area or through an external partner, and setting out the role of Best Start Family Hubs. Where delivery involves an ICB or external partner, please specify the partnership vehicle (such as an SLA or MOU) and how performance will be assured.

[1] Local areas who have been involved in ELSEC and PINS can use the structures they have in place and the learning they have gained to support the design of their offer.
[2] New guidance to be published 23 March 2026.

- A summary of the partnership approach to agreeing an optimal delivery model including how all system partners were engaged and how the approach was informed by needs-based data.
- How the EAH funding will enhance existing routes to access specialist input, and how the delivery model will be integrated with other services or offers funded separately.
- Proposal to collaboratively recommission alternative provision to align with the 3-tier model and best practice identified through Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces (APST) models.
- Where alternative provision capacity is constrained, whether the LA will contract provision, partner regionally, or share expertise and the route chosen.
- Proposals for commissioning outreach from high-quality specialist providers, where appropriate.
- Proposal for timely access to health and education professionals (e.g., in educational psychology, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy) for early years, schools and colleges based on assessed local need.
- A detailed year 1 implementation plan, including recruitment approach and success metrics (e.g. coverage, scale of support available), and a high-level plan for years 2–3.
- A proposed governance and accountability arrangement, as part of the Local Area Partnership Board, including oversight routes, budgets and funding arrangements, reporting cadence and escalation processes. This should include a single, named LA-based SRO to drive improvement and reform.
- Clear expectations for joint governance, monitoring and shared accountability across education and health partners.
- Proposed approach to settings accessing support which ensures support is not disproportionately accessed by the most proactive schools and settings and includes out of area mainstream further education settings attended by local young people with SEND.

Embedding the Experts at Hand Offer Within a Broader Reform Strategy

Local Authorities

While the Experts at Hand Offer will be a key building block to reform, it is not sufficient on its own to deliver the scale of change required for SEND. Local authorities are encouraged to continue to take a strategic approach to **place planning and capital investment** to ensure inclusive provision is available and accessible. Guidance relating to inclusion bases (formerly SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs) is due to be published in **Spring 2026**.

To support this, we expect that local authorities will:

- Set out how High Needs capital funding will be used to invest in new places and adaptations to the physical environment so that needs of children and young people with SEND are met in alignment with the reform aims of mainstream inclusion.
- Use capital investment to improve the inclusivity of provision in all settings, considering a range of interventions that could better support children and young people with SEND through the physical environment, working with professionals who can advise and support e.g. special school/alternative provision practitioners, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, specialist nurses, mental health practitioners and support workers.
- Identify where inclusion bases (formerly SU/RP/PSUs) in mainstream schools or nurseries, or specialist provision in colleges, currently exist, where additional capacity is needed, and how this varies across planning areas.
- Engage proactively with early years providers, schools, multi-academy trusts and further education providers as well as health providers, to co-develop strategies for enabling more children and young people with SEND to access mainstream education.
- Engage with parent carer forums and children and young people forums to co-produce strategies that work for children and families.
- Ensure that decisions about the location and type of new SEND provision explicitly consider the proximity to where children and young people live and

the implications for transport, recognising this may not always be possible when commissioning SEND provision in large, further education colleges.

- Ensure that all sufficiency and capital investment decisions include an assessment of transport impact, with a focus on reducing long-distance travel and increasing access to local, inclusive settings.

Core minimum requirements

Sufficiency and Place Planning

Local area partnerships will be expected to clearly and succinctly set out in their plan:

- A summary of local sufficiency pressures and how planned place growth addresses demand trends, including EHCP drivers and opportunities to meet need through capacity in mainstream settings.
- How the planned increases in capacity across setting types will reduce reliance on special schools, especially out-of-area placements and independent specialist provision.
- How collaboration between LAs and MATs could be strengthened to identify suitable sites and jointly plan the development of inclusion bases.
- Assurance that proposed inclusion bases in early years settings, schools, and colleges would reflect local demographic need, maintaining high quality standards and clear expectations on type of provision.
- How existing school premises are factored in when planning new inclusion bases, including opportunities created by falling rolls.
- Detailed plans to meet need for specialist places, by increasing capacity in mainstream settings through inclusion bases, and to improve the suitability of the physical environment. This should set out how the investment would align with local need and reduce future pressure. Where plans propose use of high needs capital to create additional special school places, this should clearly explain why need cannot be met in mainstream, including how the investment would align with local need and reduce future pressure.
- Proposals for flexibility to accommodate rurality and local variation, ensuring provision remains viable and context appropriate.

- Evidence that an impact assessment of travel arrangements has been carried out for any capital, inclusion base or special school expansion proposal, demonstrating expected changes to travel distances, journey times, and reliance on out of area placements. Including any explicit travel related mitigations.

Strengthening Effective Partnerships and Practice

Effective collaboration across all system partners, including local authorities, ICBs, health provider organisations, Parent Carer Forums, Best Start Family Hubs, early years settings, mainstream and specialist schools, further education, dioceses, multi-academy trusts (MATs), parents carers, and children and young people with SEND, is essential to delivering meaningful transformation.

A transformed system that works for children and families must include co-production, collaborative partnership working and stakeholder engagement. Strong relationships at system and setting level are central to this.

The success of this transformation depends on shared ownership of decision-making, design and delivery of the local offer, and responsibility by all system partners, particularly local authorities, Integrated Care Boards and education settings.

The department is clear that MATs and schools have clear responsibilities in the development and active deployment of a strong universal offer of support to children and young people with SEND in their settings. They are expected to proactively collaborate with their system partners, including local authorities and ICBs, drawing on up-to-date understanding of the needs of children and young people in their settings to deliver consistent and robust support, particularly for the most commonly occurring and growing areas of need.

In the long term, MATs and schools will work together to pool some funding from their Inclusion Share for a more collaborative, efficient system to meet needs across their group and allow for better sharing of expertise and resources across an area. Local school groupings will need to be actively engaged with the local authority and Integrated Care Board. We will look to local authorities and their partners to shape the formation of groupings in their areas and have an oversight role for

these groups. In designing local systems, local authorities, MATs, schools and other system partners should start to consider how they might integrate school groups into the bigger picture, to work closely with their Experts at Hand and wider reform offer to provide a comprehensive SEND system.

We would like to work with school and local authority partners to understand how these groups are best structured while we move long-term to a system where all schools are part of strong groups. Guidance relating to school groups and pooled funding will be published in due course.

Core minimum requirements

Local area partnerships will be expected to clearly and succinctly set out in their plan:

Effective Practice - Universal Offer

- Proposal to co-develop, and regularly refresh, a partnership-wide universal offer agreement with schools, MATs, early years settings and post-16 providers which will be underpinned by up-to-date, needs-based data and signed off by the local authority, ICB, MAT and school representatives and Parent Carer Forum (PCF). The agreed universal offer should draw on approaches that will be set out in the National Inclusion Standards.
- Evidence of the processes and mechanism through which MATs and PCFs are engaged in the development of the universal offer.
- How early intervention services will be strengthened, with enhanced mainstream support to prevent escalation of need.
- How a strengthened universal offer will support mainstream settings to meet the most commonly occurring and growing areas of need. This should include how well evidenced early intervention approaches focused on speech and language (e.g. ELSEC[3]/NELI[4]), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH), could be deployed.

[3] Early Language Support for Every Child
[4] Nuffield Early Language Intervention

- How a strengthened universal offer and group level specialist support will reduce escalation into out-of-area placements with significant travel-assistance requirements.

Early Years (plans should align with LA Best Start in Life plans)

- Proposal for assessing sufficiency of current level of childcare provision for 0–5s, detailing: (a) availability of early years places; (b) availability of specialist SEND early years places; and (c) any local gaps for children with complex and emerging needs and plan to address these including the role of wider partners such as Best Start Family Hubs.
- Proposal to improve early years identification and intervention strategies, including the role of Best Start Family Hubs.
- Proposal to strengthen transitions from early years to primary school, ensuring effective information flow and timely specialist input.

Post-16

- Proposal to strengthen pathways to adulthood, supporting young people to access education, training, employment and supported internships.
- A clarification of pathways into and out of post-16 settings, informed by consistent information flow and timely, effective specialist support.

Effective Partnerships

- Evidence of effective, shared, partnership leadership and governance across all system partners, with clear and mutually understood accountability arrangements.
- Evidence of formal representation from early years, schools, MATs and further education on partnership boards, with appropriate links to Schools Forums to support coherent engagement across all settings.
- Proposal to underpin partnership working with shared, high-quality data, including joint dashboards and use of a partnership maturity matrix to assess effectiveness.

- How proposed/agreed mechanisms for engaging all schools, early years providers and post-16 providers (including out of area mainstream colleges accessed by local young people with SEND) would support collective responsibility for inclusive practice.
- Proposal to strengthen dispute resolution and decision-making processes so system partners can address issues early and consistently, supported by transparent escalation routes.
- A single named SRO who is part of the leadership team, to provide operational leadership and drive reform across the partnership. The SRO should be a senior local authority official.

Effective Co-production Practices

- Proposal to strengthen co-production arrangements so that parent carer forums are properly resourced and consistently engaged in shaping decision making.
- How the voice of children and young people is captured directly and distinctly from parent voice, with clear evidence of how their views influence decisions.
- How SENDIASS will be used to support parents carers with high quality, independent information and guidance, and how the local area will address variability in service quality where it exists, with reference to the minimum SENDIASS service standards. Please include proposed mitigation to any parental concerns about the perceived independence of SENDIASS within mediation processes.
- Proposal to adopt a minimum co-production benchmark (based on NHSE guidance) and self-assess against it in year one, identifying improvement actions where needed.

Mediation

- A description of local mediation and dispute resolution arrangements, demonstrating how they incorporate the voices of parents and children and young people.

- Proposal to maintain metrics for timeliness, resolution rates and effectiveness to support monitoring and accountability.

Governance

The Local SEND Reform Plan should be a local area partnership plan. The local authority, as the system convener, has an oversight role over the process of preparing, submitting and delivering the overall Local SEND Reform Plan with active participation from all system partners.

Governance arrangement is expected to include active representation from all key partners, including ICBs, PCFs, MATs and schools, with clear roles and accountability. Where local area partnerships involve multiple education partners – including those not always located within their area such as further education colleges – or may commission therapy services from different health providers, they should agree how those institutions/providers can be represented and have a fair voice in decision making.

The local area partnership should agree a single, named Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Local SEND Reform Plan and local area transformation who will be responsible for overseeing SEND improvement and reform for the area. The SRO should be a senior local authority official and part of the local area partnership leadership.

The Local SEND Reform Plan should be discussed, agreed, and signed off at the relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan should be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Services (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer), reflecting the joint statutory responsibilities for SEND across the system.

We expect your Local SEND Reform plan to be aligned with other local strategic plans you are currently developing, including your Best Start local plan. Both plans sit firmly within the government's ambition to improve child development and health

outcomes, and to create a more inclusive, high-quality system of support for all children and young people with SEND. Together, they should provide a coherent local approach to raising outcomes for children, young people and families.

Funding

To deliver our ambition for an inclusive and sustainable SEND system, the Department has secured targeted funding through the Spending Review. Some of this funding will be delivered directly to LAs and ICBs, other funding streams will be delivered to settings and will need to be considered when developing plans.

LA and ICB Funding

Funding	Description
Experts At Hand Offer Funding (for LAs and ICBs)	This funding is provided to support development of an Experts at Hand Offer which provides a defined route for mainstream education settings to access support, including but not limited to Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, and Occupational Therapy. Rather than relying on individual referrals, the offer enables a whole setting approach to group-level support, tailored guidance, and strategic advice, allowing for earlier and more impactful intervention. The funding will be paid via the Local Inclusion Partnership Grant after June 2026. LA allocations and methodology will be published in Spring 2026.
Transformation Funding **Local Authorities**	Transformation funding should support authorities to deliver the necessary changes to their local systems in line with the Schools White Paper while continuing to deliver effective and efficient services to children and young people with SEND through transition. This could be done through expanding capacity and capability within the Local Authority to deliver the required changes. For example, building data and analytical capability to enable effective monitoring of system performance so that decisions on

	delivery are informed by high quality and good use of data or building project management functions that can organise and sequence work, ensuring efficient and effective deployment of resources. The funding will be paid via the Local Inclusion Partnership Grant after June 2026. LA allocations and methodology will be published in Spring 2026.
Best Start Family Hubs Funding **Local Authorities**	This funding supports the rollout of Best Start Family Hubs across England. Best Start Family Hubs will have a children and family services professional specifically trained in working to support inclusion for children with additional needs.
High Needs Capital Funding **Local Authorities**	This funding is provided to support local authorities to provide places for children and young people with SEND, or who require alternative provision (AP). This funding is expected to fund a transformative expansion of inclusion bases, as well as adaptations to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of mainstream settings, reducing the need for pupils to travel a long way to a special school and the costs of LA arranged transport. It can also fund places in special schools for the most complex needs. More details on this funding and local allocations will be published in Spring 2026.
Inclusive Early Years Fund **Local Authorities**	We expect early years settings to use the Inclusive Early Years Fund to strengthen inclusive practices across the whole setting. This may include freeing up staff time to participate in continuing professional development (CPD), collaborate on inclusive planning, or engage in early assessments. The funding can also support activities such as adapting the curriculum, improving the learning environment, or implementing targeted, evidence-based interventions for groups of children. These approaches aim

	to embed inclusive practice into everyday provision, reducing the need for individual applications or formal diagnoses.

Local areas should consider how these funding streams will be used strategically and effectively to support reform priorities, build capacity, and ensure priority outcomes are realised.

Other Inclusion Funding

We are also investing in mainstream settings to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of more children with SEND effectively.

Funding	Description
Inclusive Mainstream Fund (for Schools, and Post-16 settings)	We expect settings to use this funding to identify commonly occurring, predictable needs such as difficulties with reading or emotional regulation and take meaningful steps to improve everyday teaching and universal provision, so that it works well for all from the outset. Settings will also be able to spend the funding on developing more targeted evidenced-based support offers such as transition support or specific group interventions for those who need them, without the need for as many formal assessments or diagnoses.

Structure of the Local SEND Reform Plan

The Plan is structured into five key sections:

1. **Vision** – What the local area partnership is trying to achieve
   The vision and goals for your local system in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper.

2. **Strategy** – How the local area partnership plans to achieve it

Where the local system expects to be in the next 3 years, its theory of change, roadmap for the next 3 years and delivery plan for the first year.

3. **Monitoring and Evaluation** – How the local area partnership will know delivery is on track

   The processes for tracking progress against milestones and outcomes and reporting to decision-makers.

4. **Governance** – What action the local area partnership will take to stay on track

   The governance and processes for monitoring progress and taking action to ensure delivery remains on track.

5. **Central Government Support** – How we can help the local area partnership

   An opportunity to identify practical support from central government that will help you deliver your plan.

The Local SEND Reform Plan is set out in **Annex A**.

3. Submission, Review, and Monitoring Process

Submission

Local areas are expected to submit the first iteration of their Local SEND Reform Plan by **Friday, June 19, 2026**.

A month prior to final local leadership sign-off and formal submission of Local SEND Reform Plans; SEND and financial advisers will be available to review a final draft of local area plans to flag any significant gaps or concerns, and together with health regional leads and DfE officials, will offer intensive support if they believe a plan is at risk of not meeting the minimum quality threshold. Local area partnerships will then have an opportunity to action these concerns prior to formal submission to the department.

Local area leadership are encouraged to self-assess their plans using the ***Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework*** prior to sign-off and submission.

Further guidance on the submission and review process will be shared closer to the submission date.

Review

DfE and NHS England will use the plans to help identify effective, innovative practice and barriers, and identify how to effectively target support through the period of transformation.

The government will use the ***Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework*** to assess the quality of plans and facilitate access to the High Needs Stability Grant for local authorities.

The department will apply a consistent multi-tier assessment and moderation process to ensure that the review and assessment of plans is rigorous, consistent and fair.

DfE officials, health regional SEND leads, SEND and financial advisers will support local area partnerships in reviewing the plans using the ***Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework*** in the first tier.

Assessment tiers will include Regional Directors and independent senior civil servants from across the department. A SEND Delivery Board chaired by Regions Group Director-General, Tim Coulson, with DfE non-executive directors, DfE Performance and Risk Committee members and Sir Kevan Collins, the Secretary of State's delivery advisor in attendance will sign off final ratings and agree recommendations to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State will make the final decision to approve or not to approve a plan with assessment outcomes will be communicated in September

Monitoring

DfE Officials, health regional SEND leads, SEND and financial advisers will support local areas to develop iterative reform plans and, together with the local area

leadership, jointly monitor the implementation of plans as reforms are rolled out.

The purpose of the joint monitoring is to:

i. provide assurance that funding is spent in line with reform priorities and that local area partnerships are working together to co-design and implement key changes to local service delivery, including changes to roles and responsibilities; and
ii. provide assurance that the implementation of reforms is delivering the anticipated changes and outcomes, by rebalancing the system towards early intervention, inclusive education, and sustainable local services.

DfE officials, health regional SEND leads, SEND and financial advisers will join quarterly review meetings with local area partnerships (utilising existing governance forums) to understand implementation progress and provide appropriate support and challenge as needed. Where applicable, these review meetings will be consolidated with other engagement or monitoring meetings from DfE or health regional SEND leads.

Local area leadership and officials are expected to discuss progress against the plan, including:

- Progress against key metrics
- Whether key milestones are on track to be achieved
- Whether risks are being effectively mitigated
- Identifying effective and innovative practice that can be shared; and
- Identifying where additional support may be needed or barriers unblocked.

Local area partnerships are required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against the selected metrics outlined in the accompanying data template. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support local delivery, monitoring, and evaluation.

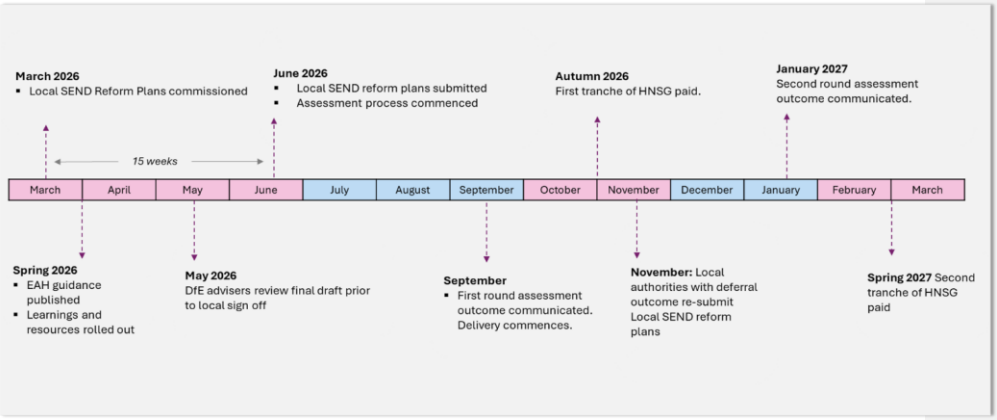
DfE officials and health regional SEND leads will use these data returns and discussions at review meetings, alongside submission of this Local SEND Reform Plan and the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment, as well as Area SEND inspection reports, to assess performance and delivery at the local level. These

assessments and this ongoing monitoring will ensure that support and engagement is best allocated and targeted throughout this period of reform.

High Needs Stability Grant

The government will address long standing SEND financial pressures by covering 90% of local authorities' High Needs-related DSG deficits accrued up to the end of 2025–26 through the High Needs Stability Grant. This grant will be paid subject to each local authority securing the Secretary of State for Education's approval of their local area's Local SEND Reform Plan. Payments will be made in Autumn 2026 for local authorities whose plans are approved. Local authorities whose plans do not meet the threshold for approval will be required to revise their plans to ensure they meet the required threshold, with appropriate support. Local authorities whose plans are subsequently approved will receive the grant payment in Spring 2027. Local authorities will not receive any payments until successful approval of their local area's Local SEND Reform Plan.

Review and payment timeline outlined below.



4. Questions

For any questions relating to this document or the Local SEND Reform Plan more widely, please get in touch with your DfE SEND Lead or contact Implementationsupport.SEND@education.gov.uk

Annex A: Local SEND Reform Plan

Developing a Local SEND Reform Plan is an important first step for local areas to set out how they will lay the foundation for reform, and design an approach tailored to their local context. A shared plan which focuses on co-designing the local approach as system partners and with children, young people and families will help foster collective responsibility for delivering the reforms.

It is critical that all system partners, including health, education and childcare settings, work together to design and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan, under the local authority's leadership. It is also crucial that representative family carers e.g. the local Parent Carer Forum, are involved in the development of the plan.

The expectation is that this plan is discussed, agreed, and signed off at your relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan must be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer). We encourage other colleagues and partners who have contributed to also review and sign-off the plan, particularly early years, school, college and trust leaders.

Name of Local Authority: **Shropshire**

Name of Integrated Care Board: **Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin**

Local SEND Reform Plan SRO: **Natasha Moody**

Signatories

Role	Name	Signature	Email contact	Date
Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO)	Tanya Miles			
Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive	Simon Whitehouse			
Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS)	David Shaw			
Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director	Vanessa Whatley			
Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer)	Duncan Whitfield			

Executive Summary

A brief summary of your local system ‘change story’ – your local context, where you are now, where you want to get to in the next 3 years, how you know you are succeeding and how you will know you have achieved your vision for the next 3 years. Please include a brief qualitative summary. This summary should also include your assessment of current and forecast performance against the headline metrics.

Please structure your ‘change story’ using the following aims:

- *Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships*
- *Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need*
- *Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system*
- *Stabilise finances and improve value for money*

Shropshire’s SEND system serves a large rural county with dispersed communities and rising complexity of need. We are resetting governance, quality assurance and delivery discipline, but start from uneven inclusive practice, stretched specialist capacity (EP, SALT, OT and mental health), EHCP timeliness that has required recovery, and continued reliance on independent and out-of-area placements that increases travel and cost. Over the next three years we will move from reactive escalation to early, local and consistent support so more children and young people thrive in their local early years setting, school or college, with more local specialist provision for those who need it.

In 2026–27 we will embed Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice (OAIP) and the graduated response through action research, a Shropshire Inclusion Quality Mark and a digital Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO) with “human navigators”. Over three years we will standardise thresholds and pathways across localities and align education, health and care around a single delivery plan and dashboard. Success will be seen in stronger OAIP implementation, improved SEND attendance and reduced exclusions, fewer children with SEN not in education/EHE linked to unmet need, and better family experience of finding and accessing support.

We will build confidence through targeted CPD, SENCO/practitioner networks, coaching and supervision. We will mobilise an Experts at Hand Offer (EAHO) using a mixed model: recruiting internal LA specialists to build LA-led capacity while commissioning the ICB and special schools to deliver defined elements at pace. Oversight and quality assurance of EAHO will be led by the EQA team. We will track

EAH reach and timeliness (coverage by phase/locality; time to triage/first contact; % de-escalated) and early impacts such as fewer repeat escalations and avoidable EHCP requests.

We will embed co-production with the Parent Carer Forum, extend the reach of our co-production beyond the designated PCF to engage with other groups parent carers and establish a representative children and young people's forum, with visible "you said, we did" feedback. We will improve statutory processes by sustaining EHCP recovery into business-as-usual performance, securing timely multi-agency advice, improving annual reviews and transitions, and using routine QA sampling to raise quality. Confidence will be evidenced through improved satisfaction, fewer complaints/disputes and clearer pathways.

Our approach is "local first" and invest-to-save: grow mainstream capacity (including inclusion bases), strengthen contracting and unit-cost insight, and reduce reliance on high-cost independent and out-of-area placements and excessive travel. We will track placement mix, travel distance/time, placement suitability and cost avoidance/savings, expecting year-one investment to outpace savings but forecasting improved cost avoidance and reduced growth in independent placements in years two and three as local capacity and earlier intervention embed.

Current performance is mixed: EHCP timeliness is improving but not yet consistent; OAIP implementation varies; health advice and therapy capacity constrains timely support; and independent placement reliance remains a key pressure. Our forecast is year-on-year improvement across the headline measures, supported by quarterly milestones, a single dashboard and routine review through QAG and the Partnership Board. Qualitatively, families and settings will experience clearer routes, faster access to advice, more consistent inclusive practice, fewer crisis points and more children supported close to home.

Section 1 – Vision and Goals

1. **What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?**

   Please set out your goals for your local system. These should be clear, aligned to the vision set out in the Schools White Paper, small in number and measurable. These goals should include clear reference to:

   - Outcomes for children
   - Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system
   - Management of finances to secure value for money

"Shropshire children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. We want them to thrive and live their best life."

Progress will be aligned with the Shropshire Outcomes Framework and will focus on:

1. **Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND (0–25).** Increase the proportion of children thriving in local mainstream provision by strengthening early intervention, embedding ordinarily available provision through the Local Inclusion Support Offer, and expanding local capacity (including Inclusion Bases and adjusting the geographical distribution of some specialist provision). Track: attainment/progress measures, attendance, exclusions, destinations, and timeliness of statutory processes and key health input.
2. **Increasing confidence and lived experience of parents, carers and young people.** Embed meaningful co-production across the partnership—building on strong parent carer engagement and strengthening child and young person voice—so families see consistent 'you said, we did' improvements. Track: satisfaction/experience feedback, complaints themes and resolution times, participation levels (including under-represented groups), and evidence of changes made as a result.
3. **Securing value for money and long-term financial sustainability.** Shift from reactive spend to planned, invest-to-save commissioning by growing local provision, reducing reliance on independent placements and excessive travel, and improving understanding of unit costs across the continuum. Track: spend against budget, placement mix, cost per place/episode, forecast variance, and reinvestment into prevention and workforce capacity.

Section 2 – Strategy

2. **Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years**

A description of what your local system would look like in the next 3 years in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper and set within the context of where you are starting from as a local system.

In particular, as commissioning system partners, you should reflect on and agree what your fully fledged **Experts At Hand Offer** model should be and how this will be deployed via mainstream settings and providers (including those not based in your area – e.g. further education colleges attended by your young people) to build their capacity as well as identify and meet the needs of children and young people earlier and without the need for a statutory assessment for Education, Health and Care.

To help you fully consider the scope and scale of change required, you may find it useful to structure your response using these 4 building blocks of an inclusive system, reflecting on what is working well in your system, what you are most worried about, what needs to change, and how the enablers will help you achieve your 3 year vision.

When summarising where your local area partnership currently is, please include an assessment of where you are in reference to the core minimum requirements above and how you bridge the gap, making reference to and attaching additional documents that provide underlying evidence for your summary.

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production – putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

We have a robust understanding of need across Shropshire and we want to build upon this by creating a systematic understanding of locality needs to help us develop a consistent, accessible and differentiated approach which helps us maximise the impact on children's outcomes. Our 'experts at hand' model will build a core offer within year 1 and by year 3 will have tailored the offer to local needs using data (e.g. service demand, localised needs and harms analysis, outcomes data and specialist staff reporting), evidencing improved outcomes which demonstrate improved inclusive education. The plan supports local sufficiency through place planning, capital investment and smarter commissioning, with a focus on reducing reliance on high-cost independent and out-of-area placements and improving value for money.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
Building blocks *Strengthening inclusion across education settings*	Inclusion in Shropshire is improving but remains uneven, and a shared approach to SEND Support and ordinarily available provision (OAP) is not yet applied consistently. Targeted initiatives—including the Inclusion Pathway, practitioner panels, the Graduated Support Pathway, early years advice and SENCO networks—are helping some settings embed inclusive practice and build confidence. However, inconsistent practice, occasional over-reliance on diagnosis and variable mainstream capacity continue to drive escalation, increasing reliance on specialist placements and long-term alternative provision and weakening reintegration. Education engagement is growing but not yet broad. Immediate priorities are to embed OAP expectations, strengthen quality-first teaching and internal capacity, and improve statutory processes and transitions.	Shropshire's ambition is that inclusion is the norm in every early years setting, school and college, enabling children and young people with additional needs to learn, belong and thrive locally wherever appropriate. A shared countywide model will embed ordinarily available provision and the graduated response through a clear tiered approach so support is provided early without over-reliance on diagnosis. Children needing adjustments will have outcomes-focused support plans that families can understand, backed by a locality-based multidisciplinary team that works across education, health and care and wraps around settings. Stronger inclusive practice and reintegration will reduce escalation, long-term alternative provision and high-cost placements, improving attainment, attendance and belonging.

Access to specialist support and local placements	Demand for specialist support and placements in Shropshire remains high, with reliance on independent/non-maintained provision and some long-term alternative provision as mainstream capacity and consistency drive escalation. The SEND sufficiency programme, stronger place planning and additional EHCP case officers are improving oversight, scrutinising commissioned placements and enabling some moves into local maintained provision. Settings can access specialist challenge through routes such as the Inclusion Pathway, practitioner panels, graduated support and SENCO networks, but provision is variable and constrained by limited internal specialist capacity and affordability. Workforce gaps in Educational Psychology and health services, especially SALT/OT and SEND mental health, increase waits and uneven support. Priorities are growing local capacity, strengthening early intervention, and embedding joint commissioning and cost sharing.	Shropshire's focus will be on delivering support locally and earlier. A "local first, close to home" approach expands mainstream support, inclusion bases and local specialist/AP to reduce out-of-area and high-cost placements. An "Experts at Hand" multidisciplinary offer (EP, SALT, OT, specialist teachers and mental health) provides timely input without escalation and will facilitate earlier identification by upskilling mainstream staff through coaching, modelling and shared tools so needs are recognised and responded to at the earliest point. All settings will receive a core Experts at Hand offer, with any additional capacity agreed and targeted within localities based on need and demand, facilitated by Inclusion Advisory Teachers who coordinate access, provide coaching and signpost to the wider multidisciplinary support. Alongside this, the EAHO will provide enhanced targeted support to a countywide network of inclusion bases, using outreach, coaching and shared practice development to upskill staff and build their capacity to meet a wider range of needs in mainstream schools close to children and young people's homes. Clear pathways and consistent thresholds make decisions transparent and fair. Specialist/AP placements are targeted and time-limited, with stronger reintegration and shared transition responsibility. Aligned place planning and smarter commissioning improve unit-cost insight and cost-sharing, supporting better attendance, wellbeing and outcomes.
System leadership, local partnership collaboration and	SEND/AP leadership and partnership in Shropshire are improving through governance redesign, stronger relationships and growing engagement, supported by corporate and political commitment, workstreams and joint learning. Co-production with parent carers has	Shropshire's SEND/AP enablers are clear governance, shared priorities and coordinated delivery. Stable, trusted governance supports timely decisions, escalation and accountability. Partners work to one time-bound plan, tracked through a single outcomes dashboard used to drive

co-production	strengthened via the Parent Carer Forum and PINS, but it is not yet systematic across education, health and care, and children and young people's voice lacks a consistent mechanism (such as a standing CYP forum) and clear "you said, we did" feedback loops. Education involvement is uneven and early years and school-to-school networking remain underdeveloped; health engagement is constrained by capacity and ICB change. Mediation is effective: Jan–Mar 2026 closed 42 referrals, 33 mediated, 80%+ agreement. Priorities are stabilising governance, one delivery plan and dashboard, embedding co-production and broadening engagement.	improvement. Place-based collaboration connects education, health, social care and the voluntary sector to strengthen prevention and early intervention. Co-production becomes routine through inclusive parent-carer and CYP participation, including a representative CYP Forum and a clear digital offer explaining support and routes to help. We will commit to providing a "human navigator" role for both parent carers and settings so that information, advice and next steps can be accessed quickly and easily, in ways that meet the needs of the user (including accessible formats and supported conversations where needed). Joint commissioning wraps multidisciplinary support around children and settings, while earlier resolution reduces mediation and appeals. Success is measured in improved experience, belonging, attendance and progress.
Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours	Inclusive culture is strong in some Shropshire schools and services but remains inconsistent systemwide, leading to variable family experiences and reduced confidence in mainstream inclusion where expectations and thresholds are unclear. Targeted improvement activity—such as the Inclusion Pathway, integrated panels, graduated support, early years advice forums, SENCO networks and quality assurance challenge—is promoting shared learning and more consistent professional dialogue. However, practice can still depend too heavily on diagnosis, with uneven confidence in delivering SEND Support and variable fair access, turnaround and reintegration. Workforce pressures limit spread. Immediate priorities are clear shared expectations, embedded ordinarily available provision and tiered support, stronger school-to-school learning, consistent QA and co-produced feedback loops.	Shropshire aims for a culture of belonging in every setting, where inclusion is everyone's responsibility and children and young people with SEND feel safe and valued. Staff across phases consistently use evidence-informed, neuroaffirming approaches, making high-quality universal provision and reasonable adjustments routine. Shared language around ordinarily available provision and the graduated response should give families predictable support without needing diagnosis. A confident mainstream response will mean earlier help, fewer exclusions, reduced reliance on long-term AP and specialist placements, and stronger fair access and reintegration. Workforce development will focus on coaching, supervision, peer networks and "experts at hand" support, improving attendance, wellbeing and outcomes.

Enablers	Shropshire has several strong enablers for SEND improvement. Established co-production infrastructure—through an active Parent Carer Forum, PINS, a co-production framework and SENDIASS insight—supports priorities shaped by lived experience. Senior corporate and political commitment, alongside a governance reset and board co-chairing, is improving clarity, pace and accountability. Practical multi-agency routes (Inclusion Pathway, practitioner panels, graduated support pathway, early years forum and EHCNA panel input) strengthen navigation and joint decision-making. Quality assurance and supportive challenge provide leverage for consistency. A stronger evidence base (SEND JSNA, performance data, audits) supports outcomes-led management, while professional learning networks, workforce innovation and sufficiency/resource oversight help shift toward sustainable local provision and better value.	Shropshire's key enablers are already in place to accelerate SEND/AP improvement. Strong co-production foundations (Parent Carer Forum, PINS, co-production framework and SENDIASS insight) will be strengthened by establishing a sustainable, accessible Children and Young People (CYP) voice, such as a representative CYP Forum linked into governance with clear "you said, we did" feedback. Governance and leadership momentum—through SEND/AP redesign, leadership stability, elected member engagement and board co-chairing—supports faster, clearer accountability. Existing multi-agency pathways and panels provide a scalable delivery engine. Quality assurance and supportive challenge (including EQA) can drive consistency. A robust analytical base (SEND JSNA, data and a single dashboard) enables outcomes-led tracking, alongside workforce and inclusion practice networks and emerging innovation to support sufficiency and smarter commissioning.
Success measures ***(drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template E.g.*** ***I***	*Baseline* *ndependent placement rate (count and % of EHCP cohort)* *No. of children supported through mainstream top-ups (with/without a plan)* *No. of children supported by EP/SLT/OT without a plan* *Average distance / travel time to placement (and % with "excessive travel" threshold)* *Timeliness – 20 weeks %* *Attendance*	*Target Metrics*

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

shropshire-send-and-ap-strategy-2024-2029-final.pdf

shropshire-send-and-ap-outcomes-framework-2025-final.pdf

3. **What is the local area partnership's strategy for delivering on the above?**

   A brief summary of your local system's theory of change or reform strategy. Reflect on the output of your **Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**, particularly your *Local System 'change story.'*

VISION
"We want Shropshire children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. We want them to thrive and live their best life." The local area's expectation is for our six outcomes to be embedded across all parts of the local SEND and AP system: • My Voice is Heard

- I am supported
- I am achieving
- I feel safe
- I am healthy and happy
- I have independence

Each individual child or young person with SEND will have a plan to support them in achieving the best possible outcomes. Organisations supporting them will have a strategic plan on how they will enable the outcomes for all children and young people with SEND.

INPUTS		
• Clear partnership governance, leadership and delivery	• Robust monitoring of KPIs, Lived Experience, Practice and Management Oversight.	• Transformation Grant
• Shared Practice Standards	• Staffing time and capacity	• Co-Production Framework
ACTIVITIES		
• Develop an accessible digital offer for all stakeholders, complimented by 'human navigators'	• Embedding OAIP across all settings: use of action research and development of best practice examples and case studies.	• Develop and embed ***Shropshire Inclusion Quality Mark*** to develop understanding of what good looks like
• Developing a CPD offer that meets identified local needs	• Developing specialist capacity (internal and commissioned) through the EAH offer and development of locality based Assistive Technology lending libraries	• Further embed co-production through engaging with a wide range Parent Carer groups and developing CYP voice across the 0-25 range.
• Develop tighter sufficiency planning	• Develop SEND aspects of communication strategy with a clear focus on closing feedback loops (you said, we did)	• Rapidly address EHCP and Annual Review timeliness and quality issues
OUTPUTS		
• Workforce Development Plan	• Joint Commissioning Strategy	• Sufficiency Strategy
• Delivery Plan	• Outcomes Plan with aligned KPI reporting	• Experts at Hand Offer
• Multi Agency Audits	• OAP Standards Published	• Improved visibility of the cost of provision.

• CYP 'Forum'	• Accessible digital platform with 'human navigators'	• Established and accessible CPD offer
OUTCOMES		
• More settings provide inclusive provision	• More children's needs are met earlier	• Settings benefit from multi disciplinary support to meet the needs of children.
• Increased confidence across the workforce.	• Local provision for local children	• Reduced costs of provision
• Improved performance	• Improved consistency of practice leading to improved outcomes	• Improved quality of support
• Parent carers and other stakeholders are able to find information and access support more easily – evidence of this	• The voice of CYP is clearly heard and acted upon	• Reduced transport costs

Please upload a completed copy of the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool.

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

5. **What is the local area partnership roadmap for the next 3 years?**

   Reflecting on the broad timescales and expectation for deliverables set out in the Schools White Paper, key documents and core minimum requirements set out in this document, please provide a high-level roadmap for the next 3 years. Please highlight key milestones and a trajectory to the target metrics identified above, including leading indicators.

In the 2026-27 column, in particular, please reference how you plan to meet the core minimum requirements in your narrative, including details and evidence in supporting documents.

You can insert or upload supporting documents including graphics/visuals that illustrate your data trajectory.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Building blocks			

Strengthening inclusion across education settings • OAP expectations are embedded consistently across settings, so families experience predictable support. • Quality-first teaching and internal specialist capacity are strengthened, improving early identification and response.	**Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice (OAIP)**: complete action research with settings and publish refreshed materials with clear expectations and examples (early years–post 16). **Quality and consistency**: agree LA Inclusion 'quality mark' that builds on our Outcomes Framework (what good looks like) and launch a light-touch cycle (audit/peer review/feedback) across pilot settings. **Digital offer**: develop a first iteration of an accessible digital LISO hub (templates, exemplars, signposting, short videos). **Workforce / CPD**: strengthen the CPD offer (blend national DfE content with local priorities) and expand SENCO networks and phase-specific communities of practice. **"Experts at Hand" (EAH) design**: design and recruit to an initial multi-disciplinary wraparound model; agree eligibility, response times and evaluation approach.	**OAIP embedded at scale**: refresh and renew OAIP materials and evidence consistent use across all settings (including phase-specific exemplars and reasonable adjustments). **EAH expansion**: expand the EAH model based on year 1 evaluation (coverage across localities/phases; clearer routes from universal to targeted support). **Assistive Technology Lending Library:** develop locality based libraries for settings to access technology **Strengthen reintegration and fair access**: implement consistent turnaround/reintegration expectations and support packages to reduce long-term AP drift.	**Align OAIP to National Inclusion Standards (anticipated 2029)**: update local standards/LISO to reflect national expectations and codify "inclusion by default". Develop local Inclusion QA tool to support schools and EQAs in evaluating inclusive practice. **Sustained inclusive practice**: demonstrate consistent QA outcomes and a mature peer-learning model across settings. **Impact on outcomes**: evidence improved belonging/attendance, reduced exclusions, reduced long-term AP, and reduced reliance on specialist placements where avoidable. **Assistive Technology Lending Library:** host assistive technology information and advice sessions for families within localities
• Statutory processes and transitions are timely and well coordinated, reducing delays and improving continuity of provision.	Recovery mobilisation; accurate case tracking; surge capacity fully productive; QA embedded early Aged cases removed at pace (no 30–52+ weeks by July; no 21+ weeks by Sept) and throughput sustained. Shift from "project mode" to controlled BAU; quality holds at good+ with 100% QA.	Right-first-time evidence; reduced rework; grip on partner advice timescales Annual Review flow stable (triage reduces unnecessary amendments); performance discipline holds. BAU resilience proven during peak periods; drift remains low.	Continuous improvement cycles reduce repeat delay causes; QA learning loop operating. Workflow optimisation reduces admin drag; escalation rules prevent "stuck" cases. High performance achieved and held; evidence of system grip.

	End-year stabilisation at “good” benchmark (60% timeliness) with backlog controlled and drift prevented.	End-year sustain at 80% timeliness while absorbing growth at a rate of 10 per month.	Sustained ≥90% at year-end with stable operating model and low drift.
Access to specialist support and local placements • Local capacity increases, enabling more children and young people to be supported close to home. • Earlier intervention becomes the norm, reducing escalation in need and demand for high-cost provision. • Joint commissioning and cost sharing are embedded, improving value for money and access to timely support.	**Local sufficiency and place planning refresh**: refine sufficiency forecasting and place planning cycle (Place Planning Board/SCAP), publish a transparent plan and decision principles (co-produced). **Pathways/thresholds**: map and simplify routes to specialist advice and placements (including AP and reintegration), making thresholds and timescales clear for families and settings. **EAH and APST mobilisation**: stand up initial EAH and APST multi-disciplinary offer (EP/therapy/specialist teacher/MH input) focused on preventing escalation. **Commissioning levers**: strengthen contracting and challenge on INMSS placements; improve unit cost understanding and joint cost-sharing conversations with health.	**Local-first delivery**: commission/expand local provision (mainstream with support, hubs/bases, local specialist/AP) in line with the sufficiency plan; reduce out-of-area placements where avoidable. **Consistent decision-making**: implement and quality assure consistent thresholds and panel decisions; publish guidance and case studies so families understand pathways. **EAH expansion**: broaden EAH coverage and embed multi-disciplinary input into settings, with clear escalation/de-escalation steps. **APST expansion** dependent on feedback from Y1 **Smarter commissioning**: embed joint commissioning and cost-sharing arrangements; use unit cost data to support invest-to-save decisions.	**Sustained local sufficiency**: majority of CYP supported close to home with clear, equitable access to local mainstream, hubs/bases and specialist/AP where needed. **Specialist input wrapped around mainstream**: EAH-style offer operates as business-as-usual and is routinely used to prevent escalation. **Value for money and reinvestment**: evidence that reduced high-cost placements and smarter commissioning releases resource to prevention and workforce capacity.
System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production • Governance is stable and clear, enabling timely decisions, escalation and accountability. • Partners deliver a single, prioritised plan tracked through	**Governance stabilisation**: confirm and publish SEND/AP governance model (roles, reporting lines, escalation routes) and embed a routine performance cycle. **Single prioritised delivery plan**: translate self-evaluation into one measurable plan with owners, milestones and risks.	**Governance fully embedded**: governance operates consistently across partners and localities; escalation routes and accountability are understood at frontline level. **Dashboard drives decisions**: use shared measures to target support, hold workstreams to account and evidence impact (not just activity).	**Mature partnership leadership**: stable governance and locality collaboration evidenced through improved outcomes, reduced escalation and consistent delivery across the county. **Co-production as business-as-usual**: co-production is systematic and demonstrably shapes strategy,

a shared performance dashboard that drives improvement. • Co-production is embedded consistently across education, health and care, with clear "you said, we did" feedback. • Engagement broadens across early years, mainstream and specialist settings, strengthening collaboration and shared learning.	**Shared dashboard (v1)**: agree shared measures (outcomes, experience and system flow) and publish a first partnership dashboard (including leading indicators). **Co-production embedded**: set expectations for co-production in governance/workstreams and implement "you said, we did" reporting. CYP **Forum established**: design, recruit and launch a representative CYP Forum (with safeguarding/ consent and accessible participation routes) and agree how it feeds into boards/workstreams. Work with CYP to understand how they want to access information.	**Place-based collaboration**: implement consistent locality arrangements that reach early years, mainstream, special, AP and post-16 and are not reliant on individuals. CYP **Forum influence at scale**: CYP Forum co-produces and tests communications/pathways, quality assures "you said, we did", and enables CYP representation into priority boards/task-and-finish groups. **Development of CYP digital offer** (if identified in Y1 as an ask)	commissioning and service design, with strong "you said, we did" feedback loops. CYP **Forum sustained**: CYP Forum is established, representative and routinely embedded into governance/QA and commissioning decisions; CYP-friendly reporting shows how input changed services.
Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours • Shared expectations are clear and applied consistently across the system. • Ordinarily available provision (OAP) is embedded, with tiered support used as intended. • School-to-school learning is stronger and more routine, spreading effective inclusive practice. • Quality assurance is consistent and drives improvement in delivery and outcomes. • Co-produced feedback loops are established, with clear "you said, we did" responses.	**Shared inclusion expectations**: communicate and reinforce that all settings take responsibility for inclusion; embed a common language for OAP and the graduated response. **Practice development**: develop a coherent workforce offer (coaching, supervision, peer networks) focused on behaviour change and quality-first teaching. **Peer learning**: strengthen school-to-school and cross-phase learning, including early years and post-16. **Lived experience feedback**: use co-production feedback (PCF and emerging CYP voice) to shape inclusion behaviours and trust.	**Culture of belonging at scale**: evidence consistent inclusive behaviours across phases and localities; reasonable adjustments become routine rather than exceptional. **Workforce model embedded**: co-produced workforce offer is implemented countywide, supported by "experts at hand" input and QA. **Reduced escalation**: improved early support leads to fewer exclusions and reduced reliance on long-term AP and avoidable specialist moves.	**Sustained inclusive culture**: inclusion is evidenced through consistent practice, improved belonging and participation, and a stable workforce approach. **Improved outcomes**: improved progress/attainment, attendance and wellbeing for CYP with SEND, with reduced exclusions and reduced long-term AP.
Enablers	**Co-production capacity**: formalise co-production infrastructure and	**Scaled participation and engagement**: CYP Forum and PCF	**Sustainable system infrastructure**: co-production (including CYP Forum)

	mobilise CYP Forum support (link officer, participation budget, comms support). **Data and insight**: build on SEND JSNA to agree the shared dataset and reporting cadence for the dashboard (including lived experience and system flow). **QA as an engine**: align QA activity (incl. EQA) to the delivery plan priorities and implement a consistent learning loop from audits to improvement support. **Workforce innovation**: progress recruitment/retention actions and new roles/models (assistant EP, EAH) to improve coverage.	involvement is routine across workstreams; seldom-heard participation improves through targeted outreach and adjustments. **Performance management embedded**: dashboard is used consistently by governance and locality partnerships to target improvement and track leading indicators. **Delivery mechanisms strengthened**: multi-agency forums/panels (Inclusion Pathway, IPPs, GSP, EY A&G) operate consistently with agreed standards and QA feedback. **Workforce model maturing**: EAH and specialist capacity stabilise; reliance on agency reduces where possible.	and QA are embedded as business-as-usual and demonstrably influence commissioning and service design. **Data-driven improvement**: shared measures show sustained progress toward target metrics, with leading indicators used to anticipate pressure and intervene early. **Workforce resilience**: clearer career pathways and stable models improve rural coverage and reduce waiting/variation. **Reinvestment**: efficiencies from reduced high-cost placements are redirected into prevention, early intervention and workforce capacity.
Success measures *Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template E.g.* *Independent placement rate (count and % of EHCP cohort)* *No. of children supported through mainstream top-ups (with/without a plan)* *No. of children supported by EP/SLT/OT without a plan* *Average distance / travel time to placement (and % with "excessive travel" threshold)* *Timeliness – 20 weeks %* *Attendance*			

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK - Add our EAHO diagram once agreed

6. **What will the local area partnership deliver in the first year?**

Please outline the key workstreams, milestones and trajectory your local area partnership will deliver and achieve in 2026-27 as well as how you plan to spend the investment allocation that will help fund this year's delivery. Please share key milestones and anticipated dates, success measures, cost breakdown and category. These should incorporate the core minimum requirements, be mapped to the building blocks above and should reflect a more detailed trajectory to the narrative, milestones and target metrics outlined in the 2026-27 column above.

2026-27 Local delivery plan		**Q2 (Jul-Sep 2026)**		**Q3 (Oct – Dec 2026)**		**Q4 (Jan-Mar 2027)**	
Workstream outline – mapped to building block ***Outcome -*** *what you want to achieve with this workstream* ***Success measures –*** *how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template*	***Responsible lead per workstream*** *– accountable for the delivery of the workstream and the identified outcome.*	***Milestones per workstream*** *What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory*	***Target trajectory per workstream*** *Where do you expect your data to be?*	***Milestones per workstream*** *What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory*	***Target trajectory per workstream*** *Where do you expect your data to be?*	***Milestones per workstream*** *What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory*	***Target trajectory per workstream*** *Where do you expect your data to be?*
NB: In Shropshire, all workstreams will have a focus on: • Participation and co-production • Comms • Data							
Workstream 1a: Experts at Hand Offer (EAHO) – Year 1 implementation **Related building blocks:** • *Strengthening inclusion across education settings*	Sarah Court	Confirm EAHO and APST operating model and service standards (single triage, thresholds, response times,	Service standards agreed; workforce plan baselined; initial	Recruit or secure commissioned capacity for core disciplines; launch partial	Partial launch in place; coverage plan live; early KPIs reporting begins	Deliver full Year 1 launch across agreed localities/phases.	Full coverage achieved for Year 1; KPIs show improving timeliness and

• *Access to specialist support and local placements* **Outcome:** EAHO is operational in Year 1 with clear service standards, equitable access and measurable impact, enabling earlier intervention and reducing escalation into statutory processes and high-cost provision. **Success measures:** coverage (% settings supported by phase/locality); median time to triage and first contact; volume supported and distribution by phase/locality; % cases de-escalated/closed without escalation; satisfaction from settings and families.		prioritisation and escalation). Agree SLA/MOU with ICB (scope, reporting, data-sharing, dispute resolution). Complete workforce and capacity plan across EP/SaLT/OT/mental health and specialist teacher/adviser roles (incl. commissioned/outreach capacity).	capacity confirmed.	service where teams are in place. Publish locality/phase coverage plan and implement equitable access approach, incl. proactive outreach to high-need settings and route for out-of-area FE.	(coverage, triage/first contact, distribution).	Embed routine group-based support offers (consultation clinics, workforce training, targeted interventions) and triage to existing pathways where needed. Agree high-level Years 2–3 scale-up plan by March 2027.	equitable distribution; de-escalation and satisfaction measures reported; Years 2–3 plan agreed.
Workstream 1: Inclusive Practice **Related building blocks:** • *Strengthening inclusion across education settings* • *Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours* **Outcome:** • Consistent, high-quality inclusive practice at SEND Support across all settings, meeting need early and reducing escalation. **Success measures:** • CYP with SEN not in Education • CYP with SEN EHE • % of settings implementing OAP/Graduated Response (self-assessment + validation) • Demand signals: repeat requests / unresolved needs at SEND Support • Attendance for SEND cohort (especially SEND Support) • Ratings for ability to navigate LISO (pulse survey / feedback theme)	Sarah Court	Complete action research of OAIP with pilot settings Recruit / identify lead for developing digital navigation system for LISO		Review and refine OAIP and co-produce training Co-produce first draft of Inclusion Quality Mark Launch basic digital LISO		OAIP training delivered Pilot Inclusion Quality Mark with identified settings Launch fully fledged digital LISO	

Workstream 2: Commissioning **Related building blocks:** • *Access to specialist support and local placements* **Outcome:** • Local-first, sustainable commissioning that grows local provision, reduces high-cost reliance and improves value for money without reducing quality, supported by strengthened early intervention and clear pathways to prevent escalation into specialist and independent placements. **Success measures:** • **Independent placement rate** (count and % of EHCP cohort) • **New local capacity delivered vs plan** (e.g., Inclusion Bases opened, outreach capacity, specialist places) • **Average distance / travel time to placement** (and % with "excessive travel" threshold) • **Cost avoidance / savings delivered** from invest-to-save initiatives (cashable + non-cashable) • **Parent/carer experience of placement suitability** (pulse survey / feedback theme)	*Jess Sharma*	Strengthen commissioning routes, contracting and unit-cost insight to support early intervention and reduce escalation into high-cost placements (EAHO delivery milestones are set out in Workstream 1a). Complete sufficiency work with Wakefield LA. Develop annual QA and feedback survey (led by EQA team, to include parent/carer experience of placement suitability). Complete Sufficiency work with Wakefield LA Develop annual QA and feedback survey (led by EQA team, to include Parent carer experience of placement suitability)		Implement commissioning and sufficiency actions from the refreshed plan (including local capacity expansion and market management); align pathways and thresholds for placements and reintegration. (EAHO scale-up activity is covered in Workstream 1a.)		Embed strengthened placement governance and contracting; monitor placement mix, cost and travel and implement repatriation actions where feasible. (EAHO full Year 1 launch is covered in Workstream 1a.)	
Workstream 3: EHCP Timeliness **Related building blocks:** • *Strengthening inclusion across education settings* **Outcome** • Timely, high-quality EHCPs and reviews that deliver coordinated support and improved outcomes, with reduced drift and disputes. **Success measures:**	*Annie Williams*	Recovery mobilisation; accurate case tracking; surge capacity fully productive; QA embedded early Aged cases removed at pace (no 30–52+ weeks by July; no 21+ weeks by Sept) and throughput sustained.	20 week timescale: 40%	Shift from "project mode" to controlled BAU; quality holds at good+ with 100% QA.	20 week timescale: 50%	End-year stabilisation at "good" benchmark with backlog controlled and drift prevented.	20 week timescale: 60%

• **% EHCPs issued within 20 weeks** • **% advice received within agreed timescales** • **EHCP quality audit score** (outcomes SMART, provision specified, clear link between need–outcome–provision) • **% annual reviews completed on time** • **% transitions completed on time** (phase transfers/post-16 planning) • **Parent/carer satisfaction with the EHCP process**							
Projected Investment Spend per quarter *Please specify funding source for each category*	**Transformation Funding**	**EAH funding**	**Transformation Funding**	**EAH funding**	**Transformation Funding**	**EAH funding**
Programme oversight/additional leadership capacity.	£55,000	£0	£27,500	£0	£27,500	£0
Workforce – EAHO mixed delivery model: internal recruitment (LA led) and commissioning(ICB and special schools)	£0	£0	£0	£400,000	£0	£600,000
Data: system integration	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Digital: development of digital navigation tool (workforce)	£0	£0	£16,250	£0	£16,250	£0
Total Spend	**£105,000**	**£0**	**£43,750**	**£400,000**	**£43,750**	**£600,000**

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK: include our fully costed workforce plan once agreed

7. **How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?**

Please set out how you will ensure the required capacity and capability is in place from organisational corporate functions to support implementation of the plan. This could include reference to how you plan to build or bring in project delivery capability to manage delivery against the plan, support prioritisation, and effective use of resources; and how you plan to build the capacity and capability in data and analytics to support effective tracking against the measures in the plan and reporting that informs decision making.

We will deliver the 2026–27 plan as one partnership programme led by the local authority, with a named LA SRO, clear workstream leads and PMO support for planning, risks and reporting. We will mobilise the Experts at Hand Offer (EAHO) through a mixed model: LA recruitment to build sustainable specialist teacher/adviser, EP and specialist practitioner model with coordination capacity; ICB-commissioned provider delivery for health disciplines (e.g., SaLT and OT) to scale quickly; and commissioned outreach from high-quality specialist and alternative provision providers to strengthen mainstream capability and reintegration. The model will deliver a core offer to all settings in Y1 with an upscaled offer in Y2-3 using needs-based data. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of impact through engagement with stakeholders from across the Partnership will also inform how the model is scaled up and enhanced in Y2-3.

Alongside developing mainstream capacity and expertise, we will develop of our sufficiency and place planning approaches and use a range of data to strategically plan additional or relocated specialist places (in both Specialist Bases and Special Schools) where needed to provide more localised provision and reduce travel times.

Performance will be assured via KPIs (coverage by phase/locality; time to triage/first contact; distribution supported; de-escalation; satisfaction), with quarterly Partnership Board review and monthly QAG oversight. Year 1: Q2 confirm service standards and the workforce/capacity plan; Q3 secure capacity and run a partial launch with published locality/phase coverage; Q4 full launch with group clinics, training and targeted interventions, plus triage into existing routes (Inclusion Pathway, panels, graduated support and early years advice).

Access will be via locality allocation, proactive outreach and an explicit route for out-of-area FE. Commissioning will refresh place planning, contracting and unit-cost insight and recommission AP to the 3-tier/APST model; if capacity is constrained we will contract locally, partner regionally or share expertise, with actions agreed at pace.

8. **Other funding Local Authorities**.

Block Transfers: If you have made a block transfer (Schools Block to High Needs Block) for 26-27, please set out how your plans for this funding align with the activities outlined above.

2026/27, Schools Forum agreed to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block (£1,165,244) to help manage rising demand and cost pressures in the High Needs system. The transfer will support delivery of the SEND and alternative provision reforms by strengthening inclusion and early intervention in mainstream settings, reducing reliance on statutory processes where needs can be met earlier, and improving consistency of support across schools. Funding will be used to sustain and scale targeted programmes that align with reform priorities, including:

(1) Step Into School funding to provide timely, short-term support for children and young people at key transition points or where an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is not appropriate or is still being assessed;
(2) Inclusion Development Grants to build school capacity, develop inclusive practice and workforce skills, and implement evidence-informed approaches that improve outcomes for pupils with SEND;
(3) Graduated Support Pathway (GSP) funding to embed a consistent “assess, plan, do, review” approach, enabling earlier identification of need, more effective interventions, and clearer routes into specialist support when required.

Together, these investments are intended to moderate demand for EHCP assessments and specialist placements over time, while ensuring pupils’ needs are met in the right place at the right time.

Capital: We have announced at least £3 billion in high needs capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30 to support children and young people (CYP) with SEND, or those requiring alternative provision (AP). This funding is intended to support place delivery across the full 0-25 age range, including early years and post-16. We expect funding to support the following outcomes:

a. Inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream settings, across all phases of education
b. Every child or young person who needs a place in an inclusion base can access one
c. Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement
d. Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

We also welcome innovative uses of high needs capital to drive inclusion, for example, investment in assistive technology for use in mainstream settings.

Please outline your strategy for how this funding will meet the outcomes above, with reference to the core minimum requirements and other workstreams in this reform plan where appropriate. We would like to see detail around your plans to increase capacity for inclusion bases (formerly known as SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs), such as schools, colleges or early years providers identified, engagement with relevant settings and trusts, and target cohort of needs.

If your plans include increases to places in special schools or specialist post-16 institutions, please include a clear rationale, showing the need that is being met, and why it cannot be met through other types of provision, such as inclusion bases.

If you are receiving additional capital funding to replace one or more planned special or AP free schools, please set out how this funding will meet need in your area, and plans for engaging relevant trusts in your sufficiency planning.

High Needs Capital Strategy (2026–2030)
High needs capital funding will be deployed to enable local sufficiency and support the DSG recovery strategy, with inclusion the default expectation across the 0–25 system. Decisions will be informed by demand forecasting and aligned to SEND and alternative provision (AP) reforms and the core minimum requirements, so that investment improves outcomes and long-term financial sustainability.

Delivery of new inclusive capacity
Capital investment will deliver **13 new inclusion provisions**, creating **358 additional local places** for children and young people with SEND. Provision is phased to strengthen early intervention, support progression, and sustain inclusion across the system:

- **Early years and primary:** new and expanded inclusion bases focused on communication and interaction, and cognition and learning, to strengthen early support and reduce escalation.
- **Secondary:** inclusion bases designed for SEMH and mixed-needs cohorts to improve attendance, engagement and retention in mainstream.
- **Post-16:** specialist inclusion provision within colleges to support transition to adulthood, independence and preparation for employment.

Settings have been identified through place-planning to address geographic gaps, reduce travel distances and respond to patterns of need. Delivery will be progressed with maintained schools, academies, colleges and trusts to ensure provision is clearly defined, sustainable and integrated in mainstream environments. Once implemented, every child or young person who requires an inclusion base place will be able to access one locally.

Link to DSG recovery
Expanding inclusive capacity is central to the DSG recovery trajectory. Increasing mainstream and inclusion-based provision will reduce reliance on high-cost independent and non-maintained placements, improve local sufficiency and support more efficient use of high needs funding over time.

Improving the suitability of the mainstream estate
Capital funding will also support targeted adaptations to improve accessibility and inclusivity in mainstream settings, including environmental adjustments, sensory and therapy-ready spaces, reconfigured accommodation, and assistive technology to strengthen inclusive practice and reduce escalation to specialist provision.

Specialist provision at Ludlow (South) and Oswestry (North)
Where needs cannot be met through inclusion bases or mainstream adaptations, specialist provision remains necessary. In Ludlow, wider capital and sufficiency work is creating the conditions for a future **special school**, responding to sustained demand while maintaining a balanced system that prioritises inclusion. In Oswestry, we are scoping a new special school satellite provision on the site of an all-through mainstream school, providing a mix of mainstream, inclusion base and specialist satellite provision in one place.

Alignment with system reform

Where capital replaces previously planned special or AP free schools, funding will be redirected to flexible, locally responsive solutions that better meet identified need and support long-term DSG sustainability. Inclusion Base and Special/Satellite School developments represent LA and MAT partnership working

.

9. **System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production.**

Please outline how the local area partnership plans to engage system partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the plan – include planned engagement with schools and early years settings, alternative providers, FE and post-16 providers (including those your young people attend that are not within your local area), Parents and Carers and children and young people with SEND, with reference to the core minimum requirements. Consider changing roles and responsibilities in the context of the Schools White Paper and how you work collaboratively to manage the transition. Please indicate where additional support is required to engage partners or stakeholders - senior officials at the Department for Education will be available to contribute to summer term events with education leaders and parent carer forum leaders.

The local area partnership has adopted a collaborative and transparent approach to engaging system partners and stakeholders in the co-production of this plan and its implementation. Our engagement approach explicitly covers: early years providers; mainstream and specialist schools; multi-academy trusts (MATs); alternative provision; further education and post-16 providers (including out-of-area mainstream colleges attended by Shropshire young people); health providers and the Integrated Care Board; Parent Carer Forum and wider parent/carer community (including seldom-heard groups); SENDIASS; and children and young people with SEND (distinct from parent voice). We have aligned engagement to the core minimum requirements and to changing roles and responsibilities described in the Schools White Paper, including expectations on mainstream settings to strengthen ordinarily available provision, participate in group-based support models, and share accountability for inclusion outcomes.

A key milestone in this process was the White Paper round table event, which brought together education leaders, local authority representatives, health partners, and parent carer forum leaders. This event provided a structured forum for open discussion on the implications of the Schools White Paper, the evolving roles and responsibilities of schools and system partners, and the practical steps required to manage a smooth transition towards a more inclusive system. Insights generated at the round table directly informed the development of the maturity matrix, establishing a shared understanding of current strengths, gaps, and priorities for improvement across the area.

To capture a wider range of experiences, the partnership facilitated a series of focus groups spanning mainstream schools, early years settings, alternative provision, and further education/post-16 providers. These sessions enabled participants to share real-life examples of good practice, challenges faced in delivering inclusive support, and suggestions for how the new reforms could be implemented most effectively. Importantly, these focus groups included providers attended by young people who live outside the local area, ensuring regional coherence and mutual learning.

In addition, surveys were distributed to all educational settings and to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. The surveys were designed to gather feedback on the core minimum requirements, as well as to test the feasibility and perceived impact of proposed reforms. Responses from these surveys have been systematically analysed and used to shape both the content and the delivery approach of the reform plan, with key themes and recommendations feeding into partnership-wide planning sessions and subsequent iterations of the maturity matrix.

The partnership's approach reflects a clear commitment to the principles set out in the Schools White Paper, particularly around strengthening collaboration, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and embedding a culture of continuous improvement. By engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders – including schools, early years providers, alternative and specialist settings, FE and post-16 institutions, and parent carers – the partnership has ensured that the SEND reform plan is both ambitious and grounded in practice. Collaborative working groups have been established to co-produce solutions to identified challenges, and joint training sessions have supported a shared understanding of the core minimum requirements.

It is recognised that direct co-production with children and young people with SEND remains an area for development. While some engagement has taken place through existing participation forums, the partnership acknowledges that more systematic and meaningful involvement is needed. As such, strengthening the voice and influence of children and young people will be a key priority in year 1 of the reform plan. Plans are in place to establish a new youth advisory group, co-design accessible engagement materials, and create regular feedback loops so that young people's experiences and aspirations directly shape the ongoing evolution of the plan.

In summary, the partnership has demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive engagement and co-production, drawing on a variety of methods to involve system partners and stakeholders at every stage. As the reforms move into implementation, continuous engagement –

particularly with children and young people – will remain central to ensuring that the SEND system evolves in a way that is responsive, effective, and sustainable for all. The newly recently developed communications plan across Children's Services sets out the approach for effective, coordinated communication across the Children's Transformation Programme, including SEND. Clear, consistent and timely communication is essential to support delivery, build shared understanding of the programme's purpose and priorities, and ensure stakeholders are informed, engaged and able to contribute effectively. The communications plan provides a framework to ensure communication activity is aligned, coherent and proportionate across the whole programme.

10. **Risks and Mitigations**

What are the key risks that could affect the successful implementation of your Local SEND Reform Plan, and what mitigation strategies are in place to manage these risks? Please include a maximum of 5 risks with impact and likelihood RAG for each risk. See Annex C for suggested risk matrix.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Uneven implementation of ordinarily available inclusive practice (OAIP) and the graduated response across settings leads to postcode provision and escalation.	High	High	Red	Clear minimum expectations; co-produced OAIP materials and training; peer learning and SENCO networks; targeted QA/deep dives and support visits; escalation route for persistent non-engagement; publish "what good looks like" via Inclusion Quality Mark.	Amber

Experts at Hand Offer cannot operate at scale due to constrained workforce capacity (EP/SALT/OT/mental health) or unclear service standards.	High	Medium	Amber	SLA/MOU with ICB setting scope, triage and response standards, prioritisation and escalation; blended delivery (consultation, group delivery, targeted interventions) to maximise reach; joint workforce plan and recruitment/retention actions; commission additional capacity where feasible; weekly capacity and backlog reporting with escalation through ICB place governance if standards missed.	Amber
Local capacity (inclusion bases, outreach, AP) takes time to create; reliance on independent/out-of-area placements and travel costs continues in the short term.	High	Medium	Amber	Staged sufficiency plan (quick wins, medium build, longer-term capital delivery); transparent place planning principles and travel impact assessment for expansions; repatriation plans and strengthened commissioning/contracting; increase inclusion base and mainstream adaptation capacity; AP recommissioning with clear reintegration pathways.	Amber
EHCP timeliness and quality improvements do not sustain ('stick') as demand rises and partner advice remains delayed or inconsistent.	High	Medium	Amber	Sustain recovery into BAU with clear workflow and QA; 'right evidence first time' standards and advice templates; agreed partner advice timescales and escalation; monthly performance rhythm; strengthen annual reviews and transitions; use EAHO and OAIP to improve upstream evidence and reduce avoidable statutory requests.	Green
Engagement and co-production does not reach under-represented families or children/young people, reducing trust and the ability to adapt services based on lived experience.	Medium	Medium	Amber	Participation plan with targeted outreach and accessible formats; resourced PCF engagement; establish a representative CYP Forum with safeguarding/consent and clear routes into governance; "you said, we did" reporting; use SENDIASS insights and mediation themes to target improvement.	Green

11. Dependencies

Please detail the key areas of the local area partnership's proposed SEND future state and roadmap that may be impacted by wider reforms nationally and locally and outline how you will manage these. We expect these will include but not be limited to:

- NHS reforms
- Local Government Re-organisation
- Reforms to Children's Social Care
- Best Start in Life, including Family Hubs
- Best Start In Life Strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review

Delivery of Shropshire's plan is dependent on wider reforms. We will manage these dependencies through: one programme plan, one RAID/dependency log, clear owners and timebound actions. The PMO will maintain the dependency log, chase actions and publish a short monthly highlight report. QAG will review dependencies and linked risks at each meeting, agree corrective actions and escalate any "stuck" issues to the SEND Partnership Board and, where relevant, ICB governance.

NHS reforms / ICB change (dependency for EAH and timeliness and quality of statutory health advice).

Operationally we will:

- agree a joint workforce plan with the ICB;
- set response standards, a single triage route and prioritisation criteria for EAH and statutory advice;
- use a blended model (consultation, group training, targeted interventions) to maximise reach;
- commission additional capacity where feasible.

We will track weekly capacity (sessions available vs requested), advice timeliness and backlogs. If standards are missed for two consecutive cycles, the SRO will escalate through ICB place leadership with a recovery action plan.

Local Government Reorganisation and Children's Social Care reform (including Family Help).

These changes affect pathways, thresholds and staff capacity. We will keep delivery joined up by running SEND within the Children's Services Transformation portfolio with a single RACI, shared project resource and aligned milestones. We will run a monthly stop/start/continue session to remove duplication and re-sequence work when corporate priorities shift. If capacity drops below minimum in critical roles, we will use transformation funding to backfill and, via QAG, de-scope lower-impact activity to protect delivery of the first-year plan.

Best Start in Life / Family Hubs.

This is a dependency for earlier identification and demand moderation and links to the risk that rising need (especially early years and transitions) overwhelms improvements and that engagement does not reach under-represented families/young people. We will integrate SEND routes into Family Hubs (single front door information, clear routes into early years advice and EAH, and consistent "you said, we did" feedback). We will track hub-level demand signals (requests, repeat contacts and waiting times) and target additional support where localities show sustained pressure.

Curriculum and Assessment Review.

Changes could affect behaviour, attendance and identification practices. To mitigate the risk of postcode practice, we will use OAIP standards and the Inclusion Quality Mark as our operational baseline. The EQA team will trigger targeted QA/deep dives where indicators suggest inconsistency (attendance/exclusion patterns, repeat escalations, high EHCP request rates). Findings will drive focused support visits, peer learning and escalation routes for persistent non-engagement. We will work with providers (particularly AP and FE) to support schools to work creatively to deliver alternative courses and qualifications that meet identified needs of CYP with SEND.

Data, finance and sufficiency dependencies.

To avoid the risks that KPIs are disputed/delayed and savings lag behind investment, we will maintain a KPI dictionary with named data owners, automate reporting where possible and publish a monthly insight narrative (what/why/so what/next). Financial dependencies will be managed through phased investment gates, unit-cost baselines, tight placement governance and explicit tracking of cost avoidance. The sufficiency programme will run a staged plan (quick wins, medium build, longer-term capital delivery) with repatriation plans to manage the risk that local capacity takes time to create and independent placements continue due to immediate need.

Section 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation

12. **How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?**

Please set out how you will monitor and track progress referencing:

- ***Monitoring tools and processes*** - the specific tools, systems, and data you will use to track delivery milestones and measure the impact on outcomes.

> *Some Local Area Partnerships hold data in a central SEND operational dashboard. This is used by teams on a weekly basis to identify trends in demand or inform conversations with local school or setting leaders.*
>
> *In some Local Area Partnerships, a view of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is reviewed monthly by a SEND Board to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of services informed by regular data.*

Please set out how you will use data to track demand (e.g., EHCP applications for assessment), Service delivery (e.g., Speech and Language Specialists deployment; places created), Service quality (e.g., parental satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., pupil attendance; pupil exclusions)

- ***Feedback and adaptation mechanisms*** - what feedback loops and stakeholder input you will use to review progress and adjust your approach.

The local area partnership will ensure delivery remains on track through a coherent performance management framework that integrates quantitative data, quality assurance, and lived experience into a single, transparent system of monitoring and improvement. This approach is designed to move beyond reporting activity and to actively drive measurable impact against identified outcomes and success measures.

A **single partnership dashboard** will be the core monitoring tool, bringing together a defined set of indicators aligned to outcomes, system flow and lived experience. This will include measures of demand, service delivery, service quality and outcomes.

Examples of key **performance indicators** include:

- **Demand and system flow:** number of EHCP requests for assessment; rate of new EHCPs issued; proportion of cases progressing to statutory assessment; panel referral volumes; and escalation indicators such as requests for specialist placements or alternative provision.
- **Service delivery and timeliness:** percentage of EHCPs completed within 20 weeks; timeliness of annual reviews; waiting times for Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and neurodevelopmental pathways; and response times within the "Experts at Hand" model.
- **Inclusion and participation:** attendance rates for children and young people with SEND; fixed-term and permanent exclusion rates; rates of reintegration from alternative provision; and proportion of needs met at SEND Support.
- **Local sufficiency and value for money:** proportion of children educated in local mainstream or maintained provision; number and cost of independent/non-maintained placements; placement stability; and average cost per placement over time.
- **Lived experience and trust:** parent and carer satisfaction scores; participation levels in co-production (including CYP Forum involvement); number and themes of complaints; and average time to resolution, alongside tracking of "you said, we did" actions.

The dashboard will incorporate both **lagging indicators** (such as attainment, placement mix and spend) and **leading indicators** (such as escalation rates, waiting times and QA findings) to provide early warning of pressure and enable proactive intervention. Data will be reviewed routinely at operational and strategic levels, with analysis by locality, phase and cohort to ensure equity across Shropshire's rural geography.

To complement quantitative data, the partnership will embed a **systematic quality assurance (QA) cycle**. This will include multi-agency audits of EHCPs and SEND Support plans (ISPs), thematic reviews (such as inclusion practice, transitions or health contributions), and peer review across settings. For example, QA indicators will include **quality ratings of EHCP plans**, evidence of clear outcomes and

provision, and consistency of ordinarily available provision in practice. These findings will be triangulated with performance data to identify priorities for improvement and inform targeted support and workforce development.

Lived experience insight will form a third, critical strand of monitoring. Regular feedback from parents, carers, and children and young people will be gathered through surveys, engagement activity and co-production forums. Indicators will include **engagement reach across seldom-heard groups**, CYP Forum activity and outputs, and evidence that feedback has influenced decision-making. This ensures progress is judged not only by system performance but by improvements in confidence, trust and experience.

Monitoring will be underpinned by **strong governance and accountability**. A single delivery plan will set out milestones, ownership and trajectories, with workstream leads accountable for progress. Partnership boards will review the dashboard regularly, using it to inform decision-making, prioritisation and resource allocation.

The partnership will also implement **feedback and adaptation mechanisms**, using leading indicators to test the impact of key interventions (such as the Local Inclusion Support Offer and Experts at Hand model) and adjust delivery where required.

Through this integrated approach—combining data, quality assurance, lived experience and governance—the partnership will maintain a clear and dynamic grip on delivery, ensuring that progress is tracked rigorously and that improvement is continuous, evidence-led and focused on better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

13. **Reporting to DfE**

Using the attached data template, the local area partnership is required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against selected key metrics. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This will include data the department holds on **Attendance**, **Exclusions**, and **Unauthorised absence**.

Please use the attached data template to upload your initial data return to DfE.

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

Section 4 – Governance

14. **How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?**

Please outline the governance structures in place to oversee delivery. Clearly set out who is responsible for overseeing reform delivery, what each governance group or individual is accountable for, and how these arrangements ensure progress is monitored and decisions are made transparently. Please identify where the named SRO for the Local SEND Reform Plan sits within the governance structure and ensure your response incorporates the core minimum requirements.

Governance Mechanism *This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).*	**Purpose/ Responsibilities** *What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?*	**Membership** *Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this. (Include n/a if an individual).*	**Cadence** *How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?*	**Decision Rights** *What decisions can this governance mechanism make?*	**Escalation Route** *Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?*
Children's Ambition Board	Strategic Partnership Board driving ambitious outcomes for children and families. to oversee the Children's Transformation . Sets the vision, oversees the Children's Transformation Programme and ensures multi-agency alignment	Chair (CEO, LA)	Every 2 months	Strategic Decisions	Top Layer of the Governance Structure
Health and Wellbeing Board	The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) acts to ensure that key leaders from health, care, and the	Co-Chairs – ICB/Portfolio Holder for Health.	At least quarterly	Statutory decisions re. JSNA, Pharmacy Needs Assessment,	Reports to Full Council as required, overseen by HOSC.

Commented [NM1]: @Louisa Jones I think you have the ToR for this group if so can you help please?

	Voluntary and Community Sector work together to protect people's health, improve the health and wellbeing of Shropshire residents and reduce inequalities that are the cause of ill health including the wider determinants of health. Health and Wellbeing Board members collaborate to understand their local community's needs, agree priorities and work together to plan how best to deliver services.	VCSE, Partners in Care, RJAH, STWCH, MPFT, West Mercia Police, WMAS.		Better Care Fund, development of Health & Wellbeing Plan. Takes strategic decisions	
Education Excellence					
IMPACT Boards	This is a tactical level board to bring participation, engagement and co-production to life across Shropshire. It has a mission to ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families influence decisions.	Chair (AD, LA Children's Services)	Monthly	Decisions on how we will seek to deliver the core functions set.	Ambitions Board
SEND and AP Partnership Board					
Quality Assurance Group (QAG)	QAG provides system assurance and improvement intelligence to the SEND and Inclusion Partnership Board. It triangulates performance, audit and lived experience evidence to assess quality, identify gaps, test impact, challenge partners and escalate risks. Covering education, health, social care and inclusion/AP, it ensures accountability, oversight and measurable outcomes across SEND services.	Chair: (AD Children's Services and **SRO)** Deputy Chair: [Associate Director of Nursing and Quality Priority Populations, ICB SEND SRO] • EHCP Team Manager, • Head of Virtual School and Access to Education, • Head of Education Quality and Safeguarding, • Principle EP and Preventative Lead, • SEND Transformation Lead. • ICB SEND Senior Responsible Officer • DCO (or deputy), • Relevant provider representation from health as required • DSCO • Commissioning: TBD • Data/insight/analytics representation: TBD	Monthly		SEND and AP Partnership Board

		• Senior Integration Development Officer Additional attendees: subject matter experts and provider representatives invited depending on agenda (e.g., early years, post-16, therapies, AP, relevant children's disability / transitions leads). Co-production routes (standing input): Children, Young People and Families are engaged and/or specialist groups when the theme relates to an area of interest.			
Workstream 1: Inclusive Practice	Develop a continuum of high-quality local provision in Shropshire across education, health and social care, to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and those requiring AP.	• Senior EQA for SEND and AP, Chair • Lead for Access to Education, Vice Chair • Head of Virtual School and Access to Education • PACC • SENDIASS • Education Quality Advisor, Shropshire Council • Designated Social Care Officer – SEND • Designated Clinical Officer - SEND • Senior EP • Commissioning Officer for SEND • Early Help Representative • Nursery representation • School age representation - primary • School age representation - secondary • Post 16 representative • Special School representation • SURP representation • TMBSS	Every 6 weeks		QAG
Workstream 2: Commissioning				This group can make decisions related to the execution of commissioning strategies approved by	QAG

Commented [NM2]: @Jessica Sharma can you add in the details from the Joint Group please

				the SEND and Inclusion Partnership. They can make decisions about the integration of shared systems to understand need, developing services, monitoring them and reviewing them to provide influence to the SEND and Inclusion Partnership.	

Workstream 3: EHCP Quality and Timeliness	Ensure partnership action to improve the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care Plans. This group is responsible for interrogating the data and taking rapid action to improve the timeliness of our EHCP's.	• EHCP Team Manager, Chair
		• Associate Designated Clinical Officer, Vice Chair
		• PACC
		• SENDIASS
		• Education Quality Advisor, Shropshire Council
		• Designated Social Care Officer – SEND
		• Senior EP
		• Adult Social Care Representative
		• Early Help Representative
		• Nursery representation
		• School age representation
		• Post 16 representative
		  • Special School representation
		  • Parent Carer group representation
			Monthly	This group makes proactive, process-oriented decisions aimed at preventing defects and ensuring services meet established standards.	QAG

If you have a diagram to show the relationship between these governance mechanisms, please upload this here.

INSERT DOCUMENT UPLOAD LINK

Section 5 – Central Government Support

15. **How can we help you?**

Please outline any practical support you need from central government to implement your plan effectively.

This may include:

- Access to specialist expertise or advisory support
- Help with workforce development or recruitment challenges
- Tools or templates to support data collection, reporting, or evaluation
- Facilitation of peer learning or regional collaboration
- Support with system-level coordination across education, health, and care
- Guidance on navigating regulatory or policy barriers

- For the Department for Education (DfE) to understand that funding calculations are based on demographics rather than demand, and that there must be flexibility in funding arrangements to allow areas to target specific needs.
- Support with multiagency auditing to develop an effective Multi-Agency (MA) Audit system that drives quality assurance (currently working with Wakefield on sector-led improvement work).
- Further work and investment required to develop the infrastructure needed to create and align dashboards and datasets, and to align reporting to the Outcomes Framework for measuring impact.
- Support to improve systemwide sharing and interpretation of data, including transparency with partners, to facilitate shared planning and decisions.
- Support to develop internal specialist support capacity so schools can access timely expertise for assessment, evidence gathering, and implementation of inclusive practice.
- Support to strengthen joint commissioning across partners and improve alignment of commissioning and workforce planning for sustainable services.
- Support to improve the timeliness of waiting times for any service offer, including ECHNAs, Annual Reviews, Early Years support via the CDC, and health waiting lists.
- Support to further develop the post-16 offer for young people.

- Support to embed a shared, systemwide understanding of ordinarily available provision and tiered support, ensuring clarity and consistency across the system.
- Support to improve mental health services for the SEND community, including neurodivergent children and young people, as part of wider inclusion and partnership improvement activity.
- Support to continue sufficiency work with Wakefield, focusing on understanding universal, targeted, and specialist capacity to meet outcomes.

Annex B - Supporting Documents

Document	Link
The Schools White Paper	Every Child Achieving and Thriving
SEND Consultation Document	SEND reform: putting children and young people first.
LA and Schools Budget 2026-27	Schools Operational Guide 2026-27
Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Guidance and Tool	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan – Data template	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework	Included in commission pack
Local Inclusion Partnership Grant 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Experts at Hand Guidance	To be published Spring 2026
High Needs Capital Allocations 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Guidance on Inclusion bases	To be published Spring 2026

Annex C – Risk Matrix

IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY/LIKELIHOOD				
		< 10%	>10% - <30%	>30% - <60%	>60% - <90%	>90%
		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely
Cannot deliver Reform Plan; Failure of mission critical activity.	**Crisis**					
Significant impact to objectives; Significant and sustained disruption to activity.	**Critical**					
Delivery targets are compromised; Project delay / budget overrun.	**Moderate**					
Limited impact on delivery targets; Deviations from project resource, timescale or targets.	**Marginal**					
Minimal impact on delivery targets; Minimal impacts to project / programme efficiency.	**Negligible**					

Shropshire Council

Families First Partnership

Thematic Pillars of Change



Thematic Pillars of Change

Inclusive Places and Spaces

Inclusive People and Practice

Data, Digital & Systems

Children and Family Voice

Leadership, Governance and Commissioning

Places and Spaces

- **Thematic:** Family Hubs and Community Spaces
- **Purpose:** Create accessible co-located hubs that provide the right support to meet their needs
- **What will they need to accomplish:**
  - Develop and expand the role of Family Hubs as central points for multi-agency colocation.
  - Ensure that they are inclusive, welcoming and strength based,
  - Ensure they are in the right places and there when people need them most.
  - Ensure that the teams who work from these places are the right ones to meet the local needs.
- **Next Steps**
  - Select the named Best Start in Life Family Hub site (March 2026) - **Interim site proposed and plans being developed for delivery**
  - Conduct a parenting review (February 2026) **Completed**
  - Prepare a BSiL plan aligned to outcomes (March 2026) **Completed**
  - Enable the community, helping to build their capacity around key priorities **(March 2027.)**
  - Mapping of the LA Estate – May 2026 **– in progress**
  - Staff usage of buildings – May 2026 – **staff survey in progress**
- **Initiated Workstream**

Corporate Lead for Workstream; Victoria Woodford, Asset Manager, Property & Development

Children's Services Lead – Rosie Boardman – Best Start in Life & Family Hubs Lead

Data, Digital & Systems

- **Thematic**: Integrated Systems and Data
- **Purpose:** Enable seamless systems that support the system to share information, make decisions and measure outcomes.
- **What will they need to accomplish?**
  - Build secure and interoperable data systems across agencies
  - Automate where possible
  - Reduce duplication
  - Use data to monitor outcomes
  - Adapt rapidly
- **Next Steps:**
  - Needs and Harms Assessment (March 2026) **Completed**
  - Agreeing Outcomes Framework (April 2026)
  - Mapping of our data **(May 2026)**
  - Mapping of our systems (May 2026) – **Family help in progress**
  - Developing a PMF for all teams **(June 2026)**
  - Co-production with service users about adapting the way the systems support the delivery of work **(June 2026.)**
  - Options Appraisal for LCS / EHM **– (June 2026) in progress**
- **Initial Workstream Meetings Held; awaiting outcome of Digital Prioritisation**
- **Presentation to Corporate Digital Board – completed.**

Corporate Lead for Workstream; David Baker, Head of Service, Automation & Technology

Data, Digital & Systems Workstream; Role & Scope

The Digital workstream acts as the enabling backbone of the Children's Transformation programme, ensuring that new models of practice are supported by deliverable, sustainable and assured digital solutions.

The digital workstream is responsible for;

1. **Enabling transformation-led digital change**
   - Translating the outputs of the Task & Finish Groups into digital, data and system requirements that support new pathways, roles and ways of working.
2. **Delivering core digital platforms that underpin transformation**;
   - Leading on the development and integration of key digital platforms that cut across all transformation strands;
     - **A digital front door for Children, Young People and families** to access information, guidance and support
     - **The Single View of the Child** to bring together information from across services and partners to support better decision making, assurance and outcomes.
3. **Managing existing and emerging digital dependencies**
   - Leading on digital requirements that are not designed through the task and finish groups but are critical to service continuity and transformation delivery;
     - **Core System lifecycle and contract management**; e.g. Synergy
     - **Digital Practice Tools** already embedded with frontline delivery; e.g. Magic Notes
4. **Prioritisation and Investment Planning;**
   - Bringing together transformation-driven and system-driven digital requirements into a single, managed digital plan for Children and Young Peoples Services, enabling coherent prioritisation, investment planning and proactive risk management.
5. **Dependency management with service delivery** to ensure digital solutions are aligned to redesigned practice and ways of working

Data, Digital and System Workstream Priorities

Digital delivery needs to be shaped around both transformation need and system sustainability, with activity prioritised to manage risk and enable delivery

Immediate Priorities

- System continuing and contract risk – Synergy Contract end – October 2027
- Stabilising and supporting tools already embedded in practice – Magic Notes Contract End Oct 2026
- Enabling critical early transformation pathways, workflows and data reporting requirements for Families First Partnership – LCS & EHM – live September 2026
- ICT readiness in Building – Family Hub pilot site September 2026, MDT's Sept 2026 and MACPT Nov 2026

Medium Term Priorities

- Digital Front Door for Children, Young People and Families
- Single View of the Child
- Workflow and Data Reporting Changes to the wider transformation programme
- ICT readiness in buildings – Family Hubs roll out

Long-term enablers

- Integrated data and outcomes reporting
- Platform rationalisation and sustainability

People and Practice

- **Thematic:** Culture and Workforce Development
- **Purpose**: Create a skilled, valued and trauma aware workforce that works collaboratively.
- **What will they need to achieve?**
  - Multi-Agency Training
  - Multi Agency Development Strategy
  - Promotion of reflective practice and strengths-based approaches.
  - Flexible working arrangements that support agile delivery.
  - Recognition of successes.
  - Co-location plan.
- **Next Steps**
  - Publish the threshold document (June 2026) – in draft (timeline extended)
  - Conduct a skills audit (March 2026) completed. Results being analysed
  - Design a ‘to be structure’ based on local need (May 2026) – in progress
  - Undertake a range of communications to support the change (April 2026) – in progress
  - Workforce Development Plan
  - Skills Mapping – Partners
- **Initial Workstream Meeting held**

Corporate Lead for Workstream; Jennie Lowe, Service Manager, Quality, Performance & Assurance

Children and Family Voice

- **Purpose**: The voice and experience of children and families especially those who are most likely to experience disadvantage influence and shape the way we work together. These relationships are built on trust.
- **What we need to achieve?**
  - A system shaped by the views and experiences of children.
  - Effective two way dialogue so that traditional mechanisms that are ineffective are challenged.
  - Mutual respect
  - Understanding of the reforms
- **Next Steps:**
  - Map the stakeholders (March 2026) – captured within comms plan
  - Develop a communications and engagement plan (March 2026) in draft alignment with SSCP – draft and ongoing development in progress
  - Agree measures for successful engagement (April 2026)
  - Engage, engage, engage!
  - Evaluate the IMPACT of the IMPACT Board (March 2027)
- **Workstream Meeting; IMPACT Board**

Service Lead for Workstream; Natasha Moody, until partnership rep can be established.

Commissioning

- **Purpose:** Ensure a Joint Commissioning approach that meets our statutory requirements.
- **What we need to achieve?**
  - A well defined understanding of need across the partnership,
  - A plan for how we will address these needs together,
  - Deliver/Influence the partnership plans and
  - Measure the impact of these plans.
- **Next Steps**
  - Sufficiency Strategy (March 2026) – in draft
  - Joint Commissioning Strategy (May 2026) – in progress
  - Defining Clear Commissioning Priorities (May 2026) – in progress
  - Defining an outcome framework for the partnership (March 2026)

Corporate Lead for Workstream; Louise Forbes, Service Manager Commissioning

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Shropshire Council

Needs and Harms Analysis
Families First Programme

Phase 2

March 2026

Needs & Harms Assessment

1. Children Safe From Abuse And Exploitation

- Child at risk of Criminal exploitation
- Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation
- Child has Protection Plan in force
- Child Has S47 Assessment
- Child In Need Plan
- Child In Need Referral
- Child is Missing from Home
- Child Looked After/Adopted Episode

2. Crime Prevention And Tacking Crime

- Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident
- Criminal Conviction/ASBO
- Evictions due to Anti-Social Behaviour
- Investigated/Cautioned for Criminal Offence
- Youth Offending Service Involvement

3. Episode of Support

- Contact Made
- Early Help Episode of Support

4. Financial Stability

- Claiming Financial Benefits
- Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed
- Issues with Rent Arrears

5. Getting A Good Education

- Child has more than 10% Absence
- Child is Home Educated
- Child is Missing Education
- Exclusion from School
- Primary Special Educational Needs
- Secondary Special Educational Needs

6. Improved Mental And Physical Health

- Adult Admitted to Hospital
- Adult at Risk of Abuse
- Adult Living with Disability
- Adult Suffers Medical Ailment
- Has Medical Issues/Benefits
- Special Educational Needs
- Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment

7. Safe From Domestic Abuse

- Child Victim of Domestic Abuse
- Crime Incident of Abuse
- Domestic Violence Marker

8. Secure Housing

- Is Homeless
- On Emergency Accommodation List
- On Housing Register

9. Young Carer

- Person is a Young Carer

10. Additional Data Added:

- CSC Referrals, CIN flags, CP Plans, CLA, Re-Referrals, Contacts & Repeats, SWA
- Early Help contacts & repeats, Episodes & repeat episodes, EH Assessments
- SEN Records
- Good Early Years development
- School Attendance (last 18 months)
- Key Stage 2 expected level of reading, writing & mathematics
- Attainment Scores

For the purposes of the following slides, the data has been filtered to include properties that have known children at the address within the confines of the dataset we have used for this analysis. Also, indicators for children that are achieving 80% attendance and above have also been removed from the data.

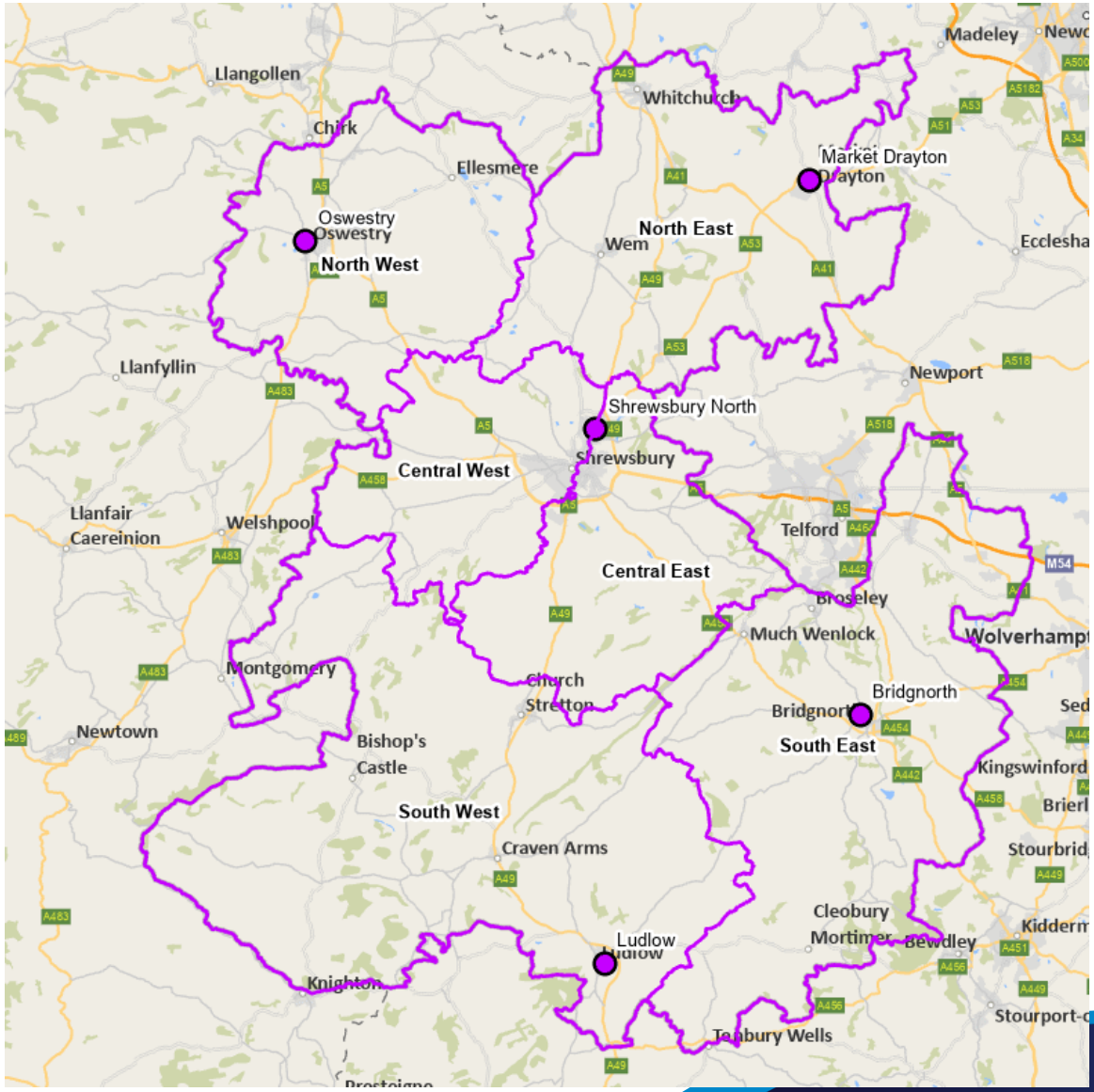
Family hub areas

Analysis of need using the 6 family hub geography areas for Shropshire.

Each hubs population size varies, with the smallest population in the South West hub area

Population size (at Census 2024):

- North West =53,237
- North East= 58,992
- Central West= 61,569
- Central East= 52,836
- South West= 36,522
- South East= 69,299

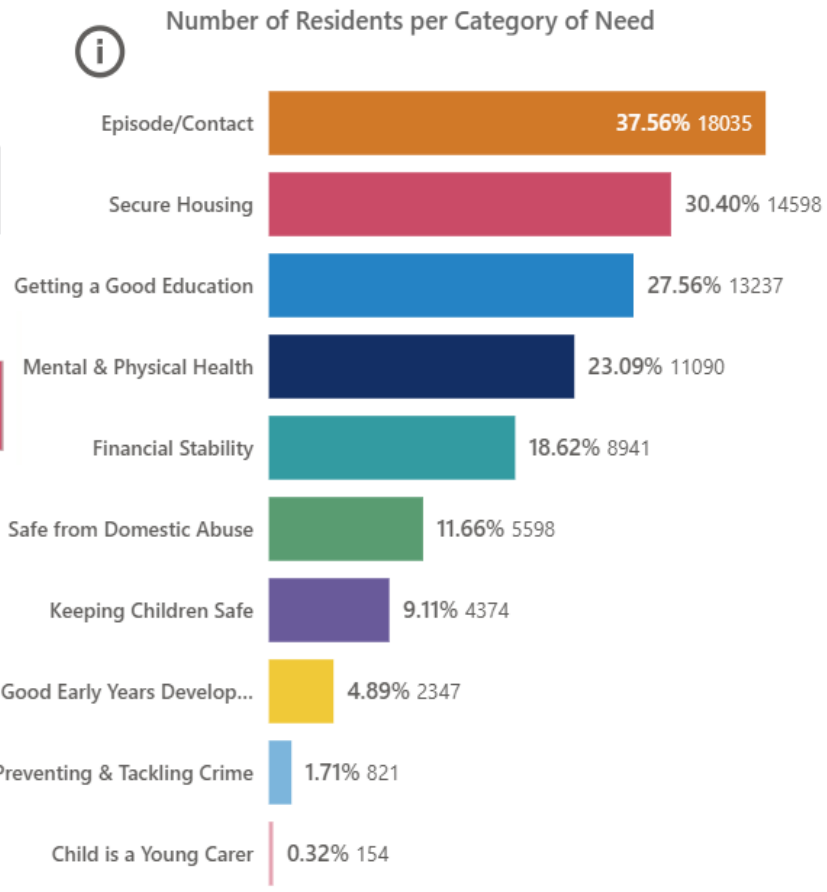


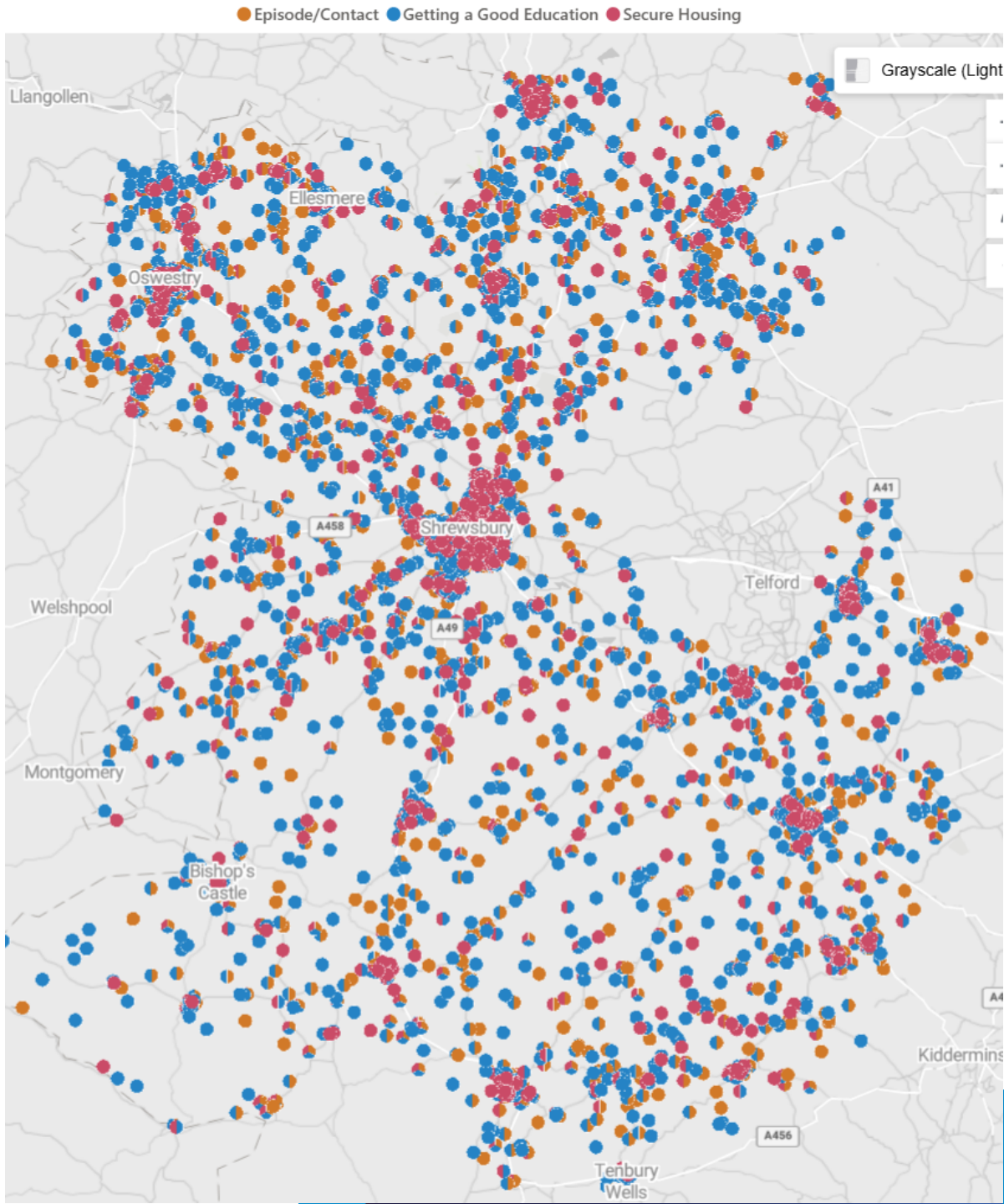
Overview of need

Total Residents	Total Properties
48,022	25,986

Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need	
27967	58.24%

Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
5,358	20.62%





Overview of need

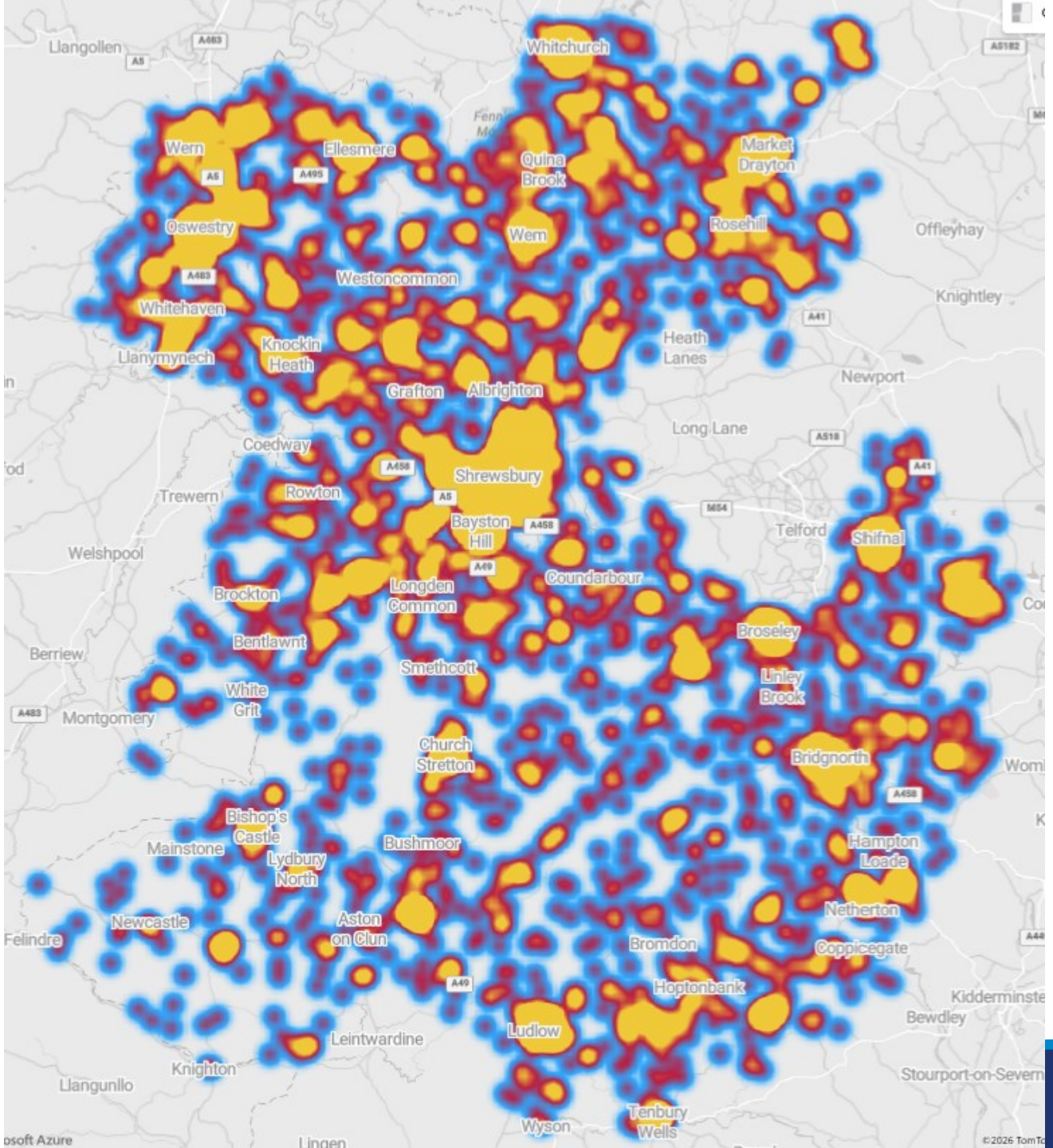
Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
On Housing Register	11687	11011	22.93%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	10301	8957	18.65%
Attendance 51% - 80%	17285	8764	18.25%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	12183	8662	18.04%
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	27636	8544	17.79%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	11602	8200	17.08%
Is Homeless	9167	6978	14.53%
Children's Social Care Contact	7907	6703	13.96%
Repeated Early Help Episode	12546	6600	13.74%
Crime Incident of Abuse	5365	4787	9.97%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	7441	4456	9.28%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	4245	2709	5.64%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	3298	2641	5.50%
Attendance 21% - 50%	4103	2175	4.53%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	2142	1919	4.00%
On Emergency Accommodation List	3126	1731	3.60%
Child has a CIN Flag	2482	1719	3.58%
Achieving Good Level of Development	1844	1580	3.29%
Social Work Assessment	2241	1452	3.02%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	1877	1430	2.98%
New Early Help Contact	1669	1378	2.87%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	3666	1345	2.80%
Child is Home Educated	1199	1198	2.49%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	1326	1069	2.23%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	1258	1053	2.19%
Claiming Financial Benefits	1024	1023	2.13%
Child Protection plan started	1169	1009	2.10%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	1163	935	1.95%
Child is Missing Education	924	923	1.92%
No Attendance	1683	852	1.77%
Attendance Less Than 20%	1563	830	1.73%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	1036	767	1.60%
Child has more than 10% Absence	680	643	1.34%
Special Educational Needs	1147	561	1.17%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	774	524	1.09%
Exclusion from School	554	514	1.07%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	709	484	1.01%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	484	441	0.92%
Child is Missing from Home	1103	441	0.92%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	456	409	0.85%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	436	404	0.84%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	468	372	0.77%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	367	300	0.62%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	335	281	0.59%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	286	230	0.48%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	218	172	0.36%
Child is a Young Carer	179	154	0.32%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	134	114	0.24%
No Attainment Score	118	96	0.20%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	88	84	0.17%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	74	66	0.14%
Adult Living with Disability	63	62	0.13%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	71	60	0.12%
Domestic Violence Marker	59	51	0.11%
Investigated/Cautioned for Criminal Offence	2	2	0.00%
Total	184963	48022	100.00%

Shropshire Council

Overview of need

Concentration of properties with indicators

(Excluding repeat indicators)



Shropshire Council

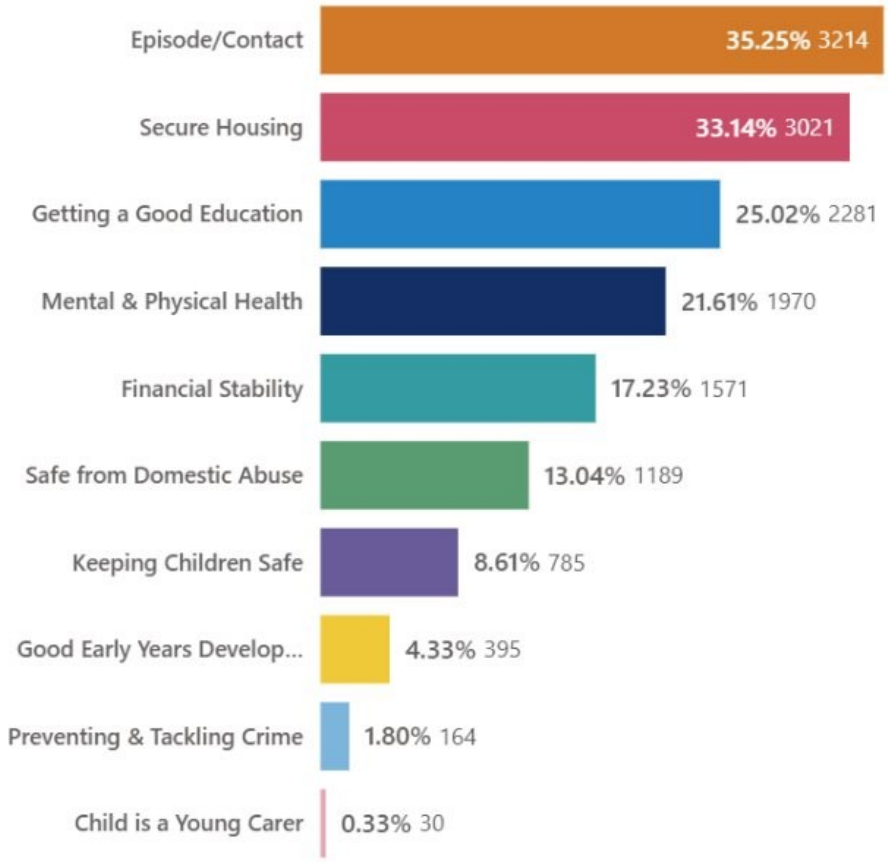
Central East | Central West | North East | North West | South East | South West

Central East

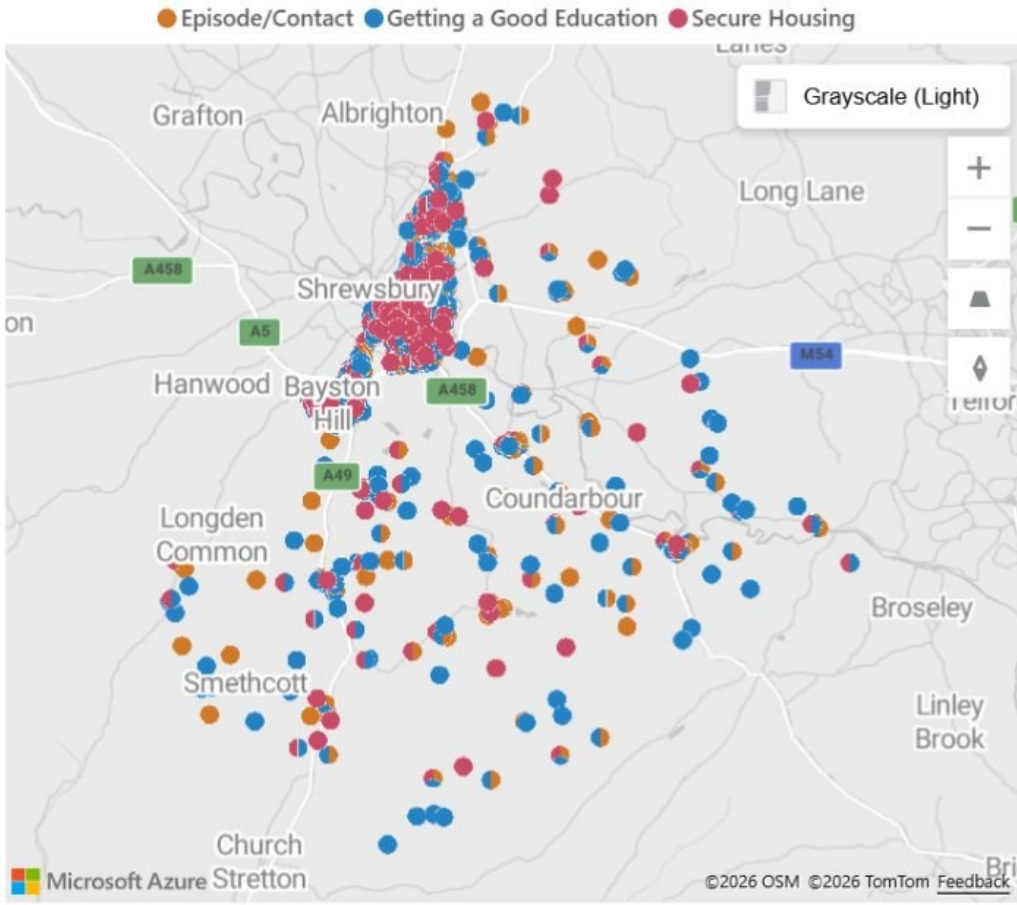
12,836 people

Total Residents	Total Properties	Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need		Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
9,117	4,484	5,529	60.64%	981	21.88%

Number of Residents per Category of Need



Top 3 Categories of Need:



Shropshire Council

Central East

Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	5112	1562	17.13%
Attendance 51% - 80%	2881	1415	15.52%
Repeated Early Help Episode	2337	1185	13.00%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	2071	1558	17.09%
On Housing Register	1969	1872	20.53%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	1944	1445	15.85%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	1872	1649	18.09%
Is Homeless	1656	1292	14.17%
Children's Social Care Contact	1322	1107	12.14%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	1195	790	8.67%
Crime Incident of Abuse	1138	1033	11.33%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	911	603	6.61%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	845	292	3.20%
Attendance 21% - 50%	783	423	4.64%
On Emergency Accommodation List	726	625	6.86%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	542	445	4.88%
Social Work Assessment	507	287	3.15%
Child has a CIN Flag	449	336	3.69%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	377	279	3.06%
No Attendance	363	157	1.72%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	354	316	3.47%
Attendance Less Than 20%	339	164	1.80%
Achieving Good Level of Development	300	247	2.71%
New Early Help Contact	289	250	2.74%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	237	199	2.18%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	219	184	2.02%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	216	148	1.62%
Special Educational Needs	216	105	1.15%
Child is Home Educated	206	206	2.26%
Child Protection plan started	200	168	1.84%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	189	161	1.77%
Child is Missing from Home	163	70	0.77%
Claiming Financial Benefits	158	158	1.73%
Child is Missing Education	148	148	1.62%
Child has more than 10% Absence	130	127	1.39%
Exclusion from School	113	107	1.17%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	105	75	0.82%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	92	72	0.79%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	90	65	0.71%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	89	76	0.83%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	89	77	0.84%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	73	66	0.72%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	60	55	0.60%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	48	38	0.42%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	37	32	0.35%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	32	27	0.30%
Child is a Young Carer	32	30	0.33%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	27	22	0.24%
No Attainment Score	24	19	0.21%
Domestic Violence Marker	18	17	0.19%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	17	17	0.19%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	16	13	0.14%
Adult Living with Disability	11	11	0.12%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	9	9	0.10%
Total	33346	9117	100.00%

Shropshire Council

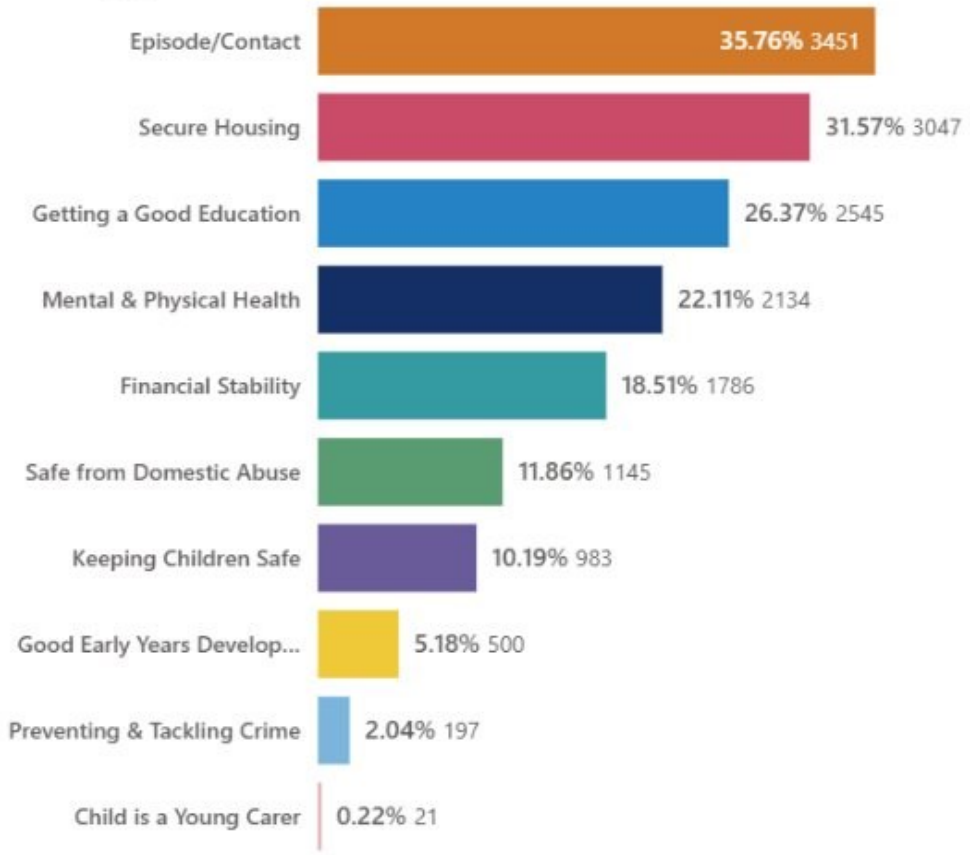
Central East | **Central West** | North East | North West | South East | South West

Central West

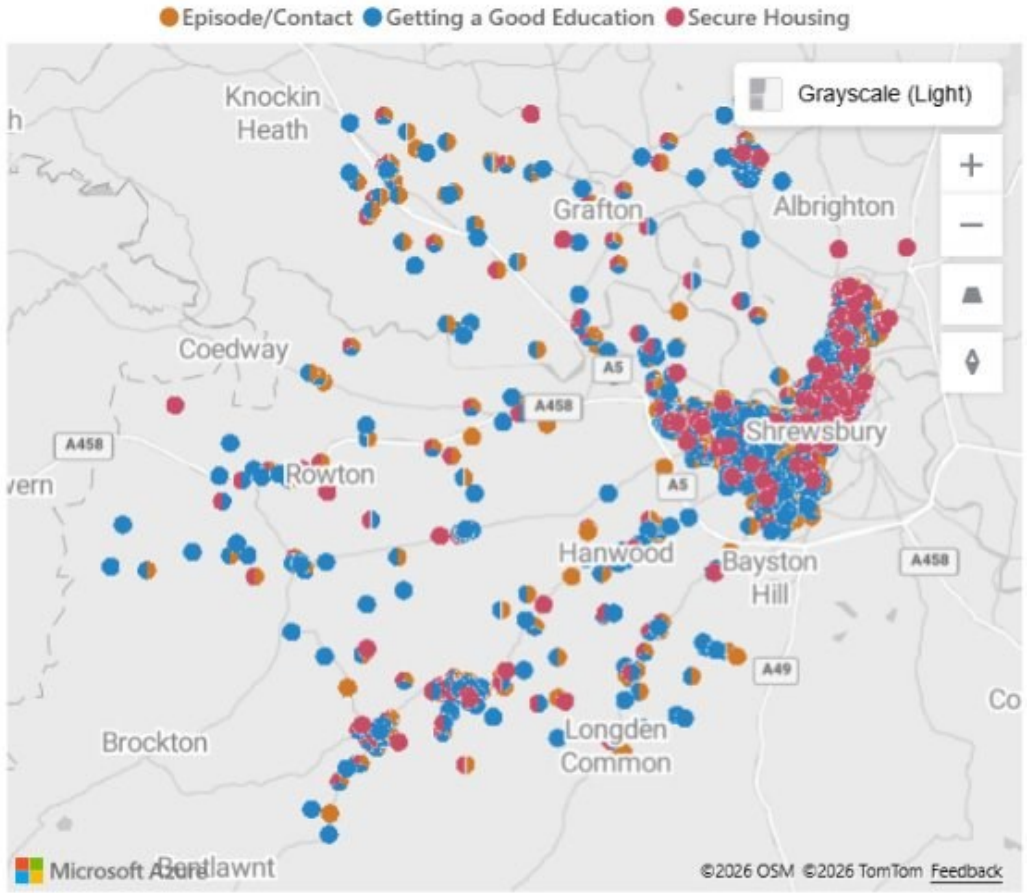
61,569 people

Total Residents	Total Properties	Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need		Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
9,651	4,941	5,954	61.69%	1,086	21.98%

Number of Residents per Category of Need



Top 3 Categories of Need:



Shropshire Council

Central West

Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	6056	1728	17.90%
Attendance 51% - 80%	3321	1706	17.68%
Repeated Early Help Episode	2350	1247	12.92%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	2230	1645	17.04%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	2218	1655	17.15%
On Housing Register	2083	1956	20.27%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	1845	1604	16.62%
Is Homeless	1741	1394	14.44%
Children's Social Care Contact	1494	1288	13.35%
Crime Incident of Abuse	1059	1001	10.37%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	1020	708	7.34%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	782	272	2.82%
Attendance 21% - 50%	767	381	3.95%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	746	518	5.37%
On Emergency Accommodation List	693	561	5.81%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	648	527	5.46%
Child has a CIN Flag	569	360	3.73%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	477	338	3.50%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	472	430	4.46%
Social Work Assessment	444	309	3.20%
Achieving Good Level of Development	389	338	3.50%
No Attendance	354	168	1.74%
Attendance Less Than 20%	344	178	1.84%
New Early Help Contact	294	262	2.71%
Child is Missing from Home	289	106	1.10%
Child Protection plan started	273	237	2.46%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	231	191	1.98%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	231	162	1.68%
Special Educational Needs	225	109	1.13%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	223	169	1.75%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	215	181	1.88%
Child is Home Educated	206	205	2.12%
Claiming Financial Benefits	191	191	1.98%
Child is Missing Education	170	170	1.76%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	159	122	1.26%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	155	94	0.97%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	155	142	1.47%
Child has more than 10% Absence	126	120	1.24%
Exclusion from School	123	113	1.17%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	117	102	1.06%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	95	67	0.69%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	85	78	0.81%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	78	58	0.60%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	72	59	0.61%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	53	39	0.40%
No Attainment Score	29	25	0.26%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	29	28	0.29%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	23	20	0.21%
Child is a Young Carer	21	21	0.22%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	21	20	0.21%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	19	16	0.17%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	14	14	0.15%
Adult Living with Disability	13	13	0.13%
Domestic Violence Marker	12	11	0.11%
Total	36049	9651	100.00%

Shropshire Council

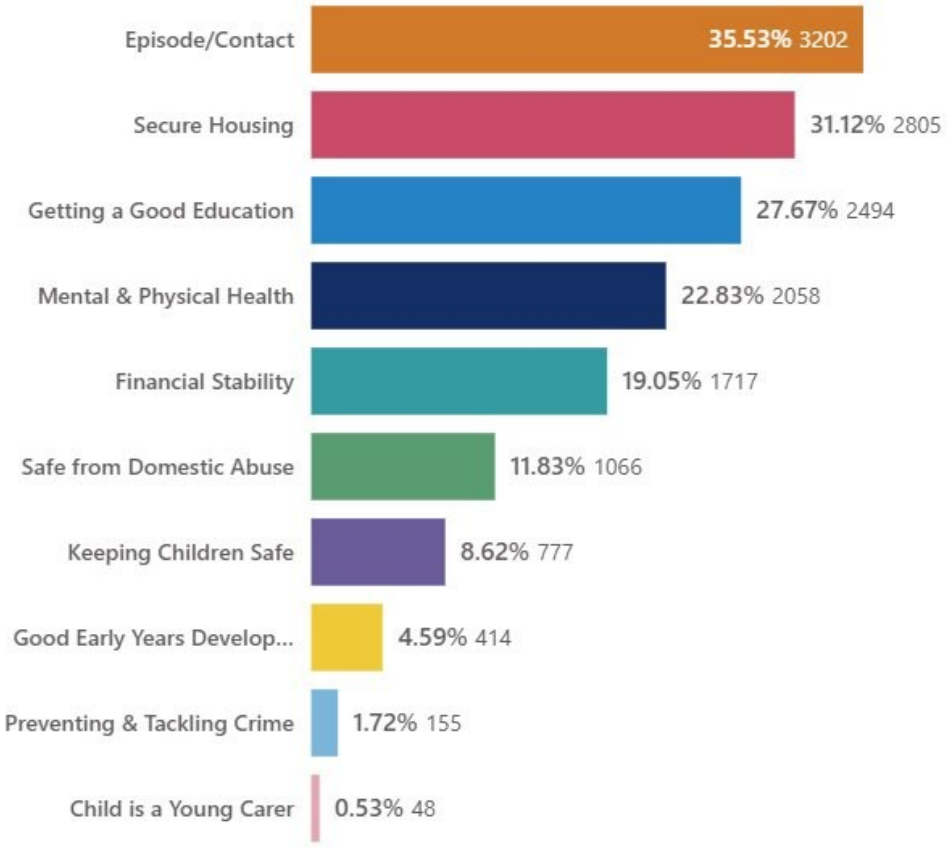
Central East | Central West | **North East** | North West | South East | South West

North East

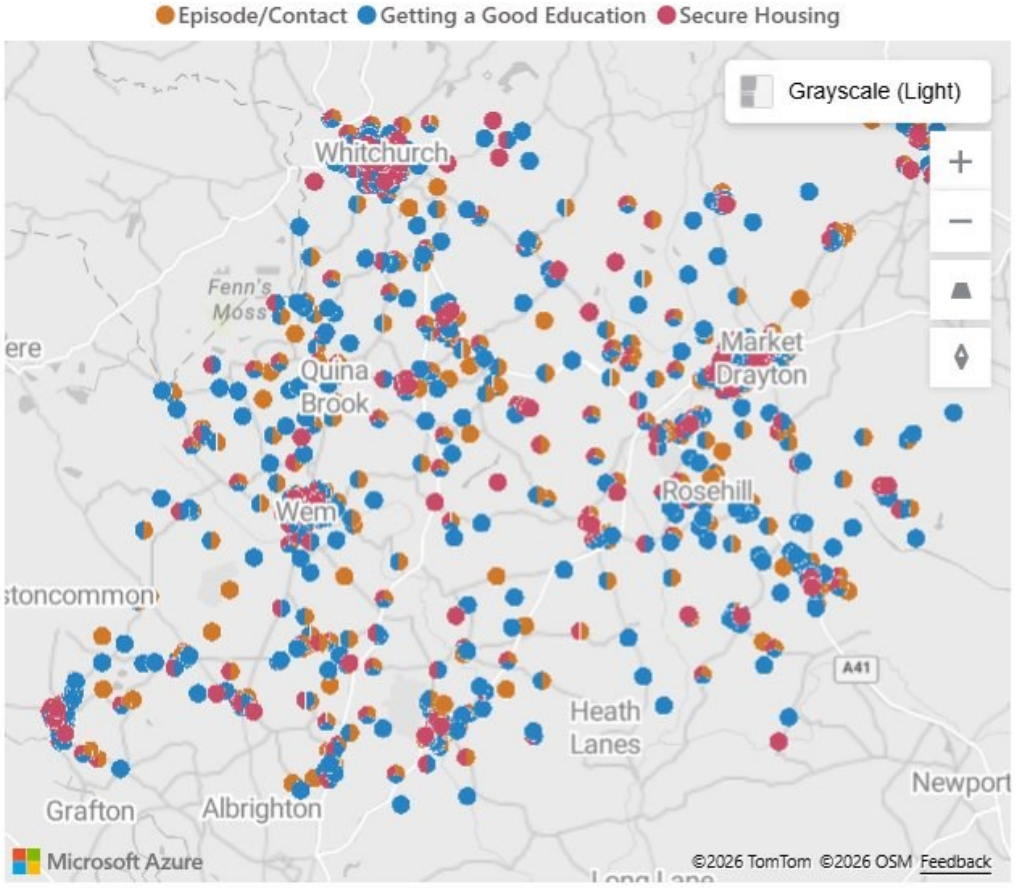
58,992 people

Total Residents	Total Properties	Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need		Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
9,013	4,740	5,310	58.91%	993	20.95%

Number of Residents per Category of Need



Top 3 Categories of Need:



Shropshire Council

North East

Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	4806	1484	16.47%
Attendance 51% - 80%	3401	1723	19.12%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	2187	1643	18.23%
Repeated Early Help Episode	2148	1146	12.71%
On Housing Register	2135	2045	22.69%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	2106	1564	17.35%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	1769	1537	17.05%
Is Homeless	1619	1276	14.16%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	1450	823	9.13%
Children's Social Care Contact	1421	1186	13.16%
Crime Incident of Abuse	957	873	9.69%
Attendance 21% - 50%	719	369	4.09%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	654	245	2.72%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	606	428	4.75%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	541	436	4.84%
Child has a CIN Flag	422	292	3.24%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	371	327	3.63%
Achieving Good Level of Development	336	299	3.32%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	336	264	2.93%
Social Work Assessment	329	238	2.64%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	323	242	2.69%
Attendance Less Than 20%	274	142	1.58%
No Attendance	255	128	1.42%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	251	210	2.33%
New Early Help Contact	248	221	2.45%
Child Protection plan started	214	187	2.07%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	208	174	1.93%
Special Educational Needs	200	105	1.16%
Child is Home Educated	196	196	2.17%
On Emergency Accommodation List	194	182	2.02%
Claiming Financial Benefits	193	193	2.14%
Child is Missing Education	157	157	1.74%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	152	115	1.28%
Child is Missing from Home	132	68	0.75%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	115	91	1.01%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	112	84	0.93%
Exclusion from School	105	99	1.10%
Child has more than 10% Absence	103	97	1.08%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	98	87	0.97%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	91	83	0.92%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	78	60	0.67%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	64	54	0.60%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	58	54	0.60%
Child is a Young Carer	58	48	0.53%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	53	49	0.54%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	44	41	0.45%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	41	33	0.37%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	30	26	0.29%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	16	14	0.16%
Domestic Violence Marker	13	10	0.11%
No Attainment Score	13	11	0.12%
Adult Living with Disability	12	11	0.12%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	11	11	0.12%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	10	8	0.09%
Total	32435	9013	100.00%

Shropshire Council

Central East | Central West | North East | **North West** | South East | South West

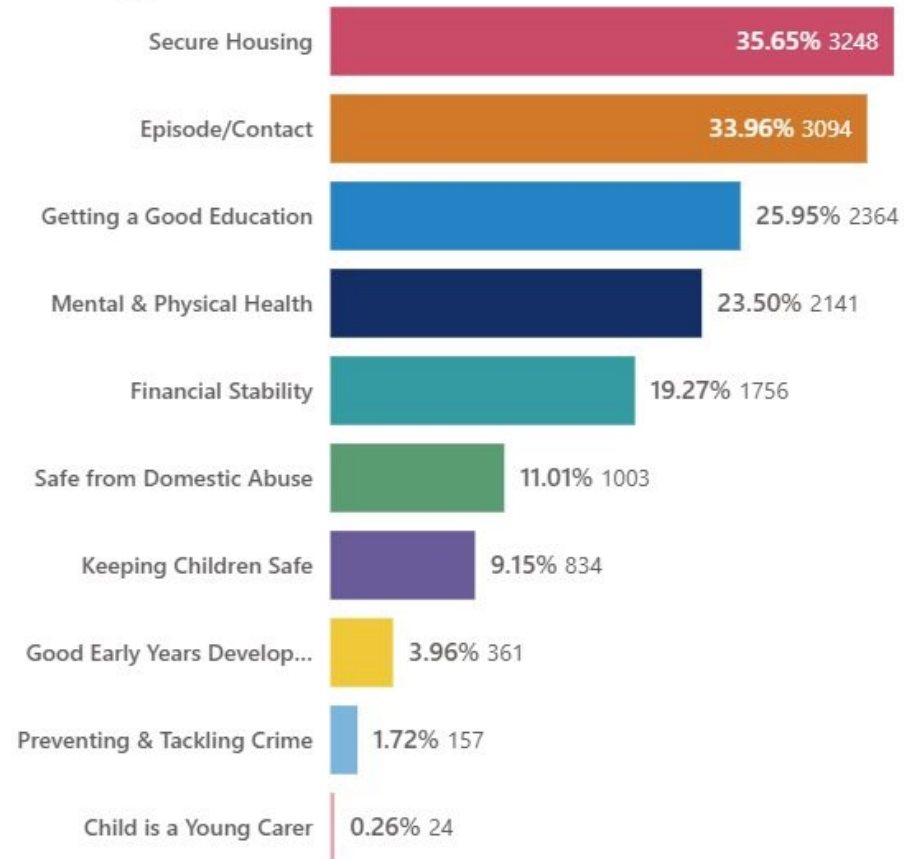
North West

Page 619

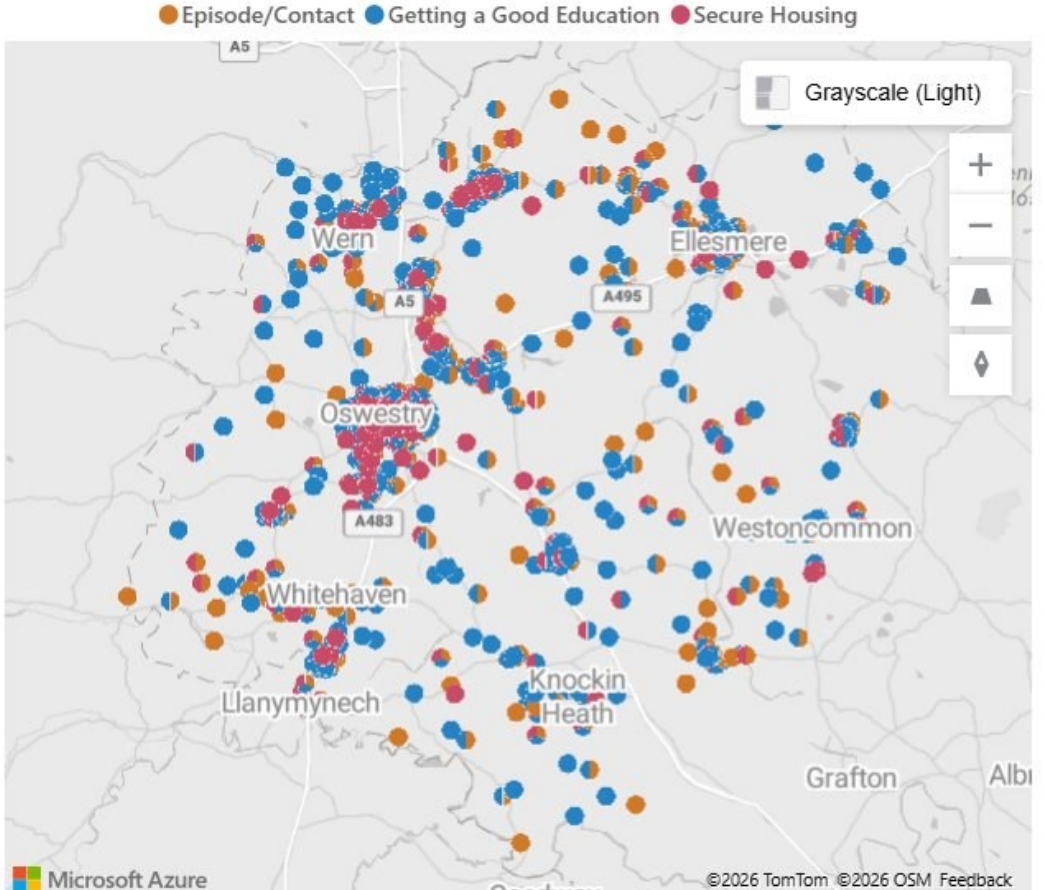
53,237 people

Total Residents	Total Properties	Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need		Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
9,111	4,625	5,487	60.22%	979	21.17%

Number of Residents per Category of Need



Top 3 Categories of Need:



Shropshire Council

North West

Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	4898	1551	17.02%
Attendance 51% - 80%	3120	1601	17.57%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	2360	1685	18.49%
On Housing Register	2282	2142	23.51%
Repeated Early Help Episode	2217	1188	13.04%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	2197	1587	17.42%
Is Homeless	1767	1411	15.49%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	1737	1506	16.53%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	1730	836	9.18%
Children's Social Care Contact	1377	1140	12.51%
On Emergency Accommodation List	1010	765	8.40%
Crime Incident of Abuse	924	832	9.13%
Attendance 21% - 50%	781	364	4.00%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	603	487	5.35%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	569	397	4.36%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	560	197	2.16%
Child has a CIN Flag	477	328	3.60%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	416	375	4.12%
Social Work Assessment	389	256	2.81%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	359	260	2.85%
No Attendance	285	152	1.67%
Achieving Good Level of Development	281	243	2.67%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	280	211	2.32%
New Early Help Contact	269	228	2.50%
Attendance Less Than 20%	245	129	1.42%
Claiming Financial Benefits	226	226	2.48%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	221	198	2.17%
Special Educational Needs	216	93	1.02%
Child Protection plan started	213	191	2.10%
Child is Home Educated	210	210	2.30%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	188	146	1.60%
Child is Missing from Home	184	61	0.67%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	161	118	1.30%
Child is Missing Education	159	159	1.75%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	155	112	1.23%
Child has more than 10% Absence	151	146	1.60%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	142	99	1.09%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	109	81	0.89%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	88	81	0.89%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	86	82	0.90%
Exclusion from School	72	68	0.75%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	66	64	0.70%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	63	49	0.54%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	55	45	0.49%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	48	34	0.37%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	43	35	0.38%
Child is a Young Carer	28	24	0.26%
No Attainment Score	22	20	0.22%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	19	17	0.19%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	17	16	0.18%
Adult Living with Disability	12	12	0.13%
Domestic Violence Marker	9	8	0.09%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	8	7	0.08%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	8	7	0.08%
Total	34112	9111	100.00%

Shropshire Council

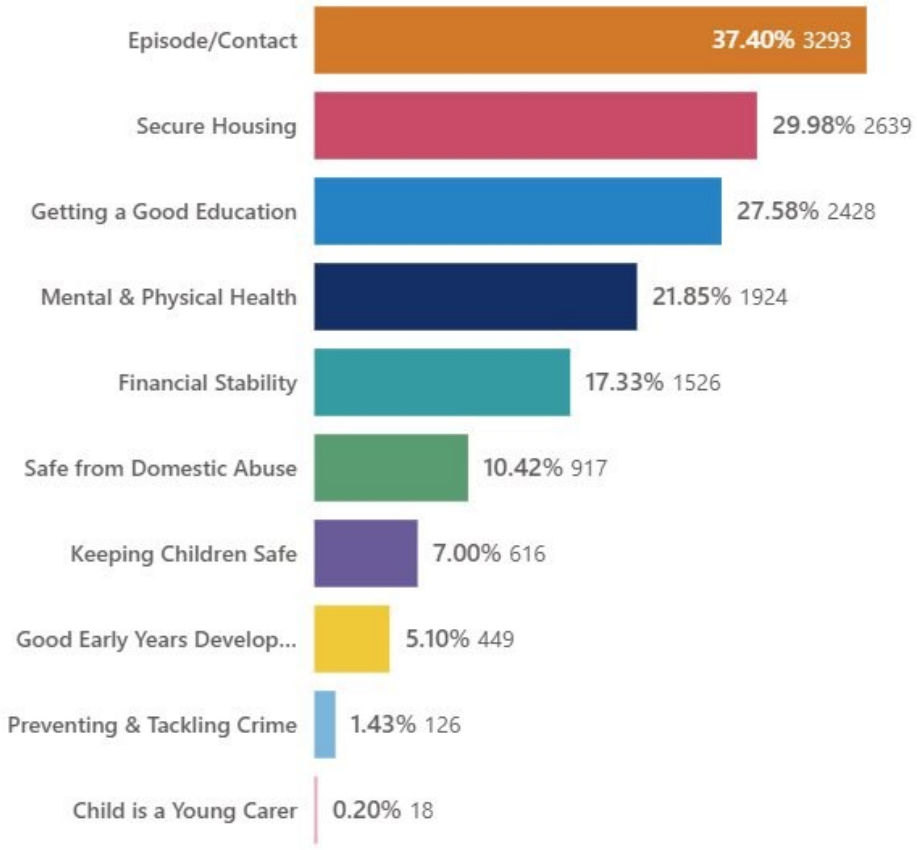
Central East | Central West | North East | North West | **South East** | South West

South East

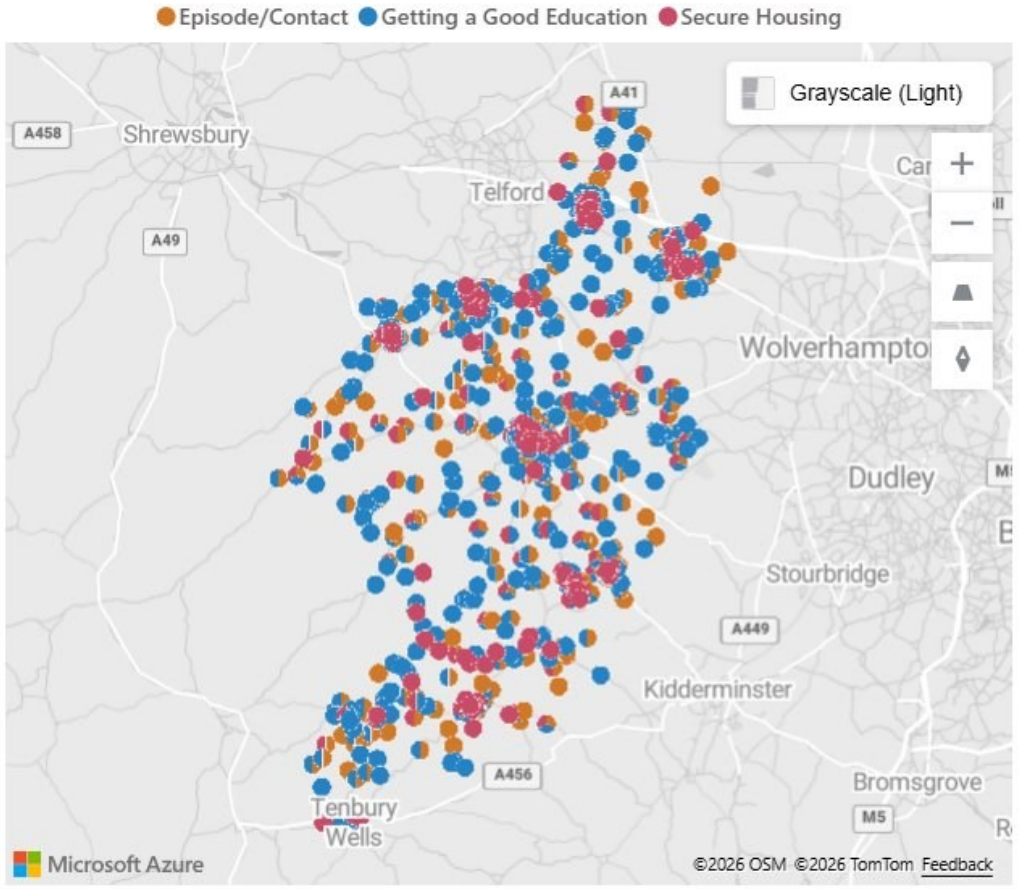
69,299 people

Total Residents	Total Properties	Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need		Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
8,804	4,632	5,199	59.05%	834	18.01%

Number of Residents per Category of Need



Top 3 Categories of Need:



Shropshire Council

South East

Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	4481	1444	16.40%
Attendance 51% - 80%	3167	1601	18.18%
Repeated Early Help Episode	2197	1155	13.12%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	2103	1501	17.05%
On Housing Register	2016	1913	21.73%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	1992	1408	15.99%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	1972	1757	19.96%
Children's Social Care Contact	1502	1297	14.73%
Is Homeless	1496	1206	13.70%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	1144	814	9.25%
Crime Incident of Abuse	860	775	8.80%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	668	472	5.36%
Attendance 21% - 50%	663	368	4.18%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	584	444	5.04%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	502	226	2.57%
On Emergency Accommodation List	359	318	3.61%
Social Work Assessment	344	228	2.59%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	343	318	3.61%
Achieving Good Level of Development	340	302	3.43%
New Early Help Contact	307	282	3.20%
Child has a CIN Flag	303	220	2.50%
Child is Home Educated	254	254	2.89%
No Attendance	254	146	1.66%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	246	203	2.31%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	234	191	2.17%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	232	181	2.06%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	224	185	2.10%
Attendance Less Than 20%	223	130	1.48%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	193	147	1.67%
Special Educational Needs	193	105	1.19%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	174	117	1.33%
Child is Missing from Home	173	77	0.87%
Child is Missing Education	166	166	1.89%
Child Protection plan started	159	141	1.60%
Claiming Financial Benefits	154	154	1.75%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	124	81	0.92%
Child has more than 10% Absence	112	104	1.18%
Exclusion from School	95	87	0.99%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	90	71	0.81%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	79	73	0.83%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	72	60	0.68%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	62	59	0.67%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	56	55	0.62%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	45	33	0.37%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	38	36	0.41%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	34	26	0.30%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	21	18	0.20%
Child is a Young Carer	20	18	0.20%
No Attainment Score	14	12	0.14%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	12	9	0.10%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	12	10	0.11%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	11	11	0.12%
Adult Living with Disability	7	7	0.08%
Domestic Violence Marker	3	3	0.03%
Investigated/Cautioned for Criminal Offence	1	1	0.01%
Total	31130	8804	100.00%

Shropshire Council

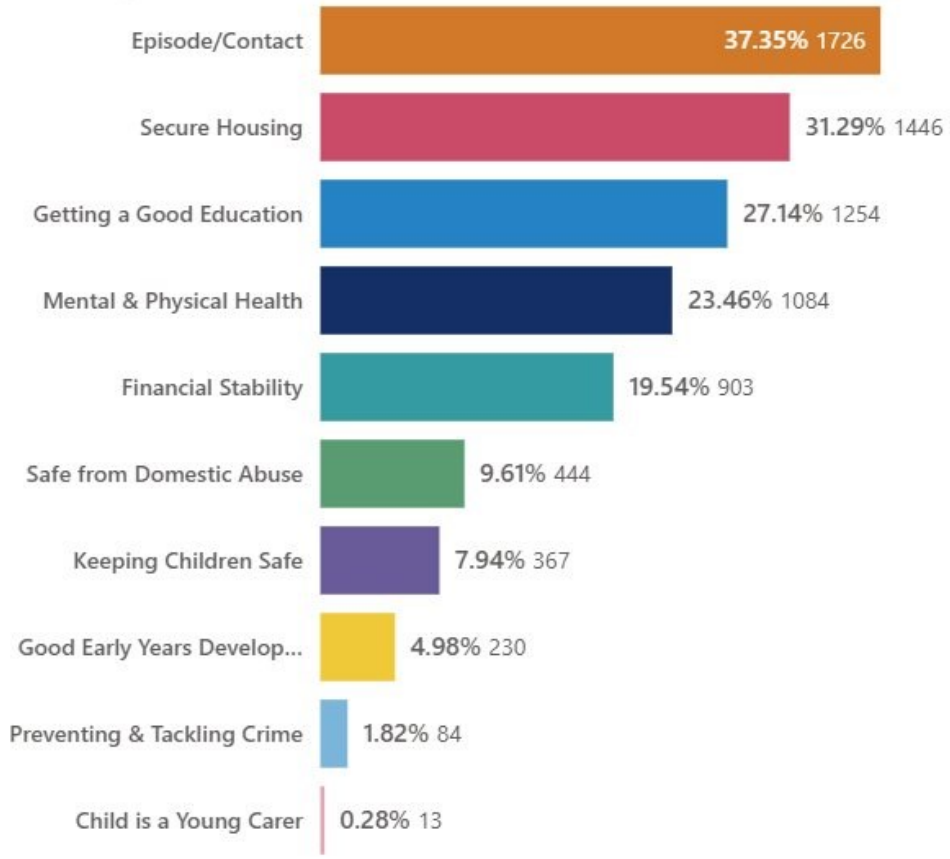
Central East | Central West | North East | North West | South East | **South West**

South West

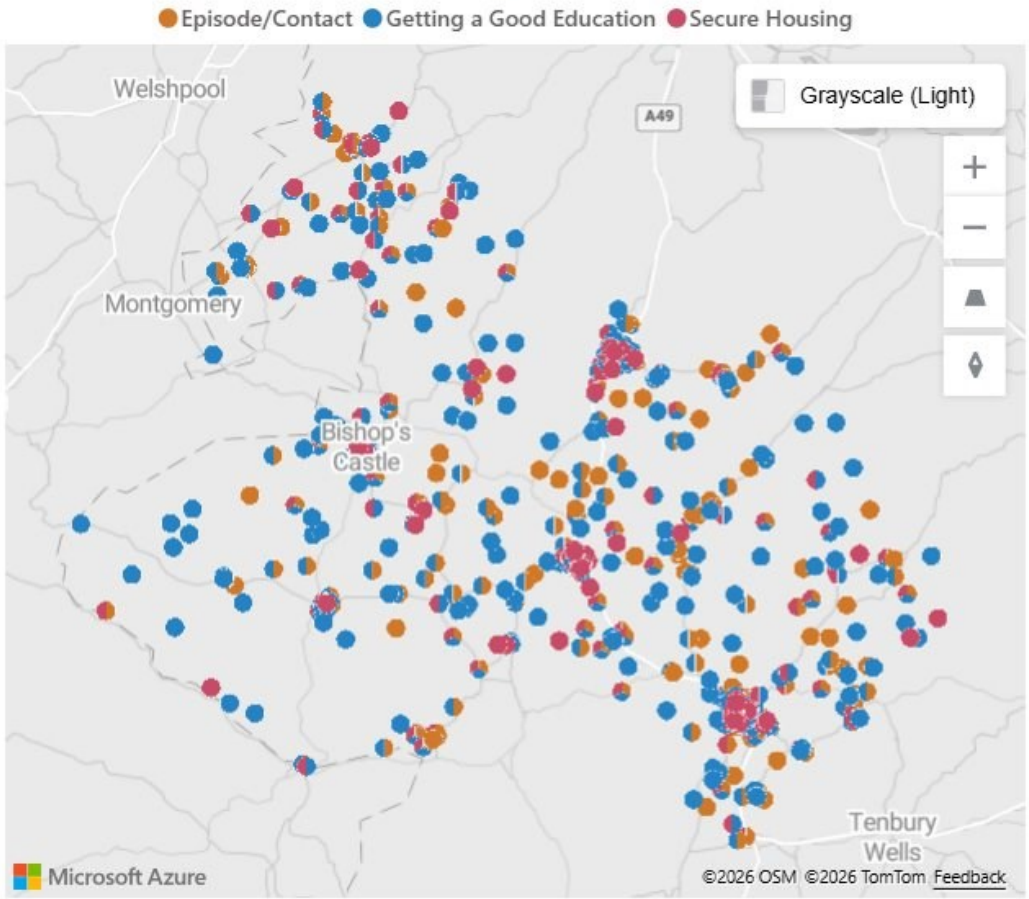
26,522 people

Total Residents	Total Properties	Residents with Repeated Indicators of Need		Properties with 3 or more Categories of Need	
4,621	2,430	2,637	57.07%	485	19.96%

Number of Residents per Category of Need



Top 3 Categories of Need:



Shropshire Council

South West

Indicator of Need	Occurrence of Indicator	Number of Residents	% of Dataset Population
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	2382	759	16.43%
Attendance 51% - 80%	1294	705	15.26%
Repeated Early Help Episode	1212	680	14.72%
On Housing Register	1151	1087	23.52%
Has Medical Issues/Benefits	1128	851	18.42%
Has Debt/Loan/Unemployed	1090	811	17.55%
Most Recent Early Help Episode	1028	887	19.19%
Is Homeless	820	629	13.61%
Children's Social Care Contact	756	632	13.68%
Has had an Early Help Assessment	711	464	10.04%
Attendance 21% - 50%	465	298	6.45%
Crime Incident of Abuse	415	384	8.31%
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	326	227	4.91%
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	303	113	2.45%
Submitted for Adult Social Care Assessment	297	241	5.22%
Child has a CIN Flag	239	167	3.61%
No Attendance	193	102	2.21%
Social Work Assessment	192	122	2.64%
Achieving Good Level of Development	184	153	3.31%
New Referral into Children's Social Care	164	152	3.29%
Re-referral into Children's Social Care within 12 Months	149	112	2.42%
Attendance Less Than 20%	140	84	1.82%
Child is Home Educated	127	127	2.75%
Claiming Financial Benefits	127	126	2.73%
New Early Help Contact	122	104	2.25%
Child is Missing from Home	120	47	1.02%
Medium Attainment Score (41 - 60)	118	95	2.06%
Low to Medium Attainment Score (21 - 40)	111	82	1.77%
Child is Missing Education	110	109	2.36%
Child Protection plan started	103	89	1.93%
Not Achieving Good Level of Development	97	77	1.67%
Child Victim of Domestic Abuse	94	82	1.77%
Special Educational Needs	94	46	1.00%
On Emergency Accommodation List	89	78	1.69%
Criminal Conviction/ASBO	87	55	1.19%
Adult Admitted to Hospital	81	53	1.15%
Child has more than 10% Absence	58	57	1.23%
Child has a Child Looked After Epsiode	46	39	0.84%
Exclusion from School	46	44	0.95%
Low Attainment Score (1 - 20)	41	34	0.74%
Medium to High Attainment Score (61 - 80)	37	28	0.61%
Child at risk of Criminal Exploitation	32	32	0.69%
Child at risk of Sexual Exploitation	32	28	0.61%
Adult at Risk of Abuse	30	26	0.56%
Not Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	27	21	0.45%
Accused/Convicted of Crime Incident	22	22	0.48%
Child is a Young Carer	13	13	0.28%
Achieved Expected Level of Reading, Writing & Maths	10	8	0.17%
No Attainment Score	9	6	0.13%
Youth Offfending Service Involvement	9	9	0.19%
Living Conditions Indicate Risk to Wellbeing	8	6	0.13%
Adult Living with Disability	7	6	0.13%
High Attainment Score (81 - 99)	5	4	0.09%
Domestic Violence Marker	3	3	0.06%
Total	16554	4621	100.00%

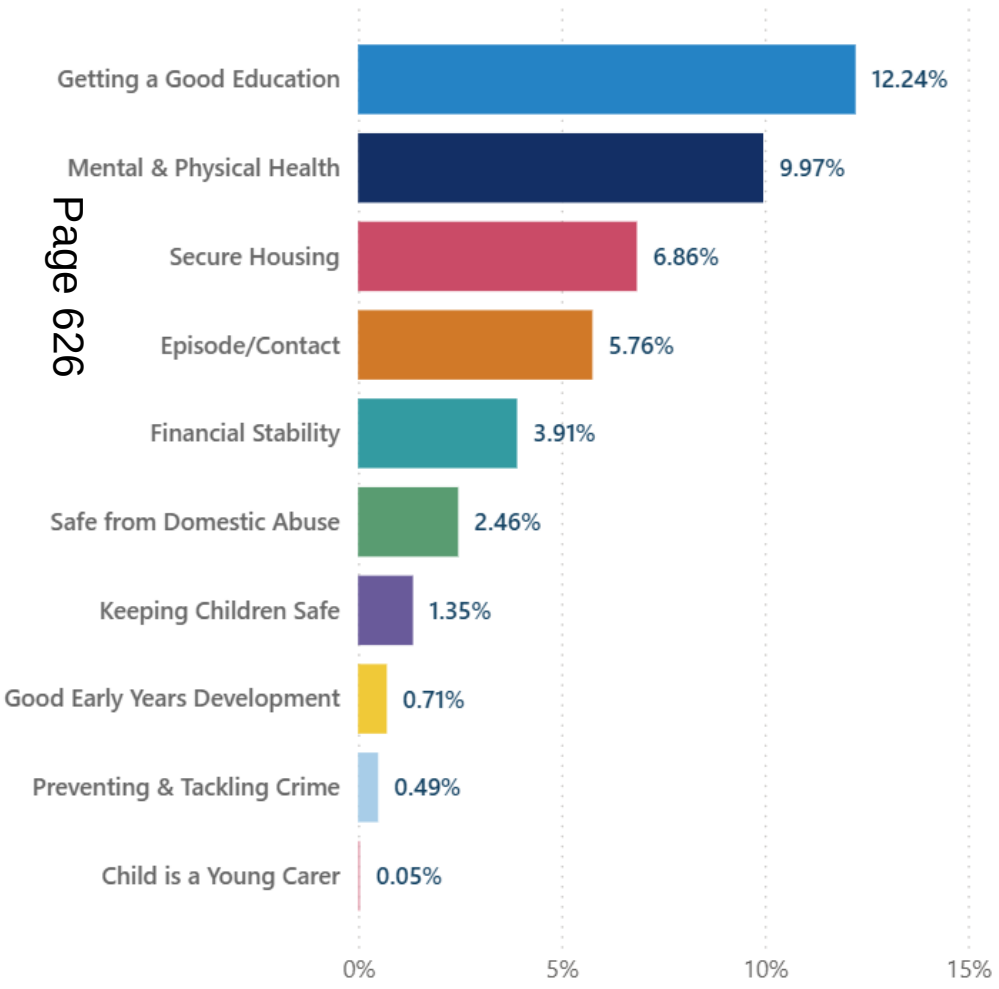
Overview of need

Central East	Central West	North East	North West	South East	South West
9,117 residents	9,651 residents	9,013 residents	9,111 residents	8,804 residents	4,621 residents
4,484 properties	4,941 properties	4,740 properties	4,625 properties	4,632 properties	2,430 properties
60.64% residents with repeated indicators of need	61.69% residents with repeated indicators of need	58.91% residents with repeated indicators of need	60.22% residents with repeated indicators of need	59.05% residents with repeated indicators of need	57.07% residents with repeated indica tors of need
21.88% 3 categories or more of need	21.98% 3 categories or more of need	20.95% 3 categories or more of need	21.17% 3 categories or more of need	18.01% 3 categories or more of need	19.96% 3 categories or more of need
Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing
Medical Issue / Benefits	School attendance	School attendance	Medical Issue / Benefits	School attendance	Medical Issue / Benefits
School attendance	Medical Issue / Benefits	Medical Issue / Benefits	School attendance	Medical Issue / Benefits	Debt / loan/ unemployed / claiming benefits
Debt / loan/ unemployed	Debt / loan/ unemployed	Debt / loan/ unemployed	Debt / loan/ unemployed / claiming benefits	Debt / loan/ unemployed	School attendance
Crime incident of abuse	Crime incident of abuse	Crime incident of abuse	Crime incident of abuse	Crime incident of abuse	Crime incident of abuse
EHCP & Special Educational needs	EHCP & Special Educational needs	EHCP & Special Educational needs	Submitted for Adults Social Care Assessment	Submitted for Adults Social Care Assessment	EHCP
Submitted for Adults Social Care Assessment	Submitted for Adults Social Care Assessment	Submitted for Adults Social Care Assessment	EHCP & Special Educational Needs	EHCP	Submitted for Adults Social Care Assessment
Child victim of domestic abuse	Child is missing from home	Child Victim of domestic abuse	Child Victim of domestic abuse	Child is home educated	Child is home educated
Child is home educated	Child is victim of domestic abuse	Child is home educated	Child is home educated	Child victim of domestic abuse	Child is missing from home

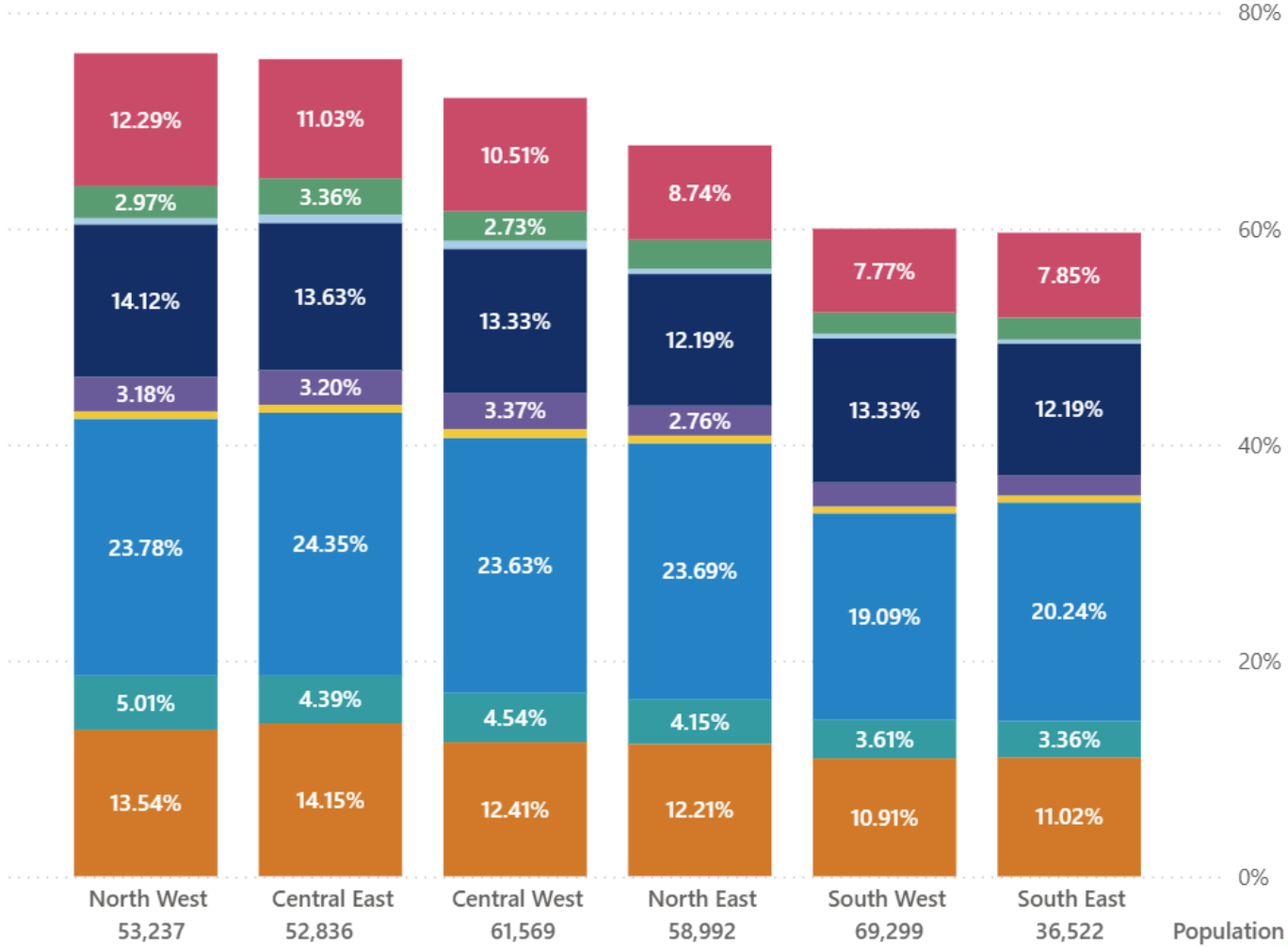
The Prevalence Rate is the proportion of people with indicator(s) per category of Needs and Harms compared to the total population of people living in the same area. Shropshire has a total of 332,455 residents split across 6 family hub areas.

Prevalence Rate = Number of Residents per Category / Population per Geographical Region

Prevalence Rate for Shropshire



Prevalence Rate per Family Hub Area



Phase 3

Locality Mapping – Shropshire's Main Towns

Regional Assessment

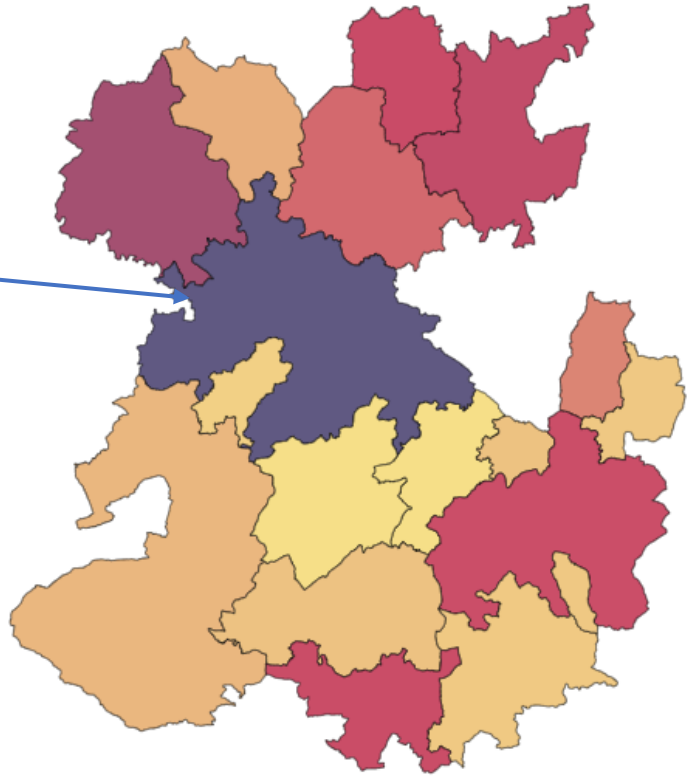
Areas Mapping

Shows totals as spreads of indicators – darker the colour is high number of indicators

Average numbers of indicators per person & household across Shropshire

Click Areas on the Map to Filter the Data:

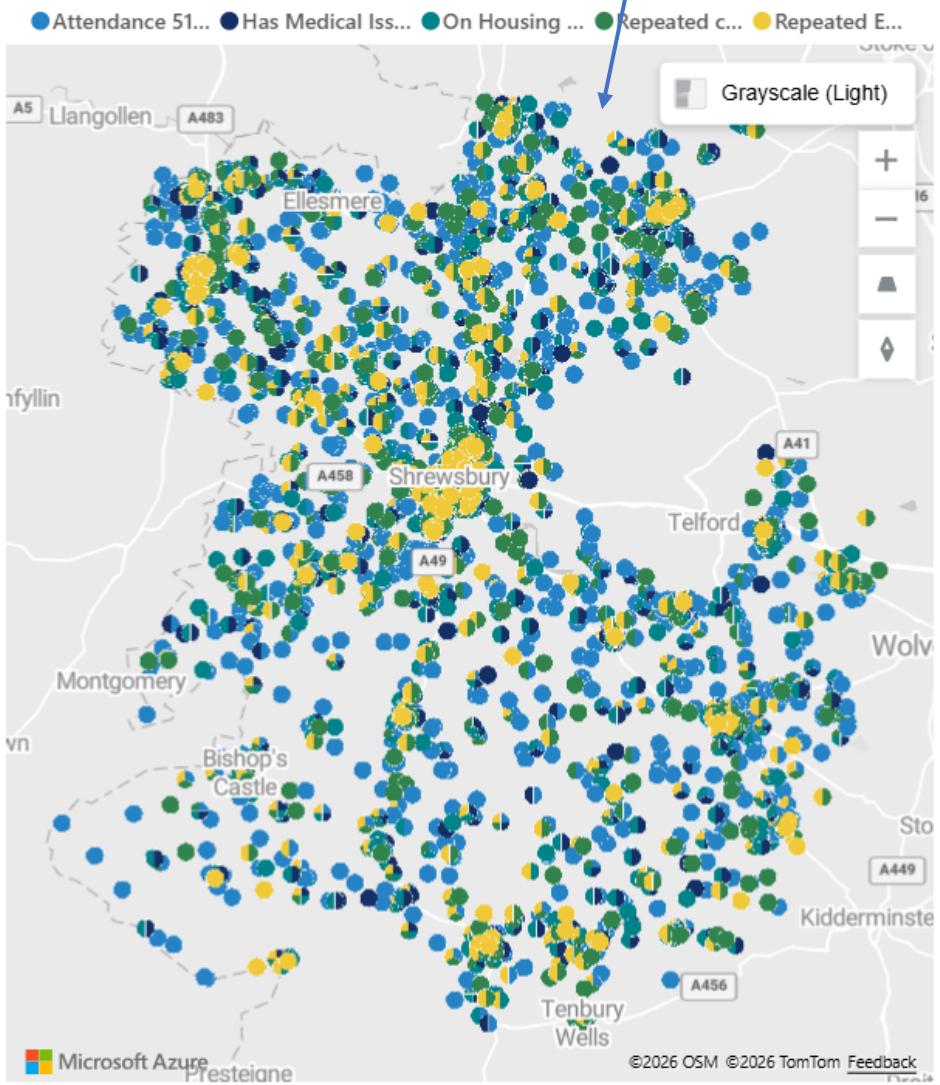
Blue areas have the highest number of Indicators, Yellow areas have the least.



Total Indicators	Average Number of Indicators per:	
	Resident	Household
161,860	3.69	6.74

Map shows the top 5 indicators per area (not categories anymore)

Top 5 Indicators of Need:



Categories per Town

Each category expands to reveal indicators within for further insight

Coloured bars to show highest demand areas

Category of Need - Total Indicators per Area	Shrewsbury	Oswestry	Market Drayton	Bridgnorth	Whitchurch	Ludlow	Wem	Shifnal	Ellesmere	Bishop's Castle
⊞ Episode/Contact	23403	10180	4573	3309	3527	3453	2779	2428	1586	1513
⊞ Getting a Good Education	11298	4827	2539	1497	1698	1371	1478	1135	726	739
⊞ Secure Housing	8986	4669	1837	1202	1228	1168	872	798	621	469
⊞ Mental & Physical Health	4852	2315	1113	701	733	708	542	451	369	322
⊞ Financial Stability	4556	2209	1048	597	766	731	434	444	325	291
⊞ Keeping Children Safe	2582	1019	447	260	326	261	335	187	164	143
⊞ Good Early Years Development	1048	390	175	174	123	102	186	124	34	94
⊞ Safe from Domestic Abuse	753	331	169	95	102	78	103	72	76	29
⊞ Preventing & Tackling Crime	316	164	68	34	49	57	29	10	19	23
⊞ Child is a Young Carer	77	25	20	13	28	10	14	3	7	1
Total	**57871**	**26129**	**11989**	**7882**	**8580**	**7939**	**6772**	**5652**	**3927**	**3624**

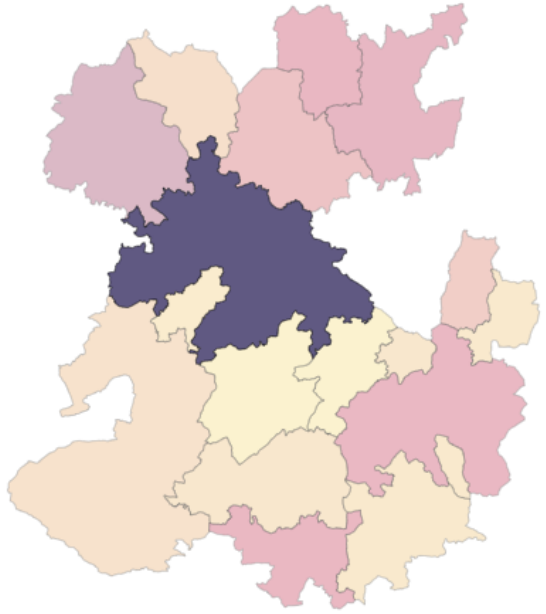
Shropshire Council

Shrewsbury

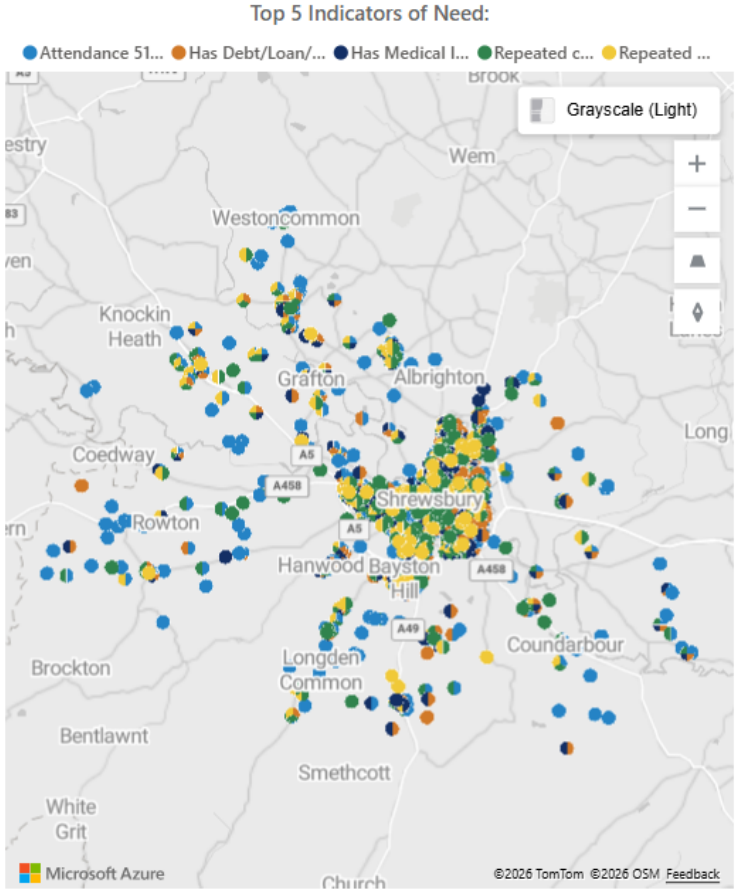
- Highest number of indicators
- Top categories: Episode/contact, Health & Education
- On Average, each resident in this data set has 3-4 indicators of need each
- On average, each household has 6 -7 indicators of need
- Highest indicator is repeat contact to Children's social care

Click Areas on the Map to Filter the Data:

Blue areas have the highest number of Indicators, Yellow areas have the least.



Top 5 Indicators of Need:



Total Indicators	Average Number of Indicators per:	
	Resident	Household
57,871	3.67	6.92

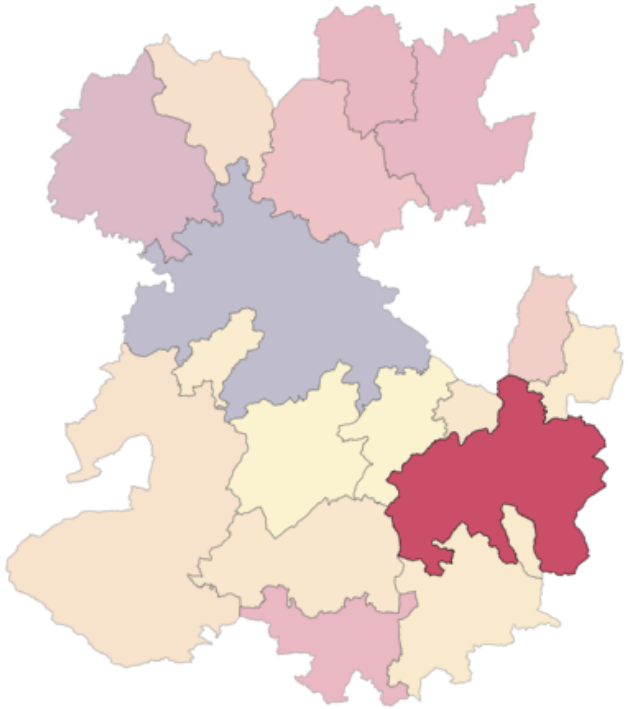
Category of Need - Total Indicators per Area	Shrewsbury	Total
Episode/Contact	23403	23403
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	7353	7353
Repeated Early Help Episode	4613	4613
Most Recent Early Help Episode	3691	3691
Repeat Early Help Contact (12 Months)	2569	2569
Has had an Early Help Assessment	2292	2292
Children's Social Care Contact	2011	2011
New Early Help Contact	874	874
Total	57871	57871

Bridgnorth

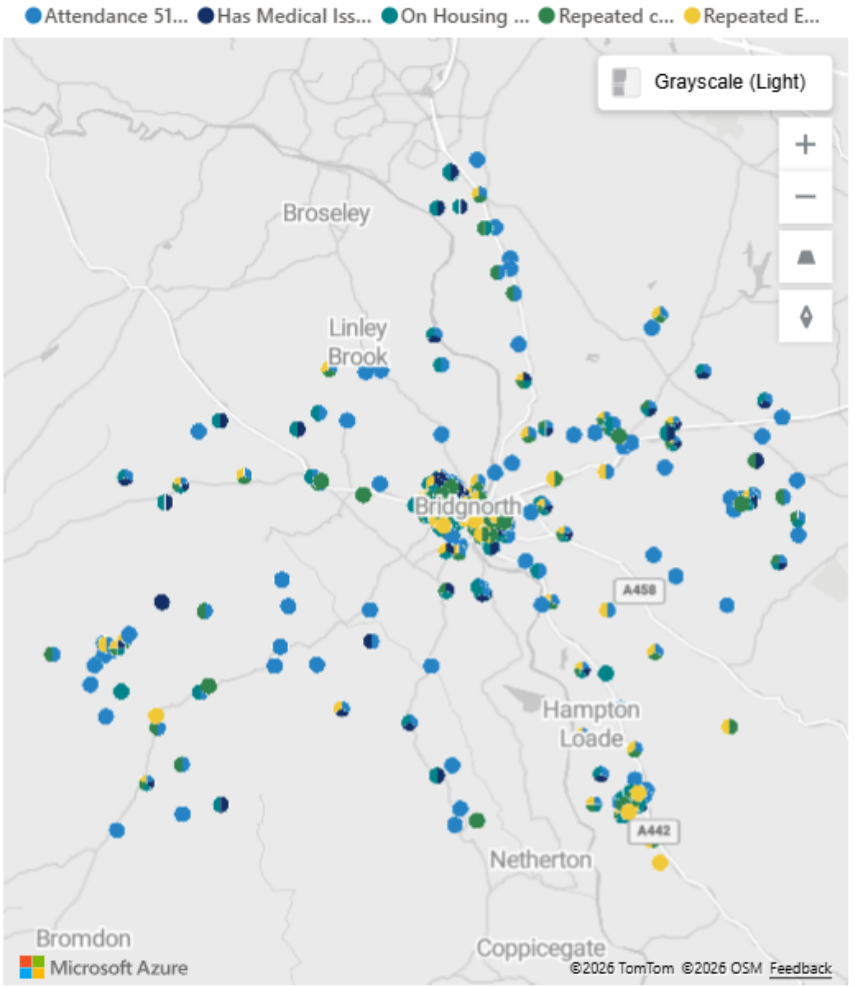
* Less indicators per household & Resident*

Click Areas on the Map to Filter the Data:

Blue areas have the highest number of Indicators, Yellow areas have the least.



Top 5 Indicators of Need:



Total Indicators	Average Number of Indicators per:	
	Resident	Household
7,882	3.15	5.71

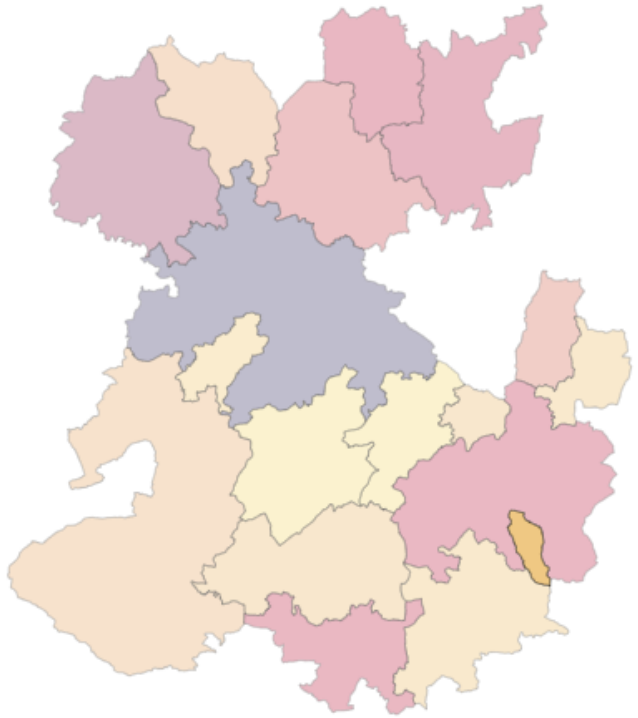
Category of Need - Total Indicators per Area	Bridgnorth	Total
Episode/Contact	3309	3309
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	970	970
Repeated Early Help Episode	675	675
Most Recent Early Help Episode	584	584
Children's Social Care	347	347

Highley

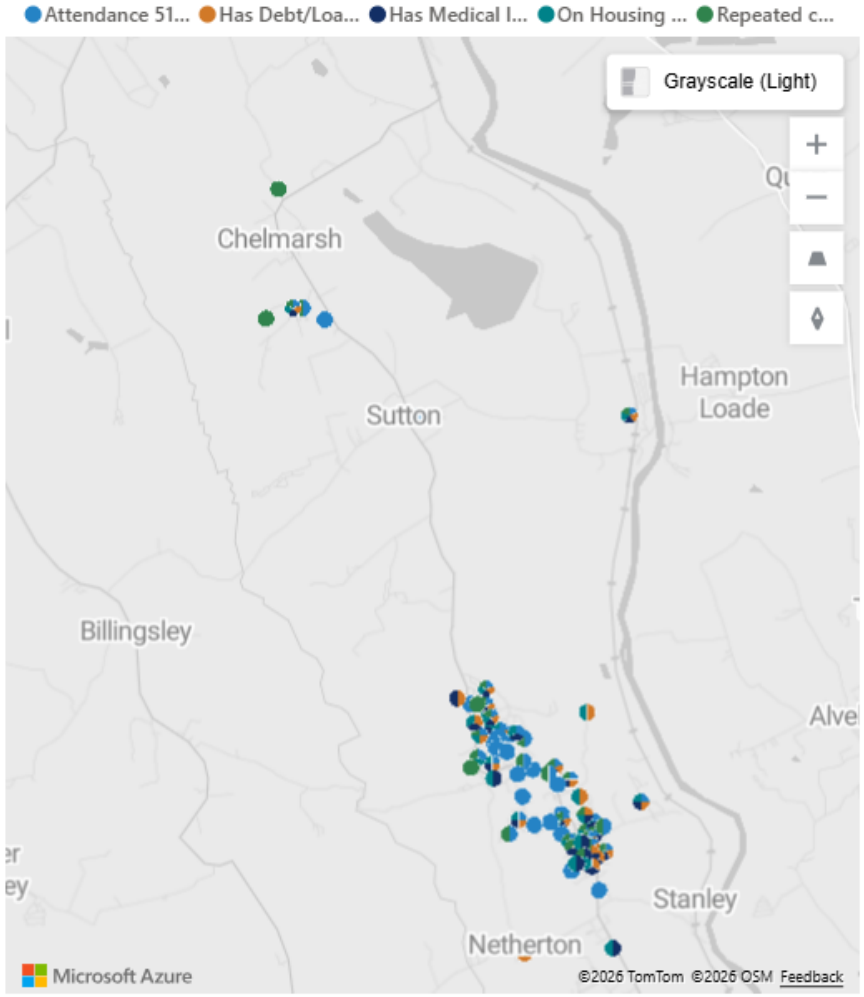
* More indicators per household *

Click Areas on the Map to Filter the Data:

Blue areas have the highest number of Indicators, Yellow areas have the least.



Top 5 Indicators of Need:



Total Indicators	Average Number of Indicators per:	
	Resident	Household
2,945	3.73	8.09

Category of Need - Total Indicators per Area	Highley	Total
Episode/Contact	1125	1125
Repeated contact into Children's Social Care	363	363
Repeated Early Help Episode	198	198
Most Recent Early Help Episode	192	192

In Summary….

- On Average, areas have similar average spread of indicators per resident and household – this suggests that there are clusters of properties where indicators occur more frequently & we don't have new residents requiring the same intervention.
- Most residents are affected primarily by similar / the same indicators across the county
- Generally, the spread of indicators are proportional to the number of residents & households per area – i.e most areas that have less indicators have less residents than other areas of larger quantity
- Some areas might be a surprise!!!!!

Is there a Phase 4?

Honest answer is yes and no!

Nothing further planned at this stage but…

Following the build of the single view of the child project, we can revise this project enabling this to become more dynamic, useful to all services, and timelier for when we come to review hub performance.

How?

The Single view will include wider datasets from more partners to be built into a central data record, so we can match people at record level more accurately, and establish better identification of households and households including children.

Cabinet | June 10th 2026

Item

Public

St. Andrews, Shifnal – Asset Decisions

Responsible Officer:	Steve Law - Head of Property and Development Toni Godolphin		
email:	Steve.law@shropshire.gov.uk Toni.Godolphin@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 250 929
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Councillor Roger Evans		

1. Synopsis

This report asks Cabinet to approve the declaration of St Andrews, Shifnal as surplus to requirements and to authorise its disposal as a non-core asset. The building is in poor condition and, following consideration through the Community Asset Transfer process, retention is not considered viable. The proposed disposal would support the Council's financial and asset management objectives by reducing liabilities and enabling a capital receipt to be realised, subject to title, planning and market considerations.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report aligns with the Council's financial and asset management objectives by recommending disposal of a non-core asset where retention is not viable and where there is potential to realise a capital receipt. St Andrews Shifnal, Shifnal returned to Shropshire Council on 1 May 2025 following termination/surrender of the previous arrangements. The previous tenants held the lease since 1972. No repairs to the fabric of the building over the term of the lease, apart from new windows. Internally heating was installed several years ago, and a main hall floor was replaced.

2.2. The site was previously considered through a Community Asset Transfer route; however, Shifnal Town Council commissioned a condition survey which concluded the building was in a bad state of repair and based on costs, it would be better value for money to be

demolished and rebuilt. Following the Town and Parish Council Asset Transfer Board meeting, it was agreed the site should proceed to cabinet to consider disposal.

2.3. Property & Development have completed a property/title review and a desktop-level indicative valuation to inform options. The title review identified an area of unregistered land to the west of the building. Work is in hand to regularise that position, and no disposal will proceed until the Council is satisfied that title issues have been addressed sufficiently for sale purpose

2.4. The building's age, historic lack of fabric investment and poor condition indicate it is unlikely to meet modern standards for energy efficiency, thermal comfort and operational performance without significant refurbishment or demolition and rebuild. This supports the value-for-money rationale for disposal and reduces the risk of the Council retaining an asset with ongoing carbon and maintenance liabilities.

2.5. In the financial year 2026/27 the government has agreed to provide Shropshire Council with support to manage financial pressures via the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) process. As part of this agreement the government expects Shropshire Council to implement robust plans to deliver improvements and service transformation required to return to financial stability and this includes generating additional income from accelerating the Council's asset disposal and identifying opportunities for capital generation. The capital receipts received from the disposal of identified surplus assets will contribute to the requirement to fund the EFS, whilst also continuing rationalisation of the estate. This will reduce both the future repairs and maintenance liability and further revenue and capital funding requirements. This asset is currently not identified within the capital receipt financing requirement to fund the current capital programme and will therefore generate a new capital receipt that can contribute to the EFS funding requirements.

3. Recommendations

3.1. To declare St Andrews, Shifnal (in accordance with the red line plan detailed in Appendix 1) surplus to requirements and approve its disposal as a non-core asset.

3.2. To delegate authority to the Head of Property and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to take all necessary steps to progress disposal, including title resolution, determination of the appropriate disposal strategy and completion of the sale in accordance with the Council's constitutional and legal requirements.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. Title and land ownership risk: disposal could be delayed or compromised due to the unregistered land to the west of the building and the need to complete the adverse possession process, which may affect marketability, buyer confidence and achievable consideration. Mitigation: continue the title due diligence and progress the adverse possession application has been submitted; only proceed to market once the title position is sufficiently clear (or disclose clearly and structure heads of terms to reflect any residual title risk).

Contact: Toni Godolphin | Toni.Godolphin@shropshire.gov.uk

4.2. Planning and value realisation risk: the potential housing-led value/capital receipt from the wider site may not be achievable if planning constraints, abnormal costs (e.g. demolition), access, utilities, ecology or other site constraints reduce deliverability and bidder appetite, resulting in a lower receipt or aborted sale. Mitigation: undertake proportionate pre-market planning and technical screening (planning, access, utilities, ecology/trees, contamination, flooding where relevant); prepare a clear information pack for bidders; consider alternative lotting/disposal strategies to widen the market; take valuation advice and maintain an updated price expectation through the marketing period.

4.3. Stakeholder, consultation and reputational risk: disposal may attract objections from local stakeholders (including the Town Council/community groups) or create expectations about future community use, potentially leading to delay, challenge or adverse publicity. Mitigation: engage early with the Portfolio Holder and local member and maintain clear communications with key stakeholders on the rationale (non core asset, condition and value for money); set out decision-making and disposal constraints transparently.

4.4. Risk table

Risk	*Mitigation*
Title risk: unregistered land and adverse possession issues could delay disposal or affect marketability.	Adverse possession applied for; only market once title is sufficiently clear or disclose and manage through contract conditions.
Planning and value realisation risk: development potential or expected receipt may not be achieved if planning, access, utilities, ecology, contamination or abnormal costs reduce deliverability and bidder appetite.	Complete proportionate pre-market technical checks; obtain up-to-date valuation advice; prepare a robust sales pack; consider alternative lotting/disposal route; set realistic reserve/acceptance parameters.
Stakeholder, consultation and reputational risk: objections from local stakeholders or expectations about community use could delay the disposal, prompt challenge or generate adverse publicity.	Follow Local Member Protocol; engage Portfolio Holder/local member early; record consultation and responses
Holding and asset condition risk: while the property remains unsold, vacancy, deterioration, vandalism or safety issues could increase costs, liabilities and delay disposal.	Maintain appropriate security and inspections; address immediate hazards; ensure insurance is in place; implement a holding strategy (boarding, signage, periodic condition checks) until disposal completes.

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 recommendation to dispose of St Andrews, Shifnal is expected to support the Council's financial recovery by seeking to realise a capital receipt from a non-core asset and by reducing ongoing holding liabilities associated with a vacant, deteriorating building; actual spend against this property in 2025/26 was £5k, with a budgeted spend of 6k for 2026/27. Due to the value of the site being within a range that could exceed 500K, in accordance with the Council's constitution and scheme of delegation, it requires a Cabinet decision. Any receipt achieved would be a capital resource and will be applied in accordance with the Council's capital strategy and medium-term financial planning, including support for agreed capital investment priorities and/or to mitigate borrowing where applicable. There is no receipt projected for this site within the capital projections and therefore this would be an addition to the current targets. Transaction costs (e.g. valuation, legal and marketing/agent fees) and any reasonable pre-sale costs (including site security and maintaining safe condition pending disposal) will be met from existing approved budgets where available and/or netted off against the receipt, subject to the final disposal strategy and approvals. The timing and quantum of any receipt remains subject to completion of title matters (including the adverse possession position), planning and market conditions and could vary from initial indications; these uncertainties will be managed through proportionate pre-market due diligence, updated valuation advice, and an appropriate marketing strategy to demonstrate best consideration and maintain a clear audit trail.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1. Energy and fuel consumption / modern standards: St Andrews is in poor condition and is unlikely to perform to modern energy efficiency standards. Retaining the building would be expected to require significant investment to improve fabric performance

6.2. Renewable energy / mitigation and adaptation: Should the site be redeveloped, there may be opportunities for a future scheme to incorporate low-carbon design and renewable technologies (for example heat pumps and solar PV) and to deliver improved climate resilience through sustainable drainage, shading/overheating control and biodiversity enhancements (subject to planning and viability). As part of the disposal process, the Council will provide available building/site information to bidders and encourage proposals that align with climate objectives, while recognising that the Council will not control the detailed design outcomes once disposed.

7. Background

7.1. St Andrews, Shifnal is a Council-owned former community building which returned to the Council on 1 May 2025 following the termination/surrender of previous arrangements. The previous tenants had held the lease since 1972 and, aside from limited works (including replacement windows and some internal improvements), the building's fabric has not benefited from comprehensive investment over that period.

Contact: Toni Godolphin | Toni.Godolphin@shropshire.gov.uk

7.2. Following the asset returning to the Council, the site was explored through a Community Asset Transfer route with Shifnal Town Council. As part of that work, Shifnal Town Council commissioned a condition survey which concluded that the building is in a poor state of repair and that, based on the likely costs of remedial works, demolition and rebuild would represent better value for money than attempting to retain and refurbish the existing structure. Working closely with Shifnal Town council, along the way has been key.

7.3. The findings were considered through the Town and Parish Council Asset Transfer Board, where it was agreed that the proposal should progress to Cabinet for a decision on disposal. In parallel, Property & Development have completed a property/title review and a desktop-level indicative valuation to inform options appraisal, identifying title complexity including an area of unregistered land to the west of the building for which adverse possession has been requested and will need to be resolved prior to disposal.

8. Additional Information

8.1. The building is currently vacant and, given its condition, is being managed on a holding basis pending disposal. Appropriate site security and periodic inspections are being maintained to manage health and safety and liability risks until a sale completes.

8.2. The disposal is intended to consider the wider site potential (including the area of land to the west of the building) which has been identified as unregistered and is subject to the adverse possession process. Any future redevelopment value is subject to planning and other site constraints, and the Council will ensure that the sale is progressed with clear title information, appropriate marketing and governance to achieve best consideration.

8.3. The Local Member was contacted but did not provide any comments.

9. Conclusions

9.1. St Andrews, Shifnal is a non-core asset which has returned to the Council and, based on the condition survey evidence, is in a poor state of repair and is not considered viable for retention without demolition and rebuild. In the context of the Council's financial position and wider asset management objectives, disposal represents the most appropriate value-for-money option, avoiding ongoing holding liabilities and providing the opportunity to realise a capital receipt (subject to planning and market conditions).

9.2. Subject to Cabinet approval, officers will progress the required due diligence and actions to enable a compliant disposal, including resolution of title matters (including the unregistered land/adverse possession position), appropriate stakeholder engagement, and selection of a disposal and marketing strategy that demonstrates best consideration and maintains a clear audit trail. Delegated authority will enable the Council to respond proportionately to technical and market findings and to progress the transaction efficiently while managing the identified risks.

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

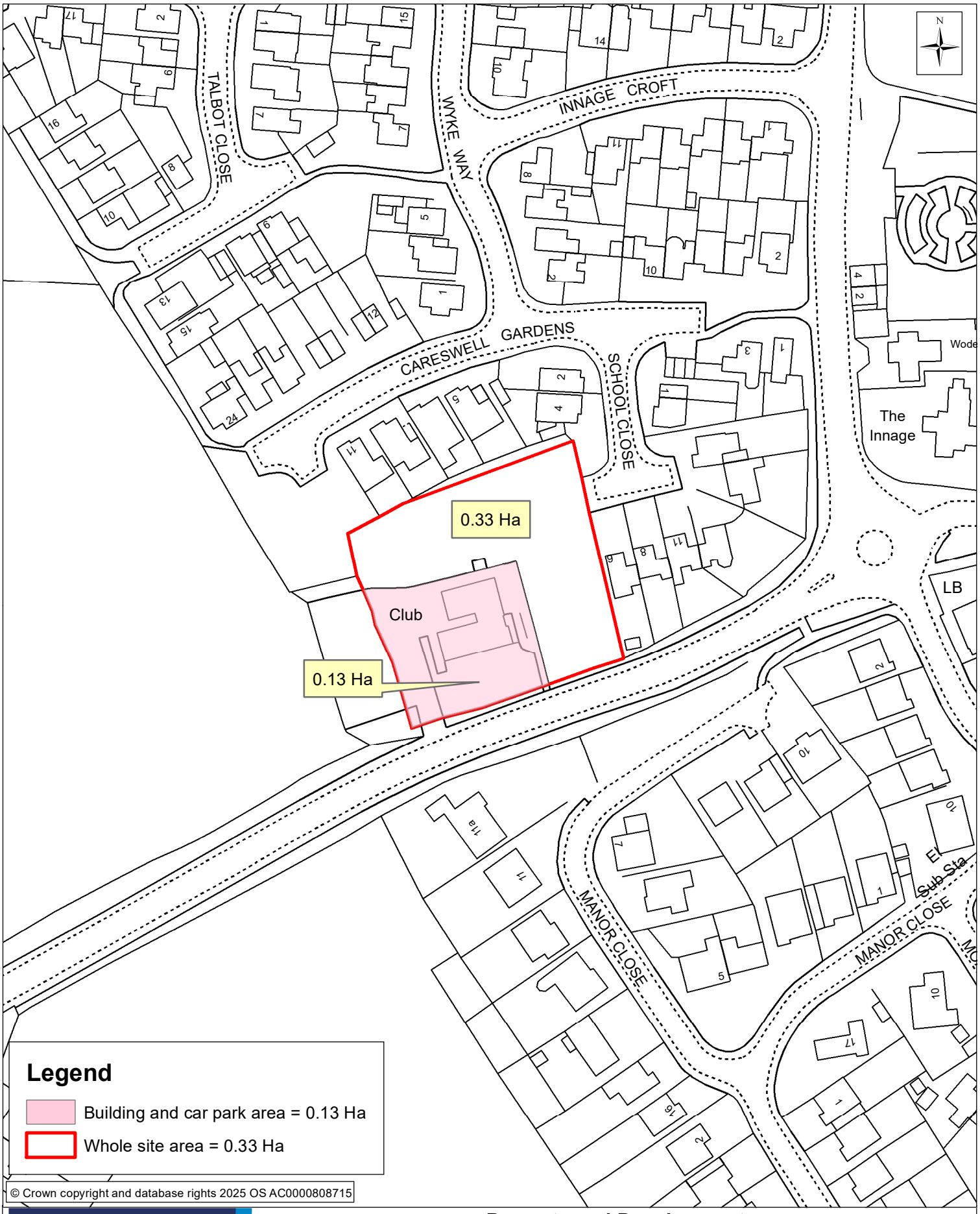
None

Contact: Toni Godolphin | Toni.Godolphin@shropshire.gov.uk

Local Member:	Cllr Ed Bird

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Red line plan of St Andrews, Shifnal



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Shropshire Council

Property and Development
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate
SHREWSBURY
SY2 6ND

Location plan with Ha details - St Andrew's Youth Club, School Close, Shifnal

Drawing No:	294-001-376
Scale:	1:1,250
Date:	September 2025
Drawn by:	ACR - Asset Management

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Finance & Improvement O&S Committee – 8th June

Cabinet – 10th June

Item

Public

Improvement Plan – Update

Responsible Officer:	Paul Clarke – Service Director, Strategy & Change
Email:	paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Heather Kidd - Leader

1. Synopsis

The Improvement Plan was approved by Full Council on 11th December 2025 as a single framework and overall plan for the Council's improvement activity. It includes agreed aims and priorities that provide the basis for a range of activity, projects and programmes that respond to the financial emergency (declared by Cabinet on 10th September 2025), ensure immediate short-term stabilisation and recovery, and drive the development of a strategy for financial sustainability over the medium term.

This report provides a summary of the delivery, progress and impact driven by the Plan, including an updated response to the External Auditors 'Statutory Recommendation' issued in November 2025. The report also summarises how the Plan has been kept under regular review, and the reprioritising and revision of some programme activity to reflect delivery, changing circumstances and the next phase of improvement required.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. The Improvement Plan was developed in response to various external reports, including a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge and External Auditor Annual Audit Letter which made recommendations to address the financial position and improve other areas of how the Council operates, including corporate governance. It also provided a response to the 'financial emergency' declared by Cabinet in September 2025. The Plan was also informed by the Statutory 'Best Value' Guidance for councils which provides the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. We know there are areas to improve before we can confidently demonstrate excellence against all characteristics.

2.2. The Plan provides an overall strategy for 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. It is built around three overall aims:

- A Council that is financially stable and sustainable
- A Council that has clear priorities and purpose
- A Council that supports its workforce to excel

2.3. The Plan has provided the overall framework and basis for activity and plans that have delivered immediate recovery and stabilisation while keeping a focus on how we need to look, feel and operate as an organisation, to deliver future priority ambitions. It remains an essential part of our overall 'flightpath' to financial sustainability – driving improvement in organisational capacity and capability and building the solid foundations and basis for a medium-term strategy.

2.4. The priority programmes listed below are described in more detail at **Appendix 1.** They are a mix of activity being delivered and projects that drive the development of a coherent and strategic basis for what we do and focus on as a Council. For example, Programme 4 has been about the development of a new Corporate Plan. Programme 6 is focussed on the development of a medium-term transformation and savings portfolio.

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
A Council that has clear priorities and purpose (Priorities)	Programme 4: Corporate Plan 2026-30
	Programme 5: Future Council – including: 5.1 Future council principles and ways of working 5.2 Devolution to parish/town councils 5.3 Place shaping role
	Programme 6: Review and realignment of the transformation programme
A council that supports and enables our workforce to excel (People)	Programme 7: People Plan
	Programme 8: Getting the basics right (strengthening corporate governance and compliance)
	Programme 9: Digital programme

2.5. Delivery and progress have been overseen by an externally chaired Improvement Board, who since January have received a monthly update report. The Board has been in place since November 2025 and includes all political group leaders. Internally, monitoring and assurance, provided by the Corporate Programme Management Office (PMO), provides insight and confidence to review and refresh elements of the Plan to better reflect the delivery to date, current financial situation, changing circumstances and evolving organisational priorities. A summary of the arrangements in place to make sure we deliver the Plan are summarised in a report to the Audit and Governance Committee on 5th February 2026.

2.6. A summary of each programme and their key deliverables, outputs and outcomes is provided at **Appendix 1**. Overall, delivery against the Plan has progressed as planned, and there are some notable delivery milestones and delivered activity – including:

- the securing of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)
- development and approval of a robust and realistic budget 2026/27
- strengthened financial management practices
- corporate governance improvements and increased levels of compliance
- piloting of devolution of services to parish/town councils
- new people management practice – PDRs, and 'role of the manager' initiative
- development of new 'PROUD' organisational values
- improved staff communication and engagement approaches
- development and approval of a new Corporate Plan 2026-30
- new strategies – including digital, procurement and commissioning
- additional leadership capacity (strategy and place)
- new arrangements to facilitate political and managerial leadership discussion

2.7. There has been a range of activity across programmes that respond to the External Auditor statutory recommendation, which are summarised at **Appendix 2**. This includes strengthening understanding of budget requirements, budget planning and monitoring, and arrangements to support the development of robust savings proposals.

2.8. There have, inevitably, been some examples of timescales needing to change to better accommodate identified interdependencies, or where original timescales have proven to be too ambitious, or capacity requirements underestimated. Robust monitoring and regular reporting, including risk escalation, has informed early consideration and decisions on changes which have had no material impact on overall delivery and, in the main, have been planned amendments.

2.9. Given the purpose of the Improvement Plan and the challenges it is responding to, a lot of the activity driven by it in the first few months has focussed on developing new plans, practice and policy to build solid foundations for sustainable improvement and performance. The impact of those will not be immediately demonstrable through improvements in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or staff sentiment. There have nonetheless been some 'green shoots' which are captured at **Appendix 3.**

3. Recommendations

The Finance and Transformation O&S Committee is recommended to:

3.1. Note the report and the progress it summarises.

3.2. Provide observations and any recommendations through a verbal report by the Chair to Cabinet at their meeting on 10th June 2026.

The Cabinet is recommended to:

3.3. Note the report and the progress it summarises.

3.4. Provide guidance and instructions as appropriate on the Council's plans for continued improvement and financial sustainability.

4. Refreshing and revising the Plan

4.1 The Improvement Plan acknowledges that programmes and projects will need to change over time, and there are some areas of the Plan that now need to be refreshed to reflect delivery that has been completed, and the evolving context of the current financial situation and organisational priorities. Changes in the Council's leadership (e.g. Executive Director (Resources), Deputy Section 151 Officer, and Service Director for Place Shaping) have also prompted a review and refresh of some programme activity.

4.2 Some of the original programmes of activity are now largely delivered. Following the approval of the 2026/27 budget at the Council meeting on 26th February, and approval from MHCLG for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS), most aspects of Programme 1 (financial stability programme) have been delivered, and the focus is increasingly on strengthening financial management practice and policy and developing the financial sustainability strategy (Programmes 2 and 3). Programme 4 focussed on the development of a new Corporate Plan which was considered by Council on 14th May, with a proposed performance framework included on the Cabinet agenda for 10th June. On that basis it is considered as completed.

4.3 Programme 5, with an objective to develop the Council's partnership working approach has had an initial focus on piloting the devolution of services to parish and town councils. It now needs to expand its focus to include the development of a Shropshire Partnership, community engagement and involvement, stakeholder management and public affairs, and

the development of the spatial development strategy. **Appendix 4** summarises the proposed scope of the next iteration of programmes 1, 2, 3, and 5.

5. Risk Management

5.1. We need to remain aware of the context, circumstances and challenges that may constrain our progress and pace of change, including staff capacity, unplanned and new demands on the organisation, and global events. These all have the potential to divert focus away from improvement activity as well as impact on the costs of services and delivery, impacting on financial stability and sustainability. Examples of recent additional external demands on organisational capacity include the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review, CIPFA assurance review, and SEND Reform Plan.

5.2. The risks identified when the Improvement Plan was approved remain. They continue to be managed and mitigated through the governance and assurance arrangements put in place and managed by the Programme Management Office (PMO):

Risk	Mitigation
Capacity and pace of delivery - Failure to deliver the improvement plan in a timely and effective manner due to capacity constraints	Realistic delivery arrangements confirmed by responsible lead senior officers and alignment of PMO resources Clear and consistent leadership setting out the direction, pace, outcomes and expectations of the change required. 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	The Financial Plan and Corporate Plan, together with the Improvement Plan, provide a coherent and strategic basis for resource deployment and prioritisation
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	Governance and assurance arrangements (including portfolio boards and leadership board) identify interdependencies and determine prioritisation and sequencing of activity Changes in scope and timescales will be agreed through governance structures.

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 regularly reported to Cabinet. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council to reduce and remove any non-essential spending to help ensure the Council's financial sustainability.

6.2. Services must be aligned to the limited resources the Council has available whilst ensuring we deliver our statutory duties at the minimum statutory level. It is recognised that this involves some difficult decisions that need to be taken and communication with our stakeholders, including our residents, that is adequate and proportionate.

6.3. 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 sustainability.

7. Climate Change Appraisal

7.1. Not applicable

8. Conclusions

8.1. The Improvement Plan continues to provide a framework for the Council's overall improvement and development as an organisation. Overall delivery is broadly in accordance with the Plan's priorities and timescales. There has been some notable delivery and impact driven by the Plan and its aims and priorities, including securing EFS, the development of a robust and realistic budget from 2026/27, and measurable improvements in corporate governance such as increased compliance with budget monitoring and FOI response times, and the strengthening of practice and policy.

8.2. Robust governance and assurance arrangements have helped to mitigate delivery slippage and inform considered and deliberate changes to activity and timescales. This has ensured overall delivery of the most fundamental activities and timescales to keep us on track in terms of our overall 'flightpath' to financial sustainability (see **Appendix 5**).

8.3. There is a need to refresh areas of the Plan to reflect delivery that has been completed, the evolving context of the current financial situation, organisational priorities and new managerial leadership.

List of Background Papers

Report to Transformation & Improvement O&S Committee (01/12/25), Cabinet (03/12/25) and Full Council (14/12/25): Shropshire Council Improvement Plan

Report to Audit & Governance Committee 05/02/26: First Line Assurance - Improvement Plan Update

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report

People Plan

External Auditor Annual Audit Letter

Appendices

Appendix 1: Improvement Plan Progress Summary

Appendix 2: Summary of response to External Auditor Statutory Recommendation

Appendix 3: Impact and improvements

Appendix 4: Next phase of programmes

Appendix 5: Flightpath to Financial Sustainability

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF DELIVERY, PROGRESS AND IMPACT

GREEN	ON TRACK / DEVLIVERED
AMBER	SOME SLIPPAGE (PLANNED OR MANAGED
RED	OFF TRACK (UNPLANNED OR NOT MITIGATED)
GREY	UNDER REVIEW / BEING REFRESHED

Aim: A council that is financially stable and sustainable

Overall summary: Planned activity to stabilise and recover the financial position has been delivered, culminating in a budget for 2026/27. A strategy for longer term financial sustainability has been outlined, and the plans to deliver that now need to be developed and built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan from 2027/28. Some of the activity delivered across these 3 programmes respond to the statutory recommendation issued by the External Auditor in November 2025 and is summarised in Appendix 2. There needs to be more activity focussed on improving our financial management practices, and a refreshed programme 2 (outlined at Appendix 3) is intended to address this.

Priority / Programme	Summary of activity and delivery	Impact: Outputs and Delivery	
Financial Stability	The programme has driven the implementation of a range of immediate and in-year (25/26) actions, measures and arrangements to contain expenditure in-year to reduce and minimise the projected year-end overspend. Extensive work was undertaken to develop an application for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) including liaison with MHCLG resulting in confirmation of EFS for both 2025/26 and 2026/27. This enabled a budget for 20276/27 to be set at a level that provides short term stability and opportunity to 're-set'.	In-year controls to contain 25/26 overspend – including tighter grip on forecasted overspend towards the end of the year Capital Programme reviewed and rationalised EFS secured, and permission to increase Council Tax (above the permitted 4.99%), enabling budget for 2026/27 to be developed and approved	
Financial Sustainability	The programme has defined elements of the strategy to achieve the longer-term goal of financial sustainability and reduce the Council's reliance on EFS. The components of a financial sustainability strategy have been outlined in the Financial Plan (reported to cabinet and council), providing the basis for further work on the development of a Medium-Term Transformation and Savings Portfolio (through Improvement Plan Programme 6) which will be summarised in a revised MTFP to be considered at Cabinet in July 2026.	MTFP 2026/27 – 2029/30 developed and approved Financial Sustainability Strategy included in Financial Plan (reported to Cabinet 21/02/26 and Council 26/02/26)	
Strengthening financial management practice and policy	The programme has focussed on improving financial compliance across the organisation with an initial emphasis on strengthening policy, practice and approaches to procurement and contract management, and increasing compliance on budget monitoring. The focus on improving income collection and debt recovery has focussed initially on increasing capacity in Revenues and Benefits to enable increased collection and recovery. In terms of activity to improve financial management practices more widely, a more focussed programme led by the Deputy 151 is deemed necessary and has been developed as part of a revised programme (see Appendix 3).	New Procurement and Commissioning Strategies drafted (to be considered by Cabinet on 10/06/26) Improved compliance with budget monitoring (now at 95%, up from 40% in July 2025) Investment in the Revenues and Benefits service to increase capacity to collect income and recover debt	

AIM: A Council with clear priorities and purpose

Overall summary: Several distinct projects have helped developed elements of the council's role and purpose, supporting the shift in overall operating model from delivering to enabling and influencing. Planned activity to develop a new Corporate Plan and associated performance framework has been delivered as scheduled. The initial phase of activity to pilot the devolution of services to parish and town councils has been completed, with the focus now shifting to evaluation and learning that will inform the future approach, in parallel to exploring the appetite and potential opportunities for partnership working. Internally work has been undertaken to make the principles that will drive how we operate and transform as a council meaningful and embedded in day-to-day management. A portfolio of transformation and change programmes is being developed to deliver savings over the medium term as part of the council's overall financial sustainability strategy.

Priority / Programme	Summary of activity and delivery	Impact: Outputs and Outcomes	
Corporate Plan 2026-30	The programme has facilitated the development of a new Corporate Plan that is informed by the administrations' ambitions set out in the 'New Direction' and grounded in the Council's financial position and statutory responsibilities. A comprehensive programme of engagement (residents, partners, members, staff) has informed the development of the plan, along with data and insights. A Corporate Plan performance framework including KPIs and delivery commitments has also been developed and scheduled to be considered by Cabinet (10/06/26).	New Corporate Plan – approved by Cabinet (06/05/26) and Council (14/05/26) Corporate Plan performance framework including KPIs and delivery commitments developed	
Future Council: town and parish councils devo	The programme has driven the development and delivery of street scene service devolution deals with four town and parish councils. A new programme focussed on wider partnership (see Appendix 2) is in development. This wider programme will include a workstream focussed on further activity relating to the parish/town devolution pilot, ensuring that learning informs future approaches, and the appetite from parish and town councils is explored.	Pilots with different models of devolving the delivery of street scene services to Shrewsbury, Shifnal, Oswestry and Broseley. Full devolution to Shrewsbury and Broseley, partial devolution to Oswestry and a collaborative/enhanced model with Shifnal.	
Future Council: Principles	The programme has focussed on activity to develop ways to embed the 'future council' principles, so they guide how the council operates and provide a basis for its continued improvement and transformation.	Exploring our Principles workshop and four Embedding the Principles webinars have been delivered. Pilot of self-assessment framework is complete.	
Future Council: Place shaping	This programme was intended to focus on the developing the 'place shaping' role of the Council and development of a long-term vision, and economic growth strategy for the county. But the operating context for this programme has changed, partly due to the new Strategic Development Strategy (SDS) requirements, and the recent arrival of a Service Director for Place Shaping who will review and assess all activities to ensure alignment with the overall context and direction of an economic growth strategy.	New Service Director (Place Shaping) – appointed January, and started March 2026	

Transformation Programme	The focus of the programme has been to refresh the Council's transformation activity, so it is driven by the financial sustainability strategy (see prog 2) and delivers savings and income, as well as modernisation and improvement. An outline portfolio has been defined, but delivery plans and programmes need further developing at pace so there is confidence about the investment required to deliver (resources, capacity, external expertise), the timescales for delivery, and the return on investment – all of which need to be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. There has also been work undertaken to assess what is needed by the organisation from its PMO function, recognising it needs to focus on supporting and assuring the delivery of the Improvement Plan and transformation and savings portfolio.	Savings Programme for 2026/27 developed and being delivered A portfolio of transformation and savings across the medium term (2027/28 – 2029/30) is in development, with some elements in early delivery. An external 'health check' of the Programme Management Office (PMO) has been undertaken to inform the development of new PMO roles and arrangements that are aligned to the delivery of the Improvement Plan and Transformation portfolio.	

Aim: A workforce that is supported and enabled to excel

Overall summary: The People Plan has provided a clear strategic basis for developing a high-performing, inclusive organisation where people feel valued, supported, and proud to work. There has been an initial focus on setting a strong foundation for improving management capability, strengthening alignment to organisational priorities, and enhancing the employee experience from entry through to development. Driven by the Statutory Officers Board, there has been a focus on reinforcing robust corporate standards and accountability through communications and monitoring. The digital programme continues to develop its priorities so it can be an enabler of the Council's wider transformation ambitions, supporting service redesign, and organisational improvement.

Priority / Programme	Summary of activity and delivery	Impact: Outputs and Outcomes	
People Plan	The programme has seen activity focused on becoming an organisation where people are proud to work for and supported to perform to their best. The initial focus has been on developing a range of new practice that will better support managers ('role of the manager'), connect staff to council priorities (values, PDR process and staff engagement) and ensure new starters experience a strong and supportive introduction to the organisation.	New PROUD organisational values New corporate induction programme introduced New PDR process developed Role of the Manager initiative and guidance produced	
Getting the basics right (corporate governance)	The programme has been driven and overseen by a Statutory Officers Board (Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, S151 Officer) and focussed on key aspects of corporate governance including responsiveness to FOIs and budget monitoring. Regular and clear communications to the organisation have helped clarify expectations and drive-up standards. A review of the Council's constitution is another key activity that is now underway but with different timescales to those originally proposed.	Statutory Officers Board established Improved performance and compliance – FOIs, budget monitoring Audit & Governance Committee training Review of constitution underway	
Digital Programme	The programme will be a key facet of the Council's transformation and savings portfolio, enabling the transformation proposed by Children's Services, Adult Social Care and the Assets and Corporate Landlord programme as well as supporting wider improvement and modernisation. The programme has focussed initially on setting the strategic basis for our digital improvement through a new Digital Strategy and Cyber Strategy.	New Digital strategy, providing the strategic basis for digital transformation across the organisation Identified initial priorities for digital transformation	

APPENDIX 2: EXTERNAL AUDITOR STATUTORY RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE

External Auditor Recommendation (November 2025)	Council response (as of April 2026)
Statutory Recommendation The Council should: Continue, at pace, the action taken to address the financial challenges it faces, including an immediate review of all services (statutory and non-statutory) and identify the cost of minimum viable service provision to deliver statutory responsibilities. Understand the scale of the structural deficit between service cost and available income Identify immediate decisions and savings deliverable (replicating Section 114 response actions). Review all estimates and modelling feeding into the budget and MTFS to reduce/eliminate optimism bias. Develop a realistic medium-term plan on how Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) will increase financial resilience and how reliance on temporary support will be reduced. Immediately action Internal Audit recommendations on budget monitoring/reporting, with regular progress reporting to Audit & Governance Committee."	**Spend control and budget monitoring improvements:** Following the declaration of a financial emergency in September 2025, a range of immediate in-year spend control arrangements were put in place. This included a spend control board, workforce board and the strengthening of budget monitoring to contain and control in-year (25/26) spend. More recently a Business, Transformation and Change Review Panel has been introduced to ensure a greater visibility of how the organisation plans and controls its expenditure and achieves efficiencies and savings. Budget monitoring arrangements have also been strengthened further including: o Extension of monitoring completion date to allow more detailed analysis of any variation o Formal sign-off of forecasts by budget holders to include narrative and highlighting risks o Monthly reporting to Leadership Board and quarterly to Cabinet. o Monitoring report has been simplified. Compliance is monitored through statutory officers' group. **Improvement Plan - focus on financial stability:** An Improvement Plan was approved by full council on 11/12/25 including programmes focussed on financial stability. Delivery of the Plan is critical and a report to the Audit and Governance Committee in February 2026 provides a summary of the arrangements in place to ensure delivery: A&G Improvement Plan update February 2026. The externally chaired, and LGA supported, Shropshire Council Improvement Board (SCIB), holds the council to account for delivery and progress, and receives a monthly update on the Council's financial position. **Understanding costs of service provision:** Since 2023/24 a series of activity has been undertaken against both statutory and non-statutory service provision to understand costs and resourcing levels. This included a full review of statutory and non-statutory services across the Council by the senior leadership team between November 2023 and February 2024 – leading to a series of savings and cabinet decision papers to reduce or remove non statutory services, and review of workforce. More recently reviews supported by the LGA have taken place across the organisation, including benchmarking against other areas and baselining service levels – for example, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Revenues and Benefits. There has also been some work undertaken for finance, legal services and regulatory services. A summary of this activity was presented to the SCIB on 16/02/26. Work will continue to review all spend across the Council through the Budget and Business Planning Process, and Business Transformation and Change Review Panel. **Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2026/27:** Analysis and engagement through Budget Oversight and Spend Strategy 'BOSS' meetings enabled an understanding of the scale of the structural deficit between service cost and available income to inform the EFS application and development of a budget for 2026/27 that is more realistic and removes optimism bias. This included reviewing and writing off some 2025/26 savings and putting growth into the 2026/27 budget. Full Council approved the 2026/27 Budget and MTFS in February 2026, which includes a commitment to develop a financial sustainability strategy. A refresh of MTFP will be completed and presented to cabinet/council in July 2026 including a summary of the transformation and change portfolio which is a key facet of the sustainability strategy.

APPENDIX 3: Impact and Improvement

Indicators and 'Green Shoots'

There have been improvements in corporate governance and compliance:

- **More budget holders are completing their budget monitoring on time.** 95.1% of budget holders completed their budget monitoring on time in March 2026. This has improved from 40% compliance in July 2025.
- **We are responding to more FOI requests within 20 days.** 68% of FOI requests received in March 2026 responded to within that timescale, compared to 59% in July 2025. Performance in February (77%) and January (69%) indicates a sustained improvement, although we need to improve further.

There have been improvements in staff satisfaction and sentiments:

- **Nearly three quarters of staff say they understand the council's priorities**. 71% of people who responded to the last Pulse Survey said they had a good understanding of the council's priorities. 84% of respondents said they have a good understanding of their role and how the council expects them to undertake it.
- **More staff say they are feeling valued in their role and feel empowered working for the Council.** While these are relatively modest increases from relatively low baselines, they suggest a positive direction of travel.
- **We are retaining more of our staff**. The retention of new starters after 6 months is improving, with the latest figure being 95.2%. At the same time staff turnover is decreasing and latest figure is 6.08%.

Things to stay focused on:

Our Key Performance Indicators and milestones suggest several areas we need to remain focussed on:

Staff absence and productivity: Our levels of staff absence are not reducing. While there were some month-on-month reductions during the latter stages of 2025/26 (e.g. 15% reduction between January and February) the overall annual rate is similar to 2024/25.	**Improvement Plan Programme 7 and People Plan** will stay focused on this.
Compliance: While we have seen compliance with timescales and standards in terms of budget monitoring and FOI responses increase, there are other areas where improvement is needed – e.g. SARs, member enquiries and complaints handling. Compliance with new practice (see below) will need to be monitored to ensure it is embedded – e.g. new PDR approach	**Improvement Plan Programme 8** will drive the next phase of compliance focus
Embedding new plans, practice and process: We know they need to be more than documents on a shelf. They need to direct what we do, guide how we operate, and ultimately enable what we deliver, enable and influence for the county and its residents.	Communications and briefings need to help embed new practice, and proportionate monitoring activity

APPENDIX 4: Next Phase of Improvement programmes

Programmes 1-3: Next phase

Following the budget approval for 2026/27 at the Council meeting on 26th February, and approval from MHCLG for EFS, most aspects of Programme 1 (financial stability programme) have been delivered, and the focus is increasingly on strengthening financial management practice and policy and developing the financial sustainability strategy (Programmes 2 and 3).

PREVIOUS

Programme	Description and Purpose
Financial Stability	A range of immediate and actions and arrangements to contain expenditure in-year to reduce and minimise the projected year-end overspend, improve financial monitoring and budget setting. The programme is also focussed on the development of the council's approach and route to financial stability including EFS and the development of a proposed balanced budget for 2026/27.
Financial Sustainability Strategy	Development of 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 EFS
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. The programme will ensure improved financial compliance across the organisation through strengthened procurement and contract management practices, budget monitoring and forecasting, income collection and debt recovery.

NEW

Programme	
Financial Sustainability	The development of a revised medium-term financial plan and financial sustainability strategy summarising the approaches the Council will take to reduce reliance on EFS and achieved financial sustainability
Strengthening financial management practice and policy	Development and delivery of a comprehensive finance improvement plan that strengthens financial literacy and discipline across the organisation, including strengthening monitoring, forecasting, income collection and debt recovery.
Improving procurement and commissioning	Continued delivery of the procurement and contract management improvement plan, and develop new commissioning and procurement strategies

Programme 5: Next phase

With the roll out of pilot service devolution arrangements on 01/04/26, the project focussed on developing our partnerships with town and parish councils is largely complete, with the recognition there needs to be a further phase of activity to focus on learning and the development of further opportunities – including ascertaining levels of interest and potential opportunities.

CURRENT PROGRAMME:

(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 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
Identify and quantify potential initial opportunities for the delegation of functions to town and parish Council
Roll out programme of developing further opportunities and partnerships with town and parish councils (T&PCs)

NEW PROGRAMME:

A new programme is being formed, to strengthen how the Council's enables and influences. This includes a project focused on the working with parish and town councils to deliver services and outcomes, along with other areas of partnership working - including:

Working with Town and Parish Councils

This project will drive, manage and oversee the delivery of post-pilot activity:

- Monitoring the pilot implementation
- Evaluation and review
- Data quality
- Ascertaining interest and potential for future opportunities
- Develop a standard operating model and approaches

Shropshire Partnership

This project will establish a clear understanding of the Council's current partnerships and identify where partnership working can most effectively support delivery of the Corporate Plan ambitions. It will also consider and develop proposals for the establishment of a Shropshire Partnership

Community engagement and involvement

This project will review existing engagement mechanisms and develop an improved strategic and coordinated approach to community engagement, supporting the ambitions to empower communities, build resilience and help reset our relationship with residents.

Stakeholder Management and Public Affairs

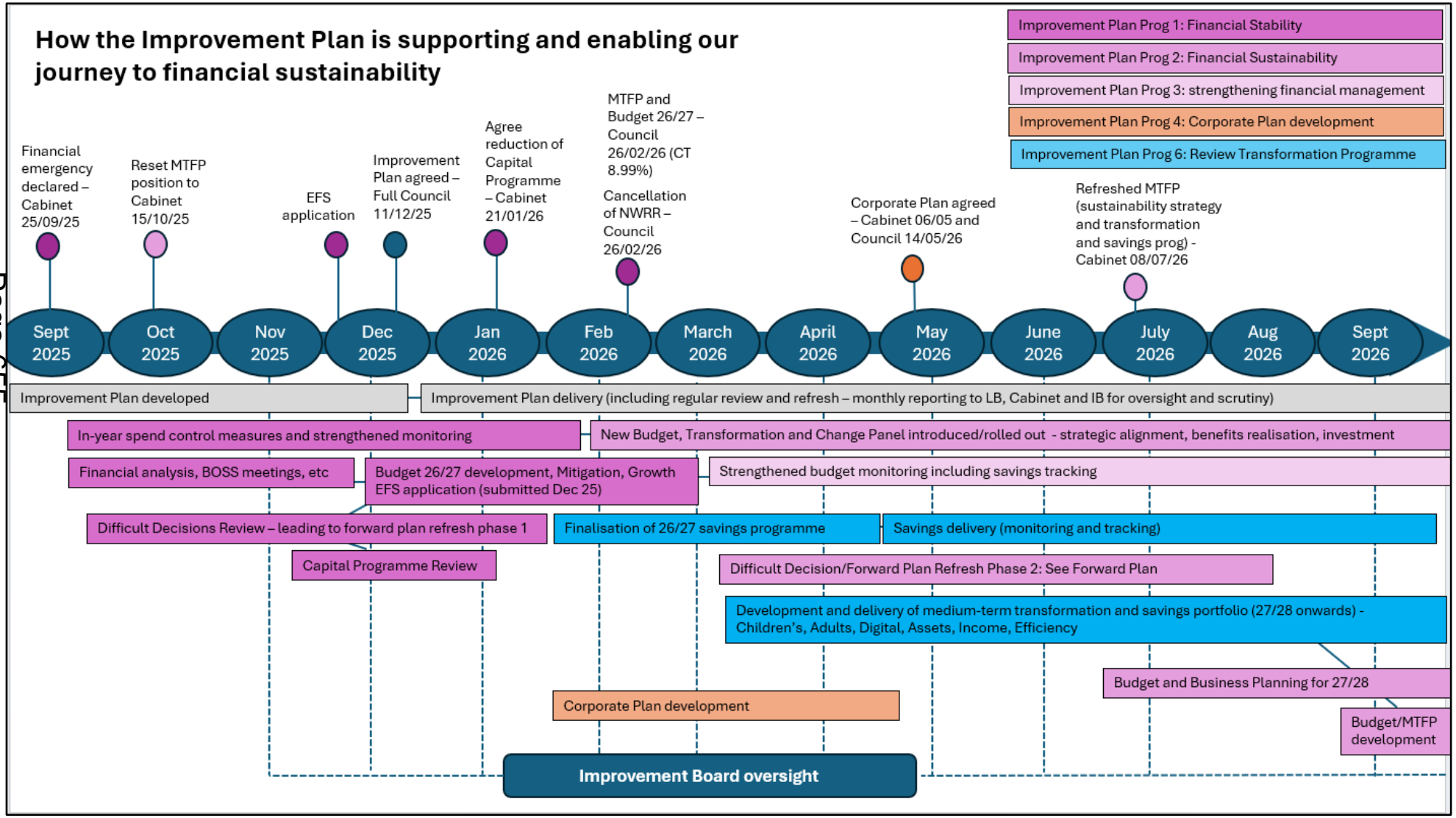
This project will strengthen understanding of key stakeholders and work with them on advocating for Shropshire. It will involve stakeholder mapping, relationship management and influencing through public affairs to support our financial sustainability strategy

Spatial Development Strategy

This project will lead, manage and oversee the development and adoption of a statutory SDS, providing a long-term strategic framework for cross-boundary planning, infrastructure alignment, and economic growth. It will ensure coordination across local authorities and partners and establish a shared evidence-based approach

APPENDIX 5: Our flightpath to financial sustainability

The Improvement Plan is instrumental in driving the development of plans, policy and practice that will support and enable our financial sustainability. The diagram below illustrates how some of the activity in the Plan is doing that.



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Cabinet 10 June 2026

Item **REP-H&W-Pub-00125**

Public

Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement & Civil Penalty Policies

Responsible Officer:	Paula Mawson, Service Director – Communities & Customer		
email:	Paula.mawson@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 256 794
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr James Owen		

1 Synopsis

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 aims to improve the private rented sector through tenancy reforms and improved property conditions in the largest overhaul in at least 40 years. This is through a number of measures introduced on a phased approach.

Its purpose is to:

- ensure empowerment, security and confidence of tenants,
- increase transparency and the information available for tenants,
- professionalisation of the sector, increasing landlord accountability and responsibility as a business.

To fulfil the Act's purpose there is a requirement for a change of approach, new accountability, and an increased duty for the Council to enforce. The Act expands civil penalties and creates a duty to enforce landlord legislation.

Updated Civil Penalty and Enforcement Policies are required to align with the new legislative framework, with a 6-month transition to provide legal and procedural continuity.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 This report seeks approval to adopt, with immediate effect, updated Civil Penalty and Enforcement Policies aligned with the Renters Rights Act 2025, which became law from 1st May 2026 and included statutory guidance, to ensure

Shropshire Council can meet its statutory duties. This new Act introduces a stronger enforcement approach and a change from informal to formal action for landlord breaches.

2.2 The new Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policies have been developed as a national framework for adoption by local authorities in accordance with statutory guidance. The Policies have been reviewed by all relevant services within the Council. It is expected that a further national framework policy on Civil Penalty Debt Recovery is being developed. Once available, this will be reviewed in line with relevant Shropshire Council policies and statutory guidance, to determine whether a further report will be presented to Cabinet. In the interim, Officers will continue to follow existing Shropshire Council policies.

These policies are intended to promote greater consistency, transparency and robustness in local authority enforcement approaches nationally, while allowing for appropriate local discretion where appropriate. Aligning the Council's policies with this nationally recognised framework and statutory guidance supports a consistent and defensible approach to enforcement, reduces the risk of unfavourable outcomes to legal challenge and strengthens the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Renters' Rights Act.

Transitional arrangements will allow existing and new policies to operate concurrently for six months to resolve legacy cases without retrospective application.

New Burdens funding has been provided for the periods 25/26, 26/27 & 27/28 to reflect the impact of the Act on Local Authorities in Housing Enforcement and Homelessness Prevention teams.

2.3 The Policies supports delivery of the Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2026-2030 by strengthening the Council's ability to protect residents from poor housing conditions, reduce risk of harm and promote wellbeing through fair, consistent and proportionate regulation. The proposal is a part of rebuilding Shropshire, through sustainability and resilience.

A. Financial sustainable council, clear priorities, purpose and a supported workforce to excel; nationally aligned, legally robust enforcement policies support consistent decision-making, reduces the risk of successful challenges, avoids reputational risks for not meeting statutory duties and provides clear guidance, training, confidence and retention of officers.

B. Communities connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure. Although in general about physical infrastructure, improved housing standards, security and safety of tenure from effective enforcement policies assists with ensuring residents remain living, working and wanting to be a part of the Shropshire community, which in turn rebuilds Shropshire together.

C. People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs; Earlier proportionate intervention where serious hazards or repeat non-compliance are identified helps prevent harm, reduce health risks, protect vulnerable tenants and support healthier living conditions.

D. An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing

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Clear enforcement policies ensure that necessary action is taken consistently to promote well managed and safe homes. This impacts on the overall community/neighbourhood by reducing environmental nuisance and supporting wellbeing to enjoy our natural assets.

E. A thriving economy that benefits everyone; consistent enforcement creates a level playing field for responsible landlords, supports a better functioning private rented sector through the tenancy reforms, and helps sustain stable accommodation that underpins participation in the economy. A safe, warm, stable home provides the foundation for every other aspect of a person's life.

3 Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet approves the Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy, to take effect immediately, with transitional arrangements allowing the existing policies to operate in tandem for a six-month period to conclude legacy cases.

3.2 That Cabinet delegates to the Service Director - Communities and Customer to undertake required updates to the Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy as the implementation of the Renter's Rights Act continues, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

3.3 That Cabinet directs that a formal review of the policies to come back for consideration in June 2027, with any delegated changes made in accordance with Recommendation 3.2 should be reported to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Report

4 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1 The Renters Rights Act 2025 is legislation implemented nationally across England by the current Government. The changes impact everyone involved with private rented accommodation. The implications and equality impact assessment of this has been considered at national Government level. As law the Council has a statutory duty to carry out the enforcement of the Act in accordance with the national guidance and report on its enforcement activity to Central Government.

Transitional arrangements will allow existing and new policies to operate concurrently for six months to resolve legacy cases without retrospective application. Once legacy cases have resolved, the existing policies will be withdrawn, leaving a single updated policy framework in place.

As case law develops for the Renters' Rights Act, the policies are likely to require amendments in line with the case law and precedents. This will ensure that the policies remain in accordance with the regulations ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties under the Renters Rights Act section 107. The policies aim to provide a robust, legally compliant, consistent approach and clear Officer guidance to enforcement decision making. It minimises the risk of successful legal challenges, is aligned with national best practice and statutory guidance. It ensures

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the Council is implementing the Renters Rights Act effectively driving forward intended tenant protections. The current Enforcement policies would not achieve these outcomes.

Further regulations are expected to be issued in due course which will necessitate changes to the Council's policies – for example, financial penalties to landlords for serious defects. Regulations introducing such penalties are expected to be laid under Section 6A of the Housing Act 2004. Once enacted, this will allow Local Authorities to issue an immediate financial penalty for serious residential defects (Category 1 Hazards) or failures in Type 1 Requirements (Criteria set to meet Decent Homes Standards) as appropriate. This does not prevent a notice being served to landlords under the current regulations, but it will require a change to our policies which will be implemented by the Service Director in accordance with her delegation under Recommendation 3.2 and reported to the next meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 **Legal and compliance risk:**

There is a risk that failure to adopt the updated enforcement and civil penalty policies aligned with the Renters' Rights Act could result in the Council being unable to demonstrate compliance with our statutory duty to enforce landlord legislation under section 107 implemented from 1st May 2026. This may increase the likelihood of successful challenge to enforcement decisions, particularly where informal action is relied upon without clear justification, or where penalty-setting lacks a transparent and consistent framework. It may also increase the risk of harm to tenants.

Mitigation: Adoption of the proposed policies, with clear decision making criteria and transitional arrangements, will provide a defensible and legally robust basis for enforcement action.

4.3 **Consistency and reputation risk:**

Inconsistent application of enforcement powers or civil penalties may contribute to perceptions of a "postcode lottery" for landlords, undermining confidence in the Council's regulatory approach and damaging its reputation as a fair and proportionate regulator. This risk is heightened where landlords operate across multiple local authority areas.

Mitigation: Alignment with the national developed model and in accordance with statutory guidance will support consistency and transparency in enforcement outcomes.

4.4 **Operational and implementation risk:**

The introduction of new policies from 1 May 2026, alongside a transitional period where legacy cases are concluded under existing policies, may create complexity for officers and decision makers, with a risk of procedural error or misapplication of policy.

Mitigation: Clear internal guidance, officer briefings, and defined transitional arrangements based on the date of offence and management oversight will support correct application of the appropriate policy framework during the transition period.

4.5 **Challenge and appeals risk:**

The expanded use of civil penalties under the Renters' Rights Act may lead to an increase in representations, appeals, and non-payment of penalties, particularly during the early stages of implementation.

Mitigation: A clear civil penalty methodology, consistent enforcement approach, and alignment with emerging best practice, Tribunal decisions and statutory guidance, including the potential development of a dedicated civil penalty debt recovery framework, will support effective recovery and reduce the risk of protracted disputes.

4.6 **Capacity and resource risk:**

The enhanced enforcement expectations under the Renters' Rights Act are expected to place additional pressure on officer capacity.

Mitigation: Clear policies will streamline decision-making, reduce rework, and support more efficient enforcement activity. Ongoing monitoring will allow emerging capacity issues to be identified and addressed. A restructure for retention and recruitment has been approved, maximising the new burdens funding provided by Central Government to implement the new Act, while retaining experienced officers. Targeted recruitment strengthens resilience, reduces skills gaps and supports effective workload management. Collaborative processes across internal teams are being implemented and will be reviewed as implementation continues.

4.7 Risk table

Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Legal and compliance	Approve and publish an updated Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy.	
Consistency and reputation risk	Approve and publish an updated Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy.	
Operational and implementation risk	Alignment will support consistency and transparency in enforcement outcomes. Clear internal guidance, officer briefings, and defined transitional arrangements based on the date of offence and management oversight will support correct application of the appropriate policy framework during the transition period.	**Health & Wellbeing of The Workforce.** **Failure of Officers and Members to adhere to Governance arrangements.** **Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year**

		Critical Skills shortage impacting on Recruitment, Retention & Succession Planning. **Impact of extreme pressures upon partners (social care, health, and criminal justice)** **Safeguarding Children**
Challenge and appeals risk	Approve and publish an updated Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy. Alignment will support consistency and transparency in enforcement outcomes.	
Capacity and resource risk:	Approve and publish an updated Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy. Alignment will support consistency and confidence of Officers. Restructure in process – new burdens funding and approved. Ongoing monitoring. Collaborative working. Training and keeping up to date with case law, statutory guidance and legislative implementation.	

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 new Tenancy Reforms and enhanced duty to enforce under the Renters' Rights Act will provide additional pressure on Officer capacity.

The additional pressures impact on numerous teams across the Council, including Housing Enforcement, Homelessness Prevention and Housing Options, Trading Standards, Legal Services, Information Technology, Communications, Customer Service, Debt Recovery and Recruitment.

Significant collaboration work has and continues to take place between internal and external partners in preparation and implementation of the Act. This is to ensure that private renters will receive the advice and protection the Act intends, landlords are clear on their responsibilities to aid compliance, staff are supported and the Council meets its duty effectively. This is continually being reviewed.

New Burdens funding has been provided for the periods 25/26, 26/27 & 27/28 to reflect the impact of the Act on Local Authorities in Housing Enforcement and Homelessness Prevention teams. A restructure in Housing Enforcement to reflect the additional pressures to retain current staff and carry out targeted recruitment to strengthen resilience, reduce skills gaps and support effective workload management was approved by the Budget, Transformation and Change Review Panel on 22nd April 2026.

The New Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policies will streamline confident decision-making, reduce rework, provide clear information to landlords and tenants to aid compliance and support more efficient enforcement activity, reducing time spent on legal challenges.

The Policies support the Councils financial sustainability providing a framework in accordance with the Renters' Rights Act for appropriate income generation and demand prevention/cost avoidance. The use of Financial penalties, Rent repayment orders and annual fees from the Private Rented Sector Landlord database registration will help to provide early intervention, improve compliance, avoid costly reactive action or statutory failure. The income generated will support the continuation of the Council's duty to enforce landlord legislation.

Improved housing standards and tenancy reforms through the Council's enforcement activities will help to reduce access to other system wide services due to mental and physical ill health. Income generated from enforcement activities will support the continuation of the Council's duty to enforce landlord legislation.

6 Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 The policies enable the Council to enforce effectively with confident decision making in accordance with statutory duties and guidance. There are approximately 23,000 private rented properties in Shropshire. Housing legislation includes the assessment of housing conditions through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). A review of HHSRS has been undertaken with the updated version expected to be approved by Central Government in June 2026.

This offers a positive impact on climate change by promoting the maintenance of safe, energy-efficient homes. By identifying and addressing hazards such as poor insulation, damp, and inefficient heating systems, HHSRS encourages improvements that reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. These

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upgrades not only enhance the health and wellbeing of occupants but also contribute to broader environmental goals by lowering the overall carbon footprint of residential buildings.

The Renters Rights Act provides for enhancement to housing conditions in the form of the Decent Homes Standards and Awaab Law, already within the Social Rented Sector and being introduced to the Private Rented Sector at a later stage.

7 Background

7.1 The Renters' Rights Act is the largest overhaul to private rented legislation in over 40 years. It introduces a significantly expanded civil penalty framework and change of approach with new duties on the Council to enforce, which includes a broader range of landlord obligations. The Council must ensure its relevant policies are fully aligned with the new legislative framework and guidance. The main provisions of the Act came into effect on 1 May 2026. The implementation of a private rented sector landlord database (end 2026/2027), duty to report enforcement activities (2027), and the introduction of a private sector housing ombudsman/redress scheme (2028) are expected in Phase 2. Phase 3 will be the implementation of the Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law expected 2035.

7.2 The Council's current Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy includes the Council's approach to civil penalty and rent repayment orders, amongst other legislative matters. It was developed prior to the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act. It does not reflect the new offences, guidance, amendments to penalty or evidential thresholds or the new duty to enforce landlord legislation.

The current Policy was developed reflecting the Regulator's Code and in accordance with the Council's overarching Better Regulation Enforcement Policy.
This framework retained broad discretion to resolve non-compliance through informal or advisory action, which was often the route undertaken.

7.3 The Renters' Rights Act represents a fundamental change from informal action to enforcement action. Section 107 places a statutory duty on local housing authorities to enforce landlord legislation. Section 110 requires authorities to report enforcement activity to the Secretary of State.

Increased security and fairness of tenure is expected to lead to higher levels of tenant complaints for housing conditions and landlord practices. The Regulators Code can no longer be relied upon to justify informal action as the starting point for compliance under the Renters' Rights Act.

7.4 Nationally, enforcement of private rented sector legislation has varied significantly between local housing authorities. This inconsistency risks undermining confidence in the regulatory system, creates uncertainty for landlords operating across multiple area, increases the likelihood of challenge to enforcement decisions and results in discrepancies to the level of tenant protections.

The new Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policies have been developed as a national framework for adoption by local authorities in accordance with statutory guidance. The Policies are reviewed in line with Shropshire Councils Cabinet process by all relevant services. It is expected that a further national framework policy on Civil Penalty Debt Recovery is being developed. Once available this will be reviewed in line with relevant Shropshire Council policies and statutory guidance, to determine

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whether a further report will be presented to Cabinet. In the interim, Officers will continue to follow existing Shropshire Council policies.

These policies are intended to promote greater consistency, transparency and robustness in local authority enforcement approaches nationally, while allowing for appropriate local discretion where appropriate. Aligning the Council's policies with this nationally recognised framework supports a consistent and defensible approach to enforcement, reduces the risk of unfavourable outcomes to legal challenge and strengthens the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Renters' Rights Act.

7.5 Without updated policies, there is a risk of inconsistent enforcement, legal challenge to decisions and reduced ability to demonstrate compliance with the Councils statutory duty. The lack of updated policies negatively impacts on staff confidence, morale and retention. It impacts our residents the most as the Council would not be effectively achieving compliance of housing standards and tenancy reforms.

Summary of Changes

Area	Current Policy	Proposed Policy	Change Detail
Legislative Framework and Offence Coverage	Based on Housing Act 2004, Housing & Planning Act 2016, general civil penalty powers and other private rented sector Regulations.	Aligned with Renters' Rights Act 2025 as implemented on 27th December and 1st May 2026 & guidance.	Amendments to reflect incoming powers and duties.
Regulators' Code	Council commits to operating in accordance with the Regulators Code unless high risk or history of non-compliance	Removed in regard to Section 107 of the Renters' Rights Act imposing a statutory duty to take enforcement action on 'landlord legislation'. Still in place for legislation that falls outside of 'landlord legislation'	Enforcement change – no longer appropriate to consider informal approach in the first instance where breach/offence of 'landlord legislation'. Code is still applicable where outside of 'landlord legislation'
Enforcement Approach	Graduated approach	Allows formal action as the first step where	Stronger early intervention

	promoting support and voluntary compliance in most cases unless high risk or history of non-compliance	'landlord legislation' breach/offence committed.	powers in adherence with section 107
Investigatory Powers	General overview of current provisions	Adds extensive Renters' Rights investigatory powers and amendments to powers of entry/request of information Housing Act 2004.	Expansion of powers to support Enforcement activity and new offences.
Rent Repayment Orders & Banning Orders	Included but less detailed	Expansion to align with the Renters Rights Act.	
Penalty Calculation	Locally determined matrix considering number of factors	Replaced with statutory matrix including set starting points and other structured factors including landlord type	Introduction of statutory starting points and a nationally consistent calculation method
Aggravating/Mitigating Factors	No clear guidance on mitigating/aggravating factors.	Significantly expanded list including vulnerability factors, duration, severity, obstruction and harm level	More structured and transparent penalty adjustments
Financial Assessment/Representation Consideration	No clear guidance provided.	Detailed evidence requirements.	Stronger evidential basis required

8 Additional Information

8.2 None.

9 Conclusions

9.1 The Renters Rights Act 2025 is a significant change of approach and duties regarding housing conditions and tenancy reforms for Councils, landlord and tenants. The aim to ensure a fair and balanced private rented sector, where all are clear on their responsibilities. The adoption of the new enforcement and civil penalty policy ensures clear guidance for all on how the Council is going to meet its new duties to improve the private rented sector for approximately 23, 000 homes.

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

Local Member:	All elected Members were invited to attend a briefing session on the Renters' Rights Act

Consultation with Local Member – *Please consider the Local Member Protocol (see page E60 onwards of part 5 of the Constitution) and determine whether it is necessary to consult with the local member over the proposal set out in this report. This may not always be applicable (eg where the proposal affects all of Shropshire) but it should always be a consideration and in some cases a necessity so as to comply with the spirit of the Protocol.*

Appendices

Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement Policy

Shropshire Housing Authority Civil Penalty Policy

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Civil Penalties under the Renters Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation Policy.

Policy for adoption by local authorities in England (no selective licensing areas).

This policy applies once the Council has made a decision to commence civil penalty proceedings.

In this policy, the term ‘landlord’ should be read as including letting agents, managing agents, licensors, property owners, corporate landlords, directors of corporate landlords, registered providers of social housing and any other person involved in the letting or management of accommodation.

In this policy, the term ‘corporate landlord’ should be read as referring to a body corporate that meets the definition of ‘landlord’ above.

In this policy, the terms ‘House in Multiple Occupation’ or ‘HMO’ are defined by the Housing Act 2004.

The following breaches are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £7,000:

- Failure to give a written statement of terms and any other prescribed information under section 16D of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to let a property for a fixed term under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to end a tenancy by service of a notice to quit under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Attempting to end a tenancy orally or requiring that it is ended orally under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Serving an eviction notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Relying on a ground where the landlord does not reasonably believe that the landlord is/will be able to obtain possession under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.

- Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988.
- Failure to give an existing tenant prescribed information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act 2025 in the prescribed form and timeframe under paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Discrimination relating to children in the lettings process under section 33 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Discrimination relating to benefits in the lettings process under section 34 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Failure to specify proposed rent within a written advertisement or offer under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Inviting, encouraging or accepting any offer of rent greater than the stated rate under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

The following breaches are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £40,000:

- Breach of duty under Regulation 3, 3B, 3C, and 3D of The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.

The following offences are subject to a civil penalty with a statutory maximum of £40,000:

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier under section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.
- Continuation of conduct subject to a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) after the 28-day period (or, if appealed, after conclusion of the appeal) where the final notice has not been withdrawn under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Conduct giving rise to liability under s.16I, where within the preceding five years the landlord has either (i) had a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) imposed for different conduct and the final notice has not been withdrawn, or (ii) been convicted under s.16J for different conduct under section 16(J) of the Housing Act 1988.
- Relying on a ground knowing the landlord would not be able to obtain possession or being reckless as to whether they would under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988.
- Breach of restrictions relating to reletting (s16(E)(2) Housing Act 1988) or remarketing (s16(E)(3) Housing Act 1988) a property within restricted period after using Grounds 1 or 1A of Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988.
- Breach of a banning order under section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice under section 30 of the Housing Act 2004.

- Contravention of an overcrowding notice under section 139 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to obtain a selective licence under section 95 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to obtain an HMO licence under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with management regulations in respect of HMOs under section 234 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with HMO licence conditions under section 72 of the Housing Act 2004.
- Failure to comply with selective licence conditions under section 95 of the Housing Act 2004.

If a landlord has committed multiple breaches or offences, a separate civil penalty can, and usually will, be imposed for each breach and offence. In each case, the level of any civil penalty imposed will be determined in accordance with this policy.

If multiple landlords have committed the same breach or offence at the same property, a separate civil penalty can, and usually will, be imposed on each offender. In each case, the level of civil penalty imposed on each offender will be in accordance with this policy.
This policy outlines the Council's methodology and mechanism for assessing and setting the level of a civil penalty at all stages where a civil penalty is under consideration, including the preparation of a notice of intent, and where a final decision has been made to impose a civil penalty.

When applying the civil penalties matrix, interim calculations at individual stages may result in figures that exceed the statutory maximum. Where the final amount reached following application of all relevant steps exceeds the statutory maximum, the civil penalty will be reduced to the applicable statutory maximum.

The Council considers the need for transparency and consistency to be of primary importance to ensure fairness in the discharge of its functions. The general objective of this policy is, therefore, to promote both transparency and consistency in the imposition of financial penalties so that those involved in the letting or management of accommodation (a) know how the Council will generally penalise relevant breaches and offences and (b) are assured that, generally, like cases will be penalised similarly, and different cases penalised differently.

The Council recognises that, despite its best efforts, landlords may operate unlawfully for a significant period without detection, and that only a proportion of those committing relevant breaches and offences will be identified. Accordingly, the Council seeks to ensure that civil penalties are set at a level that makes it clear to the landlord concerned and to others that

operating unlawfully as a landlord is financially disadvantageous when compared to operating lawfully.

The Council has a duty to act fairly, transparently and consistently when assessing civil penalties. To maintain fairness between all landlords, the Council will not give weight to claims advanced as factors that might reduce the amount of a civil penalty unless those claims are supported by evidence that the Council reasonably considers to be relevant, reliable, credible, and sufficient in scope and detail to enable proper assessment of the claim, having regard to the nature of the claim, the information ordinarily available to the landlord, and the need for consistent and fair decision-making. Allowing inadequately evidenced assertions to influence outcomes would risk rewarding those who provide incomplete or misleading information and would create an unfair advantage over landlords who provide a full and properly evidenced account. Accordingly, the Council expects landlords against whom a civil penalty is being considered to provide all documents and records that would ordinarily exist if their account were accurate. Where such evidence is not provided, and no explanation that the Council considers adequate is given, the Council may draw an adverse inference.

Where claims are advanced without sufficient supporting evidence, the Council may request specified supporting material before determining whether to issue a final notice or whether any mitigation has been sufficiently evidenced so as to justify a lower civil penalty.
The further objectives of using financial penalties in particular as a means of enforcing the above breaches and offences are explained below.

Statutory Guidance

The Government has issued statutory guidance entitled “Civil penalties under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation”. The Council has regard to this guidance in the exercise of their functions in respect of civil penalties.

The Council has considered the following factors in developing this civil penalty policy to help ensure that the civil penalty is set at an appropriate level.

Severity of the breach or offence. The more serious the breach or offence, the higher the penalty should be.

Culpability and track record of the offender. A higher penalty will be appropriate where the offender has a history of failing to comply with their obligations and/or their actions were deliberate and/or they knew, or ought to have known, that they were in breach of their legal responsibilities.

The harm caused to the tenant. This is a very important factor when determining the level of penalty. The greater the actual harm or the potential for harm, principally to the tenant but also potentially the local community, the higher the penalty should be.

Punishment of the offender. The penalty should, in a way that is fair, both punish the offender and demonstrate the consequences of not complying with their responsibilities.

Deter the offender from repeating breaches or offences. The ultimate goal is to prevent any further offending and help ensure that the offender fully complies with all of their legal responsibilities in future. The level of the penalty should therefore be set at a level that it is likely to have a very significant deterrent effect.

Deter others from committing similar breaches or offences. While the fact that someone has received a civil penalty may not be in the public domain, the civil penalty policy itself will be and local authorities should consider how their formal enforcement activity can be effectively publicised.
An important part of deterrence is the realisation on the part of landlords that the local housing authority is proactive in levying civil penalties where the need to do so exists and the civil penalty will be set at a high enough level such that operating lawfully will be the sensible financial choice.

Remove any financial benefit the offender may have obtained as a result of committing the breach or offence. The principle here is that it should not be in the offender's financial interest to commit a breach or offence rather than comply, for example that the penalty for breaching licensing conditions in respect of occupancy of a property is less than the additional rent received as a result of the over-crowding. The absence of any financial benefit to the landlord does not mean though that the penalty should be reduced.

Civil Penalties Matrix

In determining the level of a civil penalty, officers will have regard to the matrix set out below. The matrix consists of the following sequential steps:

1. Determining the starting point based on the seriousness of the breach or offence.
2. Adjustment for factors relating to the type of landlord; size and type of portfolio controlled, owned or managed; experience of the landlord ("Landlord Type")
3. Mitigating and aggravating factors the Council deems significant including, but not limited to, factors relating to the track record and culpability of the landlord and the actual or potential harm to the occupants.
4. Financial considerations.
5. Applying the totality principle.

Starting point based of seriousness of the breach or offence

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has provided statutory guidance that prescribes starting points for all breaches and offences based on the seriousness of the breach or offence. The exception to this prescription is for breaches of licensing conditions under sections 72(3) and 95(2) of the Housing Act 2004, where the Council has determined its own starting levels based on the seriousness of the specific licence condition or type of licence condition that has not be complied with.

Adjustment for factors relating to the type of landlord; size and type of portfolio controlled, owned or managed; experience of the landlord ("Landlord Type")

While all landlords are expected to comply fully with their legal obligations, the Council considers that a higher standard of professionalism and regulatory awareness is reasonably expected of landlords who operate at greater scale, who have greater experience, or who are involved in more complex forms of letting. Where such landlords fail to comply with their obligations, this will ordinarily justify a higher civil penalty.
In particular, a higher degree of professionalism is expected of landlords who:

- Control, own, or manage a significant portfolio of properties;
- Have significant experience in the letting or management of property;
- Are or have been involved in the letting or management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs);
- Are corporate landlords; or
- Are or have been directors of corporate landlords.

An upward adjustment of 20% of the applicable starting point will be applied where the landlord meets any one or more of the following criteria:

- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed six or more properties. These properties need not have been held concurrently or at the time civil penalty proceedings are brought.
- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed three or more properties that operated as HMOs, whether or not concurrently.
- The landlord is, or has previously been, a director of a corporate landlord.
- The landlord is a corporate landlord.
- The landlord has, in the Council's assessment and by reference to the available evidence, significant experience in the letting or management of property.

A downward adjustment of 20% of the applicable starting point will be applied only where all of the following criteria are met:

- The landlord has, at any point in time, controlled, owned, or managed no more than two properties.
- The landlord has controlled, owned, or managed no more than one property that has operated as an HMO, at any point in time.
- The landlord has, in the Council's assessment and by reference to the available evidence, very limited experience in the letting or management of property.

Mitigating and aggravating factors the Council deems significant including, but not limited to, factors relating to the track record and culpability of the landlord and the actual or potential harm to the occupants

To promote fairness and consistency in the administration of civil penalties, the Council will apply a structured and consistent framework when determining the extent to which mitigating and aggravating factors affect the quantum of any civil penalty.

General approach

Each breach or offence may have offence-specific mitigating and/or aggravating factors, which will be considered alongside the generic factors set out below.
Where multiple civil penalties are issued under this policy against the same landlord at the same time, and except where expressly stated otherwise, mitigating and aggravating factors will be considered and applied separately to each civil penalty when determining the quantum of each penalty.

Mitigating factors

The Council may reduce the level of a civil penalty by up to 20% of the applicable starting point to reflect the presence of mitigating factors.

Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this policy in respect of mitigating factors and apply a reduction in excess of 20%. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors.

Within the framework of this policy, the Council has not sought to provide an exhaustive list of mitigating factors, recognising that a wide range of circumstances may potentially give rise to mitigation. However, the following generic mitigating factors will be considered in respect of each breach or offence:

Steps taken to remedy the basis of the breach or offence

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Promptly remedying all elements of the breach or offence after receiving communication from the Council.
- Promptly remedying all the significant elements of the breach or offence leaving only less significant elements of the breach or offence.

A high level of cooperation

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Proactive provision of significant information the Council reasonably considers relevant beyond that required by statutory notice.

Acceptance of liability

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Accepting liability before or within the period for representations.

Where a landlord relies on a reasonable excuse defence or otherwise contests liability, this mitigating factor will not usually apply.

Health circumstances

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- A serious health condition or medical incident experienced by the landlord during, or in the period immediately preceding, the breach or offence, where there is clear and reliable evidence that the condition had a direct and material impact on the landlord's ability to comply with the relevant legal obligation. Examples may include, but are not limited to, a heart attack, stroke, cancer diagnosis, or other acute or serious medical event causing significant incapacity or impairment.

Diminished culpability (limited responsibility)

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- A joint landlord who has evidenced that compliance arrangements for the subject property were directed and controlled by another joint landlord, and not by them.
- A landlord who became involved only after an unforeseen change in circumstances (such as the death of the previous landlord) and who committed the breach or offence only for a limited period while putting their affairs in order.

The instruction of a managing or letting agent, or reliance on an agent's actions or omissions, will not of itself constitute diminished culpability.

Aggravating factors

The Council may increase the level of a civil penalty by up to 20% of the applicable starting point to reflect the presence of aggravating factors.

Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this policy in respect of aggravating factors and apply an increase in excess of 20%. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple aggravating factors.

The following generic aggravating factors will be considered in respect of each breach or offence:

Previous history of non-compliance.

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Previous successful prosecutions (including relevant spent convictions), previous civil penalties, previous rent repayment orders, previous works in default, previous simple cautions.

Concurrent investigations or proceedings relating to other civil penalties, prosecutions, or rent repayment orders will not be treated as previous non-compliance.

Non-cooperation with the Council.

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Failure to comply with notices issued under section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 235 of the Housing Act 2004, or section 114 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Failing to provide a substantive response to a letter of alleged offence.
- Failing to attend previously agreed meetings.

Where the Council has prosecuted, or is pursuing a prosecution, in respect of the same act or omission involving failure to provide legally required information (including failure to comply with a statutory notice), that conduct will not also be treated as an aggravating factor for the purposes of setting the civil penalty, in order to avoid double counting.
Where multiple civil penalties are imposed against the same landlord at the same time, this aggravating factor will be applied only to the civil penalty with the highest starting point, unless there is a clear and reasoned basis for applying it differently.

Deliberate intent or negligence when committing the offence.

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- Knowledge that the breach or offence was occurring.

- Continuation of offending after communication from the Council.
- Premeditation or planning, including steps taken to prevent detection or effective investigation.
- Providing false or misleading information to the Council.
- Applying pressure to occupants to deter cooperation with the Council.

The number of occupants affected.

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- 3-5 occupants affected.

Duration of non-compliance.

Non-exhaustive examples include:

- The offence or breach occurred over a 3–6 month period.

Vulnerability of occupants.

Non-exhaustive examples include children and young adults, persons vulnerable by reason of age, disability or sensory impairment, persons with drug or alcohol dependency, victims of domestic abuse, children in care, persons with complex health needs, persons who do not speak English as a first language, victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation, refugees, asylum seekers, and pregnant women.

Financial considerations

The Council will review the quantum of the civil penalty and consider whether it is sufficient to act as an effective deterrent to future non-compliance. Where the Council has evidence that it considers to be sufficiently reliable regarding rental income and/or asset value from the landlord's, it may determine that an increase in the level of the penalty is appropriate in order to achieve effective deterrence.

It is essential that, as an absolute minimum, landlords do not financially benefit from their offending behaviour.

Financial circumstances will ordinarily be considered after any written representations have been received and as part of the determination of any final notice.

Where a landlord seeks to rely on a strained or limited financial position as a basis for reducing the level of a civil penalty, that position must be supported by appropriate and verifiable evidence sufficient to enable the Council to assess the landlord's financial position consistently, objectively, and transparently. Unsupported assertions, partial disclosure, or selective provision of information will not be given weight.

At a minimum, and where such information exists, the following should be provided as part of any written representations:

- The last three full tax years full self-assessment tax returns filed with HMRC, including all additional and supplemental pages;
- The last three full tax years' SA302 documents & tax year overviews;
- The last three months' payslips;
- The last three years P60 certificates;
- The last twelve months' Universal Credit payment statements;
- A list of all property assets owned or jointly owned (not limited to rental properties), together with corresponding Land Registry title documents;
- A list of all property assets owned, or held on a long lease, by any corporate entity in which the landlord has a beneficial interest, together with corresponding Land Registry documentation;
- The most recent annual mortgage statement for each property, or the last twelve months' mortgage statements where the mortgage has been in place for less than twelve months;
- Valuation statements for all ISAs held;
- Statements from any crypto asset exchange accounts showing balances and valuations;
- A list of all shareholdings;
- Recent bank statements for any account holding a balance in excess of £5,000;
- Recent statements for all secured and unsecured loans;
- Bankruptcy orders and official notifications of bankruptcy.

Where the Council is not satisfied that it has been provided with sufficiently reliable, complete, and accurate information to assess the landlord's financial position, the Council may draw the inference that the landlord is able to pay the civil penalty as imposed.
A claimed inability to pay will not, of itself, outweigh the need to ensure effective deterrence or to remove any financial benefit obtained as a result of the breach or offence.

The totality principle

The Council will have regard to the totality principle to ensure that the overall outcome of its enforcement action is just and proportionate. In exceptional cases and having regard to the particular circumstances of the case, the Council may take account of totality at an earlier stage by deciding not to pursue a civil penalty in respect of a specific breach or offence where doing so would render the overall outcome disproportionate.

In general, however, the application of the totality principle will form the final step in the Council's decision-making process, undertaken after any written representations have been

considered and before final notices are issued once the level of each individual civil penalty has been assessed in accordance with this policy.

As a final step before issuing final notices, the Council will consider whether multiple civil penalties being imposed under this policy against the same landlord at the same time result in an aggregate amount that is just and proportionate. Where the Council concludes that the aggregate amount would not be just and proportionate, it will consider whether a proportionate reduction of the penalties is appropriate.

The totality principle does not operate across different legal persons who are separately liable in law, nor does it operate across civil penalties imposed at different times. In general, it applies only to multiple civil penalties imposed under this policy on the same person at the same time.

Where, however, legislation provides that an officer of a body corporate, or a person concerned in its management, may be separately liable in relation to the same conduct as the body corporate, and that officer also holds a shareholding interest in the body corporate, the Council will, where civil penalties are imposed at the same time on both the body corporate and the officer arising from that same conduct, consider whether the combined outcome results in punitive duplication and is therefore not just and proportionate.
Where a reduction is applied under the totality principle, the Council will ordinarily do so by applying a uniform percentage reduction across all relevant civil penalties being issued at the same time, being those civil penalties that form part of the same totality assessment. Where, however, the application of the totality principle is required to address punitive duplication arising from a shared economic interest between a body corporate and an officer, the Council may apply a differential adjustment to ensure that the overall outcome is just and proportionate.

This approach reflects the statutory guidance on the application of the totality principle and is intended to promote consistency, transparency, and proportionality, while avoiding arbitrary or selective adjustment of individual penalties.

In accordance with the statutory guidance, any rent repayment orders made in respect of the same breach or offence will be disregarded for the purposes of assessing the totality of civil penalties under this policy.

Offences and breaches where a civil penalty may be levied and relevant considerations as to the level of that penalty

Protection from Eviction Act 1977 offence

Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier - section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£35,000	£40,000	£28,000	£35,000	£42,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Violence or threats of violence.
- Disposal of possessions or threats to dispose of possessions.
- Breach or evasion of an injunction or undertaking.
- Loss of home.

Housing Act 1988 breaches and offences

Failure to give a written statement of terms and any other prescribed information - section 16D of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£4,000	£7,000	£3,200	£4,000	£4,800

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- Provision of some of the required terms and prescribed information within the required period.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Attempting to let a property for a fixed term - section 16E(1)(a) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£4,000	£7,000	£3,200	£4,000	£4,800

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Attempting to end a tenancy by service of a notice to quit - section 16E(1)(b) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£6,000	£7,000	£4,800	£6,000	£7,200

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit.

Attempting to end a tenancy orally or requiring that it is ended orally - section 16E(1)(c) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£6,000	£7,000	£4,800	£6,000	£7,200

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit.

Serving a possession notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process - section 16E(1)(d) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£6,000	£7,000	£4,800	£6,000	£7,200

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Tenant vacates property within four months of the date of vacation or equivalent specified in the notice to quit.

Relying on a ground where the person does not reasonably believe that the landlord is, will, or may be able to obtain possession on that ground and the tenant(s) surrendered the tenancy within the period of four months beginning with the date of the contravention, without an order for possession of the dwelling-house being made - section 16E(1)(e) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£6,000	£7,000	£4,800	£6,000	£7,200

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used - section 16E(1)(f) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£3,000	£7,000	£2,400	£3,000	£3,600

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Failure to give an existing tenant prescribed information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act 2025 in the prescribed form and timeframe - paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£4,000	£7,000	£3,200	£4,000	£4,800

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- Provision of some of the required prescribed information within the required period.
- Provision of prescribed information but not in the prescribed form.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Continuation of conduct subject to a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) after the 28-day period (or, if appealed, after conclusion of the appeal) where the final notice has not been withdrawn — section 16J(3) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Double the starting level for the two constituent breaches added together	£40,000	Dependent on the constituent breaches	Dependent on the constituent breaches	Dependent on the constituent breaches

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Conduct giving rise to liability under s.16I, where within the preceding five years the person has either (i) had a relevant penalty (under s.16I or s.16K Housing Act 1988) imposed for different conduct and the final notice has not been withdrawn, or (ii) been convicted under s.16J for different conduct – section 16(J)(4) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Double the starting level for the two constituent breaches added together	£40,000	Dependent on the constituent breaches	Dependent on the constituent breaches	Dependent on the constituent breaches

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- Dependent on the most recent conduct giving rise to liability to a civil penalty under section 16I of the Housing Act 1988.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Dependent on the most recent conduct giving rise to liability to a civil penalty under section 16I of the Housing Act 1988.

Relying on a ground where the person knows that the landlord would not be able to obtain an order for possession on that ground, or being reckless as to whether the landlord would be able to do so and the tenant(s) surrendered the tenancy within the period of four months beginning with the date the ground was relied on, without an order for possession of the dwelling-house being made – section 16J(1) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£30,000	£40,000	£24,000	£30,000	£36,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Breach of restrictions relating to reletting (s16(E)(2) Housing Act 1988) or remarketing (s16(E)(3) Housing Act 1988) a property within restricted period after using Grounds 1 or 1A of Schedule 2 Housing Act 1988 - section 16J(2) of the Housing Act 1988

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£25,000	£40,000	£20,000	£25,000	£30,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Housing and Planning Act 2016 offences.

Breach of a banning order - section 21(1) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£35,000	£40,000	£28,000	£35,000	£42,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- A single, isolated incident.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- Concealment or evasion.

Renters Rights Act 2025 breaches

Discrimination relating to children in the lettings process – section 33(1) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£6,000	£7,000	£4,800	£6,000	£7,200

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Discrimination relating to benefits in the lettings process – section 34(1) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£6,000	£7,000	£4,800	£6,000	£7,200

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Failure to specify proposed rent within a written advertisement or offer – section 56(2) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£3,000	£7,000	£2,400	£3,000	£3,600

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

Inviting, encouraging or accepting any offer of rent greater than the stated rate – section 56(3) of the Renters' Rights Act 2025

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£4,000	£7,000	£3,200	£4,000	£4,800

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- None.

The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 breach of duties

Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (3)(b), (3)(d), (3)(e). Regulation 3D: (a), (b), (c), (f)

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£5,000	£40,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The report or record evidences that the electrical installations were compliant at all points.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record.

Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c), (3)(a), (3)(c), (3)(ca), (5)(b), (5)(c). Regulation 3B: (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c). Regulation 3C: (1), (2)(a). Regulation 3D: (d), (e)

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£12,500	£40,000	£10,000	£12,500	£15,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The report or record evidences that the electrical installations were compliant at all points.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record.

Failure to comply with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector and Social Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 Regulation 3: (4), (5a), (6). Regulation 3C: (2)(b), (4)

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£20,000	£40,000	£16,000	£20,000	£24,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number or nature or severity of the issues observed on the report or record.

Housing Act 2004 offences

Failure to comply with an improvement notice - section 30(1) of the Housing Act 2004

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£25,000	£40,000	£20,000	£25,000	£30,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of hazard(s) that are present once the deadline for compliance has passed.
- Whether the property is unoccupied once the deadline for compliance has passed.
- Access to the property was prevented by the actions or refusal of the occupant(s) and a landlord can evidence that they took steps to obtain access to the property for the purpose of carrying out the required works, but those steps fell short of establishing a reasonable excuse for non-compliance.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of hazard(s) that are present once the deadline for compliance has passed.

Failure to comply with an overcrowding notice - section 139(7) of the Housing Act 2004

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£20,000	£40,000	£16,000	£20,000	£24,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The level of overcrowding present.

Failure to obtain an HMO licence - section 72(1) of the Housing Act 2004

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£17,000	£40,000	£13,600	£17,000	£20,400

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- None.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The landlord has knowledge or experience of licensing requirements.
- The condition of the unlicensed property.

Knowingly permitting over-occupation of an HMO - section 72(2) of the Housing Act 2004

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£20,000	£40,000	£16,000	£20,000	£24,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- There are suitable amenity and space provisions in the HMO.

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The level of over-occupation present.

Failure to Comply with The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation [England] Regulations 2006 and The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 – section 234(3) of the Housing Act 2004

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 impose duties on the persons managing HMOs in respect of:

- Providing information to occupiers [Regulation 3]
- Taking safety measures, including fire safety measures [Regulation 4]
- Maintaining the water supply and drainage [Regulation 5]
- Supplying and maintaining gas and electricity, including having these services/appliances regularly inspected [Regulation 6]
- Maintaining common parts [Regulation 7]
- Maintaining living accommodation [Regulation 8]
- Providing sufficient waste disposal facilities [Regulation 9]

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 impose duties on the persons managing HMOs as defined by Section 257 Housing Act 2004 in respect of:

- Providing information to occupiers [regulation 4]
- Taking safety measures, including fire safety measures [regulation 5]
- Maintaining the water supply and drainage [regulation 6]
- Supplying and maintaining gas and electricity, including having these services/appliances regularly inspected [regulation 7]
- Maintaining common parts [regulation 8]
- Maintaining living accommodation [regulation 9]
- Providing sufficient waste disposal facilities [regulation 10]

Where there are multiple breaches of a single Management Regulation at a single HMO, a single civil penalty will be imposed which will cover all the breaches of that Management Regulation.

Where multiple Management Regulations have been breached at a single HMO, a separate civil penalty will be imposed for each Management Regulation that has been breached.

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Duty of manager to provide information to occupier	£3,000	£40,000	£2,400	£3,000	£3,600

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation
- The landlord has refused to provide any outstanding contact information more than 48 hours after it has been requested by an occupant or on behalf of an occupant.

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Duty of manager to take safety measures	£20,000	£40,000	£16,000	£20,000	£24,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment

Duty of manager to maintain water supply and drainage	£10,000	£40,000	£8,000	£10,000	£12,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Duty of manager to supply and maintain gas and electricity	£12,000	£40,000	£9,600	£12,000	£14,400

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Duty of manager to maintain common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances	£7,000	£40,000	£5,600	£7,000	£8,400

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Duty of manager to maintain living accommodation	£7,000	£40,000	£5,600	£7,000	£8,400

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The number, nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Name of Management Regulation	Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
Duty to provide waste disposal facilities	£7,000	£40,000	£5,600	£7,000	£8,400

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of offences within the specific regulation
- The lack of sufficient refuse and/or litter containers either inside and/or outside the property has been previously reported
- The refuse and/or litter that requires disposal includes hazardous materials

Breach of licence conditions – Section 72(3) Housing Act 2004

All granted HMO licences impose a set of conditions on the licence holder. It is important that the licence holder of a licensed property complies with all imposed conditions, but the Council recognises that a failure to comply with certain licence conditions is likely to have a much bigger impact on the safety and comfort of residents than others.

The starting levels for each different type of licence condition breach is set out below based on the seriousness of the offence. Where a licence condition could be interpreted to fall within two different potential starting levels, the higher starting level will be chosen.

Where multiple licence conditions have been breached at a single property, a separate civil penalty will be imposed for each licence condition that has been breached.

Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:

- Signage or the provision of information for tenants
- Provision of written terms of occupancy for tenants
- Procedures regarding complaints
- Procedures regarding vetting of incoming tenants
- Compliance with deposit protection legislation
- The recording and provision of information regarding rent payments
- Procedures relating to rent collection
- The provision of information regarding occupancy of the property
- The provision of information regarding change of managers or licence holder details
- The provision of information related to changes in the property
- Requirements relating to the sale of the property
- Attending training courses
- Requirements to hold insurance
- The provision of insurance documentation
- The provision of or obtaining of suitable references
- The provision of keys and alarm codes
- Security provisions for access to the property
- The provision of suitable means for occupiers to regulate temperature
- Carrying out items on a schedule of works not otherwise mentioned in the HMO licence conditions section of this policy, relating to non-compliance with items on a schedule of works

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£4,000	£40,000	£3,200	£4,000	£4,800

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:

- Procedures and actions regarding Inspections
- Procedures regarding Repair issues

- Maintenance and use of common parts (including gardens, outbuildings and property exterior) and living areas
- Safeguarding occupiers and minimising disruption during works
- The provision of information regarding alterations and construction works
- Procedures regarding emergency issues
- Waste and waste receptacles, pests, minor repairs, alterations or decoration.
- Giving written notice prior to entry
- Allowing access for inspections
- Minimising risk of water contamination
- The compliance of furnishings or furniture with fire safety regulations
- Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to provision of mechanical extraction or electrical sockets

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£7,000	£40,000	£5,600	£7,000	£8,400

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:

- The provision of documentation regarding energy performance certificates, fire detection and prevention, emergency lighting, carbon monoxide detection, fire risk assessments, gas installations, electric installations and appliances
- Notification of legal proceedings, contraventions and other relevant information that may affect a fit and proper person status
- Procedures and actions regarding ASB
- Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to the provision of personal hygiene facilities, kitchen facilities or heating

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£12,500	£40,000	£10,000	£12,500	£15,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:

- Minimum floor areas
- Occupancy rates
- Occupancy of rooms or areas that are not to be used as sleeping accommodation
- Limits on number of households allowed to occupy the property or part of the property

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£20,000	£40,000	£16,000	£20,000	£24,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Failure to comply with licence conditions related to:

- The condition or existence of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, emergency lighting, gas installations, electric installations and appliances, fire detection or other fire safety features or requirements
- The provision and maintenance of safe means of escape, including requirements to keep escape routes and exits free from obstruction
- Carrying out items on a schedule of works in relation to fire safety or the provision of a Carbon Monoxide detector
-

Starting point	Statutory maximum civil penalty amount	Landlord Type downward adjustment	No Landlord Type adjustment	Landlord Type upward adjustment
£25,000	£40,000	£20,000	£25,000	£30,000

Offence-specific mitigating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Offence-specific aggravating factors:

- The nature and extent of the licence condition breach

Process for imposing a civil penalty and the right to make written representations

Notice of intent

Before imposing a civil penalty on a landlord, the Council will give the landlord a notice of intent. The notice of intent will set out:

- The amount of the proposed civil penalty
- The reasons for proposing to impose the civil penalty
- Information about their right to make written representations

Right to make written representations

A landlord who is given a notice of intent may make written representations to the Council about the proposal to impose a civil penalty. Any representations must be made within a period of 28 days beginning with the day after the date on which the notice of intent was given.

Decision after the representations period

After the end of the period for representations the Council will:

- Decide whether to impose a civil penalty on the landlord; and
- If it decides to impose a civil penalty, decide the amount of the penalty. This amount can be higher or lower than the amount stated in the notice of intent.

A landlord's rectification of the identified breach or offence during the representations period will rarely, of itself, lead the Council to conclude that the imposition of a civil penalty is inappropriate. However, compliance at that stage will usually be relevant to the assessment of mitigating factors that may reduce the level of any civil penalty imposed.

Similarly, an admission of liability will rarely, of itself, lead the Council to conclude that the imposition of a civil penalty is inappropriate. An admission of liability will, however, usually be relevant to the assessment of mitigating factors that may reduce the level of any civil penalty imposed.

Final notice

If, following the receipt of written representations and/or the expiry of the time period to make written representations, the Council decides to impose a civil penalty on the landlord, it will give the landlord a final notice imposing that penalty.

The final notice will set out:

- The amount of the civil penalty
- The reasons for imposing the penalty
- Information about how to pay the penalty
- The period for payment of the penalty
- Information about rights of appeal
- The consequences of failure to comply with the notice

Appeals

A landlord who is given a final notice may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) against the decision to impose a civil penalty and/or the amount of the civil penalty.

Any appeal must be made within 28 days beginning with the day after the date on which the final notice was given.
Where an appeal is brought, the final notice is suspended until the appeal is finally determined or withdrawn.

An appeal to the First-tier Tribunal is by way of a re-hearing of the Council's decision. In determining an appeal, the Tribunal may have regard to matters of which the Council was unaware at the time the decision to impose the civil penalty was made.

The Tribunal may dismiss an appeal if it is satisfied that the appeal is frivolous, vexatious, an abuse of process, or has no reasonable prospect of success.

The First-tier Tribunal may invite the parties to consider mediation or another form of alternative dispute resolution. The Council will not generally agree to mediation in relation to the level of a civil penalty, as civil penalties are determined by reference to this Policy to promote fair, consistent, and proportionate outcomes. Agreeing reductions outside the Policy framework would risk undermining consistency and the Council's enforcement objectives.

On determination of an appeal, the Tribunal may:

- Confirm the civil penalty
- Vary the amount of the civil penalty (whether by increase or reduction)

- Cancel the civil penalty

Where the Tribunal varies a civil penalty by increasing its amount, it may do so only up to the applicable statutory maximum for the relevant breach or offence (£7,000 or £40,000, as applicable).

A party to the appeal may apply for permission to appeal the decision of the First-tier Tribunal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).

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Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement Policy.

Policy for adoption by Local Housing Authorities in England

This policy sets out the Council's principles for enforcing and executing its duties as a Housing Authority under the relevant statute.

S3 Housing Act 2004 imposes a duty on Councils to keep housing conditions in their district under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them.
S107 Renters' Rights Act 2025 imposes a duty on the Council to enforce the Landlord Legislation. The Landlord Legislation is comprised of the following:

- Chapters 3 and 6 of Part 1 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025,
- Part 2 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025,
- Sections 1 and 1A of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, and
- Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988.

S110 Renters' Rights Act 2025 imposes a duty on the Council to report to the Secretary of State on the exercise of its functions under the Landlord Legislation.
In this policy, the term 'landlord' should be read as including letting agents, managing agents, licensors, property owners, directors of corporate landlords and any other person involved in the letting or management of privately rented accommodation.
In this policy, the terms 'House of Multiple Occupation' or 'HMO' are defined by the Housing Act 2004.

Aims of the Policy

The purpose of this enforcement policy is to provide guidance for Housing Authority officers to ensure enforcement action is taken in line with the provisions of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and mandatory guidance to local authorities.

The Act and the 'Landlord Legislation' (as defined by S107) sit outside of the Regulators' Code, and its provisions do not apply.

Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 is also outside of the code's scope.
Notwithstanding this, the following legislation and its enforcement does come within the Legislative and Regulatory Reform (Regulatory Functions) Order 2007 and is therefore within the scope of the Regulators Code and the principles of good regulation:

- Parts 8, 9 and 10 of the Housing Act 1985
- Part 8 of the Housing Act 1996
- Parts 2 to 5 of the Housing Act 2004

This policy document sets out what owners, landlords, their agents or any other person involved in the letting or management of privately rented accommodation, and tenants of private rented sector properties, can expect from officers when dealing with non-compliance. All enforcement action taken will be in accordance with relevant statutory Codes of Practice, Council procedures and protocols, and official guidance from central and local government bodies.

As a public body under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Council will apply the principles of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Approach to Enforcement

The Council wants to support responsible landlords to raise housing standards. However, the Council expects landlords to have a good understanding of the housing standards and management issues that should be met in privately rented accommodation.
S5 Housing Act 2004 places a duty on Councils to take appropriate enforcement action where a Category 1 hazard exists.

S7 Housing Act 2004 gives Councils a discretionary duty to take action where a Category 2 hazard exists. The Council will usually take action where a Category 2 hazard exists.
In addition, Council officers will often investigate and identify the need to take enforcement action through a range of routes, including (but not limited to): proactive inspections of dwellings through licensing provisions; in response to a complaint or request for assistance; and referrals from other public bodies. All investigations will be carried out in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. The Council will ensure that appropriate governance is in place to ensure that action is taken in accordance with appropriate policies.
The Council may commence enforcement with formal action instead of informal action in the first instance. In deciding whether to do so, the circumstances of the case will be taken into account. Relevant factors may include, but are not limited to:

- Where there is a risk to public health
- Where there is a blatant or deliberate contravention of the law
- Where there is history of non-compliance

The Council will usually take formal action in the first instance if there has been:

- Non-compliance with previous formal or informal action
- Offences in relation to the licensing of HMOs

The Council will take formal enforcement action in the first instance for breaches of the Landlord Legislation.

Investigatory powers

In addition to the Council's informal and formal powers of enforcement, there are investigatory powers relating to the collection of information and relating to the entry of premises including, but not limited to, the powers detailed below.

Power to Investigate

S114 Renters' Rights Act 2025 gives the Council power to issue a notice to a relevant person to require the person to provide specified information to the Council.
This notice may be given to any person with an estate or interest in the land; the licensor; their agents; or a marketer of a property. It may be given in regard to any offence under the following Legislation:

- Sections 1 and 1A of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977;
- Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988;
- Section 83(1) or 84(1) of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013;
- Sections 21 to 23 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016;
- Chapter 3 of Part 1 and Part 2 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

Failure to comply with a s114 notice is an offence under s131 Renters' Rights Act 2025, as is being obstructive and intentionally or recklessly making false or misleading statements in response to a s.114 notice.

S115 Renters' Rights Act 2025 permits the Council when it reasonably suspects a breach of the Rented Accommodation Legislation to issue a notice to any person requiring them to provide the information specified. This may only be done to investigate whether a breach has occurred under the Rented Accommodation Legislation, or to determine the amount of a penalty. For the purposes of this section, the Rented Accommodation Legislation means:

- Sections 1 and 1A of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977;
- Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Housing Act 1988;
- Parts 1 to 4 and 7 of the Housing Act 2004;
- Section 83(1) or 84(1) of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013;
- Sections 21 to 23 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016;
- Chapter 3 of Part 1 and Part 2 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

Where an individual has not complied with a s115 notice, s116 Renters' Rights Act 2025 enables the Council to make an application to the Court to enforce the provisions of the notice and seek reimbursement for the costs of the application.

S131 Renters' Rights Act provides that, in addition to the offence of non-compliance with a s114 notice, it is an offence for an individual to obstruct a Council officer seeking to exercise their powers without reasonable excuse. It is also an offence to fail to give an officer any additional assistance or information which they reasonably require without reasonable excuse.

S235 Housing Act 2004 allows the Council to issue a notice to relevant individuals, including occupiers, directing them to provide specified documents under their control for the purpose of investigating whether an offence has been committed under Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004 or exercising the Council's functions under Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004.

S16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 also permits the Council to issue a notice to an occupier, manager, or individual with an interest in the land to compel them to provide the Council with information on the nature of their interest and the names and addresses of current occupiers and of any others with an interest in the land.

Entry to Premises

S118 Renters' Rights Act 2025 permits Council officers to enter business premises of relevant people (including landlords, letting agents, and marketers) if it is necessary for the production or seizure of documents under s122-s123 Renters' Rights Act 2025. This power will be exercised without a warrant.

S121 Renters' Rights Act 2025 allows a Council officer named in a warrant to enter premises used for a rental sector business which is not mainly accommodation if there are documents on the premises which the officer could require under s122 or seize under s123. In addition, for this power to be exercised, one of the following conditions must be met:

- That access to the premises has been or is likely to be refused, and the Council has provided notice of their intention to apply for a warrant to the occupier;
- Those documents on the premises would likely be concealed or interfered with if notice of entry were to be given;
- That no occupier is present, and waiting for their return might defeat the purpose of the entry.

Following a s118 or s121 Renters' Rights Act 2025 entry, s122 allows an officer at any reasonable time to require a relevant person on the premises to produce any documents relating to the business and to take copies of them. This may only be exercised to ascertain whether there has been a breach of the Rented Accommodation Legislation where an officer reasonably suspects there has been a breach or an offence; or to ascertain whether the documents may be required in evidence for proceedings regarding a breach or offence.

Following a s118 or s121 Renters' Rights Act 2025 entry, s123 authorises Council officers to seize and detain documents that the officer reasonably suspects may be required as evidence in proceedings relating to a breach of, or an offence under, the Rented Accommodation Legislation. When doing so, the officer will provide evidence of the officer's identity and authority if reasonably practicable. The officer will take reasonable steps to inform the person from whom documents have been seized that they have been seized, and will provide that person with a written record of what has been taken.

S126 Renters' Rights Act 2025 permits the Council to enter residential premises used for a tenancy at a reasonable time if the officer considers it necessary as part of an investigation into potential offences specified in subsection 1(b). Where required, the Council will give at least 24 hours' notice of this to the occupier and individuals with an interest in the property as per subsection 1(c), detailing in writing why the entry is necessary and the suspected offences. Where there are occupiers found on the premises, the officer will provide evidence of the officer's identity and authority to at least one of the occupiers if reasonably practicable. In addition, s239 Housing Act 2004 permits Council officers to enter, if necessary and at a reasonable time, a property in order to carry out a survey or examination. This may be done if any one of the following is met:

- to determine if any Part 1-4 enforcement functions should be exercised;
- the premises are part of an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Order;
- a management order is in force under Chapter 1 or 2 of Part 4 on the premises.

In certain circumstance the Council may obtain a warrant to enter, by force if necessary, under s240 Housing Act 2004.

Informal action

Informal action taken by the Council may be written or verbal advice. Additionally, a visit may be made at the outset by Council Officers in cases where the initial complaint or contact indicates that an immediate investigation by a Council officer is warranted.
In cases where officers visit an address, whether this is a result of a landlord's failure to adequately resolve a highlighted issue or as part of an audit or other investigation, written or verbal advice may be deemed sufficient should the inspection highlight only very minor deficiencies.

Where written advice is deemed appropriate by the Council and is provided, timescales will normally be included to undertake any specified work or actions.
While the Council will use its discretion on whether to carry out informal action for a Category 2 hazard, it does not need to provide written or verbal advice before commencing formal action.

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Formal action

If formal action is considered appropriate, the following options are available to the Council. Housing Act 2004 Part 1

- issue an Improvement Notice in respect of any Category 1 hazards and any Category 2 hazards on the property. This requires the person to whom it is served to undertake the remedial action specified on the Notice within a given timeframe. The mandated work and the timeframe will be determined by the Council depending on the nature and scale of the work.
- issue a Prohibition Order in respect of any Category 1 hazards and any Category 2 hazards on the property. This prevents occupation of whole or part of the property, or can be used to limit occupant numbers, within a specified time frame.
- issue a Hazard Awareness Notice in respect of any Category 1 hazards and any Category 2 hazards on the property. This makes the owner and occupiers aware of the hazards identified; however, it does not require remedial action. As a result, and because it does not secure risk-reducing works within a specified timeframe, a Hazard Awareness Notice will not usually be the most appropriate course of action where remedial works are necessary to reduce the risk of harm to occupiers or potential occupiers.
- make an Emergency Prohibition Order. This immediately prohibits the use of all or part of a dwelling if there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the health or safety of the occupants or others.
- Where there is a Category 1 hazard present, S40 Housing Act 2004 allows the Council to undertake Emergency Remedial Action on the Category 1 hazard without prior notice.
- The Council also has the power to suspend action taken under Part 1 Housing Act 2004 in situations where it has the power or duty to take enforcement action through the service of an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Order. This will be at the Council's discretion and will normally be considered for the purpose of minimising inconvenience to the current occupiers.
- Demolition and Clearance are options for both Category One or Category Two hazards.
- S30 Housing Act 2004 provides that failure to comply with a Improvement Notice is a criminal offence, which will normally be followed by prosecution or the issuing of a civil penalty.
- S32 Housing Act 2004 provides that failure to comply with a Prohibition Order is a criminal offence, which will normally be followed by prosecution.

- Other formal notices served by the Council may not relate to the landlord undertaking remedial works but may cover a range of other matters including, but not limited to, exercising a right of entry under s.239 of the Housing Act 2004 and a request to provide information or the need to abate or avoid overcrowding.

Work in default

The enforcement options for non-compliance with formal Notices or breach of licence conditions include the carrying out of works specified in the Notice. This power may be exercised in addition to other enforcement proceedings taken for non-compliance. The Council has no duty to undertake works in default and it will be at its discretion.

Emergency or suspended enforcement action

Where there is a Category 1 hazard present, s43 Housing Act 2004 permits the Council to issue an Emergency Prohibition Order. This immediately prohibits the use of all or part of a dwelling if there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the health or safety of the occupants or others.
S40 Housing Act 2004 allows the Council to undertake Emergency Remedial Action on the Category 1 hazard without prior notice. The Council may then seek reimbursement of costs incurred on the work and the administration of the scheme.
The Council also has the power to suspend action taken under Part 1 Housing Act 2004 in situations where it has the power or duty to take enforcement action through the service of an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Order. This will be at the Council's discretion and will normally be considered for the purpose of minimising inconvenience to the current occupiers.

HMO Licence Conditions

Conditions can be added to HMO licences to require work to meet specified standards or to address HMO Management Regulation requirements. In general, authorities should seek to identify, remove or reduce category 1 or category 2 hazards in the house by the exercise of Part 1 functions and not by means of licence conditions however this does not prevent the authority from imposing licence conditions relating to the installation or maintenance of facilities or equipment even if the same result could be achieved by the exercise of Part 1 functions;

Failure to comply with these conditions is a is a criminal offence, which may result in prosecution or the issuing of a civil penalty.

Other Legislative alternatives

There may be other legislative alternatives available to remedy deficiencies that cause Category Two hazards, which an authority may choose as a more appropriate enforcement approach.

Prosecution

Where a Civil Financial Penalty is an available alternative to prosecution, the Council will only consider using its power to prosecute under Part 1 Housing Act 2004 in more serious cases. The decision to prosecute will be determined by the evidential strength of the Council's case and the relevant public interest factors set down by the Director of Public Prosecutions in the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

In many circumstances, where an offence is committed by a body corporate, legislation enables local authorities to pursue persons involved with the body corporate in addition to, or instead of, the body corporate. These include company officers and, where applicable, company members.

The Council will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether to take enforcement action against any person or persons that they consider fall within the scope of this category in addition to prosecuting the body corporate.

Civil Financial Penalties for specified offences

This section relates exclusively to Civil Financial Penalties issued by the Council for breaches of the below housing law.

The Council has the power to impose a Civil Financial Penalty for the following:

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupier as defined under the Protection from Eviction Act 1997
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice [s30 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) [s72 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to the Selective Licensing of 'houses' [s95 Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with an Overcrowding Notice [s139 Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with a management regulation in respect of an HMO [s234 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to Regulation 3 of the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020
- Failure to comply with a banning order [s21 Housing and Planning Act 2016]
- Failure to give a written statement of terms under section 16D of the Housing Act 1988
- Failure to give an existing tenant information about changes made by the Renters' Rights Act under paragraph 7(2) of schedule 6 to the Renters' Rights Act 2025
- Attempting to let a property for a fixed term under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988

- Attempting to end a tenancy orally or by service of a notice to quit under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Serving an eviction notice that attempts to end a tenancy outside the prescribed section 8 process under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Relying on a ground where the person does not reasonably believe that the landlord is/will be able to obtain possession under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Relying on a ground knowing the landlord would not be able to obtain possession or being reckless as to whether they would under section 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Failing to provide a tenant with prior notice that a ground which requires it may be used under section 16E of the Housing Act 1988
- Reletting or remarketing a property before expiry of the 12 month no-let period after using the moving and selling grounds under sections 16E and 16J of the Housing Act 1988
- Discriminating against prospective tenants during the letting process on the grounds that those tenants are in receipt of benefits or have children under sections 33 and 34 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025
- Marketing a letting without stating the proposed rent under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025
- Inviting or encouraging any person to offer to pay an amount of rent under the proposed letting that exceeds the stated rent under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025
- Accepting an offer from any person to pay an amount of rent under the proposed letting that exceeds the stated rent under section 56 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025

Civil Financial Penalties in respect of these offences operate according to their own independent standalone policy.

Rent Repayment Orders

Part 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 permits the Council to seek a Rent Repayment Order at the First Tier Tribunal Property Chamber to require the landlord of the property where the offence(s) has been committed to refund rent to the tenants or the Council. S48 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 places a duty on the Council to consider applying for Rent Repayment Orders.

Where a landlord has been convicted or received a Civil Financial Penalty in respect of the offence, the Tribunal must award the maximum applicable amount, except in exceptional circumstances.

This power will be considered in response to all qualifying offences and where there is sufficient evidence for a successful application to the First Tier Tribunal.
The qualifying offences are:

- Unlawful eviction and harassment of occupiers as defined under the Protection from Eviction Act 1997
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice [s30 Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to unlicensed HMOs [s72(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Offences in relation to unlicensed houses [s95(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice [s30(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order [s32(1) Housing Act 2004]
- Breach of a Banning Order [s21 Housing and Planning Act 2016]
- Using Violence to secure entry [s6(1) Criminal Law Act 1977]
- Knowingly or recklessly misusing a possession ground [s16J(1) Housing Act 1988]
- Letting or marketing of a property within twelve months of using the 'moving in' or 'selling' ground of eviction [s16J(2) Housing Act 1988]
- Continuous breach of certain tenancy reform requirements [s16J(3) Housing Act 1988]

An application for an RRO may be in addition to other formal action, such as prosecution proceedings or the imposition of a Civil Penalty. Where the Council has issued a Civil Financial Penalty or pursued prosecution, it will usually apply for a Rent Repayment Order where public funds have been paid to a landlord who has committed a qualifying offence.

S49 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 enables the Council to assist tenants in applying for Rent Repayment Orders. The Council will usually assist tenants by referring or signposting them to a relevant organisation.

Banning Orders

Part 2, Chapter 2 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 permits a Council to apply for a Banning Order against a person who has been convicted of one or more of the relevant offences. This would prevent the landlord from:

- Letting housing in England;
- Engaging in English letting agency work;
- Engaging in English property management work; or
- Doing two or more of those things.

The Council may consider a Banning Order for the more serious offenders. It will take into account the seriousness of the offence(s), whether the landlord has committed other offences (or received any Civil Penalty in relation to a Banning Order offence) and any history of failing

to comply with their obligations or legal responsibilities. It will also take into account other relevant factors, including but not limited to:

- The harm, or potential harm, caused to the tenant;
- The need to punish the offender;
- The need to deter the offender from repeating the offence;
- The need to deter others from committing similar offences.

Costs and Charges

The Council incurs costs in carrying out its functions. Where legislation allows, the Council will seek to recover reasonable costs and expenses associated with its enforcement, licensing and wider regulatory activity. This may include (non-exhaustively) costs arising from inspections, investigation, evidence gathering, notices and other statutory documentation, follow-up action, compliance monitoring, and works or other interventions.

Recovery may be pursued using all available lawful routes, which may include civil action, local land charges, and enforcement against the property.

Where permitted, interest may be applied to outstanding sums until paid.

Complaints

Contact may be made with the Council about any matters listed here by email at customer.feedback@shropshire.gov.uk or by post at:
Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council, PO Box 4826, Shrewsbury SY1 9LJ

A service user can still make a complaint in cases where the Council has instigated legal proceedings. However, making a complaint will not stop any impending legal action. Where statutory notices have been served, making a complaint does not replace the statutory rights of appeal or the right to make representations. It also does not allow extra time to comply with any notice or order.

If a service user disagrees with a statutory notice, they should take action as specified in the notice or order to make an appeal, if any exists. Reference should be made to any notes that may accompany the notice or order for more detail.

Appendix 1 – Statement of principles to determine the amount of a penalty charge under Part 4 of The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 as amended by The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 ("the Regulations")

Section 13 of the Regulations requires local housing authorities to prepare and publish a statement of principles which they propose to follow in determining the amount of a penalty charge.

The Regulations introduced legal requirements on relevant landlords to:

1. Equip a smoke alarm on each storey of the premises on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation.

2. During any period when the premises were occupied under the tenancy, to ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room of the premises which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and which contains fixed combustion appliances other than a gas cooker.

3. Carry out checks by or on behalf of the landlord to ensure that each prescribed alarm is in proper working order on the day the tenancy begins if it is a new tenancy.

4. Where, following a report made on or after 1st October 2022 by a tenant or by their nominated representative to the landlord, a prescribed alarm is found not to be in proper working order, the alarm is repaired or replaced.

For the purposes of the legislation, living accommodation includes a bathroom or lavatory.

Where the Council believe that a landlord is in breach of one or more of the above duties, the Council must serve a remedial notice on the landlord. The remedial notice is a notice served under Regulation 5 of the Regulations.

If the landlord then fails to take the remedial action specified in the notice within the specified timescale, the Council can require a landlord to pay a penalty charge and can arrange for remedial action to be taken under certain circumstances. The power to charge a penalty arises from Regulation 8 of the Regulations. Failure to comply with each remedial notice can lead to a fine of up to £5,000. Fines will be applied per breach, rather than per landlord or property.

The Council will impose a penalty charge where it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the landlord has not complied with the action specified in the remedial notice within the required timescale.

A landlord will not be considered to be in breach of their duty to comply with the remedial notice if they can demonstrate they have taken all reasonable steps to comply. Where there is evidence, including written correspondence, of repeated and consistent efforts to obtain access to the property, with access repeatedly being prevented by the occupant(s) of the property, a landlord will not be considered to be in breach of their duty to comply with the remedial notice. A landlord will be expected to have:

- Communicated the risk of harm that the lack of functioning alarms posed to all occupants in writing on multiple occasions.
- Requested access to comply with the remedial notice on a regular basis of no longer than every seven days in writing.

In considering the imposition of a penalty, the Council may look at the evidence concerning the breach of the requirement of the notice. A non-exhaustive list of methods that may be used to obtain relevant evidence includes, but is not limited to:

- Evidence obtained from a property inspection
- Evidence provided by the tenant or agent.
- Evidence provided by the landlord demonstrating compliance with the Regulations by supplying dated photographs of alarms, together with installation records.
- That all detector heads have not passed their expiration or replacement date

Landlords need to take steps to demonstrate that they have met the testing requirements at the start of the tenancy requirements. A non-exhaustive list of methods that may be used to evidence compliance with these testing requirements includes, but is not limited to:

- Tenants signing an inventory form which states that they observed the alarms being tested and confirming that the alarms were in working order at the start of the tenancy.

Where a landlord is in breach, the local housing authority may serve a remedial notice. Failure to comply with each remedial notice can lead to a fine of up to £5,000. Fines will be applied per breach, rather than per landlord or property

When determining the amount of the penalty charge, regard will be had to whether this is a first breach under the Regulations.

Determining the amount of the penalty charge for a first breach

The minimum amount of a penalty charge for a first breach of the Regulations will be £2500. Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this statement of principles and issue a penalty charge for less than £2500. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors.

The starting level of a penalty charge for a first breach of the Regulations will be £3000. The penalty charge amount will then be varied depending on aggravating and mitigating factors.

Aggravating factors include, but are not limited to:

- The number of alarms not working or missing (the Regulations state there should be one per storey)
- Other fire safety concerns/defects in the property which increase the risk posed to the occupants.
- The length of time the offence is believed to have been on-going.
- The frequency of complaints by the occupiers to the landlord about the non-working or missing alarms
- The costs of any remedial work the Council have carried out in response to the breach.
- Whether the property is let as a HMO (which increases the overall risk)
- The number of occupants living in the property.
- Presence of vulnerable occupiers such as elderly, children or disabled people
- Any history of previous enforcement or non-compliance of the landlord
- Attempts to obstruct the investigation.

Mitigating factors include, but are not limited to:

- The property being small and low-risk (for example a one-bedroom ground floor flat with a large number of fire escapes including large windows)
- A single occupant living in the property.
- Evidence that all required alarms were checked and in working order at the start of the tenancy.
- Written evidence that some efforts to gain access and comply with the remedial notice were made and access was prevented by the occupant.

Determining the amount of the penalty charge for a subsequent breach

The penalty for subsequent breaches by the same landlord will be £5000. Only in exceptional circumstances may the Council depart from the application of this statement of principles and issue a penalty charge for less than £5000. Exceptional circumstances are rare and unusual and are not established merely by the presence of multiple mitigating factors.

Appendix 2: Statement of principles to determine the amount of a penalty charge for a breach of minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) with respect to domestic privately rented property

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") make it unlawful to rent out a domestic property if it has an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating of F or G (unless a valid exemption has been registered on the PRS Exemptions register).

The Regulations make it unlawful to fail to comply with a compliance notice served by the Council.

The Regulations cover all relevant properties, even where there has been no change of tenancy.

The Regulations were introduced to improve the energy efficiency of housing in the private rented sector and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change. They should help make tenants' homes more thermally efficient.

An energy performance certificate (EPC) gives the property an energy efficiency rating – A rated properties are the most energy efficient and G rated are the least efficient. It's valid for 10 years and must be provided by the owner of a property, when it is rented or sold.

If you are a landlord and you fail, when requested, to provide an EPC for the start of a tenancy, you will be in breach of the Regulations.

An EPC contains information about the type of heating system and typical energy costs. It also gives recommendations about how the energy use could be reduced, lowering running costs. You can find the recommended energy efficiency improvements on the current EPC.

If you're a private landlord, you must either:

- ensure your rented properties have an EPC with a minimum 'E' rating.
- register a valid PRS exemption on the PRS exemptions register.

Failure to do either of these is a breach of the Regulations.

The Council investigates any potential breaches of the regulations. If the Council is satisfied that you are or have at any time in the 18 months preceding the date of service of the penalty notice, breached the Regulations, you may be subject to a penalty notice imposing a financial penalty. The Council may also impose a publication penalty.

The “publication penalty” means publication, for a minimum period of 12 months, or such longer period as the Council may decide, on the PRS Exemptions Register of such of the following information in relation to a penalty notice as the Council decides:

- Where the landlord is not an individual, the landlord’s name.
- Details of the breach of these Regulations in respect of which the penalty notice has been issued.
- The address of the property in relation to which the breach has occurred, and
- The amount of any financial penalty imposed.

The Council will impose the following financial penalties:

(a) letting a property with an F or G rating for less than 3 months: £2,000
(b) letting a property with an F or G rating for more than 3 months: £4,000
(c) registering false or misleading information on the PRS exemptions register: £1,000
(d) failing to provide information to the Council demanded by a compliance notice: £2,000

The Council may not impose a financial penalty under both subsections (a) and (b) above in relation to the same breach of the Regulations. But they may impose a financial penalty under either paragraph (a) or paragraph (b), together with financial penalties under paragraphs (c) and (d), in relation to the same breach. Where penalties are imposed under more than one of these paragraphs, the total amount of the financial penalty may not be more than £5,000.

END OF POLICY

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Adoption of Design of New Dwellings and Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Responsible Officer:	Kassandra Polyzoides, Service Director – Place Shaping		
email:	Kassandra.polyzoides@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 254797
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr David Walker		

1. Synopsis

1.1. To seek approval to adopt the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD (Appendix 1) and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (Appendix 2) as material considerations in the planning decision making process.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. The adopted Development Plan for Shropshire identifies the vision and policy framework for the future development of Shropshire. It therefore constitutes the starting point when making decisions on planning applications, although there is also a need to consider whether there are any relevant material considerations.

2.2. The purpose of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) is to provide guidance to support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. They form material considerations when reaching decisions on planning applications.

2.3. The Shropshire Plan includes the strategic objectives to "*develop Shropshire as a safe, strong and vibrant destination to attract people to live in, work in, learn in and visit"* and ensure *"an appropriate mix of housing in the right areas of the county".*

2.4. The draft SPDs on the Design of New Dwellings (Appendix 1) and the Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations (Appendix 2) can support achievement of these objectives by providing:

a. Those progressing planning applications for new dwellings or residential extensions or alterations with 'high-level' and 'technical' guidance on design.

b. Communities with further guidance and greater certainty on the design of new dwellings and residential extensions or alterations.

c. Planning officers determining planning applications with further guidance, to support their understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan and thereby support their decision making on planning applications for new dwellings and residential extensions or alterations.

2.5. The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD provides both 'high-level' and 'technical' guidance for new dwellings, supporting the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

2.6. Reflecting policy expectations in the adopted Development Plan, 'high-level' design guidance for new dwellings is structured around the following key principles:

a. Layout - responding to the site and its surroundings.

b. Character and Appearance - distinctive places that complement their setting.

c. Integration - ensuring connectivity to and through the site.

d. Inclusivity and Sustainability - health, wellbeing, sustainable development and responding to our changing climate.

e. Function - meeting the needs of occupiers.

2.7. Importantly, achieving high-quality design of new dwellings does not necessarily involve achievement of every consideration within each principle, rather it is about achieving positive balance across them - whilst continuing to ensure compliance with requirements of the adopted Development Plan.

2.8. The 'technical' design guidance then expands on these 'high-level' design principles where it is considered additional specificity is beneficial.

2.9. The draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD provides guidance on key design considerations for residential extensions and alterations and then more detailed guidance for those extensions and alterations subject to specific constraints or opportunities. In this way, it supports understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

2.10. Guidance on key design considerations for residential extensions and alterations are based on the following principles:

a. Appropriate siting and proportionate in form and scale.

b. Utilising consistent or complementary materials, finishes and fenestration.

c. Minimising impact on neighbouring amenity and character of neighbouring properties.

2.11. More detailed guidance is provided in such circumstances where extensions or alterations relate to previously converted buildings, previously extended dwellings, affordable or agricultural workers dwellings, are to meet accessibility needs, and could impact on natural or historic environment assets. Opportunities to

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incorporate energy efficiency, zero or low carbon renewable energy generation, and water efficiency as part of an extension or alteration are also highlighted.

2.12. Following Cabinet approval (on the 10 September 2025), these two draft SPDs were the subject of concurrent public consultations between 17 October 2025 and 14 January 2026.

2.13. In total, some 53 responses were received to the consultation on the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD. A summary of these responses and a Council response / summary of actions has been prepared (Appendix 3).

2.14. In total, some 20 responses were received to the consultation on the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD. A summary of these responses and a Council response / summary of actions has been prepared (Appendix 4).

2.15. Responses to these consultations have informed a series of amendments to the draft SPDs (reflected within Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report). Subject to these amendments, it is considered that the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD would support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan and form suitable material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

2.16. It should be noted that recent changes to the planning system mean that any new SPDs must be adopted by 30 June 2026. After this date, alternative mechanisms will need to be considered to provide planning guidance.

2.17. It should also be noted that upon adoption of the next Local Plan for Shropshire, any existing SPDs will be superseded – with Government specifying any key guidance within them should be incorporated into the Local Plan itself. Despite this, it is considered that the adoption of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD remains appropriate, supporting the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan until such time as the next Local Plan for Shropshire is adopted. It is anticipated that the next Shropshire Local Plan will be adopted in March 2029, as per the Cabinet decision (6 May 2026).

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees to:

3.1. Approve adoption of the Design of New Dwellings SPD (Appendix 1), to provide guidance on the application of Development Plan policies and to form a material consideration in the planning application decision-making process.

3.2. Approve adoption of the Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (Appendix 2), to provide guidance on the application of Development Plan policies and to form a material consideration in the planning application decision-making process.

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

4.1. The recommendations to adopt the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD to provide guidance on the application of Development Plan policies and to form a material consideration in the planning application decision-making process align with the approach taken for other such documents (and the parameters that were identified within the Statement of Community Involvement in place during the preparation of these SPDs). As such, it is considered there is a reduced risk of challenge that the Council has not followed due process in the production of these SPDs.

4.2. The intention of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD is to provide design guidance for new dwellings, supporting the understanding and application of relevant policies in the adopted Development Plan. It is considered that not bringing forward this document could adversely affect the design of new dwellings across Shropshire, with the resultant risks and impacts.

4.3. The intention of the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD is to provide design guidance for residential extensions and alterations, supporting the understanding and application of relevant policies in the adopted Development Plan. It is considered that not bringing forward this document could adversely affect the design of residential extensions and alterations across Shropshire, with the resultant risks and impacts.

4.4. The preparation of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD has been informed by public consultation. Responses to these consultations have informed a series of amendments to the draft SPDs, thereby enhancing the value of the resultant SPDs and also allowing for consideration and resolution of risks associated with the content of the SPDs as identified by respondents.

4.5. Following the conclusion of public consultation on these draft SPDs, two further Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIAs) have been undertaken – informed by the views of the respondents (Appendix 5 and Appendix 6). These ESHIAs record that the consultation has been undertaken and that views were sought across all groupings in the community, and that amendments to the draft SPDs have been considered in the light of these responses, supporting their finalisation and reducing the risk of challenge if they are adopted.

4.6. Following the consultation on the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD, the equality impacts continue to be anticipated to be within a range of neutral to low positive to potentially medium positive across all the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined by the Equality Act 2010.

4.7. There is potential for this to rise to medium positive equality impact for people in the groupings of Age and Disability, where there will be intersectionality, and Pregnancy and Maternity. Additionally, there is potential for a range of neutral to medium positive equality impacts for those in the further groupings for whom the Council seeks to give due regard in its decision-making processes, ie Other – Social Inclusion, Other – Carers, Other – Veterans and Service Members and their families, and Other – Young People Leaving Care. Across all these groupings, the

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impacts would be in terms of health and well-being opportunities arising from the achievement of the high-quality design of new residential development. This includes housing that reflects need, is accessible and adaptable, includes specialist housing for older people and those with disabilities and special needs, includes affordable housing, promotes active travel, and includes well-designed and accessible open space.

4.8. The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD is also anticipated to have low to medium positive health impacts, by enhancing the design of new dwellings. Enhancing layout and integration (connectivity to and through the site) of dwellings can support active travel and associated health and well-being benefits; enhanced provision of open space and green infrastructure would promote access and healthy and active lifestyles; and more inclusive and sustainable designs can meet the needs of communities and individuals with associated health and well-being impacts.

4.9. In particular, positive equality impacts may be achieved for groups including older people, people with physical, visual, auditory or learning disabilities, families with young children, and individuals with neurodiverse conditions, where refinements and enhancements to site layout support safer, more comfortable, and more navigable journeys around neighbourhoods.

4.10. Following the consultation on the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD the equality impacts continue to be anticipated to be within a range of neutral to low positive to potentially medium positive across the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined by the Equality Act 2010.

4.11. There is potential for positive equality impact for the groupings of Age, Disability, and Pregnancy and Maternity, with guidance that will support changing needs within families, as well as where people develop a disability, potentially associated with their age, or have a diagnosis for a condition that affects their day to day living arrangements. Additionally, there is potential for neutral to low positive equality impacts for those in the further groupings for whom the Council seeks to give due regard in its decision-making processes, i.e. Other – Social Inclusion, Other – Carers, Other – Veterans and Service Members and their families, and Other – Young People Leaving Care, in terms of health and well-being opportunities arising from further guidance on design if they wish to extend or alter residential properties to meet their changing needs and for people in these groupings to feel safer on their journeys for education, healthcare, work or leisure as a result of potential benefits of natural surveillance to public realm.

4.12. This is likely to potentially rise to medium positive impact for veterans and service members and their families, should life-changing injuries or illnesses affect their physical and mental health and well-being and necessitate adjustments to residential properties.

4.13. It will particularly be the case that those who are carers, who may be across and within a number of groupings, will see low to medium positive impacts as a result of the guidance in the draft SPD.

4.14. It is also anticipated the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD will have positive health impacts, by guiding extensions to provide better

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natural surveillance of public realm supporting perception of safety and active travel with the associated health and well-being benefits; and enhancing consideration of private amenity space when designing extensions – such space has known health and well-being benefits.

4.15. From a health and well-being perspective, it is anticipated that the draft SPD will support applicants in preparing planning applications for residential extensions and alterations which achieve a high-quality design. Such design will provide natural surveillance of public realm, thereby ensuring they are perceived as safe by pedestrians and cyclists. Such modes of active travel have clear health and well-being benefits. It will also support appropriate consideration of private amenity space as part of any extension or alteration scheme, thereby supporting the maintenance and enhancement of private amenity space. Access to appropriate private amenity space has known health and well-being benefits.

4.16. Furthermore, there are additional positive impacts in terms of the recognised positive health and well-being associated with the ability to appropriately extend or alter a residential property to meet the needs of the occupier(s). Including alterations allowing an increase in availability of space for additional residents within properties, or accessibility amendments allowing individuals to remain in their homes and outside of the care system for longer, leading to greater independence, and reduction in social isolation from moving away from friends, family and support systems.

4.17. Risk table:

Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Procedural risk: failing to comply with national expectations for the preparation of SPD's and the parameters that were identified within the Statement of Community Involvement in place during the preparation of these SPDs	Preparation and engagement on the draft SPDs undertaken using a process consistent with national expectations (including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) and the parameters identified in the Statement of Community Involvement in place during preparation of these SPDs.	No direct linkage to the strategic risks identified by Shropshire Council
Reputational risk: guidance proposed is perceived not to be appropriate	Preparation of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD has been informed by public consultation, with responses informing a series of amendments, thereby allowing for consideration and resolution of risks associated with the content of the SPDs as identified by respondents.	No direct linkage to the strategic risks identified by Shropshire Council

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Risk	*Mitigation*	*Link to Strategic Risk*
Reputational: Content within SPDs becomes obsolete or is perceived to no longer be relevant	Upon adoption of the next Local Plan for Shropshire, existing SPDs will be superseded. The Council recently issued an intention to commence preparation of the next Local Plan and the timetable for this process. As such, it is considered the risk that the SPD becomes obsolete or is perceived to no longer be relevant is minimal. This minimal risk will be managed by periodic reviews, as resources allow, to ensure the guidance remains in accordance with the with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).	No direct linkage to the strategic risks identified by Shropshire Council
Operational: Developers and applicants do not reference or comply with the SPDs	The SPDs will be made available on the Planning Pages of shropshire.gov.uk to raise awareness of them and the importance of good design. The SPDs include reference to Pre-Application Advice service (and in the case of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) services) offered by the Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA). These services can draw on the guidance in these SPDs to inform discussions and also provide opportunities to highlight the value of these SPDs in informing the design of development. If adopted by the Council, the SPDs will form material considerations and considered as such by Planning Officers in the Development Management service when determining planning applications.	No direct linkage to the strategic risks identified by Shropshire Council

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.

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5.2. Preparation of and engagement on the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD has been undertaken using existing resources and budgets within the Planning Policy Team.

5.3. The adoption of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD is not anticipated to have any direct cost implications.

5.4. If adopted, the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD will assist the Council in continuing to make the most effective use of its resources and support decision making on planning applications.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1. The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD seek to provide guidance to support the understanding and application of policies within the adopted Development Plan.

6.2. With regard to the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD, guidance promotes the:

a. Maximisation of fabric energy efficiency of new dwellings.

b. Management of travel behaviours associated with new dwellings to minimise need for travel and encourage use of active/public transport.

c. Reduction of waste and re-use/re-cycling during construction and operation of new dwellings.

d. Principle of identifying opportunities to integrate and support community initiatives for on-site low carbon and renewable energy generation within developments for new dwellings.

e. Incorporation of measures to respond to our changing climate, including sustainable drainage, green infrastructure, water efficiency and flood risk management within the development of new dwellings.

f. Consideration of opportunities to minimise embodied carbon, support nature based carbon sequestration and offset carbon emissions within the development of new dwellings.

6.3. With regard to the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD, it includes guidance on the opportunities to incorporate energy efficiency zero or low carbon renewable energy generation and water efficiency as part of an extension or alteration.

6.4. As such, adoption of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD is expected to have a positive outcome on the climate change impacts listed below:

a. Energy and fuel consumption (buildings and/or travel).

b. Renewable energy generation.

c. Carbon offsetting or mitigation.

d. Climate change adaptation.

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7. Background

7.1. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Development Plan for Shropshire consists of:

a. The Core Strategy (2011) which sets out the vision, strategic objectives, broad spatial strategy, and strategic policies.

b. The Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015) which provides detailed 'development management' and 'settlement' policies to guide future development and identifies site allocations.

c. 'Made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Development Plans, of which there are currently nine made and several more in preparation.

7.2. Design is the appearance, function, sustainability and connectivity of a building or area. High-quality design maintains and enhances the character, appearance and historic interest of settlements, streetscenes, groups of buildings, individual buildings, our network of green spaces and the landscape. It creates better places in which to live and work, improves sustainability, supports active and healthy lifestyles, and ensures individual and community well-being.

7.3. The adopted Development Plan includes a range of policies that address the achievement of high-quality design. Particularly relevant to the design of new dwellings and extensions / alterations to existing dwellings are Policies CS6 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan.

7.4. Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy establishes sustainable design and development principles, including requiring:

- High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- Design to respond to our changing climate; to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers.
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment; development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments.
- Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing.
- Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources.

7.5. Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan addresses sustainable design, including requiring development to:

- Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural

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design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets.

- Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
- Incorporate sustainable drainage.
- Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape); and to provide sufficient open space (30sqm per person) that meets local needs (on sites of 20 or more dwellings this should be a functional space for play, recreation and nature) managed in perpetuity.

7.6. The purpose of SPDs is to provide more detailed guidance to support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. They do not form part of the adopted Development Plan, and they cannot introduce new planning policies into the adopted Development Plan. They should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development. They form material considerations when reaching decisions on planning applications.

7.7. The requirements for producing SPDs are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and these are being followed in producing these SPDs.

7.8. To support the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan, two new draft SPDs have been prepared.

7.9. The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD (Appendix 1) provides both 'high-level' and 'technical' guidance on the policy expectations in the adopted Development Plan for the design of new dwellings.

7.10. This guidance is applicable to all proposals for one or more new dwellings. However, it recognises that the scale and context of a site will influence the relevance and approach to some components.

7.11. The 'high-level' design guidance for new dwellings is structured around a series of design principles, these being:

a. Layout - responding to the site and its surroundings.

b. Character and Appearance - distinctive places that complement their setting.

c. Integration - ensuring connectivity to and through the site.

d. Inclusivity and Sustainability - health, wellbeing, sustainable development and responding to our changing climate.

e. Function - meeting the needs of occupiers.

7.12. To provide further specificity, for each design principle and associated guidance is supported by a series of 'themes'. These are:

a. Layout:
   - Make effective use of the site.
   - Clear relationship with and responsive to the surrounding built and natural environment.

- Ease of navigation with well-defined streets and spaces.

b. Character and Appearance:
   - Create a memorable place.
   - Enhance the character and appearance of the site and its setting.
   - Design of place, including materials and finishes.

c. Integration:
   - Safe and convenient movement to and through the site.
   - Green infrastructure and wildlife corridors to and through the site.
   - Access to services, facilities, and sports / play provision on and off site.

d. Inclusivity and Sustainability:
   - Promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
   - Supporting inclusive and multi-generational communities.
   - Sustainable development and the transition to net zero through energy and water efficiency.
   - Biodiversity and heritage.

e. Function - meeting the needs of occupiers.
   - Homes responsive to community needs – now and in the future.
   - Ensuring the amenity of those living on and near the site.
   - Safe and Secure.

7.13. 'Technical' design guidance then expands on these 'high-level' principles - where it is considered additional specificity is beneficial. This includes such issues as separation standards between dwellings; internal and private amenity space; spaces for play and sport; parking; accessible and specialist housing; energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and water efficiency; natural and historic environment assets; and pollution.

7.14. For transparency the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD contains two appendices which summarise the main Development Plan policies to which the guidance within it relates.

7.15. The preparation of the Design of New Dwellings SPD has been informed by public consultation (between 17 October 2025 and 14 January 2026) following Cabinet approval (on the 10 September 2025). In total 53 responses were received to the consultation on the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD. A summary of these responses and a Council response / summary of actions has been prepared (Appendix 3).

7.16. These responses have informed a series of amendments to the draft SPD – reflected within the final draft versions of the document which forms Appendix 1.

7.17. The main amendments to the guidance within the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD resulting from consideration of responses to the public consultation are:

1. General changes to make guidance clearer and support an appropriate balance between certainty and flexibility – noting the diverse characteristics of our communities and development that occurs within them.

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2. Introduction amended to make the status of the document and its relationship to the Development Plan clearer.
3. Specific reference to Neighbourhood Plans and their role in providing design guidance included.
4. Within the 'layout' design principle**:**
    a. Relationship and responsiveness to surroundings guidance extended to include specific reference to supporting those with disabilities.
    b. Navigation guidance on private drives clarified.
5. Within the 'character and appearance' design principle:
    a. Guidance on appropriate heights, proportions, massing, density, formality and plot sizes clarified – form should complement surrounding character whilst making efficient use of the site.
6. Within the 'integration' principle:
    a. Reference to the 10 healthy streets principles included in context to safe and convenient movement guidance.
    b. Safe and convenient movement guidance updated to:
        i. Recognise guidance on active travel route provision is applicable where site context allows.
        ii. Clarify all public realm and carriageway crossing points should be fully inclusive of all peoples need.
        iii. Clarify steep gradients on footways should be avoided to support inclusivity.
        iv. Provide context on the scale of development at which integration of public transport links should be considered.
    b. Reference to the 15 Green Infrastructure principles included in context for green infrastructure and wildlife corridors guidance.
    c. Green infrastructure and wildlife corridors guidance updated to include a cross-reference to the Council's sustainable drainage handbook.
7. Within the 'inclusivity and sustainability' principle:
    a. Cross-reference to the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan included in the healthy and active lifestyles guidance.
    b. Inclusive and multi-generational communities' guidance amended to reduce the proportion of properties of properties that should achieve M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwelling standard from '100%' to '40% on sites of 5 or more dwellings'. *This reflects the changed national position, with Government previously indicating an intention to mandate achievement of M4(2) but subsequently determining the specific proportion should be a minimum of 40% but specific rates to be established locally through Local Plans. The next Shropshire Local Plan provides the ideal mechanism for further consideration of this matter.*

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c. Guidance on affordable housing in the inclusive and multi-generational communities section amended to clarify approach to distribution within development.

d. Biodiversity and heritage guidance expanded to address provision of features that support priority or threatened species such as birds, bats and hedgehogs.

8. Within the 'function' principle:

a. Responsive to community needs guidance extended to include specific reference to provision of high-speed internet connectivity.

b. Safe and secure guidance approach to street furniture clarified and specific reference to the 'hostile vehicle mitigation' guidance integrated.

9. Within the 'technical guidance' section:

a. Changes made to reflect those to the preceding design principles.

b. National described space standards clarified as an aspiration for the Council rather than a requirement.

c. Guidance on quantum of private amenity space nuanced to distinguish based on dwelling size.

d. Guidance on boundary treatments updated to reflect the need to consider railways, canals or rivers where they adjoin a site.

e. Guidance on trees and hedges updated to include reference to the Council's guidance on Trees and Development.

f. Guidance on vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian routes updated to include reference to the Manual for Streets and Cycle Infrastructure Design guide.

g. Guidance on vehicle parking updated to:

i. Amend recommended amount of parking to provide greater flexibility, recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities, and allow for the principle of zero car parking schemes in our most accessible locations.

ii. Clarify that dimensions for garages are recommended where they form part of the car and cycle parking provision of a dwelling.

h. Further context on need for accessible and adaptable housing provided.

i. Guidance on specialist housing updated to reference the Council's Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment.

j. Guidance on bin storage updated to reference the Council's Refuse and Recycling Advice for Developers.

k. Guidance on street furniture expended to address sub-stations.

l. Guidance on energy updated to include reference to ventilation and recognise that the orientation of a dwelling is influenced by site parameters in addition to maximising temperature management.

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m. Guidance on water conservation amended to align with the Council's Sustainable Design Checklist and also note that developments should consider opportunities for grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting.

n. Guidance on flood risk management expanded to clarify the purpose of the sequential test and advise on wider opportunities to manage flood risk.

o. Heritage asset guidance updated to clarify their relationship to development and provide links to guidance provided by Shropshire Council and Historic England.

p. Guidance on noise from air source heat pumps updated to reflect latest national guidance.

q. Guidance on lighting expanded to reference the Council's approach to 'part night lighting' and the role of a lighting assessment.

7.18. The draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (Appendix 2) provides guidance on key design considerations for residential extensions and alterations and then more detailed guidance for those extensions and alterations subject to specific constraints or opportunities. In this way it supports understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

7.19. Guidance on key design considerations for residential extensions and alterations are based on the following principles:

a. Appropriate siting and proportionate in form and scale.

b. Utilising consistent or complementary materials, finishes and fenestration.

c. Minimising impact on neighbouring amenity and character of neighbouring properties.

7.20. More detailed guidance is provided in such circumstances where the building has been previously converted to a dwelling, where the dwelling has been previously extended, where the extensions are to affordable properties, where the extensions are to meet specific needs of occupiers, or have the potential to impact on built or natural environment assets. Opportunities to incorporate energy efficiency, zero or low carbon renewable energy generation, and water efficiency as part of an extension or alteration are also highlighted.

7.21. The preparation of the Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD has been informed by public consultation (between 17 October 2025 and 14 January 2026) following Cabinet approval (on the 10 September 2025). In total 20 responses were received to the consultation on the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD. A summary of these responses and a Council response / summary of actions has been prepared (Appendix 4).

7.22. These responses have informed a series of amendments to the draft SPD – reflected within the final draft versions of the document which forms Appendix 2.

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7.23. The main amendments to the guidance within the draft Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD resulting from consideration of responses to the public consultation are:

1. General changes to make guidance clearer and support an appropriate balance between certainty and flexibility – noting the diverse characteristics of our communities and residential extensions that occur within them.
2. Introduction amended to make the status of the document and its relationship to the Development Plan clearer.
3. Specific reference to Neighbourhood Plans and their role in providing design guidance included.
4. Guidance on 'appropriately siting and proportionate form/scale' updated to:
    a. Clarify flat roof porches may be appropriate in certain circumstances, based on local context.
    b. Explain guidance on roof extensions does not limit solar panel provision but encourages their layout to be responsive to the location of windows in the property.
    c. Further address suitability of dormer windows in annexes.
5. Guidance on 'materials, finished and fenestration' updated to:
    a. Recognise roof forms should complement rather than simply match the existing property.
    b. Explain extensions provide the opportunity to provide features that support priority or threatened species such as birds, bats and hedgehogs.
    c. Reflect the need to consider railways, canals or rivers where they adjoin a site.
6. Guidance on 'minimising impact on neighbours' updated to:
    a. Explain Shropshire Council encourages discussions with neighbours to promote awareness and allow for consideration of their views.
7. Guidance on 'responding to our changing climate' updated to:
    a. Clarify features to respond to our changing climate still require consideration of wider design considerations.
    b. Include specific guidance on drainage.
8. 'Other important considerations' guidance updated to:
    a. Address flood risk.
9. 'Built and natural environment' guidance updated to:
    a. Provide links to guidance on design and heritage assets provided by Shropshire Council and Historic England.
    b. Reference the role of a lighting assessment, where light has the potential to impact on natural environment assets.

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7.24. Subject to the proposed amendments, it is considered that the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD would support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan and form suitable material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

7.25. Specifically, these draft SPDs would provide:

a. Those progressing planning applications for new dwellings or residential extensions or alterations with 'high-level' and 'technical' guidance on design.

b. Communities with further guidance and greater certainty on the design of new dwellings and residential extensions or alterations.

c. Planning officers determining planning applications with further guidance to support their understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan and thereby support their decision making on planning applications for new dwellings and residential extensions or alterations.

8. Additional Information

8.1. It should be noted that recent changes to the planning system mean that any new SPDs must be adopted by 30 June 2026, after this date alternative mechanisms will need to be considered to provide planning guidance.

8.2. It should also be noted that upon adoption of the next Local Plan for Shropshire, any existing SPDs will be superseded – with Government specifying any key guidance within them should be incorporated into the Local Plan itself. Despite this, it is considered that the adoption of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD remains appropriate, supporting the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan until such time as the next Local Plan for Shropshire is adopted. It is anticipated that the next Shropshire Local Plan will be adopted in March 2029, as per the Cabinet decision (6 May 2026).

9. Conclusions

9.1. To support the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan, two new draft SPDs have been prepared. The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD provides guidance on the design of new dwellings. The draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD provides guidance on the design of extensions and alterations to existing dwellings.

9.2. Following Cabinet approval (on the 10 September 2025), these two draft SPDs were the subject of concurrent public consultations between 17 October 2025 and 14 January 2026. In total, some 53 responses were received to the consultation on the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD (summarised in Appendix 3) and some 20 responses were received to the consultation on the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (summarised in Appendix 4).

9.3. Responses to these consultations have informed a series of amendments to the draft SPDs (reflected within Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report). Subject to

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these amendments, it is considered that the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD and draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD would support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan and form suitable material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

Local Member:	**All**

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Design of New Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 2: Draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 3: Summary of Responses to the Consultation on the Draft Design of New Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 4: Summary of Responses to the Consultation on the Draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 5: Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) for the Draft Design of New Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document.

Appendix 6: Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) for the Draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document.

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Shropshire Council

Design of New Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this Document

1.1. This document identifies both 'high-level' and 'technical' design guidance for **new dwellings** in Shropshire. In this way, it supports the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

1.2. Shropshire Council Planning Officers will use this document to support the application of planning policy in the adopted Development Plan and as a material consideration when determining Planning Applications or Permitted Development (PD) 'prior approval' requests for new dwellings.

1.3. It forms part of a 'suite' of Design Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for Shropshire.

1.4. The adopted Development Plan for Shropshire consists of the Core Strategy (2011), Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015) and made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans.

Getting Advice

1.5. To improve the efficiency of the planning application process and the quality of proposals you may wish to consider the **Council's Pre-Application Advice Service,** which can incorporate a **Design Review**.

1.6. The benefits of the **Pre-Application Process** include:

a. Providing an understanding of relevant planning policies and other material considerations associated with a proposed development.

b. Working collaboratively and openly at an early stage to identify, understand, and seek to resolve issues associated with a proposed development. This includes infrastructure and affordable housing requirements.

c. Discussing possible opportunities for mitigation of any identified impacts of proposed development.

d. Identifying information required to accompany a formal planning application, reducing likelihood of delays at validation stage.

e. Putting in place a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to help manage any subsequent planning application process.

1.7. The approach to Pre-Application engagement can be tailored to the nature of the proposed development and can be supported by officers from appropriate departments, such as policy, highways, heritage and ecology.

1.8. The purpose of a **Design Review** is to assess planning proposals for developments and provide advice and support to promoters and planning officers to help deliver high quality design.

1.9. It is undertaken by an independent panel of professionals with architecture and design expertise. The panel has an advisory role only and does not have formal decision-making powers.

1.10. If you are unsure whether your proposals for a new dwelling requires planning permission (or other form of consent) you may also wish to consider the **Council's Pre-Application Advice Service.**

1.11. Further information is available on the Council website via: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/planning/applications/pre-application-advice/

1.12. **Please Note: You are responsible for ensuring compliance with Planning and other relevant Legislation.**

2. Key Considerations for New Dwellings

2.1. Shropshire is a diverse county, with a varied landscape and hundreds of settlements - each with its own character and identity.

2.2. As a result, the scale of new residential developments that occur are equally diverse. They can generally be categorised as:

a. Development of replacement dwellings (for policy purposes, replacement dwellings represent new dwellings).

b. Small scale residential developments (1-9 dwellings).

c. Medium scale residential developments (10-49 dwellings).

d. Large scale residential developments (50 or more dwellings).

2.3. Given the varied scales of residential development that occur in Shropshire and the diversity of our built and natural environment, there cannot be a one-size fits all approach to high-quality design. However, **key design considerations** can be identified.

2.4. These are relevant from initial deliberation, through to project design, during determination of any necessary planning application(s), and throughout construction. *Although it is recognised that due to scale and context of a site some key design considerations (related to 'layout', inclusivity and sustainability' and 'integration' themes) are less applicable to replacement and small scale residential development.*

2.5. The starting point when determining if residential development proposals are appropriate and achieve a high-quality design is the adopted Development Plan. Particularly relevant to the design of new dwellings are Policies CS6 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan, which address Sustainable Design Principles.

2.6. Paragraph 2 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan addresses how development, including new dwellings, must:

> *"2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity values"* through:
>
> *"i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and*
>
> *ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and*
>
> *iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and*
>
> *iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12."*

2.7. Paragraph 3 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan addresses how development, including new dwellings, can:

> *3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place, but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style."*

2.8. *Please Note: The wider requirements of Policies CS6 & MD2 alongside the other policies of the adopted Development Plan are also relevant.*

2.9. Complementary to the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan Policies are those in Neighbourhood Plans, which also form part of the adopted Development Plan, providing design guidance for their specific locality.

2.10. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes a clear expectation that *"high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve"* (NPPF, paragraph 131).

2.11. To do so, the NPPF specifies in paragraph 135 that decision making should ensure that development:

"a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

2.12. The NPPF is also clear that *"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes."* (NPPF, paragraph 139).

2.13. Furthermore, the NPPF establishes that where a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' applies, whether proposals would result in the delivery of *"well-designed places"* is an important consideration in assessing whether they are sustainable (NPPF, paragraph 11(d)(ii)).

2.14. Reflecting policy expectations in the adopted Development Plan and the NPPF, **key design consideration** themes for residential development are:

Layout - *responsive to the site and its surroundings:* ✓

1. Make efficient use of the site.
2. Clear relationship with and responsive to the surrounding built and natural environment.
3. Ease of navigation with well-defined streets and spaces.

Character and Appearance - *distinctive places that complement their setting:* ✓

1. Create a memorable place.
2. Enhance the character and appearance of the site and its setting.
3. Design of place, including materials and finishes.

Integration - *ensuring connectivity to and through the site:* ✓

1. Safe and convenient movement to and through the site.
2. Green infrastructure and wildlife corridors to and through the site.
3. Access to services, facilities, sports provision and play provision on and off site.

Inclusivity and Sustainability - *health, wellbeing, sustainable development and responding to our changing climate:* ✓

1. Promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
2. Supporting inclusive and multi-generational communities.
3. Sustainable development and the transition to net zero through energy and water efficiency.
4. Biodiversity and heritage.

Function - *meeting the needs of occupiers:* ✓

1. Homes responsive to community needs – now and in the future.
2. Ensuring the amenity of those living on and near the site.
3. Safe and Secure.

2.15. These **key design consideration** themes are relevant from initial deliberation, through to project design, during determination of any necessary planning application(s), and throughout construction.

2.16. It is recognised that there is an 'interplay' between **the key design consideration** themes. High-quality design does not necessarily involve achievement of every consideration within each theme, rather it is about achieving *positive balance* across them - whilst continuing to ensure compliance with requirements of the adopted Development Plan.

2.17. Furthermore, due to scale and context of some of the key design considerations (related to 'layout', 'inclusivity and sustainability' and 'integration' themes) they may be less applicable to replacement and small scale residential development.

2.18. Chapters 3-7 of this document provide strategic guidance on each of these **key design consideration areas** for residential development in turn. Chapter 8 of this document then provides more technical guidance on a range of the themes addressed within the key design consideration areas.

2.19. The Appendices to this document cross-relate the guidance within this document to the **key policies requirements** within the adopted Development Plan.

3. Layout

3.1. Fundamental to achieving a high-quality design, is layout. This being the arrangement and relationship between buildings, associated infrastructure and public realm (including open space and landscaping) on a site.

Making Efficient Use of the Site

3.2. To achieve a layout which makes efficient use of a site, a *clear understanding* of its characteristics and relationship to the surroundings is required. Sufficient time should therefore be allowed to gain familiarity. This can be complemented by early discussions with local communities and the Council (through our pre-application services).

3.3. Proposals should then *appropriately respond*. Firstly, a shared vision may be produced which captures opportunities and constraints on the site and identifies key relationships to the sites surroundings. Conceptual ideas may then be explored which seek to respond to the shared vision, before determining a way forward and producing a preferred site layout.

3.4. To make efficient use of a site, residential development should:

a. Work with its **contours** and use **landform, features and ground conditions** in a considered way. ✓

b. Consider **structural landscaping** from the outset. ✓

c. Make the most of **identified opportunities**, reflect **perceived constraints** thereby creating character, and **embrace the relationship** with surrounding buildings, landscapes[1] and features. ✓

d. Reflect the **flow of water** across the site. Consider how this can be used to support water management on and off-site, enhance biodiversity, create character and improve health & wellbeing. ✓

e. Use **existing assets** (natural and human-made) on and beyond the site as **anchor features**. Integrate these and other **positive characteristics** through urban grain, street types, landscape character, plot shapes and sizes, building forms, and materials. ✓

f. Consider opportunities for **passive solar design** - maximise opportunities for solar gain, whilst avoiding risk of overheating. ✓

g. Consider surrounding roads, employment, entertainment and other such uses that may **impact on amenity** due to noise, dust or odour. Use site layout, natural features and building form to provide screening from sources of impact. ✓

[1] Informed by proportionate appraisals of landscape and visual sensitivity.

Relationship and Responsiveness to Surroundings

3.5. An effective layout creates places that integrate into their built and natural surroundings. To achieve this, layouts must recognise and respond to the sites setting.

3.6. To recognise the sites relationship to the surrounding area:

- Look beyond the site - walk the area, utilise ordinance survey maps, and utilise satellite imagery to help understand its setting and how the site can be integrated into it.
- Identify key connections beyond the site - vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian routes; and places, services and facilities.
- Consider ecological habitats and associated corridors on site and in its surroundings.
- Identify visual links into and through the site, particularly those associated with heritage assets.

3.7. To positively respond to a site's relationship to the surrounding area, residential development should:

a. Create a **sensitive transition** between existing and new development - building types, heights and densities. ✓

b. Ensure routes to and through the site are **designed to support those with disabilities**.

c. Ensure routes to and through the site reflect **pedestrian and cyclist desire lines** and the location of **key connections** beyond the site. ✓

d. Where possible, embrace opportunities to extend pedestrian and cyclist links **beyond the site**, particularly to key connections. ✓

e. **Safeguard** existing ecological habitats and associated corridors and ensure **connectivity** between them and new ecological habitats, including through extension or creation of new wildlife corridors within the public realm. ✓

f. Respond to **visual connections** into, out of, and through the site and ensure views, vistas and skylines are considered. ✓

g. Ensure that where relevant **agent of change principles**[2] are applied, to protect any existing commercial uses that may be impacted by the site. ✓

[2] New development should effectively integrate with existing businesses and community facilities. Therefore, existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') will be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.

Navigation

3.8. The layout of a residential development must support easy and intuitive wayfinding, which is important to support both how a place functions and is perceived by communities.

3.9. To support ease of navigation, residential development should:

a. Allow **connectivity through a site** with travel routes **fully integrated** into the design. Think multiple points of access and visually open, direct, and interconnected travel routes responsive to key connections within and beyond the site. ✓

b. Facilitate opportunities for **future connectivity.** Think about opportunities to integrate potential future development and avoid 'ransom strips'. ✓

c. Utilise **simple street patterns** based on formal or more relaxed 'grid patterns' and a clear **hierarchy of streets** ensuring principal streets have characters distinct from more minor streets (through street design, buildings, public spaces and landscaping). ✓

d. **Use buildings, public spaces and other site features** as landmarks, helping people create 'mental maps'. This can be reinforced through landscaping. ✓

e. Integrate **filtered permeability**. Think opportunities to support navigation and movement of pedestrian and cyclists whilst enhancing residential amenity. ✓

f. **Avoid private drives** as far as possible and in particular for accessing affordable housing, as they can frustrate and inhibit site navigation and represent an unnecessary financial burden for future occupiers. Where they are appropriate, alterative pedestrian and cycle routes should be provided to ensure pedestrian and cycle permeability. ✓

4. Character and Appearance

4.1. High quality design achieves distinctive places that complement their setting. Key to this, is the character and appearance of the built and natural form of the development.

A Memorable Place

4.2. A memorable place is one with a locally inspired but distinctive character. Sources of inspiration for a memorable place can be drawn from the site itself and the surrounding area.

4.3. Whether greenfield or brownfield, it is important to understand a sites past, to inform proposals. For brownfield sites previous uses, layout, and building styles can form a strong source of inspiration. For greenfield sites, their history can still inform proposals, but more imagination may be required.

4.4. Furthermore, Shropshire has a varied landscape and hundreds of settlements, each with their own characteristics. As such, there is often considerable inspiration within a sites surroundings.

4.5. In circumstances where the site and local context is more generic or poor, this is not a justification for uninspired proposals. Rather it provides an opportunity to uplift the area through the sites design. This should be inspired by the history of the area.

4.6. Once sources of inspiration for the creation of a memorable place are identified, they should be used to develop a series of design concepts. This can then be narrowed down to the preferred design concept, informed by early discussions with local communities and the Council (through our pre-application service).

4.7. A design concept which achieves a memorable place should:

a. Have a **cohesive approach** to buildings, transport links, public spaces and structural landscaping. ✓

b. Create a network of **character streets and spaces** that provide a sense of identity and are defined by buildings, structural landscaping and/or water features. ✓

c. Have key features **named- inspired** by the local area. Key features include streets, neighbourhoods, public realm, open space and green infrastructure corridors. ✓

Enhancing Character and Appearance

4.8. Residential development proposals should enhance the character and appearance of the site and its setting by:

a. Positively responding to the character, appearance, and historic interest of the associated settlement, landscape, and streetscene (built and natural) through **traditional or contemporary** (but complementary) character, appearance and design. ✓

b. Creating a pattern of development (layout of buildings, streets, cycle routes, footpaths, structural landscaping, public spaces and open space), that is **responsive to the existing urban grain**. ✓

c. Ensuring appropriate **heights, proportions, massing, density, formality and plot sizes** of buildings, public realm, transport links, open space and landscaping. Proposals should complement surrounding character whilst making efficient use of the site. ✓

d. Recognising the sites relationship to landmark buildings and features (trees, hedgerows and landscaping) and enhancing **views, vistas and skylines** to and through the site. ✓

Design of Place

4.9. The detailed design of a place involves the 'fine-grained' consideration of character and appearance, including materials and finishes, of a development.

4.10. A high-quality design of place should:

a. Take a **cohesive approach** and create new or enhance existing **landmarks** - buildings and features such as trees, hedgerows and other landscaping. ✓

b. Utilise **architectural design and detailing** which is complementary to the sites setting but provides a recognisable character and appearance. ✓

c. Ensure the **type, colour, texture and standard of material** complement and harmonise with those in the surroundings. Where appropriate, utilising **local materials**. ✓

5. Integration

5.1. Integration is key to good placemaking and high-quality design. It promotes safe and convenient movement between the development and surrounding areas; supports active travel[3] through promotion of links to key services and facilities; and creates environmental gain through the continuation and enhancement of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.

Safe and Convenient Movement

5.2. Developments which are easy to navigate and well connected are more inclusive, making residents and visitors feel safe and secure – this is detailed within the 10 healthy streets principles[4]. It assists with integration into the wider settlement and can support property sales.

5.3. To facilitate safe & convenient movement, residential development should:

a. From the outset, consider the ability to achieve **safe access and convenient movement** to, from and through a site. Where necessary, **integrate** appropriate **traffic calming measures** that complement overall design. ✓

b. Where possible, ensure a variety of pleasant, convenient, easily navigable and safe **active travel routes** to, from and through the site. These routes should be prioritised over those for motor vehicles, including by:
-Making them **distinct** and **protected** from the carriageway.
-Ensuring they are as **straight, flat and direct** as possible.
-**Retaining** or **replacing** any public rights of way present on site, then **enhancing** and **integrating** into the active travel network. ✓
-Ensuring all carriageway **crossing points are fully inclusive** whether at carriageway level or raised.
-Ensuring estate footways **avoid steep gradients,** including where they provide access to driveways.
-Providing **appropriate surfaces and lighting**.
-Locating them to benefit from **natural surveillance**.

c. Maximise **opportunities** for occupiers to use public transport. For schemes involving 50 or more dwellings, opportunities to provide links into and through the site should be considered, consistent with Council guidance on passenger transport. ✓

d. Provide an **inclusively designed public realm** suitable for all users, supports security and helps achieve social inclusion. ✓

e. Provide **focal points** along movement corridors. ✓

[3] Movement that involves physical exercise, such as walking and cycling.
[4] Healthy Streets, https://healthystreets.com/what-is-healthy-streets

Green Infrastructure and Wildlife Corridors

5.4. Integrating on-site green infrastructure and wildlife corridors with those in the surroundings can support the safeguarding and enrichment of our natural environment and the health and wellbeing of communities. This is the intention of Natural England's **15 Green Infrastructure principles**[5].

5.5. To achieve effective and integrated Green Infrastructure and wildlife corridors, residential development should:

a. Consider **structural landscaping** from the outset, alongside such factors as streets, buildings and public realm. ✓

b. Provide **interconnected** green infrastructure and wildlife corridors through the site; **integrate** into key networks beyond the site; and achieve **boundary to boundary** connectivity, ideally uninterrupted by built form or roads. ✓

c. Where possible, align provision with relevant priorities and measures in the **Shropshire Nature Recovery Strategy**. ✓

d. Utilise green infrastructure and wildlife corridor provision to **retain and enhance** key existing assets and consider opportunities to **reintroduce** those that have been lost. The Shropshire Nature Recovery Strategy can provide guidance to support identification and achievement of appropriate nature actions. ✓

e. Consider innovative ways of providing green infrastructure, including **green roofs** and **walls.** This can enhance connectivity of the network and provide an opportunity to deliver alternative habitats. ✓

f. Achieve **water management** through multi-functional sustainable drainage[6] which addresses water close to where it falls, fully integrates into the green infrastructure network, and maximises biodiversity and health & wellbeing benefits. ✓

g. Ensure **long term management and stewardship** of green infrastructure assets (including sustainable drainage) and wildlife corridors on the site. ✓

[5] Natural England, https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles.aspx

[6] The Council have prepared a Sustainable Drainage Handbook which provides guidance on the design and implementation of sustainable drainage features. This guidance is available via: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/drainage-and-flooding/development-responsibility-and-maintenance/sustainable-drainage-systems-handbook/

Access: Services, Facilities, Sports and Play

5.6. The ability to access services and facilities via active travel is crucial to supporting the function and sustainability of a development and associated communities.

5.7. To achieve effective access to services and facilities, development should:

a. Identify existing accessible **services, facilities, sports and play provision**[7] and ensure design and layout facilitates **connectivity** in a way that prioritises active travel. ✓

b. Provide appropriate on-site (or where appropriate enhancement of existing off-site) **services and facilities** and enable potential for **future provision**. Provision to be responsive to development scale, accessible existing provision, and needs of the community. ✓

c. Integrate sport and play provision into **open space**. The type and size of open spaces should be responsive to scale of development, accessible existing provision, and needs of the community. ✓

d. **Locate** on-site services, facilities and places for sport and play where they have **active frontages**, are **visible**, are **accessible,** and **encourage active travel** including from existing communities. ✓

e. Integrate **'play on the way'** and **frequent seating** along key routes to services and facilities.

f. Locate compatible uses near services and facilities to create **integrated communities** – such as specialist housing. ✓

[7] This generally includes 'top tier facilities' within a 2km radius and 'lower tier local facilities' within 1km radius.

6. Inclusivity and Sustainability

6.1. Inclusive development provides opportunities for residents to come together and supports the creation of multi-generational communities.

6.2. Genuinely sustainable development achieves social and economic benefits for new and existing communities, conserve and enhance the built and natural environment, whilst also supporting the longer-term transition to net zero through energy and water efficiency.

Healthy and Active Lifestyles

6.3. A high-quality design should support healthy and active lifestyles and the wellbeing of individuals and communities. This is a key aspiration for Shropshire Council.

6.4. To support healthy and active lifestyles, residential development should:

a. Provide appropriate levels of **private amenity space, public realm and public open space** which is accessible and inclusive, green, and positive for nature and climate adaption. They should also provide opportunities for all ages and abilities to engage in sport, play, exercise and recreation. ✓

b. Integrate **street trees** and **landscaping** through the development to support the environment, equity and contributions well-designed green spaces have to mental health. ✓

c. Protect against exposure to **air, noise and other forms of environmental pollution**. ✓

d. Ensure streets **balance** their role in facilitating movement and supporting place function. Think prioritisation of pedestrian and cyclist movement; ease of crossing; places to sit, chat and play; active frontages; and natural surveillance. ✓

e. Promote and prioritise **active travel**. Including through provision of high-quality walking and cycling routes - responsive to desire lines rather than dictated by access road alignment, links to green spaces, and cycle parking at key destinations. Provision should be responsive to relevant priorities and projects within the Council's **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**[8]. ✓

f. Support maintenance, improvement and where appropriate provision of **health and education facilities** and protect and enhance **sports, leisure and recreation facilities**. ✓

[8] https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/active-travel/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-lcwip/

Inclusive and Multi-Generational Communities

6.5. Inclusive and multi-generational communities allow people of any age, ability, income or ethnic background to be involved. To support this, housing development will include a mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures that is responsive to current and future needs of our communities.

6.6. In Shropshire, demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average. Therefore, an appropriate housing mix should include adaptable housing, which is able to respond to the changing needs of occupiers as they age; and specialist housing which supports the independent living of older people and those with disabilities and special needs.

6.7. To support inclusive and multi-generational communities, residential development should ensure:

a. An **inclusive design and layout**, which allows people of any age, gender, ethnicity and ability (including those in the Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010), to access and use the site. ✓

b. On sites of 5 or more new dwellings, **40%** should achieve **at least M4(2)** accessible and adaptable dwelling standard and a further **5%** should achieve **M4(3) wheelchair user dwelling** (wheelchair adaptable) standard, unless site-specific factors indicate that step-free access cannot be achieved. ✓

c. All proposals for 50 or more dwellings include **10% specialist housing** for older people and/or those with disabilities and special needs that support independent living (or where required provide high-level care for those with dementia and/or complex needs). ✓

d. Specialist housing and a meaningful proportion of other housing should achieve **HAPPI and Dementia Friendly principles**. ✓

e. **Affordable housing** is **indistinguishable** from market housing including through location, architecture, and landscaping; and **thoughtfully distributed** (think small clusters pepper-potted) through the site. ✓

f. **Accessibility, community interaction** and **spending time outdoors** is supported. Including through appropriate on-site provision of services, facilities, activities, open space and public realm to allow people to meet their needs, each other, and gain the health benefits of being outside in green spaces. ✓

g. Key routes include places to **sit, chat and play**; and utilise **surfaces** and **features** that support use by those with visual, mobility or other limitations. ✓

Sustainability and the Transition to Net Zero

6.8. High-quality design and sustainable development are inherently interlinked. Sustainable development supports the transition to net zero and meets needs now and in the future.

6.9. To achieve sustainable development that supports the transition to net zero, residential development should:

a. Maximise opportunities for **fabric energy efficiency**. Think building orientation to maximise solar gain and avoid overheating; insulation of roofs, floors and walls; and airtightness. ✓

b. Manage **travel behaviours** by providing opportunities to minimise need to travel, promoting and prioritising active travel, identifying and facilitating access to public transport (including where appropriate on-site connectivity and facilities), and integrating electric vehicle charging in domestic and public realm settings. ✓

c. Support the transition to a **circular economy** by reducing waste and maximising re-use/recycling (construction and operation). ✓

d. Identify opportunities to integrate and support community initiatives for **on-site low carbon and renewable energy generation**, including on dwellings and in public realm. ✓

e. **Adapt to our changing climate**, including by incorporating sustainable drainage, green infrastructure, water efficiency and flood risk management. Provision should be responsive to relevant priorities and measures of the Shropshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy[9]. ✓

f. Consider opportunities to minimise **embodied carbon,** support **nature-based carbon sequestration**, and **offset carbon emissions**. ✓

Biodiversity and Heritage

6.10. Shropshire has a rich built and natural environment which new residential development should take opportunities to conserve and enhance.

6.11. To conserve and enhance Shropshire's built and natural environment, residential development should:

a. Identify natural environment assets on and in proximity of the site and ensure they are **conserved** and wherever possible **enhanced** and **interconnected**, through development proposals. ✓

[9] https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/shropshire-and-telford-wrekin-local-nature-recovery-strategy/

b. Achieve **at least 10% 'biodiversity net gain'**. Wherever possible, this should be **on-site**, if not possible it should occur **as close as possible** to the site, to ensure environments and communities receiving development 'attain the gain'. ✓

c. **Maximise the value** of 'biodiversity net gain' by taking opportunities to support achievement of the objectives of the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** for Shropshire. ✓

d. Bolster wildlife by **incorporating features** which support priority or threatened species such as birds, bats and hedgehogs. This includes bat and bird boxes, bat tiles, swift bricks and hedgehog 'safe-routes'. Use of **swift bricks** is particularly important, with the general aim across development being a minimum of one per dwelling. ✓

e. Ensure open space and public realm is **multi-functional** - enhance the natural environment, health & wellbeing, connectivity, flood management, etc. ✓

f. Incorporate **low-disturbed wildlife corridors and habitat areas**, which are subject to low disturbance to avoid impeding habitat function and support maximum use of wider recreational public open space, where this aligns with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. ✓

g. Where located within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, support its ***'special qualities'*** through the achievement of the **highest** design standards. ✓

h. Identify designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings on or in proximity of the site.
-Wherever possible, **avoid** harm or loss of significance to these assets and their setting.
-If harm is likely, this must be justified by demonstrating public benefits **outweigh it** and **appropriate mitigation** provided. ✓
-In instances where partial or total loss is justified by being **outweighed** by public benefits, **recording** to advance understanding of significance must occur.

i. Maximise opportunities to deliver **enhancement and management** of heritage assets. ✓

j. Respond to **existing soil types** that support the wider landscape character and geology, beyond modified agricultural soils. ✓

7. Function

7.1. When thinking of high-quality design, often the most overlooked aspect is function. Creating sustainable places that work - meeting the needs of current and future communities, supporting a healthy environmental network, and stimulating economic growth.

Responsive to Community Needs – Current and Future

7.2. New residential development should 'function well' and provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

7.3. To achieve sustainable places that are responsive to community needs – current and future, proposals should:

a. Ensure the design and layout **responds** to the needs of communities and is capable of **adapting** alongside communities. ✓

b. Provide an **appropriate mix of housing** types, sizes and tenures (particularly affordable and specialist housing) that reflect the needs of the local community. ✓

c. Supports housing that is **adaptable** to meet changing needs of occupiers. ✓

d. Supports provision of appropriate **private amenity space** – all houses sand wherever possible apartments should have meaningful private amenity space. ✓

e. Provide proportionate but **meaningful** and **multi-functional open space, green infrastructure** and other **destinations** (services, facilities and public-realm) where people can meet. ✓

f. Support **accessibility** for all ages and abilities. Think about how communities get to services and facilities, open space and public realm, public and active transport links, and employment opportunities. ✓

g. Incorporate **high-speed internet connectivity** from the outset.

Amenity

7.4. The amenity of those living on and near the site should be an active consideration when designing a proposal. Therefore, residential development should:

a. Provide appropriate **'separation'** between dwellings, to ensure privacy and residential amenity of occupiers of existing and proposed dwellings. ✓

b. Ensure appropriate **private amenity space** – all houses should have meaningful private amenity space and wherever possible apartments should also be provided private amenity space. ✓

c. Provide appropriate and strong **boundary treatments** that support nature and/or local character. ✓

d. **Distinguish** between front gardens and parking areas. Promote front gardens for social interaction and nature. ✓

e. **Integrate** bin and cycle storage, utility boxes, and electric vehicle charging points in a considered way. ✓

f. Provide **multi-functional** and **meaningful** open space and **interlinking** green infrastructure which encourages use by all. Think **space for nature**; management of **water; circular-routes** for walking, dog walking and park running; places for **relaxation**; and **sport, play, recreation and exercise facilities** for all ages. ✓

Safe and Secure

7.5. Developments should create environments which make people feel safe and reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.

7.6. To achieve a safe and secure development, proposals should:

a. Achieve a layout that invites a sense of **safety** and **community**. Think active frontages (including dual-aspect homes on street corners), front doors to streets (including 'groups' of apartments in apartment buildings); and perimeter blocks. ✓

b. Facilitate **natural surveillance** through layout and orientation of dwellings and **avoid 'left over spaces'** without clear function. ✓

c. Use **design features** to identify acceptable routes to, from and through a development, encouraging their use and feeling of safety. ✓

d. Design and locate **seating, bins and other street furniture** to reduce risk of anti-social behaviour. ✓

e. Follow the **'secured by design'** and **'hostile vehicle mitigation'** design principles for site layout (to reduce the opportunity for and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour) and properties (think about doors, windows, alarm systems, conservatories, garages, and secure cycle parking). ✓

8. Technical Guidance

Structural Landscaping

8.1. Structural landscaping is the overarching arrangement of the landscape (including public open space, woodlands, planted verges, hedgerows, and street tree avenues) to:

a. Enhance the setting of the built form.
b. Contribute to climate regulation.
c. Support achievement of biodiversity net gain.
d. Support the general health & wellbeing associated with being outdoors.
e. Retain, enhance or establish wildlife corridors.
f. Achieve connectivity between new and existing green infrastructure, ecological assets, public realm and open space on and off site.
g. Provide noise mitigation.

8.2. To achieve an effective layout that maximises the potential benefits of the landscaping of a site:

a. **Structural landscaping should be considered from the outset**, alongside such factors as streets, buildings and public realm. ✓

Biodiversity Net Gain

8.3. 'Biodiversity net gain' is intended to make sure habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than before development occurred.

8.4. Government has produced advice on how to achieve biodiversity net gain at: https://gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain

8.5. Achievement of **at least 10% 'biodiversity net gain'** is a requirement for most residential development:

a. Wherever possible, 'biodiversity net gain' should occur **on-site**. If not achievable, it should occur **as close as possible** to the site, to ensure environments and communities receiving development 'attain the gain'. ✓
b. The value of 'biodiversity net gain' can be maximised by aligning delivery with objectives in the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** for Shropshire. ✓
c. This should be complemented by measures to bolster wildlife by **incorporating features** which support priority or threatened species such as birds, bats and hedgehogs. ✓

Separation Standards

8.6. The layout of a development should provide appropriate 'separation' between new and existing dwellings to ensure the privacy and residential amenity of occupiers of existing and proposed dwellings.

8.7. To achieve appropriate 'separation', the layout of a residential development should achieve the following standards for rear elevations:

a. For the single storey component of any proposed dwelling a **minimum 15m separation distance** to any opposite dwelling, where the opposing property's elevation includes windows to habitable rooms. ✓

b. For the second storey component of any proposed dwelling, a **minimum 21m separation distance** to any opposite dwelling, where the opposing property's elevation includes windows to habitable rooms. ✓

c. For the third storey or higher components of any proposed dwelling, a **minimum 27.5m separation distance** to any opposite dwelling, where the opposing property's elevation includes windows to habitable rooms. ✓

d. Where a proposed dwelling faces a blank elevation of a property (or one with only windows to non-habitable rooms) a **minimum 12m separation distance**. ✓

8.8. The layout of a residential development should also achieve appropriate 'separation' standards between side elevations:

a. For detached properties, a **minimum 1m separation distance** to their property curtilages. Similar separation is expected for 'groups' of semi-detached properties and 'groups' of terraced properties. ✓

Figure 8.1: Separation Standard - Single Storey Dwelling

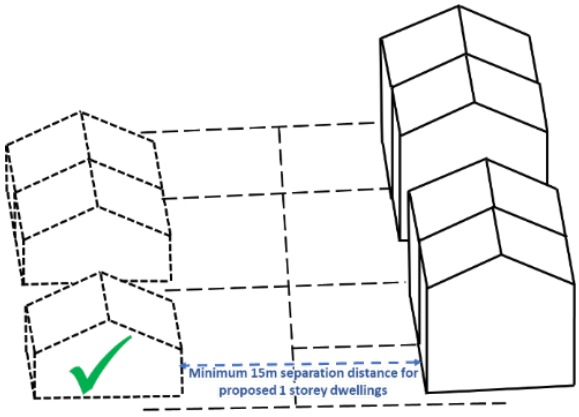


Figure 8.2: Separation Standard - Two Storey Dwelling

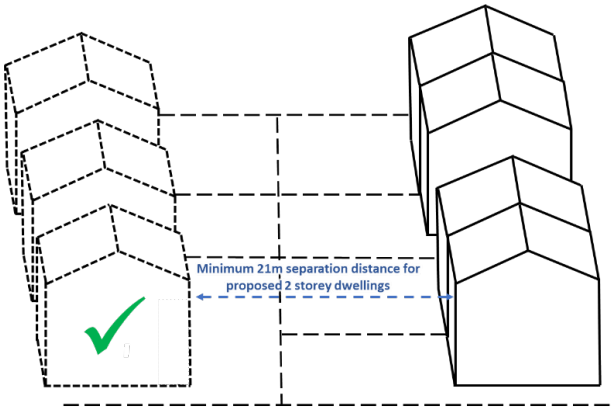


Figure 8.3: Separation Standard - Part Single Part Two Storey Dwelling

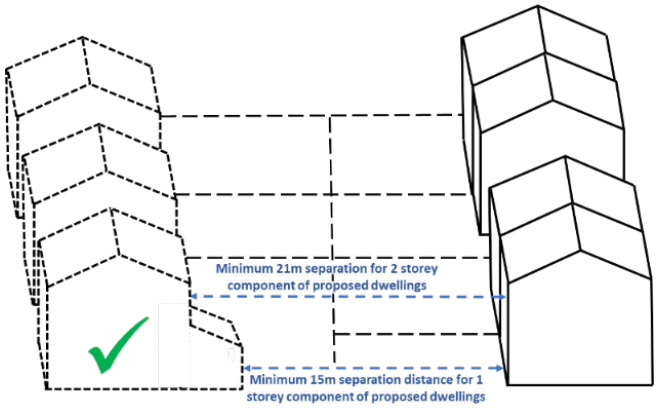


Figure 8.4: Separation Standard - Three Storey or Higher Dwelling

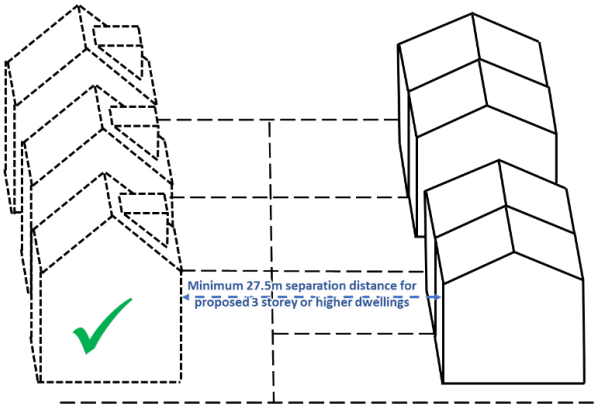


Figure 8.5: Separate Standard – Dwelling to Side of Another Building

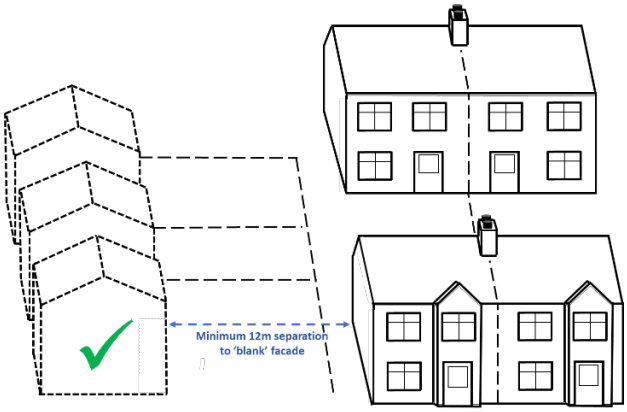
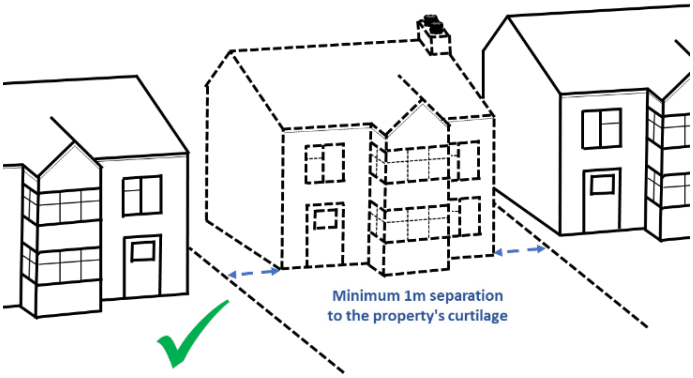
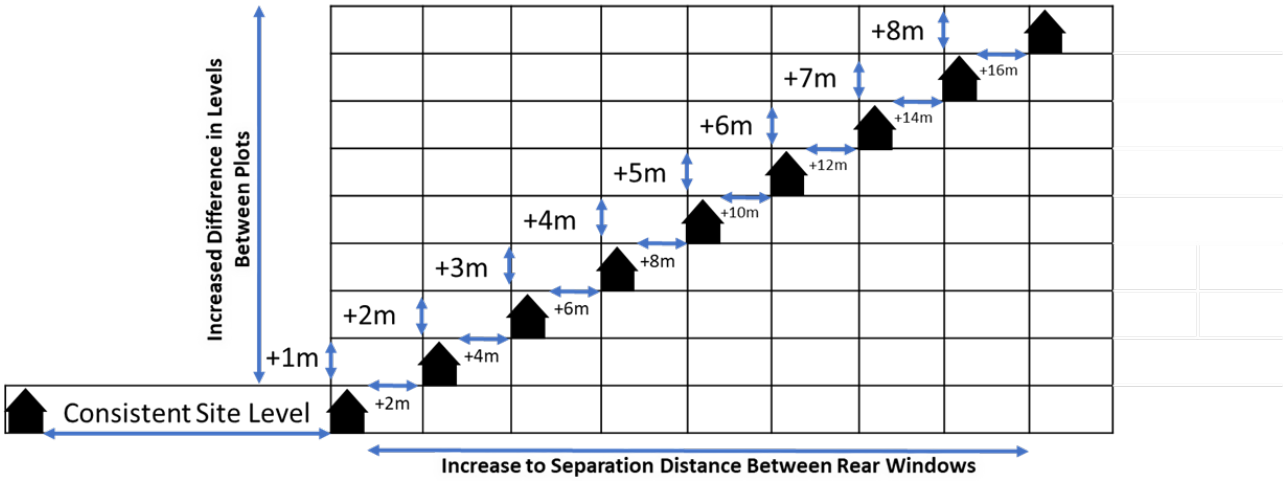


Figure 8.6: Separate Standard – Dwelling Alongside Existing



8.9. Please Note: required separation distances may be increased where there are changes in levels (height) between the relevant dwellings plots if this increases the potential adverse effect on amenity. Generally, every metre change in the level of the properties, means an additional 2m of separation would be expected.

Figure 8.7: Appropriate Separate Distances Between Single Storey Dwellings / Dwellings with a Single Storey Element



Internal Floorspace

8.10. Providing dwellings with sufficient internal floorspace positively contributes to the occupier's ability to achieve a high-quality of life. Appropriate internal space standards also provide greater potential for adaptations to the property to meet the changing needs of occupiers in the future – for instance as their family grows or as they age. As such, appropriate levels of internal space should be provided within all residential development.

8.11. For this reason, all dwellings should aspire to the achievement of the **nationally described space standards**.

a. The dwelling provides at least the following gross internal floor area and built-in storage area:

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

b. Dwellings with two or more bedspaces have at least one double (or twin) bedroom.

c. To provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m2 and is at least 2.15m wide.

d. To provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin) bedroom has a floor area of at least 11.5m2.

e. One double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide.

f. Any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m2 within the Gross Internal Area).

g. Any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all.

h. A built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in

excess of 0.72m2 in a double bedroom and 0.36m2 in a single bedroom count towards the built-in storage requirement.

i. The minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.

8.12. Further information on these Nationally Described Space Standards is available at: *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard____Final_Web_version.pdf*

Public Realm and Open Space

8.13. Public realm and open space have an important place shaping role, but also perform an important function in supporting opportunities for play, sport, recreation, socialising, exercise and rest. As such:

a. Public realm and open space should form an **integral part** of any residential development, **distinct** from private amenity spaces 'on the ground', and not directly abut dwellings. ✓

b. Public realm and open space should have a **clear identity and purpose** (informed by Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework[10]) and **support achievement** of relevant priorities and measures in the Shropshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Shropshire Green Infrastructure Strategy[11]. ✓

c. Wherever possible **integrate** into and enhance the wider green infrastructure network of the area, and be designed and located to allow users to come and go via accessible routes which benefit from natural surveillance.

d. On-site public open space provision should be **high-quality, useable**, and equivalent to a **minimum of 30sqm per person, assuming one person per bedroom**. ✓

e. Opportunities to create a **larger meaningful open space** should be pursued on sites of 20 or more dwellings, to achieve high-quality provision. This should include flat 'lawn' areas for formal / informal games and community gatherings. ✓

f. Where sufficient open space provision is not possible on-site, **appropriate contributions** to off-site provision are sought. ✓

g. Areas of open space should be **managed and maintained in perpetuity**, secured by way of legal agreement. ✓

[10] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx

[11] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/20519/green-infrastructure-strategy-main-report-ev05201.pdf

8.14. **Small and fragmented parcels of open space** (such as highway verges) are maintenance intensive and have very limited usability and biodiversity value. Therefore, whilst potentially a valued design feature, they are not considered to constitute functional open space. **As such, it does not count towards the 30sqm per person requirement.**

8.15. The minimum public open space requirement may increase in circumstances where development has the potential to adversely affect the integrity of an internationally or nationally designated wildlife site due to recreational impacts.

Playing Fields

8.16. To ensure the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and places, it is important to ensure provision of sufficient playing pitches. As such:

a. The outcomes of the Shropshire Playing Pitch and Open Space Strategy (PPOSS) and the Leisure Facilities Strategy should be taken into account in determining the **level and type of sport and recreational facilities** required to meet the needs of the occupiers of the new development. ✓

8.17. The provision of playing fields on a site can form part of the total public open space provision required.

Play Space

8.18. To ensure that open space provision meets the needs of our communities, it is important to ensure provision of sufficient formal and informal play space.

8.19. There are various forms of play space, including:

a. Informal areas of play, such as games area(s) and playable routes.

b. Local Areas of Play (LAP's) designed for use by younger children and facilitating supervision. Dependent on approach they may include play equipment or 'features' that positively encourage play. They should be accessible (within 100m of every home) and a minimum of 100m2 or an equivalent area distributed along a playable route.

c. Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP's) designed for children beginning to play independently with friends and supervised younger children. They should be accessible (within 400m of every home) by safe routes, a minimum of 400m2, and laid out with features and equipment that provide for informal recreation and varied, stimulating and challenging play experiences.

d. Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP's) designed mainly for older children, but supportive of supervised younger children. They should be accessible (within 1,000m of every home) by safe routes, a minimum of 1,000m2, and laid out to support age-appropriate socialising (sheltered areas) and play (including space for larger group games and more challenging equipment and informal areas).

e. Programmed Play / Recreation for All Facilities are specifically designed for informal recreation and integrated / distributed through a development. They include such facilities as Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA's), skate parks, parkour elements and social areas for teens. They should be accessible (within 700m of every home) by safe routes and a minimum of 1,000m2.

8.20. The Shropshire Green Infrastructure Strategy[12] and Fields In Trust[13] 'benchmark distance guidelines' and 'provision in relation to a development scale' inform the scope of play provision deemed appropriate for new development in Shropshire.

8.21. The amount and type of play space provided should be responsive to the size of the total development:

a. Up to 20 dwellings to provide space **for informal play**. ✓

b. 21-100 dwellings to as a minimum provide **Local Areas of Play** (LAP's) and **space for informal play**, subject to existing walking distances. ✓

c. 100-500 dwellings to as a minimum provide a **Local Areas of Play** (LAP's), **Local Equipped Areas of Play** (LEAP's) and **space for informal play**, subject to existing walking distances. ✓

d. More than 500 dwellings to provide **all types of play spaces for all ages.** ✓

8.22. The design of play spaces should be inclusive and accessible, with appropriate furniture, surfaces, boundaries and points of access.

8.23. The Council encourage early engagement with relevant Town and Parish Council's on play space, as they understand the needs of the community and may be responsible for their future management.

Private Amenity Space

8.24. Private amenity space is an external area dedicated to a property for the specific use of its occupier(s). Such space is multi-functional, providing much needed external space for households to relax, space for activities

[12] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/20519/green-infrastructure-strategy-main-report-ev05201.pdf
[13] https://fieldsintrust.org/content/images/FIT-Standards-2024-Accessible-version.pdf

that are best undertaken outside (such as drying clothes), and also contributes to biodiversity/green infrastructure networks.

8.25. For the avoidance of doubt, private amenity space is **complementary to** but **separate from** public open space provision required on a site.

8.26. Appropriate levels of private amenity space should be provided within all residential development and be designed to achieve an acceptable noise standard:

a. **Houses (including where it represents specialist housing)** should include appropriately sited, proportionate (to the dwelling, plot and surrounding built form), and of an appropriate size (for two-storey homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms a minimum of 10.5m in length and 50m2 in size; and for two-storey houses with 3 or more bedrooms a minimum of 10.5m in length and 70m2 in size (this excludes age-restricted dormer bungalows where the appropriate length and size will depend on the size and character of the bungalow) – potentially increasing where the plot has steep gradients or includes route protection zones for significant trees) private amenity space. ✓

b. **Flats and apartments (excluding specialist housing)** should, wherever possible, include private amenity space that is clearly associated with and accessible from the property. Generally, this should consist of green roof gardens and/or appropriately located and accessible 'green' amenity plots in the property curtilage (with appropriate boundary materials). ✓

c. **Specialist housing consisting of flats and apartments** should generally include a mix of properties with private amenity space and communal space is generally most appropriate. For instance, ground floor properties should have an area of amenity space and upper floor properties should benefit from access to communal amenity space. ✓

d. Private amenity space should generally be located to the **rear of properties, maximise sunlight,** and wherever possible **back onto other gardens or private space** in order to reduce risk of unauthorised access. Where properties back onto public spaces, the boundary treatments should appropriately respond to these conditions in order to reduce risk of unauthorised access. ✓

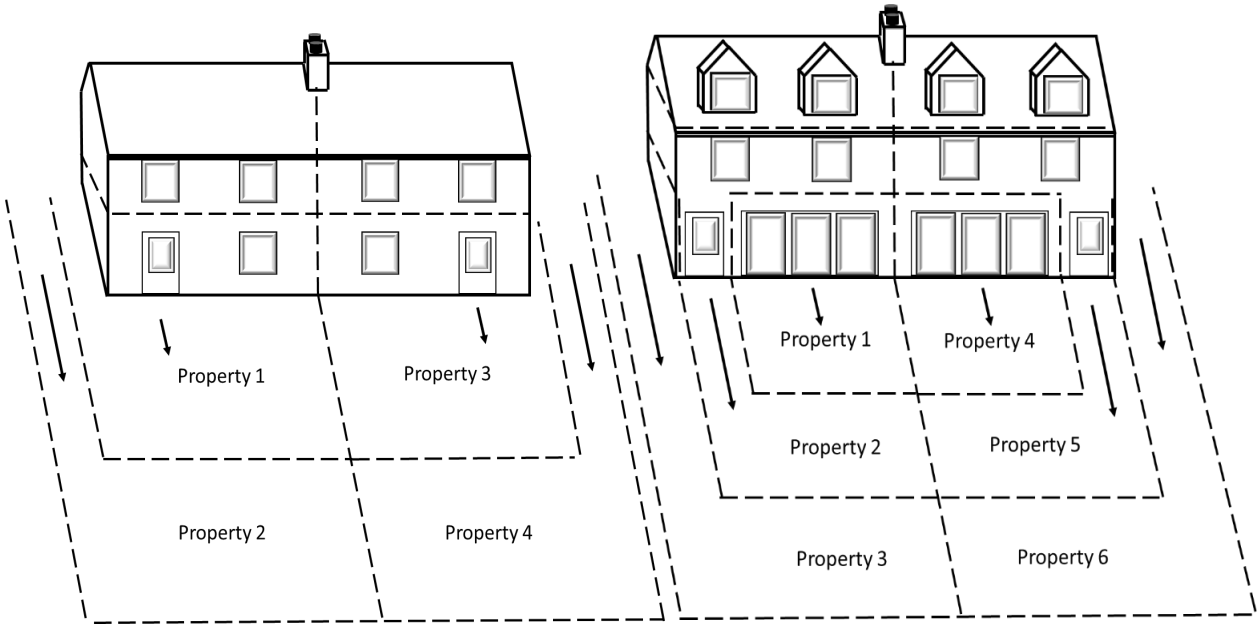
e. Where it is not possible to provide private amenity space in line with a-d, careful consideration should be given as to whether proposals constitute **an appropriate design**. If this is considered to be the case, then communal amenity space should be provided as a minimum. ✓

8.27. In some instances, it may be acceptable for the private amenity space of certain flats or apartments (excluding specialist housing) on upper stories to consist of balconies.

8.28. However, this is dependent on a number of factors, including whether alternative provision is possible; whether balconies of sufficient size can be achieved; whether it is appropriate on the plot; whether it is appropriate given the character, appearance and historic interest of the settlement, streetscene, neighbouring properties, network of green spaces and the landscape; and the implications for neighbouring amenity (whether they directly overlook windows or, at close quarters, rear gardens).

8.29. Examples of how to effectively provide private amenity space for flats and apartments (excluding specialist housing) is provided within Figure 8.8:

Figure 8.8: Examples of Private Amenity Space in Flats / Apartments



8.30. For specialist housing consisting of flats and apartments, the general preference for the mix of private and communal amenity space reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of its occupiers. Some prefer/feel able to have private amenity space with the associated direct management responsibilities, whilst others prefer access to communal space which provides some of the benefits of private amenity space, without the direct management responsibilities.

8.31. Where communal space is provided, it should allow equitable access for all tenures and abilities. It should also include quality amenity features that suit the needs of intended residents (usually at least a variety of planting and seating), and allow privacy and separation from private living areas, public spaces, building servicing and bin stores.

8.32. Integrating well-designed play into these communal spaces can also represent a positive way of increasing visiting time and providing opportunities for social interaction between generations. If well designed, residents can also use these features – evidence demonstrates dementia patients benefit from play case studies.

Boundary Treatments

8.33. The choice of boundary treatments (built and natural) within a residential development is important as they can contribute to character and appearance and overall function of a scheme.

8.34. To achieve effective boundary treatments:

a. Site boundaries should **support integration** and **be welcoming.** ✓

b. Property boundaries should be **cohesive** and **responsive / positively contribute** to the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings. ✓

c. Public open space boundaries should **be appropriately defined,** support clear **access points** and ensure spaces feel **safe and legible** for all users. These boundaries should be responsive to the space, site and setting; and involve appropriate structures, planting, and/or hard surface material changes. ✓

d. Play areas should have boundaries that **ensure safety** of users and **separation** from roads, cycleways and other hazards. Such boundaries do not necessarily need to be tight to play equipment, where appropriate they can include wider open space to allow extension of play (potential conflict with dog walkers can be resolved through good management). ✓

e. Boundary treatments required for **noise mitigation** should be **designed to last** and have a clear responsibility for **ongoing maintenance and retention**. Where boundaries are to **railways, canals or rivers,** these features should be considered when designing boundary features. ✓

f. **Natural boundary treatments** are encouraged in appropriate locations. They can function as environmental pathways, integrate into the wider environmental network, soften edges, maximise biodiversity value, and potentially dispersing pollution. Where hedges are used, unless there is an existing established hedge, it is generally necessary to also provide railings. ✓

g. Any gated access points within a development should utilise **accessible gates/barriers**. ✓

h. Expectations for homeowners on the **retention and future management** of boundary treatments should be clearly established. ✓

Trees and Hedges

8.35. In Shropshire, trees and hedges can form important existing assets contributing to the character of the area:

a. Important **trees and hedges** should be retained (ideally as part of the **public realm**) and can both inspire and form 'anchors' for a layout and provide maturity to a development. ✓

b. The Council's guidance on Trees and Development[14] should be given specific consideration. ✓

8.36. An Arboricultural and Hedge Report can inform understanding of the health and amenity value of trees and hedges on a site, informing this process.

8.37. To successfully incorporate existing trees and hedges into a scheme, it is important that root protection and canopy zones are carefully considered – both for the health of the tree and to ensure a positive juxtaposition between them and the built form.

Planting

8.38. All public open spaces should include effective and inter-connected planting from bulbs to shrubs, trees, hedges and, if appropriate, fruit trees and naturalistic native planting.

8.39. Layout of and species selected within planting should respond to:

a. The **layout of the site** and areas of public open space upon and in proximity to it. ✓

b. The **layout of the public open space** itself. ✓

c. **Local landscape character**. ✓

d. Any relevant **Shropshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy** species lists. ✓

e. The need to ensure **resilience** to expected changes to our climate, including hotter summers and wetter winters. ✓

f. The need to **improve Tree Canopy Cover** across the Country, particularly in areas below the standard minimum 20% canopy cover. ✓

g. The expectation of **seasonal interest**, including species which flower throughout the calendar year (including winter flowers). ✓

h. **Sensory qualities** of layout and species. ✓

[14] https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/media/4eedvxlk/2016-trees-development-guidance-note.pdf

8.40. This variety and connectedness is required for reasons of aesthetics, placemaking, and to support provision of Biodiversity Net Gain.

8.41. Earth mounding features could be included in combination with planting for visual interest as well as opportunities for sunbathing and informal play. Any mounding should have free-flowing, natural contours and not look engineered.

Vehicular, Cyclist and Pedestrian Routes

8.42. The design, location and inter-connectivity of vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian routes should be considered from the outset of any design process and fully integrated into the design of a development proposal.

8.43. Vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian routes should:

a. Be designed to be **visually open, direct, interconnected**, and assist easy and intuitive **wayfinding** and use. ✓

b. Be designed with regard to the **needs of all users**, including those in the Protected Characteristic groupings in the Equality Act 2010 and/or with mobility, visual or other impairments. ✓

c. Utilise **robust surface materials** which are suitable for intended uses, responsive and complementary to the character of the development site and its surroundings, and easy to maintain. ✓

d. Comply with the **Manual for Streets** and **Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20)**. ✓

The Manual for Streets (1 and 2):
https://gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets
https://gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2

Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ffa1f96d3bf7f65d9e35825/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf

Electric Vehicle Charging

8.44. Consistent with Part S of the national Building Regulations, Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points are a mandatory requirement for residential development in the following circumstances:

a. New residential homes - each home with on-site parking must have its own EV charging point.

b. New residential buildings with parking in a covered car park - each dwelling with a parking space must have a dedicated EV charging point.

c. Buildings converted for residential use and which have a car park - each dwelling with a parking space must have an EV charging point.

d. Residential buildings undergoing major renovation work which to have more than 10 parking spaces - each dwelling must have one charging point and all other parking spaces cable routes.

8.45. Where EV charging is not a mandatory requirement residential development should:

a. Wherever possible **integrate EV charging infrastructure** that is responsive to the scale of the development proposed. ✓

Vehicle Parking

8.46. Appropriate levels of vehicle parking should be provided within a development, in the form of space(s) with the curtilage of the property and benefiting from natural surveillance and appropriate lighting.

8.47. To ensure parking provision within residential development meets needs of future occupiers, it is recommended:

a. The amount of parking provided is responsive to the **size, type and tenure of the property**, the ability to use **active and public transport**, the parking provision within the **sites setting**, and the **characteristics of the settlement** in which it is located. Generally:

-Housing, flats and apartments (excluding specialist housing) with 1 bedroom to have **1 car parking space** and those with 2 or more bedrooms to have **2 car parking spaces**. ✓

-Self-contained specialist housing to have **1 car parking space**.

-Non-self-contained specialist housing to have **2 car parking spaces per 10 bedspaces**.

*However, schemes with **no car parking** may be supported in locations with strong ability to use **active and public transport.***

b. Car parking provision can include on **driveways, allocated spaces, car ports and garages**. Generally, to minimise impact on the carriageway, tandem spaces should be avoided. Where tandem spaces are considered appropriate, greater carriageway widths will likely be required. ✓

c. Driveway and communal car parking spaces should have minimum internal dimensions of **2.5m x 5.0m**. Where this parking space fronts a garage, a **1.0m buffer** should be provided to allow access.[15] ✓

d. Driveways should **incorporate permeable paving or border gardens** and have **clear sight lines**. ✓

e. Car ports that are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision should have minimum internal dimensions of **3.0m x 5.0m** to allow easy access to the vehicle.[15] ✓

f. Single garages that are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision should have minimum internal dimensions of **3.0m x 7.0m** to allow easy access to the vehicle and sufficient storage for a bicycle to the rear.[15] ✓

g. Double garages that are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision should have minimum internal dimensions of **5.5m x 7.0m** to allow easy access to the vehicles and sufficient storage for a bicycle to the rear.[15] ✓

h. **Motorcycle bays** should include ground anchors and/or metal support stands to which the motorcycles can be locked. ✓

8.48. Where communal parking is necessary and appropriate, they should be sited in small groups, close/adjacent to the associated properties, within view of habitable rooms, and allocated to individual properties. They should also either provide electric vehicle charging or be complemented by electric vehicle charging bays which are exclusively for this purpose.

8.49. Communal parking to the rear of properties or that consist of large groups of spaces is generally not appropriate.

Cycle Parking

8.50. To encourage and support active travel, appropriate levels of cycle parking should be provided. This parking should be associated with both residential properties and public realm.

8.51. To ensure provision of appropriate levels of cycle parking:

a. Wherever possible, dwellings (excluding specialist housing) should be provided with **at least 2 cycle parking spaces**.
-For houses, this should generally be in the form of **private secured and enclosed spaces** in the properties curtilage ✓

[15] https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/21393/tn9-car-parking-guide-june-2021.pdf

(where garages are provided to the sizes in this guidance, they will generally include sufficient space for a cycle parking space).

-For flats and apartments this should generally be in a **communal secured and enclosed** cycle parking area in the curtilage of the building. All provision should complement and enhance character and appearance of the site.

b. Wherever possible, self-contained specialist housing should be provided with **at least 1 cycle parking space**. Furthermore, **1 additional cycle parking space** should be provided **per 10 employees**. ✓

c. Wherever possible, non-self-contained specialist housing should be provided with **at least 1 cycle parking space per 10 bedspaces**. Furthermore, **1 additional cycle parking** space should be provided **per 10 employees**. ✓

d. Cycle parking associated with public realm should be targeted towards **key destinations** and consist of a **secure** design and materials which complement and enhance character and appearance. ✓

e. Short term **visitor cycle parking** should also be provided in an appropriate location(s) that benefit from natural surveillance. ✓

Accessible and Adaptable Housing

8.52. Accessible and adaptable housing enables people to live more independently, while also saving on health, social and adaptation costs in the future.

8.53. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average. This demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing can play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents.

8.54. This is reflected in Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy, which specifies that one of the approaches to meeting the diverse housing needs of Shropshire's current and future residents is seeking to *"ensure that all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard".*

8.55. The principles of Lifetime Homes are now incorporated into Part M of the Building Regulations, which in addressing accessibility and adaptability, introduces two optional technical standards.

8.56. These are:

- M4(2) Accessible and adaptable dwellings – where a new dwelling makes reasonable provision for most people to access the dwelling and incorporates features that make it potentially suitable for a wide range of occupants, including older people, those with reduced mobility and some wheelchair users.
- M4(3) Wheelchair user dwellings – where a new dwelling makes reasonable provision, either at completion (wheelchair accessible) or is designed such that reasonable provision can be readily achieved at a point following completion (wheelchair adaptable), for a wheelchair user to live in the dwelling and use any associated private outdoor space, parking and communal facilities that may be provided for the use of the occupants.

8.57. Therefore, unless site-specific factors indicate that step-free access cannot be achieved, on sites of 5 or more new dwellings an appropriate housing mix should include:

a. **40%** of the dwellings achieving at least **M4(2)** accessible and adaptable dwelling standards for all dwellings. ✓

b. A further **5%** of the dwellings achieving **M4(3) wheelchair adaptable** standard. ✓

8.58. Details on these standards is provided within Part M of the Building Regulations at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m

Specialist Housing

8.59. Specialist housing is designed to meet the diverse needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs. There is an array of different forms of specialist housing, including:

- **Age-restricted general market housing**: This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services.
- **Retirement living or sheltered housing**: This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

- **Extra care housing or housing-with-care**: This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.
- **Residential care homes and nursing homes**: These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

8.60. Key distinctions between the categories of specialist housing are level of care and on-site communal facilities. The Council's pre-application service can be utilised to establish the use class of a particular form of specialist housing.

8.61. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average. The Council's Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment identifies the forms of specialist housing needed to support older people within our communities.

8.62. Therefore, on larger development sites of over 50 dwellings, an appropriate housing mix should:

a. Include **10%** specialist housing which supports the independent living of older people and those with disabilities and special needs that support independent living (or where required provide high-level care for those with dementia and/or complex needs). ✓

HAPPI Principles

8.63. The HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) Principles are based on 10 key design criteria, which have particular relevance to the spectrum of older persons' housing and its need to adapt over time.

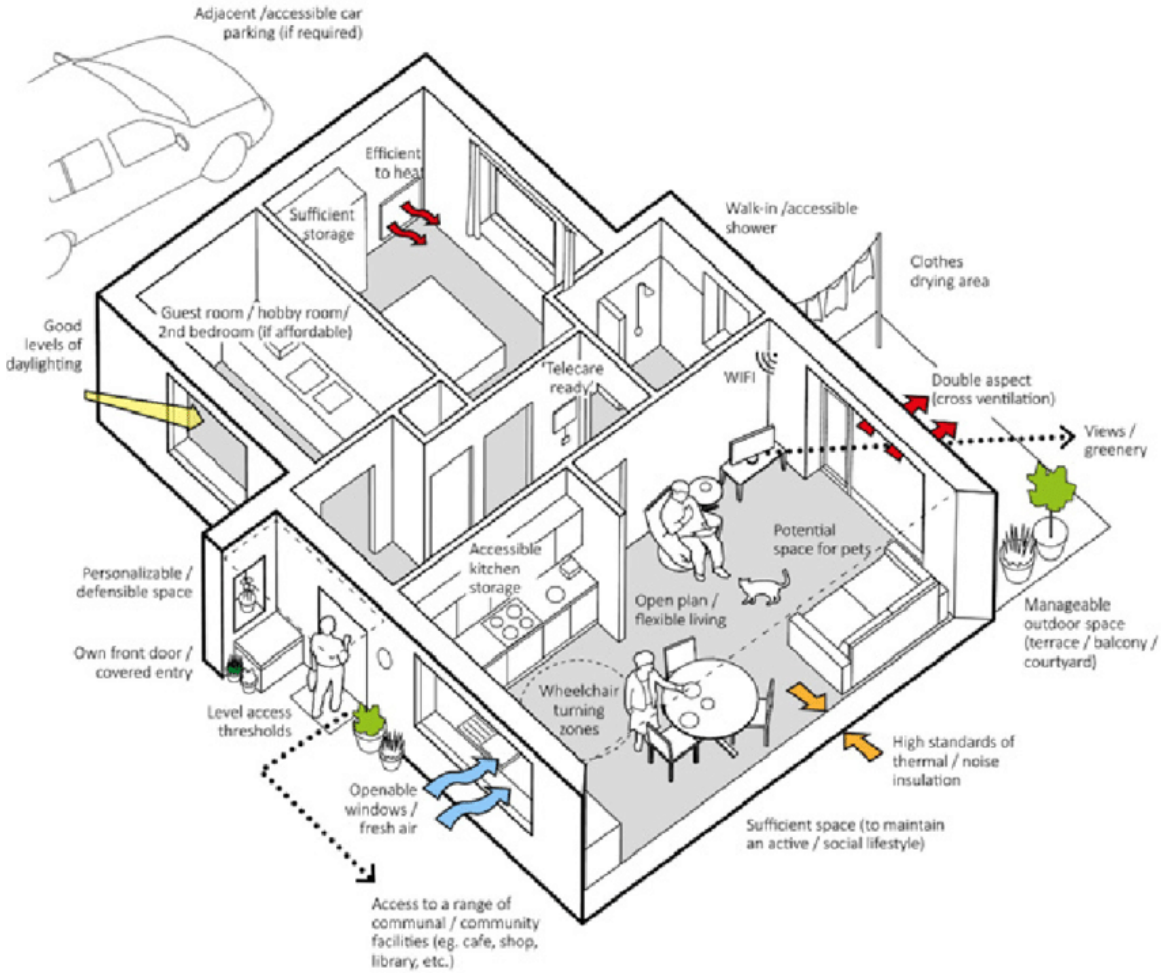
8.64. These design criteria are:

- Space and flexibility.
- Daylight in the home and in shared spaces.
- Balconies and outdoor space.
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design.
- Positive use of circulation space.
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'.
- Plants, trees, and the natural environment.
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design.
- Storage for belongings and bicycles.
- External shared surfaces and 'home' zones.

8.65. Given the demographics of Shropshire:

a. Specialist housing and a meaningful proportion of other housing should achieve **HAPPI principles**. ✓

8.66. The following diagram summarises these principles:



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8.67. Further information on the HAPPI principles is available via HousingLIN at: https://housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/

[16] A Home for Life? A Critical Perspective on Housing Choice for "Downsizers" in the UK, (2016)

Dementia Friendly Housing

8.68. Dementia friendly housing is designed to support the independence of and provide a comfortable environment for those living with dementia.

8.69. Key considerations to achieve dementia friendly housing include layout (including safe access to and views of green spaces), décor, lighting, flooring, furnishings, seating, signage, toilets, navigation, parking, noise and quiet spaces.

8.70. Guidance on achieving dementia 'friendly' housing is available through such organisations as the Alzheimer's Society which has produced a Dementia-friendly housing guide available at: https://alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/Dementia%20Friendly%20Housing_Guide.pdf

8.71. Given the demographics of Shropshire and the prevalence of dementia in older people:

a. Specialist housing and a meaningful proportion of other housing should achieve **Dementia Friendly principles**. ✓

Secured by Design and Hostile Vehicle Mitigation

8.72. 'Secured by Design' is the official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit.

8.73. Its principles address numerous aspects of the design of development, such as the:

a. Location and design of **roads, cycle routes and footpaths**.
b. Location and design of **communal areas and public spaces**.
c. **Layout, orientation and mix** of dwellings and their boundaries.
d. Location and design of **vehicle and cycle parking**.
e. **Landscaping, planting and street lighting**.
f. **Security of properties**.

8.74. Further information on 'Secured by Design' is available within the Secure by Design (Homes) guide at: https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/design-guides

8.75. The National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) 'Hostile Vehicle Mitigation' public realm design guidance assists public realm design processes so as to encourage a positive and creative response to the challenges of counter-terrorism and protective security.

8.76. Further information on 'Hostile Vehicle Mitigation' is available within the design guide at: https://npsa.gov.uk/specialised-guidance/hostile-vehicle-mitigation-hvm/public-realm-design-guide-hostile-vehicle-mitigation-0

8.77. To positively respond to the principles of 'Secured by Design' and 'Hostile Vehicle Mitigation' new dwellings and their public realm should:

a. Consider and **proportionately integrate** Hostile Vehicle Mitigation principles in public realm. ✓

b. As far as possible **provide natural surveillance** of roads, cycle routes, footways, communal areas and public spaces. ✓

c. Generally **'face'** each other and **minimise obstruction** of views from adjoining properties to increase potential for **natural surveillance**. ✓

d. Locate **principal entrances** to **benefit from natural surveillance** and be easily identifiable from public realm. ✓

e. **Design corner plots** to positively contribute to street-scene and provide natural surveillance on both road frontages. It is important to **avoid blank walls** overlooking public realm both from a visual and security perspective. ✓

f. Allow flats, apartments and communal housing (excluding care homes) to benefit from **a dedicated entrance** – this can serve clusters of residences. ✓

Adequate and Accessible Bin Storage

8.78. It is important to ensure residential development provides sufficient bin storage, located to achieve balance between function and appearance.

8.79. Functional considerations include amenity of occupiers of the site and surrounding properties, access to bins to deposit refuse, and the requirement for occupiers of properties to present bins at the kerbside on refuse collection days.

8.80. Appearance considerations include visibility from vehicular, cyclist, pedestrian routes; visibility from communal areas and public spaces; design and location complementing character and identity of the development and its setting (immediate area, wider settlement and the landscape).

8.81. Further guidance is provided in the Council's Refuse and Recycling Advice for Developers[17] guidance and the British Standard on Waste Management in Buildings (BS 5906).

[17] https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/media/jx3llvyl/shropshire-refuse-and-recycling-planning-guidance-2022.pdf

8.82. To ensure adequate and accessible bin storage, residential development should:

a. Have a design and layout of roads to ensure **adequate access and egress** is provided to refuse and emergency vehicles, including appropriate turning spaces on cul-de-sac or equivalent road layouts. ✓

b. Achieve an appropriate balance between **function and appearance.** ✓

c. Provide all properties with **appropriately sized and located** bin storage, having regard to the Council's Refuse and Recycling Advice for Developers[18]. This should generally be **dedicated** to the property (including flats and apartments) and in its curtilage, as this is best able to balance function and appearance considerations. ✓

d. In **limited circumstances** where dedicated bin storage is not achievable and communal provision is considered appropriate it should:
-Provide **sufficient capacity** for all dwellings.
-Achieve a balance between **function and appearance**.
-Be **secure**, **fire-proof**, and **avoid** creation of natural surveillance **'black-spots'**.
-Positively promote and encourage **re-use and recycling**, consistent with the principles of the waste hierarchy.
-Be **accessible** to residents and refuse collectors.
-Where possible, use **larger communal bins** to reduce total bin numbers. ✓

Street Furniture and Signage

8.83. Street furniture and signage is important in a development. However, it has potential to detract from character and appearance. As such:

a. All street furniture and should be **appropriately sited** (to maximise function and natural surveillance) and **designed** to reinforce character and identity. ✓

b. For larger residential developments, a **coordinated** approach to provision of street furniture and signage should be employed to ensure it is complementary. ✓

c. Efforts should be made to **avoid clutter** and unnecessary provision of street furniture and signage. ✓

[18] https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/media/jx3llvyl/shropshire-refuse-and-recycling-planning-guidance-2022.pdf

d. Where sub-stations are to be included within a development, their design, location and access arrangements should complement rather than detract from character and appearance. ✓

Embodied Carbon, Sequestration and Offsetting

8.84. Embodied carbon is carbon dioxide emissions associated with materials (including extracting/manufacturing component materials, transportation of component materials, and manufacturing of the material itself), transportation of materials, and construction processes utilised in a development – during its whole lifecycle.

8.85. Residential development proposals should seek to:

a. **Minimise 'embodied' carbon** by maximising use of existing resources available on a site and utilising secondary and recycled aggregate (particularly on brownfield sites), and utilising construction practices which minimise waste. ✓

8.86. Nature based carbon sequestration is the process by which carbon is removed from the atmosphere and stored in natural 'reservoirs' like vegetation and soils. Carbon offsetting involves supporting reduction or removal of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions to compensate for emissions made elsewhere.

8.87. Residential development is encouraged to support carbon sequestration and offsetting by:

a. **Planting (particularly trees)** in a development, **avoid disturbance of soils**, incorporating biochar and other natural forms of **carbon storage** into open spaces, and integrating any relevant priorities and measures in the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**. ✓

b. Investing in **carbon capture and storage**. ✓

Energy

8.88. The design and construction of residential development can support households to minimise total energy demand and maximise use of local renewable energy.

8.89. To support energy efficiency and use of renewables:

a. Where possible, dwellings should be **orientated** to support management of temperatures - much of the energy used is to maintain comfortable temperatures (heating and cooling). ✓

b. Properties are expected to meet **building control requirements** for energy efficiency and ventilation. ✓

c. Properties are encouraged to incorporate appropriately located **low carbon and renewable energy technologies**. ✓

Water Conservation and Efficiency

8.90. The Shropshire Water Cycle Study (2020) indicates water supply is under 'moderate' and it is important that new residential development does not result in an unsustainable increase in water abstraction.

8.91. To ensure new residential development minimises use of water it should:

a. As a minimum, meeting the optional Building Regulations' **105 litres per person per day** standard for water in line with the Sustainable Design Checklist. ✓

8.92. Compliance with this standard is an inexpensive way to reduce water demand, pressure on water resources, ad costs for householders and energy usage in the treatment of this water.

8.93. Opportunities for grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting to help create places resilient to climate change, contribute toward achieving net zero emissions and reduce the demand for water should also be considered.

Flood Risk Management

8.94. Development proposals that have the potential to experience flooding or increase flood risk elsewhere are expected to be informed by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment[19].

8.95. Residential development requires a site specific **Flood Risk Assessment** where:

a. It is located in Flood Zones 2 and/or 3. ✓

b. It is located in Flood Zone 1 but over 1ha in size or subject to critical drainage problems. ✓

c. It is understood to be subject to other sources of flood risk. ✓

d. It is located in an area identified as subject to increased risk of flooding now or in the future or at high risk of cumulative impacts within the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. ✓

[19] Environment Agency guidance on Flood Risk Assessment is available via: https://gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-for-planning-applications

8.96. A Flood Risk Assessment should *"demonstrate how flood risk, including residual risk, will be managed now and over the development's lifetime, taking climate change into account and with regard to the vulnerability of its users. It should cover all sources of flooding and be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and the flood risk involved. The FRA should show how the development has been designed to be resilient to both actual and residual flood risk."*

8.97. Proposals may also be required to undertake sequential (consideration of alternative sites less at risk of flooding / consideration of site layout so development occur in those areas at lowest risk of flooding and manages any flood flows within the site) and exception tests (why the proposal is exceptional) – as defined in national policy.

8.98. To minimise flood risk, development is encouraged to:

a. Maintain an 8m easement along watercourses to allow for access and maintenance, flood flow conveyance, and enhancement of the riparian environment.

b. Take opportunities for floodplain reconnection and woodland planting/wetland creation.

c. Restore and enhance watercourses where opportunities exist, including through de-culverting, removal of redundant structures and channel naturalisation.

Natural Environment Assets

8.99. Where residential development has the potential to negatively affect natural environment assets, proposals should be:

a. Supported by appropriate **Ecological, Arboricultural and/or Geological Impact Assessment(s)** – required at planning application stage. ✓

8.100. Such assessments should be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and be proportionate to the significance of the natural environment asset(s) likely to be affected.

8.101. These assessments should identify any natural environment assets that have the potential to be impacted by the proposal and explain how the proposal maintains and/or enhances them. In this way, it informs design of the proposal and its consideration at planning application stage.

8.102. To constitute high-quality design, residential development proposals should be responsive to the natural environment on the site and in its setting (as addressed under the key considerations component of this

SPD). They should also maintain and enhance natural environment asset(s) present on the site and/or in its setting.

8.103. **Please Note: You are responsible for ensuring that you comply with Planning and relevant Ecology Legislation.**

Shropshire Hills National Landscape

8.104. National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty / AONB) represent areas of the highest scenic quality. The primary purpose for their identification is conserve and enhance natural beauty. For this reason, in national policy they are considered to have equal protection to National Parks.

8.105. There is one National Landscape in Shropshire Council's administrative area, the Shropshire Hills National Landscape (which extends into the Telford & Wrekin Council administrative area).

8.106. A Management Plan has been prepared for the Shropshire Hills, which includes a summary of its special qualities and guidance on achieving a design that is sensitive to them.

The Management Plan is available at:
https://shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/a-special-place/aonb-management-plan/2019-24-management-plan

Work is also currently ongoing to update this Management Plan. The new draft Management Plan is available via:
https://shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/a-special-place/management-plan/2025-30-management-plan

8.107. Where residential development is proposed within the Shropshire Hills:

a. It should achieve **highest design quality** and support the special qualities of the National Landscape, as set out in the Management Plan. ✓

b. If it constitutes major development (10 or more dwellings), **demonstrate exceptional circumstances** and that it is in the **public interest**. ✓

Heritage Assets

8.108. Proposals for residential development with the potential to affect heritage assets or their setting should:

a. **Contribute to their conservation and enhancement through design standards** informed by a **Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)** – required at planning application stage. ✓

Heritage Impact Assessment
What is it? A structured process to consider and take into account the significance of relevant heritage asset(s), when designing and developing proposals. It is a crucial part of the design process, which tests whether proposals that could impact on a heritage asset(s) and their setting are appropriate. It helps to ensure that what is important about a heritage asset(s) is maintained or enhanced by proposals.
Who should undertake it? A suitably qualified professional.
What should it cover? The assessment should be proportionate to the significance of the relevant heritage asset(s). a. Identify character and significance of heritage asset(s) and their setting. b. Consider the contribution the site makes to the character and significance of heritage asset(s). c. Inform development of proposal(s) with the intention of achieving a high-quality design. d. Explain how the proposal maintains and enhances the character of heritage asset(s) and their setting. e. Inform consideration of the refined proposal, including whether it achieves high-quality design.

8.109. Further guidance on the consideration of heritage assets when undertaking a HIA and considering the design of new dwellings that may affect a heritage asset is available on the Council website at: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/

and Historic England via their website: https://historicengland.org.uk/

8.110. **Please Note: You are responsible for ensuring that you comply with Planning and relevant Heritage Legislation.**

Air Quality

8.111. Poor air quality is detrimental to health and well-being.

8.112. Residential development proposals likely to give rise to concerns about air quality (including as a receptor) should:

a. Provide an **Air Quality Assessment**, proportionate to the scale of development & level of concern. This includes development:
-Likely to cause a change of greater than 500 annual average daily traffic movements or 200 HGV movements.
-Near an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and likely to cause a change of greater than 100 annual average daily traffic movements though it.
-Near commercial or industrial processes likely to generate emissions to air (including dust and odour) where there is a risk of these emissions impacting on the proposed development. ✓

b. Minimise **exposure to poor air quality** and where relevant seek to maximise opportunities to improve air quality particularly in AQMA's. Including through:
-Design and layout.
-Nature based solutions such as green infrastructure and trees (particularly in areas below the standard minimum 20% canopy cover). ✓
-Use of industry relevant best available techniques.
-Traffic and travel management (including linking to active travel networks and provision of electric charging facilities).

8.113. Residential development that would lead to significant new exposure into an area where air quality has potential to exceed national objectives, would lead to unacceptable risk from air pollution, or prevent sustained compliance with limit values/national objectives for air pollutants, are unlikely to be supported.

Noise

8.114. A noisy living environment can have negative impacts on health and well-being. As outlined in Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise and its Supplementary Document 2 (Good Acoustic Design), good acoustic design principles such as layout, building massing, orientation and internal layout should be considered early in the planning process to ensure identification of most appropriate and cost-effective solutions.

8.115. Where residential development has the potential to be sensitive to existing or anticipated sources of noise (from permitted activities not yet commenced), proposals should:

a. Be informed by a **proportionate noise assessment** which informs proposals from the outset. ✓

8.116. This assessment must be prepared by a competent person who has appropriate training and experience in the field of environmental acoustics and follow the relevant industry good practice guidance.

8.117. Sources of noise that may need to be assessed (and overarching guidance on how to undertake such an assessment) include:

i. **Road traffic noise** sources that have potential to impact residential developments - through a 24hour survey to establish background noise levels both for day and night and maximum noise levels at night (LAmax). In carrying this assessment regard should be given to guidance provided in Professional Practice Guidance on Planning &

Noise and the current BS8233: Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings.

ii. **Rail noise** sources that have potential to impact residential developments - through a survey based on the rail timetable (to include freight where applicable). Additionally, vibration monitoring is needed if the proposed residential development is within 30m of a railway line.

iii. **Commercial and industrial** noise sources that have potential to impact residential developments - through an attended noise survey to determine worst and typical cases in line with the current BS4142 Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

iv. **Entertainment premises** noise sources that may impact residential developments – through a survey to establish the likely noise impact (including noise generated by patrons). The assessment should be carried out in line with the Good Practice Guide on the Control of Noise from Pubs and Clubs - Criteria and Measurement IOA Acoustics Bulletin Nov/Dec 2003. As a general principle the aim should be to ensure music and noise emanating from existing entertainment premises (including noise generated by patrons) should not be audible within the proposed noise sensitive premises.

8.118. The following requirements and guidance should be considered when undertaking any noise assessment:

i. The impact of the noise sources should be based on measured noise levels at both the source and potential receptor location, rather than predicted values based purely on calculation.

ii. Unattended measurements are not appropriate for assessing impact of commercial, industrial or entertainment noise, as measured data cannot be correlated with specific activities at premises assessing.

iii. Calculations or predictions made shall be shown in sufficient detail to allow them to be checked for accuracy/validity. If the calculations are complicated, details may be included as an appendix.

iv. Where mitigation is necessary for a development to satisfy noise criteria provided in this document, the report should include a full specification of the mitigation.

v. Building envelope specifications, including glazing, shall include clearly annotated drawings showing in plan and elevation the recommended treatments and predicted noise levels for each façade.

vi. Ventilation specifications shall include design criteria (including ventilation system design, flow rates, assessment of overheating risk and the combined noise impact of noise breakthrough from the

building envelope and the noise generated by the whole ventilation system).

vii. The appendices of the report shall include a plan showing measurement or prediction locations, unabridged noise measurement results and details of any calculations applied.

viii. The assumed noise reduction of a partially open window shall be assumed to be 10dB.

8.119. All noise assessments should also include the following information:

i. Whether or not an adverse effect on health and quality of life is occurring or is likely to occur.

ii. The level of any adverse effect as defined in the Noise Policy Statement for England Explanatory Note and the noise exposure hierarchy set out in National Guidance.

iii. Whether a good standard of amenity can be achieved taking into account appropriate mitigation measures. Such measures should not make the development unsatisfactory in other respects.

8.120. Proposals which result in an observed adverse effect requires an Acoustic Design Statement. Such development will be permitted where appropriate mitigation can either remove the effect or reduce it to an acceptable level.

8.121. The approach to mitigation of noise impacts should follow the principles of good acoustic design. In assessing mitigation schemes, the following hierarchy of measures should be considered, in descending order of preference:

i. Design and layout to maximise the distance between noise source and receptor, using existing topography, existing structures, and/or purpose-built barriers to screen the proposed development from significant sources of noise.

ii. Using the layout of the scheme or orientation of buildings to avoid exposure of noise sensitive rooms to adversely impacted facades. Maximising the amount of habitable space that does not overlook the noise source.

iii. Using the building envelope to mitigate the impact of noise to acceptable levels through noise insulation.

8.122. For medium / high risk noise sites:

a. It is imperative that building location, design, orientation, room layout, and the use of buildings as **noise shields** is considered at the outset of the design. ✓

8.123. Consideration of acoustic design after the site and building layout has been defined is not considered to constitute good acoustic design.

8.124. Solely relying on sound insulation of the building envelope to achieve acceptable acoustic conditions in new residential development, when other methods could reduce the need for this approach, is not regarded as good acoustic design and generally not considered acceptable.

8.125. Where internal noise levels are assessed with windows closed, justification for this should be included in the Acoustic Design Statement. The noise exposure hierarchy in the Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise identifies closing windows to reduce noise levels, where there is no alternative ventilation, as an adverse impact. The severity of the impact depends on how often it is necessary to close windows.

8.126. Generally, a mitigation solution that involves closed windows and mechanical ventilation is not considered acceptable. Where it is considered acceptable and necessary to close windows for long periods of time, sufficient ventilation for comfort cooling and to avoid overheating is required (trickle vents are not considered appropriate to achieve this requirement). An overheating assessment is therefore required to assess the level of ventilation required.

8.127. As such, in carrying out the noise assessment regard should be given to the guidance provided in the Acoustic Ventilation and Overheating Residential Design Guide (AVO) and Part O of the Building Regulations.

8.128. The Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise only considers noise from transportation sources. Occupants are usually more tolerant of a noise without a specific character than, for example, that from commercial sources which can trigger complex emotional reactions. Therefore, the Council will not normally support closed windows and alternative ventilation to mitigate noise from entertainment, industrial and commercial uses.

8.129. External amenity areas shall, where practicable, be designed to achieve the good noise standard of 50dB LAeq 16hr and shall not exceed 55db LAeq 16hr within external amenity spaces (gardens, patios, larger balconies, roof gardens and terraces).

8.130. Where an existing commercial noise source impacts on a proposed development, generally, the rated noise level should be no greater than the background noise level. However, the acceptability of the proposal is dependent on any particular characteristics and the context of the noise, as discussed in BS4142. A rating level below background is

preferable, in situations where schemes are shown to be exposed to rating levels of +5dB or more above the background, it is likely that the Council would not support the scheme.

8.131. Any air or ground source heat pumps shall meet the requirements of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme[20].

8.132. Where the Microgeneration Certification Scheme assessment criteria are not met, or in very quiet areas where background noise levels are exceptionally low, a full noise assessment is required prior to installation.

8.133. Where a site can only achieve a good level of noise amenity for some of the proposed dwelling plots but is still considered acceptable, these plots should be prioritised for affordable housing. This is in line with the objectives of health and wellbeing documentation, such as the Public Health Outcomes Framework, which has an overarching objective of reducing health inequalities.

8.134. Proposals which cannot be practicably designed / amended to prevent an unacceptable adverse effect or to avoid a significant observed effect will not be considered to represent a high-quality design and as such not permitted.

Lighting

8.135. Artificial lighting can cause harm to occupiers of existing and new dwellings and wildlife. As such:

a. It may be beneficial to prepare a **lighting strategy** for larger development proposals. Where this indicates detrimental impacts, a **lighting assessment** will be of value. ✓

b. Proposals for streetlights[21] and security lighting should be positioned where they **do not shine directly into windows** of existing/new dwellings, **minimise impact on wildlife**, but provide **sufficient lighting** for safety and security on streets. ✓

c. The type of lighting proposed should be responsive to the local **context and character** and the area, as well as being as **energy efficient** as possible. ✓

[20] https://mcscertified.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/MCS-020-a-Issue-1.0-Final.pdf

[21] In designing street lights, regard should be given to the Council's approach to part night lighting. Information on this approach is provided on the Council website at: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/street-care-and-cleaning/streetlights/facts-figures-and-faqs/part-night-lighting/

8.136. Proposed landscaping, movement and lighting schemes should be complementary and work together to mitigate the effect of seasonal variations and support the perception of a safe environment.

Replacement Dwellings

8.137. For policy purposes, replacement dwellings represent new dwellings. As such, Shropshire Council will consider replacement dwellings in a manner consistent with consideration of proposals for new dwellings.

8.138. Shropshire Council recognises there are circumstances where it may be appropriate to replace a dwelling, for instance where the structure is unsafe and cannot reasonably be made so, or it is not conducive to the needs of the resident(s) and cannot reasonably be made so. However, there are equally circumstances where this is not the case.

8.139. The Council generally encourages careful consideration of alternatives to replacing a dwelling, before determining it is the preferred course of action.

8.140. A replacement dwelling should demonstrate it is **appropriate,** achieves a **high-quality design** consistent with the principles outlined in this document, and complies with the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

8.141. Considerations of particular relevance for replacement dwellings include it should:

a. Be appropriately and comfortably sited in the plot, maintaining **sufficient private amenity space** for the household and positively responding to **'building lines'** on frontages to public realm. ✓

b. Be **appropriate design and scale** that complements the plot and wider streetscene. ✓

c. Utilise **building materials, finishes and fenestration** that match or complement the wider streetscene. ✓

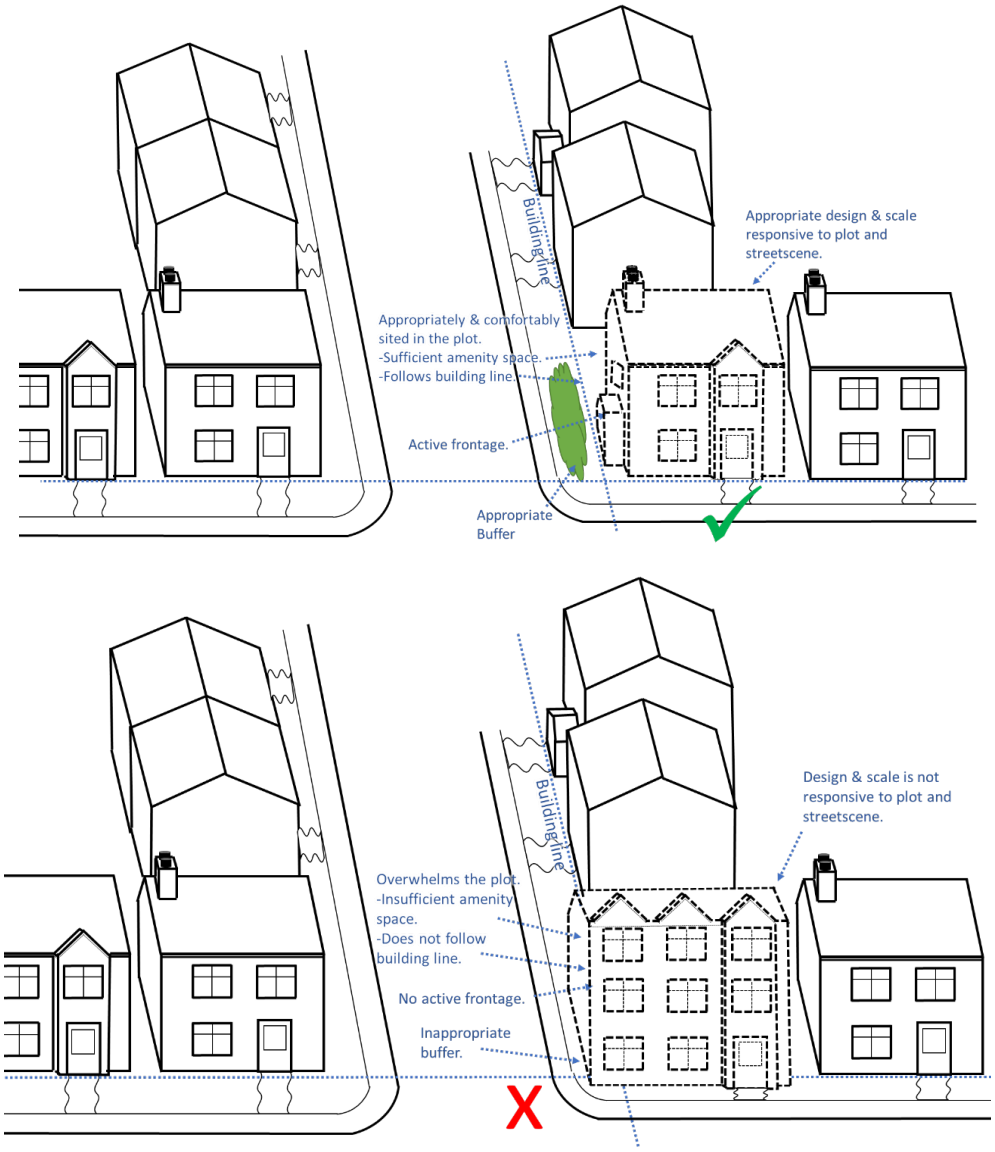
d. Where fronting public realm, **avoids blank elevations** to enhance character and provide for natural surveillance. ✓

e. Ensure an **appropriate buffer** between the property and neighbouring dwellings / public realm and **appropriate boundary treatments** which support opportunities for natural surveillance from ground floor windows. ✓

f. Minimise impact on **neighbouring amenity** and **character of neighbouring properties**. ✓

8.142. Examples of replacement dwellings that are and are not responsive to these design requirements are provided in Figure 8.9.

Figure 8.9: Replacement Dwelling



Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

8.143. Where proposals are for the replacement of a dwelling in the 'countryside', they are subject to additional policy considerations.

8.144. Specifically, such dwellings should only be permitted where:

a. The dwelling to be replaced is a **permanent structure** with an established continuing residential use. ✓

b. The dwelling is **not materially larger** and occupies the **same footprint** unless it can be demonstrated why this should not be the case. ✓

c. Where the original dwelling had been previously extended or a larger replacement is approved, **permitted development rights** are normally removed. ✓

Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt

8.145. Where proposals are for the replacement of a dwelling in the Green Belt, they are subject to the additional policy considerations applicable to such schemes in the 'countryside' alongside further policy considerations that are specific to the Green Belt.

8.146. Specifically, such dwellings should only be permitted where:

a. They meet the **requirements for replacement dwellings in the countryside.** ✓

b. It is demonstrated that it does not conflict with the **purposes of the Green Belt.** ✓

Residential Infill Development

8.147. Where new dwellings are proposed as residential infill development, they should:

a. Reflect the **character and appearance of setting**, including the size and location within the plot of existing dwellings. ✓

b. Be **sited comfortably** within the plot(s). ✓

c. Follow **established building lines** within the streetscene. ✓

New Dwellings in the Green Belt

8.148. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF specifies the forms of development appropriate in the Green Belt. This includes *"…limited infilling in villages; limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Development Plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land…[subject to specific criteria]."*

8.149. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF then specifies other forms of development, including residential, which should also not be regarded as inappropriate in specific circumstances. In summary these are:

a. The development would utilise grey belt land and not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt in the plan area.

b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed - for housing this includes where there is a lack of a five year housing land supply or the housing delivery test result is below 75%.

c. The development would be in a sustainable location. In determining if this is the case, particular reference should be given to:
    i. Paragraph 110 of the NPPF, which expects significant development to be focused in locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
    ii. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF, which expects sustainable mode of transport to be prioritised; safe and suitable access to be provided for all users; design of streets, parking and other transport elements to reflect best practice national guidance; and any significant impact on the transport network to the acceptably mitigated.

d. For housing development, it must meet the 'Golden Rules':
    i. Appropriate affordable housing contributions are provided – 35% (based on the expectation that it is 15% above the highest existing affordable housing requirement of 20%).
    ii. Provide necessary improvements to local and national infrastructure.
    iii. Provide new or improved green spaces, that are accessible to the public, contributing positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery, meet relevant local standards for green space provision (where there are none, relevant national standards), and contribute towards the objectives of the Shropshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy where it is identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery.
    iv. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether on-site or access to off-site spaces.

8.150. Where proposals for new dwellings are considered appropriate in the Green Belt, it is important that they:

a. Achieve a **high-quality design** which minimises any impact on the openness of the Green Belt. ✓

Backland and Rear Garden Development

8.151. In circumstances where a site constitutes backland or rear garden development, it should ensure:

a. Properties' **principal entrances** are located where they are easily **identifiable** from public realm & benefit from natural surveillance. ✓

b. Properties reflect the **character and appearance** of its setting, including the size and location within the plot of existing dwellings. ✓

c. All properties have **sufficient private amenity space**. ✓

d. **Minimum separation standards** (see Chapter 3) are achieved. ✓

Sub-Division of a Dwelling Plot

8.152. Proposals for the sub-division of an existing dwelling plot should consider whether the existing plot is of a sufficient scale to accommodate the proposed development. This involves consideration of whether all properties in the plot:

a. Reflect the **character and appearance** of its setting, including the size and location within the plot of existing dwellings. ✓

b. Are **sited comfortably** within the plot(s). ✓

c. Follow **established building lines** within the streetscene. ✓

8.153. Proposals will also comply with other relevant policies in the adopted Development Plan.

Use of Urban Block Layouts

8.154. Shropshire Council recognises for large-scale residential development; urban block layouts provide a 'template' for the efficient layout of a proposed development.

8.155. However, to ensure proposals are locally responsive, any use of such templates should be tempered by consideration of:

a. Locally characteristic **architectural design and details**. ✓

b. **Form and layout** of existing development. ✓

c. **Local design aspirations.** ✓

d. **Contemporary design solutions** which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a sense of place. ✓

Appendices

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Appendix 1: Summary of Key Development Plan Policies Underpinning Key Design Considerations

Key Related Local Plan Policies				
Layout - responsive to the site and its surroundings	**Character and Appearance -** distinctive places that complement their setting	**Integration -** ensuring connectivity to and through the site	**Inclusivity and Sustainability -** health, wellbeing, sustainable development and responding to our changing climate	**Function -** meeting the needs of occupiers
Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires: -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate; to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment; development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy CS7 addresses communications and transport. It specifies:** -A sustainable pattern of development requires integrated, accessible, attractive, safe and reliable transport infrastructure. -Development will promote awareness of travel behaviour and options; protect and enhance cycling, footpath, bridleway and canal networks; & enable provision of accessible, affordable and demand responsive public transport. **Policy CS8 addresses facilities, services and infrastructure provision. It expects:** -Protection and enhancement of existing services, facilities and amenities; and appropriate and accessible provision of additional services, facilities and infrastructure. **Policy CS11 addresses the type and affordability of housing. It states:** -The objective of achieving the diverse housing needs of Shropshire residents now and in the future. -Create mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. -An integrated and balanced approach will be taken in regard to existing and new housing, including type, size, tenure and affordability. -Appropriate mix of affordable housing tenures required as contributions within market housing development. -All housing developments designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes – including the elderly and those with disabilities. -Supporting appropriately located provision of specialist housing, including residential/nursing homes and extra care facilities.				

Key Related Local Plan Policies				
Layout - responsive to the site and its surroundings	**Character and Appearance -** distinctive places that complement their setting	**Integration -** ensuring connectivity to and through the site	**Inclusivity and Sustainability -** health, wellbeing, sustainable development and responding to our changing climate	**Function -** meeting the needs of occupiers

Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:
-Conserve & enhance natural and historic environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network.
-Enhance local character and quality of the natural, built and historic environment.
-Contribute to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including its landscape.
Policy CS18 addresses sustainable water management. It expects development to:
-Integrate sustainable water management to manage flood risk – including adapting to climate change.
-Safeguard water quality and quantity; ensure adequate water infrastructure; and incorporate water efficiency measures to protect water resources and reduce infrastructure pressure.
-Provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation and where appropriate de-culvert.
Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:
-Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets.
-Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
-Incorporate sustainable drainage.
-Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape); and to provide sufficient open space (30sqm per person) that meets local needs (on sites of 20 or more dwellings this should be a functional space for play, recreation and nature) managed in perpetuity.
Policy MD3 addresses the delivery of housing development. It expects development of 5 or more dwellings to:
-Include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation.
Policy MD8 addresses infrastructure provision. It expects development to:
-Safeguard existing infrastructure & only occur where sufficient infrastructure is available or can be provided.
Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies:
-Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated environmental assets.
-Proposals contributing positively to conservation, enhancement, connectivity and restoration of natural assets; or the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area will be supported.
Policy MD13 addresses the historic environment. It specifies:
-Proposals likely to affect heritage assets to be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment.
-Proposals contributing positively to heritage assets will be supported.

Appendix 2: Summary of Key Development Plan Policies Underpinning Areas of Technical Guidance

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Structural Landscaping	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate and to be safe and accessible to all. -Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment; development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessment. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance natural environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the natural environment. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; and conserve and enhance environmental assets. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape). **Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies:** -Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated environmental assets. -Proposals contributing positively to conservation, enhancement, connectivity and restoration of natural assets; or the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area will be supported.
Biodiversity Net Gain	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance natural environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the natural environment. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; and conserve and enhance environmental assets. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape).

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
	Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies: -Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated environmental assets. -Proposals contributing positively to conservation, enhancement, connectivity and restoration of natural assets; or the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area will be supported. **A minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain is a requirement of national legislation.**
Separation Standards	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features; -Regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); and reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials). -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape).
Internal Floorspace (Nationally Described Space Standards)	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Design to respond to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessment. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); and reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials).

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Public Realm and Open Space	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessment. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); and reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials). -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape); and to provide sufficient open space (30sqm per person) that meets local needs (on sites of 20 or more dwellings this should be a functional space for play, recreation and nature) managed in perpetuity.
Playing Fields	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy CS8 addresses facilities, services and infrastructure provision. It expects:** -Protection and enhancement of existing services, facilities and amenities; and appropriate and accessible provision of additional services, facilities and infrastructure. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape); and to provide sufficient open space (30sqm per person) that meets local needs (on sites of 20 or more dwellings this should be a functional space for play, recreation and nature) managed in perpetuity.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Play Space	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy CS8 addresses facilities, services and infrastructure provision. It expects:** -Protection and enhancement of existing services, facilities and amenities; and appropriate and accessible provision of additional services, facilities and infrastructure. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape); and to provide sufficient open space (30sqm per person) that meets local needs (on sites of 20 or more dwellings this should be a functional space for play, recreation and nature) managed in perpetuity.
Private Amenity Space	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); and reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials). -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape).

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Boundary Treatments	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); and reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials). -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape).
Trees and Hedges	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance natural environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the natural environment. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; and conserve and enhance environmental assets. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape). **Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies:** -Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated environmental assets. -Proposals contributing positively to conservation, enhancement, connectivity and restoration of natural assets; or the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area will be supported.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Planting	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate and to be safe and accessible to all. -Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment; development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance natural environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the natural environment. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; and conserve and enhance environmental assets. -Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development (including natural features such as trees, hedgerows and landscape). **Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies:** -Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated environmental assets. -Proposals contributing positively to conservation, enhancement, connectivity and restoration of natural assets; or the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area will be supported.
Vehicular, Cyclist and Pedestrian Routes	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate; to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy CS7 addresses communications and transport. It specifies:** -A sustainable pattern of development requires integrated, accessible, attractive, safe and reliable transport infrastructure. -Development will promote awareness of travel behaviour and options; protect and enhance cycling, footpath, bridleway and canal networks; & enable provision of accessible, affordable and demand responsive public transport.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
	Policy CS8 addresses facilities, services and infrastructure provision. It expects: -Protection and enhancement of existing services, facilities and amenities; and appropriate and accessible provision of additional services, facilities and infrastructure. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity. **Policy MD8 addresses infrastructure provision. It expects development to:** -Safeguard existing infrastructure & only occur where sufficient infrastructure is available or can be provided.
Electric Vehicle Charging	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. **Policy CS7 addresses communications and transport. It specifies:** -A sustainable pattern of development requires integrated, accessible, attractive, safe and reliable transport infrastructure. **Electric Vehicle Charging provisions area a requirement of national legislation.**
Vehicle Parking	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy CS7 addresses communications and transport. It specifies:** -A sustainable pattern of development requires integrated, accessible, attractive, safe and reliable transport infrastructure. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity and responds to the form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement). -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
Cycle Parking	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; enhancement of local distinctiveness; and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate; to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
	- having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy CS7 addresses communications and transport. It specifies:** -A sustainable pattern of development requires integrated, accessible, attractive, safe and reliable transport infrastructure. -Development will promote awareness of travel behaviour and options; protect and enhance cycling, footpath, bridleway and canal networks; & enable provision of accessible, affordable and demand responsive public transport. **Policy CS8 addresses facilities, services and infrastructure provision. It expects:** -Protection and enhancement of existing services, facilities and amenities; and appropriate and accessible provision of additional services, facilities and infrastructure. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity and responds to the form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement) -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place. **Policy MD8 addresses infrastructure provision. It expects development to:** -Safeguard existing infrastructure & only occur where sufficient infrastructure is available or can be provided.
Accessible and Adaptable Housing	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design, which is adaptable, safe and accessible to all and can respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy CS11 addresses the type and affordability of housing. It expects:** -Residential development to contribute to meeting the diverse housing needs of Shropshire residents now and in the future. -Residential development to include an appropriate mix of affordable housing. -Residential development to be designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes – including the elderly and those with disabilities. **Policy MD3 addresses the delivery of housing development. It expects development of 5 or more dwellings to:** -Include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Specialist Housing	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design, which is adaptable, safe and accessible to all and can respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy CS11 addresses the type and affordability of housing. It expects:** -Residential development to contribute to meeting the diverse housing needs of Shropshire residents now and in the future. -Residential development to support creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. -Residential development to take an integrated and balanced approach in regard to existing and new housing, including type, size, tenure and affordability. -Support for appropriately located provision of specialist housing, including residential/nursing homes and extra care Facilities. **Policy MD3 addresses the delivery of housing development. It expects development of 5 or more dwellings to:** -Include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation.
HAPPI Principles	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design, which is adaptable, safe and accessible to all and can respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy CS11 addresses the type and affordability of housing. It expects:** -Residential development to contribute to meeting the diverse housing needs of Shropshire residents now and in the future. -Residential development to be designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes – including the elderly and those with disabilities. **Policy MD3 addresses the delivery of housing development. It expects development of 5 or more dwellings to:** -Include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Dementia Friendly Housing	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design, which is adaptable, safe and accessible to all and can respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy CS11 addresses the type and affordability of housing. It expects:** -Residential development to contribute to meeting the diverse housing needs of Shropshire residents now and in the future. -Residential development to be designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes – including the elderly and those with disabilities. **Policy MD3 addresses the delivery of housing development. It expects development of 5 or more dwellings to:** -Include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation.
Secured by Design	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Adequate and Accessible Bin Storage	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
Street Furniture and Signage	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
Embodied Carbon, Sequestration and Carbon Offsetting	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources.
Energy	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. -Design to respond to our changing climate. -Appropriate landscaping and safeguarding of natural resources.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Water Conservation and Efficiency	**Policy CS18 addresses sustainable water management. It expects development to:** -Safeguard water quality and quantity; ensure adequate water infrastructure; and incorporate water efficiency measures to protect water resources and reduce infrastructure pressure. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Incorporate sustainable drainage.
Flood Risk Management	**Policy CS18 addresses sustainable water management. It expects development to:** -Integrate sustainable water management to manage flood risk – including adapting to climate change. -Provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation and where appropriate de-culvert. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Incorporate sustainable drainage.
Natural Environment Assets	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance natural environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the natural environment. **Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies:** -Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated environmental assets. -Proposals contributing positively to conservation, enhancement, connectivity and restoration of natural assets; or the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area will be supported.
Shropshire Hills National Landscape	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment and development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance natural and historic environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the natural, built and historic environment. -Contribute to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including the Shropshire Hills AONB (now National Landscape). **Policy MD12 addresses the natural environment. It specifies:** -Appropriate assessment & mitigation required if proposals are likely to negatively affect designated

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
	environmental assets, including the Shropshire Hills AONB (now National Landscape). -Proposals contributing positively to the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of the Shropshire Hills AONB (now National Landscape) will be supported.
Heritage Assets	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -Conservation and enhancement of the built and historic environment and development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy CS17 addresses environmental networks. It requires development to:** -Conserve & enhance historic environment assets and to create a multi-functional environmental network. -Enhance local character and quality of the built and historic environment. **Policy MD13 addresses the historic environment. It specifies:** -Proposals likely to affect heritage assets to be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment. -Proposals contributing positively to heritage assets will be supported.
Air Quality	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design and safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **National legislation.**
Noise	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design and safeguarding of community health and wellbeing. **National legislation.**
Lighting	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design. -Safeguarding of community health and wellbeing.
Replacement Dwellings	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	**Policy CS5 addresses countryside and Green Belt. It specifies:** -New development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt. **Policy MD7a addresses management of housing development in the countryside. It specifies replacement dwellings:** -Will only be permitted where the dwelling to be replaced is a permanent structure with an established continuing residential use. -Should not be materially larger and must occupy the same footprint unless it can be demonstrated why this should not be the case. -Where replacing a dwelling that is smaller or had been previously extended, permitted development rights will normally be removed.
Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt	**Policy CS5 addresses countryside and Green Belt. It specifies:** -New development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt. **Policy MD6 addresses Green Belt. It specifies:** -Development proposed in the Green Belt must be able to demonstrate it does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. **Policy MD7a addresses management of housing development in the countryside. It specifies replacement dwellings:** -Will only be permitted where the dwelling to be replaced is a permanent structure with an established continuing residential use. -Should not be materially larger and must occupy the same footprint unless it can be demonstrated why this should not be the case. -Where replacing a dwelling that is smaller or had been previously extended, permitted development rights will normally be removed.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Residential Infill Development	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
New Dwellings in the Green Belt	**Policy CS5 addresses countryside and Green Belt. It specifies:** -New development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt. **Policy MD6 addresses Green Belt. It specifies:** -Development proposed in the Green Belt must be able to demonstrate it does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.
Backland and Rear Garden Development	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.

Technical Guidance Subject	Key Related Local Plan Policies
Sub-Division of a Dwelling Plot	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.
Use of Urban Block Layouts	**Policy CS6 addresses sustainable design and development principles. It requires:** -High-quality sustainable design; inclusive and accessible environments; and enhancement of local distinctiveness. -Design to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all; and to respond to changing lifestyle needs of occupiers. -Development to be appropriate scale, density, pattern and design reflecting local context, character and features - having regard to national and local design guidance and assessments. **Policy MD2 addresses sustainable design. It requires development to:** -Contribute and respect locally distinctive and valued character and existing amenity; respond to form and layout of existing development (including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement); reflect local character (including architectural design, details and materials); and conserve and enhance historic and environmental assets. -Embrace contemporary design which references/reinforces distinctive local character and creates sense of place.

Shropshire Council

Design of Residential Extensions & Alternations Supplementary Planning Document

www.shropshire.gov.uk
General Enquiries: 0345 678 9000

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this Document

1.1. This document identifies key design considerations and sets out design guidance for **residential extensions and alterations** in Shropshire.

1.2. It then provides more detailed design considerations for **residential extensions and alterations** that are subject to specific constraints or opportunities which are **likely to have implications for the approach to the design of residential extensions and alterations**.

1.3. These more detailed design considerations include where the building has been previously converted to a dwelling, where the dwelling has been previously extended, where the extensions are to affordable properties, where the extensions are to meet specific needs of occupiers, or have the potential to impact on built or natural environment assets.

1.4. In this way, it provides guidance to support the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

1.5. The adopted Development Plan for Shropshire consists of the Core Strategy (2011), Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015) and made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans.

1.6. This document will be used by Shropshire Council Planning Officers when determining Planning Applications or Permitted Development (PD) 'prior approval' requests for residential extensions and alterations. It forms part of a 'suite' of Design Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for Shropshire.

Getting Advice

1.7. If you are unsure whether an extension or alteration requires planning permission (or other form of consent) or want input into the design of your scheme, you may wish to consider the Council's pre-application advice service. This can be supported by officers from appropriate departments, such as policy, highways, heritage and ecology.

1.8. Further information is available on the Council website via: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/planning/applications/pre-application-advice/

1.9. **Please Note: You are responsible for ensuring compliance with Planning and other relevant Legislation.**

2. Key Considerations

2.1. Shropshire Council recognises appropriate extensions and alterations to a residential property can enhance the quality of life of occupier(s). As such, the Council is supportive of **appropriate** extensions and alterations that achieve a **high-quality design**.

2.2. However, there cannot be a 'one-size fits all' approach to achieving the high-quality design of extensions and alterations in Shropshire. This is due to the diverse nature of our settlements, streetscenes, groups of buildings, individual buildings, open spaces and landscapes.

2.3. As such, planning applications for extensions and alterations will be **judged individually on their own merits**.

2.4. However, **key design considerations** are applicable - from initial deliberation, through to project design, during determination of any necessary planning application(s), and throughout construction.

2.5. The starting point when determining if an extension or alteration is appropriate and achieves a high-quality design is the adopted Development Plan.

2.6. Particularly relevant are Policies CS6 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan, which address Sustainable Design Principles.

2.7. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan addresses how development, including extension and alterations to dwellings, must:

> *"2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity values"* through:
> *"i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and*
> *ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and*
> *iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12.*
>
> *3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place, but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style.*
>
> **Please Note: The wider requirements of Policies CS6 & MD2 alongside the other policies of the adopted Development Plan are also relevant.**

2.8. Complementary to the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan Policies are those in Neighbourhood Plans, which also form part of the adopted Development Plan, providing design guidance for their specific locality.

2.9. Therefore, consistent with the adopted Development Plan, for a residential extension or alteration to be considered appropriate and of a high-quality design, it must:

a. Be **appropriately sited** and **proportionate** in form and scale. ✓

c. Utilise **consistent or complementary materials, finishes and fenestration.** ✓

d. Minimise impact on **neighbouring amenity and character of neighbouring properties**. ✓

3. Appropriately Sited and Proportionate in Form and Scale

3.1. To be appropriately sited an extension or alteration should be positioned so that it complements the original property, is proportionate to the property's curtilage, and does not dominate the streetscene. It should also be responsive to neighbouring properties, roads and the public realm.

3.2. To be proportionate in form and scale, an extension or alteration should be subordinate to the original dwelling (as at 1st July 1948 or as built if this occurred after this date) and avoid becoming the central feature of the property.

3.3. As such, an extension or alteration should:

a. Be **positioned** so that it complements the original dwelling and wider streetscene. ✓

b. Be **proportionate** to the size of the overall **'plot'** of the dwelling, avoiding over-development or an over-crowded form. ✓

c. **Maintain and enhance** rather than detract from the character and appearance of the original dwelling. ✓

d. Achieve an **appropriate appearance, form and massing** (width, height and bulk) which is responsive to the original dwelling. ✓

e. Be **subordinate** in size and prominence to the original dwelling, normally 'set-back' from the principal elevation and having a lower ridgeline. ✓

f. Avoid becoming the **central feature** of the property. ✓

g. Respect **building lines**, established by the frontages of dwellings along a road or public realm. ✓

h. Respect the **pattern** of buildings and spaces in a streetscene. ✓

i. Ensure **sufficient garden, parking and amenity space** remains available to the property. ✓

j. Ensure **sufficient space** is maintained within the plot for an appropriate buffer to the public realm. ✓

3.4. Further guidance on considerations for specific forms of extensions or alterations to residential properties follows.

Side Extensions

3.5. Side extensions are required to be sub-servient in size and prominence to the original dwelling and achieve a 'meaningful' design and layout that is well-related to the property and its context.

3.6. As such, side extensions should be:

a. **Smaller and less substantial** in scale than the original dwelling. ✓

b. **'Set back'** from the principal elevation of the original dwelling - unless an alternative arrangement is justified. ✓

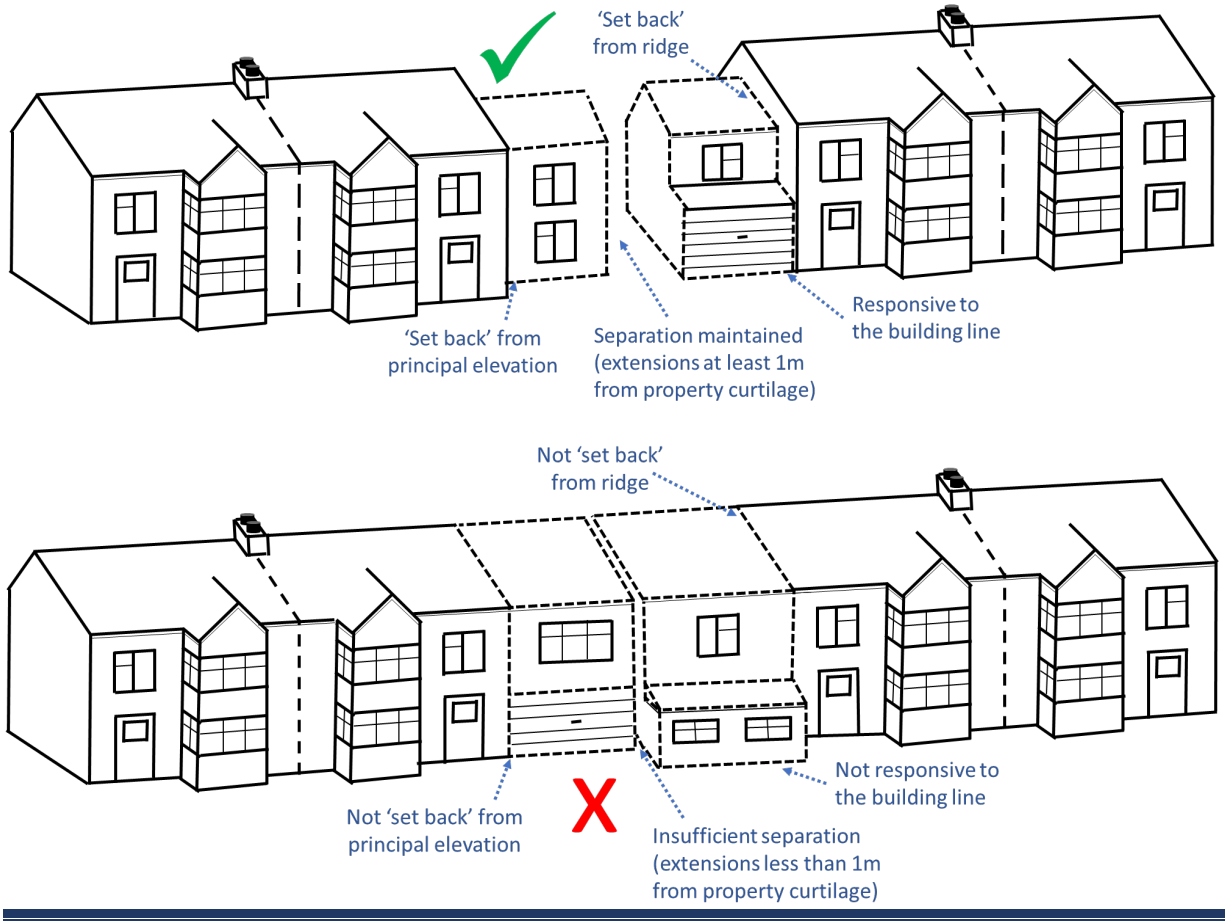
c. **'Set down'** from the ridge of the original dwelling - unless an alternative arrangement is justified. ✓

d. Responsive to the **building line** of the streetscene. ✓

e. Able to achieve **appropriate separation** from neighbouring properties (1m 'buffer' to the property's curtilage) to avoid a 'terracing' effect. ✓

3.7. Overly large or overly prominent extensions can unbalance the proportions and harmony of the original dwelling and have a detrimental effect on streetscene – particularly if they create perception of a 'terracing' effect.

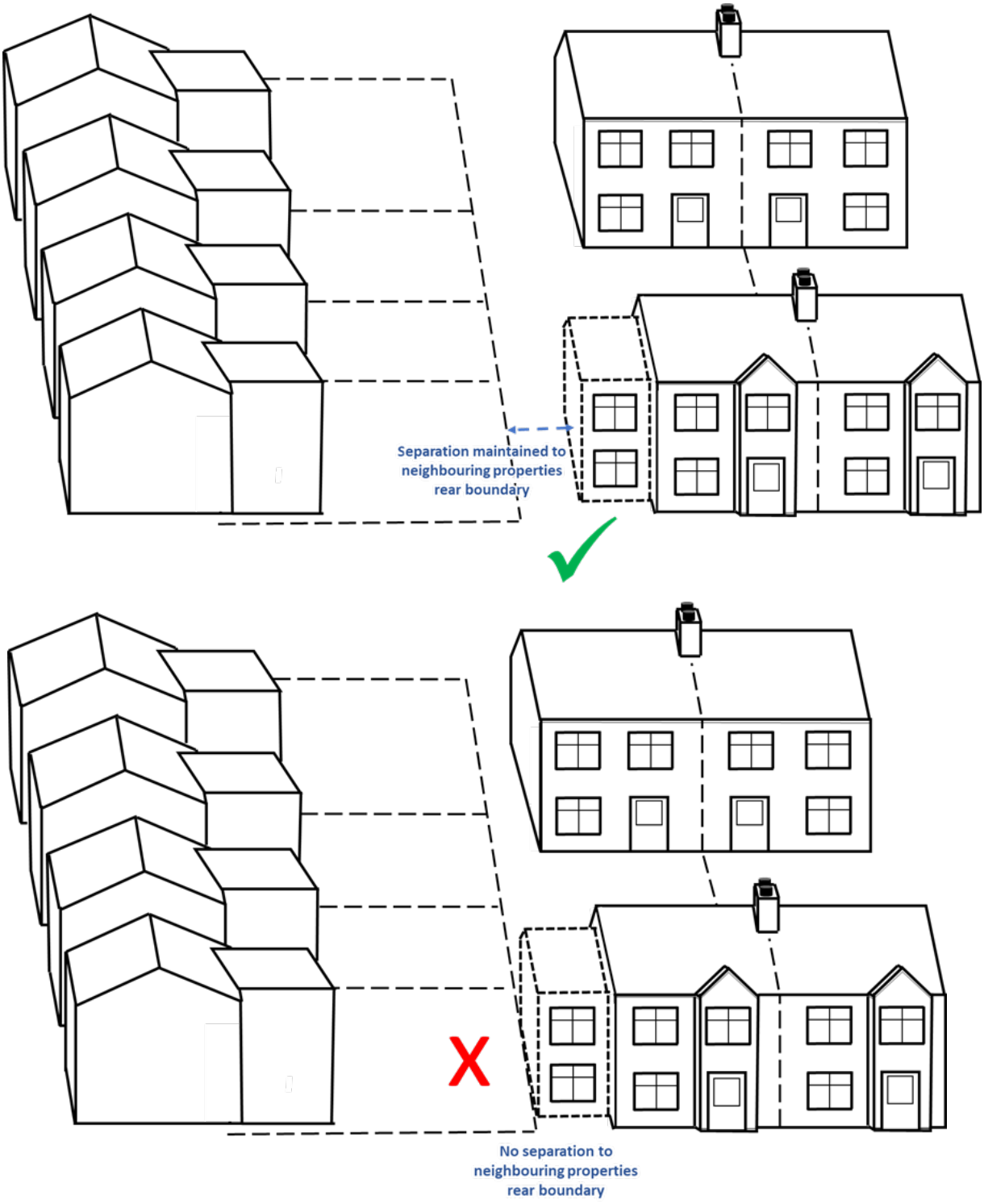
Figure 3.1: Side Extensions



3.8. In situations where neighbouring properties are perpendicular to a dwelling, any side extension must maintain a separation from the neighbours rear boundary.

3.9. Generally, more than the standard 1m 'buffer' to the property's curtilage for side extensions is required to ensure that the amenity of any neighbouring properties' gardens and the appearance of the streetscene are maintained.

Figure 3.2: Side Extensions Towards Neighbours Rear Boundary



Side Extensions on Corner Plots

3.10. Side extensions on corner plots should comply with the requirements for any side extension (identified above). However, they should also respond to their prominent location. As such they should:

a. Positively respond to the **'building line'** on both frontages. ✓

b. **Avoid blank elevations** where the extension fronts the public realm (providing opportunities for natural surveillance). ✓

c. Ensure **appropriate boundary treatments**. ✓

d. Ensure an **adequate buffer** is maintained between the edge of the property's curtilage and the public realm. ✓

Figure 3.3: Side Extensions on a Corner Plot



Rear Extensions

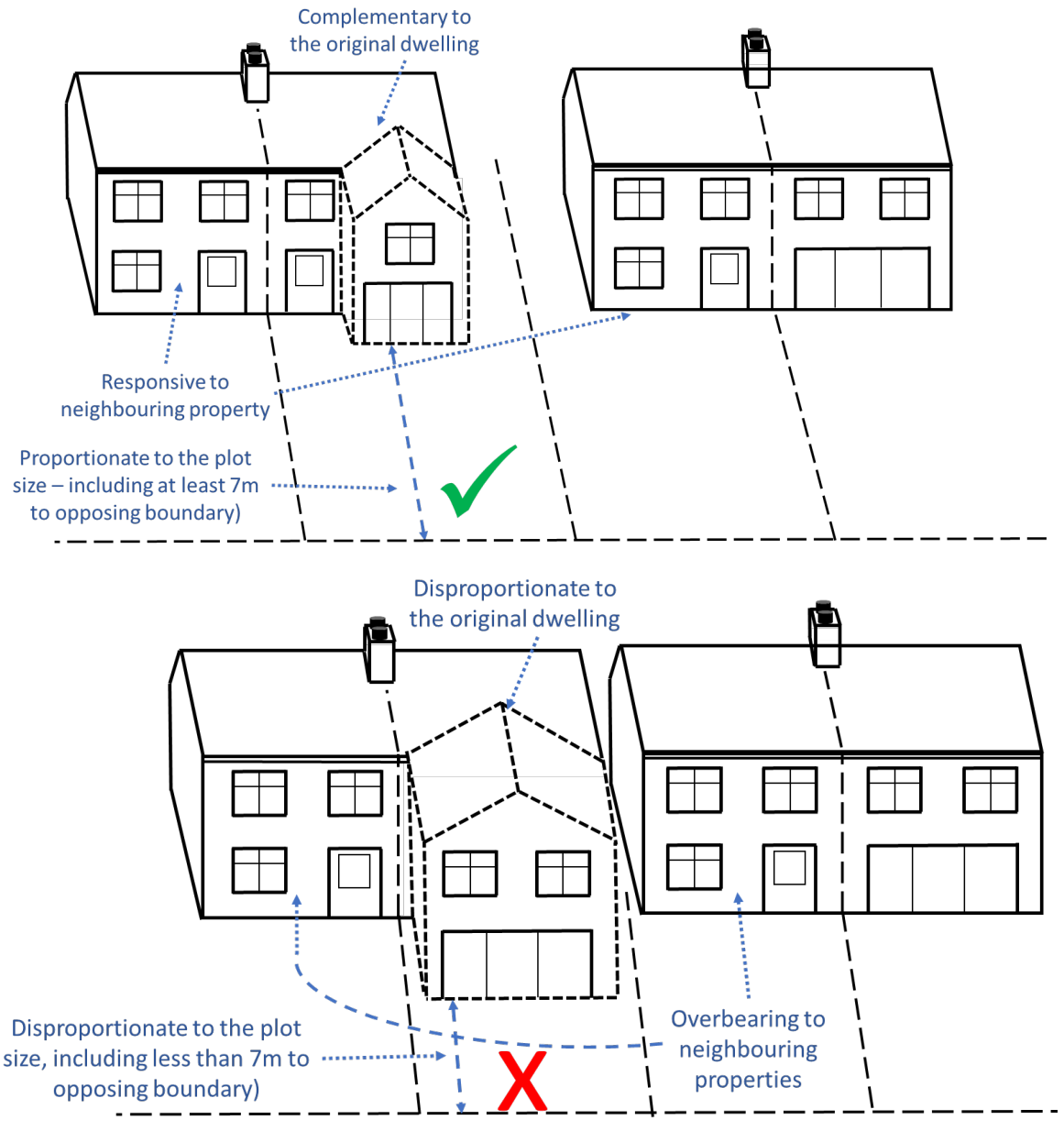
3.11. Rear extensions to a dwelling are usually the form of extension that are least prominent to the public, however this does not negate the need to achieve a 'meaningful' high-quality design and layout that is well-related to the property and its context. Rear extensions should be:

a. **Complementary** and **sub-servient** to the original dwelling, including **'set down'** from the ridge of the original dwelling. ✓

b. **Responsive to the size of the property's 'plot'** – ensuring sufficient garden space remains to the occupier, including at least 7m between the rear of the extension and the opposing boundary. ✓

c. **Responsive to neighbouring properties** – both adjoining and opposite. ✓

Figure 3.4: Rear Extensions



3.12. In order to be responsive to opposing dwellings and retain suitable levels of privacy, an appropriate separation distance must be maintained. Specifically:

a. It is expected that the single storey component of any rear extension maintains a **minimum 15m separation distance** to any opposite dwelling, where the opposing property's elevation includes windows to habitable rooms. ✓

b. It is also expected that the second storey component of any rear extension maintains a **minimum 21m separation distance** to any opposite dwelling, where the opposing properties elevation includes windows to habitable rooms. ✓

c. For the third storey or higher components of any rear extension, a **minimum 27.5m separation distance** should be maintained to any opposite dwelling, where the opposing properties elevation includes windows to habitable rooms. ✓

d. Where a rear extension faces a blank elevation of a property (or one with only windows to non-habitable rooms) a **minimum 12m separation distance** should be maintained. ✓

Figure 3.5: Rear Extensions and Opposing Properties: 1 and 2 Storey

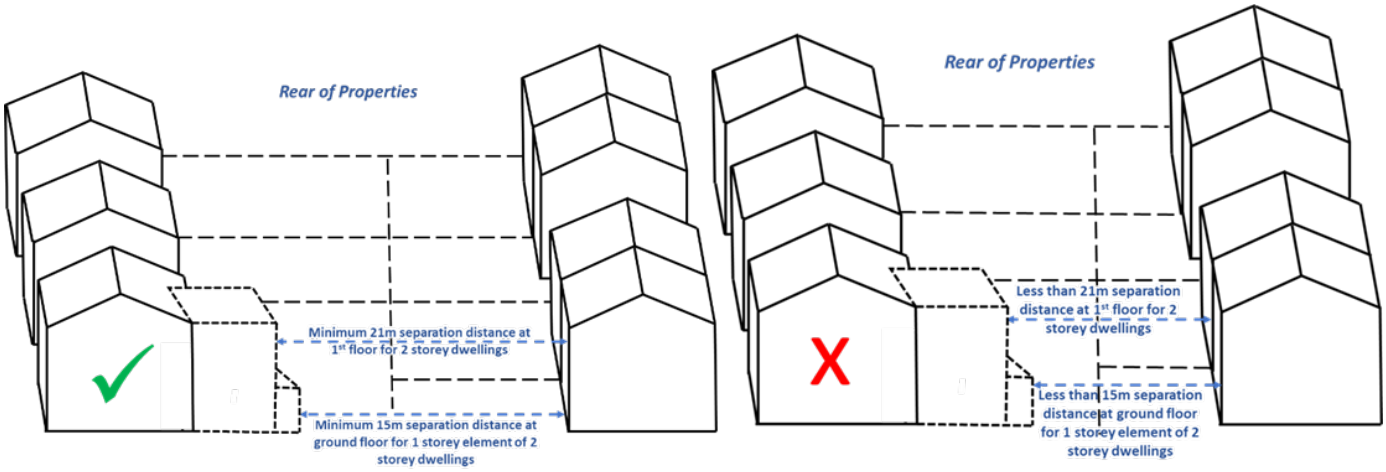


Figure 3.6: Rear Extensions and Opposing Properties: 3 or More Storey

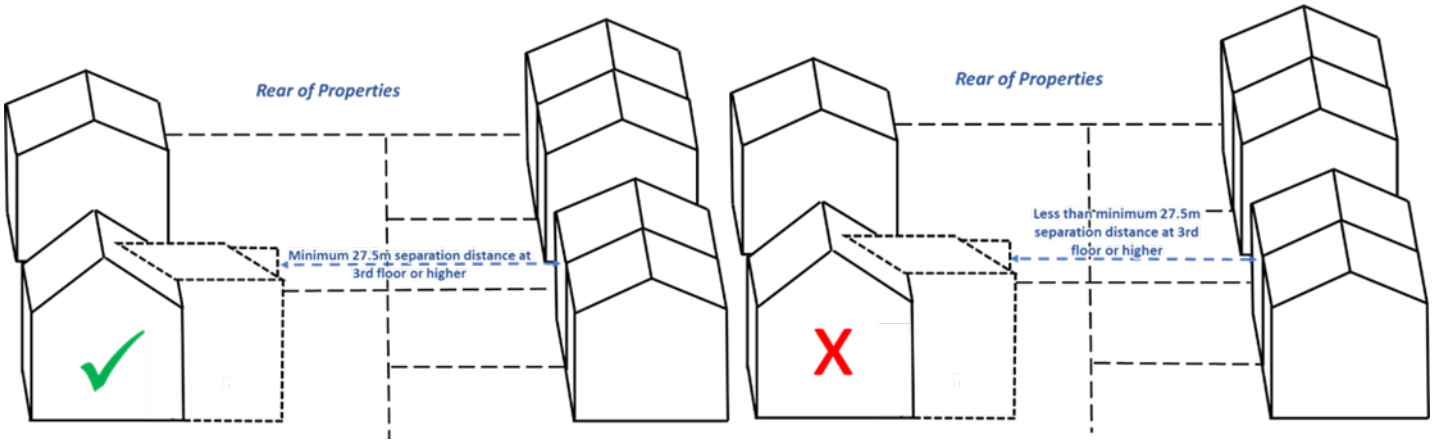
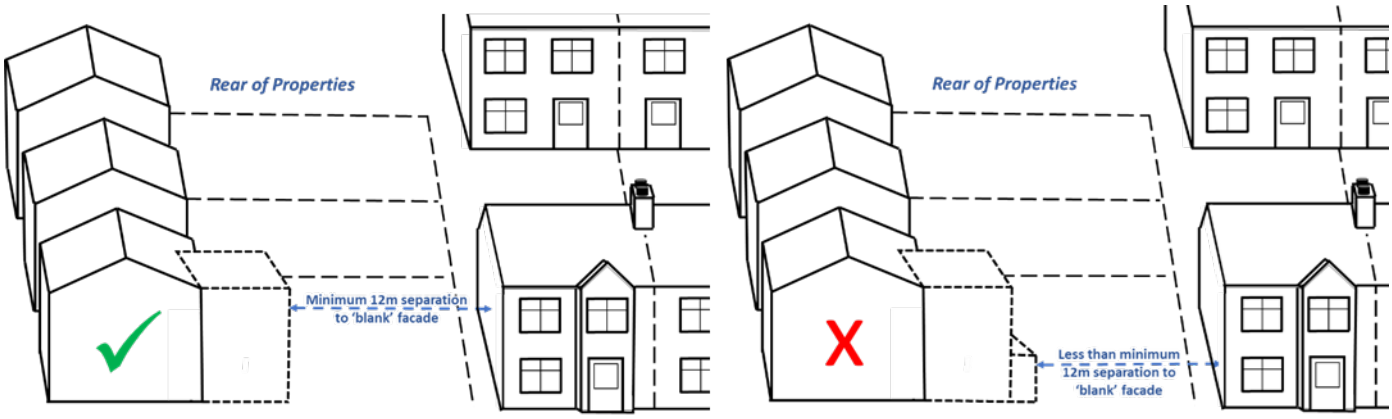


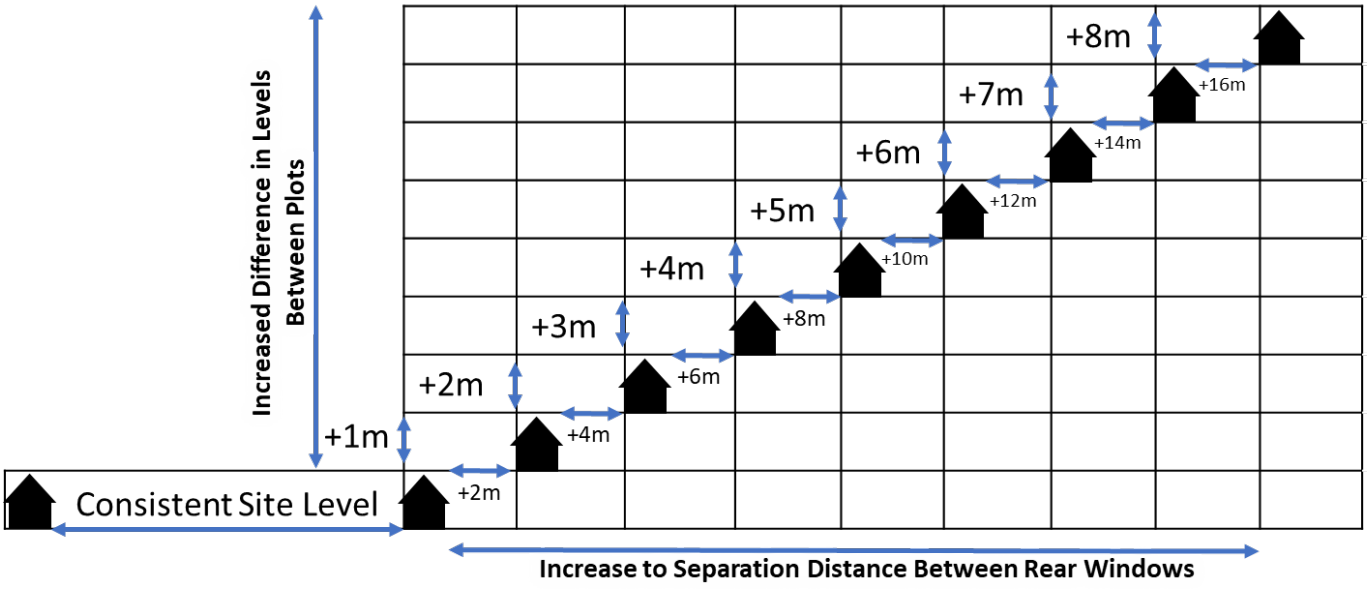
Figure 3.7: Rear Extensions Facing Blank Elevations



3.13. Please Note: required separation distances may be increased, where there are changes in levels (height) between the relevant dwellings plots, if this increases the potential adverse effect on the amenity of the neighbouring property.

3.14. Generally, every metre change in the level of the properties, means an addition 2m of separation would be expected.

Figure 3.8: Rear Extensions Where the Plot is Higher than that of Opposing Dwellings

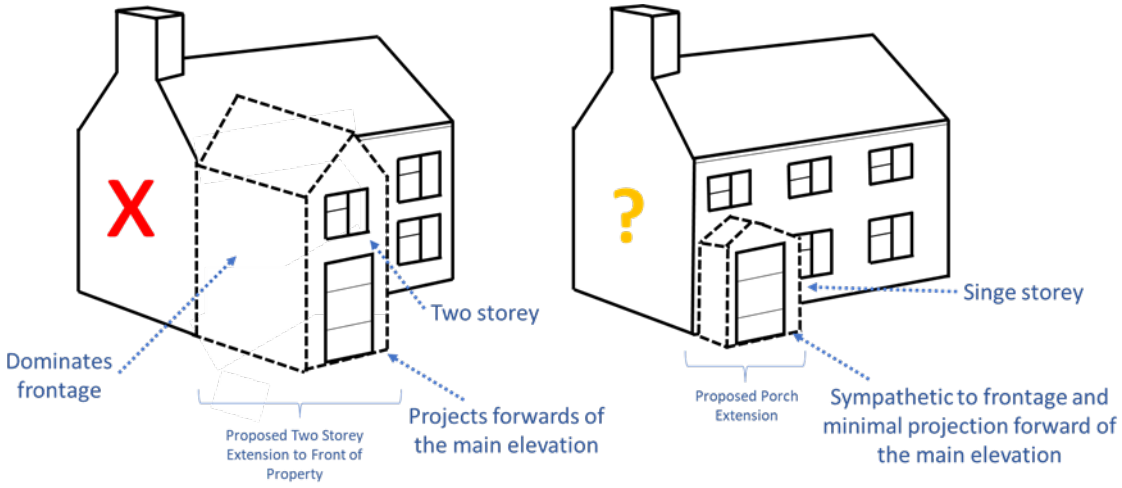


Front Extensions

3.15. The front elevation of a dwelling is the most important in defining the character and appearance of the property and streetscene. Streets are often characterised by a common design to property frontages, based upon the repetition of an architectural style, which forms the basis for 'character areas'.

3.16. As such, with the exception of appropriately sized and located porches, extensions should **not normally project forward** of the principal elevation or elevations fronting the public domain.

Figure 3.9: Front Extension



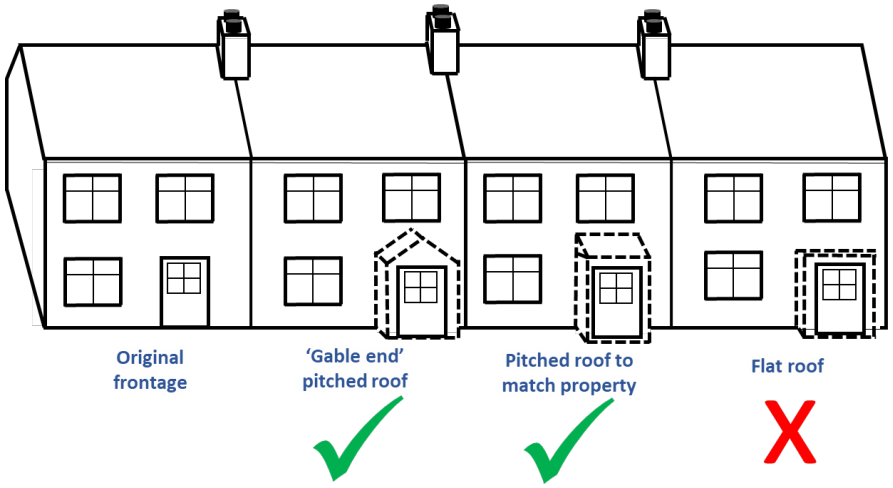
3.17. For a porch to be appropriate it must achieve a 'meaningful' design and layout which is well-related to the original property and its context:

a. **Complement** the original dwelling (including appropriate roof design and pitch) and the wider streetscene. ✓

b. Be **small in scale** and generally have a pitched roof. ✓

c. Maintain an **appropriate buffer** between the property and public realm. ✓

Figure 3.10: Examples of Potentially Appropriate Porches



Please Note: Not all porches with pitched roofs are appropriate. Similarly not all porches with flat roofs are inappropriate. Suitability is dependent on whether it is complementary to the original dwelling.

Roof Extensions

3.18. Roof extensions can be a cost-effective means of extending a property. However, where external works are required to facilitate such extensions, it is important to carefully consider the implications on the form and appearance of the original dwelling.

3.19. Dormer windows are a popular way of maximising useable space in a loft conversion. However, they can result in a top-heavy or unbalanced appearance.

3.20. To ensure dormer window(s) forming part of a roof extension are appropriate, they must achieve a 'meaningful' design and layout which is well-related to the original property. As such, they should:

a. Preferably be located on the **rear elevation**, so as to be less prominent to the public. ✓

b. Be of a number and size that is **responsive to and compatible with the original dwelling and wider streetscene** - not have a detrimental impact on the balance of the building. ✓

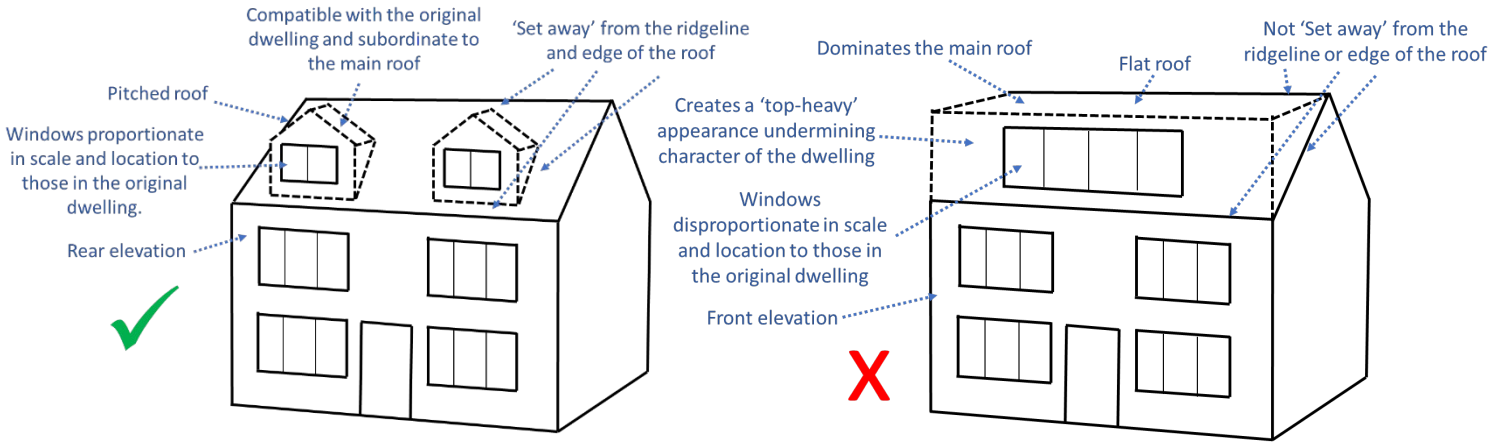
c. Achieve a design that is **subordinate** to the main roof structure and limits impact on the roof plane. ✓

d. Be set **away from the edges of the roof** and **below the ridgeline** of the property. ✓

e. Preferably be **pitched** rather than flat roofed - unless this helps define the character of the dwelling and streetscene. ✓

f. Ensure **window openings are proportionate in scale and location** having regard to those on the original dwelling. ✓

Figure 3.11: Roof Extension – Dormers



3.21. Roof lights allow natural light into a loft conversion without significantly altering the 'profile' of the roof. However, they can affect the appearance of a building and subsequently the streetscene.

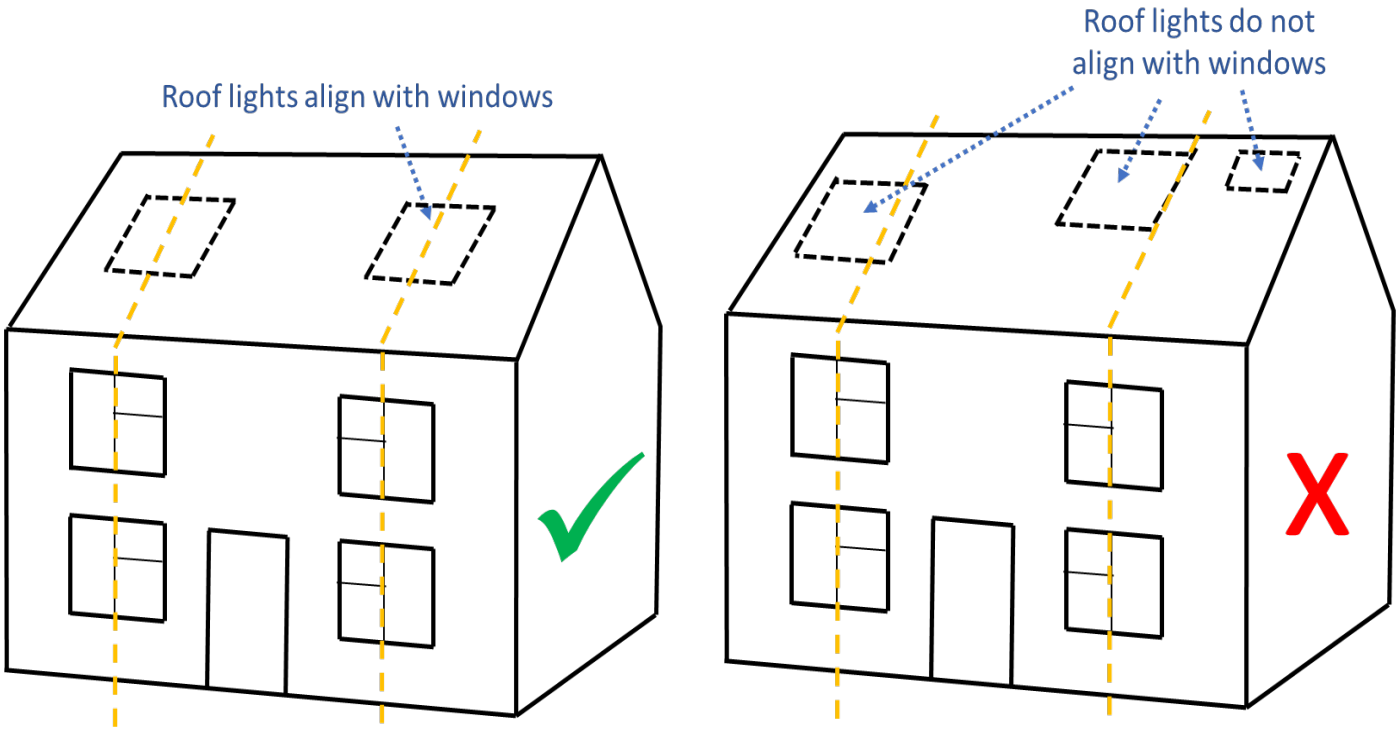
3.22. To ensure roof lights are appropriate they should:

a. Be **sensitively sited** and proportionate to the roof and dwelling. ✓

b. **Align** with the windows on the main dwelling. ✓

c. Be of a **low profile** to reduce impact on the roof plane and wider streetscene. ✓

Figure 3.12: Roof Extension – Roof Lights



3.23. These same principles can be applied to the layout of solar panels in order to ensure they maintain and enhance the appearance of your property – this does not mean that the location of solar panels should be limited to align with windows, but rather that the layout should be responsive to the location of windows.

Annexes and Outbuildings

3.24. Annexes constitute additional living space detached from the main dwelling but within its curtilage. Whilst they often provide living, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen facilities; they are normally subject to a specific occupancy condition which ensures they are 'ancillary' to the main dwelling and a separate household cannot be formed within them.

3.25. Annexes to a dwelling generally require planning permission and should comply with the high-quality design expectations to extensions in similar locations relative to the original dwelling.

3.26. Outbuildings include a range of structure within the curtilage of a dwellings, including garages (excluding integrated/attached garages), garden offices, sheds, bin stores, etc.

3.27. Annexes and those outbuildings which require planning permission must achieve a 'meaningful' design which is well-related to the original property and is of a scale, location and orientation that is complementary to the property they serve. As such they should:

a. **Be responsive to the size of the property's 'plot'** – ensuring sufficient garden space remains to the occupier. ✓

b. Be **appropriately located** in the plot, having regard to function and appearance. An annexe should usually **not being set forward** of the principal elevation of the main property. ✓

c. **Be smaller and less substantial** in scale than the original dwelling. ✓

d. Achieve an **orientation** that is **responsive and complementary** to the original dwelling and wider streetscene, whilst also reflecting intended function. ✓

e. For annexes and garages, **separation distances** to property boundaries **comparable to extensions** of similar scales and in similar locations relative to the original dwelling should be maintained. ✓

f. For annexes and garages, responsive to the **building line** of the streetscene. ✓

g. **Responsive to neighbouring properties** – both adjoining and opposite. ✓

h. **Generally not incorporate** dormer windows, unless consistent with local character and in context of the annexe appropriate in scale, location and orientation. ✓

3.28. Where outbuildings do not require planning permission, they should still reflect these principles.

Figure 3.13: Annexes

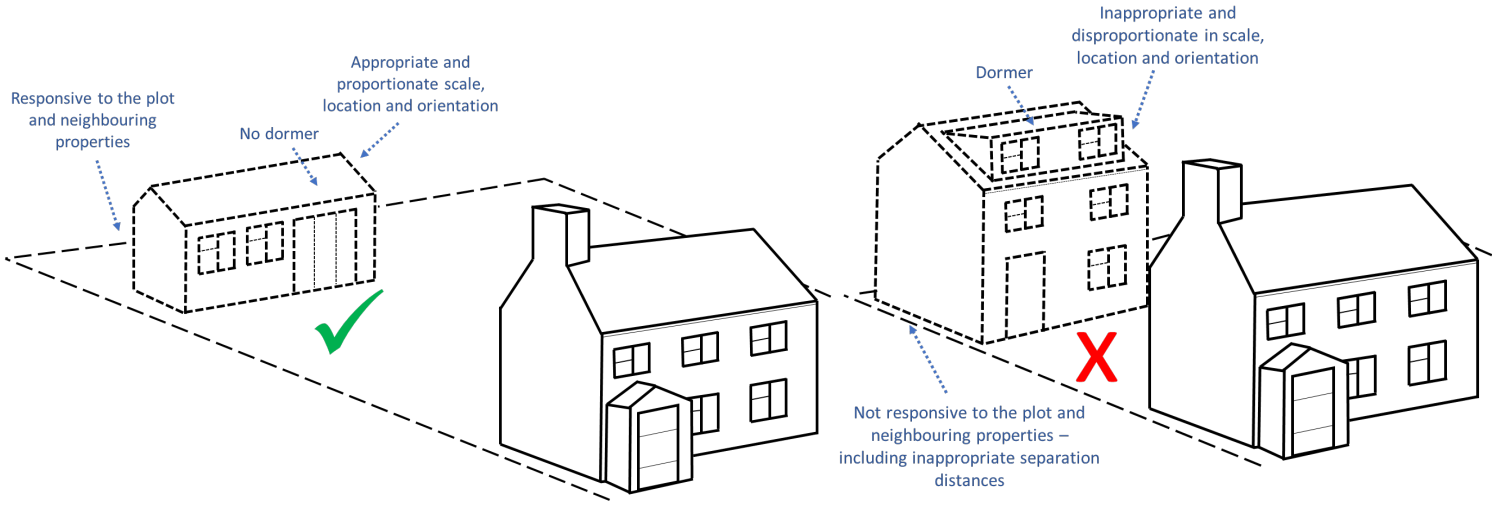


Figure 3.14: Outbuildings (including Garages)



4. Materials, Finishes and Fenestration

4.1. The materials, finishes (including architectural details) and fenestration of properties contribute to their character and the wider streetscene. As such, their use within extensions and alterations should either be consistent with or complementary to the original property and its setting.

4.2. Consistent materials, finishes and fenestration appropriately 'match' those of the original dwelling without appearing 'pastiche'. They reinforce the distinctive local characteristics of the original dwelling and streetscene.

4.3. Complementary materials, finishes and fenestration are those which appropriately contrast with that of the original dwelling – avoiding risk of appearing 'pastiche' whilst emphasising key features. This can involve embracing opportunities for contemporary materials, finishes and fenestration which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place, but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style.

4.4. In this way an extension or alteration can contribute to the harmony of the building and streetscene – particularly in circumstances where the building is or streetscene contains heritage assets. It can also help avoid negative impacts on neighbouring amenity and character. Consideration of materials must extend to all aspects of the extension or alteration.

Roofs

4.5. Roofs are a visually significant part of any building. As such, it is important for any extension or alteration to positively respond to the roof of the original property. As such:

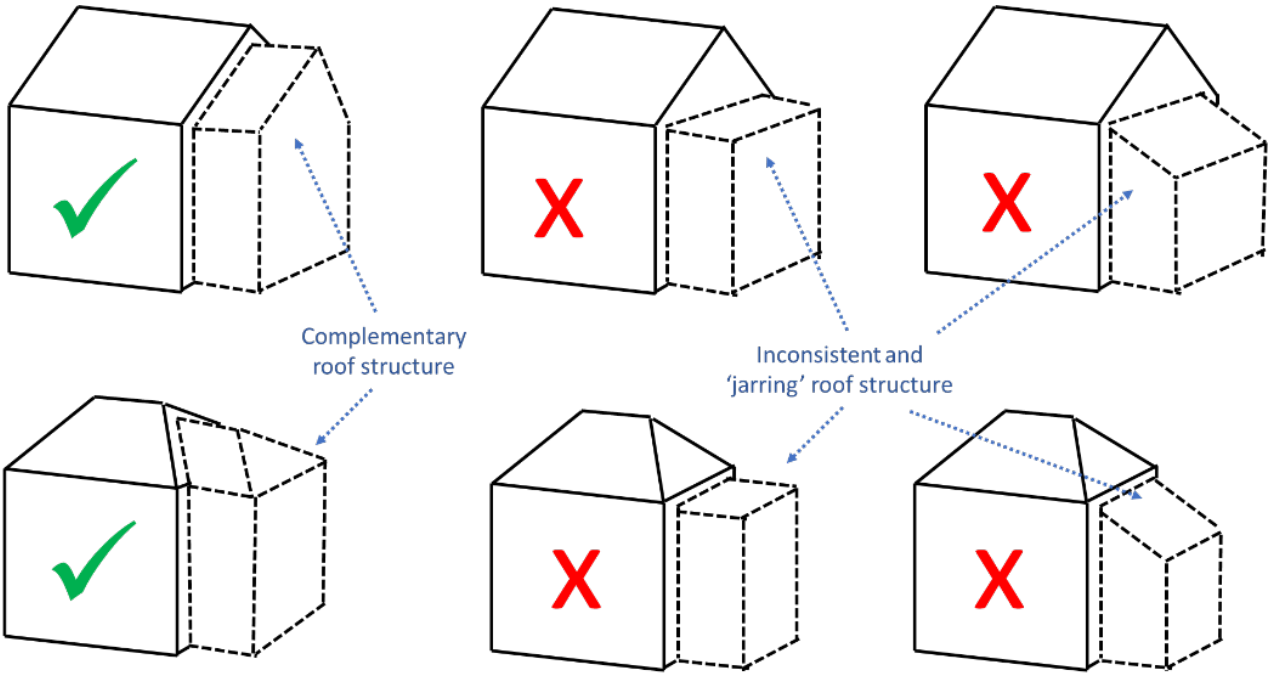
a. The **roof form** (type and angle of pitch) should match or complement that of the original property - particularly for two-storey extensions. ✓

b. **Materials and finishes** (tiles, slate, thatch, etc) should generally match that of the original property; having regard to colour, size, shape, and application. ✓

**Complementary and contemporary materials and finishes which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics may be acceptable, where they provide interesting contrast.*

4.6. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate roof formats (not intended to be exhaustive – for instance where the existing property has flat roof structures it may be appropriate for the extension to have a similar roof form) include:

Figure 4.1: Examples of Roof Formats



Walls

4.7. Walls establish the form, massing (width, height and bulk) and character of the dwelling.

4.8. As such, it is important for any extension or alteration to positively respond to the walls of the original property:

a. The **location, angle, form and height of walls** should be responsive to the original property - particularly for two-storey extensions. ✓

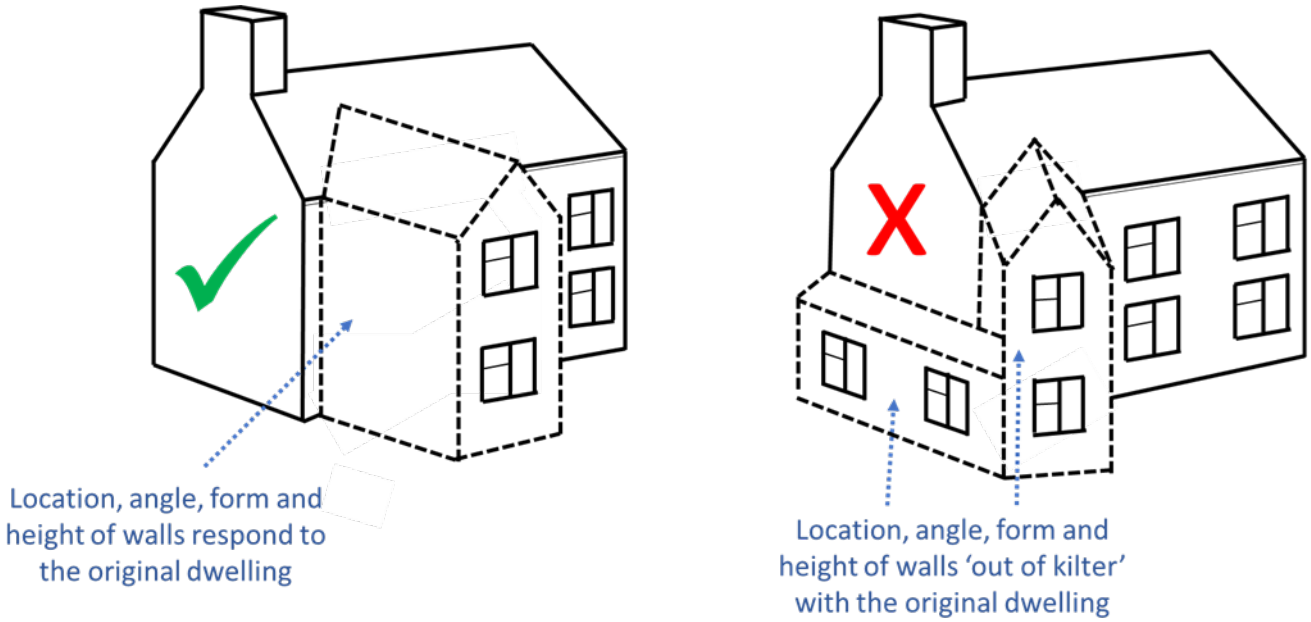
b. Materials (stone, brickwork, render, cob, timber, etc) should **match or complement** those of the original property; having regard to colour, size, shape, and application*. ✓

c. When considering stone and brickwork, it is important that care is taken with regard to both the stone / brickwork itself and the **bonding pattern, mortar colour and pointing method**. ✓

**Complementary and contemporary materials and finishes which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics may be acceptable, where they provide interesting contrast.*

4.9. *Please Note: Many materials weather with age. When considering materials to utilise within an extension or alteration, it is good practice to utilise those that complement the 'un-weathered' materials of the original dwelling.*

Figure 4.2: Wall Formats



Windows and Doors

4.10. Window and door openings often form focal points within the elevations of properties and can significantly impact the character of a property.

4.11. As such, when introducing new window and door openings they should:

a. Be appropriate in terms of **size, proportion and arrangement**. ✓

b. Have regard to the **architectural design** of the original dwelling, local context, and local identity. ✓

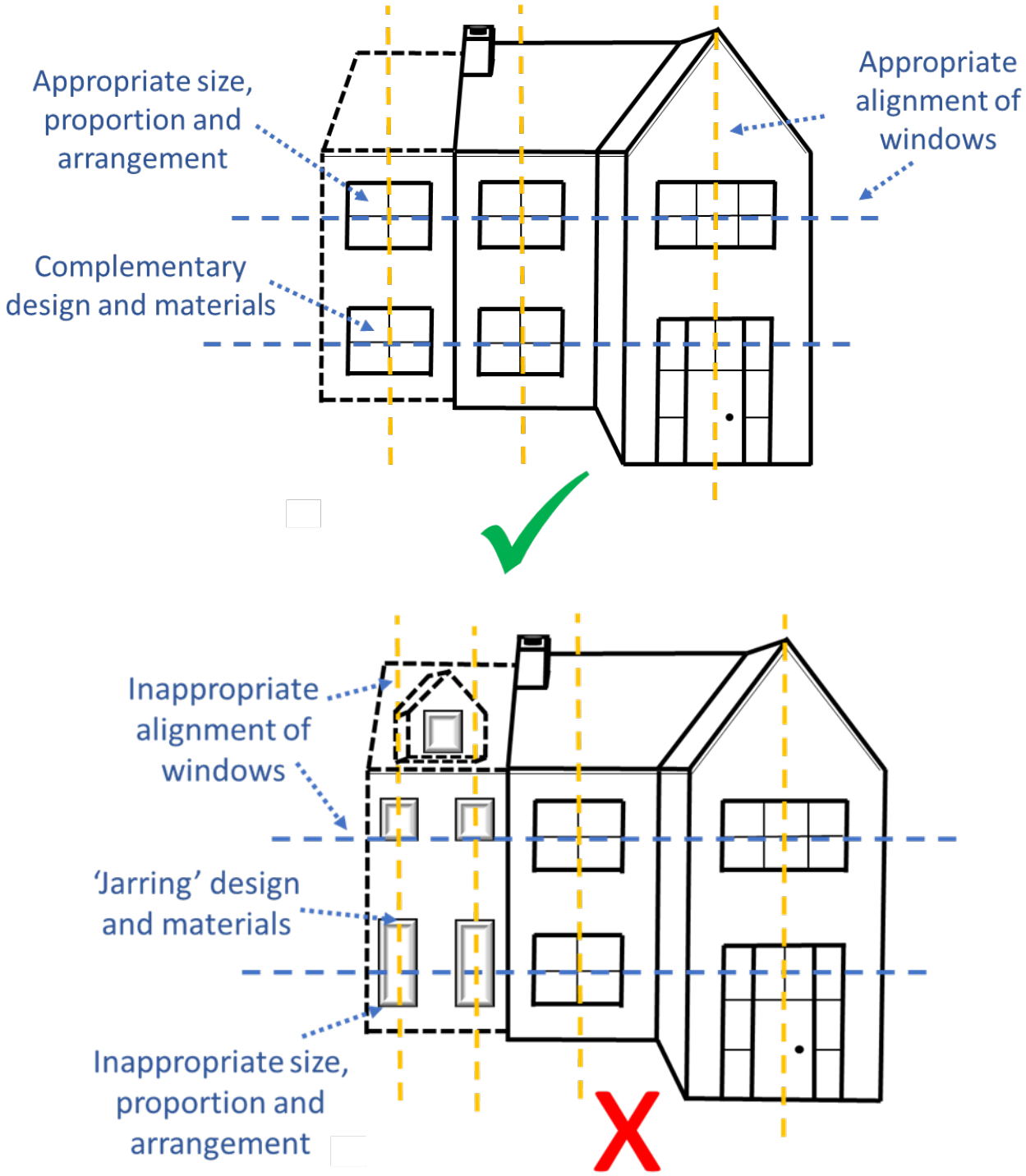
c. **Align horizontally and vertically** with those in the original property (as should associated details such as sills and lintels). ✓

d. Use **materials consistent with or complementary** to those of the original property - in terms of scale, colour, design and appearance*. ✓

**Complementary and contemporary materials and finishes which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics may be acceptable, where they provide interesting contrast.*

4.12. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate window and door layouts:

Figure 4.3: Windows and Doors



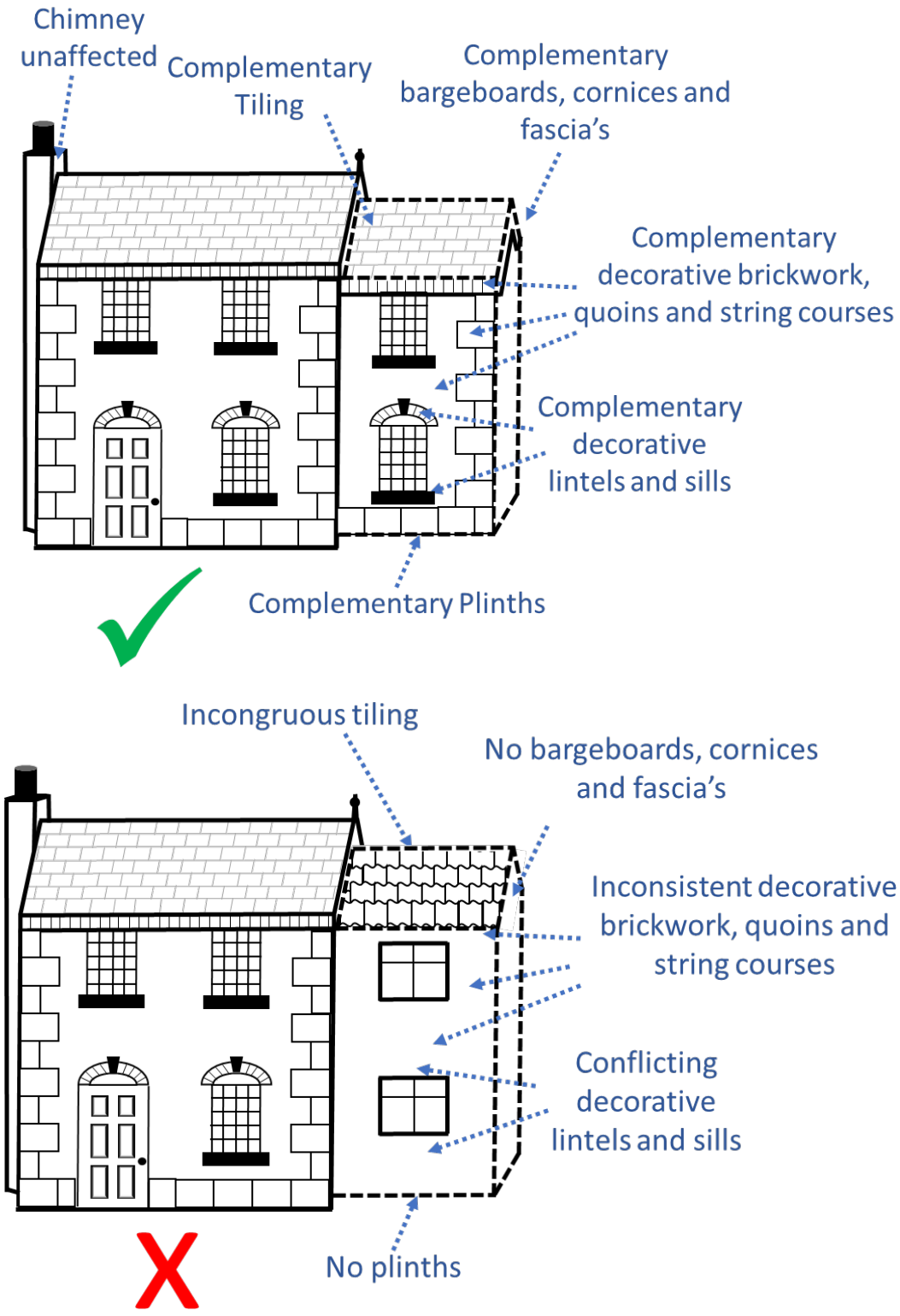
Other Features

4.13. Interesting features or details found on a dwelling contribute to its character and the appearance of the wider streetscene.

4.14. As such, any extensions or alterations to dwellings should, where appropriate, either reflect or complement these features and details.

4.15. Such features or details could include decorative brickwork, string courses and quoins; tiling and chimneys; plinths, sills and lintels; and/or barge boards, cornices and fascia's.

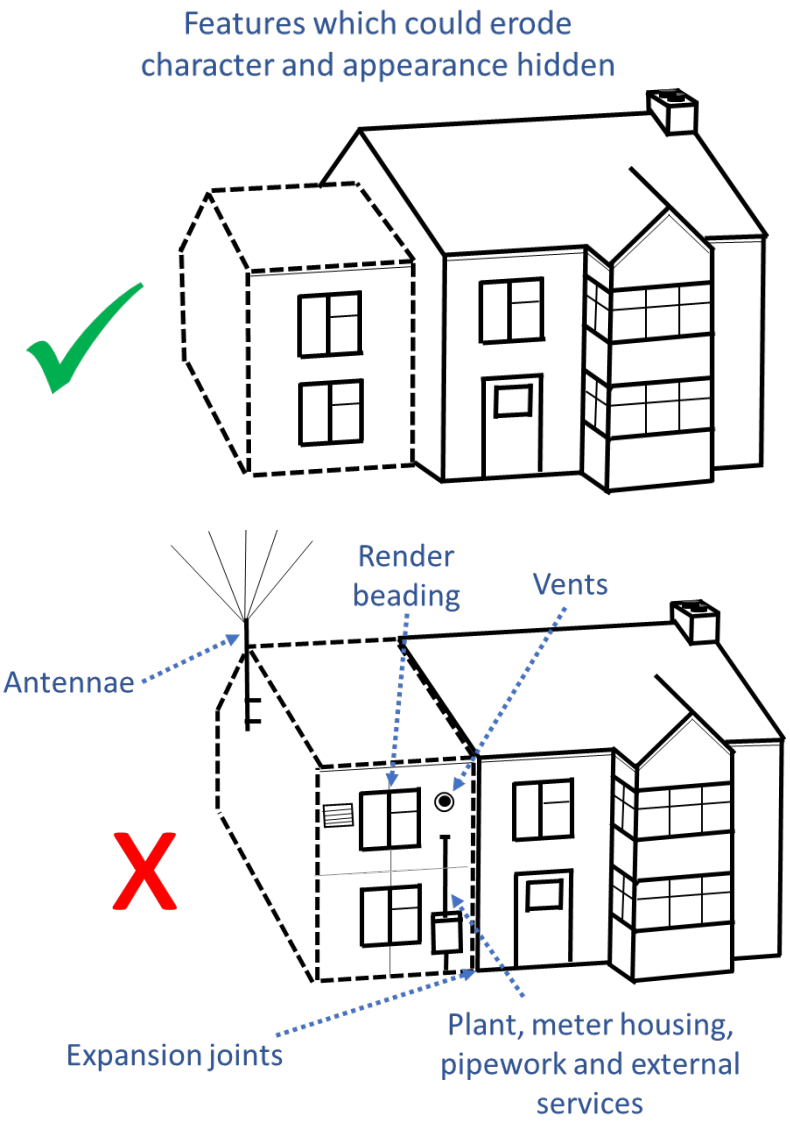
Figure 4.4: Reflect or Complement Design Features



4.16. Conversely, features which could erode character and appearance should be out of public view or designed to complement the original property and the proposed extension or alteration.

4.17. This includes such features as external services, vents, plant, antennae, meter housing, expansion joints, pipework and render beads.

Figure 4.5: Conceal 'Jarring' Features



4.18. Extensions and alterations also provide the opportunity to bolster wildlife by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as birds, bats and hedgehogs. This includes homes for bats and birds (such as bat/bird boxes, swift/bat bricks, bat tiles, house martin cups) and 'safe-routes' for hedgehogs. Use of swift bricks is particularly important, and is strongly encouraged to be integrated into residential extensions and alterations.

Boundary Treatments, Trees and Private Amenity Space

4.19. Boundary treatments, trees and private amenity space are an integral part of any extension or alteration scheme, rather than simply being used to mitigate poor design.

4.20. Boundary treatments include soft landscaping measures (such as hedges, screening plants and trees), gates, walls and fences help define the 'junction' between private land and public realm. They also contribute to the character of dwellings and the wider streetscene.

4.21. As such, where possible, extensions and alterations should be located to avoid detrimentally impacting on them. Where changes are proposed to boundary treatments, they should:

a. Be an **appropriate design and scale** that complement the original dwelling and wider streetscene. ✓

b. Utilise **building materials and styles** which prioritise soft landscaping measures, whilst matching or complementing the existing, the original dwelling and wider streetscene. ✓

c. **Ensure highway safety**, where boundaries abut the highway, respect visibility splays (not over 0.9m in height). ✓

d. Maintain **opportunities for natural surveillance** by allowing ground floor windows to overlook the street. ✓

4.22. Notably, where extensions adjoin railways or canals they should be considered when designing extensions to mitigate impacts – particularly through boundary features.

4.23. Private amenity space is multi-functional, providing much needed external space for households to relax, to undertake activities best suited to external areas (such as drying clothes), to provide opportunities for off-street parking, and to contribute to biodiversity / green infrastructure.

4.24. For any extension or alteration to a dwelling to be appropriate, sufficient private amenity space must remain available.

4.25. Opportunities to enhance private amenity space through a landscaping scheme associated with extensions and alterations should be considered.

4.26. Trees form focal points within a streetscene and private amenity spaces, they have many environmental benefits and can support adaptation to our changing climate (for instance deciduous trees can prevent overheating in summer whilst allowing solar gain in winter). Extensions and alterations must wherever possible avoid detrimentally impacting upon them. Where such schemes are likely to impact upon trees, they should be informed by an Arboricultural Assessment.

4.27. Furthermore, it is important to note that additional controls apply if trees are protected through a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or if the property is located in a Conservation Area.

5. Minimising Impact on Neighbouring Amenity and Character of Neighbouring Properties

5.1. To ensure extensions and alterations to a property do not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties, there is a need to consider potential for overshadowing, overlooking, overbearance and loss of light. Shropshire Council encourages early engagement with neighbours to promote awareness and provide opportunity to consider views.

Overshadowing, Overbearance & Loss of light

5.2. Overshadowing and loss of light occur where an extension or alteration noticeably reduces the supply of light to a neighbour's property or garden. Extensions or alterations should be designed to minimise overshadowing and loss of light.

5.3. Overbearance occurs where an extension or alteration visually overwhelms or dominates a neighbouring property and appear oppressive, due to a combination of location (proximity to the property boundary) and scale (height and mass).

5.4. The extent of any overshadowing and the severity of its impact upon the amenity of neighbours depends upon a range of factors, including:

a. Aspect of the proposed extension or alteration relative to the path and height of the sun. ?

b. Size and massing of the proposed extension or alteration. ?

c. Position of the extension or alteration relative to neighbouring properties. ?

d. Distance between the extension or alteration and neighbouring properties. ?

e. Nature and use of rooms (and available windows) within neighbouring properties affected by shadowing. ?

f. Presence of existing features that obstruct light to neighbouring properties. ?

g. Ground levels. ?

5.5. To avoid overshadowing, overbearance and loss of light when making decisions on planning applications:

a. On any side extension, an 1m 'buffer' should be retained between the extension and the edge of the property boundary. ✓

b. On a single storey rear extension an appropriate 'buffer' should be retained between the extension and the edge of the property curtilage. *The extent of this 'buffer' should increase proportionately to the extent the extension projects from the rear of the property.* ✓

c. On a two-storey rear extension, an appropriate 'buffer' should be retained between the extension and the edge of the property curtilage. Extensions of **two or more storeys should not protrude into the area formed by a 45° angle** from the centre of the nearest window to a habitable room on neighbouring properties on both horizontal and vertical planes. ✓

Figure 5.1: Overlooking, Overbearance and Loss of Light: Side Extensions

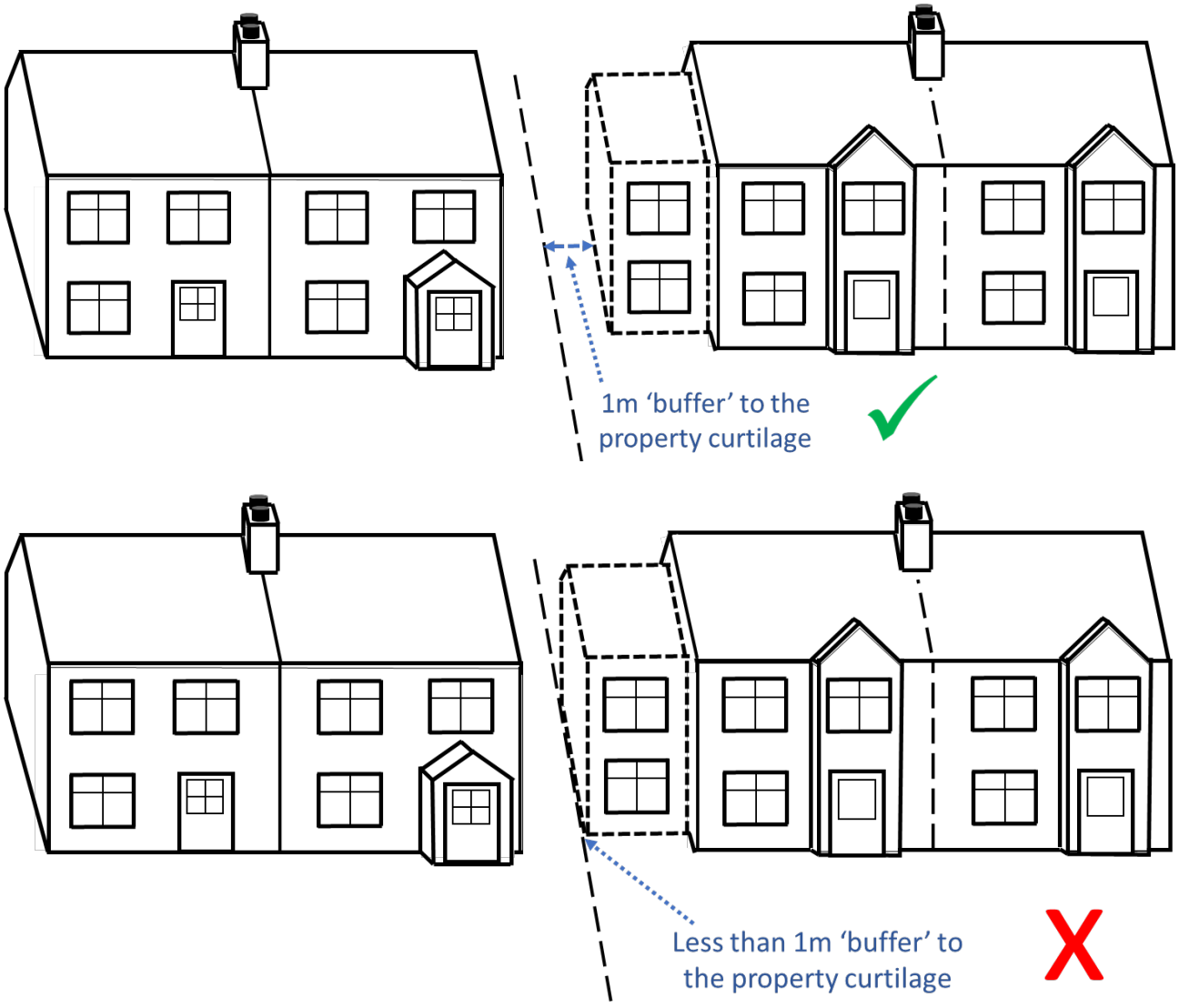


Figure 5.2: Overlooking, Overbearance and Loss of Light: Single Storey Rear Extensions

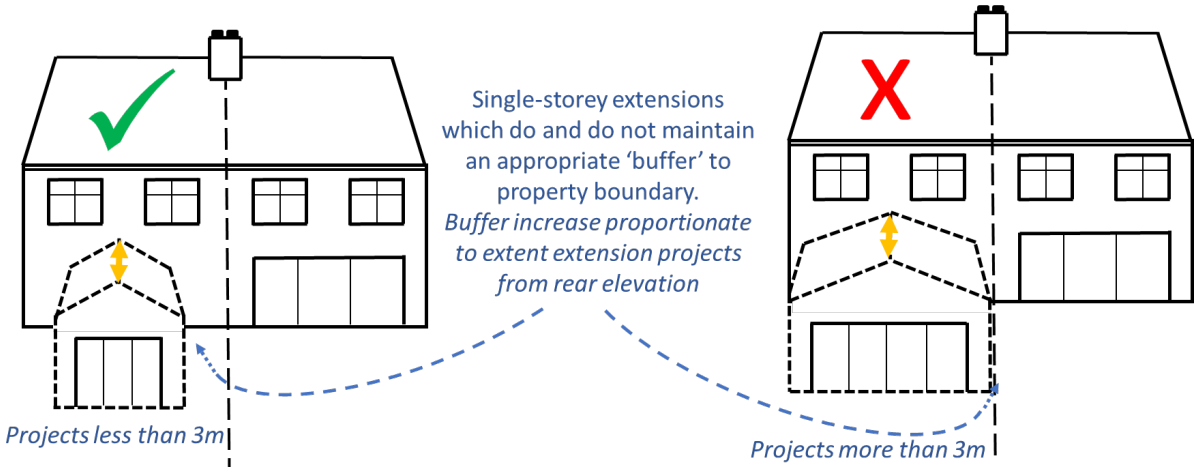


Figure 5.3: Overlooking, Overbearance and Loss of Light: Two Storey Rear Extensions



Please Note: habitable rooms do not include hallways or circulation space, bathrooms, utility rooms, or conservatories. If there are two windows in a room, impact is considered from the closer window.

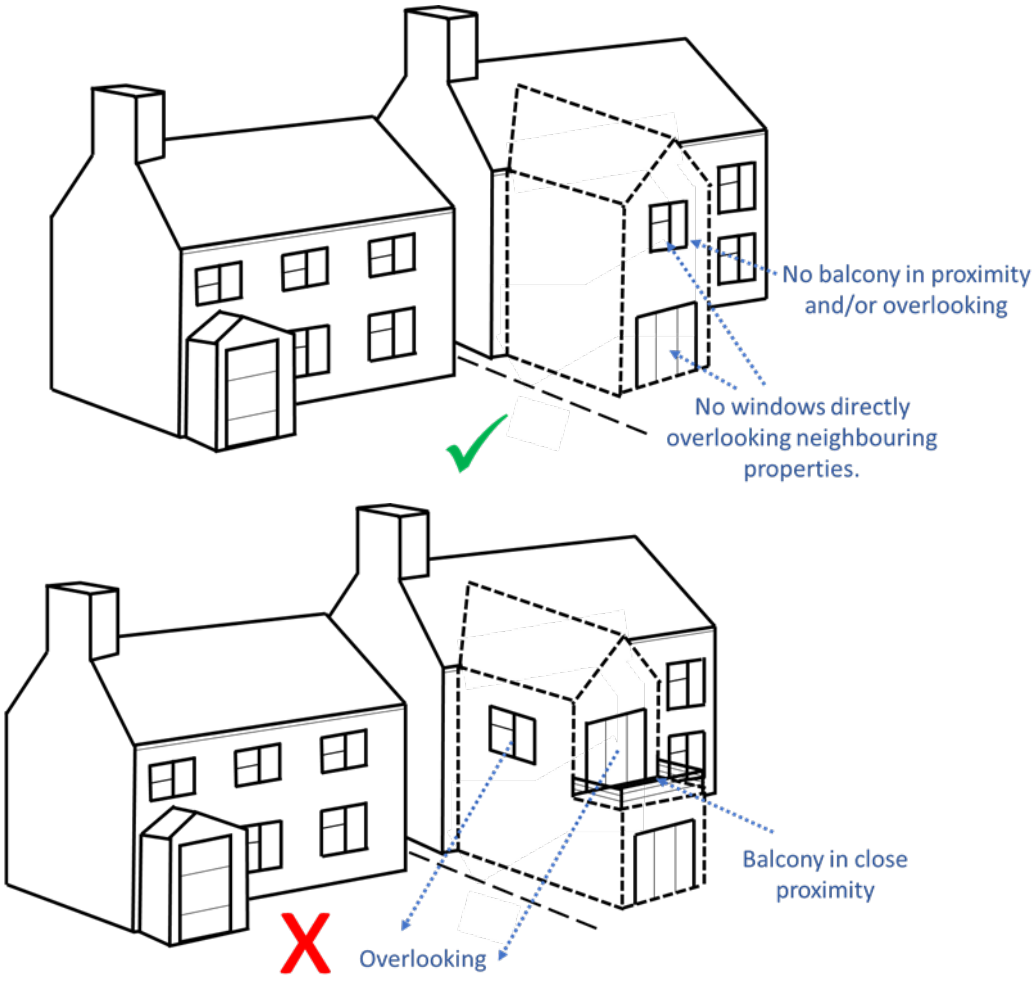
Overlooking

5.6. Overlooking occurs where extensions or alterations allow views into the private amenity or living space of a neighbour. To avoid unacceptable overlooking:

a. Windows on an extension should **not allow direct views** into private amenity or living space of an adjacent neighbour. Specifically, any upper-floor window should be obscure-glazed, and non-opening (unless the parts of the window which open are more than 1.7m above the rooms floor level). ✓

b. **Balconies and 'Juliet' balconies** should only be considered appropriate where they are consistent with and responsive to the character of the property and its setting; and where neighbouring amenity is safeguarded (**no direct views** into private amenity or living space of an adjacent neighbour, no **perception of opportunities** to overlook neighbours rear gardens and **not in close quarters** to neighbours properties – including curtilages). ✓

Figure 5.4: Avoiding Overlooking



5.7. Overlooking of public realm can be advantageous as it provides opportunities for natural surveillance.

6. Responsive to Our Changing Climate

6.1. Climate change is the long-term shift in the Earth's average temperatures and weather conditions. These changes occur naturally, but are being accelerated by our greenhouse gas emissions. This acceleration is causing increased risk of floods, droughts and heat waves.

6.2. Recognising this, Shropshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. It is important for the long term sustainability of Shropshire that we act to minimise greenhouse gas emissions (which will help reduce the negative impacts of climate change) and adapt to changes that do occur.

6.3. As such, in order to achieve a high-quality design, development (including extensions and alterations) should be designed and constructed so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also support adaptation to our changing climate. In doing so, wider design considerations remain applicable – particularly in circumstances where the building is or streetscene contains heritage assets.

Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

6.4. Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy component of the adopted Development Plan expects all development to be designed to ensure:

> *"that resource and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation are adequately addressed and improved where possible" and it "…respond[s] to the challenge of climate change…"*

6.5. **As such, when considering the design of extensions and alterations, opportunities to increase fabric energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions should be maximised. In doing so, consideration should be given to both the proposed extension / alteration and the original property.**

6.6. *Common energy efficiency improvements include:*

a. *Insulation of the floor, roof, loft and/or walls (this may include internal or external insulation). Better insulation reduces the need for heating, thereby lowering your energy bill and increasing the comfort of a property.*

b. *Double or triple glazed windows and doors which keep in significantly more heat than traditional single glazed windows, reducing the need for heating and increasing the comfort of a property.*

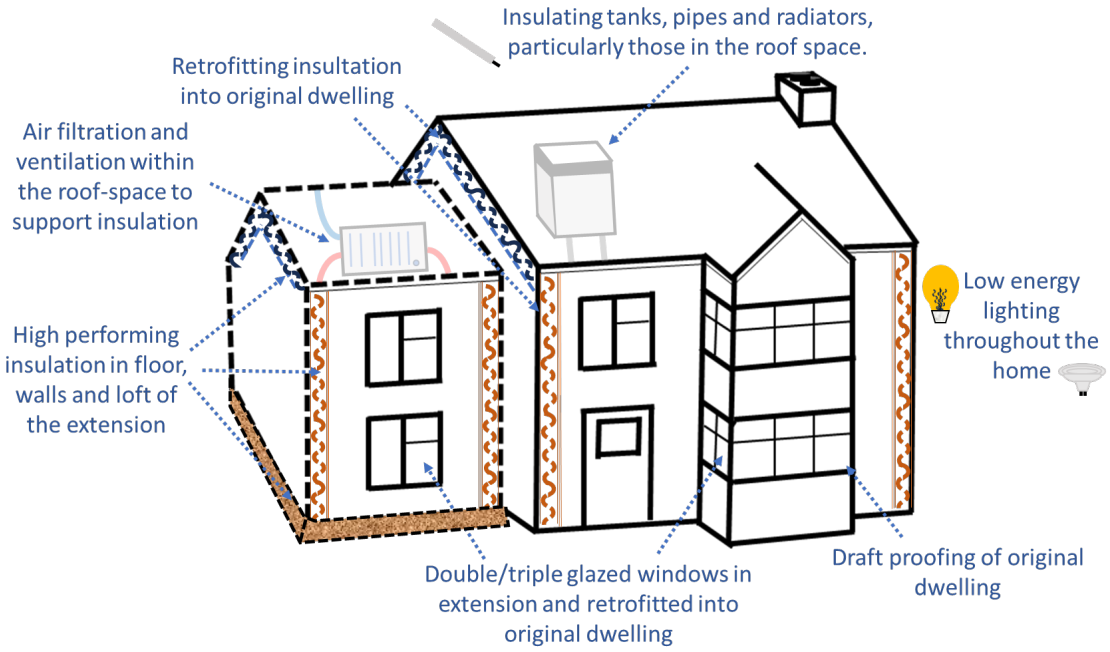
c. *Draught-proofing of unwanted gaps in the construction of your home. This can reduce the need for heating, thereby lowering your energy bill and increasing the comfort of a property. Please Note: Air needs*

to flow in and out of your house so it stays fresh, dry and healthy, so make sure you do not block or seal intentional ventilation. Very high insultation levels are often supported by mechanical ventilation.

d. *Insulating tanks, pipes and radiators to reduce heat loss, thereby increasing the efficiency of heating systems. This lowers energy bills and increases the comfort of a property.*

e. *Low-energy lighting: A small change that involves no structural alteration and as such an easy way to lower energy bills.*

Figure 6.1: Energy Efficiency Measures Illustration



6.7. *Further information is available via the Energy Saving Trust at: https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/*

6.8. ***Please Note:* It is often more cost effective and less disruptive to integrate fabric energy efficiency measures as part of an extension rather than doing so separately / retrospectively.**

What about Renewable and Low Carbon Technologies?

6.9. Similar to energy efficiency, the adopted Development Plan promotes positive consideration of opportunities to integrate renewable and low carbon technologies into extensions and alterations to a dwelling.

6.10. **As such, when considering the design of extensions and alterations, opportunities to integrate on-site renewable and low carbon technologies should be maximised.**

6.11. ***Importantly, to ensure that renewable and low carbon technologies operate to their maximum, they should be complemented by appropriate energy efficiency measures.***

6.12. In this way, extensions and alterations can increase the sustainability of properties in Shropshire.

6.13. *Common residential renewable and low carbon technologies include:*

a. ***Solar photovoltaic panels*** *capture the sun's energy and convert it to electricity. These panels do not need direct sunlight to work and can generate electricity even on cloudy days. They can be complemented by a battery storage system.*

b. ***Solar thermal panels*** *utilise the sun's energy to heat water. They work in cold climates, overcast weather and strong wind, and incorporate an energy storage system.*

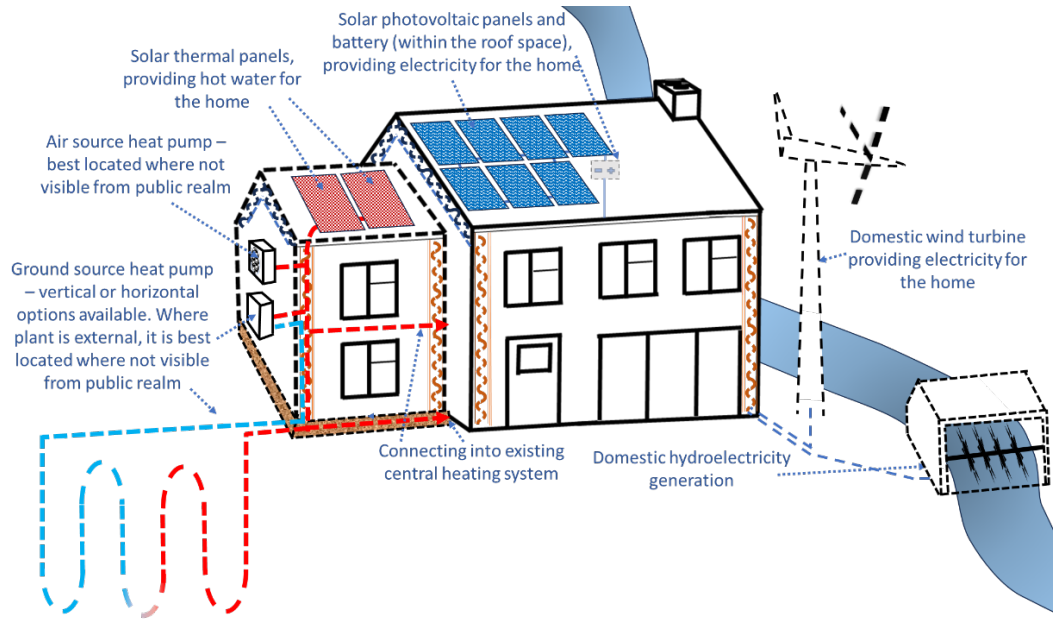
c. ***Heat pumps*** *take in heat from a colder area (usually outside air or the ground), raise the temperature and move it into your home. It utilises electricity to do so, but produced more heat energy than it uses in electrical. Air source heat pumps combined with energy efficiency measures are an increasingly popular alternative to conventional boilers.*

d. ***Domestic wind turbines*** *generate energy for the wind. Whilst generally not suitable in built-up areas, they may be an option in exposed and isolated locations.*

e. ***Hydroelectricity generation*** *utilises the flow of water to produce energy. If you have a river or a stream on your property, this may be an option.*

6.14. Further *information is available via the Energy Saving Trust at: https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/generating-renewable-electricity/*

Figure 6.2: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Illustration



6.15. ***Please Note:*** **It is often more cost effective and less disruptive to integrate renewable and low carbon technologies as part of an extension rather than doing so separately / retrospectively.**

What about Water Efficiency?

6.16. The delivery of water and wastewater services, and the heating of water in the home require high energy inputs. Reducing water consumption and waste can therefore positively contribute to the reduction of energy use and carbon dioxide emissions. Water efficiency measures can therefore reduce water usage and importantly **both water and energy costs** in the home.

6.17. Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy component of the adopted Development Plan expects:

> *"…all development proposals, including changes to existing buildings, to achieve applicable national standards, or for water use, evidence based local standards as reflected in the minimum criteria set out in the sustainability checklist…"*

6.18. **As such, when considering the design of extensions and alterations, opportunities to integrate water efficiency measures should be proactively considered.**

6.19. There are a range of ways to increase the water efficiency of your home, including:

a. *Upgrading the toilets, basin taps, and showers to low-water consumption options.*

b. *Introducing rainwater harvesting. This involves use of water storage systems to collect rainwater from roofs (and other non-permeable surfaces). The system can range from 'traditional', 'artistic' or 'discrete' water butts connected to the downpipe from your roof, to 'tanks' buried in the garden and connected to the underground drainage network. This is an inexpensive but effective means of getting an alternative source of water, generally for use in the garden.*

c. *Introducing a 'rain garden'*[1] *area to your garden. This consists of a shallow depression, with absorbent but free draining soil, planted with vegetation that can withstand occasional temporary flooding. Rain gardens accept runoff from roofs/rainwater harvesting systems.*

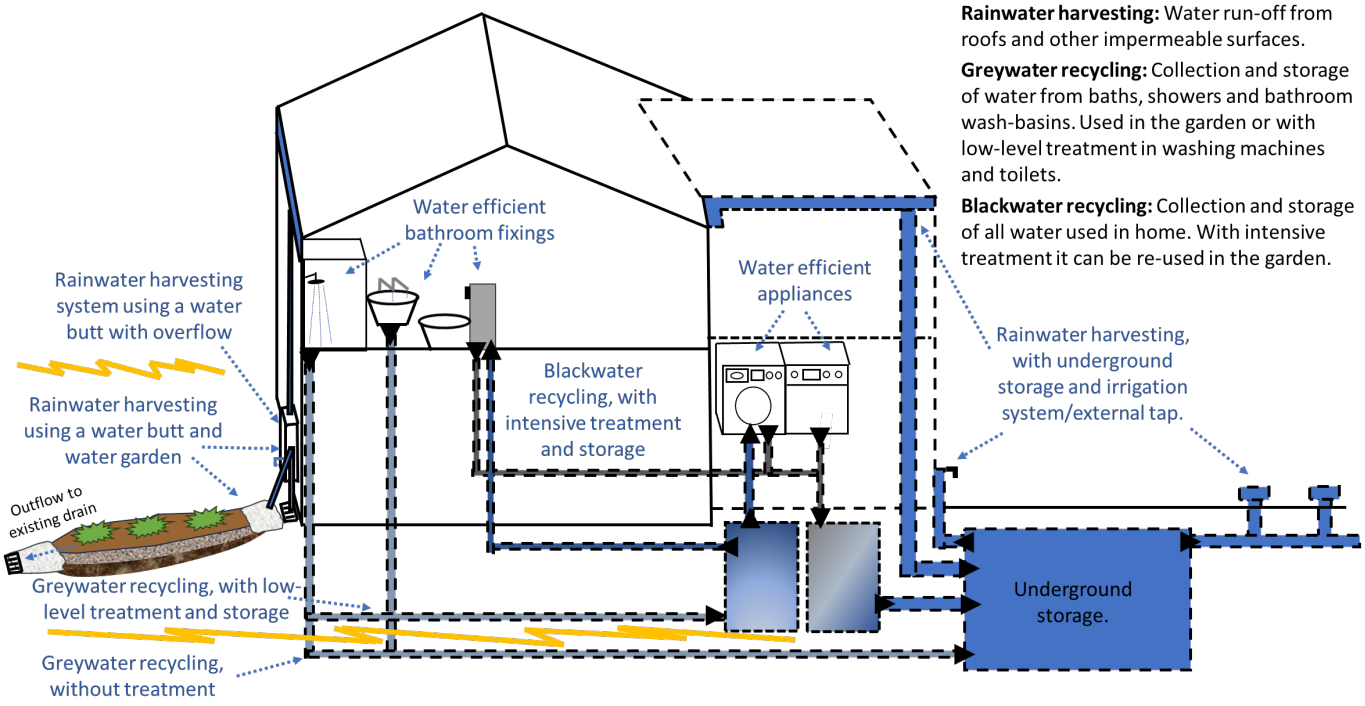
[1] Further information on Rain Gardens available via the Rain Garden Guide, (2024), https://raingardens.info/

When the water enters the rain garden it is either absorbed by the plants within it or slowly travels through it to the drain. This has the dual benefit of 'capturing' extra runoff from the roof and also reducing flood risk in the area.

d. *Introducing greywater recycling. This involves separating and storing (in 'tanks') water from baths, showers and bathroom wash-basins. This water can either be an alternative source of water for use in the garden, or combined with a low-level treatment system used in flushing toilets and washing laundry.*

e. *Introducing blackwater recycling. This involves the collection and storage (in 'tanks') of all water from the home (including the toilet, kitchen sinks and dishwasher), its treatment, and re-use for watering the garden.*

Figure 6.3: Water Efficiency Measures Montage



6.20. *Further information is available via Waterwise and the water companies operational in Shropshire:*

https://waterwise.org.uk/save-water/

https://stwater.co.uk/

https://dwrcymru.com/en

https://unitedutilities.com/

6.21. ***Please Note:*** **It is generally more cost effective and less disruptive to include water efficiency measures as part of an extension rather than introducing them separately / retrospectively.**

What About Drainage?

6.22. Achieving suitable drainage for an extension should be considered from the outset. There are two drainage systems to consider - 'foul' and 'surface water' which should generally be kept separate. Each has above and below ground elements:

a. **Foul drainage** carries the used water from toilets, sinks, basins, baths, showers, bidets, dishwashers and washing machines. The above-ground pipework is referred to as sanitary pipework; the underground pipework is referred to as foul drains and foul sewers*

b. **Surface water drainage** carries rainwater (and melted snow and ice) from hard surfaces. The above-ground system of gutters and rainwater pipes is referred to as roof drainage; the underground pipework is referred to as surface water drains and surface water sewers*.

**If your extension is over or close to sewers (generally underground drainage serving more than one property) you will require written agreement from your sewerage undertaker, so you should consult the company at the earliest planning stage of your building work.*

6.23. Extensions and alterations may require relocation or increases to the size of gutters, rainwater pipes and foul drainage pipes.

6.24. Dependent on circumstances, surface water can be discharged onto the ground, into new or existing underground pipework or can be 'captured' for rainwater harvesting (although a secondary option will also be required).

6.25. It is often preferable to release surface water into the garden of the property through sustainable drainage such as soakaways or infiltration. If you plan to use sustainable drainage this must be appropriately designed so as to avoid damaging the property or increased 'run-off' to neighbouring properties.

6.26. Building Regulations (Approved Document H) provides guidance on these considerations.

7. Other Important Considerations

7.1. This section of the SPD highlights additional design consideration for proposals to extend or alter dwellings that are:

Previously Converted Buildings? ✓

Previously Extended Dwellings? ✓

Single Plot Affordable Dwellings? ✓

Discount Market Affordable Dwellings? ✓

Agricultural Worker Dwellings? ✓

Works to Enhance Accessibility or Meet Occupier Needs? ✓

Flood Risk? ✓

Previously Converted Buildings

7.2. Planning applications for extensions and alterations to buildings that have previously been converted to dwellings from other uses (e.g. barns) will be considered on their own merits.

7.3. This consideration includes whether they:

e. Achieve the **principles outlined in this document** for comparable extensions to buildings not previously converted as set out in this document. ✓

b. **Complement or 'draw out'** features in the building which indicate its original use. Particularly important where the previously converted building has heritage value. ✓

7.4. This approach is consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 2 and 3 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan component of the adopted Development Plan.

7.5. Such proposals must also be consistent with and the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

7.6. It is important to note that often PD Rights are removed from buildings when they are converted to dwellings, particularly where the building is considered a heritage asset. It is considered that pre-application advice is particularly important in these circumstances.

Previously Extended Dwellings

7.7. Planning applications for further extensions and alterations to dwellings that have previously been extended will be considered on their own merits. This consideration includes:

a. Whether they achieve the **principles outlined in this document** for comparable extensions to buildings not previously converted as set out in this document. ✓

b. The extent of any **previous** extensions and alterations. ✓

7.8. This approach is consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 2 and 3 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan component of the adopted Development Plan.

7.9. Such proposals must also be consistent with and the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

7.10. It is important to note that often PD Rights are removed from buildings when they are converted to dwellings, particularly where the building is considered a heritage asset. It is considered that pre-application advice is particularly important in these circumstances.

Single Plot Affordable Dwellings

7.11. Single plot affordable dwellings are a form of affordable home ownership within rural parts of Shropshire. To ensure that these properties remain affordable, it is essential these homes continue to comply with the requirements for such housing in the policies of the adopted Development Plan (CS11 of the Core Strategy). As such:

a. The **total maximum size of a single plot affordable dwelling is 106 sq. metres gross internal floor area[2]**, which is sufficient for a six-person household. ✓

7.12. Please Note: Garages located within 2 metres of the dwelling are regarded as part of the dwelling and as such form part of its internal floor area.

7.13. Single plot affordable dwellings are expected to be designed to satisfy the needs of the applicant household, whilst also being future-proofed to account for changes to their or future households needs. Larger bedroom sizes and additional bathrooms should not compromise the need for additional rooms in the future.

[2] Defined by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) as the area within external walls including internal partitions.

7.14. Given that this is the case, the starting position is that extensions to such dwellings are unnecessary and will not be supported, even in circumstances where they are proposed to be built at 'nil' value i.e. not impacting on the resale value of the dwelling.

7.15. The approach to 'nil' value extensions is necessary as single plot affordable dwellings extended in this way are more likely to present visually bulky dwellings which contributes to an increase in perceived value, irrespective of the formula being applied to the original dwelling.

7.16. The Council would note that where households are considering extending their single plot affordable dwelling, it is a strong indication that they are likely able to satisfy their housing requirements through the open market, given the cost of construction versus the cost of market dwellings.

7.17. The Council would also note that enlarged dwellings are likely to be more expensive to maintain and heat, thereby conflicting with the concept of an affordable dwelling and one that is required to be reused as an affordable home in the future.

7.18. Reflecting this position, planning permission for single plot affordable dwellings will be subject to the removal of permitted development rights, thus preventing future extensions to the dwelling together with the erection of any development within the curtilage.

7.19. The rationale for this approach is to maintain affordability and safeguard stock of smaller dwellings.

7.20. However, an exception to this approach may be considered in circumstances where there is **clear evidence** to demonstrate that existing accommodation cannot be reasonably re-arranged to meet their needs and as such additional living space is required within the property. This may include because:

a. There are more than 6 household members AND insufficient bedrooms, subject to recognition that:
   i. Children within one household under 10 are expected to share a bedroom.
   ii. Children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share a bedroom.
   iii. Children of different gender over 10 are considered as requiring separate bedrooms.

b. Medical need that is appropriately evidenced as requiring additional floor area to accommodate medical equipment.

7.21. In such circumstances, any extensions or alterations are expected to achieve a high-quality design, consistent with the principles outlined in this document and the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

7.22. As permitted development rights are withdrawn from single plot affordable dwellings, proposals for new garages require planning permission. Where these garages are located within 2 metres of the property, they are regarded as part of the dwelling and as such form part of its internal floor area.

7.23. It is expected that the decision as to whether a garage is necessary from the outset, will satisfy the needs of the current household, whilst also being future-proofed to account for changes to the needs of the current or future households.

7.24. As such, the starting position is that new garages to such dwellings are unnecessary and not supported. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the exception identified in the context of extensions to the dwelling is unlikely to be relevant to a garage.

7.25. The rationale for this approach is to maintain affordability and safeguard stock of smaller dwellings. Furthermore, garages add to the level of 'built form' on a plot, which are often in countryside locations and as such it is incongruous to such locations.

Discount Market Affordable Dwellings

7.26. Discount market affordable dwellings are another form of affordable home ownership. Any extensions or alterations proposed to such dwellings should:

a. Achieve a **high-quality design**, consistent with the principles outlined in this document and the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan. ✓

b. **Strike an appropriate balance** between meeting the needs of the occupier and ensuring that the dwelling remains affordable in perpetuity. ✓

Agricultural Worker Dwellings

7.27. Agricultural workers dwellings are intended to provide opportunities for agricultural workers to live in proximity of their livelihood.

Any extensions or alterations proposed to such dwellings should:

a. Achieve a **high-quality design**, consistent with the principles outlined in this document and the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan. ✓

b. **Strike an appropriate balance** between meeting the needs of the occupier and ensuring that the dwelling is capable meeting any future occupiers needs - whether that is an agricultural worker, as an affordable dwelling or as a market dwelling (dependent on the type of agricultural worker dwelling – as defined by polices in the adopted Development Plan). ✓

Enhancing Accessibility or Meeting Occupier Needs?

7.28. Shropshire Council seeks to support all residents to live healthy and independent lives for as long as possible.

7.29. As such, the Council supports the principle of undertaking extensions or alterations to a property where they are required to meet the needs of a household with **older people or those with disabilities and special needs.**

7.30. Such extensions should achieve a high-quality design which:

a. Supports the **specific needs** the **older people or those with disabilities and special needs** occupying the property, supporting their ability to live independently. ✓

a. Achieve a **high-quality design**, consistent with the principles outlined in this document and the requirements of the design policies in the adopted Development Plan. ✓

7.31. Where extensions are proposed to meet the specific needs of an occupier, the Council would encourage use of its pre-application service so that it can support the design process. Further information is available at: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/planning/applications/pre-application-advice/

Flood Risk

7.32. The Environment Agency provides information on river flood risk and surface floor risk on their website via: https://gov.uk/browse/environment-countryside/flooding-extreme-weather

7.33. If your extension is located within an area at risk of flooding, a flood risk assessment appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development will be required. Generally, if the extension would not significantly increase the number of occupiers a less detailed assessment will be suitable - identifying the flood risk(s) and outlining the proposed measures to mitigate risk.

7.34. As a minimum, mitigation should either:

a. Ensure floor levels within the proposed development will be set no lower than existing levels and demonstrate flood proofing of the proposed development has been considered and incorporated where appropriate to 1% (1 in 100 chance each year) river flood level, including a climate change allowance.

b. Or preferably ensure floor levels within the extension are set 600mm above the known or modelled 1% (1 in 100 chance each year) river flood level, including a climate change allowance – although it is acknowledged that this is not always practical for an extension.

7.35. The Flood Risk Assessment should be supported by a plan to Ordnance Datum/GPS showing finished floor levels relative to the known or modelled flood level, which can confirm whether the site is above flood level. Where such a plan indicates otherwise or is not provided, further mitigation measures would be required focusing on further controlling floor levels and incorporating flood proofing into the design of the extension.

7.36. If the existing dwelling is in a 'low spot', maintaining floor levels at existing levels and flood proofing will not necessarily eliminate risks during a flood event. Where this is a concern, it should be considered within the Flood Risk Assessment.

7.37. It should be noted that flood risk will remain for events that exceed the 1 in 100 chance each year river flood level (including a climate change allowance). For this reason, the Environment Agency recommends considering the incorporation of flood proofing measures even where minimum mitigation is sufficient.

7.38. These flood proofing measures include removable barriers on building apertures such as doors and air bricks and providing electrical services into the building at a high level so that plugs are located above possible flood levels. Such measures could also be considered to protect the existing dwelling.

8. The Built and Natural Environment

8.1. This section of the SPD highlights additional design considerations for proposals to extend or alter dwelling which may impact on the built or natural environment. Sections relate to:

The Green Belt ✓

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape ✓

Heritage Assets ✓

Natural Environment Assets ✓

The Green Belt

8.2. Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy and MD6 of the SAMDev Plan address the Green Belt. Policy MD6 specifies that:

> *"In addition to meeting the general requirements that apply in the countryside…development proposed in the Green Belt must be able to demonstrate that it does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt…"*

8.3. National planning criteria (in Paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF) specifies extensions to buildings in the Green Belt can be considered appropriate development where: *"…the extension or alteration of a building …does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building…"*

8.4. Any extension to a building in the Green Belt should be proportionate to the size of the original building. This generally means that cumulatively, any existing extensions to be retained and any proposed extensions should **not exceed 50% of the total floorspace of the original dwelling** but there is a need to consider each case individually.

Shropshire Hills National Landscape

8.5. National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty / AONB) represent areas of the highest scenic quality, increasing the importance of design of extensions and alterations within them.

8.6. There is one National Landscape in Shropshire Council's administrative area, the Shropshire Hills National Landscape (which extends into the Telford & Wrekin Council's administrative area).

8.7. Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and MD12 of the SAMDev Plan components of the adopted Development Plan address the natural environment, including the Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

8.8. Policy CS17 includes a requirement that development:

> *Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment..."* and *"Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB…"*

8.9. Policy MD12 then expands upon this, stipulating that development which impacts on the *"special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB"* should only be permitted in very specific circumstances.

8.10. A Management Plan has been prepared for the Shropshire Hills, which includes a summary of its special qualities and guidance on achieving a design that is sensitive to them.

8.11. This Management Plan should be considered when designing extensions and alterations to support achievement of the highest quality design.

> The AONB Management Plan is available at: https://shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/a-special-place/management-plan/2019-24-management-plan
>
> Work is also currently ongoing to update this Management Plan. The new draft Management Plan is available via: https://shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/a-special-place/management-plan/2025-30-management-plan

Heritage Assets

8.12. Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and MD13 of the SAMDev Plan components of the adopted Development Plan address the built environment and heritage assets.

8.13. Policy CS17 includes a requirement that development:

> *Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment..."* and *"Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets…"*

8.14. Policy MD13 then expands upon this, stipulating that development must wherever possible *"avoid harm or loss of significance to designated or non-designated heritage assets, including their settings"* and stipulates the very specific circumstances where harm may be acceptable.

8.15. Consistent with Policies CS17 of the adopted Development Plan, extensions or alterations to heritage assets or that have the potential to affect heritage assets or their setting should achieve the **highest**

design standards, informed by a **Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)**.

8.16. **A HIA is also a planning application requirement in these circumstances.**

Figure 8.1: Heritage Impact Assessment

Heritage Impact Assessment
What is it? A structured process to consider and take into account the significance of relevant heritage asset(s), when designing and developing proposals. It is a crucial part of the design process, which tests whether proposals that could impact on a heritage asset(s) and their setting are appropriate. It helps to ensure that what is important about a heritage asset(s) is maintained or enhanced by proposals.
Who should undertake it? A suitably qualified professional.
What should it cover? The assessment should be proportionate to the significance of the relevant heritage asset(s). a. Identify character and significance of heritage asset(s) and their setting. b. Inform development of proposal(s) with the intention of achieving a high-quality design. c. Explain how the proposal maintains and enhances the character of heritage asset(s) and their setting. d. Inform consideration of the refined proposal, including whether it achieves high-quality design expectations.

8.17. Further guidance on the consideration of heritage assets when undertaking a HIA and considering the design of residential extensions and alterations that may affect a heritage asset is available on the Council website at: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/

And Historic England via their website: https://historicengland.org.uk/

World Heritage Sites

8.18. World Heritage Sites are cultural and/or natural sites considered to be of 'Outstanding Universal Value', inscribed on the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee. They are recognised as heritage assets of the highest significance within paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

8.19. Shropshire Council's administrative area contains parts of two World Heritage Sites, Ironbridge Gorge in east Shropshire (which is also in Telford & Wrekin Council's administrative area) and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal in north-west Shropshire (which is also in Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council administrative areas).

8.20. Consistent with Policies CS17 and MD13 of the adopted Development Plan, extensions and alterations to properties in these World Heritage Sites or their settings must be of the **highest design standard**.

8.21. To achieve this, they should be consistent in terms of form and scale with the historic context - height, width and depth of floor plan; roof forms should be carefully considered; and the shape and size of window and door openings should reflect historic precedents.

8.22. They should also be carefully located so as to **not impact on Outstanding Universal Value**, be subordinate in scale to the principal building and not disrupt the historic street scene. Usually this means siting new work to the rear of a property.

8.23. Supplementary Planning Documents have been adopted for each of the World Heritage Sites in Shropshire Council's administrative area, providing further information on the achievement of high-quality design. These documents are available on the Council website via: https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents-spds/

Conservation Areas

8.24. A conservation area is an *"area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"*[3]. When dealing with planning applications in conservation areas *"special attention"*[4] has to be *"paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area"*[4]. There are 128 conservation areas in Shropshire, each with its own distinct character.

8.25. To achieve a high-quality design, consistent with Policies CS17 and MD13 of the adopted Development Plan, extensions and alterations to properties in a conservation area or its setting must be responsive to its character and consider impact on the **conservation area as a whole**.

8.26. Where a conservation area benefits from a Conservation Area Appraisal, proposals should be informed by and align with its aims and objectives.

Further information on conservation areas is available at: https://shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/conservation-areas/conservation-areas-faqs/

[3] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69).

[4] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 72).

Listed Buildings

8.27. Listed Buildings are selected to mark and celebrate their special architectural and historic interest and are considered to be of national importance. There are three categories of listed building, these being:

a. Grade I: buildings of exceptional interest.
b. Grade II*: particularly important buildings of more than special interest.
c. Grade II: buildings that are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them.

8.28. There are approximately 6,892 listed buildings in Shropshire. Extensions and alterations to these listed buildings often require listed building consent (this includes some interior alterations) and some require both planning permission and listed building consent.

8.29. Where this is the case, *"special regard"*[5] should be given to *"the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".* These considerations must inform the design of extensions and alterations to the listed building or in its setting – consistent with Policies CS17 and MD13 of the adopted Development Plan.

8.30. In such circumstances, the Council would encourage use of its pre-application service, so that it can support consideration of appropriate extensions and alterations to a property. Further information is available at: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/planning/applications/pre-application-advice/

Article 4 Directions

8.31. Some heritage assets, including Conservation Areas and listed buildings, in Shropshire are subject to an **Article 4 Direction**. This direction is used where additional controls are considered necessary in order to ensure works do not occur that could threaten the character of a building, site or area.

8.32. In effect, an Article 4 Direction restricts the scope of Permitted Development (PD) rights, meaning that planning permission is required.

8.33. For further information on Article 4 Directions in Shropshire, please refer to the Council website at: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/conservation-areas/article-4-directions/

8.34. If you are unsure whether a property may be covered by an Article 4 Direction, please contact the Historic Environment Team for further advice at: historic.environment@shropshire.gov.uk

[5] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 66).

Non-Designated Heritage Assets?

8.35. A non-designated heritage asset is a local asset of historic value. Such assets are often **identified through the planning application process**, including proposals for household extensions or alterations.

8.36. To be identified as a non-designated heritage asset, an unlisted building needs to have heritage significance derived from its architectural, historic, and/or archaeological interest. In this context, the greater the age of a building (particularly if it pre-dates 1900), the more likely it is to be identified.

8.37. Likewise, if it is a good example of a particular architectural style, was designed by a noteworthy architect, or is a domestic or functional building of traditional construction that makes a positive contribution to landscape character, it may be considered to have architectural interest.

8.38. To have historic interest the building could have associations with historical figures or events, for example a noteworthy author or military building from either of the World Wars. Buildings gain archaeological interest as a consequence of their age, the evidence they exhibit for a sequence of historic development and changes in construction techniques, and/or in relation to their original intended uses (e.g. as historic industrial buildings).

8.39. The degree to which the historic building has been altered unsympathetically in the recent past, for example through unsympathetic changes to the original pattern and form of window and door openings and/or the addition of modern extensions, should also be a consideration.

8.40. The Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary source of information about the historic environment in the county. However, whilst extensive it is a 'live' document, with updates informed by sources such as planning applications. As such, it cannot be assumed a building is not a non-designated heritage asset simply because it is not on the Shropshire HER.

8.41. Further information on the Historic Environment Record can be found on the Shropshire Council website: https://shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/historic-environment-record/

8.42. Consistent with Policies CS17 and MD13 of the adopted Development Plan, extensions or alterations to a property considered a non-designated heritage asset **must constitute high-quality design that complements the asset and its setting.**

8.43. **Such design must complement and 'draw out' features within the non-designate heritage asset.**

Natural Environment Assets

8.44. For an extension or alteration to a property to constitute high-quality design, it must respect and be responsive to the natural environment, as this forms an important part of its setting.

8.45. Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and MD12 of the SAMDev Plan components of the adopted Development Plan address the natural environment.

8.46. Policy CS17 includes a requirement that development:

> *Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment..."* and *"Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB…"*

8.47. Policy MD12 then expands upon this, stipulating that development which impacts on the ecological assets in Shropshire will only be permitted in very specific circumstances.

8.48. Where extensions or alterations have the potential to affect natural environment assets, consistent with Policies CS17 and MD12 of the adopted Development Plan, the planning application must be supported by appropriate **Ecological, Arboricultural and/or Geological Impact Assessment(s).**

8.49. Such assessments should be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and should be proportionate to the significance of the natural environment asset(s) likely to be affected.

8.50. These assessments should identify any natural environment assets that have the potential to be impacted by the proposal and explain how the proposal maintains and enhances these asset(s). This will then inform the consideration of the proposal, including whether it achieves high-quality design.

8.51. These assessments should include a Lighting Assessment where the potential impact is through lighting.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
01	Shropshire Homes	Whole document	1. Very concerned about impact on viability of residential development. Particular areas of concern are: -Paragraph 6.7(b) expecting all new dwellings to achieve M4(2) standard. SH strongly object to this requirement as it would significantly increase floor areas (e.g., +140ft² for a 3 bed), raise build costs and sale prices thereby reducing affordability and reduce density and the ability to achieve efficient use of land (as a result of these larger homes). It is recommended that a smaller proportion of homes should be required to achieve the M4(2) standard, similar to Telford & Wrekin's approach (20% market, 45% affordable). -Paragraph 8.11 expecting dwellings to achieve nationally described space standards. SH have significant concerns about this proposal which would harm the viability of smaller housing, make delivery of small affordable homes very difficult, conflicts with national policy and may be difficult for the Council to justify. It is recommenced that this expectation is removed or that a more flexible model is included - for instance requiring 85% of properties to achieve nationally described space standards. -Paragraph 8.26(a) requirement for garden sizes. SH consider that the proposed minimum 70m² garden for all homes is excessive for smaller homes, not a priority for typical buyers of 1–2 bed dwellings and damaging to viability and density. It is recommended that the 70m² garden requirement applies only to 3+ bedroom houses. -Paragraphs 8.48f & 8.45g expectations for garage sizes. SH warn that enlarging garages as proposed would add ~£5,000 per home, not be recoverable in sale prices, impact viability and result in larger garages than elsewhere. It is recommenced that smaller, practical garage dimensions are specified (single garage: 3m × 5.1m and double garage: 5.1m × 5.1m). 2. Paragraph 6.7(d) and 8.65: it is recommended that the phrase "meaningful provision of other housing" is removed or limited, suggesting it should apply only to dementia friendly requirements.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
01	Shropshire Homes	Whole document	1a. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard. 1b. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 1c. The Council considers the principles on garden sizes generally align with good practice but recognises that smaller gardens may be appropriate for smaller units, so appropriate flexibility will be integrated. 1d. It is noted that there are many different standards for garages and car ports, however those in the draft SPD directly align with the Council's SMART guidance which have been informed by consultation. It is considered that it remains appropriate to utilise these standards, but it will be clarified that this is in circumstances where the garages are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision. 2. The Council considers the term 'meaningful proportion' is appropriate. Achievement of HAPPI and Dementia Friendly principles is about effective design, layout, materials and finishes and generally does not have a significant cost associated with its achievement.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
01	Shropshire Homes (continued)	Whole document	3. Paragraph 6.11b: support on-site BNG but note that off-site delivery should remain an option where necessary. It is recommended that wording is added to allow offsite provision "where on site provision is not viable". 4. Paragraph 7.3(b): welcome removal of the "prescriptive mix of house types" from the Local Plan. 5. Paragraph 7.6(b): consider there is a conflict between permeability and Secure by Design. Recommend that where conflicts arise, permeability should take precedence. 6. Paragraphs 8.13(d) & 8.14: consider small pockets of planting or landscaped areas are undervalued. It is recommended that the term "usable" open space is replaced with "mainly usable" to allow small, dispersed pockets of open space, SUDS, planting, and public art. 7. Paragraph 8.18(b): note the SPD contradicts DM guidance that LAPs should be located centrally. It is recommended that the SPD is aligned with DM advice. 8. Paragraph 8.36(b): concerned expectations for private gardens of ground floor flats create cluttered, disjointed layouts and contradict preferences of residents who prefer managed communal areas. Recommend this requirement is omitted. 9. Paragraphs 8.48, 8.48a and 8.48f: expectations for parking requirements are not suitable in all locations, will encourage car use, will reduce sustainability, will create visual clutter and tarmac dominated layouts, will undermine site efficiency and reduce viability. It is recommended that the standards are amended to 1 bed → 1 space, 2 bed → 1–2 spaces, 3 bed → 2–3 spaces, 4+ bed → 3+ spaces and that the text emphasises that these standards are recommendations rather than fixed rules. 10 Paragraph 8.53a: Support adequate cycle parking but consider 2 spaces per apartment excessive. It is recommended that this is reduced to 1 cycle space per apartment. Should also clarify that a house with a garage does not also need external cycle storage. Note that lockable cycle stores add £500 per dwelling, harming viability. 11. Support several components of the draft SPD. This includes: -The general aspirations on efficient use of a site in paragraph 3.4. -The general aspirations on responding to a sites relationship to the surrounding area in paragraph 3.7. -The general aspirations on character and appearance in paragraph 4.8. -The general aspirations on high-quality design in paragraph 4.10. -The general aspirations on healthy and active lifestyles in paragraph 6.4. -The approach to M4(3) in paragraph 6.7(b). -The approach to specialist housing in paragraph 6.7(c). -Welcome specific requirements for play space in paragraph 8.21. 12. Consider the proposals impacting on viability are best considered through a Local Plan review.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
01	Shropshire Homes (continued)	Whole document	3. The existing phraseology specifically allows for off-site provision where on-site is not possible - this would include circumstances where it is either not achievable or not viable. 4. Noted. 5. The Council does not consider that there is a conflict between achieving permeability and secure by design principles - achievement requires effective design. 6. The Council remains of the view that small and fragmented parcels of open space (such as highway verges) are maintenance intensive and have very limited usability and biodiversity value. Therefore, whilst potentially a valued design feature, they are not considered to constitute functional open space. As such, it does not count towards the 30sqm per person requirement. 7. The Council does not consider there to be conflict between this guidance and that provided by Development Management. 8. The Council remains of the view that to achieve an effective design, flats and apartments (excluding specialist housing) should, wherever possible, include private amenity space that is clearly associated with and accessible from the property. Generally, this should consist of green roof gardens and/or appropriately located and accessible 'green' amenity plots in the property curtilage (with appropriate boundary materials). 9. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly rigid. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 10. The Council considers guidance regarding cycle parking is entirely appropriate - further it should be noted that the garage sizes within the Council's SMART guidance is to allow for one cycle parking space. There are many alternatives to achieve such provision beyond lockable cycle stores. 11 and 12. Noted.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
02	Shropshire Highways	Whole document	1. Paragraph 8.48: Standing advice states a standard single garage is 6m x 3.3m, Manual for Streets states that a minimum of 6m x 3m and SMART guidance (Technical Note 9) recommends 7m x 3m (consistent with the draft SPD) to accommodate bicycle parking. The SMART guidance was subject to consultation and no concerns were raised in relation to the dimensions recommended and published on our website. Suggest amending paragraph 8.48 to clarify that when garages are below the recommended minimum standard (7mx3m) they are not counted in the overall number of parking spaces, which may be more acceptable to developers. The document is striving to achieve good practice so the later garage size would be desirable but not essential. 2. Paragraph 3.9(e): seeks enhanced filtered permeability. It is acknowledged that this is a recognised term and therefore appropriate to be used in the context. 3. Paragraph 3.9(f): Unclear on the reference to private roads, should this be private drives? Suggest the recommendation is amended to specify private drives are to be avoided, but where they are appropriate alterative pedestrian and cycle routes are provided to ensure pedestrian and cycle permeability throughout a development. 4. Paragraph 5.2: Should include the word 'inclusive' given one omission of design is typically not making inclusivity the first requirement over all other design. Alternatively chapters 5 and 6 could be re-ordered. 5. Paragraph 5.3(b): Do not require a lot of unnecessary raised tables on well designed residential streets, maintenance and legally traffic calming meaning it has a job to do with cars first not people. As worded can lead to road hump design solutions. Suggest – All crossing points should be fully inclusive whether at carriageway level or raised. Raised solutions need to consider the wider implications of introducing traffic calming to new streets. Also suggest using word 'carriageway' rather than road. 6. Paragraph 5.3(c): Consideration could be given to rewording this paragraph to include reference to links into site and within the site, given it is understood this seeks to ensure there is permeability within the site but also to provide connection to infrastructure. Is it worth referring to passenger transport draft guidance for wording? 7. Paragraph 5.3(d): Consideration could be given to using wording in Manual for Streets 3 draft, ‘an inclusively designed public realm, and through that help achieve social inclusion’. Agree with requirement to ensure public realm takes into account all users. Also emphasis on security in the public realm (reduce risk of terrorism), so an opportunity to expand to incorporate this. 8. Paragraph 5.7: Amend to require active travel to engage with top tier facilities if within walking distances of up to 2km and lower tier local facilities within 1km?

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
02	Shropshire Highways	Whole document	1. It is noted that there are different standards for garages and that those in the SMART guidance have been informed by consultation. It is considered appropriate to utilise these standards in circumstances where the garages are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision. Therefore for clarity, amendments will be made to reflect this. 2. Noted. 3. The intention of paragraph 3.9(f) was to address private drives, for clarity this will be amended. The caveat on the approach in circumstances where a private drive is appropriate is supported and will be included through an appropriate amendment. 4. It is recognised that inclusivity is an important design principle and that its specific reference in paragraph 5.2 ensures a consistent approach through the document. This will be reflected through an appropriate amendment. 5. The intention is to achieve inclusivity when seeking to cross carriageways. On reflection, it is considered that the proposed amendment better reflects this intention and as such it will be appropriately integrated. 6. Inclusion of reference to public transport links through the site is considered appropriate, reflecting the intention of this guidance. Similarly, reference to achieving consistency with Council guidance on passenger transport is also considered appropriate. Suitable amendments will be integrated. 7. It is recognised that the principles in paragraph 5.3(d) are embedded in the highway code. So as to enhance this guidance appropriate amendments will be made to align with the principles of Manual for Streets 3 and the objective of achieving inclusivity. A further amendment will be made to reflect the increased emphasis on security in the public realm. 8. An appropriate footnote is proposed to specify that when identifying existing facilities this should consider top-tier facilities within a 2km radium and lower tier facilities within a 1 km radius.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
02	Shropshire Highways (continued)	Whole document	9. Paragraph 6.9(b) does not add beyond the requirements of the NPPF. 10. Paragraphs 8.43 & 8.44: The recommendation is not robust enough. It would be more appropriate to state that the design criteria are set within MfS and LTN 1/20. 11. Paragraph 8.48(a): Concerned expressing car parking standards as a range could result in developers picking the number that suits them and the top end of ranges are at odds with Active Travel principles. There is also no opportunity for less than 1 care per dwelling. The issues with tandem parking is not referenced If tandem parking is recognised as being a solution, greater width streets will be required to absorb the additional parking impacts on residential development. Suggest there needs to be reference to access/opportunities for sustainable travel and location of site. 12. Paragraph 8.48(d): For safety reasons, all vehicles should be leaving a driveway in a forward gear. However, do agree with the principle of sight lines being provided, particularly an issue with tree lined developments. 13. Paragraph 8.51: Unsure what on-street parking exactly is being supported. Such parking will occur where drivers consider appropriate and too little available or utilisable (like tandem) parking is prevalent in a layout. 14. Paragraph 8.76: Does not address BS5906 and reference should be made to Shropshire Councils Waste Management guidance. 15. Paragraph 8.79(a): Includes reference to emergency vehicles, but they should be addressed in and of themselves. 16. Paragraph 8.80: Definition of street furniture and how this can lead to clutter may be advantageous. Suggest using the term 'clutter' rather than 'proliferation'. 17. Paragraph 8.80: Opportunity to address sub-station design, location, access – layouts usually suffer when these are introduced.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
02	Shropshire Highways (continued)	Whole document	9. The Council recognises that the guidance in paragraph 5.7 is consistent with the requirements of the NPPF. It is considered advantageous to include within the draft SPD so that these principles are expressed alongside the other guidance to support sustainability and the transition to net zero. 10. The importance of complying with the manual for streets and LTN 1/20 is recognised. For clarity, this will be included within paragraph 8.33. 11. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly rigid. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). The issues with tandem parking are also noted, and an appropriate amendment will be integrated. 12. Noted. The safety aspect is recognised and this guideline will be appropriately amended. 13. On reflection it is considered that this paragraph does not 'add value' and so will be deleted. 14. The guidance in this draft document is considered to comply with BS 5906 and Shropshire Councils Waste Management guidance. However, for clarity specific cross-referencing to these documents will be included in the document. 15. It is accepted that access and egress for emergency vehicles is a specific consideration, but these requirements are often comparable to refuse collection vehicles. As such, it is considered appropriate that it is addresses within this element of the guidance. 16. It is considered the term street furniture is sufficiently clear and understood, as is the principle of how they can, if not implemented in a coordinated way, can lead to clutter. Agree the term 'clutter' is clearer and more appropriate than 'proliferation' as such an appropriate amendment will be included. 17. It is recognised that sub-stations can constitute a significant type of street furniture and for these reason could benefit from specific guidance. As such, an additional guidelines will be incorporated into paragraph 8.80 on this matter.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
02	Shropshire Highways (further continued)	Whole document	18. Paragraph 8.129: Agree with recommendation that lighting strategy should be provided. Street lighting is a legislative requirement for road of 30mph speed limits, which may have an impact on the general design code. For all other speeds (20mph) the legal requirements are the second tier. Consideration should be given to referencing guidance on part night lighting. 19. Paragraphs 6.5 and 8.43: Draft Manual for Streets 3 puts a greater emphasis on protected characteristics in the context of street design but also applicable to housing. Section 5.1 could be included. 20. Paragraph 8.13: Potential to include reference to the use of the area for drainage purposes. 21. Paragraph 8.14: Agree with the principle of highway verges not being part of the POS. 22. Paragraph 8.35: Potential to include guidance about trees on highway. 23. Paragraph 8.45: Electric Charging strategy is being developed. 24. Paragraph 8.74: Updated version of the secured by design document available. As outlined above there is also a greater emphasis on anti terrorism measures with guidance in the NPSA Public Realm Guide for Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) - Third Edition.
03	Christine Williams	Whole document	1. The location of infrastructure is critical - ensuring there is sufficient infrastructure and is not subject to environmental or flood risk constraints. 2 There is a need for more smaller properties such as bungalows and terraced properties for individuals, those down-sizing and first time buyers. 3. There is a need to incorporate different materials in design to break-up the appearance of new development. 4. Dwellings need to be of high quality design and materials so they achieve acceptable living conditions and support renewable energy generation. 5. Room sizes should be of an adequate minimum size. 6. Each dwelling should have a garden and suitable spaces for bins, laundry, bikes and buggies.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
02	Shropshire Highways (further continued)	Whole document	18. Noted. It is not considered necessary to reference statutory requirements and the guidance addresses the design considerations in circumstances where street lighting is required. A cross-reference to the Council's guidance on part night lighting would add greater understanding of the Council's approach on this matter and so will be included. 19. The intention of the approach to inclusivity is to include those in the Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010. For clarity a specific amendments will be made to paragraph 6.7(a). 20. The Council considers that this is primarily the role of the wider Green infrastructure network. 21. Noted. 22. To ensure the guidance on trees is comprehensive, a cross reference to the Council's Trees and Development guide is to be included as an amendment. 23. Noted. Unfortunately reference cannot be included to emerging documents. 24 Noted. A link to the updated Secure By Design document will be provided. Further reference to the NPSA guidance on hostile vehicle mitigation will also be included in this section and that on safe and secure design.
03	Christine Williams	Whole document	1. It is considered that Section 5 of the SPD provides appropriate guidance on the integration of a development into its setting, including facilitation of access to services, facilities, sports and play. 2. It is considered that Section 7 of the document provides appropriate guidance on the function, including provision of an appropriate housing mix. 3 and 4. It is considered that Section 4 of the document provides appropriate guidance on the character and appearance of new dwellings, including the design of place and use of materials. 5. It is considered that the technical guidance in section 8 of the document appropriately addresses floorspace standards. 6. It is considered that the technical guidance in section 8 of the document appropriately addresses private amenity spaces in all forms of housing.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
04	Cllr Andy Boddington	Whole document	1. Paragraph 3.7 should include reference to ensuring routes into and through the development are designed with disability in mind. 2. Paragraph 3.9(a) reference to straight roads may mean development is not responsive to landform. 3. Paragraph 3.9(c) refers to 'grid patterns' which could lead to rectilinear layouts, instead reference should be to efficient densities. 4. Paragraph 3.9(e) should include reference to disability navigation. 5. Paragraph 5.3 should include “For developments of over 50 homes ensure adequate turning space for buses.” 6) Paragraphs 5.7 and 6.4 should support first time buyers and working (particularly young) working age people. It is unsustainable if all new housing is to meet the needs of older people. 7. Paragraph 6.c should reference provision of solar panels on all suitable roofs as a minimum. 8. Paragraph 6.11(g) needs to provide positive pressure to protect heritage assets. 9. Paragraph 7.6(d) wording could lead to narrow benches unsuitable for people to sit on while chatting to friends and neighbours. Suggest amending to “Design and locate seating… to reduce risk of anti-social behaviour.” 10. Paragraph 8.11 should require “all dwellings” to achieve nationally described space standards. 11. The document should emphasise the need for adequate play areas. However, Paragraph 8.21 would not require two adjacent estates of 50 dwellings to provide a LEAP. This could be CIL funded but space would be required, so possible addition to the first sentence of "taking into account the need to provide space for play given the overall scale of new build in the location.” 12. Paragraph 8.23 should replace "can be responsible” with “may be responsible”. 13. Paragraph 8.48 garage widths are too small. The width for garages is too small.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
04	Cllr Andy Boddington	Whole document	1. An appropriate addition will be made to the guidance on the relationship and responsiveness to surroundings. Furthermore, an appropriate addition will also be made to the guidance on inclusive design and layout in the section on inclusive and multi-generational communities. 2. Noted, the intention was to promote direct routes to support ease of movement, but on reflection it is considered this is achieved without the need to specify roads are 'straight' and it is agreed that removal of this reference ensures the point better aligns with the wider principles of the guidance. 3. It is considered that the context to the reference on grid patterns (formal or more relaxed) allows for appropriate flexibility to respond to the characteristics of the site whilst ensuring layouts aid navigation. It is also considered that density is more appropriately addressed in the guidance on character appearance. 4. It is considered that the proposed additional guidance in paragraph 3.7 (response to point 1) appropriately responds to this important point. 5. This concern is noted, but it is considered that the technical guidance on bin storage in paragraph 8.79 appropriately addresses this issue. 6. The importance of providing accommodation appropriate to first time buyers and working age people is noted, but new housing must also be responsive to the demographics of Shropshire. On reflection it is considered that the guidance appropriately balances these considerations. 7. Whilst this principle is understood, it is not considered that there is an appropriate policy basis for this in the adopted Development Plan and Government has been clear that energy efficiency standards for dwellings are to be managed through building regulations. However, paragraph 8.86 specifically encourages developers to incorporate low carbon and renewable energy technologies such as solar panels. 8. The importance of conserving and enhancing heritage assets is agreed. It is considered that the Development Plan provides appropriate policies on this matter and this guidance appropriately explains the policy approach. 9. Noted, the intention of this paragraph was not to reduce the function of seating, which would be contrary to wider guidance. As such, an appropriate amendment is proposed. 10. It is considered that the phraseology of the guidance in paragraph 8.11 is consistent with the Development Plan. 11. It is agreed that in circumstances where proposals seek to artificially sub-divide a scheme there is a risk that play provision could be under-sized. As such an amendment to refer to the total development is proposed. Where such a circumstance arises through schemes not artificially sub-divided it is considered that this is best addressed through the planning application process. 12. Noted. Suggested phraseology is clearer and an appropriate update is proposed.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
05	Ask GB Ltd	Whole document	1. No consideration is given in planning policies to older Shropshire residents who want to downsize from larger family homes. Such properties are well supported by communities however they cannot achieve minimum garden sizes in this guidance. There needs to be an exception or more nuanced approach to the provision of gardens and private amenity space for this sector. In our experience the purchasers want small and manageable external spaces. There is already a larger footprint in building single story accommodation (3.5-5.8 meters in length). -Paragraph 8.26a is overly-restrictive. -Paragraph 8.26b is unclear whether it applies to bungalows (effectively ground floor flats). -Paragraph 8.26e requirement for communal amenity space and open space would restrict higher-density apartment schemes. -Examples of how apartments can be served by private amenity facilities are poorly conceived and unfeasible.
06	Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council	Whole document	1. Chapter 1 - Paragraph 1.5: Parish Councils should be involved in the Pre-Application process. 2. Chapter 2 - Paragraph 2.13: Need to ensure appropriate service availability and infrastructure including mains sewerage, electricity and broadband prior to development. 3. Chapter 2 - Paragraph 2.13: More information needed about the source of information relating to 'community needs'. 4. Chapter 3 - Paragraph 9: Medium and large scale developments should have more than one point of access to the development site wherever possible. 5. Chapter 6 - Paragraph 6.7b/c: All new homes should be made as wheelchair friendly. Also the percentage of specialist housing should be higher and to just to developments over 50 dwellings. 6. Chapter 8 - Paragraph 8.91: Flood Risk Assessments should be based on recent evidence and should include the date of the evidence base. 7. Chapter 8 - Paragraph 8.65a: Need to define 'meaningful proportion'.
07	Betley Lane Residents Association	Chapter 2, Para 2.3; Chapter 3, Para 3.4, Chapter 4, Para 4.8, Chapter 6, Para, 6.8; Chapter 7, Para 7.4; Chapter 8 Para 8.6	1. The SPD does not provide sufficient safeguards to prevent harm to established communities, local landscape character, visual impact (especially key outward and inward view overlooking National Landscapes and Country Parks) or the cumulative pressures on rural settlements. Should strengthen and clarify the SPD to ensure it better reflects the intent of adopted planning policies - particularly the Shropshire Core Strategy (Policies CS6, CS7, CS9, CS17 and CS18), SAMDev Policy MD2 and the National Planning Policy.
08	Longden Parish Council	Whole document	1. Diagrams of positive design should be included to make the document shorter and more accessible. 2. Paragraph 2.6 refers to paragraph 2 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan. The guidance on density in this paragraph is somewhat contradictory to paragraph 135 of the NPPF.
09	Coal Authority	Whole document	1. No specific comments.
10	Wychavon District Council	Chapter 8, Para 8.103	1. This section should be expanded to emphasise the importance of assessing designated heritage assets, local heritage assets, listed historic buildings and the contribution of their rural and urban setting. This should especially focus on factors which add to the local distinctiveness, examples of vernacular architecture which help to establish a sense of place. This should then be utilised to design a development which emphasises local distinctiveness and avoids simple creating generic schemes.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
05	Ask GB Ltd	Whole document	1. The Council generally considers these standards to constitute good design and are clear. However, it is accepted that where a two storey dwelling consists of an age-restricted dormer bungalow a smaller garden may be appropriate, as such an appropriate amendment is proposed to paragraph 8.26(a).
Page 874	Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council	Whole document	1. The scope of the pre-application process is beyond the remit of this draft SPD. 2. The importance of ensuring sufficient infrastructure capacity is available to support development is agreed. It is considered that this principle is clear within the Development Plan. 3. It is considered that this further information is provided within section 7 of the document. 4. Paragraph 3.9a promotes 'thinking about multiple points of access' it is considered that this is appropriate guidance. 5. It is considered that the proportions of wheelchair user dwellings and specialist housing specified strike the appropriate balance between the evidenced needs and maintaining the viability of development. 6. The policies of the adopted Development Plan and national policy are clear on the requirements of a flood risk assessment - paragraph 8.92 also specifies that flood risk assessments should be proportionate. 7. It is considered the guidance is clear on the intention of the phrase meaningful proportion, which is a planning judgement based on the characteristics and circumstances of the scheme.
07	Betley Lane Residents Association	Chapter 2, Para 2.3; Chapter 3, Para 3.4, Chapter 4, Para 4.8, Chapter 6, Para, 6.8; Chapter 7, Para 7.4; Chapter 8 Para 8.6	1. The purpose of this SPD is to provide guidance to support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. SPD's cannot introduce new policy.
08	Longden Parish Council	Whole document	1. The value of diagrams in illustrating guidance is recognised and it is considered they are integrated where appropriate in the document. 2. It is considered that paragraph 2 of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan and paragraph 135 of the NPPF are entirely consistent, including with regard to the density of development. Responding appropriately to the existing density of an areas does not preclude innovative higher density development.
09	Coal Authority	Whole document	1. Noted.
10	Wychavon District Council	Chapter 8, Para 8.103	1. The importance of conserving and enhancing heritage assets is agreed. It is considered that the Development Plan provides appropriate policies on this matter and this guidance appropriately explains the policy approach.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
11	David Barton - Community Campaigner	Whole Document - particularly chapter 4, paragraphs 6.1-6.3, paragraph 8.1 and paragraphs 8.41-8.42	1.The submission emphasises that Traditional Vernacular Architecture (TVA) should form the foundation of any Design document adopted by a Local Authority. The author argues that TVA offers economic, environmental, and community benefits while contributing to climate goals and heritage protection. Key recommendations include: -Use Design Codes not Design Guides- Codes should be mandatory, detailed and rooted in TVA to ensure consistent outcomes. -Work with specialist bodies - (e.g. Create Streets, The Kings Foundation) to align codes with proven public preferences and best practice. -Prevent demolition of all pre-1950's historic buildings, incorporating this principle explicitly within the Design Code. -Create and adopt a Local List of valued non-designated heritage buildings (as required by the NPPF) to ensure they influence design coding. -Require faithful restoration, retention and replication of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian townscape characteristics, preventing stark contrasts with post-1950's housing. -When demolition of newer (post-1950's) buildings does occur replacement development must use historic styles and local materials to ensure coherent character. -Support development of local artisan and heritage skills and encourage volunteer groups to help deliver conservation - aligned projects. -Streamline Planning processes for applications that support authentic restoration or traditional new build. -Ensure Design Codes account for era-appropriate style selection where multiple historic layers exist (e.g. areas blending Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian). 2. Overall the Design Code must centre on embedding traditional architecture as the local design language, protecting embodied carbon, preventing loss of historic fabric and ensuring new development reinforces a coherent and heritage-led urban form.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
11	David Barton - Community Campaigner	Whole Document - particularly chapter 4, paragraphs 6.1-6.3, paragraph 8.1 and paragraphs 8.41-8.42	1 and 2. Noted. It is considered the draft document encourages residential extensions to respond to the character of the existing dwelling - both in form and materials. Furthermore, the document includes specific guidance for extensions in conservation areas, to listed buildings (including those subject to Article 4 directions), and non-designated heritage assets.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
12	Shropshire Climate Action	Whole document	1. National Design Guide / National Model Design Code and Guidance advises local planning authorities design guidance should relate to the differing types of area such as town centres; inner suburbs; villages; rural areas. Although the introduction to the Design Guide recognises the different areas and localities of Shropshire, the Technical Guidance does not generally offer different design codes for different areas. The Technical design guidance which has been produced which appears to be mainly suitable for residential developments on the edge of towns rather than historic town centres across the county. 2. Paragraph 6.9 should be more clear on fabric energy efficiency standards. 3. Paragraph 8.48 parking standards encourage the use of private cars. 4. Paragraph 8.86(b) expects development to meet building control requirements for energy efficiency. Suggest this states “Properties are expected to meet or exceed building control requirements.” 5. Paragraphs **8.125-8.128 references MCS 020, which has been superseded by MCS 020(a)**. The specified noise limit is now 37db at the assessment position. Rather than specifying noise levels (which can be confusing) better to reference the guidance. MCS 020(a) should be adopted as the standard for new dwellings. 6. Object to paragraph 8.126 which implies a lower noise standard for air pumps.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
12	Shropshire Climate Action	Whole document	1. It is considered that the diverse characteristics of Shropshire and our settlements are appropriately reflected in the draft SPD. 2 and 4. Government has been clear that energy efficiency standards for dwellings are to be managed through building regulations. Paragraph 6.9 is consistent with this approach, complementing building regulations by encouraging development to maximise energy efficiency. 3. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly high. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 5. Noted, paragraph 8.125 will be updated accordingly. 6. Noted, on reflection references to specific noise standards are to be removed.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
13	Stretton Climate Care	Whole document	1. National Design Guide / National Model Design Code and Guidance advises local planning authorities design guidance should relate to the differing types of area such as town centres; inner suburbs; villages; rural areas. Although the introduction to the Design Guide recognises the different areas and localities of Shropshire, the Technical Guidance does not generally offer different design codes for different areas. The Technical design guidance which has been produced which appears to be mainly suitable for residential developments on the edge of towns rather than historic town centres across the county. 2. Paragraph 6.9 should be more clear on fabric energy efficiency standards. 3. Paragraph 8.48 parking standards encourage the use of private cars. 4. Paragraph 8.86(b) expects development to meet building control requirements for energy efficiency. Suggest this states "Properties are expected to meet or exceed building control requirements." 5. Paragraphs **8.125-8.128 references MCS 020, which has been superseded by MCS 020(a)**. The specified noise limit is now 37db at the assessment position. Rather than specifying noise levels (which can be confusing) better to reference the guidance. MCS 020(a) should be adopted as the standard for new dwellings. 6. Object to paragraph 8.126 which implies a lower noise standard for air pumps.
14	Dudley Council	Whole document	1. No specific comments.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
13	Stretton Climate Care	Whole document	1. It is considered that the diverse characteristics of Shropshire and our settlements are appropriately reflected in the draft SPD. 2 and 4. Government has been clear that energy efficiency standards for dwellings are to be managed through building regulations. Paragraph 6.9 is consistent with this approach, complementing building regulations by encouraging development to maximise energy efficiency. 3. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly high. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 5. Noted, paragraph 8.125 will be updated accordingly. 6. Noted, on reflection references to specific noise standards are to be removed.
14	Dudley Council	Whole document	1. Noted

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
15	Lovell Strategic Land	Whole document	1. Proposals to secure housing specifications exceeding adopted policy conflict with national policy, guidance and statute. 2. Guidance is overly-prescriptive and flexibility needs to be inserted to ensure efficient use of land and achievement of high quality places. 3. Adopted policy does not require dwellings to achieve nationally described space standards. As there is no policy basis for this requirement, it should be removed from the draft SPD. 4. Adopted policy does not require dwellings to achieve M4(2) or M4(3) accessibility standards. As there is no policy basis for this requirement, it should be removed from the draft SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
15	Lovell Strategic Land	Whole document	1. The Council recognises that an SPD provides guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan rather than itself forming part of the adopted Development Plan. Specific concerns raised by the respondent are addressed in turn below. 2. The Council considers the guidance in the draft SPD generally strikes an appropriate balance between providing certainty and allowing flexibility for innovation. Specific concerns raised by the respondent are addressed in turn below. 3. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 4. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
15	Lovell Strategic Land	Whole document	5. Adopted policy does not require a proportion of dwellings on sites of 50 or more dwellings to constitute specialist housing for older people. Whilst supportive of providing such housing, as there is no policy basis for this requirement it should be removed from the draft SPD. 6. Adopted policy does not require housing to meet the optional Building Regulations 110 litres per person per day. Guidance is clear this can only be set through local policy and whilst the delivery of sustainable development is supported, as there is no policy basis for this requirement it should be removed from the draft SPD. 7. Setting car-parking expectations for housing is helpful. However, as this is specified as a range for further clarity it would be helpful for the Council to set out how they would assess what spaces are required within the range.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
15	Lovell Strategic Land	Whole document	5. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure "that all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities" (our emphasis) and that the Council will support "the provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need" (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should "on sites of five or more dwellings, include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation" (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. 6. Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy specifies that development will "incorporate water efficiency measures, in accordance with the sustainability checklist in Policy CS6, to meet the water efficiency objectives within the Shropshire Water Cycle Study to protect water resources and reduce pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure." The referenced checklist forms part of the Sustainable Design SPD which specifies a minimum expectation of 105 litres per day - as such for consistency this SPD will be aligned with this mimulus expectation. Notably, Shropshire (Severn Trent Water Limited company area) is now identified as an area under 'serious water stress (water stressed areas 2021 classification). 7. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that the provision of a range would create unnecessary uncertainty, further clarity on the considerations when determining appropriate levels of parking would be beneficial and that rates specified were overly rigid. Amendments are therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities and provide guidance on the considerations when determining appropriate levels of parking.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	1. The interface between the high-level and technical guidance is unclear. 2. The SPD should relate to the emerging Local Plan and not the adopted Local Plan. 3. Proposals to secure housing specifications exceeding adopted policy conflict with national policy, guidance and statute. 4. Object to the inclusion of the requirement for Nationally Described Space Standards. This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability. 5. Object to the inclusion of an expectation that larger development includes 10% specialist housing. This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	1. The Council considers the relationship between the high-level and technical guidance is entirely clear. The high-level guidance deals with overarching principles, whilst the technical guidance provide more detailed guidance on those issues upon which such information is considered necessary. 2. The intention is that this SPD would provide guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. The next plan-making process under which the next Local Plan will be prepared does not include SPD's. 3. The Council recognises that an SPD provides guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan rather than itself forming part of the adopted Development Plan. Specific concerns raised by the respondent are addressed in turn below. 4. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 5. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure *"that all housing developments are* ***designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities*** " (our emphasis) and that the Council will support *"the* ***provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision*** *, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need"* (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should *"on sites of five or more dwellings,* ***include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence*** *and community consultation* " (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	6. Object to the expectation that 100% of housing achieves M4(2) and 5% of housing achieves M4(3) accessibility standards. This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability. Planning Practice Guidance states that LPAs "should clearly state in their Local Plan what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements". This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability. 7. Object to the elements of the SPD which relate to energy and sustainability, as these requirements are not supported by sufficient evidence base and do not supplement existing development plan policies (6.8 – 6.9 and 8.81 – 8.86).

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	6. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard. 7. The Council considers the guidance in paragraphs 6.8-6.9 and 8.81-8.86 is entirely appropriate and consistent with the adopted Development Plan. Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy is clear that "to create sustainable places, development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles" including through "requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced", ensuring development is "designed ... to respond to the challenge of climate change" and "Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water".

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	8. BNG is not considered to be a design matter and should also not be included in the SPD for this reason. Also object to the specification that BNG is achieved on-site or as close to the site as possible. This wording is not compliant with existing legislation which includes no reference to proximity to the site. 9. Object to paragraph 8.103 which states “Proposals for residential development with the potential to affect heritage assets or their setting should achieve highest design standards” which is unreasonable and should be more flexible. 10. Water conservation and efficiency is not a design matter and should not be included. Further, the 110 litre per day requirement is not within the adopted Development Plan. 11. Flood risk is not a design consideration and should be deleted. 12. Natural environment assets is not a design consideration and should be deleted. 13. Paragraph 4.8(a) is vague on how 'complementary contemporary' design will be assessed. Clearer criteria to reduce ambiguity should be provided. 14. Paragraph 4.8(c) appropriate heights, massing, and densities are important but often creates tension with aspirations to increase densities. Clearer support for modest density increases would be welcome. 15. Paragraph 5.5(g) need further clarity on acceptable mechanisms for stewardship of green infrastructure (e.g., adoption agreements, management companies) and ensure requirements are proportionate to the scale of development. 16. Paragraph 6.7(e) the SPD could allow flexibility for clustering of affordable housing in small groups where this supports effective management and delivery. 17. Paragraph 7.6(a) flexibility on active frontages, dual-aspect homes, and perimeter blocks would be beneficial.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	8. The Council considers failure to recognise BNG is a design consideration inevitably leads to either poor quality provision made as an after-thought rather than an integral part of the design of a development, or costly and unnecessary off-site provision. This is the exact reason the Council has included it in this guidance. As recognised by the respondent legislation does not set a requirement for how closely BNG offsetting sites should be located to development sites. Therefore, it is not considered inconsistent with this guidance to indicate the Council's clear preference that if offsetting is to occur off-site it should be as close as possible to the site, to ensure environments and communities receiving development 'attain the gain'. This does not preclude provision being made further afield if necessary, but is a clear indication of the Council's preference. 9. The Council accepts the terminology could be more flexible given the potential for other mechanisms (such as mitigation) to offset impacts on heritage assets. An appropriate amendments will therefore be made. 10. The Council considers it is entirely appropriate to address design responsive to water efficiency within this design SPD. Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy specifies that development will *"incorporate water efficiency measures, in accordance with the sustainability checklist in Policy CS6, to meet the water efficiency objectives within the Shropshire Water Cycle Study to protect water resources and reduce pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure."* The referenced checklist forms part of the Sustainable Design SPD which specifies a minimum expectation of 105 litres per day - as such for consistency this SPD will be aligned with this mimulus expectation. 11 and 12. The Council considers it appropriate to address flood risk and natural environment assets and how design can positively respond to these principles within a design SPD. 13, 15 and 17. The Council considers the guidance in paragraph 4.8(a), 5.5(g) and 7.6(a) strikes the appropriate balance between clarity and providing sufficient flexibility to respond to the various scales of residential development and characteristics of the communities across Shropshire. 14. It is accepted that an appropriate density may not simply be replication of that in the surrounding area. As such, further guidance on this matter will be included. 16. It is accepted that there can be benefits in allowing small clusters of affordable housing as part of the pepper-pot principle and that this also provides an opportunity to be more explicit about access expectations. Appropriate amendments are therefore proposed.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	18. Paragraph 8.7 standards on front to front separation distances can affect street design, so consider greater flexibility is required. 19. In Paragraph 8.26 consider the private amenity space minimums too rigid. 20. Paragraph 8.27 upper stories" is vague and should be clarified. 21. Paragraph 8.34(e and h) addresses boundary treatments, but imposing ongoing management duties form is not common practice and may present enforcement challenges. 22. Parking standards in paragraph 8.48 are excessive and could compromise good design. 23. Paragraph 8.50 is too inflexible regarding rear parking courts.
17	Graham Cowley	Chapter 6, Para 6.11	1. Specific guidance should be provided on creation of permanent habitats for wildlife with the inclusion of swift bricks, bat tiles and bricks.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
16	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Whole document	18. The Council agree the application of these standards to front elevations is overly prescriptive and an appropriate amendments is therefore proposed. 19, 20 and 23. The Council considers the guidance in paragraphs 8.26, 8.27 and 8.50 strikes the appropriate balance between clarity and providing sufficient flexibility to respond to the various scales of residential development and characteristics of the communities across Shropshire. 21. Paragraph 8.34(e) relates specifically to boundaries for noise mitigation purposes and the guidance is considered entirely appropriate for this reason. Paragraph 8.34(h) expects retention and future management of boundaries to be clearly established - this is not expected to entail management duties, rather it is about outlining expectations for homeowners. This will be appropriately clarified. 22. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly high. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations).
17	Graham Cowley	Chapter 6, Para 6.11	1. The Council recognise the importance of providing appropriate habitat for wildlife. Whilst this is already reflected in the document, it is considered there is a specific opportunity to promote those mechanisms that can be incorporated into dwellings to 'bolster' at risk wildlife.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
18	Shropshire Council: Health, Wellbeing & Prevention	Whole document	1. Generally supportive of the document. 2. Paragraph 3.1 provides an opportunity to reference the 10 Healthy Street indicators. 3. Paragraph 5.3 further context on the value of street lighting in promoting safety and mental wellbeing, particularly in the winter months, would be welcomed. 4. Paragraph 7.3 should include reference to provision of high-speed broadband infrastructure, enabling the promotion and uptake of both work from home opportunities for those with caring responsibilities or disabilities that limit in-person employment opportunities, and virtual health care/telemedicine supporting individuals to remain in their residence near pre-existing support systems. 5. Paragraph 8.62 should reference the use of data from Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and other demographic data sources to inform the location and types of specialist housing for older people. 6. Paragraph 8.86 could support property designs that are appropriately energy efficient to relevant EPC standards and allow for suitable ventilation to avoid the respiratory/cardiovascular/musculoskeletal health impacts of mould and cold temperatures. Developments should also, as much as is practical, assist in reducing the costs of heating/cooling the home to ease subsequent financial pressures, and support with Local Authority goals/initiatives to reduce fuel poverty.
19	Historic England	Whole document	1. Page 12/13 provides useful context on the Council's aspirations in the context of design. Consider it would be helpful to provide additional text and examples about what is meant in practice and what other documents the applicant can utilise to assist in preparing a design-led scheme. 2. Paragraph 4.8 would benefit from a reference to heritage assets and the need to protect the significance of heritage assets and their setting and the options for enhancement should be sought. 3. Paragraph 4.10 would need to take account of the historic environment and how existing heritage assets/landmarks respond to their surroundings, if new landmarks are being encouraged. 4. Support reference to Heritage Impact Assessment in Paragraph 8.103. However, the table would benefit from additional detail on what information is to be provide - focus on the significance of heritage assets, how the development site contributes to the significance of heritage asset/s and how new design is reflective of local character – either a traditional design or a contemporary design. 5. Recommend a link to relevant documents such as Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Historic Townscape and Landscape Reports, Historic Environment Record, Local Lists are provided 6. Photographs and examples of what the Council considers to be positive design within the context of this draft SPD should be provided. 7. There is no commentary on the World Heritage Site within this SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
18	Shropshire Council: Health, Wellbeing & Prevention	Whole document	1. Noted. 2. The value of the 10 Healthy Streets indicators are appreciated. A specific reference to their consideration will be integrated into the guidance on safe and convenient movement. 3. The roll of lighting and appropriate surfacing in supporting safety and mental wellbeing, particularly in the winter months is noted. It is considered the guidance is appropriately responsive to this matter. 4. The importance of high-speed internet connectivity to support modern lifestyles cannot be understated. An appropriate amendment will be made to paragraph 7.3 to reflect this. 5. Agree that reference to a source of evidence on the need for specialist housing would provide helpful context. The Council has recently completed a Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment which is considered best placed to provide this information - an appropriate amendment will be incorporated. 6. It is considered that the guidance on energy efficiency is appropriate, but there is an opportunity to extend this to address ventilation.
19	Historic England	Whole document	1. The Council considers guidance on character and appearance strikes the appropriate balance between providing certainty of approach and flexibility so as to not stifle innovation. Where further guidance on an issue is considered appropriate, this is addressed in the technical guidance section of the draft SPD. 2. Paragraph 4.8 is clear that design should be responsive to the character of an area - which includes any heritage assets. Furthermore, there are specific sections of guidance on consideration of heritage assets, within sections 6 and 8 of the draft SPD. It is not considered necessary to duplicate this. 3. Paragraph 4.10 is clear that any landmark feature (which is not necessarily a new building) should be of a design that complements its setting. Furthermore, there are specific sections of guidance on consideration of heritage assets, within sections 6 and 8 of the draft SPD. It is not considered necessary to duplicate this. 4. The Council considers the guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment generally strikes an appropriate balance between providing certainty of scope whilst reflecting that the specific approach will be dependent on the scale of proposal and nature of associated heritage asset(s). However, a specific reference to the need to consider the contribution the site makes to the character and significance of heritage asset(s) will be included. 5. Noted, such links are provided on the planning policy webpages from which the document would be accessed. 6. The Council considers that the diverse characteristics of development schemes and our communities mean that providing specific examples / photographs of design guidelines would be unhelpful. 7. The document addresses heritage assets as a collective. There are separate SPD's for each of the two World Heritage Sites in Shropshire, which will be made available alongside this document.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
20	Lone Star Land	Chapter 6 and Chapter 8	1. Object to the specific requirements of 100% M4(2) and 5% of housing achieves M4(3) accessibility standards. This is not required in policy, there is insufficient evidence of need and there is no evidence of their viability. Planning Practice Guidance states that LPAs "should clearly state in their Local Plan what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements". This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability. Flexibility on this guideline should also be provided.
20	Lone Star Land	Chapter 6 and Chapter 8	2. Object to the inclusion of an expectation that larger development includes 10% specialist housing. This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability. 3. Object to the inclusion of the requirement for Nationally Described Space Standards. This is not required in policy and there is no evidence of their viability. 4. Appropriately sized and located bin storage needs to be defined. Would object if this meant dedicated bin storage on every plot.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
20	Lone Star Land	Chapter 6 and Chapter 8	1. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.
20	Lone Star Land	Chapter 6 and Chapter 8	2. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure "that all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities" (our emphasis) and that the Council will support "the provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need" (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should "on sites of five or more dwellings, include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation" (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. 3. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 4. The Council considers the guidance in paragraph 8.79 is clear whilst not restricting innovation.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
21	J3 Buildings Features	Whole document	1. Paragraph 4.7(c) consider it is depressing to name aspects of development after features it eradicates. 2. Paragraph 4.8(a) and 4.10 Support contemporary/complementary design, but consider nothing worse than modern buildings trying to look old. 3. Section 6 guidance on inclusivity and sustainability should reference the spatial potential and perhaps even financial provision for community assets. 4. Section 6 guidance on sustainability / net zero is too passive. 5.Section 7 guidance on amenity should address overly high (2m+) fencing and allowing perforates bases for wildlife movement. 6. Paragraph 7.6(b) guidance is understood but the 'left over spaces' without clear function need to be provided to allow community expansion, or children's creativity, or 'wild' areas. 7. Technical guidance on trees and hedges should set a default position that all are important and should be retained and should specify Arboricultural and Hedge Reports are mandatory. 8. Don't understand why guidance on earth mounding in paragraph 8.41 specifies mounding should have free-flowing, natural contours and not look engineered - there are some incredible land artists and this could be incorporated in the right places. 9. The guidance on embodied carbon needs expanding. 10. Guidance on energy efficiency would benefit from basic diagrams. 11. Paragraph 8.86(b) should specify properties must meet building control requirements on energy efficiency. 12. Paragraph 8.86(c) only encourages integration of renewable energy, this is not good enough. 13. It should be assumed all residential development has the potential to negatively affect natural environment assets, so relevant assessments should be mandatory. 14. Unclear why the guidance on noise is so long, but energy efficiency so short. 15. More guidance on lighting - such as dark skies - required. 16. Guidance on replacement dwellings should recognise that it may be more cost effective/energy efficient to replace.
22	Jill Ashurst	Chapters 2-10	1. Protecting landscape settings and separation of settlements are very important, as are the fringe areas of the countryside which protect the visual impact of green spaces and sensitive sites. 2. Trees and current hedges need to be undisturbed as far as possible as they harbour wild life and plants. 3. There needs to be an infrastructure impact assessment to ensure services such as schools can absorb increased populations. 4. Development above housing targets should be resisted. 5. Surrounding or adjacent residences must be protected with regard to outlook, privacy and access to daylight and the open countryside. Minimum separation distances between building and existing boundaries need to be respected and adhered to. 6. Traffic noise buffers need to be considered in certain areas, cycle ways and safe and healthy pedestrian walkways also, away from busy roads.
23	Jane Shutt	Chapter 6, Para 6.11	1. Guidance should address providing permanent habitats for wildlife with the inclusion of swift bricks, bat tiles and bricks.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
21	J3 Buildings Features	Whole document	1. Shropshire Council considers it entirely appropriate for the names of aspects of a development to be inspired by local features - it is incorrect to suggest such features will be lost through a development. 2. Shropshire Council considers the guidance is clear that design should be complementary - there can be a role for development that seeks to 'blend' into existing built form and that which seeks to create an appropriate 'juxtaposition'. The guidance supports these principles. 3. Shropshire Council considers section 6 of the document appropriately addresses provision of community space for sport, play, exercise and recreation. Section 5 addresses provision of services and facilities more widely. 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14. Shropshire Council considers the guidance in section 6 and wider guidance on carbon management/energy of the document is consistent with policy requirements of the Development Plan and the expectations of national Government that energy efficiency of new dwellings will be managed through the building control regime and not planning. 5. The technical guidance section of the document provides guidance on boundary treatments. 6. Shropshire Council considers that the guidance on safe and secure design is appropriate - it seeks to avoid left over spaces without clear function, spaces for children to play creatively have a clear function. 7. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on trees and hedgerows consistent with the adopted Development Plan and national policy. 8. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on earth mounding appropriate. 13. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on natural environment assets consistent with the adopted Development Plan and national policy. 15. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on lighting appropriate and proportionate. 16. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on replacement dwellings appropriate and proportionate.
22	Jill Ashurst	Chapters 2-10	1 and 2. Noted, it is considered that the guidance appropriately addresses these issues. 3. Section 5 of the document addresses access to services, facilities, sports and play. This guidance will be complemented by the consideration of any planning application, informed by engagement with infrastructure providers. 4. Planning case law has established that housing requirements in Development Plans cannot form 'ceilings' to development. The purpose of this guidance is not about the quantum of development, rather it is about quality. 5 and 6. Shropshire Council considers these issues are appropriately reflected within the guidance.
23	Jane Shutt	Chapter 6, Para 6.11	1. The Council recognise the importance of providing appropriate habitat for wildlife. Whilst this is already reflected in the document, it is considered there is a specific opportunity to promote those mechanisms that can be incorporated into dwellings to 'bolster' at risk wildlife.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
24	Julie Cowley	Whole document Chapter 5, Para 5.4 Chapter 6, Para 6.11 Chapters 3, 4, 5 (page 51), paras 3.4 and 8.129	1. Guidance should address providing permanent habitats for wildlife with the inclusion of swift bricks, bat tiles and bricks. 2. Guidance should address providing corridors for hedgehogs. 3. The term green infrastructure is unclear - giving examples such as mixed species hedgerows, native trees, meadow grasses and wildflower verges and spaces in this document will help emphasise the point. 4. The guidance uses the term 'should' consider it should be more enforceable. 5. Sensitive lighting schemes are very important to wildlife. All development should have a lighting scheme strategy.
25	Kate Long	Whole document	1. Wildlife corridors are crucial, consider making the installation of hedgehog fencing and swift nesting bricks compulsory for any housing scheme. Also need to acknowledge legally protected species. 2. Need to carefully manage waste water to avoid polluting streams and rivers. 3. Provide guidance on preserving natural 'sponge' areas that hold excess water during heavy rains, and not building on flood plains.
26	Clive Roberts	General Comments (particularly paras 8.10-8.11)	1. Guidance is very general - they should be made more Shropshire specific. 2. Introduction should explain why the Council believes a new SPD is needed. 3. Need to define what “high quality design” actually means and the consequences of failing to achieve it. 4. The guidance should detail what developers are required to submit to demonstrate high-quality design. 5. The SPD could set out the value of discussions with Council Officers throughout the application process, and how the system might operate. 6. Terms frequently used in the document should be explained - character, high-quality etc. 7. Paragraphs 8.10 and 8.11 address national space standards but not aware of evidence these are appropriate in Shropshire. This guidance should be more flexible.
27	Much Wenlock Refresh Group	Para 8.63	1. Schemes of 50 or more dwellings should include an appropriate housing mix. This includes 10% specialist housing which supports the independent living of older people and those with disabilities and special needs and all should achieve M4 design standards.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
24	Julie Cowley	Whole document Chapter 5, Para 5.4 Chapter 6, Para 6.11 Chapters 3, 4, 5 (page 51), paras 3.4 and 8.129	1 and 2. The Council recognise the importance of providing appropriate habitat for wildlife. Whilst this is already reflected in the document, it is considered there is a specific opportunity to promote those mechanisms that can be incorporated into dwellings to 'bolster' at risk wildlife. 3. The guidance addresses green infrastructure in section 5, which the Council considers provides clear guidance on how to make the most of such provision. 4. The SPD will be guidance not policy, as such the Council considers the phraseology consistent with its status. 5. The importance of appropriate lighting is recognised. For this reason it is addressed within the technical guidance component of the SPD.
25	Kate Long	Whole document	1. The Council recognise the importance of providing appropriate habitat for wildlife. Whilst this is already reflected in the document, it is considered there is a specific opportunity to promote those mechanisms that can be incorporated into dwellings to 'bolster' at risk wildlife. 2 and 3. The technical guidance section of the document addresses water conservation, efficiency and flood risk management.
26	Clive Roberts	General Comments (particularly paras 8.10-8.11)	1. The key considerations section of the draft SPD explains the strategic approach taken within the guidance, reflecting the varied scales residential development that occur and the diversity of our communities. 2. The introduction of the draft SPD includes a clear and concise summary of the role of the SPD. 3. The key design considerations to achieve a high-quality design are the topic of the SPD - it provides the context for what high-quality design means in a Shropshire context. 4. The intention of the guidance is not to place additional documentation requirements on developers, rather it provides guidance on the achievement of high-quality design which can be reflected within the material they already produce to inform planning applications. 5. The introduction of the draft Sped includes specific guidance on the value of getting advice through proactive engagement with Development Management services. 6. Shropshire Council considers the documents provides clear context on the intention of design terms using within it. 7. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers - evidence is clear that the nationally described space standards result in housing better able to support immediate and longer term needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration.
27	Much Wenlock Refresh Group	Para 8.63	1. Shropshire Council agrees sites of 50 or more dwellings should include an appropriate housing mix to meet local needs and it is considered this guidance will support this intention. The approach to M4(2) and M4(3) housing has been amended in response to wider consultation responses and changes nationally, but it is considered this continues to reflect the wider principle of meeting local needs.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
28	Local Developer Consortium (Shingler Homes Ltd, Shropshire Homes Ltd, Pickstock Homes Ltd and SJ Roberts Construction Ltd)	Whole document	1. Very concerned about impact on viability of residential development. Particular areas of concern are: -S106 contributions are increasingly required of smaller developments with the justification often arbitrary and requests made at a late stage which means they cannot be reflected in land prices and raise viability concerns. -CIL rates have increased significantly through indexation (78.57%) they should be reviewed. -There is increasing difficulty in securing RSL's to purchase S106 affordable housing units, particularly on smaller sites. Furthermore, concerned that the Council intends to review affordable housing rates and would seek assurances that this is informed by viability assessment. -BNG, Building Safety Levy and other national regulatory burdens are affecting viability. -Most sites incur abnormal costs. 2. The proposed increase in M4(2) dwellings will increase the size of smaller houses and therefore the costs. It is very unlikely that this can be recovered in sale prices.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
28	Local Developer Consortium (Shingler Homes Ltd, Shropshire Homes Ltd, Pickstock Homes Ltd and SJ Roberts Construction Ltd)	Whole document	1. Shropshire Council recognises the need to achieve an appropriate balance between ensuring development remains viable whilst also achieving design expectations and funding its fair share of infrastructure improvements. It is considered that the guidance in this document will support these principles. With regard to S106 contributions, the national tests define where these are appropriate. Ultimately development can only occur where it is supported by necessary supporting infrastructure. With regard to CIL rates, the Council has issued its intention to review its CIL Charging Schedule alongside preparation of the next Shropshire Local Plan. This is the only mechanism available to review these rates. With regard to affordable housing take-up, this is beyond the scope of this SPD, however the Council will of course support developers if they assistance in securing RSL's to purchase S106 affordable housing units at appropriate values. With regard to the wider factors that influence development viability, these are recognised by the Council and they have and will continue to be given due consideration when preparing policy documents and determining planning applications. With regard to the potential for abnormal costs, this is also recognised by the Council and there are mechanisms in the adopted Development Plan which respond where such circumstances arise and have significant implications for the viability of development. Further specific comments on identified issues follow. 2. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
28	Local Developer Consortium (Shingler Homes Ltd, Shropshire Homes Ltd, Pickstock Homes Ltd and SJ Roberts Construction Ltd) (continued)	Whole document	3. National Space standards will increase costs but will not generally produce a proportionate increase in selling prices. 4. Garage sizes, garden sizes, cycle storage and open space requirements incur development costs that are not generally recoverable in sale prices and will further undermine viability.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
28	Local Developer Consortium (Shingler Homes Ltd, Shropshire Homes Ltd, Pickstock Homes Ltd and SJ Roberts Construction Ltd) (continued)	Whole document	3. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 4. With regard to garage and car port sizes, it is noted that there are many different standards, however those in the draft SPD directly align with the Council's SMART guidance which have been informed by consultation. It is considered that it remains appropriate to utilise these standards, but it will be clarified that this is in circumstances where the garages are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision. With regard to cycle parking the guidance is considered entirely appropriate - further it should be noted that the garage sizes within the Council's SMART guidance is to allow for one cycle parking space. With regard to garden sizes, the Council considers these principles generally align with good practice but recognises that smaller gardens may be appropriate for smaller units, so appropriate flexibility will be integrated. With regard to open space requirements, these standards are well established, with the guidance supporting effective achievement of standards.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
29	Boningale Developments	Whole document	1. The SPD seeks to introduce new policy, impose new technical standards, and present requirements beyond national policy and statutory regulation. It cannot legally be given any weight in decision making. Paragraph 1.1 states the Sped includes design expectation and para 1.2 that it will be used in determining planning applications. Wider language and content with the use of tick-box standards, quantitative thresholds and prescriptive “should” statements which, in practice, are likely to be treated as mandatory requirements by decision makers and statutory consultees go far beyond the scope of an SPD. 2. Paragraphs 6.7(b) and 8.58, state all new dwellings must achieve M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards, and on sites of five or more dwellings 5% must achieve M4(3) wheelchair user standards. These are optional Building Regulations standards, which national policy and guidance explicitly stage may only be applied where a local planning authority has demonstrated need and viability and has adopted those standards through Local Plan policy. This should not be introduced through SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
29	Boningale Developments	Whole document	1. The Council recognises that an SPD provides guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan, rather than itself providing policies or forming part of the adopted Development Plan. The guidance within the draft SPD achieves this principle, supporting understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan, with the appendices of the draft SPD assisting in understanding this relationship. However, it is accepted that the introduction could be clearer and as such appropriate amendments are proposed. With regard to wider language, the use of 'should' is considered entirely appropriate and standard practice in guidance - Development Management officers are experienced in the application of guidance expressed in such a way; guidance on quantitative thresholds are to support understanding of the requirements of policies in the adopted Development Plan - reflecting the role of SPD's in providing such guidance to support understanding and application of Development Plan policy; and the purpose of the tick box graphics are to support identification of key guidance rather than forming a checklist with such a mechanism not forming part of the draft SPD. 2. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
29	Boningale Developments (continued)	Whole document	3. Paragraph 6.7(c) and 8.63 require schemes of 50 or more dwellings provide 10% specialist housing. This is strays beyond design guidance constituting strategic housing policy intervention with potential implications for land value, scheme viability and delivery. This should not be introduced through SPD. 4. Paragraphs 8.6–8.9 specify fixed quantitative standards on separation distances. These standards will directly impact density and site capacity and are therefore policy in substance. They should not be introduced through SPD. 5. Paragraph 8.26(a) mandates minimum garden sizes that go beyond the requirements set out in SAMDev Policy MD2. Such an approach conflicts directly with the purpose of an SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
29	Boningale Developments (continued)	Whole document	3. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure *"that all housing developments are* ***designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities*** " (our emphasis) and that the Council will support *"the* ***provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision*** *, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need"* (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should *"on sites of five or more dwellings,* ***include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence*** *and community consultation* " (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. 4. The guidance on separation standards specifically supports application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. In particular, this guidance supports understanding of expectations within Policy CS6 on the enhancement of local distinctiveness, achievement of appropriate scale, density, pattern and design that reflects local context; and compliance with local design guidance (which itself represents). Furthermore, this guidance supports the understanding of expectations in Policy MD2, including those on respecting local character, responding to form and layout of existing development (including scale, density and plot sizes), and supports consideration of design of landscaping and open space holistically. 5. The guidance on garden sizes specifically supports application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. In particular, the guidance supports understanding of expectations within Policy CS6 on being adaptable to changing lifestyle needs, achievement of appropriate scale, density, pattern and design that reflects local context; safeguarding community health and wellbeing and compliance with local design guidance (which itself represents). Furthermore, this guidance supports the understanding of expectations in Policy MD2, including those on respecting local character, responding to form and layout of existing development (including scale, density and plot sizes), and supports consideration of design of landscaping and open space holistically.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
29	Boningale Developments (further continued)	Whole document	6. Paragraphs 6.9 and 8.42 onwards promote fabric-first energy efficiency, carbon offsetting, embodied carbon assessment and renewable energy generation. These matters are already comprehensively regulated by Building Regulations and national policy. There is no justification for the SPD to address these matters. 7. It is not lawful to introduce nationally described space standards through an SPD. 8. The approach to parking provision, shared surfaces and "pedestrian first" principles are applies in a uniform and unrealistic way which fails to reflect the fundamentally rural character of much of Shropshire and the reality of how communities' function. 9. The SPD relies on dated evidence. 10. Design, density, parking provision, use of shared surfaces, provision of cycleways, are all areas that should be determined on a site-by-site basis. What is appropriate in Shrewsbury will not be appropriate in Much Wenlock for example. 11. Viability implications of the guidance are profound. Mandatory M4(2) compliance, mandatory M4(3) provision, 10% specialist housing, fixed separation distances, minimum open space standards, minimum garden sizes, enhanced sustainability measures, increased dwelling and garage sizes and carbon expectations, all sit alongside existing policy burdens such as affordable housing, biodiversity net gain, nutrient neutrality mitigation and infrastructure contributions. It will materially reduce developable capacity, increase build costs and undermine deliverability. The SPD therefore risks directly undermining the Government's objective to significantly boost housing supply. 12. If the Council seeks to use this SPD to refuse applications based on standards that exceed national policy, exceed Building Regulations, and are not embedded in adopted Development Plan policies, we would be concerned that refusals based on the SPD would be overturned at appeal.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
29	Boningale Developments (further continued)	Whole document	6. The Council is aware that Government intends to regulate energy efficiency through Building Regulations. The guidance in the draft SPD is entirely consistent with and complementary to this approach - it does not seek to exceed Building Regulation standards, rather it provides guidance on the expectations in policy CS6 regarding design that mitigates and adapts to climate change and safeguards natural resources. 7. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers - evidence is clear that the nationally described space standards result in housing better able to support immediate and longer term needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 8. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on these matters generally appropriate. However, having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly high. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 9. The purpose of this SPD is to provide guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. The guidance is responsive to the characteristics and demographics of Shropshire informed by latest information. It is also considered consistent with current national policy/legislation. 10. Shropshire Council agrees with this principle, which is reflected within the guidance of this draft SPD. 11 and 12. Shropshire Council considers the guidance in this SPD appropriate. It support understanding and application of existing policies in the adopted Development Plan.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
30	Shrewsbury Town Council	Whole document	1. Support the five high-level design principles, emphasis on sustainability, and acknowledgement the SPD provides detailed guidance to support policy understanding and application. 2. Whilst county-wide, consider the SPD should expressly recognise the special historic character of towns such as Shrewsbury. 3. Guidance on layout, function and amenity space should emphasise that site context (urban vs rural vs edge-of-town) will determine appropriate scale and density. The term “one size fits all” must be avoided. 4. Given Shrewsbury's riverside location (River Severn) and history of flooding, suggest the SPD include a clearer reference to flood risk, flood resilience, and adaptation measures (e.g., raised finished floor levels, resilient materials, drainage integrated with open space). While broader sustainability is addressed, flood-risk deserves explicit mention. 5. Guidance for infill, back-land or brownfield sites needs to recognise challenges around constrained sites, existing built context, servicing and amenity. The SPD should provide specific commentary (or an annex) for such constrained urban sites. 6. Support high design standards, but urge the SPD to recognise that increased design/technical requirements may potentially increase development costs and affect viability – especially for affordable housing. Suggest the SPD includes language about balancing design ambitions with viability and enabling flexible approaches where affordable housing delivery is affected. 7. Would welcome a commitment to monitor and review how the SPD is used in practice – e.g., examples of planning applications where guidance has been applied, feedback on outcomes, and how any unintended consequences (e.g., slower delivery/lower viability) are addressed. 8. Request Shropshire Council works closely with Shrewsbury Town Council (and relevant stakeholders) in delivering the SPD and any associated design review or pre-application processes within Shrewsbury. We also suggest that the SPD is accompanied by practical toolkits or worked examples, including for town-centre, edge of-town and rural contexts.
31	Natural Resources Wales	No specific comments	1. No specific comments.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
30	Shrewsbury Town Council	Whole document	1. Noted. 2. Shropshire Council recognises that Shropshire is a diverse county, with a varied landscape and hundreds of settlements - each with its own character and identity - this has specifically informed the approach to provision of guidance in this draft SPD. Unfortunately this does mean that it can be challenging to specifically recognise individual characteristics within specific settlements - however the guidance is considered sufficiently flexible to respond to this diversity. 3. Agreed, the Council considers this is achieved within the guidance of this draft SPD. 4. Noted, the draft SPD provides guidance on flood risk management within the technical guidance section. On balance this is considered proportionate given the wider available guidance on this matter. 5. The draft SPD includes guidance on backland, rear garden development and sub-division of dwelling plots within the technical guidance section. The principles of design for brownfield sites are a 'thread' throughout the draft SPD. 6. Noted, the Council considers the policies of the adopted Development Plan strike an appropriate balance between maximising design quality and maintaining development viability - the guidance in this draft SPD reflects this balance. 7. Shropshire Council has issued an intention to commence preparation of the next Local Plan, this provides the ideal mechanism to review this SPD. 8. Noted, the Council values the input of Shrewsbury Town Council and other stakeholders in both plan-making and decision-making. However, this specific issues is beyond the scope of this SPD.
31	Natural Resources Wales	No specific comments	1. Noted

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
32	MossCo Architects	Whole document	1. Does guidance in section 2 apply to conversions (i.e. town centre properties to apartments)? 2. Para 3.9c - Designing new housing estates with simple street patterns can make developments feel unnatural and artificial. Some complexity in the layout of streets can help development feel more natural. 3. Para 8.13d - Does the minimum of 30m2 per person open space apply to apartment block developments? Would developments of apartment blocks be expected to provide this area of open space? This could make many developments financially unviable. 4. Para 8.48 - There is no guidance on the provision of parking spaces for converted buildings (e.g. commercial to residential in a town centre situation) It is not always possible to provide parking for converted properties due to the nature of their location and surroundings (i.e. a town centre) 5. No consideration has been given to surface water drainage and how landscaping might be used to mitigate flood risk.
33	National Highways	Whole document	1. Support those chapters which support integration and inclusivity and sustainability. The design of new developments to promote active and sustainable transport as the primary mode of transport, thereby encouraging modal shift, aligns with the objectives of both the NPPF and the Circular in reducing the need to travel by private vehicle.
34	Natural England	No specific comments	1. No specific comments.
35	Network Rail	Whole document	1. Design of extensions should factor in the railway as consideration for mitigation from impacts of development and construction works.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
32	MossCo Architects	Whole document	1. The guidance in section 2 applies to all new dwellings. However the para 2.15 is clear that *"Although it is recognised that due to scale and context of a site some key design considerations (related to 'layout', inclusivity and sustainability' and 'integration' themes) are less applicable to replacement and small scale residential development."* 2. Shropshire Council considers that a clear street hierarchy can achieve an attractive layout whilst ensuring development is easily navigable. 3. Open space requirements are established in Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan and apply to all forms of residential development. 4. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly high. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 5. Section 6 of the draft SPD specifically addresses the potential for open space and public realm to achieve multiple functions, including flood management.
33	National Highways	Whole document	1. Noted
34	Natural England	No specific comments	1. Noted
35	Network Rail	Whole document	1. Noted. Advice on this matter will be incorporated into the document.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
36	Bowsall Developments Ltd	Whole document	1. The SPD introduces expectations that go beyond existing Development Plan policy and should be removed (e.g. inclusive design requirements at para. 6, separation distances at paras 8.7-8.8 and specialist housing requirements at para 8.63). This should be reserved for the Local Plan.
36	Bowsall Developments Ltd (continued)	Whole document	2. Paragraph 8.93 should be reworded to reflect latest guidance on Flood Risk Sequential Tests (PPG Paragraph 027 Reference ID: - 7-027-20220825). 3. Once adopted, the Council should allow a reasonable transition period. It is suggested that the SPD would not apply to any planning application that has been submitted at the time of adoption and would not apply to any scheme submitted within 6 months of the adoption date of the SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
36	Bowsall Developments Ltd	Whole document	1. Shropshire Council considers that the guidance within this draft SPD is generally appropriate - supporting the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. With regard to guidance on accessible housing and specialist housing, Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing and specialist housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest evidence Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. Policy CS11 also specifies that the Council will support "the provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need" (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should "on sites of five or more dwellings, include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation" (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards and the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.
36	Bowsall Developments Ltd (continued)	Whole document	1 (continued). The guidance on separation standards specifically supports application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. In particular, this guidance supports understanding of expectations within Policy CS6 on the enhancement of local distinctiveness, achievement of appropriate scale, density, pattern and design that reflects local context; and compliance with local design guidance (which itself represents). Furthermore, this guidance supports the understanding of expectations in Policy MD2, including those on respecting local character, responding to form and layout of existing development (including scale, density and plot sizes), and supports consideration of design of landscaping and open space holistically. 2. Shropshire Council considers the guidance in paragraph 8.93 is consistent with national policy and guidance. 3. As this is a guidance document, supporting the understanding and application of policy in the adopted Development Plan, it is not considered that a transitional period is necessary.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
37	Anwyl Homes	Whole document	1. SPD's should build upon existing policies and cannot introduce new requirements over and above those set out in the Development Plan, which will have been tested for soundness and financial viability. Introducing requirements through an SPD is contrary to national policy and guidance. 2. SPDs must avoid terms such as 'must' and should not specify 'minimum and maximum requirements' unless they are set out in an adopted Development Plan Document) doing so undermines Development Plan policy and adds to the financial burdens for developers. 3. Paragraph 3.3 is overly prescriptive and should be reworded to clarify it is not mandatory. 4. Paragraph 3.4 uses the word “should” alongside tick marks which may result in a requirement to meet every criterion, regardless of site context. This is inappropriate for SPD guidance, so should be clarified by a clear statement that not all criteria will be applicable to every site and that compliance should be assessed holistically and proportionately. 5. Paragraph 3.4(a-g) fail to acknowledge viability and other constraints. Wording should be added to confirm criteria only apply were feasible and viable. 6. Paragraph 3.7(a) sensitive transition is ambiguous and should be clarified to confirm it will be assessed on a case by case basis. 7. Paragraph 3.7(c) expects developments to extend pedestrian and cyclist links beyond the site boundary but does not acknowledge that land outside the application site is often in third-party ownership and therefore beyond the control of the developer. This risks creating an unreasonable expectation that off-site connections can always be delivered. 8. Paragraph 3.7(d) addresses ecological connectivity, these expectations may exceed adopted Development Plan policy requirements and should be limited to these requirements. 9. Paragraph 3.7(f) needs to clarify that Agent of Change principles apply only where relevant, in accordance with Local Plan policy and national guidance. 10. Paragraph 3.9(a) addresses multiple access points, this may be inappropriate in some cases so should be amended to where appropriate and feasible. 11. Paragraph 3.9(b) expectation to safeguard future connectivity may exceed site control so should be clarified that this is where reasonable and within the applicant’s control, and where it does not prejudice deliverability or viability. 12. Paragraph 3.9(c) preference for grid patterns may conflict with local character, this should be reworded to recognise it is one approach and the layouts must respond to local character, topography and context.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
37	Anwyl Homes	Whole document	1, 2, 15, 28 and 47. The Council recognises that an SPD provides guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan, rather than itself providing policies or forming part of the adopted Development Plan. The guidance within the draft SPD achieves this principle, supporting understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan, with the appendices of the draft SPD assisting in understanding this relationship. With regard to wider language, the use of 'must' is limited to references to policies and general descriptions of what constitutes high-quality design; the use of 'minimums and maximums' is considered entirely compatible with the role of guidance - supporting understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. 3. The Council does not intend paragraph 3.3 to represent a mandatory process, but rather an explanation of best proactive. Minor amendments will be incorporated to clarify this. 4. The Council disagrees use of “should” alongside tick marks in paragraph 3.4 constitutes an inappropriate requirement. Rather, it provides clear guidance on the factors that should be considered when designing a site so as to achieve efficient use of the site - consistent with the requirements of Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy. 5. The Council considers the guidance in paragraph 3.4(a-g) entirely appropriate, supporting understanding and application of Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy and MD2 of the SAMDev Plan. 6. The Council considers the term sensitive transition is appropriate and suitably responsive to the differing contexts of development in Shropshire. 7. The Council is cognisant of this issue and intended the guidance in paragraph 3.7(c) to reflect it through reference to 'opportunities'. However, to avoid ambiguity on this matter, an amendment will be incorporated. 8. The Council considers this guidance is entirely consistent with Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and MD12 of the SAMDev Plan which outline the expectation that development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire’s environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. 9. Whilst the Council considers it should be apparent that the agent of change principle should only be applied in relevant circumstances, an appropriate amendment will be incorporated to ensure this is clear. 10 and 11. The Council considers the guidance in paragraphs 3.9(a) and (b) appropriately flexible to respond to the diverse development that arises in Shropshire. 12. It is considered that the context to the reference on grid patterns (formal or more relaxed) allows for appropriate flexibility to respond to the characteristics of the site whilst ensuring layouts aid navigation. It is also considered that density is more appropriately addressed in the guidance on character appearance.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
37	Anwyl Homes (continued)	Whole document	13. Paragraph 3.9(e) filtered permeability may conflict with amenity or management considerations. Amend wording to confirm that filtered permeability should be provided where it enhances safety, legibility and amenity, and does not create management or security issues. 14. Paragraph 3.9(f) blanket discouragement of private roads risks undermining deliverability, this should be reworded to state they should be minimised where appropriate. 15. Paragraph 4.7 risks forming a rigid checklist. This is inappropriate for SPD guidance, so should be clarified by a clear statement that not all criteria will be applicable to every site and that compliance should be assessed holistically and proportionately. 16. Paragraph 4.7(b) expectation for “character streets” may conflict with context. It should be clarified that character streets and spaces should be provided where appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. 17. Paragraph 4.7(c) should be reworded to state that locally inspired naming may be encouraged, but is not a planning requirement. 18. Paragraph 4.8(b) should be clarified to specify that responding to urban grain should not preclude appropriate changes in density or form where supported by policy. 19. Paragraph 4.8(c) includes subjective terminology that risk inconsistent application. Need to confirm these matters will be assessed case-by-case, informed by Local Plan policies and site context. 20. Paragraph 4.8(d) visual considerations may exceed relevance on some sites. Should be clarified it only applies where feasible and deliverable based on land ownership. 21. Paragraph 5.3(b) priority for active travel routes may be overly restrictive, wording should be amended to specify this prioritisation is where appropriate and achievable, having regard to site context and travel patterns. 22. Paragraph 5.3(b) design requirements may conflict with site constraints, this should be reworded to confirm that route characteristics should be achieved where feasible, taking account of topography, safety and environmental constraints. 23. Paragraph 5.3(b) approach to PROW's needs to clarify that they should be retained where possible, or appropriately diverted in accordance with statutory procedures. 24. Paragraph 5.3(b) expectation on level crossings may exceed technical standards. This should be clarified that such provision is where feasible and agreed with the highway authority. 25. Paragraph 5.3(c) requires clarification on what is meant by "schemes involving several dwellings" as public transport expectations may be unrealistic. It should state that such integration should be considered where viable and appropriate to the scale of development and location.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
37	Anwyl Homes (continued)	Whole document	13. The Council considers the principles of filtered permeability entirely consistent with amenity and management considerations. 14. This Council considers the guidance on private drives entirely appropriate and would note that it includes a recognition that there may circumstances where they are appropriate. 16. The Council considers the guidance in paragraphs 4.7(b) on character streets appropriately flexible to respond to the diverse development that arises in Shropshire. 17 and 19. The Council considers this guidance on locally inspired names and building form generally appropriate, but will incorporate appropriate clarification amendments. 18. The Council considers the guidance on responding to urban grain is appropriately flexible and that it would not conflict with achieving appropriate densities. 20. The Council considers the guidance appropriate on design and layout responding to landmark features - there is no need to own landmark features to positively respond to them. 21 and 22. The Council accepts there may be some circumstances where this is not possible but development remains appropriate. As such, an appropriate amendment will be incorporated. 23. The Council considers the guidance already reflects these principles. 24. The Council is proposing appropriate amendments to this guidance, reflecting comments from the highway authority. 25. The Council agrees that providing more clarity on what constitutes a scheme involving several dwellings would add value to the draft SPD. Informed by discussions with the highway authority, it is considered that an appropriate scale for this guideline is 50 or more dwellings. As such, an appropriate amendment will be made to reflect this.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
37	Anwyl Homes (further continued)	Whole document	26. Paragraph 5.5(b) expectation for uninterrupted boundary-to-boundary connectivity may be unrealistic. Amend wording to state green infrastructure connectivity should be achieved where feasible, and may be integrated alongside infrastructure where necessary. 27. Paragraph 5.5(e) innovative green infrastructure may not suit all development types, so should be clarified to consider where appropriate and viable. 28. Paragraph 5.7 risks forming a rigid checklist. This is inappropriate for SPD guidance, so should be clarified by a clear statement that not all criteria will be applicable to every site and that compliance should be assessed holistically and proportionately. 29. Paragraph 5.7(b) is overly vague and should be re-worded to provide clarity. 30. Detailed requirements of section 6 go beyond the scope of an SPD, which does not set numeric/prescriptive requirements for them. This is contrary to national policy and guidance and have not been informed by viability assessment: a. Requirements for inclusive design - M4(2)/M4(3) accessibility. b. Specialist housing. c. HAPPI/Dementia Friendly principles. d. affordable housing distribution. e. outdoor community interaction

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
37	Anwyl Homes (further continued)	Whole document	26. Shropshire Council considers this guidance appropriate. 27 and 29. The Council considers the guidance in paragraphs 5.5(e) and5.7(b) clear and appropriately flexible to respond to the diverse development that arises in Shropshire. 30. The Council considers the guidance within the draft SPD appropriately supports the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. The appendices of the draft SPD assist in understanding the relationship between this guidance and policies in the adopted Development Plan. 30a, 30c, 41 and 42. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
37	Anwyl Homes (further continued 2)	Whole document	31. Paragraph 6.11(g) is not consistent with the NPPF, which for non-designated heritage assets in paragraph 216 requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. 32. Paragraph 7.3(b) and 8.63 should be reworded to say specialist housing is encouraged rather than set a specific minimum requirement. This places a burden on applicants beyond the adopted Local Plan policies mentioned above and is not a matter for the SPD. Specific requirements need to be viability tested and are a matter for the new Local Plan. 33. Paragraph 7.4(c) needs to clarify what is meant by “appropriate and strong”. 34. Paragraph 7.6(b) reference to “left over spaces” is undefined and unclear, creating ambiguity. This needs to be clarified. 35. Paragraphs 8.7-8.8 set rigid numerical separation distances between new and existing dwellings. This is overly prescriptive and inflexible to site specific circumstances, so should be amended.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
37	Anwyl Homes (further continued 2)	Whole document	30b and 32. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure *"that* ***all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities*** " (our emphasis) and that the Council will support *"the provision of housing for vulnerable people and* ***specialist housing provision*** *, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need"* (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should *"on sites of five or more dwellings, include a* ***mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation*** " (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. 30d. The Council considers guidance on the distribution of affordable housing within a development is entirely consistent with and supports understanding and application of Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy which seeks to *"create mixed, balanced and inclusive communities, an integrated and balanced approach will be taken with regard to existing and new housing, including type, size, tenure and affordability"* . 30e. The Council considers guidance on outdoor community interaction is entirely consistent with and supports understanding and application of Policy MD2 of the SAMDev Plan which expects the consideration of the *"design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development to provide safe, useable and well-connected outdoor spaces which respond to and reinforce the character and context within which it is set".* 31. Shropshire Council considers this guidance is entirely consistent with Policy MD13 of the SAMDev Plan and the NPPF. 33. Shropshire Council considers that this guidance achieves an appropriate balance between clarity and flexibility. 34. The Council considers para 7.6(b) is clear that left over spaces are those areas without clear function. 35. The Council considers guidance on separation standards is appropriate.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
37	Anwyl Homes (further continued 3)	Whole document	36. Introducing Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) requirements in paragraph 8.11 goes beyond the scope of an SPD. This should be removed. 37. Paragraph 8.13 requirement for all open space to be usable excludes areas for ecological, landscape and visual amenity value. Useable should be clarified as where appropriate. 38. Paragraph 8.15 guidance on over-provision of open space where development may adversely affect the integrity of an internationally or nationally designated wildlife site due to recreational impacts is more prescriptive than policy MD2. This should be amended to align with Policy MD2. 39. Paragraph 8.26 sets specific numerical and spatial standards for private amenity space including guidance on flats, specialist housing, orientation, and boundaries. these requirements go beyond the scope of Local Plan policies, which promote amenity and high-quality layouts without prescribing rigid dimensions. 40. Paragraph 8.35 requirement to retain all important trees should be clarified as where possible. 41. Paragraph 8.58 requirements for inclusive design - M4(2)/M4(3) accessibility is inappropriate as it goes beyond policy and has viability implications. 42. Paragraphs 8.65&8.71 requirement for HAPPI principles and Dementia-Friendly principles within the mix goes beyond the Local Plan Polices. This should be clarified to encouraged. 43. Paragraph 8.88 water efficiency requirements are overly prescriptive and goes beyond the requirements of the adopted Local Plan, which does not mandate specific water efficiency standards. This should be removed. 44. Paragraph 8.93 needs to reflect the latest guidance on Sequential Tests in the PPG. 45. Paragraph 8.103 is not consistent with local or national policy and goes beyond the scope of a SPD. 46. Once adopted, the Council should allow for a reasonable transition period, during which the SPD would not apply to schemes already in preparation, subject to ongoing pre-application discussions, or live planning applications. 47. The SPD should be updated where necessary to ensure full alignment with the latest published version of the NPPF once the consultation has concluded and the final version is published. Consequently, the Council may need to hold a further consultation period on a revised SPD taking into account changes to national planning policy later in 2026.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
37	Anwyl Homes (further continued 3)	Whole document	36. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 37. The Council considers this guidance entirely appropriate and consistent with the expectations of policy MD2. 38. The Council intended this paragraph to align with the requirement of Policy MD2 and so for clarity an amendment is proposed. 39. Shropshire Council considers this guidance is entirely appropriate, supporting the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. However, appropriate amendments will be included to provide greater discretion between smaller and larger dwellings. 43. Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy specifies that development will "incorporate water efficiency measures, in accordance with the sustainability checklist in Policy CS6, to meet the water efficiency objectives within the Shropshire Water Cycle Study to protect water resources and reduce pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure." The referenced checklist forms part of the Sustainable Design SPD which specifies a minimum expectation of 105 litres per day - as such for consistency this SPD will be aligned with this mimulus expectation. Notably, Shropshire (Severn Trent Water Limited company area) is now identified as an area under 'serious water stress (water stressed areas 2021 classification). 44. Appropriate amendments are proposed informed by guidance from the Environment Agency. 45. Appropriate amendments are proposed addressing development contributing to the conservation and enhancement of assets. 46. As this is a guidance document, supporting the understanding and application of policy in the adopted Development Plan, it is not considered that a transitional period is necessary.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
38	Pickstock Homes	Whole document	1. Concerned that some proposed guidelines will adversely impact on development viability, thereby delaying or halting development. As such, some of the measures may be better through the Local Plan Review. 2. Paragraph 6.7(b) requirement for all new dwellings to achieve M4(2) standards will result increases construction costs, adversely impacting on viability and pricing out first time buyers. 3. Paragraph 8.11 requirement to meet Nationally Described Space Standards will have adverse effects on the viability of smaller house types. 4. Paragraph 8.26(a) minimum 70sq.m. of garden space is a significant increase over existing standards. Many homeowners (particularly in smaller single storey properties) do not prioritise garden size with smaller being preferable. This will also effect density and scheme viability. Suggest it only applies to detached 3 bed properties. 5. Paragraph 7.3(b) - agree with the proposals to omit a prescriptive mix of house types. 6. Paragraph 8.53(a) addresses cycle parking, whilst supportive in principle providing two spaces in a communal cycle store is too much and will impact on scheme viability. Also important to specify that where a house has a garage, no additional cycle storage is required.
39	Bridgnorth Town Council	Chapter 8, paragraphs 8.47-8.51	1. Concerned that there are no recommendations for the sizing of car parking spaces.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
38	Pickstock Homes	Whole document	1. 2. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard. 3. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 4. The Council considers the principles on garden sizes generally align with good practice but recognises that smaller gardens may be appropriate for smaller units, so appropriate flexibility will be integrated. 5. Noted. 6. It is considered that the guidance in the draft SPD is appropriately flexible on this matter, specifying provision is to be made wherever possible. However, an appropriate amendment will be made to provide clarity on the role of garages in meeting cycle parking provision.
39	Bridgnorth Town Council	Chapter 8, paragraphs 8.47-8.51	1. Paragraph 8.48 of the draft SPD addresses the size of car parking spaces.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
40	Pontesbury Parish Council	Chapters 3, 4, 7 and 8. Paragraphs 2, 3.7(e), 8.102, 8.80(c). 8.35 and 6.4(e).	1. Support five key design considerations. 2. Consider specific reference should be included to Neighbourhood Plans and local design codes as key sources of information on local character. 3. This document should not become a progressive tick list but be a flexible enough to accommodate well justified design. 4. Chapter 3 - In rural areas important to maintain vistas. 5. Chapter 6 - Good links within and beyond a site will encourage active travel and social contact. 6. Chapter 7 - Design of open spaces to encourage sociability as well as recreation, e.g. seats, planting. 7. Chapter 8 - Gardens to have some hedge boundaries where it fits local character. 8. Chapter 8 - Signage to be kept to a minimum. 9. Chapter 8 - Strongly support the aspiration for design to be the highest quality in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
40	Pontesbury Parish Council	Chapters 3, 4, 7 and 8. Paragraphs 2, 3.7(e), 8.102, 8.80(c). 8.35 and 6.4(e).	1. Noted. 2. The importance of Neighbourhood Plans is well appreciated, as they form part of the adopted Development Plan for Shropshire. However, it is appreciated that the SPD could inclusion specific reference, an amendment to the introduction of the SPD is therefore proposed. 3. The Council agrees that the guidance provided within this SPD must be sufficiently flexible to respond to the diverse characteristics of our settlements and the forms of development that arise. It is considered that this flexibility is achieved. 4. The Council agrees that consideration of views and vistas should form part of the design process. It considers appropriate reference to the consideration of views and vistas is made in the guidance in paragraph 3.7(e). 5. The Council agrees that good design encourages use of active modes of travel. It considers the guidance in paragraphs 3.7(b) (integrating development into its surroundings) and paragraph 6.4(e) (promotion and prioritised of active travel) suitably address this issue. 6. The Council agrees that the design of open space can promote social recreation. It considers the guidance in paragraphs 7.4 and 8.13 appropriately reflects this. 7. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on boundary treatments in section 8 of the document is appropriate. 8. Shropshire Council considers the guidance on signage in section 8 of the document is appropriate. 9. Noted.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
41	Nigel Ingham	Whole document	1. Document could be shorter but provides useful guidance which will support preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. 2. Paragraphs 2.6 and 2.10 useful in stating how new dwellings should fit in with existing properties so as to avoid altering the character of a village. 3. Paragraph 2.13 - very useful design considerations on layout, integration, inclusivity & sustainability and function. 4. Paragraph 3.4 - very useful comments on landform, features and ground conditions. Particularly relevant in terms of sites on slopes. Useful points on solar gain and flow of water. 5. Paragraph 3.6 - Several good points including connectivity. 6. Paragraph 4.1-4.10 - Character and appearance. Very useful points mentioning issues such as type, texture and materials. Imperative that new dwellings do not alter the character of a village. 7. Paragraph 5.3b. Important travel routes are safe. This means that excessive speeds need to be tackled in villages, for existing residents and for any future residents. Traffic calming should be included in these situations so that road crossing is safe. 8. Section 6 – excellent points that include affordable homes and housing for elderly or disabled. It is particularly important that these dwellings should be indistinguishable to other housing. Many youngsters cannot afford to move into villages they grew up in, so any affordable housing should be targeted at local people first. Similarly it is important that any future developments are not solely affordable housing, as this could alter the dynamics of the village. 9. Paragraph 6.9 – Need to avoid excessive car journeys. In terms of the actual properties Part L Building Regulations will force developers/builders to look at LZC technology such as heat pumps (rather than boilers) for heating, and also solar panels for the generation of electricity. 10. Paragraph 6.11 – In the past development has often harmed biodiversity so the inclusion of Biodiversity Net Gain BNG is important. This is likely to affect sizes and therefore reduce development density. 11. Section 8 - Whilst this section is extensive it is useful to demonstrate examples of good and bad practice (e.g. diagrams on P25). 12. Specialist housing - This section looks at age restriction general market housing. Many olde people cannot downsize easily or do not want to, as often they have been in their home of many years. There is also the trauma of moving. Many elderly residents may prefer to access care packages in their homes. There is a general lack of new build single storey housing such as bungalows, these would be more useful to elderly residents and those with limited mobility. The reference to HAPPI principles is useful. 13. Sections on Secure by Design/ adequate bin storage / street furniture – many of these points could be necessary criteria that builders need to satisfy prior to getting planning approval. 14. Appendices are useful.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
41	Nigel Ingham	Whole document	1. The Council considers the length of the SPD appropriate given the breath of issues addressed. It welcomes the view that the SPD will support preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. 2-5, 9-14. Noted. 6. The Council considers the guidance and the policies of the adopted Development Plan is appropriately responsive to the diverse characteristics of Shropshire. 7. The Council considers the guidance in section 5 appropriately addresses the design of roads. 8. Noted, it is considered the guidance on affordable and specialist housing is appropriate. It is considered that the specific allocation of affordable housing extends beyond the remit of this design guidance.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
42	Cameron Homes	Whole document - particularly para's 6.7, 6.9 and 8.11	- 1. Government is phasing out SPD's and adopted will be superseded when the Council adopts its next Local Plan - meaning any emerging SPD would now be short lived. As such, consider progression of this SPD is contrary to Government approach. 2. Significant concern the draft SPD is seeking to introduce additional policy and burdens, beyond that within the adopted Development Plan. It is also increasing development costs. These principles are contrary to national policy and guidance. 3. Paragraph 6.7 - Government intends to make M4(2) mandatory nationally, so local SPD requirements are unnecessary. Accessibility standards should be set through building regulations, not local guidance. This would also increase the cost of development, which is contrary to national expectations.
42	Cameron Homes (continued)		4. Paragraph 6.9 - supportive of the Council's aim to transition to net zero, however it considers that standards relating to energy efficiency are best led by national building control regulations. 5. Paragraph 6.11 - through this paragraph Shropshire Council is seeking to introduce additional policy burdens on development. Government has made clear that these standards are optional and can only be mandated through a Local Plan policy, not an SPD. Evidence of local need (e.g., SHMA 2020) is insufficient and out of date and viability evidence is also over 5 years old and cannot justify new requirements.
43	Paul Carter	Whole document	1. Diagrams of positive design should be included to make the document shorter and more accessible. 2. Particularly support paragraphs 2.6, 2.13, 3.4, 4.1-4.4, 6.9 and security by design guidance.
44	Paul Gurnett	Whole document	1. The Council should not be providing guidance on these matters.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
42	Cameron Homes	Whole document - particularly para's 6.7, 6.9 and 8.11	1. The Council considers it entirely appropriate to produce further guidance to support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan - this aligns with the guidance from Government which includes specific timescales within which SPD's can be adopted. It is understood that this guidance will be in place until such time as the next Local Plan is adopted - however it is considered the guidance will be of value for this period. 2. The Council recognises that an SPD provides guidance to support understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan, rather than itself providing policies or forming part of the adopted Development Plan. The guidance within the draft SPD achieves this principle, supporting understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan, with the appendices of the draft SPD assisting in understanding this relationship. 3. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.
42	Cameron Homes (continued)		4. The Council is aware that Government intends to regulate energy efficiency through Building Regulations. The guidance in the draft SPD is entirely consistent with and complementary to this approach - it does not seek to exceed Building Regulation standards, rather it provides guidance on the expectations in policy CS6 regarding design that mitigates and adapts to climate change and safeguards natural resources. 5. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers - evidence is clear that the nationally described space standards result in housing better able to support immediate and longer term needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration.
43	Paul Carter	Whole document	1. The value of diagrams in illustrating guidance is recognised and it is considered they are integrated where appropriate in the document. 2. Noted.
44	Paul Gurnett	Whole document	1. Shropshire Council considers it entirely appropriate to produce guidance on design to support the understanding and application of relevant policies in the adopted Development Plan.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
45	Shropshire Swifts	Chapter 6 and 6 Para 5.5 and 6.11	1. Strong support for the inclusion of swift bricks, hedgehog corridors, bat bricks/ tiles. 2. Greater emphasis on supporting biodiversity at all scales. 3. Sections 8.6, 8.7, 8.8 and 8.26 all imply very dense building of properties with very little space for nature in ever smaller gardens. Aspirations for nature should be included even at the smaller scale.
46	Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey	Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 8. Paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, 6.7, 8.8, 8.11, 8.48, 8.58, 8.63, 8.86.	1. Generally support the aims and objectives of Section 3 Layout, and the requirement for development proposals to make efficient use of land, in line with National Planning Policy. 2. Paragraph 3.7(c) - Agree opportunities to improve active travel routes beyond development sites should be encouraged, but this requirement needs to recognise this is only possible where land ownership and other constraints allow. 3. Generally support the aims and objectives of section 5 Integration and the requirement for development proposals to ensure connectivity to and through the site, providing green infrastructure and wildlife corridors and access to services, facilities, and sports and play provision. 4. Paragraph 5.5(b) concerned this requirement is too ambiguous and likely to interrupt development parcels, thereby undermining the ability to make efficient use of land. Furthermore, making wildlife corridors 'weave' through a site may not be the most appropriate form of connection and could increase travel distances for wildlife. 5. Paragraphs 6.7b and 8.58 seek to introduce a requirement for new dwellings to achieve M4(2) and M4(3) standards. This is inappropriate, unviable and unlawful. It is inappropriate as M4(3) standards would require either an identified end user, or a restriction placed upon who can purchase those properties built to M4(3) standards - properties cannot be left empty until these conditions are met. A more appropriate alternative would be a financial contribution to provide grants for works to properties where individuals require them. It is unviable as this requirement has not been tested to consider its impact on residential developments within Shropshire - it represents a marked change to current policy requirements impacting both site density and delivery costs and latest viability assessment evidence is out of date. Lack of viability assessment and the fact that this is tantamount to new policy makes this unlawful. This paragraph should be deleted.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
45	Shropshire Swifts	Chapter 6 and 6 Para 5.5 and 6.11	1 and 2. The Council recognise the importance of providing appropriate habitat for wildlife. Whilst this is already reflected in the document, it is considered there is a specific opportunity to promote those mechanisms that can be incorporated into dwellings to 'bolster' at risk wildlife. 3. The draft SPD provides guidance on garden sizes.
46	Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey	Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 8. Paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, 6.7, 8.8, 8.11, 8.48, 8.58, 8.63, 8.86.	1 and 3. Noted. 2. The Council is cognisant of this issue and intended the guidance in paragraph 3.7(c) to reflect it through reference to 'opportunities'. However, to avoid ambiguity on this matter, an amendment will be incorporated. 4. The Council's intention is to ensure green infrastructure and wildlife corridors are interconnected and fully integrated (weaved) into a site, rather than a disjointed afterthought. However, it accepts that there is potential for the phrase 'weaved' to be misunderstood, as such an appropriate amended will be incorporated. 5. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
46	Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey (continued)	Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 8. Paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, 6.7, 8.8, 8.11, 8.48, 8.58, 8.63, 8.86.	6. Paragraphs 6.7(c) and 8.63 seek to introduce a requirement for development of 50 or more dwellings to include 10% specialist housing. This is unevidenced, unviable and unlawful. There is no evidence of need or how such specialist homes have been delivered within Shropshire to date (experience suggests this is mainly through windfall). It is unviable as this requirement has not been tested to consider its impact on residential developments within Shropshire - impacting both site density and delivery costs and latest viability assessment evidence is out of date. Lack of viability assessment and the fact that this is tantamount to new policy makes this unlawful. This paragraph should be deleted. 7. Significant concerns paragraph 8.8 would impact the ability to achieve appropriate densities due to the effect on the location of car parking between detached properties. 8. Paragraph 8.11 introduces a general expectation that all dwellings achieve national described space standards. The inclusion of such a requirement in the SPD does not accord with the guidance contained in the Planning Practice Guidance. 9. Paragraph 8.48(a) - no evidence is presented as to how recommendations have been reached and therefore there is no justification for the suggested approach. It is considered unnecessary to require 3 bedroom properties to require such a high number of car parking spaces and such a requirement is likely to impact on the density that can be achieved and increase the dominance of car parking. 10. Paragraph 8.48(f&g) - the requirement for garages to be 7m in length should only apply where it is to be used for cycle parking as part of the cycle parking requirements set out in paragraph 8.53. If cycle parking is to be provided separately then the size requirement for garages should be reduced to 6m in length. 11. Paragraph 8.86 - Whilst generally we have no concerns regarding the approach, it is clear that the orientation of properties does have to respond to site specific factors and good urban design principles. As such, dwellings cannot always be orientated to support such an approach within conflicting with other elements of the draft SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
46	Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey (continued)	Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 8. Paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, 6.7, 8.8, 8.11, 8.48, 8.58, 8.63, 8.86.	6. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure "that all housing developments are **designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities**" (our emphasis) and that the Council will support "**the provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision**, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need" (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should "on sites of five or more dwellings, **include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation**" (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. 7. The Council considers guidance on a 1m separation between a detached / end semi/terraced property and its curtilage entirely appropriate. It is understood from the response there is concern this would constitute unused/undeveloped land, but this is unlikely to be the case. The 1m 'buffer' could consist of garden space, driveway or other appropriate use of land. The intention of this guidance is to support the layout of dwellings avoiding an overbearing terracing effect and to support future access for maintenance purposes. 8. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 9. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly rigid. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 10. It is noted that there are different standards for garages and that those in the SMART guidance (which have been informed by consultation) include an allowance for cycle parking. It is considered appropriate to utilise these standards in circumstances where the garages are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision but reference will also be made to their role in providing cycle parking. For clarity, amendments will be made to reflect these principles. 11. It is accepted that there are other factors that inform the orientation of dwellings, so an appropriate amendment will be incorporated.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
46	Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey (further continued)	Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 8. Paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, 6.7, 8.8, 8.11, 8.48, 8.58, 8.63, 8.86.	10. Paragraph 8.48(f&g) - the requirement for garages to be 7m in length should only apply where it is to be used for cycle parking as part of the cycle parking requirements set out in paragraph 8.53. If cycle parking is to be provided separately then the size requirement for garages should be reduced to 6m in length. 11. Paragraph 8.86 - Whilst generally we have no concerns regarding the approach, it is clear that the orientation of properties does have to respond to site specific factors and good urban design principles. As such, dwellings cannot always be orientated to support such an approach within conflicting with other elements of the draft SPD.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
46	Bloor Homes and Taylor Wimpey (further continued)	Chapters 3, 5, 6 & 8. Paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, 6.7, 8.8, 8.11, 8.48, 8.58, 8.63, 8.86.	10. It is noted that there are different standards for garages and that those in the SMART guidance (which have been informed by consultation) include an allowance for cycle parking. It is considered appropriate to utilise these standards in circumstances where the garages are to constitute part of a dwellings car parking provision but reference will also be made to their role in providing cycle parking. For clarity, amendments will be made to reflect these principles. 11. It is accepted that there are other factors that inform the orientation of dwellings, so an appropriate amendment will be incorporated.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
47	The Canal and River Trust	Whole document	1. Canal and river waterways should be recognised as significant blue/green infrastructure. 2. Welcome text in paragraph 4 4.8. 3. Section 8 should identify situations where Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments are likely required. This could reflect the requirements in the Local Validation List and the expectation that such assessments will be provided for larger developments and particularly sensitive areas. 4. Paragraphs 6.11 and 8.103 - welcome text clarifying the need addressing heritage and the need for Heritage Impact Assessments. However, additional text addressing Conservation Areas would be of benefit. 5. Paragraph 8.129 - draft text recognises the impact of lighting on wildlife and that it may be beneficial to prepare a lighting strategy for larger development proposals but should clarify that were detrimental impacts on biodiversity could arise as a result of development a Lighting Assessment will be required. 6. The draft SPD refers to sustainable drainage in various sections. Inappropriate SuDS can affect water quality and structural integrity of canals and rivers. However, where appropriate our canals can provide opportunities for the controlled discharge of surface water to a water body. Providing a cross reference to the LPA's adopted SPD on Sustainable drainage would assist developers understanding the wider requirements related to SuDS. 7. Welcome identification of Policy CS7 recognising the benefits that the canal and river network provides and the promotion of an awareness of it.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
47	The Canal and River Trust	Whole document	1. Noted. The Council agrees that the draft SPD would benefit from provision of guidance on considering canals and waterways where sites are in proximity to this infrastructure. An appropriate amendment will be identified. 2. Noted. 3. Noted. A footnote will be added to paragraph 3.4, explaining the role of landscape and visual sensitivity assessment in informing proposals - consistent with SAMDev Plan Policy MD12. 4. The Council considers sufficient guidance is provided to support those policies related to heritage assets, including conservation areas. 5. The Council agrees that reference to the role of a Lighting Assessment where the strategy identifies harm would be of value. 6. The Council agrees that a cross-reference to guidance on the design of SUD's features would be of value. This will be incorporated as a footnote to paragraph 5.5. 7. Noted.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
48	Vistry Group	Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Paragraphs 3.1, 3.9.b, 5.1, 5.5.c, 5.5.d, 5.5.e, 6.7, 6.7.b, 6.7.c, 6.11.b, 6.11.c and 6.11.g.	1. Request for greater flexibility in SPD wording on avoiding 'ransom strips', as multiple landownerships often make this difficult in practice. Suggest amending paragraph 3.9(b) to recognise that avoiding ransom strips may require agreement between landowners, not solely developer control. 2. In paragraph 5.5(c) Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles are voluntary, not policy. SPD should reflect this by stating developers should align "where possible". 3. The Shropshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a non mandatory and not intended to restrict development. The SPD wording should be more flexible and avoid implying LNRS requirements are binding in paragraphs 5.5(c) and 5.5(d). 4. Paragraph 5.5(e) - green roofs/walls may be unsuitable for many residential schemes, especially where roof space is needed for PV panels required under the Future Homes Standard; SPD should reflect suitability and viability constraints.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
48	Vistry Group	Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Paragraphs 3.1, 3.9.b, 5.1, 5.5.c, 5.5.d, 5.5.e, 6.7, 6.7.b, 6.7.c, 6.11.b, 6.11.c and 6.11.g.	1. The Council considers that the guidance on avoiding ransom strips appropriate and sufficiently flexible to respond to the different circumstances experienced across development sites. 2. On reflection, the Council considers that reference to Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles is best provided within the context element of this section of guidance. As such, an appropriate amendment is proposed. 3. The Council considers the LNRS an essential sources of evidence on the opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore Shropshire's natural environment. Guidance on the alignment of green infrastructure and wildlife corridor provision with the LNRS objectives is therefore considered consistent with and supportive of the understanding and application of the expectations of Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD12 of the SAMDev Plan. With regard to paragraph 5.5(c) it is recognised that dependent on site it may not always be possible to align provision with the objectives of the LNRS and as such an appropriate amendment will be incorporated. With regard to paragraph 5.5(d) the Council considers it appropriate to specify the can provide guidance to support identification and achievement of appropriate nature actions. 4. The Council considers this guidance entirely appropriate, it suggests consideration of innovative ways to provide green infrastructure, rather than requiring its provision.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
48	Vistry Group (continued)	Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Paragraphs 3.1, 3.9.b, 5.1, 5.5.c, 5.5.d, 5.5.e, 6.7, 6.7.b, 6.7.c, 6.11.b, 6.11.c and 6.11.g.	5. It is considered that paragraph 6.7(b) fails to have regard to the viability and deliverability of sites and extends beyond national policy (introducing an optional building standard). There is no justification for this proposal provided. As such, the requirement for 5% of homes as M4(3) standards on sites of 5 or more dwellings should therefore be considered on an individual basis and properly evidenced. 6. The definition of 'specialist housing' in paragraph 6.7(c) is unclear and it is requested that further clarity is provided on this. Further, the requirement for 10% specialist housing on sites of 50 or more dwellings is too high and will likely impact the viability of sites and delay them from bringing forward new homes to meet identified needs. It is therefore requested that paragraph 6.7(c) is updated to 5% and the wording is amended to be more flexible and have regard to sites on an individual basis.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
48	Vistry Group (continued)	Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Paragraphs 3.1, 3.9.b, 5.1, 5.5.c, 5.5.d, 5.5.e, 6.7, 6.7.b, 6.7.c, 6.11.b, 6.11.c and 6.11.g.	5. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be "designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11" (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure "all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard" (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard. 6. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that specialist housing for older people will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents. This is further demonstrated within the Council's recent Supported Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents, stating that to do so the Council will seek to ensure "that all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, including the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities" (our emphasis) and that the Council will support "the provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision, including nursing homes, residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need" (our emphasis). Furthermore, Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan specifies residential development should "on sites of five or more dwellings, include a mix and type of housing that has regard to local evidence and community consultation" (our emphasis). Local evidence is clear on the importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of older people within our communities. As such, it is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to the proportion of housing on larger sites of 50 or more dwellings consisting of specialist housing for older people. The definition of specialist housing is provided in section 8 of the document.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
48	Vistry Group (further continued)	Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Paragraphs 3.1, 3.9.b, 5.1, 5.5.c, 5.5.d, 5.5.e, 6.7, 6.7.b, 6.7.c, 6.11.b, 6.11.c and 6.11.g.	7. SPD wording of “at least 10% BNG” should be amended to 10% to align precisely with Environment Act requirements (not above). 8. Note that residential development often already delivers significant ecological enhancements; SPD should reflect this positive relationship with BNG outcomes. 9. Support SPD wording generally, but stress the NPPF requirement that any heritage harm must be weighed against public benefits, particularly relevant given Shropshire’s current housing land supply shortfall. 10. **Overall Themes** a. SPD should avoid turning voluntary frameworks (GI Principles, LNRS) into implied policy requirements. b. Need for clearer definitions, particularly around specialist housing. c. Key policies should be viability tested, flexible, and consistent with national policy to support housing delivery.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
48	Vistry Group (further continued)	Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Paragraphs 3.1, 3.9.b, 5.1, 5.5.c, 5.5.d, 5.5.e, 6.7, 6.7.b, 6.7.c, 6.11.b, 6.11.c and 6.11.g.	7. The Council considers the wording of the SPD aligns with the Environment Act. It does not require more than 10% BNG. 8. This is readily acknowledged by the Council and it is considered that this is reflected in the draft SPD. 9. Noted. 10. See wider response.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
49	Shrewsbury Civic Society	Whole document	1. Highly recommend guidance aligns with Homes England: Healthy, Homes Standard, published Autumn 2025, which is much more coherent/progressive on many aspects of what constitutes good design. 2. Consider parking guidance inappropriate. The council should be reducing reliance on private cars by promoting sustainable transport options and aspiring to car-free developments in highly accessible urban areas .
50	Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Whole document Particularly Chapters 5, 6 and 8; and paragraphs 5.5, 6.4 and 8.5.	1. Should include guidance regarding avoidance of pipe to basin type SuDS features and promote sumpless gully pots, road underpasses and badger corridors where appropriate. 2. Reference to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) should provide the documents full name. 3. Paragraph 5.5(d) should include guidance regarding the role of the LNRS in supporting the identification and achievement of appropriate nature actions. 4. Sites may not be within the mapped network identified in the LNRS but unmapped actions identified by the LNRS may be relevant. 5. Paragraph 6.4(b) should refer to the benefits of 'well designed' green spaces on mental health. 6. Paragraph 6.11(e) refers to non-disturbed spaces and then 'low' disturbance in those spaces. In reality low disturbance is difficult to achieve. The writing needs to be really clear on the expectation here. 7. Designing onsite BNG should take into account long term sustainability of the habitats being provided - ensuring they can be maintained. 8. Paragraph 8.34 boundary fences should include hedgehog holes where ever possible to make development permeable to wildlife.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
49	Shrewsbury Civic Society	Whole document	1. It is considered that the guidance in the draft SPD appropriately reflects best practice on design, whilst reflecting the intended role of an SPD - supporting the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. 2. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly high. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations).
50	Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Whole document Particularly Chapters 5, 6 and 8; and paragraphs 5.5, 6.4 and 8.5.	1. A footnote will be added to paragraph 5.5, highlighting the Council's detailed guidance on Sustainable Drainage. 2. To avoid confusion a specific link to the LNRS will be incorporated into the SPD where the document is first referenced. 3. The Council considers the guidance in para 5.5 appropriately highlights the opportunities of aligning green infrastructure/wildlife provision with the LNRS. 4. Noted, the Council considers the guidance which refers to the LNRS is not limited to the mapped opportunities. 5. Noted, this is a reasonable clarification and will be integrated. 6. Noted, the Council will ensure that the guidance refers consistently to low-disturbance. 7. The Council considers the legislative requirements sufficiently address the long-term maintenance of BNG. 8. The Council recognise the importance of providing appropriate habitat for wildlife. Whilst this is already reflected in the document, it is considered there is a specific opportunity to promote those mechanisms that can be incorporated into dwellings to 'bolster' at risk wildlife.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
51	Berry's	Whole document	1. Paragraph 2.13 - will there be minimum plot sizes, allowing potential for extension in the future whilst maintaining separation boundaries? 2. Paragraph 3.9(c) - Desire has previously been expressed for more organic road layouts and developments with less hierarchy on development, this is contradicted in the reference to a 'grid pattern' which potentially scuppers designing to work with landform. 3. Paragraph 3.9(f) – concern over inhibition of site navigation through exclusion of private roads, which allow for more efficient layouts on constrained sites. Furthermore, are the Council suggesting they want to adopt every road? 4. Paragraph 4.5 – strongly agree with this point and advocate this forming part of the new design code – just because there is poor design nearby, does not mean poor design should be acceptable in general. 5. Paragraph 4.10(c) – concern this may stifle future innovation and or restrict the natural evolution of design and development regarding materials and the like. 6. Paragraph 5.2/5.3 – agree and already incorporate most of the points within our designs. 7. Paragraph 5.5(e) – Council has not previously been receptive to this, but welcome and advocate for the promotion of green infrastructure. 8. Paragraph 6.7(b,c,d) – agree with principle of futureproofing all dwellings where possible. However, achieving M4(3) units is very prescriptive and difficult to apply this as a blanket percentage to all new developments. Also, do the percentages overlap or are these distinguishable per development?

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
51	Berry's	Whole document	1. The Council does not consider that guidance on minimum plot sizes is required, as the draft SPD includes guidance on garden sizes and separation standards. 2. The Council does not consider guidance in paragraph 3.9(c) to be overly restrictive, it references the potential for formal or more relaxed grid patterns, thereby supporting designs that are responsive to the sites landform whilst supporting navigation. 3. The Council has very significant concerns about the implications of private drives and their negative implications for site navigation. This guidance is considered entirely appropriate. 4, 6 and 7. Noted. 5. The Council does not consider this guidance to be overly prescriptible. It does not suggest materials should 'copy' those that already exist, but rather that they should 'complement'. 8. Shropshire's demographics demonstrate both our age profile and the speed at which the profile is ageing are higher than the national average - this demonstrates the important role that accessible and adaptable housing will play in meeting the needs of Shropshire's residents, as emphasised in the Council's latest SHMA. Furthermore, a key component of the Council's adult social care strategy is to support older people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. Core Strategy Policy CS6 specifically requires all development to be *"designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing,* ***adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11*** " (our emphasis). Core Strategy Policy CS11 continues stating that to meet the diverse needs of Shropshire residents the Council will seek to ensure *"all housing developments are designed to be capable of adaptation to accommodate lifestyle changes, i* ***ncluding the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, and to achieve the Lifetime Homes standard*** " (our emphasis) - notably lifetime home standards are now incorporated into Part M of the Buildings Regulations. It is considered entirely appropriate that in providing guidance on the achievement of these policy principles, reference is made to dwellings achieving M4(2) and M4(3) accessibility standards. However, the 100% M4(2) guideline had been linked to the expectation that Government was to mandate this, which it is now understood is no longer to be the case and it is appreciate the certainty over the interplay between M4(2) and M4(3) standards is of value. Therefore, reflecting the demographics of Shropshire and emerging national policy it is considered appropriate to amend this guideline to specify that 40% of dwellings on sites of 5 or mode dwellings achieve M4(2) standards and a further 5% achieve the M4(3) standard.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
51	Berry's (continued)	Whole document	9. Paragraph 6.7e – it is traditionally difficult to make affordable units indistinguishable as normally limited to a specific size. 10. Paragraph 6.9a – modern methods of construction for energy efficiency (think Passivhaus as exemplary standard) utilise overhangs for solar shading, and different materials and profiles. This is potentially contradictory to the character and appearance section – will there be a hierarchy here? 11. Paragraph 8.11 – advocate for this as a bare minimum standard and also push for enforcement of these rules – volume housebuilders should not be immune to this. 12. Paragraph 8.48 parking provision – does this not directly contradict the active travel element that you are looking to promote? Further to this, we feel that tandem parking on new developments creates issues with cars parking on the roadside rather than in tandem on the allocated drive. It should be preferential to have parallel / side by side parking drives where possible to avoid the on street parking scenario. 13. Paragraph 8.86b – meet building control requirements for energy efficiency. This should be the bare minimum, and we should be pushing for much better than the minimal needed to pass. Homes should be aiming to utilise passive principles and aim for Passivhaus standard. This would truly ensure energy efficiency and negate any future retrofit needs. 14. Section 8 water conservation and efficiency – this is the council's chance to be at the forefront of change and push for grey water recycling and or rain water harvesting technology where possible, reducing the use of potable water for toilets and irrigation.
52	Much Wenlock Town Council	Whole document	1. It is essential that the guidance includes reference to the role of Neighbourhood Plans - suggest section 8.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
51	Berry's (continued)	Whole document	9. It is considered that through location, architecture, and landscaping affordable housing can be made indistinguishable from market housing. The Council would also note that consistent with Policy MD3 of the SAMDev Plan, smaller market housing has an important role in meeting the needs of our communities. 10. The Council consider the guidance on fabric energy efficiency and character & appearance is entirely consistent. It should be noted that the guidance on character and appearance does not expect development to copy existing character, but to be complementary and also recognises the role for contemporary (but complementary) design. 11. The Council is passionate about ensuring future housing provides appropriate internal floorspace to meet the needs of occupiers. However, it is recognised that the phraseology of the draft SPD may have been overly restrictive, as such the Council is proposing appropriate amendments to reflect this is an aspiration. 12. Having reflected on the parking provision guidance, it is considered that they were overly rigid. Amendments therefore to be made to recognise the diversity of dwelling types and our communities (including that zero car parking schemes may be appropriate in our most accessible locations). 13. The Council is aware that Government intends to regulate energy efficiency through Building Regulations. The guidance in the draft SPD is entirely consistent with and complementary to this approach. 14. Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy specifies that development will "incorporate water efficiency measures, in accordance with the sustainability checklist in Policy CS6, to meet the water efficiency objectives within the Shropshire Water Cycle Study to protect water resources and reduce pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure." The referenced checklist forms part of the Sustainable Design SPD which specifies a minimum expectation of 105 litres per day - as such for consistency this SPD will be aligned with this mimulus expectation. Notably, Shropshire (Severn Trent Water Limited company area) is now identified as an area under 'serious water stress (water stressed areas 2021 classification).
52	Much Wenlock Town Council	Whole document	2. The importance of Neighbourhood Plans is well appreciated, as they form part of the adopted Development Plan for Shropshire. However, it is appreciated that the SPD could inclusion specific reference, an amendment to the introduction of the SPD is therefore proposed.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
53	Environment Agency	Whole document	1. Paragraph 8.87 refers to the Shropshire Water Cycle Study (2020), however this needs updating. Shropshire (Severn Trent Water Limited company area) is now identified as an area under 'serious water stress (water stressed areas 2021 classification). 2. The proposed water efficiency standards in paragraph 8.88 do not align with those set out in Shropshire Council's Sustainability Checklist as required by Policy CS6 of the existing Core Strategy. This sets a minimum requirement of 105l/p/d but indicates 90l/p/d would be good and 80/l/p/d would be best. Given the 'stressed' classification these tighter standards remain justified. Recommend tighter water efficiency standards should be adopted for new homes which go beyond the minimum standards set out in Building Regulations. 3. With regard to paragraph 8.89 implementing tighter water efficiency standards is generally not costly or challenging and is viable for developments that should be seen as a positive outcome. The Design Guide could include requirements for grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting for new development (designed at an appropriate scale) to help create places resilient to climate change, contribute toward achieving net zero emissions and reduce the demand for water. 4. Paragraph 8.90 should specify that flood risk assessments should be site specific and provide reference to the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Guidance Note (West Midlands Area). It should also provide minimum expectations for the flood risk assessment. 5. In paragraph 8.93, recommend the guidance highlights the need to apply a sequential approach to the siting of development to ensure: the site layout places new development within those areas at lowest risk of flooding; and management of any flood flows within the site. 6. Technical guidance on flooding could encourage development to maintain an 8m easement along watercourses, work with natural processes (natural flood management), restore and enhance watercourses where opportunities exist and make reference to the SFRA or any update (including cumulative impacts. 7. Recommend the section on Green Infrastructure includes reference to blue infrastructure. 8. Opportunity to expand on the agent of change principle in paragraph 3.7(f). 9. The design guidance could set an expectation for new development to be connected to the foul mains drainage network, include reference to the drainage hierarchy as set out in the NPPG.

Reference	Respondent	Part of Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
53	Environment Agency	Whole document	1. The Council intends to update the Water Cycle Study as part of the process of preparing the next Shropshire Local Plan, however it is considered appropriate to reference the currently available evidence. The guidance in this draft SPD addresses water efficiency, reflecting the 'water stress' concern. 2. Noted, for consistency this SPD will be aligned with the mimulus expectation of the Sustainable Design SPD. 3. The Council agrees with the view that achieving increased water efficiency is generally inexpensive and a positive outcome for development, this is reflected in paragraph 8.89. The Council also agrees that the draft SPD provides an opportunity to promote consideration of grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting. 4. The Council agrees that specifying that where required flood risk assessments should be site specific adds further certainty on their scope. The Council also agrees referencing appropriate guidance will support those undertaking flood risk assessment, as such a link to the EA guidance on flood risk for developers will be incorporated. However inclusion of specific expectations is considered unnecessary given this new link to relevant guidance. 5. Noted. An appropriate amendment will be made. 6. Noted, the guidance will be expanded to encourage developers to consider opportunities to minimise flood risk. 7. The term green infrastructure is generally well understood and incorporate blue infrastructure. As such, the Council do not consider it is necessary to specifically include it within the text. 8. The Council considers the draft SPD guidance on the agent of change principle is sufficient. 9 and 10. The Council considers expecting new development to be connected to the foul mains drainage network, separate foul and storm drainage, restrict surface water connections etc would be overly prescriptive.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
01	Nicky Hook - Bridgnorth Town Council	Chapter 4 Paragraphs 4.5-4.6	1. The Town Council concerned how the guidance will be publicised. 2. The Town Council felt the guidance on flat roofs was quite confusing, as the document tends to imply flat roofs are not allowed, whereas there would be a difference between what would be permitted in a conservation area, compared to properties not within such restrictions.
02	Shropshire Climate Action	As Detailed in Comments	1. Welcome the document, but any conflict with the draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code should result in the design code being given precedence. **2. Strengthen Support for Contemporary, Sustainable Design** -Paragraph 2.8 and the illustrations throughout the SPD should better reflect the stated policy encouraging contemporary and innovative design, not just traditional pastiche. -Reinforce alignment with the National Design Guide's principle that high-quality modern architecture will form the heritage of the future. **3. Produce More Localised Design Guidance** -The current single countywide document is too generic and risks becoming a "one-size-fits-all" solution. -Create or adapt guidance so it meaningfully responds to different area types (town centres, rural areas, villages), as recommended in national design guidance. -Ensure consistency of approach with the more tailored **Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Guide**. **4. Reconsider the "Proportionate to the Original Dwelling" Rule** - Allow more flexibility when larger or differently scaled extensions would enhance the wider street scene. -Acknowledge that estate-scale examples may not suit all contexts and that alternative approaches may be preferable in some situations. **5. Withdraw or Revise Paragraph 3.23 on Solar Panels** -The suggested requirement to align solar panels only with window positions is overly restrictive and conflicts with: -Permitted development rights. -The Council's own policy to maximise energy efficiency opportunities. ***Recommendation: Remove Paragraph 3.23.*** **6. Remove Blanket Restriction on Dormer Windows on Annexes (3.27)** - The SPD should not prohibit dormer windows on annexes when dormers are characteristic of the surrounding properties. - Replace with context-sensitive guidance rather than a universal restriction. 7. **Provide Practical Guidance on External Wall Insulation (EWI)** - Many pre 1930 homes (especially terraced houses) will require external rather than internal wall insulation. - Add explicit guidance in Chapter 6 and cross reference in Paragraph 4.8 to support energy efficiency retrofits outside Conservation Areas.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
01	Nicky Hook - Bridgnorth Town Council	Chapter 4 Paragraphs 4.5-4.6	1. Subject to adoption by the Council the document would be publicised on its planning policy webpages and its use promoted through the Council's development management service. 2. Noted. The intention of paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 is to ensure that the roof structures of extensions complement the existing building. This does not preclude flat roofs, if this is complementary to the roof structure of the existing building. To ensure this is clear paragraphs 4.5(a) and 4.6 will be amended.
02	Shropshire Climate Action	As Detailed in Comments	1 and 3. The intention is that this document and the design code are intended to be complementary. However, as this document covers a much broader geography it inevitably provides less specificity whilst the Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code is able to provide such specificity for this more focused geography. On this basis the design code would be of the greatest relevance as a material consideration within its specific geography. 2. Paragraph 2.8 includes specific reference to materials, finishes and fenestration being consistent or complementary. In doing so it is consistent with the policy that allows for appropriate contemporary design solutions. Similarly, it is considered the wider document and illustrative diagrams and consistent with the policy. 3. The document is intended to apply across all of Shropshire. It is for this reason that the document provides less specificity and focuses on good design principles. It is considered that the document is appropriately responsive to the differing characteristics of Shropshire. 4. The Council consider the approach to proportionality of extensions entirely appropriate and allows appropriate flexibility. The diagrams are intended to be illustrative and cannot capture all circumstances. 5. Noted. The intention of paragraph 3.23 was not to limit the location of solar panels so that they align with windows. This paragraph will be amended to clarify this matter. 6. Noted. The Council agrees that prohibition of dormers on all annexes is overly restrictive. The guideline will be modified to discourage dormers on annexes unless it is consistent with local character and in context of the annexe appropriate in scale, location and orientation. 7. Noted. The Council intended for paragraph 6.6 to highlight opportunities for appropriate internal or external wall insultation, recognising the diverse existing dwelling stock in Shropshire. This paragraph will be amended to clarify.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
02	Shropshire Climate Action continued	As Detailed in Comments	**8. Recognise the Benefits of Trees for Climate Adaptation** Amend Paragraph 4.24 to acknowledge that deciduous trees help prevent overheating in summer while allowing winter solar gain. **9. Integrate Climate Adaptation More Fully Across the SPD** Chapter 6 currently feels like an add on; climate considerations (e.g., insulation, glazing, renewables) should be embedded throughout the design advice. Include more detailed guidance on: - External wall insulation - Air source heat pumps - Climate responsive design approaches **10. Update Guidance on Heat Pumps and Renewable Technologies** Strengthen Paragraph 6.13 with factual information about national heat pump installation targets and the new Building Regulations requirement for 55°C flow temperature heating systems. Revise Figure 6.2: - Remove the incorrectly sited wind turbine. - illustrate heat pumps on ground mounts rather than walls to avoid vibration issues. 11. **Rephrase Requirements for Heritage Impact Assessments in Conservation Areas** - The current wording requiring assessment of the impact on the **entire conservation area** is disproportionate for minor works. - Rephrase to emphasise that assessments should be **proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal**.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
02	Shropshire Climate Action continued	As Detailed in Comments	8. Noted. The Council agrees that paragraph 4.25 would benefit from reference to the role of trees in adapting to our changing climate and as such it will be appropriately amended. 9 and 10. The Council considers that the document achieves an appropriate balance between focusing on the design of residential extensions and highlighting the opportunities that such extensions offer to incorporate energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. Further guidance on such measures is best achieved through separate documents. 11. Noted. Figure 8.1 outlines the scope of a Heritage Impact Assessment specifying it should be proportionate to the significance of the relevant heritage asset(s). The Council considers this is consistent with policy CS17 of the Core Strategy.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
03	Stretton Climate Care	As Detailed in Comments	1. Welcome the document, but any conflict with the draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code should result in the design code being given precedence. **2. Strengthen Support for Contemporary, Sustainable Design** -Paragraph 2.8 and the illustrations throughout the SPD should better reflect the stated policy encouraging contemporary and innovative design, not just traditional pastiche. -Reinforce alignment with the National Design Guide's principle that high-quality modern architecture will form the heritage of the future. **3. Produce More Localised Design Guidance** -The current single countywide document is too generic and risks becoming a "one-size-fits-all" solution. -Create or adapt guidance so it meaningfully responds to different area types (town centres, rural areas, villages), as recommended in national design guidance. -Ensure consistency of approach with the more tailored **Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Guide**. **4. Reconsider the "Proportionate to the Original Dwelling" Rule** - Allow more flexibility when larger or differently scaled extensions would enhance the wider street scene. -Acknowledge that estate-scale examples may not suit all contexts and that alternative approaches may be preferable in some situations. **5. Withdraw or Revise Paragraph 3.23 on Solar Panels** -The suggested requirement to align solar panels only with window positions is overly restrictive and conflicts with: -Permitted development rights. -The Council's own policy to maximise energy efficiency opportunities. ***Recommendation: Remove Paragraph 3.23.*** **6. Remove Blanket Restriction on Dormer Windows on Annexes (3.27)** - The SPD should not prohibit dormer windows on annexes when dormers are characteristic of the surrounding properties. - Replace with context-sensitive guidance rather than a universal restriction. 7. **Provide Practical Guidance on External Wall Insulation (EWI)** - Many pre 1930 homes (especially terraced houses) will require external rather than internal wall insulation. - Add explicit guidance in Chapter 6 and cross reference in Paragraph 4.8 to support energy efficiency retrofits outside Conservation Areas.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
03	Stretton Climate Care	As Detailed in Comments	1 and 3. The intention is that this document and the design code are intended to be complementary. However, as this document covers a much broader geography it inevitably provides less specificity whilst the Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code is able to provide such specificity for this more focused geography. On this basis the design code would be of the greatest relevance as a material consideration within its specific geography. 2. Paragraph 2.8 includes specific reference to materials, finishes and fenestration being consistent or complementary. In doing so it is consistent with the policy that allows for appropriate contemporary design solutions. Similarly, it is considered the wider document and illustrative diagrams and consistent with the policy. 3. The document is intended to apply across all of Shropshire. It is for this reason that the document provides less specificity and focuses on good design principles. It is considered that the document is appropriately responsive to the differing characteristics of Shropshire. 4. The Council consider the approach to proportionality of extensions entirely appropriate and allows appropriate flexibility. The diagrams are intended to be illustrative and cannot capture all circumstances. 5. Noted. The intention of paragraph 3.23 was not to limit the location of solar panels so that they align with windows. This paragraph will be amended to clarify this matter. 6. Noted. The Council agrees that prohibition of dormers on all annexes is overly restrictive. The guideline will be modified to discourage dormers on annexes unless it is consistent with local character and in context of the annexe appropriate in scale, location and orientation. 7. Noted. The Council intended for paragraph 6.6 to highlight opportunities for appropriate internal or external wall insultation, recognising the diverse existing dwelling stock in Shropshire. This paragraph will be amended to clarify.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
03	Stretton Climate Care continued	As Detailed in Comments	**8. Recognise the Benefits of Trees for Climate Adaptation** Amend Paragraph 4.24 to acknowledge that deciduous trees help prevent overheating in summer while allowing winter solar gain. **9. Integrate Climate Adaptation More Fully Across the SPD** Chapter 6 currently feels like an add on; climate considerations (e.g., insulation, glazing, renewables) should be embedded throughout the design advice. Include more detailed guidance on: - External wall insulation - Air source heat pumps - Climate responsive design approaches **10. Update Guidance on Heat Pumps and Renewable Technologies** Strengthen Paragraph 6.13 with factual information about national heat pump installation targets and the new Building Regulations requirement for 55°C flow temperature heating systems. Revise Figure 6.2: - Remove the incorrectly sited wind turbine. - illustrate heat pumps on ground mounts rather than walls to avoid vibration issues. 11. **Rephrase Requirements for Heritage Impact Assessments in Conservation Areas** - The current wording requiring assessment of the impact on the **entire conservation area** is disproportionate for minor works. - Rephrase to emphasise that assessments should be **proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal**.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
03	Stretton Climate Care continued	As Detailed in Comments	8. Noted. The Council agrees that paragraph 4.25 would benefit from reference to the role of trees in adapting to our changing climate and as such it will be appropriately amended. 9 and 10. The Council considers that the document achieves an appropriate balance between focusing on the design of residential extensions and highlighting the opportunities that such extensions offer to incorporate energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. Further guidance on such measures is best achieved through separate documents. 11. Noted. Figure 8.1 outlines the scope of a Heritage Impact Assessment specifying it should be proportionate to the significance of the relevant heritage asset(s). The Council considers this is consistent with policy CS17 of the Core Strategy.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
04	Shrewsbury Town Council	Whole Document	1. Supportive of the SPD and welcome its aim to improve the design quality of residential extensions and alterations across Shropshire. 2. There should be more **Shrewsbury specific guidance**, including case studies for terraced urban housing, historic villas, industrial conversions, tight back-garden plots typical of the town. 3. Needs clarification on how the SPD applies within conservation areas and to extensions near the River Severn corridor. 4. Require more nuanced treatment of high density, small-plot areas, where separation distances are tight and amenity impacts (light, overlooking, overbearing) can be greater. 5. Improve access to pre application advice. 6. Allow flexibility and contemporary design ensuring SPD language allows innovative, contemporary extensions where contextually appropriate. Recognising that many suburban areas in Shrewsbury can accommodate modern design solutions that still respect local character. 7. Add clarity on parking (garages and parking for terraced housing), boundary treatments (hedges, gates, fences), and trees and private amenity space in backland developments. 8. Clearer guidance required on terraced housing extensions, narrow plots with minimal separation distances and neighbour impacts where amenity sensitivity is high. 9. Ensure adequate implementation resourcing - need clear, consistent application by planning officers; adequate staffing, training and monitoring; and publication of case studies showing how the SPD is being applied and its outcomes. 10. Clarify interaction with other design guidance, such as the Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code to avoid conflicting advice and provide a seamless framework for applicants working in the town centre. 11. A Shrewsbury-specific section or appendix should be provided covering urban and historic town issues, typical housing typologies and good practice examples. 12. More illustrated examples should be provided especially for terraces, early 20th-century semis, modern infill and back garden extensions. 13. There should be a stronger emphasis on accessibility given the ageing population, ensuring extensions can support adaptations is considered important. 14. Encourage early neighbour engagement - particularly important in dense areas with tight plots.
05	Much Wenlock Town Council	Whole Document	1. The SPD provides useful guidance. 2. There is no reference to Neighbourhood Development Plans. Much Wenlock Town Councillors consider it essential to include a section on Neighbourhood Development Plans as these provide design guidance for their specific locality. Reference to Neighbourhood Plans should sit within Section 8 in the SPD, alongside key considerations such as the Green Belt and Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
04	Shrewsbury Town Council	Whole Document	1. Noted. 2 and 11. This document is intended to apply to all of Shropshire, as such the guidance must be sufficiently flexible to recognise the diverse characteristics of our County. It is considered that greater specificity on design requirements for specific locations is best achieved in complementary documents, such as the Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code. 3. Guidance on extensions in conservation areas and that may effect natural environment assets is provided in Section 8. 4. The Council considers the specified separation distances are appropriate and responsive to the diverse characteristics of Shropshire. 5. Shropshire Council offers a pre-application advice service, details of which are on its website. This document provides a link to the relevant webpage. 6. Noted. The document and associated policy specifically recognise that good design is not just about 'matching' existing character but 'embracing' opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place, but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style. 7. Paragraph 3.3(i) provides guidance on gardens, parking and amenity space. Paragraphs 4.20 provides guidance on boundary treatments and trees. The section on annexes and outbuildings (paragraph 3.27) addresses backland development in the context of extensions. 8. Noted. It is considered that the guidance on appropriate siting of extensions and minimising neighbouring impacts is appropriate. 9. Whilst resourcing is an important consideration it is beyond the scope of this document. 10. Noted. Shropshire Council entirely agree that guidance must be consistent and complementary. It is considered that this is achieved between this document and other existing/emerging guidance. As this document covers a much broader geography than the Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code it inevitably provides less specificity, but they are considered complementary. 12. The Council recognises the value of the illustrative examples, unfortunately given the diverse characteristics of Shropshire and our settlements they inevitably need to take a more overarching rather than circumstance specific approach. 13. The document includes specific guidance in circumstances where an extension is to meet accessibility needs of occupiers. 14. Noted, the Council will include an appropriate amendment to paragraph 5.1.
05	Much Wenlock Town Council	Whole Document	1. Noted. 2. Noted. The Council values the role of Neighbourhood Plans in providing locally specific design guidance. As such, a new paragraph will be integrated into Section 2 - Key Considerations.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
06	Pontesbury Parish Council	Chapters 4,7,8 , Paragraphs 4.15,4.19,7.14,8.24,8.41	1. Support the draft SPD as it will go some way to achieving a better understanding of existing policies and should improve design quality. However, it is too long, requires editing and any additions should be balanced by removal of existing text. 2. Redrafting should aim to make it more user friendly for the general public. 3. Chapter 4 - to avoid bland facades, support inclusion of such details as mentioned in 4.15. 4. Chapter 4 - the retention of hedges is important to retain a rural feeling. 5. Chapter 7 - support strong measures to ensure that affordable single plot housing remains truly affordable. 6. Chapter 8 - Agree that in Conservation areas, the impact should relate to the whole area. 7. Chapter 8 - A danger that the document will become mandatory and so not have a desired flexibility, especially when dealing with the historic environment.
07	Sally Stringer	Chapter 3.6, Paragraph - 'Set Back' from the principal elevation of the original dwelling - unless an alternative arrangement is justified.	1. Extra requirements for large garages/barns to the front of the building line. Particularly where neighbouring properties are close. this should address appropriate siting, proportionate form, scale and light, pollution, wildlife impact (including nesting birds) and risk of flooding.
08	Julie Cowley	Whole Document	1.The SPD should clearly state responsibilities relating to wildlife protection, rather than relying on assumptions or optional guidance. This includes: -Explicit references to priority species in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): Swifts, house martins, swallows, and bats. -Clear direction for developers to follow high quality guidance notes for proper installation of mitigation/enhancement features. 2. The SPD currently does not mention checking the biodiversity register to confirm whether swifts already nest on a building. The respondent argues this should be required, so there is no presumption either way. 3. The respondent strongly advocates making the following features standard requirements for any extension or alteration: -Swift bricks: Swifts are listed as Critically Endangered (BoCC 2025) and priority LNRS species. Installing swift bricks provides permanent nesting without affecting building integrity. -Bat bricks or bat tiles: Bats are also LNRS priority species. Integrated bat features offer secure, long term roosting opportunities. -House martin nest cups: House martins are now also Critically Endangered. Including approved nest cups ensures nests are placed appropriately and prevents destruction of natural nests (which is a wildlife offence). -Swallow nesting provision in barn conversions: Swallow populations are in steep decline. Renovation of farm buildings removes nest sites; barn conversions should therefore include replacement nesting opportunities. -Hedgehog Highways: The respondent recommends including hedgehog highways (small gaps in fences/walls) as an SPD requirement because they allow hedgehogs to move safely between gardens; reduce the risk of hedgehogs straying onto roads and this simple measure can improve the local population's resilience.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
06	Pontesbury Parish Council	Chapters 4,7,8 , Paragraphs 4.15,4.19,7.14,8.24,8.41	1 and 2. Noted. The Council considers that the document strikes an appropriate balance between being succinct and providing necessary guidance. 3-6. Noted. 7. The starting point for decision making remains the Development Plan. This document would not form part of the Development Plan, rather it would constitute guidance and a material consideration in decision making - other material considerations equally require consideration.
07	Sally Stringer	Chapter 3.6, Paragraph - 'Set Back' from the principal elevation of the original dwelling - unless an alternative arrangement is justified.	1. The document provides guidance on proposals for extensions to the front or side of properties, including reference to building lines.
08	Julie Cowley	Whole Document	1. The Council recognises the importance of nature consideration, however the document cannot introduce policy rather it is intended to provide guidance to support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. 2. Section 8 of the document provides guidance in circumstances where an extension has the potential, to impact on natural environment assets. 3. The document cannot introduce policy rather it is intended to provide guidance to support the understanding and application of policies in the adopted Development Plan. However, additional guidance will be provided on the opportunity that extensions provide to bolster wildlife by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as birds, bats and hedgehogs.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
09	MossCo Architects	Whole Document	1. Paragraph 3.22 - Position of rooflights is often dependant on the internal layout and it is not always possible or appropriate to align them with existing windows (e.g. Listed Buildings). 2. Paragraph 4.11c - It is not always possible or appropriate to align new windows and doors with existing windows and doors. This is heavily influenced by the internal layout. 3. Paragraph 4.20c - Manual For Streets suggests a car driver's eye height is 1.05m. Boundary treatments of max. 0.6m within visibility splays seems unnecessarily low. For example, it would be impossible to maintain an existing mature hedge at 0.6m without it killing it off. A max. height of 0.9m would be more appropriate. 4. Paragraph 5.6b - Balconies are often an excellent way to provide outdoor space to apartments where residents don't have access to a garden space. 5. Section 6 - Energy and water efficiency are already covered by the Building Regulations making this section unnecessary. The SPD will be used by agents (architects etc) to justify planning applications, but this section seems largely aimed at homeowners. 6. Paragraph 6.13 - Biomass boilers do not appear on the suggested list of renewable and low carbon technologies. While woodchip boilers are more suited to larger homes in rural areas, highly-efficient wood pellet boilers are available that are designed for residential use with automatic control and feeding systems which avoids the need for large storage areas for logs or woodchip. 7. Single Plot Affordable Dwellings - With the increase in working from home, the 106m2 floor area limit for affordable dwellings is inadequate. Extensions to affordable dwellings should be considered where there has been a change in the working arrangements of the occupants (i.e. they have moved from working in an office to working from home). 8. The document seems applicable to very simple, conventional buildings in an urban context. There is limited mention of surface water drainage which needs to be considered at the planning stage. Extreme rainfall events are becoming more frequent so the use of sustainable drainage systems and permeable surfaces needs to be encouraged to prevent surface water runoff which can lead to flooding. Private amenity space can be used to capture excess rainwater during extreme rainfall events. Rain gardens are suggested as an idealistic response, but removing impermeable paving or tarmac and replacing it with permeable gravel or porous paving is likely to be easier, cheaper and more effective.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
09	MossCo Architects	Whole Document	1 and 2. The Council considers this guideline is appropriate. 3. Noted. The Council agrees this is an appropriate amendment. 4. The Council considers that the guidance on balconies to residential extensions is entirely appropriate recognising they can provide amenity value to residents but there is also a need to consider overlooking of neighbours. 5. The purpose of section 6 is to promote the opportunities that extensions provide to deliver water and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation measures cost effectively. The Council would encourage agents to ensure that their clients give this section consideration when undertaking extensions. 6. Paragraph 6.13 is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It addresses common residential renewable and low carbon technologies. 7. The Council considers the approach to extensions to single plot affordable dwellings appropriate. It strikes a balance between providing flexibility for occupiers and supporting properties to remain affordable. 8. This document is intended to apply to all of Shropshire, as such the guidance must be sufficiently flexible to recognise the diverse characteristics of our County. The Council will however include additional guidance on flood risk within Section 8 of the document.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
10	Historic England	Whole Document	**1. Paragraph 3.3** could also relate to what should occur if the application is related to a heritage asset. This is applicable for all areas within the document, and it might benefit from a paragraph at the beginning about what happens if the application relates to a heritage asset. **2. Paragraph 4.1** could reference heritage assets, including Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets as different considerations will apply with respect to materials, finishing and fenestration. **3. Section 6** should further consider how this advice is applicable if the application relates to a heritage asset. **4. Section 8.12** is useful to include but we consider the document itself requires additional detail on what may or may not be appropriate within the context of any changes for heritage assets and links to Historic England's website and information relating to issues such as Listed Building Consent etc. **5. Section 8.17** onwards is very limited in detail on what this means for the World Heritage Site/s and what developers need to do in respect of this.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
11	Historic England	Whole Document	1. Noted. To ensure that it is clear that in circumstances where a residential extension has the potential to effect a heritage asset (or is subject to other specific design considerations) this may have implications for the approach to the design of residential extensions and alterations. 2. Noted. The Council recognises that the consideration of materials, finishes and fenestration of extensions or alterations may vary in circumstances where the building is or the streetscene contains heritage assets. However, it is considered that this is better clarified in paragraph 4.4 which will be appropriately amended. 3. Noted. Additional text will be incorporated into the introduction of Section 6 to recognise that measures to address our changing climate do not remove the expectation that wider design considerations (particularly in circumstances where a heritage asset may be affected) apply. 4. The Council considers the guidance in this document provides appropriate overarching guidance on the design considerations for residential extensions - including those that have the potential to effect heritage assets. However, an explanation that further guidance is available will be included. 5. The Council has specific design guidance on development in the World Heritage Sites present in Shropshire, which is available on the Council website with a link provided int he document.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
11	J3 Building Futures	Whole Document	1. Paragraph 3.3(f) to be amended so as to expect extensions not to be the central feature unless an alternative arrangement is justified – in the case of change of use or repurposing a building, or significant renovations which may use an existing building (or part) as a starting point, but seeks to add to it significantly rather than demolish. 2. Paragraph 3.6(a) should again allow for flexibility as per point 1. 3. Paragraph 3.17(b) why should porches be small in scale and flat roofed? Well-designed modern flat-roofed extensions can result in a very attractive and interesting dichotomy with an old building. 4. Paragraph 3.20(a) **s**mall dormers to front roof slopes are very traditional, attractive, and should be allowed. 5. Paragraph 3.20(e). seems too prescriptive – there's nothing wrong with well-designed flat roofed extensions, which if very modern in appearance can result in a very attractive and interesting dichotomy with an old building. 6. Paragraph 3.22(b) attractive buildings are about relationship of elements, not simply alignment, sometimes alignment looks too formal, too basic, and asymmetry can be very beautiful. 7. Paragraph 3.27(h) Why not? There are some very lovely old barns or stables that incorporate small dormers for rooms in the roof and are all the more attractive for it. 8. Paragraph 4.5(a) Why? Notes on modern flat roofs etc as above. 9. Paragraph 4.8(a) Architecture is about responding to the whole context of a building - an aspect of the street or geography for example might make it perfectly sensible/desirable/attractive to have an extension at a different angle. 10. Paragraph 8.24. Well-designed very modern additions can elevate a building and an area, and make a building look relevant, whereas simply adding something which looks the same might be regarded as pastiche, patronising, overly sentimental, and detrimental. This goes for listed buildings as well.
12	Canal and River Trust	As detailed in Comments	**1. Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.18-4.25** Inappropriate boundary treatment adjacent to our network could result in adverse visual impacts and on the setting of heritage assets. We welcome the guidance provided. **2. Chapter 6 Paragraph 6.16-6.21** Although extensions are relatively low risk, but could increase drainage flows, which could affect our infrastructure locally. Text should address the need for proposals to ensure that drainage systems are adequate to accommodate increased flows. Improvements could be made through the use of SuDS that also promote better water quality (especially if existing drainage discharges into watercourses). **3. Chapter 8 Paragraph 8.17-8.22** We welcome the guidance related to World Heritage Sites and the specific reference to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal. **4. Chapter 8 Paragraph 8.43-8.49** Canals and reservoirs, that form part of our network, are used for bat foraging and commuting routes, which are sensitive to lighting. The draft text should recognise the impact of lighting on wildlife and that were detrimental impacts on biodiversity could arise because of proposed lighting a Lighting Assessment will be required.
13	Coal Authority	General Comment	1. No specific comments.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
11	J3 Building Futures	Whole Document	1 and 2. The Council considers that it is appropriate to expect that an extension should not become the central feature of a property. It is noted that there may be limited circumstances where other material considerations justify an alternative approach, which is the case for any guidance and indeed policy. 3. Given the visual prominence of front extensions, it is considered important to provide clear guidance on size expectations. Regarding roof structure, in most instances again due to visual prominence it is considered that a flat roof on a porch is inappropriate as it is generally not in keeping with the original dwelling. However, it is considered appropriate to modify this guideline to recognise that there may be some limited instances where a flat roofed porch is appropriate. 4. Paragraph 3.20(a) specifies the preference is for dormers to be on the rear of a dwelling, it does not preclude appropriate dormers on front of a dwelling. 5. The Council considers that paragraph 3.20(e) is entirely appropriate. It specifies roofs will preferably be pitched, unless this helps define the character of the dwelling and streetscene. 6. The Council considers this guideline is appropriate. 7. Noted. The Council agrees that prohibition of dormers on all annexes is overly restrictive. The guideline will be modified to discourage dormers on annexes unless it is consistent with local character and in context of the annexe appropriate in scale, location and orientation. 8. Noted. The intention of paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 is to ensure that the roof structures of extensions complement the existing building. This does not preclude flat roofs, if this is complementary to the roof structure of the existing building. To ensure this is clear paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 will be amended. 9. Paragraph 4.8(a) specifies the location, angle, form and height of walls should be responsive to the original property - particularly for two-storey extensions. This is consistent with the view expressed. 10. Noted. It is considered that the guidance in the document is consistent with the view expressed.
12	Canal and River Trust	As detailed in Comments	1. Noted. Specific reference to canals added to new paragraph 4.21. 2. Noted. The Council will include additional guidance on flood risk within Section 8 of the document. 3. Noted. 4. Noted. A new paragraph will be included addressing lighting.
13	Coal Authority	General Comment	1. Noted

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Summary of Comments
14	David Barton - Community Campaigner	Whole Document - particularly chapter 4, paragraphs 6.1-6.3, paragraph 8.1 and paragraphs 8.41-8.42	1.The submission emphasises that Traditional Vernacular Architecture (TVA) should form the foundation of any Design document adopted by a Local Authority. The author argues that TVA offers economic, environmental, and community benefits while contributing to climate goals and heritage protection. Key recommendations include: -Use Design Codes not Design Guides- Codes should be mandatory, detailed and rooted in TVA to ensure consistent outcomes. -Work with specialist bodies - (e.g. Create Streets, The Kings Foundation) to align codes with proven public preferences and best practice. -Prevent demolition of all pre-1950's historic buildings, incorporating this principle explicitly within the Design Code. -Create and adopt a Local List of valued non-designated heritage buildings (as required by the NPPF) to ensure they influence design coding. -Require faithful restoration, retention and replication of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian townscape characteristics, preventing stark contrasts with post-1950's housing. -When demolition of newer (post-1950's) buildings does occur replacement development must use historic styles and local materials to ensure coherent character. -Support development of local artisan and heritage skills and encourage volunteer groups to help deliver conservation - aligned projects. -Streamline Planning processes for applications that support authentic restoration or traditional new build. -Ensure Design Codes account for era-appropriate style selection where multiple historic layers exist (e.g. areas blending Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian). 2. Overall the Design Code must centre on embedding traditional architecture as the local design language, protecting embodied carbon, preventing loss of historic fabric and ensuring new development reinforces a coherent and heritage-led urban form.
15	Dudley Council	General Comment	1. No specific comments.
16	Natural Resources Wales	General Comment	1. No specific comments.
17	National Highways	General Comment	1. No specific comments.
18	Network Rail	General Comment	1. Design of extensions should factor in the railway as consideration for mitigation from impacts of development and construction works.
19	Shrewsbury Civic Society	General Comment	1. Requiring the roof form of extension to match the original property might stiffly innovation.
20	The Environment Agency	General Comment	1. The document does not consider residential extensions / alterations within areas at risk of flooding. We advise you to include a section on flood risk, including the requirement for a simple flood risk assessment. Attached is our standing advice ‘Minor Development and Extensions’ to help inform this.

Reference	Respondent	Part of the Document Addressed	Shropshire Council Response / Action
14	David Barton - Community Campaigner	Whole Document - particularly chapter 4, paragraphs 6.1-6.3, paragraph 8.1 and paragraphs 8.41-8.42	1 and 2. Noted. It is considered the draft document encourages residential extensions to respond to the character of the existing dwelling - both in form and materials. Furthermore, the document includes specific guidance for extensions in conservation areas, to listed buildings (including those subject to Article 4 directions), and non-designated heritage assets.
15	Dudley Council	General Comment	1. Noted
16	Natural Resources Wales	General Comment	1. Noted
17	National Highways	General Comment	1. Noted
18	Network Rail	General Comment	1. Noted. Advice on this matter will be incorporated into the document.
19	Shrewsbury Civic Society	General Comment	2. Noted. The intention of paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 is to ensure that the roof structures of extensions complement the existing building. To ensure this is clear paragraphs 4.5(a) will be amended.
20	The Environment Agency	General Comment	1. Noted. The Council will include additional guidance on flood risk within Section 8 of the document.

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2026

Please note that part A and part B of this document should be completed.

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Design of New Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Daniel Corden

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	X	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		X

If completion of a Stage One screening assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above, and complete both part A and part B of this template. If a Full or Stage Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative impact or positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document (hereafter SPD) for the design of new dwellings and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation. Following this consultation, the equality impacts continue to be anticipated to be within a range of neutral to low positive to potentially medium positive across all the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined by the Equality Act 2010. There is potential for this to rise to medium positive equality impact for people in the groupings of Age and Disability, where there will be intersectionality, and Pregnancy and Maternity. Additionally, there is potential for a range of neutral to medium positive equality impacts for those in the further groupings for whom the Council seeks to give due regard in its decision-making processes, ie Other – Social Inclusion, Other – Carers, Other – Veterans and Service Members and their families, and Other – Young People Leaving Care. Across all these groupings, the impacts would be low to medium positive in terms of health and well-being opportunities arising from the achievement of the high-quality design of new residential development. This includes housing that reflects need, is accessible and adaptable, includes specialist housing for older people and those with disabilities and special needs, includes affordable housing, promotes active travel, and includes well-designed and accessible open space and green infrastructure.

The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD is anticipated to have positive health impacts, by enhancing the design of new dwellings. Enhancing layout and integration (connectivity to and through the site) of dwellings can support active travel and associated health and well-being benefits; enhanced provision of open space and green infrastructure would promote access and healthy and active lifestyles; and more inclusive and sustainable designs can meet the needs of communities and individuals with associated health and well-being impacts.

In particular, positive equality impacts may be achieved for groups including older people, people with physical, visual, auditory or learning disabilities, families with young children, and individuals with neurodiverse conditions, where refinements and enhancements to site layout support safer, more comfortable, and more navigable journeys around neighbourhoods.

The design considerations within the draft SPD include:

- Layout – making the most of the site, relationship to surroundings, and navigation.
- Character and appearance – a memorable place, enhancing character and appearance, and design.
- Integration – safe and convenient movement; green infrastructure and wildlife corridors; and access to services, facilities, sports and play.
- Inclusivity and sustainability – healthy and active lifestyles, inclusive and multi-generational communities, sustainability and transition to net zero, and biodiversity and heritage.
- Function – responding to current and future needs of communities, amenity, and safe and secure design.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of new dwellings and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation.

The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD identifies both ‘high-level’ and ‘technical’ design guidance for new dwellings in Shropshire. In this way, it provides guidance to support the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

From a health and well-being perspective, it is anticipated that the draft SPD will support applicants in preparing planning applications for new dwellings which achieve a high-quality design.

Such design will support achievement of an effective layout and integration (connectivity to and through the site), which supports easy navigation, safe and convenient movement, and natural surveillance of public realm, thereby ensuring they are perceived as safe by pedestrians and cyclists, even during the darker winter months where exercise levels reduce. Such modes of active travel have

clear health and well-being benefits and support wider council priorities and plans such the Health & Wellbeing, and Healthy Weight Strategies. Promotion of active travel can also support against cost-of-living pressures where non-car travel to employment or education is practical. Incorporating high-speed internet as a baseline will allow for greater employment opportunities (both in and out of county) for working from home or allowing disabled persons to take up opportunities previously unavailable to them.

Such design will also include meaningful open space, public realm, landscaping and green infrastructure – thereby supporting and encouraging healthy and active lifestyles and promoting mental and physical well-being across groupings.

The draft SPD includes specific guidance on achieving inclusivity and sustainability through design on new dwellings. This will promote healthy and active lifestyles and inclusive/multi-generational communities.

There are additional positive impacts in terms of the recognised positive mental well-being that may accrue from meeting housing needs. Access to housing is a crucial determinant of health.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of new dwellings and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation.

The respondents to this consultation included statutory organisations, representatives of the development industry, community and advocate groups and individuals. It is considered that this range of respondents provided an appropriate basis for the consideration of wider views on the draft content of the document.

The implementation of this draft SPD will be monitored through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report processes.

The Council will draw upon the learning from pedestrianisation efforts in market towns in Shropshire, which are building upon Covid-19 measures that led to improved physical access around towns by people in Protected Characteristic groupings and those we may describe as vulnerable. The Council will also draw upon strategic policy around public transport infrastructure including Active Travel, and best alignment with economic growth strategy development and with implementation of cultural and leisure strategy actions. These strategies all very much include efforts to promote social inclusion and in so doing achieve equality of opportunity for people in Protected Characteristic groupings to safely access economic, leisure and cultural opportunities in market towns.

Associated ESHIAs

ESHIA for the consultation draft of the Design of Residential Extensions SPD.

ESHIA for the consultation draft of the Design of New Dwellings SPD.

ESHIA for the final draft of the Design of New Dwellings SPD.

ESHIA for the final draft of the Ironbridge Gorge WHS SPD.

ESHIA for the draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code.

ESHIA for the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027.

ESHIA for the Scoping Consultation Document of the next Shropshire Local Plan.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact, and actions to review and monitor overall impacts, with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts

The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD identifies both 'high-level' and 'technical' design guidance for new dwellings in Shropshire. In this way, it supports the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan.

The design guidance in this SPD has been informed by a period of public consultation.

Climate change

The draft SPD would provide guidance and information to support the understanding and application of policies within the adopted Local Plan, which plans for the long term sustainable development of Shropshire – social, economic and environmental benefits.

Design guidance in the draft SPD support resilience and adaptation to our changing climate, with guidance on sustainable development, the transition to net zero through energy and water efficiency. This includes promoting the:

- Maximisation of fabric energy efficiency of new dwellings.
- Management of travel behaviours to minimise need for travel and encourage use of active/public transport.
- Reduction of waste and re-use/re-cycling during construction and operation.
- Principle of identifying opportunities to integrate and support community initiatives for on-site low carbon and renewable energy generation.
- Incorporation of measures to respond to our changing climate, including sustainable drainage, green infrastructure, water efficiency and flood risk management.
- Consideration of opportunities to minimise embodied carbon, support nature-based carbon sequestration, and offset carbon emissions.

The draft SPD is therefore expected to have a positive outcome on the climate change impacts listed below:

- Energy and fuel consumption (buildings and/or travel).
- Renewable energy generation.
- Carbon offsetting or mitigation.
- Climate change adaptation.

Economic and societal/wider community

The draft SPD would provide guidance and information to support the understanding and application of policies within the adopted Local Plan, which plans for the long term sustainable development of Shropshire – social, economic and environmental benefits.

Design guidance in the draft SPD supports the achievement of inclusivity within new residential development. This includes promoting the achievement of:

- An inclusive layout which allows people of any age, gender, and ability to access and use the site, including people who are in a caring role and those for whom they care. This could be families, people with physical or sensory disabilities, people with learning disabilities, and people with neurodiverse conditions.
- New dwellings which support accessibility and adaptability to meet the changing needs of occupiers.
- Specialist housing for older people and those with disabilities and special needs.
- Affordable housing which is indistinguishable and thoughtfully distributed.
- Design and layout which supports community interaction and spending time outdoors.
- Key routes through the site which provide places to sit, chat, and play; and utilise surfaces and features that support use by people with what may be a range of disabilities and by children and young people and their families and carers. visual, mobility, or other limitations.

The achievement of a high-quality design of new dwellings has a key place shaping benefit, providing societal and community benefit.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People Involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change *Mr Edward West*		11/05/2026
Officer carrying out the screening *Mr Daniel Corden*		11/05/2026
*External support** *Mrs Lois Dale* *Senior Insights and Research EDI Specialist*		13/05/2026
Mr Phillip Northfield *Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health*		14/05/2026

This refers to support external to the service and within the Council, e.g., the Senior Insights and Research EDI specialist, the Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health, other Insights and Research or Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, Climate Change specialists, etc.

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name *Mr Daniel Corden*		11/05/2026
Service manager's name *Mr Edward West*		11/05/2026

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
The aim of the draft Design of New Dwellings SPD is to provide both 'high-level' and 'technical' design guidance for new dwellings in Shropshire. In this way, it will support the understanding and application of design policies in the adopted Development Plan. The design considerations addressed within this draft SPD include: • Layout – making the most of the site, relationship to surroundings, and navigation. • Character and appearance – a memorable place, enhancing character and appearance, and design.

- Integration – safe and convenient movement; green infrastructure and wildlife corridors; and access to services, facilities, sports and play.
- Inclusivity and sustainability – healthy and active lifestyles, inclusive and multi-generational communities, sustainability and transition to net zero, and biodiversity and heritage.
- Function – responding to current and future needs of communities, amenity, and safe and secure design.

Once adopted, it would be used by Shropshire Council Planning Officers as a material consideration when determining Planning Applications or Permitted Development (PD) 'prior approval' requests for new dwellings.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The draft Design of New Dwellings SPD would identify key design considerations for all parties considering and involved in construction of new dwellings in Shropshire. It would also provide planning guidance to all parties interested in and considering commenting on 'live' planning applications for new dwellings.

Users and stakeholders for the SPD would include:
• Local residents and potential future residents.
• Architects, planners, and the construction industry.
• Town and Parish Councils.
• Statutory Agencies.
• Unitary Authorities (Shropshire Council).
• Local MPs.
• Government Departments and Agencies.

Once adopted, the SPD would form a material consideration when determining planning applications for new dwellings within the Council's administrative area.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Shropshire Council adopted Development Plan (consisting of the Core Strategy; Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan; and 'made' Neighbourhood Plans).

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of new dwellings and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation.

This consultation occurred between 17 October 2025 and 14 January 2026 and in total some 53 responses were received.

The consultation process complied with Shropshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement and national policy on the preparation/engagement on SPDS. Consultation materials were made available on the Shropshire Council website, the consultation was supported by a press release, and notification correspondence was issues to all parties on the Council's Local Plan consultation database.

The respondents to this consultation included statutory organisations, representatives of the development industry, community and advocate groups and individuals. It is considered that this range of respondents provided an appropriate basis for the consideration of wider views on the draft content of the document.

A summary of these responses and a Council response / summary of actions has been prepared.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have for a grouping, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).

Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Stage Two ESHIA required*	**High positive impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, young carers, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)			√Low to Medium positive	
Disability (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			√Low to Medium positive	

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Stage Two ESHIA required*	**High positive impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral to low positive
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral to low positive
Pregnancy and Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			√Low to Medium positive	
Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				√Neutral to low positive
Religion or Belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				√Neutral to low positive
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral to low positive
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral to low positive
Other: Social Inclusion (please include households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness; and rural communities)			√Low to Medium positive	
Other: Carers (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)			√Low to Medium positive	

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	High negative impact *Stage Two ESHIA required*	High positive impact *Stage One ESHIA required*	Medium positive or negative impact *Stage One ESHIA required*	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) *Stage One ESHIA required*
Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)			√Low to Medium positive	
Other: Young people leaving care			√Low to Medium positive	

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).
Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact *Part Two HIA required*	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?			√Medium positive – improvements to neighbourhood design and community spaces will lead to greater connectivity between groups and individuals, encouraging social inclusion.	
Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing? For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?			√Medium positive – availability of green spaces and active travel routes will enable an increase in non-car related travel and increase in physical activity.	

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact *Part Two HIA required*	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the policy have a *direct impact* on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health? For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?			√Medium positive – green spaces are well researched in improving mental wellbeing, and green spaces provide natural cooling and cover from potential heat and UV related health impacts such as sunburn, heatstroke/exhaustion and skin cancers.	
Will there be a likely change in *demand* for or access to health and social care services? For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?				√Neutral – potential for a small reduction in demand for avoidable health conditions due to a possible increase in active travel, physical activity and improved mental wellbeing through improved design.

Initial health equity assessment	
For the following categories, please complete with the expected impacts of this service change on wider inequalities, not just those that are health-related (whether positive, negative, or neutral) – include any additional information you feel is pertinent or useful. **Consider and record which you can control, which you can influence, and which may be out of your control**.	
Which population groups/demographics will face health impacts as a result of this change (if any)? • Socio-Economically Deprived • Geographic Deprivation (inc. Rurality) – *if so, where?* • Inclusion Health & Vulnerable Groups[1] • Other	It is anticipated that the draft SPD will support all applicants irrespective of economic circumstances, rurality, health or social status in preparing planning applications preparing planning applications for new dwellings which achieve a high-quality design. Such design will support achievement of an effective layout and integration (connectivity to and through the site), which supports easy navigation, safe and convenient movement, and natural surveillance of public realm, thereby ensuring they are perceived as safe by pedestrians and cyclists, even during the darker winter months where exercise levels reduce. Such modes of active travel have clear health and well-being benefits and support wider council priorities and plans such the Health & Wellbeing, and Healthy Weight Strategies.

	Such design will also include meaningful open space, public realm, landscaping and green infrastructure – thereby supporting and encouraging healthy and active lifestyles. The draft SPD includes specific guidance on achieving inclusivity and sustainability through design on new dwellings. This will promote healthy and active lifestyles and inclusive/multi-generational communities. There are additional positive impacts in terms of the recognised positive mental well-being that may accrue from meeting housing needs.
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of new dwellings and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation. The implementation of this draft SPD will be monitored through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report processes.

1- Inclusion health is an umbrella term used to describe people who are socially excluded, who typically experience multiple overlapping risk factors for poor health, such as poverty, violence, and complex trauma. This includes people who experience homelessness, drug and alcohol dependence, vulnerable migrants, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, sex workers, people in contact with the justice system and victims of modern slavery. Health impacts for this wide grouping will therefore potentially be the same as those recorded under the Social Inclusion category in the equality impact table.

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision-making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Stage One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, a Stage One ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the national Protected Characteristic groupings and our additional local categories. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation eg young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second Stage One ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive.

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to thus visibly show we are taking what is called ‘due regard’ of the needs of people in Protected Characteristic groupings.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be high negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to take advice on whether or not to carry out a full report, or Stage Two assessment. This is resource intensive but will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Stage Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government. The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible

equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area~~,~~ this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet or to Strategic Licensing Committee.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.
- What actions will you take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any likely positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to monitor and review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

There are nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010. The full list of groupings is: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

There is also intersectionality between these. Eg a young person with a disability would be in the groupings of Age and Disability, and if they described themselves as having a faith they would then also be in the grouping of Religion or Belief. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

For the individuals and groupings who may be affected, ask yourself what impact do you think is likely and what actions will you currently anticipate taking, to mitigate or enhance likely impact of the service change? If you are reducing a service, for example, there may be further use you could make of awareness raising through social media and other channels to reach more people who may be affected.

Social inclusion is then a wider additional local category we use in Shropshire, in order to help us to go beyond the equality legislation in also considering impacts for individuals and households with regard to the circumstances in which they may find themselves across their life stages. This could be households on low incomes, or households facing challenges in accessing services, such as households in rural areas, or people that we might consider to be vulnerable, such as refugee families or rough sleepers.

Please note that veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families are a grouping to whom we are required to give due regard under Armed Forces legislation, although in practice we have been doing so for a number of years now.

We also identify two further distinct separate local groupings due to their circumstances: care leavers, as vulnerable individuals, and carers, due to the support they give and the support they need.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose.-You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove or reconfigure a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

Carry out and record your equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is an area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for which we ask service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities.

A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in

ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.
- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

Provision or change to a service that allows greater reach to those most in need, this can involve relocation, pooling of resource/efficiency changes, or digitisation of some provision. It may also involve greater opportunities for employment, decreasing socio-economic inequality. Physical alternatives to be made available (where practical) to be offered wherever possible to avoid digital exclusion and reduce social

isolation. These changes can be either positive or negative depending on the proposal.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives. It could also involve virtual support sessions/appointments to avoid unnecessary travel and provide greater flexibility with individuals work schedules. It may involve greater internet connectivity, to improve remote working opportunities and air pollution concerns, or improved communications coverage through closer partnership working – targeting those most in need of specific information.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and wellbeing.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community**?**

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk or engage in active travel. Increasing physical activity and minimising the time spent sitting down helps to maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and depression. The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, each week. At a wider level, reductions in vehicular emission lead to better air quality, and a reduction in NO_2 in the atmosphere.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and wellbeing of the wider community.

An example of this could be: an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for

households of having a warm home in Shropshire. This can reduce the risks of cold related health effects, as well as reduce the financial burden on the population, whose ability to shoulder these costs can vary. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be: a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further advice: please contact
Lois Dale via email Lois.Dale@shropshire.gov.uk
or
Phil Northfield via email Phillip.Northfield@shropshire.gov.uk

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Stage One Screening Record 2026

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Design of Residential Extensions & Alternations Supplementary Planning Document

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Daniel Corden

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Initial (Stage One) ESHIA Only?	X	
Proceed to Stage Two Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		X

If completion of a Stage One screening assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above, and complete both part A and part B of this template. If a Full or Stage Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative impact or positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document (hereafter SPD) for the design of residential extensions and alterations and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation. Following this consultation, the equality impacts continue to be anticipated to be within a range of neutral to low positive to potentially medium positive across the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined by the Equality Act 2010. There is potential for positive equality impact for the groupings of Age, Disability, and Pregnancy and Maternity, with guidance that will support changing needs within families, as well as where people develop a disability, potentially associated with their age, or have a diagnosis for a condition that affects their day-to-day living arrangements. Additionally, there is potential for neutral to low positive equality impacts for those in the further groupings for whom the Council seeks to give due regard in its decision-making processes, i.e. Other – Social Inclusion, Other – Carers, Other – Veterans and Service Members and their families, and Other – Young People Leaving Care, in terms of health and well-being opportunities arising from further guidance on design if they wish to extend or alter residential properties to meet their changing needs and for people in these groupings to feel safer on their journeys for education, healthcare, work or leisure as a result of potential benefits of natural surveillance to public realm.

This is likely to potentially rise to medium positive impact for veterans and service members and their families, should life-changing injuries or illnesses affect their physical and mental health and well-being and necessitate adjustments to residential properties.

It will particularly be the case that those who are carers, who may be across and within a number of groupings, will see low to medium positive impacts as a result of the guidance in the draft SPD.

This ESHIA also anticipates the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD will have positive health impacts, by guiding extensions to provide better natural surveillance of public realm supporting perception of safety and active travel with the associated health and well-being benefits; and enhancing consideration of private amenity space when designing extensions – such space has known health and well-being benefits.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact of the service change in terms of health and wellbeing considerations

Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of residential extensions and alterations and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation.

From a health and well-being perspective, it is anticipated that the draft SPD will support applicants in preparing planning applications for residential extensions and alterations which achieve a high-quality design.

Such design will provide natural surveillance of public realm, thereby ensuring they are perceived as safe by pedestrians and cyclists. Such modes of active travel have clear health and well-being benefits.

It will also support appropriate consideration of private amenity space as part of any extension or alteration scheme, thereby supporting the maintenance and enhancement of private amenity space. Access to appropriate private amenity space has known positive health and well-being benefits.

Furthermore, there are additional positive impacts in terms of the recognised positive health and well-being associated with the ability to appropriately extend or alter a residential property to meet the needs of the occupier(s). Including alterations allowing an increase in availability of space for additional residents within properties, or accessibility amendments allowing individuals to remain in their homes and outside of the care system for longer, leading to greater independence, and reduction in social isolation from moving away from friends, family and support systems, and maintaining community cohesion.

These changes can potentially lead to a reduction in demand on the care system, as well as otherwise required support through the council or social housing providers, freeing up capacity. This is particularly important due to the expected demographic changes within the next 25 years (and beyond) across Shropshire, enabling and promoting good design to futureproof and adapt to residents needs as they progress through the life course.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of residential extensions and alterations and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation.

The respondents to this consultation included statutory organisations, representatives of the development industry, community and advocate groups and individuals. It is considered that this range of respondents provided an appropriate basis for the consideration of wider views on the draft content of the document.

The implementation of this draft SPD will be monitored through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report processes.

The Council will draw upon the learning from pedestrianisation efforts in market towns in Shropshire, which are building upon Covid-19 measures that led to improved physical access around towns by people in Protected Characteristic groupings and those we may describe as vulnerable. The Council will also draw upon strategic policy around public transport infrastructure including Active Travel, and best alignment with economic growth strategy development and with implementation of cultural and leisure strategy actions. These strategies all very much include efforts to promote social inclusion and in so doing achieve equality of opportunity for people in Protected Characteristic groupings to safely access economic, leisure and cultural opportunities in market towns.

Associated ESHIAs

ESHIA for the consultation draft of the Design of Residential Extensions SPD.

ESHIA for the consultation draft of the Design of New Dwellings SPD.

ESHIA for the final draft of the Design of New Dwellings SPD.

ESHIA for the final draft of the Ironbridge Gorge WHS SPD.

ESHIA for the draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code.

ESHIA for the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2027.

ESHIA for the Scoping Consultation Document of the next Shropshire Local Plan.

Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact, and actions to review and monitor overall impacts, with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts

The draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD identifies key design considerations for residential extensions and alterations in Shropshire. These design considerations have been informed by a period of public consultation.

Climate change

The draft SPD would provide guidance and information to support the understanding and application of policies within the adopted Local Plan, which plans for the long term sustainable development of Shropshire – social, economic and environmental benefits.

Design guidance supports resilience and adaptation to our changing climate, addressing energy efficiency, renewable and low carbon technologies and water efficiency.

The draft SPD is therefore expected to have a positive outcome on the climate change impacts listed below:

- Energy and fuel consumption (buildings and/or travel).
- Renewable energy generation.
- Carbon offsetting or mitigation.
- Climate change adaptation.

Economic and societal/wider community

The draft SPD would provide guidance and information to support the understanding and application of policies within the adopted Local Plan, which plans for the long term sustainable development of Shropshire – social, economic and environmental benefits.

The achievement of a high-quality design of residential extensions and alterations has a key place shaping benefit, providing societal and community benefit.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People Involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change *Mr Edward West*		11/05/2026
Officer carrying out the screening *Mr Daniel Corden*		11/05/2026
*External support** *Mrs Lois Dale* *Senior Insights and Research EDI Specialist* *Mr Phillip Northfield* *Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health*	 	15/05/2026 15/05/2026

This refers to support external to the service and within the Council, e.g., the Senior Insights and Research EDI specialist, the Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health, other Insights and Research or Public Health colleagues, the Feedback and Insight Team, Climate Change specialists, etc.

Sign off at Stage One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name *Mr Daniel Corden*		11/05/2026
Service manager's name *Mr Edward West*		11/05/2026

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
The aim of the draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD is to provide guidance and information to support the understanding and application of a policies in the adopted Local Plan. It identifies key design considerations for those parties' considering extensions or alterations to dwellings in Shropshire. It will also provide more detailed design considerations for those parties considering residential extensions or alterations to dwellings in Shropshire that are subject to specific constraints or opportunities.

The design considerations addressed within this draft SPD include:

- Appropriately siting extensions.
- Ensuring extensions are proportionate in form and scale.
- Appropriate use of materials, finishes, and fenestration.
- Minimising impacts on neighbouring amenity and character of neighbouring properties.
- Responding to our changing climate.
- Conservation and enhancement of the built and natural environment.

Once adopted, it would be used by Shropshire Council Planning Officers as a material consideration when determining Planning Applications or Permitted Development (PD) 'prior approval' requests for residential extensions and alterations.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The draft Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD would identify key design considerations for all parties considering and involved in construction of extensions or alterations to dwellings in Shropshire. It would also provide planning guidance to all parties interested in and considering commenting on 'live' planning applications for residential extensions or alterations.

Users and stakeholders for the SPD would include:

- Local residents.
- Architects, planners, and the construction industry.
- Town and Parish Councils.
- Statutory Agencies.
- Unitary Authorities (Shropshire Council).
- Local MPs.
- Government Departments and Agencies.

Once adopted, the SPD would form a material consideration when determining planning applications for residential extensions or alterations within the Council's administrative area.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Shropshire Council adopted Development Plan (consisting of the Core Strategy; Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan; and 'made' Neighbourhood Plans).

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change
Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of residential extensions and alterations and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation. This consultation occurred between 17 October 2025 and 14 January 2026 and in total some 20 responses were received. The consultation process complied with Shropshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement and national policy on the preparation/engagement on SPDS. Consultation materials were made available on the Shropshire Council website, the consultation was supported by a press release, and notification correspondence was issues to all parties on the Council's Local Plan consultation database. The respondents to this consultation included statutory organisations, representatives of the development industry, community and advocate groups and individuals. It is considered that this range of respondents provided an appropriate basis for the consideration of wider views on the draft content of the document. A summary of these responses and a Council response / summary of actions has been prepared.

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below this table)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have for a grouping, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).

Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Stage Two ESHIA required*	**High positive impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, young carers, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with a disability)			√Low to medium positive	

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Stage Two ESHIA required*	**High positive impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
Disability (please include cancer; HIV/AIDS; learning disabilities; mental health conditions and syndromes; multiple sclerosis; neurodiverse conditions such as autism; hidden disabilities such as Crohn's disease; physical and/or sensory disabilities or impairments)			√Low to medium positive	
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral
Pregnancy and Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			√Low to medium positive	
Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				√Neutral
Religion or Belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				√Neutral
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				√Neutral
Other: Social Inclusion (please include households in poverty or on low incomes; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness; and rural communities)			√Low to medium positive	

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings locally identified in Shropshire	High negative impact *Stage Two ESHIA required*	High positive impact *Stage One ESHIA required*	Medium positive or negative impact *Stage One ESHIA required*	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) *Stage One ESHIA required*
Other: Carers (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)			√Low to medium positive	
Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)			√Low to medium positive	
Other: Young people leaving care			√Low to medium positive	

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column, including if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact).
Please also record in here your headline rationale for the ratings you have given.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact *Part Two HIA required*	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?				√Low positive
Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing? For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?				√Low positive – potential access to green space, or alternative work from home arrangements will improve mental wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact *Part Two HIA required*	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
Will the policy have a *direct impact* on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health? For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?				√Low positive
Will there be a likely change in *demand* for or access to health and social care services? For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?				√Neutral – potential reduction in demand if alterations allow individuals to remain in their homes.

Initial health equity assessment	
For the following categories, please complete with the expected impacts of this service change on wider inequalities, not just those that are health-related (whether positive, negative, or neutral) – include any additional information you feel is pertinent or useful. **Consider and record which you can control, which you can influence, and which may be out of your control**.	
Which population groups / demographics will face health impacts as a result of this change (if any)? • Socio-Economically Deprived • Geographic Deprivation (inc. Rurality) – *if so, where?* • Inclusion Health & Vulnerable Groups[1] • Other	It is anticipated that the draft SPD will support all applicants irrespective of economic circumstances, rurality, health or social status in preparing planning applications for residential extensions and alterations which achieve a high-quality design. It will support appropriate consideration of private amenity space as part of any extension or alteration scheme, thereby supporting the maintenance and enhancement of private amenity space. Access to appropriate private amenity space has known health and well-being benefits. Furthermore, there are additional positive impacts in terms of the recognised positive health and well-being associated with the ability to appropriately extend or alter a residential

	property to meet the needs of the occupier(s). Including alterations allowing an increase in availability of space for additional residents within properties, or accessibility amendments allowing individuals to remain in their homes and outside of the care system for longer, leading to greater independence, and reduction in social isolation from moving away from friends, family and support systems.
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	Preparation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document for the design of residential extensions and alterations and this ESHIA have been informed by a period of public consultation. The implementation of this draft SPD will be monitored through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report processes.

1- Inclusion health is an umbrella term used to describe people who are socially excluded, who typically experience multiple overlapping risk factors for poor health, such as poverty, violence, and complex trauma. This includes people who experience homelessness, drug and alcohol dependence, vulnerable migrants, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, sex workers, people in contact with the justice system and victims of modern slavery. Health impacts for this wide grouping will therefore potentially be the same as those recorded under the Social Inclusion category in the equality impact table.

Guidance Notes

1. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. By way of illustration, some local authorities focus more overtly upon human rights; some include safeguarding. It is about what is considered to be needed in a local authority's area, in line with local factors such as demography and strategic objectives as well as with the national legislative imperatives.

Carrying out these impact assessments helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision-making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

These screening assessments for any proposed service change go to Cabinet as part of the committee report, or occasionally direct to Full Council, unless they are ones to do with Licensing, in which case they go to Strategic Licensing Committee.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Stage One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

These screening assessments are recommended to be undertaken at timely points in the development and implementation of the proposed service change.

For example, a Stage One ESHIA would be a recommended course of action before a consultation. This would draw upon the evidence available at that time, and identify the target audiences, and assess at that initial stage what the likely impact of the service change could be across the national Protected Characteristic groupings and our additional local categories. This ESHIA would set out intended actions to engage with the groupings, particularly those who are historically less likely to engage in public consultation e.g. young people, as otherwise we would not know their specific needs.

A second Stage One ESHIA would then be carried out after the consultation, to say what the feedback was, to set out changes proposed as a result of the feedback, and to say where responses were low and what the plans are to engage with groupings who did not really respond. This ESHIA would also draw more upon actions to review impacts in order to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive.

Meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty through carrying out these ESHIAs is very much about using them as an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing engagement across groupings and to thus visibly show we are taking what is called ‘due regard’ of the needs of people in Protected Characteristic groupings.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be high negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to take advice on whether or not to carry out a full report, or Stage Two assessment. This is resource intensive but will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion.

In practice, Stage Two or Full Screening Assessments have only been recommended twice since 2014, as the ongoing mitigation of negative equality impacts should serve to keep them below the threshold for triggering a Full Screening Assessment. The expectation is that Full Screening Assessments in regard to Health Impacts may occasionally need to be undertaken, but this would be very much the exception rather than the rule.

2. Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies, or procedures, including those that may be required by Government. The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision-making processes.

This is where Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESHIA in your service area~~,~~ this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet or to Strategic Licensing Committee.
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date.

- What actions will you take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any likely positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to monitor and review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand-alone for a member of the public to read. The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions, or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

There are nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010. The full list of groupings is: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation.

There is also intersectionality between these. Eg a young person with a disability would be in the groupings of Age and Disability, and if they described themselves as having a faith they would then also be in the grouping of Religion or Belief. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging, or delivering services.

For the individuals and groupings who may be affected, ask yourself what impact do you think is likely and what actions will you currently anticipate taking, to mitigate or enhance likely impact of the service change? If you are reducing a service, for example, there may be further use you could make of awareness raising through social media and other channels to reach more people who may be affected.

Social inclusion is then a wider additional local category we use in Shropshire, in order to help us to go beyond the equality legislation in also considering impacts for individuals and households with regard to the circumstances in which they may find themselves across their life stages. This could be households on low incomes, or households facing challenges in accessing services, such as households in rural areas, or people that we might consider to be vulnerable, such as refugee families or rough sleepers.

Please note that veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families are a grouping to whom we are required to give due regard under Armed Forces legislation, although in practice we have been doing so for a number of years now.

We also identify two further distinct separate local groupings due to their circumstances: care leavers, as vulnerable individuals, and carers, due to the support they give and the support they need.

When you are not carrying out an ESHIA, you still need to demonstrate and record that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose. You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESHIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council.

Carry out an ESHIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building.
- If you are planning to reduce or remove or reconfigure a service.
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy.
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

Carry out and record your equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them.
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour that we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license.
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself.
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach.

3. Council wide and service area policy and practice on health and wellbeing

This is an area to record within our overall assessments of impacts, for which we ask service area leads to consider health and wellbeing impacts, and to look at these in the context of direct and indirect impacts for individuals and for communities.

A better understanding across the Council of these impacts will also better enable the Public Health colleagues to prioritise activities to reduce health inequalities in ways that are evidence based and that link effectively with equality impact considerations and climate change mitigation.

Health in All Policies – Health Impact Assessment

Health in All Policies is an upstream approach for health and wellbeing promotion and prevention, and to reduce health inequalities. The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the supporting mechanism

- Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is the technical name for a process that considers the wider effects of local policies, strategies and initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people's health and wellbeing.

- Health Impact Assessment is a means of assessing both the positive and negative health impacts of a policy. It is also a means of developing good evidence-based policy and strategy using a structured process to review the impact.
- A Health Impact Assessment seeks to determine how to maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities. It identifies any unintended health consequences. These consequences may support policy and strategy or may lead to suggestions for improvements.
- An agreed framework will set out a clear pathway through which a policy or strategy can be assessed and impacts with outcomes identified. It also sets out the support mechanisms for maximising health benefits.

The embedding of a Health in All Policies approach will support Shropshire Council through evidence-based practice and a whole systems approach, in achieving our corporate and partnership strategic priorities. This will assist the Council and partners in promoting, enabling and sustaining the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities whilst reducing health inequalities.

Individuals

Will the proposal have a *direct impact* on health, mental health and wellbeing?

For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?

Will the proposal directly affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to be physically active e.g., being able to use a cycle route; to access food more easily; to change lifestyle in ways that are of positive impact for their health.

Provision or change to a service that allows greater reach to those most in need, this can involve relocation, pooling of resource/efficiency changes, or digitisation of some provision. It may also involve greater opportunities for employment, decreasing socio-economic inequality. Physical alternatives to be made available (where practical) to be offered wherever possible to avoid digital exclusion and reduce social isolation. These changes can be either positive or negative depending on the proposal.

An example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g., green highways), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage. and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve lives. It could also involve virtual support sessions/appointments to avoid unnecessary travel and provide greater flexibility with individuals work schedules. It may involve greater internet connectivity, to improve remote working opportunities and air pollution concerns, or improved communications coverage through closer partnership working – targeting those most in need of specific information.

Will the proposal *indirectly impact* an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?

This could include the following: their ability to access local facilities e.g., to access food more easily, or to access a means of mobility to local services and amenities? (e.g. change to bus route)

Similarly to the above, an example of this could be that you may be involved in proposals for the establishment of safer walking and cycling routes (e.g. pedestrianisation of town centres), and changes to public transport that could encourage people away from car usage, and increase the number of journeys that they make on public transport, by foot or on bicycle or scooter. This could improve their health and wellbeing.

Communities

Will the proposal directly or indirectly affect the physical health, mental health, and wellbeing of the wider community**?**

A *direct impact* could include either the causing of ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation, or the promotion of better health.

An example of this could be that safer walking and cycling routes could help the wider community, as more people across groupings may be encouraged to walk or engage in active travel. Increasing physical activity and minimising the time spent sitting down helps to maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and depression. The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, each week. At a wider level, reductions in vehicular emission lead to better air quality, and a reduction in NO_2 in the atmosphere.

An *indirect impact* could mean that a service change could indirectly affect living and working conditions and therefore the health and wellbeing of the wider community.

An example of this could be: an increase in the availability of warm homes would improve the quality of the housing offer in Shropshire and reduce the costs for households of having a warm home in Shropshire. This can reduce the risks of cold related health effects, as well as reduce the financial burden on the population, whose ability to shoulder these costs can vary. Often a health promoting approach also supports our agenda to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions and to reduce the impact of climate change.

Please record whether at this stage you consider the proposed service change to have a direct or an indirect impact upon communities.

Demand

Will there be a change in demand for or access to health, local authority and social care services?

For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health and Social Services?

An example of this could be: a new housing development in an area would affect demand for primary care and local authority facilities and services in that location and surrounding areas. If the housing development does not factor in consideration of availability of green space and safety within the public realm, further down the line there could be an increased demand upon health and social care services as a result of the lack of opportunities for physical recreation, and reluctance of some groupings to venture outside if they do not perceive it to be safe.

For further advice: please contact
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