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

Date: Tuesday, 10 November 2026

Committee:
Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 18 November 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

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

Please click here to view the livestream of the meeting* on the date and time stated on the agenda

The recording of the event will also be made available shortly after the meeting on the Shropshire Council Youtube Channel Here

Richard Phillips
Director – Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

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

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 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 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 12 November 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 12 November 2026.

6 Scrutiny Items

7 Crisis & Resilience Fund – 6-month Progress Update (Pages 9 - 56)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Rachel Robinson, Corporate Director for Population, Wellbeing & Neighbourhoods

8 Council Tax Support - Proposed Changes 2027-28 Consultation Responses (Pages 57 - 88)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Phil Weir, Revenue & Benefits Service Manager

9 Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2026/27 (Pages 89 - 122)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

10 **Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2026/27** (Pages 123 - 146)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

11 **Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2027 - 2032** (Pages 147 - 180)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

12 **Draft Capital Strategy 2027 – 2032** (Pages 181 - 206)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

13 **Q2 Performance Report** (Pages 207 - 258)

Lead Member: Councillor Heather Kidd, Leader

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

14 **Review of Highways Maintenance Strategy and Highways Inspection Policy** (Pages 259 - 350)

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

Lead Officer: Andy Wilde, Service Director – Highways & Transport

15 **Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries - Consultation** (Pages 351 - 602)

Lead Member: Councillor Sarah Marston, Portfolio Holder for Communities & Environment

Lead Officer: Peter Banford, Culture & Communities Manager

16 **Asset Strategy & Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme** (Pages 603 - 618)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

17 **Shirehall Marketing Proposals** (Pages 619 - 630)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

18 Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that, in accordance with the provisions of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items

19 Shirehall Marketing Proposals (Exempt Appendices) (Pages 631 - 742)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Duncan Whitfield, Corporate Director – Finance & Governance (S151)

20 Chief Executive and Chief Officer Pay Award (Pages 743 - 756)

Lead Member: Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Lead Officer: Sam Collins-Lafferty, HR & OD Manager

21 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 2 December 2026.

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Shropshire Council

Committee and Date

Cabinet

18 November 2026

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2026
In the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.30 am

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

Present
Councillors Heather Kidd (Chair), Alex Wagner, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, Ruth Houghton, James Owen, Rob Wilson, David Vasmer and Sarah Marston

In attendance
Group Leaders: Councillors Rosemary Dartnall (Labour), Dawn Husemann (Reform UK), Duncan Kerr (Green & Progressive Independents), Ed Potter (Conservatives)

Officers: Tanya Miles – Chief Executive, Rachel Robinson - Executive Director for Public Health, Richard Phillips – Director for Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer), Duncan Whitfield – Interim Executive Director for Finance (S151) (online), Natalie McFall – Service Director for Care & Wellbeing, Chris Atherton – DASS, Andy Wilde – Service Director for Infrastructure, Hayley Deighton - Strategic Partnerships Manager, Simon D'Vali – Traffic Engineering Project Manager, Ashley Kendrick – Democratic Services Officer

Other Members: Councillors Andy Boddington, Duncan Borrowman, Ben Jephcott, Robert Jones, Brendan Mallon

254 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor David Walker.

255 **Disclosable Interests**

No declarations were received.

256 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

257 **Public Question Time**

One public question was received:

Tony Burton, in relation to Meole Brace Park & Ride. In response to a supplementary question, it was confirmed that the Meole Brace Park and Ride service had been secured for a three-year period.

The full question and response can be found on Responses to Public Questions - Cabinet 14 October 2026.pdf

258 **Member Question Time**

Six Members' questions had been received.

Duncan Borrowman, in relation to the future of E-MERLIN & the Knockin Telescope.

Ben Jephcott, in relation to litter collection. In response to a supplementary question on litter collection, it was confirmed that discussions with National Highways were ongoing and consideration would be given to scheduling collections, subject to financial constraints.

Brendan Mallon, on behalf of Harry Hancock-Davies, in relation to safety improvements around Harlescott Junior School.

Duncan Kerr, in relation to the Parking Strategy Framework. In response to a supplementary question on residents' parking, it was agreed that information on the Oswestry assessment and timescales would be provided after the meeting.

Robert Jones, in relation to safeguarding agricultural land.

Andy Boddington, in relation to Ludlow bus services. In response to a supplementary question on Ludlow bus services, it was agreed that the possibility of subsidising the service to reduce fares would be discussed with officers.

Full questions and responses can be found on Responses to Member Questions - Cabinet 14 October 2026.pdf

259 **Scrutiny Items**

There were no scrutiny items.

260 **Adult Social Care Transformation Plan**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the Adult Social Care Transformation Plan, comprising 11 connected programmes aimed at improving outcomes and supporting financial sustainability. The programme focused on earlier intervention and prevention, independence and recovery, complex care and accommodation, and commissioning and financial sustainability. An independent diagnostic was underway to establish robust baselines and identify realistic savings and benefits.

It was reported that up to £4 million over three years was provisionally earmarked to support delivery, with any expenditure subject to appropriate business cases and approval.

Members discussed the importance of prevention and highlighted links with transport, housing, digital technology, community provision and partnership working with health services.

Members raised concerns regarding the level of financial detail available, capacity to deliver the programme and reliance on effective partnership working with the NHS.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the timing and use of transformation funding and ensuring that increased use of digital technology did not exclude those requiring telephone or face-to-face support.

It was confirmed that the independent diagnostic would provide greater clarity on priorities, investment requirements and potential financial benefits, with further reporting as the programme progressed.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Endorsed the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme as the strategic framework for delivering coordinated improvement across Adult Social Care pathways, service and outcomes for residents; noting that some individual workstreams may require future cabinet decisions.

2. Endorsed the proposed governance arrangements for the transformation programme.

3. Delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Care, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health to take any decision necessary to implement this strategic framework, except for decisions requiring specific Cabinet approval.

4. Noted the requirement to provisionally earmark transformation funding of up to £4 million over the next three financial years in order to deliver the programme, and that this will be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

5. Noted that a further report will be received in March 2027 on progress made with each of the 11 programmes following completion and recommendations from the Adult Social Care Diagnostic which will include estimates of potential outcomes and savings.

261 **Devolution and Strategic Partnerships**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Economic Growth introduced the report, which sought to continue discussions with Government and neighbouring authorities on future devolution arrangements. It was emphasised that Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin should be central to any future arrangement, while maintaining important partnerships with the West Midlands, Marches area and Wales.

Members supported remaining actively involved in shaping future arrangements but raised concerns regarding democratic oversight, public consultation and protection of Shropshire's rural interests. It was confirmed that the proposals were intended to establish a direction of travel and enable options to be developed, with substantive proposals returning for further consideration.

The wider economic opportunities arising from strategic partnerships, including work relating to water, flooding, energy, food security, skills and rural economic growth, were also highlighted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Continue discussions with Government, Telford & Wrekin Council, and other partners to explore devolution options that support Shropshire's interests, recognise its rurality and build on existing economic and partnership strengths; and

2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, and Corporate Director of Growth and Connected Communities, in consultation with the Leader, and relevant Portfolio Holder, to progress discussions with Ministers, Government officials, neighbouring authorities and partners in line with national timescales.

262 **Shropshire Traffic Management and Parking Consultation (formerly Shropshire Parking Tariff Proposal)**

The Portfolio Holder for Transport & Regeneration introduced proposals for consultation on changes to parking tariffs and traffic management arrangements. It was emphasised that the proposals sought to balance the affordability and availability of parking with the need to support a sustainable transport network and improve public transport provision.

Members discussed the proposed changes, including residents' parking schemes, the differing impact on Shrewsbury and the market towns, potential effects on town-centre businesses and the use of additional parking income to support public transport.

Concerns were raised regarding affordability, displacement of parking into residential areas and whether increased charges could affect footfall.

It was confirmed that the proposals were for consultation and did not represent a final decision on implementation, allowing residents, businesses and other stakeholders to comment before final decisions were made.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved public consultation on the proposed changes to parking tariffs, parking bands, charging periods and other charging arrangements set out in this report and Appendix 1.

2. Delegated authority to the Service Director Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Regeneration, to:

    a. consider the responses received through the public consultation and any further relevant evidence;
    b. make any necessary amendments to the proposals arising from the consultation; and
    c. approve and implement the revised parking charging scheme, including making or varying any necessary traffic regulation orders and determining the implementation date or dates.

3. Approved the principle that parking charges should be reviewed annually, with any future changes remaining subject to the Council's applicable decision-making and statutory processes.

263 **Albrighton and Donington Neighbourhood Plan - Area Designation**

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Planning, the Portfolio Holder for Housing presented the report which sought Cabinet approval for the proposed designation of the Albrighton and Donington parish area as the neighbourhood area for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed the designation of the proposed Neighbourhood Area identified on the map in Appendix A, covering the Parish of Albrighton and Donington as an appropriate basis for the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and notifies Albrighton and Donington Parish Council accordingly.

264 **DWP Skills Bootcamps**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Economic Growth introduced the proposals for the delivery of the DWP Skills Bootcamps programme, which would bring £1.5 million of external funding into Shropshire to provide short, flexible training in areas of identified skills shortages. The programme aimed to support around 400 participants, including people seeking employment, changing careers or progressing within their existing employment.

Members welcomed the investment and opportunities presented, particularly within sectors such as construction and social care. Concerns were raised regarding contract management, potential financial risk and access to training for people in rural areas.

It was clarified that funding would be drawn down according to delivery, administrative costs were funded separately, and financial risk associated with outcomes would principally sit with training providers.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved entering into the Grant Funding Agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the programme.

2. Approved Shropshire Council acting as the accountable body for the funding within the Shropshire Council delivery area.

3. Supported the commissioning of training providers to deliver Skills Bootcamps based on employer demand and local need, noting that this approach was approved by CCDG on 7 September 2026.

4. Noted the proposed governance and delivery arrangements, whereby the programme will be managed by the Economy, Funding and Skills Service in alignment with the Get Marches Working Plan, The Shropshire Skills and Employment Strategy and the Councils Corporate Plan priorities.

5. Acknowledged that approval to submit the Delivery Plan to DWP has been obtained in accordance with BTCRP governance arrangements.

265 **Highways Future Service Model**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways presented the report which provided an update on the progress that has been made in the progressive development of the highway services delivery model (termed – Mixed Economy Model) and the actions and decisions now required to implement the Highways Future Service Model by April 2028. This included bringing street scene services in-house, developing a mixed economy model and extending the existing Kier contract to March 2028 to provide a controlled transition to the new arrangements.

Members discussed lessons from the previous street scene transition and raised concerns regarding service capacity, communication and engagement with town and parish councils, and the involvement of scrutiny in developing the proposals. It was confirmed that the phased approach was intended to reduce transition risks, strengthen accountability and contract management, and support increased investment in preventative maintenance and permanent defect repairs.

The importance of improving communication with parish councils, including consideration of a dedicated point of contact, was also highlighted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the insourcing of the non-devolved Street Scene services by 1st April 2027.

2. Noted the procurement of the new enhanced Mixed Economy Defect Repair contract by 1st April 2027.

3. Noted the preparation of an options study and business case for the Highways Future Service Model by the end December' 2026.

4. Referred the Future Service Model options to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for pre decision by the end December' 2026.

266 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the provisions of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items.

267 **Highways Future Service Model (Exempt Appendix)**

No business was transacted within the exempt session as decisions took place in the open session.

268 **Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 18 November 2026.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....

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Committee	Cabinet
Date and Time	18th November 2026 10:30 – 13:00 Public

Crisis & Resilience Fund – 6-month Progress Update

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Rachel Robinson – Corporate Director – Population, Wellbeing and Neighbourhoods (DPH) / Deputy Chief Executive
Service Area:	Population, Wellbeing & Neighbourhoods
Report Author	Phillip Northfield – Public Health Integration & Inequalities Officer
Officer contact details	01743 252694 - Phillip.Northfield@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All
Key Decision?	Non-Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	Not Applicable
Report considered by	Cabinet – 18th November 2026

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) aims to support low-income residents who have experienced a financial shock or need assistance building financial resilience. This can be through direct payments, or through advice and support on budgeting, maximising their income, reducing their debts or applying for other support. It is not limited to those on benefits. This report provides an update on the spend, delivery and progress of the first 6 months of the Crisis & Resilience Fund within Shropshire by council teams and external partners. The delivery plan and proposals for year 1 of this fund were approved by Cabinet in April 2026.

1.2. This report also seeks approval for some expenditure/plans moving into year 2 ahead of April 2027, to avoid delays in implementation, and to retain existing, experienced staff. It also seeks approval for proposals around utilising in-year underspends for additional staffing and other system improvements.

1.3. Finally, the report asks Cabinet to note the start of broader development of the Year 2 and 3 delivery plans by the CRF working group and partnership board via workshops, for collation of proposals to be shared at April 2027 Cabinet.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

2.1. Acknowledge the work undertaken to date by internal council teams, the VCSE and other external partners on the implementation of the Crisis & Resilience Fund year 1 delivery plan as approved by Cabinet in April 2026 and outlined in this paper.

2.2. Approve the extension of existing partner staffing posts referenced at 3.17, including inflationary adjustments at a rate to be confirmed by Finance, and the carry-forward of eligible partner underspends from 2026/27 into 2027/28 in accordance with grant funding agreements. Where possible, these underspends will be used to fund inflationary increases before additional funding is provided, supporting continuity of service and retention of existing staff and expertise.

2.3. Approve in-year Council underspend utilisation on programmes/priorities outlined in point 4.3, delegating authority to approve any further potential underspends to the Portfolio Holder for Finance in consultation with the Section 151 Officer.

2.4. Approve attached Crisis Payment and Housing Payment policies covering from November 2026 through to the end of the fund on March 31st, 2029.

2.5. Continue as local members to advocate for the “no-wrong-door” approach to accessing cost of living and financial resilience support across Shropshire. To signpost and refer residents to appropriate partners through the council’s cost-of-living webpages, and any physical materials.

3. Background

3.1. The Crisis & Resilience Fund year 1 delivery plan was approved by Cabinet in April 2026. This report updates on the progress made in implementing these proposals, the work undertaken, and the number of residents supported across the CRF network. As part of the approval, a 6-month update was requested to Cabinet. This report also outlines the planned support over the winter period yet to be delivered but in train. Continued national inflationary and cost-of-living pressures around food, energy and interest rates are having a significant impact on residents, and the demand for this crucial support is clear. This funding from UK Government is greatly needed and provides the ability to provide advice and payments to affected individuals and households.

3.2. **Progress to date:** October represents the mid-point for year 1 of the Crisis & Resilience Fund, which runs from April to April each year, for a period of three years, ending 31st March 2029. Due to the requirement to hire staff, both internal

and external, arrange funding and grant agreements, this initial 6 months has been utilised to lay the groundwork for strengthening the resilience and community coordination strands of the Crisis & Resilience Fund network. A substantial number of people however have still been supported with a variety of issues (providing over 11,600 payments), and work is scaling up over the remainder of the first year. The total spend for the first 6 months of this fund comes to £1,739,574.39 or 39% of the overall in year allocation (including heating oil top-up).

The following workstreams/programmes have been implemented since April.

3.3. **Crisis Payments** – Our Crisis Payments scheme has been live and accepting applications since the 1st April. Between then and the 30th September 2026, 566 payments were distributed. The total spend for Crisis Payments in the first 6 months was £313,607.08, or approximately half of their initial allocation. Crisis Payments help with emergencies or sudden loss of income; they are not designed as long-term replacement finance. Most of these awards were for white goods/furniture (73%), food (12%) and essential utilities debts (10%). Over 97% of applicants had received no previous awards under CRF and this was their first time contacting for this new scheme, with only 3% needing to come back for further support.

Residents can apply for crisis payments through email, phone, or in-person at Shropshire Local. An online application form is also currently in development, freeing up Welfare Support staff capacity, and speeding up direct payments to residents. Where direct cash awards are deemed not appropriate (for reasons such as identified gambling, or substance misuse problems amongst others) referrals are made to partners HSW Family Hardship Fund (formerly Tenbury NILS) who provide in-kind goods on our behalf.

Crisis Payments are handled in-house by the Welfare Support team. Staffing within this team has proven an issue over the last 6 months due to one member of staff on long-term sickness, and delays in hiring for the new additional post agreed as part of the year 1 delivery plan. Mitigations through agency staff have been agreed ahead of winter to increase capacity.

Existing technical systems are insufficient to meet the increased operational and reporting requirements of the Crisis Payments strand, particularly the need to process payments within a 48-hour window and provide accurate management information (MI) returns to the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). Current processes rely on significant manual administration, contributing to processing backlogs and limiting the speed at which support can be provided to residents.

Approval is therefore requested (as part of point 4.3) to use CRF funding to procure a replacement CRM/digital software solution. The investment would streamline application and payment processes, reduce manual handling and duplication, improve case tracking and MI reporting, help address existing backlogs, and support faster payments to households experiencing financial hardship. Initial conversations with providers have taken place to explore the market and identify potential solutions that can meet the changing requirements of the CRF.

3.4. **Housing Payments** – Our Housing Payments scheme has been live and accepting applications since the 1st April. This is a replacement for the predecessor "Discretionary Housing Payment" (DHP) scheme. Between the 1st April and 30th September, 353 awards were provided to residents in Shropshire, with an average payment of approximately £528. Spend for the first 6 months came to a total of £186,377.80.

(CRF) Housing Payments are administered by our in-house Revenues & Benefits team, who are experienced in the predecessor scheme and have strong backgrounds assisting the clientele applying for this support. A trend noted early by this team identified an uptick in the need for housing payment support during Household Support Fund 7. As such, the ringfenced allocation for this support was increased by 20% to £439,926.30 and approved by Cabinet in April. Housing Payments are for supporting with shortfalls in rent, keeping people in their homes for longer, avoiding the need for costlier interventions for the council and partners, and stressful situations for at-risk residents.

For both our Crisis and Housing payment schemes, the transition between HSF and CRF was seamless for the public, with all outstanding cases under the old scheme being carried over, and residents were not required to reapply. Partner organisations are aware of the schemes and are also able to signpost/refer people in to access support. These links are a key part of the Crisis & Resilience Fund.

3.5. **Heating Oil support** – a "top-up" was awarded to local authorities within England to support households reliant on heating oil and liquid petroleum gas (LPG). In Shropshire this relates to the approximately 24,000 off-grid properties. Due to this large number of households, funding to Shropshire was an additional £758,558 to the existing CRF allocation.

A programme was set up at short notice, working closely with VCSE partners Community Resource, to provide a multiple access route scheme enabling people to apply via phone, online form, email, or in-person via Shropshire Local. Demand over summer has been relatively low, however this reflects national trends identified across the country also present in other Local Authorities and it not unique to Shropshire. This demand was also significantly impacted by the summer heatwave events.

Winter 26/27 is expected to see a significant increase in the demand for this support due to the conflict in Iran remaining ongoing and prices remaining high. At the time of writing, 125 households have been helped for a total expenditure of £55,052.05, with an average payment of £440, this is across both our in-house team, and partners Community Resource**.** The remainder of this funding has been kept back in reserve for heating oil/LPG support over the 26/27 winter. This can be accessed by eligible residents either online, through the council's cost-of-living webpages, through phone, or in person at Shropshire Local. Several communications messages have gone out around this support to increase visibility, including through partners. If demand does not meet the current resource, we will look to explore targeted payments to at-risk cohorts.

3.6. **Council Tax Support Awards** – A direct on-account award of up to £80 was paid to working age claimants on Council Tax support who would be impacted by the 20% minimum payment. Council Tax arrears were identified by Citizens Advice

Shropshire as one of the most common priority debts amongst residents within the county. For the 26/27 council tax year, this resulted in 2625 households being paid a total of £133,528.94.

Future possible plans for years 2 and 3 of this support are outlined within the September 2026 Council Tax Support proposals (currently out for consultation) and include further awards for the same cohorts, scaling year on year, funded by CRF, at an “up-to” £90 award in 27/28 and “up-to” £100 award in 28/29.

3.7. **Food Insecurity Programme** – To provide support to local food bank partners, whilst still adhering to national guidance, 2 workshops (one online, and one in-person) were held with foodbanks in Shropshire, and coordinated through support of the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance (SFPA) co-ordinator (all foodbanks were invited to attend and apply for support, though not all chose to attend). These workshops introduced the resilience and community coordination strands of the CRF, and foodbanks were invited to apply for tiered funding of up to £12,000 for localised, needs-based resilience proposals based on their own communities. These may include hosting training sessions, cooking classes, financial skill and budgeting classes and more.

£100,000 was provided for distribution on this scheme, and distribution of the grant was handled by Citizens Advice Shropshire, with approval decisions on proposals made up of an impartial panel of VCSE members. 10 out of 14 foodbanks applied for funding under this scheme. 8 were approved, 1 was approved following amends to their proposal, and one was rejected due to not fulfilling CRF criteria. Funding was tiered at 3 levels at amounts of £3,000, £6,000 and £12,000. Higher amounts had more in-depth requirements and expected outputs.

Foodbanks also serve as a crucial focal point and front door for accessing wider resilience support and link to the Crisis & Housing payment schemes, as well as wider partner resilience services. Communications and physical printouts have been distributed to these venues, and currently training is being explored with foodbank volunteers for identifying underlying issues and risks and how to refer to appropriate support as early intervention.

3.8. **Financial Assessment Team – AgeUK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin (STW) pilot** – During a partner workshop to develop the delivery plan for CRF year 1, a proposal put forward by AgeUK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin (STW) included a developmental pilot post working via referrals from the Council’s in house Financial Assessment Team and also social workers where appropriate. This post supports elderly residents with completion of paperwork, forms and the complex financial documentation required for moving into care. This may involve in-person visits to avoid digital exclusion and offer face-to-face support where our internal team no longer has capacity to do so. Referrals into this new post started in late September, through a referral form coproduced between the Council and AgeUK STW. Feedback from AgeUK and our in-house team has been positive, with 8 complex-case residents supported between launch and the 15th of October, with partners noting likely increasing demand as the scheme becomes more established and referral links are strengthened.

This is one of two FTE posts funded at AgeUK (at a cost of £40,000 per post for the FY), with the other being a general advisor taking referrals from partners and the council to support on advice and resilience support for older people, such as

applying for pension credit, appointing an attorney and more. 593 older people have been supported in the first 6 months. For every £1 the council invested via CRF AgeUK STW have provided a £28.51 tangible increase in confirmed financial resilience for individuals.

3.9. **Affordable Warmth & Energy Efficiency (AWEE) Programmes** – Established case management and referral process with Marches Energy Advice (MEA) for the delivery of a Central Energy Advice service. Established monthly reporting and management meetings with MEA to keep delivery of grant agreement on track.

A large amount of coordination work has been undertaken over the summer months, with the team frequently meeting with other teams at the Council, MEA and other partner organisations to further develop and 'warm-up' referral routes for residents in or at risk of fuel poverty. This has included the roll out of training sessions for frontline workers through MEA, new digital energy advice materials, and access to goods-in-kind grants to help households with the cost of energy. This work will continue through the winter, with a focus on pulling together partner organisations and teams into a forum on Energy Debt, with an attempt to build a coordinated Shropshire approach.

The team carried out scoping & research into technologies and demographic data for effective targeting of the Hot Water Modernisation scheme. Three main clusters have initially been identified for targeting, with the proposed install of new SUNAMP Thermino Heat Batteries. Based on previous work by the team and SAP analysis, the targeted households are each expected to see a roughly £300 annual bill saving from the upgrades. We subsequently secured a suitably accredited installer and have prepared first wave of installs. Work continues to intensify communications and promotion of the scheme across these areas, with a 'winter uptick' expected in line with most of our affordable warmth services.

We also continued delivery of the emergency temporary heating, boiler repair / replacement and housing health hazard interventions for qualifying low-income residents – over summertime a total of 27 direct grants have been issued to the value of £40,362.99, significantly reducing the risk of 22 identified Housing Health Hazards, subsidising unaffordable energy / fuel costs and restoring heating & hot water to resident's homes. The service has also covered 5 emergency heating interventions so far this year.

3.10. **Cost-of-Living materials and Communications refresh** – Working closely with both our in-house communications, and web teams, as well as external partners IFAN (Independent Food Aid Network) an updated "Worrying about Money?" leaflet was produced, outlining available support within Shropshire. The content of this document was collated and coordinated by Citizens Advice Shropshire based on partner feedback. A large quantity (17.500) of these were printed (funded by CRF) and shared with appropriate venues, including VCSE partners, foodbanks, libraries, community venues and Shropshire Local. Copies were offered to all members at the September 24th meeting of Council. In addition to this, a full suite of marketing materials were produced by our in-house comms team, including social media posts, press releases and graphics, these have also been shared with partners for wider promotion. This comms plan extended to a refresh, rebranding and simplification of our existing cost-of-living support pages, making it easier for residents to apply, find, and access support, including, but not limited to

the Crisis & Resilience Fund. These webpages can be found here: Cost of living help | Shropshire Council.

*(a copy of the "Worrying about Money?" leaflet is included as **appendix 3**)*

3.11. **Welcome Spaces Grants** – continuing from our successful "Warm Welcome" programme run over the last few years, additional funding was provided and distributed by partners Marches Energy Advice (MEA). £169,000 was set aside for this work, an increase from the previous "Warm Welcome" funding due to the increased requirements on venues to provide a stronger offer.

A multi-organisation panel, including Shropshire Council, assessed the applications from 43 venues, spread across the county, with strong coverage. There were 3 tiers of funding available, ranging from £0 to £10,000.

Multiple venues will be awarded funding through this scheme, and will be launching over the 26/27 winter period, all will be publicised on the council website, as well as through delivery partners Marches Energy Advice. These locations serve as localised community drop-ins holding resilience sessions, warm spaces and signposting/referral points to wider CRF network partners. Larger venues will also serve as central hubs, offering training sessions for volunteers to upskill and provide more targeted community-based support.

There is scope for non-CRF work to be undertaken in these larger venues due to the relationship building between partners. For example, a vaccination awareness programme in these hubs is currently in development to increase uptake of vaccines and improve public health and wellbeing.

3.12. **Citizens Advice Shropshire** - Between the 1st April and 30th September, Citizens Advice Shropshire (CAS) delivered a 41% increase in maximisation of income clients compared with the same time in 2025. This has resulted in a total income gain outcome of £314,595 in Qtr1 & 2 of 2026, a substantial increase of £225,718 comparatively with the same period in 2025. CRF funding was used to increase capacity within these teams to offer this additional support. Further posts (as outlined in point 17.3) have been hired and are currently undergoing training. Citizens Advice Shropshire have also continued to co-ordinate the food insecurity programme through the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance and provide data, insight and analysis to support decision-making and priority setting for the Crisis & Resilience Fund.

3.13. **Care Leaver Support** – following the council's commitment to becoming a child-friendly organisation and continuing from the Household Support Fund rounds 6 & 7, a standalone pot of £100,000 for year 1 was provided to our care leaving team for targeted support to this cohort. The leaving care service remains committed to supporting young people to reduce chance of experiencing financial crisis and to increase their resilience. Over the past six months the team have been working on developing an independence programme with our care leavers and the first session on money management has been arranged for the 27th October. Spend to the end of September on these programmes came to £7,487.48, directly providing 101 awards to care leavers. Similar to other schemes, this spend is expected to increase substantially over the winter period, and as arranged programmes roll out.

A printed money management programme is in train, so that social workers and personal advisers can share with young people currently aged 17 and their carers. They will strongly encourage them to complete this programme before they turn 18 so they have a better understanding on handling their personal finances as they move into adulthood.

3.14. **Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) Programme top-up** – considering the changes to CRF regarding blanket provision previously allowable under the Household Support Fund (HSF) around Free School Meals (FSM), removal over the 2026 Summer Holidays and beyond required suitable mitigations to be put in place. The council elected to increase funding to the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) pot, as well as the food insecurity workstream listed in point 3.7. Additional places were offered in target places of high demand. An allocation of **£200,000** was provided to the HAF team for this support.

Overall, this additional £200,000 of funding represented an approximate 25% increase in funding for this programme. Figures on numbers support/spend to date are unknown at the time of writing due to different reporting periods, a request has been made to utilise funding to explore the potential for a digital booking system to improve uptake and simplify the process for families to arrange activities for their children over the holidays. Indicative figures put the cost of such a system at around £13,000 p/y.

3.15. **Free School Meal (FSM) funding – May half-term week –** Within the initial delivery plan in April, funding for the final (in-school) week of the 25/26 academic year was approved to allow time for the scheme to wind down and give suitable time for families and schools to prepare. Communications were shared well in advance of this date, with versions for headteachers, and a clear letter for schools to distribute to parents, which outlined other available support for those in need. This single week came to a total cost of £111,765 and covered 8,137 children.

3.16. **Domestic Abuse Programmes –** our in-house domestic abuse prevention team have scheduled three half-day sessions around economic abuse in October and November (two sessions in Shrewsbury and one in Oswestry). A Ludlow session is in development and expected to be held in November. Bridgnorth is also planned before the end of the year. Two half-day training sessions will also be delivered to Citizens Advice Shropshire staff, highlighting the desire and demand for this expertise to professional services. It is recommended that additional funding is provided to deliver further training and support around economic abuse in year 2 due to this interest. Due to the time required to book venues and arrange sessions, it is proposed to utilise a small amount of year 1 underspends from other programmes to start rollout of this scheme before April 2027. An amount of £10,000 would enable rollout of this support into year 2, enabling wider lived experience input including both older and younger people in more innovative ways.

3.17. **Staffing Capacity (internal & partners)** – in the first 6 months, the fund has also been used to finance several staffing posts both within the council and in partner organisations, increasing capacity to deliver the programmes within the year 1 plan. These posts currently vary between 1-year and 3-year fixed term contracts, though currently, all external posts are agreed for one financial year only. No further contractual posts are planned for in year at this stage, however extension

of these existing posts is recommended to ensure continuity of support between years, and to retain capacity and experience within the VCSE sector. Additional temporary agency staffing have been arranged within the Welfare Support Team to increase capacity due to sickness and hiring delays and support the winter demand. This was approved at the relevant teams internal Workforce Board.

- **Shropshire Council**
  - 1.0 FTE – Crisis & Resilience Fund Support Officer, providing general administrative support with reporting and Management Information returns, FOI requests, finance, and handling referrals to partners, and triaging "no-wrong-door" requests. This Grade 6 post was filled as of October 5th.
  - 1.0 FTE – Affordable Warmth & Energy Efficiency (AWEE) Support Staff – Grade 10 Post, supporting with AWEE schemes and programmes.
  - 2.8 FTE – Welfare Support – Grade 7 Posts – handing Crisis Payment applications, (including urgent Heating Oil requests), and where possible triaging and completing warm referrals to partner support.
  - At the time of writing, additional, 2.0 FTE temporary agency staff are currently being recruited to the Welfare Support team (Crisis Payments) to support over the winter period and reduce the current case backlog. Funding for these posts would come from in-year underspends of the grant.

- **Citizens Advice Shropshire**
  - 2.0 FTE - Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Certified Debt Advisors
  - 1.0 FTE – General Community Advisor (extension of previous HSF post)
  - 0.2 FTE - Research and Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance (SFPA) Coordinator Funding

- **AgeUK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin**
  - 1.0 FTE - Advisor Post, providing general resilience support and advice services.
  - 1.0 FTE - Financial Assessment Pilot Post within AgeUK STW.

- **Community Resource**
  - 2.0 FTE – Ask, Assist, Act (Conversational framework) Trainers
  - 1.0 FTE – Heating Oil Support Officer (year 1 only)

4. Summary of Main Proposals

4.1. This report mainly seeks to provide an update on the spend, delivery and progress of the first 6 months of the Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) within Shropshire by the council and its partners. The delivery plan and proposals for year 1 of this fund were approved by Cabinet in April 2026. This report details work undertaken in the first 6 months of this scheme, but also outlines the projects planned for delivery over the winter period. Lastly, it aims to make suggestions regarding some year 2 proposals requiring early commitment, underspend utilisation and how the Council plans to coproduce and collaboratively create the next delivery plan for 27/28.

4.2. The initial launch of this fund through the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) left little lead-in time for partners, hiring of staff (internal and external), and transferring of funds. To avoid this moving into year 2, it is proposed that 2027/2028 funding for the external staff posts outlined in this report is approved before year end, with Cabinet delegating authority to approve this to the Portfolio Holder in discussion with the S.151 Officer, so that funds can be in partner accounts before next fiscal year. This includes permission for partners to carry forward underspends, as well as an inflationary adjustment (of a figure to be confirmed by finance) where required. Where this inflationary adjustment can be covered by year 1 underspends, this would be utilised before provision of additional funding in year 2.

4.3. There are also schemes/issues internally that have arisen since the delivery plan was written that support the outcomes of the fund. It is proposed and requested for approval to use in-year underspends to fund these programmes should there be enough to do so following advice and discussion with finance and appropriate internal teams. These include, but may not be limited to:

- Investment in a replacement digital solution/s for existing systems, including, but not limited to Crisis Payments.
- Exploring the potential to procure a Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) booking system, simplifying the process and increasing uptake of events for eligible children.
- Review potential to provide top-up funding to schemes where demand has been higher than anticipated (both internal and external)
- Expand the Economic Abuse training offer with commitment to funding upfront costs due to lead-in time arranging sessions.

Any proposed use of underspends would be shared with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and S.151 Officer for approval should delegated authority be approved.

4.4. Over the remainder of the financial year (CRF year 1), the following priorities for the next 6 months have been identified or remain in train from the initial delivery plan.

- Improve referral pathways and explore development of a uniform document for making warm referrals across the council and partners.
- Promote available support across the wider council, so that all staff are available to the support on offer when speaking to residents.
- Reduce the Crisis Payments backlog and improve efficiencies/payment times.
- Prepare for increased winter demand on both budgets and staffing capacity.
- Promotion of schemes via internal and partner communications channels, keeping a close eye on the impact this has on demand.
- Launch and monitor Welcome Spaces and Food Bank schemes.
- Evaluate and review AgeUK and Domestic Abuse pilot schemes.
- Start to explore proposals and priorities for year 2 (or year 3 pending lead-in time) delivery plan.

4.5. **Case Studies** *(all names have been anonymised, and the first two case studies were kindly provided by Citizens Advice Shropshire):*

*" **Henry**, a single man of working-age with long-term health conditions and*

depression, was struggling on a low-income earning a standard allowance from Universal Credit while managing priority debts such as utility arrears and parking fines totalling £1,887.00. He felt unable to afford the existing repayment arrangements and sought support from Citizens Advice Shropshire Debt Caseworker team.
Through specialist debt advice and partner collaboration, Henry received local foodbank support, guidance on accessing pension entitlements with AgeUK Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and following a referral by Citizens Advice Shropshire, was awarded a £900 contribution towards his energy debt from Marches Energy Advice. Citizens Advice Shropshire Debt Caseworker team also helped Henry organise his debts, negotiate with debtors, and supported him towards an affordable repayment plan, improving his financial stability and reducing the pressure of Henry's accrued debt."

*"**Kai**, a nonbinary, working-aged person is a council tenant living with multiple long-term health conditions including Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, OCD and chronic back pain, was struggling with a monthly budget deficit of £215.60. Living on a low-income of Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit, rising energy costs and benefit deductions left them unable to manage their arrears, accruing utility debts of over £2,872.*
Citizens Advice Shropshire (CAS) provided Kai with debt advice and practical support, including referrals to a local foodbank, Marches Energy Advice (MEA) and Community Resource. With support from CAS Debt Caseworkers, Kai secured a £500 Essential Support Fund grant from Community Resource towards energy arrears, in addition to securing a "Breathing Space" period to prevent an escalation of enforcement action while CAS Debt Caseworkers continued to negotiate with Scottish Power on Kai's behalf. As a result of consultation with MEA, CAS Debt Caseworkers were also directed to available energy debt funds with utility providers to help reduce Kai's arrears as well as being informed of MEA debt support of arrears below £2,000.
The intervention helped reduce financial pressure and protected Kai from further debt escalation while their case is ongoing. Kai's story demonstrates the significant impact of available collaborative voluntary sector partner support in Shropshire."

Internally, **Jane Doe** was referred to our Welfare Support team by MacMillan Cancer support. They are self-employed but have been out of work since August. Due to this financial shock, they were struggling to pay their bills and buy food. They are on Universal Credit and recently underwent cancer-related surgery. Following a call with our in-house team, identifying possible support, were able to provide funding for 2 months of each; food (£360), gas & electricity (£250) and support with a phone bill (£130) thereby reducing potential isolation and enabling her to keep in touch with MacMillan. This is one case of many, where a person-centred approach provides tailored support to residents.

4.6. Finally, the report asks Cabinet to note upcoming preliminary exploring of potential schemes and priorities for year 2 of CRF. This would be via coproduction through partner workshops, and where possible member suggestions and priorities shared with either the Portfolio Holder for Finance, or the CRF delivery group to shape the next delivery plan.

5. Alternative Options

5.1. The proposals set out above are recommended as they provide the most effective approach to maintaining continuity of delivery while making best use of the funding available. Extending existing partner staffing arrangements will retain established staff, expertise and relationships, avoiding unnecessary disruption and delays associated with recruitment or establishing replacement provision. Allowing eligible underspends to be carried forward also provides flexibility to meet agreed staffing and inflationary costs, while ensuring that existing funding is utilised wherever possible before additional funding is committed. Overall, this approach provides greater certainty for partners and services while supporting effective and timely delivery of the programme and reducing the impact on residents accessing support.

5.2. **Option 1:** No automatic continuation of partner posts.

Funding with partners for staffing posts has been agreed for a single year, ending 31st March 2027, this is the deadline shared in partner grant funding agreements. Partners have been made aware that an extension to these posts requires Cabinet approval. Removing funding for these posts however would mean a reduction in capacity for partners to accept referrals and deliver support and potentially cause a loss in goodwill. There would also be a substantial delay and onboarding costs in re-hiring should these posts be required again later.

Risk: Partners may begin redundancy processes, experienced staff may leave, and services may not be immediately available if Cabinet later decides to reinstate them. This option is not recommended.

5.3. **Option 2:** Carry forward all (non-staffing) underspends into year 2, and review and draft the next delivery plan in April 2027 based on this new & increased funding envelope.

Guidance within this fund allows underspends to be carried forward into the next financial year for the first 2 years, with all funding to be utilised by the 31st March 2029.

Ringfenced Housing Payments, and a Crisis Payment scheme are the only items currently required under DWP guidance. The Resilience and Community Coordination strands and funding for these schemes is largely discretionary provided it supports the priorities and outcomes required. Currently there are proposals for utilisation of some of the underspend that are not outlined within the year 1 delivery plan. These proposals could instead form part of the year 2 plan; however, this would delay implementation similar to year 1.

Risk: Delayed decisions may make recruitment and programme mobilisation more difficult. Clawback of any partner underspends will require substantial administrative time for both internal teams and partner finance departments.

5.4. **Option 3:** Hold back full year partner funding, with conditional continuation to June 2027

Do not approve full-year extensions. Instead, hold back most Year 2 funding and offer selected posts a short extension of up to three months, subject to appropriate legal, procurement, grant and HR advice.

The extension would provide continuity while a formal review is completed. Posts would only continue beyond June 2027 where they meet an agreed performance threshold and remain aligned with Year 2 priorities. Avoids a cliff edge while preserving most funding for later decisions, however, does not provide assurance to existing staff around security of posts, who may elect to look for alternative positions. Existing partner underspends, or internal year 1 underspends could be used in the first instance for this option if available.

Risk: A short extension may only defer staffing uncertainty and could still create redundancy or retention issues. Potential for significant administrative work and time in the form of multiple invoicing, grant agreements and staffing contracts.

5.5. **Option 4:** Any combination of the above regarding staff post extensions and underspend utilisation.

Risk: A combination of approaches could result in inconsistent arrangements across partner organisations, reducing certainty around future staffing and funding. This may make workforce planning more difficult, increase the risk of losing experienced staff, and create additional administrative complexity in managing and monitoring different funding arrangements.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

6.1. Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector partners have seen a reduction in funding over the last few years. Failure to adequately support and resource this sector may lead to a reduction in capacity for the support and advice services they are able to offer. This may lead to an increase in the areas the Crisis & Resilience Fund is designed to reduce, or even subsequent increased demand on Council and partner services.

6.2. The key opportunity remains a partnership-wide “no wrong door” referral network operating through trusted community settings. This is in train, and will be and in development with partners, however national charities and custom case-management systems have meant this process has taken longer than anticipated. This would enable Welfare Support, customer services, libraries, Welcome Spaces, foodbanks, VCSE partners and more to identify underlying needs, make warm referrals and connect residents quickly to debt advice, income maximisation, housing, energy and other preventative support. Better tracking in the form of a referral system or better digital solutions would reduce duplication, backlogs and payment delays, strengthen management information, and show which interventions reduce repeat crisis demand. Targeted outreach through local venues will also improve access for rural and digitally excluded residents across Shropshire and improve community resilience long-term, even should any future grant provision not be forthcoming. Tracking of repeated applications and referrals will also provide datasets for identifying at-risk locations in the county, or cohorts/ demographics more at need of support, informing future delivery plans.

6.3. Staffing capacity internally has proven a problem in terms of delivery (particularly in the form of the Crisis Payments scheme) – this is currently being bolstered by proposed agency staff. Loss of further staff will cause significant impacts on the ability to deliver our Crisis, Housing and Heating Oil payment schemes, as well as referrals into wider resilience support.

6.4. The additional funding provided for heating oil & LPG support provided is not guaranteed to be a multi-year offer. At the time of writing, no information on further energy support top-ups in years 2 and 3 has been shared. There is a potential risk of dependency should the funding be provided in one year but not others, as well as reputational risk to the Council who would be unable to provide the same level of support in years 2 and 3 without additional funding. The future price of heating oil/LPG is unpredictable and based on global circumstances.

6.5. With rapid advances in generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), several local authorities across England administering CRF schemes have reported computer-generated evidence such as photographs and bills attached to fraudulent claims. We continue to put in place safeguards where appropriate against these support requests and continue to monitor developments in AI detection alongside our IT department. There is also a risk of fraudulent organisations targeting at-risk groups or providing misinformation. Scam awareness sessions are being run at our Library venues for residents, and timely sharing of key communications is implemented with partners.

7. Council Priorities

7.1. **"Early Intervention & Prevention" –** The main aim of the Crisis & Resilience Fund is to move from crisis support to a targeted preventative resilience support model. This supports to reduce downstream, costlier pressures, such as emergency housing, council tax write-offs and expensive (and largely inefficient) crisis payments for utilities or other debts.

7.2. **"People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs" –** In addition to direct Housing Payments assisting with rent arrears, several support programmes directly relate to improving household quality, such as replacement of white goods, energy efficiency schemes (such as boiler schemes and more). More broadly, support around financial resilience and better education or income maximisation will also help residents remain in their homes for longer, in a more stable environment.

7.3. **"Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life" –** the Crisis & Resilience fund does not restrict support based on age and is open to all cohorts of residents living within Shropshire. Poverty, and cost-of-living concerns are not restricted to the elderly, people with disabilities, families, or single individuals.

7.4. **"A thriving economy that benefits everyone" –** individuals who have greater handling of their finances, increased income through benefit entitlement, or improved budgeting are better placed to spend money within the local Shropshire economy.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. The total spend for the first 6 months of this fund comes to £1,739,574.39 or 39% of the overall in year allocation (including top-up). Whilst the spend is not a straight-line profile, demand is expected to increase once more referrals are made, communications promoting the scheme are launched, and we enter the winter period. Delays to hiring staff have also reduced spend within this reporting period. As per official guidance, unlike the predecessor fund, underspends are permitted

to be carried forward into years 2 and 3 ensuring no funding is lost to Shropshire and its residents. The S151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Finance will be made aware of what this figure is expected to be as the financial year ends. For information, at the same 6-month mid-point for the predecessor Household Support Fund 7 (HSF), spend was at 41.2% with the entire allocation being utilised before the end of the grant period.

8.2. Expenditure to date has only been on items approved in the initial year 1 delivery plan. These schemes were fully funded by the grant. There is no additional requirement on Council finances to deliver these standalone schemes. The yearly allocation for Shropshire remains £3.67m with a further £0.76m of funding made available in relation to Heating Oli support in the first year. Subsequent potential energy support top-ups in years 2 and 3 are unknown at the time of writing.

8.3. Unlike the predecessor fund where payments were made in arrears after claiming back eligible spend, the Crisis & Resilience Fund is paid monthly as part of the Local Government Settlement. This supports cashflow from an organisational perspective.

8.4. The Housing Payment scheme remains ringfenced in terms of allocation for the year, with a top-up of 20% (as permitted by guidance) provided to the Revenues & Benefits team due to increased demand on this support being required. This brings the total allocation for this scheme in year 1 to £439,926.30. This ringfencing is in place for years 1 and 2. Approval for a 20% top-up in year 2 is also recommended. In 2028/29, the allocation can be amended as deemed appropriate by the Council, pending evaluation of year 1 and 2 demand and expected trends.

8.5. Payments made to partners has been accounted for in-year. Should partners have underspends in the FY, the recommendation is that they are allowed to carry this forward for appropriate purposes as outlined within grant funding agreements. This would also form the basis for any inflation-based adjustments for staffing costs in year 2 before any top-up is provided from year 2 funding.

8.6. Due to contracts for new (and existing) council staff posts, it is required that funding is set aside for potential staff redundancy costs. A ringfenced pot will be allocated out of underspends available in the grant funding window (2026-2029).

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1. **Legal Implications**

As with the predecessor fund, the Council is required to deliver the Crisis & Resilience Fund in accordance with DWP guidance and grant conditions, including requirements relating to eligible expenditure, timescales, record keeping, reporting and assurance. Funding to external organisations is supported by appropriate grant agreements or contracts covering permitted use, monitoring, data protection, audit, recovery of funds, variation and termination. Proposed extensions or new digital systems must comply with the Council's procurement rules and the relevant Procurement Act.

9.2. **Human Resources Implications**

Employees engaged on fixed-term contracts may acquire additional employment rights through continuous service. Where a fixed-term contract is not renewed for

redundancy-related reasons, employees with the relevant qualifying service may be entitled to redundancy pay and access to appropriate consultation and redeployment processes. Successive fixed-term contracts should also be reviewed, particularly where continuous fixed-term service approaches four years, unless continued fixed-term status can be objectively justified. HR advice must be obtained before any extension, non-renewal or change of contractual status. This currently relates to approximately 5.0 FTE council staff of varying grades. Costs at this stage are unknown due to future potential pay awards that are yet to be decided, as well as potential future grant funding from the Department for Work & Pensions for continued (or replacement) Crisis & Resilience Fund iterations post April 2029.

Currently agency staff are proposed to support with the existing backlog and expected increase in demand over the upcoming winter period. Currently funding for these posts has been agreed for a period of 24 weeks maximum, at which point capacity will again reduce to core levels. Demand after this date will be closely monitored to avoid escalating backlogs.
For external partners, employment responsibilities will be determined by the employing organisation and contractual arrangement. The Council will manage its directly employed staff in accordance with its employment policies. External partners will remain responsible for their employees, with any eligible staffing, notice or redundancy costs subject to the relevant grant agreement and confirmation from Finance, Legal and HR.

Workforce decisions arising from the Fund will be implemented consistently and transparently, with appropriate consideration of equality impacts, reasonable adjustments, flexible working arrangements and the avoidance of less favourable treatment of fixed-term or part-time employees. Any restructure, selection or redundancy process will be subject to the Council's appropriate workforce equality assessment and consultation requirements.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1. The fund & subsequent programmes are county-wide. Payment support schemes (Crisis, Housing, and Heating Oil cash awards) can be accessed or applied for irrespective of location within the county (*though applicants must be a Shropshire resident, and eligibility criteria may apply*).

10.2. Where possible and practical, in-person programmes are (and will be) run from a range of locations across the county to ensure coverage, avoiding exclusion and ensuring reach of Shropshire's rural communities. Phone calls and digital support is available for more rural areas where Resilience support programmes may be limited.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1. **Health in all Policies (HiAP)** - The Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) represents a practical, real-world example of Health in All Policies in action within Shropshire.

By investing in income maximisation, housing stability, debt reduction, food security, fuel poverty interventions and community organisation resilience, the programme addresses several wider determinants of health across multiple

council services and partner organisations, reducing siloed working and providing greater opportunity and staffing capacity for referrals across the CRF network.

The fund demonstrates how financial, housing and community policy decisions can contribute directly to improving health outcomes, preventing ill-health and reducing health inequalities across Shropshire particularly in the areas of, (though not limited to) fuel poverty, food insecurity, debt management, and income maximisation.

These factors reduce potential future demand on Council and partner services by improving financial resilience and skills and providing direct cash (or in-kind) support to low-income households. This represents a shift from reactive crisis response to proactive, preventative support.

11.2. **Child Friendly Shropshire** – Care Leavers have a dedicated budget as part of this work, with programmes designed to support this cohort. This includes crisis payments, support with training opportunities into employment, financial and budgeting skill sessions and more. Support is also available to low-income includes families with children, who may be struggling, and crisis, housing or heating oil payments are not restricted to those on benefits. Resilience and advice/support services offered by partners are open to all including families with children of all ages.

11.3. **Economic Implications** – people struggling with low income are more at risk of falling into debt, facing repossession of homes (or eviction if rented) or purchasing essential items (such as white goods) on high-risk or interest rate credit. This has potentially severe downstream effects on both residents and the council or partners where costs are avoidable with correct, and early intervention. Debt also removes money from the local economy that could otherwise support small, Shropshire based businesses. Where loan-sharking or high interest debt is identified through reviewing applications, the Crisis Payments team signpost to appropriate support, safeguarding or the police.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1. There are no restrictions on protected characteristics or classes as a part of this funding. Eligibility criteria are based on income, savings and assessment of financial situation. Multiple access routes are available for persons with disabilities, including via phone, email, online application form, or in-person for those who may otherwise be digitally excluded.

12.2. Communications around support programmes have been shared with the council's Armed Forces Covenant lead, as well as across the wider council estate, including libraries, leisure centres, Shropshire Local, and Community & Family Hubs (including Best Start in Life Centre located at the Lantern in Shrewsbury). Partners have also received copies, which will be distributed to foodbanks, and Welcome Space venues covering the breadth of the county.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1. Fuel Poverty is a serious issue within Shropshire due to its rurality, older housing stock, and low-income economy. Demographics also trend older, with residents

more likely to need to heat their home for longer during the winter months. Several schemes have been funded to support these workstreams including boiler upgrades, energy efficiency works and grant and debt advice.

13.2. Access to services digitally reduces the need to travel to historical “hub” locations such as the main market towns, reducing vehicle emissions. Delivery of support sessions in nearer, community venues through our food insecurity and Welcome Space programmes should also lead to a reduction in travel to access this support.

13.3. Funding for replacement or new white goods through our Crisis Payments scheme prioritises energy efficient devices, both to save energy costs in bills, but also supports with reduced electricity consumption and support the Councils climate change agenda. This scheme may also extend to replacement carpets or other items that improve insulation and reduce energy costs/climate emissions.

14. Background Papers

14.1. Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) – Delivery Plan Proposals

14.2. Crisis & Resilience Fund Initial Delivery Plan – Year 1

15. Appendices

Appendix A - “Worrying about Money?” Leaflet – Digital Version
Appendix B - Crisis Payment Policy (2026 - 2029)
Appendix C - Crisis & Resilience Fund Housing Payment Policy (CRF-HP) (2026 - 2029)

Worrying about money?

Free, confidential help is available in Shropshire



Three steps to find options and places to get help

Page 27

Step 1: What's the problem?

I suddenly have no money

- Lost job or reduced hours
- Money stopped
- Lost money
- Unexpected expense
- Disaster (e.g. flood or fire)
- Relationship breakdown
- Sanctioned (see option: 5)

See options: 1 2 6

I am waiting on a benefit payment or advance

- New claim for benefit
- Payment delayed
- Waiting for decision

See options: 1 4

My money doesn't stretch far enough

- Deciding between food, fuel, and mobile credit
- Low income
- Zero hours contract
- Statutory Sick Pay too low to cover costs
- Facing redundancy
- Not sure if eligible for support
- Change of circumstance

See options: 1 2

I have debt

- Rent or Council Tax
- Gas and electricity
- Payday loans
- Owe friends and/or family
- Benefit repayments

See option: 3

Step 2: What are some options?

1 Council Support Schemes

If you're struggling to meet your most essential living costs or are facing an unexpected crisis you may be able to access a Crisis Payment through Shropshire Council from the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF).

You may also be eligible for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support as well as the Crisis and Resilience Housing Payment scheme.

If you apply, we may, with your permission, refer you onto partners who can help you with further advice and support.

Find out more: next.shropshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help/crisis-and-resilience-fund

2 Maximise Your Income

Anyone who is struggling financially can get a benefit check and speak to an advisor for free and confidential advice. A benefit check can ensure that you are receiving all the money you're entitled to, especially if your circumstances have changed recently. Advisors can also provide support to access any discounts you may be entitled to, help with managing gas and electricity bills, and make sure you're not missing out on things like school clothing grants or free school meals.

3 Debt Advice

Debt can happen to anyone. Free advice and support can help you find ways to manage your debts and reduce how much you pay each month.

4 Benefit Advance

If you have made a new claim for benefit and are in financial hardship while you wait for your first payment, you may be able to get an advance to afford things like rent or food. It's important to get advice before taking out an advance. Benefit advances must be paid back, and the money will be taken from your future benefit payments (a loan).

5 Hardship Payment

If you have been sanctioned and you are on Universal Credit, you may be able to access a Hardship Payment. Hardship payments are not always paid immediately and usually need to be paid back.

6 Challenge a Decision

You can challenge a benefit decision if your benefit has been stopped / sanctioned / reduced / refused or you have been overpaid. Most benefit decisions need to be challenged within one month.

Step 3: Where can I get help? For free and confidential advice

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Advice on Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and the CRF Housing Cost scheme
0345 678 9002 (Benefit Service)
www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits
Help with option: 1

Advice on crisis payments
0345 678 9078 (Welfare Support Team)
next.shropshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help/crisis-and-resilience-fund
Help with option: 1

Cost of living help
next.shropshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help

Scan for full, up-to-date list of support
Drop-in support is available via – Shropshire Local

CITIZENS ADVICE SHROPSHIRE

Advice on benefits, debt, housing and more
0808 278 7894 (Freephone)
Text: 0800 144 8884 (Freephone)
01743 280 019 (Debt advice)
www.cabshropshire.org.uk
Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6

MARCHES ENERGY ADVICE

Energy advice and support with energy tariffs, bills, emergency grants and more
0800 677 1307 (Freephone)
shropshire@mea.org.uk | www.mea.org.uk
Help with option: 2

AGE UK SHROPSHIRE TELFORD & WREKIN

Support and advice for older people, their families and carers
01743 233 123
www.ageuk.org.uk/shropshireandtelford
Help with options: 1 2 6

COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Grants and energy advice for people struggling with fuel and energy bills
01743 360 641
grants@community-resource.org.uk
www.community-resource.org.uk/essential-support-fund
Help with options: 1 2

Other Support

Christians Against Poverty
Advice and ongoing support for people struggling with debt
0800 328 0006
07943 669 727 (Debt Centre Manager, Bridgnorth) | marktriggs@capuk.org
www.capuk.org/get-help

Just Credit Union
Provide safe home for savings with access to affordable low cost loans
01743 252 325
info@justcreditunion.org
www.justcreditunion.org

Shropshire Larder
Advice on income maximisation, budgeting, debt and more
www.shropshirelarder.org.uk

The Shrewsbury Ark
Advice, support and signposting for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness
01743 363 305
info@shrewsburyark.co.uk
www.shrewsburyark.co.uk

The Samaritans
24/7 telephone support, non-judgemental and confidential
116 123
www.samaritans.org/branches/shrewsbury

Shropshire Council – Mental Health and Wellbeing
Resources to support your mental health
www.shropshire.gov.uk/healthy-shropshire/mental-health-and-wellbeing

Shropshire Mental Health Support
Support and services for people affected by mental health difficulties
01743 368 647 | www.shropshiremhs.com

Other Support

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Services
Supporting for anyone affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence
0300 303 1191
(Shropshire – Freephone)
sdas@shropsdas.org.uk
www.shropsdas.org.uk

StepChange
Debt advice and money management
0808 138 1111
www.stepchange.org

MoneyHelper
Debt advice and guidance on money and pensions
0800 011 3797
07701 342 744 (WhatsApp)
www.moneyhelper.org.uk

Turn2us
Information on benefits and grants
www.turn2us.org.uk
benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

Shelter
Advice and information for people with a housing problem or who are homeless
Emergency helpline: 0808 800 444
england.shelter.org.uk

Healthy Start
Help to buy fruit, vegetables and milk if you're on a low income and pregnant or have a child under 4
(Also available for people with NRPF)
0300 330 7010
healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk
www.healthystart.nhs.uk

For Migrants with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

This means you may not be able to claim benefits

Shropshire Supports Refugees
Support with issues around housing, benefits, work, medical support and more
01743 216 758 (Freephone)
info@shropshiresupportsrefugees.co.uk
www.shropshiresupportsrefugees.org

The Unity Project
Support to have NRPF condition removed if applicable and other support
www.unity-project.org.uk

Project 17
Advice on housing and financial options for families with children facing severe poverty or homelessness because they have NRPF
07963 509 044 | www.project17.org.uk

Migrant Help
Independent advice and guidance to assist asylum seekers in the UK
0808 801 0503 (Freephone)
www.migranthelpuk.org

Shropshire Council | citizens advice Shropshire | Marches Energy Advice | Shropshire Telford & Wrekin age UK

Powys Community Resource | Independent Food Aid Network

Interactive version:

Funded by UK Government

www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/shropshire

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Updated: 21/08/26

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POLICY

CRISIS AND RESILIENCE FUND (CRISIS PAYMENTS)

Shropshire Council's delivery policy for
Crisis and Resilience Fund (Crisis Payments)

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. What is this policy for? 3
3. Who might qualify for help? 4
4. What can an award help with? 5
5. The Application Process: All Applications 6

Making an application for a CRF Crisis Payment 7

Supporting Evidence Requirements: 8

Treatment of income and expenditure: 9

Decision making: 9

6. How we make our awards 10
7. Disputed decisions 11
8. Combatting fraud 12
9. Publicity 12
10. Management reporting 12
11. Policy review 13

Policy

1. Introduction

The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) is funded by the UK Government. It is grant funding money that is made available to Local Authorities by the Department for Work & Pensions.

The objective of The Fund is to provide short-term support to low-income households by:

- Supporting individuals who have experienced financial shock. A financial shock is a sudden, unexpected expense or drop in income, that can place pressure on their budget and wellbeing, or
- preventing individuals from entering crisis. Providing timely support so that people can manage pressures, maintain control, and avoid being pushed into crisis or prevent crises from escalating.

The fund also aims to support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience. The purpose of this policy is to outline the support available, and approach taken through the Crisis Payments strand of this fund.

For more information on the Crisis and Resilience Fund, please refer to the UK Govt Crisis and Resilience Fund Guidance

Shropshire Council has been allocated £3.67m per year, for a period of 3 years between 1st April 2026, and the 31st March 2029. Additionally, in financial year 2026/27, £758,558 of "top-up" funding was awarded to support with households reliant on heating oil and LPG for delivery under the Crisis Payments strand.

As required as part of this fund, a dedicated Crisis Payment function is required, and so part of this funding has been allocated for the administration of Crisis Payments.

Help towards housing costs is largely covered by support from Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payments administered by the Council's Benefits Service. That scheme replaces the preceding Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's), and the payments are covered by a different Council policy document.

2. What is this policy for?

This policy explains how Shropshire Council will deliver Crisis Payments. This part of the CRF will be run as an application-based award scheme based on need, where residents will come forward to request support through making an application, or will be signposted by other Council services or specialist professional agencies.

As part of applying, we look at the reasons for needing help and through this review, or through ongoing conversations we may identify underlying issues requiring support. We may therefore provide a warm handover or signpost applicants to Resilience Services to obtain wider support for those issues as required, and we have consent to do so. These include, but are not limited to:

- Budgeting and financial advice
- Community Mental Health support
- Community Substance Misuse support
- Citizens Advice Shropshire
- Support with gambling
- A variety of other supportive services
- Support from AgeUK

As the wider fund develops, and stronger partnerships are made between the Council and external partners, this list will expand to provide a greater and more comprehensive range of available support.

3. Who might qualify for help?

When considering a crisis payment application, we'll define low income as:

“a household whose income doesn't cover their essential expenditure costs.”

Where a household contains other adults, we'll expect them to contribute towards household costs.

We'll take a person-centred approach to establishing eligibility. Examples of a crisis where we might be able to help will be linked to some sort of financial shock.

For example (this list isn't exhaustive):

- A reduction in regular income (redundancy, significant change in working pattern)
- An unexpected sudden reduction in benefits or other income
- A car breaking down or a bus route being cut (or some other transport change)
- An essential item or household appliance breaking down (boiler, medical equipment or white goods)
- A disaster, such as fire, flood, gas explosion, chemical leak, landslip etc

- An accident, health emergency, mental health crisis leading to additional unplanned expenditure
- Domestic abuse resulting in additional expenditure

Please note that we may ask to see proof of the above.

In addition to the above, to be **eligible** for a CRF Crisis Payment, the person must:

- Be aged 16 or over
- Normally be a resident of Shropshire
- Not be a person subject to immigration control unless there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example if:
    - An adult has care and support needs
    - There is a child welfare concern
    - The Council believes that it is appropriate for improving the public health of the applicant

People who are **ineligible** for support are as follows:

- People subject to immigration control or who have no recourse to public funds and who do not meet the conditions above
- People who live outside Shropshire, unless they have been placed out of County by our Social Work or Homeless Teams
- Prisoners and people lawfully detained, including those released on temporary licence (but not those released on parole or on bail pending a court hearing)

Members of a religious order who are fully maintained by the order Where repeated applications are made, we reserve the right to refuse payments until evidence of engagement with resilience or appropriate support is provided.

It should be noted that the scheme is **not** intended to supplement or replace income on a long-term or ongoing basis.

There is no requirement that anyone applying must be in receipt of specific benefits but there is an expectation that the fund should be used to support households in the most need.

The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need which includes, but is not limited to, families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and people with disabilities.

Applications will be accepted from those deemed eligible as listed above.

4. What can an award help with?

There is no prescriptive list specifying eligible expenditure for Crisis Payments, the fund is designed to help at-risk individuals on a case-by-case basis. We will use our discretion to determine appropriate support by taking a person-centred, needs-based approach. A Crisis Payment may be considered for any of the following, based on your circumstances:

- Food
- Water including for drinking, washing, cooking, as well as for sanitary purposes and sewerage
- Housing costs - where these are not already met through Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, a CRF Housing Payment (see separate policy) or if applicable, through support from the Homeless Prevention Fund.
- Period and hygiene products such as soap and toothpaste
- Energy for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. This includes help for those who are facing immediate financial hardship because of significant increases in energy costs, such as a large increase in heating oil prices
- Clothing including uniform, warm winter clothing and shoes
- Essential furniture and appliances such as beds and bedding, washing machines, window coverings and carpets, fridge-freezers and ovens
- Essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or bus pass or paying for fuel
- Digital and connectivity essentials such as broadband or phone bills

If it is deemed that another statutory body is responsible for items or services, Crisis Payments cannot be made for these.

Dependent on circumstances, and where appropriate, we may work with a third-party to provide this support, whether cash-first, vouchers, or in-kind.

5. The Application Process: All Applications

Applications to the CRF will normally be limited to 3 in any 12 months' period however we may allow exceptions at our discretion. This limit does not assume an automatic entitlement to three awards in any 12 months period. In the event of repeat applications, we will look at any earlier award, what was provided and why. We will also consider any referrals to resilience services, recommendations or requirements that were advised when the earlier award was made. Applications may be refused where these recommendations or requirements have not been followed, or where an applicant has refused to accept, or has not engaged with resilience support.

Making an application for a CRF Crisis Payment

Until our online application form is available, applications to the CRF can be made over the phone by calling 0345 678 9078.

The appropriate privacy statement and declaration that explain how we may use your information and our expectations of the information you are asked to give will be played during a call for the applicant to hear and agree to. The privacy statement and declaration also cover permission to use other sources of information we have available to help decide on the application. After this, an adviser will complete the application itself during the call and explain what happens next, what else may be needed and the time limits that apply.

The Welfare Support Team's privacy notice can be found on our website: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/privacy/service-area-specific-privacy-notices/

Once available, our online application will be available on this web page, and will be the new way to apply for a CRF Crisis Payment: https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help/crisis-and-resilience-fund/crisis-payments/

We will operate a 'no-wrong-door' approach. This means that we aim to ensure that applicants can access advice and support through trusted partners, and receive the right help regardless of where they first make contact. We will also accept referrals from external partners and wider council departments as appropriate.We will accept applications from representatives or professional agencies acting on the applicant's behalf (subject to appropriate checks).

If an applicant needs help to complete their application online, staff at one of our Shropshire Local locations will be able to help:

Shropshire Local - Shrewsbury | Shropshire Council
Shropshire Local - Ludlow | Shropshire Council
Shropshire Local Mobile | Shropshire Council

Once our online form is available, if a resident has no one to help them and they are unable to get to a Shropshire Local location, they should contact us on 0345 678 9078 (selecting option 1) to discuss alternative options to make their application.

Applications will be administered in date order of when they were received. However, we will seek to identify and prioritise those in most urgent need where appropriate. Any applications received outside office hours that we consider to be urgent will be looked at on our next working day. All applications will be considered on an individual basis with due account given to the vulnerability and personal circumstances of each customer. An individual's personal circumstances, the

amount requested and the importance of the need will form the basis for the prioritisation of awards.

Some applications may be considered by other organisations on behalf of the Council.

Supporting Evidence Requirements:

We will need further information to support an application. We will require proof of identification for all applications.

If we are made aware that the information we require has already been provided to other Council services or professional organisations, we will obtain consent from the customer for this to be shared, to avoid duplication.

We may ask for a budget sheet to establish whether the applicant needs help. We can provide a budget sheet on request, alternatively, applicants may prefer to use the budget planner from Money Helper.

We'll also consider what money the applicant has available to them. For this purpose, we will need applicants to provide their most recent bank statement for each account they and their partner (if you have one) have, whether the account is in credit or debit. This also includes savings accounts. If the applicant has other accounts, such as ISAs, we may need to see proof of those too.

Please note that in some circumstances we may ask for bank proof for other members of the household where we would expect them to contribute towards the cost of the item(s) being requested.

We will normally have a conversation with the applicant to fully understand their needs. During this discussion, we may ask for other evidence, depending on the applicant's circumstances and the item(s) they are requesting. We will also identify any benefits they may be entitled to and will help them to identify areas where they may be able to make changes to help them meet their financial obligations, either themselves, or with support.

Once we've received the evidence we asked the applicant to provide when they made their application, a specialist adviser will contact them to gather more information. They may ask for further information or evidence, depending on the circumstances. If the applicant has applied to us before, we will require a budget sheet showing all income and outgoings.

We will check with you how and when you can send the information to us, and will agree on that date with you.

An application is not classed as complete unless we have all the information we need to make our decision. We therefore encourage applicants to provide any evidence we have requested by the agreed date. If evidence has not been provided by this date, the application will lapse and a new application may need to be made.

If you have a support worker, it can be helpful if they can provide us with a statement to support the application or if we can have the applicant's permission to discuss their application with the support worker. This additional information can help us to understand the applicant's situation more fully and therefore make a more informed and person-centred decision.

Treatment of income and expenditure:

Whilst there is no requirement for an income and expenditure test to be carried out, the purpose of this Fund is to support low-income households who are most in need, and we expect to target this Fund at those individuals and families least able to meet the cost of their essential outgoings.

Low-income can be defined as:

- Any adult in the household is currently entitled to a means tested benefit, including Universal Credit, Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit), Housing Benefit, or Council Tax Reduction (local scheme).
- Someone who is unable to meet their essential living costs after a reasonable and proportionate assessment of their household income, their accessible capital, and their essential expenditure (or outgoings).

If an applicant has received a benefit sanction, we will consider their individual circumstances, including the reason for the sanction. We will take a person-centred approach to establish the need, and the risk to the customer if an award is not made. We will require the applicant to take all appropriate steps to re-engage with the Department for Work and Pensions in order to re-instate their benefits, some partner organisations may be able to assist with this. If the customer approaches us again, we may not make an award where the customer is unable to demonstrate that they have taken the appropriate steps.

Where repeat, or repeated applications are made, we will require a completed budget form giving details of income against expenditure so that we may consider what actions need to be taken or what other sources of help are available.

Decision making:

Decisions on awards will be based on the principles of good decision-making, in that they are based on the facts and evidence available to an individual application, will be reasonable in the circumstances and made with unbiased discretion.

We will apply a person-centred, needs-based, holistic and trauma-informed approach to the customer's circumstances to identify need. This might include household finances, including the money available to the household, any steps or actions that the applicant is taking to address issues themselves, when the next income becomes available to the household or any other support received. (This is not an exhaustive list).

Where the applicant is found to have underlying issues that need to be addressed, the amount of time reasonably needed to do so will be considered. All supporting information, including that from third parties, will be used in arriving at the decision.

Each application is considered on its own merit, and because of the wide variety of individual circumstances that may result, a decision made on one application does not constitute a precedent for others.

Where we are unable to make an award, we will explain the reasons for this in writing so that the applicant understands why. We will also provide suggestions for alternative support where these exist and will either provide applicants with a warm handover or signpost applicants to wrap-around support through Resilience Services.

Where we make an award, we will confirm the items we have awarded and any actions necessary by the applicant. These actions may be reviewed as part of any repeat application made.

Decisions will be confirmed over the telephone (where possible) and followed up in writing.

We are unable to guarantee any timescales on awards, although we will endeavour to make awards within 48 hours of receiving all the information required to support the application.

6. How we make our awards

If we decide to make an award, it will depend on the type of award the applicant needs, and how urgently they need the help. We'll discuss this with the applicant when administering their application. We'll notify the applicant of our decision, and if we're unable to make an award, we'll explain why. The method we use to provide an award will be based upon the individual circumstances of each customer and will be flexible in how, when and where awards will be given to reflect the individual requirements of each application.

Appropriate methods of award may include:

- Cash or cash vouchers
- Other vouchers for essential items and goods
- Payment direct to third party
- Electricity or gas vouchers
- In-kind provision of goods

A referral may be made to a local food bank as an alternative to a refusal for a Crisis Payment for food.

7. Disputed decisions

Local welfare provision schemes, including crisis payments, are discretionary, and as such there's no right of appeal to a Social Security tribunal.
Applicants can ask us to conduct an internal review (look at our decision again) if they have reason to disagree with the decision we have made, if they think we haven't taken something into account or if they have new information that they think would be helpful to us. If an applicant wants to ask for a review, they must request this in writing, within one month of the date of the decision letter we send to them. The quickest way to do this, is to email localsupport@shropshire.gov.uk

If unable to do this, the request can be posted to us:
Welfare Support Team
Shropshire Council
PO Box 4826
SHREWSBURY
SY1 9LJ.

Decisions will be reviewed within the Welfare Support Team, by a different officer to the original decision maker, unless new information is provided that was not previously considered when the decision was made.

If the applicant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the review, they may request a further review within one month of the date of the review outcome. The process will seek to ensure that stage 2 reviews are considered by a senior officer, considering all the information and evidence included in the review and the reasonableness of the decision made. The decision will be notified in writing.

If we're unable to change our decision, applicants can choose the route of Judicial Review.

8. Combatting fraud

The privacy statement and declaration that forms part of every application allows for cross-checking of a number of information sources, specifically to combat potential fraud.

Knowingly failing to disclose a material fact or making a false statement in an application will be treated as fraudulent and where this is detected, the individual will be refused any further assistance. The council may notify the police and the Department for Work and Pensions and reserves the right to take legal action to recover a CRF award where there has been:

- A misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact or change of circumstances by the claimant (either fraudulently or otherwise)
- False evidence provided to support an application (whether from an alternative individual, or fabricated (either by hand or using AI tools)
- An error made when the application was determined

9. Publicity

Shropshire Council will inform its internal teams and forums, and external partner and stakeholder organisations of the availability of this fund as these are the places and organisations most likely to receive contact from, and identify, people in need. In addition, the Council will publicise the application-based scheme wider through:

- The Council's website
- The Shropshire Local service and the Customer Service Centre
- Crisis and Resilience Fund partners and VCSE organisations
- Wider public communication channels may include press releases, local radio and targeted leafletting, and will state that Crisis Payments are funded by the UK Government.

10. Management reporting

Reporting regarding applications and awards will be conducted in line with Government reporting requirements, through submission of twice-yearly MI returns. This will include information reported to us by any organisations administering awards on behalf of the Council.

Additionally, we may reserve the right to use any information provided for (anonymised) case studies, to inform future decision making as part of the development and improvement of this fund in future years.

11. Policy review

The policy will remain a working document and changes will be made as appropriate to ensure the service continues to meet the stated outcomes, objectives, needs of the local community and the council.

The policy is iterative and will be reviewed yearly for the duration of the Crisis and Resilience Fund, so changes may be made to this policy for applications administered in 2027/28 and 2028/29.

Continuation of this policy beyond March 2029 is entirely dependent upon the availability of future government funding.

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Crisis Resilience Fund

Housing Payment

2026

The Crisis Resilience Fund – Housing Payments scheme is administered in line with the *Discretionary Finance Assistance Regulations 2001 and The Crisis Resilience Fund Guidance Manual March 2026*

Table Of Contents

1. Introduction ……3
   1.1 Intentions of the scheme ……3
   1.2 Aims of the policy……3
2. What can Crisis Resilience Fund – Housing payment (CRF-HP) be used for……4
   2.1 Shortfall awards ……4
   2.2 Shortfall arrears……4
   2.3 Rent in advance and deposits ……4
   2.4 Removal costs……5
   2.5 Two homes ……5
   2.6 Other Housing payment……6
3. How can an application be made ……6
4. Qualifying conditions……6
5. Length of award……7
6. Capital, income and expenditure ……7
7. Conditions on award……9
8. Notification of an award……10
9. Payments……10
10. Revisions……10
11. Recovery of overpayments ……10
12. Reconsiderations ……11
13. Monitoring……11

1. Introduction

1.1 Intentions of the Crisis Resilience Fund – Housing payment

Each Local Authority receives an annual fund from Central Government in order to have finance available to assist residents, who meet set criteria, with housing costs relating to rented properties that cannot be met by Universal Credit (UC) housing costs or Housing Benefit (HB)

Each year the allocation is calculated based on the welfare reforms that have been introduced by Central Government in order for the Local Authorities to help tenants who are unable to sustain their tenancies following these changes.

Any grant that remains unspent each year is returned to central Government.

This policy is intended to provide clarification on how Shropshire Council will administer the funds to ensure:

- Consistency in decision making
- It meets the aims of the scheme set by Central Government
- It monitors the fund to allow it to be used equitably throughout the fund year
- Maximise expenditure of the grant within the limit set by central Government

1.2 Aims of the policy

Whilst Central Government have set the intended aims of the scheme, we have our own aims designed to best support Shropshire Council's most vulnerable residents, these include

- Prevention of homelessness
- Reduction of homelessness subsidy
- Assisting in the process of resettlement following homelessness
- Alleviating poverty
- Tenancy sustainment
- Safeguarding residents in their own home
- Providing temporary support during a period of crisis or transition
- Keeping families together
- Keeping residents within their area of support networks
- Supporting vulnerable people and/or victims of violence to move to a safer environment
- Assist people to move to housing appropriate to their needs
- Providing stability for children
- Supporting young people establishing independence
- Helping disabled people remain in suitably adapted properties

2. <u>What can Crisis Resilience Fund – Housing payment (CRF-HP) be used for?</u>

2.1 Shortfall awards

Where there is a difference between the maximum eligible HB or UC housing costs and the rental liability, CRF-HP can be used to assist the customer in making up the shortfall in full or part. This shortfall can be due to a number of things, for example:

- Reduction due to non-dependant deductions
- The benefit cap
- Reduction due to the size criteria
- Local Housing allowance restrictions
- In terms of UC, if the payments are not going direct to the landlord, where the overall payment has been reduced and it is not clear which element the deductions may have been taken from.
- If the UC is being paid directly to the landlord, then it is only the shortfall in relation to the housing costs that can be considered.

However, there are also circumstances under which CRF-HP cannot be used. These include where the shortfall has been caused by:

- Recovery of HB overpayments
- Ineligible service charges
- Increased rent due to rent arrears
- Certain sanctions and reductions in benefits

2.2 Shortfall arrears

In order to either prevent eviction or facilitate a move to a more sustainable accommodation.

Where a claimant has accrued arrears of rent a payment of CRF-HP can be considered to help clear the arrears in either part or full for any period where HB and/or UC housing costs have been in payment and the arrears have accrued in due to the shortfall criteria outlined in section 2.1 above.

2.3 Rent in advance and deposits

Where a person is looking to move into a new property, they can often be faced with having to initially pay large sums to cover rent in advance and/or a deposit in order to secure a tenancy.

Since the introduction of UC this has become more commonplace for Landlords to require a payment upfront to secure a tenancy, this includes properties from the social housing sector.

CRF-HP's can assist by paying part or all of this lump sum payment to help secure the new tenancy.

These moves can include either move into or out of the Shropshire area so long as there is genuine reason for the move and the new property is affordable.

In order for an award of CRF-HP to be made there has to be an appropriate reason for the move, for example, moving to a more affordable property or moving closer to a support network.

A tenant wishing to move for reasons not pursuant to the aims of the scheme, will not be given access to the fund, for instance where a move is motivated out of personal preference alone.

Likewise in order for an application to be successful the applicant must demonstrate that the move has some urgency and that they would not be able to budget for the move themselves given time, for instance an applicant wishing to move out of the familiar home and become independent, would need to demonstrate why they were not able to remain in their current home and put money aside for rent in advance and/or a deposit.

In order for an application to be successful the proposed tenancy must be appropriate to the customer's needs and must be financially sustainable without further recourse to the CRF-HP fund.

2.4 Removal costs

As with rent in advance and deposits, removal costs can be a considerable sum of money. This is again something that the CRF-HP fund can help with. The move has to be taking place due to an appropriate reason in line with the overall CRF-HP policy. This move could, again, be either into or out of the County of Shropshire.

2.5 Two homes

A CRF-HP can be awarded in respect of two homes if a customer is temporarily unable to stay in their main home, for instance those who have fled their main home because they are a victim of domestic abuse.

In such cases of temporary absence - if the claimant is liable for rent on both properties, it is possible to award a CRF-HP in respect of one or both properties

If the claimant is only treated as liable for HB or UC on one home, but is having to pay rent on two, a CRF-HP could be made to cover the costs of the second home.

In either case the amount of the award is limited to the weekly or monthly eligible rent of the customers main home, for example if the eligible rent on the customers main home is £100 per week, this is the maximum combined HB or UC HC and CRF-HP they can be paid in respect of each property.

2.6 Other housing costs

As there is no actual definition of housing costs within the regulations, this allows for Local Authorities to utilise the CRF-HP fund to assist with other housing costs they may deem eligible.

However, the CRF-HP fund is limited so only costs deemed adherent to the principles of the scheme could be awarded.

3. How can an application be made?

Although the regulations state that an application must be made for an award for CRF-HP they allow local authorities to decide what format this can be in.

Often the reason for a CRF-HP application is time sensitive, in the best interests of the customer we aim to make it as quick and easy as possible to apply, therefore we will accept an application via the following methods:

- Written form (available for download on our website)

- Over the telephone
- Via email
- Online application (when available)
- Where we already hold information relating to income and expenditure via a section 13A request or an overpayment recovery request and we identify a possible CRF-HP we can obtain verbal or written authority from the customer to treat this is as an application for CRF-HP

Where an application for an extension of an award or a reapplication is made within 3 months of the termination of an earlier award, the decision maker may at their discretion not require the customer to complete a full application.

4. Qualifying conditions

In order to qualify for an award from the CRF-HP the claimant (or partner in the case of joint claims), throughout the currency of any award must be in receipt of either:

- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit Housing Costs

It is not necessary for entitlement to exist at the time of application.

In the case of a Universal Credit award where payment is reduced to nil, where there are deductions other than income, entitlement can still be established if payment would be due but for said deductions.

Provisional Awards

In the case of a claim for costs to facilitate a change of address there must be an expectation that the customer and/or their partner will be entitled to a qualifying benefit at the new property.

In cases where there is no qualifying benefit entitlement prior to the change of address a provisional award can be made, this requires the potential Landlord to accept a promise of payment to be made once the qualifying benefit is awarded.

In cases where subsequent to the change of address a qualifying benefit is not awarded, the CRF-HP is not paid and the matter of any sum owed to the Landlord becomes a matter of dispute between the Landlord and tenant.

5. Length of award

There is no limit to the length of an award of CRF-HP however:

- An award may not be backdated to include a period prior to 02 July 2001
- An award which spans 2 or more fund years will be split into periods corresponding to the fund year.

The expectation is that most CR-HC awards will be for short periods structured to enable customers to change their circumstances in order to be able to meet their housing costs without further support from the fund, however an award may be extended under repeat application if deemed appropriate.

Where it is accepted that a customer is in a property appropriate to their needs, and is not able to pursue a change to their circumstances an award maybe be granted for a longer period.

6. Capital, Income and Expenditure

An award from the CRF-HP fund should only be made if all other reasonable sources of help have been exhausted.

Evidence of Capital, Income and/or Expenditure may be requested as reasonable.

Where evidence is requested a deadline of 1 month from the date of request for the provision of the evidence must be notified to the customer and must state that failure to provide the required evidence within time limits will result in their claim being refused.

Where evidence is not provided within 1 month of the request (or longer where reasonable) the claim will be refused.

Capital

Any capital that the customer and/or partner can reasonably access should be exhausted before an award of CRF-HP is considered.

In regard of applications for assistance with moving property an appropriate amount of capital may be ignored to facilitate the move and associated costs of resettlement.

Income

Income belonging to the customer and/or partner will be accounted for in full when assessing financial capacity to meet their expenditure, except in the case of:

- Attendance Allowance

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payments

Income belonging to other household members for example non-dependants may be taken into account in so much that a financial contribution to the household may be assumed and/or expenditure attributable to the non-dependant may be disregarded.

Expenditure

Where expenditure appears excessive the decision maker may at their discretion assume a figure they deem to be more reasonable, or may ask the customer to provide evidence of said expenditure before the application can proceed.

If a reduced expenditure figure is assumed, the notification of the decision must contain a statement explaining why a reduced figure has been assumed and invite the customer to provide evidence of the expenditure within 1 month should they disagree.

Where expenditure appears to be non-essential the decision maker may at their discretion exclude said expenditure from the assessment.

If expenditure is excluded from the assessment, the notification of the decision must contain a statement explaining why it has been excluded.

Where expenditure appears too low the decision maker may at their discretion assume a figure they deem to be more reasonable, for instance an application listing food as £10 per week because more cannot be afforded can be increased to allow a more reasonable amount for the purposes of assessment.

Where an expenditure has been omitted from an application and the decision maker either knows or can reasonably assume that the expenditure should exist, a reasonable figure may be assumed for said expenditure.

In the case where an application for an extension of an award is made, or in the case where an further application is made within 3 months of the end date of an earlier award, the expenditure figures previously provided may be used where they have been deemed reasonable and where a condition has not been based on the award to take steps to reduce expenditure and/or engage with budgeting support.

7. Conditions on award

The decision maker at their discretion may place conditions on the award which require that the customer undertake specific actions in order to enable the customer to be able to meet their housing costs without recourse to the CRF-HP scheme.

These conditions may include but are not limited to:

- Actively seek more affordable appropriate accommodation
- That payments of HB/UC HC are paid direct to the Landlord
- Approach their Landlord to request that the rent is reduced
- Reduce excessive and/or non-essential expenditure
- Engage with budgeting support
- Obtain more affordable deals for out of contract items for instance mobile phones
- Increase their income through employment

In the case where an application for an extension of an award is made, or in the case where a further application is made following a cessation of an award, the customer is required to provide evidence that they have complied with the conditions placed on the earlier award.

Where the customer has not complied with the conditions of an award or fails to provide evidence to show they have complied with the conditions of an award, the application for extension or reapplication may be refused.

The decision maker should have regard to any factors which may have prevented the customer from complying with the conditions placed on them.

8. Notification of an award

Notification of a decision must be made in writing to the customer (or their appointed representative).

An extension to an award may be notified verbally providing that there are no alterations to, or further conditions placed on the award.

9. Payments

Payments will be made to whomever the decision maker deems appropriate in a given case.

The default position for payments are:

- Rent in advance and/or deposits – payments will be made directly to the prospective Landlord. These payments will be released after the claimant has moved into the property.
- Removal costs – Payments will be made directly to the customer or representative. These payments will be released after the claimant has moved into the property.
- Shortfall - Payments will be made to the same party as the payments of HB or UC HC

However, the decision maker may decide to pay a different party if it is in the best interest of safeguarding the tenancy.

10. Revisions

Where the qualifying benefit is reassessed or where of any other change of circumstances occurs during the currency of an award of CRF-HP, the CRF-HP must be reassessed and the customer must be notified of any changes made to the award.

During the currency of an award the customer may request that award be revised, in this case a reassessment must be undertaken, the decision maker may at this point request any further evidence and/or information they require to make the reassessment and may suspend payment of the award pending the completion of the reassessment.

11. Recovery of overpayments

In the case of a payment of rent in advance, deposit or removal costs which have been made, where it occurs that the move did not (and will not take place), the amount of the payment is recoverable from the person to whom the payment was made.

In the case of a payment of a shortfall where it occurs that a payment was made in error, either by fault of the local authority, or the DWP, recovery will not ordinarily be sought.

In the case of a payment of a shortfall where is occurs that a payment was made in error, as a consequence of misrepresentation by or failure to disclose relevant information by the customer or representative recovery may be sought at the discretion of the decision maker from the person to whom the payment was made.

Where there is an overpayment which occurs during the currency of an award, or where an overpayment of an earlier award has occurred, the overpayment should not be recovered from ongoing payments, this would be contrary to the purpose of

making the award, (if there was capacity to cope with a reduced level of CRF-HP award, there would be no justification to award the CRF-HP at that level other than to recover the overpayment).

12. Reconsiderations

A customer or their appointed representative may request a review of a decision at any time following the decision or at any point during the currency of an award.

Requests for review where the customer disagrees with our decision are to be undertaken by a decision maker other than the originating decision maker.

Where a further review is requested or in complex or contentious cases a senior member of staff will undertake a review of the case.

There is no recourse to review of a CRF-HP decision by an independent body.

13. Monitoring

The Local Authority will actively record the outcomes of CRF-HP applications throughout the fund year in order to ensure that the budget is managed correctly and to identify the issues facing the vulnerable residents of Shropshire.

We also commit within this policy to maximise expenditure of the CR-HC grant and spend at least 90% of the CRF-HP grant annually (and minimise any grant repaid to central government).

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Committee	Cabinet
Date and Time	18th November 2026
	Public

Council Tax Support, proposed changes 2027-28 consultation responses

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer
Service Area:	Revenues and Benefits
Report Author	Phil Weir, Revenue & Benefits Service Manager
Officer contact details	phil.weir@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All
Key Decision?	Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes – 24th August 2026
Report considered by	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. For Cabinet to consider responses to the six-week public consultation on the proposal to disregard child benefit as an income in the Council Tax Support calculation for working age claimants at an estimated cost of £800k (78% of the cost to Shropshire Council and 22% to precepting authorities) in 2027-28 and decide whether to agree this change subject to full Council approval in December 2026.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Consider the responses received to the statutory consultation.

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

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

3. Background

3.1. Cabinet considered the proposal to change the Council Tax Support scheme to disregard Child Benefit as an income on 9 September 2026.

3.2. There is a legal requirement to consult in relation to any changes to the Council's Council Tax Support scheme.

3.3. A public consultation ran from 10 September 2026 to 22 October 2026. The consultation questions were approved by Cabinet on 9 September 2026 and are at **Appendix A.** Responders were asked whether they agreed with the proposal to disregard Child Benefit as an income in its calculation of Council Tax Support.

3.4. Town and Parish Councils were also advised of the consultation. Subsequently they were advised of the marginal impact of the proposed change on their taxbase.

3.5. The consultation was promoted via the Council's social media platforms. Also, the following were contacted directly to raise awareness.

- Voluntary sector advice groups
- Housing Associations

3.6. The two major precepting authorities (Police and Fire Authority) have been contacted more recently following the running of the taxbase reports in early October and advised of the potential impact on the overall taxbase. Any further responses from them will be fed back and referenced in the taxbase report in December 2026 if appropriate.

3.7. The Council received 385 responses to the public consultation. A summary document of the responses is at **Appendix B**.

3.8. 227 (59%) opposed the proposal. 147 (38%) supported the proposal. 10 (3%) were unsure. 1 responder failed to answer the question.

3.9. **Main reasons given in support of the proposal**

- Child Benefit is intended for children
- Cost of living and child poverty
- Fairness and consistency
- Direct personal impact
- Wider disregard requests

3.10. **Main reasons given in opposition**

- Affordability and Funding
- Child Benefit is income
- Perceived unfairness to other households
- Priority to other services
- Work incentives and personal responsibility
- Scope and Precedent

4. Summary of Main Proposals

4.1. Alternative proposals were considered by Cabinet on 9 September 2026.

4.2. At the meeting on 9 September 2026, Cabinet were presented with alternative proposals to continue with a tapered means tested Council Tax Support scheme or consider a banded scheme.

4.3. It was agreed to continue with a tapered scheme and to consult on adjusting the current tapered scheme to disregard Child Benefit as an income within the assessment for working age claimants.

4.4. Cabinet were minded of the current cost of living crisis now being exacerbated by fuel and other inflationary pressures and the negative impact of not disregarding Child Benefit particularly for low income working age families.

5. Alternative Options

5.1. Alternative options for the Council Tax Support scheme were considered by Cabinet on 9 September 2026.

5.2. The consideration now is to agree to the current proposal to disregard Child Benefit as an income for working age claimants in the Council Tax Support scheme which is an estimated cost of £800k per year following the outcome of the public consultation.

5.3. While the consultation responses overall, do not support the proposal the following should be taken into consideration in forming a decision:

- Most Councils continue to disregard Child Benefit in their local Council Tax Support schemes.

- Child Benefit was disregarded as an income in the national Council Tax Benefit scheme (which was abolished in 2013) and this proposal is to reverse

Shropshire Councils decision in 2013 to no longer disregard Child Benefit when it first developed its local Council Tax Support scheme.

- Child Benefit continues to be disregarded in other welfare benefits such as Housing Benefit.

- Some people who opposed the proposal stated that the proposal was not fair to other households such as single people, couples without children, working families above benefit thresholds and pensioners. It should however be noted that there are other factors that impact the applicable amount for other households and other income disregards and deductions that feed into the overall assessment of need. It should also be noted the proposed additional support for all claimants impacted by the 20% minimum payment from the Crisis Resilience Fund. Also, pensioners continue to have their Council Tax Support assessed against a continuation of the former Council Tax Benefit rules which provides more generous assessment rules.

- While Child Benefit is an income, it is not means tested until income exceeds £60k and is designed to provide support to children.

- The Council's Welfare Team (who do not provide support for council tax) currently provides considerable support to financially vulnerable families with children from the Crisis Resilience Fund which evidences why low-income families with children require further support. From April 2026 to September 2026 the Welfare Team supported 237 households with children with a total spend of £147k. The proposed change would go some way to reduce the financial pressure on low-income families with children and reduce child poverty.

- While several comments opposed to this change stated that it was not affordable at this time, and that resources could be diverted to other areas such as roads, social care, waste services, local amenities it should be noted that the overall cost to Shropshire Council is relatively low (£624k), and that providing additional support to low income families through Council Tax Support is a preventative measure in relation to social care need and future cost, and will reduce overall Council Tax collection costs.

- The consultation reflects the views of just 385 residents out of a population of over 330k. Only 227 residents opposed the proposal and this is not considered to be a statistically significant number.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

6.1. The recommended approach will offer additional support to working age families with children. It will also offer continued and tapered increased support to financially vulnerable claimants through the Crisis Resilience Fund.

6.2. This mitigates any current and potential risks to financially vulnerable residents from any potential future Council Tax increases

7. Council Priorities

7.1. Council Tax Support provides support to low-income families with their Council Tax. The proposed change to disregards Child Benefit as an income will provide additional support to low-income families with children. This links to the following Council priorities.

- People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs
- Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life

8. Financial Implications

8.1. The estimated cost of disregarding Child Benefit as an income for Shropshire Council is £624k, and this will need to be incorporated within the MTFP.

8.2. The total Council Tax debit for 2026-27 is £311.5 million. This additional cost represents around 0.25% of the total Council tax debit for 2026-27.

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1. There is a legal requirement to consult in relation to any changes to the Council Tax Support scheme and the Council has undergone a six-week public consultation from 10 September 2026 to 22 October 2026. Major precepting authorities have been advised of the actual impact on the overall taxbase following the running of the taxbase reports in October 2026. The Council has a legal obligation to have a Council Tax Support scheme following the abolition of the national scheme, and the recommendations in this report support that requirement.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1. There are no electoral division implications directly arising from this report.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1. The proposed change to disregard Child Benefit as an income will ensure that low-income families with children receive additional support with their council tax.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1. This is continuation of the existing scheme with a beneficial change for resident in receipt of Child Benefit. A full public consultation took place during September/October 2026.

12.2. A competed ESHIA is set out at **Appendix C**

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1. There are not climate change, biodiversity and environmental implications directly arising from this report.

14. Background Papers

14.1. The Council's current Council Tax Support scheme (220 pages) can be accessed from the link below

Shropshire Council - Council Tax Support Scheme-2026-2027-pdf

14.2. This proposed change was considered by Cabinet on 9 September 2026

Council tax Support Scheme - Cabinet 9 September 2026

15. Appendices

Appendix A - Consultation Questions
Appendix B – Summary of consultation responses
Appendix C - ESHIA

Appendix A - Consultation Questions – Shropshire Council, Council Tax Support Scheme 2027 onwards

Disregard Child Benefit as an Income

Background

With effect from 2013 each billing authority was required to design and implement its own scheme for working age residents on low incomes, whilst accommodating a 10% reduction in government funding

Proposed Change

In 2013 Shropshire Council took the decision to remove the child benefit income disregard. This change was detrimental to low-income families with children.

Shropshire Council is now proposing to change its scheme for 2027 onwards, to disregard child benefit as an income in its calculation for council tax support. This change will benefit low-income families with children.

The estimated cost of this change is £750k to £800k per year.

Questions

Do you agree with the Councils proposal to make this change?

Yes/No

Do you have any additional comment to make about this proposal?

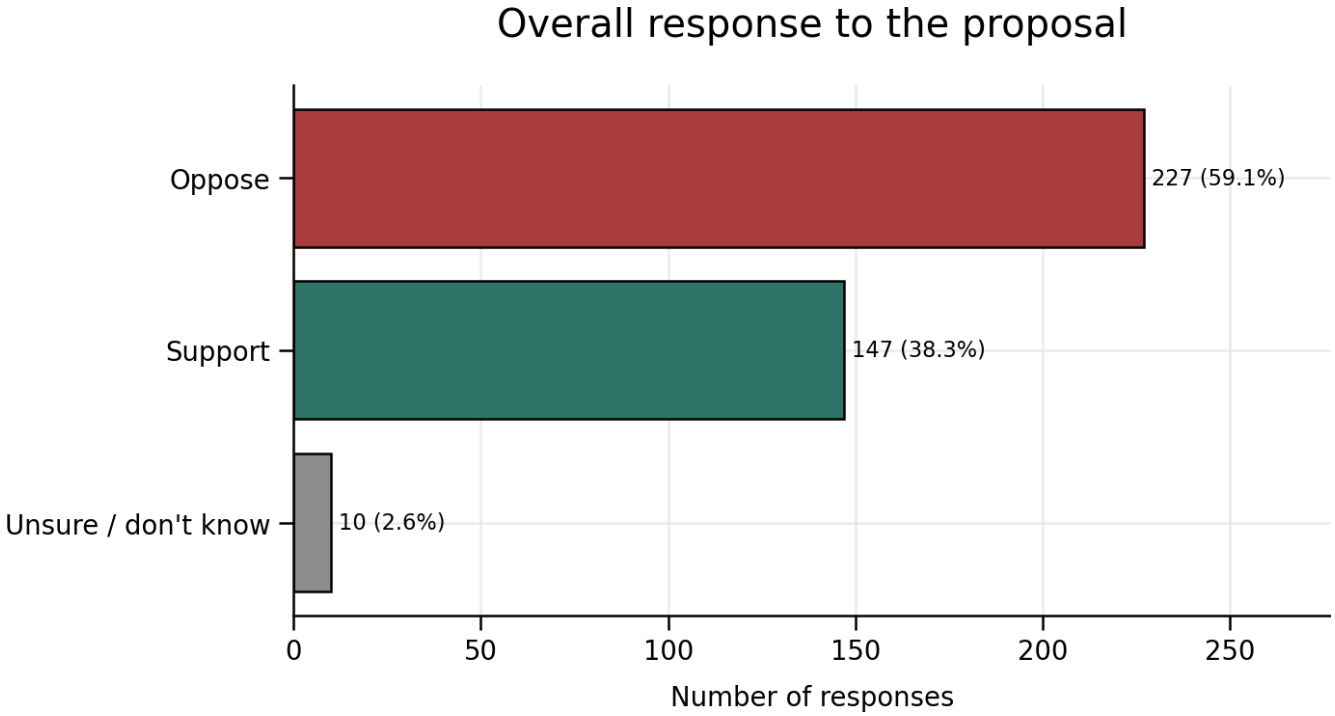
COMMENT BOX

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Shropshire Council - Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation report - October 2026

Proposal to disregard Child Benefit when calculating Council Tax Support

Analysis of 385 consultation responses



Prepared from: Copy of Council Tax Support Scheme 2027 22.10.26.xlsx

1. Executive summary

The consultation shows a clear overall majority opposed to the proposal, while also revealing strong support among some groups most likely to experience the direct effects of the change. The responses therefore present a significant policy trade-off between targeted support for low-income families with children and concerns about affordability, fairness and the effect on other taxpayers and services.

Response	Number	Percentage
Oppose	227	59.1%
Support	147	38.3%
Unsure/I don't know	10	2.6%
No response	1	0.3%
Total records	385	100.0%

Key findings

- Opposition centred on the financial cost, the source of replacement funding, possible pressure on Council Tax or services, and the principle that Child Benefit is household income.
- Support centred on Child Benefit being intended for children, the cost-of-living pressure on families, consistency with the treatment of Child Benefit in other benefit calculations, and the potential to reduce hardship.
- Respondents who said they had children were divided: 103 supported, 107 opposed and 2 were unsure.
- Respondents aged 25-34 and 35-44 were more supportive, while respondents aged 55-64 and 65-74 were more opposed.
- Several respondents, including carers and disabled respondents, asked the council to consider other disregards or wider support. Others argued that low-income adults without children and pensioners should not be overlooked.

2. Consultation scope and method

This report analyses the completed responses recorded as part of the consultation. It covers the closed question on overall support, the two general free-text questions and the demographic and equality-monitoring fields.

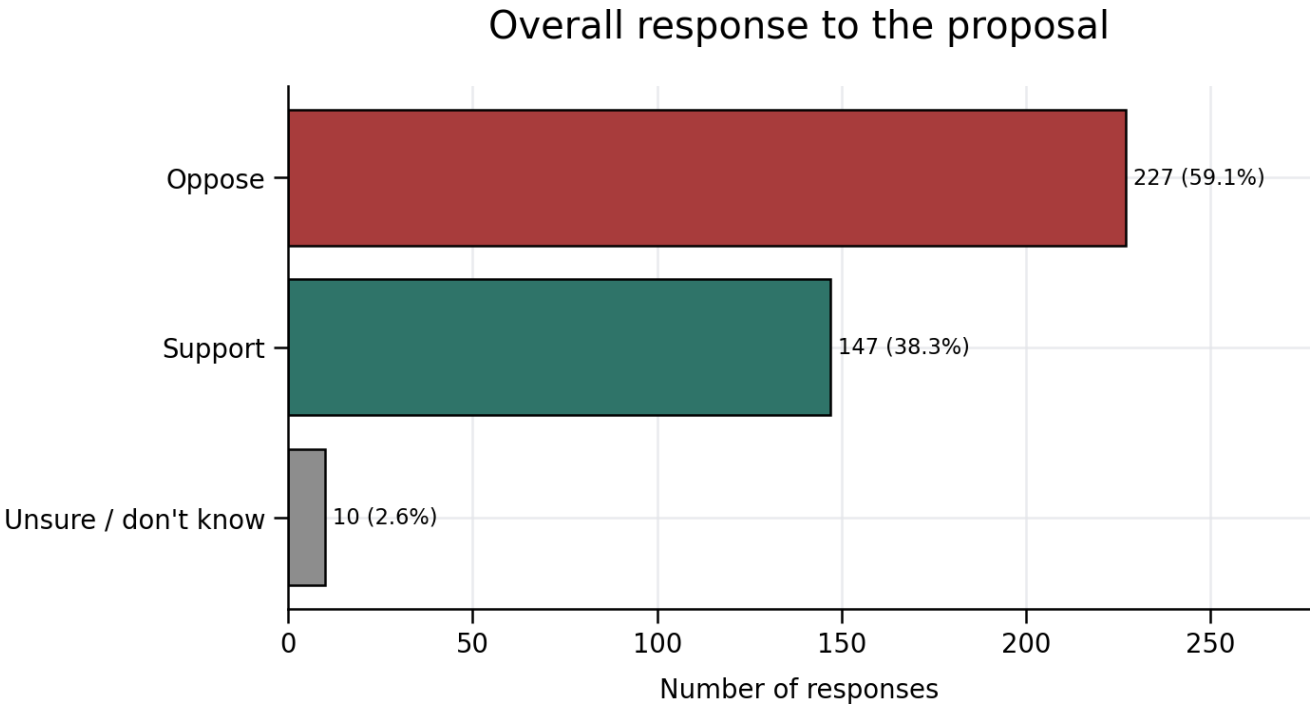
- 385 response records were identified; 384 contained an answer to the main support question and one did not.
- 344 respondents provided an explanation.
- 188 respondents provided an additional comment.
- 50 respondents provided an equality-related comment.
- Quantitative results are presented as counts and percentages. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

- Free-text responses were reviewed thematically. Themes overlap, so one response may contribute to more than one theme.
- Names, email addresses, IP addresses and respondent identifiers are not reproduced in this report.

Limitations

- The consultation sample is self-selecting and may over-represent people with stronger views.
- Demographic fields were optional. “No response” and “prefer not to say” levels limit some subgroup analysis.
- Some subgroups are small. Their percentages should be read with caution and not generalised to the wider population.
- Comments sometimes included factual claims about benefits, taxation or council finances. This report records the views expressed and does not verify those claims.

3. Overall result



Among respondents who answered the main question, opposition exceeded support by 80 responses, a difference of 20.8 percentage points.

4. Main reasons given in support

Child Benefit is intended for children

Supporters commonly said Child Benefit should remain available for food, clothing, school items, childcare and other costs of raising a child, rather than indirectly increasing Council Tax liability.

Cost of living and child poverty

Supportive comments referred to financial pressure on low-income families, lone parents, working parents, carers and households with disabled children. Respondents said the proposed change could provide practical relief and reduce hardship.

Fairness and consistency

Some respondents described the current treatment as a penalty for receiving Child Benefit and referred to its treatment in other benefit assessments.

Direct personal impact

Several respondents said Child Benefit affected their Council Tax Support entitlement or that Council Tax was one of their most difficult household bills.

Wider disregard requests

Some respondents asked the council to consider disability-related benefits, carers' benefits or childcare elements as part of a wider review.

5. Main reasons given in opposition

Affordability and funding

The most persistent concern was how the reduction in Council Tax income would be funded. Respondents raised possible higher Council Tax, reduced services or additional pressure on the council's financial position.

Child Benefit is income

Many opponents considered any money entering a household to be income for means-testing purposes, whether earned or received as a benefit.

Fairness to other households

Comments frequently mentioned low-income single people, couples without children, working households above benefit thresholds and pensioners, arguing that these groups may also be struggling.

Priority for other services

Some respondents preferred resources to be directed towards roads, social care, waste services, local amenities or general Council Tax restraint.

Work incentives and personal responsibility

Some comments argued that additional support could weaken work incentives or that parents should meet the costs of having children. Some were expressed in strongly negative terms about benefit recipients.

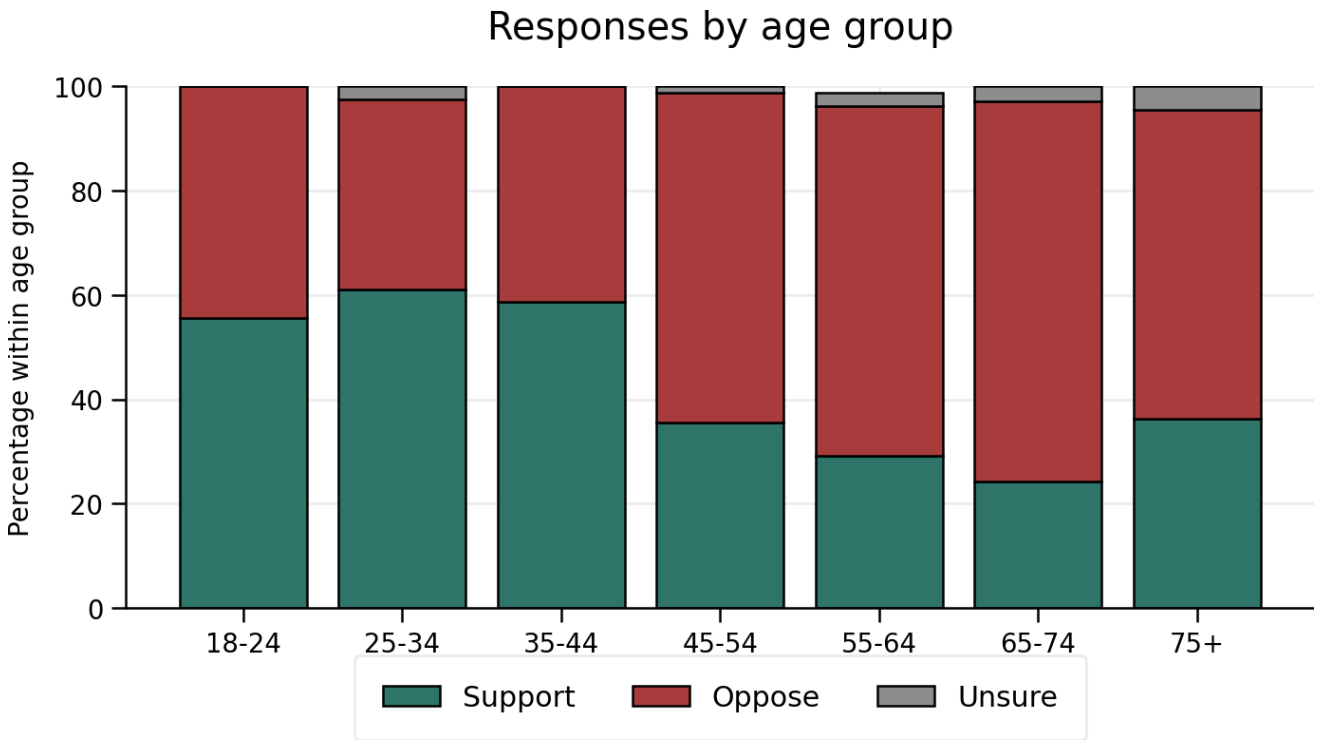
Scope and precedent

A number of respondents questioned whether disregarding Child Benefit could lead to requests to disregard other income sources, or whether family support should be funded nationally.

6. Responses by demographic group

Subgroup results describe this consultation sample only. They do not demonstrate the views of the wider population and should not be used to predict individual opinions.

Age



Age	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
18-24	9	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0
25-34	41	25 (61.0%)	15 (36.6%)	1 (2.4%)	0
35-44	63	37 (58.7%)	26 (41.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0
45-54	76	27 (35.5%)	48 (63.2%)	1 (1.3%)	0
55-64	79	23 (29.1%)	53 (67.1%)	2 (2.5%)	1
65-74	70	17 (24.3%)	51 (72.9%)	2 (2.9%)	0
75+	22	8 (36.4%)	13 (59.1%)	1 (4.5%)	0
No response	25	5 (20.0%)	17 (68.0%)	3 (12.0%)	0

The strongest support within the recorded age groups was among respondents aged 25-34 and 35-44. Opposition was the majority response in the 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+ groups. The 18-24 group was small and should be interpreted cautiously.

Children in household

Children	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
Yes	212	103 (48.6%)	107 (50.5%)	2 (0.9%)	0

Children	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
No	103	30 (29.1%)	69 (67.0%)	4 (3.9%)	0
Prefer not to say	50	8 (16.0%)	39 (78.0%)	2 (4.0%)	1
No response	20	6 (30.0%)	12 (60.0%)	2 (10.0%)	0

Respondents who reported having children were closely divided. Respondents who reported having no children were more likely to oppose the proposal in this sample.

Gender

Gender	Total	Support	Oppose	Unsure	No answer
Female	237	111 (46.8%)	119 (50.2%)	6 (2.5%)	1
Male	99	25 (25.3%)	73 (73.7%)	1 (1.0%)	0
Prefer not to say	31	5 (16.1%)	25 (80.6%)	1 (3.2%)	0
Prefer to self-describe	2	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0
No response	16	5 (31.2%)	9 (56.2%)	2 (12.5%)	0

7. Equality considerations

The equality-monitoring responses indicate that the proposal may have different practical effects across households, but the consultation data alone cannot establish the scale of those effects.

Comments referred particularly to disability, caring responsibilities, lone parents and households with disabled children. Other respondents asked that low-income adults without children and pensioners should also be considered.

A separate Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment has been completed.

8. Conclusions

The consultation result is not supportive overall. Of the 384 respondents who answered the main question, 59.1% opposed the proposal, 38.3% supported it and 2.6% were unsure.

The qualitative responses show that the issue is not simply a division between support for families and opposition to welfare. Respondents on both sides raised the cost of living and fairness of the Council Tax system.

Supporters focused on the purpose of Child Benefit and the value of leaving more support available for children.

Opponents focused on affordability, equal treatment of other struggling households and the possibility that costs could affect other taxpayers or services. Respondents who were unsure mainly sought clearer financial information before reaching a view.

Appendix A. Respondent profile

Characteristic	Response profile
Age	55-64: 79; 45-54: 76; 65-74: 70; 35-44: 63; 25-34: 41; 75+: 22; 18-24: 9; No response: 25
Economic status	Employed/self-employed: 187; retired: 100; full-time carer/home: 23; other/prefer not to say/no response: 75
Household income	Prefer not to say: 95; £25,000 to £39,999: 66; £17,000 to £24,999: 56; £40,000 to £59,999: 44; £9,500 to £16,999: 31; £75,000 and over: 24; No response: 19; £60,000 to £74,999: 17; Don't know: 14; £6,500 to £9,499: 10; £6,499 or less per year: 9
Children	Yes: 212; No: 103; Prefer not to say: 50; No response: 20
Disability/illness	No: 209; limited a little: 59; limited a lot: 43; prefer not to say/no response: 74
Unpaid carer	Yes: 83; no: 230; prefer not to say/no response: 72
Ethnicity	White (British; Irish; Welsh): 289; Prefer not to say: 63; No response: 20; Other ethnic group: 6; Other white background eg Bulgarian, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, White South African, etc: 3; other categories: 4

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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
Council Tax Support Scheme Proposal to disregard Child Benefit as an income in the calculation of Council Tax Support for working age claimants Considered by Cabinet on 9 September 2026 Council tax Support Scheme - Cabinet 9 September 2026

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Philip Weir

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

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 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
The proposal is to disregard child benefit as an income in the assessment of Council Tax Support, for working age claimants. This change benefits low-income families with children. It does not directly negatively impact cohorts outside of these claimants and there are no plans at this stage to reduce entitlements to other groups. There is an overall cost of this change estimated at £800k per year (78% of the cost to Shropshire Council and 22% to other precepting authorities)

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

This change will benefit low-income families with children who claim Council Tax Support only. This may lead to potential increase in discretionary income improving financial resilience against future shocks.

The overall cost is estimated at £800k (78% of the cost to Shropshire Council and 22% to precepting authorities) which will be picked up by the wider Council Taxpayer. The total Council Tax debit for 2026-27 is £311.5 million. This additional cost represents around 0.25% of the total Council Tax Debit for 2026-27.

It should be noted that there are other factors that impact the applicable amount for other household types and other income disregards and deductions that feed into the overall assessment of need. Also, pensioners continue to have their Council Tax Support assessed against a continuation of the former Council Tax Benefit rules which continues to be a more generous assessment.

There is no proposal to reduce benefit entitlement for other groups. Instead, the proposal is to increase the support for low-income families with children. This is additional support to an existing policy.

Shropshire's demographics trend older than national averages, and this programme is targeted at younger cohorts with children, potentially helping them to remain in the county longer-term.

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

This is continuation of the existing Council Tax Support scheme with a beneficial change for resident in receipt of Child Benefit.

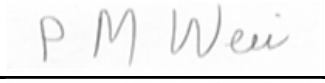
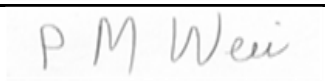
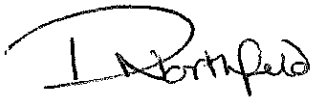
The proposed change to disregard Child Benefit as an income for working age claimants will ensure that low-income families with children receive additional support with their council tax.

This will align the Council with the majority of other local Council Tax Support schemes and with other national benefits such as Housing Benefit that continue to disregard Child Benefit as an income.

Associated ESHIAs
None

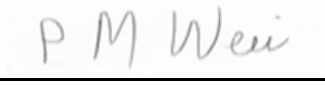
Assessment of likely neutral, negative or positive impact, and actions to review and monitor overall impacts, with regard to climate change impacts and with regard to economic and societal impacts
Climate change N/A ***Economic and societal/wider community*** Increases in discretionary income to affected families will support financial resilience and allow funding to support wider cost-of-living pressures.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Philip Weir		22/10/2026
Philip Weir		22/10/2026
*External support** **Phillip Northfield** *Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health*		23/10/2026

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
Philip Weir		22/10/2026
Philip Weir		22/10/2026

	P M Weir	

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

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
Prior to 2013 there was a national council tax benefit scheme to support council taxpayers on low income. This was funded through a government subsidy. With effect from 2013 each billing authority was required to design and implement its own scheme for working age residents on low incomes. At the same time government funding for the system reduced by 10%. Pensioners still have council tax support awarded against former council tax benefit rules From 2013-14, Shropshire Council's scheme continued with a tapered reduction scheme, with 100% support for the financially most vulnerable. The main changes in 2013 were as detailed below, including the decision to remove the Child Benefit income disregard: - • Removal of second adult rebate • Reduction of the capital limit from £16,000 to £10,0000 • Removal of earnings disregards • **Removal of child benefit disregard** • Increase in non-dependant deductions The proposal is to reverse the change made in 2013 and disregard Child Benefit as an income which will be beneficial to low-income families with children and will be more in line with practice nationally and other benefits.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change
All Shropshire Council Taxpayers

Evidence used for screening of the service change
Cost of the change has been estimated through analysis of the Council Tax base calculations for 2027-28

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

There is a legal requirement to consult in relation to any changes to the Council Tax Support scheme and the Council has undergone a six-week public consultation from 10 September 2026 to 22 October 2026. Major precepting authorities have been advised of the actual impact on the overall taxbase following the running of the taxbase reports in October 2026.

We received 385 responses to the public consultation

227 (59%) opposed the proposal. 147 (38%) supported the proposal. (10 3%) were unsure.

The main reasons in support of the proposal

- Child Benefit is intended for children
- Cost of living and child poverty
- Fairness and consistency
- Direct personal impact
- Wider disregard requests

The main reasons given in opposition

- Affordability and Funding
- Child Benefit is income
- Perceived unfairness to other households
- Priority to other services
- Work incentives and personal responsibility

While the consultation outcome does not support the proposal the following should be taken into consideration in forming a decision.

- The consultation reflects the views of just 385 residents out of a population of over 330k. Only 227 residents opposed the proposal.

- Consultations of this type may over represent people with stronger held views

- Child Benefit was disregarded as an income in the national Council Tax Benefit scheme (which was abolished in 2013) and this proposal is to reverse Shropshire Councils decision in 2013 to no longer disregard Child Benefit when it first developed its local Council Tax Support scheme.

- Most other Councils continued to disregard Child Benefit in their local Council Tax Support schemes.

- Child Benefit continues to be disregarded in other welfare benefits such as Housing Benefit, this proposal would simplify the application process for impacted residents.

- Some people in opposition stated that the proposal was not fair to other households such as single people, couples without children, working families above benefit thresholds and pensioners. It should however be noted that there are other factors that impact the applicable amount for other households and other income disregards and deductions that feed into the overall assessment of need. It should also be noted the proposed additional support for all claimants impacted by the 20% minimum payment from the Crisis and Resilience Fund. Also, pensioners continue to have their Council Tax Support assessed against a continuation of the former Council Tax Benefit rules which continues to be a more generous assessment.

- While Child Benefit is an income, it is not means tested until income exceeds £60k and is designed to provide support to children.

- The Councils Welfare Team (who do not currently provide support for Council Tax) currently provide considerable support to financially vulnerable families with children from the Crisis and Resilience Fund which evidences why low-income families with children require further support. From April 2026 to September 2026 the Welfare Team supported 237 households with children with a total spend of £147k. The proposed change would go some way to reduce the financial pressure on low-income families with children and reduce child poverty.

- While several comments opposed to this change stated that it was not affordable at this time, and that resources could be diverted to other areas such as roads, social care, waste services, local amenities it should be noted that the overall cost to Shropshire Council is relatively low (£624k), and that providing additional support to low income families through Council Tax Support is a preventative measure in relation to social care need and future cost, and will reduce overall Council Tax collection costs.

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 income working age families will benefit positively from this change	
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)				None
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				None
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				None
Pregnancy and Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				None
Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				None
Religion or Belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				None
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				None
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				None

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)				None
Other: Carers (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)				None
Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)				None
Other: Young people leaving care				None

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 income families with children will receive additional support with Council Tax
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,				Low income families with children will receive additional support with Council Tax,

reduce drinking and smoking? .				increasing their discretionary income and financial resilience.
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 income families with children will receive additional support with Council Tax
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? .				No

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	Low income families with children will receive additional support with Council Tax, increasing their discretionary income, and helping to improve financial resilience.

• Geographic Deprivation (inc. Rurality) – *if so, where?* • Inclusion Health & Vulnerable Groups[1] • Other	
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	*None*

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

Committee	Cabinet 18th November 2026
Date and Time	Finance & Improvement Scrutiny 30th November 2026
	Public

Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2026/27

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer
Service Area:	Finance
Report Author	Clare Williams, Deputy Section 151 Officer
Officer contact details	clare.williams@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All / Name of individual Electoral Division(s)
Key Decision?	Key
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes – 12th May 2026
Report considered by	*List any Committees the report has been to **prior** to the final committee INSERT COMMITTEE AND DATE (don't list any **future** committee dates here)*

1 Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's quarter two financial position for the current financial year 2026/27 and to report the latest revenue and capital budget forecasts.

1.2. The report highlights the main variations from budgets, identifies emerging financial risks and pressures, and outlines the actions being taken to manage these within the approved budget approved by Council in February 2026.

1.3. It also provides assurance on the effectiveness of budget monitoring arrangements and enables Cabinet to assess the Council's progress in delivering a balanced budget whilst maintaining essential services and achieving the objectives set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

2 Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:

A. Support the Q2 favourable revenue outturn forecast of £0.051m.
B. Support the significant adverse variation forecast for Children's Services and the mitigations in place to contain and reduce this over the remainder of the financial year.
C. Instruct the Chief Executive and s151 Officer to continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that directorates remain within their budgets and appropriate mitigating action are taken where adverse variations are arising.
D. Support the forecast level of savings achieved of £4.052m to date and £5.368m to be delivered by the end of the financial year.
E. Support the forecast General Fund Balance as at 31 March 2027 of £15.051m and the strategy to continue to restore this balance over time.
F. Note work in progress through the officer led Budget, Transformation and Change Panel (BTCP) and Workforce Review Board to give provisional approval to projects designed to transform the Council, achieve further savings and to rebuild capacity and capability, subject to further oversight by Cabinet and the Finance and Improvement Scrutiny Committee.
G. Approve the provisional allocations of transformation funds to date of £3.532m for 2026/27.
H. Support the Capital programme and forecast outturn position at quarter 2.
I. Approve the adjustments necessary to the Capital Programme.
J. Approve the Revenue and Capital budget virements as set out in Appendix B and D.
K. Agree that a provisional Q3 report will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2027, based on period 8 actuals as adjusted for more current information.

3 Background and Overview

3.1. The Council approved the budget for 2026/27 and Financial Strategy 2026/27 – 2030/31 on 26 February 2026. This outlined the revenue and capital budgets for 2026/27 and set Council Tax for the year.

3.2. The 2026/27 budget is supported by up to £121m of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) that was approved by MHCLG in principle subject to an independent review commissioned by them. This review was carried out by CIPFA between April and May and subsequently led to a Non Statutory Best Value Notice being issued MHCLG in August.

The Council's application for EFS was necessary due to the significant financial pressures facing the Council and the inability to deliver a balanced budget. This was due principally to significant structural deficits in departmental budgets and undeliverable savings established within the previous budget set in February 2025. This position had been compounded by pressures building over a number of years and the serious reduction in the level of reserves and balances.

3.3. In July 2026, Cabinet received an updated MTFP report which identified three options being the best, worst, and most likely case of the financial position looking forwards on the basis of revised assumptions. A further update is being presented to Cabinet at this meeting.

Importantly, the previous update of the MTFP set out a revised EFS requirement for 2026/27 of around £87m, £34m less than the original requirement. This revised estimate is dependent on delivering a balanced outturn position for 2026/27 against the departmental and corporate budgets. This report forecasts a positive outturn position with a small surplus of £0.051m. This position contains a number of significant variations that should be expected in a year of stabilisation for the financial affairs of the Council as budgets have been reset and financial management arrangements enhanced.

3.4. However, a number of positive variations are overshadowed by significant adverse budget variations within Children's services. The extent of the variation, which continues to be subject to service demand and price pressures, creates a special risk to the Council's overall financial position, The Chief Executive has established a Children's Service Budget Recovery Board chaired by the s151 Officer to give clear oversight of the causes of the variation and the actions being taken to prevent further forecast variations and to reduce the scale of the current forecast.

3.5. While Children's Services remains the biggest single risk at present to achieving a balanced outturn, this report is for only the first half of the year. The Council will remain conscious of any unforeseen events or activity which, as they arise, will need further mitigations. These include any impacts arising from, for example, winter pressures on the Adult Social Care.

3.6. Monthly revenue budget monitoring reports are presented to Leadership Board to enable appropriate actions to be taken to support the Council keeping within the budget allocation. Quarterly updates will continue for Cabinet. Monitoring arrangements continue to be enhanced and budget accountability statements will be introduced across the Council in the second half of the year. Financial training programmes continue to be developed with external support from CIPFA.

3.7. The Capital budget is reporting a balanced position at quarter 1 however there has been a net budget increase of £5.654m for 2026/27, compared to the revised budget at Quarter 1. The budget increase is due to changes in funding and reprofiling of schemes within the capital programme.

4 Forecast Outturn Position as at Quarter 2

4.1. At Quarter 2 (1st April – 30th September), the Council is reporting an overall forecast favourable variation for 2026/27 of £0.051m against the approved budget of £489m. At this time this position is considered by the s151 officer to be reasonable although requiring careful management throughout the rest of the year. He is also minded that 2026/27 remains a year of stabilisation for the Council as departmental budgets are reestablished at appropriate levels to reflect the costs of actual demand for services.

4.2. Summarised departmental positions are set out in Table 1; details of the variances are set out below.

Table 1 – Quarter 2 Forecast Outturn by Service Area

Service Area	2026/27 Budget £'000	YTD Actuals £'000	2026/27 Forecast Outturn £'000	Forecast Variance (Favourable) / Adverse £'000
Care & Wellbeing	169,704	106,463	169,921	217
Children & Young People	133,106	134,071	141,985	8,879
Commissioning	12,070	6,061	11,590	(479)
Communities & Customer	11,848	4,258	11,633	(215)
Enabling	1,007	(4,679)	836	(171)
Executive Management Team	299	(216)	176	(123)
Infrastructure	27,481	12,867	26,689	(791)
Legal & Governance	3,494	(2,110)	2,497	(996)
Pensions	248	1,541	248	0
Place Shaping	45,059	25,761	41,909	(3,149)
Public Health - Non-Ringfenced	2,458	2,008	2,452	(6)
Public Health – Ringfenced	334	7,472	334	0
Section 151 – Finance	6,399	14,189	5,645	(754)
Strategy	1,030	813	894	(136)
Service Delivery Budgets	**414,535**	**308,499**	**416,809**	**2,274**
Corporate Budgets	50,208	6,309	50,410	202
Debt Management Costs	24,416	7,756	21,889	(2,527)
Grand Total:	**489,159**	**322,563**	**489,108**	**(51)**

4.3. It is recognised that the 2026/27 budgets are only achievable with significant support from government in the form of EFS. This represents the facility for the Council to borrow for revenue purposes. For 2026/27, the Council's requirement for EFS is one of the highest in the country and cannot be sustained at the current levels, not least given the cost of financing the additional debt each year. There is therefore a critical need to reduce the Council's cost base while maintaining statutory services at least at minimum levels. The Council is also aware that many discretionary services are supportive of statutory requirements and cannot simply be reduced without some side effects on statutory provisions.

4.4. It is noted that this forecast position is achieved despite a significant overspend within Children's Services of £8.879m including additional pressures on Home to School Transport of around £2m. Mitigations are in place to contain and to reduce these variations and support being made available through the Local Government Association (LGA), the Improvement Board and through peer challenge.

4.5. Adverse Variations are being offset currently by a number of favourable variations, including Finance and Governance, Place Shaping and Corporate Budgets, including debt financing. the most significant within Place Shaping and Finance and Governance. Corporate Budgets also report a positive position at this time. Many of these savings represent the impact of difficulties in rebuilding capacity and capability for which provision was made within the 2026/27 base budget (e.g. revenues and benefits). These delays are due to a number of factors, not least shortage of availability in various labour markets. Work continues to fill these gaps and it is still

expected to complete these recruitments, although in some cases using different models. Therefore, these positive variations will not be available indefinitely.

4.6. At this time, there are a number of transformation projects and programmes that have been agreed in principle to proceed subject to the finalisation of detailed plans and financial costs and benefits. Some of these projects (e.g. Children's Services Adults Services) span a number of years and will take some years to yield financial benefits. The total transformation funding committed for 2026/27 as at Quarter 2 is £3.532m and contained within transformation funding identified within the base budget. Any unallocated transformation funds at the end of the year will be subject to review at the end of the financial year with a view to retaining funds for future years, reducing calls on EFS or returning to earmarked reserves.

4.7. Departmental commentaries of the main variations from budget as at Quarter 2 are detailed below:

Care & Wellbeing

4.8. Care & Wellbeing remains broadly within budget with a minor variance to budget at Period 6 of £0.217m overspend. This is mainly driven by purchasing within Adult Social Care Operations, which is being offset by underspends across some services, mitigations, staff vacancies and income This position includes growth and built in assumptions on winter pressures included in the budget. A range of mitigating actions have been implemented to manage these pressures to stay within budget and maintain financial stability, enabling the service to remain on track against its budget position. Work continues to develop on the wider transformation programme some of which are currently in progress and supporting the current forecast position.

Children & Young People

4.9. The Children & Young People forecast spend over budget position at Period 6 is reported as a total adverse variation of £8.879m. The Children and Young People's Budget is made up of services across Children's services which includes Early Help, Children's Social Care including the cost for children who are in our care, SEND and education services including Home to School Transport. The budget for Children's Social Care is £98.8 million but projecting an overspend of £6.021m. The single largest contributing factor is the increase in External Residential placements and related costs which is reporting £7.363m overspent. The increase is directly related to a sufficiency deficit in foster placements, especially for younger children with more complex needs. This is a national challenge. Whilst we have increased significantly our foster carer numbers over the last 2 years, we still need more, especially those with the skills and experience to support children with more complex needs.

4.10. Work is currently underway, with external support and challenge , to review the cohort of children in care whilst developing a programme of work focussed on the outcome of children living at home, including a range of activities aimed at strengthening the way we work with the market to achieve best value. This is built around a significant project plan, integrated within the Children's Transformation plan, that focuses on the development of the commissioning service and working with the fostering and residential market to improve placement sufficiency. As a result of the increasing overspend a Children's Services Recovery Board has been set up which meets weekly to oversee the strategy to curtail costs in the current financial

year and transformation plans to mitigate future years budget pressures and reduce costs overall. Further mitigation actions include making improvements to the tracking and oversight of permanence plans and ensuring that they are accurately costed and projected, including a detailed review of every child in residential care, ensuring there is an accurate financial projection. Alongside this the Commissioning Team are working with providers to address additional spend factors, such as additional staffing requests when complex behaviours are present.

4.11. In Q2 2026, 11 children stepped down from external residential homes; 1 moved to supported accommodation, 4 children went home and 4 children moved from external residential to internal children's homes. In addition, 2 children became 18 years old, which reduces the forecasted cost to Children's Social Care of £1.868m.

Commissioning

4.12. The Commissioning service budgets include Leisure services, Commissioning Development & Procurement, bereavement services, business support, insurance, and armed forces support. Overall, the budget is forecasting an underspend at Period 6 of £0.479m however there are a number of variances within this position. A shortfall on expected income exists from purchasing rebates as a result of changing providers, however this has now been offset by cost savings in agency placements across services in the Council. Growth to remove the income budget for the purchasing rebate has been built into the 2027/28 budget. Another shortfall of income relating to the swimming pool closure at Market Drayton of £0.109m, is offset by underspends on grounds maintenance and utility costs across various leisure facilities of £0.368m. The remaining underspend of £0.443m against budget relates to staff salaries across the service areas.

Communities & Customer

4.13. The Communities and Customer service budgets include Housing services, Libraries, Museums, Corporate Records Management, Shropshire Archives Service, Theatre Services and Customer Services. Overall, the budget is forecasting an underspend of £0.215m, however there are a number of variances the most significant of which are Theatre Services £0.205m favourable due to better income performance than budgeted, Housing Services £0.171m favourable which is the net position after some pressures from increasing presentations of homeless people recorded here. These are offset by adverse variances in Libraries, Museums and Archives which include £0.100m of additional storage costs regarding museum storage. The savings target for this directorate was £0.422m of which £0.143m is outstanding: £0.050m in Museums and £0.093m in libraries. Service reviews are ongoing for libraries and museums to Support options for delivery of savings on a permanent basis.

Enabling

4.14. The Enabling service area includes Training & Development, Technology, Human Resources, Recruitment and Payroll, Health & Safety and Personal Assistants. The overall Period 6 underspend forecast is £0.171m under budget however there are variances within this position. Pressures on the budget identified include renewal of the ERP contract, reduction of forecasted income from external clients, and overspends across IT hardware, software licences, maintenance and support and

other supplies and services. This is being offset by underspends across multiple services on staffing.

Executive Management Team

4.15. The Executive Management Team is currently forecast to be £0.123m under spent against budget for the year. This mostly relates to periods in the financial year where vacant positions were held. These have now been filled and assumed in the monitoring position.

Infrastructure

4.16. The Infrastructure forecast spend under budget position at Period 6 is reported as £0.791m. This includes variances across the area including adverse variances relating to the extension of the Kier contract, and the delayed implementation of the car parking prices increase following the requirement for consultation. These are offset by favourable variances for devolution in street cleansing and grounds maintenance, increase income assumptions in Streetworks, and spend below budget on concessionary fares and staffing costs.

Legal & Governance

4.17. The Legal & Governance service area includes Business and Consumer Protection, Registrars and Coroners, Democratic Services, Elections, Legal Services, Policy & Governance, Overview & Scrutiny, and Feedback and Insights. Overall the service is forecasting to be £0.996m under budget as at Period 6. The vast majority of the variance relates to spend under budget against staffing across Policy & Governance, Business and Consumer Protection and Legal Services.

4.18. Recruitment is actively underway across these areas. A number of posts require specialist professional skills and experience and, in some areas, the Council is operating in particularly challenging recruitment markets where there is significant competition for suitably qualified people and material differences in market pay. The service is therefore taking a proactive and flexible approach to recruitment, exploring different routes to market, strengthening how opportunities are promoted and engaging directly with potential candidates. The focus is not simply on filling vacancies, but on attracting and appointing high-quality people with the skills, experience and approach needed to strengthen services and meet the Council's current and future challenges.

Place Shaping

4.19. The Place Shaping service area brings together Assets and Estates, Economic Growth and Strategic Partnerships, Planning and Building Control, Waste Management and Climate Change. At Quarter 2, the service area is forecasting an underspend of £3.149m against a revised revenue budget of £45.059m. This reflects a combination of expenditure controls, vacancy management, income performance and timing differences across the services. The largest variance in this service area relates to Waste management where the forecasted position includes favourable variances against budget on the PFI contract due to inflationary assumptions from the prior year being higher than anticipated, and greater grant income assumptions. A large proportion of the remaining underspends relates to vacancy management

across multiple services. The position will continue to be monitored throughout the year.

Finance

4.20. The Finance directorate includes Finance and Revenues and Benefits. At Quarter 2, the overall directorate is forecasting an underspend of £0.754m, comprising £0.084m within Finance and £0.671m within Revenues and Benefits. The Finance underspend is mainly due to staffing vacancies, offset partially by agency spend. Revenues and Benefits is reporting a £0.500m staffing underspend, due to recruitment proving to be challenging. Agency quotes have been provided due to recruitment delays. In addition, income is £0.137m above budget following receipt of DWP funding, which was not known at the time the budget was set.

Strategy

4.21. The Strategy forecast spend under budget position at Period 6 is reported as £0.136m.

4.22. This position is due to time taken to recruit to budgeted posts (£0.243m) offset by a shortfall in commercial services of £0.100m. There is likely to be an increase in expenditure for programme management as we utilise additional interim capacity to support transformation programme delivery in the short term. Recruitment has also been completed in the BI and Feedback & Insights Teams, meaning increased expenditure on those budget lines over the next periods.

Corporate Budgets

4.23. Corporate service budgets include all income budgets that support the revenue budget, including Council Tax, Revenue Support Grant, Specific and s31 Grants, internal market budgets, external audit costs, pension costs, PFI, transformation and capital financing (inc. MRP).

4.24. There are a number of minor variations across the budget including additional costs relating to external audit.

4.25. The transformation budget £15m is included within the Corporate Budget but, as set out below, remains subject to significant activity and detailed proposals. Indicative commitments received to date by BTCP for 2026/27 amount to approximately £3.532m and will continue to be monitored closely.

4.26. The current forecast assumes the full budget for transformation will be used by the end of the financial year. In the event that the budget is not fully required, the shortfall will be available to reduce the Council's ESF request.

The budget included a savings target of £5m however during quarter 1 this was increased to £5.7m due to additional savings identified. As at quarter 2, savings delivery is reporting an adverse variance of £0.393m with mitigating actions being sought with the expectation they will be delivered in full by the end of the financial year.

Debt Management Costs

4.27. Debt Management Costs include the budgets relating to Treasury Management, which is the interest received on cash balances held and any principal and interest payments provided for on outstanding debt held by the Council.

The Debt Management Costs budget is showing an underspend of £2.527m as at Quarter 2, which is due to delayed and reduced PWLB borrowing as a result of a reduced requirement for Exceptional Financial Support in 2026/27 than originally budgeted for in 2026/27 and the impact of pausing capital projects during the year, which has reduced the effect on available cash balances. Borrowing taken out during the year have been managed through temporary borrowing at lower interest rates than available PWLB rates.

Transformation and Change

4.28. The 2026/27 budget approved by Council in February 2026 included a base budget provision of up to £15m to support service transformation that will help enable a reduced reliance on EFS over the Medium Term Financial Plan period. The July MTFP considered a reduction in the transformation funding to £10m to reduce the EFS requirement.

4.29. Governance arrangements for approving transformation funding are managed through the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel (BTCP), which meets weekly to ensure value for money, improve outcomes, reduce risk and deliver budget savings and will be subject to separate reports to Cabinet and Finance and Improvement Scrutiny Committee for oversight and agreement.

4.30. As at Quarter 2, £3.532m has been committed against the transformation funding for 2026/27.

Savings

4.31. The base budget for 2026/27 estimated savings of £5m. To date, £5.7m has been identified. Indirectly, this reduces the call on EFS for 2026/27 and will be incorporated, subject to any variations before the end of the end of the financial year.

4.32. Details of the savings are set out in Appendix A and Table 2 of which 93% is forecast to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

4.33. The reason for the shortfall in forecast savings is set out below:

Table 2 - Savings delivery by Service Area

Service Area	Savings Target (£'000)	30th September Forecast Delivery (£'000)	30th September Forecast Delivery (%)
Care & Wellbeing	3,675	3,675	100
Commissioning	379	379	100
Communities & Customer	422	279	66
Infrastructure	650	400	62
Legal & Governance	10	10	100

Place Shaping	500	500	100
Section 151 – Finance	125	125	100
Total Savings	**5,761**	**5,368**	**93**

Reserves and General Fund Balance

4.34. The Council's total reserves are projected to be £49.583m as at 31 March 2027, as set out in Appendix 3. The Council holds both earmarked reserves and a General Fund Balance. At the start of 2026/27, earmarked reserves totalled £25.113m, excluding school balances, and the General Fund Balance was £5m. Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes and generally cannot be used for other purposes without affecting the delivery of Council commitments.

4.35. The Councils General Fund Balance (GFB) as at 31 March 2026 was £5m, subject to any changes which may occur during the audit of 2025/26 accounts. The 2026/27 budget included a contribution to reserves of £42.675m in 2026/27 to replenish reserve to a moderate level considered the required level at that time.

4.36. During Quarter 1, the Council reviewed its current financial position, year-end forecast and associated financial risks. The draft MTFP presented to Cabinet on 8th July included the Quarter 1 risk assessment and proposed deferring the full 2026/27 transfer to reserves by £32.675m. Subject to delivery of the in-year budget, this revised strategy would increase the General Fund Balance to £35m by 2028/29. It would also defer the occurrence of debt financing costs to pay for the accumulation of those balances.

4.37. The updated reserves position is summarised in the table below and in Appendix C.

Table 3 – General Fund Balance

General Fund	£'000
Balance as at 1st April 2026	5,000
Budgeted Contribution as agreed in revised MTFP presented to Cabinet in July 2026	10,000
Budgeted General Fund Balance as at 31st March	**15,000**
2026/27 projected outturn position	51
Balance as at 31 March 2027	**15,051**

Capital

4.38. The current capital programme and actual spend is detailed in Table 4 below, including updated projections on financing of the programme. Further detail is provided in Appendix D.

Table 4 – Capital Programme as at Quarter 2

Service Area	2026/27 Revised Capital Programme (£'000)	2026/27 Actual Spend (£'000)	2026/27 Proportion of Budget Spent (%)	2027/28 Capital Programme (£'000)	2028/29 Capital Programme (£'000)
Care & Wellbeing	162	21	12.82	0	0

Children & Young People	20,659	4,683	22.67	16,339	11,700
Commissioning	2,256	1,806	80.04	790	0
Communities & Customer	11,894	4,749	39.93	7,827	4,500
Enabling	2,846	1,243	43.69	2,480	1,610
Infrastructure	63,940	15,176	23.73	59,747	57,084
Place Shaping	18,090	7,430	41.07	11,825	1,500
Strategy	0	0	0.00	0	0
Total	**119,847**	**35,108**	**29.29**	**99,009**	**76,394**
Housing Revenue Account	20,036	2,169	10.83	33,688	17,621
Total Capital Programme	**139,883**	**37,277**	**26.65**	**132,697**	**94,015**
Financed By*:					
Borrowing	11,276			16,218	5,121
Government Grants	90,993			87,036	66,879
Other Grants	387				
Other Contributions	11,390			2,385	5,435
Revenue Contributions	7,151			4,780	3,000
Major Repairs Allowance	5,000			5,000	5,000
Capital Receipts	13,686			17,278	8,580
Total Financing	**139,883**			**132,697**	**94,015**

4.39. Capital schemes within the capital programme are monitored on a regular basis and at Quarter 2 the forecast outturn against budget is a balanced position.

4.40. A review of the capital programme took place as part of setting the 2026/27 budget and a number of projects was paused and approved by Council. A number of the projects paused had incurred expenditure in previous years which has not yet been written out of capital expenditure to revenue.

4.41. The Capital budget is reporting a balanced position at quarter 2 however there has been a net budget increase of £5.654m for 2026/27 during Quarter 2 in relation to the reprofiling of capital grants and additional grants and contributions received towards schemes in the year. Further details are set out in Appendix D.

4.42. The current capital programme assumes a level of capital receipts to finance the capital programme. Appendix E summarises the current capital receipt position and highlights the need to identify further assets for disposal in future years to contribute to the funding of the capital programme.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4.43. The 2026/27 HRA budget sets out a planned net deficit of £2.072m, representing a net draw on HRA reserves. The Quarter 2 forecast indicates that at the year-end the HRA will be in a £1.149m deficit position, a favourable variation of £0.923m.

4.44. The main variances from budget include a projected reduction in rents received due to the 62 new additions to stock that were included as part of the budget not going ahead. This is partly offset by potential savings on supplies and services, however further work will be undertaken during the next period to fully understand spend in

this area to provide more certainty around the expected outturn position. Also given the level of balances held within the HRA and a delay in capital expenditure during the year, interest received on surplus balances is greater than originally budgeted for.

4.45. This has helped to deliver an overall projected surplus on the original budget for 2026/27.

Dedicated Schools Grant

4.46. The overall 2026-27 outturn against centrally retained DSG is forecast to be £40.112m in deficit as at the end of September 26. It should be noted that this figure is the in-year deficit and will increase the year end deficit carried forward from 2025-26 in order to give an overall forecast cumulative DSG deficit position of £45.668m. During October the council received notification that 90% of the DSG deficit will be funded through the High Needs Stability Grant, following successful approval of the SEND Reform Plan, and this has been taken into account leaving a cumulative deficit of £45.668m. This figure is currently managed through a Statutory Override agreed nationally by government for DSG deficits through to March 2028.

4.47. In 2026/27, Shropshire continues 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. There are three main areas of spend over budget, namely an increase in "top-up" funding to mainstream schools and SEND Hubs attached to mainstream schools, increases to state-funded special school funding through increased top-up funding, and further growth in children and young people placed with Independent Providers e.g. Independent Special Schools, Specialist Post 16 Institutions and independent alternative provision. These 3 budget pressures account for £35.606m of the in-year deficit.

4.48. With the increased funding levels to mainstream schools, SEND Hubs 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. The number of Commissioned places at these Hubs has increased from 227 to 268 during this financial year. The Council has also been increasing top-up funding to our state-funded Special Schools; Severndale School, Woodlands School and Keystones School.

4.49. A Local SEND Reform plan has been produced as part of the conditions of receiving the High Needs Stability Grant. £1.944m of Experts at Hand SEND Transformation grant funding has been received with the primary purpose of strengthening the capability of mainstream education settings to meet the needs of children with SEND more effectively and inclusively. This is through early identification, closer collaboration between Health and Education, and direct access to professionals such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and specialist teachers.

5 Key risks and Opportunities

5.1 The 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement set out 12 key strategic risks many of which refer to the financial challenges of the Council. These are set out below together with high level mitigations.

5.2 Below the strategic risks sit departmental risk registers. These contain specific service pressure insofar as they impact of finance. The departmental registers provide the detail necessary to assess the strategic risks. The arrangements for risk management are currently being refreshed and new arrangements reported to Audit and Governance Committee in September.

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
The Council has reported Limited Assurance on the Internal Audit Control Framework for seven years, limiting confidence in the standards of governance in place within the organisation.	Leadership Board regular reviews the status of audit recommendations and the Statutory Officers Group, introduced in October 2025, further monitors the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations and provides direction as necessary to improve overall responsiveness.	Effective internal control framework
The external auditor felt bound to issue statutory recommendations as part of their annual audit for 2024/25 which cast doubt on the integrity of the Council's value for money arrangements.	The Improvement Plan included actions and activity that responded to the statutory recommendations. An updated response to the recommendations (which included activity undertaken during 2025/26) was reported to the Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in June 2026 as part of an Improvement Plan update report. Some recommendations require extensive and ongoing work; others have been independently reviewed in specific functional areas such as children's and adult social care. The recommendations will continue to be reflected in the improvement plan for some time to come, especially insofar as they impact on the Council's budget and business planning process.	Governance, assurance and value for money

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) incurs costs of debt for both interest and principal of a fixed number of years and creates an additional overhead over and above the costs of additional demands for services and the inflation that goes with it.	This is a specific additional dimension of the risk of an inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year. As part of its Medium-Term Financial Plan, approved by Full Council in February 2026, the Council committed to developing a Financial Sustainability Strategy (due for Cabinet consideration in July 2026) that sets out how the Council will take steps to reduce reliance on EFS. In any event in order to pay for the additional costs of debt, the Council will be prioritising Council Tax increases up to the maximum allowed and will need to find offset savings in the cost of services to balance the budget without recourse to further EFS.	Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support
Despite a three-year settlement, government funding continues to reduce as a proportion of public sector investment in real terms and continues to transfer additional burden to local taxpayers.	The additional increase in Council Tax for 2025/26 is one manifestation of mitigation necessary to address this risk, and there is likely to be further impacts as the Council reduces its expenditure. The Improvement Plan acknowledges the risk that residents see service performance reducing rather than improving as the Council implements the plan. Looking forward, the Council will need to stress on Government the need for funding to tackle sparsity and rurality and the demographic and geographical dynamics of the borough. The Council does, however, recognise that in the context of a new three-year settlement and the recent fair funding changes, short-term solutions seem unlikely.	Achieving long term financial sustainability
The national and global economy remains volatile and continues to present	Persistent inflationary pressures, rising energy and fuel costs, interest rate fluctuations and wider economic uncertainty can create additional unfunded	Increasing demand for services and economic uncertainty

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
significant financial risks to the Council.	burdens on Council budgets. Continued economic instability may also impact residents' financial resilience, increasing demand for Council services at a time when resources remain constrained. The Council will continue to make best assumptions in MTFPs to cover such risks although events such as the Gulf issues do nothing but increase uncertainty.	
Cyber security remains as an ongoing threat to all organisations, not least the public sector and local government, in terms of the impact of lost, corrupted or stolen data with serious implications for potential financial loss and reputational damage.	As the Council continues to rely on digital technologies to deliver and transform services and hold sensitive information, maintaining effective cyber security controls, staff awareness and incident response arrangements will remain essential to mitigating this risk.	Maintaining cyber resilience and information security
Workforce capacity and capability must be in place to deliver existing services to minimum standards but also to support the significant transformation and improvement activity required to address the Council's financial challenges.	Maintaining a stable, skilled and resilient workforce remains critical to achieving financial sustainability and delivering the Council's strategic objectives – and is at the heart of the Improvement Plan and People Plan. Budget has been applied in 2026/27 budgets to restore capacity previously removed. While this mitigates some risk, it is recognised that recruitment and retention remains a concern and that in some cases capacity and capability may need to be sought from other third parties.	Workforce capacity and capability
Abnormal financial position compromising decision making processes.	The necessity to deliver significant savings, reduce expenditure and reliance on EFS may limit strategic flexibility and increase the risk that decisions prioritise immediate financial outcomes over longer-term service sustainability and demand prevention. Robust governance, decisive and transparent decision	Challenging financial position compromising decision making and governance arrangements

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
	making and effective scrutiny arrangements will be essential to ensuring that financial pressures do not detract from long-term strategic decision making although there will inevitably be some compromises, not least around asset management and disposal, recovery of Council balances over time, etc.	
External scrutiny and threat of intervention	A consequence of EFS is an increased likelihood of external scrutiny over and above the Improvement Board arrangements established in November 2025. There remains an ongoing risk of Government intervention, including the appointment of envoys or commissioners, should the Council be unable to provide assurance that it has a credible strategy to reduce its reliance on EFS and achieve financial sustainability. The Council is very aware of this risk and would wish to retain control of its own decisions and direction; it is, however, aware of intervention in other authorities where Government have thought it to be necessary. Continued delivery of outcomes from the Improvement Plan and clear evidence of progress will be essential in mitigating this risk.	Governance, performance and financial weaknesses
Breakdown of major contract arising from provider insolvency, poor performance, workforce shortages, contractual disputes or market instability, resulting in service disruption, financial loss, reputational damage and additional management costs.	Given the Council's reliance on a number of significant contracts to deliver statutory and essential services, effective contract management and performance monitoring (part of the Improvement Plan) and business continuity arrangements are critical to reducing the likelihood and impact of this risk.	Breakdown of critical contracts, providers or strategic partnerships

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
A catastrophic physical, climatic or pandemic event severely disrupts the delivery of Council services and compromises the Council's ability to meet statutory requirements.	While these events are largely beyond the control of the Council, there is a continued need for emergency planning capacity and fully tested business continuity plans. These will continue to be subject to continuous review across all Council departments to confirm that they remain current and complete.	Major emergency, pandemic or climate related events
Transformation programmes and significant projects are delayed, deferred or fail to deliver on their objectives leading to loss of opportunities and adverse financial impacts.	EFS has allowed the Council to set aside finance for investments in major transformation programmes. These will need to be created and challenged through the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel, a group of senior Council Officers. Transformation and other projects will be subject to oversight of the new Programme Management Office with regular reports to Cabinet and Finance and Improvement Scrutiny. Risk management arrangements for major projects are being reviewed, and it is recognised that, for some projects, these have been less than successful in the past.	Transformation programmes and significant projects

These risks are now being contained and managed within Improvement Plan which also include responses to MHCLG and CPC recommendations. They also form an integral part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

6 Council Priorities

6.1 A new Corporate Plan for 2026-2030 was approved by Cabinet and Full Council in May 2026. The Plan summarises the priority ambitions the Council will focus on – including the ambition to be a Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel. This report outlines the management of the current year's budget which is an important step in moving towards this ambition.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 This report sets out the financial projections for the Council in the 2026/27 Financial Year as at Quarter 2. Although the position is reporting an overall balanced there are significant overspends which need to be mitigated to prevent further budget pressures on the MTFP.

7.2 Given that this is half way through the financial year, budget holders must continue to keep within their budgets and identify opportunities to reduce costs in year and consequently reduce the amount of EFS required at the end of the financial year.

8 Legal and HR implications

8.2 The Section 151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and ensure that the Council takes action if overall net overspends /shortfalls emerge. There is also a legal requirement to ensure that the statutory service provision meets demands.

8.3 Legal services will provide ongoing advice in relation to specific proposals relating to the making of savings, including on any requirement to undertake consultation as such proposals are brought forward for consideration, the impact of any proposed savings on the delivery of statutory services and any other legal matter arising.

9 Electoral Division Implications

9.2 None

10 Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

10.2 None

11 Equality and Diversity Implications

11.2 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

12 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

12.2 The Council's Financial Strategy supports its strategies for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction in several ways. A specific climate change revenue budget is held. The climate change schemes involving the Council's assets or infrastructure are included within the capital programme. These two areas of expenditure are anticipated to have a positive contribution towards climate change outcomes.

13 Background Papers

1. Draft 2026/27 General Fund budgets and Medium-term Financial Plan 2026/27 – 2030/31
2. Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026/27
3. Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2027-28 to 2031-32

14 Appendices

Appendix A – Delivery of 2026/27 Savings Proposals
Appendix B – Amendments to Original Budget 2026/27
Appendix C – Reserves 2026/27
Appendix D – Projected Capital Programme Outturn 2026/27 – 2028/29
Appendix E – Projected Capital Receipts
Appendix F – Housing Revenue Account Projected Outturn

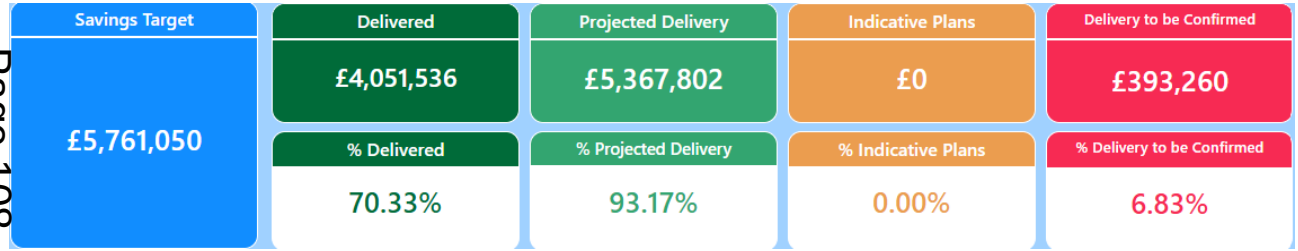
APPENDIX A

DELIVERY OF 2026/27 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Summary

The savings projections for 2026/27 are being tracked monthly with savings delivery being mapped against projected delivery during the course of the year. The current position indicates projected delivery of £5.368m against the £5.761m, representing 93% projected delivery of savings.

The snippet below summarises the position as at 30th September 2026.



A more detailed individual savings list is below:

Shropshire Council 26/27 Individual Savings List

Individual Savings List 26/27

Service Area	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
Care & Wellbeing	**£3,675,000**	**£0**	**£3,300,000**	**£3,300,000**	**£375,012**	**£3,300,000**	**£3,675,012**	**£0**	**£0**
CW001 - Market Management	£3,300,000	£0	£3,300,000	£3,300,000	£0	£3,300,000	£3,300,000	£0	£0
CW002 - ICB/CHC Increase in base budget (offset by growth)	£375,000	£0	£0	£0	£375,012	£0	£375,012	£0	£0
Commissioning	**£379,000**	**£0**	**£306,081**	**£306,081**	**£125,000**	**£254,000**	**£379,000**	**£0**	**£0**
CM001 - Capacity Increase underspend One Off while recruiting	£125,000	£0	£52,081	£52,081	£125,000	£0	£125,000	£0	-£0
CM002 - Implementation of management changes at Much Wenlock Leisure Centre and Church Stretton Leisure Centre, and removal of subsidies at Ludlow and Cleobury Mortimer Leisure Centres; also, agreement of additional funding support from local councils. Additional income also planned at Meole Brace golf course further to improved greenkeeping standards.	£254,000	£0	£254,000	£254,000	£0	£254,000	£254,000	£0	£0
Communities & Customer	**£422,050**	**£0**	**£278,790**	**£278,790**	**£0**	**£278,790**	**£278,790**	**£0**	**£143,260**
CC001 - Theatre Severn Subsidy	£120,000	£0	£120,000	£120,000	£0	£120,000	£120,000	£0	£0
CC002 - Housing scheme	£130,000	£0	£130,000	£130,000	£0	£130,000	£130,000	£0	-£0
CC003 - Continue to deliver spending reductions in Library Services through ongoing improvements to overall efficiency including increased income and enhanced partnership working with services in communities. Further, separate, plans are being prepared for 2026-27, and appropriate consultation will take place in line with our statutory duties when required.	£112,050	£0	£18,790	£18,790	£0	£18,790	£18,790	£0	£93,260
CC004 - 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
CC005 - Review and Minimise Museums and Archives service costs	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£50,000

Infrastructure	**£650,000**	**£0**	**£166,665**	**£166,665**	**£0**	**£400,000**	**£400,000**	**£0**	**£250,000**
IN001 - Streetworks Unbudgeted income	£250,000	£0	£104,165	£104,165	£0	£250,000	£250,000	£0	-£0
IN002 - Localities (re Streetscene Pilots)	£50,000	£0	£20,835	£20,835	£0	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£0
IN003 - Streetworks	£100,000	£0	£41,665	£41,665	£0	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£0
IN004 - Parking / Traffic Management	£250,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£250,000
Legal & Governance	**£10,000**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£10,000**	**£0**	**£10,000**	**£0**	**£0**
LG001 - Increase income from an enhanced memorial and ceremony offer at Council sites	£5,000	£0	£0	£0	£5,000	£0	£5,000	£0	£0
LG002 - Increase income from an improved range of wedding and partnership ceremony packages	£5,000	£0	£0	£0	£5,000	£0	£5,000	£0	£0
Place Shaping	**£500,000**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£500,000**	**£0**	**£500,000**	**£0**	**-£0**
PS001 - Planning Income	£500,000	£0	£0	£0	£500,000	£0	£500,000	£0	-£0
Section 151 - Finance	**£125,000**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£125,000**	**£0**	**£125,000**	**£0**	**£0**
SF001 - Capacity Increase underspend One Off while recruiting	£125,000	£0	£0	£0	£125,000	£0	£125,000	£0	£0
Total	**£5,761,050**	**£0**	**£4,051,536**	**£4,051,536**	**£1,135,012**	**£4,232,790**	**£5,367,802**	**£0**	**£393,260**

APPENDIX B

AMENDMENTS TO ORIGINAL BUDGET 2026/27

	Total £' 000	Care & Wellbeing £' 000	Children & Young People £' 000	Commissioning £' 000	Communities & Customer £' 000	Corporate £' 000	Enabling £' 000	Executive Management Team £' 000	Infrastructure £' 000	Legal & Governance £' 000	Pension £' 000	Place Shaping £' 000	Public Health Non-Ringfenced £' 000	Public Health – Ringfenced £' 000	Section 151 Finance £' 000	Strategy £' 000
Original Budget 2026/27	**489,159**	**173,315**	**114,616**	**45,290**	**16,815**	**69,121**	**10,671**	**498**	**51,128**	**5,189**	**244**	**0**	**-**	**-**	**0**	**2,271**
Quarter 1 Virements	**0**	**(3,350)**	**(345)**	**(213)**	**(248)**	**5,320**	**(114)**	**(170)**	**(760)**	**(402)**	**4**	**142**			**0**	**136**
Quarter 1 Structure Changes	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**			**0**	**0**
Quarter 2 Virements:	**0**															
Correct savings for posts left via Voluntary Redundancy	0				(104)	183	(48)			(31)						
Correction of revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute, reversing old virement	0				261				(261)							
Quarter 2 Structure Changes	**0**	**(261)**	**18,835**	**(33,008)**	**(4,875)**	**0**	**(9,502)**	**(29)**	**(22,627)**	**(1,262)**	**0**	**44,916**	**2,458**	**334**	**6,399**	**(1,378)**
Q2 structure changes to align to new Council Structure	0	(261)	18,835	(33,008)	(4,875)	0	(9,502)	(29)	(22,627)	(1,262)	0	44,916	2,458	334	6,399	(1,378)
Final Revised Budget 2026/27	**489,159**	**169,704**	**133,106**	**12,070**	**11,848**	**74,624**	**1,007**	**299**	**27,481**	**3,494**	**248**	**45,059**	**2,458**	**334**	**6,399**	**1,030**

APPENDIX C

RESERVES 2026/27

General Fund

The general fund reserve on 31st March 2026 stood at £5.000m, significantly below its optimum desired balance.

The 2026/27 budget strategy included a contribution of £42.675m to the General Fund balance which would then reach £47.675m, which is a safer level given the current profile of financial risks.

It is essential that the council maintains the General Fund Balance as assumed within the medium-term financial plan, otherwise it would limit the ability of the council to mitigate any further 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%-10% of net spending.

In the Adequacy of Reserves assessment within the Financial Strategy approved by Council in February 2026, the Council identified the need to target a risk assessed level of £45.815m within the General Fund Balance.

The updated MTFP presented to Cabinet in July considered the potential for reducing the contribution to the General Fund Balance which would reduce the EFS required in 2026/27. This will be considered further as 2026/27 progresses, against the projected financial position for the year, and other financial risks as they arise however we have adjusted for the reduction in Q2.

General Fund	**£'000**
Balance as at 1st April 2026	5,000
Budgeted Contribution as agreed in revised MTFP presented to Cabinet in July 2026	10,000
Budgeted General Fund Balance as at 31st March 2027	**15,000**
2026/27 projected outturn position	51
Balance as at 31 March 2027	**15,051**

Earmarked Reserves

The council held balances of £25.113m (excluding school balances) in earmarked reserves as at 1 April 2026. There are a number of transactions planned from earmarked reserves during the course of the year. The current projections for the year end balance in earmarked reserves is £34.532m (£29.831m excluding school balances) as set out in the table below.

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.	4,919	-5	0	4,914
Invest to save Reserve	Required to fund invest to save projects in order to deliver the service transformation programme.	567	0	164	731
External Fund Reserve	Reserves held where the Council is the administering body for trust funds or partnership working.	2,455	-256	130	2,329
		7,941	**-261**	**294**	**7,973**
Reserves retained for service departmental use					
Building Control	Required to manage the position regarding building control charges.	272	0	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.	271	-147	7	130
Debt Recovery Reserve	Established to provide resources for improving the recovery of debts across the Council and Collection Fund.	253	0	0	253
Economic Development	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.	110	0	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.	99	0	0	99
Improvement Plan Reserve	Established from external funds received towards the Improvement Plan	115	0	0	115
Planning Reserve	Set aside to fund developments within the Local Plan and any planning inquiry costs.	79	0	0	79
Public Health Reserve	This reserve includes balances committed to specific public health projects.	3,389	-14,111	13,475	2,753
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	4,620	-371	2	4,252
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.	1,527	0	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	0	0	0
Streetworks Reserve	Established from additional income generated within the service to be reinvested in the service	439	-211	0	228
TMO Vehicle Replacement	Set up to meet the costs of replacement vehicles by the Integrated Transport Unit.	37	0	0	37
		11,688	**-14,840**	**13,483**	**10,331**

Reserves	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward	Movement Out 2025/26	Movement In 2025/26	Balance Carried Forward
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
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.	1,740	0	0	1,740
		1,740	**0**	**0**	**1,740**
Insurance Reserves					
Fire Liability	Required to meet the cost of excesses on all council properties.	526	-431	464	558
Motor Insurance	An internally operated self-insurance reserve to meet costs not covered by the Council's Motor Insurance Policy.	570	0	80	650
		1,096	**-431**	**544**	**1,208**
Financial Risks					
Financial Strategy Reserve	Established specifically to provide one off funding for savings proposals in the Financial Strategy	1,049	0	5,930	6,979
Financial Risk - Adult Social Care	Established to address the financial risk of additional unforeseen Adult Social Care Demand	700	0	0	700
Financial Risk - Children's Social Care	Established to address the financial risk of additional unforeseen Children's Social Care Demand	400	0	0	400
Financial Risk - Economic Risk	Established to address the financial risk arising from changing economic conditions that may impact on the Council	500	0	0	500
		2,649	**0**	**5,930**	**8,579**
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.	4,701	0	0	4,701
		4,701	**0**	**0**	**4,701**
Total Reserves		**29,814**	**-15,533**	**20,251**	**34,532**

APPENDIX D

PROJECTED CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2026/27 – 2028/29

The capital budget for 2026/27 is monitored on a regular basis and changed to reflect the nature of capital projects which can be profiled for delivery over several years. In Quarter 2 there has been a net budget increase of £5.654m for 2026/27, compared to the revised budget reported at Quarter 1. The budget increase is entirely due to virements.

Virements in Quarter 2 arose primarily due to reprofiling of DofE Grants and CIL contributions to School Future Place Planning schemes of £5.325m, additional DEFRA grant relating to Farming in Protected Landscapes of £1.275m, additional S106 contributions to Affordable Housing Schemes of £0.639m offset by a slippage of £1.649m for the Temporary Accommodation Programme within the Housing Revenue Account.

The tables below summarise the overall movement, between the budget approved in February and changes up to Quarter 2.

Service Area	Revised Budget Quarter 1 £	Budget Virements Quarter 2 £	Revised Budget Quarter 2 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	Outturn Projection Variance £	2027/28 Revised Budget £	2028/29 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Care & Wellbeing Capital	162,162	0	162,162	20,793	141,369	12.82%	162,162	0	0	0
Children & Young People & Children's Social Care (CSC)	15,320,331	5,338,954	20,659,285	4,682,613	15,976,672	22.67%	20,659,285	0	16,339,437	11,700,000
Commissioning Capital	2,230,976	25,000	2,255,976	1,805,594	450,382	80.04%	2,255,976	0	789,916	0
Communities & Customer Capital	11,893,416	130	11,893,546	4,749,367	7,144,179	39.93%	11,893,546	0	7,826,918	4,500,000
Enabling Capital	2,846,000	0	2,846,000	1,243,290	1,602,710	43.69%	2,846,000	0	2,480,000	1,610,000
Infrastructure Capital	62,311,455	1,628,001	63,939,456	15,175,688	48,763,768	23.73%	63,939,456	0	59,747,333	57,084,433
Place Shaping Capital	17,237,186	853,214	18,090,400	7,430,344	10,660,056	41.07%	18,090,400	0	11,825,000	1,500,000
Strategy Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total General Fund	**112,001,526**	**7,845,299**	**119,846,825**	**35,107,688**	**84,739,137**	**29.29%**	**119,846,825**	**0**	**99,008,604**	**76,394,433**
Housing Revenue Account	22,227,379	-2,190,861	20,036,518	2,169,145	17,867,373	10.83%	20,036,518	0	33,687,936	17,621,182
Total Approved Budget	**134,228,905**	**5,654,438**	**139,883,343**	**37,276,833**	**102,606,510**	**26.65%**	**139,883,343**	**0**	**132,696,540**	**94,015,615**

The actual capital expenditure at Quarter 2 is £37.277m, which represents 26.65% of the revised capital budget at Quarter 2, 50% of the year. This is slightly low in comparison to the total budget, but in line with the average expenditure percentage at this period in previous years. All budgets are fully allocated to projects and will be monitored for levels of spend throughout the remainder of the year. Based on recent years, the capital programme has out turned at around 85% of the outturn budget, which on average has been around 20% lower than the budget at this point in the year, due to further re-profiling later in the year.

The level of spend is slightly low across the programme in some areas, but equal to the level of spend in the previous year at this period. In terms of the major areas the spend position is as follows: Care & Wellbeing 12.82% (budget £0.162m), Children & Young People 22.67% (budget £20.659m), Commissioning 80.04% (budget £2.256m), Communities & Customer 39.93% (budget £11.893m), Enabling 43.69% (budget £2.846m), Infrastructure 23.73% (budget £63.939m), Place Shaping 41.07% (budget £18.090m), and HRA Major Repairs & New Build Programme 10.83% (budget £20.037m).

Service Area	Revised Budget Quarter 1 £	Budget Virements Quarter 2 £	Revised Budget Quarter 2 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	Outturn Projection Variance £	2027/28 Revised Budget £	2028/29 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Care & Wellbeing	**162,162**	**0**	**162,162**	**20,793**	**141,369**	**12.82%**	**162,162**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Adult Social Care Operations Capital	162,162	0	162,162	20,793	141,369	12.82%	162,162	0	0	0
Children & Young People & Children's Social Care (CSC)	**15,320,331**	**5,338,954**	**20,659,285**	**4,682,613**	**15,976,672**	**22.67%**	**20,659,285**	**0**	**16,339,437**	**11,700,000**
Children's Residential Care Capital	42,822	0	42,822	0	42,822	0.00%	42,822	0	0	0
Non Maintained Schools Capital	7,632,594	4,364,115	11,996,709	3,468,363	8,528,346	28.91%	11,996,709	0	7,750,000	8,700,000
Primary School Capital	3,031,679	1,824,782	4,856,461	987,954	3,868,507	20.34%	4,856,461	0	1,800,000	2,000,000
Primary School Managed Capital	1,044,444	47,332	1,091,776	163,288	928,488	14.96%	1,091,776	0	0	0
Secondary School Capital	782	0	782	0	782	0.00%	782	0	0	0
Secondary School Managed Capital	71,112	0	71,112	15,582	55,531	21.91%	71,112	0	0	0
Shropshire Music Service Capital	51,443	0	51,443	3,358	48,085	6.53%	51,443	0	0	0
Special Schools Capital	12,804	18,029	30,833	5,067	25,766	16.43%	30,833	0	0	0
Special Schools Managed Capital	10,151	0	10,151	0	10,151	0.00%	10,151	0	0	0
Unallocated School Capital	3,422,500	-915,304	2,507,196	0	2,507,196	0.00%	2,507,196	0	6,789,437	1,000,000
Youth Support Services Capital	0	0	0	39,000	-39,000	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Commissioning	**2,230,976**	**25,000**	**2,255,976**	**1,805,594**	**450,382**	**80.04%**	**2,255,976**	**0**	**789,916**	**0**
Leisure Capital	2,230,976	25,000	2,255,976	1,805,594	450,382	80.04%	2,255,976	0	789,916	0
Communities & Customer	**11,893,416**	**130**	**11,893,546**	**4,749,367**	**7,144,179**	**39.93%**	**11,893,546**	**0**	**7,826,918**	**4,500,000**
Community Hubs & Libraries Capital	320,841	0	320,841	17,727	303,114	5.53%	320,841	0	0	0
Housing Services Capital	11,137,504	0	11,137,504	4,394,146	6,743,358	39.45%	11,137,504	0	7,826,918	4,500,000
Museums & Archives Capital	1,509	130	1,639	7,086	-5,447	432.31%	1,639	0	0	0
Theatre Services Capital	433,562	0	433,562	330,408	103,154	76.21%	433,562	0	0	0
Enabling	**2,846,000**	**0**	**2,846,000**	**1,243,290**	**1,602,710**	**43.69%**	**2,846,000**	**0**	**2,480,000**	**1,610,000**
ICT Infrastructure Capital	2,846,000	0	2,846,000	1,243,290	1,602,710	43.69%	2,846,000	0	2,480,000	1,610,000
Infrastructure	**62,311,455**	**1,477,967**	**63,789,422**	**15,025,654**	**48,763,768**	**23.56%**	**63,789,422**	**0**	**59,747,333**	**57,084,433**
Environment and Transport (Public Transport) Capital	2,773,274	27,775	2,801,049	741,907	2,059,142	26.49%	2,801,049	0	1,453,400	1,482,100
Highways - Central Area Division Capital	270,000	0	270,000	39,192	230,808	14.52%	270,000	0	0	0
Highways - Flood Defence & Water Management Capital	3,967,370	0	3,967,370	953,541	3,013,829	24.03%	3,967,370	0	0	0
Highways - Integrated Transport Capital	17,302,101	-3,828,124	13,473,977	986,245	12,487,732	7.32%	13,473,977	0	16,999,900	11,329,300
Highways - North West Relief Road (NWRR)	0	0	0	-2,007	2,007	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Highways - Northern Area Division Capital	270,000	0	270,000	1,992	268,008	0.74%	270,000	0	0	0
Highways - Oxon Relief Road (OLR)	45,856	0	45,856	0	45,856	0.00%	45,856	0	0	0
Highways - Southern Area Division Capital	270,000	0	270,000	139,615	130,385	51.71%	270,000	0	0	0
Highways - Street Lighting Capital	1,100,000	0	1,100,000	-44,548	1,144,548	-4.05%	1,100,000	0	0	0
Highways - Structural Maintenance of Bridges Capital	2,500,000	0	2,500,000	218,266	2,281,734	8.73%	2,500,000	0	0	0
Highways - Structural Maintenance of Roads Capital	32,697,285	4,000,000	36,697,285	11,198,143	25,499,143	30.51%	36,697,285	0	40,504,000	43,492,000
National Landscapes and Outdoor Partnerships Capital	1,115,569	1,278,316	2,393,885	793,308	1,600,577	33.14%	2,393,885	0	790,033	781,033
Place Shaping	**17,237,186**	**1,003,248**	**18,240,434**	**7,580,378**	**10,660,056**	**41.56%**	**18,240,434**	**0**	**11,825,000**	**1,500,000**
Climate Change Capital	564,120	0	564,120	116,479	447,641	20.65%	564,120	0	0	0
Growth & Development Capital	1,540,016	0	1,540,016	683,665	856,351	44.39%	1,540,016	0	7,000,000	0
Property & Asset Capital	12,984,859	371,680	13,356,539	5,765,043	7,591,496	43.16%	13,356,539	0	4,000,000	1,500,000
Broadband Capital	1,575,891	0	1,575,891	153,884	1,422,007	9.76%	1,575,891	0	500,000	0
Waste Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	325,000	0
Development Management Capital	36,687	-8,412	28,275	1,327	26,948	4.69%	28,275	0	0	0
Planning Policy Capital	535,613	639,980	1,175,593	859,980	315,613	73.15%	1,175,593	0	0	0
Strategy	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.00%**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Communications and Engagement Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Transformation Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total General Fund	**112,001,526**	**7,845,299**	**119,846,825**	**35,107,688**	**84,739,137**	**29.29%**	**119,846,825**	**0**	**99,008,604**	**76,394,433**
Housing Revenue Account	**22,227,379**	**-2,190,861**	**20,036,518**	**2,169,145**	**17,867,373**	**10.83%**	**20,036,518**	**0**	**33,687,936**	**17,621,182**
HRA Dwellings Capital	22,227,379	-2,190,861	20,036,518	2,169,145	17,867,373	10.83%	20,036,518	0	33,687,936	17,621,182
Total Approved Budget	**134,228,905**	**5,654,438**	**139,883,343**	**37,276,833**	**102,606,510**	**26.65%**	**139,883,343**	**0**	**132,696,540**	**94,015,615**

APPENDIX E

PROJECTED CAPITAL RECEIPTS

The current capital programme is heavily reliant on the Council generating capital receipts to finance 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 2026/27 to 2029/30. 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.

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	13,685,685	17,478,508	8,580,000	4,326,000	-
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	450,000	7,682,095	10,500,000	8,181,991	5,164,303
Transformation activities	-	-	-	-	-
Total Commitments	**14,135,685**	**25,160,603**	**19,080,000**	**12,507,991**	**5,164,303**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	22,379,581	16,491,303	- 7,329,301	- 26,344,301	- 38,852,292
Generated 2026/27 YTD	4,370,287	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	3,877,120	1,340,000	65,000	-	
Total in hand/projected	**30,626,988**	**17,831,303**	**- 7,264,301**	**- 26,344,301**	**- 38,852,292**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 16,491,303**	**7,329,301**	**26,344,301**	**38,852,292**	**44,016,595**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	596,000	39,553,709	4,753,080	-	-

In 2026/27 there is currently a projected surplus of capital receipts of £16.491m and in 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30 there are currently projected cumulative shortfalls of capital receipts of £7.329m, £26.344m and £38.852m respectively.

These surpluses are generated and shortfalls mitigated by the capital receipts surplus position in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Analysis of the General Fund and HRA requirement for capital receipts is shown in the tables below.

General Fund	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	12,339,116	14,778,508	4,580,000	3,326,000	-
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	450,000	3,554,000	8,500,000	6,181,991	5,164,303
Transformation activities	-	-	-	-	-
Total Commitments	**12,789,116**	**18,332,508**	**13,080,000**	**9,507,991**	**5,164,303**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	12,643,100	5,640,250	- 11,352,258	- 24,367,258	- 33,875,249
Generated 2026/27 YTD	2,902,346	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	2,883,920	1,340,000	65,000	-	-
Total in hand/projected	**18,429,365**	**6,980,250**	**- 11,287,258**	**- 24,367,258**	**- 33,875,249**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 5,640,250**	**11,352,258**	**24,367,258**	**33,875,249**	**39,039,552**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	596,000	39,553,709	4,753,080		

HRA	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	1,346,569	2,700,000	4,000,000	1,000,000	-
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	-	4,128,095	2,000,000	2,000,000	-
Transformation activities	-	-	-	-	-
Total Commitments	**1,346,569**	**6,828,095**	**6,000,000**	**3,000,000**	**-**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	9,736,481	10,851,053	4,022,958	- 1,977,042	- 4,977,042
Generated 2026/27YTD	1,467,941	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	993,200	-	-		
Total in hand/projected	**12,197,623**	**10,851,053**	**4,022,958**	**- 1,977,042**	**- 4,977,042**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 10,851,053**	**- 4,022,958**	**1,977,042**	**4,977,042**	**4,977,042**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	-	-	-		-

These tables demonstrate that capital receipts for the HRA are in a comparatively healthy surplus position over the period, however, there is significant pressure arising from the capital receipts requirement of the General Fund. In 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30 there are currently projected cumulative shortfalls of capital receipts of £11.352m, £24.367m, and £33.875m respectively.

Assets currently being considered for disposal total £44.903m which if realised will still fall short of the total capital receipts required within the capital programme. It is therefore necessary for the asset base to be reviewed in detail to identify further assets that can be considered for disposal and all capital receipts planned are maximised. Considerable work is required to realise these receipts, with generally a lead in time of at least 12 to 18 months on larger disposals.

APPENDIX F

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

	2026/27 Budget £	Period 1-6 Actual £	Period 7-12 Forecast £	Full year Projection £	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance £
Income					
Dwellings Rent	(23,684,000)	(11,411,827)	(11,411,827)	(22,823,654)	(860,346)
Garage Rent	(108,000)	(46,114)	(46,114)	(92,228)	(15,772)
Other Rent	(35,000)	(22,342)	(22,342)	(44,683)	9,683
Charges for Services	(1,912,585)	(780,313)	(1,255,701)	(2,036,014)	123,429
Total Income	**(25,739,585)**	**(12,260,596)**	**(12,735,983)**	**(24,996,579)**	**(743,006)**
Expenditure					
ALMO Management Fee	11,199,832	8,509,180	2,690,652	11,199,832	-
Supplies and Services	2,719,134	723,652	1,688,987	2,412,639	306,495
Capital Charges - Dwelling Depreciation	5,072,000	2,536,000	2,536,000	5,072,000	-
Capital Charges - Depreciation Other	298,000	149,000	149,000	298,000	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-
Repairs charged to revenue	635,000	341,354	75,907	417,261	217,739
New Development Feasibility	150,510	2,777	67,223	70,000	80,510
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	114,656	57,328	57,328	114,656	-
Corporate & Democratic Core	635,180	317,590	317,590	635,180	-
Total Expenditure	**20,284,312**	**12,636,881**	**7,582,687**	**20,219,568**	**604,744**
Net Cost of Services	**(1,262,273)**	**376,285**	**(5,153,296)**	**(4,777,011)**	**(138,262)**
Revenue Financing Capital Expenditure	3,558,000	-	2,841,170	2,841,170	716,830
Loan repayments	-	-	-	-	-
Interest Paid	3,653,000	1,758,123	2,278,379	4,036,502	(383,502)
Interest Received	(224,000)	(112,000)	(839,580)	(951,580)	727,580
1'(Gain) or loss on sale of HRA non-current assets	-	-	-	-	-
I&E in relation to investment properties & changes in fair values	-	-	-	-	-
Net Operating (Income)/Expenditure	**2,071,727**	**2,022,408**	**(873,327)**	**1,149,081**	**922,646**
Net Cost of Service/(Surplus) for Year	**2,071,727**	**2,022,408**	**(873,327)**	**1,149,081**	**922,646**

	2026/27 Budget £	Period 1-6 Actual £	Period 7-12 Forecast £	Full year Projection £	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance £
HRA Reserve					
B/fwd 1 April	(16,232,153)	(16,232,153)	-	(16,232,153)	
(Surplus)/Deficit for year (Estimated)	2,071,727	1,149,081	-	1,149,081	
2'(Gain) or Loss on sale of HRA non-current assets	-	-	-	-	
Transfer to/from the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	
Transfer to/from Reserve	-	-	-	-	
Carried Forward 31 March (Estimated)	**(14,160,426)**	**(15,083,072)**	**-**	**(15,083,072)**	

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Committee	Cabinet
Date and Time	18th November 2026 Public

Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2026/27

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer
Service Area:	Finance
Report Author	Cheryl Sedgley, Strategic Finance Manager
Officer contact details	Cheryl.sedgley@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All / Name of individual Electoral Division(s)
Key Decision?	Key
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes – 12th May 2026
Report considered by	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The report outlines the treasury management activities of the Council in the second quarter of 2026/27. 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. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to

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

2.2. Review and endorse the performance within the prudential indicators for quarter 2, 2026/27 (Appendix B).

3. Background

3.1. 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 April 2026 and 30 September 2026.

3.2. Under the CIPFA Treasury Management Code, it is best practice to provide quarterly Treasury Management updates. This report demonstrates compliance with that best practice.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

4.1. The Council receives its treasury advice from MUFG. Their latest interest rate forecasts to 31 March 2029 are shown below. The Bank Rate remained at 3.75% during Quarter 2, however projections on the bank rate over the remainder of the year have changed during the last quarter with an increase now anticipated before the end of the calendar year, which has been realised in November.

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 21.09.26													
	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29	Jun-29	Sep-29	Dec-29
BANK RATE	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
5 yr PWLB	5.60	5.60	5.30	5.10	4.70	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30
10 yr PWLB	6.00	5.90	5.60	5.40	5.00	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.60
25 yr PWLB	6.50	6.40	6.10	5.90	5.60	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.20
50 yr PWLB	6.10	6.10	5.80	5.50	5.30	5.10	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90	4.90

4.2. An overview of the general economic position is included as Appendix A, and with further detail in Appendix D. Decisions on Council investment activity are influenced by this wider context.

4.3. 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 MUFG’s suggested creditworthiness approach, including sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information provided by MUFG.

The Finance Team continue to take a prudent approach keeping investments short term and with the most highly credit rated organisations.

4.4 In the second quarter of 2026/27 the internal finance team’s return outperformed its benchmark by 0.91%. The gross investment return was 3.821% compared to the benchmark of 3.730%. As cash balances held are lower than in previous

years, the Council need to ensure cash balances are highly liquid, resulting in lower interest rates on short term deals. However, during August and September available cash balances have enabled some investments to be made with other local authorities or banks spanning a full month, which have resulted in a better interest return.

4.5 Whilst returns on investment are important, as we strive to achieve the best investment we can, the Council's priority is always to ensure security of funds and ensure we hold sufficient liquid balances. With this in mind, this will often mean that we cannot secure the higher rate investments as these are offered to longer term deals.

4.6 The total net investment income achieved as at the end of the September was £1.081m, which is included in the Council's outturn position in the financial outturn position.

4.7 The council had £53.8m invested at the end of the period. A full list of investments held as at 30 September 2026, compared to MUFG's counterparty list, and changes to Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's credit ratings are shown within MUFG's Monthly Investment Analysis Review at Appendix A. None of the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were breached during the second quarter of 2026/27. Officers continue to monitor the credit ratings of institutions on a daily basis. Delegated authority has been put in place to make any amendments to the approved lending list.

4.8 As cash balances and reserves at the Council have reduced over recent years the Council can no longer utilise internal borrowing and so it is now necessary to take out new external borrowing, particularly for capital schemes have been funded through borrowings.

4.9 During 2026/27, the Council will have a need to borrow, specifically in relation to the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) of £121m approved in principle for 2026/27 to support the revenue budget, but also for capital expenditure plans as set out in the capital programme.

4.10 Taking the need to borrow before the end of the calendar year and current expectations of future Bank Rates, the Council will profile borrowing decisions in a way which secures the best value, in line with specialist advice, while still ensuring sufficient cashflow liquidity to manage day-to-day operations.

4.11 Given that PWLB rates have increased over the last 6 months, and the likelihood of a future increase in the Bank Rate before the end of the financial year, the Council is currently reviewing the options to secure borrowing at the lowest interest rate that can be secured. This is generally a mix of either temporary borrowing from other local authorities or PWLB borrowing. During Quarter 2 the Council secured £15m of PWLB loans and £20m of temporary borrowing.

4.12 All borrowing undertaken is in line with the Authorised and Operational Boundary for external debt as demonstrated in Appendix B.

5. Key risks and Opportunities

5.1 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.

5.2 The Council's Audit Committee is the committee responsible for ensuring effective consideration of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and policies.

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	Governance, performance and financial weaknesses
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.	Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)
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	Challenging financial position compromising decision making and governance arrangements

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
	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.	

6 Council Priorities

6.1 The requirement to manage the Council's cashflow position, treasury investments and borrowing efficiently and effectively is a key requirement in helping to deliver a financially sustainable council. By ensuring that any surplus monies are invested, this will generate essential additional income for the Council. Also, by carefully managing the timescale and need to borrow funds, this can keep associated borrowing costs to a minimum for the Council.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 The Council makes assumptions about the levels of borrowing and investment income over the financial year. Reduced borrowing because 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.

7.2 The Quarter 2 performance is above benchmark and has delivered total net income of £1.081 for the Council. Further details on the performance against benchmark are detailed in paragraph 4.4.

7.3 As at 30 September 2026 the Council held £53.8m in investments as detailed in Appendix A and borrowing of £470m at fixed interest rates. There has been no significant change in the level of investments, and borrowing of £35m has been secured during the quarter. Further borrowing will be required during the remainder of the financial year.

8 Legal and HR implications

8.1 The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations require the Council to determine and keep under review the Prudential and Treasury Indicators as set out in the CIPFA Prudential Code and CIPFA Treasury management Code of Practice. This report provides an update of treasury management activity in the first quarter of the year and tracks performance against the indicators as set out in Appendix B.

9 Electoral Division Implications

9.1 None.

10 Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

10.1 None.

11 Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

12 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

12.1 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.

13 Background Papers

1. Treasury Strategy 2026/27 – Council, 26 February 2026
2. Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2026/27 – Cabinet, 9 September 2026

14 Appendices

Appendix A - Shropshire Council Monthly Investment Analysis Review as at 30 September 2026 (provided by MUFG)
Appendix B - Prudential Indicators for Quarter 2 2026/27
Appendix C – Prudential Borrowing Approvals
Appendix D – Economic Background and Borrowing Update

Shropshire Council

Monthly Investment Analysis Review

September 2026

Shropshire Council

Monthly Economic Summary

General Economy
The UK economic outlook was mixed through September, with continued private-sector expansion and firmer household indicators alongside higher inflation and a loosening labour market. Meanwhile, the Bank of England left Bank Rate at 3.75% and announced that it will reduce its holding of gilts by £368bn over the next eight years through revisions to its Quantitative Tightening programme. While Bank Rate was unchanged, the result was a "hawkish hold", with the Bank raising its own inflation forecasts to a peak over 4% in the first quarter of next year. The tone and contents of the meeting's minutes suggested that unless energy prices fall back and a resolution to the Middle East occurs, the Committee could see a majority voting for tighter monetary policy despite the current lack of second-round effects, given how elevated energy costs could see these develop.

Business surveys remained resilient, although momentum softened. The Composite and Services PMIs both fell to 51.7 in September from 52.5 in August, while Manufacturing PMI rose to 51.9 from 51.7 - matching expectations. Contrasting this, construction activity continued to contract, with its PMI falling to 44.3 in August from 44.7, the twentieth successive month below 50.

Headline consumer-level inflation rose to 3.1% in August from 2.9% in July, while prices increased 0.5% m/m after 0.3% previously, driven mainly by a 6.9% increase in fuel which alone added 0.2%. On a more positive note, core inflation held at 2.6% and services inflation at 3.4%.

Growth data was stronger than expected, rising 0.4% in July after 0.3% in June to leave the annual rate at an improved 1.4%. Within the headline reading, services improved 0.4%, production 0.2% and construction 0.1%. Alongside the July figures, there was also an upward revision to GDP growth in Q2, from 0.4% q/q to 0.5% q/q, suggests that the economy has been a bit more resilient to higher energy prices in the first half of the year than previously thought. Elsewhere, the trade deficit narrowed to £3.45 billion from £5.54 billion as exports rose 2.1% m/m and imports to the UK edged down 0.4% m/m to a five-month low of £85.37 billion in July 2026. The figures pointed to firmer activity at the start of Q3, although elevated inflation and subdued new orders continue to cloud the outlook.

The labour market continued to loosen as although unemployment remained at 4.9% in the three months to July, HMRC payrolled employment fell by 26,000 in August after a revised 19,000 decline previously. Meanwhile, vacancies decreased to 702,000 in the three months to August and wage data showed total pay slowing to 3.9% y/y from 4.2% with that excluding bonuses unchanged, as were private sector earnings.

Retail sales rose 0.5% m/m in August after a 0.5% fall in July, beating expectations for a 0.2% decline, and were 2.4% higher y/y. Consumer confidence improved for a third month, rising to -13 in September from -14, its strongest reading since August 2024.

Public finances remained constrained, with net borrowing of £18.3 billion in August, above £15.4 billion a year earlier and expectations of £15.7 billion. Public Sector Net Debt to GDP in the United Kingdom decreased to 93.80% of GDP in August from 94%. The figures reinforced market concerns over the government's fiscal headroom, with attention now moving towards the 28th October Budget.

US Economy
The US economy remained resilient through September, despite inflation remaining firmly above target and GDP growth slowing. Non-farm payrolls rose by 162,000 in August after an upwardly revised gain of 23,000 in July, well above expectations of 56,000. Headline inflation rose 0.4% on the month in July, with the annual rate unchanged at 3.4%. However, core inflation eased to 2.4%. The US economy expanded at an annualised rate of 2.2% in Q2 2026, revised up by 0.7 percentage point from the 2nd estimate, following an upwardly revised 2.5% growth in Q1. The Federal Reserve' Open Market Committee unanimously voted to raise its target range by 25 basis points to 3.75%–4.00%, responding to persistent above target inflation and a resilient economy.

EU Economy
Eurozone economic releases showed continued expansion alongside higher headline inflation. For the latter, annual headline inflation rose to 3.2% in August from 2.9%, although the core reading eased to 2.4%. Meanwhile, Q2 GDP rose 0.6% q/q and annual growth accelerated to 1.2% from the 0.6% seen in the first quarter of the year. The ECB raised its Main Refinancing Rate by 25 basis points to 2.65% and the Deposit Rate to 2.50%, with President Lagarde describing the decision as a "no brainer" as the recent developments in the Middle East conflict threatens to keep inflation above target for a prolonged period and thus raised the risk of second-round wage and price effects.

Housing
UK Housing data was mixed in the latest releases. The UK Nationwide House Price Index rose by 0.8% y/y in September, slowing from a 1.6% increase in August and falling short of the expectations for a 1.3% rise. On a monthly basis, prices fell by 0.2%. Meanwhile, the Lloyds House Price Index (rebranded from Halifax) reported an average house price of £298,468 in August, representing a 0.4% decline compared with a year earlier. Overall, the unexpected monthly decline, alongside the prospect of a further rise in mortgage rates and uncertainty over possible tax increases in the Budget, suggests that house price growth could remain subdued in the coming months.

Currency
Over the month, Sterling rose against the Euro and fell against the USD

September	Start	End	High	Low
GBP/USD	$1.3516	$1.3267	$1.3547	$1.3219
GBP/EUR	€1.1657	€1.1708	€1.1708	€1.1617

Interest Rate Forecast
Whilst Capital Economics altered their Bank Rate forecasts on 17/09/2026. MUFG Corporate Markets altered their Bank Rate forecasts on 21/09/2026.

Bank Rate	Now	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29	Jun-29	Sep-29
MUFG Corporate Markets	**3.75%**	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	3.75%	3.50%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%
Capital Economics	**3.75%**	4.00%	4.25%	4.25%	4.25%	4.00%	3.75%	3.75%	3.50%	3.50%	-	-	-

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	3.86%		MMF	AAAm		
MMF Insight	15,000,000	3.88%		MMF	AAAm		
DMO	4,400,000	3.71%	29/09/2026	06/10/2026	AA-	0.000%	0
DMO	9,400,000	3.73%	30/09/2026	15/10/2026	AA-	0.001%	0
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	10,000,000	4.90%	28/09/2026	30/10/2026	AA-	0.002%	0
Total Investments	**£53,800,000**	**4.02%**					£0

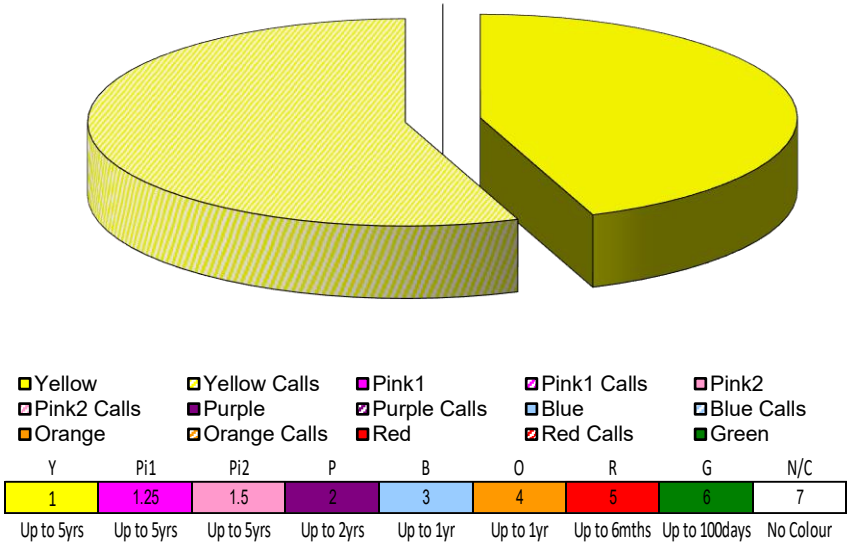
Note: An historic risk of default is only provided if a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and is not provided for an MMF or USDBF, for which the rating agencies provide a fund rating. The portfolio's historic risk of default therefore measures the historic risk of default attached only to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

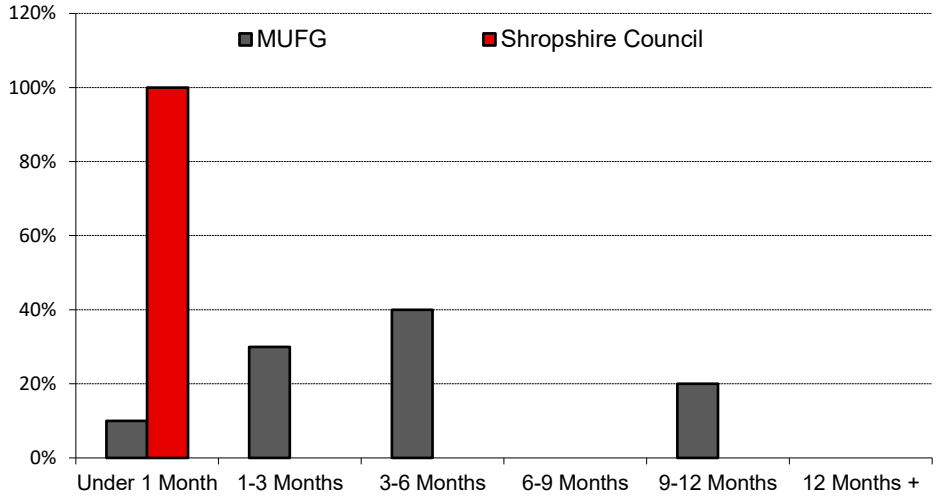
The Historic Risk of Default column is based on the lowest long term rating. If clients are using this % for their Expected Credit Loss calculation under IFRS 9, please be aware that the Code does not recognise a loss allowance where the counterparty is central government or a local authority since relevant 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 June 2026, which are the latest returns currently available.

Shropshire Council

Portfolio Composition by MUFG's Suggested Lending Criteria





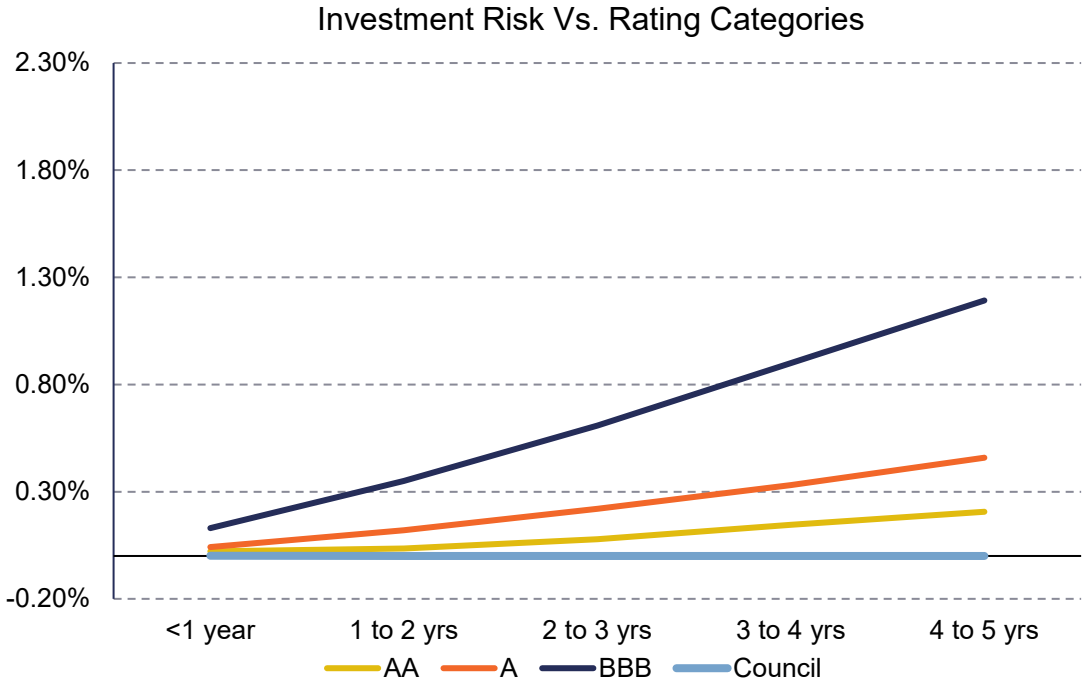
Portfolios weighted average risk number = 1.00

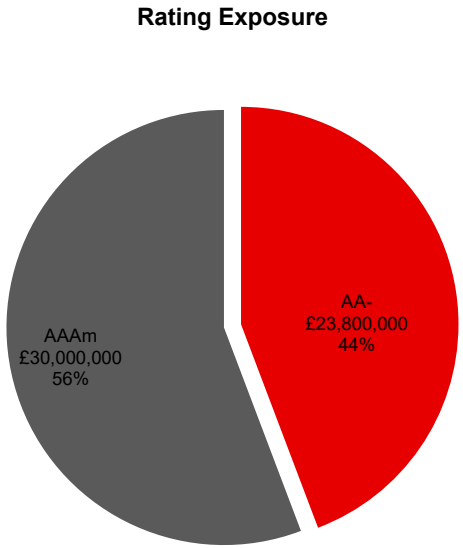
WARoR = Weighted Average Rate of Return
WAM = Weighted Average Time to Maturity

	% 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%	£53,800,000	55.76%	£30,000,000	55.76%	4.02%	9	9	20	21
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%	**£53,800,000**	**55.76%**	**£30,000,000**	**55.76%**	**4.02%**	**9**	**9**	**20**	**21**

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
07/09/2026	2146	Qatar (Sovereign)	Qatar	The Negative Watch on the Sovereign Rating was removed and the Sovereign Rating was placed on Negative Outlook.
10/09/2026	2147	Qatar National Bank	Qatar	The Negative Watch on the Long Term Rating was removed and the Long Term Rating was placed on Negative Outlook.
17/09/2026	2148	Coventry Building Society	United Kingdom	The Long Term Rating was downgraded to A from A+.
17/09/2026	2148	Co-operative Bank PLC (The)	United Kingdom	The Long Term Rating was downgraded to A from A+.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes
S&P

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
01/09/2026	2145	Danske A/S	Denmark	The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Positive from Stable.
17/09/2026	2149	Cooperatieve Rabobank U.A.	Netherlands	The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Positive from Stable.
30/09/2026	2151	Clydesdale Bank PLC	United Kingdom	All ratings were withdrawn.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes
MOODY'S

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
18/09/2026	2150	HSBC Bank PLC (NRFB)	United Kingdom	The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Positive from Stable.
18/09/2026	2150	HSBC UK Bank Plc (RFB)	United Kingdom	The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Positive from Stable.

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MUFG Corporate Markets | 19th Floor | 51 Lime Street | London | EC3M 7DQ.

APPENDIX B – PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR QUARTER 2, 2026/27

Prudential Indicator	2026/27 Indicator £m	Quarter 1 – Actual £m	Quarter 2 – Actual £m	Quarter 3 – Actual £m	Quarter 4 – Actual £m
Non HRA Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	602	352	367		
HRA CFR	136	103	118		
Gross borrowing	738	455	485		
Investments	50	23	54		
Net borrowing	688	432	431		
Authorised limit for external debt	929	455	485		
Operational boundary for external debt	831	455	485		
Limit of fixed interest rates (borrowing)	929	455	485		
Limit of variable interest rates (borrowing)	464	0	0		
Internal Team Principal sums invested > 364 days	70	0	0		
Maturity structure of borrowing limits	%	%	%	%	%
Under 12 months	25	19	22		
12 months to 2 years	25	16	16		
2 years to 5 years	50	16	15		
5 years to 10 years	75	19	15		
10 years to 20 years	100	15	14		
20 years to 30 years	100	14	14		
30 years to 40 years	100	2	2		
40 years to 50 years	100	1	0		
50 years and above	100	2	2		

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APPENDIX C -PRUDENTIAL BORROWING APPROVALS

Capital Financing Summary

Prudential Borrowing Approvals	Date Approved	Amount Approved	Applied (Spent) 2006/07 - 2025/26	Budgeted 2026/27	Budgeted 2027/28	Budgeted 2028/29	Budgeted 2029/30	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**	**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**	**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
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	1,863,045	1,530,270		332,775			AUC	45	2070/71
Pride Hill Phase 1 Enabling Works	01/02/2022	13,955	13,955					AUC	45	2070/71
Multi Agency Hub - Feb 22 approval	01/02/2022	3,364,961	0	2,364,961	1,000,000			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	3,778,229	3,540,979	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	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	4,293	6,339,578			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	Budgeted 2029/30	First year MRP Charged	Asset Life	Final year MRP Charged
		£	£	£	£	£	£			
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project 2		3,296,000	2,731,880	564,120				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	894,976	1,036,293			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	2,047,999	1,907,760	140,239				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	20	
Transformation Programme 2025-26 Expenditure Funded Through Borrowing Under EFS Approval		61,857,070	61,857,070					2025/26	20	
Transformation Programme 2026-27 Expenditure Funded Through Borrowing Under EFS Approval		121,000,000	0	121,000,000				2025/26	20	
		226,300,096	**269,864,337**	**128,598,139**	**8,708,646**	**0**	**0**			

Appendix D

Economic Background and Borrowing Update

Economic Background

The second quarter of 2026/27 saw:

- Continued resilience in the face of the ongoing energy shock, with real GDP up 0.4% m/m in July,
- The 3myy rate of average earnings growth excluding bonuses hold steady at 3.5% in July.
- CPI inflation increased to 3.1% in August, and is forecast to rise further by January 2027.
- The Bank of England leave interest rates unchanged at 3.75% although it intimated in its September meeting that rates will be hiked in November or December if a resolution to the conflict in the Middle East is not forthcoming before then.
- The 10-year gilt yield fluctuated ending the quarter at 5.43%.

Real GDP growth has increased by 0.4% m/m in July. The rise in July was broad-based with services output up by 0.4% m/m, industrial production 0.2% m/m higher and construction output rising by 0.1% m/m. The Office for National Statistics also noted that businesses reported stronger activity related to AI and cloud computing.

By September, the composite Purchasing Manager Index (PMI) stood at 52.0. While this was still indicative of expanding activity, it was weaker than August's 52.5 and the lowest level in three months, suggesting the latest leap in energy prices and the prospect of another tax-raising Autumn Budget are weighing on activity. Within the composite report, employment contracted (i.e., a reading below 50) for the twenty-fourth consecutive month while higher fuel and payroll costs contributed to the sharpest rise in prices charged since May. The services PMI fell from 52.5 to 52.1, reportedly due to subdued domestic economic conditions and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty. Meanwhile, weak consumer demand constrained production, bringing the manufacturing output subcomponent balance down from 52.1 to a six-month low of 51.5. The press release also noted that weaker consumer demand was partly offset by AI investment and greater defence spending.

Retail sales volumes were up in every major category except "other stores" and fuel in August, leaving the headline figure up 0.5% m/m. That fully reversed the 0.5% m/m decline in July and left the level of retail sales 2.4% higher than last August. Even if retail sales volumes were flat in September, volumes for the quarter as a whole would still rise by 0.5% q/q, higher than the 0.2% q/q rise in the previous quarter. August's figure suggests that other factors are offsetting the drag on real incomes from higher energy prices and borrowing costs, or that households remain able and willing to reduce their saving rate to sustain recent spending growth. That said, with inflation yet to peak, the biggest drag on households' real income has yet to come.

Public sector net borrowing of £18.3 billion in August was once again higher than the OBR's forecast of £14.8 billion. It also marked the second highest August borrowing figure since records began in 1993. At £12.4 billion, current borrowing (i.e., excluding investments) which is important for the Chancellor's fiscal mandate, was also above the OBR's forecast of £10.4 billion. Higher central government tax receipts were not enough to offset the effect of higher government spending. Central government expenditure overshot the OBR's forecast by £2.3 billion, partly due to higher inflation pushing up debt interest payments and government spending on public services.

Regarding employment, the latest PAYE employment figure for August saw a 26,000 fall, leaving employment 95,000 lower than before the start of the Iran War in February and 0.5% lower than a year ago. The number of job vacancies continued to fall, edging down from 706,000 in the three months to July to 702,000 in the three months to August. While alternative measures of employment show a slightly stronger picture, the unemployment rate stayed at 4.9% in July for the fourth consecutive month.

The knock-on impact from surging energy prices is now being felt, pushing CPI inflation up from 2.9% in July to 3.1% in August. That increase was entirely due to the 6.9% m/m rise in fuel prices, which lifted annual fuel inflation from 15.3% to 23.0%. Even so, higher energy costs do not yet seem to be boosting other items of the CPI just yet. For example, food and drink inflation stayed at 1.3%.

The FTSE 100 started April below 10,200, below its record high of around 10,900 in late February. Nonetheless, the index surged to just shy of that level in late July. More recently, it has struggled, ending September at 10,606. Moreover, it materially underperformed the broader more domestic-focused FTSE 250 and most other international indices over this period, weighed down by weightings towards energy, mining, financials and pharmaceuticals and lack of exposure to tech stocks which generally outperformed globally.

A summary overview of the future path of Bank Rate

There were two monetary policy committee (MPC) meetings during the quarter where Bank rate was yet again left unchanged at 3.75%. The July and September meetings both recorded a 6-3 split however, in September, the Bank of England have intimated that despite this vote against increasing Bank Rate to 4%, four of the majority who voted for no change are minded to vote for a rate hike in November or December if the conflict in the Middle East remains unresolved

Borrowing

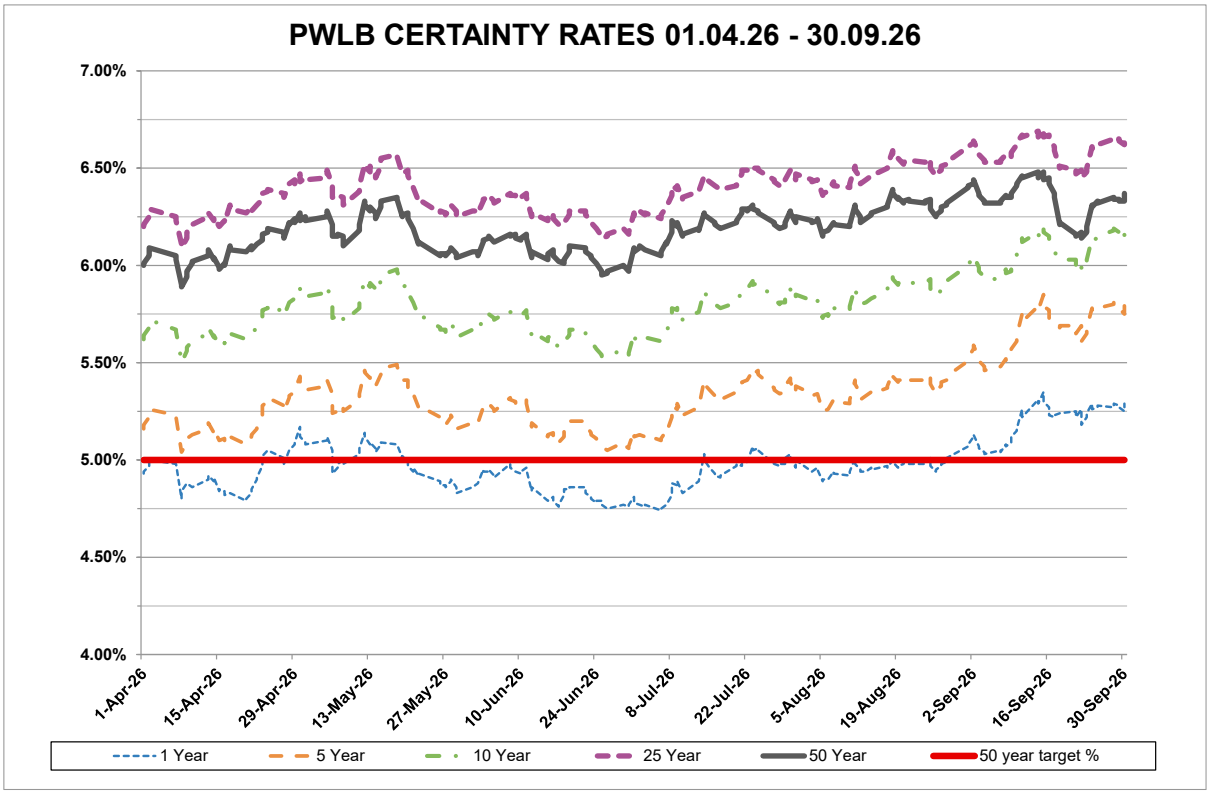
It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the "Affordable Borrowing Limits". The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators (affordability limits) are included in the approved Treasury Management Strategy. A list of the approved limits is shown in Appendix B. The Prudential Indicators were not breached during the second quarter of 2026/27 and have not been previously breached. The schedule at Appendix C details the Prudential Borrowing approved and utilised to date.

During the second quarter of 2026/27, the Council has taken out new borrowing to the value of £35m. These loans consisted of £15m of PWLB loans relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and a further £20m of temporary borrowing from other local authorities, also relating to the HRA. The Council will be planning to undertake further borrowing before the end of the financial year and is actively monitoring PWLB borrowing rates, with an aim to secure longer term borrowing at the most optimum PWLB rates.

The Council has also taken the decision to repay one of its Lender Option Borrower Option Loans at a value of £5.7m. These loans were taken out a number of years ago and allow the lender the option to increase the interest rate charged on the loan at a predetermined reset date. Theis was enacted by the bank to a level much higher than the current market rates, so a decision was taken by the Council to repay this loan.

Gilt yields and PWLB Certainty Rates have remained volatile over the quarter, but the general trend has been for the whole curve to shift higher on the back of inflation concerns and a pessimistic outlook for fiscal aspects, both domestically and internationally.

At this juncture, forecasts rates are predicted to fall back over the next one to three years as inflation dampens, but in the near-term there are upside risks should the second-round effects of inflation, primarily from energy price shocks emanating in the Middle East, become embedded. That scenario could lead to wage increases becoming more challenging from an inflation-management perspective, resulting in monetary policy tightening further than currently forecast (one increase in Bank Rate of 0.25% in either November or December 2026). Conversely, a swift resolution to the conflict in the Middle East could see energy prices fall back swiftly and, therein, an easing in inflation concerns and monetary policy respectively. Currently, the CPI measure of inflation is expected to hit a high of 4.3% in early 2027 before falling back towards the 2% target rate by 2028.Of course, there have been both international geo-political and domestic factors holding sway over the past three months, sometimes separately and sometimes jointly. Initially, markets focussed on the inflationary threat from a large spike upwards in fuel and energy costs emanating from the conflict in the Middle East and, more precisely, the shutting of the Strait of Hormuz to cargo ships transporting oil. Heading into July, however, there has been an outbreak – albeit tentative – of optimism that the US and Iran can reach an agreement that will either end, or at least restrict, the worst of the hostilities. As oil prices have dropped back, inflation concerns have become more muted, although gilt yields are still historically high and monetary policy tighter than it was before the start of the conflict.



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

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
01/04/2026	4.93%	5.16%	5.62%	6.20%	6.00%
30/09/2026	5.29%	5.80%	6.17%	6.67%	6.37%
Low	4.74%	5.04%	5.50%	6.09%	5.89%
Low date	06/07/2026	08/04/2026	08/04/2026	08/04/2026	08/04/2026
High	5.35%	5.85%	6.21%	6.70%	6.48%
High date	15/09/2026	15/09/2026	15/09/2026	15/09/2026	14/09/2026
Average	4.98%	5.34%	5.81%	6.40%	6.19%
Spread	0.61%	0.81%	0.71%	0.61%	0.59%

Committee	Cabinet 18th November 2026
Date and Time	Finance & Improvement Scrutiny 30th November 2026
	Public

Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2027-2031

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer
Service Area:	Finance
Report Author	Clare Williams, Deputy Section 151 Officer
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All Divisions
Key Decision?	Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes – 12 May 2026
Report considered by	Cabinet – 18 November 2026

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report updates Cabinet on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2027/28 and beyond which was last presented to Cabinet in July 2026.

1.2. This update reflects the revenue budget challenges for 2027/28 and 2028/29 and especially actions necessary to set a balanced budget for 2027/28. This includes the need for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from Government that will be required to achieve this, not only for 2027/28 but for the foreseeable future.

1.3. This report is based on a critical assumption of achieving a balanced outturn financial position for 2026/27. The 2026/27 forecast outturn is subject to a

separate report on this Cabinet's agenda and at Q2 projects a near to balanced position at the end of this financial year.

1.4. This report also includes updated assumptions for government funding, inflation and pay awards, fees and charges, savings and demand growth and commitments. These are indicative assumptions at this time and will require further and ongoing due diligence in respect of both local and national conditions.

1.5. A detailed review of fees and charges is underway. The findings will be presented to Cabinet in December. The final proposals will be included in the next MTFP update to Cabinet in February 2027, including the budget impact.

1.6. Some detail contained within this report provides an indication of work carried out since July through departmental budget challenge panels. These have given rise to both growth and savings proposals that will remain subject to ongoing review over the coming weeks and months leading to Council in February 2027. Essentially, this period will focus on the need to contain growth and increase savings to meet previous MTFP targets as a minimum.

1.7. Current resource estimates required for transformation that formed part of the 2026/27 and 2027/28 MTFP projections are included in MTFP assumptions. These remain subject to further due diligence and particularly assessment of benefits including future savings and foregone costs arising from the programmes.

1.8. The impact of this work will be subject to a further MTFP report to Cabinet early in the new year and in advance of Council's budget setting meeting on 25th February 2027.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve, support and note:

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

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

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

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

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

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

G. The current estimated budget shortfall for 2027/28 of £108.424m, which is subject to further economic assumptions and budget adjustments throughout November and December and the provisional funding settlement that will be announced in December.

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

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

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

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

3. Background

3.1. The Council approved the Budget for 2026/27, with a request to MHCLG for up to £121m of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). This was in addition to £71m of EFS approved to support the 2025/26 financial year.

3.2. EFS was essential to restabilise the Council budget as a result of the need to:

- fill the structural deficits that had been created especially in adults and children's social care budgets;
- allow unachievable savings targets to be removed from the base budget;
- account for further anticipated growth in demand and costs increases;
- allow for capacity and capability to be rebuilt across the Council;
- Recognise the limited opportunity to generate savings (£5m were committed) in a year of stabilisation and the need to transform and change the way the Council operates.

3.3. Ultimately, without this EFS, the Council would have been unable to set a balanced budget for the year and it would have been necessary for the s151 Officer to issue a s114 notice.

3.4. An updated MTFP was presented to Cabinet in July 2026 which included revised budget assumptions for 2026/27 and beyond. At that time Cabinet also agreed a Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy that set out a series of financial objectives that will be required by the Council in order to reduce future dependence on EFS from government, conceding that this will take a number of years to remove entirely.

3.5. The s151 Officer is minded that this is likely to be at least five years given the scale of the task and savings that will need to be identified, the need to continue to deliver statutory services even at a minimum level, the prospect of continuing demand pressures in children's and adults social care, limitations over the certainty of government grant funding and the broader volatility of the economic climate.

3.6. The July Cabinet report also set out a new framework for budget setting that has been underway throughout the summer, officers working in each department to draw up proposals for budget savings and transformation projects and also to identify areas of growth within service areas. This work will continue through to February 2027 when a balanced budget will be presented to Council for approval.

3.7. Economic conditions have changed over the past six months, not least impacts from inflation, pay awards and fuel prices with pressures remaining on cost of living. This report therefore focuses on the revised assumptions and what they mean for the Council's likely requirement for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) in 2027/28 and subsequent years.

3.8. The July MTFP set out a revised EFS requirement for 2026/27 of c£87m, approximately £34m less than the sum approved in principle in February of £121m. The latest budget monitoring position is reported to Cabinet alongside this report and forecasts the council is working within the approved budget for 2026/27.

3.9. For 2027/28, the MTFP identified a revised gap of c£99m, again some £24m less than identified in February 2026. For 2028/29, the estimated EFS requirement was reduced by c£26m to c£121m. The main reasons for these changes arise from:

- A revised strategy for the recovery of the Council's General Fund Balance to a targeted £35m over a longer period;
- A review of assumptions for inflation and pay;
- The inclusion of known new commitments not known at the time of preparing the previous MTFP;
- A review of estimates for future fees and charges;
- A revised assumption of the scale and timing of the use of capital receipts from the Council's asset disposals plan to help reduce the call on EFS.

3.10. This report updates the forecasted financial position for 2027/28 and 2028/29, reflecting a further detailed review of budget assumptions and current savings plans undertaken during the summer and autumn budget-setting process. The current forecast indicates a 2027/28 funding gap of between £95.6m and £143.2m, with the most likely outcome around £108.4m, the details of which are set out within this report.

3.11. For 2027/28, the range provided at this time reflects a prudent approach as the Council continues to develop its plans to reduce expenditure, deliver efficiencies and savings through transformation, improvement and change, and to provide statutory services to residents at no less than minimum required levels. This compares with the estimated requirement of £123m reported to Cabinet and Council in February 2026.

3.12. The principal reason for the movement in the 2027/28 projection since July has been unexpectedly high levels of additional service growth set out in Appendix B. Officers continue to work to reduce the extent of this growth and to identify further savings. In particular, these additional savings are expected to emerge from increased analysis of benefits to arise from the transformation programme that will be set out in full at Cabinet in February.

3.13. The council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget each year. This requirement remains despite the impacts of reductions in funding in real terms from the Government over a number of years, Council Tax caps, increasing demand across a range of services and especially children's and adults social care, short- and longer-term economic pressures.

3.14. To meet its statutory duty to set a balanced budget, the Council will need to seek Government approval for a further year of EFS in 2027/28. The amount required will be determined later, allowing more time to develop plans for transformation, improvement and change and assess any further savings and reduced growth which could be delivered in 2027/28.

3.15. It is imperative the council reduces the need for EFS as this represents permission to borrow to fund ongoing revenue costs. Such borrowing incurs costs in order to repay principal on the loan over 20 years plus the payment of interest on the debt, all chargeable to the Council's general fund incurring the need for further budget savings and a weighting on Council Tax.

3.16. This means that at current costs of borrowing (c 5.6% interest rate through the Public Works Loans Board) plus MRP to £1m of borrowing represents additional annual costs of approximately £85,000. The council has been given approval in principle to borrow up to £219.3m of EFS over the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 which could cost up to £18.091m to fund if the maximum value was utilised. The proposals set out in the revised MTFP result in the need for £7.957m in 2027/28 of additional funding for debt charges based on the reduction in EFS required in 2026/27 financial year and the reprofiled capital programme for 2026/27.

3.17. This report also provides an update on the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy stretching beyond 2026-27, budget planning arrangements for 2028/29 and the budget guiding principles currently being followed in setting the budget.

3.18. This report outlines the main funding sources for the council which are:

- Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) and Revenue Support Grant (RSG)
- Core revenue grants
- Council Tax
- Sales, fees and charges

- Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)

3.19. All assumptions have been reviewed and revisions made to the key component parts for pay and inflation, demand growth and debt financing. Grant funding was set as part of the final three-year local government settlement in January, so no changes have been made with the exception of increasing the level by inflation under a best-case model.

3.20. At this stage there are a great many assumptions and uncertainties, and the financial and economic conditions are continually changing. The Council will continue to face demands and pressures on our services, from the cost-of-living crisis and additional support for the most vulnerable, social care and homelessness.

3.21 Despite these challenges the Council remains committed to delivering services for our residents and ensuring it supports the most vulnerable in line with the Shropshire Plan. The latest budget assumptions are based on best estimates at the time of this report and will change prior to the final budget report being presented to Cabinet in February 2027. The Budget Forum will continue to receive updates from officers between now and then.

4. Main Budget Proposals

4.1. The budget assumptions set out within this report are the most likely budget gap as set out within table 1 below.

Autumn Budget

4.2. The Autumn Budget, announced on 28 October 2026, offered little support for Shropshire Council's 2027/28 budget setting despite a poor fair funding settlement which has significantly contributed to the Councils budget gap.

4.3. The Government acknowledged rising inflation and its impact on borrowing and energy costs however there was no reference to providing financial support to Councils suffering financial hardship. The Council is experiencing these cost increases alongside growing demand for services reflected in the budget assumptions which further widen the budget gap.

4.4. There is still no clarity over a number of specific grants, not least the Improved Better Care Fund which is subject to review and potential repurposing. There have been no indications of understanding of the impacts of the loss of Rural Services Delivery Grant and changes in Fair Funding which has limited recognition of rurality and sparsity.

4.5. Neither is there any indication of details for the Council to assess the impact of 100% retention of business rates, not least in the context of the Council's relatively low levels of business rates (another rurality factor) and what any redistribution may mean.

4.6. The ability to charge overnight levies is interesting in that it may generate resources to reinvest across the Council. However, the proposition at this time

seems over dependent on the regional mayoral status of Councils. This remains a matter of uncertainty.

Funding Assumptions

4.7. The Summary MTFP position as set out in Table 1 and Appendix F is forecasting a £108.4 budget gap for 2027/28 and £133.1m for 2028/29. The 2027/28 most likely position includes all the assumptions set out in this report.

Table 1 – Summary MTFP Position

	2027/28 Likely - Current MTFP £	2028/29 £	2029/30 £	2030/31 £
Settlement Funding Assessment	137,310,186	131,246,161	133,352,095	135,521,206
Government Grants	254,967,454	253,368,794	249,635,311	249,592,297
Other Income	162,667,299	163,882,704	165,158,880	166,438,094
Council Tax & Business Rate Growth	252,030,932	269,098,495	286,109,692	303,300,690
Total Resources	**806,975,872**	**817,596,154**	**834,255,977**	**854,852,287**
Prior Year Budget	**889,412,753**	**915,399,882**	**950,716,436**	**989,455,953**
Inflation and Pay	21,088,029	22,000,000	25,400,000	26,700,000
Commitments and Growth	26,935,995	25,816,554	25,839,517	30,450,986
Reserves	-4,250,000	0	0	0
Budget Before Savings & Efficiencies	**933,186,777**	**963,216,436**	**1,001,955,953**	**1,046,606,939**
Savings	-17,786,895	-12,500,000	-12,500,000	-12,500,000
Total Budget	**915,399,882**	**950,716,436**	**989,455,953**	**1,034,106,939**
Funding Gap to be supported by EFS	**108,424,010**	**133,120,282**	**155,199,976**	**179,254,652**

4.8. The Council's Band D Council Tax for the 2026/27 financial year is £1,969.09. The Council has the opportunity to make an application to MHCLG to increase the rate of Council Tax over and above the 4.99% cap for 2027/28 financial year.

4.9. The best-case model includes an increase of 8.99% which would bring the Band D Council Tax to £2,146.11 and an additional £9.741m to the Council income for 2027/28 reducing the budget gap and requirement for EFS to £97.375m. It should be noted that a 1% increase in the council tax rate generates an additional £2.4m in revenue. Any rise above the cap requires explicit agreement from MHCLG.

4.10. In the current financial emergency, the s151 Officer will be making the recommendation to Council that, in the event of MHCLG giving dispensation, the Council should raise Council Tax to the maxim possible level.

4.11. The Table below illustrates where Shropshire would rank with a 4.99% increase in council tax against statistical neighbours assuming all increase their Council Tax by 4.99%.

Table 2 – Council Tax

Statistical Nearest Neighbours	Increase 2026/27 %	Council Tax 2026/27 £	Potential Increase 2027/28 4.99%	Estimate 2027/28 £
Northumberland	4.99	2,382.00	4.99%	2,500.86
Stockport	4.99	2,179.65	4.99%	2,288.41
Sefton	4.99	2,164.58	4.99%	2,272.59
Isle of Wight	4.99	2,103.77	4.99%	2,208.75
Cornwall	4.99	2,086.36	4.99%	2,190.47
Wirral	4.99	2,081.37	4.99%	2,185.23
Cheshire West and Chester	4.99	2,076.79	4.99%	2,180.42
Herefordshire	4.99	2,067.63	4.99%	2,170.80
Wiltshire	4.99	1,981.15	4.99%	2,080.01
BCP	6.74	1,980.46	4.99%	2,079.28
Cheshire East	4.99	1,975.95	4.99%	2,074.55
Shropshire	8.99	1,969.09	4.99%	2,067.35
East Riding of Yorkshire	4.99	1,964.47	4.99%	2,062.50
North Somerset	6.99	1,954.57	4.99%	2,052.10
Bath and North East Somerset	4.99	1,914.03	4.99%	2,009.54
Average		**2,058.79**		**2,166.78**

4.12. The Local Government Finance settlement is the annual determination of funding to local government and was announced earlier this year. The announcement covered the period 2026-27 to 2028-29. It is expected that the provisional settlement for 2027-28 will be announced during December and in line with what has already been announced.

4.13. A detailed review of fees and charges is being undertaken and the outcome will be presented to Cabinet in December. If the recommendations on uplifts are approved, the financial impact will be included in full within the final budget report to Cabinet in February. The fees and charges increased as part of the updated MTFP includes assumed annual increase of 5% for 2027-28 and future years for all income not fixed by regulation or representing cost recovery services.

Grants (Appendix A)

4.14. As part of the final settlement the Government confirmed the level of some grants which are set out in Appendix A. Confirmation of grant allocations will be received as part of provisional and final settlement.

Expenditure Assumptions

4.15. The assumptions set out within this report are best estimates and there is a risk inflation and pay awards may be more than what our assumptions are reporting. The pressures the Council are experiencing due to the economy as set out in the

Governments Autumn Budget Statement are significant and within the following areas:

- Cost of fuel
- Cost of Energy
- Increased borrowing costs
- Higher inflation
- Pay awards

4.16. The expenditure assumptions have been reviewed and based on the best estimates however there is the risk they could be more. The best estimates are:

4.17. **Pay award:** The 2027/28 budget forecast assumes a pay award of 3.5%, which is consistent with the assumption made in the approved February budget. This reflects the latest CPI rate of 3.5% in September 2026 and the 2026/27 pay award of 3.3%.

4.18. **Pension contributions:** The pension contribution rate was reviewed in 2025/26 and the resulting three-year contribution rate has been reflected in the MTFP.

4.19. **Contract inflation:** Contract inflation has been increased in accordance with the relevant contractual terms, using CPI, RPI or another specified measure. The inflation is based on the contract terms giving an average of 3.57%.

4.20. **Demographic Growth:** The budget includes demographic growth of £15.095m, as detailed in Appendix B. The growth has been set using current trends and expected demographic pressures due to changes in population and other known economic factors as at September 2026.

4.21. In addition to demographic growth required there is other growth identified, as part of the second round of budget challenge sessions, alternative plans will be explored to manage them.

4.22. The growth built into the MTFP presented to Cabinet in July 2026 was £12.86m, hence the need to challenge and minimise growth requirements to be brought in line with this original assumption. If growth requirements cannot be reduced, it will be necessary to identify additional savings to reduce the pressure on the Council's financial position.

Savings Proposals

4.23. The MTFP presented to Cabinet in February and July 2026 included a £10m savings target which has now been identified as detailed in Appendix D. These proposals have undergone an assurance review, and further assurance reviews will take place over the coming months with final savings proposals to be presented to Cabinet in January 2027. The savings have been reviewed against the transformation plan themes and within Income and commercial and organisational Improvement and efficiency.

4.24. In addition to the savings proposals identified work is underway to develop the recovery strategy to ensure the council is financially sustainable over the medium

term the details are set out in section 5 of this report. The MTFP will be updated when plans have been assured and sufficiently robust for inclusion in the MTFP.

Budget Setting Process and Timetable

4.25. As part of the MTFP presented to Cabinet in July 2026, a Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy was agreed, which underpins future budget setting for the council for the foreseeable future. The report also included details of a new framework for preparing council budgets which continues to be implemented. This process includes rounds of budget challenges for departments, for the Chief Executive and S151 Officer. These challenges enable assessment of budget challenges and opportunities facing service directors and have sought proposals for both savings and new commitments over the next three years.

4.26. Following two rounds of challenges a number of budget proposals have been presented, and a number are included within this MTFP. Round three challenges are now in progress with the specific objective of identifying further savings and reducing future commitments.

4.27. MTFP reported to Cabinet in January and February will reflect the outcome of this ongoing work and will be subject to approval by cabinet in advance of council tax setting at council on 25 February 2027.

4.28. The budget setting timeline is set out in Appendix E.

Debt Financing

4.29. The debt financing budget has been estimated based on the level of borrowing required to deliver the current capital programme and £26.820m of borrowing for EFS for 2024/25, £61.857m for 2025/26, £87.278m for 2026/27 and £108.186m for 2027/28 which is based on the proposed application to be made to MHCLG. The cost to borrow £1m is circa. £0.085m, however this is based on current PWLB rates of around 5.6%. Should interest rates increase higher than this level, there will be a need to identify further savings to offset interest costs or accelerate asset sales.

Reserves

4.30. The Council holds both earmarked reserves and a General Fund Balance. At the start of 2026/27, earmarked reserves totalled £29.814m, and the General Fund Balance was £5m. Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes and generally cannot be used for other purposes without affecting the delivery of Council commitments. The General Fund Balance is unallocated to any specific activities or projects and is designed to act as a financial backstop in the event of any significant event.

4.31. Over the last three financial years, total reserves have reduced from £59.672m to £34.814m at the end of 2025/26 as a consequence of drawing on reserves to help manage the financial position over recent years. The low level of balances held has been highlighted by our external auditors in reference to the financial resilience of the Council.

4.32. The forecast level of general fund reserves at 31 March 2027 assumes the 2026/27 budget is delivered and there is no call upon reserves to balance the financial position. The July MTFP proposed to amend the contribution to the General Fund to £10m in 2026/27 budget. This proposal would replenish the reserve to £35m by 2028/29. It would also defer the occurrence of debt financing costs to pay for the accumulation of those balances.

4.33. Subject to the General Fund being required to manage the in-year budget position, this proposal would:

- lower the requirement for Exceptional Financial Support in-year; and
- reduce borrowing costs in 2026/27 and across the MTFP period.

4.34. The Dedicated School Grant deficit reserve was £45.655m at 1 April 2026. The council has received notification from DFE that £41m of this will be funded from the High Needs Stability Grant, following successful approval of the SEND Reform Plan, and the payment is expected during November 2026. The current year overspend is forecast to be a deficit of £40.112m which will increase the deficit by the end of this financial year to £45.668m. The government has an override in place allowing the council to hold this deficit reserve and this is expected to end 31 March 2028. External Auditors may consider the need to establish sufficient reserves to withstand the removal of the override but this is simply not affordable in the context of the financial emergency and other DSG priorities.

4.35. The Council's total reserves are projected to be £49.583m as at 31 March 2027, as set out in Appendix D.

5. Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy

5.1 The Council is committed to restoring financial stability and ending reliance on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from Government at the earliest opportunity. The Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan report to Cabinet in July 2026 outlines the approach to this challenge.

5.2 The Strategy combines transformation programmes, asset rationalisation, income maximisation, and strengthened financial management. Key initiatives include service transformation (children's social care and adult services), advancing digital innovation, and implementing a programme to optimise or dispose of property assets. Additional measures focus on improving tax collection, reviewing council tax levels, enhancing efficiency, rebuilding reserves, and optimising debt and capital expenditure. Alongside these, the Council will continue advocating for fairer government funding and promoting economic growth. Together, these actions aim to deliver a resilient financial position, reduce costs and demand, and secure long-term sustainability for the organisation.

5.3 Central to this strategy is a balance between transformation, prudent financial management, and long-term investment choices, ensuring that the Council can deliver sustainable, high-quality services for residents while addressing current and future fiscal and demand pressures.

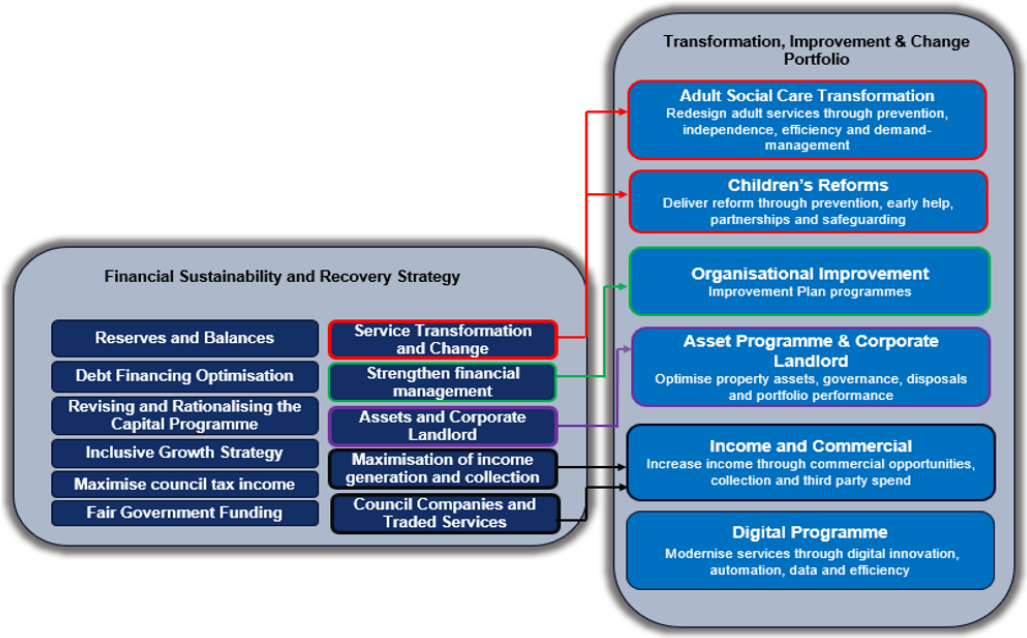
5.4 The Strategy will be subject to regular review in the context of existing and emerging Council priorities. At all times the key priority will be to enable the Council to set a legally balanced budget within the resources available while maintaining adequate levels of reserves and balances as determined by s151 Officer. It recognises the financial emergency facing the Council, and that these are exceptional times which will require the highest standards of governance associated with pace and innovation. It notes that there may be occasions or events where exceptional decisions may be required that would not be either necessary or preferred under normal conditions.

5.5 During the course of budget challenges throughout the summer, it has been clear that there are legacy policies that are no longer appropriate in this financial emergency and in a wider context. In particular, the 'Commissioning Council' may act to counteract the most appropriate outcome to decision taking and climate strategies are now outdated and not in line with policy nationally and in other local Councils across the country.

5.6 The Strategy sits alongside the Council's wider Improvement Plan which focuses on rebuilding and strengthening organisational capacity and capability. The Improvement Plan (incorporating the People Plan) sits as part of the Council's Transformation, Improvement and Change (TIC) Portfolio which brings together a coordinated set of actions and programmes to reduce costs, manage demand, and improve efficiency across services, while enhancing income and financial resilience.

Transformation, Improvement and Change (TIC) Portfolio

5.6 The Transformation, Improvement and Change (TIC) Portfolio provides a single framework and structure for our transformation, improvement and change activity over the medium term (next 3-4 years). It recognises that alongside financial recovery there is a need to pursue organisational improvement. The one will not be achievable without the other. The Portfolio comprises of six programmes focused on service transformation, assets disposal and management, organisational improvement, income generation, and enhancing the use of digital technology to improve and enable service delivery. Together they will help deliver key facets of the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy:



5.7 The six programmes making up the Portfolio are:

1. **Adult Social Care Transformation Programme**: The programme responds to rising demand, increasing complexity of need, workforce pressures and affordability challenges and brings together key projects across four strategic themes: Access, Prevention and Community Support; Independence and Recovery; Complex Care and Accommodation; and Commissioning and Financial Sustainability. The programme will enable people to live independently with greater choice and control, shift support upstream through prevention and earlier intervention, reduce or delay reliance on formal care, and improve outcomes while strengthening financial sustainability and managing the market. An overview of the programme was reported to Cabinet on 14th October 2026: Adult Social Care Transformation Programme . Since that time detailed diagnostic work has been undertaken and will continue. In part this work will help to identify transformation priorities and a clearer indication of potential savings and their timing. Some indicative savings are already set out in Appendix C.

2. **Children's Transformation Programme:** the programme covers three key components. The first brings together the Council's response to major national reforms, including Families First Partnership, SEND reform, Best Start in Life and youth transformation, supporting the ambition for a child-friendly Shropshire. It will shift services towards earlier intervention and prevention, with more joined-up support across education, health, social care and community partners, including Family Hubs and locality-based multi-agency teams. By providing the right help earlier, the programme aims to improve outcomes for children and families, reduce escalation into statutory services and care, manage growing demand and support the longer-term financial sustainability of children's services (responding to CIPFA Recommendation 6). An overview of the programme was considered by Cabinet on 10th June 2026: Update on the Children's Services Reforms. Alongside this core component, two new key components are being developed by December 2026, the second focusses on immediate actions to reduce cost pressure and growth

requirements (responding to CIPFA Recommendation 16), the third component focusses on Education Transport Transformation (Responding to CIPFA Recommendation 16 and longer term Recommendation 6). More recently, the Budget Recovery Board has identified three key themes for savings and foregoing costs that will be critical in reducing 2026/27 projected adverse variations, principally through the management of demand. Further details will be provided in the Q3 monitor in January.

3. **Organisational Improvement and Efficiency:** An updated Improvement Plan People Plan provide the basis of this programme with a focus on becoming a well-run, efficient and high-performing organisation, with clear priorities, strong governance and accountability, effective leadership and an enabled and engaged workforce. The programme will drive continuous improvement, and greater productivity and efficiency through better processes, stronger corporate disciplines, service improvement activity, and more effective use of resources. The annual review and refresh of the Improvement Plan will be presented to Cabinet on 2nd December 2026.

4. **Assets Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review:** The programme will set how the Council uses, invests in and disposes of its land and buildings. A new Asset Strategy will be developed, for the next five years and will implement a Corporate Landlord model under which the estate is held and managed as a single corporate portfolio, aligned to the Council's corporate plan and operating model. It will optimise the estate by identifying opportunities to retain, reuse, co-locate, invest in or release assets, while accelerating appropriate disposals, reducing running costs and maximising income. Ultimately, it is anticipated to create a smaller, more efficient and sustainable estate, aligned to the Council's priorities and demonstrating best value. An overview of the programme is being reported to Cabinet on 18th November 2026 and benefits are continuing to be assessed for inclusion in the MTFP in February

5. **Digital Programme:** The programme will transform how the Council works through better use of digital, data, automation and technology. It will make services simpler and more connected for residents, improve access and enable earlier, more preventative support. For staff, it will reduce manual processes, improve access to information and release capacity to focus on higher-value activity. The programme will strengthen cyber resilience, modernise core systems and make better use of data and AI. Digital transformation will be a key enabler of wider service transformation - including children's services and adults social care - and improved organisational performance and efficiency. This is in line with the national direction and drive for more preventative, productive and joined-up public services. A Digital Roadmap consolidates digital transformation and service improvement activity and was presented to Cabinet on 5th August 2026: Digital Roadmap Report

6. **Income and Commercial:** The programme will strengthen the Council's financial sustainability by maximising income, improving collection and ensuring commercial activity delivers clear financial and strategic value. It will review traded services, council companies and other commercial activity to identify opportunities to grow income, improve performance or reconsider activity that is not delivering sufficient value. The programme will also strengthen debt recovery and income collection through investment in

Revenues and Benefits, alongside a systematic annual review of fees and charges and opportunities for new income. Together, this will create a more consistent, commercially focused approach that supports the Council's wider financial recovery. All commercial undertakings of the Council are currently being reviewed with special focus on their continued viability and affordability and the outcomes of theses reviews will be returned to Cabinet for decisions.

5.8 The challenge facing the Council is stark. Financial recovery and reducing reliance on EFS is the priority. But significant organisational improvement is required to deliver the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy. The pace and scale of our transformation, improvement and change must be aligned with the organisational capacity and capability, and our ability to manage additional capacity and external support that is commissioned to help us deliver it.

5.9 The current base budget includes £10m of funding provision to invest in services to transform, improve and change to deliver corporate priorities and achieve a balanced budget over the medium term. Effectively, this is a revenue resource made possible through EFS. There have been a number of proposals put forward and approved through the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel (BTCP) and the initial estimated investment from transformation funding is set out in Table 3 below.

5.10 The proposals for funding in 2026/27 is currently standing at approximately £3.532m and at over £11m for 2027/28. These are for a wide variety of activities that will need detailed planning, development and implementation. They range from relatively small projects to much larger projects such as transformation programmes for adults and children's services that have recently been reported to Cabinet and the Digital programme that is under development. Significant investment will also be required in respect of assets and the property estate. The asset issues are subject to a separate report on this Cabinet Agenda.

5.11 The savings proposals resulting from this investment are currently being reviewed in detail and clear plans being developed which will form part of the MTFP savings once assurance on delivery has been achieved and the timing of the savings is clear. This is to avoid previous difficulties where savings have been identified within budgets without sufficient confidence in their delivery. It should be recognised that not all projects will save money as they represent the further rebuilding of the Council capacity to deliver services. The BTCP considers proposals for transformation, improvement and change to ensure they are strategically aligned to council priorities. It challenges and assesses investment requirements, return on investment, and risks. Supported proposals require benefits realisation monitoring including the delivery of savings as appropriate. This approach supports informed decision making, maximises impact from limited resources, and strengthens overall financial sustainability.

Other budget savings and income opportunities

5.12 In addition to the TIC Portfolio, a number of 'business-as-usual' activities will identify an ongoing pipeline of savings and income opportunities – such as business planning and budget challenge sessions, annual reviews of fees and charges, and service and spend reviews. Delivering efficiency, increased

productivity and value for money needs to be embedded in how we plan and deliver services. It needs to be part of an embedded continuous improvement culture across the Council, and an element of how we achieve financial stability and sustainability.

5.13 The Council will continue to proactively seek internal and external challenge, and sector-led support to strengthen its proposals and plans required to deliver the portfolio's programmes – including internal audit, Improvement Board, peer review and specialist support. The Improvement Board will also play a role to check, challenge and validate delivery of the TIC portfolio – considering monthly reports in TIC delivery and financial position.

6. Budget Consultation

6.1. The budget consultation process is currently in preparation and will commence on 2 December 2026 and will run to a date close to the end of January 2027. This work will be subject to the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Budget Forum will be advised accordingly.

7. Key risks and Opportunities

7.1. A number of strategic risks to the council are relevant to the MTFP and these specific financial risks are set out in the annual governance statement. In general, controllable risks are mitigated through the budget process and referenced against the financial sustainability and recovery strategy. However, a number of risks are beyond the council's control and can only be mitigated as part of the budget by using prudent assumptions with regard, for example, inflation, pay, demand growth, domestic and global economy, etc...

7.2. The 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement set out 12 key strategic risks many of which refer to the financial challenges of the Council. These are set out below together with high level mitigations. Over and above strategic risks sit departmental risk register that will contain specific service pressure insofar as they impact of finance. The arrangements for risk management are currently subject to review and will be presented to Audit and Governance Committee later in September.

Risk	Mitigation
The Council has reported Limited Assurance on the Internal Audit Control Framework for seven years, limiting confidence in the standards of governance in place within the organisation.	Linked to the strategic risk of a failure of officers and members to adhere to governance arrangements, there is an acknowledged need for further action. Leadership Board regular reviews the status of audit recommendations and the Statutory Officers Group, introduced in October 2025, further monitors the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations and provides direction as necessary to improve overall responsiveness.
The external auditor felt bound to issue statutory recommendations as part of their annual audit for	The Improvement Plan included actions and activity that responded to the statutory recommendations. An updated response to the

2024/25 which cast doubt on the integrity of the Council's value for money arrangements.	recommendations (which included activity undertaken during 2025/26) was reported to the Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in June 2026 as part of an Improvement Plan update report. Some recommendations require extensive and ongoing work; others have been independently reviewed in specific functional areas such as children's and adult social care. The recommendations will continue to be reflected in the improvement plan for some time to come, especially insofar as they impact on the Council's budget and business planning process.
Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) incurs costs of debt for both interest and principal of a fixed number of years and creates an additional overhead over and above the costs of additional demands for services and the inflation that goes with it.	This is a specific additional dimension of the risk of an inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year. As part of its Medium-Term Financial Plan, approved by Full Council in February 2026, the Council committed to developing a Financial Sustainability Strategy (due for Cabinet consideration in July 2026) that sets out how the Council will take steps to reduce reliance on EFS. In any event in order to pay for the additional costs of debt, the Council will be prioritising Council Tax increases up to the maximum allowed and will need to find offset savings in the cost of services to balance the budget without recourse to further EFS.
Despite a three-year settlement, government funding continues to reduce as a proportion of public sector investment in real terms and continues to transfer additional burden to local taxpayers.	The additional increase in Council Tax for 2025/26 is one manifestation of mitigation necessary to address this risk, and there is likely to be further impacts as the Council reduces its expenditure. The Improvement Plan acknowledges the risk that residents see service performance reducing rather than improving as the Council implements the plan. Looking forward, the Council will need to stress on Government the need for funding to tackle sparsity and rurality and the demographic and geographical dynamics of the borough. The Council does, however, recognise that in the context of a new three-year settlement and the recent fair funding changes, short-term solutions seem unlikely.
The national and global economy remains volatile and continues to present significant financial risks to the Council.	Persistent inflationary pressures, rising energy and fuel costs, interest rate fluctuations and wider economic uncertainty can create additional unfunded burdens on Council budgets. Continued economic instability may also impact residents' financial resilience, increasing demand

	for Council services at a time when resources remain constrained. The Council will continue to make best assumptions in MTFPs to cover such risks although events such as the Gulf issues do nothing but increase uncertainty.
Cyber security remains as an ongoing threat to all organisations, not least the public sector and local government, in terms of the impact of lost, corrupted or stolen data with serious implications for potential financial loss and reputational damage.	As the Council continues to rely on digital technologies to deliver and transform services and hold sensitive information, maintaining effective cyber security controls, staff awareness and incident response arrangements will remain essential to mitigating this risk.
Workforce capacity and capability must be in place to deliver existing services to minimum standards but also to support the significant transformation and improvement activity required to address the Council's financial challenges.	Maintaining a stable, skilled and resilient workforce remains critical to achieving financial sustainability and delivering the Council's strategic objectives – and is at the heart of the Improvement Plan and People Plan. Budget has been applied in 2026/27 budgets to restore capacity previously removed. While this mitigates some risk, it is recognised that recruitment and retention remains a concern and that in some cases capacity and capability may need to be sought from other third parties.
Abnormal financial position compromising decision making processes.	The necessity to deliver significant savings, reduce expenditure and reliance on EFS may limit strategic flexibility and increase the risk that decisions prioritise immediate financial outcomes over longer-term service sustainability and demand prevention. Robust governance, decisive and transparent decision making and effective scrutiny arrangements will be essential to ensuring that financial pressures do not detract from long-term strategic decision making although there will inevitably be some compromises, not least around asset management and disposal, recovery of Council balances over time, etc.
External scrutiny and threat of intervention:	A consequence of EFS is an increased likelihood of external scrutiny over and above the Improvement Board arrangements established in November 2025. There remains an ongoing risk of Government intervention, including the appointment of envoys or commissioners, should the Council be unable to provide assurance that it has a credible strategy to reduce its reliance on EFS and achieve financial sustainability. The Council is very aware of this risk and would wish

	to retain control of its own decisions and direction; it is, however, aware of intervention in other authorities where Government have thought it to be necessary. Continued delivery of outcomes from the Improvement Plan and clear evidence of progress will be essential in mitigating this risk.
Breakdown of major contract arising from provider insolvency, poor performance, workforce shortages, contractual disputes or market instability, resulting in service disruption, financial loss, reputational damage and additional management costs.	Given the Council's reliance on a number of significant contracts to deliver statutory and essential services, effective contract management and performance monitoring (part of the Improvement Plan) and business continuity arrangements are critical to reducing the likelihood and impact of this risk.
A catastrophic physical, climatic or pandemic event severely disrupts the delivery of Council services and compromises the Council's ability to meet statutory requirements.	While these events are largely beyond the control of the Council, there is a continued need for emergency planning capacity and fully tested business continuity plans. These will continue to be subject to continuous review across all Council departments to confirm that they remain current and complete.
Transformation programmes and significant projects are delayed, deferred or fail to deliver on their objectives leading to loss of opportunities and adverse financial impacts.	EFS has allowed the Council to set aside finance for investments in major transformation programmes. These will need to be created and challenged through the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel, a group of senior Council Officers. Transformation and other projects will be subject to oversight of the new Programme Management Office with regular reports to Cabinet and Finance and Improvement Scrutiny. Risk management arrangements for major projects are being reviewed, and it is recognised that, for some projects, these have been less than successful in the past.

7.3. These risks are now being contained and managed within Improvement Plan which also include responses to MHCLG and CPC recommendations. They also form an integral part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

8. Council Priorities

8.1. A new Corporate Plan for 2026-2030 was approved by Cabinet and Full Council in May 2026. The Plan summarises the priority ambitions the Council will focus on – including the ambition to be a Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel. The Medium-Term Financial Plan and Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy are key enablers of achieving that ambition.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report although it importantly sets out the current estimated gap between resources required to balance the Council's budget for 2027-28 and beyond on the basis of current assumptions.

9.2. The MTFP report considers the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy that was presented to Cabinet in July and demonstrates the requirements for the Council to move to a point where EFS will no longer be required. It is noted that this will take a number of years given the scale of the budget shortfall.

9.3. A further update of the MTFP will be reported to Cabinet in January 2027 however this report will form the basis of submitting a request for EFS from Government. It is expected that this report will include an update on the progress being made in delivering council services in 2026/27 within budget, final proposals for budget savings in 2027/28 and the impact of transformation programmes in 2027/28 and beyond. The report will review again the current assumptions for pay, inflation due to the current economic climate and growth and any potential variations to the multi-year local government funding settlement set earlier this year.

9.4. The report has fully reviewed the original MTFP assumptions included as part of the February budget report. As a consequence, and subject to delivering the realigned 2026/27 budget on target and to working in line with the standards set out in the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy, the call on EFS is estimated to reduce from £121m to approximately £87.0m in 2026/27.

10. Legal and HR implications

10.1. The Council is required to set a balanced budget and council tax for 2027/28 before 11 March 2027. In doing so, it must have regard to the statutory advice of the Section 151 Officer on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves.

10.2. The Council's budget proposals will be developed and consulted upon in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules before the final budget is considered by Full Council.

10.3. EFS is subject to Government approval and any conditions attached to that approval. EFS does not remove the Council's obligation to set a lawful and balanced budget and, where provided through a capitalisation direction, represents permission to fund specified revenue expenditure through capital resources, including borrowing. The Council must therefore continue to demonstrate a credible and sustainable plan to reduce its reliance on EFS and return to financial sustainability.

10.4. Individual savings, transformation proposals and service changes arising from the MTFP will remain subject to any specific legal, consultation, equality, procurement and employment requirements before implementation.

11. Electoral Division Implications

11.1. None

12. Health, Social (including “Child Friendly Shropshire”) and Economic Implication

12.1. None

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1. There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report although subsequent budget decisions will require impact assessments when these are considered at Council in February 2027.

14. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

14.1. None

15. Background Papers

1. MTFP July Cabinet

16. Appendices

Appendix A – Government Grants
Appendix B – Demography Growth
Appendix C – Savings
Appendix D – Reserves
Appendix E – Budget Timetable
Appendix F – MTFP

Appendix A

Government Grants

	2027/28 £
Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF)	14,635,454
DHSC - Individual Placement Support Grant	274,640
DHSC - The Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF)	2,470
Assessed & Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)	28,000
Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	199,730
Dedicated Schools Grant	145,737,300
Pupil Premium Grant	4,159,690
Pupil Premium Grant Post 16	75,830
KS2 Modernisation	13,640
Families First Partnership	2,872,140
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)	3,969,900
Public Health Grant	17,429,988
Mandatory Rent Allowances: Subsidy	38,000,000
Rent Rebates: Subsidy	8,100,000
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	531,006
Single Fraud Investigation Service	2,200
Welfare Reform New Burdens	66,090
Universal Credit	13,856
HB Accuracy Initiative	26,600
Bikeability	160,000
RPA Higher Level Stewardship (Parks & Sites)	30,000
AONB Core Grant	228,110
DEFRA - Farming in Protected Landscapes	700,000
Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant	2,671,003
Homelessness Reduction Act	88,040
DfE - Holiday Activities and Food Programme	753,030
Arts Council - National Portfolio Organisations	188,999
Crisis Resilience Fund	3,671,847
Historic England - Offa's Dyke Project	51,630
Waste - Private Finance Initiative	3,185,610
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	5,578,000
Quality in Community Services - Private Finance Initiative	1,522,650
Total Specific Grants	**254,967,454**
Grants included in Core Funding:	
Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF)	-14,635,454
Families First Partnership	-2,872,140
Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant	-2,671,003
Specific Grants (Excluding Core Grants)	**234,788,856**

Appendix B

Demography Growth and Contract Price Inflation

	Baseline Built into MTFP £	Additional Growth to be considered* £	Total £
Demographic Growth			
Adults	6,116,662		6,116,662
Children's	7,000,000	10,950,673	17,950,673
Home to School Transport	1,978,000	2,000,000	3,978,000
Total Demographic Growth	**15,094,662**	**12,950,673**	**28,045,335**
Service Growth:			
Commissioning - Business Support	249,060		249,060
Care & Wellbeing	340,220		340,220
Children's - EHCPs, Education Psychology	1,584,520		1,584,520
Children's SC - Placements - Shortfall in Income contributions	747,612		747,612
Children's SC - Agency	462,014		462,014
Children's SC - UASC	880,610		880,610
Place Shaping	250,000		250,000
Infrastructure - Highways contracts transition	950,000		950,000
Infrastructure - Support for DFT Highways Grant Programme	500,000		500,000
Infrastructure - Adoption of new Estates requiring Street Scene services	614,935		614,935
Infrastructure - Litter Picking of High Speed Trunk Roads	300,000		300,000
Infrastructure - Play area Inspections and Maintenance	50,000		50,000
Infrastructure - Management Resources for Parking	100,000		100,000
Infrastructure - Park & Ride Services	353,000		353,000
Infrastructure - Sunday Park & Ride	114,000		114,000
Infrastructure - Contribution to Severe Weather	100,000		100,000
Enabling - ERP contract renewal	368,357		368,357
Enabling - HR income	89,040		89,040
Enabling - Training	500,000		500,000
Legal & Governance - Coroner	115,000		115,000
Legal & Governance - Procurement Staffing	250,420		250,420
Legal & Governance - Removal of Purchasing Rebates Income	300,000		300,000
Public Health NR - Emergency Planning	15,000		15,000
Communities & Customer - Statutory Archives	184,407		184,407
Strategy - Removal of histoircal unachievable saving	106,380		106,380
Strategy - Local and Strategic Partnership Team	500,000		500,000
Total Service Growth	**10,024,575**	**0**	**10,024,575**

*Additional Growth to be considered has not been built into the MTFP yet, as further work and decisions are to be made around whether additional growth can be accommodated within the MTFP or relevant mitigations can be identified to reduce this pressure.

Service Area	Contract Price Inflation £	2027/28 Corporate Landlord Price Inflation £	Total £
Care & Wellbeing	7,004,446	0	7,004,446
Children & Young People	1,194,560	0	1,194,560
Children & Young People - CSC	3,004,797	0	3,004,797
Commissioning	53,235	0	53,235
Communities & Customer	31,519	0	31,519
Enabling	351,724	0	351,724
Executive Management Team	0	0	0
Infrastructure	1,729,260	0	1,729,260
Legal & Governance	37,287	0	37,287
Pensions	0	0	0
Place Shaping	251,419	562,682	814,101
Public Health Non-Ringfenced	0	0	0
Public Health - Ringfenced	0	0	0
Section 151 - Finance	13,666	0	13,666
Strategy	3,162	0	3,162
Corporate	153,361	0	153,361
Total	**13,828,437**	**562,682**	**14,391,119**

Appendix C

Savings Proposals

Service Area	Saving Proposal	2027/28 £	2028/29 £	2029/30 £
Adult Social Care	Transformation Projects	-3,000,000		
Commissioning	Reduction in Leisure budgets dependant on Contract retender from 1/8/27		-700,000	
Communities and Customer	Housing - Termination of contracts	-160,000		
Communities and Customer	Libraries – Service Changes	-75,000	-75,000	
Communities and Customer	Theatre Severn increase in income	-50,000	-300,000	-50,000
Communities and Customer	Customer Services - Transfer of Shrewsbury CCTV service to Shrewsbury Town Council		-100,000	
Communities and Customer	Customer Services - Reduction in customer services non-pay expenditure		-100,000	
Enabling	ICT - Warwickshire County Council rental charges	-81,000		
Enabling	Health & Safety - Staffing restructure	-64,000		
Enabling	Payroll – Efficiencies resulting from implementation of new recruitment system	-30,000		
Infrastructure	Additional Street works Income based on Business Case (Team Restructure)	-750,000		
Infrastructure	Car Parking Tariffs	-2,750,000		
Infrastructure	Highways Grant Programme Capitalisation	-300,000		
Legal & Governance	Savings resulting from Procurement of a Managed Service for low value Procurement Contracts (below £30k). Total value of contracts across council £76m		-250,000	-250,000
Place Shaping	Increased Grant Income within Waste	-1,125,000		
Place Shaping	Office moves budget	-600,000		
Place Shaping	Shirehall costs saving (inc. NNDR)	-364,000		
Place Shaping / Corporate	Recovery of CIL Administration costs	-300,000		
Corporate	Review of Corporate Finance accounting arrangements	-2,727,680		
	Savings Identified to date	**-12,376,680**	**-1,525,000**	**-300,000**

Service Area	Saving Proposal	2027/28 £	2028/29 £	2029/30 £
TBC	Additional Savings to offset emerging Growth (to be identified)	-5,286,895		
TBC	Transformation Savings to be identified and confirmed	-123,320	-10,975,000	-12,200,000
	Total Revised Savings Target	**-17,786,895**	**-12,500,000**	**-12,500,000**

Appendix D

Reserves

General Fund

The General Fund Balance as at 31st March 2026 stood at £5.000m, significantly below its optimum desired balance.

The 2026/27 budget strategy included a contribution of £42.675m to the General Fund balance which would then reach £47.675m. This would represent an appropriate level for the general fund reserve given the scale of Shropshire Council operations and the risks that underly the business of all Councils.

In the context of the financial emergency and in line with the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy, it is important that the Council attempts to recover the General Fund Balance to this level over time. MTFP. The General Fund Balance provides Councils with the flexibility to help mitigate any unforeseen financial shocks (such as ongoing local or national inflationary increases, new burdens, rapid reductions in available resources due to changed national policy, etc.) while permanent mitigations are put in place.

Independent advice is that general fund un-earmarked reserves should equate to 5%-10% of net spending, subject to the risk profile of the Council. The current financial position faced by the Council is, in itself, an indication of the extent of that risk.

In the Adequacy of Reserves assessment within the Financial Strategy approved by Council in February 2026, confirmed the need to hold a risk assessed level of £45.815m within the General Fund Balance.

The speed of recovery in the General Fund Balance will be dependent in the short to medium term on EFS. In other words the Council will incur debt in order to restore the Balance to reasonable levels. For this reason, the Council will need to be measured in assessing the appropriate pace required for the recovery.

The updated MTFP presented to Cabinet in July considered the potential for reducing the contribution to the General Fund Balance which would substantially reduce the amount of EFS required by the Council in 2026/27 thereby reduce the debt burden. This will be considered further over the winter period and in advance of Cabinet meetings in January and February 2027. Final decisions will be highly influenced by the ability of the Council to manage within budget in 2026/27 and other current and emerging financial risks, not least demand pressures across social care.

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General Fund	**£'000**
Balance as at 1st April 2026	5,000
Budgeted Contribution as agreed in revised MTFP presented to Cabinet in July 2026	10,000
Budgeted General Fund Balance as at 31st March 2027	**15,000**
2026/27 projected outturn position (Q2)	51
Balance as at 31 March 2027	**15,051**

The update MTFP in July assumed a base budget contribution of £10m to the General Fund in 2027/28 and future years. This is reflected in the further updated but will be subject to further review in advance of January and February Cabinet meetings. In particular, progress in containing financial pressures on social care budgets and the costs of borrowing will be key considerations in determining whether the pace of recovery of balances can be slowed.

Earmarked Reserves

The council held earmarked reserves of £25.113m (excluding school balances) as at 1st April 2026. There are a number of transactions planned from earmarked reserves during the course of this financial year. Earmarked reserves are held in respect of unspent ring fenced grants (e.g. public health), projects in progress, technical accounting, capital and specific financial risks

The current projections for the year-end balance in earmarked reserves is £34.532m (£29.831m excluding school balances) as set out in the table below.

These reserves will be reviewed through accounts closing processes at the end of the financial year and updated accordingly.

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.	4,919	-5	0	4,914
Invest to save Reserve	Required to fund invest to save projects in order to deliver the service transformation programme.	567	0	164	731
External Fund Reserve	Reserves held where the Council is the administering body for trust funds or partnership working.	2,455	-256	130	2,329
		7,941	**-261**	**294**	**7,973**
Reserves retained for service departmental use					
Building Control	Required to manage the position regarding building control charges.	272	0	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.	271	-147	7	130
Debt Recovery Reserve	Established to provide resources for improving the recovery of debts across the Council and Collection Fund.	253	0	0	253
Economic Development	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.	110	0	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.	99	0	0	99
Improvement Plan Reserve	Established from external funds received towards the Improvement Plan	115	0	0	115
Planning Reserve	Set aside to fund developments within the Local Plan and any planning inquiry costs.	79	0	0	79
Public Health Reserve	This reserve includes balances committed to specific public health projects.	3,389	-14,111	13,475	2,753
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	4,620	-371	2	4,252
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.	1,527	0	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	0	0	0
Streetworks Reserve	Established from additional income generated within the service to be reinvested in the service	439	-211	0	228
TMO Vehicle Replacement	Set up to meet the costs of replacement vehicles by the Integrated Transport Unit.	37	0	0	37
		11,688	**-14,840**	**13,483**	**10,331**

Reserves	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward	Movement Out 2025/26	Movement In 2025/26	Balance Carried Forward
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
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.	1,740	0	0	1,740
		1,740	**0**	**0**	**1,740**
Insurance Reserves					
Fire Liability	Required to meet the cost of excesses on all council properties.	526	-431	464	558
Motor Insurance	An internally operated self-insurance reserve to meet costs not covered by the Council's Motor Insurance Policy.	570	0	80	650
		1,096	**-431**	**544**	**1,208**
Financial Risks					
Financial Strategy Reserve	Established specifically to provide one off funding for savings proposals in the Financial Strategy	1,049	0	5,930	6,979
Financial Risk - Adult Social Care	Established to address the financial risk of additional unforeseen Adult Social Care Demand	700	0	0	700
Financial Risk - Children's Social Care	Established to address the financial risk of additional unforeseen Children's Social Care Demand	400	0	0	400
Financial Risk - Economic Risk	Established to address the financial risk arising from changing economic conditions that may impact on the Council	500	0	0	500
		2,649	**0**	**5,930**	**8,579**
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.	4,701	0	0	4,701
		4,701	**0**	**0**	**4,701**
Total Reserves		**29,814**	**-15,533**	**20,251**	**34,532**

Appendix E – Budget Timetable

Date	Meeting / Eventa	Main Purpose
2/ 16 November 2026	One Shropshire Board	Finance Update
3 November 2026	Contact MHCLG	EFS Application & Council Tax Flexibility
9 November 2026	Improvement Board	Finance Update
16 November 2026	Budget Forum	Finance Update
18 November 2026	Cabinet	MTFP Capital Strategy Q2 Monitoring
30 November 2026	Finance Scrutiny Committee	MTFP Q2 Monitoring Capital Strategy
2 December 2026	Budget Consultation begins	Budget and EFS Application
December 2026	Provisional Settlement Announced	Budget Updated
2 December 2026	Cabinet	Proposed Fees & Charges uplifts Report to Cabinet Setting the Council Taxbase
4/18/24 January 2027	One Shropshire Board	Finance Update
11 January 2027	Budget Forum	Budget Update
20 January 2027	Cabinet	MTFP - Final Budget Capital Strategy Fees & Charges
10 February 2027	Cabinet	Final Budget and MTFP
15 February 2027	Budget Forum	Final Budget
25 February 2027	Full Council	2027/28 Budget and Council Tax setting Capital Strategy

Appendix F

Medium Term Financial Plan 2028/28 – 2030/31

	2027/28			2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Worst £	Likely - Current MTFP £	Best £	£	£	£
Revenue Support Grant	77,469,007	77,469,007	77,469,007	70,197,777	72,303,711	74,472,822
Business Rate Baseline	59,841,179	59,841,179	59,841,179	61,048,384	61,048,384	61,048,384
Settlement Funding Assessment	**137,310,186**	**137,310,186**	**137,310,186**	**131,246,161**	**133,352,095**	**135,521,206**
Improved Better Care Fund	0	14,635,454	14,635,454	14,635,454	14,635,454	14,635,454
Families First Partnership	2,872,140	2,872,140	2,872,140	2,453,091	2,453,091	2,453,091
Homelessness Grant	2,671,003	2,671,003	2,631,012	2,701,694	2,701,694	2,701,694
Specific Grants (excluding Core Funding Grants above)	234,788,856	234,788,856	234,788,856	233,578,554	229,845,071	229,802,057
Government Grants	**240,331,999**	**254,967,454**	**254,927,462**	**253,368,794**	**249,635,311**	**249,592,297**
Total Government Funding	**377,642,186**	**392,277,640**	**392,237,649**	**384,614,955**	**382,987,405**	**385,113,503**
Other Grants and Contributions	45,161,860	45,161,860	45,161,860	45,161,860	45,161,860	45,161,860
Internal Recharges	11,367,110	11,367,110	11,367,110	11,367,110	11,367,110	11,367,110
Fees & Charges	104,980,800	106,138,329	106,138,329	107,353,734	108,629,910	109,909,124
Other Income	**161,509,770**	**162,667,299**	**162,667,299**	**163,882,704**	**165,158,880**	**166,438,094**
Council Tax (assumed 4.99% increase)	253,910,932	253,910,932	253,910,932	268,398,495	284,609,692	301,800,690
MHCLG permission for additional 4%	0	0	9,741,049	0	0	0
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	-800,000	-800,000	-800,000	-800,000	0	0
Council Tax collection fund surplus/(deficit)	-1,400,000	-900,000	-400,000	0	0	0
Business Rate - Energy Renewable Schemes	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,750,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Business Rate Growth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rate collection fund surplus/(deficit)	-1,680,000	-1,680,000	0	0	0	0
Council Tax & Business Rate Growth	**251,530,932**	**252,030,932**	**264,201,982**	**269,098,495**	**286,109,692**	**303,300,690**
Total Resources	**790,682,888**	**806,975,872**	**819,106,930**	**817,596,154**	**834,255,977**	**854,852,287**

	2027/28			2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	Worst £	Likely - Current MTFP £	Best £	£	£	£
Prior Year Budget	**889,412,753**	**889,412,753**	**889,412,753**	**915,399,882**	**950,716,436**	**989,455,953**
Inflation and Pay						
Pay Awards	6,696,910	6,696,910	6,696,910	7,000,000	7,400,000	7,700,000
Pension	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractual Inflation	14,391,119	14,391,119	14,391,119	15,000,000	18,000,000	19,000,000
Commitments and Growth						
Demographic Growth	28,045,335	15,094,662	15,094,662	17,000,000	17,000,000	17,000,000
Other Service Growth	10,024,575	10,024,575	10,024,575	-52,450	705,000	5,000
Debt Financing (incl. EFS)	7,305,676	7,305,676	7,305,676	10,467,664	11,868,000	13,489,000
Grant Changes	-4,488,918	-4,488,918	-4,488,918	-1,598,660	-3,733,483	-43,014
Invest to Save	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feasibility Study	-1,000,000	-1,000,000	-1,000,000	0	0	0
Technical Adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reserves						
General Fund Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Risk Reserve	-4,250,000	-4,250,000	-4,250,000	0	0	0
Budget Before Savings & Efficiencies	**946,137,449**	**933,186,777**	**933,186,777**	**963,216,436**	**1,001,955,953**	**1,046,606,939**
Savings						
New Savings	-12,000,000	-17,786,895	-17,786,895	-12,500,000	-12,500,000	-12,500,000
Total Budget	**934,137,449**	**915,399,882**	**915,399,882**	**950,716,436**	**989,455,953**	**1,034,106,939**
Funding Gap to be supported by EFS	**143,454,561**	**108,424,010**	**96,292,952**	**133,120,282**	**155,199,976**	**179,254,652**

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Committee	Cabinet 18th November 2026
Date and Time	Finance & Improvement Scrutiny 30th November 2026
	Public

Draft Capital Strategy 2027 – 2037

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer
Service Area:	Finance
Report Author	Clare Williams, Deputy Section 151 Officer
Officer contact details	clare.williams@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All / Name of individual Electoral Division(s)
Key Decision?	Key
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes – 13th August 2026
Report considered by	N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The Council is required to have a Capital Strategy as part of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. This report provides updates to the existing Capital Strategy agreed by Council in February 2026. This update is in advance of a final update to Cabinet in January and formal agreement by Council in February 2027.

1.2. This update is required at this time in order to capture all potential funding requirements to be incorporated within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. It also allows for the expansion of the Capital Strategy to a ten year horizon giving better visibility of the Council's potential needs.

1.3. This report also considers the future of a number of schemes paused in February 2026, some new essential schemes and some aspirational programmes. Subject to approval in principle, these schemes will require further work by officers.

1.4. The report proposes new arrangements for the agreement to the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with special oversight from the group of statutory officers in consultation with the Director of Place. This is to ensure the application of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and s106 to the most appropriate schemes and at the earliest opportunity and to optimise the funding of the capital programme for infrastructure projects.

1.5. The capital strategy aligns with the priorities set out in the Council Plan and other key council strategies. The strategy is integrated with the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and treasury management strategy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 Background

3.1 This capital strategy is an overarching document which sets the policy framework for the development, management and monitoring of capital investment. The strategy focuses on core principles that underpin the council's capital programme - its short, medium and long term objectives; the key issues and risks that will impact the delivery of the programme; and the governance framework required to ensure that the capital programme is delivered providing value for money for residents of Shropshire.

3.2 As part of the financial emergency declared in 2025, the Council carried out a thorough review of the 2026/27 capital programme, paused schemes so as to prioritise projects that maintain Council assets, meet health and safety requirements and improve the Council's financial position over the period of the MTFP.

3.3 Key principles of the review included:

- Ensuring the Council can meet its operational, statutory compliance, legal and health and safety responsibilities.
- Prioritising income generating projects; both those which generate on going revenue income but also those which generate a capital receipt for the Council.
- Prioritising revenue reduction projects that support the Council to reduce annual running costs.

3.4 Appendix A sets out the current approved Capital Programme for 2027/28 to 2029/30.

3.5 The Projects which remain paused following the review include:

- Swimming in Shropshire Sundorne Leisure Centre - paused pending a review of Shropshire's overall Leisure Centre Requirements and Leisure Strategy Development; the total expenditure to date is £1.91m.
- Smithfield / Riverside Development - except for the park construction which is already committed, underway and fully funded from Levelling Up funding, the remaining project to be paused pending a site masterplan review, there has been no expenditure to date.
- Oxon Link Road - paused pending an options paper to be reported to Cabinet following the cancellation of the Northwest Relief Road project, the total expenditure to date is £6.088m.
- Pride Hill Shopping Centre Regeneration - paused pending an options paper to be reported to Cabinet; the total expenditure to date is £1.530m.
- Maesbury Solar Farm - paused pending a review of the Business Case, Cabinet now to receive a report early in 2027 on the future of the project; the total expenditure to date is £0.133m.

3.6 The investments made to date in the paused projects are listed in paragraph 4.4. If these projects do not restart, the expenditure to date may need to revert to revenue unless related and relevant projects can be substituted.

3.7 Each year the Council has approved the flexible use of capital receipts in line with MHCLG guidance issued in 2016, which was subsequently extended until March

2030 to enable councils to spend up to 100% of capital receipts on the revenue costs of transformation projects that result in revenue savings. The Council has historically utilised this flexibility to fund redundancy costs resulting from service redesign and restructure changes and transformation investment. This report proposes to continue with this flexible use of capital receipts and for such use to be agreed by the s151 Officer and reported via the in-year monitoring reports to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.

3.8 A priority for the Council will continue to be to seek external funding opportunities and fully and efficiently utilise Government grant allocations. Where appropriate, the Council will seek to develop a pipeline of projects to enable grant applications to be made as funding opportunities arise. Such projects will continue to be subject to robust due diligence to ensure the costs to the Council of construction and administrative overheads are kept to a minimum and are affordable.

Core Principles that underpin the capital programme

3.9 Underlying the Capital Strategy is the recognition that the financial resources available to meet capital expenditure priorities are constrained by a significant reduction in financial resources and now the need to use borrowing through Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) as a priority to manage the revenue budget.

3.10 The Council's approach to investment must therefore be to make investment decisions, relating to projects which maintain essential assets and which are funded through external funding or deliver a return to the Council and fund the investment.

Governance Arrangement

3.11 To ensure that available resources are allocated optimally and deliver value for money, capital programming decisions need their own planning and approval process working in parallel with the service and revenue budget planning process within the framework of the MTFP. Decisions are of course reserved in any event for Cabinet and for Council.

3.12 New capital schemes and programmes will need to be appraised along with other investments and grant programmes following a clearly defined set of criteria and gateway processes as necessary. The Council will make use of officers' advice and expertise supported by external professional advisors where appropriate. The key objective will be to ensure that robust capital investment decisions are made on the basis of relevant evidence. Advice includes technical, financial, legal, property and economic outcomes. At all times, the needs of residents and communities will be at the forefront of all decisions, even those that are more difficult to take but are necessary in the context of the financial emergency and other priorities.

3.13 The next Capital Strategy report to Cabinet will outline for their approval, details of revised arrangements for governance of the capital programme to include the allocation of CIL funding to individual schemes.

3.14 The authority has an appraisal mechanism in place which will seek to ensure that there is an integrated approach to addressing cross-cutting issues, both internal and external to the authority, developing and improving service delivery through transformation and its investment in pursuance of the authority's over-arching aims.

The appraisal mechanism and governance process are currently under review, however in the meantime, the governance arrangements as listed below will continue. This includes Officer Groups which bring together a range of service interests and professional expertise, including:

- Democratic decision-making and scrutiny processes which provide overall political direction and ensure accountability for the investment in the Capital Programme.

- The Council's senior officers oversee the investment portfolio. It is supported by a group of officers who appraise all business plans using independent external advisors if necessary. This will assist the making of investment decisions based on full site investigations, due diligence, funding package, undertaking full risk and reward assessments, lifetime costings, asset replacement and monitoring the outcome and reviewing those projects already in progress.

- The Capital Steering Group will oversee and review business cases for investments prior to sign off and submission to Cabinet/Council approval.

3.15 For projects and programmes an Expression of Interest (EOI) will be submitted that needs to include the investment levels required, source of funding, outcomes to be delivered, risk assessments, appropriate due diligence, repayment mechanisms, revenue impacts and full lifetime costings. These will be reviewed against an agreed weighting and appropriate recommendations made to the Capital Steering Group.

3.16 Subject to the EOI proposal being approved, a detailed Outline Business Case (OBC) will be submitted and appraised in line with the Council approved methodology of the Treasury 5-case model, prior to a Full Business Case being completed and appended to a Council report. A suite of template documents is appended to the OBC to ensure a consistent approach to project delivery. These include:

- Risk Register.
- Cash Flow Modelling.
- Gantt Chart for project timeline.
- Project Board Terms of Reference and Agenda.
- Procurement considerations.
- Project closure report.

3.17 Officers and Members involved in the decision making process in relation to proposed projects and programmes will have the appropriate capacity, skills, and information to enable them to take informed decisions to acquire specific investments, to assess investments in the context of the Council's strategic objectives and risk profile and to understand how decisions have changed the overall risk exposure of the Council.

3.18 Quarterly Capital Programme reports will continue to be submitted to Cabinet that identify changes to the approved programme to reflect:

- New resource allocations
- Rescheduling in programme delivery
- Programmes reduced or removed
- Virements between schemes and programmes to maximise delivery.
- Revisions to spend profile and funding to ensure ongoing revenue costs are minimised.
- Monitor the funding of the programme
- Capital receipts generated

4 Summary of Main Proposals

4.1 The current approved Capital Programme which has been revised at quarter 2 2026/27 financial year is set out in Appendix A including the current funding of the capital programme in Appendix B.

4.2 The council is planning to borrow £2.036m to fund projects currently in the capital programme and previously approved. For 2027/8 onwards, it can be seen from Appendix B that the Council is heavily reliant on the timing of future capital receipts in order to meet funding commitments, a timing difference in realisation of capital receipts would result in a short term need to incur borrowing until such time the assets disposals take place. It is essential therefore that the Council accelerates its asset disposal programme with the aim of:

- preventing a timing difference in the use of capital receipts for current schemes and;
- to enable consideration of a capitalisation direction request to the Government to convert capital receipts to revenue resources. This would alleviate pressure on revenue budgets to fund contributions to revenue reserves, such as General Fund Balances.

4.3 Appendix B sets out details of the financing required to fund the current Capital Programme in Appendix A prior to the addition of new scheme proposals.

4.4 The new Capital schemes to be included within the 10-year Capital Programme for 2027/28 onwards have been reviewed, and the proposals for inclusion in the budget are set out in Appendix C. Alongside this is the proposed funding methodology that will be reflected in the financing of the programme.

4.5 As part of the strategy, consideration was given to Future Capital Projects the Council are seeking to invest in but not considered a priority over the medium term. These projects are set out in Appendix D in no particular order and remain on the future capital projects list to be reviewed on a regular basis and may be bought forward as priority schemes at any point. There are no significant implications to the delivery of council services if these projects are deferred to a later date.

Asset Management Planning and Capital Receipts

4.6 The overriding objective of asset management within the council is to achieve a corporate portfolio of property assets that is appropriate, fit for purpose and affordable.

4.7 The council will realise the value of any properties that have been declared surplus to requirements in a timely manner, having regard to the prevailing market conditions.

4.8 When a capital asset is deemed as surplus, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on planned capital expenditure. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council already has budget commitments within the current capital programme of projects expected to be funded from capital receipts as set out in Appendix B.

4.9 As a result of the challenges facing the council and requirement to fund the revenue budget through Exceptional Financial Support there is an urgent need to call upon capital receipts to fund this before using external borrowing which adds further pressure to the council budget gap.

4.10 As at Quarter 2 2026/27, the current position of expected capital receipts against budget commitments is as follows:

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	13,685,685	17,478,508	8,580,000	4,326,000	-
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	450,000	7,682,095	10,500,000	8,181,991	5,164,303
Transformation activities	-	-	-	-	-
Total Commitments	**14,135,685**	**25,160,603**	**19,080,000**	**12,507,991**	**5,164,303**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	22,379,581	16,491,303	- 7,329,301	- 26,344,301	- 38,852,292
Generated 2026/27 YTD	4,370,287	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	3,877,120	1,340,000	65,000	-	
Total in hand/projected	**30,626,988**	**17,831,303**	**- 7,264,301**	**- 26,344,301**	**- 38,852,292**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 16,491,303**	**7,329,301**	**26,344,301**	**38,852,292**	**44,016,595**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	596,000	39,553,709	4,753,080	-	-

4.11 In 2026/27 there is currently a projected surplus of capital receipts of £16.491m and in 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30 there are currently projected cumulative shortfalls of capital receipts of £7.329m, £26.344m and £38.852m respectively.

4.12 These surplus and shortfall positions are mitigated by the capital receipts surplus position in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Analysis of the General fund and HRA requirement for capital receipts are shown in the tables below.

General Fund	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	12,339,116	14,778,508	4,580,000	3,326,000	-
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	450,000	3,554,000	8,500,000	6,181,991	5,164,303
Transformation activities	-	-	-	-	-
Total Commitments	**12,789,116**	**18,332,508**	**13,080,000**	**9,507,991**	**5,164,303**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	12,643,100	5,640,250	- 11,352,258	- 24,367,258	- 33,875,249
Generated 2026/27 YTD	2,902,346	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	2,883,920	1,340,000	65,000	-	-
Total in hand/projected	**18,429,365**	**6,980,250**	**- 11,287,258**	**- 24,367,258**	**- 33,875,249**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 5,640,250**	**11,352,258**	**24,367,258**	**33,875,249**	**39,039,552**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	596,000	39,553,709	4,753,080		

HRA	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	1,346,569	2,700,000	4,000,000	1,000,000	-
Capital Programme Ring-fenced receipt requirements	-	4,128,095	2,000,000	2,000,000	-
Transformation activities	-	-	-	-	-
Total Commitments	**1,346,569**	**6,828,095**	**6,000,000**	**3,000,000**	**-**
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:					
Brought Forward in hand	9,736,481	10,851,053	4,022,958	- 1,977,042	- 4,977,042
Generated 2026/27YTD	1,467,941	-	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	993,200	-	-		
Total in hand/projected	**12,197,623**	**10,851,053**	**4,022,958**	**- 1,977,042**	**- 4,977,042**
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	**- 10,851,053**	**- 4,022,958**	**1,977,042**	**4,977,042**	**4,977,042**
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal (Amber/Red)	-	-	-		-

4.13 These tables clearly demonstrate that capital receipts for the HRA are in a healthy surplus position over the period, however, there is severe pressure arising from the capital receipts requirement of the General Fund. In 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30 there are currently projected cumulative shortfalls of capital receipts of £11.352m, £24.367m and £33.875m respectively.

4.14 The shortfall in capital receipts from 2027/28 onwards may need to be financed from Prudential Borrowing if they cannot be addressed by progressing the disposals programmed for future years and will incur future year revenue costs that are not budgeted for in the revenue financial strategy.

4.15 Assets currently being considered for disposal total £44.903m which if realised would be sufficient to resolve the currently projected shortfall in capital receipts up to 2028/29. Of these disposals £36.502m and £8.401m are currently RAG rated “Amber” and “Red” respectively, meaning that they are either achievable but challenging or highly unlikely to complete within the relevant financial years.

4.16 There is a significant and urgent pressure, therefore, to progress the disposals programmed for future years, to ensure that 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 time of at least 12 to 18 months on larger disposals.

4.17 The Council is committed to delivering a refreshed Asset Management Strategy as part of its Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy which will focus on maximising the capital receipts to be realised and minimising the period to achieve that receipt.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

4.18 The Council collects Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts from chargeable development. Subject to the statutory provisions for administration and neighbourhood funding, Council-retained CIL is used to fund infrastructure that supports development of the area. The allocation arrangements below distinguish the statutory provisions from the Council’s current policy for Local and Strategic CIL

- Administration Charge up to 5% (Regulation 61 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010)
- **Neighbourhood CIL:** 15% of relevant receipts, subject to the statutory cap, or 25% where the relevant neighbourhood planning provisions apply, is passed to the relevant Town or Parish Council under Regulation 59A.

- **Council CIL:** The remaining CIL is retained by Shropshire Council and applied under Regulation 59 to fund the *"provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area."*
    - **90% CIL Local:** allocated under the Council's current policy to the relevant Place Plan area.
    - **10% CIL Strategic:** allocated under the Council's current policy for strategic infrastructure.

4.19 At Q2 2026/27 there is £35.086m held within the CIL reserves.

4.20 The Council has authority to apply Council CIL to infrastructure in accordance with Regulation 59. Under the Council's current policy, Council CIL is divided between 90% CIL Local, allocated to the relevant Place Plan area, and 10% CIL Strategic. The current Strategic CIL balance is £6.143m and the Local CIL balance is £28.220m. Place Plan infrastructure projects are currently being reviewed, including their eligibility, prioritisation and deliverability, before appropriate projects are brought forward through the Capital Programme.

4.21 Work is underway to review the Council's approach to the allocation of CIL, including the relationship between CIL, Place Plan infrastructure priorities and the Capital Programme. This will provide greater visibility of the infrastructure requirements that may require CIL funding and support consideration of future allocation priorities.

4.22 The governance arrangements for CIL allocation are also being reviewed, including the respective roles of officers, Members and the Internal Infrastructure Group in prioritising projects, allocating funding and monitoring delivery within the Council's statutory and financial framework.

Section 106 Developer Contributions

4.23 A Section 106 (S106) agreement is a legally binding agreement between the Council and parties with an interest in the development land. It secures financial contributions and/or other obligations to mitigate the impacts of the development and make it acceptable in planning terms.

4.24 The key purposes and requirements of Section 106 contributions are:

- Affordable Housing: Requiring developers to provide a percentage of new homes as affordable housing or make a financial contribution toward it.
- Infrastructure Improvements: Funding or building local transport, road networks, and highway access.
- Community Facilities: Providing financial support or land for schools, healthcare clinics, sports facilities, and public open spaces.
- Incorporating green spaces, flood mitigation, or Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) measures.

4.25 The Council currently holds £14.202m in S106 reserves as at the 25/26 financial year end.

4.26 Each Section 106 agreement is unique in its terms and delivery requirements and can be time restrictive, which could result in payments being returned to the developer if the Council does not act on the obligations within the agreement.

4.27 Each developer payment is recorded in detail and expiry dates noted and this is monitored regularly to ensure projects are bought forward and delivered as part of the Capital Programme within the timeframe requirements.

4.28 Again, moving forward, the Statutory Officers Group will take oversight of the allocation of the s106 programme in consultation with the Director of Place and the IIG. This will seek to accelerate the allocation of s106 funds to relevant projects at the earliest opportunity to satisfy Council and local priorities. Allocation of S106 contributions will remain subject to the permitted purposes, spending deadlines and other conditions of each agreement.

5. Key Risks

5.1 A number of strategic risks to the council are relevant to the budget and these specific financial risks are set out in the annual governance statement. In general, controllable risks are mitigated through the budget process and referenced against the financial sustainability and recovery strategy. However, a number of risks are beyond the council's control and can only be mitigated as part of the budget by using prudent assumptions with regard, for example, inflation, pay, demand growth, domestic and global economy, etc...

5.2 The 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement set out 12 key strategic risks many of which refer to the financial challenges of the Council and therefore impact on the Capital Strategy. These are set out below together with high level mitigations. Over and above strategic risks sit departmental risk registers that will contain specific service pressures insofar as they impact of finance. The arrangements for risk management are currently subject to review and will be presented to Audit and Governance Committee later in September.

Risk	Mitigation
The Council has reported Limited Assurance on the Internal Audit Control Framework for seven years, limiting confidence in the standards of governance in place within the organisation.	Linked to the strategic risk of a failure of officers and members to adhere to governance arrangements, there is an acknowledged need for further action. Leadership Board regularly reviews the status of audit recommendations and the Statutory Officers Group, introduced in October 2025, further monitors the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations and provides direction as necessary to improve overall responsiveness.
The external auditor felt bound to issue statutory recommendations as part of their annual audit for	The Improvement Plan included actions and activity that responded to the statutory recommendations. An updated response to the recommendations (which included

2024/25 which cast doubt on the integrity of the Council's value for money arrangements.	activity undertaken during 2025/26) was reported to the Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in June 2026 as part of an Improvement Plan update report. Some recommendations require extensive and ongoing work; others have been independently reviewed in specific functional areas such as children's and adult social care. The recommendations will continue to be reflected in the improvement plan for some time to come, especially insofar as they impact on the Council's budget and business planning process.
Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) incurs costs of debt for both interest and principal of a fixed number of years and creates an additional overhead over and above the costs of additional demands for services and the inflation that goes with it.	This is a specific additional dimension of the risk of an inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within this financial year. As part of its Medium-Term Financial Plan, approved by Full Council in February 2026, the Council committed to developing a Financial Sustainability Strategy that sets out how the Council will take steps to reduce reliance on EFS. In any event in order to pay for the additional costs of debt, the Council will be prioritising Council Tax increases up to the maximum allowed and will need to find offset savings in the cost of services to balance the budget without recourse to further EFS.
Despite a three-year settlement, government funding continues to reduce as a proportion of public sector investment in real terms and continues to transfer additional burden to local taxpayers.	The additional increase in Council Tax for 2025/26 is one manifestation of mitigation necessary to address this risk, and there is likely to be further impacts as the Council reduces its expenditure. The Improvement Plan acknowledges the risk that residents see service performance reducing rather than improving as the Council implements the plan. Looking forward, the Council will need to stress on Government the need for funding to tackle sparsity and rurality and the demographic and geographical dynamics of the borough. The Council does, however, recognise that in the context of a new three-year settlement and the recent fair funding changes, short-term solutions seem unlikely.
The national and global economy remains volatile	Persistent inflationary pressures, rising energy and fuel costs, interest rate

and continues to present significant financial risks to the Council.	fluctuations and wider economic uncertainty can create additional unfunded burdens on Council budgets. Continued economic instability may also impact residents' financial resilience, increasing demand for Council services at a time when resources remain constrained. The Council will continue to make best assumptions in MTFPs to cover such risks although events such as the Gulf issues do nothing but increase uncertainty.
Cyber security remains as an ongoing threat to all organisations, not least the public sector and local government, in terms of the impact of lost, corrupted or stolen data with serious implications for potential financial loss and reputational damage.	As the Council continues to rely on digital technologies to deliver and transform services and hold sensitive information, maintaining effective cyber security controls, staff awareness and incident response arrangements will remain essential to mitigating this risk.
Workforce capacity and capability must be in place to deliver existing services to minimum standards but also to support the significant transformation and improvement activity required to address the Council's financial challenges.	Maintaining a stable, skilled and resilient workforce remains critical to achieving financial sustainability and delivering the Council's strategic objectives – and is at the heart of the Improvement Plan and People Plan. Budget has been applied in 2026/27 budgets to restore capacity previously removed. While this mitigates some risk, it is recognised that recruitment and retention remains a concern and that in some cases capacity and capability may need to be sought from other third parties.
Abnormal financial position compromising decision making processes.	The necessity to deliver significant savings, reduce expenditure and reliance on EFS may limit strategic flexibility and increase the risk that decisions prioritise immediate financial outcomes over longer-term service sustainability and demand prevention. Robust governance, decisive and transparent decision making and effective scrutiny arrangements will be essential to ensuring that financial pressures do not detract from long-term strategic decision making although there will inevitably be some compromises, not least around asset management and disposal, recovery of Council balances over time, etc.

External scrutiny and threat of intervention:	A consequence of EFS is an increased likelihood of external scrutiny over and above the Improvement Board arrangements established in November 2025. There remains an ongoing risk of Government intervention, including the appointment of envoys or commissioners, should the Council be unable to provide assurance that it has a credible strategy to reduce its reliance on EFS and achieve financial sustainability. The Council is very aware of this risk and would wish to retain control of its own decisions and direction; it is, however, aware of intervention in other authorities where Government have thought it to be necessary. Continued delivery of outcomes from the Improvement Plan and clear evidence of progress will be essential in mitigating this risk.
Breakdown of major contract arising from provider insolvency, poor performance, workforce shortages, contractual disputes or market instability, resulting in service disruption, financial loss, reputational damage and additional management costs.	Given the Council's reliance on a number of significant contracts to deliver statutory and essential services, effective contract management and performance monitoring (part of the Improvement Plan) and business continuity arrangements are critical to reducing the likelihood and impact of this risk.
A catastrophic physical, climatic or pandemic event severely disrupts the delivery of Council services and compromises the Council's ability to meet statutory requirements.	While these events are largely beyond the control of the Council, there is a continued need for emergency planning capacity and fully tested business continuity plans. These will continue to be subject to continuous review across all Council departments to confirm that they remain current and complete.
Transformation programmes and significant projects are delayed, deferred or fail to deliver on their objectives leading to loss of opportunities and adverse financial impacts.	EFS has allowed the Council to set aside finance for investments in major transformation programmes. These will need to be created and challenged through the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel, a group of senior Council Officers. Transformation and other projects will be subject to oversight of the new Programme Management Office with regular reports to Cabinet and Finance and Improvement Scrutiny. Risk management arrangements for major projects are being reviewed, and

		it is recognised that, for some projects, these have been less than successful in the past.

5.3 These risks are now being contained and managed within Improvement Plan which also include responses to MHCLG and CPC recommendations. They also form an integral part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement, and Risk Management Strategy.

6 Council Priorities

6.1 A new Corporate Plan for 2026-2030 was approved by Cabinet and Full Council in May 2026. The Plan summarises the priority ambitions the Council will focus on – including the ambition to be a Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel. This report outlines the management of the current year's budget which is an important step in moving towards this ambition.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 Financial Implications are set out within this report.

8 Legal and HR implications

8.1 The Council is required to have a Capital Strategy to meet the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance. It is important because it sets out the Council's considerations when formulating its capital programme. It should be seen as a key element of the wider budget setting process. The report sets out the risks and legal advice will be provided on an ongoing basis on individual projects as and when required to ensure the Council also meets its legal obligations in furtherance of the strategy.

9 Electoral Division Implications

9.1 None

10 Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

10.1 None

11 Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

12 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

12.1 There are no specific implications arising directly from this report.

13 Background Papers

1. Draft 2026/27 General Fund budgets and medium-term Financial Plan 2026/27 – 2030/31

14 Appendices

Appendix A – Current Capital Programme
Appendix B – Capital Financing
Appendix C – New Scheme priorities
Appendix D – Potential Future Projects

Appendix A - Current Capital Programme

Scheme Description	2027/2028 Budget £	2028/2029 Budget £	2029/2030 Budget £
Commissioning Capital			
Leisure Capital			
Church Stretton Leisure Centre - Replacement Sports Hall Floor	39,916		
Bishops Castle SpArc PSDS Decarbonisation Project	750,000		
Total Commissioning Capital	**789,916**	**0**	**0**
Communities & Customer Capital			
Housing Services Capital			
Disabled Facilities Grants	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000
Warm Homes Capital Projects Housing Services Capital			
Shropshire Warm Homes Grant Wave 3 WHLG DESNZ	1,035,314		
Telford & Wrekin Warm Homes Grant Wave 3 WHLG DESNZ	982,221		
Herefordshire Warm Homes Grant Wave 3 WHLG 053 DESNZ 2025	637,116		
SHDF Wave 3 Shropshire Rural Grant	672,267		
Total Communities & Customer Capital	**7,826,918**	**4,500,000**	**4,500,000**
Infrastructure Capital			
National Landscapes & Outdoor Partnerships Capital			
DEFRA - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Grant	9,000		
DEFRA - Farming in Protected Landscapes Capital Grant (FIPL)	781,033	781,033	
Highways Infrastructure Capital			
A5191 DfT Safer Road Scheme Grant	300,000		
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Right of Way Programme	200,000	200,000	200,000
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Maintenance	1,650,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Welsh Bridge Shrewsbury Parapet Replacement		1,500,000	
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Bridgnorth Low Town Bridge Refurbishment	500,000		

Scheme Description	2027/2028 Budget £	2028/2029 Budget £	2029/2030 Budget £
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Castlewalk Footbridge Shrewsbury Replacement		1,000,000	1,500,000
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Malehurst No 2 Replacement	350,000		
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Boreton Road Bridge Replacement		400,000	
Structural Maintenance of Bridges and Structures: Crew Green Bridge Holding Match	1,000,000	2,700,000	
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Drainage	1,200,000	1,400,000	1,600,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Landslip/Embankment Works	300,000	300,000	300,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Depot Overhead Fixed Costs	2,750,000	3,025,000	3,327,500
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Depot Overhead Fixed Costs	2,750,000	3,025,000	3,327,500
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Footway Programme (Slurry Sealing)	1,360,000	1,675,000	2,052,500
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Surface Dressing Programme	6,569,025	7,682,500	8,790,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Countywide Resurfacing Programme	10,669,000	9,152,000	13,785,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Staff Capitalisation	525,000	550,000	575,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Local Improvement Schemes North Shropshire	300,000	330,000	360,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Local Improvement Schemes Central Shropshire	300,000	330,000	360,000
Structural Maintenance of Roads: Local Improvement Schemes South Shropshire	300,000	330,000	360,000
Street Lighting Maintenance Programme	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Active Travel Infrastructure Capital			
Programme of improving walking and cycling routes (LCWIP)	200,000	200,000	200,000
Programme of Safer Routes to Schools Infrastructure Improvements	200,000	200,000	200,000
Expand Shrewsbury e-bike scheme	200,000		
Oswestry Innovation Park Connectivity	52,700	447,300	
The Coppice Clayton Way Active Travel Route	169,600		
First and last mile access at rail stations			300,000
Local Transport Plan Consolidated Fund			
Rolling programme of traffic signal, zebra, and electrical signs upgrades	1,000,000	100,000	700,000
Introduce Moving Traffic Enforcement infrastructure in appropriate locations	500,000		
ADS Replacement Programme	250,000		
Programme of introducing 20mph outside schools	500,000		
Rolling programme of targeted accident reduction schemes	500,000	500,000	500,000

Scheme Description	2027/2028 Budget £	2028/2029 Budget £	2029/2030 Budget £
Programme of prioritised traffic engineer led schemes to improve perception of road safety	240,000	240,000	240,000
Shrewsbury - Strategic Network Review (including SMPSS)	1,000,000	2,500,000	
Market Town Traffic Improvement Programme	500,000	1,500,000	500,000
Inclusive Taxi and PHV service plan		250,000	
Air Quality Action Plans Mitigation		500,000	500,000
Retained Integrated Transport Fund CDEL- to allow review of emerging LTP capital	10,782,000	2,315,000	10,811,300
Bus Grant			
Park and Ride Infrastructure Improvements	500,000	500,000	
Bus stop upgrades and improved passenger facilities at busiest locations	350,000	350,000	
Grant funding provided to Community Transport Consortium	105,000	105,000	
Bus Priority	404,000	404,000	
Total Infrastructure Capital	**59,747,333**	**57,084,433**	**63,671,300**
Place Shaping Capital			
Growth & Development Capital			
Oswestry Innovation Park Infrastructure	7,000,000		
Waste Capital			
Contribution to Waste In-Vessel Composting Facility	325,000		
Property & Assets Capital			
Shrewsbury Town Centre Riverside Redevelopment - Levelling Up Fund 2 Project 1	1,000,000		
Corporate Landlord Estate Maintenance Programme	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Shrewsbury Castle Walls West Elevation Remedial Works	1,500,000		
Corporate Landlord Building Suitability Programme	500,000	500,000	500,000
Broadband Infrastructure Capital			
Broadband Project - Phase 5 - BDUK Gigabit Voucher Scheme Top Up Funding	500,000		
Total Place Shaping Capital	**11,825,000**	**1,500,000**	**1,500,000**

Scheme Description	2027/2028 Budget £	2028/2029 Budget £	2029/2030 Budget £
Enabling Capital			
ICT Infrastructure Capital			
IT Laptop Replacement Programme	850,000	850,000	850,000
IT Peripheral Kits Replacement Programme	300,000	150,000	150,000
IT Mobile Phone Replacement Programme			416,000
IT Hardware Upgrades - LAN Hardware Replacement	80,000	10,000	10,000
IT Hardware Upgrades - WI-FI Replacement	250,000		
IT Hardware Upgrades - Main Firewall		600,000	
IT Hardware Upgrades - Nutanix Hardware			400,000
IT Hardware Upgrades - Rubrik	1,000,000		
Total Enabling Capital	**2,480,000**	**1,610,000**	**1,826,000**
Children and Young People & Children's Social Care Capital			
Children and Young People Capital			
School Place Planning	600,000		
St Andrews Shifnal - DfE School Rebuilding Programme - SC additional contribution	800,000		
Schools Future Place Planning Phase 4 Contingency	976,500	1,000,000	
Belvidere Secondary - 6 classroom extension		3,000,000	
Meole Brace Secondary - Dining Room/Hall expansion	1,000,000		
St Giles Primary - 4 classroom extension		2,000,000	
Moreton Say Primary - expansion	1,000,000		
Lakelands Secondary - 4 classroom expansion	2,000,000		
Corbet Secondary - 2 classroom expansion	500,000		
Mary Webb Secondary - 3 classroom expansion	1,250,000		
Ludlow Infants & Juniors Amalgamation	2,000,000		
Ironbridge New School		3,200,000	
Schools Capital Maintenance Programme	2,000,000		
Schools SEN Capital Funding	3,062,937		
SEN High Needs - Ludlow New SEN Specialist School		2,500,000	

Scheme Description	2027/2028 Budget £	2028/2029 Budget £	2029/2030 Budget £
SEN High Needs - TBC Shrewsbury Secondary Resourced Provision	1,000,000		
Schools Devolved Formula Capital Grant	150,000		
Total Children & Young People & Children's Social Care Capital	**16,339,437**	**11,700,000**	**0**
Total General Fund Capital Programme	**99,008,604**	**76,394,433**	**71,497,300**

Appendix B Capital Financing

Financing	2027/2028 Budget £	2028/2029 Budget £	2029/2030 Budget £
Borrowing	**(2,036,293)**	**0**	**0**
Prudential Borrowing	(2,036,293)	0	0
Government Grants	**(79,804,233)**	**(66,379,180)**	**(68,171,300)**
GG Capital DfT Highways Consolidated Fund	(40,204,000)	(43,492,000)	(49,720,000)
GG Capital DfT Highways Local Transport Fund	(16,594,200)	(10,923,600)	(12,034,900)
GG Capital DfT Bus Grant	(1,453,400)	(1,482,100)	(1,510,700)
GG Capital DEFRA Grant	(790,033)	(781,033)	0
GG Capital DoH Better Care Fund	(4,500,000)	(4,500,000)	(4,500,000)
GG Capital DoE Devolved Formula Capital Grant	(150,000)	0	0
GG Capital DoE Basic Need Grant	(6,210,953)	(2,261,270)	0
GG Capital DoE School Condition Grant	(1,869,029)	(33,477)	0
GG Capital DoE Special Provisions Fund	(4,000,000)	(2,500,000)	0
GG Capital DfT Capital Block Funding Specific Grant	(405,700)	(405,700)	(405,700)
GG Capital DfT Safer Roads Fund	(300,000)	0	0
GG Capital DESNZ Warm Homes Social Housing Fund Wave 3	(2,654,651)	0	0
GG Capital DESNZ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 3	(672,267)	0	0
Other Grants	**(750,000)**	**0**	**0**
GG Capital Salix PSDS Grant	(750,000)	0	0
Other Contributions	**(1,800,000)**	**(5,435,253)**	**0**
Capital Contributions Section 106	0	(2,705,253)	0
Capital Contributions Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	(1,800,000)	(2,730,000)	0
Revenue Contributions to Capital	**(39,916)**	**0**	**0**
Revenue Contributions to Capital - GF	(39,916)	0	0
Capital Receipts	**(14,578,162)**	**(4,580,000)**	**(3,326,000)**
Total General Fund Financing	**(99,008,604)**	**(76,394,433)**	**(71,497,300)**

Appendix C Draft New Scheme Priorities

Scheme	Estimated Capital Cost £m	Delivery Timeframe										
		2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	2036-37	Total
Primary Education Facility Former Power Station Site	2.371			2.371								2.371
Expansion of William Brookes School	4.400			2.400	2.000							4.400
Swimming in Shropshire	32.000							16.000	16.000			32.000
Maintenance Condition Requirements Leisure Assets	12.458	2.473	1.203	1.640	0.632	2.155	1.209	0.256	0.724	0.120	2.046	12.458
Estates Compliance requirements for Council Buildings	1.500	0.500	0.500	0.500								1.500
Estates Capital Maintenance of Council Estate	12.600				1.500	1.600	1.700	1.800	1.900	2.000	2.100	12.600
Estates Suitability for Rationalisation Plan	5.600				0.500	0.600	0.700	0.800	0.900	1.000	1.100	5.600
IT Laptop Replacement Programme	7.600				0.850	0.850	0.850	2.500	0.850	0.850	0.850	7.600
IT Peripheral Kits Replacement Programme	1.400				0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	1.400
IT Mobile Phone Replacement Programme	0.416								0.416			0.416
IT Hardware Upgrades - LAN Hardware Replacement	0.520				0.010	0.200	0.080	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.200	0.520
IT Hardware Upgrades - WI-FI Replacement	0.250								0.250			0.250
IT Hardware Upgrades - Main Firewall	0.600									0.600		0.600
IT Hardware Upgrades - Nutanix Hardware	0.600			0.100					0.500			0.600
IT Digital Mailroom	0.300	0.150					0.150					0.300
IT Print Device Replacement	0.040	0.020					0.020					0.040
IT Teams Room Solutions Replace MS Surface Hubs	0.500				0.250				0.250			0.500
IT Teams Phones	0.060		0.015		0.010			0.020		0.015		0.060
IT Guildhall UPS Refresh	0.090	0.050				0.020				0.020		0.090
Total Priority Additions	**83.305**	**3.193**	**1.718**	**7.011**	**5.952**	**5.625**	**4.909**	**21.586**	**22.000**	**4.815**	**6.496**	**83.305**

	Proposed Funding against timeframe										
Funding Method	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**2035-36**	**2036-37**	**Total**
External Grant											0.000
S106			2.371								2.371
CIL			2.400	2.000			0.250	0.250			4.900
Revenue Contribution											0.000
External Contributions											0.000
Borrowing							13.750	13.750			27.500
Capital Receipts	3.193	1.718	2.240	3.952	5.625	4.909	7.586	8.000	4.815	6.496	48.534
Total	**3.193**	**1.718**	**7.011**	**5.952**	**5.625**	**4.909**	**21.586**	**22.000**	**4.815**	**6.496**	**83.305**

Appendix D - Potential Future Projects

Service Area	Scheme	Scheme Description
Commissioning	Market Drayton Swimming Centre	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	Church Stretton Leisure Centre	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	Cleobury Mortimer Sports and Fitness Centre	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	South Shropshire Leisure Centre, Ludlow	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	Oswestry Leisure Centre	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	Much Wenlock Leisure Centre	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	SpArC Bishop's Castle	Refurbishment and upgrade to Leisure Facilities
Commissioning	Shrewsbury town centre community swimming facility	To explore options to replace the Quarry Pool when it reaches the end of its operational life.
Commissioning	Oswestry Adult Day Services	Centre Refurbishment/relocation
Commissioning	Investment in Supported Living Accommodation	Acquisition or build of more supported accommodation facilities
Commissioning	Maesbury Metals Workshop	Support options to combine facility with Day Services
Place Shaping	The Mere at Ellesmere	Support redevelopment of Swan Hill Depot to visitor centre.
Place Shaping	Shrewsbury Castle: Restoration Proposals and Improvement Scheme	Renovation and Reconfiguration of the Town Centre Heritage Asset to increase visitor numbers and usage - part of the Big Town Plan. Also addresses improvements to the fabric of the buildings to address Health and Safety issues and safeguard the heritage.
Place Shaping	Shrewsbury Riverside Development	Following on from the demolition, investment in development of the site for end use - part of the Big Town Plan.
Place Shaping	Corporate Buildings LED Lighting Replacement Scheme	Explore Grant Funding for Conversion of all Corporate owned Buildings to LED Lighting to meet requirements of Climate Strategy by 2030
Place Shaping	Corporate Buildings Insulation and Energy Conservation	Explore Grant Funding for Insulation and Energy improvements on all Corporate owned Buildings to meet requirements of Climate Strategy by 2030
Place Shaping	Shrewsbury Northern Corridor Regeneration	Facilitate regeneration of Shrewsbury Northern Corridor
Place Shaping	Shropshire Parkway Station	Facilitate progression of Shropshire Parkway Station proposal from SOC to OBC and FBC
Enabling	Digital Transformation	Consideration of Capital Investment Need for Digital Roadmap Cabinet Paper 05/08/26
Place Shaping	Broadband Infrastructure	Consideration of Capital Investment to support agreed Strategy Policy.
Infrastructure	Oxon Park and Ride	Support relocation of existing Park & Ride Site to a more suitable location

Service Area	Scheme	Scheme Description
Infrastructure	Harlescott Park and Ride	Support relocation of existing Park & Ride Site to a more suitable location
Infrastructure	Market Drayton town centre traffic and public realm works	To deliver improvements to Town Centre and associated public realm works.
Infrastructure	Bridgnorth town centre traffic and public realm works	To deliver improvements to Town Centre and associated public realm works.
Infrastructure	Highways Depot Rationalisation Plan	Review location of current Site - North Shropshire
Infrastructure	Highways Depot Rationalisation Plan	Review location of current Site - Central Shropshire
Infrastructure	Highways Depot Rationalisation Plan	Review location of current Site - South Shropshire
Infrastructure	Install Solar arrays on car parks	Explore Grant Funding Opportunities
Infrastructure	Purchase of Shrewsbury Park & Ride vehicle fleet	Improving fleet to modern sustainable standards. Own and lease back to operators or operate internally.
Infrastructure	Upgrade or possible relocation of County Bus Station	Support opportunities for a new county bus station as part of the Smithfield Riverside redevelopment.
Infrastructure	Additional level(s) at Frankwell car park, Shrewsbury	Explore options to add a deck to increase capacity at Frankwell car park to increase capacity as well as to increase flood resilience
Infrastructure	Additional level(s) at Abbey Foregate car park, Shrewsbury	Explore options to add a deck to increase capacity at Abbey Foregate car park to increase capacity as well as to increase flood resilience
Infrastructure	Abbey Foregate to Rail Station footpath link	Explore the re-establishment of link to train station from Abbey Foregate car park, previously severed when residential development came forward.
Infrastructure	Frankwell Footbridge	Improve access to Town Centre and Railway Station from Frankwell Car Park with consideration to user access across footbridge.
Infrastructure	Upgrade/replacement of Greyfriars footbridge, Shrewsbury	To upgrade/replace Greyfriars Bridge in Shrewsbury in line with LCWIP scheme s.76
Children & Young People - CSC	Fostering - capacity increase through property investment	Support grant scheme/loan facilities or property acquisition to support Fostering increase.
Children & Young People - CSC	Accommodation/Supported housing for YP 16+/Care Leavers	Explore cost of accommodation provision
Communities & Customer	Outreach Bus (Health, Wellbeing & Prevention)	Investment in Outreach Bus Services
Communities & Customer	Service Integration Facility - Family/Community/Health Hubs (Health, Wellbeing & Prevention)	Investment in Community Facilities across place plan areas
Communities & Customer	Introduction of Self-Serve Kiosks in Libraries	
Place Shaping	Rowley's House, Structural Safety	Heritage at Risk Asset - explore grant options
Place Shaping	White Horse, Wem Structural Safety	Heritage at Risk Asset - explore grant options

Service Area	Scheme	Scheme Description
Infrastructure	Oxon Link Road (OLR)	Support options for delivering Highways Improvements to facilitate Housing development in Shrewsbury West
Place Shaping	Pride Hill Shopping Centre Regeneration	Explore future use options
Place Shaping	Raven Meadows Car Park, Shrewsbury	Consideration to longer term maintenance requirements
Place Shaping	Mardol House, Shrewsbury	Options for best future use
Place Shaping	Market Hall, Shrewsbury	Consideration to longer term maintenance and regeneration requirements
Place Shaping	Darwin Shopping Centre, Shrewsbury	Consideration to longer term maintenance and regeneration requirements
Place Shaping	Lord Hill Column	Heritage Asset - long term maintenance of structure
Place Shaping	Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area	Heritage Asset - long term maintenance of structures including Hoffmann Kiln and Chimney
Place Shaping	Snailbeach Lead Mine	Heritage Asset - long term maintenance of structures
Place Shaping	English Bridge Workshops, Shrewsbury	Consideration to longer term maintenance requirements
Place Shaping	The Bog Mine, Stiperstones	Heritage Asset - long term maintenance of structures
Place Shaping	Shrewsbury Museum	Consideration to longer term maintenance requirements

Committee	Cabinet 18 November Scrutiny Finance & Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date and Time	30 November Public

Quarter 2 Performance Report

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Heather Kidd – Leader of the Council
Lead Director:	Paul Clarke – Service Director Strategy and Change
Service Area:	Strategy and Change
Report Author	Mark Gwynne – Interim Business Intelligence Strategic Lead
Officer contact details	mark.gwynne@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All
Key Decision?	Non Key
Cabinet Forward Plan	Not applicable
Report considered by	*Not applicable*

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report presents the second Quarterly Performance Report against the Corporate Plan 2026-2030. The report – attached at **Appendix A** - provides a summary of progress using a performance framework including both 'delivery commitments' and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

1.2 The report communicates progress and impact in the delivery of the Council's six priority ambitions. It identifies key successes and impact, areas that may need focus, and possible topics for the Council's overview and scrutiny committees to identify where they can add value to the Council and for Shropshire communities (e.g. reviewing the impact of new policy and strategy).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- Review performance at Quarter 2 and confirm any areas in the report that need action to address them.
- Provide further feedback on the performance report that can be taken forward in further refinements to the report format.
- Propose emerging topics or issues as appropriate to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider for inclusion in their work programme.

2.2 Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- Consider the performance at Quarter 2 and identify any issues and topics that they would like to consider in greater detail in their work programme or to refer to one or more of the other overview and scrutiny committees.

3. Background

3.1 Shropshire Council adopted its new Corporate Plan 2026-2030 at its meeting on 14 May 2026. This was followed by Cabinet confirming the Performance Management Framework (PMF) on 10 June 2026, including the KPIs and 'Delivery Commitments' which form the basis of the Corporate Plan quarterly performance reporting.

3.2 The Corporate Plan, alongside the Improvement Plan and the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy provide the strategic framework for the Council over the coming years. They set out the focus and direction, and their delivery and evidence of performance and impact give assurance locally to members, staff and communities, and to those externally who are maintaining an overview of progress at the Council.

3.3 External scrutiny of the Council is significant as it continues to respond to the financial challenges and reduce its reliance on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). Since 1 April 2026 there has been a range of external reviews including an independent assurance review carried out by CIPFA on behalf of MHCLG, a SEND area visit / inspection, an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge follow-up visit, and the External Auditor Annual Value for Money Assessment. In July 2026, the Council received a Best Value Notice from MHCLG.

4. Quarterly Report Overview

4.1 The approach to performance reporting aims to provide a more rounded summary of how the Council is delivering against its priority ambitions as it continues on its improvement journey and flightpath to financial sustainability.

4.2 Over the year it will increasingly provide an outcome-based view of progress and impact. The respective quarterly reports will provide the basis for an annual report

which will be published in June each year and will bring together a summary of progress and impact for the previous year and set out the delivery commitments against each of the Corporate Plan ambitions for the coming year.

4.3 A key feature of the report and delivery is that it highlights performance that is higher or lower than expected. This enables greater focus on those measures and services that are not achieving expected progress or impact and supports identifying and managing associated risks to the Council achieving its priorities. This does mean that there will be different levels of focus and detail for each priority ambition in this report each quarter.

4.4 To provide a better understanding of relative performance, the Quarter 2 report, as well as showing performance compared to all upper tier and unitary councils, also now includes comparative information with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) family group of similar authorities (details of the Family Group members are shown on Page 43 of the Corporate Plan Performance Report, included as Appendix 1). This information is being used, alongside service planning, to inform local target setting which will be included in future reports. This group comprises the 15 councils most similar to Shropshire based on population, geography and demographic data; this therefore provides a better basis against which to compare our performance and set local targets.

4.5 Reporting contained within the report is based on the period July to September 2026. All KPIs and narrative within the report is therefore based on progress as at 30 September 2026 and therefore may reflect dates in the future, although some of these dates may have passed by the time the report has been presented through the reporting routes.

4.5 For next quarter there will be further evolution of the reporting to recognise that some data has cyclical trends within the year, comparative periods will be extended to include last quarter and the same period last year. This helps in identifying trends over time and avoids raising concerns around normal changes in performance data. Alongside this improvement, local targets will be established in line with benchmarks, priorities, resources and plans to drive improvement. This will support service planning and establishing longer term performance targets.

5. Progress Against Delivery Commitments and Key Performance Indicators

5.1 Whilst there are more delivery commitments slipping than in Quarter one, the report demonstrates significant progress and improvement in some areas of delivery, with a few key successes to highlight being:

- 9 of the 48 Corporate Plan delivery commitments have been completed by the end of Quarter 2, 29 are in progress / on track, whilst 5 are red rated and 5 amber rated.
- Reducing homelessness and stays in B&B accommodation has significantly improved over the last year, with no families now staying in B&B for more than 6 weeks.

- There has been a further increase in repair of potholes over the quarter, with 10,141 potholes repaired.

5.2 The report also shows areas where progress is not being made at the desired pace, and where possible a likely timeline for progress, including:

- Establishment of the corporate landlord function is a longer term workstream that is being picked up through the Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme.
- The review of cultural services is delayed until March 2027 to allow support from an independent expert to provide input and identify opportunities.
- Some housing delivery commitments have slipped awaiting arrival of the new Service Director who will ensure a focus on establishing the right milestones and drive them forward so we are able to accurately assess progress and any likely impact next quarter.

5.3 The report highlights 16 Red and 1 Amber rated KPIs (the same as in Quarter 1). An overview of some aspects where performance is below that of our comparators, shown as Red in Appendix A, with some being identified below:

- Road maintenance (T01 and T02) a sustained focus on increasing the pace of fixing potholes prevents road condition worsening further, but due to historic challenges of under investment in roads maintenance and repair, with road condition not comparing favourably with our benchmark authorities.
- Bus connectivity and journeys (T06 and T08) remain challenging with work continuing to progress new routes which will lead to an improvement in coming months.
- The rate of looked after children (HC13) has improved slightly but remains very high and improvement will be supported through increased emphasis from the Improvement Board and mobilisation of the Children's Transformation Programme, driving better outcomes and reduced cost.

6. Key Risks and Opportunities

6.1 The management of key performance indicators is a key process as an aspect of monitoring progress in the delivery of priority outcomes. This provides insight into areas which are performing as intended, or where 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. Service planning, regular budget monitoring and financial reporting are also parts of the wider performance, governance and risk management approaches within the Council which are being more closely aligned towards becoming an integrated framework.

6.2 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 performance management framework or the financial position of the Council. It is unlikely to 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. This will 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. This context has been used to set local performance targets against the key performance indicators contained within this report.

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Staff capacity to maintain levels of service provision and deliver the transformation required.	• Deprioritise service areas to stop or reduce levels provided to release more capacity. • Identify different ways that outcomes can be met and work with partners to confirm changes. • Identify specific functions and roles that are gaps to support the delivery of change and proceed to recruit to them to deliver the work required or backfill existing staff. • Communicate changes being made to service delivery and levels of service to help manage expectations and prevent increases in concerns and complaints.	Workforce, capacity and capability
Changes to services impacts on performance in other areas of the council	• Maintaining a cross-council view of transformation and service redesign and change that maps interdependencies and proactively identifies risks and mitigations to minimise or remove unplanned impacts.	Governance, Performance and Financial Weaknesses
Failure to achieve the Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments and other key projects and programmes	• Maintain frequent review of progress by Service Directors through their service plans and direct management of their senior managers and project leads. • Actions and plans to address slippage established and	Governance, Performance and Financial Weaknesses Achieving long-term financial sustainability

	implemented at pace to minimise an impacts and implications. • Visibility and transparency through quarterly review and reporting via the Corporate Plan Performance Report. • Business Plans for 2027/28 which will be developed during Quarter 3 will capture all deliver commitments with clear actions to ensure accountability for timely progress.	

7. Council Priorities

7.1 The Corporate Plan summarises the Council priorities and this performance report helps provide a view of progress and impact across all of them but fits most directly against 'A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excels.'

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications related to decisions in this report.

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1 The Council is a best value authority as set out in the Local Government Act 1999. As such it must ensure that it has effective methods of assessing its performance and ensuring best value across its services, in the undertaking of its statutory duties and the delivery of its priority policies. Tracking and mapping the performance of the Council against its Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan objectives is one way in which the Council can evidence and assess its progress.

9.2 This report provides a rolling update on progress against delivery commitments for the year which remain in progress: enabling effective oversight and challenge.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1 Not applicable.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1 There are no implications from this report. The report presents progress and performance that relates to all areas of the Council as they deliver the corporate Plan including social care and the economy.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications associated with decisions in this report.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no direct implications associated with decisions for this report. The Corporate Plan contains a strategic ambition focused on our environment, and climate change is a cross-cutting topic that should be considered in all service design and planning, commissioning and procurement, and decision-making.

14. Background Papers

14.1 Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2026-2030
14.2 Shropshire Council Corporate Performance Management Framework

15. Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Plan Performance Report – Quarter 2

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Shropshire Council

Appendix A

Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter 2, 2026/27

Rebuilding Shropshire Together









Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Progress and impact delivering our priority ambitions	Page 5
Ambition - A council that is financially sustainable	Page 7
Ambition - Communities are connected	Page 13
Ambition - People live in safe, inclusive places	Page 18
Ambition - Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive	Page 25
Ambition - An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing	Page 32
Ambition - A thriving economy that benefits everyone	Page 37
Annex 1 - How to read the performance dashboard	Page 42

Introduction

The Corporate Plan 2026-2030 was approved by Full Council on 14 May 2026. The Plan sets out the priority ambitions and focus for the Council over the next 4 years, and the 'Future Council Principles' that will drive improvement. The priority ambitions adopted within the Corporate Plan are:

- There is a financially sustainable council, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel
- Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure
- People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs
- Everyone has an opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life
- An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing
- A thriving economy that benefits everyone

This second quarter report provides a rounded summary of delivery against the Corporate Plan, including progress and impact through its improvement and financial sustainability journey, delivering the priority ambitions, the key decisions taken in the reporting period, and progress demonstrated by the key performance indicators (KPIs). A set of KPIs, drawing on those previously reported (as part of the Shropshire Plan) and are relevant to the Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments, measures from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Local Outcomes Framework (LOF) and some priority indicators that have been locally defined.

The report is structured around each of the six priority ambitions but recognises that many of the programmes or work and projects being implemented are cross Council and deliver more than one priority. The report focuses on highlighting 'exceptions' - positive exceptions where we should be celebrating successes, and negative exceptions where performance or progress has not been to plan or in line with original assumptions or targets. In doing so it acknowledges the different delivery timescales that are being taken to develop and implement the programmes, projects and initiatives that will see the Council achieve its priority ambitions over the next 4 years. As such each priority ambition may be covered in differing levels of detail each quarter.

Most of the Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments are on track to deliver the work in the timescales that were originally set, with a number being completed as planned. A small number have been identified as likely to slip slightly on the timescales set out in the performance management framework, but senior responsible officers are confident that this will have minimal implications on the overall delivery and impact. Building on the progress made in the first quarterly report, this report is structured around the Corporate Plan priority ambitions – with all aspects of progress collated in a single RAG rated view of the Delivery Commitments and Key Performance Indicators.

Quarterly Progress and Impact Report - Introduction

Quarter 2 of 2026/27 has seen further new and refreshed strategies and plans that, together with the Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan, provide direction for the council over the next 12 months and beyond. Amongst these, some of the key strategies are:

- A Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy approved by Cabinet on 8 July 2026 as part of the draft Medium-Term Financial Plan 2027/28 – 2031/32, setting out our 11-point route map to reduce reliance on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) and make progress to becoming a financially stable and sustainable council.
- Implementation of a new education strategy to elevate education standards across the county was approved in September. The Shropshire Children Achieving and Thriving in Education Strategy is a three-year strategy that is being rolled out now.
- The new Digital and Cyber strategies were approved by Cabinet on 8 July 2026, setting out a roadmap for the provision of digital services providing more accessible services and ensuring that required actions are taken to enable growth in digital services whilst working to ensure security and resilience to the growth in cyber threats.

A new Risk Management Framework was presented to Audit and Governance Committee on 25 September 2026 for consideration ahead of approval by Statutory Officers Group.

During Quarter 2 work continues to update the Improvement Plan, bringing together findings from external audit and assurance reports, feedback from the Improvement Board and other activity to inform improvement priorities – this revised Improvement Plan will be considered by Full Council in December and sets the framework and priorities for improvement over the coming years.

A summary table of overall RAG ratings for each Delivery Commitment and KPI is set out on page 6. The following sections are broken down for each priority ambition, providing a more detailed overview of progress by way of narrative, RAG rated view of the Commitments, RAG rated update on the relevant KPIs (long with comparative information) is shown followed by a more detailed narrative on those KPIs which are red rated for delivery or for the direction of travel. This format provides a more rounded view of progress in delivering the priority ambition during the period **July – September 2026**. It should be noted, that several of the delivery commitments cut across more than one priority ambition, but they are only shown once to avoid duplication and once a delivery commitment is completed no further updates will be provided in future reports. Likewise, not all KPIs are updated on a quarterly basis, so in these instances the most recent information is included.

All KPIs and narrative within the report are based on progress at 30 September 2026 and therefore reflect dates in the future, although some of these dates may have passed by the time the report has been presented through the reporting routes.

Shropshire Council

Progress and impact delivering our priority ambitions









Quarterly Progress and Impact Report - Overview

The Corporate Plan sets out six Priority Ambitions for the Council. This report shows progress against these ambitions, however, much work cuts across more than one ambition and therefore information has only been included once in the ambition that feels most appropriate. Some priority areas of work and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) also relate to how the Council is delivering its services, driving improvement or modernising ways of working. These aspects are shown after our ambitions.

Priority Ambition (Summary)	Overall RAG				Additional comment
	Delivery Commitments		Key Performance Indicators		
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	
Financially sustainable council	Green	Green	N/A	Amber	Although some slippage, half the commitments are completed.
Connected communities	Green	Green	N/A	Red	Small slippage but on track to be completed in year.
Safe inclusive places	Green	Amber	N/A	Amber	Some slippage which will be picked up by new Service Director.
Healthy and thrive	Green	Green	N/A	Green	Two slipping, but commitments are overall on track.
Environment and well-being	Green	Green	N/A	Green	All aspects progressing on track
Thriving economy	Green	Green	N/A	Amber	Progress on activity is going well, but some KPIs are challenging

Green	On target	Amber	Off target	Red	Original delivery date / target missed

The Corporate Plan KPIs provide a strategic view of the Council's performance in terms of the delivery of the Corporate Plan structured around our priority ambitions. Overall view of the Corporate Plan, forming the top layer of the performance management framework.

This link is to the overall Corporate Plan KPI Dashboard and provides a view of the most recent performance data which has been published nationally, a RAG rated view of how the council's performance compares to the national average and to our Family Group*, the direction of travel for the measure based on the previous reporting period.

Considered alongside the delivery commitments, the dashboard provides a baseline position to understand Shropshire Council's performance and is a tool to help inform understanding of progress and impact to help drive continuous improvement.

* Family Group – this is a group of the most similar councils as compiled by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and provides the best comparators against which to benchmark performance and establish realistic targets given the similar demography. A list of members of the Family Group is contained on Page 43.

Shropshire Council

A council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose and, a workforce that is supported to excel









A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel

Our Ambition

Our ambition is to secure the Council's financial future through clear priorities, strong governance, an engaged workforce and efficient, high-quality services. We will address our financial position, deliver robust and achievable savings plans, and remove the need for Exceptional Financial Support.

Overview of progress on delivering our priority ambition in Quarter 2

Work started in Quarter 1 continues to further build the conditions for a more financially sustainable, well-governed and delivery-focused council, supported by an increased focus on budget monitoring to deliver eh required savings targets in year. As part of the financial considerations, Cabinet in September 2026 approved the structured closure of the Cornovii company over a period of time to minimise the financial exposure to the Council, consistent with the requirements set out in the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy.

Development of the refreshed Medium-Term Financial Strategy remains on track, supported by the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy's 11-point plan to reduce reliance on Exceptional Financial Support. Roll out of the new business and budget planning approach commenced to support a more inclusive, disciplined and transparent budget-setting process ahead of Council in February 2027, underpinned by a new Business Planning approach: supporting alignment of service priorities, budget and delivering the priority ambitions. Approval by Cabinet in July 2026 of the new Digital Strategy and route map will help transform how services operate and how quickly residents can get answers, while the Cyber Strategy approved at the same meeting strengthens the council's ability to protect data and systems.

The People Change programme has moved from establishing individual workstreams to putting tangible organisational foundations in place. Role of the Manager, strengthened PDR arrangements, a developing performance framework and a more integrated approach to culture, engagement and communications are creating clearer expectations and better support for the workforce. The planned refresh of the People Plan now provides an opportunity to connect these interventions across people, process and technology and shift reporting from activity completed to evidenced impact, with clear baselines, success measures and customer outcomes.

Delivery of the Improvement Plan remains central to building a more effective organisation, with a refresh underway to ensure that this draws in learning and input from audit activity and external reviews. This refreshed Improvement Plan will be completed during Quarter 3 for approval and is underpinned by more effective programme, performance and risk management approaches that have been developed during the quarter. The main areas requiring sustained attention (including corporate governance and compliance) continue to be challenging, and work has progressed on each throughout Quarter.

What we are doing in Quarter 3

- Update and approval of a refreshed Improvement Plan in December 2026
- Approval of the refreshed People Plan and launch of the Role of the Manager programme
- Approval of Adult Social Care Transformation Plan by Cabinet in October 2026
- Report on Asset Strategy & Corporate Landlord Transformation Programme to Cabinet in November 2026

A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel

Progress on Delivery Commitments

Update for Quarter 2

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
A budget for 2027/28 and MTFP that reduces our reliance on EFS (February 2027).	**Q2** – On track to meet planned timescales. Budget development is underway with full budget and EFS needs ready for consideration by Cabinet and Council in February 2027.	Finance	Executive Director S.151		
Review of council relationship with Cornovii Development Limited (July 2026).	**Q2** – On 9 September 2026 Cabinet approved the structured closure of the Company over a period of time (Section 4; Option 6) in order to minimise the financial exposure to the Council, consistent with the requirements set out in the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy.	Housing	Executive Director S.151		
A new Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord function resetting how the Council's property is governed and managed (developed by July 2026).	**Q2** - This work in ongoing and picked up through the Transformation Programme where the first phase of establishing asset transfer programmes is complete. Asset Strategy and and Corporate Landlord brief is due to go to a mini-competition in November 2026. Further work will continue in to 2028/29. Whilst the original timescale has been missed, a report is going to Cabinet in November 2026.	Finance	Service Director Place Shaping		
An Adults Social Care transformation programme with an emphasis on prevent, reduce and delay, and flexible market options (developed by September 2026).	**Q2** - On track. The Adult Social Care Transformation Plan has been developed and is being presented to Cabinet on 14 October 2026, setting out the four strategic themes and associated eleven identified programmes.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Adult Social Care		
A new Adult Social Care Strategy – outlining key priorities and operating model for adult social care (October 2026).	**Q2** - Engagement on the refreshed Adult Social Care Strategy has supported development of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme which will be presented to Cabinet in October 2026. This will support establishment of a more sustainable operating model for adult social care.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Adult Social Care		
Continued delivery of the Improvement Plan, reporting progress and impact to the Improvement Board (ongoing).	**Q2** - The Plan continues to provide the basis for the delivery of improvement activity across the Council though various priority programmes for action. The Plan is due to be reviewed and updated to reflect programmes delivered, and to respond to further external reviews and recommendations.	Leader	Service Director Strategy and Change		
Develop a customer charter that sets out how we work with residents and other customers (December 2026).	**Q2** – Draft Charter prepared informed by benchmarking with other Local Authorities. Session held with Senior Leaders for feedback. Further revisions to the draft in progress ahead of being presented to Cabinet.	Communities and Environment	Service Director Communities and Customer		

What is Completed

- Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Strategy approved by Cabinet in June
- Review of in-house provider services (Adult Social Care completed with Cabinet taking decisions in June
- Digital Strategy approved by Cabinet in July
- Cyber Strategy approved by Cabinet in July
- Relationship with Cornovii decided by Cabinet in September

A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel

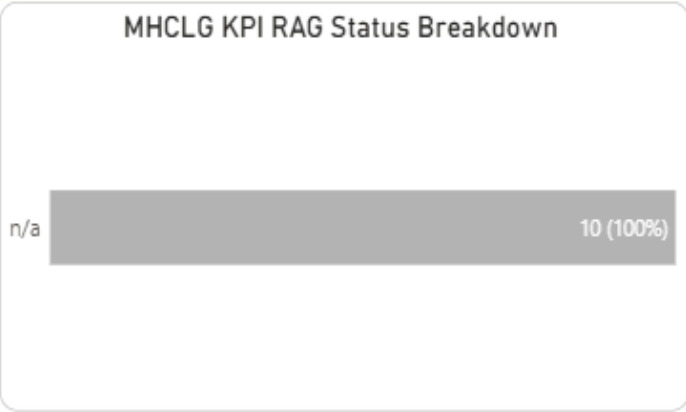
Progress on Delivery Commitments (continued)

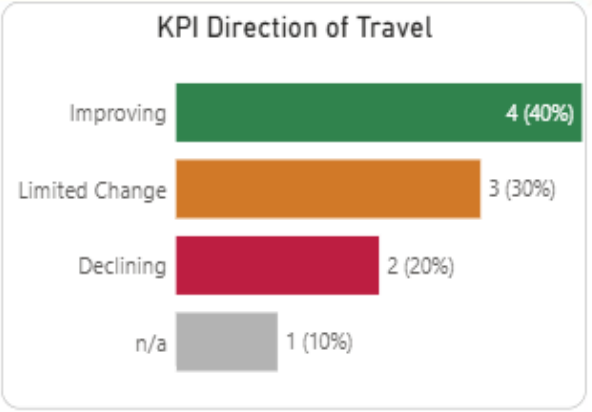
Update for Quarter 2

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
Review of cultural service offers to ensure financially sustainable delivery (October 2026).	**Q2** – A procurement process is currently ongoing to secure an independent expert to undertake the review of the Shrewsbury Museums services and Shrewsbury Castle. The timeline for the review to be delivered is later than originally planned, but the report will be available within the 2026-27 financial year. This will now be completed by March 2027.	Deputy Leader and Transformation and Economic Growth	Service Director Communities and Customer		
A new council constitution (December 2026).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales. Draft currently being reviewed and scheduled programme of Member feedback sessions being developed ahead of approval.	Leader	Director of Legal and Governance		
Continued delivery of the People Plan to create a workforce that is supported and enabled to excel (ongoing).	**Q2** – Delivery of the People Plan continues with Manager Expectations, Manager Base Camp, strengthened PDR arrangements, a developing performance framework and a more integrated approach to culture, engagement and communications creating clearer expectations and better support for the workforce.	Finance	Service Director Enabling		
New digital and cyber strategies that enable council services that are joined up, efficient, simple and tailored to resident's needs (July 2026).	**Q2** – The new Digital Strategy and Cyber Strategy wereapproved by Cabinet on 8 July 2026.	Finance	Service Director Enabling		

10
Number of KPIs

A financially sustainable council with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel (F)	Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life (HC)
Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport, and infrastructure (T)	A protected and adaptive environment that harnesses our natural assets and promotes wellbeing (N)
Safe inclusive places with home that meet people's needs (P)	A fair, dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits everyone (E)





KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
F01	In year budget perfomance	Q2 2026	↓	£-1,059,297			-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F02	Income collection rate (council tax)	Q2 2026	↑	55.6%	↑ +26.9%	28.7%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F03	Income collection rate (business rates)	Q2 2026	↑	61.3%	↑ +26.1%	35.2%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F04	Number of Complaints Investigations Received	Q2 2026	↓	352.0	↓ -13.1%	405.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F05	Number of Complaints received	Q2 2026	↓	617.0	↑ +10.2%	560.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F06	Percentage of Complaints resolved within 15 days	Q2 2026	↑	54.5%	↘ -1.8%	56.3%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F12	Number of FOIs	Q2 2026	→	532.0	↗ +4.7%	508.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F13	Percentage of FOIs Overdue (+40 Days)	Q2 2026	↓	7.5%	↓ -3.1%	10.6%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F14	FOIs timeliness within statutory target (Completed within 20 days)	Q2 2026	↑	50.8%	↘ -4.0%	54.7%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
F15	Staff sickness absence - average lost days per FTE	Sep 2026	↓	10.0	↑ +19.1%	8.4	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local

A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel

Commentary on Red Rated KPIs

There are no red rate KPIs in this section, where performance is below that of comparator authorities. There is, however, one KPI where performance is worsening for which updates have been provided.

F04 – Number of complaints investigations received. The number of complaints received by the council has continued to increase throughout the year, building on the already high numbers in Quarter 1. This has resulted in a backlog and limited staff capacity to reduce the delays. There are a number of possible factors for this increase in demand, including growing use of AI to create complaints. There are also currently more complaints escalating to Stage 2: adding further pressure. Appointment of an additional staff member to support training and early resolution of complaints is expected to lead to improved awareness within the organisation of the work that can be undertaken to early resolve and remedy complaints.

Shropshire Council

Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure









Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure

Our Ambition

We want every community to be connected by safe, well-maintained roads and accessible, greener transport. Through improving infrastructure, journey times and access to public transport, and enabling and promoting options and opportunities for walking and cycling, we will reduce isolation. Linked to our inclusive growth plans this will help open-up opportunities to access work, education, healthcare and trade, strengthen wellbeing and protect the natural environment.

Delivering our priority ambition in Quarter 2

Shropshire's transport and highways work is focused on delivering safer, more reliable and more sustainable journeys for residents, businesses and communities across a large rural county. Performance data has been enhanced with comparative information from similar rural authorities facing common challenges to Shropshire. This provides a better comparator and helps position performance alongside similar areas allowing more meaningful target setting and learning from others. Work on the Local Transport Plan continues which will support alignment of national requirements with local need, asset condition and available resources.

Road condition surveys completed in 2025 provide the baseline for measuring progress and show that Shropshire is below the national average for A, B and C roads, reflecting the scale of maintenance pressures across an extensive and dispersed rural network.

During Quarter 2, work has continued on the immediate priority to stabilise the network by responding effectively to weather-related damage and continuing to tackle potholes. In Quarter 2 there were 10,141 pothole repairs completed (continuing an upward trend from 9,956 in Quarter 1 and up significantly from 7,870 in Q2 2025/26. This work is essential in stopping the further deterioration of the roads.

Consultation on the new Local Transport Plan is underway which will help to understand residents' priorities and inform bus routes to enable an increase in journeys over time. However, Shropshire remains one of the lowest-ranked authorities for bus passenger journeys, underlining the challenge of providing viable services in rural areas, where bus journey times through small villages with many stopping pints can be significantly longer than a more direct car journey.

In September, a new bus service was announced to start in November between Newtown and Craven Arms – via Montgomery, Churchstoke, Chirbury, Clun and Bishop's Castle. The new X81 service is a collaboration between Shropshire Council and Powys County Council and will be operated by Tanat Valley Coaches. It will operate six days a week, with four journeys a day in each direction, which will help improve connectivity and journeys KPIs for Quarter 3 and beyond.

What we are doing in Quarter 3

- Consideration of the Highways Future Service Model by Cabinet in October 2026
- Approval of a revised Highways Maintenance Strategy and Inspection Policy by Cabinet in November 2026
- Continued delivery of highways maintenance statutory responsibilities
- Consultation of the Local Transport Plan

Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure

Progress on Delivery Commitments

Update for Quarter 2

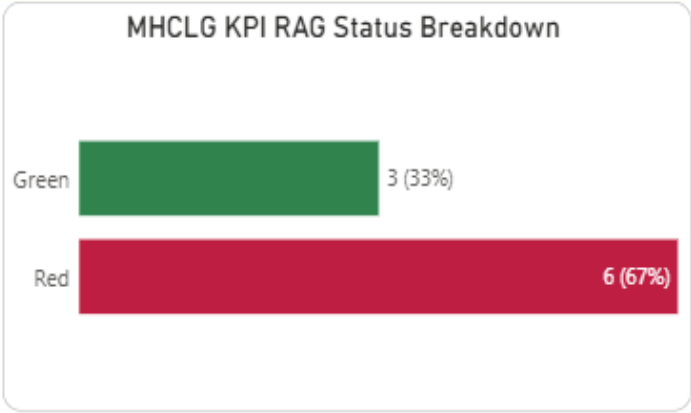
Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
A new Local Transport Plan (March 2027).	**Q2** - Consultation has started across Shropshire enabling a report to go to Cabinet in February presenting feedback from the consultation and ready for reporting to Council in March 2027.	Transport and Regeneration	Service Director Infrastructure		
Develop and shape a new operating model for highways services (March 2027).	**Q2** - The existing highways contract is being extended to March 2028, in line with the agreed contract terms, enabling an options appraisal to progress through to December 2026. This will enable commissioning decisions and the appropriate procurement route to be followed for a new contract to be in place from March 2028. Shown as Amber due to the revised timeline presented.	Highways and Waste	Service Director Infrastructure		
A new Highways Maintenance Strategy and Inspection Policy to align with new DfT funding criteria (June 2026).	**Q2** – The revised Strategy and Policy have been developed and going to Cabinet in November 2026 in line with revised DfT requirements. This commitment is shown as red due to original timescale not being achieved, but will be completed in Q3.	Highways and Waste	Service Director Infrastructure		
Continued focus and delivery of highways maintenance statutory responsibilities and investment in preventative maintenance (measured by road condition KPI).	**Q2** - Work continues on repairing potholes with 10,141 repaired in Q2 (an increase from 6,956 in Q1) whilst work continues on develping preventative approaches within available funding. Performance for A, B and C roads is below the national average and reflects the high length of roads across Shropshire's large rural geography.	Highways and Waste	Service Director Infrastructure		
Deliver 10 new or improved access routes / green space schemes to improve access to green space and support wellbeing (March 2027).	**Q2** – On track to achieve timescales. Work on this continues linked to the Green Infrastructure Strategy. We are working in partnership to develop the sites.	Communities and Environment	Service Director Place Shaping Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		

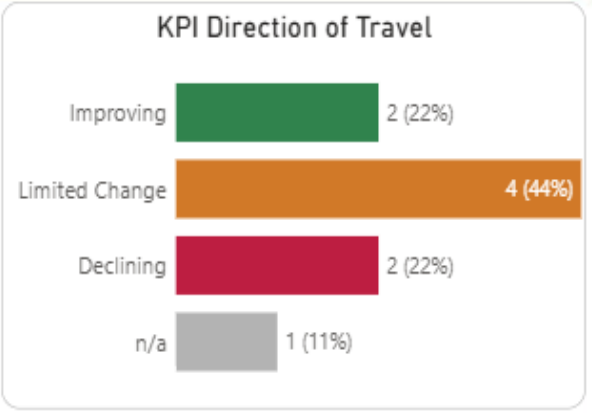
What is Completed

- Developmental work on the Local Transport Plan to enable consultation to commence.
- Work continues in all areas to drive improvement and work towards achieving performance targets.

9
Number of KPIs

A financially sustainable council with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel (F)	Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life (HC)
Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport, and infrastructure (T)	A protected and adaptive environment that harnesses our natural assets and promotes wellbeing (N)
Safe inclusive places with home that meet people's needs (P)	A fair, dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits everyone (E)





KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
T01	(LOF) Percentage of local authority motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance	FYE 2025	↓	10%	↗ +1.0%	9%	-	2% (24/25)	n/a	n/a	5% (24/25)	n/a	n/a	Published
T02	(LOF) Percentage of B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance	FYE 2025	↓	13%	↘ -1.0%	14%	-	6% (21/22)		n/a	7% (21/22)	112 of 119	☆ 6%	Published
T03	(LOF) Proportion of the local unclassifed roads that should be considered for maintenance	FYE 2025	↓	14%	↘ -2.0%	16%	-	15% (24/25)		n/a	16% (24/25)	72 of 137	★ 48%	Published
T04	(LOF) Passenger journeys on local bus services per head	2025	↑	9.8	↑ +5.4%	9.3	-	16.6 (2024/25)	10 of 12	☆ 18%	33.7 (2024/25)	75 of 79	☆ 5%	Published
T05	(LOF) Percentage change in service mileage year on year	2025	↑	6.7%	↑ +15.0%	-8.4%	-	3.9% (2024/25)	n/a	★ 100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	Published
T06	(LOF) Connectivity score for public transport to key services	2025	↑	43.4	n/a		-	50.3 (2025)	10 of 12	☆ 18%	71.3 (2025)	125 of 128	☆ 2%	Published
T07	(LOF) Number killed or seriously injured, per billion vehicle miles travelled	2024	↓	73.1	↑ +6.2%	68.8	-	66.2 (2024)	12 of 16	★ 27%	128 (2024)	54 of 152	★ 65%	Published
T08	(LOF) Percentage of adults who engaged in active travel at least twice in the last 28 days	2025	↑	26%	↓ -5.7%	31.7%	-	28.7% (2025)	13 of 16	☆ 20%	34.4% (2025)	132 of 153	★ 14%	Published
T09	(LOF) Public EV charging devices per 100,000 population	Q1 (Jan-Mar) 2026	↑	162.1	↗ +0.4%	161.5	-	163 (Q1 2026/27)	9 of 16	★ 47%	193 (Q1 2026/27)	59 of 151	★ 61%	Published

Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure

Commentary on Red Rated KPIs

There are six red rate KPIs in this section, where performance is below that of comparator authorities.

T01 – Percentage of motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance. The performance shown is for the same period as last quarter whilst more recent data is awaited. Additional funding for investment in improving roads is not therefore reflected in the data shown, but due to the condition of roads and geography of Shropshire, performance will remain red. The significant increase in repairs to potholes will stop roads from further deteriorating.

T02 – Percentage of B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance. The performance shown is for the same period as last quarter whilst more recent data is awaited. Additional funding for investment in improving roads is not therefore reflected in the data shown, but due to the condition of roads and geography of Shropshire, performance will remain red. The significant increase in repairs to potholes will stop roads from further deteriorating.

T04 – Passenger journeys on local bus services per head. The number of bus journeys has improved slightly (up by 5.4%) on the previous period. Work is underway to introduce new bus routes which will help to increase total journeys, however, in rural areas with high car ownership it is challenging to connect small villages with journeys fast enough to compete with driving.

T06 – Connectivity score for public transport to key services. The connectivity score for public transport to key services will also be improved by the new bus route mentioned in T05. The impact of this additional route will become evident towards the end of the year, whilst work continues on identifying opportunities for improving bus connectivity, travel and usage numbers.

T07 – Number killed or seriously injured, per billion miles travelled. The data presented represents the same period as reported last quarter. Shropshire's rate is similar to national average, but significantly worse than comparable authorities. Work continues as outline in the performance report last Quarter.

T08 – Percentage of adults who engaged in active travel at least twice in the last 28 days. The data presented represents the same period as reported last quarter. Given the rural nature of Shopshire, increasing active travel to the required level will remain challenging, although work continues as outlined in Quarter 1.

Shropshire Council

People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs









People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

Our Ambition

Working across the council and partners, we will deliver an integrated approach to identify and address the root causes of housing pressures and safety in our communities. We will deliver affordable, well-located homes, safer and more cohesive places for our communities, with resilient rural services, and enabling sustainable inclusive growth.

Delivering our priority ambition in Quarter 2

Work is progressing on the new Local Plan, with early scoping consultation completed with residents, town and parish councils, businesses and other stakeholders. This has helped identify the key issues and gaps that need to be addressed. This is a medium term piece of work and over the next year, important milestones will move the plan forward, closely aligned with the new Housing Strategy supporting delivery of the Corporate Plan.

Progress continues to be made across housing services and in the prevention of homelessness. Action continues on earlier identification of housing issues, targeted to households vis the floating support team, better access to welfare advice, private rented options, family mediation and supported housing pathways. These measures are intended to help more households remain safely housed and reduce pressure on temporary accommodation. No families have been in B&B accommodation for more than 6 weeks, which evidences a sustained focus and achievements in supporting people to meet their housing needs. More detailed progress and the continued focus on earlier intervention and whole-system homelessness prevention were reported to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September.

Shropshire Local Mobile expanded to include Ellesmere for a four-month trial period, making it even easier for residents to get face-to-face, in-person support to help access Shropshire Council services.

Training has taken place on recognising and responding to economic abuse to enable greater understanding of how this is shaped by people's lived experience, including the impact on young people and families.

Work continues on strengthening food standards and private water supplies.

Progress has been made on development of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was reported to Cabinet on 9 September 2026, along with the agreement to start consultation on the Council Tax Support Scheme, supporting lower income and vulnerable people to live inclusively within their communities.

What we are doing in Quarter 3

- Continuation of Local Plan Green Belt review
- Continued work on development of consultation to inform the Local Plan

People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

Progress on Delivery Commitments

Update for Quarter 2

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
Implementation of the single Children's Transformation Programme year 1 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 (March 2027).	**Q2** – There has been significant work underway to progress the restructure of teams into localities. Delays in several key areas are starting to impact on overall progress. Work is underway to secure the right capacity, seek to resolve the impact of planned system changes and to help create the conditions for the culture change required to prevent delays to the overall implementation. Confirmation of securing SEND Reform funding will support delivery of the programme.	Children and Education	Service Director Families First Partnership		
A programme of accessible and inclusive sessions on economic abuse within the context of domestic abuse – enabling people to manage their finances (March 2027).	**Q2** – Economic abuse sessions fully developed with input from lived experience group with sessions advertised and bookings commenced for delivery in Q3 and Q4.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Strategy and Change		
An agreed approach to working with parish and town councils to deliver services and outcomes (March 2027).	**Q2** – Learning from experience working with Town and Parish Councils is being compiled to develop future working opportunities.	Deputy Leader and Transformation and Economic Growth	Service Director Strategy and Change		
An updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan providing a framework for managing, maintaining and developing our council housing stock (September 2026).	**Q2** – Cabinet approved tthe Housing Revenue Account Business Plan at its meeting on 9 September 2026. This report presented the HRA Policy and Business Plan enablign further work to be undertaken to support potential applications for Government grant funding to increase capacity within the HRA stock, which would require further Cabionet approval before submission.	Housing	Service Director Communities and Customer		
Increase the number of households where homelessness is prevented to start to reduce our use of temporary accommodation (ongoing, measured by KPI).	**Q2** – Strong progress continues in shifting the service towards earlier intervention and homelessness prevention. The latest published H-CLIC performance (Q1 2026/27) shows that 55.18% of households owed a homelessness duty were accepted at prevention stage, compared with 36.48% in Q1 2025/26, while the proportion of duties successfully prevented increased from 15.75% to 31.93%. More recent operational data also demonstrates progress in reducing reliance on temporary accommodation: at the end of September 2026, 250 households were in temporary accommodation compared with 286 at the same point in 2025, while B&B use reduced from 100 households to 21. No families had been in B&B for more than six weeks.	Housing	Service Director Communities and Customer		

What is Completed

- Economic abuse sessions have been developed for delivery
- HRA Business Plan has been approved by Cabinet on 9 September 2026

People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

Progress on Delivery Commitments (continued)

Update for Quarter 2

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
Increase the number of households where homelessness is prevented to start to reduce our use of temporary accommodation (ongoing, measured by KPI).	**Q2** – Strong progress continues in shifting the service towards earlier intervention and homelessness prevention. The latest published H-CLIC performance (Q1 2026/27) shows that 55.18% of households owed a homelessness duty were accepted at prevention stage, compared with 36.48% in Q1 2025/26, while the proportion of duties successfully prevented increased from 15.75% to 31.93%. More recent operational data also demonstrates progress in reducing reliance on temporary accommodation: at the end of September 2026, 250 households were in temporary accommodation compared with 286 at the same point in 2025, while B&B use reduced from 100 households to 21. No families had been in B&B for more than six weeks.	Housing	Service Director Communities and Customer		
Review the Housing Allocations Policy and service in line with proposed national changes and timescales (December 2026).	**Q2** – Housing Overview and Scrutiny received a report on the Shropshire Council Allocations Policy & Scheme at its meeting on 9 September 2026. Scrutiny agreed to establish a rapid Task Finish Group to review the policy and make recommendations ahead of Cabinet being requested to approve commencing a public consultation on a refreshed policy – consultation on the draft policy will follow policy review.	Housing	Service Director Communities and Customer		
Develop a Housing Strategy (for consultation) aligning with the Local Plan development (December 2026).	**Q2** – This action is being paused for two reasons. Firstly, housing is awaiting the strategic needs assessment for housing which is being undertaken as part of the Local Plan. This document needs to inform the priorities of the Housing Strategy. The second reason is to allow the new Service Director for Housing to lead the production of the Strategy and consultation process once they are in post. This will now work to a revised timescale of March 2027.	Housing	Service Director Communities and Customer		
Strengthen Food Standards and Private Water Supplies delivery as part of our environmental health and protection services, in accordance with regulations (ongoing).	**Q2** – Unable to recruit in round one, so currently re-advertised with interviews to be held Q3.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		
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).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales.	Leader	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		
Recommission our mandatory public health service contracts – including: a. 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).	**Q2** – Working with Legal and Procurement to work through extending the drug and alcohol contract to end March 2028 utilising the PSR Regulations to put this in place through a direct award for 1 year. Once in place (anticipated October / early November 2026 pending financial negotiation and agreement) the new opportunity for drug and alcohol services will be advertised under through the PSR competitive tender process for the new service to begin April 2028.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		

People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

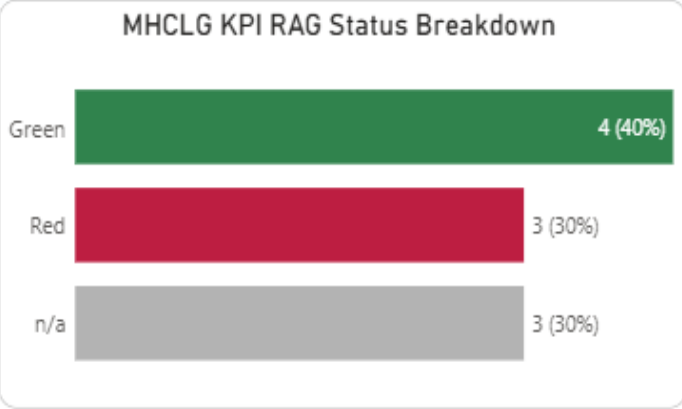
Progress on Delivery Commitments (continued)

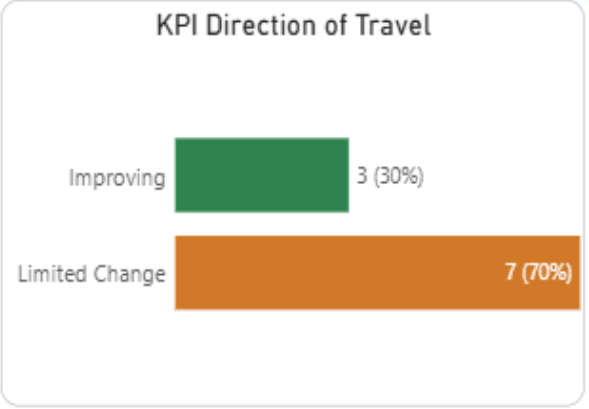
Update for Quarter 2

Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
b. 0-19 Healthy Child Programme to provide support for young people and their families (from April 2027).	**Q2** – Public Health Nursing Service contract out to procurement November 2026 with a view to new contract commencing October 2027.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		
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).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales. Planning for new strategy development has commenced alongside key milestones and timeline.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		
Work with partners to develop a system-wide strategic approach to neighbourhoods including neighbourhood health as part of the national mandate (December 2026).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales. Work continues across the system to develop the framework for neighbourhood health. Progress to date has been presented at HWBB & SHIPP workshops.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		
Continue to develop and coordinate the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) delivery plan (ongoing).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales. CRF and heating oil applications are available, and funding distributed to partners as per the delivery plan to provide additional capacity to deliver advice and support services. Returns are made to DWP on bi-annual basis. Welcome Space (Warm Hub replacement scheme delivering resilience support) & Food Bank proposals approved and funding provided to VCSE partners for implementation over Q3 and Q4.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		

10
Number of KPIs

A financially sustainable council with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel (F)	Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life (HC)
Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport, and infrastructure (T)	A protected and adaptive environment that harnesses our natural assets and promotes wellbeing (N)
Safe inclusive places with home that meet people's needs (P)	A fair, dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits everyone (E)





KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
P01	(LOF) Percentage of people experiencing loneliness	2025/26	↓	7.4%	↗ +1.1%	6.3%	-	6% (2025/26)	11 of 16	☆ 33%	7% (2025/26)	40 of 131	★ 70%	
P02	(LOF) People are satisfed with their local area as a place to live	2025/26	↑	84.4%	↓ -0.9%	85.3%	-	79% (2025/26)	3 of 16	★ 87%	70% (2025/26)	7 of 131	★ 95%	
P03	(LOF) People feel they can infuence local decisions	2025/26	↑	25.7%	↘ -2.0%	27.8%	-	26% (2025/26)	7 of 16	★ 60%	27% (2025/26)	62 of 131	★ 53%	
P04	Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000	Jul 2026	↓	0.8	↓ -3.8%	0.8	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
P05	Crime incidents -responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty and through their statutory role in leading CSPs	Q1 2026	↓	47.5	↘ -1.4%	48.1	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
P06	Number of affordable homes completed	2026/27 Q2	↑	63.0	↑ +6.8%	59.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
P07	(LOF) Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved	2026/27 Q2	↑	34.8%	↘ -2.1%	36.9%	-	41% (2025/26 Q4)	13 of 16	☆ 20%	44% (2025/26 Q4)	117 of 146	★ 20%	Local
P08	(LOF) Percentage of families in B&B over 6 weeks	2025/26 Q4	↓	0%	→ 0.0%	0%	-	1% (2025/26 Q4)	1 of 14	★ 100%	8% (2025/26 Q4)	1 of 114	★ 100%	Published
P09	(LOF) Percentage of local authority-owned social housing deemed decent	05/2026	↑	94.4%	↘ -0.2%	94.7%	-	92% (2024/25)	1 of 6	★ 100%	n/a	1 of 93	★ 100%	Local
P10	(LOF) Percentage of rental housing in the local authority area deemed decent	2024	↑	76.2%	↗ +1.1%	75.2%	-	81% (2024)	11 of 16	☆ 33%	83.7% (2024)	120 of 132	☆ 9%	Published

People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

Commentary on Red Rated KPIs

There are three red rate KPIs in this section, where performance is below that of comparator authorities.

P01 – Percentage of people experiencing loneliness. This is an annual measure which is based on a survey sample, so although showing a change of 1.1%, this is within the confidence intervals for the survey. Shropshire performance is in line with MHCLG comparators, with rural areas seeing an increase in feeling of isolation and loneliness, however, there is a continued focus on supporting people to prevent loneliness and ensure inclusive communities.

P07 – Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved. To date, the focus has been on reducing use of B&B accommodation, which has progressed well. Work, however, continues to focus on early identification and target support on issues as they arise, through the floating support team, which will help create an impact over time in preventing homelessness.

P10 – Percentage of rental housing in the local authority area deemed decent. Performance continues to show steady improvement towards achieving the target. An increased focus on this are and further development of the Council's role in enforcing the Renter's Rights Act is expected to drive performance in the right direction.

Shropshire Council

Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life









Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life

Our Ambition

Our ambition is for everyone to be healthy, safe and thrive throughout life. We will enable this by tackling inequalities through prevention and early help, provide the right support at the right time, protect vulnerable people and promote independence. With partners, multi-agency hubs and a local workforce, we will deliver child-friendly, joined-up services.

Delivering our priority ambition in Quarter 2

For children and families, work continues on shaping and delivery of the Single Children's Transformation Programme , rebalancing the system towards prevention, inclusive practice, stronger family voice, better use of data, improved commissioning and multi-agency support. Improved reporting has been established enabling greater understanding and scrutiny by elected members, whilst supporting managers to drive performance.

Cabinet approved the Shropshire Achieving and Thriving in Education Strategy 2026-29 at its meeting on 8 July 2026 which sets out the ambitious strategy to ensure children and young people achieve and thrive in education in Shropshire. It clarifies Shropshire Council's approach to education quality and safeguarding standards whilst recognising and responding to the increasingly diverse nature and autonomy of most educational settings within Shropshire. The Strategy sets expectations and monitoring arrangements for achievement, attendance, behaviour, inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and safeguarding. It introduces a countywide framework using regular data analysis, targeted visits and structured strategic conversations with leaders (including academy trusts) to identify risk early, provide challenge and broker support. Following submission of the SEND Reform Plan to the Department for Education in June, the Council will receive money from the government to pay off 90% of its historic debts accrued through supporting children and young people with SEND. This will work alongside the roll-out of improved services through the Transformation and Experts at Hand grant and will be rolled out through to September 2030.

A new Foster Payments Arrangement Policy was approved by Cabinet on 9 September 2026 and, also in September, public consultation started on proposals to change the Council Tax Support Scheme so that Child Benefit is no longer counted as household income when support is calculated – which is intended to provide additional support for low-income families with children.

For adults, rising demand, an ageing population and ongoing support needs have informed the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme. This aligns with delivery of the new Adult Social Care Strategy and a sustained focus on achieving the best outcomes within available resources. Early delivery is already underway through the optimal care and community independence pathway, including use of technology to help people remain at home for longer.

The Adult Social Care Transformation Programme has been developed ready for approval in November, with work underway on the Adult Social Care Strategy.

What we are doing in Quarter 3

- Continue to deliver the Children's Transformation Programme
- Approval of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme and developing the Adult Social Care Strategy
- Expand integrated neighbourhood working (Community and Family Hubs)

Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life

Progress on Delivery Commitments

Update for Quarter 2

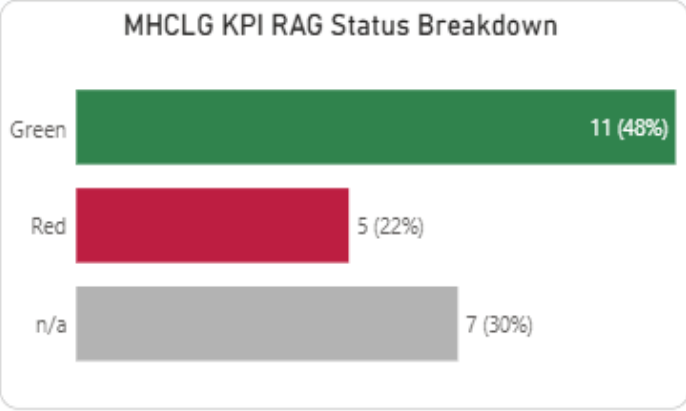
Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
Deliver (Year 1 of) the Local Area SEND Reform Plan including phase one of the Experts at Hand (March 2027).	**Q2** – SEND Plan approved by the Department for Education. This will see £41 million contributed towards the high needs deficit. The recruitment to key roles is underway. Approved governance in place. Data return planned for October 2026.	Children and Education	Service Director Families First Partnership		
Work with DWP to support families on benefits and reduce the impact of child poverty e.g. by expanding free school meals April 2027).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales. Work underway with DWP to reduce the impact of child poverty by supporting families on benefits. Set up work is largely complete with implementation from September through a rolling programme over the school year.	Children and Education	Service Director Families First Partnership		
Ensure sufficient nursery places to enable parents to access work (April 2027).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales. Some challenges with recent poor quality Ofsted inspections which could potentially impact on capacity. Team offering support to settings.	Children and Education	Service Director Families First Partnership		
Develop and implement a financially sustainable library service (March 2027).	**Q2** – A report will be presented to November Cabinet entitled: Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries – consultation which will request permission from Cabinet to launch a public consultation on the libraries service.	Communities and Environment	Service Director Communities and Customer		
Expand integrated neighbourhood working through Community & Family Hubs (Best Start in Life) and VCSE partners for priority areas aligned to statutory requirements (September 2026).	**Q2** – Work continues to align programmes of work to meet statutory requirements. The BSiL delivery plan has been developed and approved by the Department for Education. Sites for the BsiL Family Hubs have been selected and delivery commenced in some areas. The Lantern is operational with reduced offer awaiting recruitment to new vacancies.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Families First Partnership / Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		
Expand community-based wellbeing and prevention services into library and community hub spaces (March 2027).	**Q2** – Expansion of community-based wellbeing and prevention services continues in library and community hubs and is being mapped alongside Healthy Neighbourhoods, ASC and CSC transformation programmes.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Service Director Deputy Director Public Health		

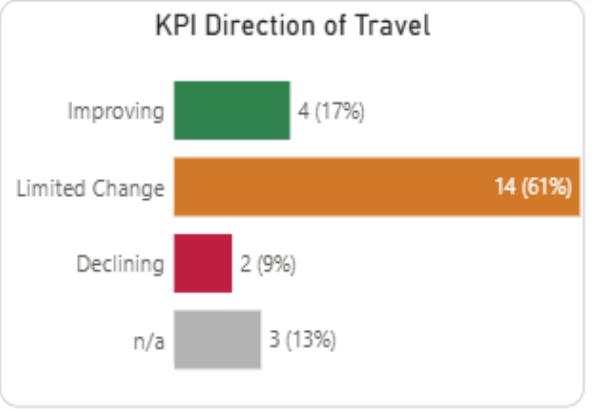
What is Completed

- Development of the Achieving and Thriving in Education Strategy has been completed with the Strategy approved by Cabinet in July.
- The Foster Payments Arrangement Policy was approved by Cabinet on 9 September 2026

23
Number of KPIs

A financially sustainable council with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel (F)	**Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life (HC)**
Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport, and infrastructure (T)	A protected and adaptive environment that harnesses our natural assets and promotes wellbeing (N)
Safe inclusive places with home that meet people's needs (P)	A fair, dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits everyone (E)

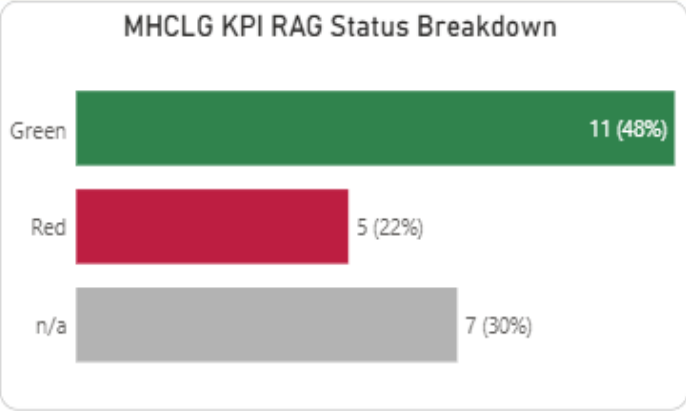


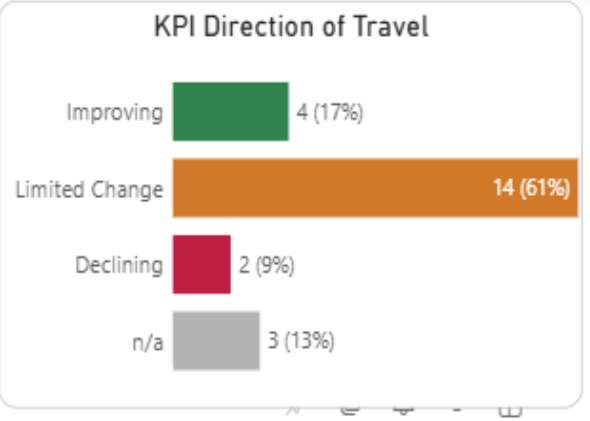


KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
HC01	(LOF) Proportion of people receiving long-term support living in their home or with family	Q2 26/27	↑	83.9%	↘ -0.5%	84.4%	-	75.1% (2024/25)	11 of 16	☆ 33%	77.6% (2024/25)	138 of 153	☆ 10%	Local
HC02	(LOF) Number of adults (65+) whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes (per 100,000 population)	Q2 26/27	↓	143.5	↓ -13.7%	166.3	-	573 (2024/25)	11 of 16	☆ 33%	594 (2024/25)	88 of 151	★ 42%	Local
HC03	(LOF) Overall satisfaction of care recipients with their care and support (1D ASCOF)	2024-25	↑	67.9%	n/a		-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Published
HC04	(LOF) Proportion of section 42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identifed, and the reported outcome was that the risk was reduced or removed	Q2 26/27	↑	87.5%	↗ +0.6%	86.9%	-	86.2% (2024/25)	5 of 16	☆ 73%	90.3% (2024/25)	35 of 150	☆ 77%	Local
HC05	% of people with a learning disability living independently (own home or family)	Q2 26/27	↑	60.1%	↘ -1.7%	61.8%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
HC06	(LOF) Proportion of people who received reablement during the year, who previously were not receiving services, where no further request was made for ongoing support (2A ASCOF)	2024-25	↓	81.5%	n/a		-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Published
HC07	(LOF) Health life expectancy at birth - male	2022 - 24	↑	63.0	↘ -2.6%	64.7	-	62.6 (2022 - 24)	5 of 16	☆ 73%	60.9 (2022 - 24)	38 of 151	☆ 75%	Published
HC08	(LOF) Health life expectancy at birth - female	2022 - 24	↑	62.4	↘ -3.7%	64.8	-	62.5 (2022 - 24)	9 of 16	★ 47%	61.3 (2022 - 24)	52 of 151	★ 66%	Published
HC09	(LOF) Slope index of inequality in life expectancy at birth -	2022 - 24	↓	5.1	↘ -2.2%	5.2	-	8.1 (2022 - 24)	2 of 16	★ 93%	10.4 (2022 -	7 of 150	★ 96%	Published

23
Number of KPIs

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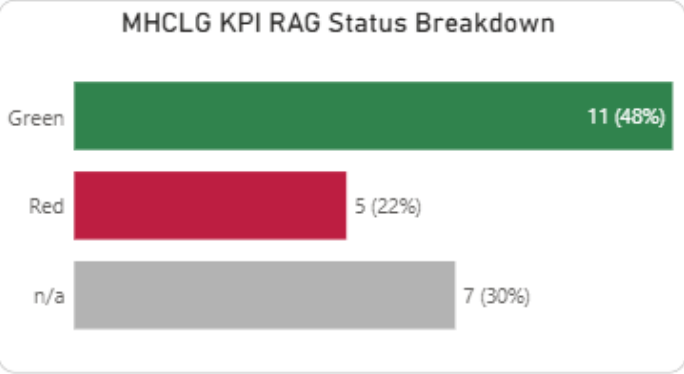


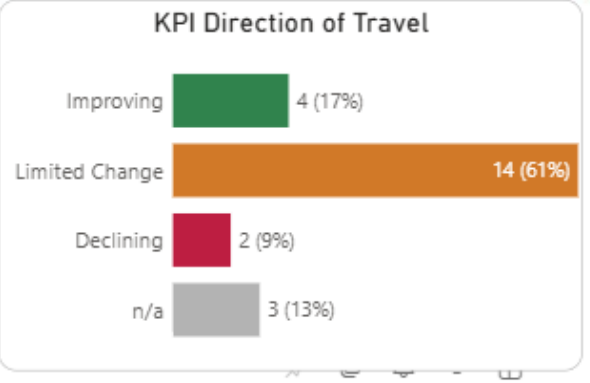


KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
HC10	(LOF) Slope index of inequality in life expectancy at birth - female	2022 - 24	↓	4.0	↑ +26.1%	3.2	-	6.2 (2022 - 24)	3 of 16	★ 87%	8.0 (2022 - 24)	16 of 150	★ 90%	Published
HC11	(LOF) Percentage achieving good level of development at 2-2.5 year review	2024/25	↑	65.6%	↘ -0.1%	65.7%	-	81.3% (2024/25)	14 of 15	☆ 7%	81% (2024/25)	134 of 140	☆ 4%	Published
HC12	(LOF) Year 6 obesity prevalence	2022/23 - 24/25	↓	19.2%	↗ +0.3%	18.8%	-	20% (2024/25)	7 of 16	★ 60%	22.7% (2024/25)	28 of 151	★ 82%	Published
HC13	(LOF) Rate of children looked after per 10,000	2024-25	↓	119.0	↘ -0.8%	120.0	-	64.0 (2024-25)	16 of 16	☆ 0%	73.0 (2024-25)	140 of 152	☆ 8%	Published
HC14	Rate of Child protection plans per 10,000 children	2026/27 Q2	↓	36.0	↓ -7.7%	39.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local
HC15	(LOF) Absence rate - Persistent absence	2025/26	↓	19.3%	n/a		-	17.1% (2024/25)	9 of 16	★ 47%	18.2% (2024/25)	50 of 153	★ 68%	Local
HC16	(LOF) Absence rate - Severe absence	2024/25	↓	2.1%	↘ -0.1%	2.1%	-	2.5% (2024/25)	4 of 16	★ 80%	2.4% (2024/25)	53 of 153	★ 66%	Published
HC17	(LOF) Percentage of children with a good level of development up to 5 years old	2025/26	↑	72.4%	↑ +4.4%	68%	-	69.5% (2024-25)	13 of 16	★ 20%	68% (2024-25)	83 of 153	★ 46%	Local
HC18	(LOF) Percentage of SEND children supported in mainstream schools	2024/25	→	18.1%	↑ +1.2%	16.9%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	23.8% (2024/25)	n/a	n/a	
HC19	(LOF) Percentage point difference between the proportion of children eligible or not eligible for Free School Meals achieving a Good Level of Development	2025/26	↓	31.4%	↗ +3.3%	28.1%	-	27.9% (2024-25)	10 of 16	★ 40%	21.3% (2024-25)	129 of 152	★ 15%	Local
HC20	(LOF) Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (17-18 year old)	2026/27 Q2	↑	68.8%	↗ +1.1%	67.6%	-	70% (2024/25)	14 of 16	★ 13%	65% (2024/25)	121 of 149	★ 19%	Local
HC21	(LOF) Percentage of care leavers in education, employment	2026/27 Q2	↑	53.8%	↗ +0.8%	52.9%	-	60% (2024/25)	14 of 16	★ 13%	55% (2024/25)	108 of 150	★ 28%	Local

23
Number of KPIs

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KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
HC22	(LOF) Percentage of young people (16 – 17) not in education, employment or training	2025/26	↓	3%	→ 0.0%	3%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Published
HC23	% of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (Statutory outcome)	2024/25	↑	12%	↓ -25.0%	37%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Published

Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life

Commentary on Red Rated KPIs

There are five red rate KPIs in this section, where performance is below that of comparator authorities

HC11 – Percentage achieving good level of development at 2-2.5 year review. Shropshire was at or above the expected level across all five areas of development at the 2–2½ year review, compared with 81.4% nationally and 78.0% across the West Midlands. Performance is broadly unchanged from 65.7% in the previous year and remains significantly below the national position. Additional work is also being undertaken to increase the uptake of the review, with the Public Health Nursing Service (PHNS) is working alongside the Best Start in Life programme to strengthen the home learning environment and other wider initiatives aimed at improving children's development across all domains.

HC13 – Rate of looked after children per 10,000 children. The data currently used to inform the dashboard is the latest nationally available data for 2024/25 whilst new data is awaited. Local data shows a reducing number of children coming into care, although this number remains high. Preventing children becoming looked after and stepping children down from being in care safely and appropriately remain the focus. There is a dedicated focus on this work and a clear plan to support children exiting care.

HC15 – Absence rate – persistent absence. Performance has dipped slightly from the previous year, however, still compares favourably to national and MHCLG comparators. this represents a small number of young people and work continues to support those children who are persistently absent.

HC19 – Percentage point difference between the proportion of children eligible or not-eligible for Free School Meals achieving a Good Level of Development. Targeted work is being progressed through the transformation programme to identify those children who need support. This is represents a small number of children (32) to shift performance, who are spread across the large geography of the area.

HC21 – Percentage care leavers in employment, education or training (19-21 year old). Our data in relation to over 18's in education employment and training remains slightly below the national average. It varies greatly across the year. Outside of college and university options, it can be difficult for our 18 year olds to secure long term apprenticeship or employment opportunities. Work is underway to work with businesses locally to increase opportunities, overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board.

Shropshire Council

An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing









An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing

Our ambition

We will harness Shropshire's natural and cultural assets to improve prosperity, health and wellbeing. By widening access to healthy lifestyles, supporting independent choices and strengthening community resilience, we will help people adapt to climate and energy pressures. We will promote locally generated renewable energy, reduce waste and encourage sustainable behaviour.

Delivering our priority ambition in Quarter 2

Work is continuing to develop the strategy for the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme with partners by March 2027 with a proposal going to Cabinet in December to launch consultation on the strategy. This will provide the foundation for future outline business cases for a major infrastructure programme designed to manage water more effectively, reduce risk, and support future growth. Through the Marches Forward Partnership, the council is also helping to shape national thinking on the links between water management, land use and growth.

Shropshire Council continues to take practical action to improve environmental performance, strengthen resilience, and support long-term sustainable growth. Recycling performance remains below target, with the latest data providing further evidence of a continued, but slow, decline in recycling rates continuing the impact of green-waste charging introduced in Autumn 2024. There was, however, an increase in green waste subscriptions in 2025 compared to 2024 which is hoped to continue into 2026.

The council is also strengthening its understanding of carbon emissions across the services it commissions and procures, where most emissions from council activity arise. Funded support from the Midlands Net Zero Hub will help develop more robust carbon accounting, enabling the council to identify where emissions can be reduced and where environmental action could also deliver financial benefits.

What we are doing in Quarter 3

- Continue to work on the strategy for the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme to report to Cabinet in December 2026 ahead of consultation

An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing

Progress on Delivery Commitments

Page 288

Update for Quarter 2

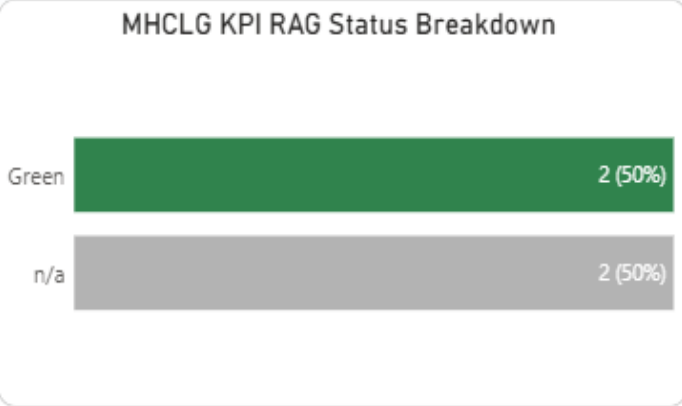
Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
Expand community reuse / repair schemes and promote alternatives such as home composting for food and green waste to reduce household waste per household (March 2027 measured by KPI).	**Q2** - On target to meet timescales for KPI improvement. The reduction in green waste charging continues to lead to increases in green waste and reduction of household waste. This is subject to weather impacting on volumes. Expansion of repair cafes, reuse schemesand other alternative approaches remain a priority to support a reduction in household wast.	Highways and Waste	Service Director Place Shaping		
Deliver and / or encourage energy efficiency improvements to 100 properties across Shropshire, prioritising rural, low-income and off gas (March 2027).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timelines. At end of the quarter there are 83 properties in the delivery pipeline.	Housing	Service Director Communities and Customer		
Deliver 10 priority projects / sites (e.g. wetlands, hedgerows, green spaces) in line with our Local Nature Recovery Strategy (March 2027).	**Q2** – On target to achieve timescales.	Communities and Environment	Service Director Place Shaping		

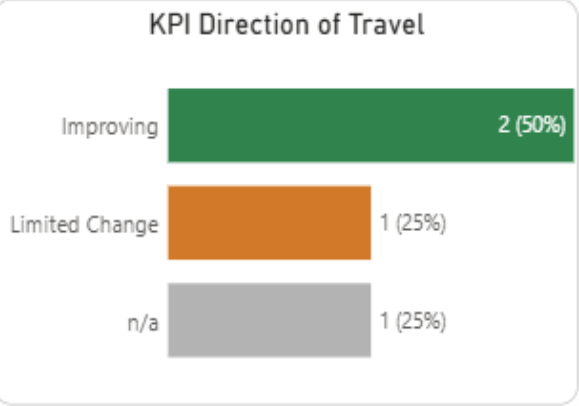
What is Completed

- Work continues in all areas of activity

4
Number of KPIs

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KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Aim	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank	National Average	LA Rank (1 is best)	National Percentile Rank	Published or Local Data
N01	(LOF) Percentage of total household waste sent for recycling/ compost/ reuse	Q1 2026	↑	51.3%	↑ +7.8%	43.4%	-	48.9% (2024/25)	7 of 16	★ 60%	39.8% (2024/25)	21 of 153	★ 87%	Local
N03	(LOF) Deaths attributable to particulate air pollution	2024	↓	4.1%	↗ +0.3%	3.9%	-	n/a		n/a	5.3% (2024)	12 of 153	★ 93%	Published
N06	(LOF) Access to green and blue spaces	2025	↑	85%	n/a		-	85% (2025)	9 of 16	☆ 47%	78% (2025)	47 of 153	☆ 70%	
N07	Net Emmisions of the Council (yearly change)	2025	↓	-20.2%	↓ -19.2%	-1%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Local

Shropshire Council

A thriving economy that benefits everyone









A thriving economy that benefits everyone

Our ambition

A more prosperous, connected and resilient county by driving sustainable inclusive growth, attracting investment and strengthening local opportunity. Through bold spatial planning, stronger partnerships, improved connectivity and a skills system aligned to employer needs, we will support priority sectors, attract and retain talent and create high-value jobs. This will help build a more inclusive, future-ready economy where ambition and opportunity are shared across the county.

Delivering our priority ambition in Quarter 2

Shropshire is building the foundations for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic growth. Development of the new Inclusive Growth Strategy is on track and will provide a clear framework for how the Council works with partners to improve opportunity, productivity and prosperity across the county. It is being developed alongside other major strategies, including the Local Plan, Housing Strategy, Local Transport Plan which are being presented to Cabinet later this year and work alongside the Achieving and Thriving in Education Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in September 2026. These ensure that growth is joined up with housing, transport, place, skills and public service priorities.

Preparation for work on a joint Spatial Development Strategy continues. Shropshire continues to perform strongly on employment, with working-age employment and the proportion of 18–24-year-olds in full-time education or employment both in the top quartile nationally. The births of new enterprise (E04) are slightly lower than our comparators in similar authorities. Survival rates remain stronger in Shropshire, with 63% of new businesses surviving three years compared with 53% nationally with many being small or micro businesses. However, average pay remains below the national average reflecting the nature of the jobs and main employment sectors in Shropshire compared to other areas of country.

Shropshire continues to strengthen its regional role through the Marches Forward Partnership, positioning the Marches as a practical model for cross-border collaboration that complements English devolution. The Marches Business Resilience Coalition continues to grow and bring together major infrastructure providers, local businesses, civic leaders, food suppliers, supermarkets and academic partners to develop a regional resilience model that supports economic growth.

Good digital connectivity is essential to a thriving, inclusive economy, enabling residents, learners, businesses and communities to access services, skills, markets and social connection. Shropshire's gigabit-capable broadband coverage is improving but remains below the national average and with our most comparable rural counties, reflecting the challenge of connecting physically to dispersed premises across a large rural geography. Earlier investment prioritised wider superfast coverage, balancing cost, reach and delivery speed and linkages need to be made with the emerging Sustainable Growth Strategy to support further digital rollout.

What we are doing in Quarter 3

- Developing the Inclusive Growth Strategy
- An update on Community Infrastructure Levy is in development for One Shropshire Board in November
- Continuing to work on arrangements for a Spatial Development Strategy

A thriving economy that benefits everyone

Progress on Delivery Commitments

Update for Quarter 2

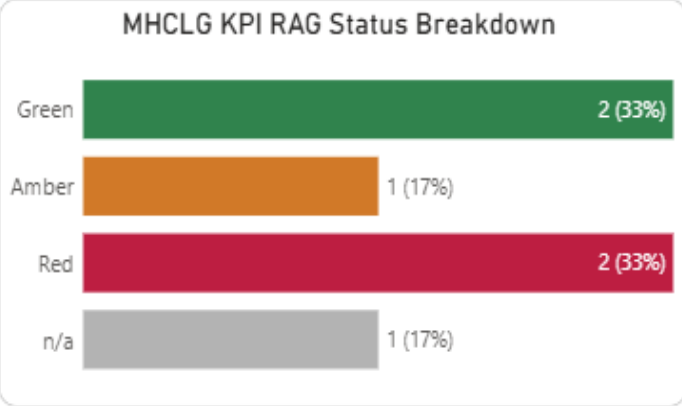
Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments for 2026/27	Progress Update	Portfolio Holder	Lead Director	Quarter 1 RAG	Quarter 2 RAG
A new (Economic Growth) Inclusive Growth Strategy that sets a clear direction for our economy to attract investment and deliver growth (April 2027).	Q2 - On track to meet timescales with next step to be corproate budget commitment and finalising the brief in December 2026.	Deputy Leader and Transformation and Economic Growth	Service Director Place Shaping		
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).	**Q2** - Progress on delviery continues. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Economic Development Needs Assessment were both commissioned in September 2026.	Planning	Service Director Place Shaping		
Publish an annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategy that provides clear direction for and increased utilisation of CIL funding (December 2026).	**Q2** - An update on CIL is proposed to go to One Shropshire Board in November 2026. A report is being prepared for Cabinet on SIL and the linkage with the Capital Programme. The CIL Annual Statement will be presented on schedule in December 2026.	Planning	Service Director Place Shaping		
Increase the proportion of premises in Shropshire with access to a gigabit capable broadband connection, working with broadband suppliers (measured by KPI).	**Q2** - Shropshire's gigabit-capable broadband coverage is improving but remains below the national average and with our most comparable rural counties, reflecting the challenge of connecting physically to dispersed premises across a large rural geography. Mapping of connectity and identifying areas in most need will enable engagement with providers to support improved delivery.	Deputy Leader and Transformation and Economic Growth	Service Director Place Shaping		
A proposed approach to a Shropshire Partnership (November 2026).	**Q2** – The original timescale for this work is being reviewed in the context of the changing national devolution landscape and discussions about future potential strategic authority arrangements (report developed for Cabinet on 14 October 2026) and work being planned as part of the Improvement Plan.	Communities and Environment	Service Director Strategy and Change		

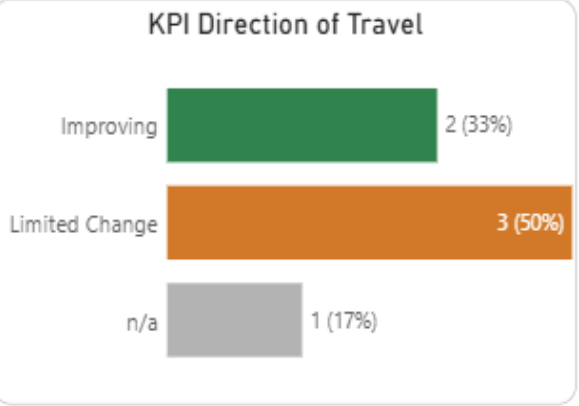
What is Completed

- All aspects of delivery continue into Quarter 3

6
Number of KPIs

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E01	(LOF) Employment rate 16-64 year olds	2026	↑	79.3%	→ 0.0%	79.3%	-	78.9% (2025 Q4)	9 of 16	★ 47%	75.1% (2025 Q4)	23 of 151	★ 85%	
E02	(LOF) 18-24 year olds in full-time education or employment	Q4_2025	↑	111.8%	↑ +33.9%	77.9%	-	94% (Q4 2025)	3 of 16	★ 87%	88.4% (Q4 2025)	14 of 148	★ 91%	
E03	(LOF) Percentage of working-age population with qualifications at RQF Level 4 or above	2026	↑		n/a		-	44.7% (2025)	4 of 16	★ 80%	47.8% (2025)	52 of 151	★ 66%	
E04	(LOF) Births of new enterprises	2024	↑	1,165.0	↘ -0.4%	1,170.0	-	1,302 (2024)	9 of 16	★ 47%	1,848 (2024)	95 of 153	★ 38%	
E05	(LOF) Gross median weekly pay	2025	↑	£727	↑ +4.0%	£699	-	£761 (2025)	13 of 16	★ 20%	£779 (2025)	96 of 151	★ 37%	
E06	(LOF) Percentage of premises with gigabit-capable broadband coverage	Jan 2026	↑	74.6%	↗ +2.1%	72.5%	-	82% (Jan 2026)	15 of 16	☆ 7%	91% (Jan 2026)	130 of 132	☆ 2%	

Commentary on Red Rated KPIs

There are two red rated KPIs in this section, where performance is below that of comparator authorities.

E04 – Births of new enterprises. Performance has dipped slightly since last reported and is marginally behind comparators. Whilst births is lower than some comparators, survival rates tend to be higher. Development of the Inclusive Growth Strategy will help pick up on these aspects and understand the need for incubator spaces, etc. to support the growth of small businesses.

E06 – Percentage of premises with gigabit capable broadband coverage. Performance has improved slightly but remains behind our comparator group. Mapping is proposed to generate a better understanding of the areas which don't have gigabit broadband coverage to enable working in partnership with local providers to meet needs where there is demand.

Shropshire Council

Annex 1

How to read the performance dashboard



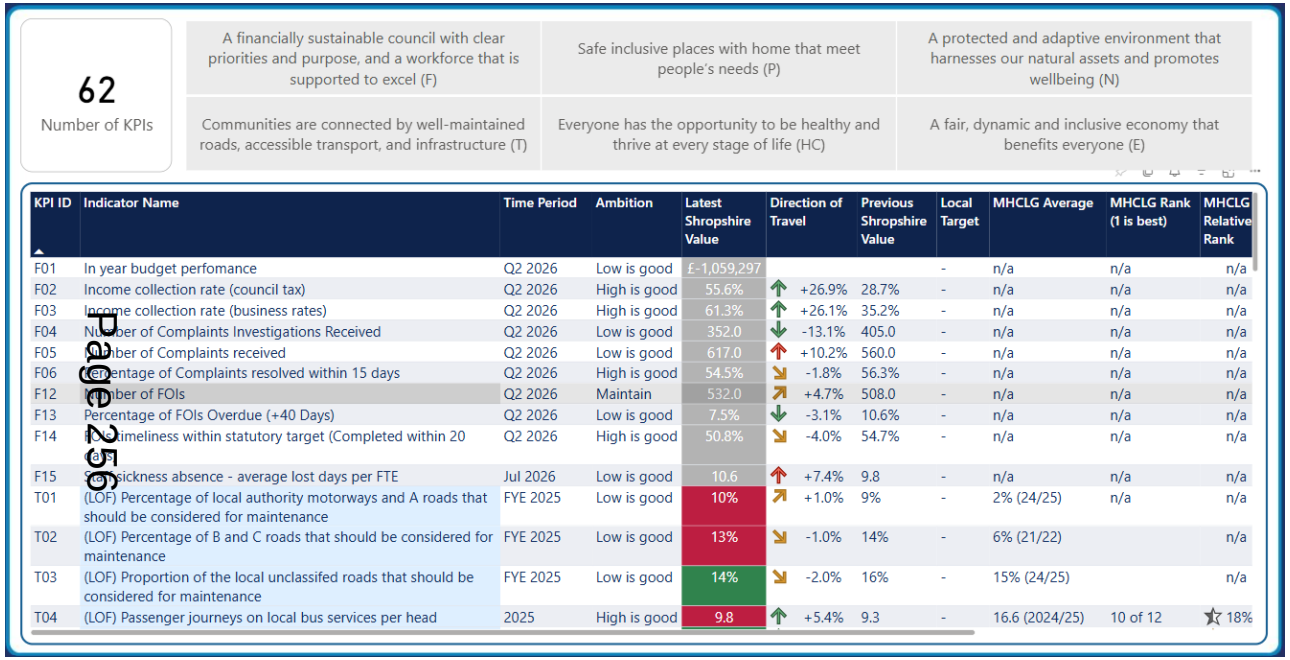






How to Read the Corporate Plan Performance Dashboard

This dashboard shows how Shropshire Council is performing against a range of key measures, known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
These measures help track progress against the ambitions set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.



KPI ID	Indicator Name	Time Period	Ambition	Latest Shropshire Value	Direction of Travel	Previous Shropshire Value	Local Target	MHCLG Average	MHCLG Rank (1 is best)	MHCLG Relative Rank
F01	In year budget perfomance	Q2 2026	Low is good	£-1,059,297			-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F02	Income collection rate (council tax)	Q2 2026	High is good	55.6%	+26.9%	28.7%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F03	Income collection rate (business rates)	Q2 2026	High is good	61.3%	+26.1%	35.2%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F04	Number of Complaints Investigations Received	Q2 2026	Low is good	352.0	-13.1%	405.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F05	Number of Complaints received	Q2 2026	Low is good	617.0	+10.2%	560.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F06	Percentage of Complaints resolved within 15 days	Q2 2026	High is good	54.5%	-1.8%	56.3%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F12	Number of FOIs	Q2 2026	Maintain	532.0	+4.7%	508.0	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F13	Percentage of FOIs Overdue (+40 Days)	Q2 2026	Low is good	7.5%	-3.1%	10.6%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F14	FOI timeliness within statutory target (Completed within 20	Q2 2026	High is good	50.8%	-4.0%	54.7%	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
F15	Staff sickness absence - average lost days per FTE	Jul 2026	Low is good	10.6	+7.4%	9.8	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
T01	(LOF) Percentage of local authority motorways and A roads that should be considered for maintenance	FYE 2025	Low is good	10%	+1.0%	9%	-	2% (24/25)	n/a	n/a
T02	(LOF) Percentage of B and C roads that should be considered for maintenance	FYE 2025	Low is good	13%	-1.0%	14%	-	6% (21/22)		n/a
T03	(LOF) Proportion of the local unclassifed roads that should be considered for maintenance	FYE 2025	Low is good	14%	-2.0%	16%	-	15% (24/25)		n/a
T04	(LOF) Passenger journeys on local bus services per head	2025	High is good	9.8	+5.4%	9.3	-	16.6 (2024/25)	10 of 12	18%

Shropshire's MHCLG Family Group		
1. Somerset	6. Herefordshire	11. Central Bedfordshire
2. Dorset	7. Westmorland and Furness	12. Rutland
3. Wiltshire	8. East Riding of Yorkshire	13. Cheshire West and Chester
4. Cornwall	9. Cumberland	14. North Somerset
5. North Yorkshire	10. Northumberland	15. Bedford

Ranked 1 – 15 from most to least like Shropshire

Understanding the Dashboard
Each row represents a different KPI and shows:

KPI ID – A unique reference number for the performance KPI

Indicator Name – The name of the KPI being reported.

Time Period – The period of time the data relates to (for example, a month, quarter, or year).

Ambition – The target or level of performance the Council aims to achieve.

Bigger = a higher value is better.
Smaller = a lower value is better.
Maintain = the aim is to keep performance at its current level.

Latest Shropshire Value – The most recent result for Shropshire.

Direction of Travel – Shows whether performance is improving, worsening, or staying the same compared with the previous reporting period.

- Green arrow = performance is improving
- Amber arrow = performance is remaining broadly the same but may require attention
- Red arrow = performance is worsening

The percentage shown alongside the arrow represents the change from the previous result.

Previous Shropshire Value – The result for the previous reporting period.

National Average – The average result across single tier authorities and county councils in England where this is available.

MHCLG Average – The average result across our "Family Group" of similar local authorities in England where this is available.

MHCLG Rank (1 is best) – Shropshire's position compared with other similar authorities and county councils, where 1 is the highest-ranked performer. Not all indicators have an available ranking.

Percentile Rank – Shropshire's position compared with other local authorities expressed as a percentile. A higher percentile indicates better performance.
For example:

- **90th percentile** = better than 90% of councils.
- **50th percentile** = around average.
- **10th percentile** = lower than most councils.

Published or Local Data – Indicates whether the data comes from a nationally published source or has been produced locally by the Council.

Note: Some indicators are better when the value is higher and others are better when the value is lower. The "Direction of Travel" and ranking measures help show whether performance is improving over time and how Shropshire compares with other councils.

Understanding the Colour Coding
The dashboard uses colours to help identify performance at a glance.
🟢 **Green** = performance is close to the MHCLG average. Indicators remain Green where performance is within **3% of the average**.
🟡 **Amber** = performance requires monitoring or attention. Indicators are rated Amber when performance is more than **3% from the MHCLG average** but less than **5% from the average for Red**.
🔴 **Red** = performance is below the national average and may require action. Indicators are rated Red when performance is **5% or more worse than the MHCLG average**.

The colour assessment takes into account the ambition for the indicator and the level of variation from the expected performance. To avoid unnecessary changes in status due to minor fluctuations, a **3% tolerance is applied between Green and Amber, and a 5% tolerance is applied between Amber and Red**.

Things to Remember

- Some indicators are better when the value is **high** (for example, recycling rates or income collection rates).
- Other indicators are better when the value is **low** (for example, sickness absence or road maintenance requirements).
- A change that looks positive for one KPI may be negative for another, depending on whether the ambition is **Bigger**, **Smaller**, or **Maintain**.
- National averages, ranks, and percentiles are only shown where comparable national data exists.
- The dashboard is intended to provide a clear overview of performance and trends, helping councillors, staff, and residents understand how the Council is performing and where improvement may be needed.

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Cabinet

18 November 2026

State if
Public

Review of Highways Maintenance Strategy and Highways Inspection Policy

Cabinet Member:	David Vasmer
Lead Director:	Andy Wilde – Service Director
Service Area:	Infrastructure
Report Author	Steve Holdaway – Executive Manager Highways Operations
Officer contact details	Steve.holdaway@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All Electoral Division(s)
Key Decision?	Yes
Cabinet Forward Plan	12 May 2026
Report considered by	Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 1 September 2026

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The last update of Shropshire Council's Highway Inspection Manual was approved by the Council in February 2019. Such policies require regular review and maintenance to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice and adapt to changes in risk.

1.2. Similarly, the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy was also approved in 2019. These are the core documents for the management of the Council's highway infrastructure assets. These documents also require an update to reflect the priorities

of the current administration and to ensure that the Council fulfils all the criteria of the Department for Transport Incentive Fund to maximise capital funding.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

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

3. Background

Update of the Highway Safety Inspection Manual

3.1 A review of Shropshire Council's Highway Safety Inspection Manual has been carried out considering:

- Experience of using the current manual by the Highway Inspections team;
- Feedback from the Council's Insurance team on best practice and current risks;
- Feedback from an independent review of the 2019 version;
- Input from the Interim Asset Manager on current codes and best practice.

3.2 The review highlighted a number of areas of improvement. In summary, these were:

- Minor drafting amendments arising from the independent review, alongside the substantive changes summarised below and detailed in Table 1;
- Implementing a robust process for monitoring and implementing changes to the hierarchy and frequencies;
- Improving the provision around the risk to cyclists and motor cyclists;
- A specific note on ash die-back;
- Clarification about dealing with flooding;
- The supporting risk assessment should also consider the size and use of agricultural vehicles and heavy goods vehicles on C-class and unclassified roads, and whether local circumstances warrant a review of inspection arrangements or referral for further assessment;
- Clarification on when kerbs are inspected;
- Updating the general inspection procedures and clarifying the distinction between scheduled inspection frequencies and the response times applicable to identified safety defects;
- Reviewing the underlying risks to update inspection frequencies;
- Widening the scope of the section on heritage assets.

3.3 The proposal follows the updated risk analysis and would establish a consistent scheduled inspection frequency across the Local Access Road hierarchy. The supporting assessment should explain why an annual interval is appropriate, identify the previous frequencies affected and set out the arrangements for responding to reported defects or changes in local risk between scheduled inspections.

3.4 The proposals have already been presented for internal challenge with the following comments and responses which members of Cabinet may wish to consider and add further comment.

- Car Park inspections – is annual inspection sufficient?
  Currently this is considered appropriate in terms of frequency given the damaging impact of relatively low weight vehicles and inspection cycles for the public highway.

- National Policies regarding footways and cycleways – is it possible to surpass current best practice?
  Whilst this is possible it would require additional revenue investment at a time of financial emergency and arguably extra capital investment to upgrade or improve the existing network of footways and cycleways, which is balanced against existing investment priorities in the asset management strategy.

- Appropriate Inspections - e.g. cycleways inspected on a bicycles. Again, whilst this is possible it would require additional revenue investment for the purchase of vehicles and their maintenance. It may also present a challenge in terms of safely recording defects, staff may need additional training and the assessment of H&S considerations which will inevitably result in additional revenue costs.

- Is Climate Change considered?
  The asset management strategy references the climate change emergency and the need to increase the resilient of the asset; however, there is a need for further detail in the strategy on how this challenge will begin to be addressed.

- Abandoned Vehicles in Laybys?
  Abandoned vehicles would be identified through a range of reporting mechanisms and addressed through measures available to the Streetscene service.

- Definition of Secondary Walking routes – this is currently unspecific.
  Secondary walking routes are simply the medium use footways that are not Primary routes (e.g. shopping centres). These are positioned in the hierarchy between Primary routes (e.g. shopping centres) and Link footways (typically in residential areas). It is a term that is widely adopted by local highways authorities and publicly defined in the national code of practice “Well managed highway infrastructure”.

- Footway accessibility for buggies and wheelchairs.
  Some footways present accessibility challenges. Safety inspections should remain risk-based, as additional criteria may be difficult to apply consistently and could increase claims and revenue exposure. However, inspection findings, service requests and user feedback can inform Asset Management Strategy priorities and future improvements aligned with LTP active travel objectives. Link to recommendation no. 4 Appendix E.

Car Park Addendum

3.5 The Highway Safety Inspection Manual is primarily in place to describe how the Council discharges its duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act. Off-street car parks are not within the scope of the Highways Act; however, there is still a requirement to maintain these areas so that they are safe to use.

3.6 The competencies required to undertake an inspection and the response to a defect in an off-street car park are similar to those required on the highway; therefore, an addendum has been formed which uses the relevant sections of the Highway Safety Inspection process but tailors the requirements to off-street parking areas.

3.7 The Addendum maintains the separation of the Council's duties under the Highways Act and its need to manage off-street car parks.

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy

3.8 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy define the Council's long-term objectives for managing its highway infrastructure assets. Together, they set out how the Council intends to maintain, operate, and improve the network in a way that aligns with its wider strategic direction. A Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy is a short document that sets out the Council's overall approach to managing its highway infrastructure assets. It explains what the Council wants to achieve and the principles that everyone involved in delivering the strategy are to follow. A Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy is the more detailed document that explains how the Council will deliver the aims set out in its Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy.

3.9 The Strategy document is formed around a framework for asset management as shown in Figure 1.

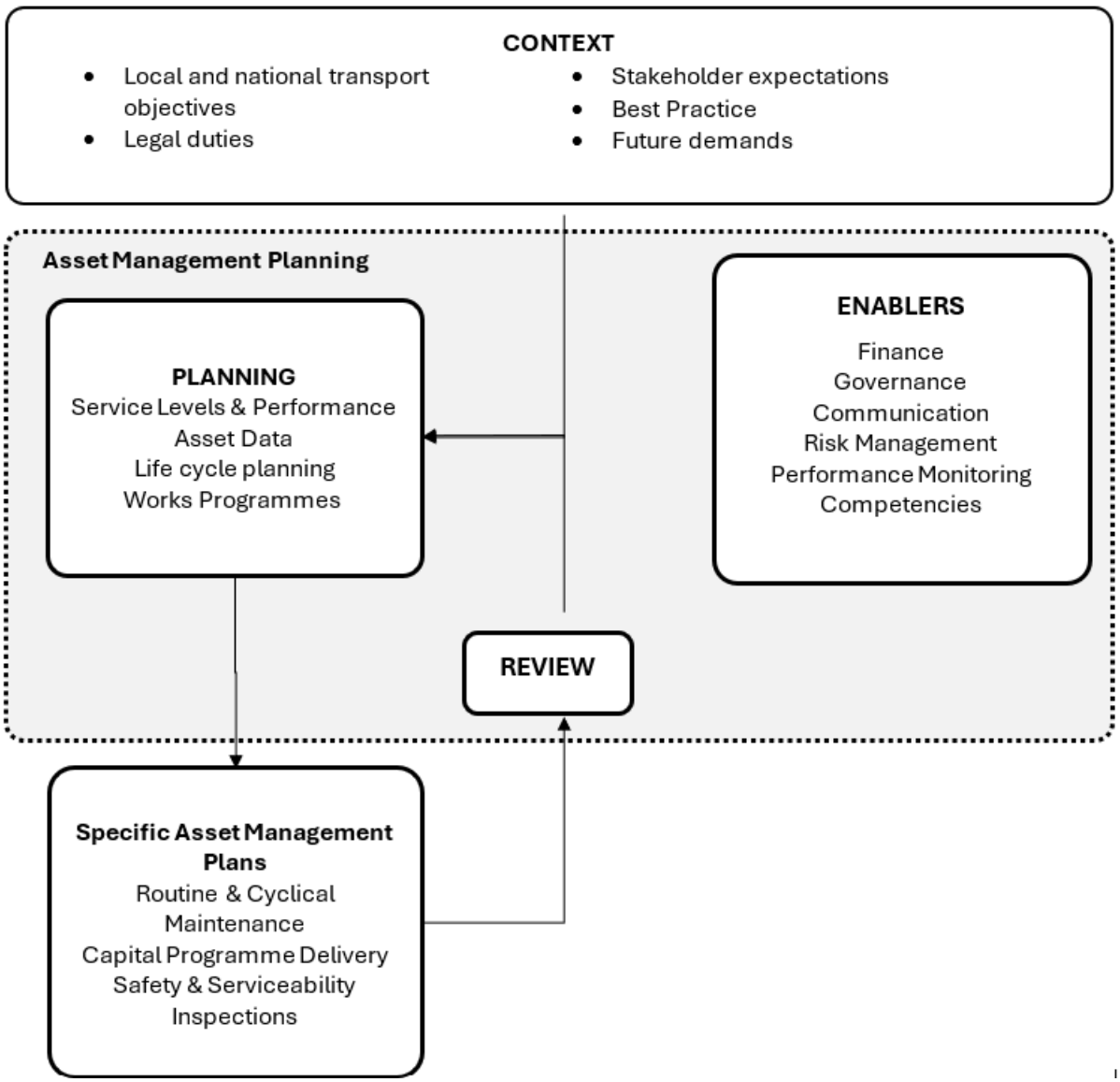


Figure 1. The asset management framework

3.10 The Context section sets out the environment that the Strategy operates. One of the most important sections of the Context is stakeholder expectations. It is unsurprising that the condition of the highway is showing least satisfaction, highest importance and where people would like more money spent.

3.11 These expectations have been used to guide the formation of this Strategy, for example, dealing with potholes and defects supports the first priority in the Strategy.

3.12 The Planning and Enablers section are the core elements of the Highways Asset Management Strategy.

3.13 The Highways Asset Management Strategy has been aligned with the emerging priorities in the Local Transport Plan. This is clearly demonstrated through the establishment of Service Levels (Table 3 of the Strategy); these service levels will be monitored using a Performance Management Framework as set out in Section 6.5 of the Strategy.

3.14 Under the Planning section, the Strategy describes how the Council will manage asset data, understand the life cycle of assets and form programmes of work.

3.15 A set of Enablers are also described which are not a core asset management function but strongly support the delivery of the Strategy.

3.16 The Strategy also includes a set of six asset class strategies for each of the main groups of assets: Carriageways, Footways and Cycleways, Structures, Street Lighting, Traffic Signals and Drainage. These asset class strategies allow for more focussed detail on the assets, the particular challenges presented and strategies to deal with these, and an overall outcome statement for the asset group. These asset class strategies are intended to provide transparency about how and why each type of asset is managed.

3.17 Linked to the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy are Specific Asset Management Plans, these internal plans will define how each part of the service operates including routine maintenance, inspections and how work is prioritised in accordance with the asset class strategy.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy

4.1 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy is provided in Appendix A and the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy is provided in Appendix B.

Update of the Highway Safety Inspection Manual

4.2 The update does not fundamentally change the risk-based approach that was adopted by the Council in 2019; rather, the changes seek to provide more clarity and better reflect current risks. The update of the Highway Safety Inspection Manual is provided in Appendix C and the Car Park Addendum is provided in Appendix D.

4.3 The updates made to the 2019 version of the Safety Inspection Manual are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Updates to the manual

	Change from 2019 version	Reason for change
2	Scope: Paragraph added to state that the planning of highway safety inspection does not account for the risk of damage from agricultural vehicles.	Risk identified and addressed.
4	Changed sentence to better describe how the inspection frequencies are determined	General Improvement
4	Table 4: Inspections of Local Access Roads is now adjusted to reflect the usage within the urban and rural context on a	Adjustment in the risk-based approach – see section of report

	minimum frequency of a least once per year.	
4	Cycle Path changed to Cycle Track	A more specific term for this infrastructure, for alignment with National Guidance and Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
5.1	Improved sentence that points to the response times in Table 3	General Improvement
5.3	Defects: A specific section has been added around the consideration of the risk of defects for cyclists & motor cyclists.	Risk identified and addressed.
5.4	Investigatory levels, defect standards and responses: A wider scope dealing heritage features rather than just surfaces has been introduced.	Risk identified and addressed.
6	Safety inspections – General procedures: • Double manning requirement omitted. • An improved process for inspecting footways during driven inspections. • Provision for the use of AI technology • A more precise definition of who monitors risk •	Risk identified and addressed. Risk identified and addressed. Provision in preparation for adoption of this technology. General improvement.
7	Safety inspections – Specific instructions: • Clause on Non-safety Street Lighting defects omitted • A clarification has been added to define when kerbs are inspected. • A section on EV cables has been added to Obstructions. • Road markings instructions amalgamated into a single instruction. • A reference Ash Dieback added •	Outside of the scope of this document Risk identified and addressed. Risk identified and addressed. Improvement in clarity Risk identified and addressed
8	Roles and Competencies: • Improved descriptions of roles • A definition of competency added	General Improvement. Risk identified and addressed.

Car Park Addendum

4.4 The key aspects of the Addendum are:

- All car parks will be inspected annually.

- Operational defects are treated separately from safety defects.
- Response times are specifically defined for car parks.
- The inspections will be done on foot.

5. Alternative Options

These updated documents have been developed in consultation with Officers and Members. The principal alternative is to retain the 2019 documents. This is not recommended because they would not reflect the current risk review, updated operational practice, Council priorities or the requirements used to support Department for Transport funding. Alternative inspection frequencies and methods were considered during development. More frequent or mode-specific inspections could provide additional information but would require further equipment, training, health and safety assessment and revenue resource. The proposed approach retains a risk-based framework while improving clarity, coverage and governance.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

6.1 The key risks are about securing full funding and minimising the Council's exposure to highway claims.

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Out-of-date Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy leading to loss of funding.	Proposed mitigation: • Approve and implement the updated Policy and Strategy; • Assign responsibility for checking current DfT funding conditions, submission deadlines and supporting evidence; • Maintain an evidence and assurance record, review the documents annually and escalate any compliance gaps or funding exposure through service and financial governance.	Financial sustainability: • Loss of grant funding could increase pressure on available resources and future balanced budgets.
Out-of-date Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy leading to inappropriate investment priorities.	Proposed mitigation: • Implement the updated Strategy through an evidence led investment programme using asset condition, safety risk, network importance and whole life costs; • Record prioritisation decisions and funding constraints; • Review delivery, condition trends and affordability through the Asset	Financial sustainability and governance: • Poorly targeted investment can increase future maintenance liabilities and undermine approved priorities.

	Management Group and service governance; • Escalate material departures from agreed priorities and review the Strategy annually.	
Inability to repudiate highway claims due to out-of-date Highway Safety Inspection Manual.	Proposed mitigation: • Approve and implement the revised Manual with Legal and Insurance input, a controlled commencement date and inspector training; • Retain auditable inspection, defect-assessment and response records; check compliance with approved frequencies and response times and escalate overdue safety actions; • Review claims learning and policy effectiveness regularly.	Financial sustainability and governance: • Inconsistent inspection practice or inadequate records can weaken claims defence and increase uninsured costs.
Additional costs due to out-of-date Highway Safety Inspection Manual.	Proposed mitigation: • Implement the revised Manual consistently and assess inspection, repair, training and systems capacity before commencement; • Monitor inspection compliance, overdue defects, reactive expenditure and claims costs with Finance and Insurance; • Record and authorise any policy exceptions, supported by a risk assessment; • Escalate resource gaps through transformation and budget governance; • Working outside of agreed policy which in turn exposes the Council to additional risk.	Financial sustainability: • Avoidable inspection, repair and claims costs can contribute to in-year overspend and future budget pressures.

7. Council Priorities

7.1 These updated documents support the following:

- A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel.
- Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure
- People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their need
- An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing
- A thriving economy that benefits everyone

8. Financial Implications

Budgets are not affected. However, the policy and strategy adjustments ensure that these are aligned with corporate priorities, LTP priorities and DfT requirements, thereby ensuring expenditure represents VfM and is efficiently managed.

Highway related claims remain a financial risk to the Council. An up-to-date inspection policy, supported by consistent implementation and reliable records of inspections and responses, assists in managing that exposure but does not eliminate the risk of claims or establish that every claim can be defended.

Approval of the policy and strategy does not, by itself, amend existing budgets. Delivery of Scrutiny actions, including enhanced reporting, dashboard capability, community training and any change to inspection methods, may require additional capacity, systems or funding. These requirements will be assessed through the relevant transformation and budget governance processes before commitments are made. Maintaining current, consistently applied policies also supports the Council in managing value for money and its exposure to highway related claims. Financial risk will be mitigated by the council having sufficient capacity to respond to service demand and should be addressed through the Transformation process proposal.

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1 The Council, as local highway authority, has a statutory duty under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain highways maintainable at the public expense. The proposed Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy and Highway Safety Inspection Manual provide an important framework through which the Council can discharge that duty.

9.2 Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 provides a statutory defence to certain claims arising from the condition of the highway where the Council can demonstrate that it had taken such care as was reasonably required to secure that the relevant part of the highway was not dangerous. The existence of an adopted policy or inspection regime is not sufficient in itself. It is important that the arrangements adopted by the Council are evidence based, capable of being delivered and consistently applied, with appropriate records maintained of inspections, identified defects, decisions and responses.

9.3 The approval and maintenance of a clear, current and evidence-based strategy and supporting policies is an important part of demonstrating good governance. It provides a transparent framework for decision-making, establishes clear priorities and standards, supports consistency in the exercise of the Council's functions and helps ensure that resources and operational decisions are directed in accordance with the Council's statutory responsibilities and agreed priorities. Effective

governance also requires the approved arrangements to be implemented in practice, with appropriate oversight, monitoring and review so that the Council can continue to demonstrate that it is acting lawfully, reasonably and in accordance with its adopted policies.

9.4 The proposed arrangements should therefore remain under review to ensure that they continue to reflect changes in legislation, relevant guidance and good practice, operational experience and the risks affecting the highway network. The Car Park Addendum appropriately recognises that off-street parking areas do not fall within the section 41 highway maintenance duty, while providing a separate framework for the Council to manage its responsibilities for those premises.

9.5 Workforce considerations around capacity, competency, training, safe systems of work, role clarity and potential technology change. These are acknowledged and will be managed through implementation and any workforce, Health and Safety, training, competency, resource requirements, will be considered together with any necessary engagement with recognised trade unions and managed through the Council's relevant people, organisational change and job-evaluation processes.

10. Electoral Division Implications

The policy and strategy will be applied consistently across all divisions

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

The condition and safety of roads, footways and cycleways are relevant to health, wellbeing and access to services. The proposed approach is intended to support safer journeys, active travel and access to education, employment, healthcare and community facilities. The final report should explain how these considerations inform maintenance priorities and identify any adverse impacts and appropriate mitigations. No reduction in injuries, NHS demand or associated costs is quantified in this report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no significant impacts on these documents for equality and diversity. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy strengthens the priority for infrastructure that support active modes of travel which will positively impact older people and young people which may not be able to drive.

12.2 An Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment has been carried out – Appendix F.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 The policy and strategy adjustments take account of these considerations and the Council statutory obligations and further industry best practice.

13.2 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy include an expanded section on sustainability which covers Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental aspects.

14. Background Papers

N/A

15. Appendices

Appendix A – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy
Appendix B – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
Appendix C – Highway Safety Inspection Manual
Appendix D – Highway Safety Inspection Manual – Car Park Addendum
Appendix E – Recommendations made by Economy and Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee
Appendix F - Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment

Shropshire Council is committed to adopting an asset management approach for maintenance and improvement of the county's highway network. The Council places a high significance on its highway network, its most valuable asset. The network is vital to the wellbeing of our residents and businesses and is fundamental to the quality of life in Shropshire.

An asset management approach enables informed decisions to be made about maintenance and improvement through the understanding of how resources can be deployed most effectively, what stakeholders expect, how much investment and maintenance funding is needed to support our aims and identifying and managing risks associated with carrying out our statutory duties.

Managing the highway asset, we aim to:

- improve road safety for everyone in Shropshire
- ensure the long-term quality and resilience of our transport system through appropriate investment and maintenance.
- make walking, wheeling and cycling the best choices for local journeys
- protect our natural, built and historic environment from the negative impact of traffic and transport.

Delivering our highway infrastructure asset management strategy, we will:

- Fulfil our statutory duties.
- Maintain highway infrastructure in a condition that is fit for its purpose.
- Consider all users when we plan maintenance or improvements on a street.
- Remember that 'prevention is better than cure' when planning maintenance.
- Ensure that our activity and plans are led by evidence.
- Maximise the benefits of investment by making decisions based upon the whole life cost of maintaining our assets and balancing competing needs across the highway network.
- Use our understanding risk to make better decisions about reactive, cyclical and planned maintenance activities.
- Take account of the impact of our decisions on the environment and sustainability.
- Listen to our customers and clearly communicate our actions.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document sets the strategic direction that Shropshire Council will adopt in how highway infrastructure assets will be managed and how the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy will be followed. The Policy is a high-level document that confirms the Council's commitment to Highway Infrastructure Asset Management.

Asset Management is a process of stewardship that seeks to get the most out of the assets for the benefit of stakeholders. It acknowledges that assets have a life cycle where these respond to their environment and normally deteriorate with use. It allows the Council to understand how the assets are performing, what levels of investment are needed and to manage risks. The process improves transparency and accountability, and should result in better value for money and improved customer service.

This strategy considers what is required in terms of asset management activities (the framework) as well as what is required for each type of asset in order to meet the challenges identified. It applies to all who manage Shropshire Council's highway infrastructure.

The highway network in Shropshire is extensive, comprising over 5,100 km. The network provides essential links between communities and key services. Strategic routes provide connections between the main towns within Shropshire and beyond as well as connections to the national Strategic Road Network.

The highway network is an intrinsic part of life in Shropshire. It supports all of the Council's ambitions. Moreover, it is critically important to our communities and local businesses.

The highway network supports almost all travel in Shropshire whether by motor vehicle, public transport, cycle or on foot. For many rural communities, there exists few reasonable routes to connect them with key services. When these are not available, the communities can be subject to long diversions or even severed from services. The resilience of the highway network is therefore vital.

2 ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

An Asset Management Framework has been adopted in line with the current best practice as shown in Figure 1.

The framework sets out how asset management planning operates at the Council. Each area of the framework (Context, Priorities, Planning, Enablers and Asset Group Strategies) is covered in this Strategy. More detailed, technical asset management plans support this strategy and provide a more focussed service-level description of the approach.

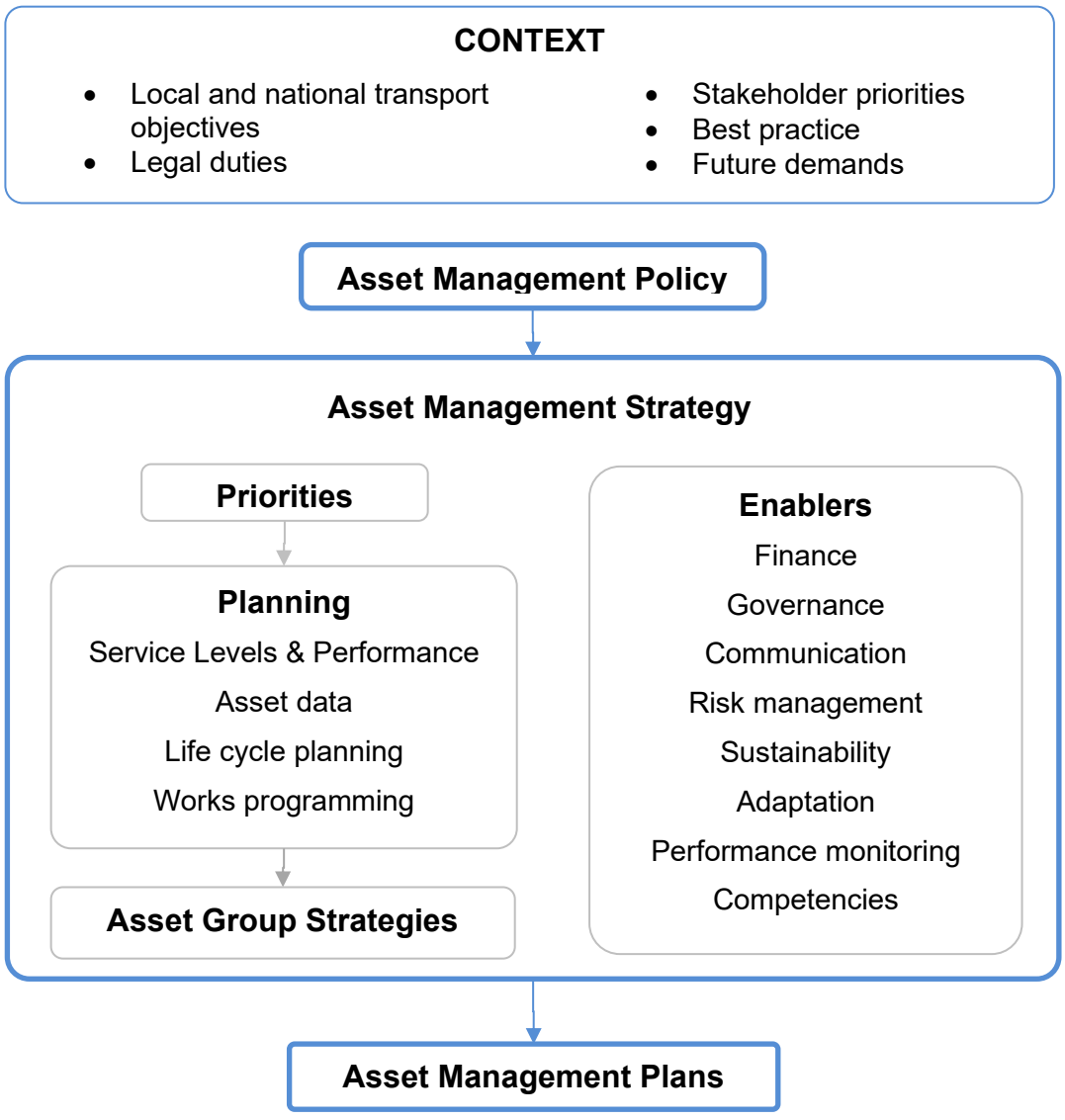


Figure 1. Asset Management Framework

3 CONTEXT

3.1 What are highway infrastructure assets?

Highway infrastructure assets work as a system of elements to facilitate journeys and create a place. There are many different types of highway infrastructure asset and the main asset groups are carriageway, footway, street lighting, traffic signal, structures (bridges) and drainage.

Each asset performs a specific function and as such contributes to the overall level of service. These are discussed in more detail in the asset group strategies.



Figure 2. Types of Highway Infrastructure Assets

In addition, other highway infrastructure assets are present including: signs and lining, highway trees, street furniture, road restraint systems; these other assets are also covered by this strategy.

Some infrastructure assets on the highway are owned or managed by third parties; these are not covered by this strategy. Examples of such assets include: covers for access to utilities, bus shelters which may be managed by town or parish councils, and railway bridges which are managed by Network Rail.

The highway network in Shropshire has evolved over generations rather than having been constructed to known standards. Consequently, knowledge about the network is incomplete and the network itself is highly diverse in terms of its characteristics and performance, leading to areas of strength and vulnerability. This diversity needs to be understood in order to best manage the condition of the asset.

Table 1. Summary of the highway infrastructure assets

Asset Group	Asset Type	Quantity	Unit
Carriageways	A Roads	450	km
	B & C Roads	2325	Km
	Unclassified Roads	2340	Km
Footways and Cycleways	Footways	1,597	Km
	Cycleways	70	Km
Structures	Bridges and large culverts	835	Number
	Small bridges and culverts	175	Number
Street Lighting	Street Lights	20,329	Number
	Illuminated Signs and Bollards	2,822	Number
Traffic Signals	Signalised crossings	85	Number
	Zebra crossings	75	Number
	Junctions	44	Number
Drainage	Gullies and Catchpits	92,278	Number

3.2 Stakeholder priorities

The Council participates in the National Highways and Transportation (NHT) Public Satisfaction survey. This survey is sent to a random sample of residents each year and allows the Council to benchmark its performance across a range of themes with other Councils. As part of this survey, people are also asked how important different aspects for Highways and Transport are and how satisfied they feel about them. This knowledge will help set the priorities for this strategy.

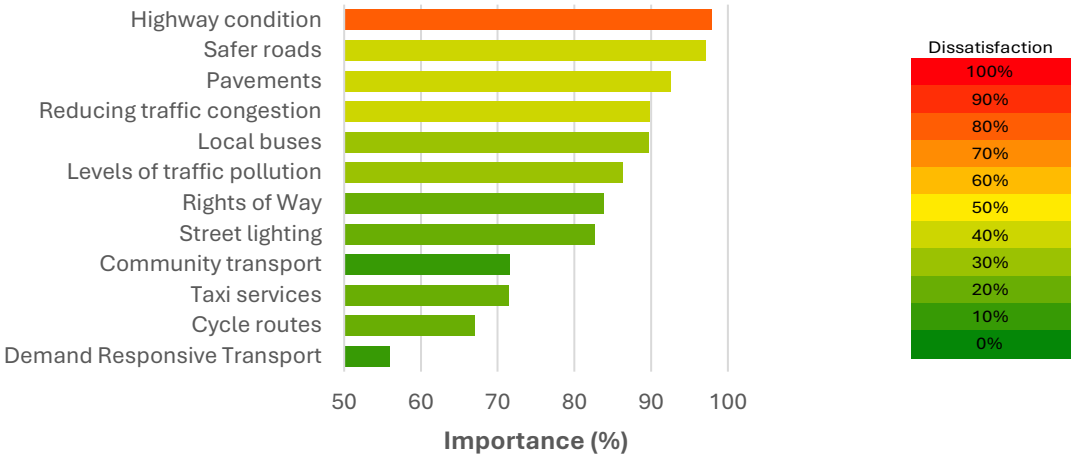


Figure 3. Importance and Satisfaction

The most important aspects to our residents (in order) are highway condition, safer roads and pavements. Furthermore, the aspect that needs most improvement is highway condition.

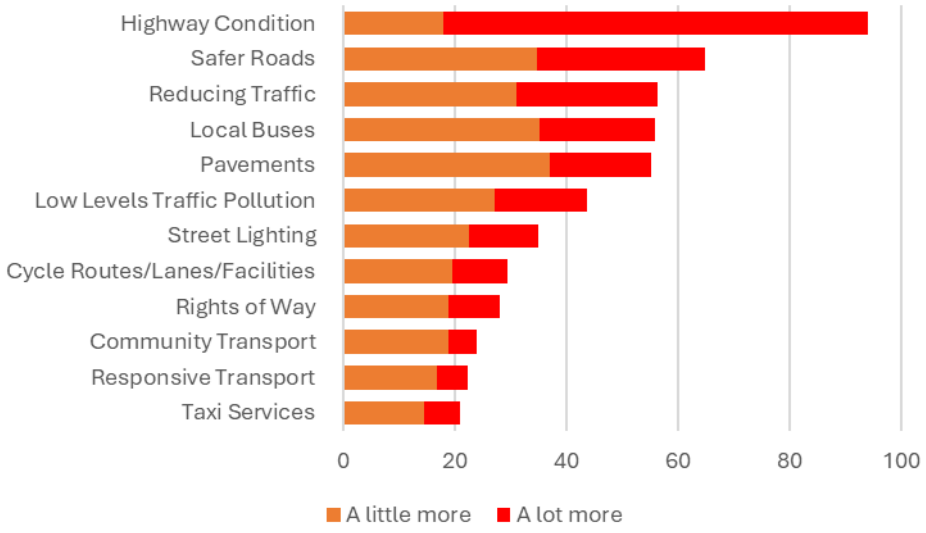


Figure 4. Percentage of people advocating more spending by aspect

Figure 4 indicates that almost all residents want more money to be spent on improving highway condition. Spending more money on safer roads was also indicated.

The NHT survey has specific sections which assess the level of satisfaction against many aspects of roads (carriageways) and pavements (footways), as well as the activity of highways maintenance. The top three aspects which require improvement in these areas are:

Roads	Pavements	Highways maintenance
Speed of repair to damaged roads	Speed of repair to damaged pavements	Deals with potholes and damaged roads
Condition of road surfaces	Pavements being kept clear of obstructions	Cuts back overgrown hedges or trees
Quality of repair to damaged roads	Weed killing on pavements	Deals with flooding on roads and pavements

There is a clear theme of investing in roads and footways and repairing potholes and damage properly.

Keeping pavements clear of obstructions such as overgrown hedges and trees is also important to our residents, as is routine work such as maintaining drainage and weed killing.

3.3 Local objectives

This Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy is aligned and supports the priorities of the Shropshire Corporate Plan (2026 - 2030). The six priority ambitions of this plan are:

- People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs.
- Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and to thrive at every stage of life.

- Communities that are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure. Focussing on tackling potholes and improving the condition of our roads.
- An environment that harnesses our natural assets, and supports wellbeing.
- A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce supported to excel.
- A thriving economy that benefits everyone.

The priorities in this strategy have also been aligned with the emerging Local Transport Plan 4, the following statements reflect the currently proposed plans.

- We will improve road safety for everyone in Shropshire.
- We will make walking, wheeling and cycling the best choices for local journeys.
- We will ensure the long-term quality and resilient of our transport system through appropriate investment and maintenance. In particular, improving the condition of walking, wheeling and cycling routes so they are safe, reliable and easy to use.
- We will protect our natural, built and historic environment from the negative impact of traffic and transport.

These ambitions and priorities have been aligned with the Level of Service in this Strategy.

3.4 National transport objectives

Highways that are managed by the Council are also a component of the national highway network. Central government, is a key stakeholder in the local highway network in terms of investment and the wider role it has as part of the national highway network; it has its own political and strategic objectives. The Council must acknowledge national objectives in addition to local needs to ensure that it continues to meet its duties and optimises the opportunities for funding from central government.

The Department for Transport require local highway authorities to report on a range of outcome indicators including estimates of carbon emissions for their Local Transport Delivery Plan; this requires the establishment of robust processes for the quantification and reporting of carbon emissions.

The Department for Transport are requiring local highway authorities to prepare public Transparency Reports as part of their Incentive Element regime. Using the information provided in the Transparency Reports, the Department is also rating authorities according to the condition of local roads, how much each authority is spending on maintenance and how effectively each local highway authority is following best practice.

3.5 Legal duties

In managing highway infrastructure, the Council has to comply with many legal duties. Those duties that are specifically aimed at the authorities, such as the Highways Act (1980), are the responsibility of the elected members. The key duties from legislation are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Key duties around the management highway infrastructure

Legislation	Places a duty on the Council to…
Highways Act (1980)	Maintain highways and to take all reasonable care to ensure that highway is not dangerous to traffic
Traffic Management Act (2004)	Keep traffic moving
Road Traffic Act (1988)	Promote road safety and to undertake studies to reduce the risk of accidents
Flood and Water Management Act (2010)	Investigate the causes of flooding and to undertake measures to reduce flood risk as the Lead Local Flood Authority.
Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)	Protect flora, fauna, and the countryside.
Environmental Protection Act (1990)	Manage waste, control pollution and prevent nuisances.

There is other legislation that applies to the Council more generally; these can also be the responsibility of Council Officers and Service Providers. Such legislation covers Health and Safety, Equality, Human Rights, Civil Contingencies and other local government legislation.

3.6 Best practice

This strategy aligns with the current Code of Practice "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure" published in 2026. The Code states that authorities should establish and maintain an Asset Management Framework that supports the effective delivery of highway services and long-term stewardship of infrastructure assets.

A range of best practice guidance is available such as 'Inclusive Mobility - A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure', 'Designing for Walking - CIHT' and 'Cycle Infrastructure Design - Local Transport Note 1/20'. It is noted that much of this guidance is about new infrastructure rather than the maintenance of existing infrastructure; however, these documents will be used to seek opportunities for the improvement of highway infrastructure whilst delivering the core objectives of this strategy.

3.7 Future demands

Highway infrastructure assets are typically in service for 25 years or more. For the planning of new, maintained or replacement assets, the future demands on the assets must be considered.

An environment that harnesses our natural assets, and supports wellbeing is a Council ambition. Protecting our outstanding natural environment and our historic built environment is a key part of our asset management approach. This priority will be addressed by considering the impacts of maintenance on biodiversity and planning work to maximise sustainability; an

example of this would be to invest in preventative maintenance to prolong the life span of assets.

Shropshire Council has declared a climate emergency. Reducing the impact of managing highway infrastructure on climate change is a priority, we will adopt proven low carbon technologies and consider the whole-life carbon impact of our maintenance decisions.

The effects of climate change are accepted as inevitable with hotter, wetter summers and a greater incidence of severe weather that will likely lead to a greater need for resilience. In addition to a strategic resilient network, an understanding of how the network can keep communities connected will be important both in planning maintenance and planning emergency response during severe weather. In additional there will be a need to protect highway surfaces from accelerated deterioration due to the effects of flooding and ice by maintaining a sealed surface and keeping drainage working.

The development of the highway network will add roads and footways that will also create additional structures, drainage, lighting and signals. The nature of Shropshire has meant that the impact of this development, compared to the size of the network is limited.

The nature of the traffic is expected to change. This will affect customer expectations about the asset and also the rate of deterioration. The key changes that are envisaged are:

- The migration to more active travel will mean that the relative importance of the condition of footways and cycleways to highway users will be increased.
- Motorised traffic loading will change. It is anticipated that the number of vehicles will increase, in particular the use of light goods vehicles for home deliveries. In addition, the migration away from internal combustion engine vehicles are likely to result in heavier vehicles with greater torque that will likely increase the demand on road surfaces.
- The use of larger agricultural vehicles and HGVs serving rural businesses will place additional loading on the most vulnerable parts of the network.

4 PRIORITIES

The priorities for the management of highway infrastructure assets have been formed to support the Local Transport Plan actions.

Priority 1: We will improve road safety for everyone in Shropshire

Repairing damaged roads and footways is the main area for improvement highlighted by stakeholders. Our primary focus will be reducing the number of potholes on the network through:

- Having a focus on preventative maintenance;
- Targeting investment at reducing pot holes;
- Prioritising permanent rather than temporary repairs; and
- Reducing the risk of flooding on the highway.

Where potholes appear, we will:

- Inspect the defects and assess the risk for repair;
- Remedy the defect on time according to risk;
- Implement an agile regime to allow reactive work to be remedied by planned work if needed; and
- Where there are significant potholes, investigate whether drainage cleaning would prevent further potholes from appearing, and then clean

We will continue to manage the risk of wet-skidding accidents on main roads and we will use special surfaces at locations where they are most effective.

Priority 2: We will ensure the long-term quality and resilience of our transport system through appropriate investment and maintenance

Our priorities are:

- Improving the condition of walking, wheeling and cycling routes so they are safe, reliable and easy to use.
- Focussing on improving the condition of Strategic Roads, Main roads, Rural Link Roads.
- Maximising the available funding for highways maintenance by meeting the Department for Transport's Incentive Fund criteria.

Longer term, we will seek to understand how changes to traffic are impacting on the long-term needs our highway network by gathering intelligence. The study will particularly look at the impact of agricultural traffic and commercial vehicle use.

Priority 3: We will make walking, wheeling and cycling the best choices for local journeys

Our priorities are:

- Improving the condition of walking, wheeling and cycling routes so they are safe, reliable and easy to use.
- Using our powers to ensure the highway is available for all by removing obstructions on footways, dealing with overgrown hedges or trees and ensuring that crossovers do not unduly impact on the use of footways and cycleways.

Longer term we will seek opportunities to rebalance road space during maintenance and consider how maintenance of highway infrastructure can positively influence the choice of public transport, walking and cycling.

Priority 4: We will protect our natural, built and historic environment from the negative impact of traffic and transport

We will protect the environment by:

- Considering the way that roadside verges are managed;
- Selecting maintenance treatments that are appropriate to the street;
- Carefully considering how work in the programme can be adapted to mitigate noise in sensitive areas;
- Working in partnership with National Highways to reduce air pollution; and
- Supporting active travel.

We will tackle climate change by:

- Making decisions to reduce our carbon emissions using an evidence-based approach; and
- Reviewing Transport Policy and contracts to promote low carbon options.

We make sustainable choices by considering the whole life impacts of our decisions.

5 PLANNING

5.1 Levels of service and Performance

Levels of service are simple statements that describe the performance of highway infrastructure assets in terms that stakeholders can understand. Performance measures are used to demonstrate the levels of service and are defined in the Performance Management Framework.

Objectives and Levels of service have been defined based on the key aspects of highway maintenance as set out in the Code of Practice, these have been aligned to the Council's Local transport actions in Table 3.

Table 3. Service Levels

Local transport action	Maintenance objective	Level of service
We will improve road safety for everyone in Shropshire	Network Safety	Complying with statutory obligations Meeting users' needs for safety as well as roadworks and other parties
We will make walking, wheeling and cycling the best choices for local journeys We will ensure the long-term quality and resilience of our transport system through appropriate investment and maintenance.	Network Serviceability	Ensuring availability Ensuring integrity Maintaining reliability Resilience Managing condition
We will protect our natural, built and historic environment from the negative impact of traffic and transport.	Network Sustainability	Minimising cost over time Maximising value to the community Taking positive action to protect the environment
	Customer Service	Communication Engagement

The levels of service are monitored using the Performance Management Framework.

5.2 Asset data

Asset data is information on what physical highway infrastructure assets an authority has responsibility for and includes number, location, performance, financial value and customer feedback.

We will actively manage asset data so that the authority can:

- define the type and number of highway infrastructure assets;
- monitor performance;
- make effective and informed decisions;
- manage risk;
- determine the required level of investment; and
- comply with statutory requirements.

We ensure that all data is created according to the requirements set out in an asset data management plan that:

- sets out detailed requirements for the creation of asset data;
- identifies how asset data is stored in asset data systems;
- identifies which stakeholders use the asset data and for what purpose it is used;
- explains how asset data is to be maintained, the currency and accuracy of data will be confirmed by regular data audits; and
- sets out how redundant asset data is disposed; whether data be deleted or archived.

5.3 Lifecycle planning

Asset management requires the long-term consideration of the impact of investment and maintenance strategy; this is called lifecycle planning. Life cycle plans enable the council to:

- Understand the future performance of highway infrastructure assets and wider impacts for different levels of investment and different maintenance strategies. Wider impacts will include the effect on the environment, carbon emissions and future resilience.
- Determine the level of investment required for an appropriate maintenance strategy to achieve the required performance or the performance that will be achieved for defined level of investment.
- Support decision making, the case for investing in maintenance activities and demonstrate the impact of different funding scenarios.
- Minimising costs and environmental impacts over the lifecycle while maintaining the required performance.

Lifecycle plans can vary in complexity. Life cycle plans will be maintained that are appropriate to level of investment and risk associated with the asset group.

5.4 Works programming

An integrated works programme will be maintained covering all capital investment in highway infrastructure. The programme includes forward plans, work in preparation and the annual works programme.

The integrated works programme allows for work to be shared with stakeholders in advance including external stakeholders. Sharing knowledge and future plans enables work to be coordinated internally and with third parties, reducing risks to all involved. In addition, sharing allows for early engagement with local communities, increasing transparency and ensuring that limited resources are targeted in the right place.

The annual works programme will be made available on the Council website.

6 ENABLERS

6.1 Finance

Sources

Maintenance of highway infrastructure is funded according to whether it improves the asset (capital) or simply ensures that it continues to function (revenue). Capital funding is typically provided by central government or through public borrowing. Revenue funding that supports routine maintenance is supported by locally raised revenues and central government grants.

For the period 2025/26 to 2029/30, the Department for Transport have split the funding for highways maintenance into a baseline level of funding and an 'Incentive Element'. The 'Incentive Element' of funding is conditional on criteria that must be met by local highway authorities and is a significant proportion of the overall available investment; it is therefore an essential part of fulfilling the objectives of this strategy.

For the creation of new highway infrastructure, capital funding is most commonly secured from local developments but can also be secured for specific projects from central government funding.

Asset valuation

Whole of Government Accounting (WGA) principles allow infrastructure assets to be valued using a consistent methodology across all types of public assets. Under WGA, the value of a bridge can be robustly compared to the value of a school. His Majesty's Treasury are seeking to adopt WGA across all public sectors.

For highway infrastructure asset management purposes, WGA provides a useful overall value for the assets but also a measure of the in-year consumption. The in-year consumption of the asset can be used to assess whether the current level of funding is correct.

Balancing funding priorities

The majority of capital funding for highway maintenance investment comes from the DfT Highways Maintenance Block allocation. The initial budget is apportioned by DfT according to a needs-based formula.

Life cycle planning is used to understand the budget needs against the initial budget and the long-term risks that this presents, such as the effect on whole life costs and future performance. The initial budget is the adjusted to manage these risks.

In addition, many other factors are considered to determine the allocation of budgets for work. These include:

- coordination of schemes with work by internal and external stakeholders;
- ensuring that schemes help achieve the local transport objectives;
- managing known delivery risks; and
- addressing community concerns.

6.2 Governance

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste is the sponsor for the asset management approach set out in this strategy. They, along with the wider Council, are the senior decision makers.

The Asset Management Group lead on the use of the asset management approach. The group is formed of asset leads and covers all aspects of the asset management framework including regular updates for risk management and performance.

Progress with delivering the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy is monitored annually to ensure it remains aligned with network needs, statutory requirements, and the wider transport and Council priorities. This monitoring is overseen by the Asset Management Group and reported to the Head of Service.

6.3 Communication

The Council has a number of channels to receive feedback. Service requests can be made using the Council website or the Customer Service Centre. Social media is monitored to understand what the public is saying about the service in general.

In addition, the Council participates in the National Highways and Transportation public satisfaction survey. This survey asks a randomly selected sample of our residents about levels of satisfaction with a range of services including those relating to the service provided by highway infrastructure.

For planned work, the Council collaborates with its alliance partners to ensure that appropriate communication is made to the right stakeholders at the right time using the right channel. These channels include letter drops, website and social media notifications and data published on Roadworks.org.

6.4 Risk management

The Council have embraced a risk-based approach to all aspects of highway maintenance and as such, it is a corner stone of this strategy. Our risk-based approach to highway infrastructure management is to:

- maintain alignment with the Council's corporate and local transport objectives, legislative requirements, and the corporate approach to risk and management of risk;
- develop an understanding of risk throughout the highways service and its application to all areas of operations, including people, infrastructure, data, finance and suppliers;
- develop an understanding of the potential risks and their likely significance to users, stakeholders, the authority and to the asset data and information held;
- ensuring that our asset data adequately reflects the function, criticality, sensitivity, characteristics and use of our highway infrastructure assets;
- establishment of functional hierarchies and levels of service with appropriate funding.
- ensure that the appropriate competencies have been used to develop and implement of the risk-based approach; and

- undertake regular evidence-based reviews of risk.

Risks arising from the management of highway infrastructure assets that affect the achievement of the Council's ambitions are reported using links with the corporate risk register which is managed in line with an Opportunity-Risk Management framework.

6.5 Resilience and adaptation

Climate change is already affecting our highway network. Wetter winters, hotter summers and more frequent storms are putting pressure on all parts of highway infrastructure. By pro-actively adapting to these changes, we can improve our resilience and avoid higher maintenance costs.

The risk from climate change will be considered within investment planning, design and maintenance delivery. This could be choosing maintenance treatments that limit the impact of hot temperatures, identifying and preparing high risk locations that can be affected during bad weather and adjusting our winter service to better support active modes of travel.

Resilience is also about keeping communities connected and supporting local businesses. We have identified a resilient network that we invest in to ensure that it remains available during times of disruption. The resilient network is formed from main roads that keep towns connected and other roads that provide access to key services and is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflects the most critical elements of network.

We will define a network that better reflects how communities are connected that will allow the Council to give focus to the parts of the network that have the greatest value to local communities. This network will be developed through engagement with Town and Parish Councils.

6.6 Sustainability and the environment

The Council has set in place a climate change strategy and our asset management activities remain aligned to this strategy.

The maintenance of highway infrastructure can contribute significantly to carbon emissions through the installation of materials and transport operations. To support local goals on carbon reduction we will be guided by an intervention hierarchy of carbon reduction potential:

- Build and maintain nothing - Can the asset be decommissioned or not yet replaced?
- Build and maintain less – Using asset data and preservation techniques to time interventions so that the maximum life of treatments is achieved
- Build and maintain clever – Design to using low carbon materials and replace only the optimum amount of the asset
- Build and maintain efficiently – Embrace new technology and eliminate waste.

In accordance with national policy, the Council is implementing processes for carbon quantification across all local transport activities. This initiative will enable the Council to make decisions that reduce carbon emissions in the early stages of scheme development and it will also allow the setting of baseline levels from which improvements can be monitored. Decisions

will be made by considering the whole-life carbon emissions associated with highway infrastructure.

Shropshire Council are trialling a number of changes to the way the roadside verges are managed. These changes include identifying existing wild flower areas and reducing the frequency of cutting in these areas, as well as creating new wild flower areas. The Council will monitor the success of these actions and, if successful, incorporate them into our routine maintenance plans.

Road noise can be nuisance to residents. We will consider the strategic road noise maps produced by DEFRA under the European Noise Directive to identify potential benefits of investing in lower noise solutions in sensitive areas.

There are two Air Quality Management Areas in Shropshire. It is recognised that road traffic on Shropshire's network and National Highways network is a major source of pollutants. The Council's approach to reducing air pollution is to work in partnership with National Highways, supporting active travel and to promote the use of EVs through the provision of EV charging points.

The conservation and enhancement of streets can provide high value to the community and local economy. In undertaking maintenance, the Council will consider the risks and opportunities locally for the choices it needs to make. In general, maintenance will be selected that is appropriate for the street and funded from existing funding sources; exceptionally additional funding can be used to enhance specific parts of the highway.

6.7 Performance monitoring

A Performance Management Framework links the priorities of this strategy to the levels of service. This framework is built on statutory condition indicators, local performance reporting and customer satisfaction measures. Performance is monitored as part of the formal review of this strategy in order to assess progress in delivering the objectives and to recommend improvement.

All the indicators are reviewed at least annually as well as on-going monitoring of monthly measures in line with the overall governance of asset management practice as set out in Section 6.2.

As well as a number of technical performance indicators, the framework includes a number of public interest indicators that are also published on the Council's website.

6.8 Competencies

Competencies will be monitored using the UKRLG Asset Management Competency Framework at the authority level, detailed development plans identify actions needed by the role or individual as required.

Competencies and training needs are identified in the highway competency development plan.

7 ASSET GROUP STRATEGIES

Concise strategies have been produced for the following main asset classes:

- Carriageways
- Footways and cycleways
- Structures
- Street lighting
- Traffic signals
- Highway drainage systems

For each class of asset, the asset group strategy sets out the extent of the asset, the condition that it is in (if known), an overview of the challenges for that asset class including risks, the maintenance strategy to be adopted and a short statement about the outcomes.

Carriageways form the main element of the highway infrastructure asset, these range from busy A class roads to minor lanes; some carriageways are unmetalled.



Knowledge

The Council maintains 5,168 km of carriageway. The network is characterised by minor rural roads (70%), urban roads (20%) and strategic links (10%).

More than 12% of roads have deteriorated to a stage that they are 'functionally impaired'. Main A and B roads are in better condition overall than C roads and Unclassified roads. Of particular concern is the condition of C roads where more than 17% could be 'functionally impaired'.

Customer satisfaction with highways maintenance, most notably carriageways, is low.

Key challenges

- The asset has suffered from years of under-funding leading to aged surfaces which allow water to penetrate and potholes to form. This is a considerable threat on minor rural roads which comprise more than two-thirds of the network.
- Home deliveries, rural diversification and modern farming methods mean that the way the rural network is being trafficked has fundamentally changed.
- Climate change has led to wetter winters (increasing potholes) and hotter summers (increasing the risk of road surfaces melting known as 'fatting').
- The structure of these roads has been evolved rather than designed; consequently, the construction is not consistent even where knowledge of the pavement exists.
- Utility openings are a constant threat to the condition of carriageway surfaces.

Strategy

- Reactive repairs can be a drain on Council resources, reducing these will enable more longer-term investment in the asset. Reactive repairs should be done 'right first time' and will be replaced with planned maintenance where most appropriate.
- Lifecycle planning will be used to establish a baseline funding requirement for the network.
- Investment shall be targeted using clear evidence, where the money will return greatest return and will also be aligned with the local community needs.
- The type of maintenance will match the function it needs to perform and level of service required.
- The use of preventative surface treatments shall be optimised and these shall be done at the right time.
- Ensuring that drainage systems operate effectively to reduce the impact of water either damaging the carriageway or posing a risk due to flooding. Correct functioning of the drainage is crucial to the preservation of carriageway assets.
- Specialist materials will only be used where fully justified.
- The risk of a wet-road skidding incident will be managed on main roads.

Outcomes

Carriageway condition is maintained with minimum whole life cost supported by sufficient steady state investment.



Footways and Cycleways facilitate people to travel on foot, by bicycle or ‘wheeling‘. For many vulnerable road users, footways are their only means to travel and access public transport.

Knowledge

The Council maintains approximately 1,600km of footways and 70km of cycleways. Although the majority of footways and cycleways are in urban areas, almost a third of footways are in rural areas providing links within and between villages.

The condition of footways and cycleways is good considering the network as a whole but there are minor areas or concern.

Footways are seen as important by Stakeholders with reasonable levels of satisfaction. Key issues highlighted are speed of repair to damaged pavements, pavements being kept clear of obstructions and weed killing.

Key challenges

- Footways are often blocked by parked vehicles and overgrown vegetation, reducing safe pedestrian space.
- Vehicle overruns cause small but important areas of structural damage. More households want vehicle access, increasing demand for permitted crossovers. Where crossovers are installed without permission, the footway remains weak and is easily damaged.
- Wetter winters linked to climate change lead to standing water on footways, accelerating deterioration.
- Many market-town footways use specialist surfacing materials, which are harder and more expensive to maintain.
- Tree roots and utility openings disrupt footway surfaces and threaten long-term condition.
- Autumn leaf-fall creates slippery surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists.

Strategy

- Reactive repairs will be completed right first time, and replaced with planned maintenance where this provides a better long term solution.
- Lifecycle planning will define the baseline funding needed for the footway and cycleway network, including identifying special surface footways so their additional costs can be quantified.
- Investment will be evidence based and directed to where it delivers the greatest benefit.
- Maintenance types will be matched to the function of the asset and the required level of service.
- Preventative surface treatments will be optimised and applied at the correct point in the lifecycle.
- A clear process will be established for reporting and managing obstructions on the footway.
- The Council will confirm its policy on crossovers and implement measures to protect the footway network.

Outcomes

Footway and cycleway condition is maintained at current levels at minimum whole life cost supported by steady state investment.

Highway structures include bridges that carry the highway over obstacles such as water courses or other highways; culverts that allow water courses to pass under highways; retaining walls that retain material from encroaching the highway or supporting the highway itself; embankments and cuttings; and cattle grids.



Knowledge

The Council inspects and maintains a wide range of structures consisting of 835 bridges or culverts with a span of 1.5 m or greater and 175 smaller bridges or culverts, approximately 1,500 walls retaining a height of 1.35m or greater and 50 cattle grids. There are other minor bridges and culverts that are not inspected as a structure.

The current stock of bridges has an average condition score of 79 (April 2025), which is considered to be in a 'fair' condition.

Key challenges

- Detailed asset data exists for all types of structures with the exception of retaining walls. The cost of completing the inventory is prohibitive compared to the risk of failure against other priorities.
- Unless the current level of funding is maintained, there is the potential for a rapid decline in bridge condition, leading to an expanded backlog of maintenance and renewal works.
- Climate change will lead to increasingly frequent severe weather events and an increased risk of scour around bridge foundations and other structural damage.
- The materials used in the construction and maintenance of bridges have a large embodied carbon element and options for using alternative materials and maintenance techniques are limited.

Strategy

- We will continue to meet our statutory duties and maintain the bridge stock in a safe and serviceable condition by undertaking annual routine maintenance and
- We will continue to take a risk-based approach to prioritise our inspection, sub-standard monitoring of weak structures and works programmes in accordance with recommendation in the WMHI Code of Practice.
- We will form a three year strengthening/ replacement forward programme of works.
- Maintenance works schedules and strengthening programmes will be developed using works priority, cost and strategic weighted factors such as network hierarchy (including resilient network), obstacle crossed, heritage status and length of structure.
- Retaining walls will be managed using a reactive regime.
- We will develop life cycle models that will improve our understanding of the long-term impacts of different maintenance strategies on costs and carbon emissions and the level of investment that may be required to achieve our asset management objectives.

Outcomes

Our aim is to maintain the condition of highway bridges and structures in a good condition.

Street lighting includes all electrical equipment that illuminates features on the highway such as lighting columns, wall-mounted lights, subway lighting, illuminated bollards and illuminated signs.



Knowledge

Shropshire Council currently maintains 20,329 street lights. Of these, approximately a third are over 35 years old and 88% of the stock are low energy lighting. The majority of the existing columns are mild steel columns, there are also a significant number of reinforced concrete columns (686 or 3.4%).

A planned programme of upgrades has been completed significantly increasing the amount of low energy lighting. As well as reducing energy use, these modern lighting units allow for further efficiencies in their operations.

Challenges

- An ageing asset with a high proportion of columns reaching the end of their life.
- We have been capturing the cable network for street lighting in recent years to enable scheduled maintenance to be undertaken and plans provided to third parties on request, reducing risks relating to nearby works in the highway. It has become apparent that the type of connection on these networks is significant and we will also be capturing this data.
- Particular types of lighting column, such as concrete columns, are known to pose additional risk of sudden failure.
- A significant number of units are old and contain obsolete parts. When these require replacement, it is often necessary to replace a whole unit rather than a single component.

Strategy

- Minimise energy costs and carbon emissions by converting all appropriate lighting to LED and employ dimming in part night lighting areas.
- Arrest the decline in the street lighting stock by identifying appropriate levels of investment and prioritising the replacement of aged stock. A life cycle model is used to identify investment levels.
- A risk-based programme of structural testing to be used to identify high risk of failures and replacement columns that fail and inform a prioritised forward programme.
- Monitor higher risk assets and replace if any signs of failure emerge.
- The use of long-life aluminium columns will be considered where appropriate.

Outcomes

All lighting is upgraded to low energy lighting and deploy part-night lighting where appropriate.

The risk of failure of these assets is minimised.

Traffic signals perform an important role in managing traffic flow, improving safety and providing road crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. This asset group includes all powered equipment in the highway such as Vehicle Activated Signs, Variable Message Sign, rising bollards and Council maintained EV charging points; it excludes street lighting.



Knowledge

The Council is responsible for managing a wide range of traffic and pedestrian infrastructure, including 44 signal controlled junctions, 85 signalised crossings, and 75 zebra crossings. In addition, it oversees approximately 290 electronic signs, comprising Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS), Variable Message Signs (VMS), school warning “wig-wag” signs, and cattle crossing signs.

Challenges

- Overall, the traffic signal equipment across Shropshire is in relatively good condition, with only 4% of assets exceeding their 20-year design life
- There are very few junctions and crossings that are low-voltage; this is required for on-site safety.
- Asset data is held in multiple systems. The Confirm system holds much of the asset information needed for the asset management strategy. However, other information lies outside this system, notably in terms of detailed highways inventory information (held in a series of Excel spreadsheets) for Traffic Signals and Electronic signs.
- The maintenance contractor, SWARCO, also uses a bespoke system called ImTrac. ImTrac provides a comprehensive asset, fault and lifecycle management platform for traffic signal infrastructure, enabling efficient maintenance, data-driven decision making, and long-term investment planning

Strategy

- Continued investment in Shropshire's Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) to ease congestion and improve maintenance response times.
- Upgrade existing junctions and crossings to low-voltages installations
- Undertake planned and cyclic maintenance of the traffic signal asset stock to minimise operating and replacements costs and to extend asset life.
- Identify maintenance needs and funding for a medium-term programme.
- Streamline the management of asset data and ensure that the solution is fit-for-purpose.

Outcomes

The asset is managed so that the age of the stock is less than 20 years old.

The risk of failure of these assets is managed to within acceptable levels.

This group encompasses a wide range of assets, varying from piped systems to open watercourses, which assist in the council's duty to safely drain the highway and provide opportunities for the council to meet its obligations under the Water Framework Directive.



Knowledge

Shropshire Council currently maintains around 92,000 gullies and catchpits.

Challenges

Whilst asset data exists with regard to the majority of highway gullies, information on the associated outfall systems, of various types, into which they discharge is very limited. The collection of such data is high cost and a data collection exercise for the entire asset cannot be justified. A risk-based approach to the collection of highway drainage asset data is therefore taken.

Limited data is available for subterranean assets such as pipework.

The successful operation of this asset group is ensured by revenue funding rather than capital funding.

The Council has moved to a reactive rather than cyclical maintenance regime for drainage. This means that there is limited intelligence on how the asset is performing.

Ditches can be crucial to prevent water on the highway in rural areas, there are often the responsibility of local land owners.

Strategy

- Use a risk-based approach to establish a cyclical cleansing operation on main roads.
- Ensure that cleansing means ensuring that the whole system is working not simply emptying the sumps.
- Investigate the use of SMART technology to remotely monitor key locations.
- Whenever new drainage assets are provided the as-built details are added to the asset register.
- For the existing highway drainage systems, there are no proposals to record all outfalls; however, where any investigation to improve drainage is required, that information is captured and recorded.
- Continued to deliver drainage improvement schemes using a prioritised programme of work.
- We will continue to work in partnership with other organisations and to deliver other benefits, such as those required by the Water Framework Directive, will also be sought.
- Encourage local land owners to maintain their drainage assets.

Outcomes

To meet statutory duties and maintain a safe, in flood risk terms, highway by continuing to assess and prioritise high risk flooding issues and programme them accordingly.

Minimising the impact of water on carriageway and footway surfaces.

Highway Safety Inspection Manual

Update – July 2026

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 3

2 SCOPE 4

3 NETWORK HIERARCHY 7

4 INSPECTION FREQUENCIES 8

4.1 Inspection frequencies – tolerances 9

5 DEFECTS 10

5.1 Defect response times 10

5.2 Deficiency and risk 11

5.3 Special considerations for cyclists 12

5.4 Investigatory levels, defect standards and responses 13

6 SAFETY INSPECTIONS – GENERAL PROCEDURES 17

7 SAFETY INSPECTIONS – SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS 21

8 ROLES AND COMPETENCIES 27

1 INTRODUCTION

Safety inspections are an important means of keeping the highway safe for the travelling public. They are also vitally important in court cases for providing evidence that Shropshire Council takes a responsible attitude to its duties as a highway authority. If a highway user suffers a loss that is attributed to a failure to maintain a section of highway, then the highway users may claim damages from the highway authority unless it can prove “that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic”. The number of claims must be controlled as these have an impact on the highway maintenance budgets.

The Council’s safety inspection manual has been developed following the guidance within the current Code of Practice “Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure” (UKRLG, 2016) and its legal requirements as set out in the Highways Act (1980). Highway safety inspections are carried out for the following reasons:

- To meet the Council’s duty to maintain the highway.
- To identify defects that are likely to create a danger or serious inconvenience to highway users or the wider community and to determine the degree and timing of repairs.
- To provide additional intelligence on the condition of the network for wider asset management purposes including optimisation of asset life cycles, prioritisation of funding and scheduling of works programmes.
- To provide an adequate defence against highway claims under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980.

This inspection manual sets out the Council’s requirements for highway safety inspections. Safety Inspections are designed to identify all defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to network users or the wider community. Following the identification of a defect identified as detailed in Section 5 of this document, the risk due to a hazard is assessed on site and an appropriate priority response assigned.

This safety inspection manual provides guidance on the classification of defects according to risk. It is expected that Inspectors will apply their knowledge and experience to undertake a dynamic risk assessment of the risks as they see it but if in any doubt they should seek advice from their supervisor. Each and every such decision could be critical to the safety of network users and may also potentially be subject to legal scrutiny in the event of an accident occurring at or near the site. In such circumstances complete and accurate records will be essential to show a competent evaluation has been made and, where appropriate, suitable corrective measures have been initiated.

2 SCOPE

Safety inspections will be carried out on all features within the highway on carriageways, footways and cycleways as set out in the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan. Some features will only receive a superficial visual inspection and obvious defects reported to the relevant person or organisation responsible for its maintenance; such features include:

- Highway structures;
- Street lighting;
- Traffic signals;
- Highway trees;
- Statutory undertaker's equipment in the highway;
- Features maintained by other authorities including Highways England, Network Rail and town and parish councils.

These following deficiencies are to be looked for during safety inspections. It is provided as a check list only, is not exhaustive and should be adapted to suit local circumstances.

- Debris, spillage or contamination on running surface or hard shoulder;
- Displaced road studs lying on running surface;
- Overhead wires damaged or unstable;
- Damaged and exposed electrical wiring;
- Embankments and cuttings apparently unstable;
- Trees with loose branches or apparently unstable;
- Signs, signals or lighting damaged, defective, missing or unstable;
- Road markings and studs missing, misleading or badly worn;

- Signs, signals or lighting dirty or obscured;
- Sight-lines obscured by trees, unauthorised signs and other obstructions;
- Safety fencing, parapet fencing, handrail, and other barriers missing or defective;
- Abrupt level differences in the running surface;
- Potholes, cracks or gaps in the running surface;
- Crowning, depression and rutting in the running surface;
- Edge deterioration of the running surface;
- Kerbing, edging or channel defects;
- Rocking or otherwise unstable footpath or cycleway surfaces;
- Apparently slippery running surface;
- Ironwork (gully lids, manholes etc.) broken or missing;
- Gullies, drains or grips blocked or defective;
- Standing water, water discharging onto or overflowing across the running surface;
- Fords- inspected at same frequency as road category, check that depth gauge is present and record onto inspection record.

The term running surface applies to metalled parts of the carriageway, footway or cycle route.

This manual does not cover inspections for winter maintenance. These are treated as a special form of safety inspection and specific codes of practice adhered to.

Where the highway crosses a railway, the Council is not responsible for safety inspections between the STOP markings, any potential safety defect observed during safety inspections must be immediately reported to Network Rail or the private rail operator. In addition, warning lights, barriers and signs associated with the railway are also the responsibility of Network Rail or the private rail operator.

Some observed safety defects may not be the responsibility of the Council such as utility trench reinstatements and iron works, as well as hazards caused by third parties such as obstructions in the highway or dangerous scaffolding. The Council must ensure that all relevant information is notified directly to the third party concerned but it retains its obligations in respect of maintaining the highway. This means that when such hazards are

deemed actionable, the site should be made safe in accordance with the principles of this manual. Any costs incurred may be re-charged to the third party.

The planning of highway safety inspection does not account for the risk of damage from agricultural vehicles. Movements of agricultural vehicles, and the risk posed by them, is subject to the land use in any one season or year; therefore, it is not practicable for the highway authority to plan highway safety inspections based on such movements. Where concerns are reported, these will be investigated in the normal way.

3 NETWORK HIERARCHY

A network hierarchy has been defined. A full description of each hierarchy is provided in the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP). The hierarchies for carriageway, footway and cycleways as published in the Code of Practice have been used as a basis for the hierarchies in Shropshire. The basic hierarchy has been enhanced to deal with specific local risks; this enhancement follows similar approaches adopted by other highway authorities and ensures that the core hierarchy is consistent with that used by other authorities.

The assignment of the hierarchy to the network sections has been done using the descriptions in the HIAMP and supplemented with:

- Information on the levels of use
- The expectation of service level by users considering the hierarchy of local links
- Local intelligence on the function of the highway
- Historical classification and an appreciation of risk
- Stakeholder feedback

Where a section could be placed in multiple hierarchies, a judgement on the hierarchy that best reflects the function of that section has been made.

4 INSPECTION FREQUENCIES

Table 1 sets out the standard inspection frequency for each hierarchy; a description of each hierarchy is set out in the HIAMP. These frequencies have been determined from an analysis of recent claims and the likelihood of an encounter with the defect.

Table 1. Inspection Frequencies

Category		Hierarchy Type	Inspected
Carriageway	2	Strategic Route	1 Month
	3a	Main Distributor	1 Month
	3b	Secondary Distributor	1 Month
	4a	Link Road	3 Months
	4b	Local Access Road	1 Year
	4c	Layby	1 Year
	4d	Minor Lane	1 Year
	5a	Track	As required
	5b	Disused Track	As required
Footways	F1	Primary Walking Route	1 Month
	F2	Secondary Walking Route	3 Months
	F3	Link Footway	6 Months
	F4	Local Access Footway	1 Year
	F5	Minor Footway	As required
Cycle Routes	Y1	Cycle Lane	As for the carriageway
	Y2	Cycle Track	6 Months
	Y3	Cycle Trail	As required

The standard inspection frequency can be increased or reduced based on the risk present. Shropshire Council shall maintain a log of deviations from the standard frequency and where required shall regularly review these changes at least annually.

In addition to the schedule of safety inspections, additional inspections of specific defects can be carried out in response to reports of defects from stakeholders or other incidents.

4.1 Inspection frequencies – tolerances

The inspection due date is set by the previous date of inspection and the inspection frequency. The inspection regime acknowledges the need to maintain a regular inspection interval whilst acknowledging the normal operational challenges in maintaining that interval such as weekends, bank holidays, poor weather and normal variations in the time required to undertake inspections. An operational contingency, which is linked to the frequency of inspection and therefore risk, has been defined to cover these normal events and is given in Table 2.

The inspection must be completed by the earlier of the following two conditions:

- The end of the calendar month in which the inspection is due.
- The inspection due date plus the operational contingency.

The effect of the above conditions is illustrated in the following examples:

- If an inspection due date is 10 May 2018 and the operational contingency is 7 days, the inspection must be completed by 18 May 2018.
- If an inspection due date is 10 May 2018 and the operational contingency is 28 days, the inspection must be completed by 31 May 2018.

Inspection intervals can be extended further in exceptional circumstances such as severe weather events on the network. In these circumstances, the inspection must be undertaken as soon as is reasonably practicable following the event and a record maintained by the supervisor of the circumstances which prevented the completion of the inspection within the normal timescales.

Table 2. Operational contingency

Inspection frequency	Operational contingency
1 Month	7 calendar days
3 Months	7 calendar days
6 Months	28 calendar days
12 Months	28 calendar days

5 DEFECTS

5.1 Defect response times

Clearly some defects need to be treated more urgently than others. In order to record how quickly action needs to be taken after an inspection, a category is applied to each individual defect as set out in Table 3.

Table 3. Defect categories

Defect Category	Description	Response
1H	Immediate Response	Make safe/repair within 1 day
1	Urgent Response	
2H	Planned Response (High Risk)	Make safe/repair within 7 days
2	Planned Response	Make safe/repair within 28 days
2L	Planned Response (Low Risk)	Risk-based response

The response time for each category commences at the end of the day on which the defect is identified. For example, ‘within 1 day’ means a defect observed on Tuesday should be made safe or repaired by the end of the day on Wednesday.

The standard planned response to a safety defect is 28 days; this response can be changed to an alternative response time as set out in Table 3 based on the risk assessed at the time of observation. A key determinant of the risk will be the hierarchy of the carriageway, footway or cycle route but other factors should be taken into account. Section 5.2 provides more guidance on the assessment of risk.

There will be certain defects for which a planned response is not appropriate; these are classed as Category 1 defects. Category 1 defects should be made safe or repaired within 1 day. Category 1 defects include a further sub-category 1H or Immediate Response where

failure to act would mean that the first person to pass by would be likely to come to harm. Examples of such defects could be fallen trees, major bank slips, or certain potholes more than 150mm deep. Where a category 1H defect is observed, the defect must not be left unattended until such time that it is either made safe or repaired.

The risk-based response for Category 2L defects will be determined by the Inspector, often in consultation with local highways teams, based on the observed condition and the risk of further deterioration until the next scheduled inspection. The response may be to include the repair in the next works programme, schedule a more detailed investigation, monitor by more frequent inspections or simply to review at the next inspection.

5.2 Deficiency and risk

Under a risk-based approach, the appropriate response to defects will be determined by considering the risk presented by:

- The depth, surface area or other degree of deficiency of the defect or obstruction.
- The volume, characteristics and speed of traffic.
- The location of the defect relative to highway features such as junctions and bends.
- The location of the defect relative to the positioning of users, especially vulnerable users, such as in traffic lanes or wheel tracks, in cycle lanes or crossing points.
- The nature of interaction with other defects.
- Likely weather conditions, especially potential for freezing of surface water.
- Likely impact on highway users who come into contact with the defect.
- Impacts on vehicles and property that come into contact with the defect.

These can be assessed in accordance with the Council's Opportunity Risk Management Strategy using the matrix in Table 4. After the assessment of risk, the risk will be treated according to an appropriate response. In accordance with the Council's Opportunity Risk Management Strategy, any risks assessed as being below the 'Risk Acceptance Level' should managed to ensure that resources are not wasted and as such the defect should be considered for maintenance in accordance with the Council's asset management strategy.

Table 4. Risk Assessment Matrix

Impact							
	Critical	5	1H	1H	1H	1H	1H
	Major	4	2	2H	1	1	1H
	Significant	3		2	2H	1	1
	Minor	2			2	2H	1
	Negligible	1				2	2H
			1	2	3	4	5
			Rare	Possible	Likely	Almost certain	Certain
			Likelihood				

Risk acceptance level

5.3 Special considerations for cyclists

Cyclists use the highway in multiple ways such as sharing certain areas of footway, using dedicated lanes or sharing the carriageway with other vehicles.

It is not reasonably practicable to adjust the level of acceptable risk on all roads for the possible existence of cyclists; however, special consideration should be given in the following defined areas where there is specific infrastructure permitting or encouraging cycle use, such as:

- Shared use footways – segregated and non-segregated
- Cycle lanes

The presence of cycle route signage could be an example of which special consideration should be given; however, these signs seldom accurately define the full extent of route and

may exist in one direction only or could be missing. For such situations, the special consideration may be given in circumstances that the average road user may perceive them. This is that the sign is seen prior to the inspector commencing the inspection of the route and for a reasonable distance.

5.4 Investigatory levels, defect standards and responses

In order to provide clear guidance, minimum investigatory levels have been developed using a risk and evidence-based approach, benchmarking with other Highway Authorities and the Code of Practice. The Table 5 and 6 provide the investigatory criteria and guidance on responses.

Heritage areas can include materials and/or features that have intrinsically uneven surface qualities or do not meet modern standards. Highway users may be reasonably expected to acknowledge these qualities and take appropriate care when travelling through these areas. A response determined by the consideration of specific, local risk factors would be appropriate in these circumstances.

Table 5: Investigatory criteria and guidance on response times for carriageway defects

Carriageways	2, 3a, 3b	4a,4b,4c	4d,5a,5b	Response	Notes
Abrupt level difference in the surface	>100mm			1	
	>40mm	>100mm		2H	
		>40mm		2	
			>40mm	2L	
Potholes (>150mm diameter)	>100mm			1	
	>40mm	>100mm		2H	
		>40mm		2	
			>40mm	2L	
Fretting of surface joints	>100mm			1	
	>40mm	>100mm		2H	
		>40mm		2	
			>40mm	2L	
Edge deterioration	>100mm			1	
	>40mm	>100mm		2H	
		>40mm		2	
			>40mm	2L	
Flooding	Affects > ¼ of road			1	
		Affects > ½ of road		2H	
		>75mm		2H	
Displaced filter material from drainage	●			1	
Missing ironwork	●			1	
Defective ironwork	●			2L	

Carriageways	2, 3a, 3b	4a,4b,4c	4d,5a,5b	Response	Notes
Displaced filter material from drainage	●			1	
Defective vehicle barrier	●			1	
Damaged/Deformed Bridge or Structural Element	●			2L	Report to Structure's Team
Unstable Masonry/Brickwork/Rot	●			1	
Visibility restricted at bridge	●			2L	
Inadequate visibility	●			2H	
		●		2L	
Severe foundation failure or subsidence	●			1	Refer to notes
Geotechnical material on road	●			1H	Refer to notes
Injurious weeds	●			2H	
Dangerous obstructions in the highway	●			1	
Other obstructions in the highway	●			2L	
Debris on road surface including spills	●			1	
		●		2H	
Defective important warning and regulatory signs	Insufficient legibility			1	
		Insufficient legibility		2H	
Defective signs and bollards	Dangerous			1	Refer to notes
	Non-dangerous			2L	
		Dangerous		2H	Refer to notes
		Non-dangerous		2L	
Traffic signals defects	●			1	Report to Traffic Signals Team

Carriageways	2, 3a, 3b	4a,4b,4c	4d,5a,5b	Response	Notes
Dangerous street lighting columns		●		1H	Report to Street Lighting Team
Exposed wiring		●		1H	
Non-dangerous lighting defects		●		2L	
Defective road studs	Missing, Loose or badly damaged			1	

Table 6. Investigatory criteria and guidance on response times for footway defects

Footways & Cycleways	F1	F2, F3, F4	F5	Y1, Y2	Y3	Response	Notes
Abrupt level difference in the surface	>20mm					1	
		>20mm		>20mm		2H	
			>20mm			2L	
Potholes	>20mm					1	
		>20mm		>20mm		2H	
			>20mm			2L	
Fretting of surface joints	>20mm					1	
		>20mm		>20mm		2H	
			>20mm			2L	
Rocking paving units	>20mm					1	
		>20mm		>20mm		2H	
			>20mm			2L	
Vegetation	●			●		2	
		●			●	2L	
Defective pedestrian barrier	●			●		1	
		●			●	2H	

● Applies

Does not apply

6 SAFETY INSPECTIONS – GENERAL PROCEDURES

Most safety inspections on the highway network will be undertaken from a slow-moving vehicle travelling in one direction.

- On dual carriageways and wide single carriageways, inspections will be carried out in both directions in order that all features and possible defects on the network are observed from a road users' perspective.
- On single carriageway, strategic routes, main distributor and secondary distributor roads, the inspections will take place from one direction in month one, and from the other direction in month two.

This procedure presumes that nearly all actionable defects will be observable from a slow-moving vehicle. In practice this is not always the case, and in such circumstances the inspection should be completed on foot.

Driven inspections of footways on either side of one-way streets should be done twice for each side of the road. For two-way roads, the inspection of the footway shall be carried out in both directions covering the near side footway in each direction.

Dedicated mobile technologies can offer increased precision for safety inspections. Wherever dedicated mobile technologies are used to support Safety Inspections, the data collection will be supervised by a competent Inspector.

Inspections should only be undertaken when there is adequate visibility. The Inspector will decide if visibility is adequate.

Where the surface of the highway is obscured, for example by parked cars, it is reasonable to expect that this part of the surface is not inspected until a further attempt at the next scheduled inspection (save in circumstances where an inspector decides that it is reasonably required to investigate under an object given the presence of a visible actionable defect adjacent to the object that might extend further underneath and to investigate would not place the inspector in peril).

The inspection schedules will be maintained by the Supervisor.

Category 1 defects (including those on highway trees) must be notified immediately by telephone to the Contractor or, where features have only received a superficial visual

inspection as set out in Section 2, to the appropriate organisation or section responsible for the maintenance of the feature.

Inspections are to be recorded using a Data Capture Device (DCD) linked to the Integrated Highway Management System (IHMS). In the event of failure of either the DCD or IHMS, a alternative process of capturing and issuing work will be employed and the IHMS will be updated as soon as possible.

Where no defects exist, a clear record that the section has been inspected must be created in the Integrated Highway Management System (IHMS). This is typically done using the Data Capture Device (DCD).

Sufficiently clear images should be captured of the defect when observed and when repaired; for multiple defects in one location these images should capture the wider view of the defects. Where possible, these images should include a locally identifiable feature. It may be helpful to include a standard object to help scale the dimensions of the defect such as a ruler, pen or coin. Images must not be captured where to do so would place the Inspector at risk.

The general process for dealing with defects is as follows:

1. Assess the risk and categorise the defect
2. Take action to make safe in accordance with the category of the defect.
3. Arrange for additional work to permanently repair the defect if not permanently repaired in Step 2 and if required by the asset life cycle plan.

Risk should be regularly monitored by the Local Highway Manager, Highway Inspections Manager and Highway Asset Manager through analysis of insurance claims, recent safety inspections and feedback from the Inspector or Local Highways Technician. Any particular sections where there is a pattern of risk which is significantly different from the expected pattern for the hierarchy and that which is known locally may be assigned a different frequency of inspection than shown in Table 1.

Works orders to rectify safety defects must be appropriately referenced to the highway network with coordinates and linked to inspection records. A sufficiently detailed audit trail recording the process from identifying defects to the completion of the works should be created. For Category 1 defects, the time that the defect was observed must be recorded together with the time that the defect was made safe. For Category 2 defects,

as a minimum, the date that the defect was observed must be recorded together with the date that the defect was made safe; where no time is recorded it will be assumed that time was 23:59 on the day of inspection.

The standards and specification of the defect repair will be as detailed in the Council highway maintenance contract document in use at the time the defect is found.

Where a defect has been notified to a third party, the information communicated about the defect should be retained and where required, a further inspection arranged to confirm that timely remedial action has been taken in accordance with the response that would be set out in this policy.

Table 7. Permissible methods of inspection

	Mode		
	Vehicle	**Cycle**	**On foot**
Carriageways	✓		✓1
Footways			
Primary Walking Route			✓
Secondary Walking Route			✓
Link Footway	✓2		✓
Local Access	✓2		✓
Minor Footway	✓2		✓
Cycleways			
Cycle Lane	✓	✓	✓1
Cycle Path	✓1	✓	✓
Cycle Trial		✓	✓

Notes:

1 – Only permitted where the inspected surface can be clearly viewed and is not obscured by hedges, parked cars etc.

2 – On rural footways, safety inspections should be done from a vehicle with only the occasional need to proceed on foot. On urban footways, safety inspection from a vehicle may not be possible and may need to be conducted on foot.

7 SAFETY INSPECTIONS – SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

CARRIAGEWAYS	
1	Edge deterioration on rural unkerbed roads within 250mm of the original road edge and 50mm deep or less are not considered to be a safety defect and safety related action is not required.
2	Road sections where there is clear evidence of extensive rutting, poor cross-sectional profile, poor longitudinal profile (unevenness), or smooth/polished areas, must be reported to the Local Highway Manager.
3	Some areas of carriageway are designed for use by pedestrians. In these cases, the investigatory criteria for footways will also apply. Such areas include: • Formal pedestrian crossings • Carriageways that act as pedestrianised areas. These are typically closed to vehicles at certain times of the day.
4	For carriageways that form part of the signed cycle route, the investigatory criteria for cycleways will only apply in such areas where a cycle lane exists.
FOOTWAYS AND CYCLEWAYS	
5	Non highway trenches with potholes greater than 20mm deep or abrupt differences in level greater than 20mm, when measured vertically, shall be recorded and notified to the appropriate service company, responsible body, or private owner. If the defect is such that a Category 1 response would be required, immediate arrangements should be made to make safe.
6	Flagged and modular footways have been assessed as presenting a higher risk than other types of footway. Such risks are attributed to disruption of the surface from underneath (e.g. tree roots) or from above (e.g. vehicle overrun). Where there is a significant risk of disruption to the surface, the footway should be inspected at a frequency in accordance with the next more frequent level above as set out in Table 1 to reduce risk; for example a Local Access Footway with a significant risk of disruption of the surface should be inspected every 6 months.

	Recent inspection records and claims history can be used to determine the risk of disruption to the surface.
7	It is not reasonably required to physically check every paving unit for rocking movement. However, the inspector must check obvious moving units which may be displaced or show other signs of disturbance.
IRONWORK	
8	For defects in non-highway service furniture, these should be recorded and notified to the appropriate service company (via the Street Works Team), the responsible body, or private owner. For fire hydrants refer to the Fire & Rescue Service.
9	Defects on or immediately around fire hydrants shall be referred to the Fire & Rescue Service.
10	Ironwork in the highway will only be subject to a visual inspection to ensure that it is seated correctly and the cover is intact.
11	All ironwork with a difference in level with the road should be dealt with in accordance with type of asset it is positioned within i.e. carriageway, footway or cycle route.
KERBS	
12	Kerbs will be inspected as part of the footway inspection when the footway is present. Where a footway is not present, the kerb will be inspected as part of the carriageway inspection.
13	Where there is a footway immediately adjacent and significant crossing movements would be expected, the response times shall be aligned with the guidance for Footways.
14	Where there is no footway immediately adjacent and kerbs are damaged or missing, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the Inspector to determine the scale of works and response time required

STREET LIGHTING	
15	Damaged, leaning or collapsed columns, and exposed wiring, missing or open doors, or hanging lanterns that are assessed to expose highway users to high risk must be reported immediately by telephone to the Street Lighting Team.
TRAFFIC SIGNALS	
16	All defects must be reported immediately by telephone to the Traffic Signals Team who will then arrange for the necessary repairs.
17	Defects are to be considered as Category 1 defects and made safe by erecting suitable temporary warning signs as soon as practicable.
BRIDGES AND RETAINING WALLS	
18	All unstable masonry or brickwork observed in any structures adjacent to the highway must be reported immediately by telephone to the Structures Team.
HIGHWAY DRAINAGE: FLOODING AND BLOCKAGES	
19	Blocked drainage systems must be investigated within 7 days if a significant seepage of water across the carriageway occurs. On the defined network of roads for winter maintenance, such seepage can result in the loss of any salt applied and rapidly lead to a significant build up of ice. Seepage also significantly increases the risk of aquaplaning and wet skid accidents.
20	Flooding defects on Strategic Routes, Main Distributor and Secondary Distributor road that are caused by blockages and silt accumulation must be treated as Category 1 and made safe by the provision of warning signs. Arrangements should be made to clear the blockage or siltation within 7 days. Flooding defects on other roads that are caused by blockages and silt accumulation should be treated following a risk assessment by a Local Highways Technician. Where required, arrangements should be made to clear the blockage and siltation within 28 days.
21	Advice must be sought from the Drainage Team on all privately-owned ditches used to carry the highway water, which become blocked or silted up.

VERGES, TREES AND HEDGES	
22	Injurious weeds growing on highways which could cause danger to humans, such as giant hogweed, should be treated by suitably qualified personnel.
23	Highway safety inspections should include highway trees, including those outside, but within falling distance of the highway. Inspectors should take note of any encroachment or obstruction to visibility caused by highways trees. Any obvious damage, ill health (such as ash dieback) or trip hazards should also be noted.
24	If there is an immediate risk of harm to network users due to tree causing an obstruction on the highway, it shall be treated as a category 1 defect and the Arboricultural Officer shall be consulted for advice. In other instances, work required on trees adjacent to the highway should be referred to the landowner and action taken to remedy the situation agreed.
25	For defects on trees adjacent to the highway, these should be recorded and notified to the land owner.
ROAD RESTRAINTS	
26	On all roads the site should be made safe within 24 hours of damage being notified or observed, by the provision of suitable warning signs. The provision of temporary barriers or lane closures should be considered where a Local Highways Technician has carried out a risk assessment exercise which indicated a significant risk to road users.
EMBANKMENTS AND CUTTINGS	
27	The Local Highways Technicians shall carry out an on-site risk assessment to determine an appropriate response to failures.
HIGHWAY OBSTRUCTIONS	
28	Accident debris, slurry, mud deposits, oil spillages and the like on Strategic, Main and Secondary Distributor Roads that are considered by an Inspector to pose a significant risk to network users, shall be treated as a Category 1 defect and must be made safe by the provision of warning signs and/or cleansing.

	On all other roads, The Local Highways Technicians shall carry out an on-site risk assessment to determine an appropriate response to these defects.
29	For defects where the cause of the risk is not the responsibility of highway authority, these should be recorded and notified to the appropriate service company (via the Street Works Team), the responsible body, or private owner for action within 7 days.
30	All fuel and chemical spillages should be dealt with following consultation with the emergency services. In the event of advice being delayed from the emergency services, the site must be immediately made safe by the erection of appropriate signs, and in extreme cases, by emergency road closures.
31	Cables trailing across the footway are prohibited, even if a protection system is used and should be treated as a hazard.
SIGNS: FACE/STRUCTURE/FIXINGS	
32	The response requirements for strategic routes, main distributor and secondary distributor roads extend to signs on adjoining roads at the approaches to these routes.
33	Defects affecting the legibility of important warning signs and regulatory signs or other defect to signs and bollards presenting a high risk of harm to highway users should be managed as follows: On strategic routes, main distributor and secondary distributor roads defects should be treated as Category 1 and permanently repaired within 7 days. On other roads, defects should be treated as Category 2H and permanently repaired within 28 days.
34	Defects on other road signs including posts and fittings that are missing, damaged, obscured or pointing the wrong way, should be treated as Category 2L and, where possible, repaired within 3 months. The Traffic Team may be consulted to ensure that the sign is not redundant.

35	Lamp failures and lamps illuminated during the day should be reported to the Street Lighting Team.
36	Illuminated stop signs with lamp failure or any exposed wiring should be reported to the Street Lighting Team immediately by telephone.
ROAD STUDS	
37	Missing, loose or badly damaged casings for road studs are treated as Category 1 and replaced in the next available programme.
38	Low or high cats-eye casings, damaged cats-eye rubbers, damaged or missing stick-on road studs are to be treated as Category 2L.
ROAD MARKINGS	
39	On Strategic Routes, Main Distributor and Secondary Distributor roads, markings should be replaced within three months and during the next available programme for all other roads when more than 50% of road markings are: • missing or worn away • obscured • visible by day, but not reflective at night On all roads, markings should be replaced within 3 months when 50% of Stop and Give Way markings are missing or worn away. The Local Highways Technician may consider erecting warning signs following a risk assessment of the site. Longitudinal road markings should normally be assessed over a 300m length. In the case of double white line systems or approaches to junctions, a 50m section should be used instead.

8 ROLES AND COMPETENCIES

This document references a number of roles which are required to operate the safety inspection system. In a dynamic organisation, roles and titles can change; therefore, the following generic descriptions of roles are defined which will be identifiable within the current organisational structure. An individual may undertake more than one of these roles.

Role	Description
Inspector	A person who is sufficiently competent to undertake inspections and assess risk in accordance with the requirements of this manual.
Supervisor	A person who directly manages the task of safety inspections and is responsible for ensuring that the inspections are completed according to the required schedule and to the requirements of this manual. A Supervisor will be expected to be able to undertake the role of an Inspector.
Local Highway Manager	A person who is responsible for highways maintenance on a defined part of the network.
Highway Technician	A person who is able to assess risk and priorities on behalf of the Council using technical knowledge of highways maintenance; typically, a Highway Technician reports to the Local Highways Manager. A Highway Technician will be expected to be able to undertake the role of an Inspector.
Highway Inspections Manager	A person responsible for the planning and operation of highway safety inspections.
Highway Asset Manager	A person who is able to confidently provide advice on how to implement Council policy and strategy.
Traffic Team	Persons in this team have responsibility for implementing road safety and other traffic management features.
Street Lighting Team	Persons in this team have responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Council's street lighting assets.

Traffic Signals Team	Persons in this team have responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Council's traffic signal assets.
Structures Team	Persons in this team have responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Council's bridges and retaining walls.
Drainage Team	Persons in this team are able to assess risk and priorities on behalf of the Council using technical knowledge of highway drainage.
Street Works Team	Persons in this team act liaise directly with statutory undertakers on behalf of the Council.
Natural Environment Team	Persons in this team are able to assess risk and priorities on behalf of the Council using technical knowledge of environmental issues.
Bridge Engineer	Person who is responsible for assessing risk and priorities on highway structures on behalf of the Council.
Arboricultural Officer	Person who is able to assess risk and priorities on behalf of the Council using technical knowledge of arboriculture.

The sufficiently competent Inspector should be registered on the National Register of Highway Inspectors. For new Inspectors, they will be closely mentored by the Supervisor and a personal development plan will be in place to ensure that they are registered within 12 months of starting the role.

Competency for this manual shall be defined by the core competencies set out in the UKRLG Highway Inspector Competency Framework (2019).

Highway Safety Inspection Manual

Car Park Addendum

Update – July 2026

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 SCOPE 1

3 DEFINITIONS 1

4 INSPECTION FREQUENCIES 1

5 DEFECTS 2

5.1 Defect response times 2

5.2 Deficiency and risk 2

5.3 Investigatory levels, defect standards and responses 2

6 SAFETY INSPECTIONS - GENERAL PROCEDURES 3

1 INTRODUCTION

This addendum describes Shropshire Council's Parking and Transport Serviceability Inspection procedure. It is an addendum to the Highway Safety Inspection Manual so that the overall risk-based approach applies.

2 SCOPE

The serviceability inspections will be carried out on Council-owned or managed parking and transport assets under a service-level agreement by the Highway Safety Inspection team.

The assets will be as defined on the list of defined within the Service Level Agreement or as agreed by the Car Parking Manager and the Highway Inspection Manager by an explicit variation.

The assets inspected are not Highway and are therefore not defined under the Highways Act (1980) and as such, no duties or powers under this legislation are inferred on the authority for these assets.

As part of the serviceability inspection, the inspector will assess the risk for any observed defects that may present a danger to users or impair its operation and define the response. Defects can be safety defects such as potholes or operational defects such as gully cleaning, lining, signage, vandalism, or faulty or damaged equipment.

Pay and Display Machines are covered under contract maintenance with the supplier and defects on this should be reported to the Car Park Manager

Electric Car Charging Points are covered under contract maintenance with the supplier and defects should be reported to the Street Lighting and Traffic Signals Manager

3 DEFINITIONS

A defined footway can be identified by the type of construction or layout or by specific lining reserving an area for use by pedestrians.

4 INSPECTION FREQUENCIES

All car parks will be inspected annually.

5 DEFECTS

5.1 Defect response times

Defect response times are set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Manual.

5.2 Deficiency and risk

Safety risks can be assessed using the methodology in the Highway Safety Inspection Manual. Under this risk-based approach, an inspector is able to assess the risk from a defect and determine the appropriate response required.

Operational defects such as lines and signage will be recorded and a risk-based response will be recorded. Defects that present significant impairment to the operation of the car park should be promptly reported to the Car Parking Manager.

5.3 Investigatory levels, defect standards and responses

The following investigatory criteria and guidance on response times are defined for defects.

	Defined footways	**General areas**	**Response**
Abrupt level difference in the surface	>20 mm	>40 mm	2
Potholes	>20 mm	>40 mm	2
Fretting of surface joints	>20 mm	>40 mm	2
Missing Ironwork	.	.	1
Dangerous street lighting columns	.	.	1H
Exposed wiring	.	.	1H
Operational defects	.	.	2L

The response timescales are set out in Table 3 of the Highways Safety Inspection Manual.

6 SAFETY INSPECTIONS - GENERAL PROCEDURES

The inspection of parking and transport assets will be done on foot.

Where possible, the serviceability inspection will be carried out at outside of peak times to allow for the greatest area of the car park to be visible.

Where the surface of the highway is obscured, for example by parked cars, it is reasonable to expect that this part of the surface is not inspected until a further attempt at the next scheduled inspection (save in circumstances where an inspector decides that it is reasonably required to investigate under an object given the presence of a visible actionable defect adjacent to the object that might extend further underneath and to investigate would not place the inspector in peril).

Where no defects exist, a clear record that the car park has been inspected must be created.

Sufficiently clear images should be captured of the defect when observed and when repaired; for multiple defects in one location these images should capture the wider view of the defects. Where possible, these images should include a locally identifiable feature. It may be helpful to include a standard object to help scale the dimensions of the defect such as a ruler, pen or coin. Images must not be captured where to do so would place the inspector in peril. The Car Parking Manager is responsible for ensuring that these images are captured appropriately.

Works orders to rectify defects must be appropriately referenced to the asset with coordinates and linked to inspection records. A sufficiently detailed audit trail recording the process from identifying defects to the completion of the works should be created. For responses of one day or faster, the time that the defect was observed must be recorded together with the time that the defect was made safe. For response of greater than one day, as a minimum, the date that the defect was observed must be recorded together with the date that the defect was made safe; where no time is recorded it will be assumed that time was 23:59 on the day of inspection.

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Economy and Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee Recommendations

Scrutiny topics and officer responses

Update – Oct 2026

CONTENTS

1 Introduction 1

2 Scrutiny topics and officer responses. 1

Recommendation 1: Highways Performance Framework 1

Recommendation 2: Improved Member Transparency and Communication 1

Recommendation 3: Increased Community Involvement through Town and Parish Councils 2

Recommendation 4: Active Travel Considerations within Highway Inspections 3

Recommendation 5: Resident Communication of Highway Repair Priorities 3

Recommendation 6: Long-Term Asset Management Approach 4

3 Delivery and Assurance 4

1 Introduction

On the 1st September 2026 the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Review of Highways Maintenance Strategy and Highways Inspection Policy and made the following recommendations to Cabinet relating to performance measurement, transparency, community engagement, active travel, inspection processes, communication and long-term asset management

2 Scrutiny topics and officer responses.

Recommendation 1: Highways Performance Framework

Members highlighted the need to demonstrate success and provide assurance that investment and resources are delivering improved outcomes for residents and recommended that the revised Highways Maintenance Strategy includes a clear performance framework with measurable outcomes.

Whilst acknowledging that the strategy says what the council intends to do, it does not include information around what success looks like. Members would like detail on what measurable outcomes can be expected over the next three years and how scrutiny will be able to hold the service to account.

Including information on:

- What are the measures to show successful outcomes?
- What does good look like?
- Members would also like to work with officers to determine what measures they would like to see included?
- What is meaningful for Members and for their communities, and how to track them.

Officer Response:

Officers accept this recommendation. Existing highways performance measures will be consolidated into a clearer framework linking investment and maintenance activity to changes in network condition and resident outcomes. Measures should draw on the Council's existing information on network condition, defects, planned maintenance activity, customer feedback and highway claims. Members will be invited to identify any additional measures that would provide meaningful assurance to communities and Scrutiny. The detailed measures, reporting frequency and implementation arrangements will be confirmed through the supporting action plan.

Recommendation 2: Improved Member Transparency and Communication

Members expressed concerns that existing dates and performance information do not always appear to reflect activity on the ground, and recommended that the information available to Members regarding reported highways defects and repairs, ensures that:

- Target completion dates are meaningful and realistic
- Progress updates are clearly communicated
- Delays and backlogs are visible
- Performance information is available through an accessible dashboard where possible.

Officer Response:

Officers accept the principle of improved transparency. The consolidated performance framework will support clearer reporting to Members on highway condition, maintenance activity and delivery. The Council will review how planned activity, progress, delays and backlogs can be presented in a meaningful and accessible form, including the scope for dashboard reporting where appropriate. Any commitment to new reporting will be aligned with available data, systems and service capacity.

Recommendation 3: Increased Community Involvement through Town and Parish Councils

Members identified opportunities to utilise local knowledge and build on learning from existing pilot projects. They recommended stronger engagement with Town and Parish councils, and local communities in identifying local priorities and enabling greater proactive Town and Parish council involvement, supported by:

- Clear governance arrangements
- Suitable training
- Insurance and safety requirements
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Developing a clear understanding of how Town and Parish Councils like to be engaged with

Developing a communication / consultation strategy that allows Town and Parish Councils to work alongside Shropshire in the decision-making process, allowing Highways to make better use of local knowledge and intelligence, supporting town and parish councils in what they can do for themselves by enabling processes and unblocking any blockers.

Officer Response:

Officers accept this recommendation. The Council will build on existing community-based approaches, including learning from the Parish Road Warden model, to strengthen local involvement in identifying priorities and supporting appropriate low risk maintenance activity. Any expansion will require clearly defined roles, responsibilities and scope, together with suitable governance, competence checks, training, insurance, safe systems of work and ongoing Council oversight. Local intelligence will complement, rather than replace, the Council's risk-based inspection and maintenance responsibilities. Subject to the agreed scope and controls, community reporting may also help identify emerging issues on lower-use rural routes between scheduled inspections.

Recommendation 4: Active Travel Considerations within Highway Inspections

Members questioned whether current inspection approaches sufficiently capture issues affecting cyclists using the wider highway network and recommended that the revised inspection policy explicitly considers the needs of cyclists and other active travel users, including whether inspection methods adequately identify defects experienced by users of the highway network beyond dedicated cycleways. Utilising the opportunity to inspect the carriageway by bicycle.

Officer Response:

Officers partially accept this recommendation. The revised Highway Safety Inspection Manual already strengthens the consideration of risks affecting cyclists. The Council will keep inspection methods under review to ensure they adequately identify risks experienced by cyclists and other active-travel users. Routine inspection by bicycle is not proposed at this stage. Many cycleways run alongside footways already fully inspected on foot; where that is not the case, inspection regimes will be reviewed. Inspection data and public service requests will also be used to develop footway asset management strategies, identify recurring accessibility barriers and prioritise improvements for wheelchair users, people using buggies and other footway users. This will link inspection findings and reported concerns to planned investment aligned with the Local Transport Plan's (LTP) active travel objectives, subject to risk assessments and available funding.

Recommendation 5: Resident Communication of Highway Repair Priorities

The committee discussed the importance of managing expectations and increasing public understanding of how highways maintenance decisions are made and recommended that the Council improves public communication regarding highway repair priorities, timescales and decision-making criteria so that residents better understand:

- How defects are assessed
- Why some repairs are prioritised over others
- Expected response times
- The impact of exceptional weather events and resource pressures on delivery

Officer Response:

Officers accept this recommendation. Resident facing information will be reviewed so that it explains more clearly how defects are assessed through the risk based inspection policy, why apparently similar defects can receive different responses, how location, network use and risk influence prioritisation, and what residents should expect after reporting a defect. Communications will distinguish an immediate safety intervention from lower-priority or planned maintenance and explain how exceptional weather and resource pressures may affect delivery. The explanation will be aligned with the approved inspection policy and will avoid implying that every observed defect requires the same treatment or response.

Recommendation 6: Long-Term Asset Management Approach

That the revised Highways Maintenance Strategy places greater emphasis on preventative maintenance and long-term asset management, helping to reduce future deterioration and improve network resilience.

Officers advised that the strategy refresh is intended to align with current priorities, best practice and Department for Transport funding requirements.

Officer Response:

Officers accept this recommendation. The Asset Management Strategy supports evidence led, preventative and whole life approach, balancing reactive safety interventions with planned maintenance intended to slow deterioration and improve network resilience. Where it is safe and appropriate, coordinating lower level interventions with a future planned treatment may provide a more sustainable outcome than repeated reactive repair. Local engagement can also help identify important community routes, drainage concerns and supporting maintenance that may protect future resurfacing or repair investment.

3 Delivery and Assurance

The proposed responses will be translated into a supporting action plan identifying confirmed owners, target dates, dependencies and reporting arrangements. Where implementation depends on additional systems, analytical capacity, workforce resource or funding, the dependency will be recorded and considered through the relevant Highways and Transport transformation and budget governance arrangements. Progress will be reported through the performance management arrangements described in the Strategy.

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
Review of Highways Maintenance Strategy and Highways Inspection Policy *This should please match the name or description used for the report title on a report being prepared for committee, or your internal reference used for the proposed service change. Please share the report with external support at draft stage as well.*

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Darren Merrill

Decision, review, and monitoring

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

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 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
Age: The strategy increases the priority for walking, wheeling and cycling which should benefit younger and older stakeholders. There are neutral impacts for the Highway Safety Inspection Policy. Disability: The strategy increases the priority for walking, wheeling and cycling in particular obstructions on the footway which should benefit people with disabilities. There are neutral impacts for the Highway Safety Inspection Policy. Gender Reassignment: There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups. There are neutral impacts for the Highway Safety Inspection Policy.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups. There are neutral impacts for the Highway Safety Inspection Policy.

Pregnancy and Maternity; A focus on Accessibility this strategy is likely to benefit people in these groups. There are neutral impacts for the Highway Safety Inspection Policy.

Race: There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups.

Religion or Belief: There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups.

Sex: There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups.

Sexual Orientation. There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups.

Other: Social Inclusion: A key part of this strategy is maintaining links to communities through main roads and rural link road. Furthermore, the updated strategy advocates more strongly for the maintenance of infrastructure that supports active modes of travel that should benefit a wider range of users.

Other: Carers. The strategy increases the priority for walking and wheeling in particular obstructions on the footway which should benefit people with disabilities. There are neutral impacts for the Highway Safety Inspection Policy.

Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023): There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups.

Other: Young people leaving care; There are neutral impacts in these documents for people in these groups.

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

A key change is the adjustment of inspection frequencies to better reflect risk and therefore better match resources ensuring the authority has taken reasonable action to ensure that highway is not dangerous for traffic.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations
No specific action required

Associated ESHIAs
There are no associated ESHIAs.

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
Climate change The strategy includes a section on sustainability and highlights the challenge of climate change from both a carbon and a resilience perspective. ***Economic and societal/wider community*** A key part of this strategy is maintaining links to communities through main roads and rural link road. Furthermore, the updated strategy advocates more strongly for the maintenance of infrastructure that supports active modes of travel that should benefit a wider range of users.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change		
Officer carrying out the screening		
*External support**		

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		
Service manager's name		

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

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
These Highway Infrastructure Asset Management strategy is being updated to reflect the current National and Local Transport priorities. No specific change in service is detail, however there is an increase focus on safety (reducing the number of potholes) and active travel (walking and cycling). The Highway Safety Inspection Manual is being updated to reflect the current risk levels that the Council is exposed to and to ensure that the document remains relevant to current best practice.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change
Everyone who lives and works in Shropshire

Evidence used for screening of the service change
The National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey has been used to understand stakeholder priorities. It was reviewed by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change
Everyone who lives and works in Shropshire.

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 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 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)				Neutral
Race				Neutral

(please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				
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 positive
Other: Carers (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)				Low positive
Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)				Neutral
Other: Young people leaving care				Neutral

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*	**High positive impact**	**Medium positive or negative impact**	**Low positive negative or neutral impact**

	HIA required			**(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? .				Neutral
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

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	All population groups will have a low positive impact as a result of an increased focus on active travel modes such as walking.
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	No mitigation/enhancement is required.

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. **<u>Council Wide and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality, Social Inclusion and Health</u>**

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.

<u>Individuals</u>

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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Committee	Cabinet
Date and Time	18th November 2026 Public

Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries – Consultation

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Marston – Portfolio Holder for Communities & Environment
Lead Director:	Paula Mawson – Service Director, Communities & Customer
Service Area:	Shropshire Library Service
Report Author	Pete Banford– Culture and Communities Manager
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All Divisions
Key Decision?	Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes -15 October 2026
Report considered by	Cabinet – 18 November 2026

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to commence a consultation on proposals to shape the future of the Shropshire Libraries Service, in the context of the statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all who live, work or study in the area.

1.2. These proposals have been based on an updated needs assessment for this service which is presented to Cabinet in this report, and the Council's need to meet Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964).

1.3. The proposals are also made in the context of the Council's ongoing financial emergency; it's imperative to reduce reliance on exceptional financial support from the government, and the corresponding decreased financial envelope available to the council to deliver its statutory duties.

1.4. If approved, the consultation would seek to identify the views of residents, communities and key stakeholders regarding the proposed changes, the potential impact upon them and their views on mitigations and alternative suggestions.

1.5. This report does not present any decisions or predetermined positions on the future of the library service. The responses to the public consultation will be analysed and presented to Cabinet to inform decision making in a future report.

1.6. The Council remains committed to ensuring the statutory duties for library services are met, and to delivering a comprehensive consultation process to inform future decision making.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

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

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

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

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

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

3. Background

3.1 **Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 ("1964 Act")**

Shropshire Council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all those who "live, work or study and want to access the service" in the Shropshire Council area (Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964). In so doing, the statutory duty under section 7 of the Act requires that the Council must have particular regard to:

- Ensuring an adequate range and quality of materials in sufficient number, range and quality to meet the general needs and special requirements of adults and children.
- Encouraging adults and children to make full use of the library service

- Securing full cooperation between those carrying out the library authority's functions and other authorities whose functions operate within the library area.

3.2 Shropshire's Libraries Service Offer

Shropshire libraries are a valued part of the Council's universal public services with a strong core library offer to meet the statutory duty. Libraries are trusted, safe and welcoming community spaces, offering a route for access to a broader range of public services and community events. Community information and signposting advice is available, alongside social spaces for people to come together and access to a range of services, both from the council and other partner agencies. Libraries provide opportunities that encourage learning and ambition, improve skills and self-confidence, promote wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation across our rural communities. Libraries implement the Libraries Connected four universal library offers:

Table 1 Libraries Connected Four Universal Offers

Culture and Creativity	Enabling local communities to enjoy high-quality arts and cultural experiences through libraries.
Health and Wellbeing	Supporting the health and wellbeing of communities through services that inform, engage and connect.
Information and Digital	Ensuring communities can access quality information and digital services, learn new digital skills and feel safe online.
Reading	Building a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.

3.3 The Need for Change

The 1964 Act places a duty on local authorities to ensure a comprehensive library service is offered to all those who want to access it. One of the ways local authorities assess that they are meeting the statutory duty is through the production of a comprehensive needs assessment. The needs assessment, which is updated regularly, enables local authorities to assess their library delivery and consider evidence-based changes through a range of factors, including the monitoring of library usage and demand, demographic information, access information, amongst others. As a result, the way in which Local authorities meet their statutory duty to provide a comprehensive library service is not a fixed concept; it may change over time reflective of the evidence in the needs assessment and following appropriate consultation with communities and assessment of their feedback. Additionally,

the Council must ensure it complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act), through delivering a service that is accessible for all residents, using reasonable means, making best use of assets available whilst recognising the constraints on council resources.

A summary of the latest needs assessment for Shropshire is presented in the next section with the full needs assessment in Appendix A. This shows that the demand for libraries is changing. The Council needs to demonstrate that it is keeping the service relevant for the existing population and its delivery model will meet the future needs of the population to be compliant with the statutory duty. This must consider both the needs of the adult population, and importantly the needs of children and young people. To illustrate, the needs assessment provides evidence of significant growth in attendance at events, with reasonable growth in visits to static libraries. Loans and physical issues from libraries have fallen. The Council has considered in detail the findings of the needs assessment to inform the consultation proposals outlined in this report.

For Shropshire Council, consideration of the libraries service delivery needs to also be considered within the challenges of the Council's ongoing financial emergency, the imperative to urgently reduce reliance on Exceptional Financial Support from the government and the need to secure a sustainable financial position for the local authority. The Council must therefore consider how best to meet the needs of communities, adhere to the library's statutory duty but within the context of the significantly reduced financial resources available to it.

The proposals that we are now consulting upon before reaching a final decision are reflective of both the updated needs assessment and reflective of Shropshire's difficult financial position.

3.4 Library Service Needs Assessment.

Shropshire Council maintains a needs assessment on the delivery of library services across the County. This needs assessment was recently updated to include the delivery information for 2025-26, and can be found in Appendix A. A summary of some of the key points from the needs assessment for the service is provided below but Cabinet members are invited to read the assessment in full.

Shropshire operates a network of twenty-one static libraries, a prison library (Stoke Heath), digital services, three mobile libraries and a targeted home library service. Together, these services provide access to libraries across the County as shown in Table 1.

Table 2: Shropshire Library Access Points

Static libraries	Principal libraries in market towns	6	Shrewsbury; Oswestry; Bridgnorth; Ludlow; Market Drayton; Whitchurch	Run by Shropshire Council
Static libraries	Local community libraries	7	Gobowen; Church Stretton; Bayston Hill; Wem; The Lantern; Pontesbury; Much Wenlock	Run by Shropshire Council
Static libraries	Local market town community libraries	5	Bishop's Castle; Craven Arms; Highley; Cleobury Mortimer; Ellesmere	Run by local community groups

Static libraries	Commissioned libraries	3	Albrighton; Broseley; Shifnal	Run by the relevant town or parish council, with associated asset transfer
Prison library	Stoke Heath Prison Library	1	Stoke Heath Prison	Operated under a fully funded contract from His Majesty's Prisons
Digital Service	Online library	1	E-books; e-audiobooks; e-magazines; e-newspapers	Digital library provision
Mobile library service	Mobile library vans	3	232 stops over a two-week cycle across three vans	Serves rurally isolated parts of the county; stop duration ranges from 10 to 150 minutes depending on need
Home Library Offer	Book delivery to people who cannot attend a physical location or access online materials		Operates in certain libraries with the support of volunteers	Currently a targeted offer only

3.5 The core library service across Shropshire offers a range of services. These service offers are tailored to specific individual libraries and the communities they serve. Individual libraries will offer a range of provision selected from the below and tailored to their community and individual library arrangements:

- General community hubs for events and activities.
- Safe space and warm hubs for communities.
- Activities, events and services based on community need working with internal and external partners, including Voluntary & Community Sector Agencies (VCSA).
- Bridgnorth and Oswestry libraries operate as Community and Family Hubs.
- Shropshire Local (council's customer service team) delivers from Oswestry, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch, Bishops Castle, Shifnal, Highley, Albrighton & Broseley libraries.
- Books and other reading materials for loan.
- Book clubs.
- Local history Information & Groups.
- Wi-Fi access.
- Public computer access.
- Printing/scanning facilities.
- Support and training to enhance digital inclusion.
- Targeted Home Library offer – volunteers delivering to those that cannot access a library.

The Needs Assessment presents detailed information about library usage and demand both at whole service and individual library levels, along with demographic information. Benchmarking information from comparator local authorities is also provided.

At the whole service level, it is noted in the needs assessment that the number of:

- Active library users have reached a plateau with 33,378 registered users in 2022/23 compared to 33,121 in 2025/26.
- Visits to static libraries have seen reasonable growth from 596,080 visits in 2022/23 to 631,308 visits in 2025/26.
- Loans from static libraries has reduced considerably from a peak of 674,895 in 2022/23 to 594,134 in 2025/26
- Physical issues from static libraries have also fallen from a peak of 611,566 in 2022/23 to 531,949 in 2025/26.

- Number of E-loans from static libraries has stayed steady with 63,320 in 2022/23 compared to 62,718 on 2025/26, although the number of unique users has increased.
- Access to computer use remains a popular part of the service offer with over 24,000 delivery hours in 2025/26.
- Large growth in events attendance at static libraries peaking in 2025/26 with 82,257 attendances.
- 1,100 people make use of the 3 mobile library vans which offer a total of 232 stops over a fortnightly period.

Geographic data is presented in the needs assessment to note accessibility across the county. More than three-quarters of Shropshire's population (77%) live within a 10-minute drive of a static library, while only 1% face a drive time longer than 25 minutes. On foot access is also presented with nearly a third of members living within a 15-minute walk of their local static library, a figure that increases to over half when extending the walking radius to 30 minutes.

Demographic data indicates that women account for 65% of all users, with a greater proportion of children and young adults (25%) accessing the libraries than the base population. The proportion attributable to over 65s is also higher than the Shropshire base population (30% of all library users compared to 26% of the population). The 20-64 age band is under-represented, accounting for 44% of library users, compared to a base population of 54%.

In addition, the needs assessment also contains specific profiles of all individual libraries.

Library Service budget 2025/26

Table 3 Service Budgets

Source	Budget (£)
Service budget static libraries	1,493,230.00
Library Management & Support	345,170.00
Mobile Library Service	183,130.00
Corporate Landlord charge for assets	905,740.00
Internal Market charges	348,210.00
Non-controllable Budgets (Pensions adjustment)	262,130.00
Total budget	**3,537,610.00**

3.6 Budget distribution

Table 4 Budget Distribution

Service Expenditure
• 74% of the service expenditure for libraries is on the 6 main market town libraries
• 6% of the service expenditure is on the mobile library service

• 20% of the service expenditure is on the on the remaining smaller library branches
Property / assets
• 75% on libraries in our 6 main market towns
• 25% on remaining library branches

Further information on the budget breakdown for individual libraries will be provided in the consultation pack.

3.7 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) published in 2024 noted savings of £332,588 over a 2-year period. To date £239,278 has been achieved through increasing efficiencies and income without significant service changes. The remaining £93,260 is currently an undelivered saving. The proposals noted in this report may generate additional savings, and the ongoing refresh of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan will present to Cabinet and Council updated library savings that are reflective of the proposals and estimated savings noted in this report. Any further savings or efficiencies to the service's budget will only be confirmed after the consultation process and assessment of its findings has been completed, and dependent upon decisions made by Cabinet in a future report.

On the 14 May 2026, Full Council approved the new Corporate Plan*, Rebuilding Shropshire Together*. Alongside the Plan a set of delivery commitments were published. These included a review of libraries to ensure sustainable and efficient delivery for the future of the service. This report is a step towards meeting that commitment.

4. Consultation Proposals

4.1. Ahead of any proposals being considered by Officers for presentation in this report to Cabinet, key national guidance on library service delivery and expectations for appropriate consultation processes has been reviewed. Discussions have also taken place with the Department for Digital, Media, Culture & Sport (DCMS), noting their important role to consider any representations that local authorities may be failing in to meet their statutory duties for libraries. The needs assessments data have also been considered to support the formulation of proposals.

4.2 This report does not present any decisions or predetermined positions on the future of the library service. Approval to consult is requested to allow a full consultation to take place seeking to identify the views of residents, communities and key stakeholders regarding the proposed changes, the potential impact upon them and their views on mitigations and other alternative delivery suggestions. The Council will seek to engage not only with current users, but also engage prospective library users, including children and young adults, and other key stakeholders. Consultation responses will be assessed and presented to Cabinet to inform any future decision making for the libraries service.

The consultation options presented below have considered all aspects of library provision – static libraries, mobile provision and the core library offer, within the context of the library Statutory duty, the context of the council's financial emergency,

and within the context of Shropshire's corporate plan and the important role that libraries deliver across our communities.

The Council's review of libraries recognises that:

- Libraries are a valued part of our community offer, providing safe inclusive spaces in our rural communities and dispersed population
- Library delivery is complex. Some libraries are delivered and funded solely by the Council, some in partnership with Town and Parish Councils TPCs or other delivery partners
- Assets arrangements are equally complex with some buildings council owned, some leased and some owned by other parties
- Libraries are also community hubs offering a range of events and other services – banks, health & prevention services, customer services etc
- Transport infrastructure for our rural services is poor, so transport times and routes for residents must be considered. Digital delivery options would not reach all our dispersed rural communities
- Library finances are also complex. Seven community branches are supported by TPCs, with three of those fully commissioned.

4.3 In this context, the following table provides a summary of the proposed public consultation proposals. It will be emphasised within the consultation documentation that the Council encourages consultees to suggest alternative options and mitigations for consideration, and to include their views on impacts of the proposed changes as part of their response.

Table 5 Consultation Proposals Summary

Description	**Estimated Savings**
Reduce opening hours of the 6 principal libraries (Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch) to 30 hours per week – see section 4.4	£130,000
Closure of The Library at the Lantern – see section 4.7	£53,230
Closure of Gobowen Library – see section 4.8	£37,970
Closure of the mobile library service – see section 4.9	£183,500

Further information on each of the four proposals is provided below.

Reduce Opening hours at 6 principal Libraries

The table below sets out the proposed change in total opening hours for the 6 principal libraries.

Table 6 Proposed reductions in opening hours

Library	Current weekly opening hours	Proposed public consultation weekly opening hours	Reduced weekly hours
Shrewsbury	46hrs	30hrs	16hrs
Oswestry	45hrs	30hrs	15hrs
Market Drayton	34.5hrs	30hrs	4.5hrs
Bridgnorth	36.5hrs	30hrs	6.5hrs
Ludlow	34.5hrs	30hrs	4.5hrs
Whitchurch	30.5hrs	30hrs	0.5hrs

4.4 An example of what a 30 hour a week opening time could look like for the 6 principal libraries is attached at **Appendix B**, the aim is to provide consistency whilst responding to the specific needs and circumstances of each community. Two examples are given for each library each retaining a choice of opening times for customers across the week, late opening and on Saturdays. Alternative suggestions will be considered as part of the consultation process to inform future decision-making.

These proposals are presented reflective of the overall library budget position which demonstrates that 75% of the service costs sits within these 6 specific libraries, noting the council's overall reduced financial envelope for services as a result of its financial emergency and reliance on exceptional financial support.

The consultation will seek responses from all stakeholders to include current and future library users regarding proposed opening time reductions and views on how these reductions could be deployed to maximise use of these libraries, along with any mitigations or other alternatives suggested by stakeholders.

4.5 The Council will continue to explore with Town and Parish Councils, Community and Voluntary Sector groups and / or other stakeholders e.g. Friends of Libraries groups to consider any potential support to their local library delivery which may off-set any proposed reduction in opening hours. A summary of discussions held with stakeholders in the lead up to this report will be noted in the consultation pack. The consultation findings report will also report on any held during the consultation.

4.6 The responses to this part of the consultation will be carefully analysed and assessed to inform any future decision making recommended to Cabinet.

4.7 Closure of the Library at the Lantern

The Library at the Lantern is located in northeast Shrewsbury, within a community building delivering a broader range of services that features bookable rooms, a cafe, and on-site parking. The proposal is to close the library, not the entire building or other services that are delivered from it.

A detailed profile of the library is available in the needs assessment. The needs assessment notes that there are 801 active users during the 2025/26 financial year. This is equivalent to 2.4% of all Shropshire library users. 7.9% of the Lantern catchment population are active users, which is lower than the Shropshire average.

This demonstrates that the library catchment areas covers approximately 143 hectares which is less than 0.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment is also entirely within the catchment for Shrewsbury's main library, with Shrewsbury the only town that has two libraries. Almost a third of library users living in the catchment use Shrewsbury library.

Shrewsbury main library is located 2.1 miles away from Library at the Lantern, with good transportation links via road and bus. Shrewsbury is the only town in Shropshire with two libraries.

If the consultation is approved, we will explore the impact, mitigations and alternative delivery opportunities for residents through the consultation. Mitigations could include consideration of targeted outreach provision at the Lantern, and we would welcome suggestions on this from the community. We will also explore through the consultation a detailed assessment of impacts for people who use the Library at the Lantern, particularly those with protected characteristics as part of our Equalities and Social Health Impact Assessment. We recognise that the area around the Lantern is within one of the most deprived 20% of the country, and we will therefore ensure targeted efforts in our consultation process to reach this community through a range of routes, listening carefully to their views to help us assess the impacts fully.

We acknowledge the significance of this proposal and very careful consideration will be given to the consultation responses before making a final recommendation to Cabinet.

4.8 Closure of Gobowen Library

Gobowen is a small town in the north-west of Shropshire, close to the Wrexham border, just north of Oswestry; the library is located in the centre of Gobowen.

A detailed profile of the library is available from the needs assessment. This demonstrates that the library is open 15 hours per week, over Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The library had 262 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is equivalent to 0.8% of all Shropshire library users, with Gobowen library catchment the smallest in terms of population size.

The closest library to Gobowen is Oswestry library, a principal library, which is located 3 miles away. Almost as many users in the Gobowen catchment use Oswestry library as they do Gobowen. Oswestry is the most frequently visited

alternative library. Travel from Gobowen to Oswestry, as the nearest alternative library, is approximately an 8-minute drive, with good bus links which takes approximately 20 minutes. Gobowen library is second only to the Library at the Lantern in terms of closeness of a community branch library to another principal library.

If the consultation is approved, the Council will explore the impact, mitigations and alternative delivery opportunities for residents through the consultation. Council has explored with Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council the opportunity for the parish council to consider running the library; at this time the parish council has declined to pursue these conversations further. We remain open to considering this again through the consultation should the Parish Council wish to re-open discussions. We will also explore through the consultation a detailed assessment of impacts for people who use Gobowen Library, particularly those with protected characteristics as part of our Equalities and Social Health Impact Assessment. We recognise that the area around Gobowen Library is within one of the most deprived 20% of the country, and we will therefore ensure targeted efforts in our consultation process to reach this community through a range of routes, listening carefully to their views to help us assess their view and opinions, and the impacts fully.

We acknowledge the significance of this proposal and very careful consideration will be given to the consultation responses before making a final recommendation to Cabinet.

4.9 Closure of the Mobile Library Service

Shropshire Council operates three mobile libraries covering 232 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. The mobile library service operates for 46.75 hours per week and 2,431 hours per annum with 1,110 active borrowers in 25/26, noting a small decline in active users from 2021/22. The number of visits to the mobile libraries peaked in 2024/25 with 23,052 and in 2025/26 this had reduced to 20,532. Number of loans have also reduced from a peak in 2021/22 of 60,298 to 53,039 in 2025/26.

A detailed profile on the use of the mobile library service is available in the needs assessment.

The Council recognises that mobile libraries provide a valuable service to a relatively smaller number of library users. The Council also recognises that these library users may have particular needs that make it harder for them to access static libraries – there may be older people who rely on the proximity to home to access the mobile service, conversely there maybe parents of young children with limited access to transport who may also rely on accessing a mobile offer to meet their access needs. The consultation will support the Council to better understand the needs of the mobile library service users, their views on potential mitigations through such Community transport Dial a ride schemes to support access to a static library and their views on potential alternative delivery options such as the Home Library Service. These are explored in more detail in the mitigations section below. The Council will use this information to also update its Equalities and Social Health Impact Assessment for this proposal.

It is also important to note, however, that the costs of the mobile library service are relatively high compared to the average costs of the static libraries.

If the consultation is approved, the Council will explore the impact, mitigations and alternative delivery opportunities for residents through the consultation.

We acknowledge the significance of this proposal and very careful consideration will be given to the consultation responses before making a final recommendation to Cabinet.

4.10 Combination of Proposals

Shropshire Council recognises that, taken together, the proposals may particularly impact some library users to a greater extent than others. We recognise, for example that in the Oswestry and Shrewsbury areas, there is both a proposed reduction in opening hours of principal libraries, and proposed closures of library branches in the nearby vicinities of Gobowen and Library at the Lantern. We also acknowledge that a proposal to close the mobile libraries provision whilst at the same time reducing the opening of principal libraries may compound access for some library users more so than others. The Council would like to understand this more through the consultation process, and assess the potential impacts, particularly for those users with protected characteristics, and those users with socio-economic circumstances which may make accessing libraries more difficult, or the impact on health and other factors more detrimental.

The Council acknowledges that whilst these proposals are difficult, at this time it is viewed that they represent the least detrimental option to maintain a good quality of overall delivery within the context of the Councils' overall financial position.

The Council will listen carefully to the consultation responses and feedback, updating its Equalities & Social Health Impact Assessment ahead of recommending any decision to Cabinet in a future report.

4.11 Asset review

Shropshire Council's library service aims to provide spaces that are vibrant, modern environments that fit the changing needs of the local community. Cabinet is asked to also endorse Council officers to undertake a strategic asset review of the Library Service assets arrangements and to provide further reports to Cabinet on this work. It is further proposed that this review aligns with the broader review of all Council assets currently being planned by the Council. Subject to Cabinet's approval, Officers propose to include some questions in the main library consultation to explore with library users their views of the existing assets and any considerations they would like to make to inform this work. There is also an opportunity to consider stakeholder views on opportunities to expand access to our available assets during periods when the library may be closed, so they can be used as a community resource. No decisions have or will be made about assets until this work is undertaken and any requirement for any additional public consultation considered and undertaken as required.

4.12 Asset transfer & commissioned library models

Transferring over the management and the lease of a specific library to a Town and Parish Council ("TPC"), local community group, charity, or social enterprise is a model which has worked well in Shropshire, supporting financial efficiencies for the library delivery and enabling greater local control of the running of the library in our rural community branches. This approach has been adopted at Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley. The libraries at these locations are busy, popular and highly cost efficient to Shropshire Council. At these locations the following arrangements are in place as part of a commissioned library model:

- The Town or Parish Council staff manage daily operations of the branch at their expense.
- Shropshire Council manage and fund infrastructure costs for book stock, computers, network connections and advisory support.
- Shropshire Council remain as the library authority with responsibility for the statutory duty to provide the service.

TPCs interested in considering this approach for their local library branch are encouraged to participate in the consultation and to discuss specific opportunities with officers.

The consultation pack will provide further information on ongoing discussions with TPCs with the report on consultation findings also noting discussions held during the consultation period.

4.13 Public Consultation Plan & Timeline

The Public Consultation will use a range of engagement / feedback methods, including printed and online surveys, focus groups, public meetings, key stakeholder meetings, and promotion via social media and other channels.

The consultation will offer digital engagement surveys via the Council's Get Involved webpage with access to hard copies on request at all Libraries. Public meetings will be held during the consultation period at The Lantern, Gobowen Library and the principal libraries. Targeted promotion will also be undertaken to current users of the mobile library service through hard copies available of the survey on the mobile vans, along with leaflets and posters.

4.14 A core component of the consultation process will be undertaken to seek the views of children and young adults, as key users of library provision. Existing links within communities, such as schools, nurseries, home education groups, Community and Family Hub partners, will be used to encourage responses from children and young people. Those attending libraries will also be advised of the consultation and supported to participate.

4.15 If approval is given by Cabinet to consult the proposed timelines for the consultation are shown below. Please note that timings are approximate and subject to change.

Table 7 Indicative Consultation Timeline

Action	Due date
Cabinet Meeting	18/11/26
Consultation commences for 12 weeks	30/11/2026
Consultation closes	21/02/2027
Consultation analysis	22/02/2027 – 21/03/2027
Pre-decision consultation outcome report to Economy & Environment Scrutiny	Date To be confirmed
Cabinet report regarding consultation findings.	May 2027

5 Alternative Service Delivery Options & Mitigations

5.1 Shropshire Council is keen to continue to explore stakeholder views on alternative service delivery options and mitigations as part of the consultation process. We are particularly keen to explore the following but welcome all suggestions as part of the consultation process.

5.2 Town and Parish Council / third sector support

In line with Shropshire Council's corporate commitment to further strengthen working arrangements with Town and Parish Councils, the Library Service has continued to engage with TPCs to consider opportunities for joint working and funding agreements on library delivery, building on the successful agreements that are in place with 7 TPCs. Conversations remain ongoing and TPCs are encouraged to participate in the consultation process and to reach out to Officers throughout this process to discuss all opportunities. Shropshire Council is grateful to those TPCs who support the delivery of their local library as this helps us to maximise delivery and access to the service across our County.

Voluntary Sector, Community groups and Friends of Library groups and organisations also support delivery of libraries across Shropshire. As key stakeholders they are also encouraged to participate in the consultation process and discuss with Officers where they may be interested in further supporting library delivery. Shropshire Council is also grateful to all the community and voluntary groups, organisations and volunteers who support the library service across Shropshire.

5.3 E-library solutions

In line with other sectors library delivery has seen growth in both e-library options and usage. The cost of digital provision, however, can be more expensive than physical books, due to the licences. Understanding stakeholder views on balancing a physical book offer with E-library offers within the available budgets will be of assistance to us, particularly given the E-library can support access for some individuals where they are not able to access a static library or prefer a

digital offer. This needs to be balanced with the availability of digital infrastructure and digital skills to enable uptake of this across Shropshire.

5.4 Home Library Service

The library service currently offers a targeted home library service principally delivered by volunteers in a small number of libraries, whereby books are delivered to library users who cannot access a static library. We will be seeking feedback as part of the consultation whether we should seek to grow this offer, particularly as a mitigation for any decision made to close the mobile library offer.

5.5 Community transport

Shropshire's travel and public transport infrastructure is an important consideration in terms of access to library services, and the consultation will explore this theme. As part of this the Council would like to consider options to work with community transport providers to support access into our static libraries, and Officers would welcome the opportunity to discuss this through the consultation.

6 Alternative Options in relation to the Consultation Proposals

6.1 Council Officers have considered a range of options ahead of making the proposals in this report to Cabinet, these included:

6.2 Option 1 Do nothing

This option was discounted as library usage is changing and evolving as shown in the needs assessment. The service model needs to adapt alongside to ensure the Council continues to meet the statutory duty. This option would also not allow the service to meet an existing undelivered saving. In addition, the Council's financial position, with a declared financial emergency, and the imperative to reduce reliance on Exceptional Financial Support from the government, means all services need to be reviewed to ensure the most cost-efficient delivery and best value duty is achieved. The do-nothing option does not allow for service review or financial efficiencies.

6.3 **Option 2 A substantial and significant service reduction** that could include closure of a significant numbers of libraries. Modelling was completed to consider a North, Central and South operating model for library delivery which would have proposed reducing the static library estate to a total of 9 libraries. This option would allow asset disposal and capital receipts to support the council's financial position. The service budget under this model would have required re-basing, but indicative savings were estimated at over £0.5m recurrent, plus the value of capital assets receipts for those library bases the Council owns and could have considered for disposal. This option was also discounted due to the recognised role libraries deliver as community hubs across our dispersed rural communities, and the need to ensure we meet our statutory duties for libraries. This option could also be subject to public and legal challenge, potential intervention from DCMS, customer dissatisfaction, and corporate reputational damage.

6.4 **Option 3 – Recommended option.** The consultation proposals recommended in this report have provisionally considered all aspects of library provision –static

libraries, mobile libraries and the core library offer, within the context of the library statutory duty. It seeks to offer an intermediate position between either Option 1 or 2 above, to ensure that Shropshire libraries continue to meet community need for all current and future users, whilst also ensuring that best value is achieved for the public purse and Shropshire's reduced financial resources. The consultation will test this out in terms of community and stakeholder responses, to include impacts, mitigations and other alternative delivery suggestions received. These will all be carefully considered and assessed ahead of any decisions being presented to Cabinet for consideration. This will include an updated Equalities Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment.

7 Key risks and Opportunities

7.1 Shropshire Council in seeking to consult on making changes to the way it delivers its library service. It faces potential legal, financial, and reputational risks during and after the public consultation, primarily concerning its statutory duty and procedural compliance.

7.2 The table below sets out these risks and offers mitigation.

Table 8 Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Public challenge and Judicial Review	The Public Consultation will consider the four key stages as set out in The Gunning Principles: • **Formative stage:** Consultation must happen when proposals are still open to change and a final decision has not yet been made or predetermined. • **Sufficient information:** The public body must provide clear reasons and enough detailed information so that people can understand the issues and respond intelligently. • **Adequate time:** Participants must be given enough time to consider the proposal and submit their feedback. In this case a minimum 12-week consultation period is to be offered. • **Conscientious consideration:**	Governance, performance and financial weaknesses

	Shropshire Council must genuinely and openly take the consultation responses into account before making a final decision regarding the future of the library service. An Equality, Social Inclusion, Health and Impact Assessment has been completed ahead of the proposed consultation and can be found at Appendix C. The ESHIA will be updated in line with the consultation feedback to assess impacts, mitigations and alternative delivery opportunities ahead of any decisions being recommended to Cabinet.	
DCMS intervention	Pre-Consultation Engagement has taken place with DCMS. Officers will officially notify the DCMS at libraries@dcms.gov.uk before opening a public consultation if the Cabinet approves the commencement of public consultation.	Governance, performance and financial weaknesses
Equality Act 2010 breach and related Armed Forces legislation breach	An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been completed ahead of proposed consultation (Appendix C). An additional ESHIA will be completed following analysis and assessment of consultation responses to inform any future decision making. Carrying out ESHIAs will, as far as possible, ensure that the Library Service is taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on Shropshire Council by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three national equality	Governance, performance and financial weaknesses

	aims are integral to our decision-making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations. The duty to have 'due regard' to the needs of veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families, as per Armed Forces legislation, will be met through inclusion of this undertaking within the ESHIA template.	
Failure to deliver savings and achieve efficient library delivery	Future budget settings will allow sufficient time for consultation, feedback, service change initiation when considering savings.	Achieving long-term financial sustainability
Needs Assessment is not fit for purpose.	A Needs Assessment has been developed and updated annually with support from Shropshire Council's Business Intelligence and Insights team.	Governance, performance and financial weaknesses

8 Council Priorities

8.1 This report sets out how Shropshire council will deliver a comprehensive core library service that fulfils its statutory duties while actively supporting the Corporate Plan and Local Government Outcomes.

8.2 The Corporate Plan priorities are:

- **A financially sustainable council, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce supported to excel:** Focuses on financial discipline, spending on needs rather than wants, closing the budget gap, and supporting staff.
- **Communities connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport, and infrastructure:** Aims to improve local transit, physical networks, and regional connectivity.
- **Opportunities for everyone to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life:** Centres on public health, prevention, reducing demand on social care, and supporting wellbeing of the local population across demographics.
- **A thriving economy that benefits everyone:** Promotes inclusive economic growth, job opportunities, productivity, and local skills

9 Financial Implications

9.1 This report is presenting proposals for consultation for Cabinet to consider approving. As this is not a decision paper, there are no direct financial implications to note arising from this report. Funding for the consultation process will be met within service budgets.

10 Legal and HR implications

10.1 Legal

10.2 Shropshire Council has a legal duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all those who "live, work or study and want to access the service" in the Shropshire Council area as set out in Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

10.3 Shropshire Council also has a legal duty to consider requirements within the Equality Act (2010), and the Public Sector Equality Duty in Section 149. When exercising their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken and attached to this report as Appendix C

10.3.1 Pre-Consultation Engagement has taken place with DCMS. Officers will officially notify the DCMS before opening a public consultation. The Needs Assessment (Appendix A) will provide how the service after consultation serves the population of Shropshire.

10.4 Judicial Review: Communities or individuals can challenge council decisions in court if the consultation process was flawed, pre-determined, or failed to consider statutory duties.

10.5 Human Resources

10.6 As this report is requesting Cabinet's approval to commence a public consultation, there are no direct staff implications. Staff who may be impacted by the proposals have been informed prior to publication of this report. Following the public consultation, a future report will be presented to Cabinet regarding any decisions on the library service. A decision stage report will consider any impacts on staff and ensure that appropriate HR processes are adopted in any service staffing changes.

11 Electoral Division Implications

11.1 The library service is accessible to all, therefore the recommendations in this report have implications for all Divisions. All members have been invited to attend a member briefing sessions on the service and the proposals contained in this report.

11.2 Under the local member briefings protocol, separate briefings were arranged for the local members for Library at the Lantern and Gobowen Library given the specific proposals outlined in this report.

12 Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

12.1 Shropshire library service aligns with the Council's Health in All Policies approach by acting as a non-health community support partner that supports the social determinants of health and collaborates across multiple public sectors to build resilient communities.

12.2 Library services across the County offer a range of provision seeking to continuously improve the service's provided. The specific offers provided at individual libraries will vary depending on the specific circumstances of each library and the community it serves. Examples of some of the areas of development within libraries, noting not all of these will be available at all libraries, includes:

- Provision of safe inclusive spaces rooted in communities, with access to events and services, supporting delivery of placed based Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) & Action Plans. The JSNA is a statutory requirement for local authorities and NHS Integrated Care Boards to assess the current and future health and wellbeing needs of its population. This is a separate and distinct assessment from the Library's needs assessment.
- Promoting reading for pleasure, improved literacy levels and confidence to read through developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities.
- Promoting health, wellbeing and prevention opportunities through access to community hub services and events.
- Embedding the *Ask, Assist, Act* approach so residents are supported to access the right service at the right time.
- Ensuring residents and communities can access quality digital services, including digital skills training – building confidence and safety online.
- Enabling communities to enjoy quality arts and cultural experiences through libraries supporting their wellbeing.

12.3 The library service is committed to the development of the Council's "Child friendly" Status. The service aims to offer and develop libraries that has the rights of the child at the centre of the way it works. All four of the key rights are considered by the development and delivery of the library service.

12.4 The library service has a long tradition of providing space for exciting child focused learning activities, including Rhyme Times, creative workshops with musicians and poets, reading groups, school visits and craft events. The service has supported and provided activities funded by the national Holiday Activities and Food Programme to enrich the school holiday experience. A recent bid to the Arts

Council has been successful in securing funding to improve our physical children's library offer.

12.5 To drive sustainable economic and community growth, the library service will continue to work strategically with partners across the business, education, culture, and health sectors to develop flexible, inclusive, and vibrant multi-functional spaces. By engaging directly with local communities to deeply understand their needs, the service will align agendas with other council departments and external organisations to ensure long-term, targeted impacts.

13 Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1 An initial Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been carried out as per legislative compliance requirements and good practice. This is attached as **Appendix C**.

13.2 Ahead of the consultation, the overall likely anticipated impacted of the proposals is that these will be low negative across the whole community, with potential for medium negative impacts for some individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals. This may include some negative impacts specifically focusing on the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010 and intersectionality across these groupings e.g. Age and Disability, provided that intended enhancement and mitigation actions are put in place.

13.3 These potential impacts will be tested through the consultation, to include consideration of mitigations and alternative delivery options.

13.4 The proposed service changes seek to take in to account social inclusion, the rurality of the county, opportunities to expand the digital offer, public access to multiple services from community venues and the promotion and continuation of local libraries as free, high-quality venues.

13.5 Proposed service reductions may impact adversely on all groupings given reduced opening hours, with adverse impacts noted for the users of two libraries proposed for closures and for the users of the mobile library service. The impacts will be particularly assessed as part of the consultation process, to include potential to mitigate with other delivery options.

13.6 Other individuals or groupings may experience a neutral impact, low negative impact or low positive impacts. Potential growth in the e-library offer may improve access for some, including for the additional groupings of people that we think about in Shropshire, of Social Inclusion, Carers, and Young People Leaving Care. The Council also considers veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families, in a separate grouping, in order to visibly demonstrate that 'due regard' is being given to people in this grouping, as per the requirements of the Armed Forces Act 2021. At this stage, it has been recorded that potential impacts could be low negative in regard to social inclusion, due to reduced ability or perception of reduced ability to access and signpost services and referral opportunities.

13.7 Our additional categories help us to seek to ensure that we consider the needs of the following: rural households; households on low incomes; households in fuel

poverty; and those we may consider to be vulnerable. This includes refugee families, people living in fuel poverty, people fleeing domestic violence, and those who are rough sleepers or at risk of homelessness for what may be a variety of circumstances.

13.8 Efforts will need to be made during the consultation process to obtain feedback from as wide a range of people and stakeholder organisations as possible, in order to seek to gauge the depth of potential adverse impacts as well as ways to enhance any positive impacts. Feedback will then be factored into considerations and recorded in a follow up ESHIA, demonstrating ongoing engagement across stakeholders and communities and enabling views to be taken into account in decision-making processes about the proposals.

14 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

14.1 This report is presenting proposals for consultation for Cabinet to consider approving. As this is not a decision paper, there are no direct climate change, biodiversity or environmental implications.

15 Background Papers

15.1 None

16 Appendices

Appendix A - Shropshire Libraries: Needs Assessment October 2026
Appendix B - Examples of 30 hours a week opening times for 6 principal libraries
Appendix C – Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Shropshire Libraries: Needs Assessment

October 2026

Table of Contents

Shropshire Libraries Needs Assessment: Introduction 1
Context 2-10
- Population 3-4
- Housing & Households 4-5
- Health & Disability 5-6
- Economic Activity & Employment 6-7
- Educational Attainments & Qualifications 8
- Deprivation 8-9
  - Overall Deprivation 8-9
  - Barriers to Housing & Services 9
  - Active Library Users 9
- Car Ownership 10
- Broadband Availability 10

Catchment Analysis 11-16
- Library Catchments Average IMD Score 15-16

Shropshire Libraries Demand and Usage Analysis 17-28
- Library Demand Data Indicators 17
- Library Demand Trend Analysis 17-23
- Trends in Active Library Users by Library 24-26
- Mobile Libraries 27-28

Profile of Shropshire Library Users 29
- Age & Gender 29
- Concessionary Users 29

Access to Library Services 30-37
Shropshire Library Costs 38-47
- Library Running Costs versus Library Users 41
- Mobile Library Costs 42
- Costs Compared with Nearest CIPFA Neighbours 43
- Library Data Comparison (CIPFA) 44-47

Appendix

Library Profiles 48-195

List of Tables, Charts and Maps

Tables

Table 1: Breakdown of Population by Broad Age Band 3
Table 2: Disability and Long-Term Health Conditions, 2021 6
Table 3: Breakdown of Employment by Occupation, 2021 7
Table 4: Breakdown of 16-64 Population by Qualification Level, 2023 8
Table 5: Overall IMD 2015 & 2019: National Deciles 9
Table 6: Catchments ranked by Size (Shropshire Land Mass) 11
Table 7: Average IMD Score by Library Catchment 15
Table 8: Newspapers and Magazine Readers 20
Table 9: Summary of Shropshire Libraries Usage Data 22
Table 10: Library Demand/Usage Ranked 2025/26 23
Table 11 – Active Library Users by Library 24
Table 12: Proportion of Shropshire Population within Drive Times of Libraries 30
Table 13: Proportion of Active Library Users within Walk and Drive Times by Library 31
Table 14: Library Users: Travel Times to Closest Library 33
Table 15: Alternative Library Provision 35
Table 16: Library Costs Ranked 2025/26 39
Table 17: Library Opening Hours 41
Table 18: Mobile Library Costs, 2025/26 41

Charts

Chart 1: Population Change in Shropshire, 2015-2025 3
Chart 2: Population Growth, 2015-2025 3
Chart 3: Breakdown of the Shropshire and England Populations by Age, 2025 4
Chart 4: Breakdown of Households by Household Composition, 2021 4
Chart 5: Proportion of Households with all Residents 66+, 2021 5
Chart 6: Households with Dependent Children, 2021 5
Chart 7: General Health, 2021 5
Chart 8: Rates of Disability in Shropshire by Age, 2021 6
Chart 9: Economic Activity Rates, 2011 and 2021 7
Chart 10: Breakdown of Economically Active Population, 2021 7
Chart 11: Overall IMD: Proportion of Active Library Users and Shropshire Population in each National Decile, 2019 9
Chart 12: Car/Van Availability, 2011 & 2021 10
Chart 13: Catchments ranked by Shropshire Population 12
Chart 14: Population Density by Library Catchment 12
Chart 15: Proportion of Active Users Living in Catchment Area 14
Chart 16: Number of Users Living in each Catchment Using Alternative Libraries 15
Chart 17: Number of Active Library Users 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end March, Static Libraries) 18
Chart 18: Number of Visits to Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 18
Chart 19: Number of Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 19
Chart 20: Number of Physical Issues Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 19
Chart 21: Number of E-Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 19
Chart 22: Newspapers and Magazine Readers 2021/22 to 2025/26 20
Chart 23: Number of E-Loans as a Percentage of Total Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 20
Chart 24: Public Computer Use Time in Hours Static Libraries, 2021/22 to 2025/26 21
Chart 25: Event Attendance Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 21
Chart 26: Library Active Users Percentage Change Five Years 26
Chart 27: Number of Active Library Users 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries) 27

Chart 28: Number of Visits to Mobile Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries) 27
Chart 29: Number of Loans Mobile Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobil Libraries 27
Chart 30: Age Profile of Shropshire Library Users 29
Chart 31: Library Users as Proportion of Population by Age 29
Chart 32: Annual Costs per Library 2025/26 37
Chart 33: Cost Per Opening Hour 2025/26 37
Chart 34: Cost per Active Library Borrower/User 2025/26 38
Chart 35: Cost per Book Loan 2025/26 38
Chart 36: Cost Per Individual Walk in Footfall 2025/26 38
Chart 37 – Users by Running Cost Smaller Libraries 41
Chart 38 – Users by Running Cost Main Libraries 41
Chart 39: Library Running Costs (£ millions) 2022/23 compared with CIPFA Nearest Neighbours 43
Chart 40: Library Count (2016) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours 44
Chart 41: Number of Physical Visits to Libraries per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours 45
Chart 42: Number of Enquiries to the Library Service per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours 46
Chart 43: Population per Library Service Point (open 10 hours or more including mobiles) (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours 47

Maps

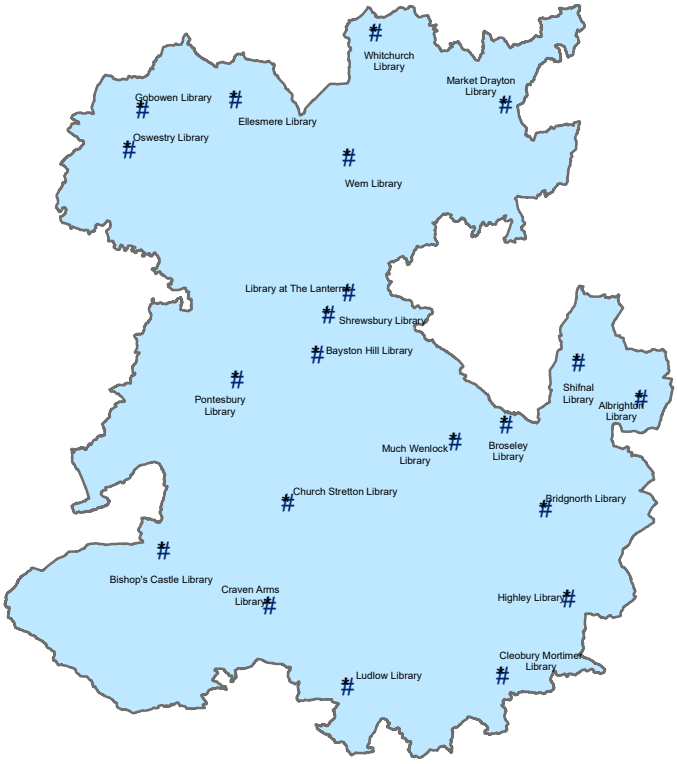
Map 1: Location of Shropshire's Static Libraries 1
Map 2: Population Density 2
Map 3: Shropshire Library Catchment Areas Constrained to Shropshire Local Authority Area 13
Map 4: Shropshire Library Catchment Areas: Shropshire and Cross Border 13
Map 5: IMD Average Score by Library Catchment 16
Map 6: 15 and 30 Minute Walk Times: All Libraries 32
Map 7: 10 Minute Drive: All Libraries 32
Map 8: 15 Minute Drive: All Libraries 33
Map 9: 20 Minute Drive: All Libraries 33
Map 10: 25 Minute Drive: All Libraries 34
Map 11: 20 Minutes Drive Time to Six Main Libraries 36

Shropshire Libraries Needs Assessment: Introduction

Shropshire Library Service serves a population of 333,200 (Mid-2025 Population estimates, ONS). Shropshire operates a network of twenty one static libraries, a prison library (Stoke Heath), digital and development services and three mobile libraries. Together these services provide access to libraries across the County.

Map 1: Location of Shropshire Static Libraries

- 6 Core Libraries in Market Towns run by Shropshire Counci: Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton and Whitchurch.
- 7 local community libraries run by Shropshire Council: Gobowen, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill, Wem, Library at the Lantern, Pontesbury and Much Wenlock.
- 8 local market town community libraries run by local community groups: Albrighton, Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Craven Arms, Highley, Shifnal, Cleobury Mortimer and Ellesmere.
- 3 Mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council with 274 stops on a rota.
- Stoke Heath Prison Library operated under fully funded contract from His Majesty's Prisons.



Shropshire's library service cost Shropshire Council £2,624,370 in 2025/26, which is the equivalent of £7.88 per head of population.

This Needs Assessment aims to:

- Review the context in which the library service operates in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of the population the libraries serve
- Assess the catchment areas for each static library and the profile of the customers that live there
- Review usage statistics for the library service and monitor trends over time
- Assess ease of access to the library service and drive-time analysis
- Analyse the cost of operating library services

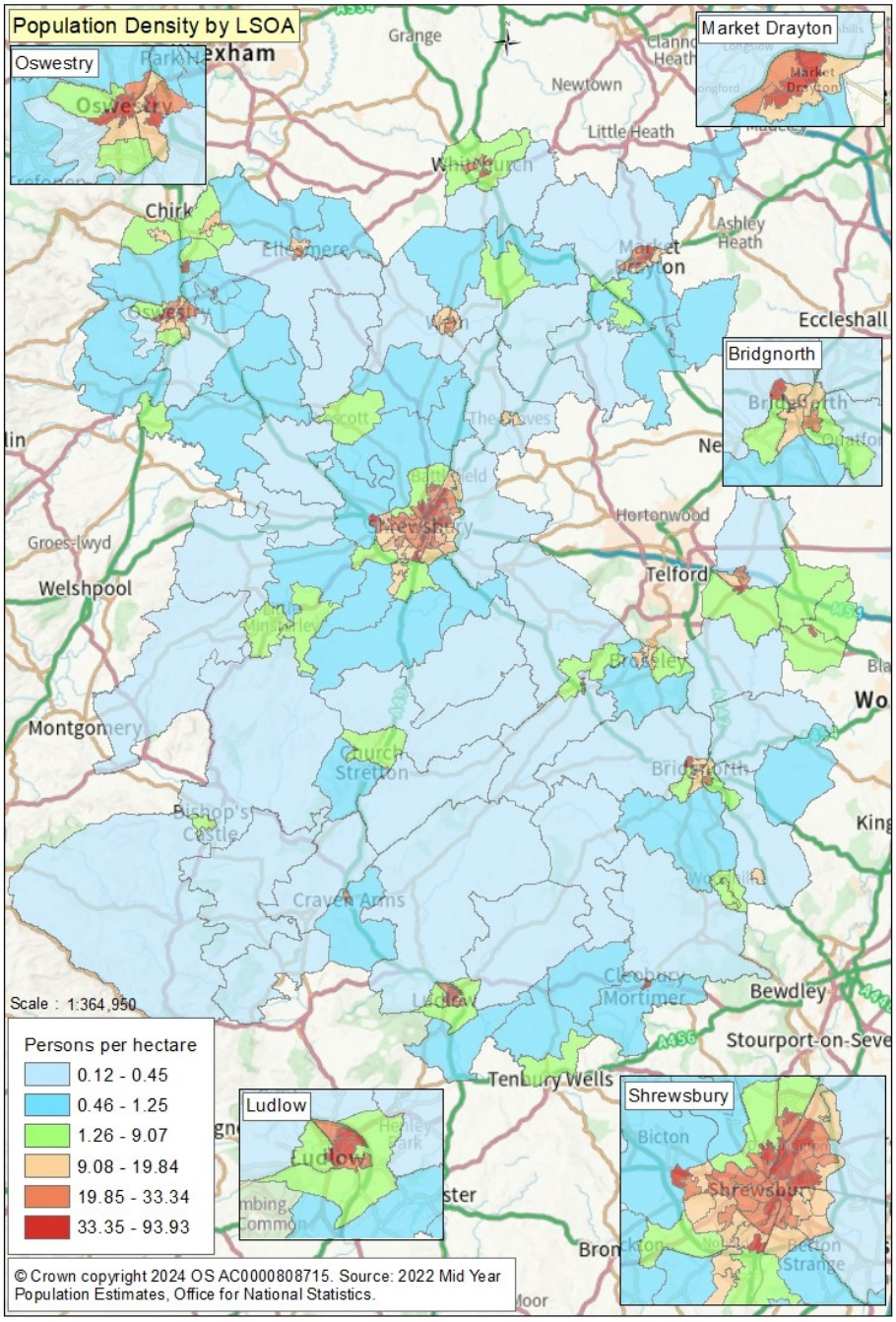
Context

Shropshire is a large rural county in the centre of the country in the West Midlands, sharing a border with Wales to the west. Shropshire is the second largest inland local authority behind Wiltshire, covering 319,730 hectares.

It has a population of 333,200 (2025 ONS Mid-Year Estimates) and is sparsely populated, with just over one person per hectare (4.3 persons per hectare in England). 97.5% of Shropshire's land mass is rural – the 2.5% of land mass that is classified as urban accommodates approximately 43% of the population.[1] Shropshire's population is spread across the entire county, with hardly any unpopulated land area. This means that the provision of services can be more challenging and more expensive than it is in more urban locations and that for much of the population, access to employment and services can be time-consuming and costly.

The map below shows the population density of Shropshire. While the county town of Shrewsbury and key market towns are more densely populated, many parts of Shropshire contain less than 0.5 persons per hectare.

Map 2: Population Density

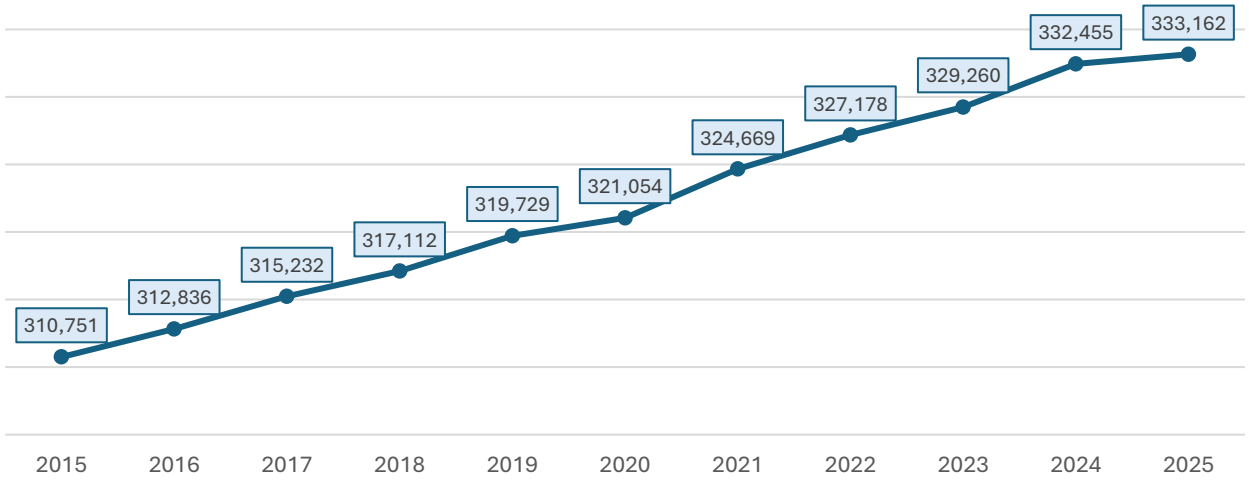


[1] According to the Rural Urban Classification 2021

Population

Over the 10 years to 2025, Shropshire's population has grown by 22,400 people (+7.2%) to 333,200.

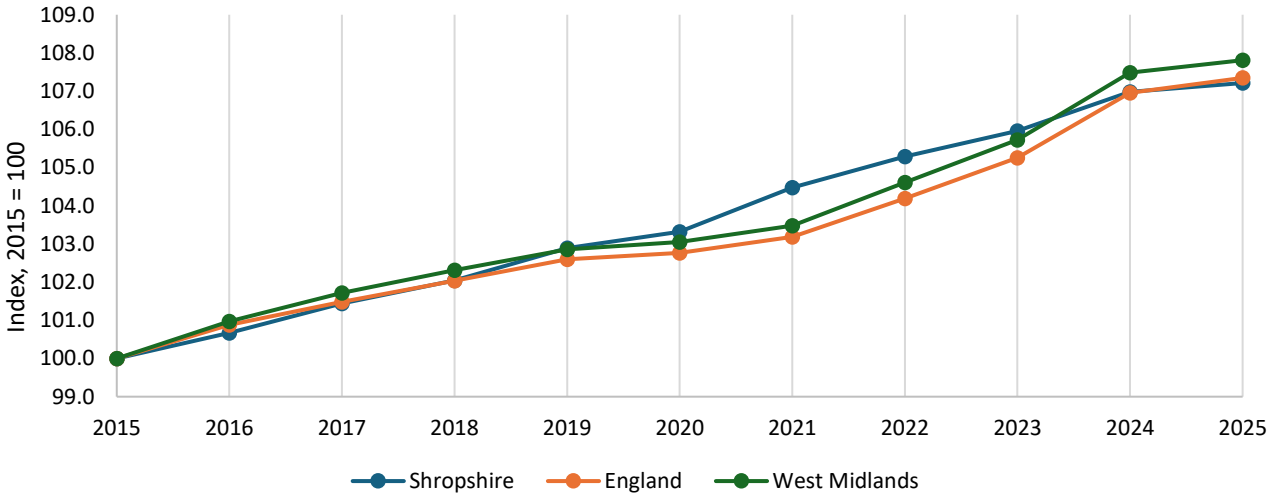
Chart 1: Population Change in Shropshire, 2015-2025



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2025

The population in Shropshire has risen at a very similar rate to population growth in England and the West Midlands at an average annual rate of 0.7% per annum.

Chart 2: Population Growth, 2015-2025



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2025

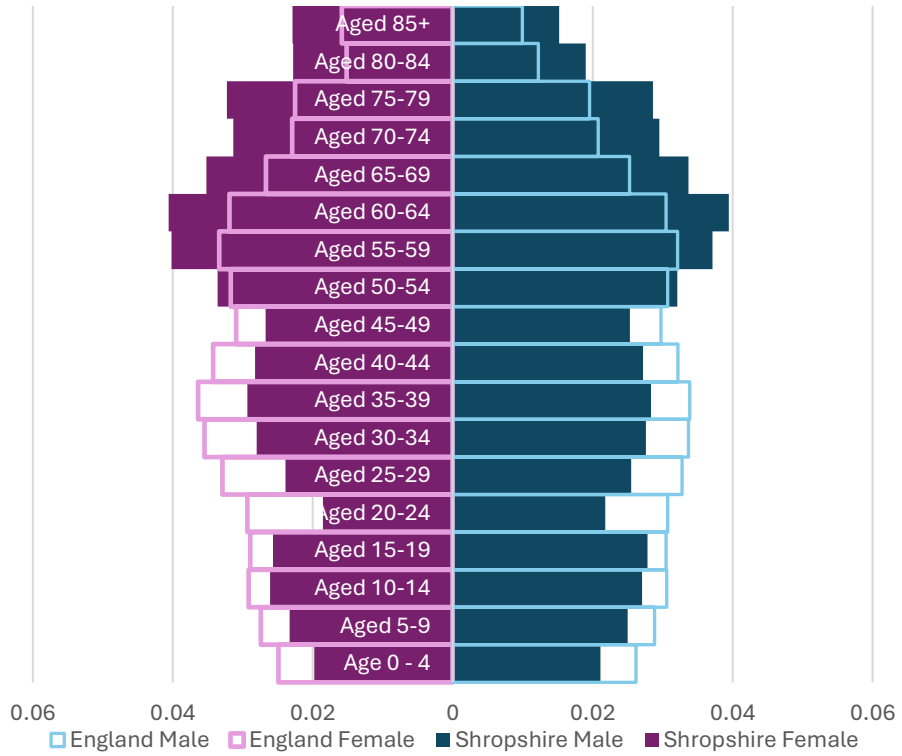
Shropshire has an ageing population, with 27.1% of the total population aged 65 and above in 2025 compared with 19.1% as an average across England. Shropshire has a lower proportion of people aged below the age of 50 than England or the West Midlands (50.6% compared to 61.9% nationally and 62.1% regionally). The "mushroom" shape of the population pyramid on the following page illustrates the ageing structure of the population in Shropshire.

Table 1: Breakdown of Population by Broad Age Band, 2025

	Shropshire		England		West Midlands	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-4	13,600	4.1%	3,003,900	5.1%	335,000	5.4%
5-19	51,600	15.5%	10,332,200	17.5%	1,145,900	18.5%
20-34	48,400	14.5%	11,466,400	19.5%	1,181,400	19.0%
35-49	55,000	16.5%	11,610,400	19.7%	1,190,300	19.2%
50-64	74,300	22.3%	11,197,500	19.0%	1,165,800	18.8%
65+	90,200	27.1%	11,234,400	19.1%	1,187,400	19.1%
Total	333,200	100.0%	58,834,800	100.0%	6,205,900	100.0%

Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2025

Chart 3: Breakdown of the Shropshire and England Populations by Age, 2025



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates, 2025

Housing & Households

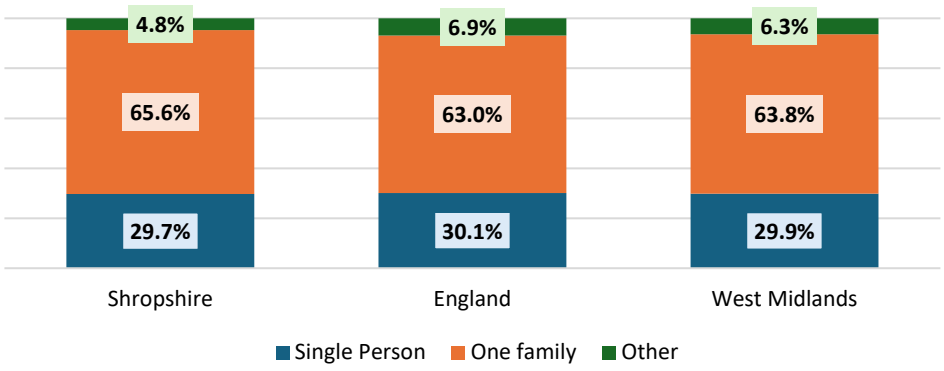
There were 139,579 households in Shropshire at the time of the 2021 Census. This represents an increase of 9,905 households since 2011, which is the equivalent of 7.6% growth. Growth in the number of households has exceeded regional and national growth (+5.9% and +6.2% respectively) and has also slightly exceeded population growth due to an increase in the number of single person households.

The average household size in 2021 in England was 2.37 people, slightly smaller than the West Midlands regional average of 2.41 people. In Shropshire, the average household size is 2.26 people.

2.3% of the Shropshire population lives in a communal establishment rather than a household. This equates to 7,300 people.

29.7% of all households in Shropshire in 2021 were single person, which is the equivalent of 41,428 people living alone. This proportion has risen from 28.9% in 2011 and constitutes an increase of 3,888 more people living by themselves. The proportion of single person households is similar in England and the West Midlands.

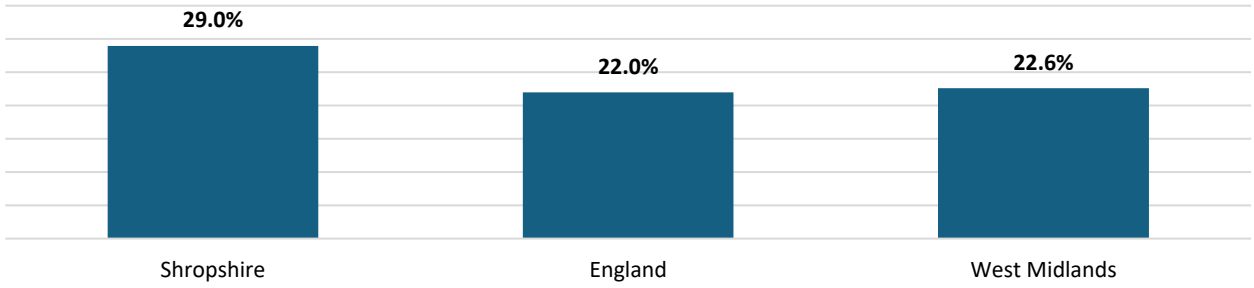
Chart 4: Breakdown of Households by Household Composition, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

29% of all Shropshire households comprise residents aged 66 and above. This compares with 22.0% in England and 22.6% in the West Midlands. More than half of these households are single person.

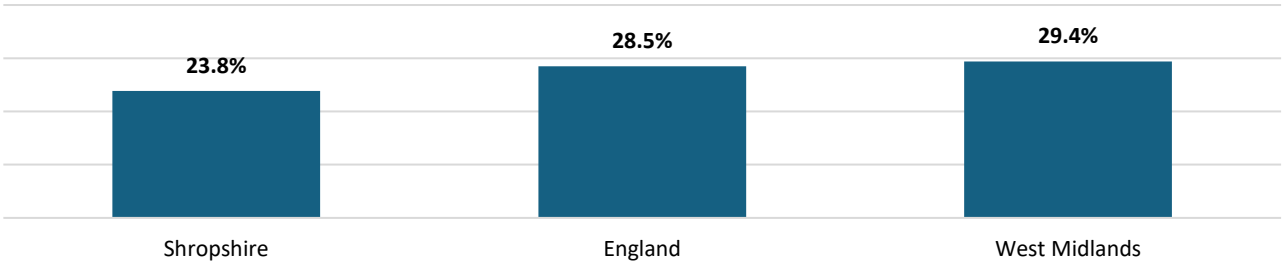
Chart 5: Proportion of Households with all Residents 66+, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

Less than a quarter of households in Shropshire contain children. This compares with 28.5% in England and 29.4% in the West Midlands.

Chart 6: Households with Dependent Children, 2021

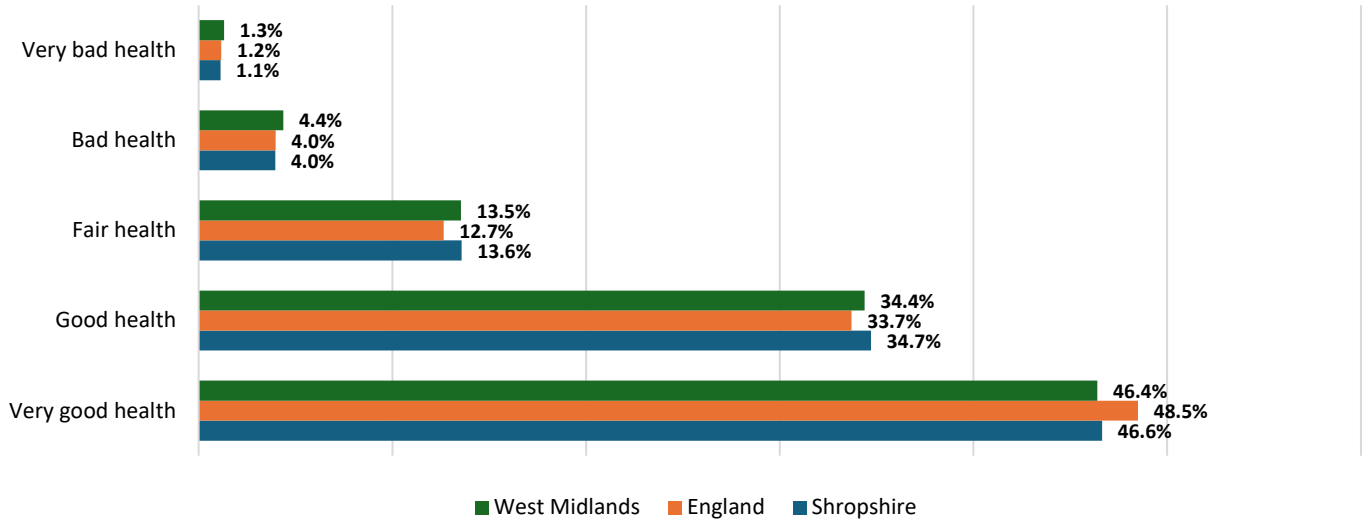


Source: ONS Census 2021

Health & Disability

More than four-fifths of the Shropshire population consider themselves to be in either good or very good health. The proportion is similar in the West Midlands and England. 5.1% consider themselves to be in either bad or very bad health. Again, this proportion is comparable to the national average (5.2%) and very slightly lower than the regional average (5.7%).

Chart 7: General Health, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

According to the 2021 Census, 18.5% of the Shropshire population is registered disabled under the Equality Act. This compares with 17.3% in England and 18.1% in the West Midlands. Of the disabled population, 40.5% (7.5% of the total population) say their day-to-day activities are limited a lot.

Over three-quarters of the population nationally and regionally are not disabled and do not have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is slightly lower at 74.1% in Shropshire. 7.4% are not disabled but do have a long term physical or mental health condition compared with 6.8% in England and 6.5% in the West Midlands.

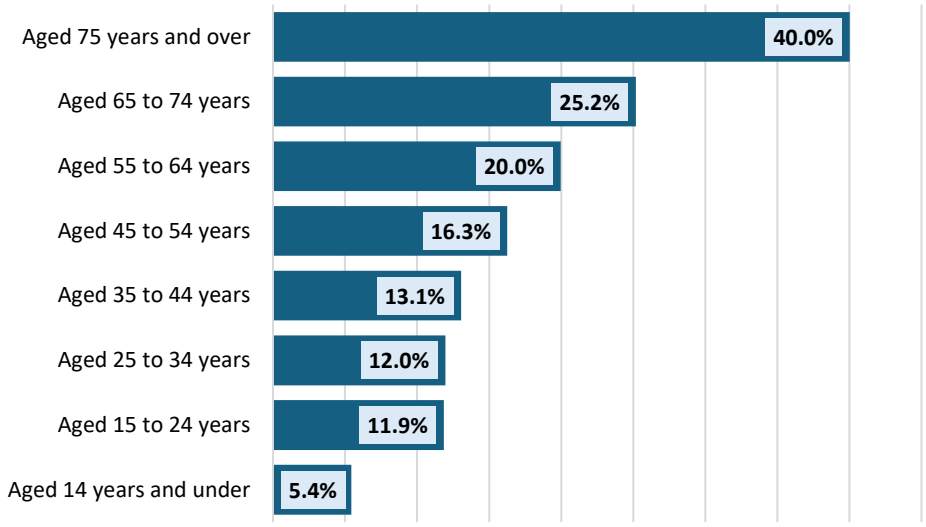
Table 2: Disability and Long-Term Health Conditions, 2021

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
Disabled under the Equality Act	18.5%	17.3%	18.1%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	7.5%	7.3%	7.9%
Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little	11.0%	10.0%	10.2%
Not disabled under the Equality Act	81.5%	82.7%	81.9%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited	7.4%	6.8%	6.5%
Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions	74.1%	75.9%	75.4%

Source: ONS Census 2021

Rates of disability increase significantly with age, with 40% of the 75 plus population in Shropshire registered as disabled under the Equality Act.

Chart 8: Rates of Disability in Shropshire by Age, 2021

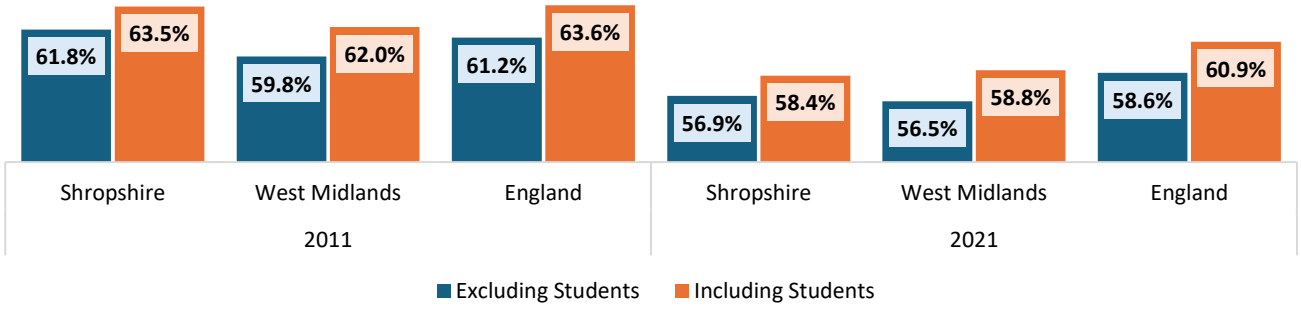


Source: ONS Census 2021

Economic Activity and Employment

58.4% of the 16+ population was economically active in 2021. This represents a decrease from 63.5% in 2011. Economic activity rates have also fallen in the West Midlands and England over the last decade. In 2021 the regional and national rates were very slightly superior to the Shropshire rate.

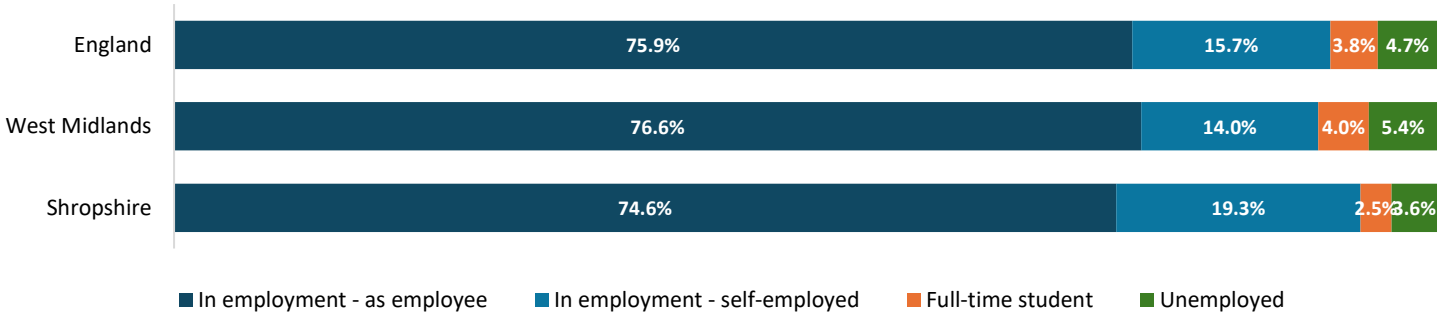
Chart 9: Economic Activity Rates, 2011 and 2021



Source: ONS Census 2011 & 2021

The following chart shows the breakdown of the economically active population according to activity. The majority are in employment as an employee. However, the proportion that are self-employed is higher in Shropshire than in the West Midlands or England.

Chart 10: Breakdown of Economically Active Population, 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

43.7% of Shropshire workers are employed in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations (SOC 1 - 3). Although the proportion attributable to managers is slightly higher than it is in the West Midlands or England, the proportion attributable to professional occupations and associate professional occupations is marginally lower. Proportionally, there are fewer employed as process, plant and machine operatives or in elementary professions (SOC8-9) and more working in skilled trades and in caring and leisure occupations.

Table 3: Breakdown of Employment by Occupation, 2021

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	13.9%	12.9%	12.8%
2. Professional occupations	17.6%	20.3%	20.2%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	12.2%	13.3%	13.2%
SOC 1-3	**43.7%**	**46.5%**	**46.2%**
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	8.7%	9.3%	9.3%
5. Skilled trades occupations	13.8%	10.2%	10.3%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	10.0%	9.3%	9.4%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	7.1%	7.5%	7.5%
SOC 4-7	**39.6%**	**36.3%**	**36.5%**
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	6.7%	6.9%	7.0%
9. Elementary occupations	9.9%	10.5%	10.5%
SOC 8-9	**16.6%**	**17.4%**	**17.5%**

Source: ONS Census 2021

Educational Attainment and Qualifications

The average attainment 8 score in Shropshire in 2022/23 was 44.0. This compares with an average of 46.3 across all state funded schools in England. 38.2% of Shropshire students achieved a grade of 5 or above in English and mathematics compared with 45.3% of their national counterparts.

43% of the Shropshire population of traditional working age (16-64) are qualified to level RQF4 or above (about degree level). This is slightly higher than in the West Midlands, but lower than in England. Just over a tenth of the population have no qualifications or RQF1 level only.

Table 4: Breakdown of 16-64 Population by Qualification Level, 2023

	Shropshire	England	West Midlands
RQF4+	43.0%	46.7%	42.5%
RQF3	24.2%	20.7%	21.1%
RQF2	19.4%	19.2%	20.7%
RQF1	3.0%	2.6%	3.2%
Other Qualifications	2.7%	4.7%	5.2%
No Qualifications	7.7%	6.2%	7.3%
Low and No Qualifications*	**10.7%**	**8.8%**	**10.5%**

Source: Annual Population Survey

** Note: No Qualifications or Level 1*

Deprivation

Overall Deprivation

According to the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025, Shropshire is ranked as the 154th most deprived lower tier local authority in England out of 396. In comparison with 2015, Shropshire has become slightly more deprived in relation to other local authorities (185th out of 326 authorities).

In Shropshire, there are two lower-level super output areas (LSOAs) in the 10% most deprived areas of England – one in Harlescott electoral division and the other in Monkmoor, which are both in Shrewsbury. The former was also in the most deprived decile in 2015 and 2019. The latter was in decile 2 in 2019. Meanwhile, a neighbourhood in Ludlow East moved from decile 1 to decile 2 between 2019 and 2025. As well as the two LSOAs that fall within the 10% most deprived areas of the country, there are a further nine in the 20% most deprived areas of the country.

Approximately 5% of Shropshire's population live in the most deprived 20% of areas within England and 52% live within the least deprived 50% of areas.

The table below shows in which LSOA individual libraries are located and to which national decile they belonged in 2015, 2019 and 2025. Decile 1 represents the most deprived and decile 10 the least deprived. This shows that Oswestry, Market Drayton, Gobowen, Craven Arms, Highley and the Lantern libraries are in the most deprived areas and that Ellesmere, Church Stretton, Bayston Hill and Albrighton are in the least deprived. The libraries that are in areas that have become relatively more deprived are Gobowen, Craven Arms, Highley, Wem, Bishop's Castle, Shrewsbury, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury, Cleobury Mortimer, Shifnal, Ellesmere and Albrighton. Market Drayton, Bridgnorth and Church Stretton libraries are in areas that have become relatively less deprived.

Table 5: Overall IMD 2015, 2019 & 2025: National Deciles

Library	LSOA Code	National Decile 2015	National Decile 2019	National Decile 2025	Change in Decile
Oswestry	E01028906	2	2	2	No Change
Lantern	E01028983	2	2	2	No Change
Gobowen	E01028912	3	3	2	More deprived
Craven Arms	E01029014	3	3	2	More deprived
Highley	E01028849	4	4	2	More deprived
Market Drayton	E01028873	2	2	3	Less deprived
Whitchurch	E01028891	3	3	3	No Change
Ludlow	E01033526	3	3	3	No Change
Wem	E01028886	5	5	3	More deprived
Bishop's Castle	E01028992	4	4	3	More deprived
Broseley	E01028841	4	4	4	No Change
Shrewsbury	E01028946	5	6	5	More deprived*
Much Wenlock	E01028852	6	6	5	More deprived
Pontesbury	E01028977	8	8	6	More deprived
Bridgnorth	E01028832	6	5	6	Less deprived*
Cleobury Mortimer	E01029001	8	9	6	More Deprived
Shifnal	E01028854	9	8	7	More Deprived
Church Stretton	E01028998	7	7	8	Less deprived
Bayston Hill	E01028936	9	8	8	Unchanged*
Ellesmere	E01028865	9	9	8	More deprived
Albrighton	E01028845	10	10	9	More deprived

Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015, 2019, 2025

** since 2019*

Barriers to Housing & Services

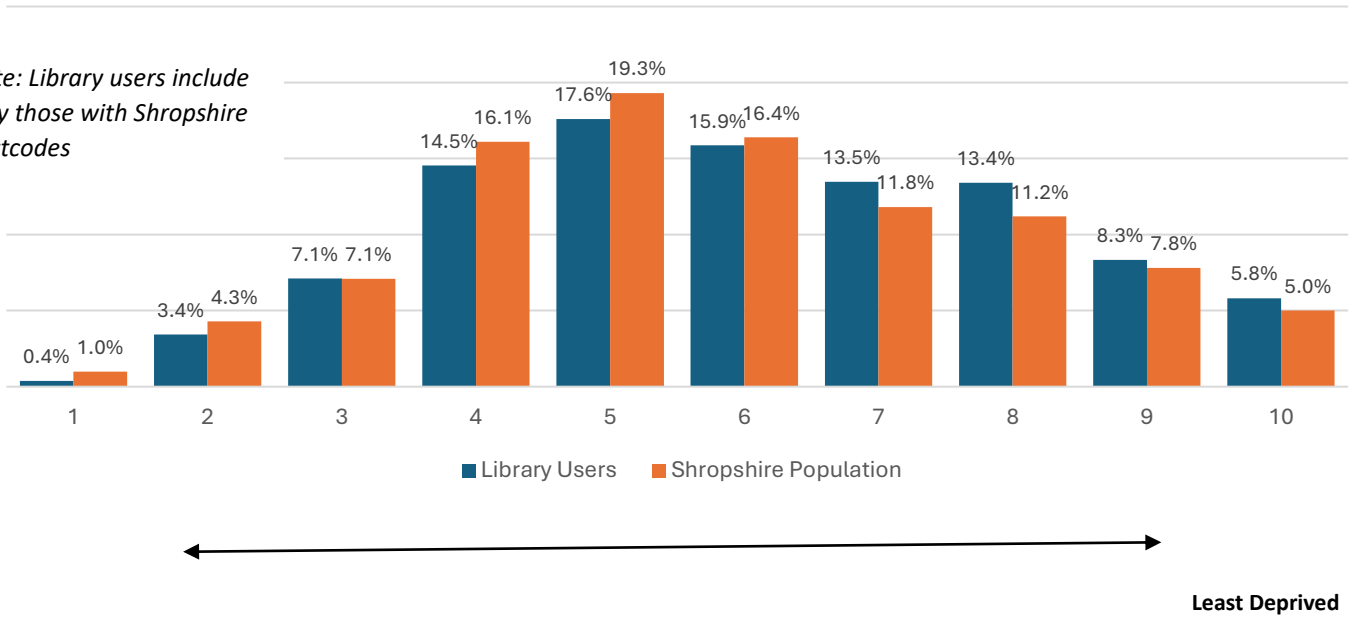
63 LSOAs in Shropshire fall within the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England according to the Barriers to Housing and Services domain of the IMD. 52 are within the most deprived 5% and 25 are within the 1% most deprived LSOAs nationally. Shropshire is more deprived than 77% of all lower tier Local Authorities in respect of the Barriers to Housing & Services domain. Approaching a third (31%) of the Shropshire population live in the 63 LSOAs that are in the 10% most deprived areas in England, which means that they are more likely to struggle to access the services that they need.

Active Library Users

10.9% of active users of Shropshire's libraries live in the 30% most deprived areas nationally, as shown in the chart following. 14.2% live in the least deprived 20% of England. The breakdown of library users according to their IMD decile is broadly in line with the breakdown of the Shropshire population, albeit slightly less deprived.

Chart 11: Overall IMD: Proportion of Active Library Users and Shropshire Population in each National Decile, 2025

Note: Library users include only those with Shropshire postcodes

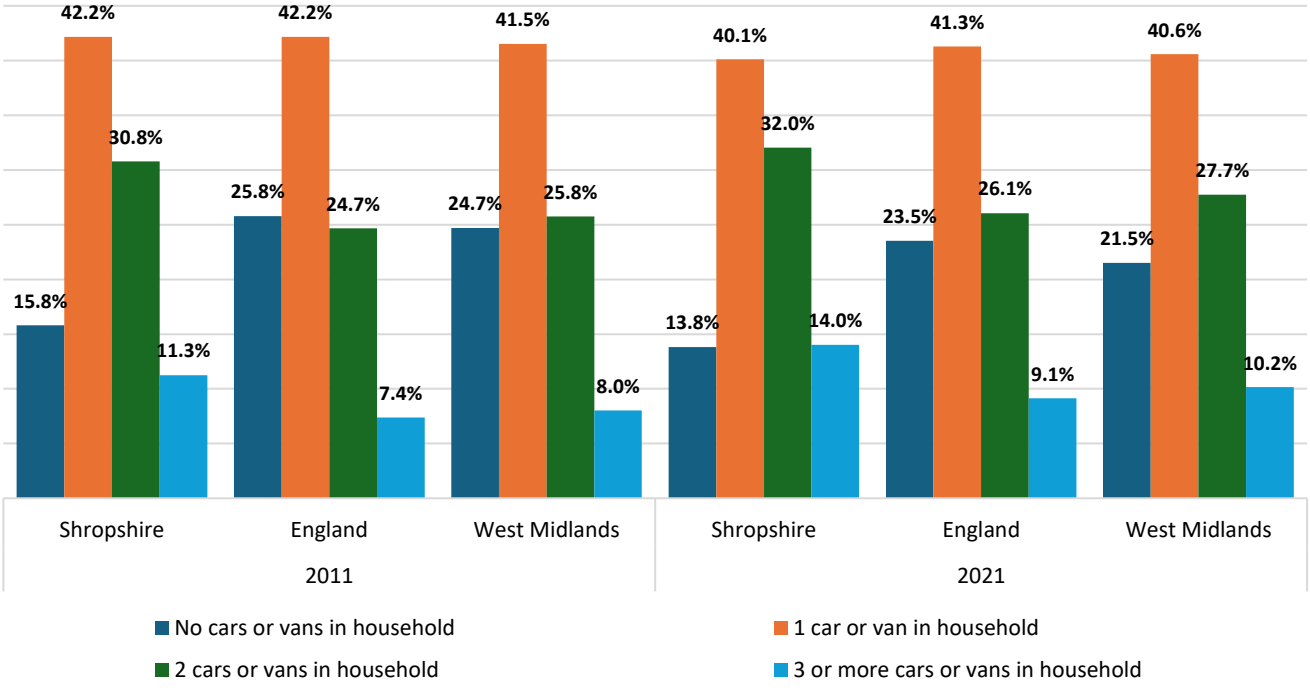


Source: English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025

Car Ownership

As a large rural county, car ownership can be a necessity rather than a privilege, and there are relatively few households that do not have access to a car or van at 13.8% in 2021. This represents a reduction from 15.8% in 2011. More than a fifth of households in both the West Midlands and England do not have access to a motor vehicle.

Chart 12: Car/Van Availability, 2011 & 2021



Source: ONS Census 2021

Broadband Availability

92% of premises in Shropshire have access to superfast broadband (download speeds >30mbps), with the number edging upwards over the last two years. Coverage is worse in Shropshire than it is nationally (98% January 2026 according to Ofcom Connected Nations). The remaining gaps tend to be in very rural hard-to-reach locations.

Gigabit broadband technology (speeds of >1,000mbps) has been rolled out rapidly in the UK over the last few years, with 88% of England premises having access by January 2026. The roll-out in rural areas like Shropshire is much more difficult and consequently has been slower. However, 75% of Shropshire premises are now gigabit-capable.

Catchment Analysis

A catchment has been identified for each library based on the area from which it derives the major share of its customers based on registered users' home postcodes. Across Shropshire, each output area[2] has been allocated to the library to which the highest proportion of its residents are registered to create discreet catchment areas. These are shown on Map 3 on page 13. To ensure that each catchment is a contiguous area, in a small minority of cases, an output area has been allocated to the most appropriate catchment even though a higher share of residents may use an alternative library. Naturally, some library users in all catchments use alternative library provision in other catchments. **Please note that the designation of catchment areas is based on the 2024 database of users.**

Many of Shropshire's libraries also attract users who live outside the local authority boundary. Non-Shropshire output areas have been included within in each library's catchment when there are at least nine active users for the main six libraries and at least four active library users for all other libraries. Using this methodology means that these wider catchments (shown on Map 4 on page 13) are not necessarily contiguous.

Shrewsbury is the largest catchment, accounting for 17% of Shropshire's land mass, ahead of Ludlow, Bridgnorth and Bishop's Castle. Oswestry is the third largest when considering cross border catchment. As well as Oswestry, a sizeable proportion of the Whitchurch and Ludlow catchments are outside Shropshire. The catchments for the Lantern, Gobowen, Highley and Bayston Hill are the smallest, together accounting for less than 1% of Shropshire hectares. The Lantern and Bayston Hill catchments are entirely subsumed within the Shrewsbury catchment, while Gobowen is completely enclosed within Oswestry. The smallest catchments tend to be close to an alternative larger library.

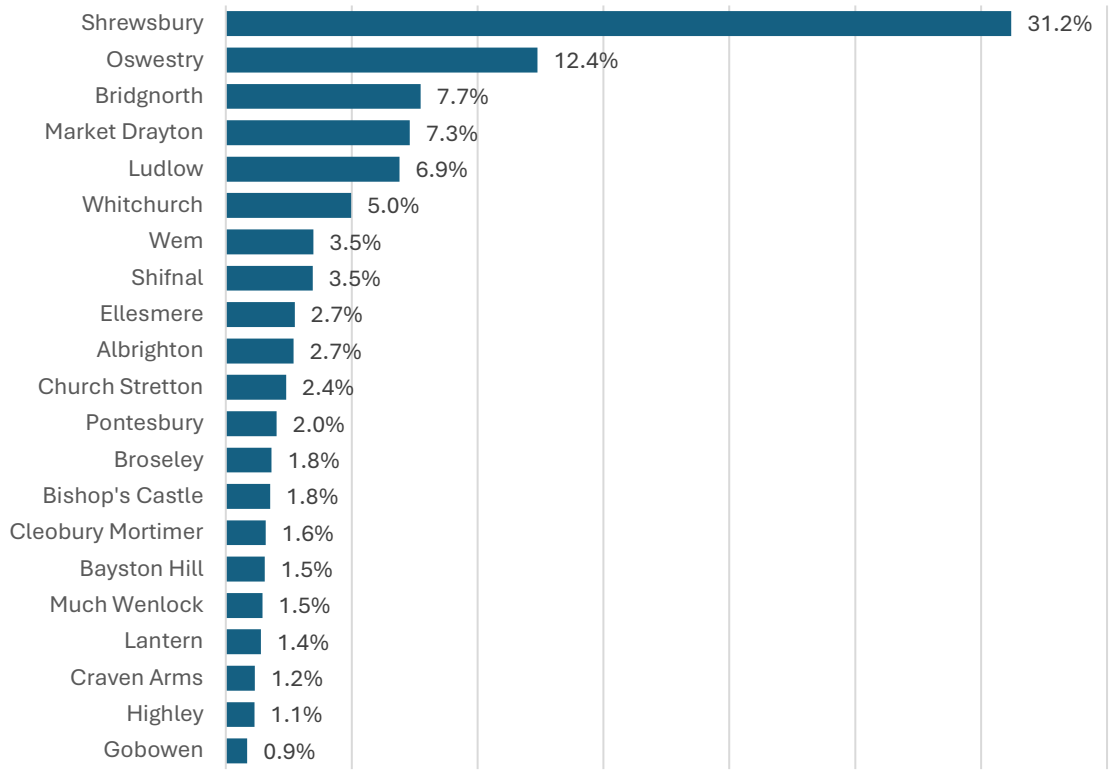
Table 6: Catchments ranked by Size (Shropshire Land Mass)

Catchment	Shropshire Area (Hectares)	% of Shropshire Area	Total Area (Hectares)	Cross Border as % Total Area
Shrewsbury	54,507	17.0%	55,146	1%
Ludlow	44,684	14.0%	58,220	23%
Bridgnorth	34,243	10.7%	34,243	0%
Bishops Castle	30,544	9.6%	35,975	15%
Oswestry	26,072	8.2%	40,620	36%
Market Drayton	22,702	7.1%	27,515	17%
Church Stretton	17,740	5.5%	17,740	0%
Wem	13,948	4.4%	14,962	7%
Ellesmere	12,841	4.0%	13,689	6%
Whitchurch	11,892	3.7%	19,125	38%
Much Wenlock	10,051	3.1%	10,055	0%
Cleobury Mortimer	8,540	2.7%	9,452	10%
Pontesbury	8,253	2.6%	8,253	0%
Shifnal	6,398	2.0%	6,415	0%
Craven Arms	6,138	1.9%	6,138	0%
Albrighton	6,105	1.9%	7,441	18%
Broseley	3,272	1.0%	3,339	2%
Bayston Hill	864	0.3%	864	0%
Highley	638	0.2%	638	0%
Gobowen	151	>0.0%	151	0%
Lantern	143	>0.0%	143	0%
Total	319,726	100.0%	370,124	14%

[2] The lowest level of geographical area for census statistics. Each Output Area is made up of between 40 and 250 households and a usually resident population of between 100 and 625 persons

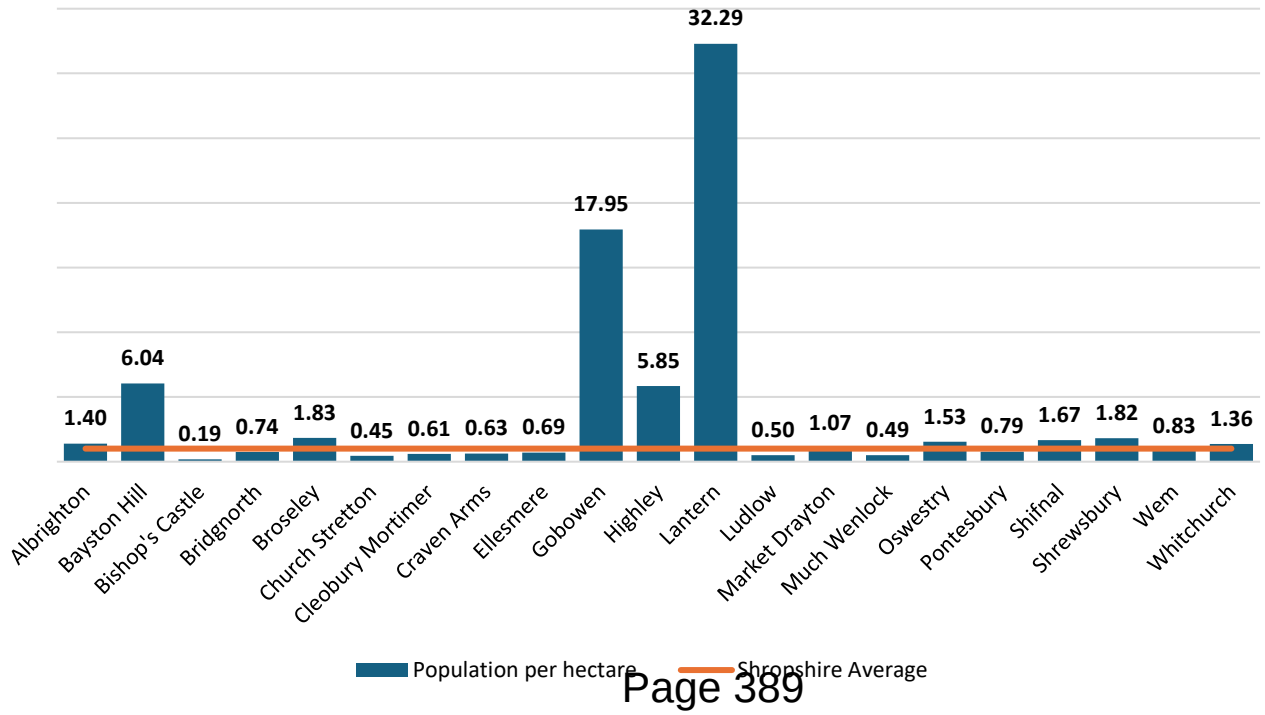
Shrewsbury is also the largest catchment in terms of population, accounting for just over 31% of the Shropshire population. Oswestry ranks second, taking a share of 12.4%. Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Ludlow and Whitchurch make up the top six.

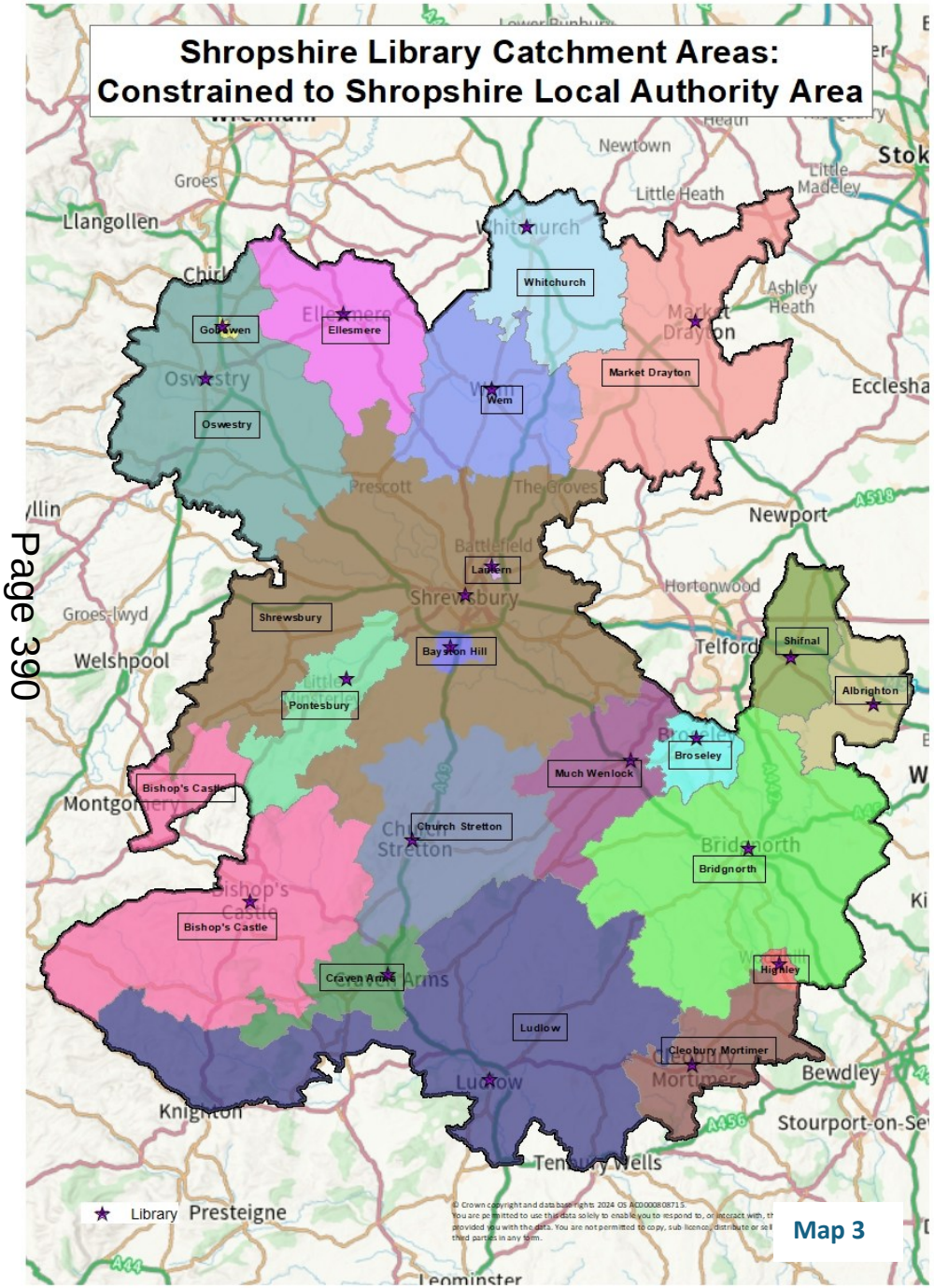
Chart 13: Catchments ranked by Shropshire Population

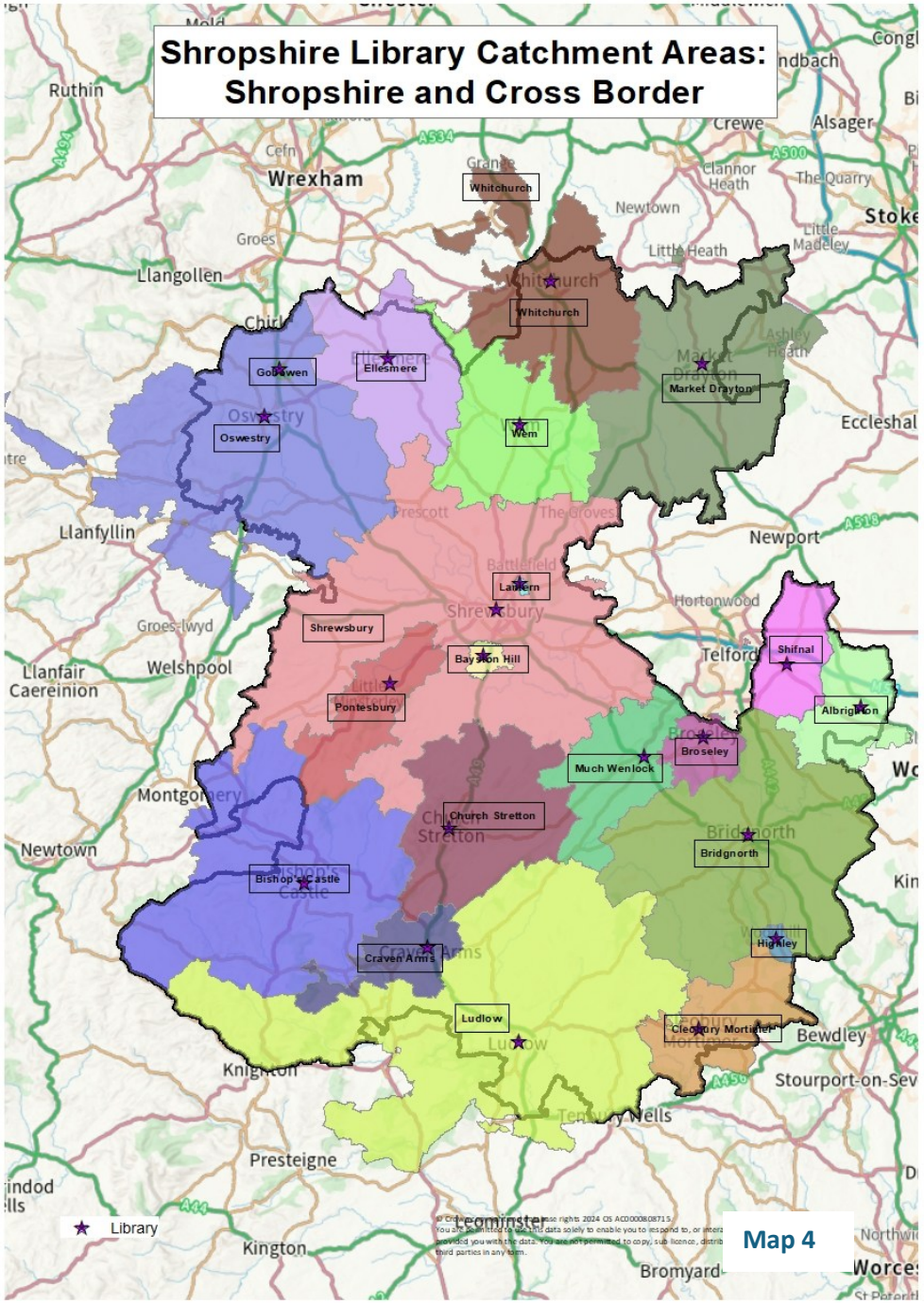


Average population per hectare across Shropshire is just over one person. The chart below illustrates how this varies by library catchment. The smallest catchments – the Lantern, Gobowen, Highley and Bayston Hill are much more densely populated that many of the larger catchments. Population density is much lower than average for Bishop's Castle. Bridgnorth, Church Stretton, Cleobury Mortimer, Craven Arms, Ellesmere, Ludlow, Much Wenlock, Pontesbury and Wem.

Chart 14: Population Density by Library Catchment

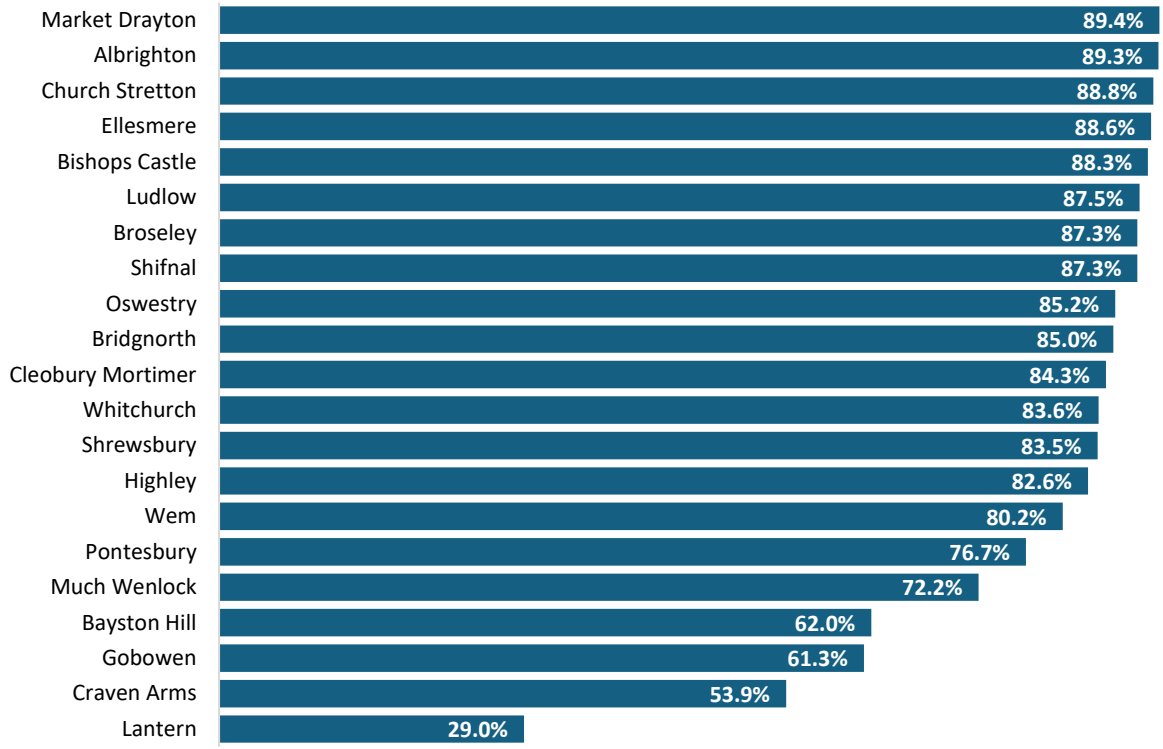



Shropshire Library Catchment Areas:
Constrained to Shropshire Local Authority Area
Whitchurch
Ellesmere
Market Drayton
Wem
Oswestry
Shrewsbury
Bayston Hill
Pontesbury
Shifnal
Albrighton
Broseley
Much Wenlock
Bishop's Castle
Church Stretton
Bridgnorth
Craven Arms
Highley
Ludlow
Cleobury Mortimer
Library
Map 3


Shropshire Library Catchment Areas:
Shropshire and Cross Border
Whitchurch
Ellesmere
Market Drayton
Wem
Oswestry
Shrewsbury
Bayston Hill
Pontesbury
Shifnal
Albrighton
Broseley
Much Wenlock
Church Stretton
Bridgnorth
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Highley
Ludlow
Cleobury Mortimer
Library
Map 4

More than 85% of Market Drayton, Albrighton, Church Stretton, Ellesmere, Bishop's Castle, Ludlow, Broseley, Bridgnorth, Oswestry and Shifnal active library users live in their library's designated catchment area. Not surprisingly, the smallest catchment areas tend to accommodate a lower proportion of the library's active users – less than 30% of users of the Lantern live within the Lantern's catchment. Likewise, around two-thirds of users or fewer of Bayston Hill, Gobowen and Craven Arms libraries live in their respective catchment areas. All these libraries are within relatively proximity of another library with a larger catchment area.

Chart 15: Proportion of Active Users Living in Catchment Area



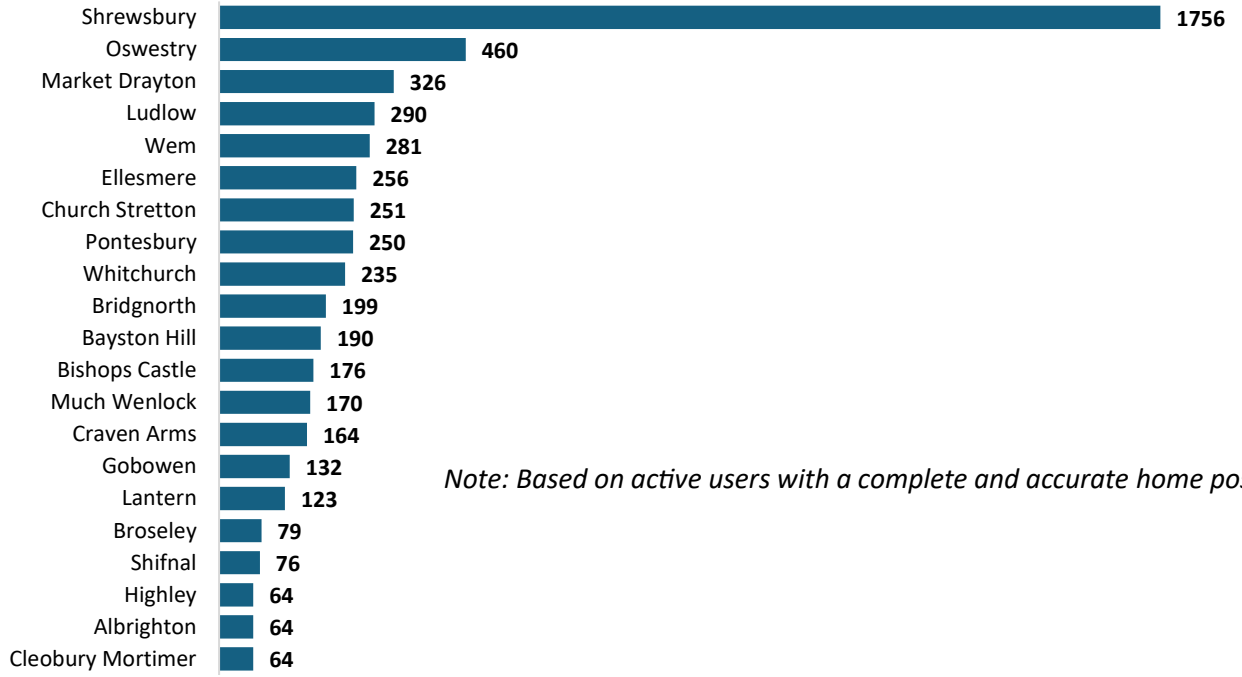
Note: Based on active users with a complete and accurate home postcode only

All library catchments contain residents who are active users of an alternative library. The highest number is in the Shrewsbury catchment, where there are 1,756 users of other libraries across Shropshire. 535 users of the Lantern live in the Shrewsbury catchment area (63,8% of all Lantern users with a recognised postcode) as well as 286 Bayston Hill Library users (32.9% of all Bayston Hill library users). 460 people living in the Oswestry catchment area use alternative libraries – of these, 161 use Shrewsbury library and 85 use Gobowen. Nearly a third of Gobowen library users live in the Oswestry catchment.

Comparatively few users of alternative libraries live in the Cleobury Mortimer, Albrighton, Highley, Broseley or Shifnal catchments.

It should be noted that users of mobile libraries are included within these up-dated 2026 figures (having been excluded in 2024). This means that the proportion of library users living in their designated catchment area has declined slightly for most libraries and that the number using alternative library provision had increased.

Chart 16: Number of Users Living in each Catchment Using Alternative Libraries



Note: Based on active users with a complete and accurate home postcode only

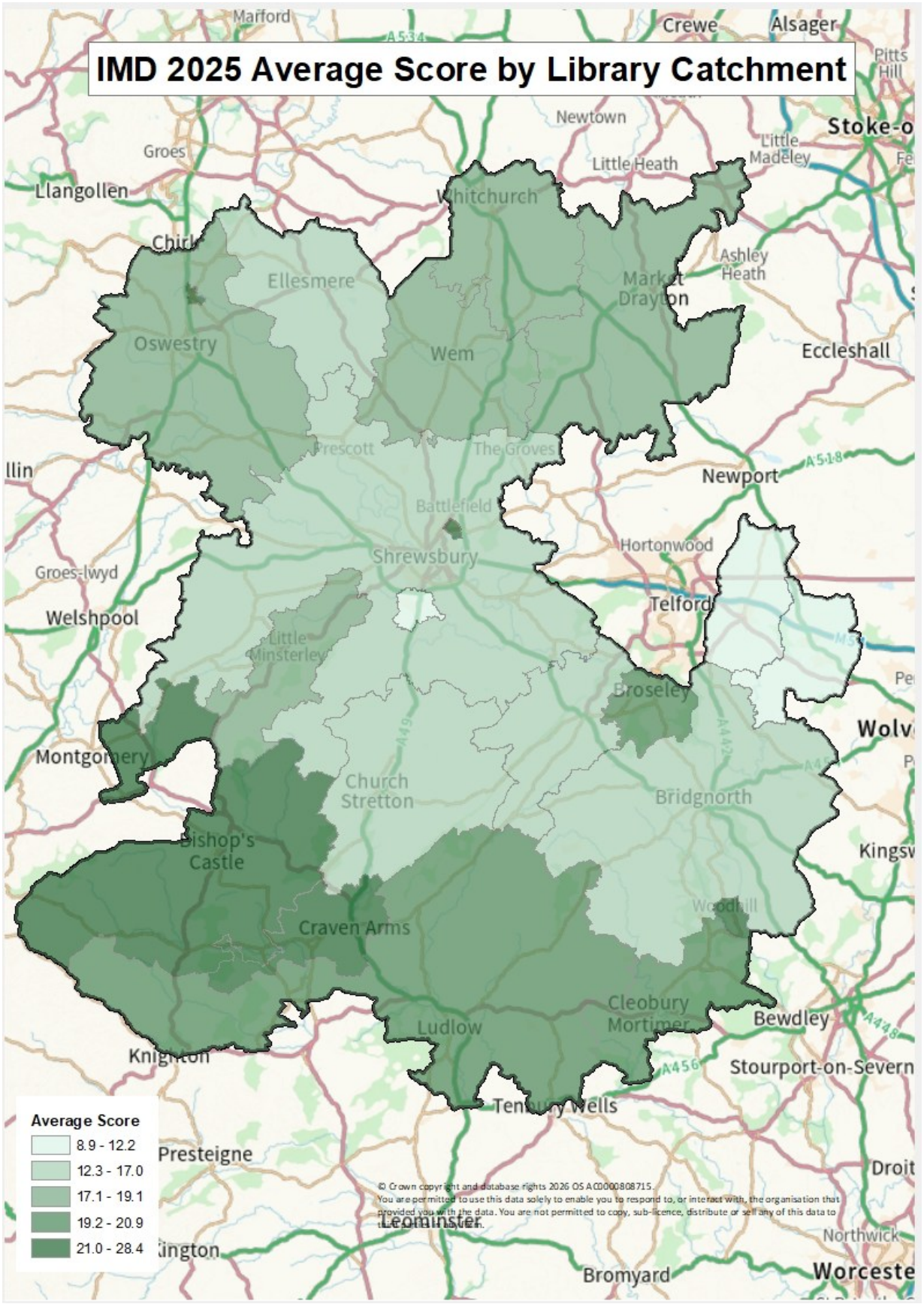
Library Catchments Average IMD Score

Average IMD scores have been calculated for each Shropshire library catchment (see map 5 on page 16 for catchment areas). This shows that Bayston Hill and Albrighton are the least deprived and that the Lantern and Craven Arms are the most deprived.

Table 7: Average IMD Score by Library Catchment

Library Catchment	Rank (1= most deprived)	Average core for Catchment
Lantern	1	28.4
Craven Arms	2	25.7
Highley	3	25.1
Bishop's Castle	4	24.0
Gobowen	5	23.5
Cleobury Mortimer	6	20.9
Ludlow	7	20.2
Broseley	8	20.1
Whitchurch	9	19.2
Oswestry	10	18.9
Wem	11	18.8
Market Drayton	12	18.7
Pontesbury	13	17.8
Ellesmere	14	16.9
Bridgnorth	15	16.2
Shrewsbury	16	15.8
Much Wenlock	17	15.6
Church Stretton	18	15.3
Shifnal	19	12.2
Albrighton	20	10.5
Bayston Hill	21	8.9

Map 5


IMD 2025 Average Score by Library Catchment
Average Score
8.9 - 12.2
12.3 - 17.0
17.1 - 19.1
19.2 - 20.9
21.0 - 28.4
Marford
Crewe
Alsager
Newtown
Stoke-o
Groes
Little Heath
Llangollen
Whitchurch
Ellesmere
Ashley Heath
Oswestry
Wem
Eccleshall
Prescott
The Groves
Newport
Battlefield
Shrewsbury
Hortonwood
Groes-lwyd
Telford
Welshpool
Broseley
Montgomery
Church Stretton
Bridgnorth
Bishop's Castle
Craven Arms
Cleobury Mortimer
Ludlow
Bewdley
Stourport-on-Severn
Presteigne
Leominster
Bromyard
Worceste
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Shropshire Libraries: Demand and Usage Analysis

Library usage data provides a good indication of how much libraries are used by the population and the level of demand that exists across a range of different activities. Analysing trend data over time gives insights into changing demand and patterns of usage also incorporating the evolving digital offer.

This data can show clear variations between different libraries - libraries across Shropshire have different offers, strengths, environments, buildings, catchments, socio-economic characteristics, local communities and so on. It is also useful to compare these trends with the national picture. This data is sourced from Shropshire Council Library Systems.

Library Demand Data Indicators

Includes rank table based on

- Number of Active Library Users
- Number of Visits
- Number of Issues/Loans
- Event Participation
- Public Access Computer User Hours

Library Demand Trend Analysis

The analysis below shows trends in library usage over the last five years. The time frame under review (2021/22 to 2025/26) began just after the Covid Pandemic of 2020/21 which can explain some of the larger rises in library usage since that low level of usage in the Pandemic. The period has also been a period of change in consumer expectations, unprecedented rises in the cost of living and more financially challenging budgets for local authorities.

The library usage data below shows library activity trends overtime, from April to March 2021/22 to April to March 2025/26. It excludes mobile libraries and headquarters.

Library usage dipped hugely during the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020/21 but the number of people using libraries for different activities has steadily increased year on year since 2021. There is a year-on-year increase in numbers and growth since 2021/22. However, since 2023/24 numbers are at a plateau at a steady number of active users around 33,000.

The number of active library users (Chart 17) has risen from 28,299 in 2021/22 to 33,121 in 2025/26. This is an increase of 17.0%. The number of active library users has increased in all Shropshire libraries except Whitchurch Library which saw a decline of 30.9% (this Library had been closed for a significant period). The largest increases in active users were seen in Broseley Library (56.4%), Much Wenlock (43.1%), Gobowen Library (41.6%), Bayston Hill (32.7%). The main 6 libraries (except Whitchurch) also saw increases: Shrewsbury (22.7%), Bridgnorth (15%), Ludlow (24.2%), Market Drayton (13.2%), Oswestry (17.8%).

The number of visits (Chart 18) has increased from 450,046 in 2021/22 to 631,208 in 2025/26, an increase of 40.3%. This is greater than the increase in the number of active users, suggesting users are visiting more often. All of the main libraries (except Whitchurch) have seen a rise in visits over the 5-year period, Bridgnorth (75.8%), Ludlow (68.7%), Market Drayton (36.9%) Oswestry (63.1%), Shrewsbury (30.6%). *Highley Library had a particularly large increase in visits in the period of 1183%. From 929 visits to 11,847, however this is due a newly installed people counter and the library moving into a different space so now has more groups using it for meetings, also the previous figure was an estimate.*

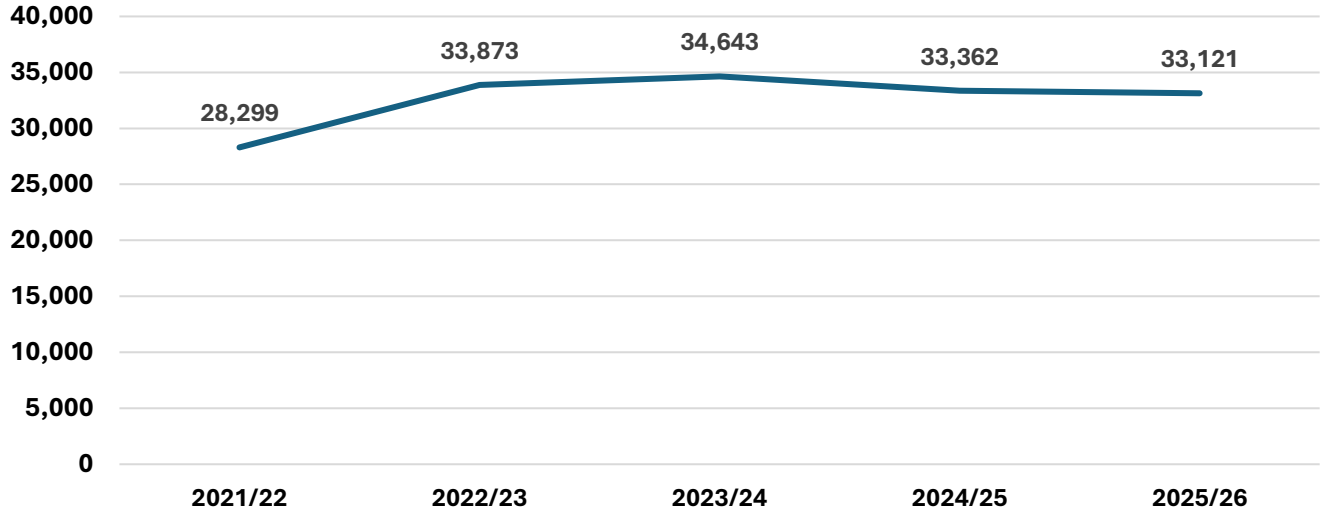
The number of E-loans (Chart 21) has continued to increase, although fallen back slightly between 2024/25 and 2025/26, e-loans have steadily risen from 59,736 in 2021/22 to 79,514 in 2024/25 and fallen to 62,718 in 2025/26, a rise of 5%. E-loans now represent 11% of total loans compared to 10% in 2021/22. The increase in e-loans has had a small impact on physical loans; physical loans were 89.5% of total loans in 2025/26 compared to 67.2% in 2021/22. The number of physical loans has increased by 3% since 2021/22, but numbers have declined since 2023/24 by 5.6%

from 563,510 to 531,949, chart 20 shows a general declining trend. The number of total loans (Chart 19) shows a declining trend since 2022/23 from 674,895 to 594,134 in 2025/25; this suggests while active users and visits have increased people are borrowing fewer items on each visit.

Public computer usage (Chart 24) rose between 2021/22 from 15,215 hours to 25,399 in 2022/23 it has remained reasonably steady at this level.

Event attendance (Chart 25) has risen a great deal since 2021/22 showing an upward trend from 17,149 to 82,257 in 2025/26, a rise of (379%). The Community Hubs have also been established in some libraries which will have influenced this trend.

Chart 17: Number of Active Library Users 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end March, Static Libraries)



Active Users (borrowers) are registered library users (registered at a certain branch) who have actively used the library in the last 12 months.

Chart 18: Number of Visits to Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26

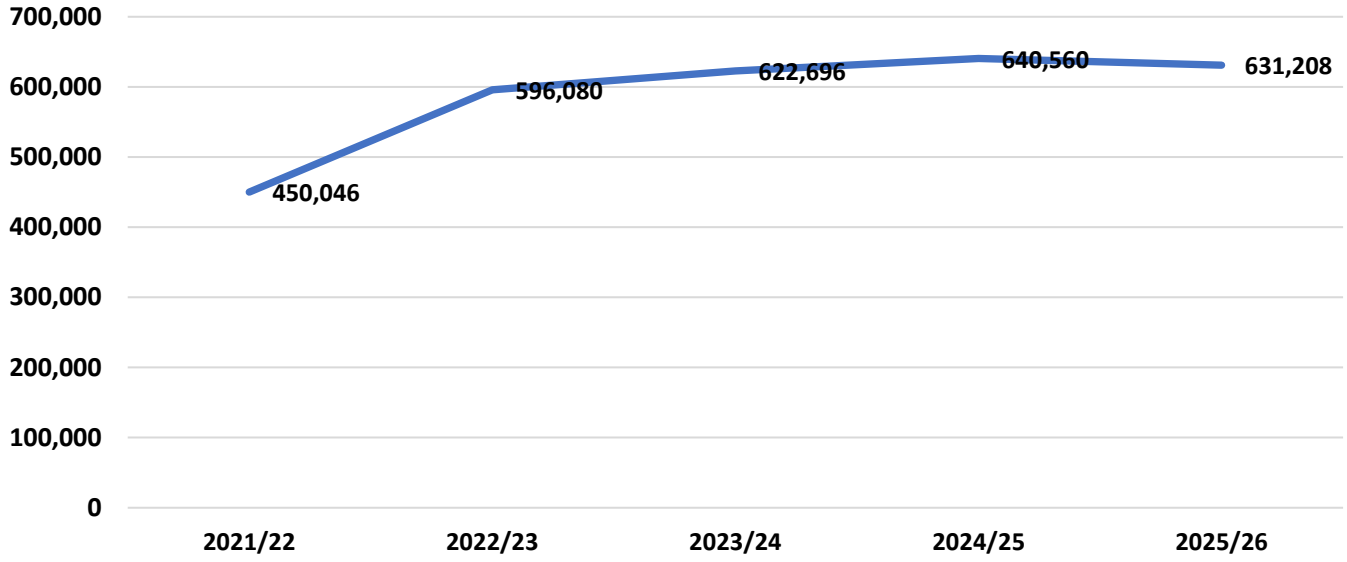


Chart 19: Number of Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26

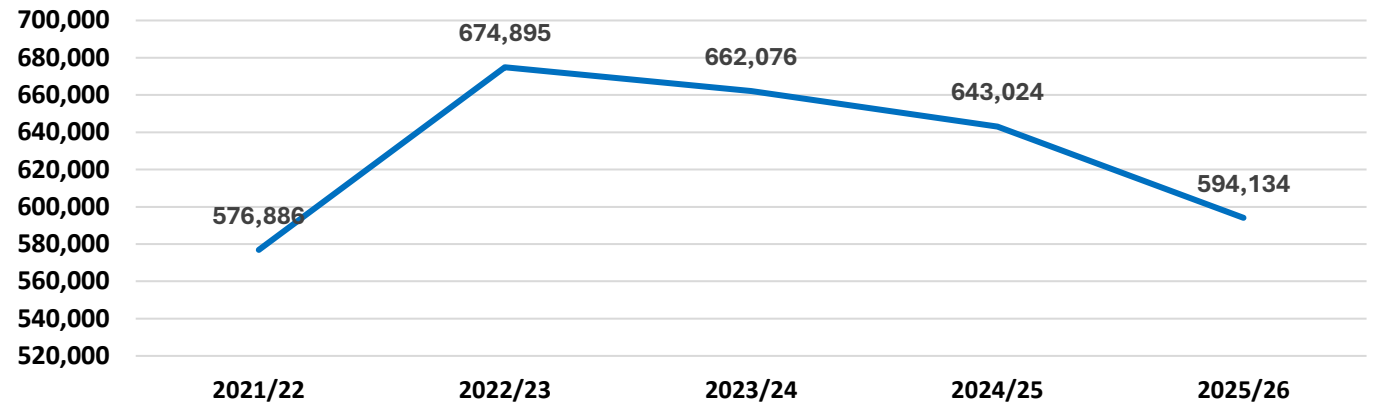


Chart 20: Number of Physical Issues Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26

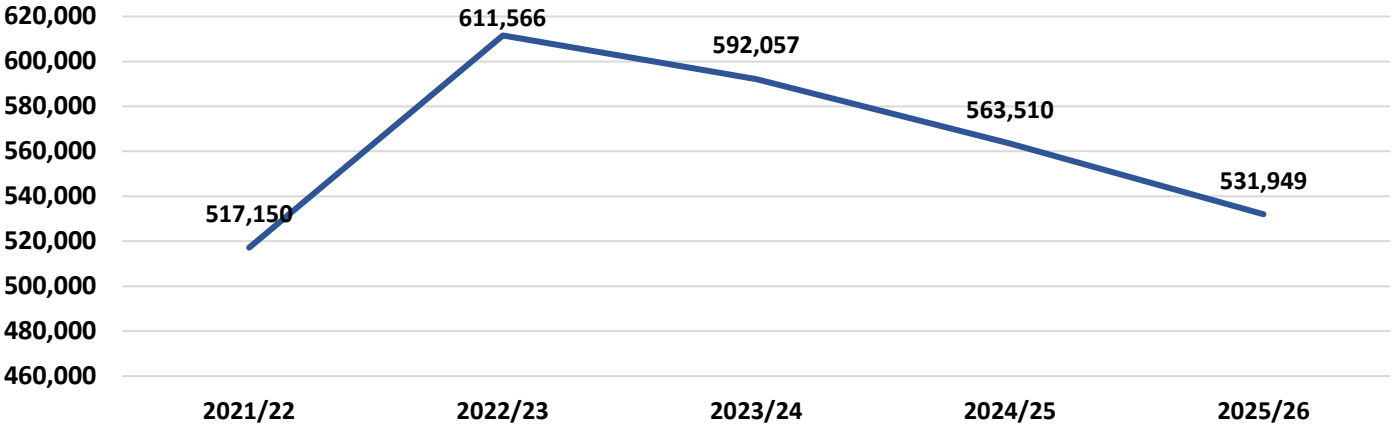
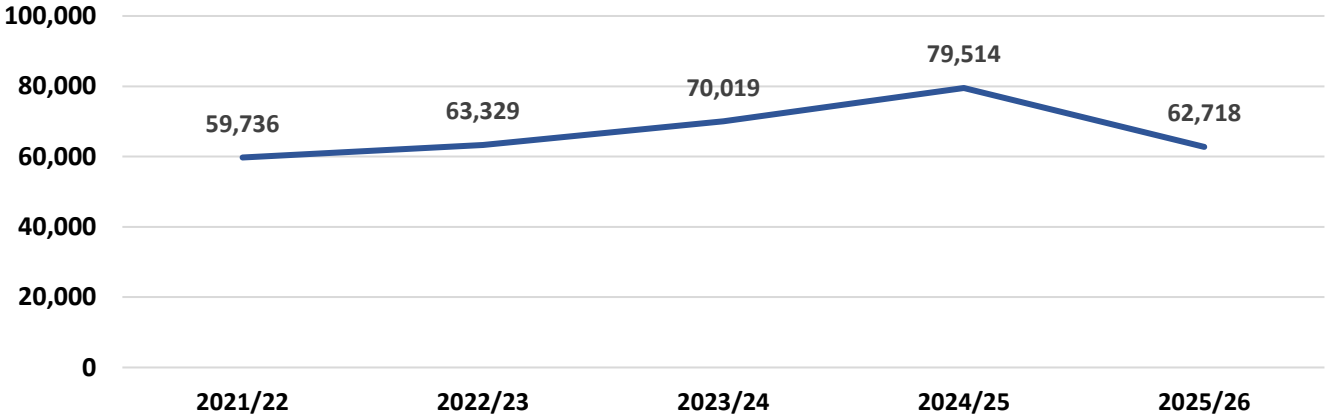


Chart 21: Number of E-Loans Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26



E-loans includes e-books and e-audio.

E-mags/newspapers aren't 'issued' in the same way, they're just available to view. In 2025/26 there were 2,266 unique users using the libraries for reading newspapers or magazines, 281,463 sessions and 543,414 issue opens. The number of unique users has risen from 316 in 2018/19 to 2,107 in 2024/25. Table 8 and Chart 22 show a steady year on year rise in newspaper and magazine readers, the number of issue opens has risen by 96% since 2021/22.

Table 8 Newspapers and Magazine Readers

	Sessions	Users	Issue Opens
18/19	14,423	316	27,600
19/20	52,782	753	65,626
20/21	163,353	1,360	239,477
21/22	162,931	1,102	277,220
22/23	182,626	1,405	381,599
23/24	184,024	1,649	349,530
24/25	232,525	2,171	431,711
25/26	281,463	2,266	543,414

Chart 22 Newspapers and Magazine Readers 2018/19 to 2025/26

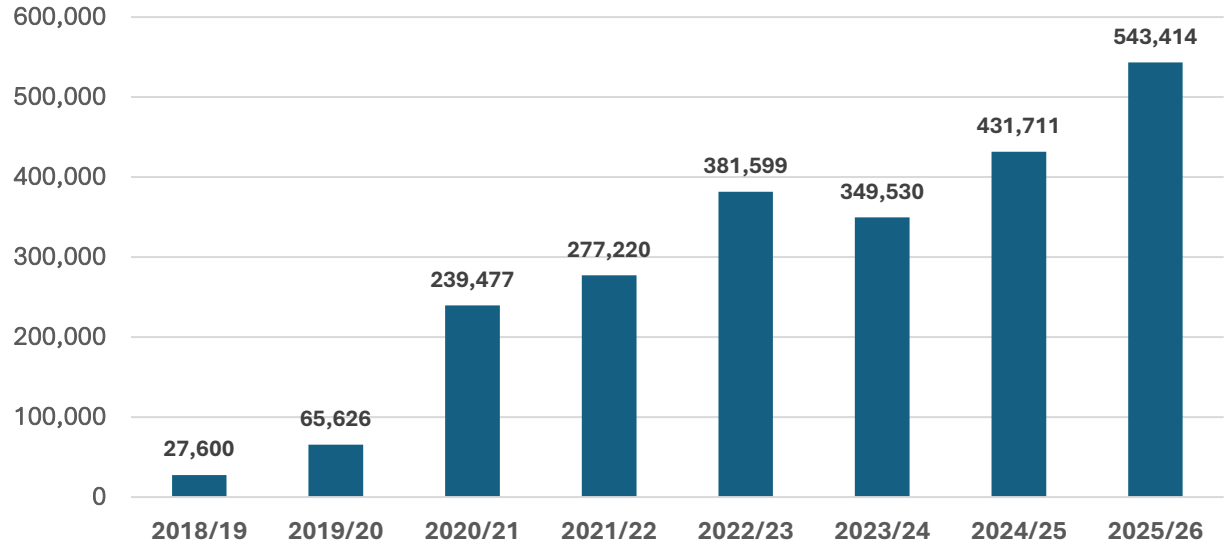
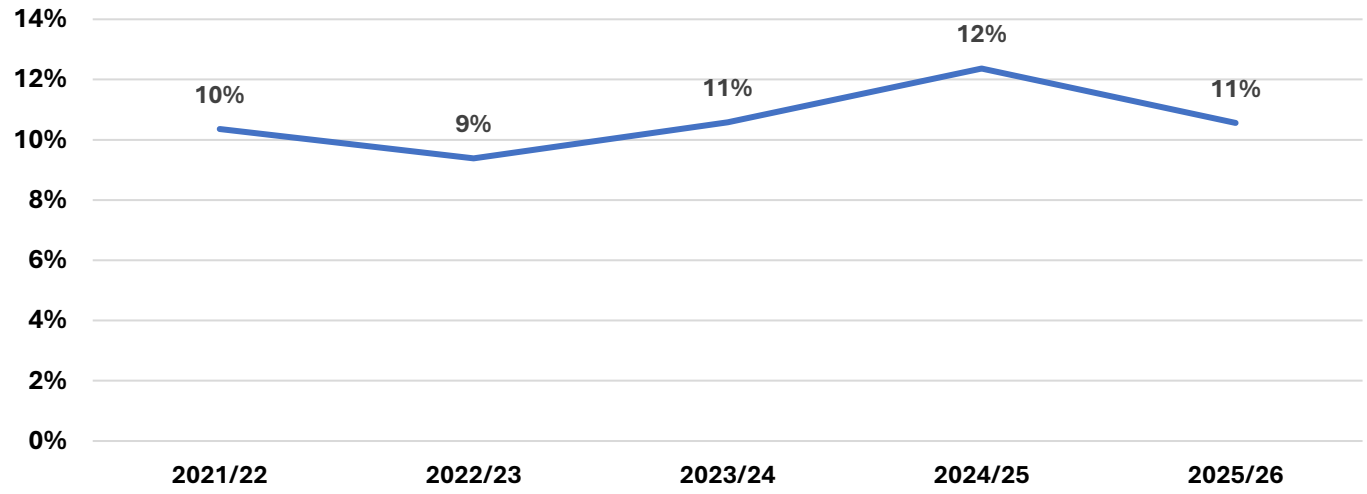


Chart 23: Number of E-Loans as a Percentage of Total Loans Static Libraries 2020/21 to 2025/26



This data on loans excludes Mobile Libraries and HQ.

Chart 24: Public Computer Use Time in Hours Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26

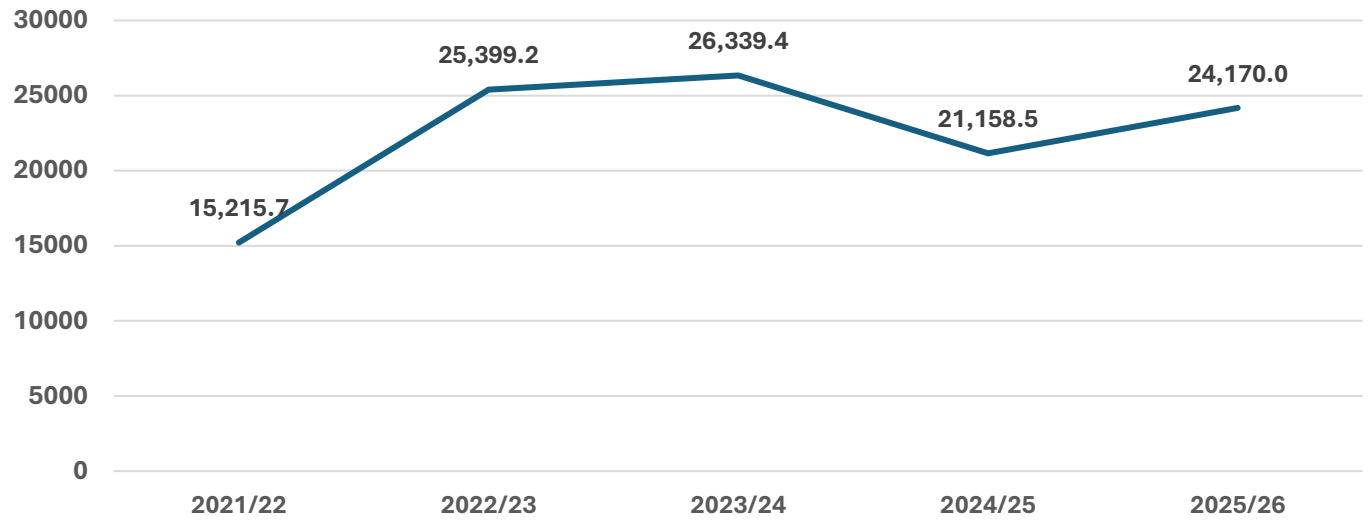


Chart 25: Event Attendance Static Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26

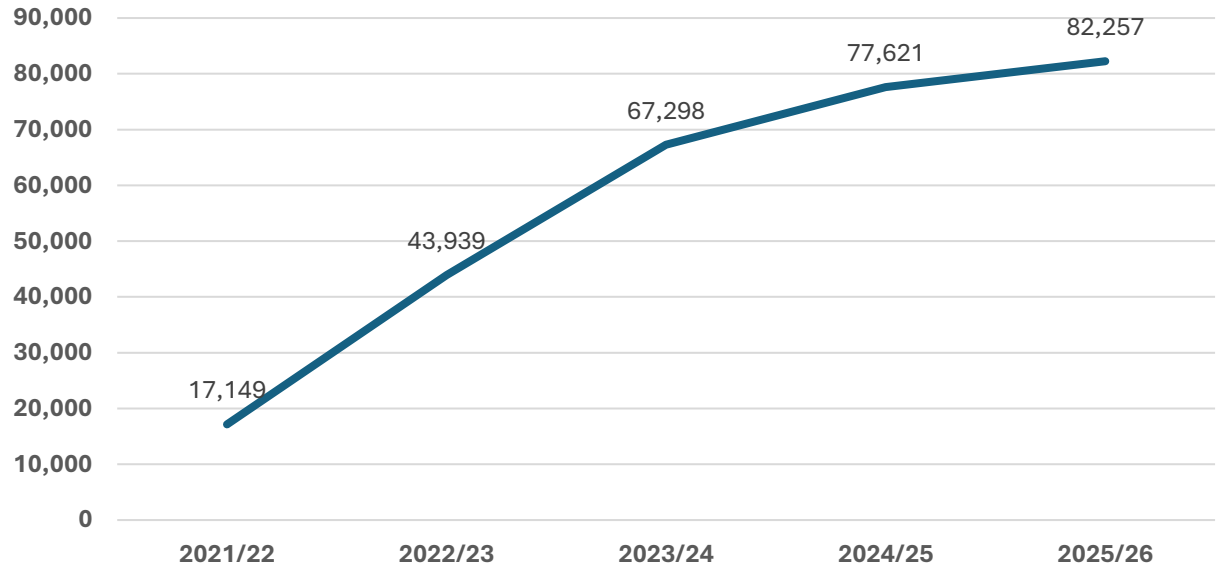


Table 9: Summary of Shropshire Libraries Usage Data

Library Activity	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	%Change 2021/22 to 2025/26	% Change 2024/25 to 2025/26
Active Library Users	28,299	33,873	34,643	33,362	33,121	17%	-0.72%
Total Loans	576,886	674,895	662,076	643,024	594,134	3%	-7.60%
Physical Loans	517,150	611,566	592,057	563,510	531,949	3%	-5.60%
E-Loans	59,736	63,329	70,019	79,514	79,514	33%	0.00%
E-Loans as a % of all loans	10%	9%	11%	12%	11%	10%	-8.33%
Public Computer User	15,215.7	25,399.2	26,339.4	21,158.5	24,170	59%	14.23%
Event Attendance	17,149	43,939	67,298	77,621	82,257	380%	5.97%

Note: excludes mobile libraries

Table 10 shows demand data by each library where data was reviewed for each activity type and ranked 1-22, where 1 indicates comparatively highest usage and 22 comparatively the lowest usage. The top 5 were Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Market Drayton and Bridgnorth. The bottom 5 were Highley, Gobowen, Craven Arms, Much Wenlock and Cleobury Mortimer.

Table 11 shows active library users by library 2021/22 to 2025/26.

Table 10: Library Demand/Usage Ranked 2025/26

Library	Rank of Active Users	Rank of Loans	Rank of Visits	Rank of Events	Rank of Computers	Overall
Shrewsbury	1	1	1	4	1	1
Oswestry	2	2	2	1	2	2
Ludlow	3	3	3	3	3	3
Market Drayton	4	4	5	2	5	4
Bridgnorth	5	5	4	5	4	5
Church Stretton	6	6	6	6	6	6
Wem	8	9	7	8	8	7
Whitchurch	7	10	13	13	0	8
The Lantern	11	7	10	9	9	9
Albrighton	12	16	11	7	7	10
Bayston Hill	9	8	12	18	11	11
Stoke Heath	10	12	16	22	0	12
Bishops Castle	13	11	9	21	10	13
Broseley	17	17	8	11	14	14
Ellesmere	14	13	19	10	13	15
Pontesbury	16	14	15	12	17	16
Shifnal	15	15	18	16	12	17
Gobowen	21	20	21	14	0	17
Highley	22	22	14	20	0	19
Much Wenlock	18	18	20	15	16	20
Cleobury Mortimer	19	21	17	17	15	21
Craven Arms	20	19	22	19	18	22

Each type of library usage was added up to a total score and then an overall rank of the score was given. 1 = the most used and 22 the least used based on these measures. Also need to take into account the population size of the location.

Table 11 – Active Library Users by Library

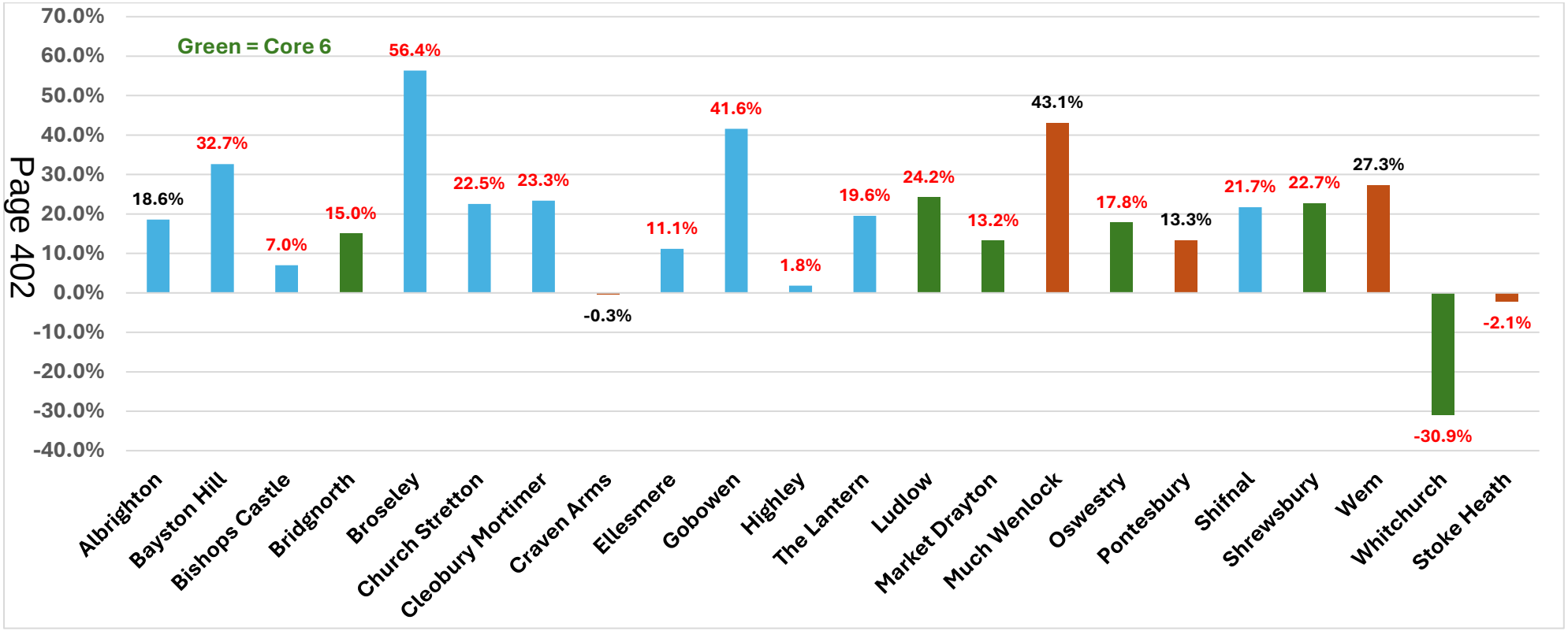
Library	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Albrighton	492	641	735	779	786	760
Bayston Hill	471	652	754	831	834	865
Bishops Castle	502	668	727	762	752	715
Bridgnorth	1,423	1,979	2,411	2528	2384	2,276
Broseley	270	385	459	572	642	602
Church Stretton	954	1,078	1,207	1140	1219	1321
Cleobury Mortimer	295	317	444	442	366	391
Craven Arms	253	344	413	353	322	343
Ellesmere	541	628	744	765	754	698
Gobowen	135	185	193	231	257	262
Highley	90	166	184	176	217	169
The Lantern	404	670	775	769	781	801
Ludlow	1,791	2,424	2,986	3280	3143	3,010
Market Drayton	1,435	2,085	2,616	2761	2466	2,361
Much Wenlock	278	404	461	488	496	578
Oswestry	2,596	3,566	4,469	4406	4355	4,201
Pontesbury	380	548	617	645	648	621
Shifnal	435	571	640	659	673	695
Shrewsbury	5,787	7,690	9,208	9496	9346	9,439
Wem	600	839	1,024	1094	1166	1,068
Whitchurch	1,340	1,603	1,857	1539	921	1,107
Stoke Heath	617	856	949	927	834	838
Total	21,089	28,299	33,873	34643	33,362	33,121

Trends in Active Library Users by Library

Chart 26 below shows percentage change in the number of active users for each library. Those indicated in green are the core six libraries of Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Bridgnorth and Whitchurch.

All libraries have seen an increase in active users except Whitchurch (had been closed for a period) and Stoke Heath (Young Offenders) had a small decline. The largest increases in Broseley, Gobowen, Much Wenlock and Bayston Hill.

Chart 26: Library Active Users Percentage Change Five Years



5 years change all libraries up 17%

Mobile Libraries

There are three mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council covering 232 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. Map of routes. The number of active borrowers was 1,110 in 2025/26. See appendix for list of mobile library stops.

The number of active library users (Chart 27) for mobile libraries has declined from 1,227 in 2021/22 to 1,110 in 2025/26. This is a decline of -117 (-9.5%). The number of users of mobile libraries was stable at just over 1,200 users in the immediate post-pandemic period but has been in gradual decline since 2023/24.

The number of visits to mobile libraries (Chart 28) was at an unprecedently low level in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recovery was strong in 2022/23 and 2023/24 but has since tailed off, with around 2,500 fewer visits in 2025/26 than in the preceding year.

In terms of the number of loans (Chart 29) there has been a decline of 7,529 (-12%) from 60,298 in 2021/22 to 53,039 in 2025/26.

Chart 27: Number of Active Library Users 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)

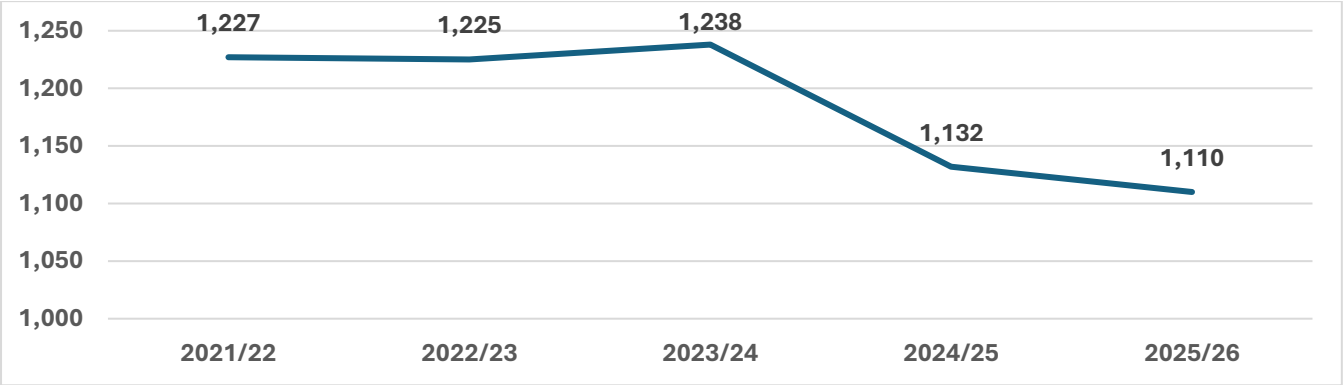


Chart 28: Number of Visits to Mobile Libraries 2021/22 to 2025/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)

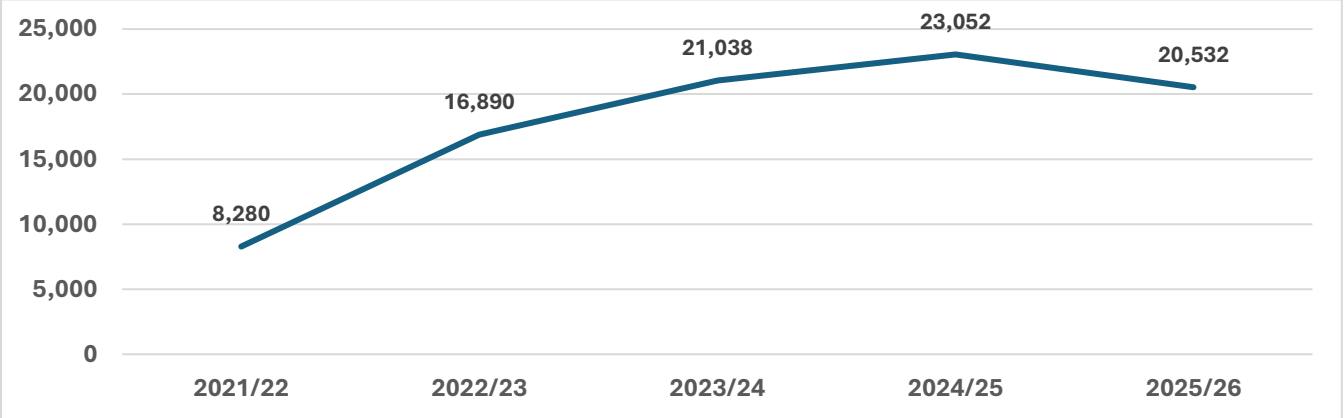
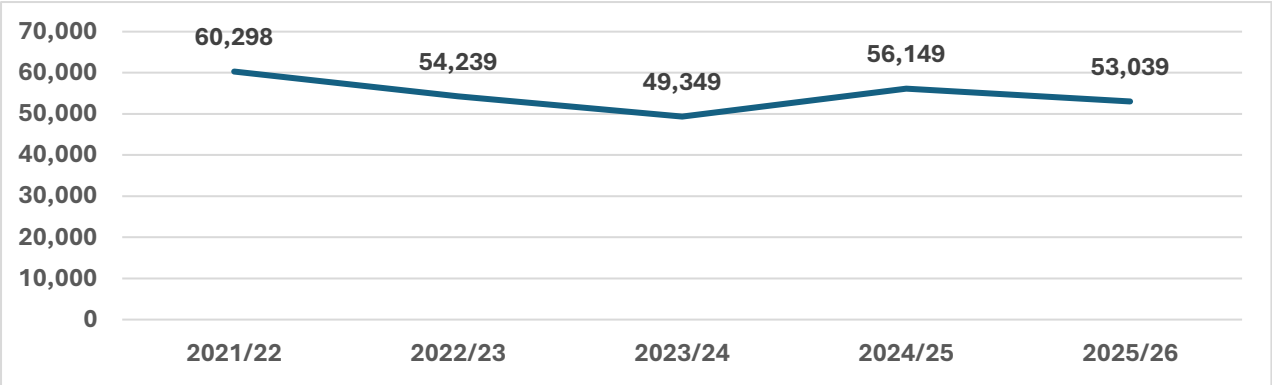


Chart 29: Number of Loans Mobile Libraries 2021/22 to 205/26 (Year-end April, Mobile Libraries)

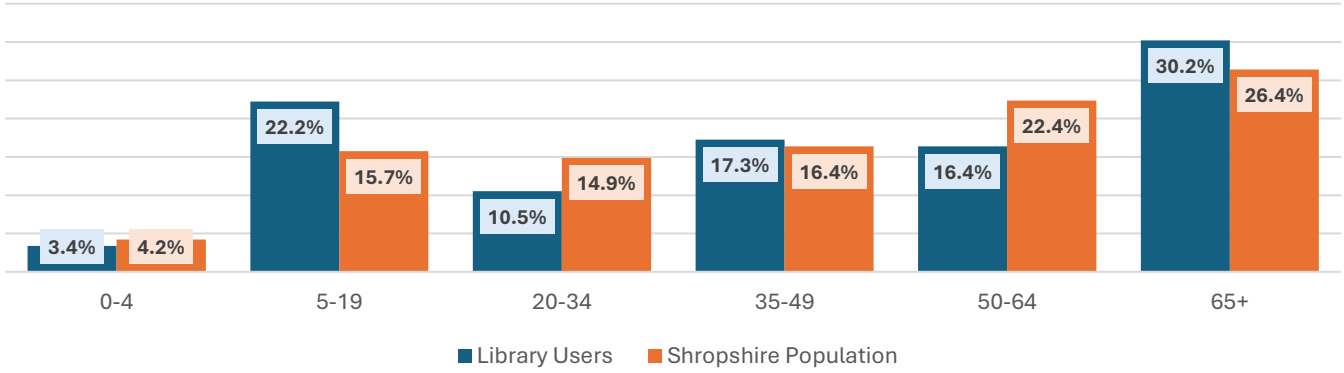


Profile of Shropshire Library Users

Age and Gender

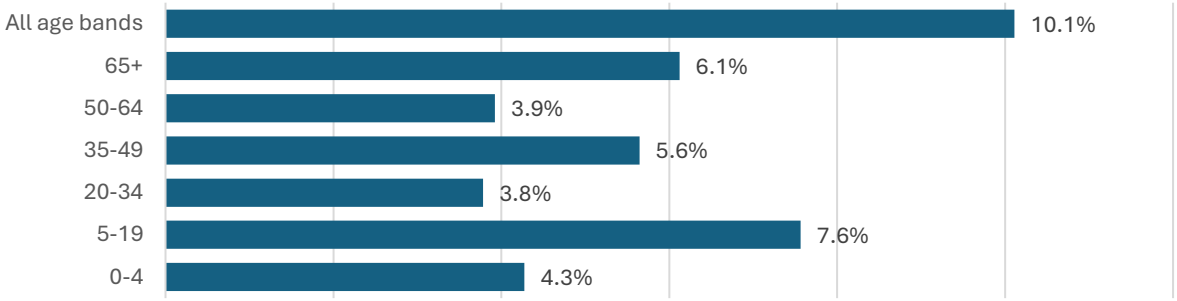
The Shropshire library user base is primarily female, with women accounting for 65% of all users (active users 2024/25). In comparison, just over half (50.7%) of the Shropshire population is female (ONS Mid-Year estimates, 2024). The age profile of library users (for whom the age is known) is also slightly different to the base population, with a much higher representation of children and young adults. People under the age of 20 account for 25.6% of library users but represent less than a fifth of the Shropshire population. The use of libraries by younger people demonstrates libraries do still have an appeal to the younger population. The proportion attributable to over 65's is also higher than the Shropshire average (30.2% of library users against 26.4% of the population). Consequently, the 20-64 age band is under-represented, accounting for 44.2% of library users (53.6% of the Shropshire population).

Chart 30: Age Profile of Shropshire Library Users



Just over a tenth of the Shropshire population is an active library user. As shown in the chart below, the usage rate is highest for those aged 5-19 and much lower than average for those aged 20-34 and 50-64.

Chart 31: Library Users as Proportion of Population by Age



Note: Overall usage rate includes library users for whom the age band is not known. Also includes Shropshire library users resident outside of Shropshire

Concessionary Users

Almost 3,500 active users of the Shropshire library service have concessionary membership. This equates with 10.4% of all library users. Concessionary membership can be usefully used as a proxy for members who have a disability. According to the 2021 Census, 59,990 Shropshire residents are registered as disabled under the terms of the Equality Act. This translates into a user rate of 6% of the disabled population and suggests that the cohort is under-represented given an overall user rate across the population of over 10%. However, it should be noted that users with a disability may use the library services under standard membership.

Access to Library Services

Shropshire's 21 static libraries (excluding Stoke Heath) are spread across the county, with at least one per place plan area[3]. This means that most people are within relatively straightforward access by car of at least one library.

More than three-quarters of Shropshire's population (77%) live within a 10-minute drive of at least one library. Currently, just 1% of the population have to travel further than 25 minutes by car to access library services.

Access to the main six libraries is also achievable for most people within 25 minutes' drive, although 9% of the population (29,746 people) live outside this catchment. 21% live outside a 20-minute drive of a main library, which is the equivalent of 68,654 people. Just over half of the population live within a 10-minute car journey of one of the main six libraries.

Table 12: Proportion of Shropshire Population within Drive Times of Libraries

	All Libraries		Main Libraries*	
	Number	% of Population	Number	% of Population
Within 10 minutes	256,789	77%	174,151	52%
Within 15 minutes	290,611	87%	213,052	64%
Within 20 minutes	317,019	95%	263,846	79%
Within 25 minutes	329,153	99%	302,754	91%

Note: *Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch

The following table shows the proportion of active library users for each library which lives within certain walk and drive times.

Across all library users, almost a third live within a 15-minute walk of the library for which they are registered. This proportion rises to over half if the length of the walk is doubled to half an hour. Libraries where a particularly high proportion of users live very locally include Albrighton, Bayston Hill, Broseley, Cleobury Mortimer, Gobowen, Highley and Shifnal. In contrast, users of the main six libraries are much less likely to live within a 15-minute walk which reflects the much larger catchments that these libraries represent.

93.6% of all library users live within a 25-minute drive of the library that they use. This proportion exceeds 90% in all libraries except Ludlow which attracts relatively high numbers of users from its rural hinterland and from across the border in Herefordshire. Given that 99% of the Shropshire population live within a 25-minute drive of their closest library (see Table 10 above), it is clear that some library users are not registered with their closest facility.

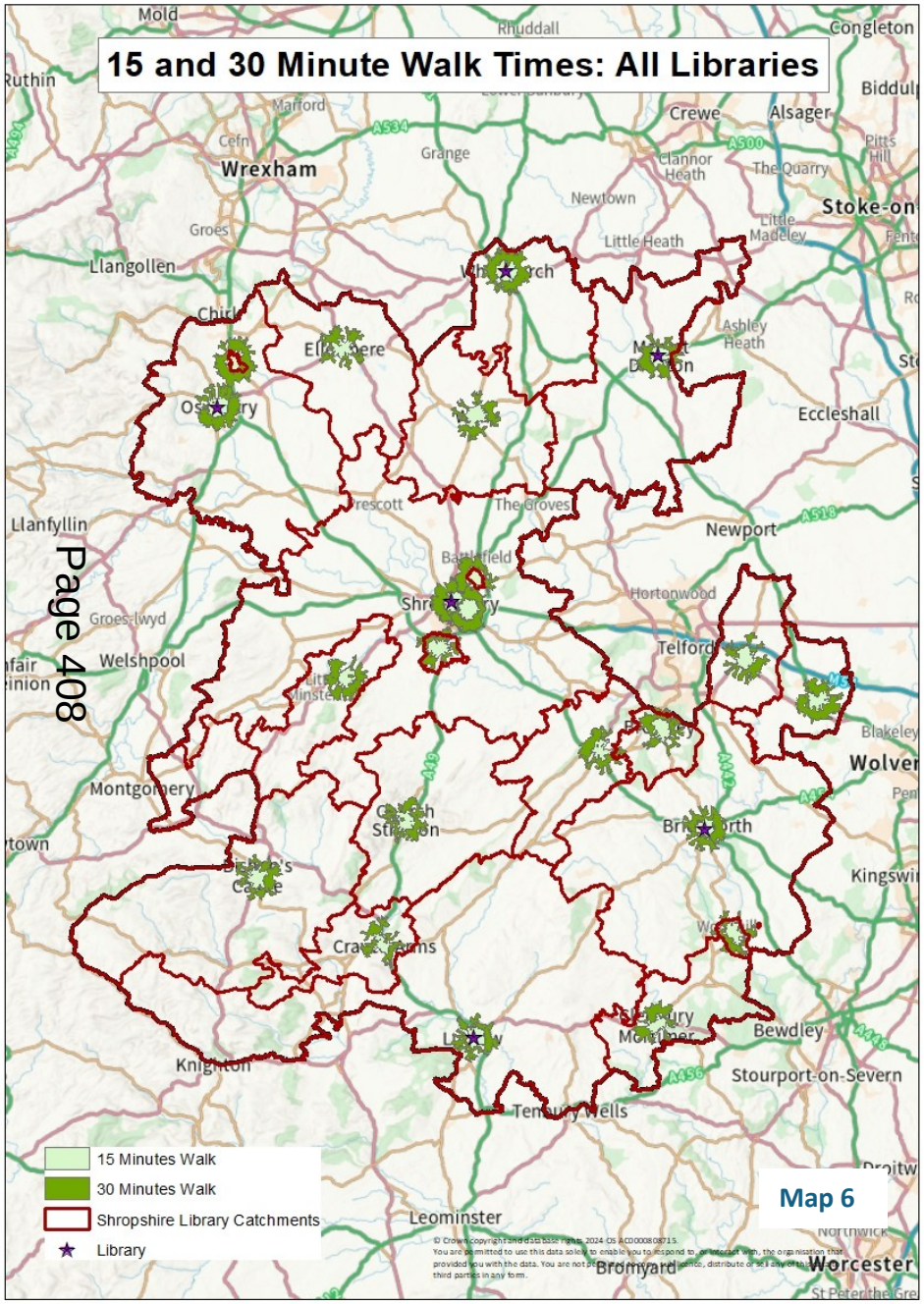
[3] Shropshire is divided into 18 Place Plan areas for planning policy purposes. These are areas of varying size, served by a main town and with a rural hinterland.

Table 13: Proportion of Active Library Users within Walk and Drive Times by Library

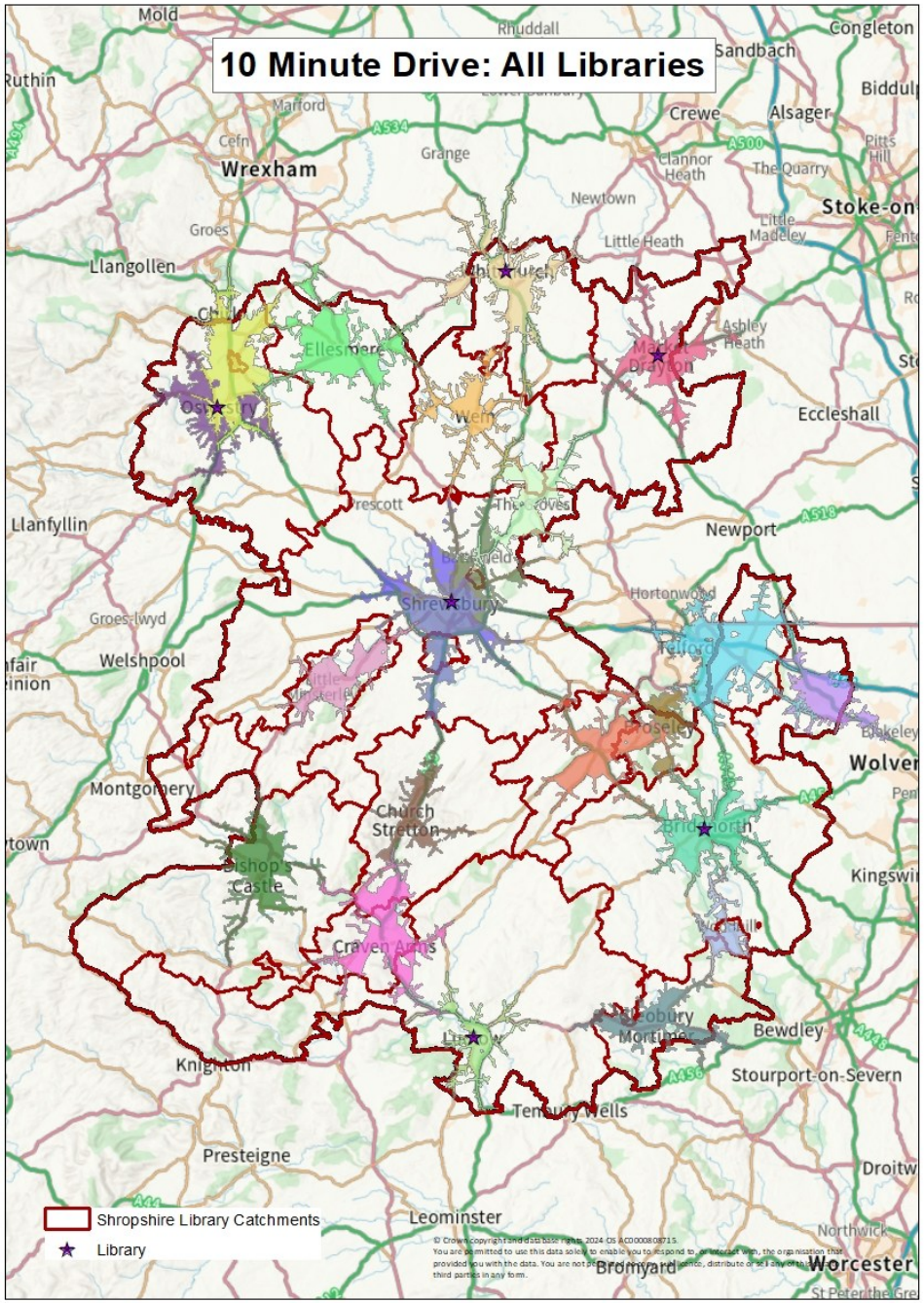
	% within 15 minute walk	% within 30 minute walk	% within 10 minute drive	% within 15 minute drive	% within 20 minute drive	% within 25 minute drive
Albrighton	66.6%	79.8%	84.0%	89.6%	95.0%	97.4%
Bayston Hill	57.7%	63.0%	87.1%	93.3%	96.1%	97.1%
Bishop's Castle	38.5%	42.4%	55.2%	72.4%	86.7%	93.6%
Bridgnorth	28.1%	60.3%	68.8%	77.6%	88.2%	92.0%
Broseley	69.0%	84.1%	90.0%	92.5%	96.3%	97.6%
Church Stretton	49.1%	65.6%	76.7%	85.7%	90.9%	94.8%
Cleobury Mortimer	66.9%	68.7%	79.8%	89.4%	93.4%	98.0%
Craven Arms	28.8%	38.6%	54.2%	70.9%	81.8%	91.4%
Ellesmere	52.5%	58.7%	83.4%	92.7%	95.8%	97.2%
Gobowen	66.2%	69.9%	91.4%	94.7%	96.2%	97.0%
Highley	72.7%	84.5%	86.3%	89.4%	91.3%	93.8%
Library at the Lantern	37.5%	55.4%	83.1%	91.2%	93.4%	96.8%
Ludlow	33.1%	55.0%	56.5%	71.8%	82.0%	89.2%
Market Drayton	29.9%	55.9%	66.6%	82.9%	91.4%	95.8%
Much Wenlock	48.6%	54.3%	71.4%	85.1%	92.2%	96.1%
Oswestry	23.9%	43.0%	59.0%	78.7%	88.2%	93.1%
Pontesbury	34.6%	42.3%	70.6%	85.3%	95.7%	97.5%
Shifnal	68.9%	83.8%	89.8%	94.6%	97.5%	98.5%
Shrewsbury	10.5%	38.8%	75.9%	81.2%	87.8%	92.2%
Wem	54.8%	59.0%	69.0%	85.1%	91.6%	96.0%
Whitchurch	40.2%	54.7%	68.4%	82.8%	90.7%	94.3%
All Users	31.1%	51.6%	71.2%	81.9%	89.4%	93.6%

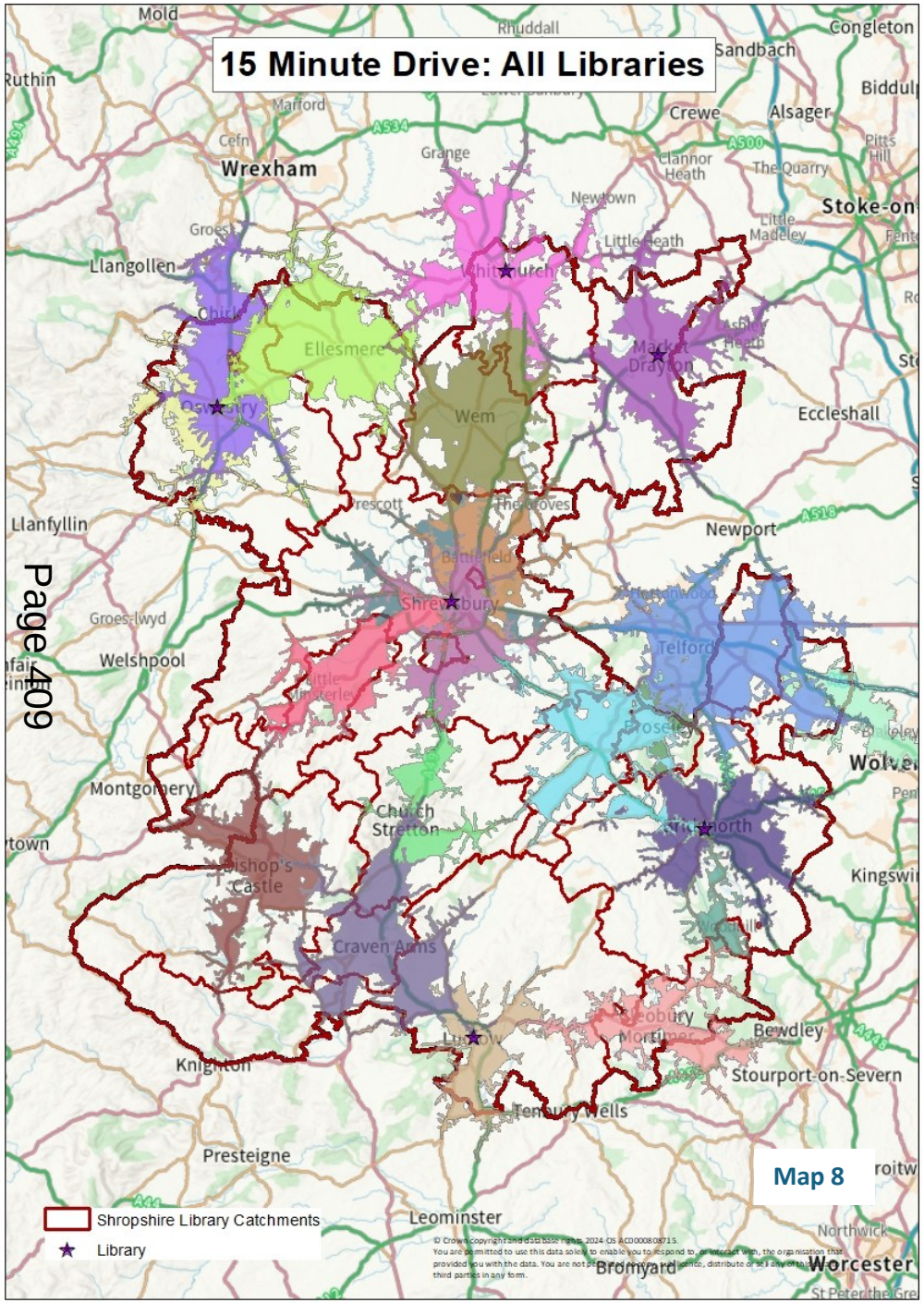
Note: Walk and drive times refer to the library to which each user is registered. They may live closer to alternative library provision.

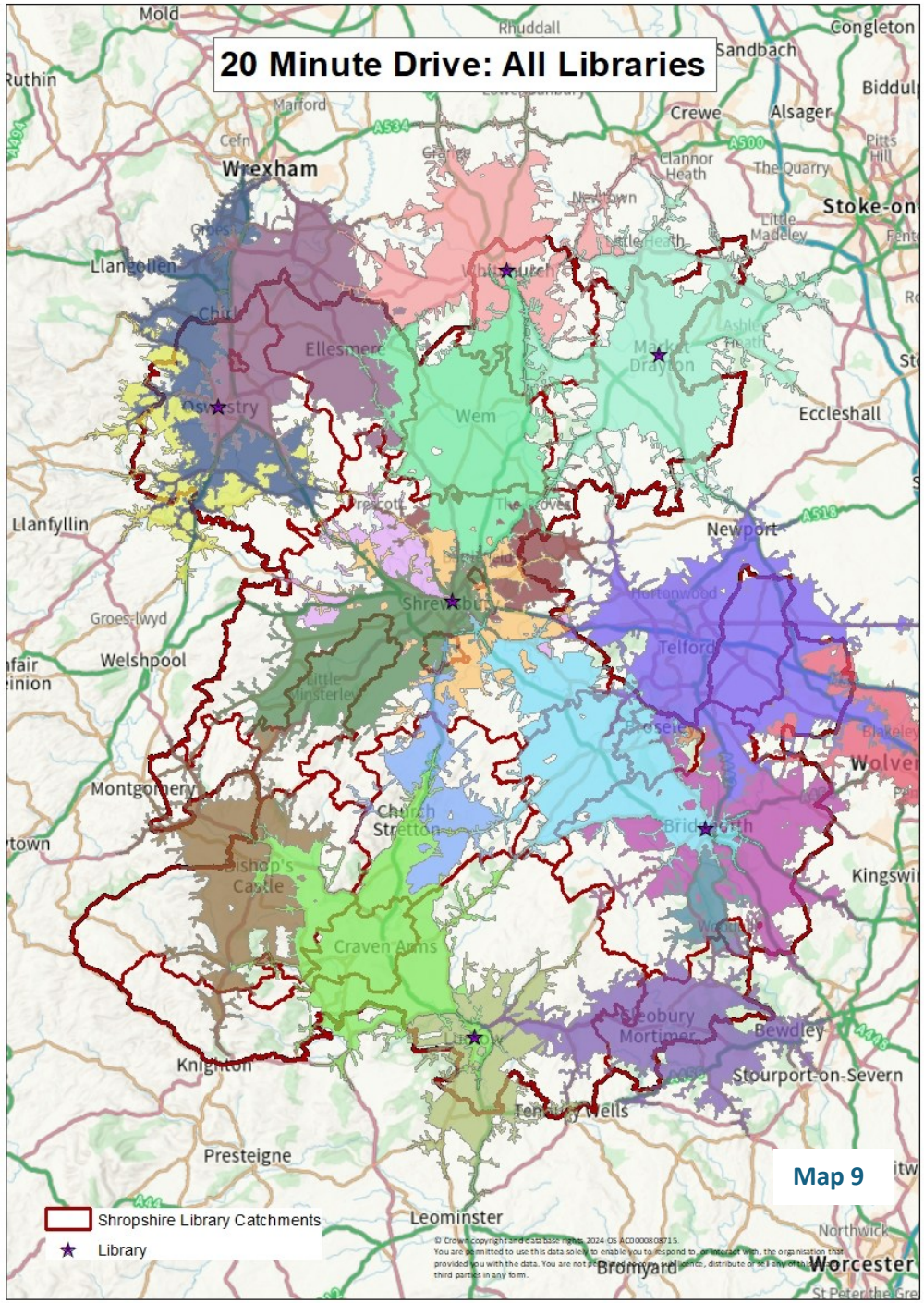
Th following maps show walk and drive times for all of Shropshire's 21 static libraries.

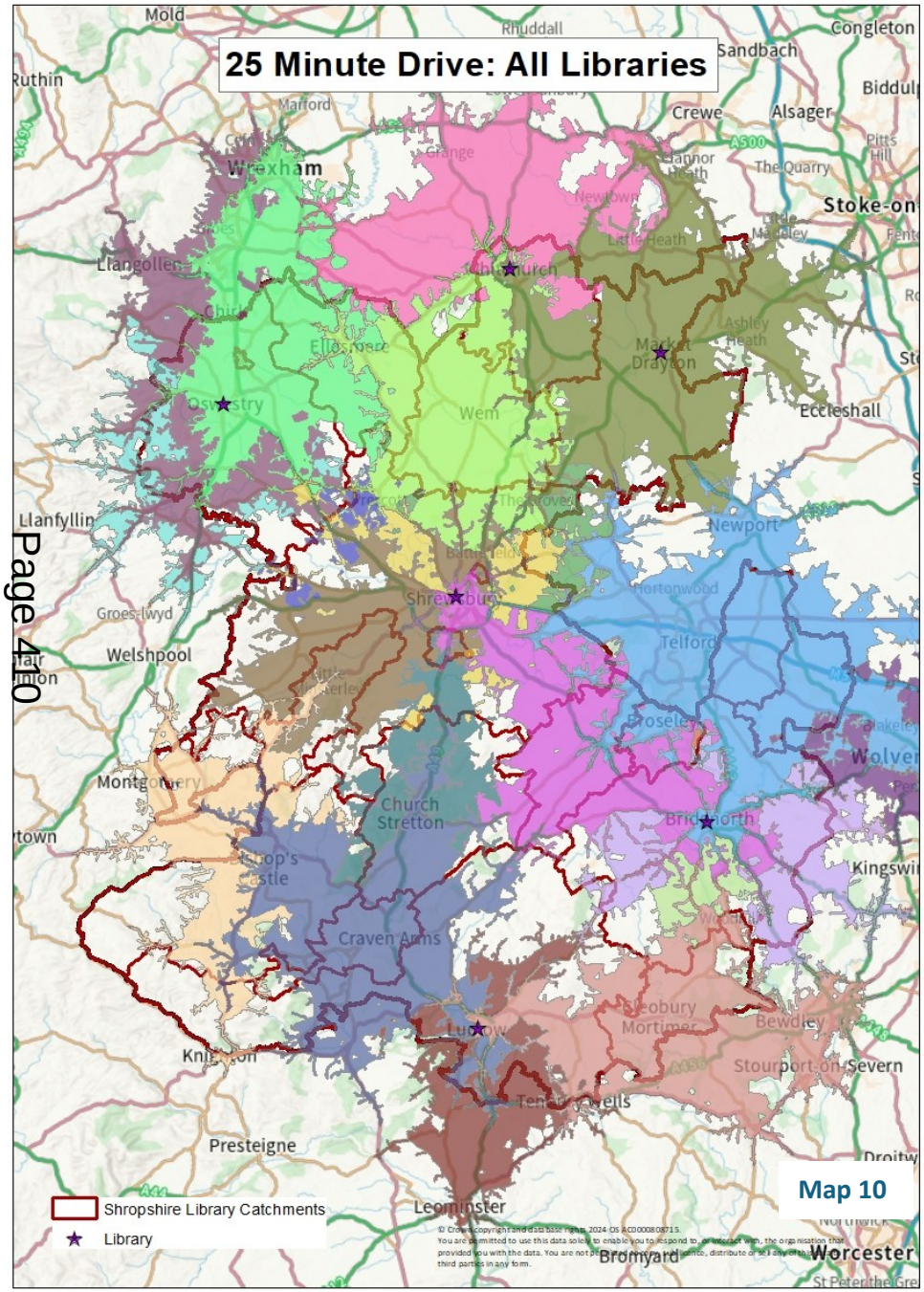

15 and 30 Minute Walk Times: All Libraries
Wrexham
Llangollen
Oswestry
Ellesmere
Eccleshall
Newport
Shrewsbury
Telford
Welshpool
Montgomery
Bridgnorth
Craven Arms
Ludlow
Bewdley
Stourport-on-Severn
Tenbury Wells
Knighton
Leominster
Bromyard
Worcester
Kingswinford
Wolverhampton
Stoke-on-Trent
Crewe
Congleton
15 Minutes Walk
30 Minutes Walk
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library

Map 6


10 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Wrexham
Llangollen
Oswestry
Ellesmere
Eccleshall
Newport
Shrewsbury
Telford
Welshpool
Montgomery
Bridgnorth
Craven Arms
Ludlow
Bewdley
Stourport-on-Severn
Tenbury Wells
Knighton
Presteigne
Leominster
Bromyard
Worcester
Kingswinford
Wolverhampton
Stoke-on-Trent
Crewe
Congleton
Sandbach
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library


15 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library
Map 8


20 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library
Map 9


25 Minute Drive: All Libraries
Shropshire Library Catchments
Library
Map 10

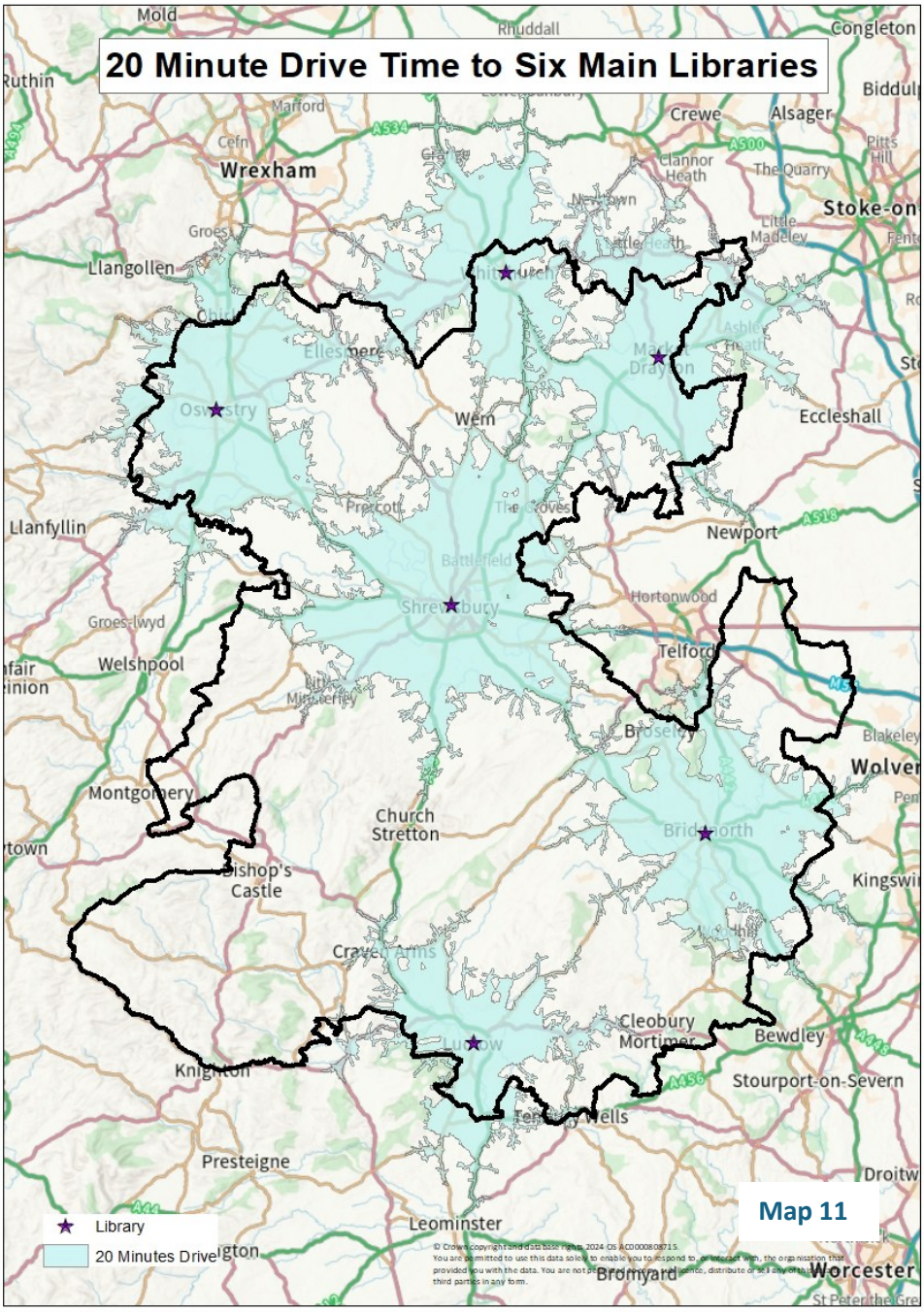
Currently, 98% of library users live within a 25-minute drive of their closest library (which is not necessarily the library to which they are registered). Almost three-quarters live within a 10-minute drive. The time required to travel to one of the main libraries is much longer. 48% of current users (of all libraries) need to travel for more than 10 minutes to access one of the main libraries while one in ten lives more than a 25-minute drive away.

Table 14: Library Users: Travel Times to Closest Library

	All Libraries		Main Libraries	
	Number	% of Library Users	Number	% of Library Users
More than 10 minutes	7,748	23%	15,979	48%
More than 15 minutes	3,806	11%	11,853	35%
More than 20 minutes	1,475	4%	7,353	22%
More than 25 minutes	550	2%	3,310	10%

Note: Includes only library users for whom a valid postcode is held

The map below shows the areas of Shropshire which are within a 20-minute drive of one of the main six libraries.



The table below shows the closest alternative library to the 15 smaller Shropshire libraries and the closest main library, with associated travel times.

Table 15: Alternative Library Provision

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Albrighton	Shifnal	5.6 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth Shrewsbury	11.2 miles 24.0 miles	22 mins 32 mins	Train to Shifnal, 114 bus to Bridgnorth Train to Shrewsbury	1.5-2 hours 50 minutes
Bayston Hill	Shrewsbury	4.2 miles	13 mins	Shrewsbury	4.2 miles	13 mins	27 Bus	20-30 mins
Bishop's Castle	Craven Arms	11.1 miles	22 mins	Ludlow Shrewsbury	18 miles 22 miles	31 mins 41 mins	553 bus to Shrewsbury, train to Ludlow 553 bus	2-3 hours 1 hour
Broseley	Much Wenlock	4.5 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	6.4 miles	12 mins	8 Bus to Bridgnorth	20 mins
Church Stretton	Craven Arms	7.8 miles	13 mins	Ludlow	15.5 Miles	25 mins	Train 435 bus to Ludlow	15 mins 45 mins
Cleobury Mortimer	Highley	8.6 miles	16 mins	Ludlow	11.7 miles	22 mins	292 bus	25 mins
Craven Arms	Ludlow	7.9 miles	13 mins	Ludlow	7.9 miles	13 mins	435 bus to Ludlow Train	20 mins 10 mins
Ellesmere	Gobowen	7.5 miles	13 mins	Oswestry	8.2 miles	17 mins	53 bus to Oswestry	39 mins
Gobowen	Oswestry	3 miles	8 mins	Oswestry	3 miles	8 mins	T12 bus	20-25 mins
Highley	Bridgnorth	7.4 miles	14 mins	Bridgnorth	7.4 miles	14 mins	125 bus to Bridgnorth	25 mins
Library at The Lantern	Shrewsbury	2.1 miles	8 mins	Shrewsbury	2.1 miles	8 mins	24 or 511 bus	20-25 mins
Much Wenlock	Broseley	4.5 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	8.1 miles	14 mins	436 bus	35 mins
Pontesbury	Bayston Hill	8.1 miles	14 mins	Shrewsbury	8.1 miles	19 mins	552 or 553 Bus	33 ins
Shifnal	Albrighton	5.6 mins	10 mins	Bridgnorth	11.7 miles	20 mins	114 bus to Bridgnorth	1 hr
Wem	Whitchurch	9 miles	18 mins	Whitchurch	9 miles	18 mins	Train to Whitchurch or 512 bus	12 mins (train) 35-45 mins (bus)

Note: Drive time calculations using AA route planner. Public transport sourced from www.travelline.info

Shropshire Library Costs

Chart 32 shows annual running costs attributable to Shropshire Council per library; the larger libraries had larger annual costs. Shrewsbury Library had the highest costs at £507,370 followed by Ludlow and Oswestry. The lowest costs were Craven Arms, Albrighton, Shifnal and Broseley. The total cost for all static libraries was £2,624,370. The average cost was £120,277. Annual running costs are influenced by the size of the library and often the building it is located in as well as the role Shropshire Council plays in its operation.

Chart 32: Annual Costs per Library 2025/26 (Annual Budget)

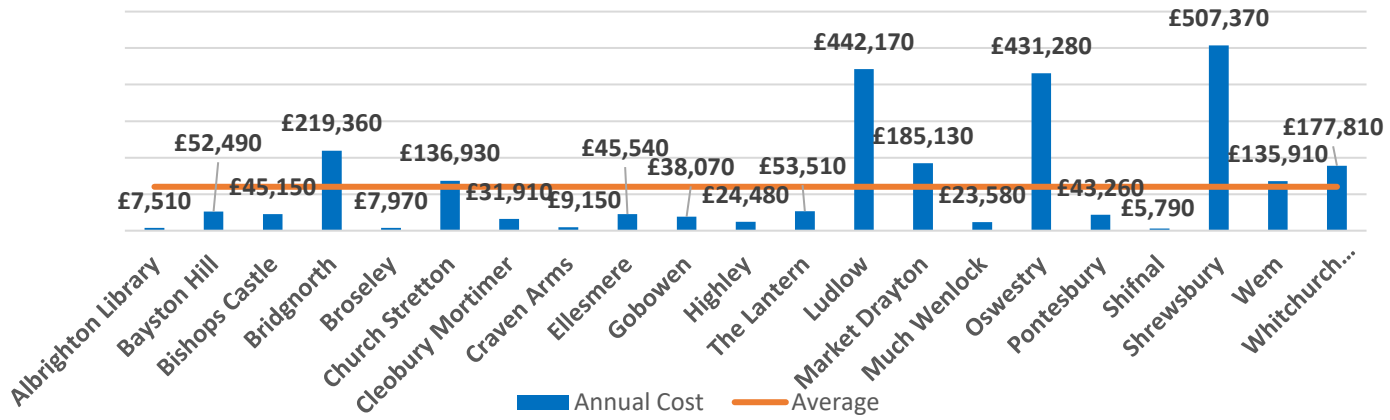


Chart 33 shows Ludlow Library had the highest cost per opening hour followed by Shrewsbury and Oswestry libraries. Craven Arms, Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley had the lowest cost. The average cost for all libraries was £73.12 per opening hour.

Chart 33: Cost Per Opening Hour 2025/26

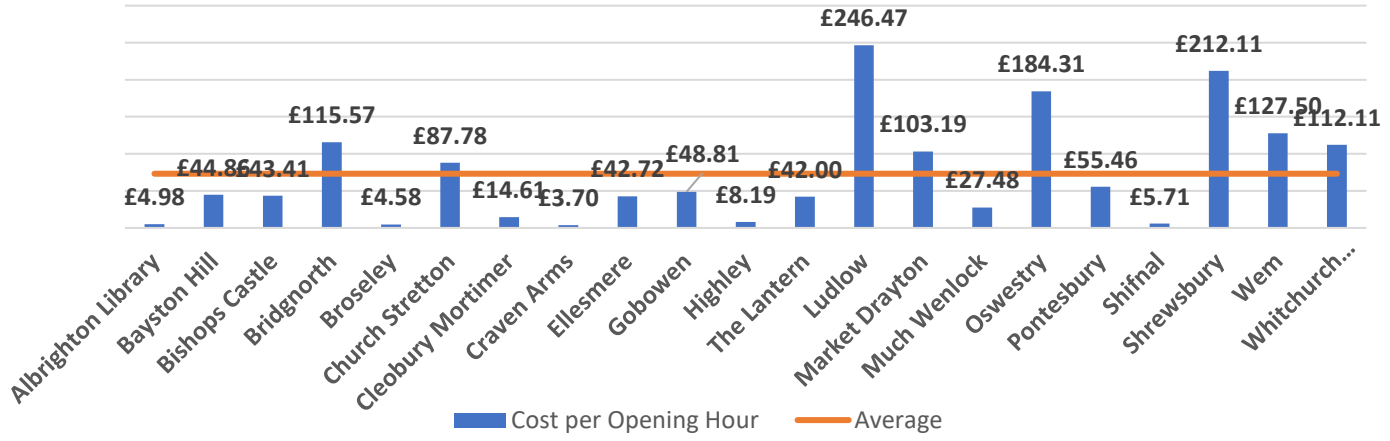


Chart 34 shows Whitchurch Library had the highest cost per active borrower (this library has been closed therefore this has altered these figures). Ludlow Library had the second highest cost per active library user followed by Gobowen and Highley libraries. The lowest cost libraries were Craven Arms, Shifnal and Broseley. The average cost per active user was £79.33.

Chart 34: Cost per Active Library Borrower 2025/26

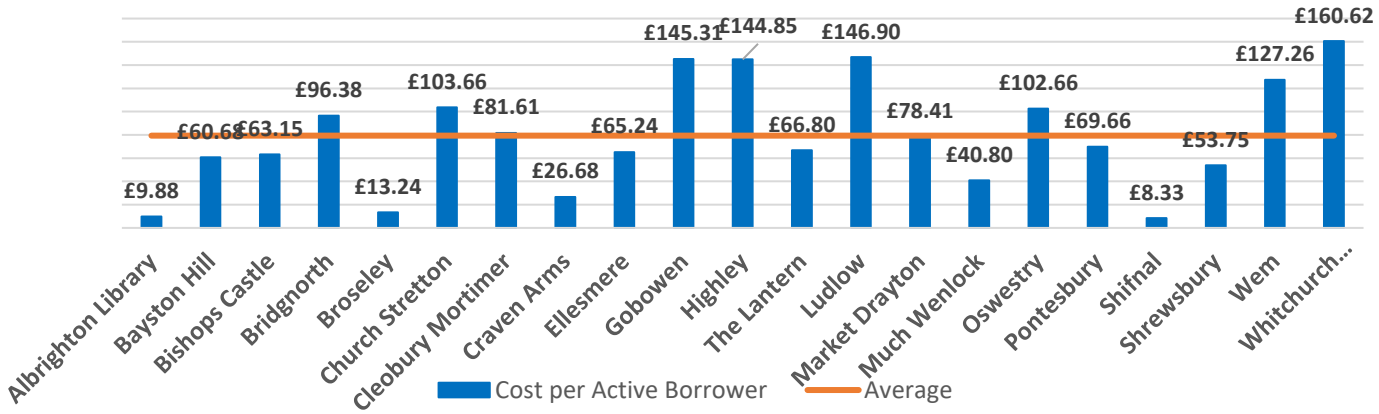


Chart 35 shows Highley had the highest cost per book loan followed by Whitchurch (this library has been closed for a period of time), Ludlow and Cleobury Mortimer. Craven Arms, Broseley. Albrighton and Shifnal libraries had the lowest costs per book loan. The average cost was £4.70.

Chart 35: Cost per Book Loan 2025/26

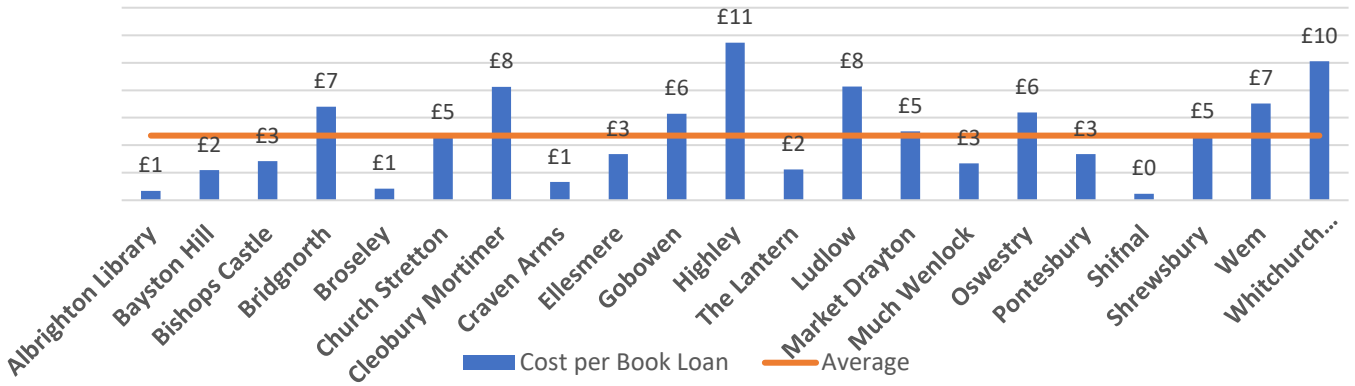


Chart 36 shows Whitchurch had the highest cost per individual footfall at £14.13 followed by Gobowen (£9.21) and Gobowen (8.47) compared to an average for all libraries of £4.13. Craven Arms, Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley had the lowest cost per individual footfall.

Chart 36: Cost Per Individual Walk in Footfall 2025/26

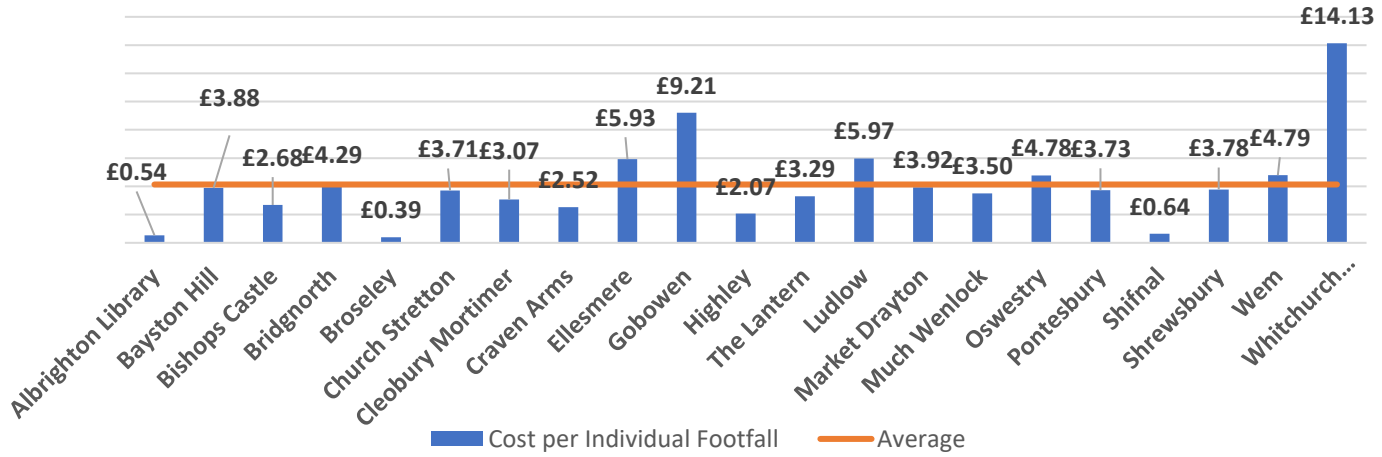


Table 16: Library Costs Ranked 2025/26

Library	Cost Per Opening Hour Rank	Cost per Active Borrower Rank	Cost per Individual Walk In (footfall) Rank	Cost Per Book Loan Rank	Overall Rank
Shifnal Library	18	21	19	21	1
Albrighton Library	19	20	20	20	1
Broseley Library	20	19	21	19	1
Craven Arms Library	21	18	17	18	2
Much Wenlock Library	15	17	13	15	3
Bishop's Castle Library	12	14	16	14	4
Library at the Lantern	14	12	14	16	5
Bayston Hill Library	11	15	9	17	6
Pontesbury Library	9	11	11	13	7
Cleobury Mortimer Library	16	9	15	4	8
Ellesmere Library	13	13	4	12	9
Highley Library	17	4	18	1	10
Shrewsbury Library	2	16	10	10	11
Church Stretton Library	8	6	12	11	12
Market Drayton Library	7	10	8	9	13
Bridgnorth Library	5	8	7	6	14
Oswestry Library	3	7	6	7	15
Gobowen Library	10	3	2	8	16
Wem Library	4	5	5	5	17
Whitchurch Library	6	1	1	2	18
Ludlow Library	1	2	3	3	19

Each rank of cost was added up to a total score and then an overall rank of the score was given. 1 = the least expensive and 22 (19 in practice as three libraries were rank 1 with same score) the most expensive based on these measures. Shifnal, Albrighton and Broseley had the same total score so were ordered in cost per opening hour order in the table. Excludes Stoke Heath and Mobile Libraries.

Ludlow Library was the most expensive library with the highest overall score, followed by Whitchurch, Wem and Gobowen. Highley was ranked one of the most expensive in terms of cost per loan and cost per active borrower but one of the least expensive for cost per opening hour and cost per individual walk in.

Library Running Cost versus Library Users

The bubble matrix below shows how library total running costs per library compare with the total number of active users in 2025/26.

Chart 37 – Users by Running Cost Smaller Libraries

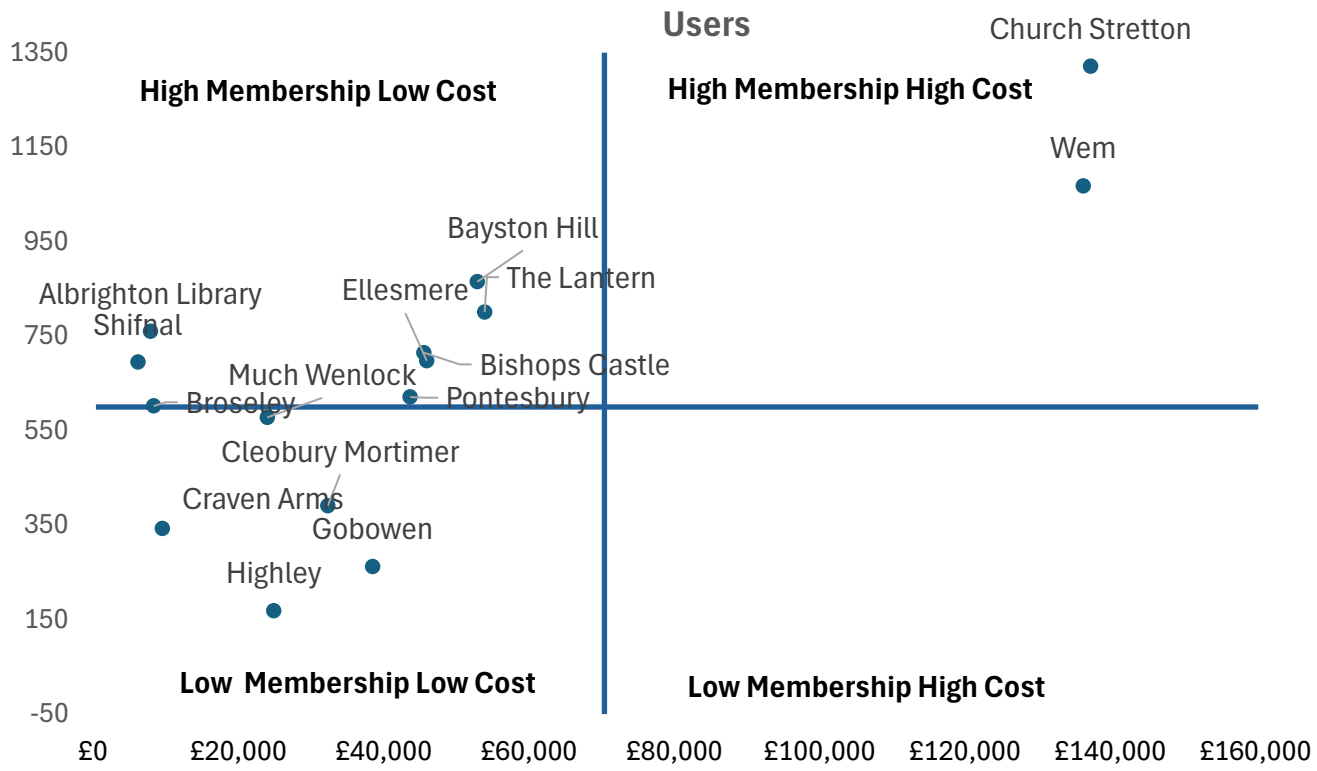


Chart 38 – Users by Running Cost Main Libraries

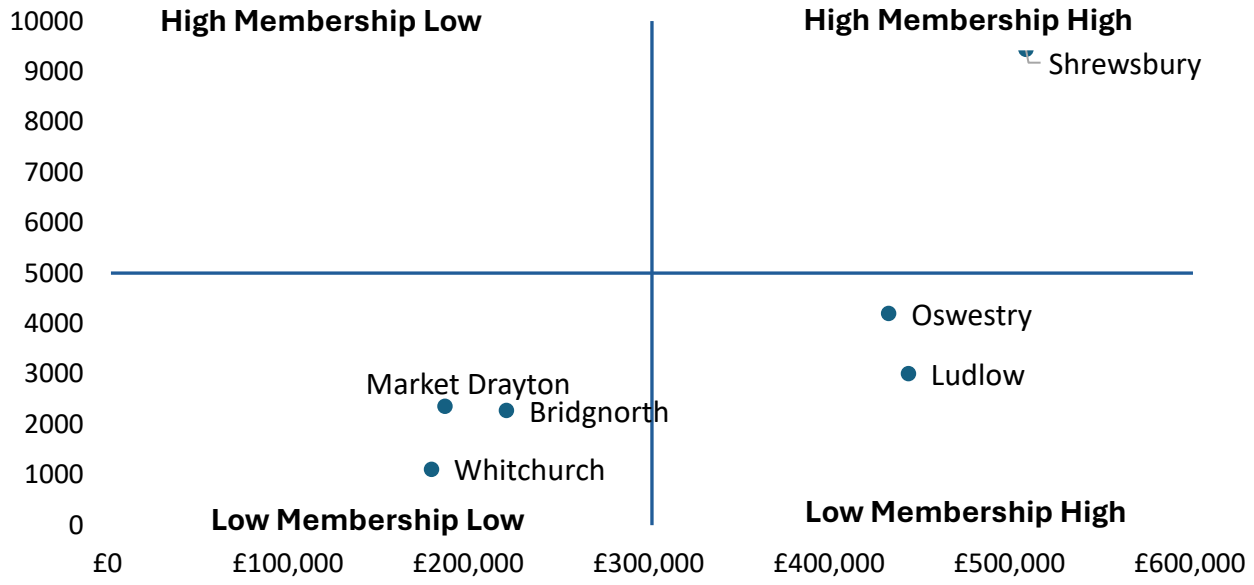


Table 17: Library Opening Hours 2024/25

Library	Opening Hours Per Week	Opening Hours Per Annum
Albrighton Library	29	1508
Bayston Hill	22.5	1170
Bishops Castle	20	1040
Bridgnorth	36.5	1898
Broseley	33.5	1742
Church Stretton	30	1560
Cleobury Mortimer	42	2184
Craven Arms	47.5	2470
Ellesmere	20.5	1066
Gobowen	15	780
Highley	57.5	2990
The Lantern	24.5	1274
Ludlow	34.5	1794
Market Drayton	34.5	1794
Much Wenlock	16.5	858
Oswestry	45	2340
Pontesbury	15	780
Shifnal	19.5	1014
Shrewsbury	46	2392
Wem	20.5	1066
Whitchurch	30.5	1586
HMP Stoke Heath prison	60.5	3,146

Mobile Libraries

There are three mobile libraries run by Shropshire Council covering 232 stops ranging from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours on a fortnightly rota. Map of routes. The number of active borrowers was 1,110 in 2025/26.

The cost to run mobile libraries is relatively high compared to the average for all static libraries. It is also relatively high in relation to the number of active borrowers. The cost of running three mobile libraries is similar to the cost of running a library in one of the large market towns.

However, the mobile libraries do provide a valuable service to rural communities and for people who find accessing static libraries more difficult.

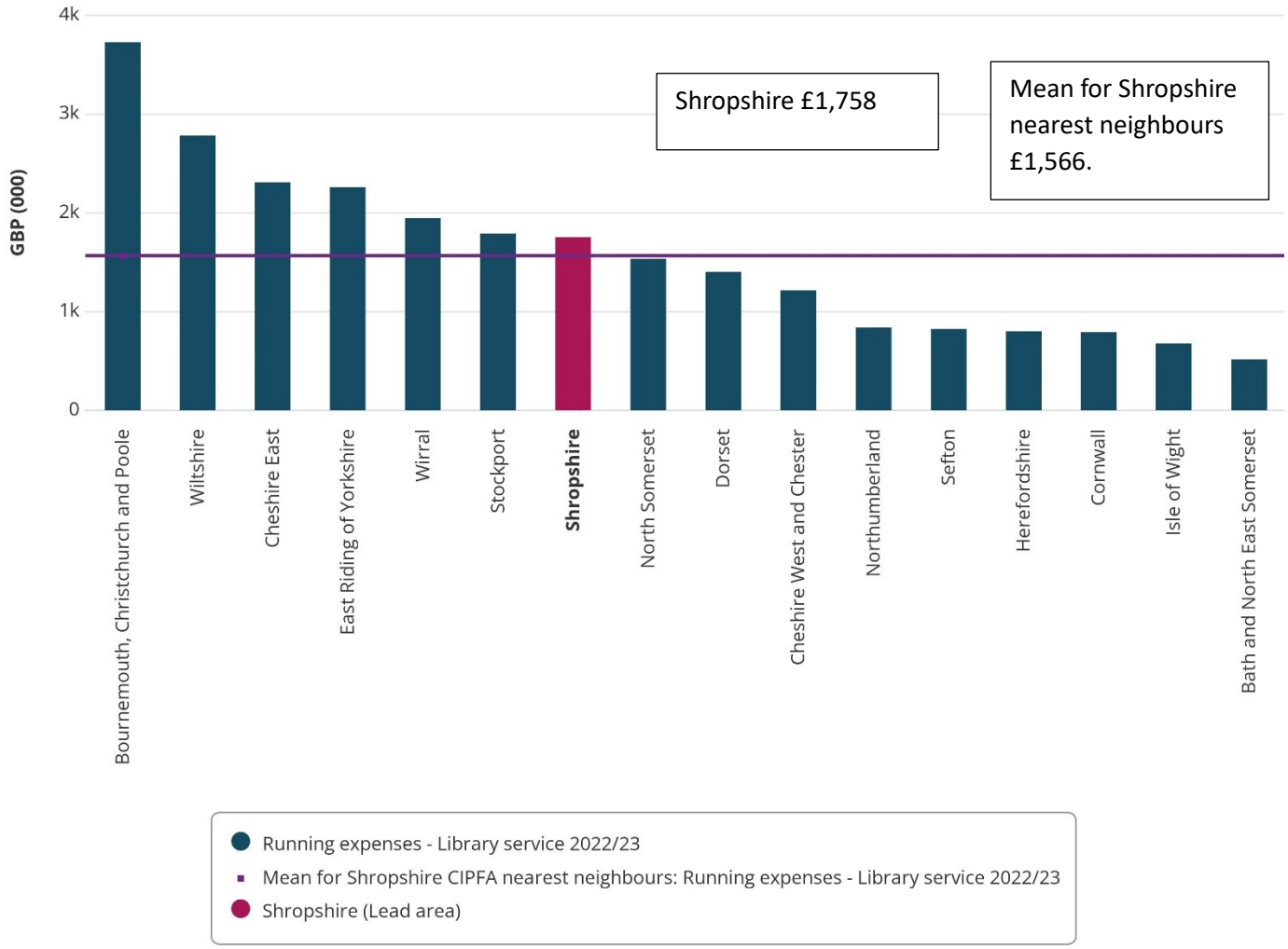
The mobile libraries are open for 46.75 hours per week and 2,431 hours per annum. However additional time and costs are involved in drive times and vehicle maintenance.

Table 18: Mobile Library Costs, 2023/24

Mobile Libraries	Annual Budget	Cost per Hour Opening	Cost per Active Borrower	Cost per Individual Walk in (Footfall)	Cost per book loan
Mobile Libraries	£211,540	£87.02	£191	£10.30	£4.00
Shropshire Static Library Average	£120,277	£78.80	£81.0	£4.23	£5.0

Costs Compared to CIPFA Nearest Neighbours

Chart 39: Library Running Costs (£ millions) 2022/23 compared with CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Powered by LG Inform

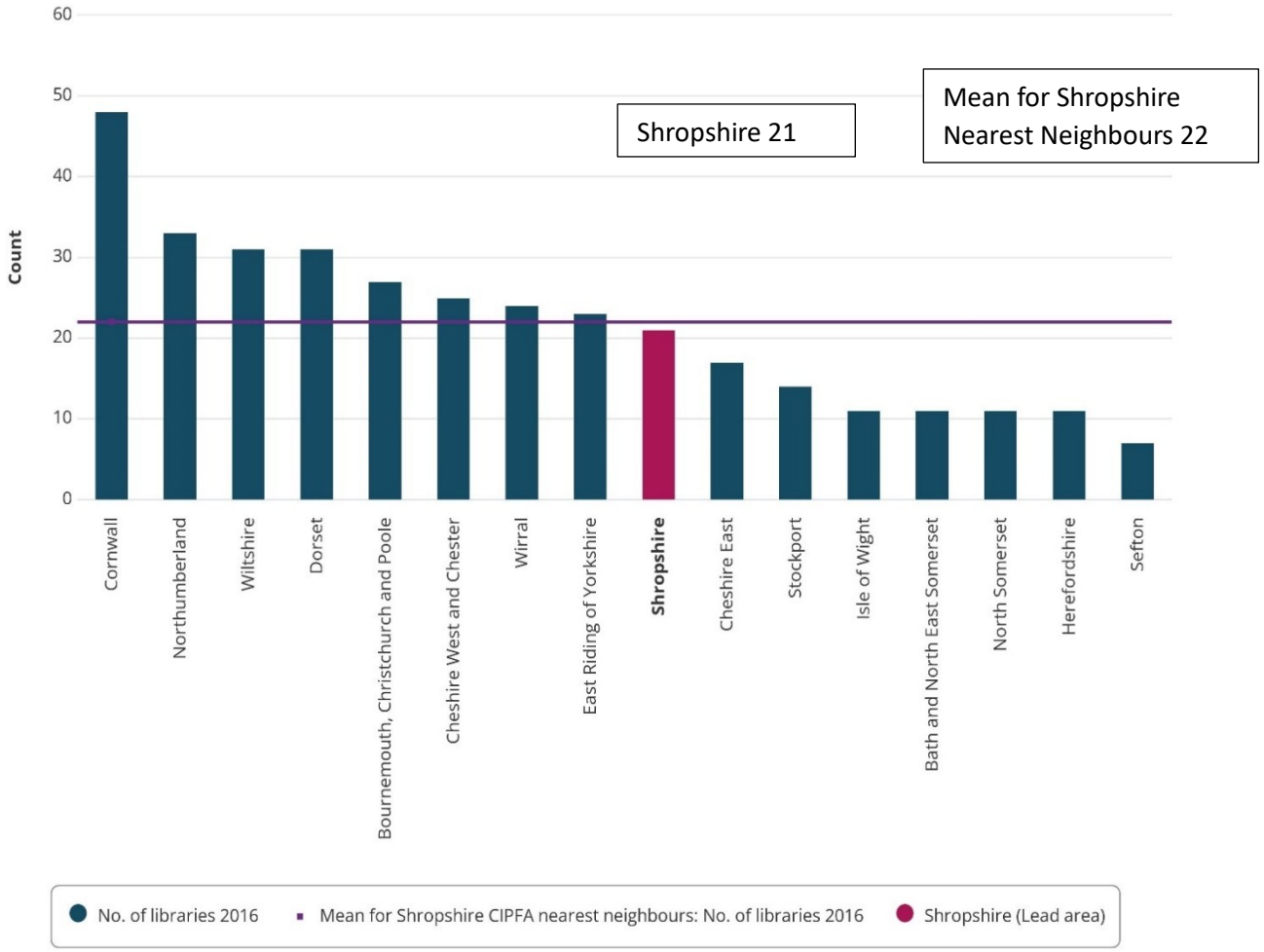
Annual Cost. Running expenses exclude employee costs.

Library Data Comparison (CIPFA)

The following data has been extracted from LG Inform and uses CIPFA nearest neighbour as a comparator.

Chart 40 shows Shropshire had only slightly fewer libraries compared to the mean number for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours in 2016.

Chart 40: Library Count (2016) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours

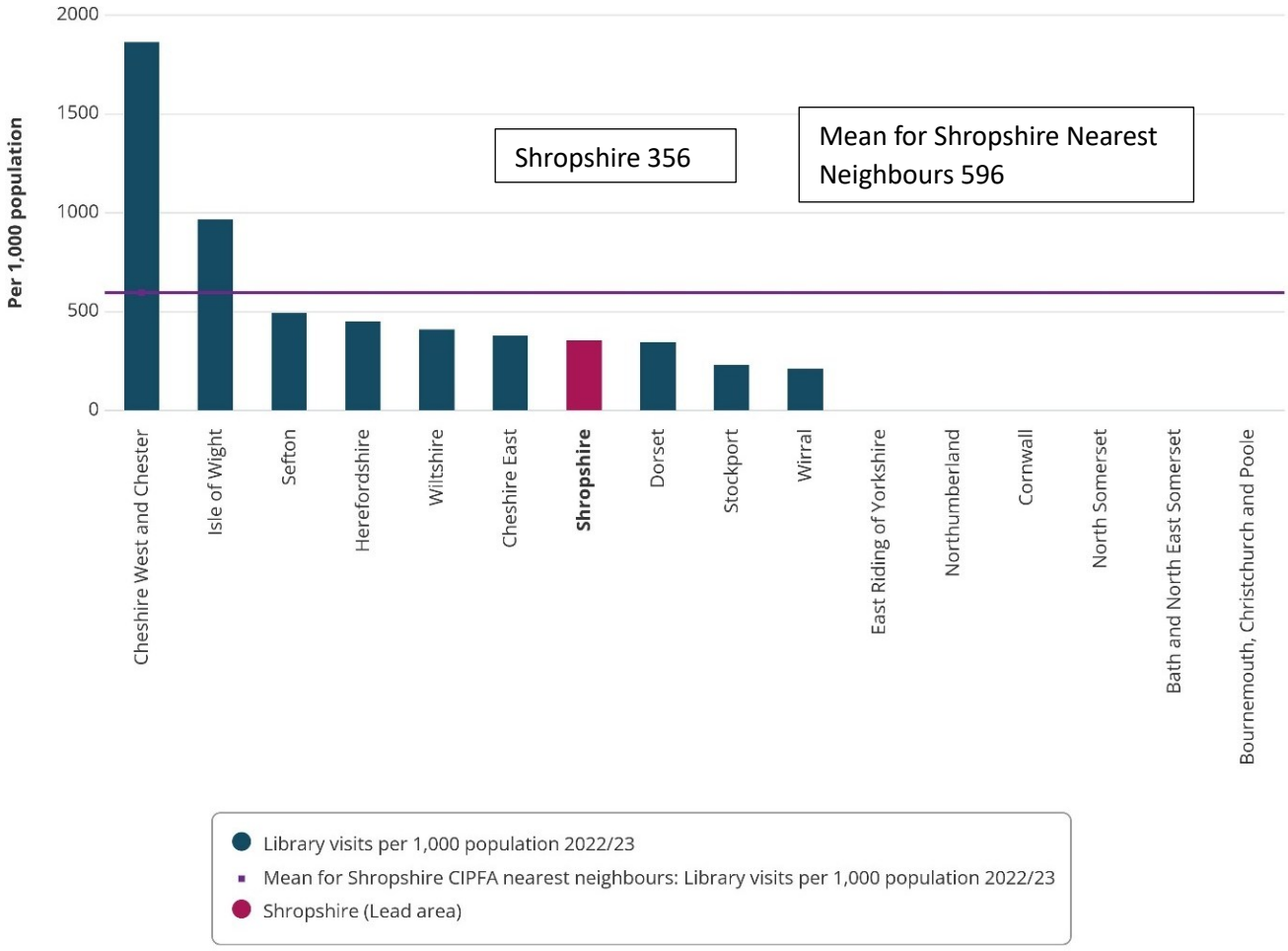


Source:
Local collection
Powered by LG Inform

In 2022/23, the number of physical visits to the library service, per 1,000 people, in Shropshire was 356, which was less than the mean number of visits for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours of 596.

The maximum for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours was 1,865 for Cheshire West and Chester and the minimum was 212 for Wirral. The mean for all English unitary authorities was 593.

Chart 41: Number of Physical Visits to Libraries per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours

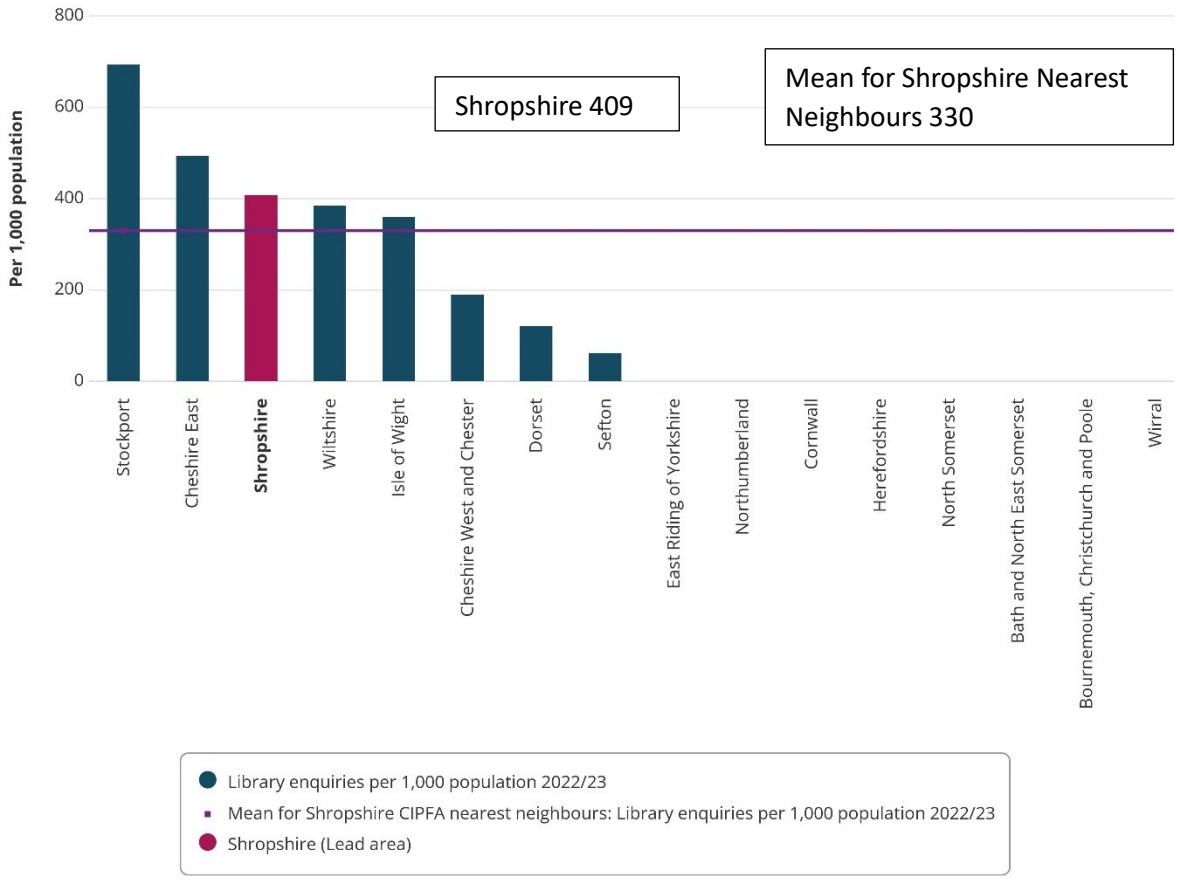


Source:
CIPFA Statistical Information Services
Powered by LG Inform

In 2022/23 there were 409 enquiries to the Shropshire Library Service per 1,000 population, higher than the mean number of enquiries for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours of 330.

The maximum for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours was 694 in Stockport and the minimum was 63 for Sefton. The mean for all English Unitary authorities was 593.

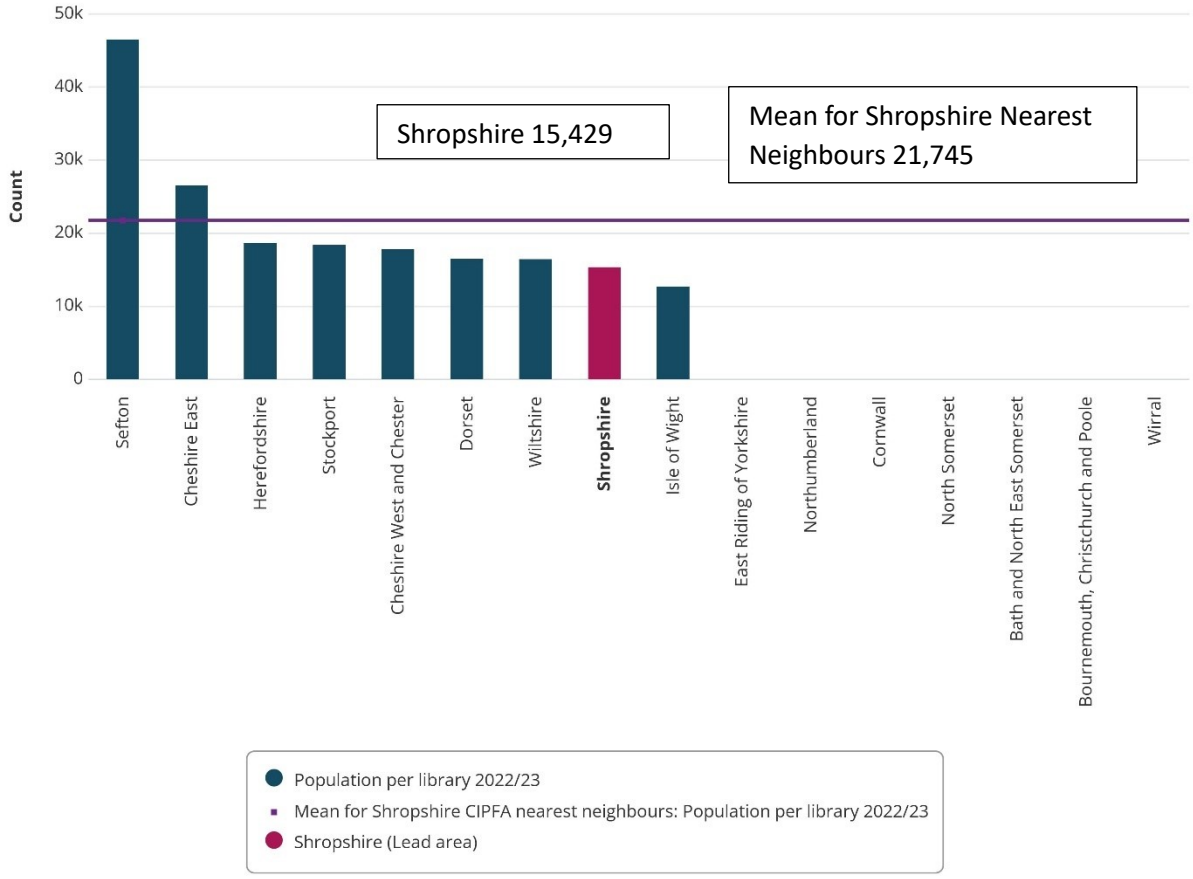
Chart 42: Number of Enquiries to the Library Service per 1,000 Population (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:
CIPFA Statistical Information Services
Powered by LG Inform

In 2022/23, the population per library service point in Shropshire was 15,429 which was less than the average of 21,745 for Shropshire CIPFA nearest neighbours The maximum for Shropshire's nearest neighbours was 46,556 in Sefton and the minimum was 12,770 in the Isle of Wight.

Chart 43: Population per Library Service Point (open 10 hours or more including mobiles) (2022/23) for Shropshire & Shropshire CIPFA Nearest Neighbours



Source:
CIPFA Statistical Information Services
Powered by LG Inform

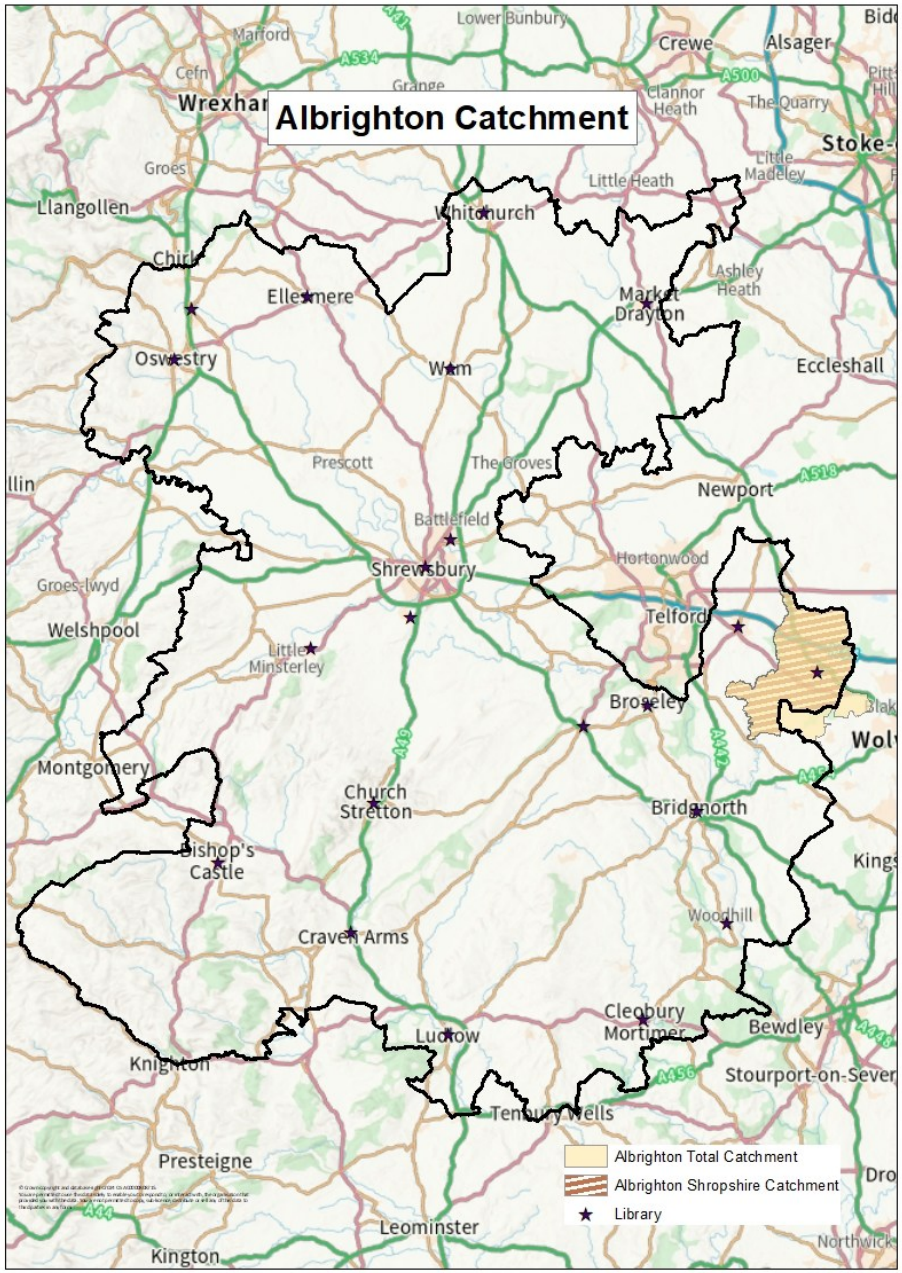
Appendix

Albrighton Library Profile
Bayston Hill Library Profile
Bishop's Castle Library Profile
Bridgnorth Library Profile
Broseley Library Profile
Church Stretton Library Profile
Cleobury Mortimer Library Profile
Craven Arms Library Profile
Ellesmere Library Profile
Gobowen Library Profile
Highley Library Profile
Library at the Lanter Library Profile
Ludlow Library Profile
Market Drayton Library Profile
Much Wenlock Library Profile
Oswestry Library Profile
Pontesbury Library Profile
Shifnal Library Profile
Shrewsbury Library Profile
Wem Library Profile
Whitchurch Library Profile

Albrighton Library Profile

Background

- Albrighton is a large village in the east of Shropshire, approximately two miles from the border with Wolverhampton.
- The library is located in the centre of the village, less than 10 minutes' walk from the railway station, which is on the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton route.
- It is a single storey building, owned by Shropshire Council and leased to Albrighton Parish Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 6,100 hectares within Shropshire – about 2% of the county's land mass. As shown in the map opposite, the catchment also crosses the border with Wolverhampton.
- The total population within the Albrighton library catchment area is 9,400 comprising 3,196 households.
- 453 people in the catchment live outside Shropshire (4.8%).



Opening Hours

The library is open 29 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

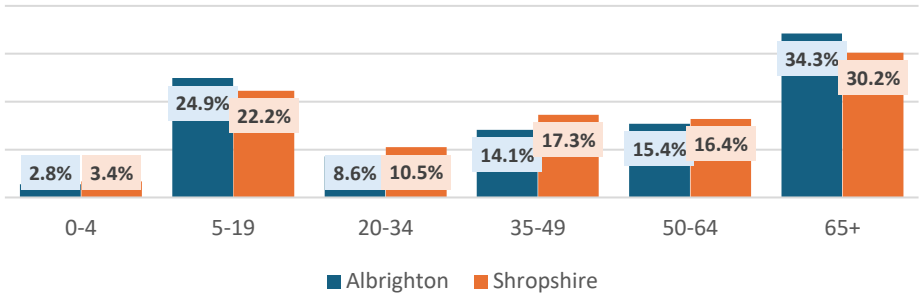
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Tuesday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Friday	10.00am-16.50pm	6.5
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 0.8 FTE persons with no volunteer support in 2025/26.

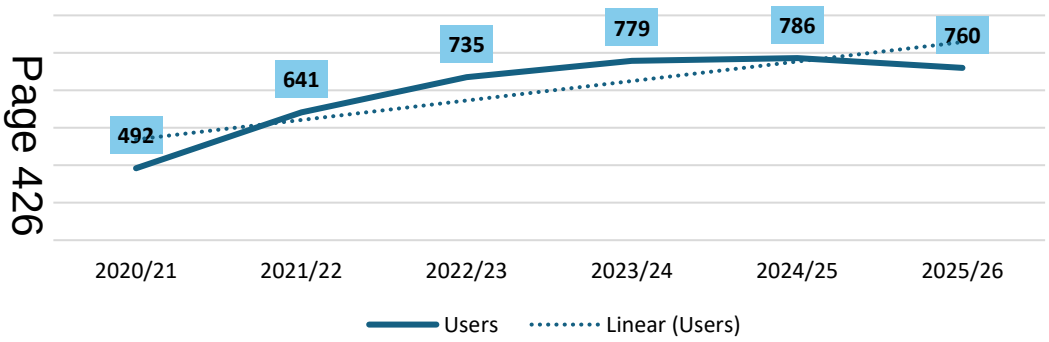
Library Users

- Albrighton library had 760 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.1% of the Albrighton catchment population are active library users (includes all Shropshire libraries, not necessarily Albrighton library).
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly fewer adults aged 20-64and a higher proportion of people aged 65 and above.

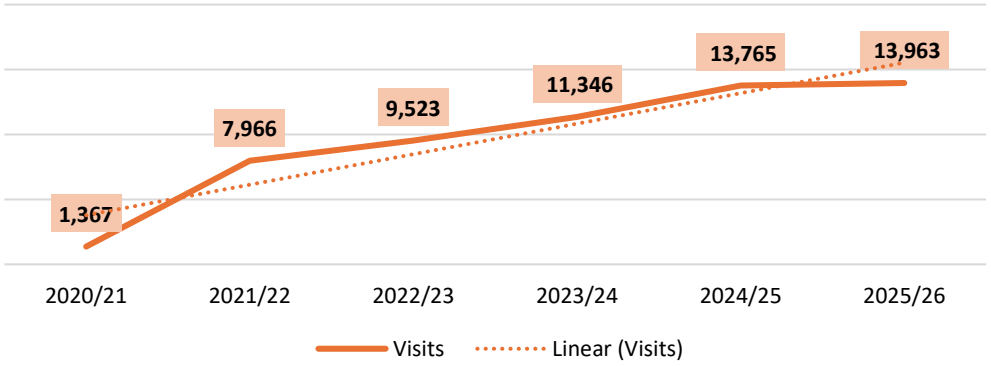
Breakdown of Albrighton Library Users by Age



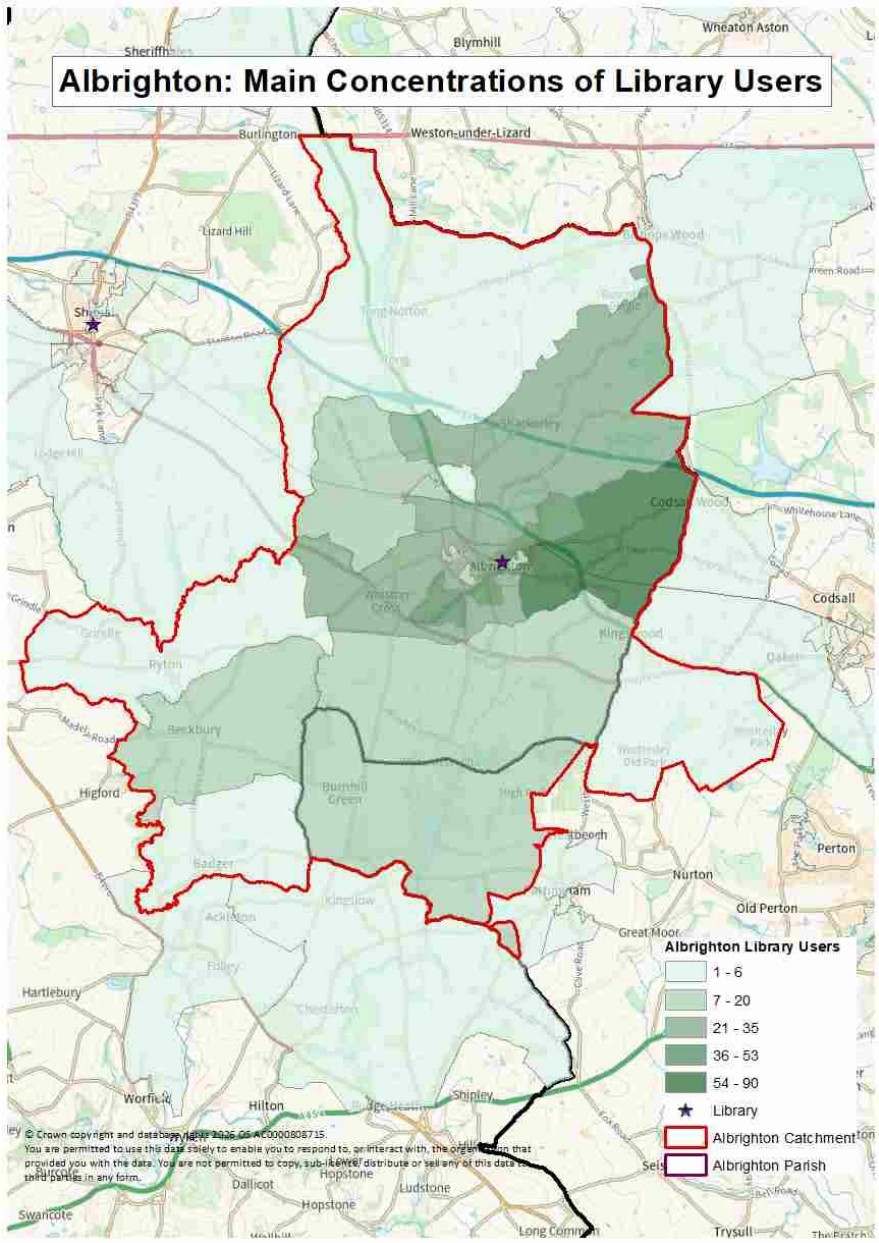
Albrighton: Number of Active Users



Albrighton: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although growth has tailed off over the last year.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 268 users (+54.5%) which is comparable to the average increase across all 21 Shropshire libraries (+57.7%).
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 13,963, which is the equivalent of about 18 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and although recovery has occurred in the 2021/22-2025/26 period, each library user is still making fewer visits than they used to (20 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was more than 10 times higher in 2025/26 than it had been in 2020/21.
- 10,990 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 14 per active user and under 1 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 12% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library also fell by 7% but computer time used was up by 1%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- Almost 90% of all Albrighton library users live within the main catchment area, with concentrations of users in the main town centre area.
- 82% of users live within Albrighton parish (please note parish boundary has changed since 2025).
- 8.1% of the population in the catchment area are Albrighton active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to almost 20%. Please note that this only includes users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 10% of Albrighton library users that do not live in the catchment, about 4% live within the adjoining catchments of Shifnal and Bridgnorth (about 2% in each case).
- Small numbers of people that live in the Albrighton catchment are registered with an alternative library – most usually Shifnal (19 people) or Bridgnorth (25 people).
- Over the six months to May 2026, 94.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Albrighton library were to Albrighton, and these accounted for 93.8% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Albrighton include Shrewsbury, Shifnal, Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth.

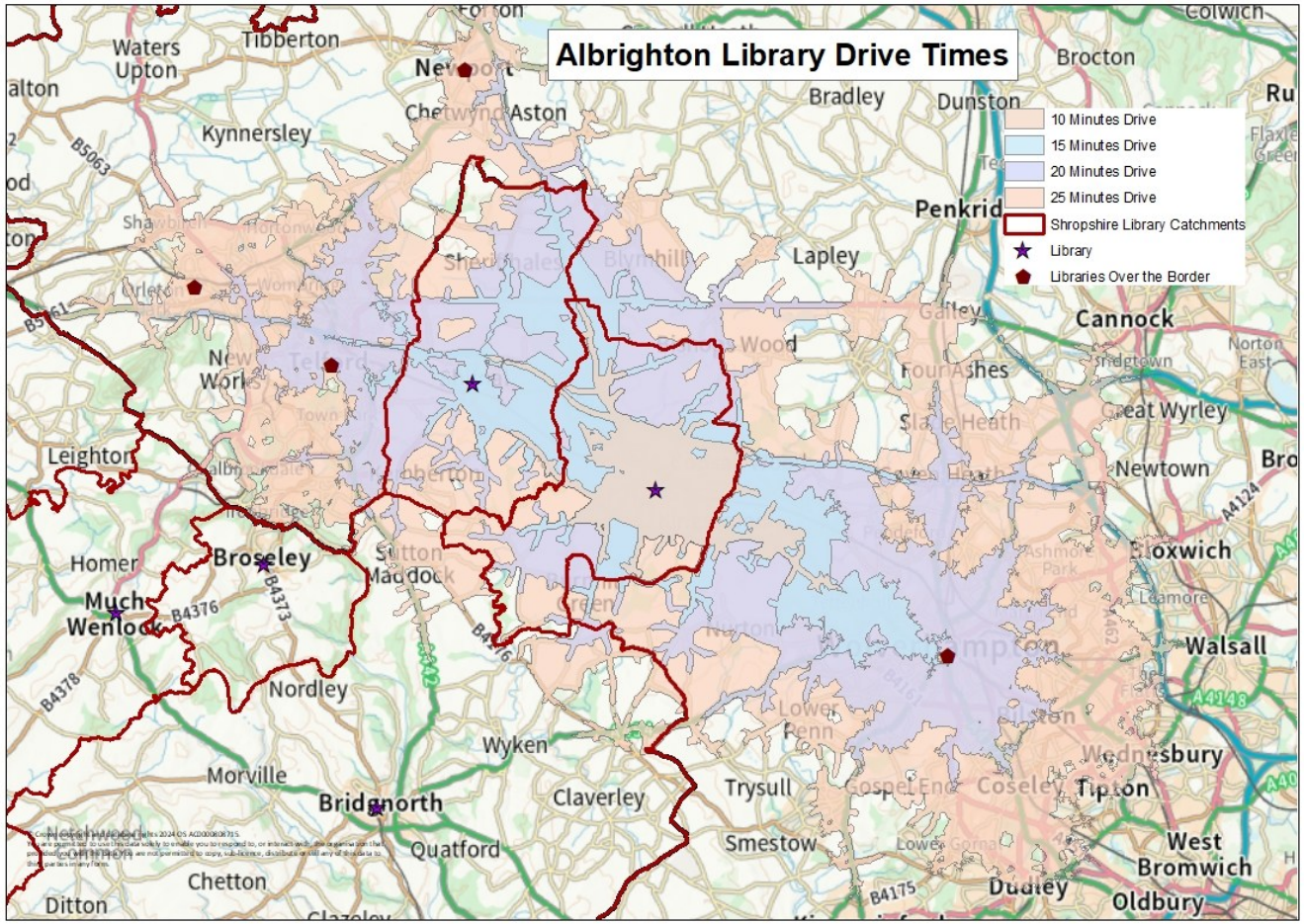
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Albrighton library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	66.6%
30 Minute Walk	79.8%
10 Minute Drive	84.0%
15 Minute Drive	89.6%
20 Minute Drive	95.0%
25 Minute Drive	97.4%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- The road and rail infrastructure that serves Albrighton means that it is easier to travel eastwards and westwards rather than north to south. This means that the only Shropshire library that is accessible within a 10-to-15-minute drive is Shifnal. Several libraries located outside of Shropshire are also more readily accessibly than alternative Shropshire provision including Wolverhampton, Newport and Telford.
- Shifnal library is 5.6 miles from Albrighton library. Bridgnorth is the closest main Shropshire library (11.2 miles away). According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 22 minutes.
- Albrighton is on the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton train line. This means that is relatively straightforward to travel between Albrighton and Shifnal, and that it is easier to access Shrewsbury library than Bridgnorth using public transport. The former can be reached by train in 50 minutes via an hourly service at peak times. Access to Bridgnorth library by public transport requires taking a train to Shifnal and then the 114 bus to Bridgnorth.



Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Albrighton	Shifnal	5.6 miles	10 mins	Bridgnorth	11.2 miles	22 mins	Train to Shifnal, 114 bus to Bridgnorth	1.5-2 hours
				Shrewsbury	24.0 miles	32 mins	Train to Shrewsbury	50 minutes

Costs

- Albrighton is the second least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shifnal.
- The annual cost to Shropshire Council is £7,510 (2025/26)
- Albrighton library costs less than average per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£4.98	£78.80	19th
Per Active User	£9.88	£81.29	20th
Per Visit	£0.54	£4.23	20th
Per Book Loan	£0.68	£5.07	20th

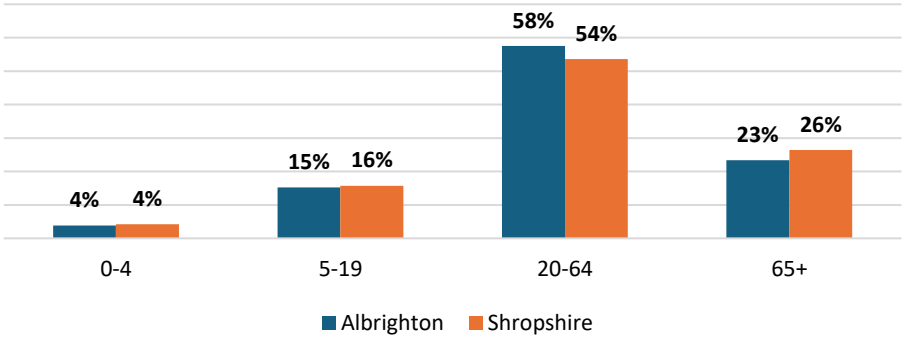
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Albrighton Catchment Area

Population

- Albrighton library catchment is the 10th largest in terms of population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 8,954 people and a total population of 9,407.
- The age breakdown of the population is similar to the Shropshire breakdown, although there is a higher representation of adults of working age and slightly fewer aged 15–19 and 65+.
- There are 3,196 households in the catchment, with 1,617 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.31 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

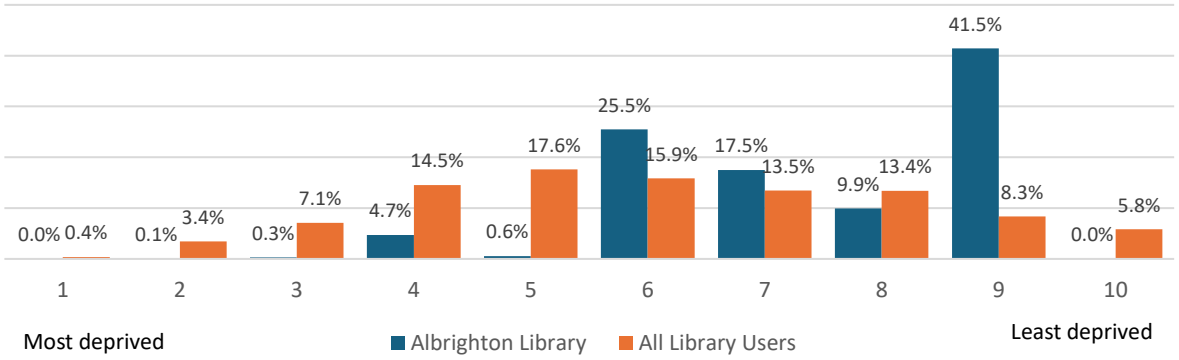
Age Breakdown of Albrighton Catchment



Albrighton catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Albrighton Library Users by IMD Decile



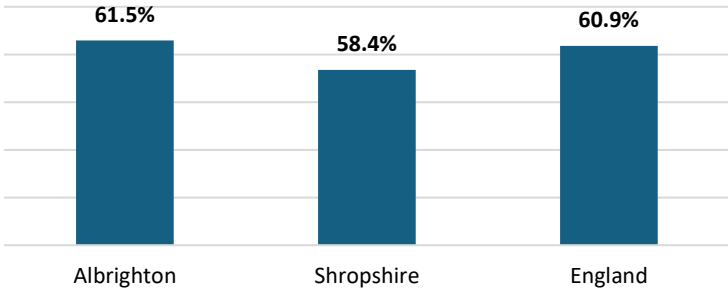
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Albrighton library is in one of the least deprived locations in Shropshire, and its catchment also draws from people living in predominantly un-deprived areas.
- The adjacent chart shows that 41.5% of Albrighton library users live in the least deprived 20% of England compared with 14.1% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- A significant proportion are also resident in decile six and seven (43.0% compared with 19.4% of all Shropshire library users).
- Less than 6% of Albrighton library users live in the most deprived 50% of the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Albrighton library catchment is higher than the Shropshire average at 61.5% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also higher than the England rate of 60.9%. While Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market, Albrighton's younger age profile bucks this trend.
- The economic activity rate in the Albrighton library catchment area is the third highest in Shropshire behind Shifnal and the Lantern.

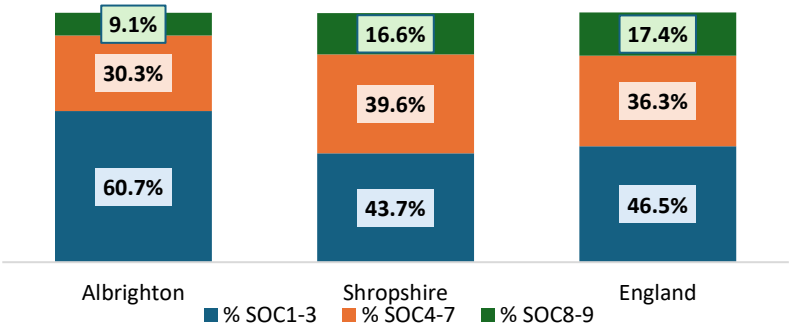
Albrighton: Economic Activity Rate



Employment

- 4,725 people in Albrighton were in employment in 2021, which equates with 59.8% of the 16+ population.
- A very high proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) at 60.7% compared with 43.7% in Shropshire and 46.5% in England. In contrast, fewer are employed in care and lesiure occupations (SOC 4-7) or in elementary occupations and process and plant operatives (SOC 8-9).

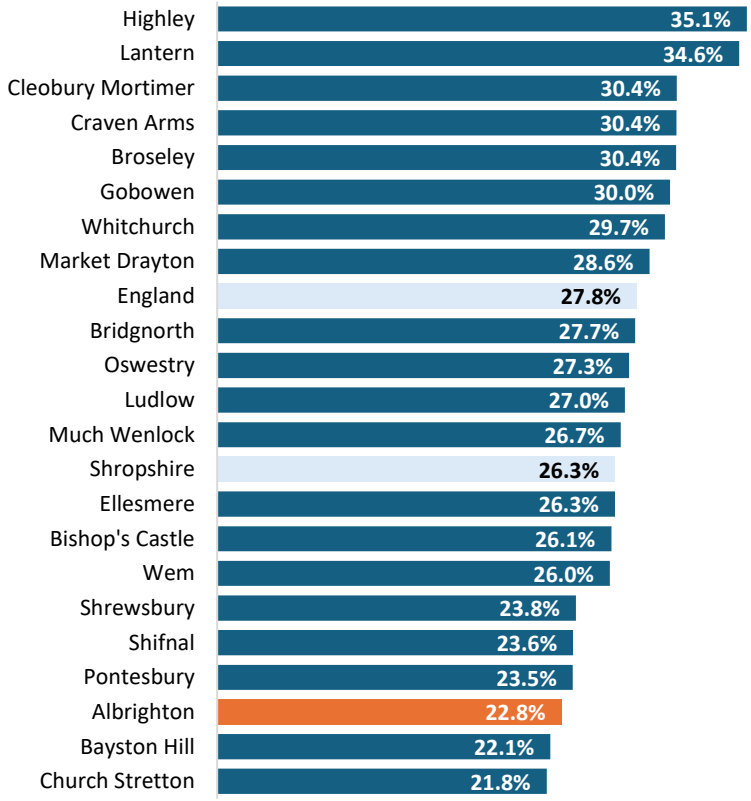
Albrighton: Occupation Types



Qualifications

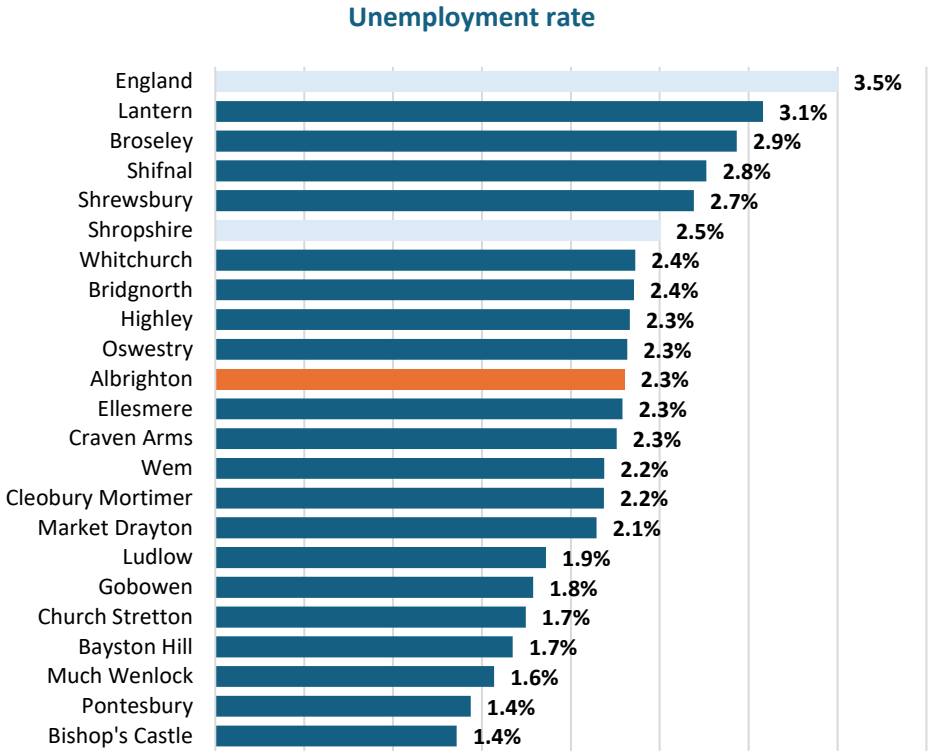
- The Albrighton population is amongst the best qualified in Shropshire, with just 22.8% with low (NVQ level 1) or no qualifications. This is lower than the Shropshire and national averages (26.3% and 27.8% respectively) and corresponds with the high proportion of people employed in SOC 1-3 occupations.

% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



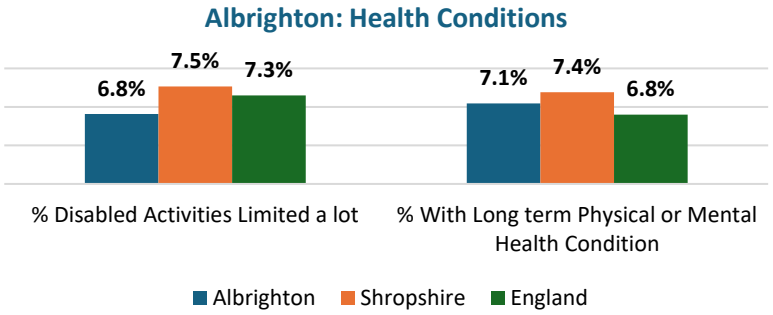
Unemployment

- 182 people living in the Albrighton catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



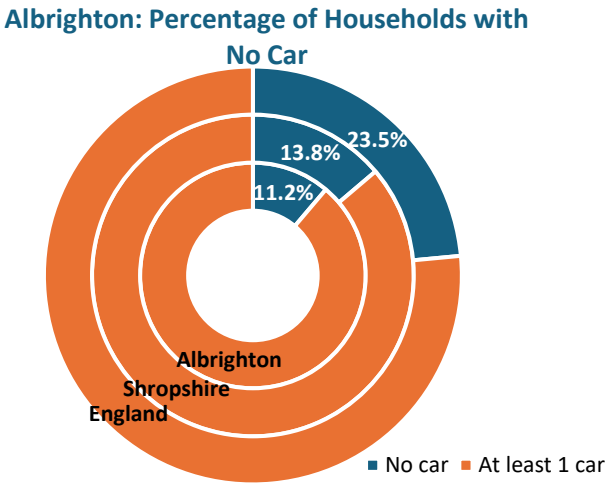
Health Conditions

- 6.8% of residents in the Albrighton library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is marginally lower than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.1% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. Again, this proportion is slightly lower than it is across Shropshire (7.4%) but it is slightly higher than the English average (6.8%).



Car Ownership

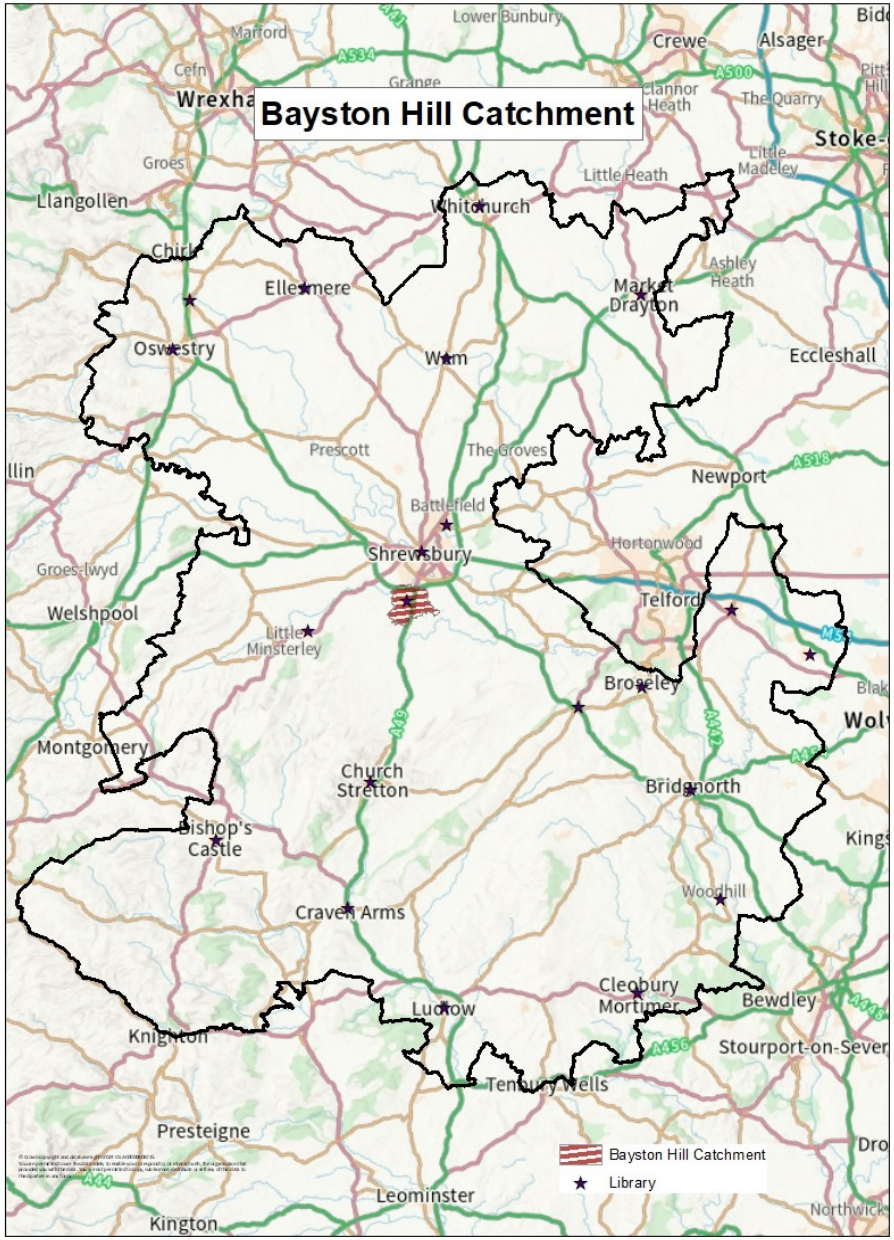
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Albrighton households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.2%.



Bayston Hill Library Profile

Background

- Bayston Hill is a large village in the centre of Shropshire, approximately three miles south of Shrewsbury town centre.
- The library is located in the centre of the village and is within close proximity of the A49 which gives access to Shrewsbury to the north and Church Stretton to the south.
- The library building is owned by Shropshire Council and library services are likewise operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 864 hectares – about 0.3% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the smallest in Shropshire. The catchment area is identical to Bayston Hill parish council.
- The total population within the Bayston Hill library catchment area is 5,147 comprising 2,208 households.
- The total catchment is within Shropshire and is entirely subsumed within the Shrewsbury catchment.



Opening Hours

The library is open 22.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

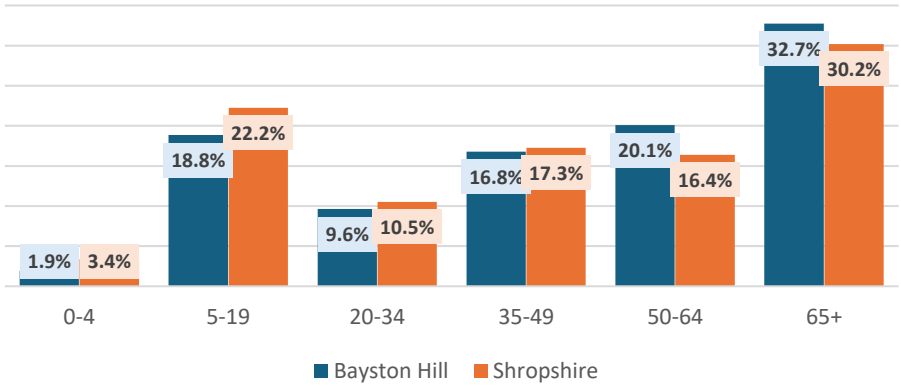
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Friday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 1.13 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from two volunteer contributing a total of 162 volunteer hours.

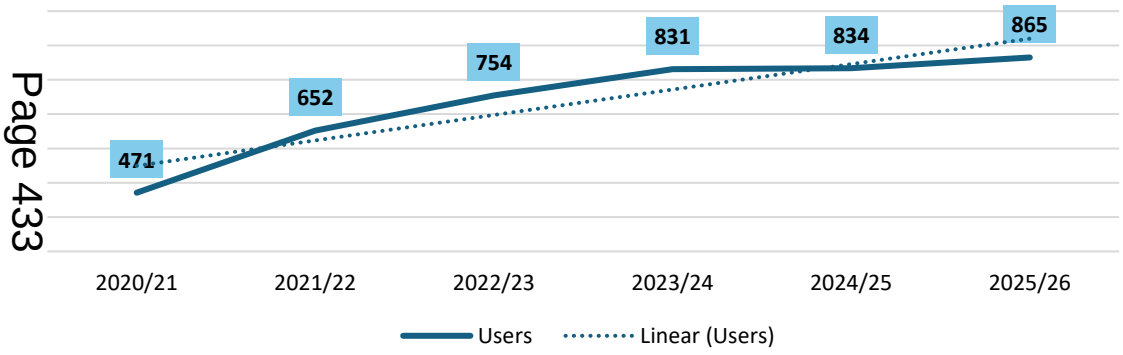
Library Users

- Bayston Hill library had 865 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.7% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.2% of the Bayston Hill catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes usage of all Shropshire libraries, not just Bayston Hill.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (64%) (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly fewer children and young people and a higher proportion of people aged 50 and above.

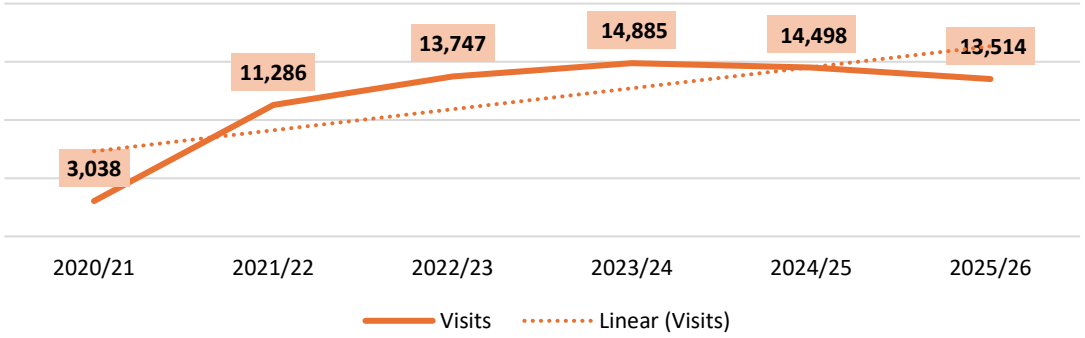
Breakdown of Bayston Hill Library Users by Age



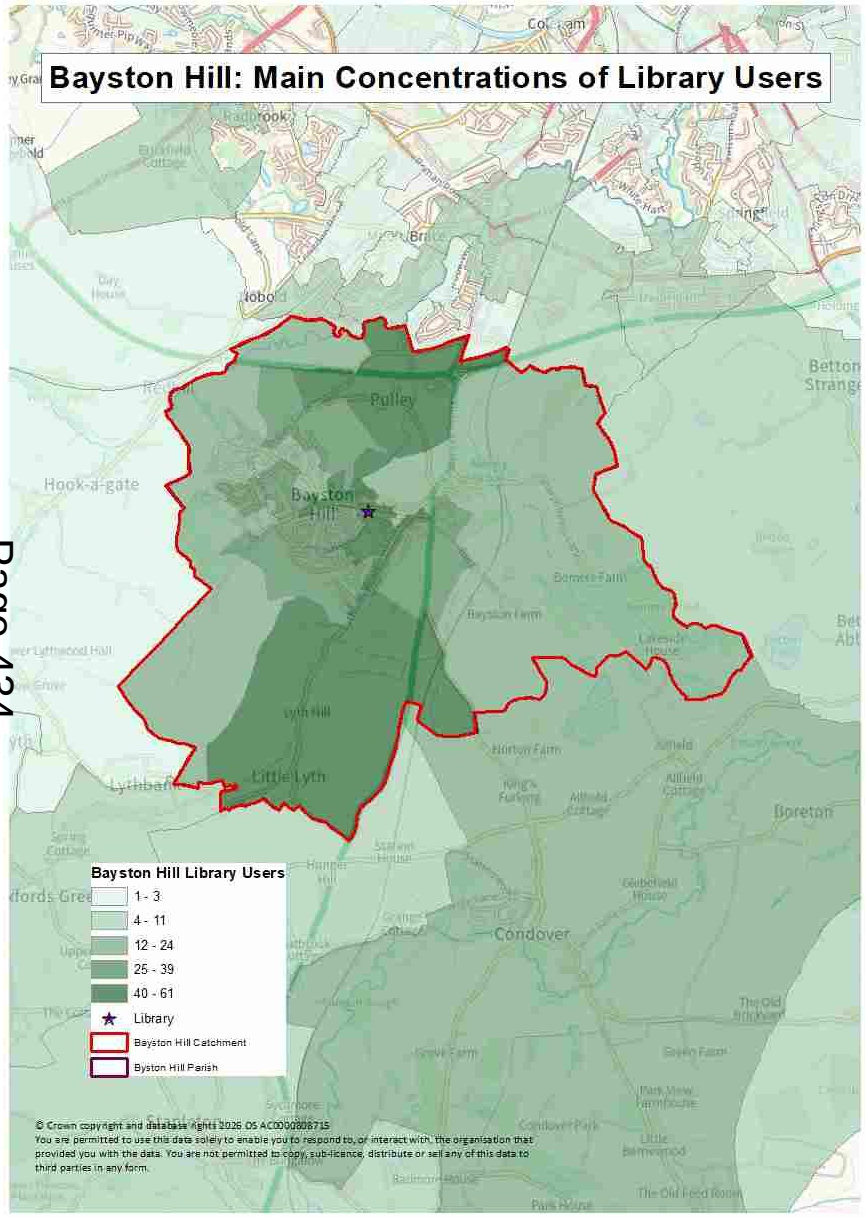
Bayston Hill: Number of Active Users



Bayston Hill: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery and by 2023/24 numbers had surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Growth in the number of users between 2024/25 and 2025/26 was much more muted.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 394 users (+83.7%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 13,514, which is the equivalent of about 16 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and although recovery has occurred in the 2021/22-2025/26 period, each library user is still making fewer visits than they used to (22 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits increased threefold between 2020/21 and 2025/26.
- 23,985 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 28 per active user and just over 1.8 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 17%.
- Computer time used was down by 3%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- Under two-thirds (62.0%) of all Bayston Hill library users live within the main catchment area. This is amongst the lowest proportions of all Shropshire libraries.
- 14.1% of the population in the catchment area are Bayston Hill active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 8% to more than 20%. **This includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.**
- Of the 38.0% of Bayston Hill library users that do not live in the catchment, significant numbers live within the Shrewsbury catchment. Around 33% of all Bayton Hill library users have a Shrewsbury catchment postcode. Small numbers are resident in Church Stretton.
- A significant number of people that live in the Bayston Hill catchment are registered with Shrewsbury library (approximately 1.8% of all Shrewsbury active users).
- Over the six months to May 2026, 87.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bayston Hill library were to Bayston Hill, and these accounted for 90.0% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bayston Hill include Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, the Lantern and Oswestry as well as the Sabrina mobile library.

Walk/Drive Times

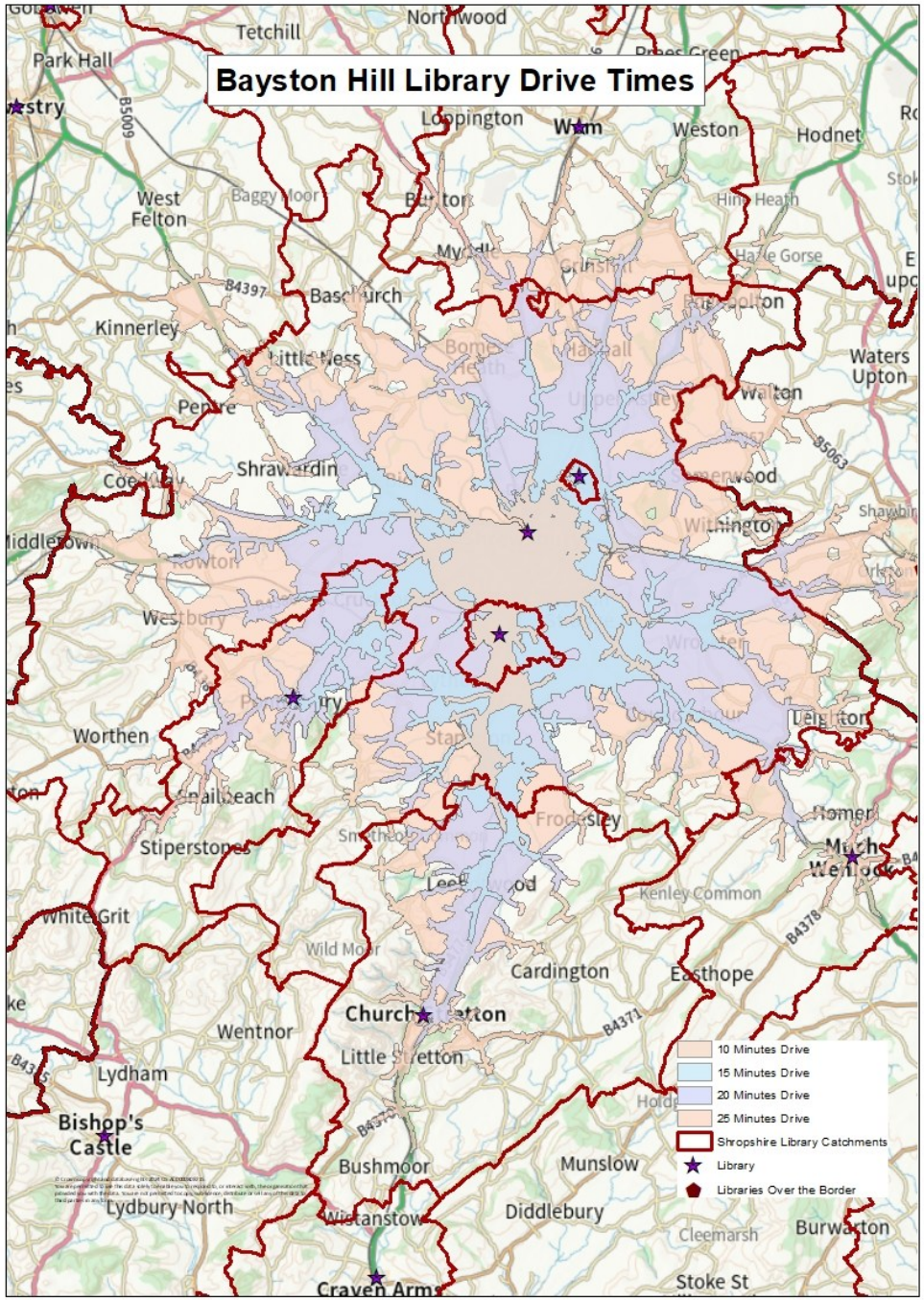
- The following table shows the proportion of active Bayston Hill library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	57.7%
30 Minute Walk	63.0%
10 Minute Drive	87.1%
15 Minute Drive	93.3%
20 Minute Drive	96.1%
25 Minute Drive	97.1%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Bayston Hill is just to the west of the A49 between Shrewsbury and Church Stretton, and this means that both alternative libraries are within relatively easy reach.
- The closest library to Bayston Hill library is Shrewsbury, which is located 4.2 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes.
- Bayton Hill is not on the rail network. However, there are frequent buses to Shrewsbury town centre meaning that is possible to travel between the two libraries using public transport within about half an hour.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Bayston Hill	Shrewsbury	4.2 miles	13 mins	27 Bus	20-30 Minutes



Costs

- Bayston Hill is the eleventh most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the fifth most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual running costs are £52,490 (2025/26)
- Bayston Hill library costs less than average per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£44.86	£78.80	11th
Per Active User	£60.68	£81.29	15th
Per Visit	£3.88	£4.23	9th
Per Book Loan	£2.19	£5.07	17th

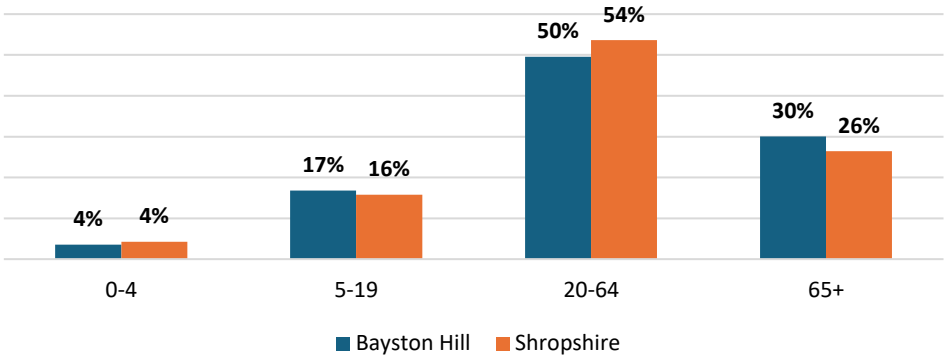
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bayston Hill Catchment Area

Population

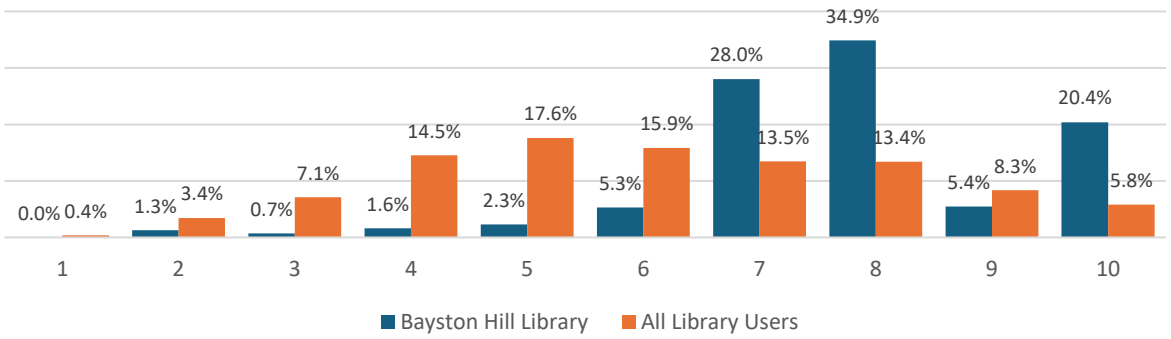
- Bayston Hill library catchment is the 15th largest in terms of population size, accommodating a total population of 5,147.
- The age breakdown of the population is similar to the Shropshire breakdown, although there is a lower representation of adults of working age and slightly more aged 65+.
- There are 2,208 households in the catchment, with 53 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.34 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Bayston Hill Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Bayston Hill Library Users by IMD Decile



Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

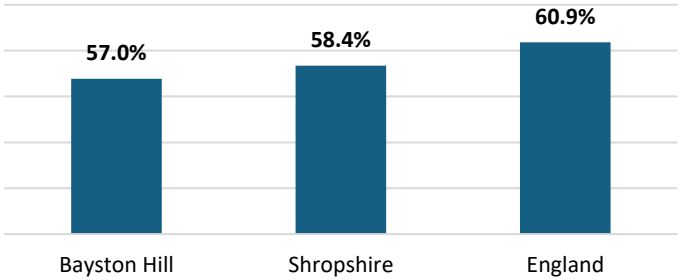
Most deprived

- Bayston Hill library is in one of the least deprived locations in Shropshire, and its catchment also draws from people living in predominantly un-deprived areas.
- The adjacent chart shows that 60% of Bayston Hill library users live in the least deprived 30% of England compared with 27.5% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- Just 5.3% of Bayston Hill library users live in the most deprived 50% of the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Bayston Hill library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 57.0% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Bayston Hill catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Bayston Hill library catchment area is the 11th highest in Shropshire.

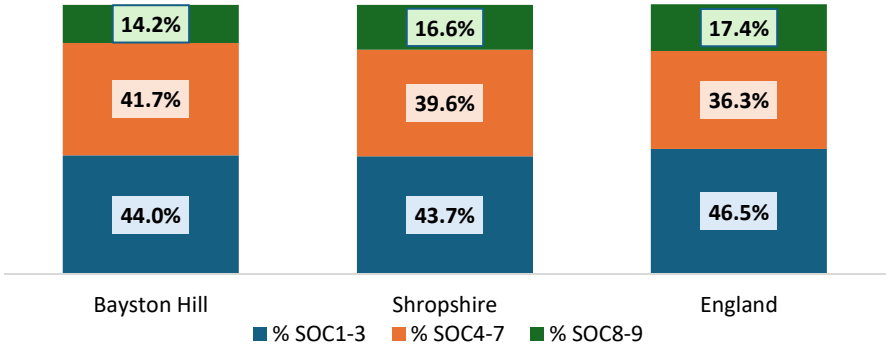
Bayston Hill: Economic Activity Rate



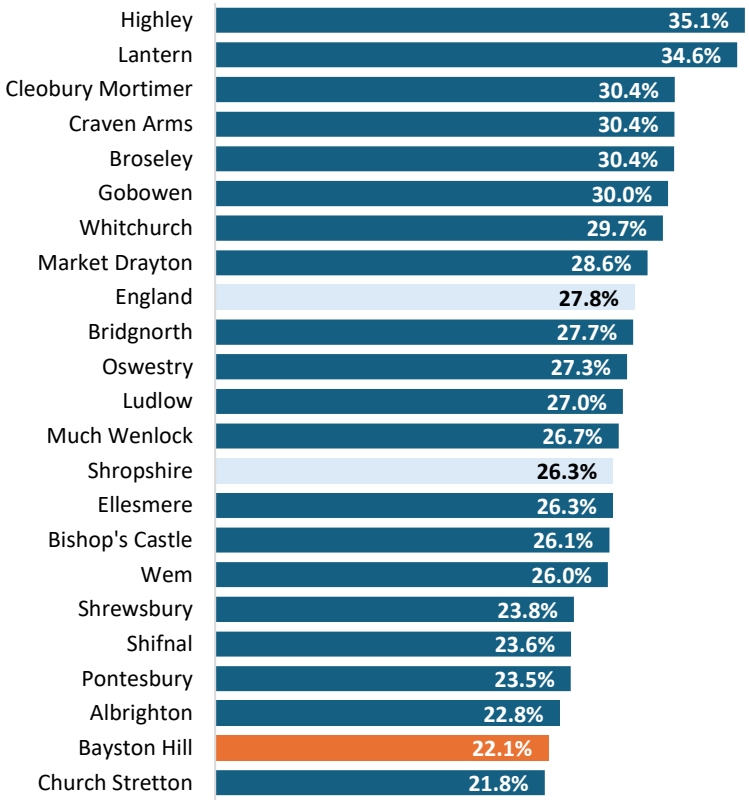
Employment

- 2,391 people in Bayston Hill were in employment in 2021, which equates with 55.6% of the 16+ population.
- A similar proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 44.0%. Slighly fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and slightly more in service and caring occupations (SOC 4-7).

Bayston Hill: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

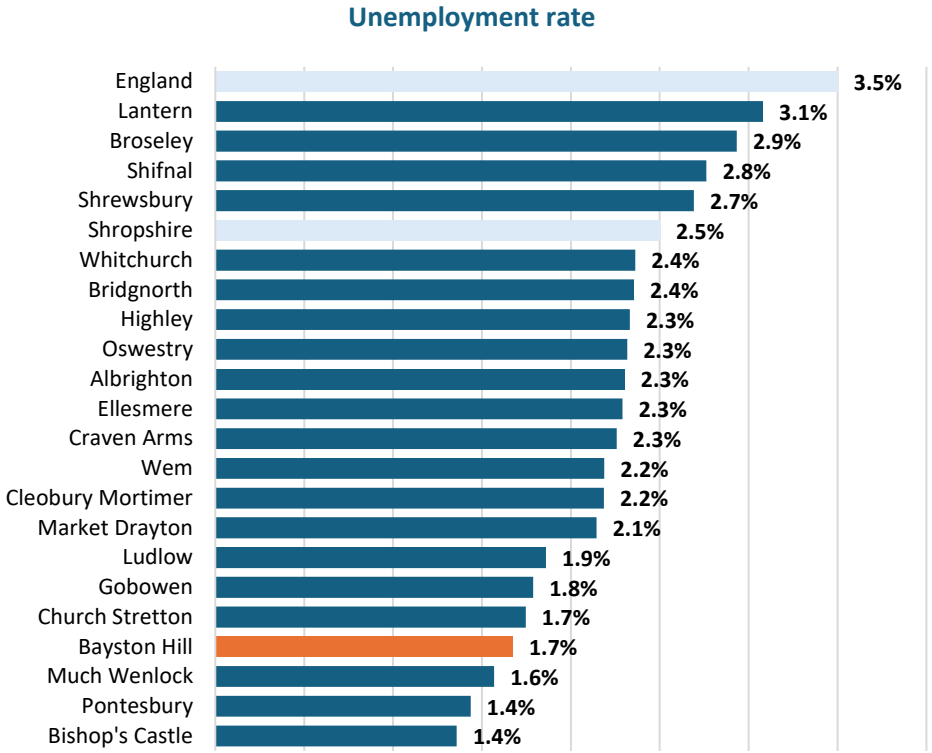


Qualifications

- The Bayston Hill population is amongst the best qualified in Shropshire, with just 22.1% with low (NVQ level 1) or no qualifications. This is lower than the Shropshire and national averages (26.3% and 27.8% respectively) and corresponds with the high proportion of people employed in SOC 1-3 occupations.

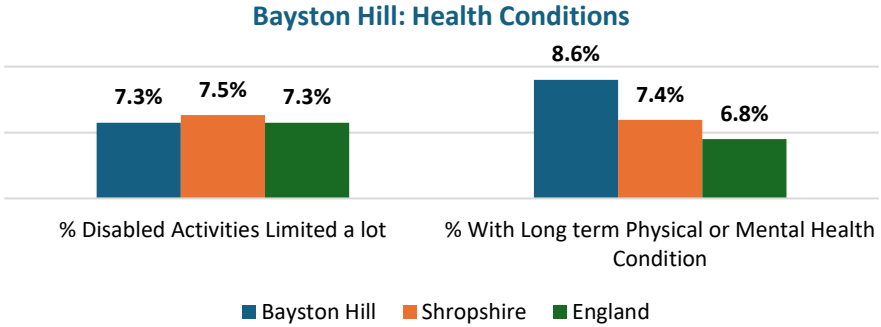
Unemployment

- 72 people living in the Bayston Hill catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.7%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



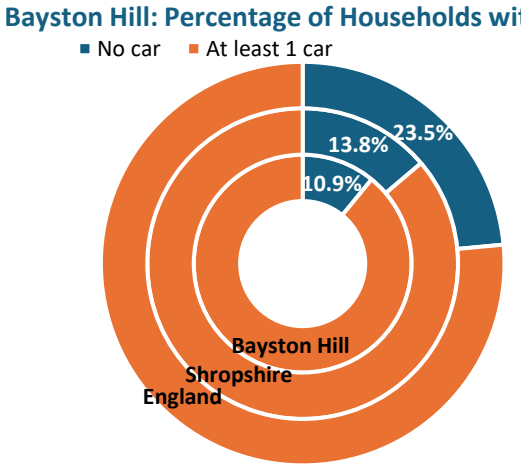
Health Conditions

- 7.3% of residents in the Bayston Hill library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is marginally lower than for Shropshire (7.5%) and the same as in England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 8.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is higher than it is across Shropshire (7.4%) and England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

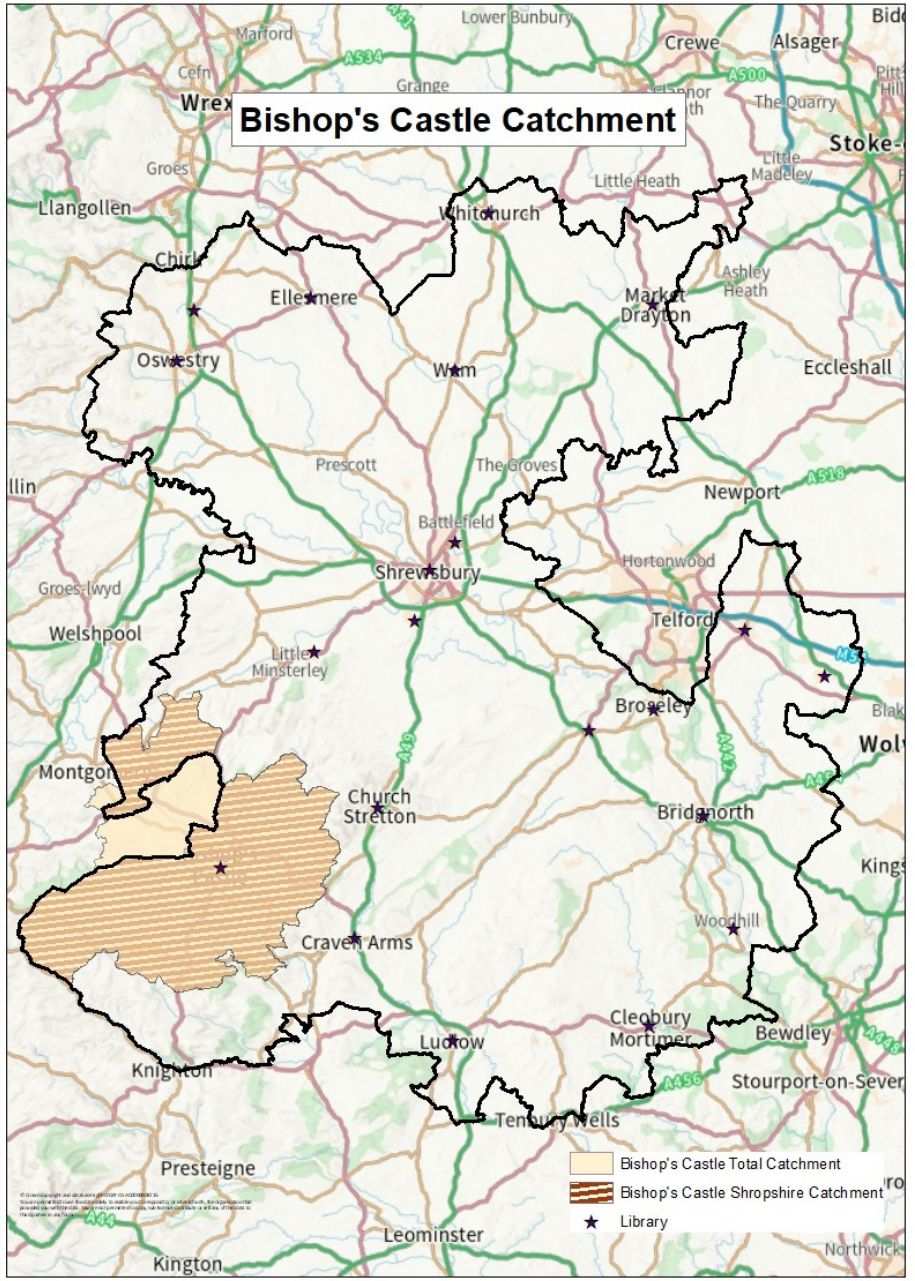
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bayston Hill households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 10.9%.



Bishop's Castle Library Profile

Background

- Bishop's Castle is a small town in the rural south west of Shropshire, approximately two miles from the Welsh border.
- The library is located in the centre of the town in the Enterprise House building which also has general office space and printing and photocopying facilities.
- The library building is owned by Shropshire Council but leased to Enterprise South West.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 30,544 hectares within Shropshire which is about 9.6% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. 15% of the catchment area is in Wales as shown on the adjacent map.
- The total population within the Bishop's Castle library catchment area is 7,704 comprising 3,420 households. The Shropshire population (5,853 people) accounts for 76.0% of the total catchment population. The catchment is the most sparsely populated, with just 0.19 people per hectare.



Opening Hours

The library is open 20 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

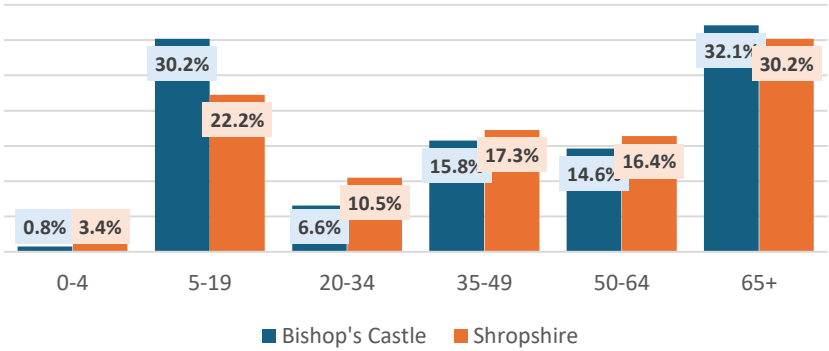
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 1 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 11 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 173 volunteer hours.

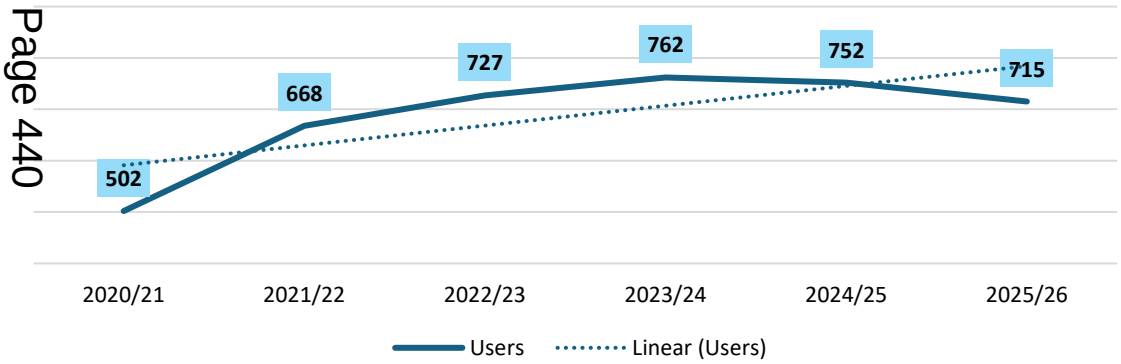
Library Users

- Bishop's Castle library had 715 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.2% of the Bishop's Castle catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average (including all Shropshire libraries not just Bishop's Castle).
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and more users aged 65 and above but fewer adults of working age.

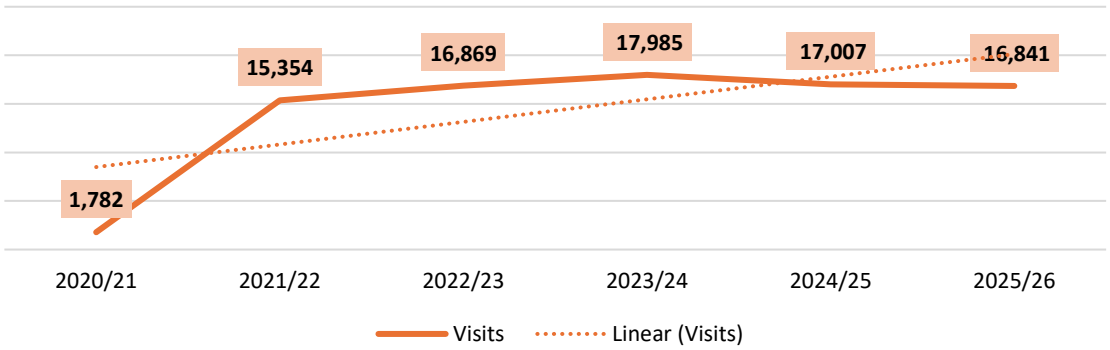
Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Library Users by Age



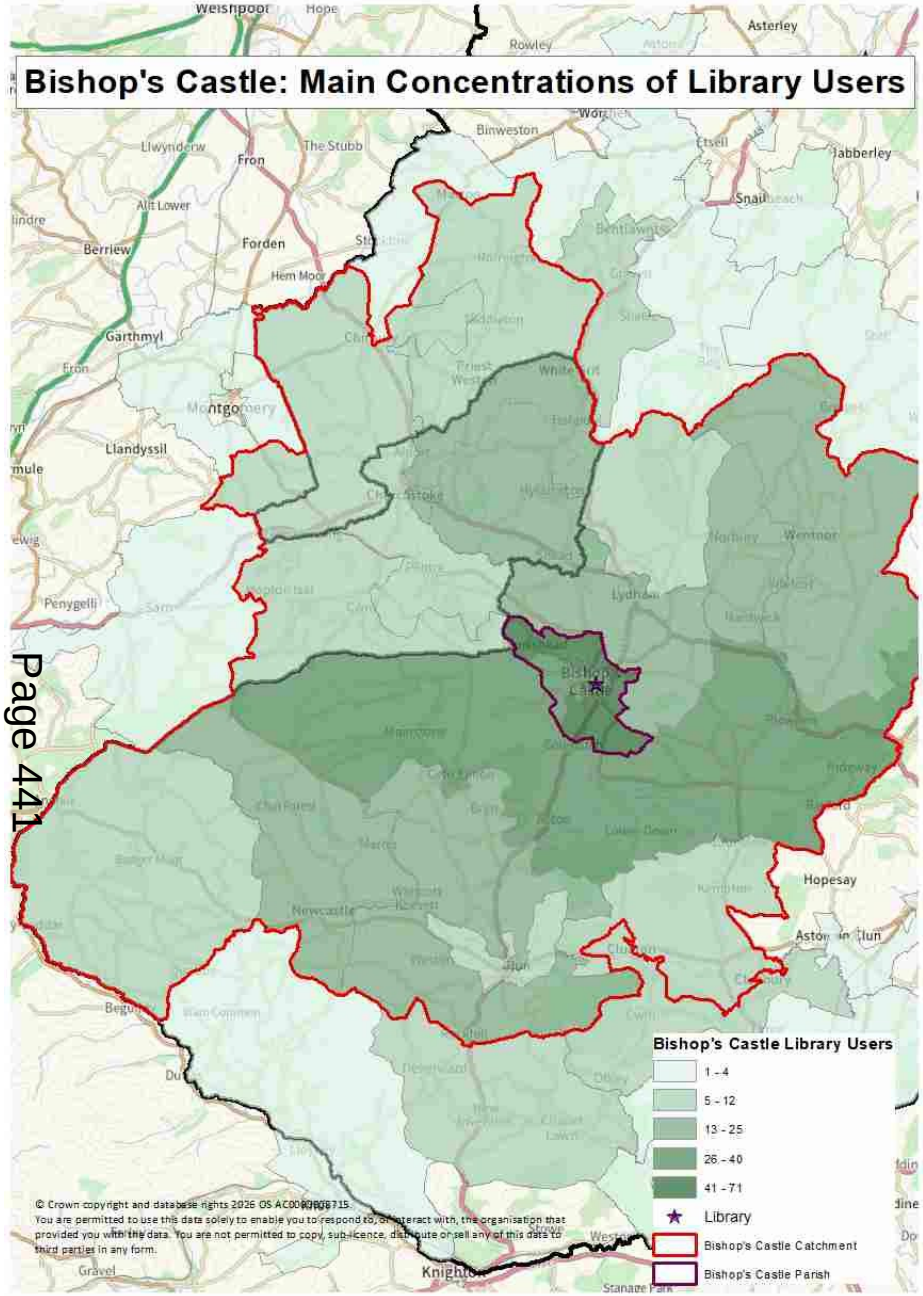
Bishop's Castle: Number of Active Users



Bishop's Castle: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although this now appears to have plateaued, and numbers remains well below pre-pandemic levels.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 213 users (+42.4%). This compares with an average rise in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 16,841, which is the equivalent of about 24 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at almost once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels.
- The overall number of visits was more than nine times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 15,831 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 22 per active user and about 1 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 10% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 15%.
- Computer time was, however, up by 5%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 88.3% of all Bishop's Castle library users live within the main catchment area.
- 41.3% live within Bishop's Castle Parish.
- 10.2% of the population in the catchment area are Bishop's Castle active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 3% to over a fifth.
- Of the 11.7% of Bishop's Castle library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in either Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ludlow, Shrewsbury or Pontesbury catchments.
- People that live in the Bishop's Castle catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ludlow, Shrewsbury or Pontesbury libraries.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 87.8% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bishop's Castle library were to Bishop's Castle, and these accounted for 87.9% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bishop's Castle include Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Ludlow and Craven Arms as well as the Sabrina mobile library.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Bishop's Castle library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

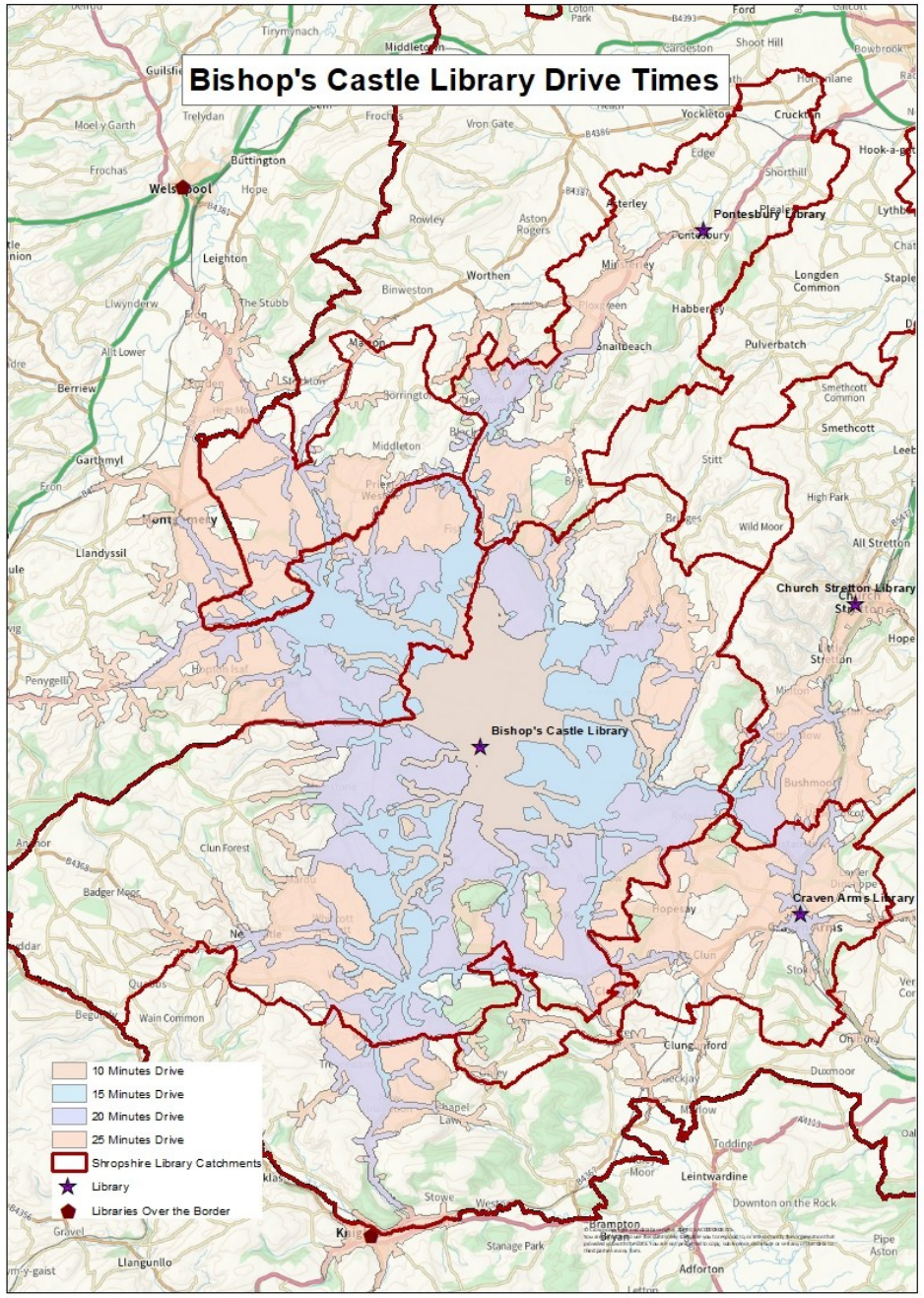
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	38.5%
30 Minute Walk	42.4%
10 Minute Drive	55.2%
15 Minute Drive	72.4%
20 Minute Drive	86.7%
25 Minute Drive	93.6%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Bishop's Castle is in the south west of Shropshire close to the Welsh border. It is in a very rural location and serves a substantial very sparsely populated hinterland.
- The closest library to Bishop's Castle library is in Craven Arms, which is located 11.1 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 22 minutes.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Ludlow, which is approximately 18 miles away with a drive time of 31 minutes. Shrewsbury is slightly further afield at 22 miles, or a 41-minute drive.
- Bishop's Castle is not on the rail network. However, there is a bus service to Shrewsbury town centre which takes about an hour.
- Accessing Ludlow via public transport is more challenging. A direct bus service is infrequent.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Bishop's Castle	Craven Arms	11.1 miles	22 mins	745 Bus	55 Mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Bishop's Castle	Ludlow	18 miles	31mins	553 bus to Shrewsbury then train	2-3 hours
	Shrewsbury	22 miles	41 mins	553 bus	1 hour



Costs

- Bishop's Castle is the twelfth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the sixth most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual costs to the Council are £45.150 (2025/26)
- Costs are lower per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan than the average across all 21 libraries.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£43.42	£78.80	12th
Per Active User	£63.15	£81.29	14th
Per Visit	£2.68	£4.23	16th
Per Book Loan	£2.85	£5.07	14th

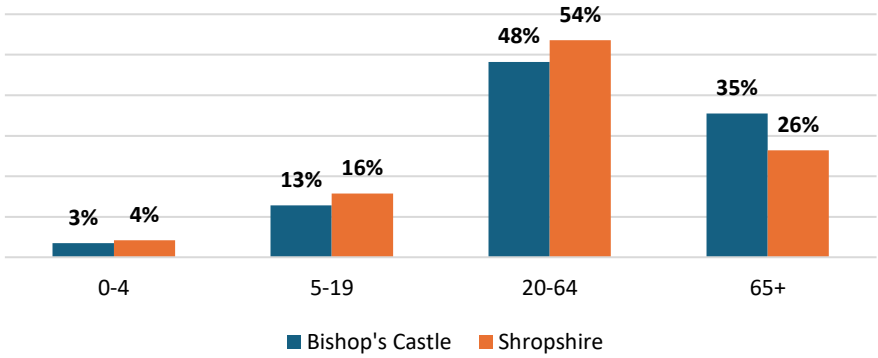
Includes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= least expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bishop's Castle Catchment Area

Population

- Bishop's Castle library catchment is the 14th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 7,704 and a Shropshire population of 5,853.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There are 3,420 households in the catchment, with 114 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.19 which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

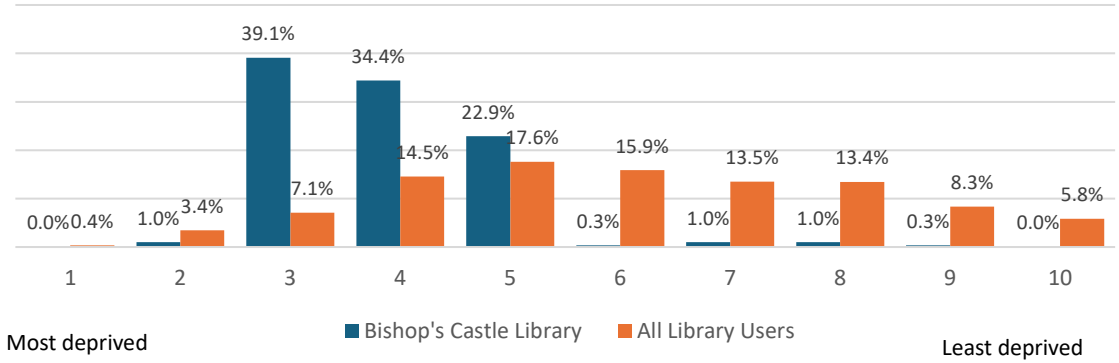
Age Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Catchment



Bishop's Castle catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Bishop's Castle Library Users by IMD Decile



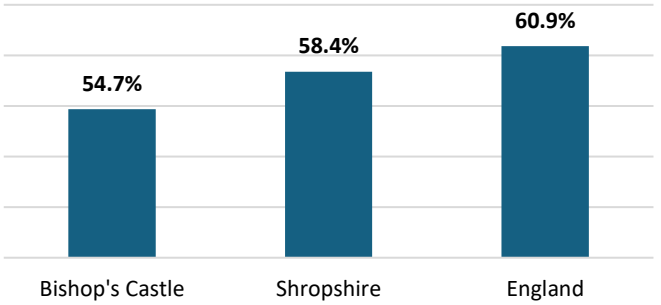
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Bishop's Castle library is in one of the more deprived locations in Shropshire (decile 3 according to IMD 2025), in a large part due to its rural location.
- The adjacent chart shows that more than 95% of Bishop's castle library users live in the most deprived 50% of England compared with 43% of all users of Shropshire libraries.
- Most of these people live in deciles three, four and five rather than in the most deprived 20% of the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Bishop's Castle library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 54.7% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Bishop's Castle catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Bishop's Castle library catchment area is the 6th lowest in Shropshire.

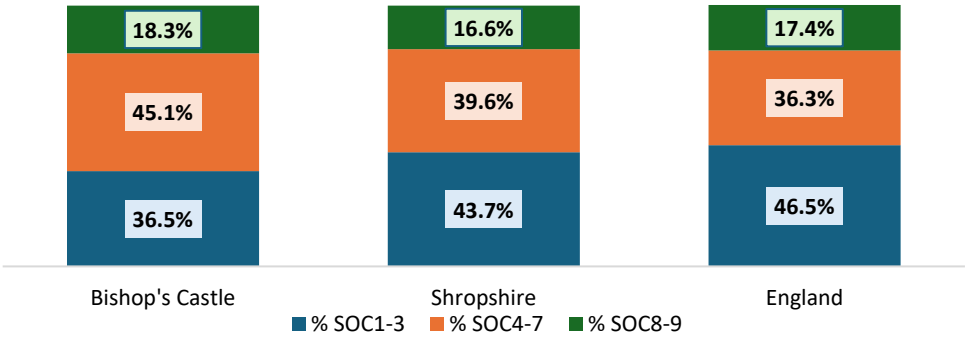
Bishop's Castle: Economic Activity Rate



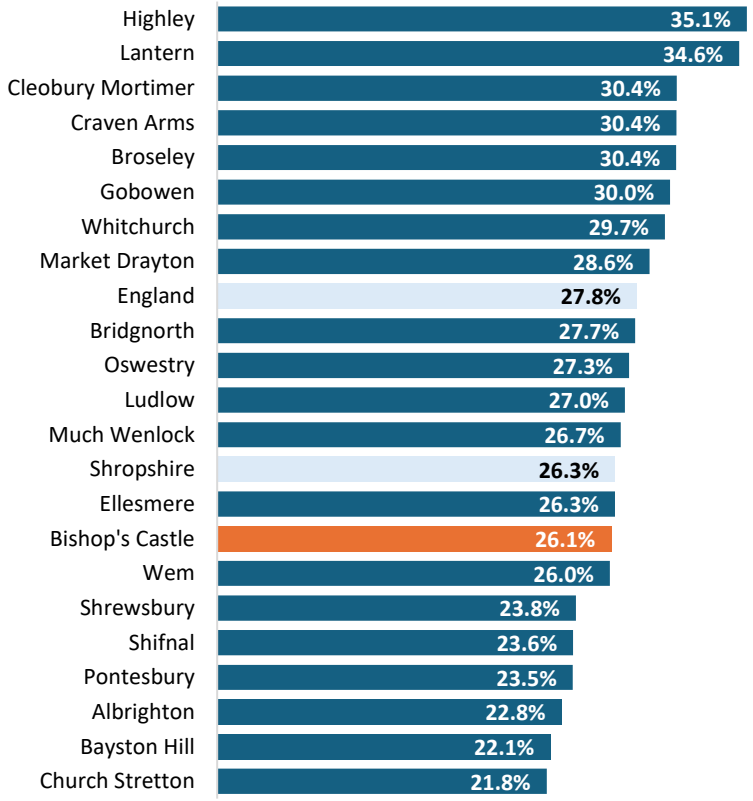
Employment

- 3,514 people in Bishop's Castle were in employment in 2021, which equates with 53% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 36.5%. Slighly more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). A particularly high proportion are employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services).

Bishop's Castle: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

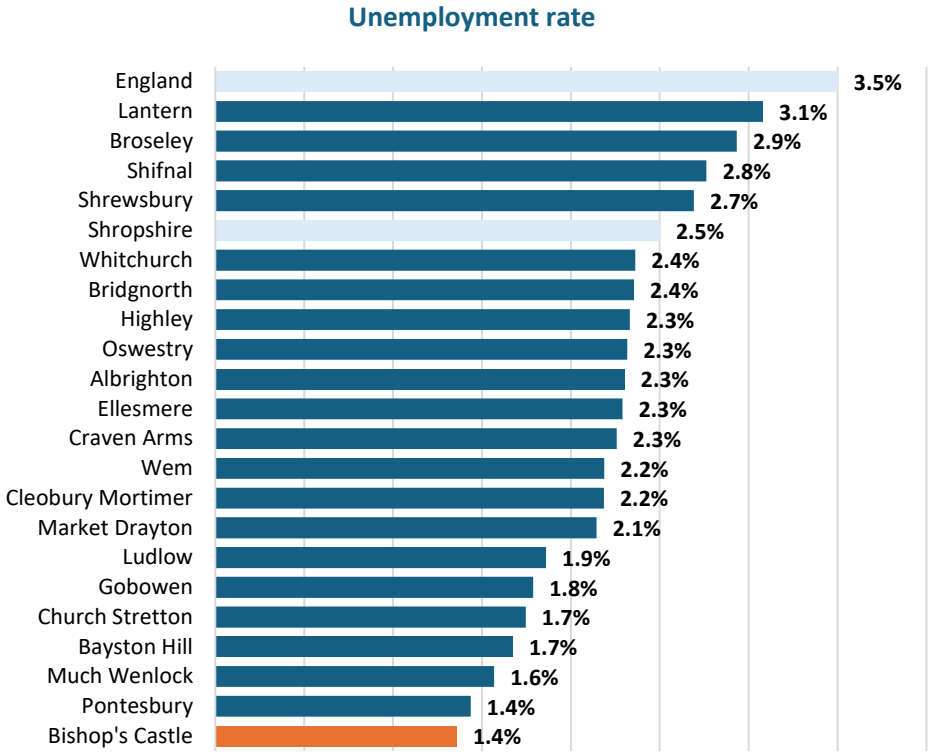


Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Bishop's Castle population have no or low qualifications to the Shropshire average at 26.1%. This is lower than the national average of 27.8%

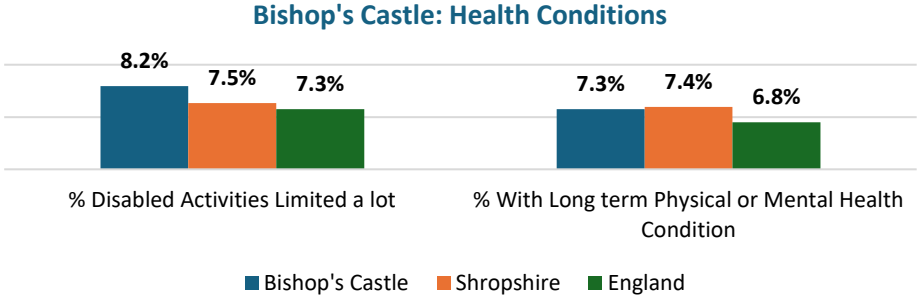
Unemployment

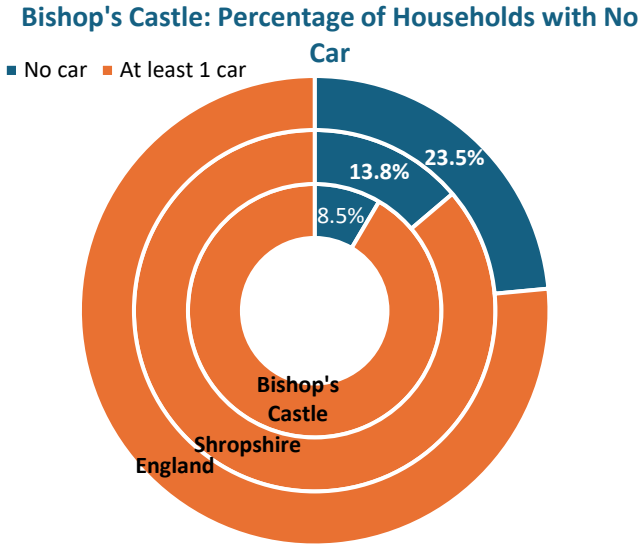
- 90 people living in the Bishop's Castle catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.4%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is lower than any other catchment in Shropshire.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



Health Conditions

- 8.2% of residents in the Bishop's Castle library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is marginally higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.3% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).





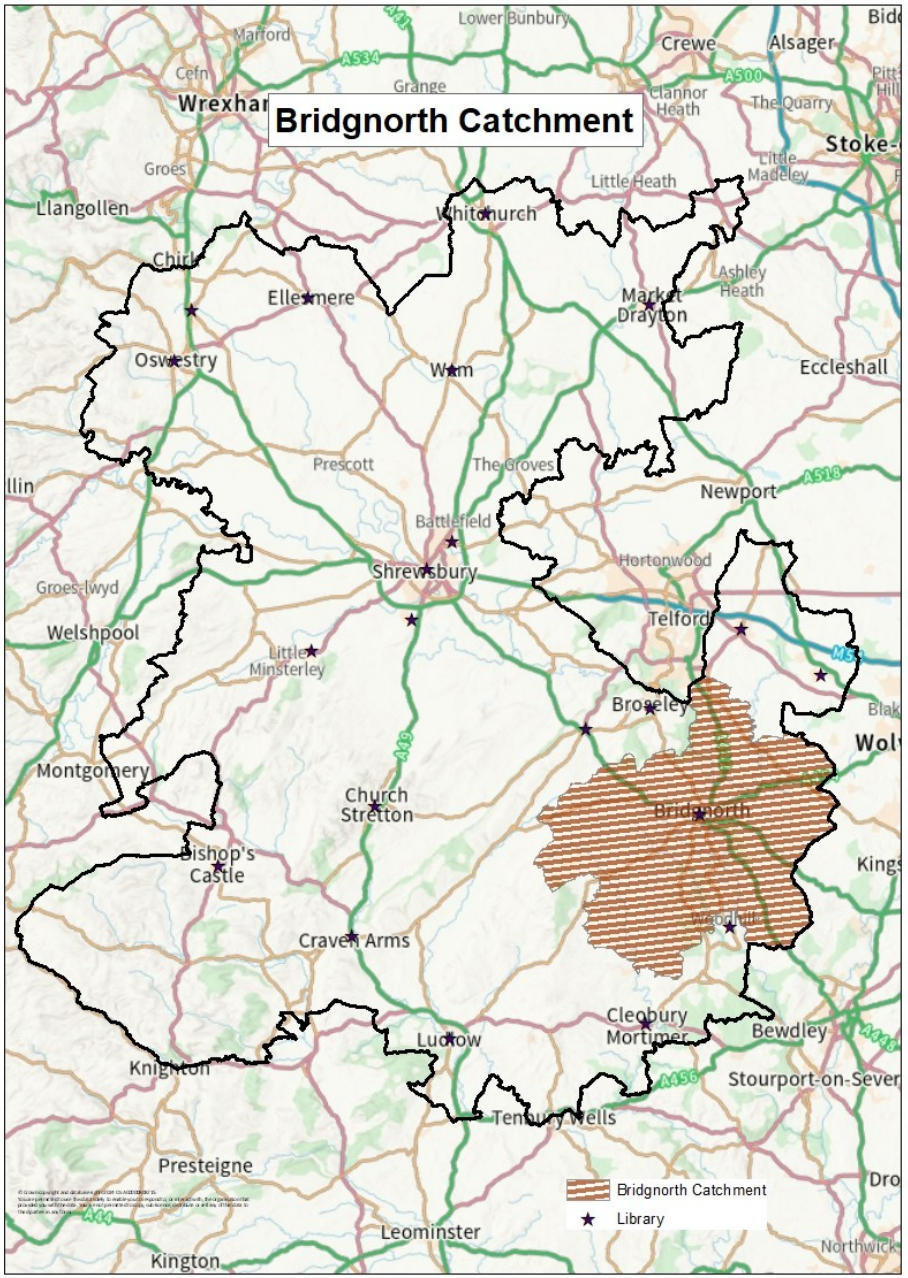
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bishop's Castle households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 8.5%.

Bridgnorth Library Profile

Background

- Bridgnorth is a town in the south east of Shropshire on the River Severn. It is approximately 7 miles from the Shropshire border and 14 miles from Wolverhampton.
- The library is a single storey building located in the centre of the town, with parking to the rear. The building is owned by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 34,243 hectares within Shropshire which is about 10.7% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment is contained within Shropshire.
- The total population within the Bridgnorth library catchment area is 25,740 comprising 11,025 households. In terms of the population it serves, Bridgnorth is the third largest catchment in Shropshire.



Opening Hours

The library is open 36.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

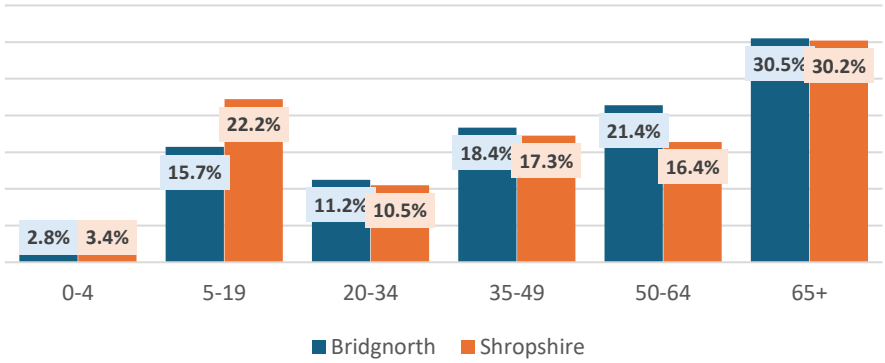
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-15.00pm	5.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 4.38 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 222 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 596 volunteer hours.

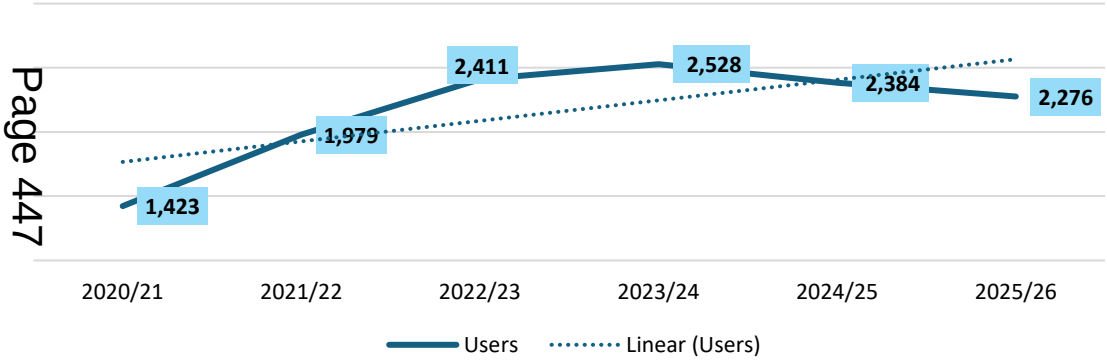
Library Users

- Bridgnorth library had 2,276 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 7.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.3% of the Bridgnorth catchment population are active library users, which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average. This includes usage of all Shropshire libraries, not just Bridgnorth.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and adults aged 20-49 and more users aged 50 and above.

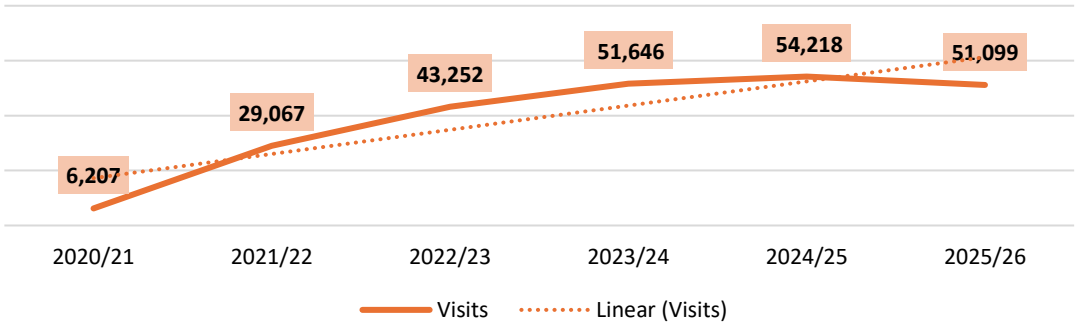
Breakdown of Bridgnorth Library Users by Age



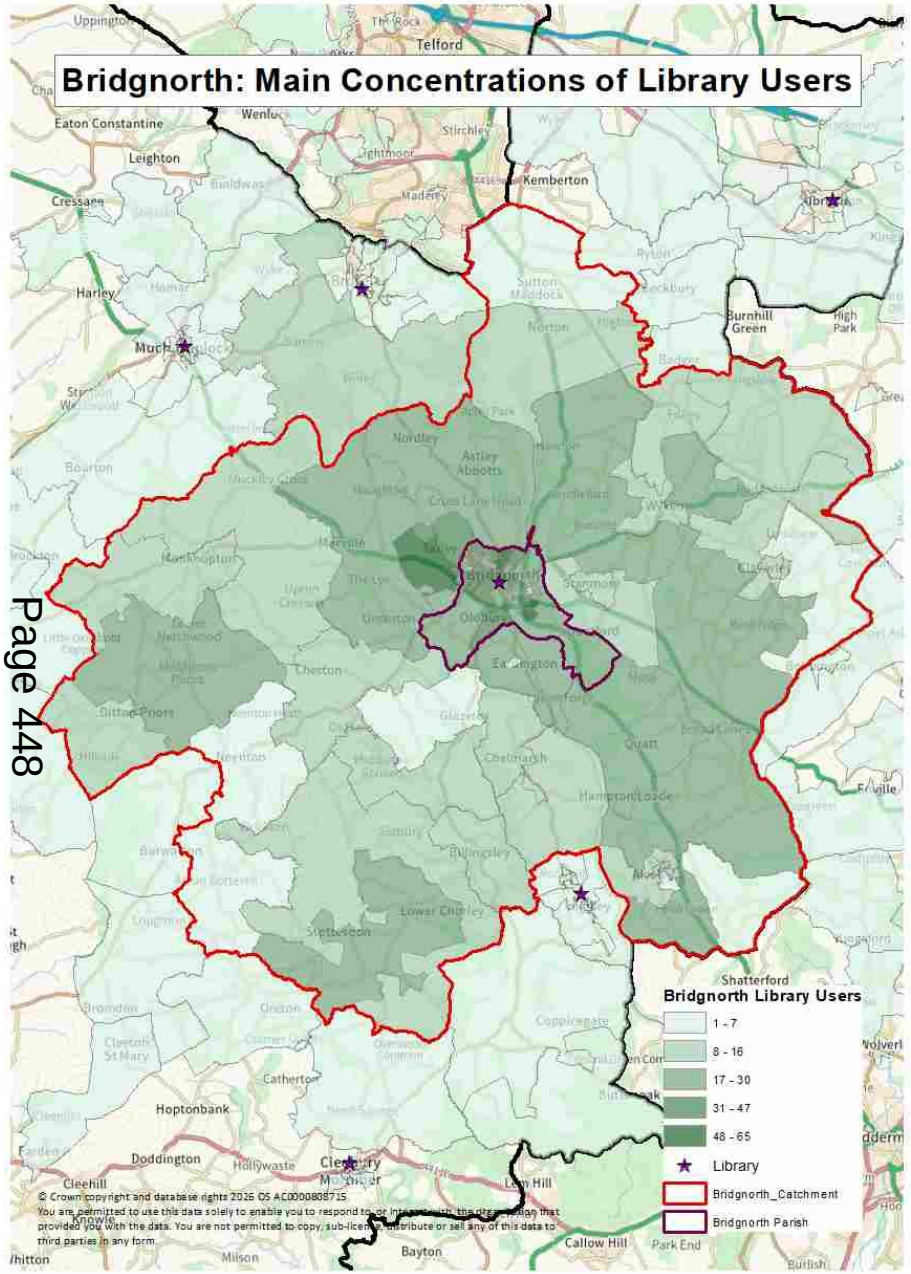
Bridgnorth: Number of Active Users



Bridgnorth: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there was considerable recovery until 2023/24 before user numbers dipped in 2024/25 and again in 2025/26. The number of users remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- Post pandemic there has been a notable recovery, with the number of users increasing between 2019/20 and 2024/25 by 853 users (+59.9%). This is comparable to the average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 51,099, which is the equivalent of about 22 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library is now slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels (21 visits per user).
- The overall number of visits in 2025/26 was more than eight times higher than in 2020/21.
- 32,248 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 14 per active user and about 0.6 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 12% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 17% over the last year.
- Computer time was down substantially (-14%).



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 85.0% of all Bridgnorth library users live within the main catchment area.
- 56.1% live within the Bridgnorth town council area.
- 8.3% of the population in the catchment area are Bridgnorth active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 3% to over 18%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 15.0% of Bridgnorth library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in Broseley, Much Wenlock or Highley, with smaller numbers in Shrewsbury Albrighton, Shifnal and Ludlow.
- People that live in the Bridgnorth catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury, Highley or Ludlow library or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to May 2025, 88.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Bridgnorth library were to Bridgnorth, and these accounted for 88.5% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Bridgnorth include Much Wenlock, Broseley, Highley, Albrighton, Shrewsbury and Ludlow as well as the Brookes mobile.

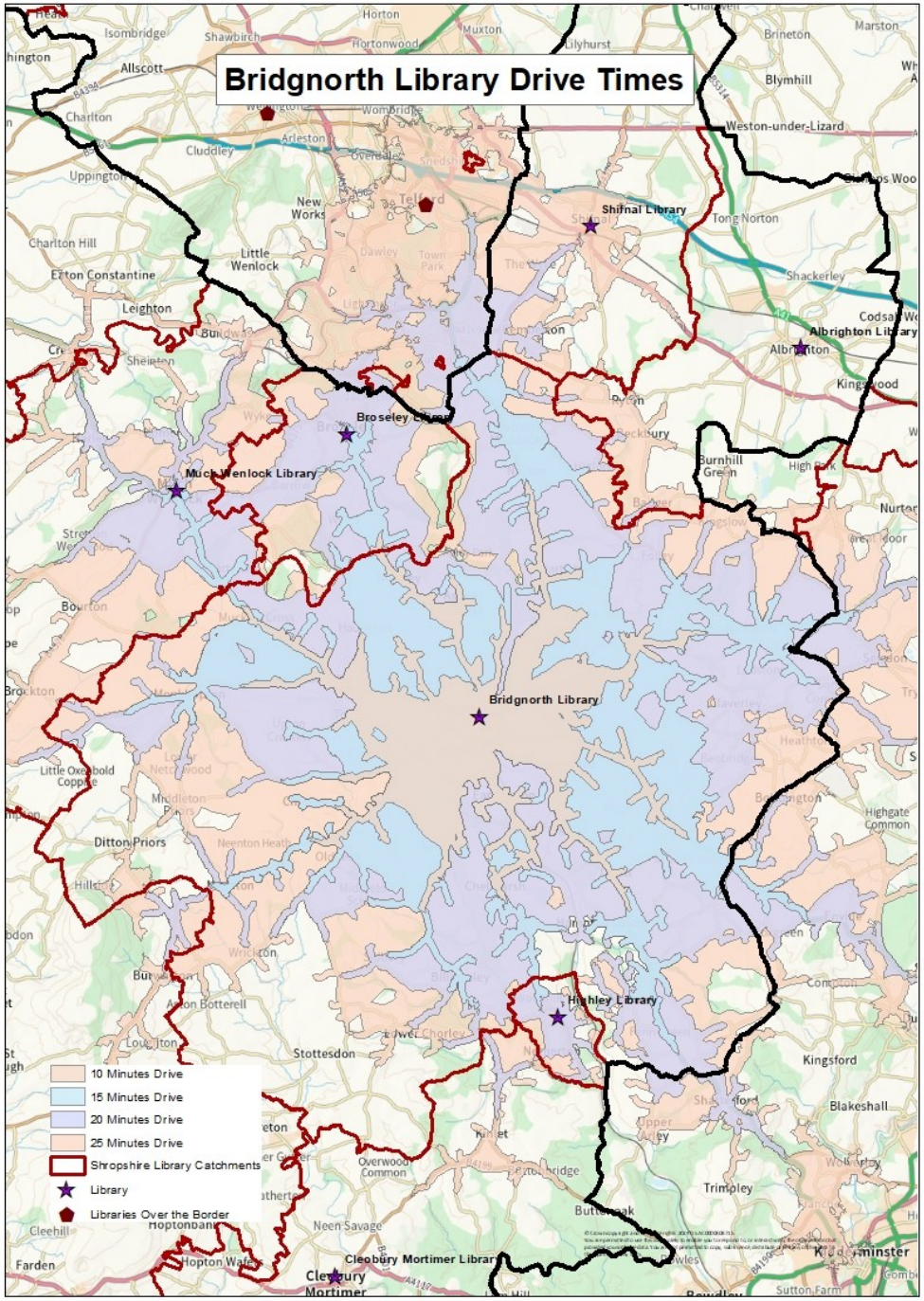
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Bridgnorth library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	28.1%
30 Minute Walk	60.3%
10 Minute Drive	68.8%
15 Minute Drive	77.6%
20 Minute Drive	88.2%
25 Minute Drive	92.0%

Access

- Bridgnorth is in the south east of Shropshire with easy access to the West Midlands conurbation.
- Broseley, Much Wenlock and Highley libraries are all within an approximate 10-20 minute drive from Bridgnorth, with Shifnal and Albrighton slightly further afield.
- The nearest of other main six libraries is Ludlow, which is approximately 19.5 miles away with a drive time of 35 minutes. Shrewsbury is slightly further afield at 22.9 miles, or a 39-minute drive.



Costs

- Bridgnorth is the fourth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Oswestry
- Annual running costs are £219,360 (2025/26)
- Bridgnorth library costs more than average per hour open, per active user and per book loan but around average per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£115.57	£78.80	5th
Per Active User	£96.38	£81.29	8th
Per Visit	£4.29	£4.23	7th
Per Book Loan	£6.80	£5.07	6th

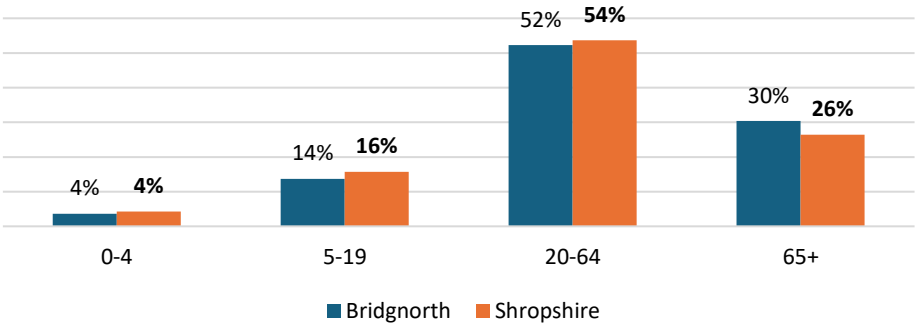
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Bridgnorth Catchment Area

Population

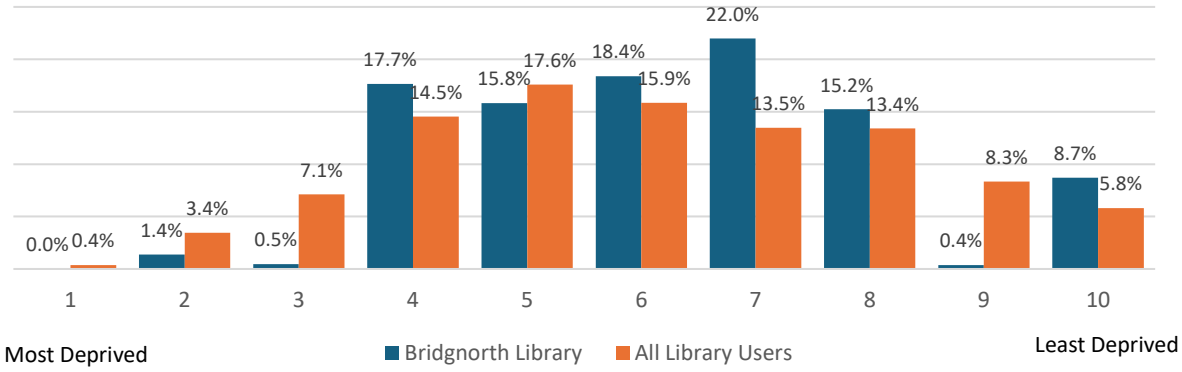
- Bridgnorth library catchment is the third largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 25,740.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There are 11,025 households in the catchment, with 379 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.28 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Bridgnorth Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Bridgnorth Library Users by IMD Decile



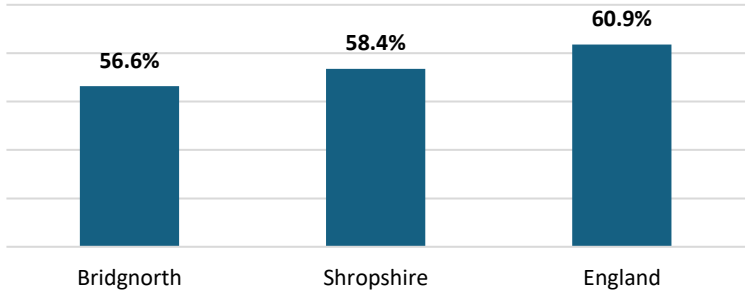
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Bridgnorth library is in decile 6 according to the IMD 2025, and as such is in an area with average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that less than 2% of Bridgnorth library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.8% for all Shropshire library users)
- 89.1% of users are drawn from deciles four to eight, with numbers relatively evenly spread across these deciles.
- 9.1% live in the least deprived 20% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Bridgnorth library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 56.6% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Bridgnorth catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Bridgnorth library catchment area is the 9th lowest in Shropshire.

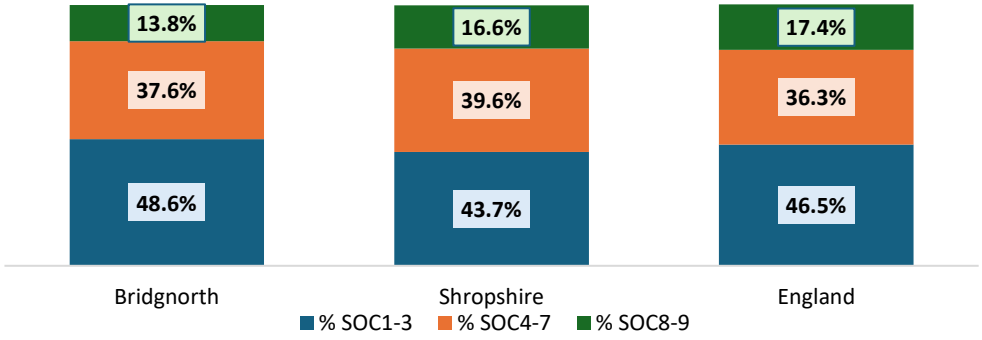
Bridgnorth: Economic Activity Rate



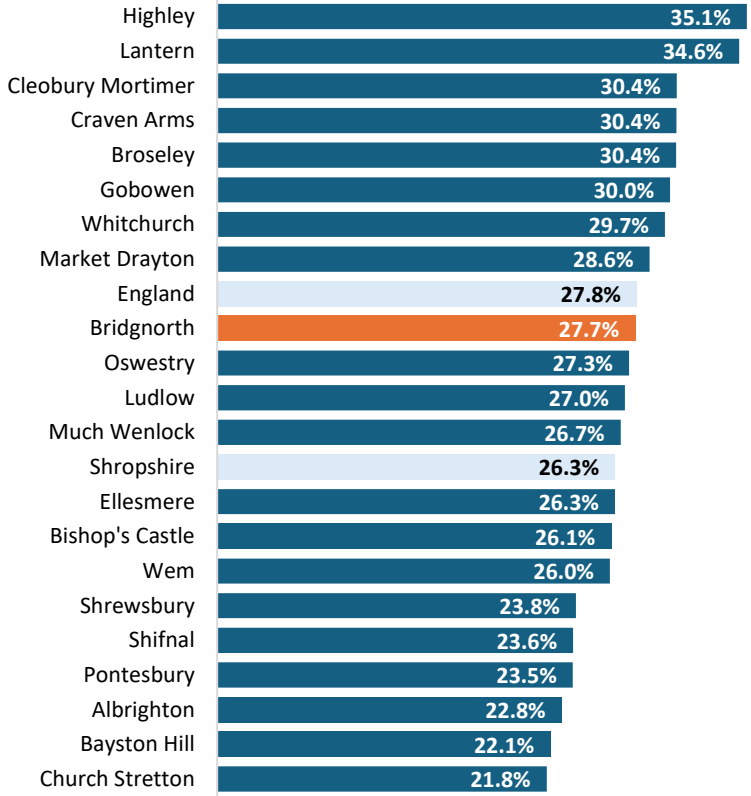
Employment

- 11,926 people in Bridgnorth were in employment in 2021, which equates with 54.6% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 48.6%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) or in SOC4-7 occupations(skilled trades and services).

Bridgnorth: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

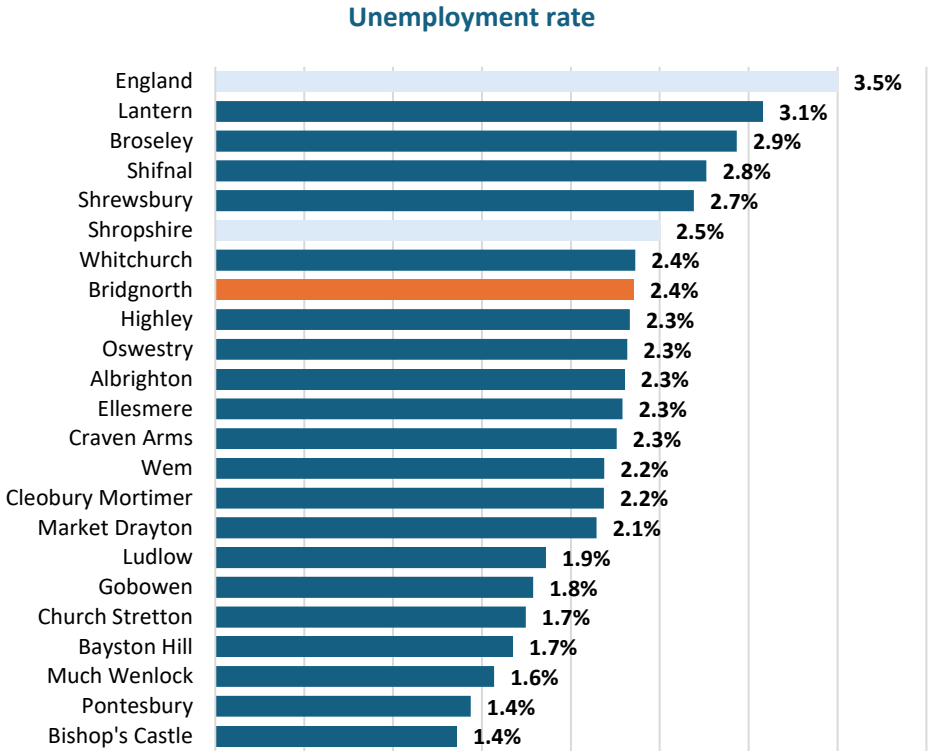


Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Bridgnorth population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.7%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average (26.3%).

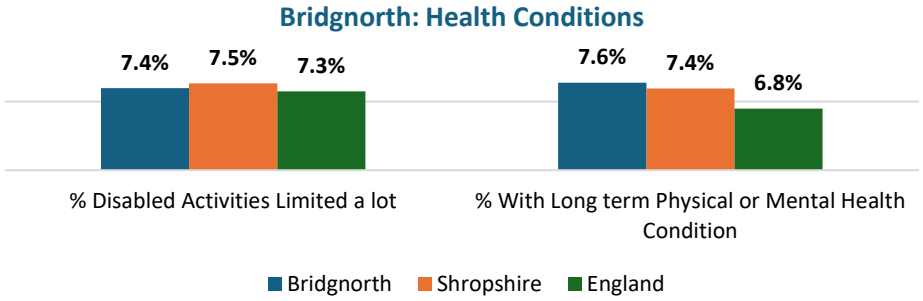
Unemployment

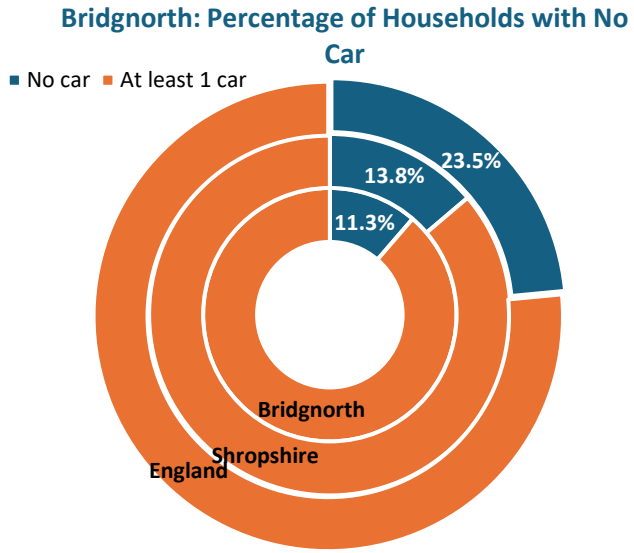
- 514 people living in the Bridgnorth catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.4%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



Health Conditions

- 7.4% of residents in the Bridgnorth library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable with the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).





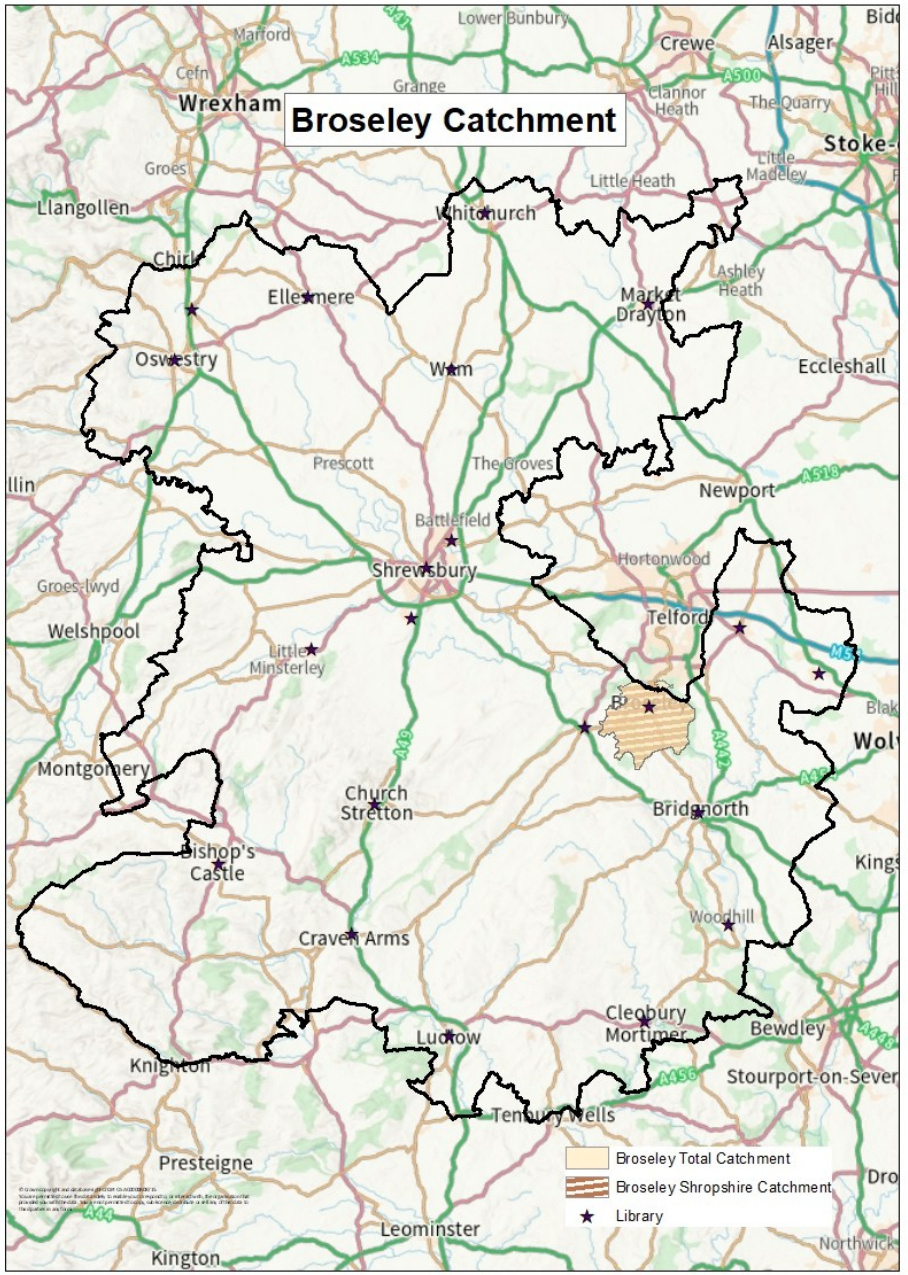
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Bridgnorth households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.3%.

Broseley Library Profile

Background

- Broseley is a small town in the east of Shropshire, close to the Ironbridge Gorge and the border with Telford &Wrekin.
- The library is located in the centre of the town with an adjacent car park.
- The library building is late 19th century and is a converted school house. Library services are commissioned by Shropshire Council and run by the town council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 3,272 hectares within Shropshire which is about 1% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the smallest in Shropshire. A small proportion of the catchment is outside Shropshire in Telford and Wrekin (the equivalent of 67 hectares).
- The total population within the Broseley library catchment area is 6,341 comprising 2,737 households. The Shropshire population (6,047 people) accounts for 95.4% of the total catchment population.



Opening Hours

The library is open 33.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

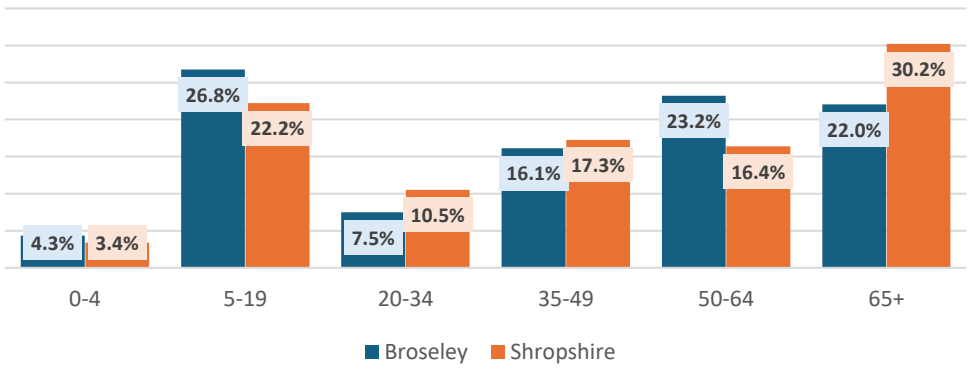
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Tuesday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Wednesday	9.30am-13.30pm	4
Thursday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Friday	9.30am-13.30pm 14.00pm-16.30pm	6.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- In 2025/26 the library benefited from 36 volunteers, contributing 298 volunteer hours throughout the year.

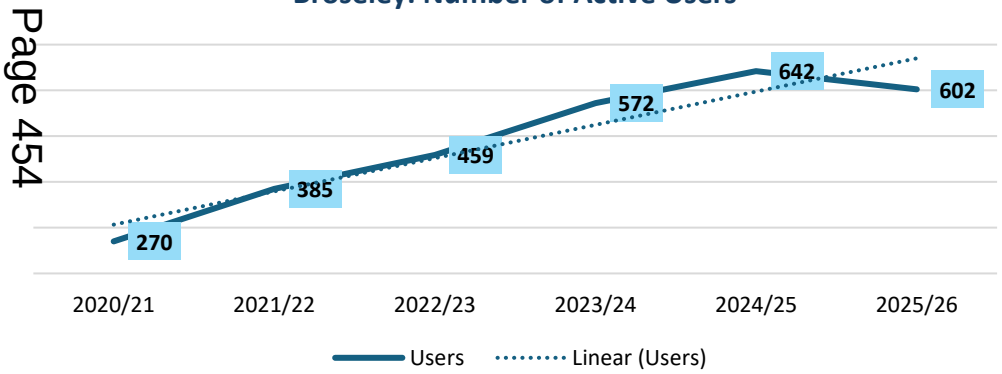
Library Users

- Broseley library had 602 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.9% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.9% of the Broseley catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries not just Broseley.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and fewer adults aged 20-49. The representation of the 65+ cohort is also under-represented.

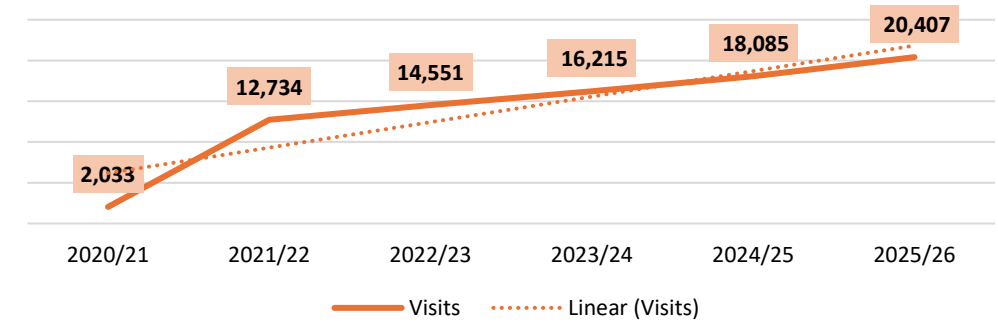
Breakdown of Broseley Library Users by Age



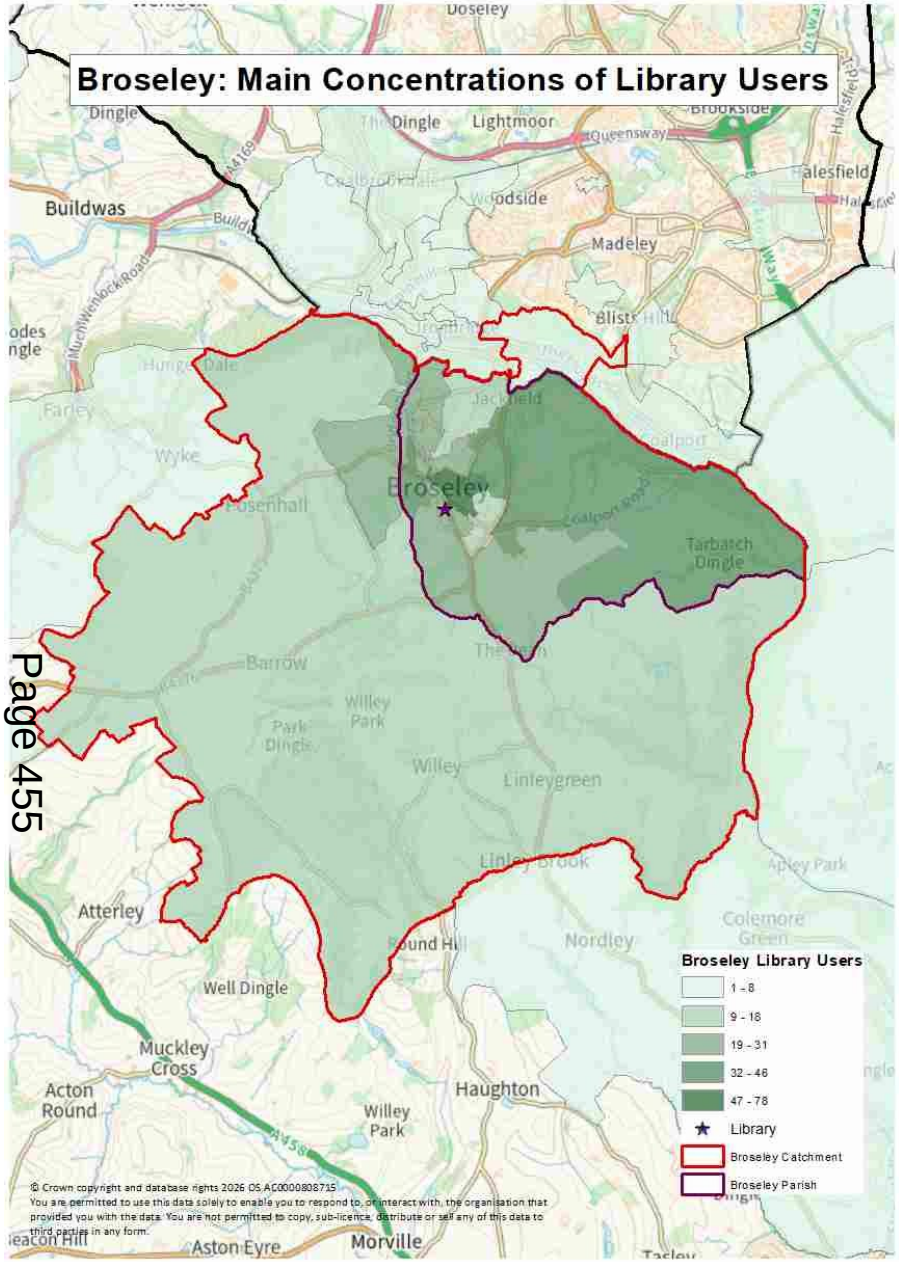
Broseley: Number of Active Users



Broseley: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year, and by 2024/25 numbers had reached 642 which is higher than pre-pandemic levels. The number fell back slightly in 2025/26.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 332 users (+123.0%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 20,407, which is the equivalent of about 34 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at over once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels (28 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was 10 times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 9,481 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.5 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 13% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 9%.
- Computer time increased by a significant 70%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.3% of all Broseley library users live within the main catchment area.
- 79.5% live within Broseley Parish.
- 9.9% of the population in the catchment area are Broseley active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from around 5% to around 15%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 12.7% of Broseley library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in either Much Wenlock or Bridgnorth catchments or have an out-of-county postcode.
- People that live in the Broseley catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Bridgnorth library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 91.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Broseley library were to Broseley, and these accounted for 91.1% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Broseley include Bridgnorth and Church Stretton.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Broseley library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

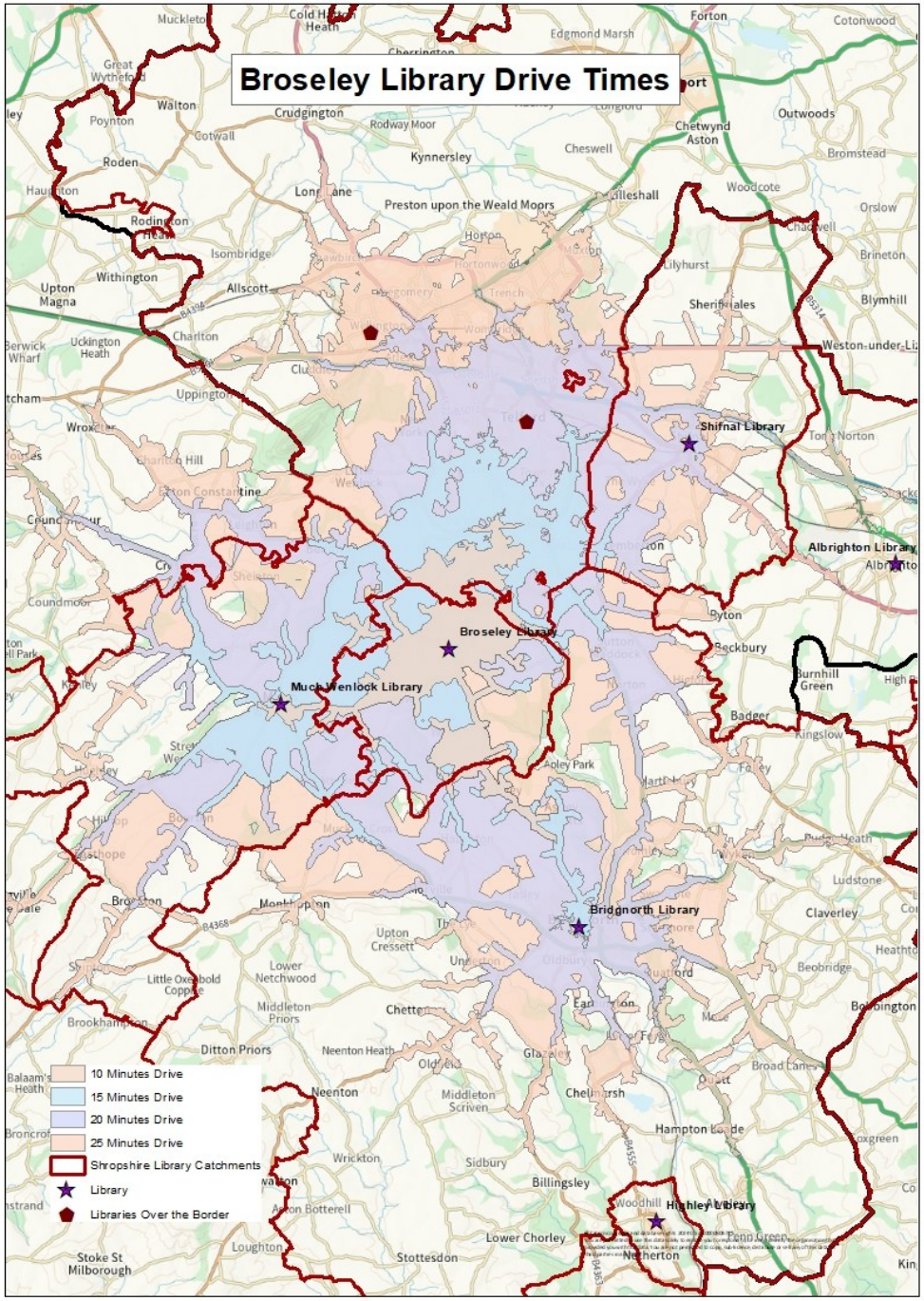
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	69.0%
30 Minute Walk	84.1%
10 Minute Drive	90.0%
15 Minute Drive	92.5%
20 Minute Drive	96.3%
25 Minute Drive	97.6%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Broseley is in the east of Shropshire close to the border with Telford & Wrekin.
- The closest library to Broseley library is Much Wenlock, which is located 4.5 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 10 minutes. There is also a bus every two hours which takes 20 minutes.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Bridgnorth which is approximately 6.4 miles away with a drive time of 12 minutes.
- Bridgnorth is easily accessible by public transport with the number 8 bus running about every two or three hours and taking about 20 minutes.

Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Broseley	Much Wenlock	4.5 miles	10 mins	8A Bus	20 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Broseley	Bridgnorth	6.4 miles	12 mins	8 Bus	20 mins



Costs

- Broseley is the third least expensive library in Shropshire for Shropshire Council to operate behind Albrighton and Shifnal.
- Annual Council costs are £7,970 (2025/26)
- Broseley ranks amongst the three least expensive Shropshire libraries in relation to costs per hour open, per active user, per book loan and per visit.

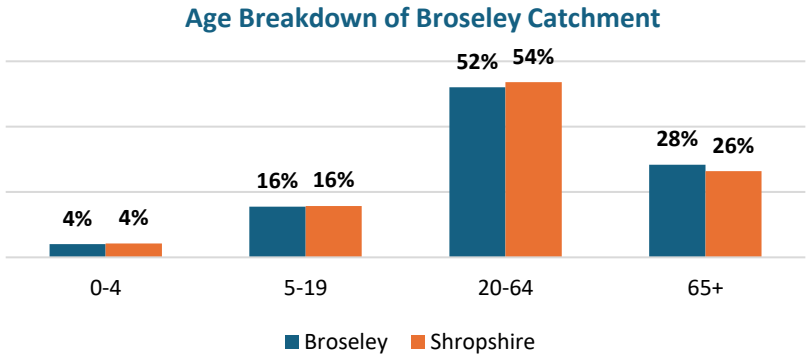
	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£4.58	£78.80	20th
Per Active User	£13.24	£81.29	19th
Per Visit	£0.39	£4.23	21st
Per Book Loan	£0.84	£5.07	19th

Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Broseley Catchment Area

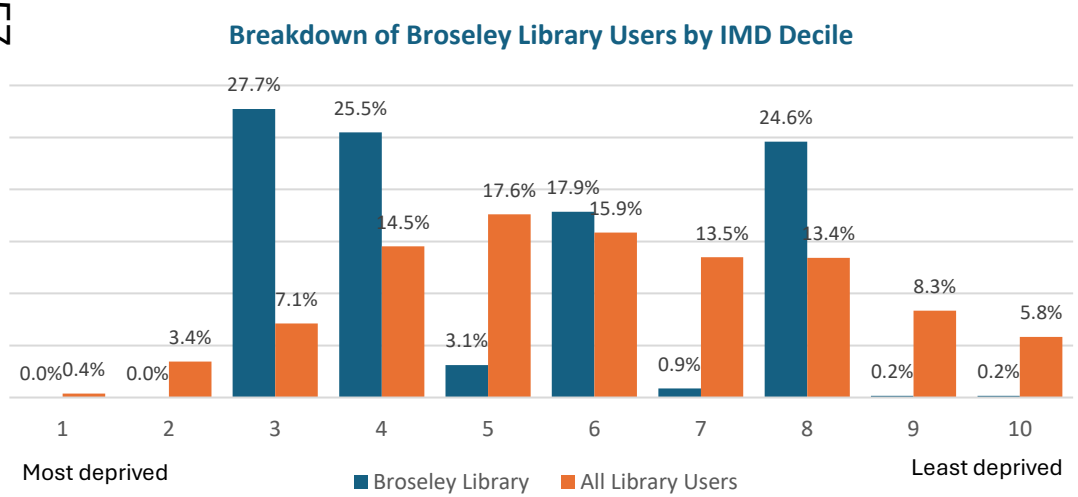
Population

- Broseley library catchment is the 13th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 6,341 and a Shropshire population of 6,047.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (28% compared with 26% for Shropshire).
- There are 2,737 households in the catchment, with 32 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.29 which is comparable to the Shropshire average of 2.27.



Broseley catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation



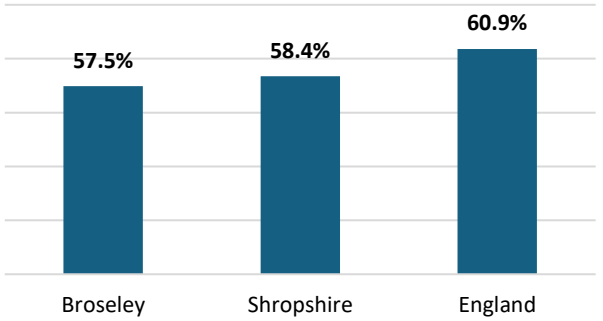
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Broseley library is in decile 4 according to the 2025 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that 25.5% of Broseley library users live in this decile compared with 14.5% of all Shropshire library users.
- A high proportion also live in deciles 3 and 8.
- No library users live in either the most or least deprived 20% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Broseley library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 57.5% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Broseley library catchment area is the 9th highest in Shropshire.

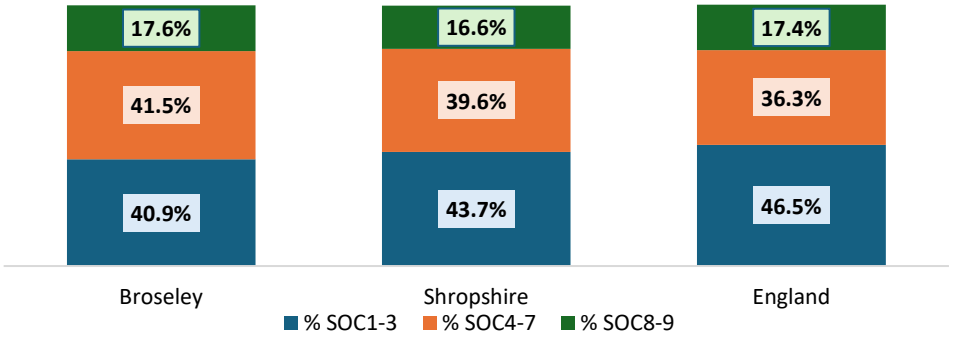
Broseley: Economic Activity Rate



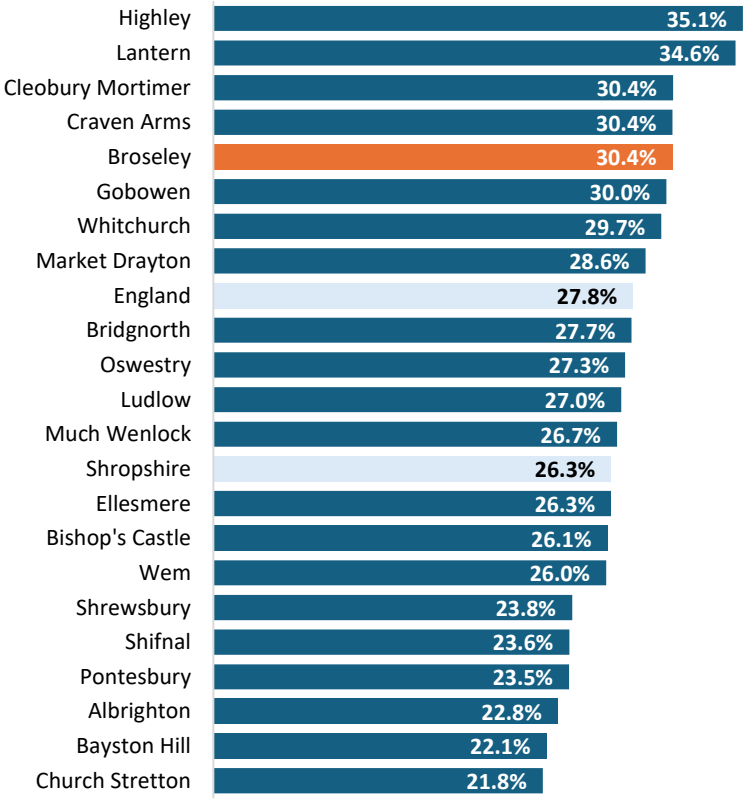
Employment

- 2,862 people in Broseley were in employment in 2021, which equates with 54.5% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 40.9%. Slighly more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). A particularly high proportion are employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services).

Broseley: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

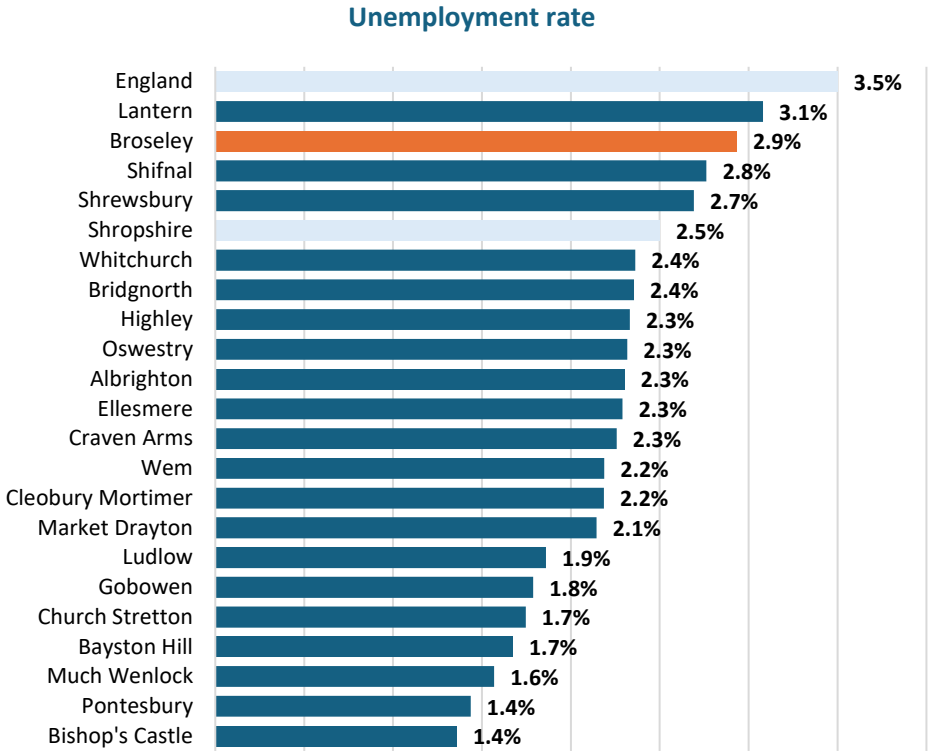


Qualifications

- A higher proportion of the Broseley population have no or low qualifications compared to the Shropshire average at 30.4%. This is also higher than the national average.

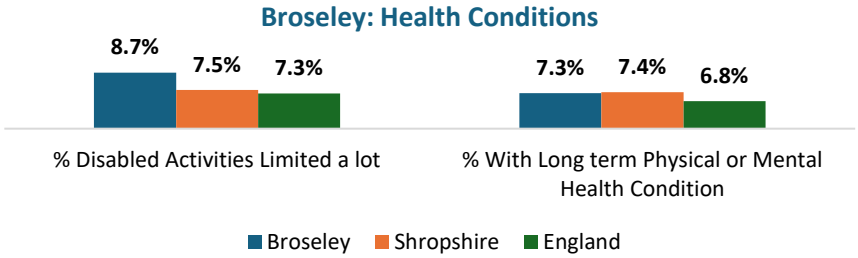
Unemployment

- 154 people living in the Broseley catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.9%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is higher than any other catchment in Shropshire except the Lantern.
- Other catchments with relatively high levels of unemployment include Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



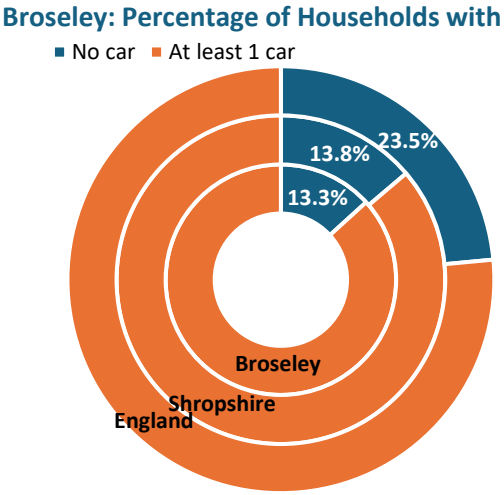
Health Conditions

- 8.7% of residents in the Broseley library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is notably higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.3% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

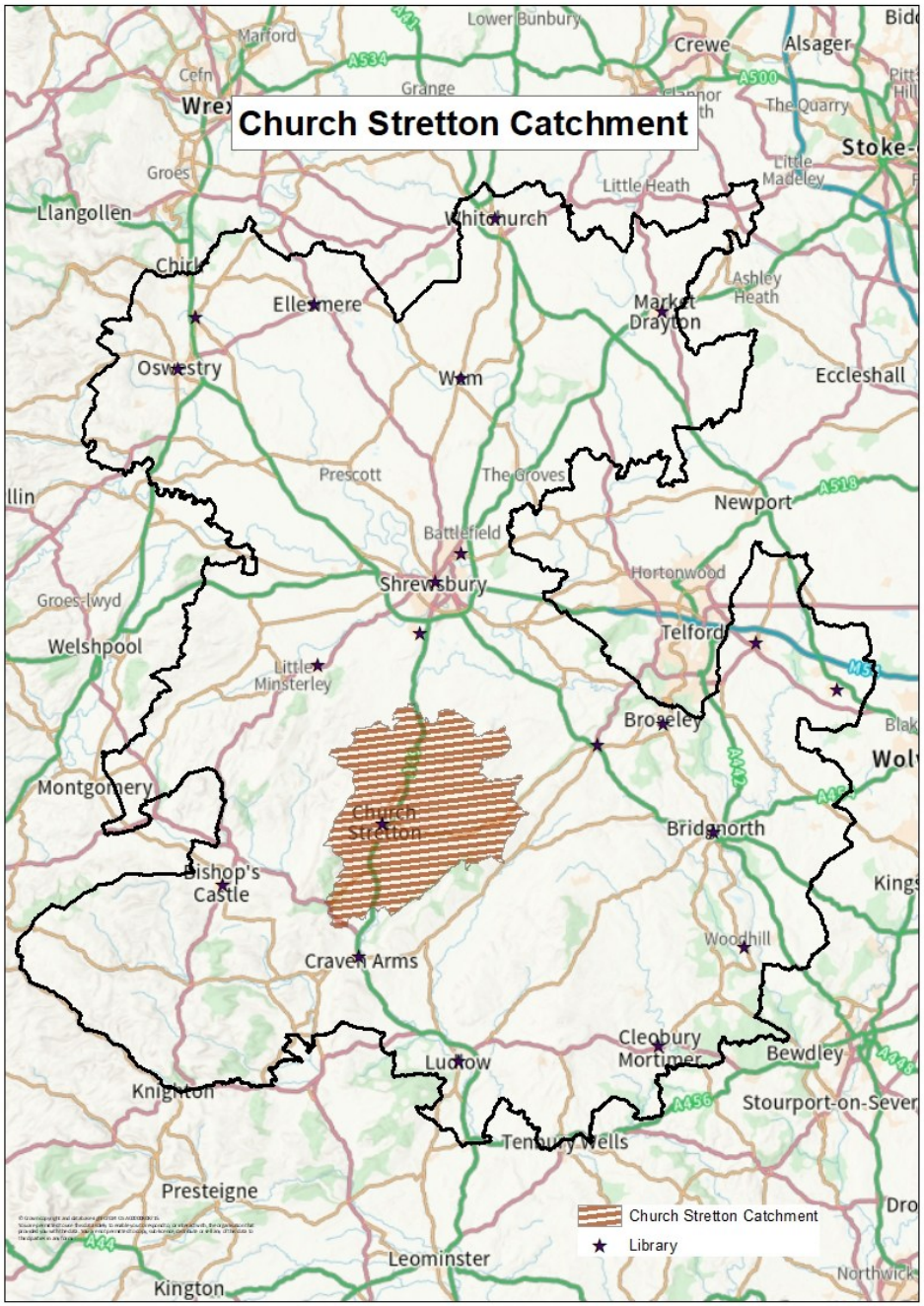
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Broseley households that do not have access to a car or van is comparable to the Shropshire average at 13.3%.



Church Stretton Library Profile

Background

- Church Stretton is a small town in the south of Shropshire, located on the A49 between Shrewsbury and Ludlow. It is located within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The library is the centre of the town on Church Street with a small car park to the rear.
- The library building, owned by Shropshire Council, is mid-19th century and is a converted schoolhouse. The building also houses the town's Visitor Information Centre.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 17,740 hectares within Shropshire which is about 5.5% of the county's land mass. The catchment, which is entirely within Shropshire, accounts for the seventh largest share of Shropshire hectares, and other than Bishop's Castle is the largest catchment outside of the six main libraries.
- The total population within the Church Stretton library catchment area is 7,962 comprising 3,691 households.



Opening Hours

The library is open 30 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

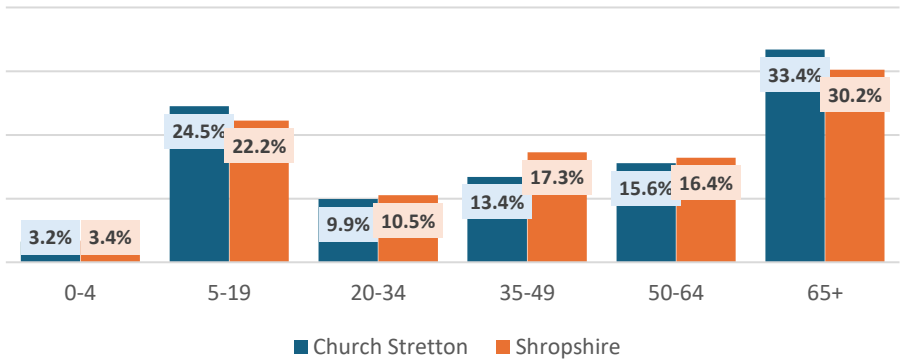
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 2.27 FTEs and in 2025/26 benefited from 251 volunteers, contributing 1,509 volunteer hours throughout the year.

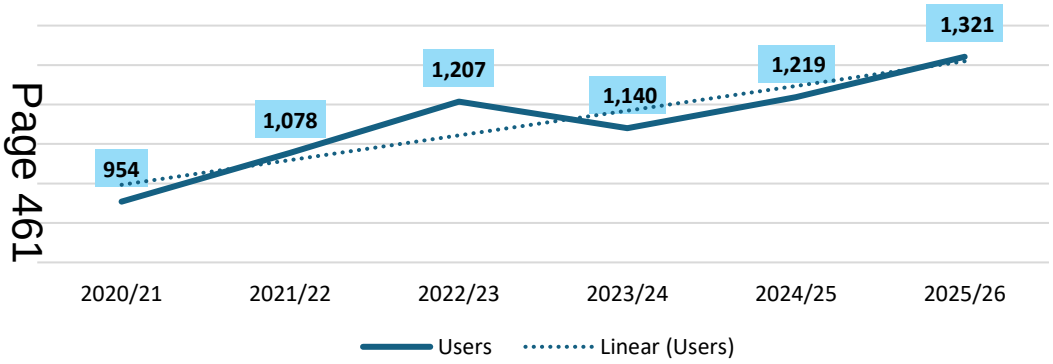
Library Users

- Church Stretton library had 1,321 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 4.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 18.0% of the Church Stretton catchment population are active library users (all Shropshire libraries not just Church Stretton), which is higher than any other catchment in Shropshire.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more users aged 65 and above and also more children, but fewer adults of working age.

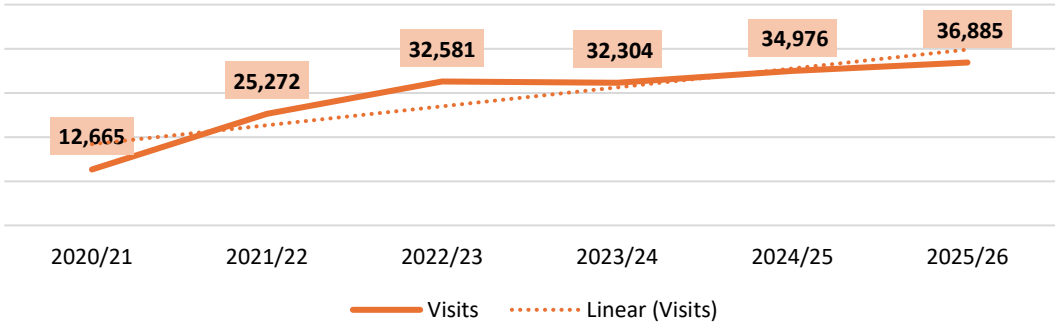
Breakdown of Church Stretton Library Users by Age



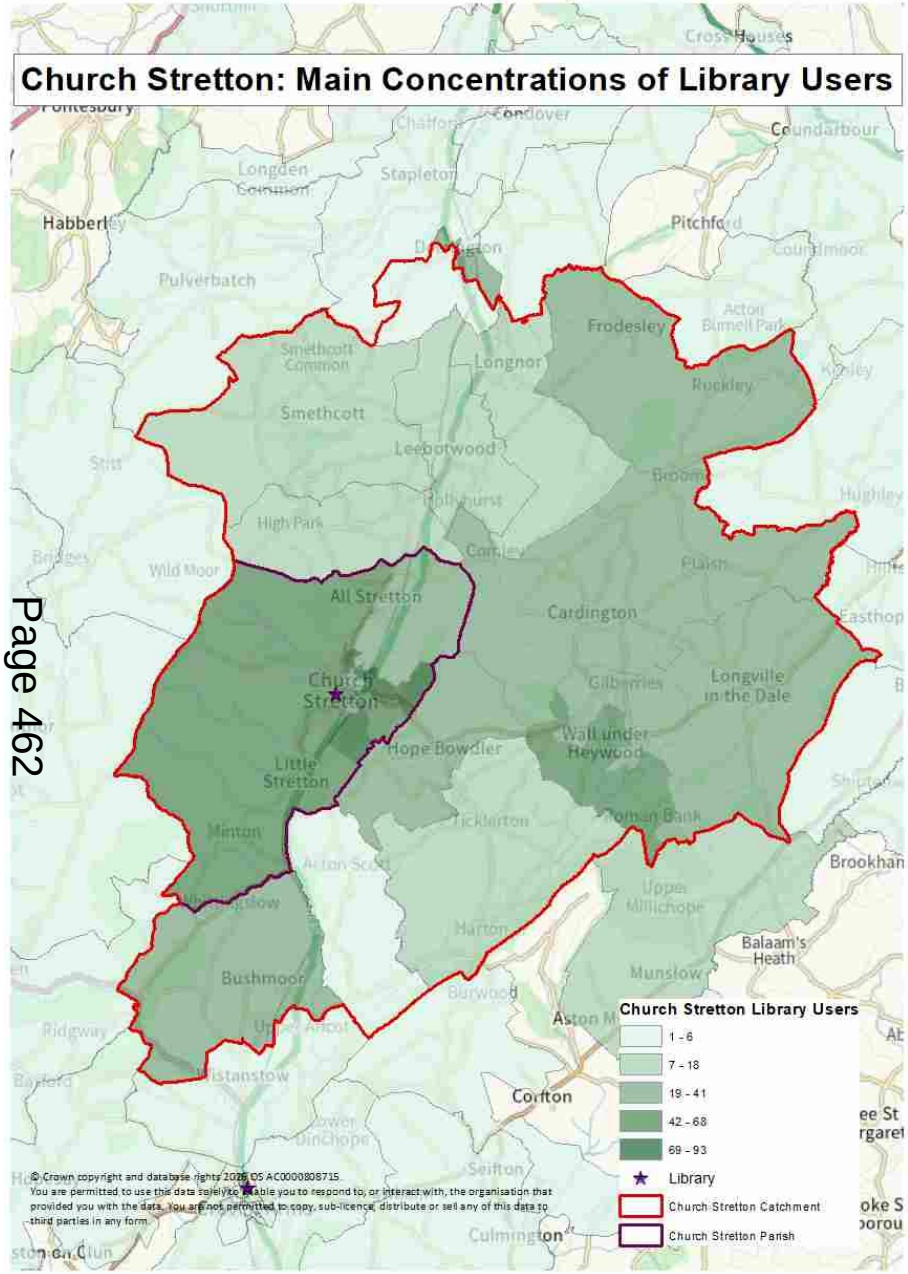
Church Stretton: Number of Active Users



Church Stretton: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although numbers dipped again in 2023/24 before picking up again in 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 367 users (+38.5%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 36,885, which is the equivalent of about 28 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at just over once a fortnight on average, has gone back up to pre-pandemic levels (27 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost three times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 29,835 loans were made in 2023/24, which equates with 23 per active user and 0.8 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 1% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 5%.
- Computer time was up significantly (+23%).



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 88.6% of all Church Stretton library users live within the main catchment area.
- 69.2% live within Church Stretton Parish.
- 18.0% of the population in the catchment area are Church Stretton active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 5% to almost a third. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 11.4% of Church Stretton library users that do not live in the catchment, most live in Shrewsbury, Craven Arms, Bishop's Castle and Ludlow catchments.
- People that live in the Church Stretton catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 87.4% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Church Stretton library were to Church Stretton, and these accounted for 88.2% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Church Stretton include Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Craven Arms as well as the Sabrina mobile library service.

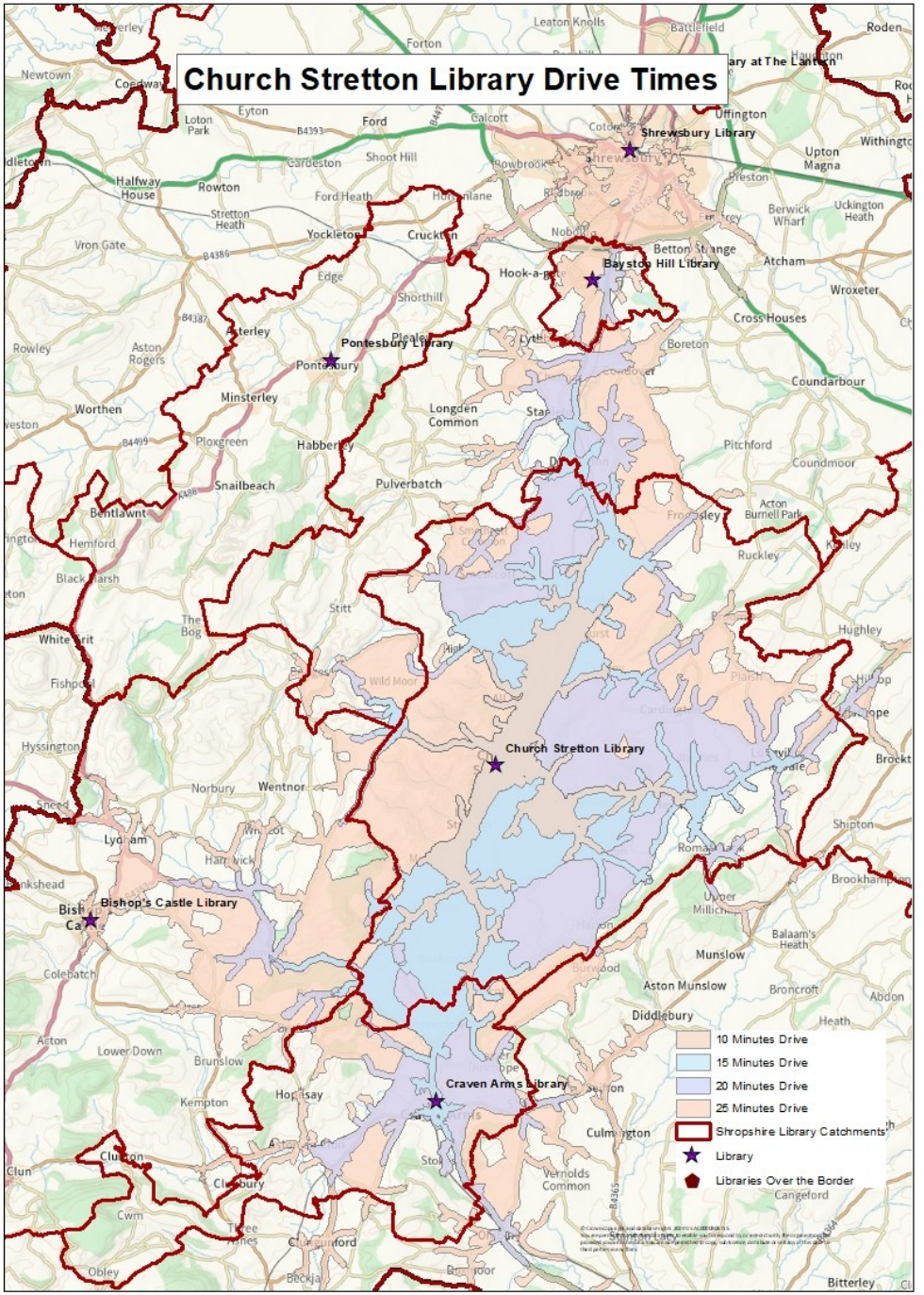
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Church Stretton library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	49.1%
30 Minute Walk	65.6%
10 Minute Drive	76.7%
15 Minute Drive	85.7%
20 Minute Drive	90.9%
25 Minute Drive	94.8%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Church Stretton is in the south of Shropshire on the A49 between Shrewsbury and Ludlow.
- It benefits from a train station which is on the Shrewsbury to Cardiff line.
- The closest library to Church Stretton library is Craven Arms, which is located 7.8 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes. There is also a relatively frequent train service and a regular bus service.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Ludlow which is approximately 15.5 miles away with a drive time of 25 minutes.
- Ludlow is easily accessible from the centre of Church Stretton via train or bus.



Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Church Stretton	Craven Arms	7.8 miles	13 mins	Train 435 Bus	8 mins 20 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Church Stretton	Ludlow	15.5 miles	25 mins	Train 435 Bus	15 mins 45 mins

Costs

- Church Stretton is the seventh most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the most expensive when the main six libraries are excluded.
- Annual running costs are £136,930 (2025/26)
- Church Stretton library costs more than average per hour open and per active user but less per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£87.78	£78.80	8th
Per Active User	£103.66	£81.29	6th
Per Visit	£3.71	£4.23	12th
Per Book Loan	£4.59	£5.07	11th

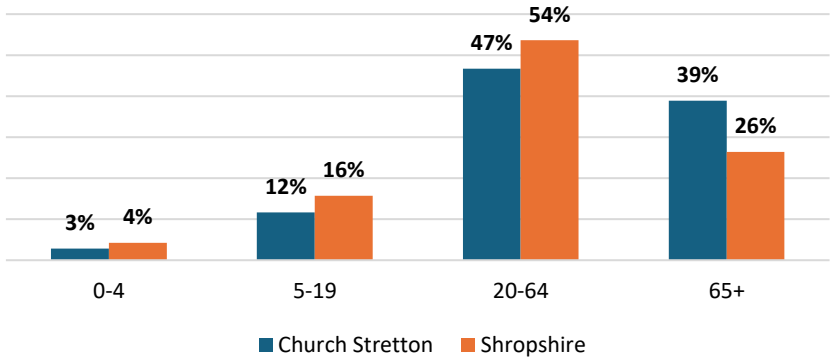
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Church Stretton Catchment Area

Population

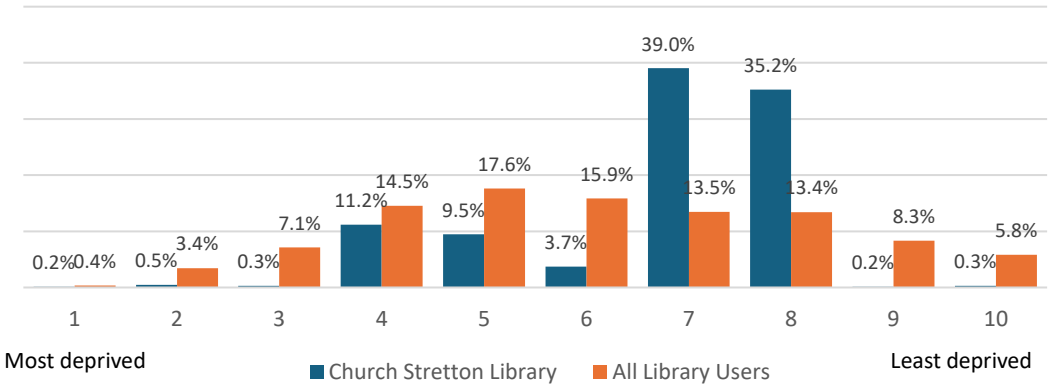
- Church Stretton library catchment is the 11th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 7,962.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a much higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (39% compared with 26% for Shropshire).
- There are 3,691 households in the catchment, with 135 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.12 which is smaller than the Shropshire average of 2.27

Age Breakdown of Church Stretton Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Church Stretton Library Users by IMD Decile



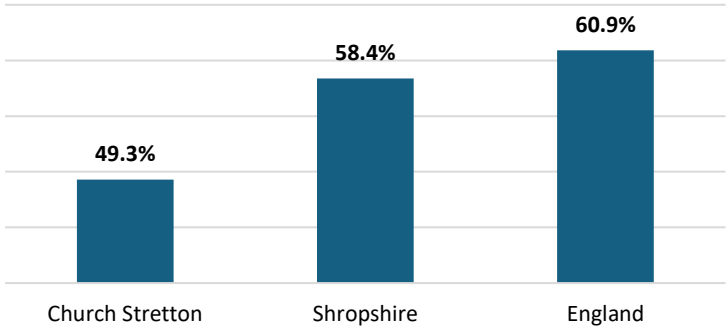
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Church Stretton library is in a relatively un-deprived location (decile 8 according to the IMD 2015), and most users also reside in the comparatively un-deprived parts of the county.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost three-quarters of Church Stretton library users live in the least deprived 40% of the country (41.0% for all Shropshire library users).
- Less than 1% live within the 30% most deprived areas of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Church Stretton library catchment is significantly lower than the Shropshire average at 49.3% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Church Stretton area is particularly skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Church Stretton library catchment area is the lowest in Shropshire.

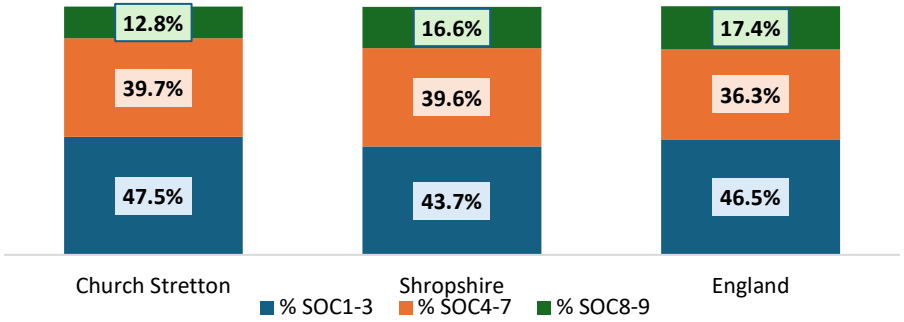
Church Stretton: Economic Activity Rate



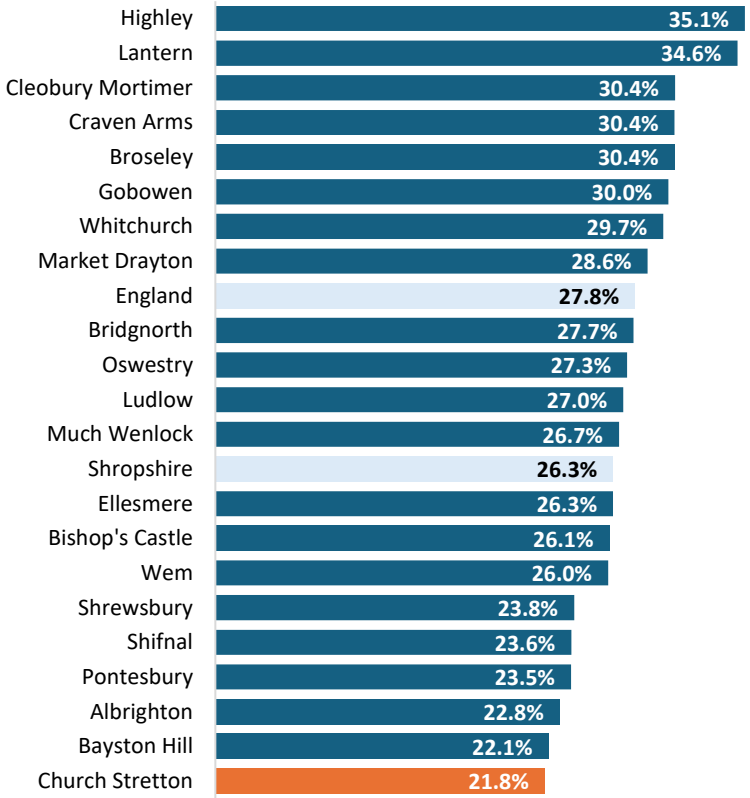
Employment

- 3,384 people in Church Stretton were in employment in 2021, which equates with 48% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 47.5%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). The proportion employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations is comparable to the Shropshire average.

Church Stretton: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

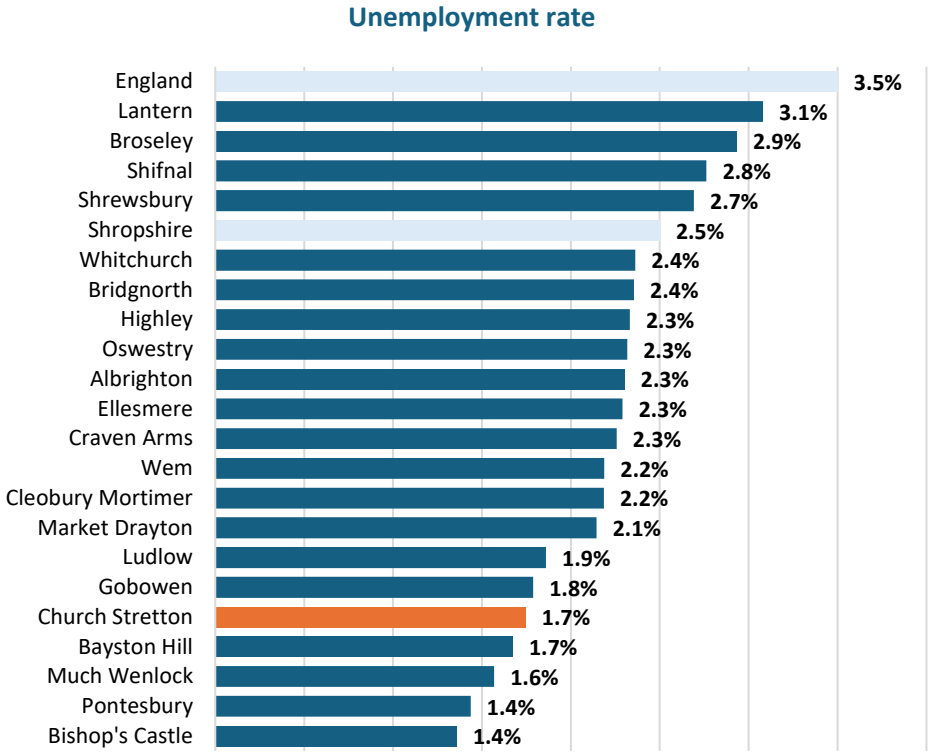


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Church Stretton population with no or low qualifications is the lowest in Shropshire at 21.8% of the 16+ population. This corresponds with the high proportion of workers in SOC 1-3 occupations.

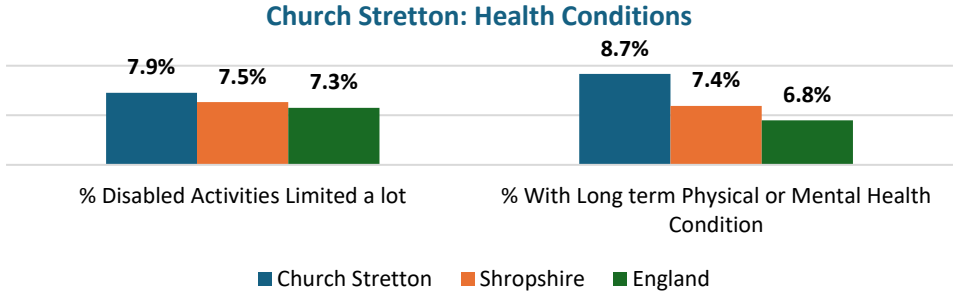
Unemployment

- 123 people living in the Church Stretton catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.7%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is amongst the lowest of all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



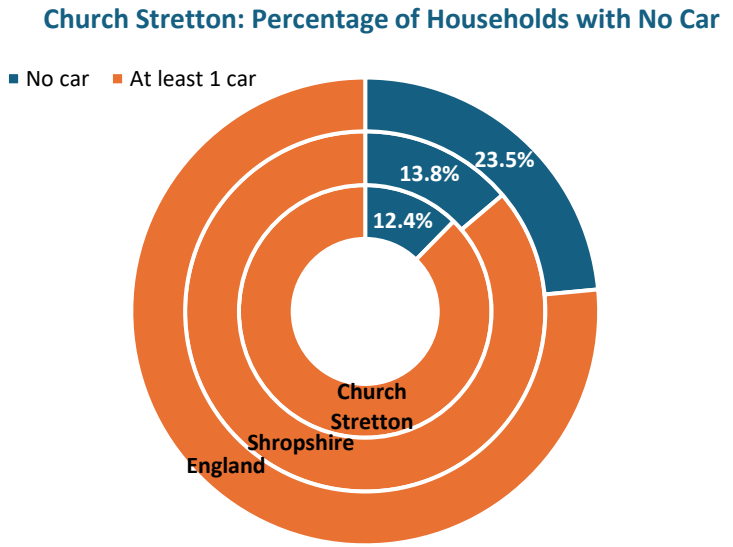
Health Conditions

- 7.9% of residents in the Church Stretton library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is slightly higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 8.7% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is notably higher than the Shropshire and England averages (7.4% and 6.8% respectively).



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Church Stretton households that do not have access to a car or van is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 12.4%.



Cleobury Mortimer Library Profile

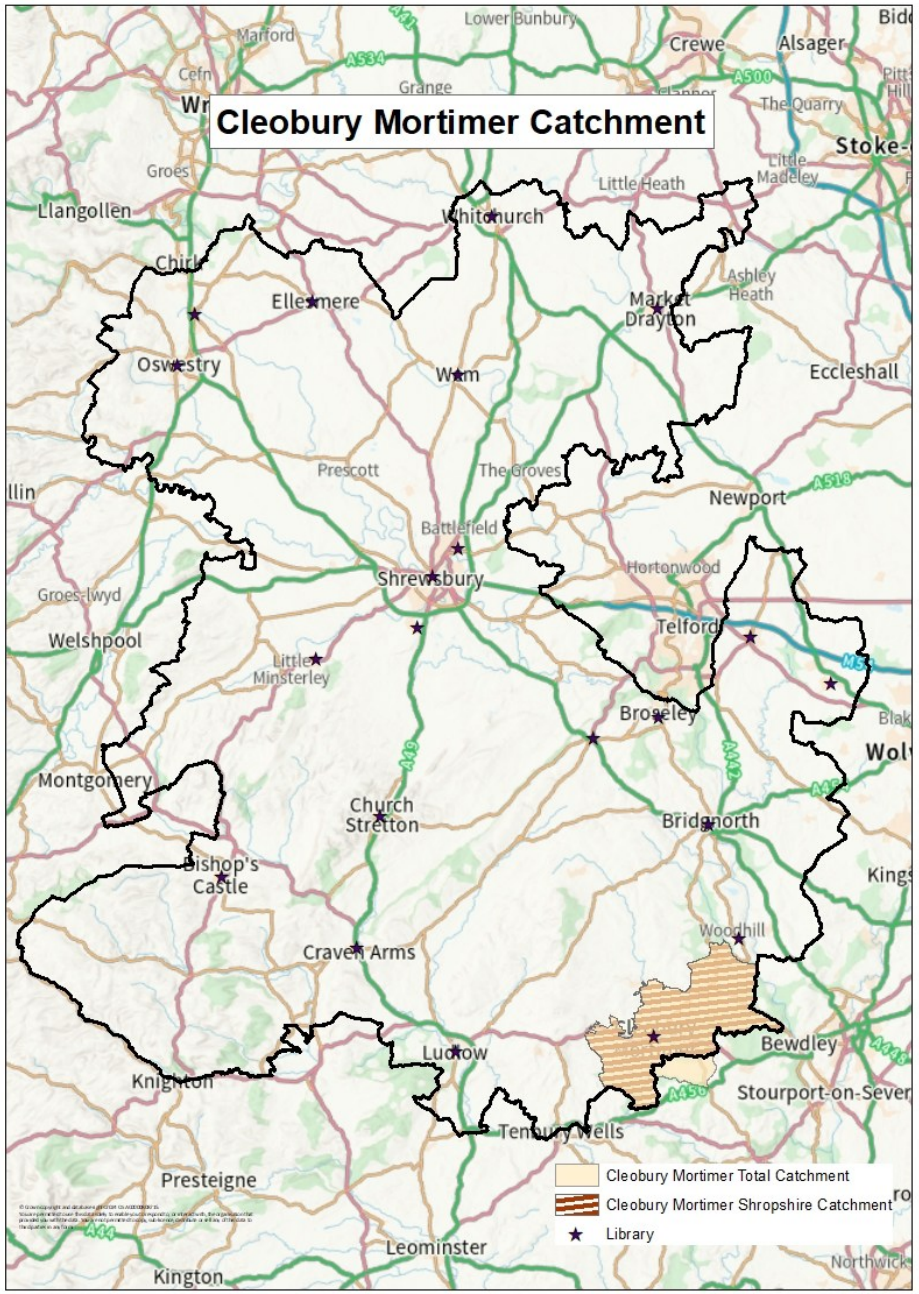
Background

- Cleobury Mortimer is a small town in the south east of Shropshire, located close to the Worcestershire border.
- The library is located in the centre of the town and offers parking.
- The library building is purpose built and single storey. It is owned by Shropshire Council and leased to Cleobury Country for a peppercorn rent.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 8,540 hectares within Shropshire which is about 2.7% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends beyond Shropshire into Worcestershire, with the overall catchment covering 9,452 hectares.
- The total population within the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment area is 5,774 comprising 2,509 households. The Shropshire population is 5,266.

Opening Hours

The library is open 42 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

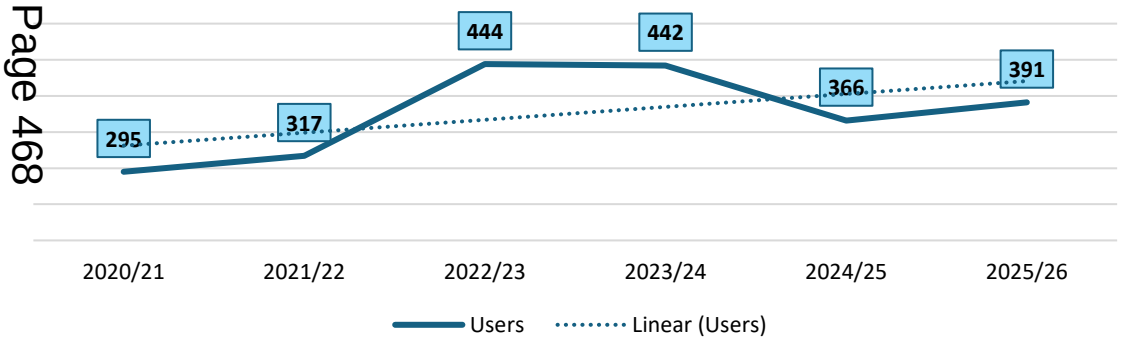
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Tuesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Wednesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Thursday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Friday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Saturday	10.00am-12.00pm	2
Sunday	Closed	0



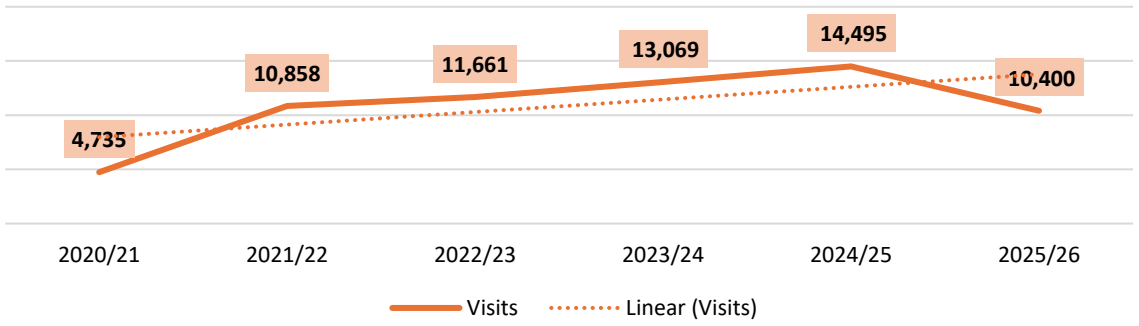
Library Users

- Cleobury Mortimer library had 391 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 6.9% of the Cleobury Mortimer catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries, not just Cleobury Mortimer.
- 57.4% of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more children and young adults and fewer adults aged 50+. Indeed, over a third of users are under the age of 20.

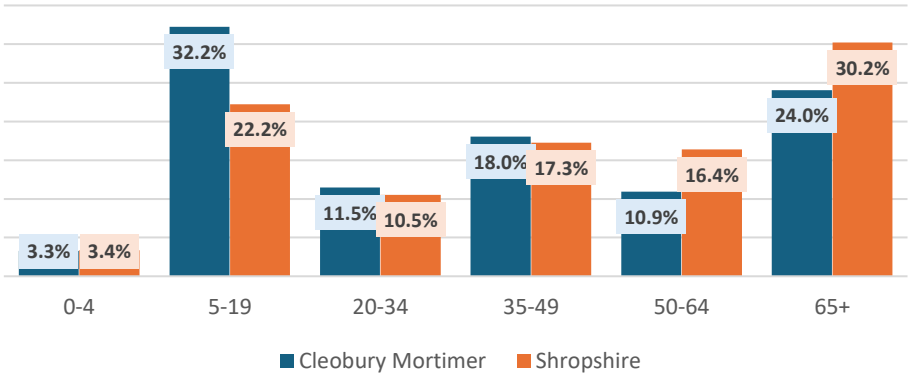
Cleobury Mortimer: Number of Active Users



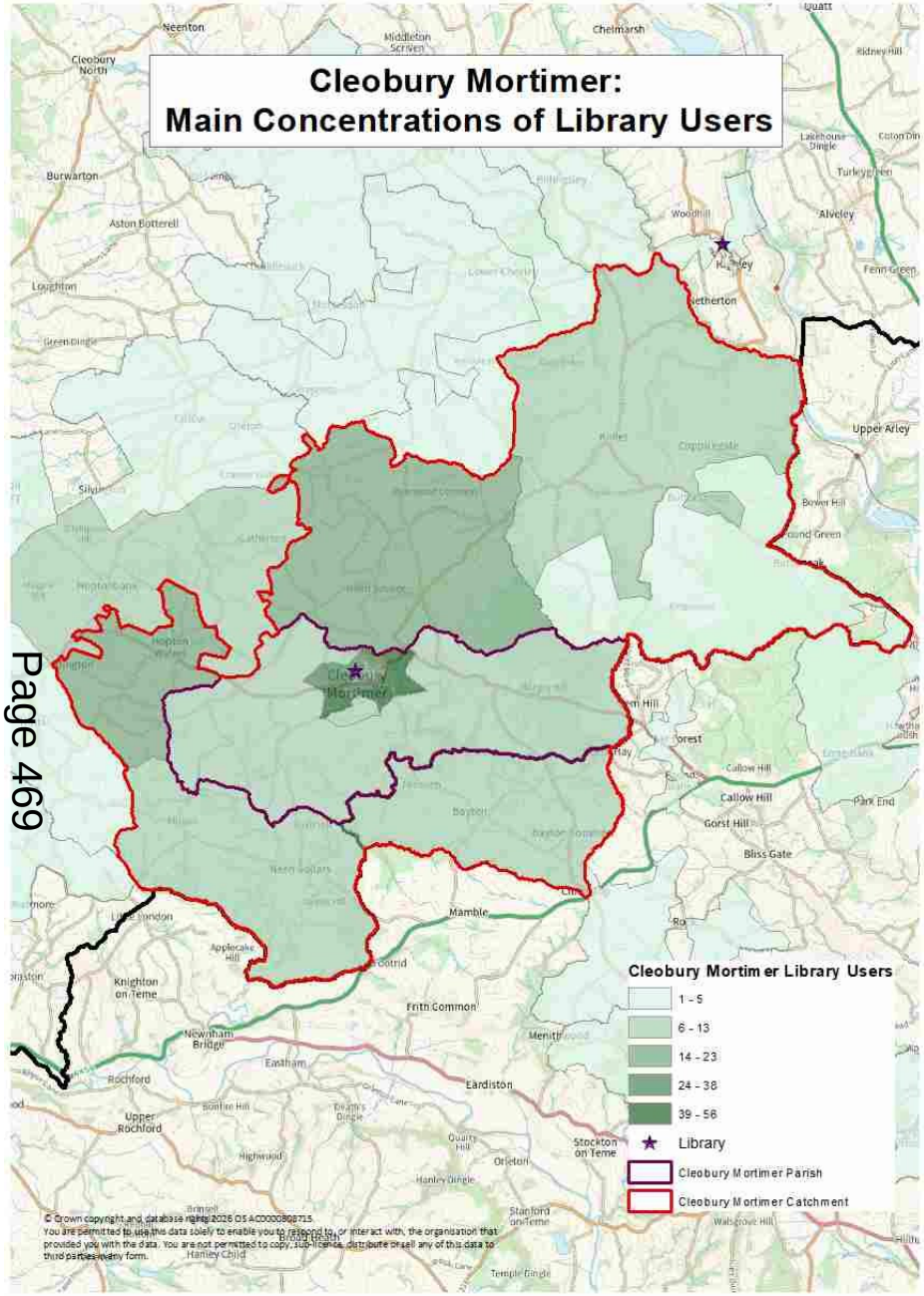
Cleobury Mortimer: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although numbers were flat in 2023/24 and declined in 2024/25. There was an upturn in 2025/26 although user numbers were still lower than they had been in 2023/24.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 96 users (+32.5%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 10.400, which is the equivalent of about 27 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business. Visits peaked in 2024/25 before declining by 28.3% in 2025/26.
- 3,871 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 10 per active user and 0.4 per visit, suggesting that the majority of visits are not associated with book loans.
- The number of loans decreased by 18% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 19%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 84.3% of all Cleobury Mortimer library users live within the main catchment area.
- 69.4% live within Cleobury Mortimer Parish.
- 6.9% of the population in the catchment area are Cleobury Mortimer active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 12.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 15.7% of Cleobury Mortimer library users that do not live in the catchment, most live the Bridgnorth and Ludlow catchments or out-of-county.
- People that live in the Cleobury Mortimer catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Bridgnorth or Ludlow libraries or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 86.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Cleobury Mortimer library were to Cleobury Mortimer, and these accounted for 84.3% of all issues.
- Ludlow was the most frequently visited alternative library.

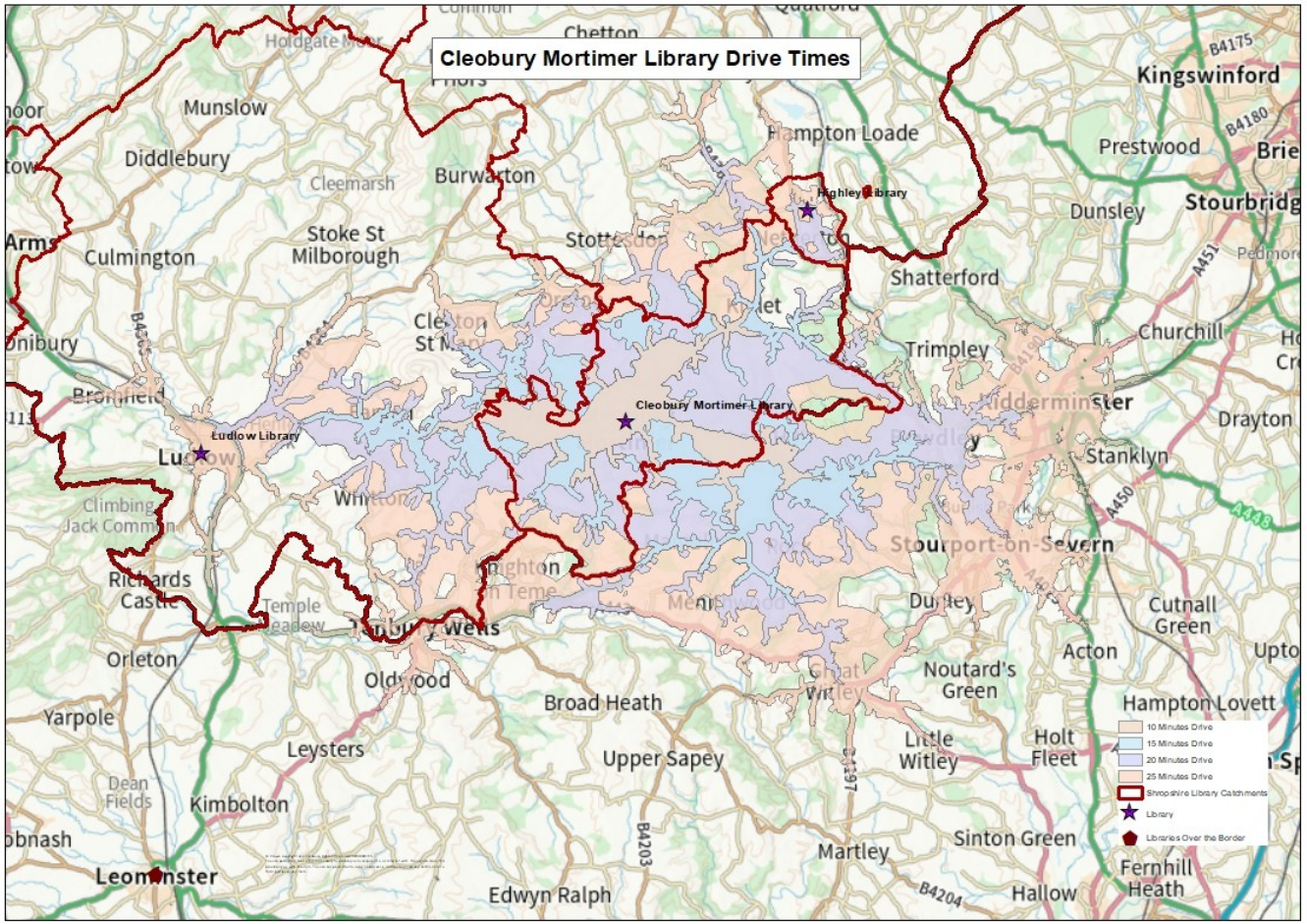
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Cleobury Mortimer library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	66.9%
30 Minute Walk	68.7%
10 Minute Drive	79.8%
15 Minute Drive	89.4%
20 Minute Drive	93.4%
25 Minute Drive	98.0%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Cleobury Mortimer is in the south of Shropshire close to the border with Worcestershire.
- It is located in a relatively rural location, although Ludlow is within a 25 minute drive, as are Stourport and Kidderminster in Worcestershire.
- The closest library to Cleobury Mortimer library is Highley, which is located 8.6 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 16 minutes.
- The nearest of the main six libraries is Ludlow which is approximately 11.7 miles away with a drive time of 22 minutes.
- Ludlow is easily accessible from the centre of Cleobury Mortimer by the 292 bus, which runs frequently with a journey time of about 25 minutes.



Library	Nearest Alternative Library	Distance	Drive Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Cleobury Mortimer	Highley	8.6 miles	16 mins	Ludlow	11.7 miles	22 mins	292 bus	25 minutes

Costs

- Cleobury Mortimer is the seventh least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £31,910 (2025/26).
- Cleobury Mortimer library costs more than average per book loan, around average per user, but less per visit and opening hour.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£14.61	£78.80	16th
Per Active User	£81.61	£81.29	9th
Per Visit	£3.07	£4.23	15th
Per Book Loan	£8.24	£4.50	4th

Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

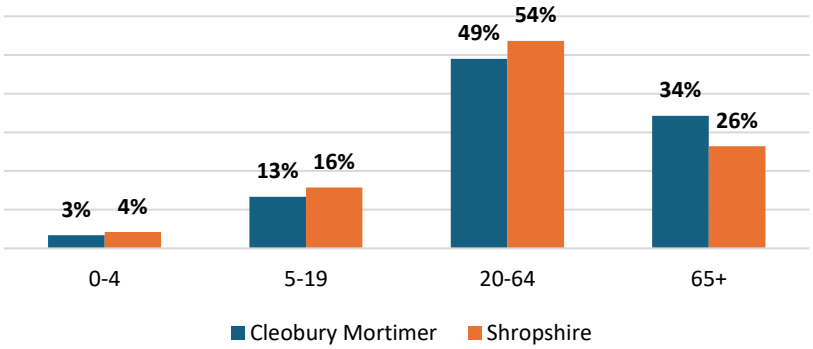
Socio-Economic Characteristics of Cleobury Mortimer Catchment Area

Population

- Cleobury Mortimer library catchment is the 6th smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 5,266 and a total population of 5,774.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a much higher proportion of adults aged 65+ (34% compared with 26% for Shropshire).
- There are 2,509 households in the catchment, with 43 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

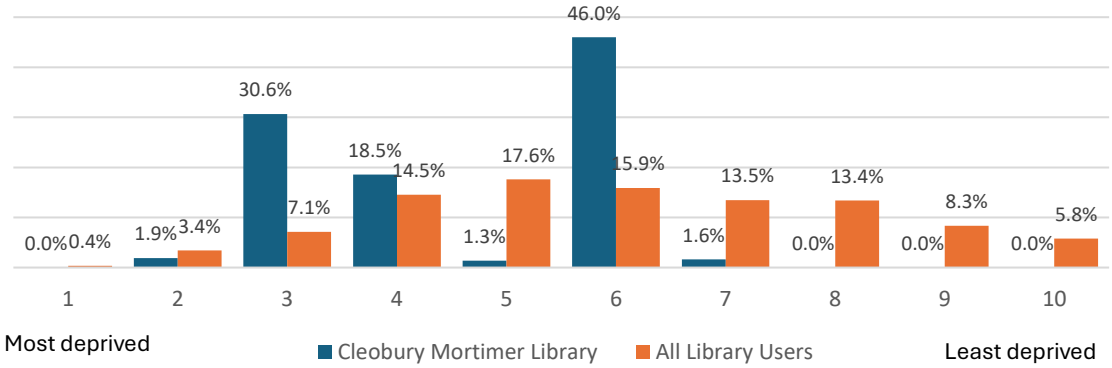
Deprivation

Age Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Catchment



Cleobury Mortimer catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Breakdown of Cleobury Mortimer Library Users by IMD Decile



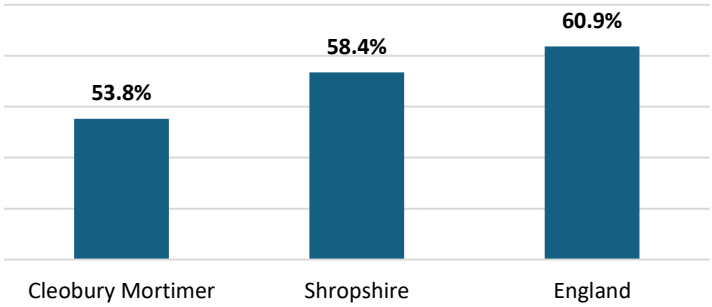
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Cleobury Mortimer library is in an area with average levels of deprivation (in decile 6 according to the IMD 2025).
- The adjacent chart shows that a large proportion of library users are also drawn from decile 6 (46% compared with 15.9% for Shropshire).
- Around a third live in the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- No library users are resident in the least deprived 30% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment is significantly lower than the Shropshire average at 53.8% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Cleobury Mortimer area is skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment area is the fourth lowest in Shropshire.

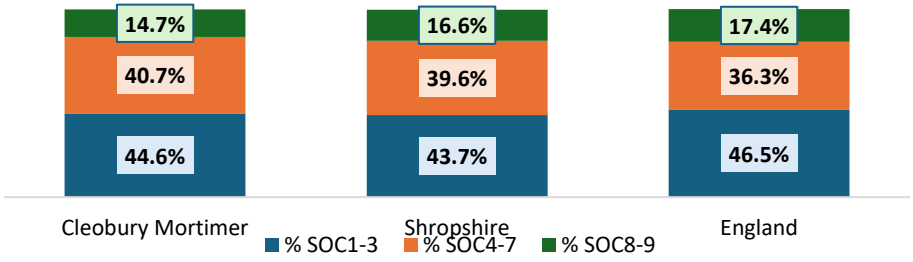
Cleobury Mortimer: Economic Activity Rate



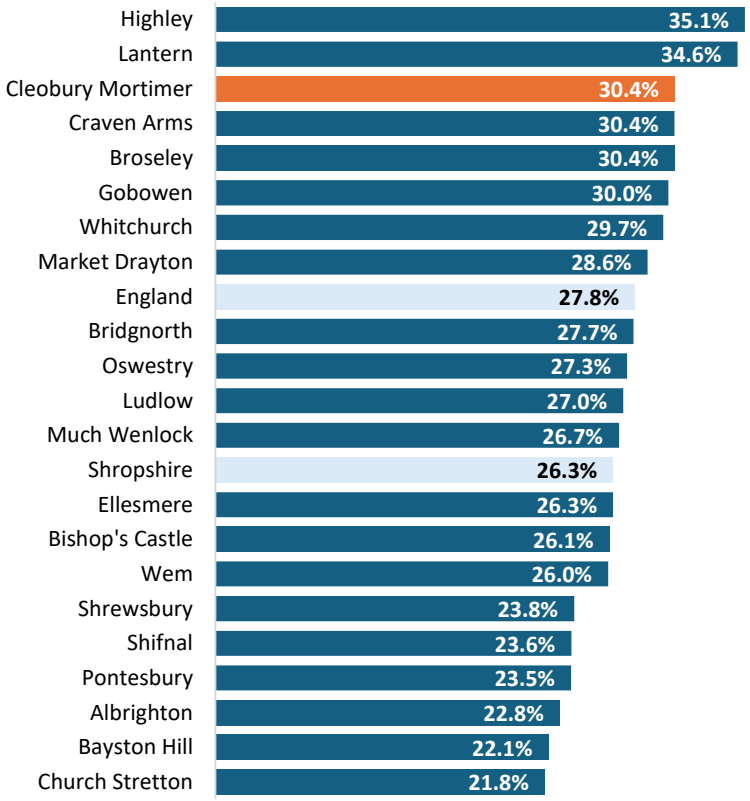
Employment

- 2,546 people in Cleobury Mortimer were in employment in 2021, which equates with 52% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 44.6%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations). The proportion employed in the SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations is verys lightly higher than the Shropshire average.

Cleobury Mortimer: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

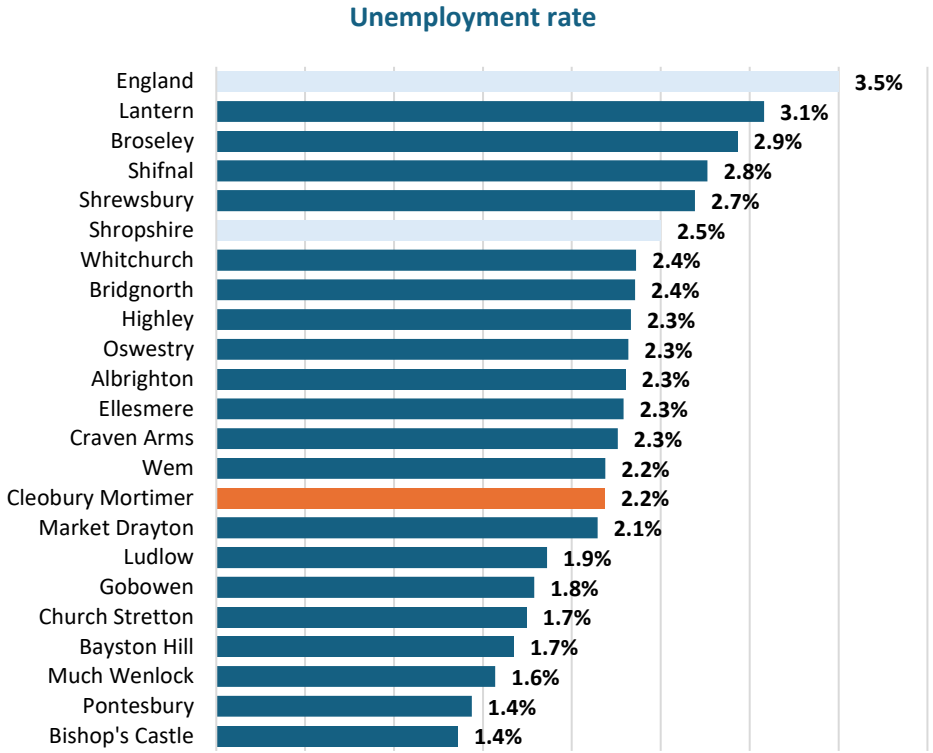


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Cleobury Mortimer population with no or low qualifications is amongst the highest in Shropshire at 30.4% of the 16+ population.

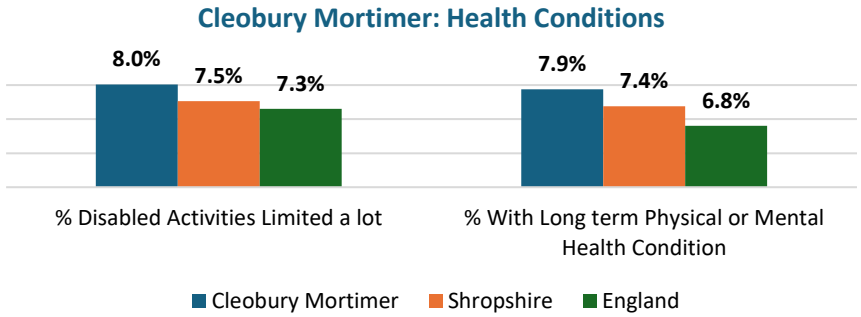
Unemployment

- 107 people living in the Cleobury Mortimer catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.2%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is at the lower end of all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



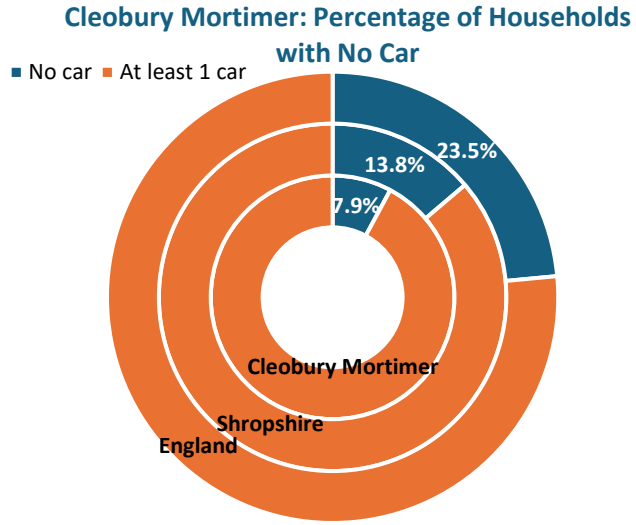
Health Conditions

- 8.0% of residents in the Cleobury Mortimer library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is slightly higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.9% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

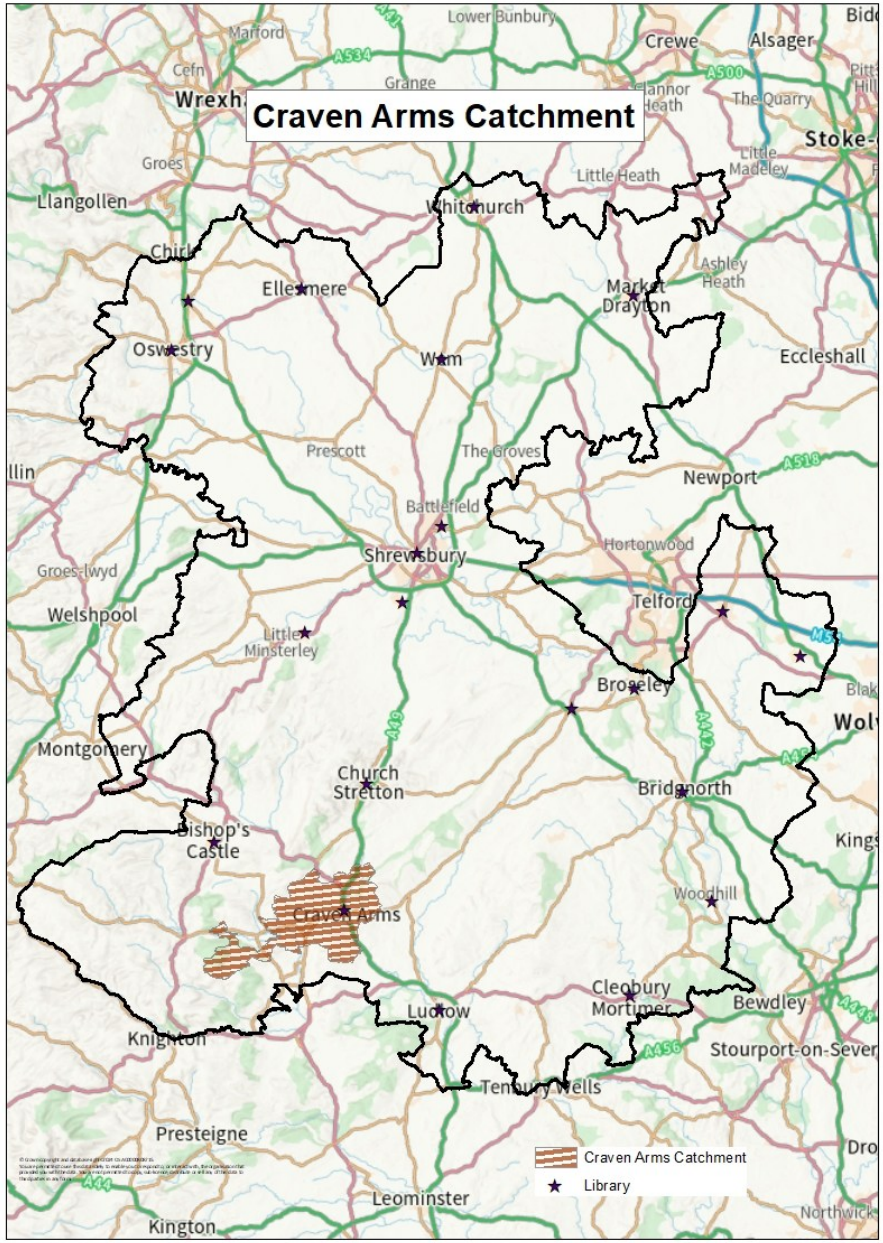
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of households in Cleobury Mortimer without a car is the lowest in Shropshire at 7.9%.



Craven Arms Library Profile

Background

- Craven Arms is a small town in the south of Shropshire, located along the A49 between Church Stretton and Ludlow.
- The library is located in Craven Arms Community Centre and offers free parking. The venue also has meeting rooms, a sports hall, gym and pre-school nursery.
- The library is run by Halo on behalf of Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 6,138 hectares which is about 1.9% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely contained within Shropshire.
- The total population within the Craven Arms library catchment area is 3,847 comprising 1,715 households.



Opening Hours

The library is open 47.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

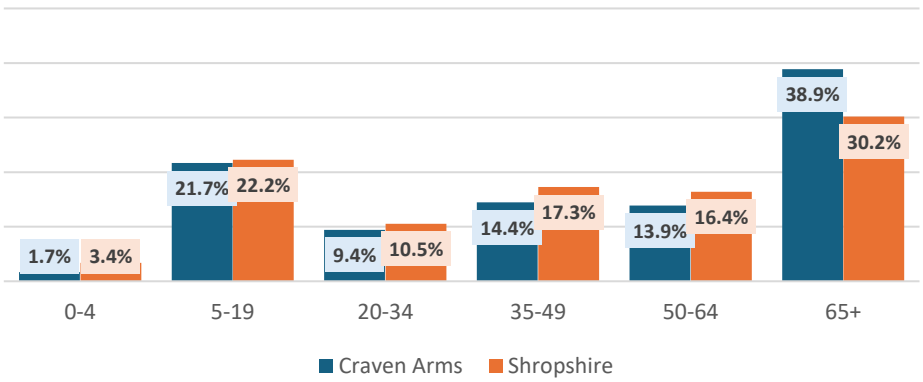
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.00am-20.00pm	11
Tuesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Wednesday	9.00am-21.00pm	12
Thursday	9.00am-19.00pm	10
Friday	9.00am-15.50pm	6.5
Saturday	Closed	0
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 1.62 FTE.

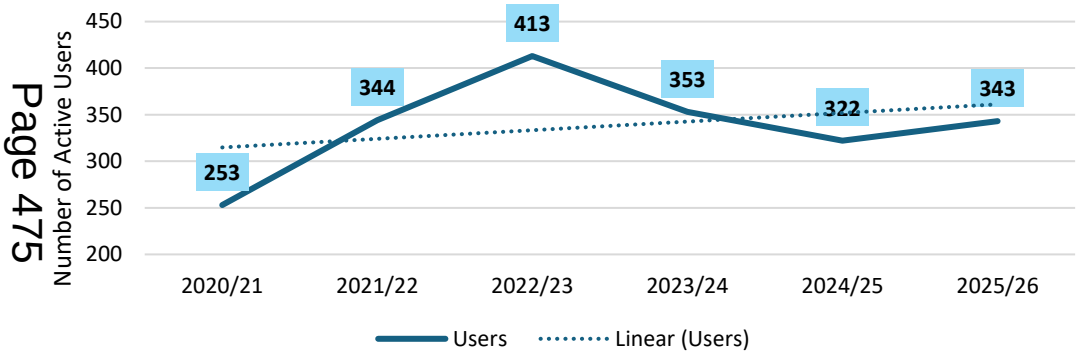
Library Users

- Craven Arms library had 343 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.1% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.1% of the Craven Arms catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries, not just Craven Arms.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users for the year 2025/26 is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more people aged 65+ and lower numbers of people aged 20-64.

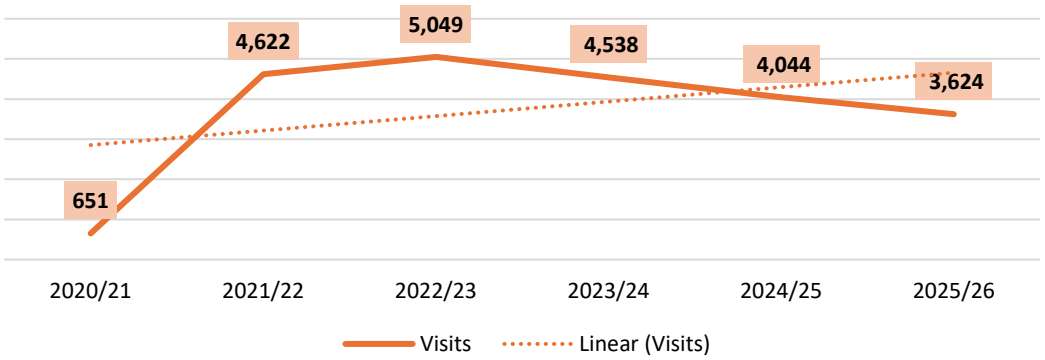
Breakdown of Craven Arms Library Users by Age



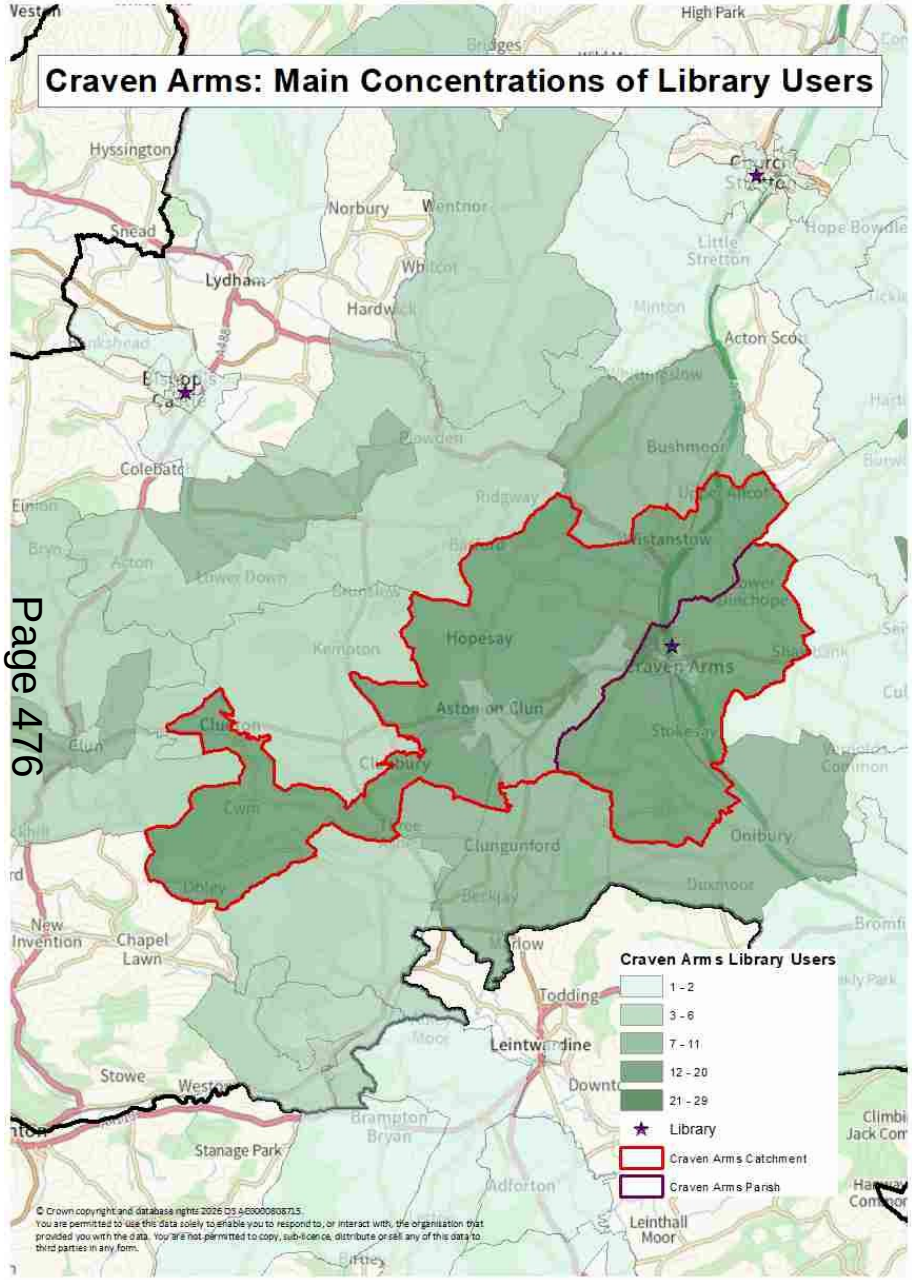
Craven Arms: Number of Active Users



Craven Arms: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although numbers fell back down by 60 in 2023/24 and by a further 31 in 2024/25. There was an uptick in 2025/26, although user numbers remain lower than the 2022/23 peak.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 90 users (+35.6%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 3,624, which is the equivalent of about 11 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at about once every four/five weeks on average, remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (17 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was more than five times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 6,906 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 20 per active user and 1.9 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 1% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 15%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 53.9% of all Craven Arms library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is the lowest in Shropshire.
- 37.2% live within Craven Arms Parish.
- 9.1% of the population in the catchment area are Craven Arms active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 4.8% to 15.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with a complete and accurate home postcode.
- Of the 46.1% of Craven Arms library users that do not live in the catchment, most live the Ludlow, Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle catchments.
- People that live in the Craven Arms catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Ludlow library, although a significant number also use services in Church Stretton and Bishop's Castle.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 74.0% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Craven Arms library were to Craven Arms, and these accounted for 74.1% of all issues.
- Ludlow and Church Stretton were the most frequently visited alternative libraries.

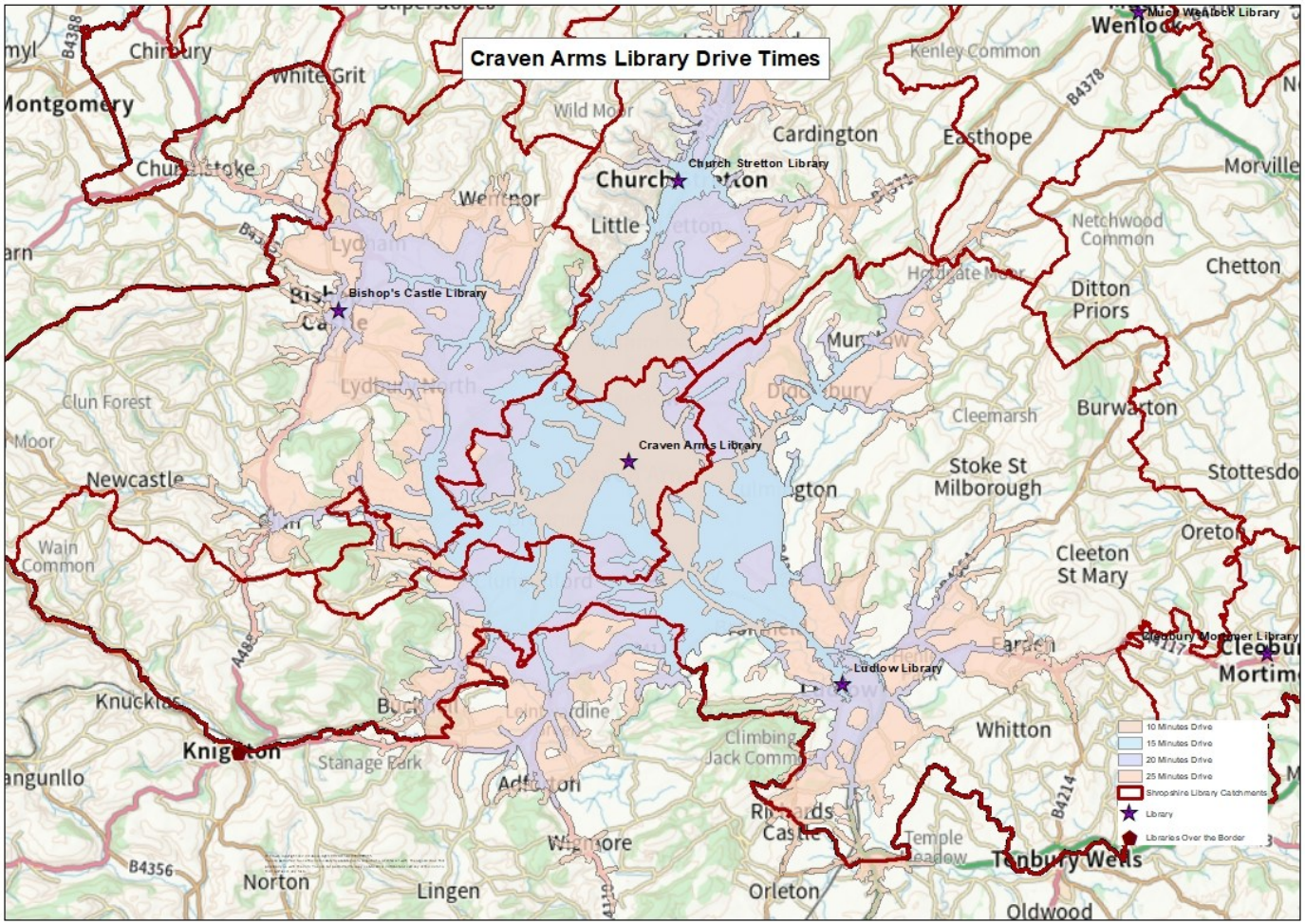
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Craven Arms library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	28.8%
30 Minute Walk	38.6%
10 Minute Drive	54.2%
15 Minute Drive	70.9%
20 Minute Drive	81.8%
25 Minute Drive	91.4%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Craven Arms is in the south of Shropshire between Church Stretton and Ludlow.
- It is located in a relatively rural location, but its proximity to the A49 offers easy access northwards to Church Stretton and southwards to Ludlow.
- Craven Arms has a railway station and is on the Shrewsbury to Cardiff line.
- The closest library to Craven Arms library is Ludlow, which is located 7.9 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes.
- Ludlow is easily accessible from the centre of Craven Arms by the 435 bus, which runs frequently with a journey time of about 20 minutes. Alternatively, Craven Arms is just one stop from Ludlow by train.



Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport to Nearest Main Library	Approx Time
Craven Arms	Ludlow	7.9 miles	13 mins	435 bus Train	20 minutes 10 minutes

Costs

- Craven Arms is the fourth least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £9,150 (2025/26)
- Craven Arms ranks as the cheapest library per hour open and amongst the least expensive per active user, per book loan and per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£3.70	£78.80	21st
Per Active User	£26.68	£81.29	18th
Per Visit	£2.52	£4.23	17th
Per Book Loan	£1.32	£5.07	18th

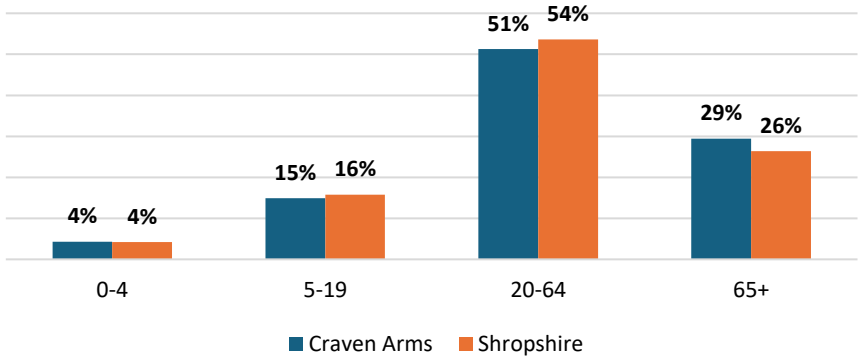
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Craven Arms Catchment Area

Population

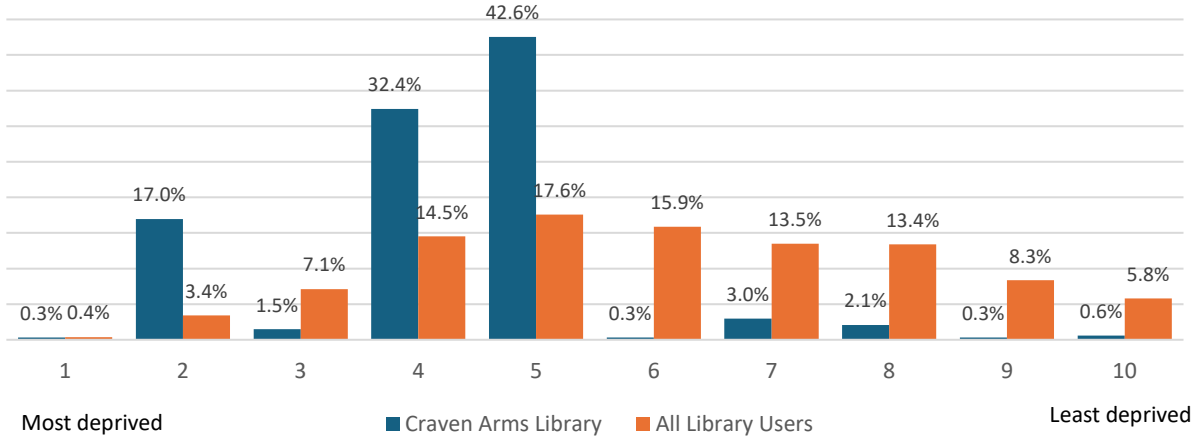
- Craven Arms library catchment is the 3rd smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 3,847.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion aged 65+ but a slightly lower proportion of 20-64-year-olds.
- There are 1,715 households in the catchment, with 27 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Craven Arms Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Craven Arms Library Users by IMD Decile



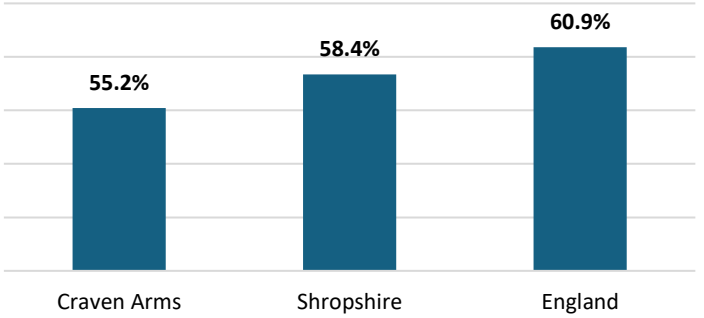
- Craven Arms library is in the second decile according to the IMD (2025), which means it is one the five libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that the majority of users live within the most deprived half of the country, with more than 90% living in deciles 2 to 5.
- Just 3.0% live in the least deprived 30% of the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Craven Arms library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 55.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Craven Arms area is slightly skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Craven Arms library catchment area is the seventh lowest in Shropshire.

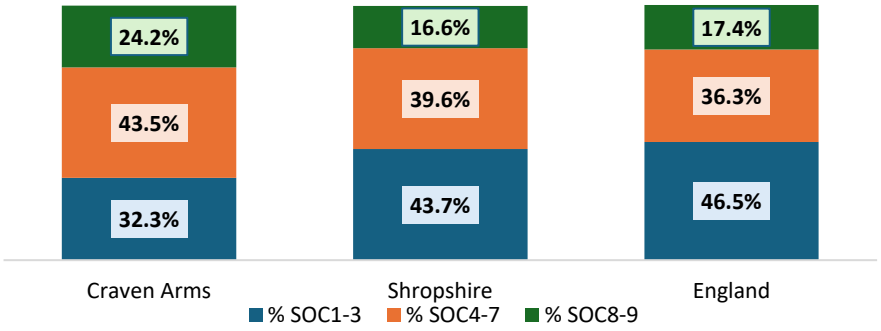
Craven Arms: Economic Activity Rate



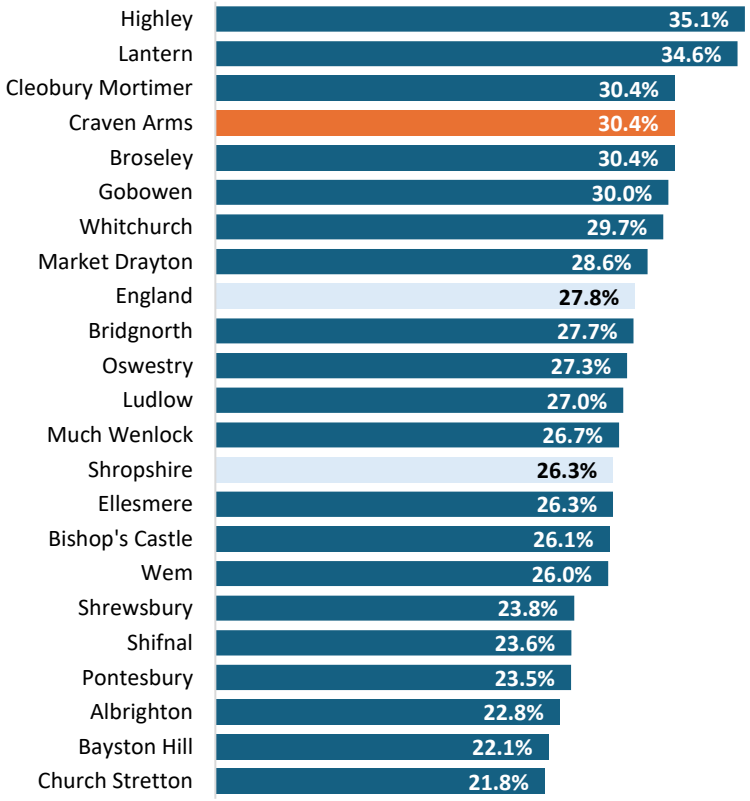
Employment

- 1,718 people in Cravens Arms were in employment in 2021, which equates with 53.1% of the 16+ population.
- A much lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 32.3%. More are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Craven Arms: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

- The proportion of the Craven Arms population with no or low qualifications is amongst the highest in Shropshire at 30.4% of the 16+ population.

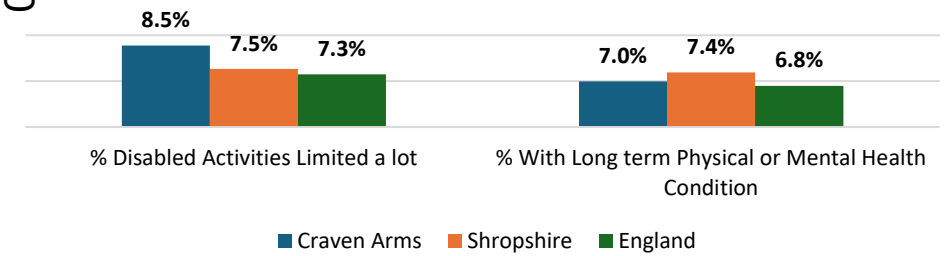
Unemployment

- 73 people living in the Craven Arms catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is at the lower end of all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

Health Conditions

- 8.5% of residents in the Craven Arms library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.0% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.

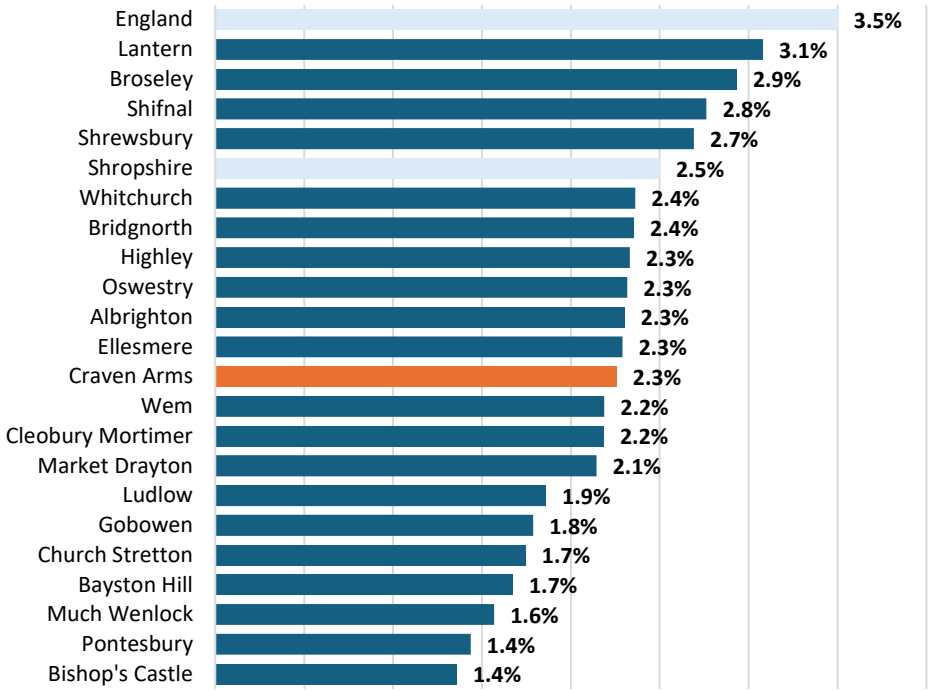
Craven Arms: Health Conditions



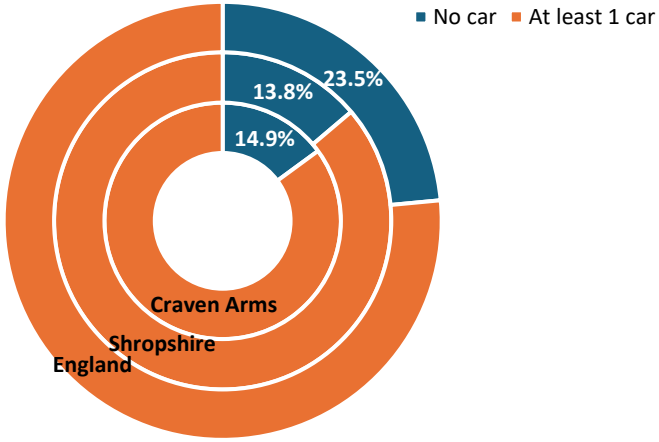
Ca

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Craven Arms is slightly higher than the Shropshire average at 14.9%.

Unemployment rate



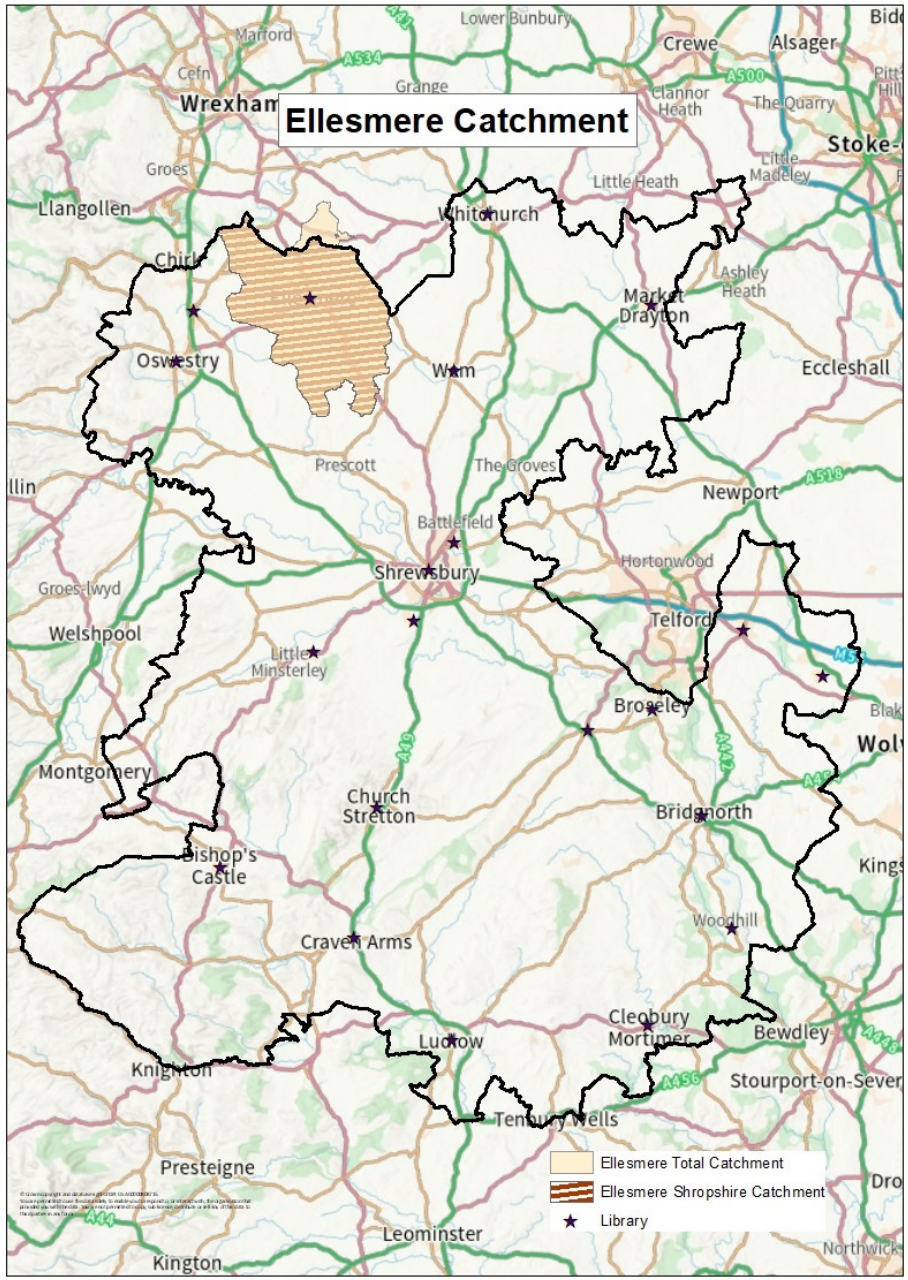
Craven Arms: Percentage of Households with No Car



Ellesmere Library Profile

Background

- Ellesmere is a small town in the north of Shropshire, located on the A495 between Oswestry to the west and Whitchurch to the east.
- The library is located in the centre of Ellesmere in the Our Space building on Trimpley Street.
- The library is run by Bethphage on behalf of Shropshire Council. Bethphage is a charity providing specialist support to adults with learning difficulties.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 12,841 hectares which is about 4% of the county's land mass. The catchment also extends north of the border into Wrexham. 6% of Ellesmere's catchment is outside Shropshire.
- The total population within the Ellesmere library catchment area is 10,123 comprising 4,255 households. The Shropshire population is 9,111.



Opening Hours

The library is open 20.5 hours a week according to the following schedule:

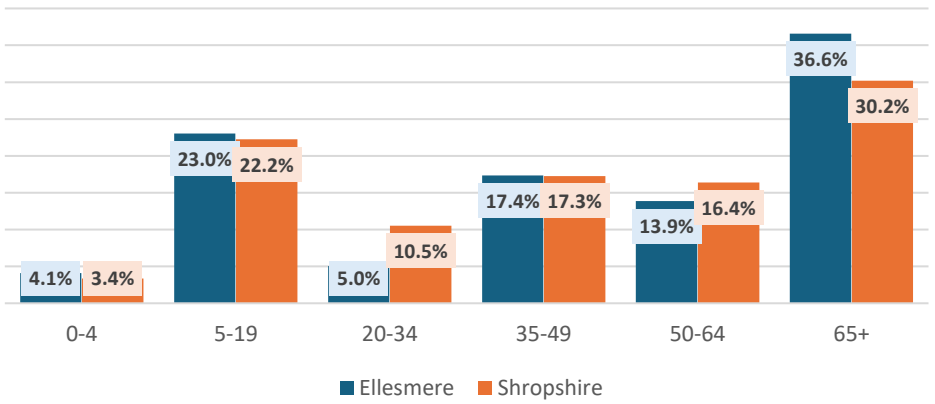
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.00am-17.00pm	8
Saturday	9.00am-13.50pm	4.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library benefitted from 20 volunteers in 2025/26, amounting to 823 volunteer hours.

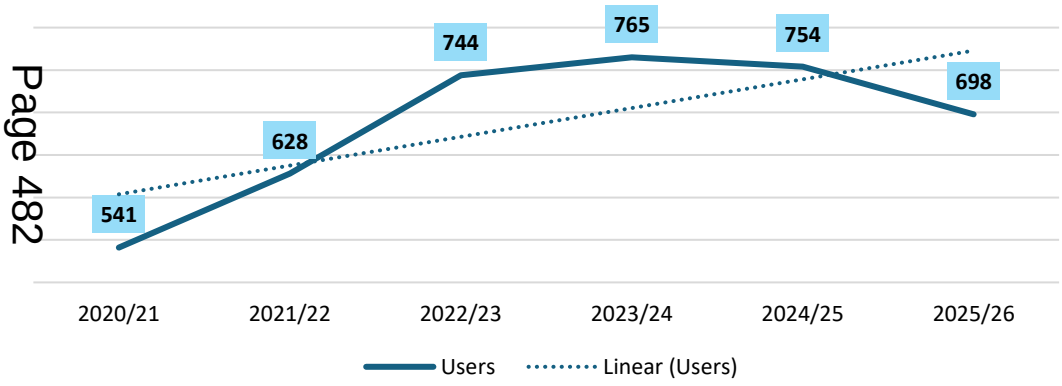
Library Users

- Ellesmere library had 698 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.7% of the Ellesmere catchment population are active library users, which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries.
- Almost two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more people aged 0-19, significantly more aged 65+ and lower numbers of people aged 20-64.

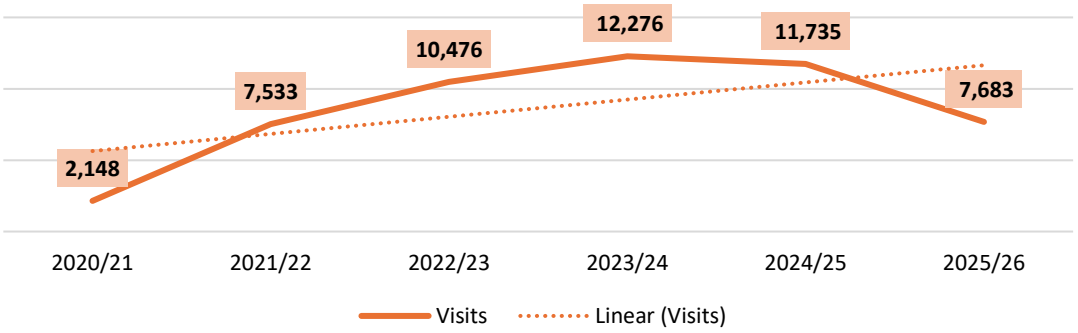
Breakdown of Ellesmere Library Users by Age



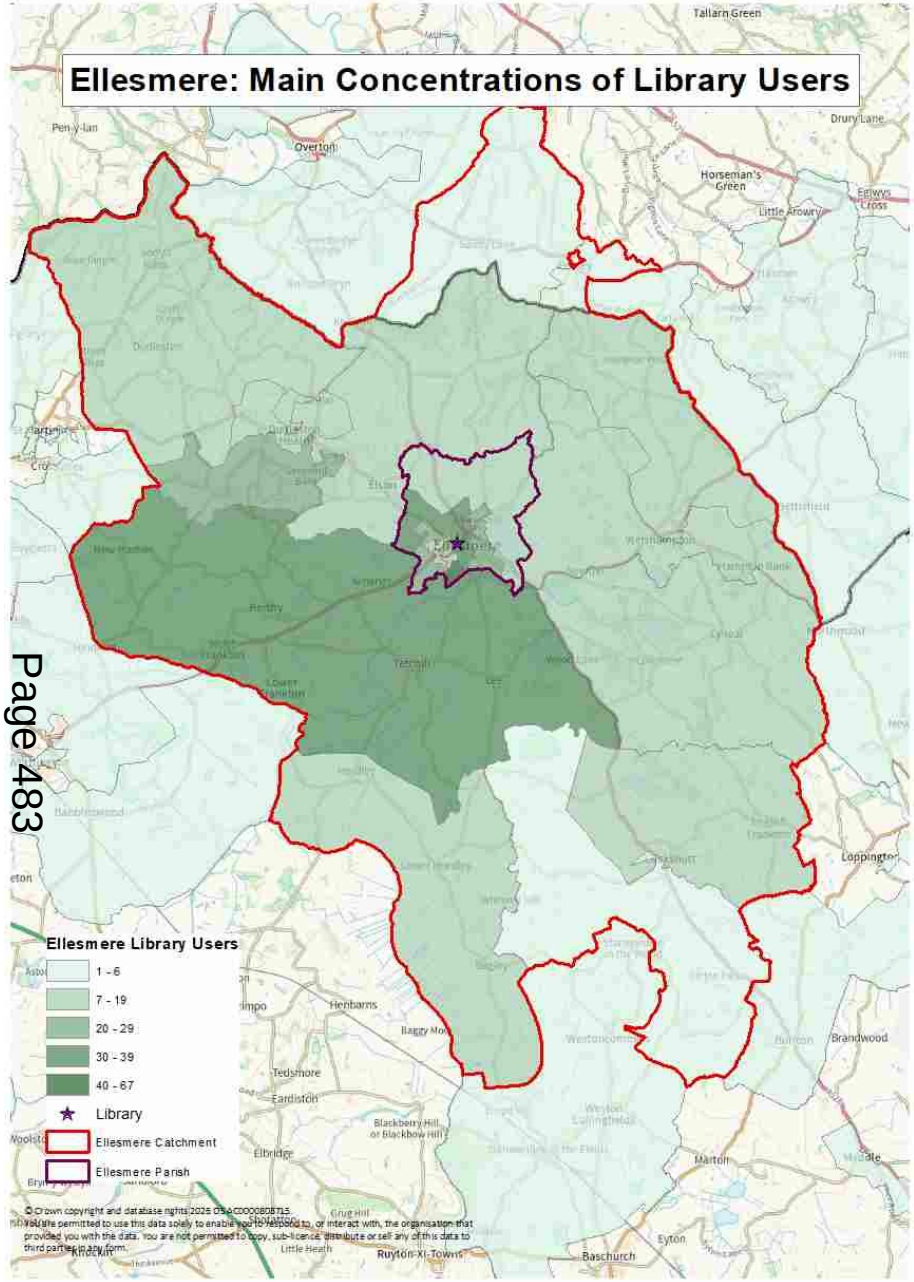
Ellesmere: Number of Active Users



Ellesmere: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery although user numbers dipped over the last year.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 157 users (+29.0%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 7,683, which is the equivalent of about 11 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and the frequency with which users visit the library remains lower than it was pre-pandemic (15 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits fell by 34.5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- 13,572 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 19 per active user and 1.8 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 5%.
- Computer usage was down by 21%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 88.6% of all Ellesmere library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the highest in Shropshire.
- 55.7% live within Ellesmere Urban Parish.
- 8,7% of the population in the catchment area are Ellesmere active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1.0% to 16%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 11.4% of Ellesmere library users that do not live in the catchment, most live the Wem, Oswestry and Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Ellesmere catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Oswestry library, although a significant number also use services in Wem, Whitchurch and Shrewsbury as well as the Owen mobile library service.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 82.1% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Ellesmere library were to Ellesmere, and these accounted for 79.9% of all issues.
- Oswestry was the most frequently visited alternative library.

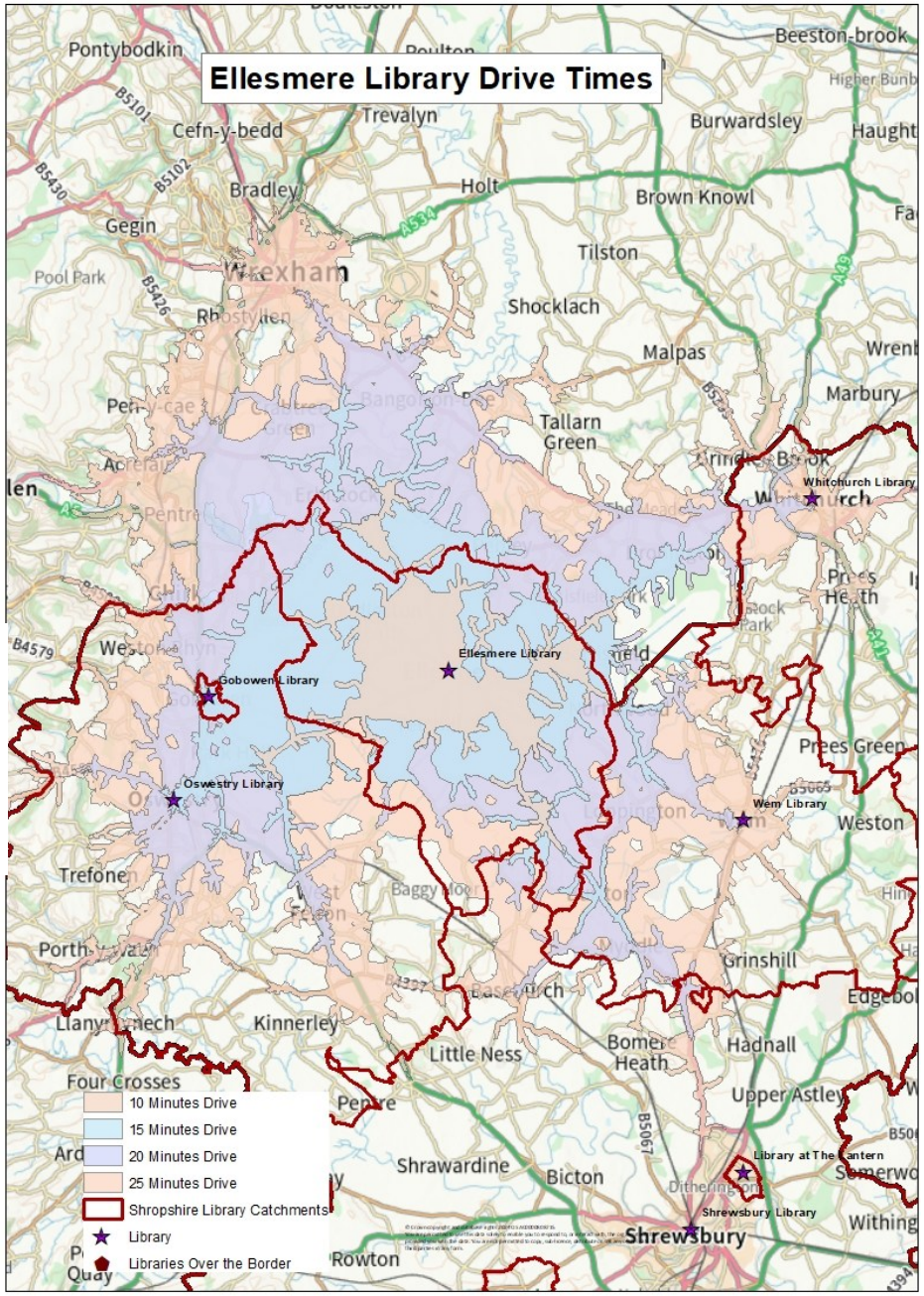
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Ellesmere library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	52.5%
30 Minute Walk	58.7%
10 Minute Drive	83.4%
15 Minute Drive	92.7%
20 Minute Drive	95.8%
25 Minute Drive	97.52%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Ellesmere is in the north of Shropshire between Oswestry and Whitchurch, and the town is within relatively easy access of both via the A495.
- The closest library to Ellesmere library is Gobowen, which is located 7.5 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 13 minutes.
- It can also be reached via the 53 bus which runs about every three hours and which takes 22 minutes.
- Oswestry is the nearest main library to Ellesmere at a distance of 8.2 miles, which equates with a drive time of about 17 minutes. It can also be accessed using the 53 bus, with a journey time of about 39 minutes.



Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Ellesmere	Gobowen	7.5 miles	13 mins	53 Bus	22 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Ellesmere	Oswestry	8.2 miles	17 mins	53 Bus	39 mins

Costs

- Ellesmere is the 11th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual costs to the Council are £45,540 (2025/26).
- Ellesmere is the fourth most expensive library in terms of cost per visit, but costs less than the average per hour open, per active user and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£42.72	£77.80	13th
Per Active User	£65.24	£81.29	13th
Per Visit	£5.93	£4.23	4th
Per Book Loan	£3.36	£5.07	10th

Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1 = most expensive

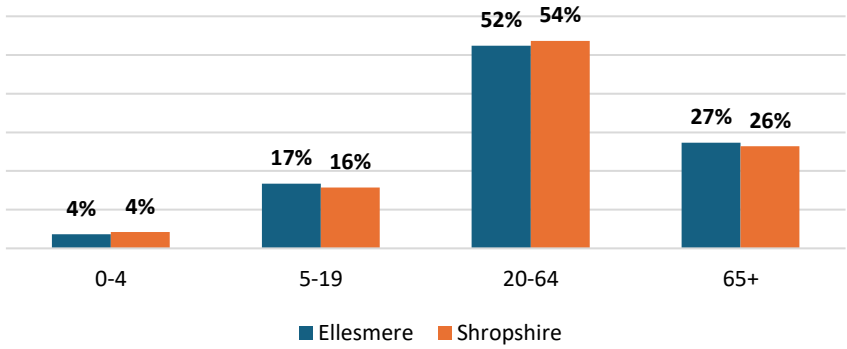
Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ellesmere Catchment Area

Population

- Ellesmere library catchment is the 9th largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 10,123 (9,111 in Shropshire).
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion aged 65+ but also a slightly higher proportion of 5-19-year-olds.
- There are 4,255 households in the catchment, with 208 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

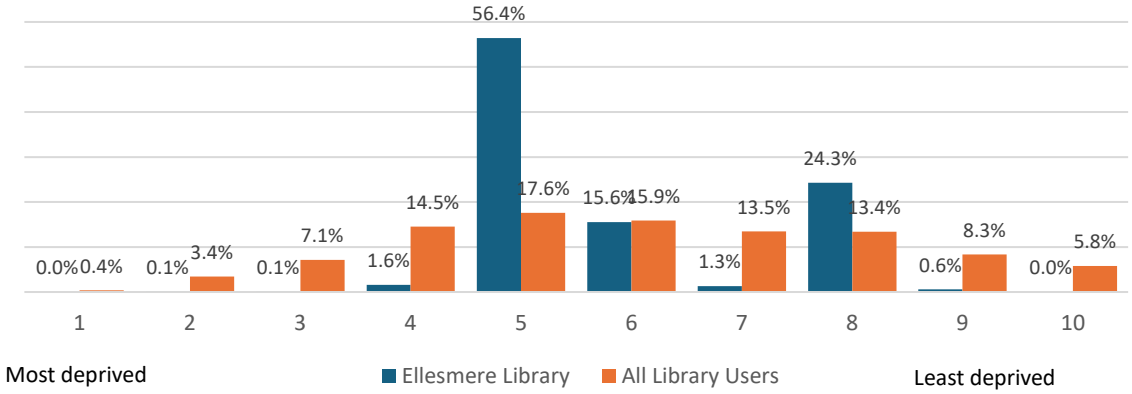
Deprivation

Age Breakdown of Ellesmere Catchment



Ellesmere catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Breakdown of Ellesmere Library Users by IMD Decile



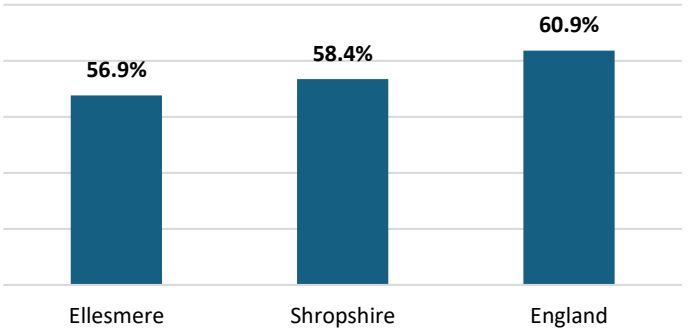
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Ellesmere library is in the eighth decile according to the IMD 2025, which means it is one the four libraries in Shropshire located in the 30% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a quarter of users are drawn from this decile compared with 13.4% of all Shropshire library users.
- 72% of users live in the fourth and fifth decile.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Ellesmere library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 56.9% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Ellesmere area is very slightly skewed towards older age bands.
- The economic activity rate in the Ellesmere library catchment area is the 12th highest in Shropshire.

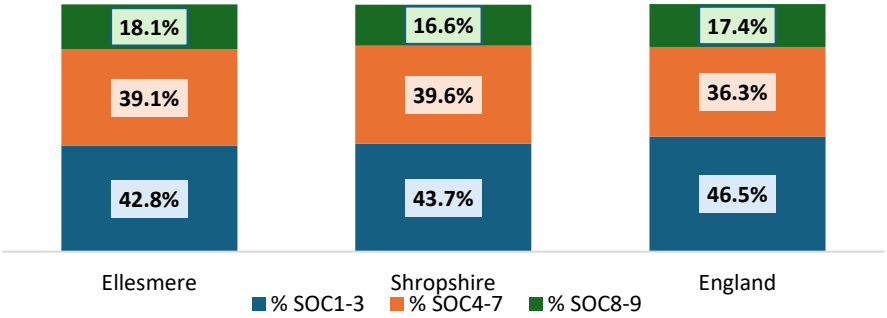
Ellesmere: Economic Activity Rate



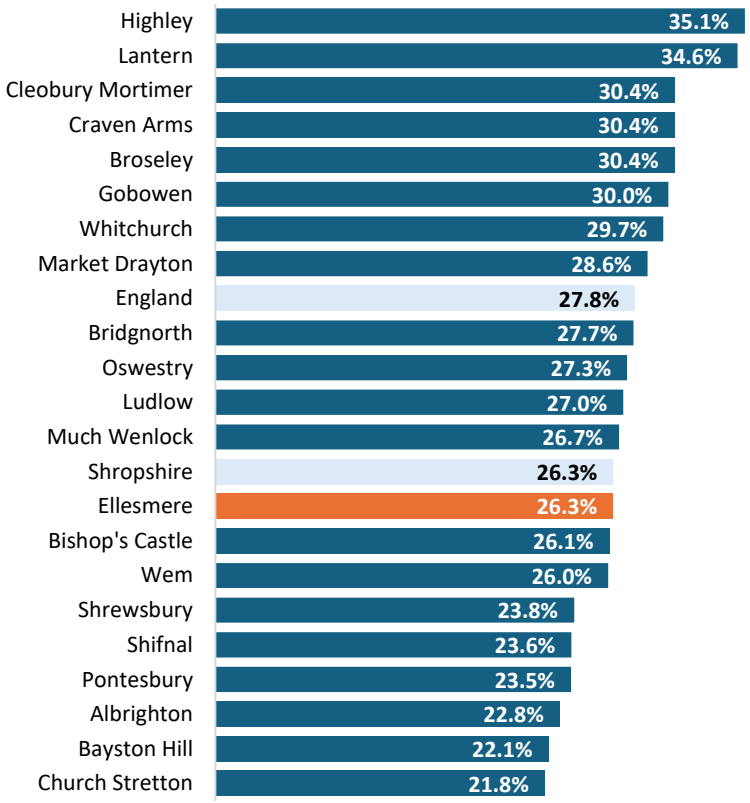
Employment

- 4,517 people in Ellesmere were in employment in 2021, which equates with 55.0% of the 16+ population.
- A slightly lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 42.8%. More are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and a similar proportion in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Ellesmere: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

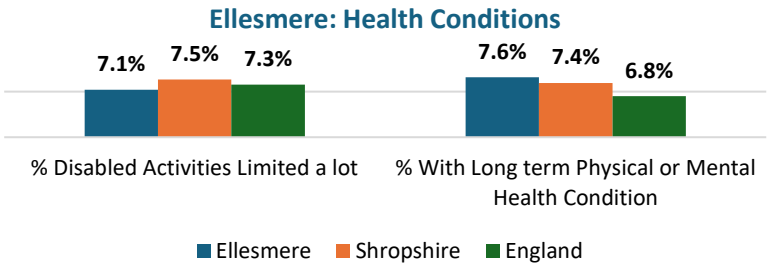
- The proportion of the Ellesmere population with no or low qualifications is comparable to the Shropshire average at 26.3% of the 16+ population. This is slightly lower than the national average.

Unemployment

- 188 people living in the Ellesmere catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is mid-range compared with all library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

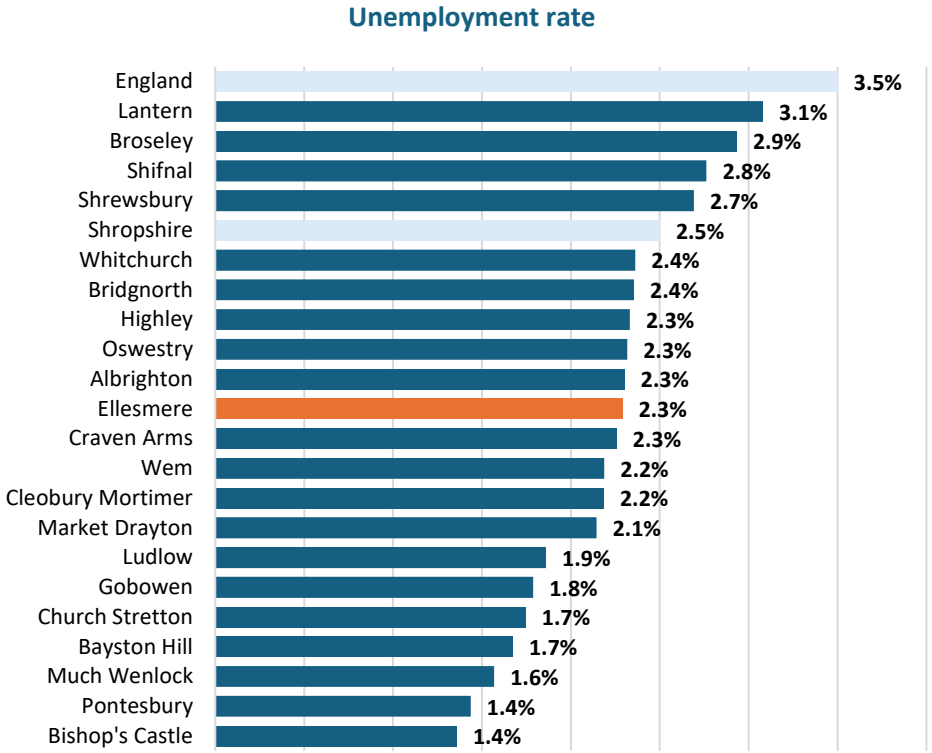
Health Conditions

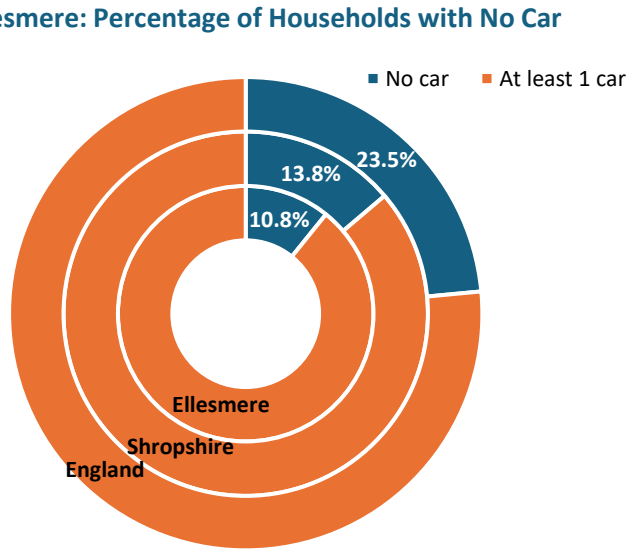
- 7.1% of residents in the Ellesmere library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is lower than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Ellesmere is lower than the Shropshire average at 10.8%.

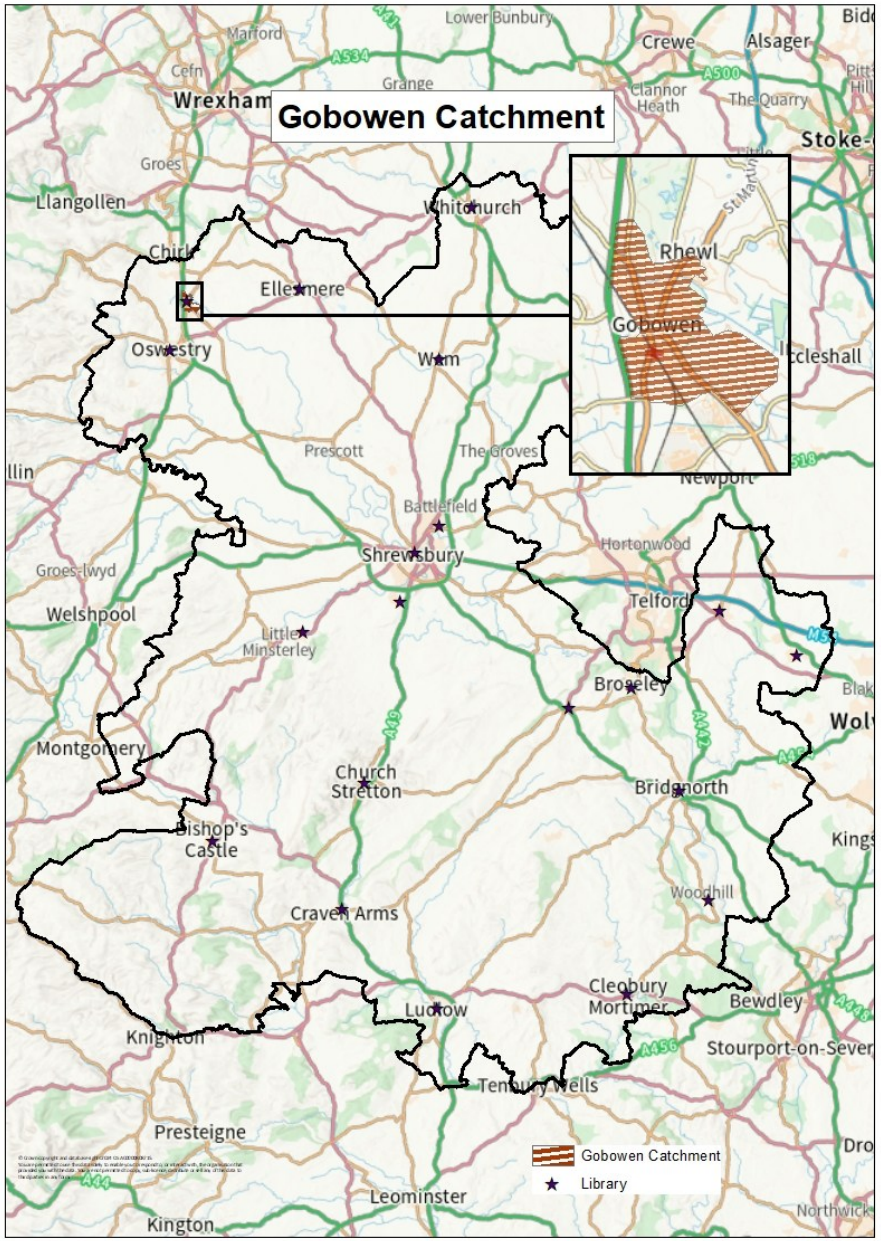




Gobowen Library Profile

Background

- Gobowen is a small town in the north-west of Shropshire, close to the Wrexham border, just north of Oswestry.
- The library is located in central Gobowen and offers on-site parking.
- The library is a small demountable modular construction built in 2011 and is owned and run by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 151 hectares which is less than 0.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely in Shropshire and is also completely contained within the Oswestry catchment.
- The total population within the Gobowen library catchment area is 2,830 comprising 1,182 households.



Opening Hours

The library is open 15 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

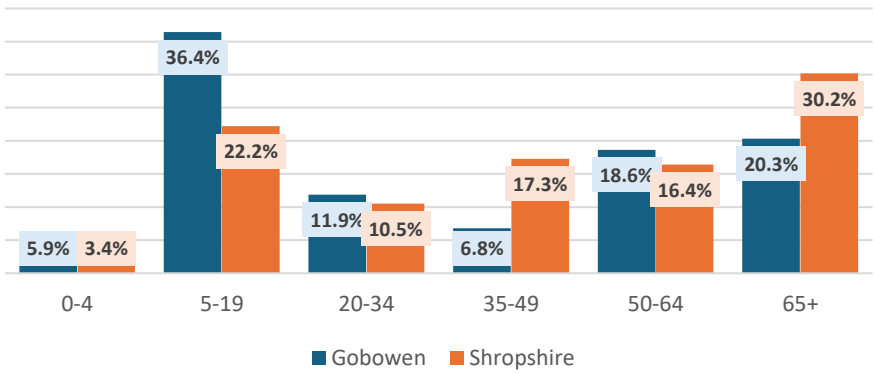
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Friday	Closed	0
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library has 0.41 FTE employees and benefitted from 118 volunteers in 2025/26, amounting to 257 volunteer hours.

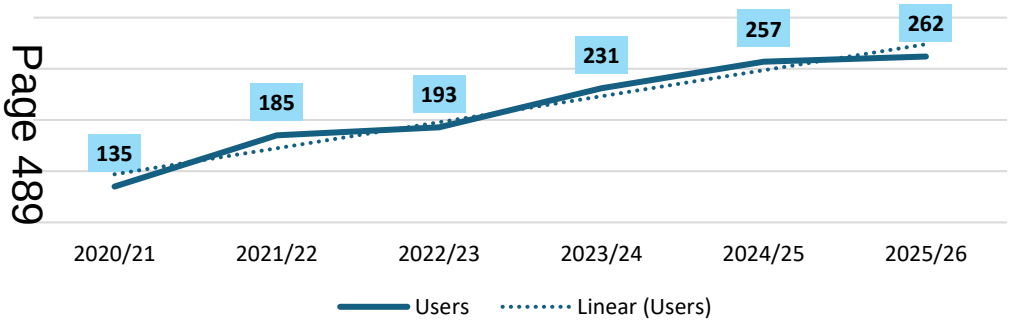
Library Users

- Gobowen library had 262 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 0.8% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.4% of the Gobowen catchment population are active library users, which is comparable with the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries, not just Gobowen.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are significantly more children and young people and fewer adults over the age of 35.

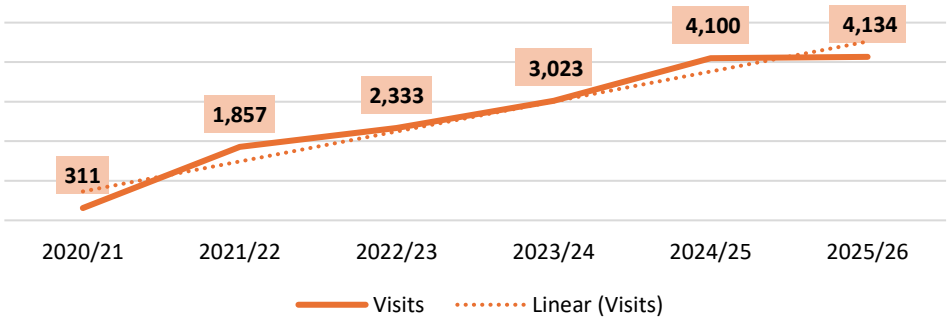
Breakdown of Gobowen Library Users by Age



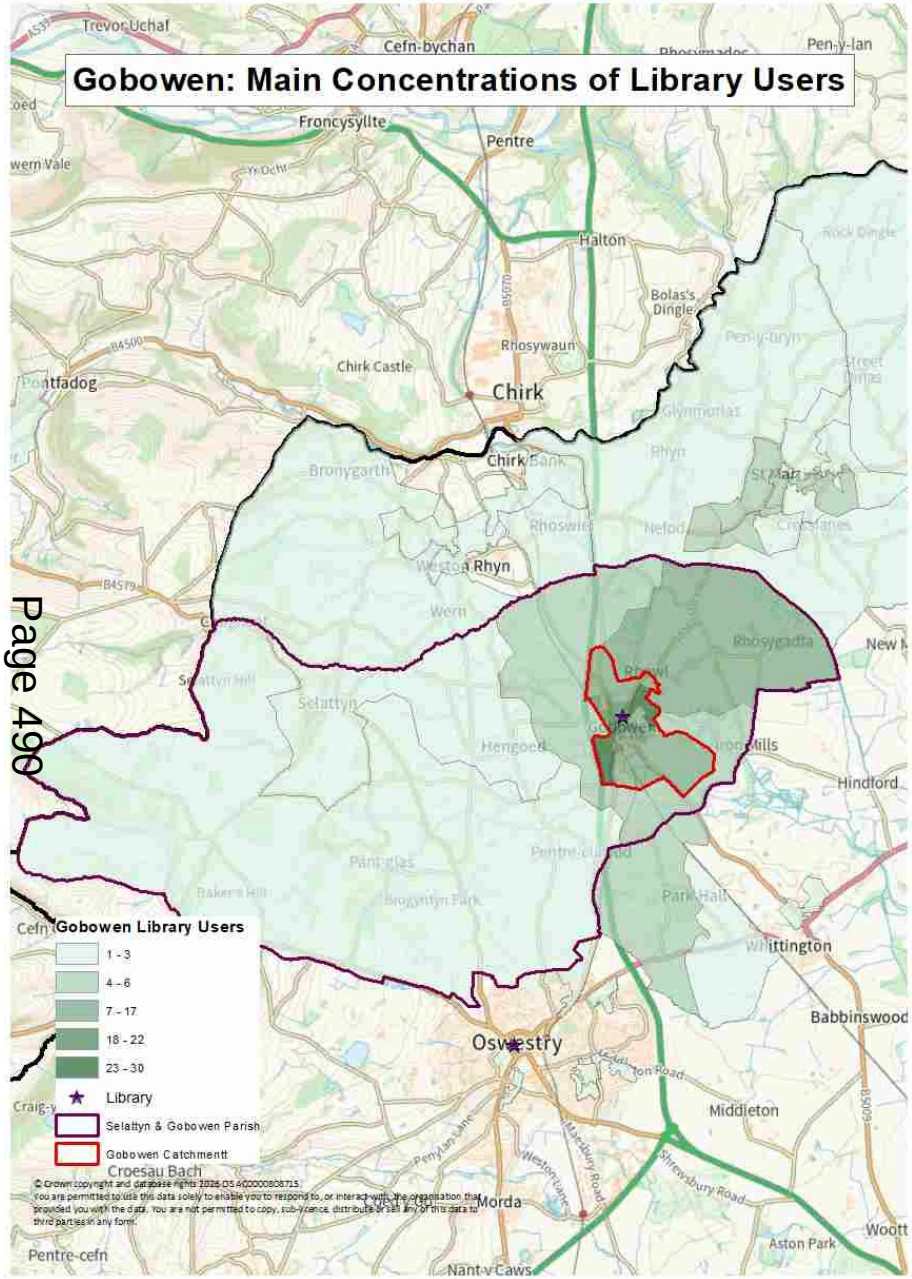
Gobowen: Number of Active Users



Gobowen: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery each year, with user numbers rising by five in 2025/26.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 127 users (+94.1%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 4,134, which is the equivalent of about 16 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, at about once every three to four weeks on average, is now higher than it was in 2019/20 (13 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was stable in 2025/26 in comparison with the previous year.
- 6,062 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 23 per active user and 1.5 per visit.
- The number of loans rose by 4% between 2025/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 12%.
- Computer usage was up by a substantial 67%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 61.3% of all Gobowen library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- 70.3% live within Selattyn and Gobowen Parish, which covers a much larger geographic area than the library catchment.
- 10.4% of the population in the catchment area are Gobowen active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 6.6% to 14.2%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 38.7% of Gobowen library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Oswestry catchment.
- People that live in the Gobowen catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Oswestry library- almost as many users in the Gobowen catchment use Oswestry library as they do Gobowen.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 76.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Gobowen library were to Gobowen, and these accounted for 72.5% of all issues.
- Oswestry was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

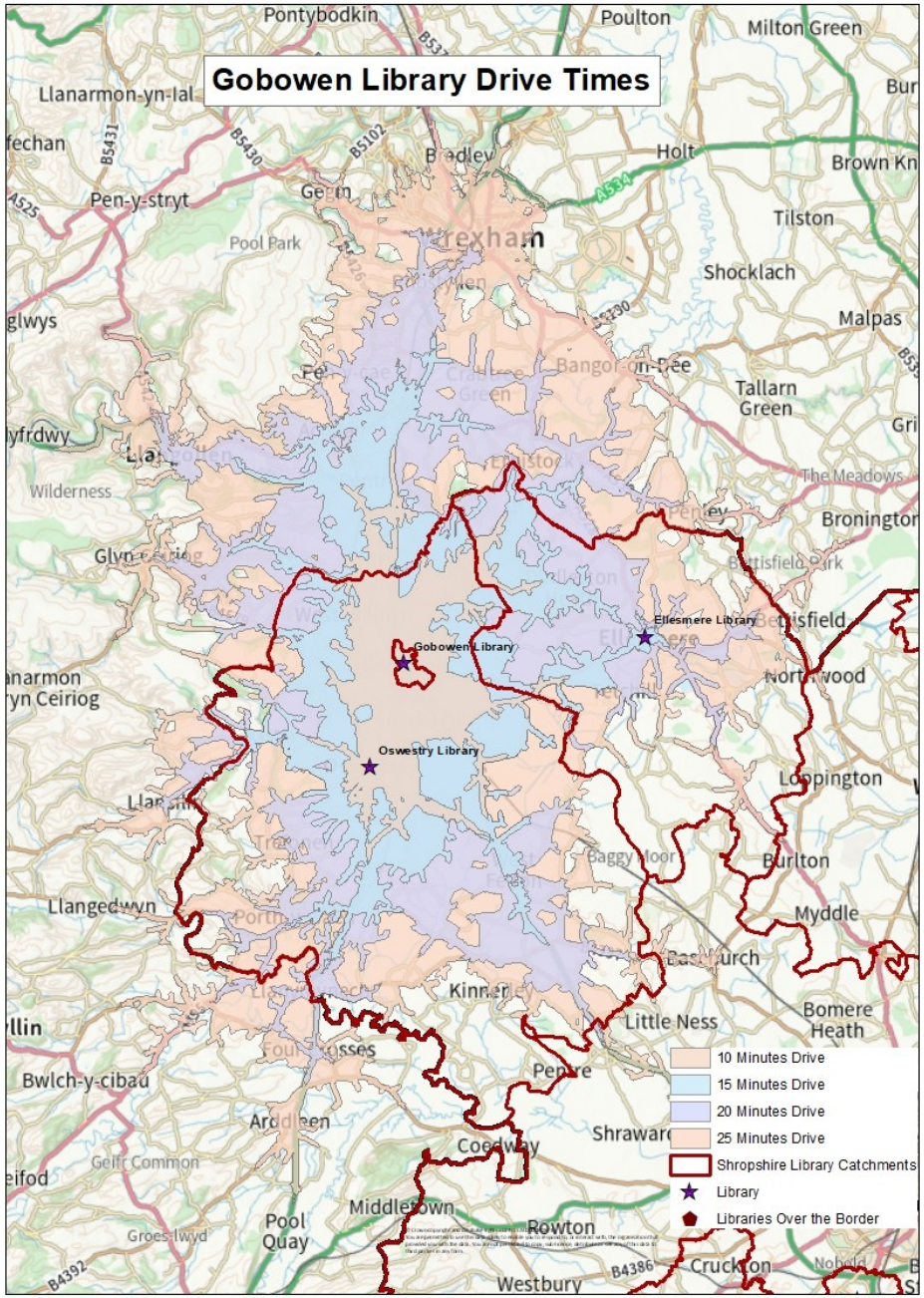
- The following table shows the proportion of active Gobowen library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	66.2%
30 Minute Walk	69.9%
10 Minute Drive	91.4%
15 Minute Drive	94.7%
20 Minute Drive	96.2%
25 Minute Drive	97.0%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Gobowen is in the north of Shropshire between Oswestry and Wrexham.
- The closest library to Gobowen is Oswestry, which is located 3 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 8 minutes.
- It can also be reached via a frequent bus service between Gobowen and Oswestry which takes about 20 minutes.
- Although Gobowen is on the rail network, Oswestry is not.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Gobowen	Oswestry	3 miles	8 mins	Bus (Several)	20 mins



Costs

- Gobowen is the 8th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £38,070 (2025/26)
- However, the library ranks as the third most expensive per active user behind Ludlow and Whitchurch and second most expensive per visit behind Whitchurch. It is also more expensive than average per book loan but is less expensive per hour open.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£48.81	£78.80	10th
Per Active User	£145.31	£81.29	3rd
Per Visit	£9.21	£4.23	2nd
Per Book Loan	£6.28	£5.07	8th

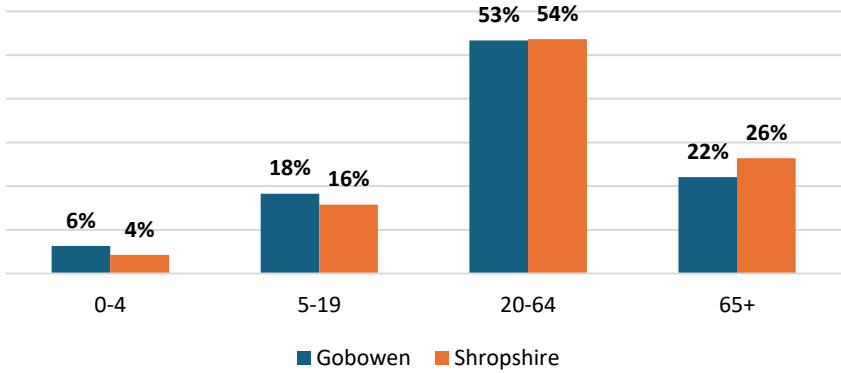
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Gobowen Catchment Area

Population

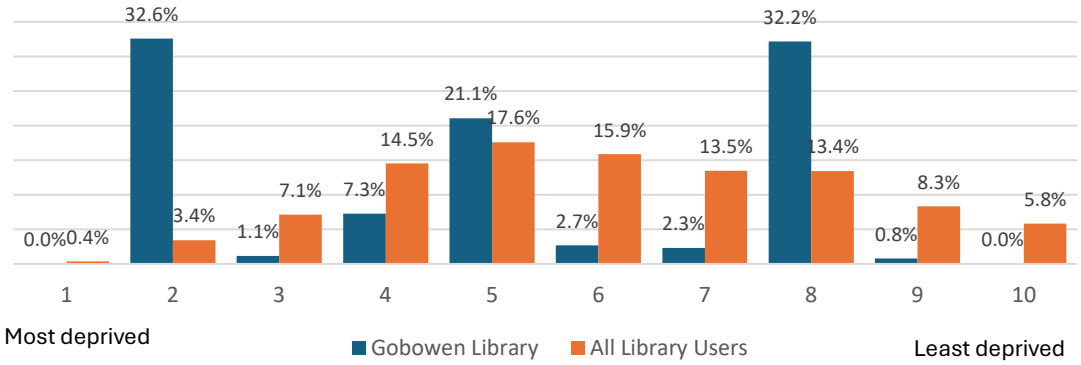
- Gobowen library catchment is the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 2,830.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of 0–19-year-olds and a slightly lower proportion aged 65+.
- There are 1,182 households in the catchment, with 27 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.27 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of Gobowen Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Gobowen Library Users by IMD Decile



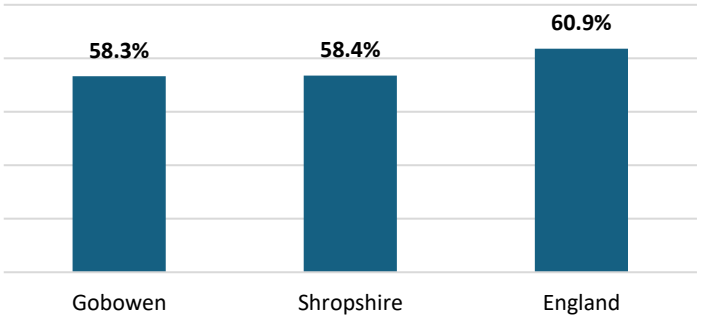
- Gobowen library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2024, which means it is one the five libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a third of users are drawn from this decile compared with 3.4% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further third of users live within the least deprived 30% of the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Gobowen library catchment is comparable to the Shropshire average at 58.3% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic in the Gobowen area is slightly younger than the county profile.
- The economic activity rate in the Gobowen library catchment area is the 7th highest in Shropshire.

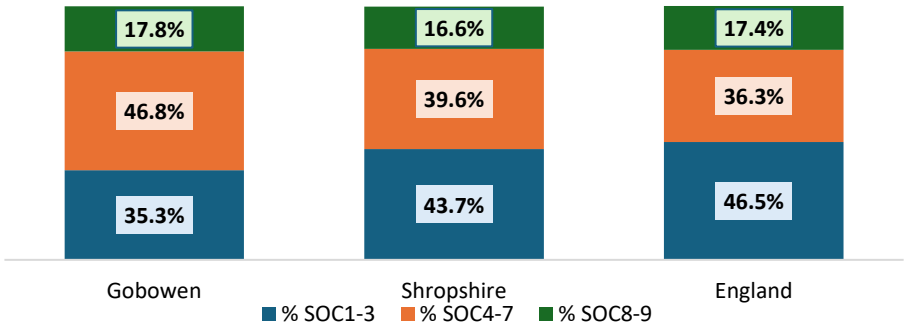
Gobowen: Economic Activity Rate



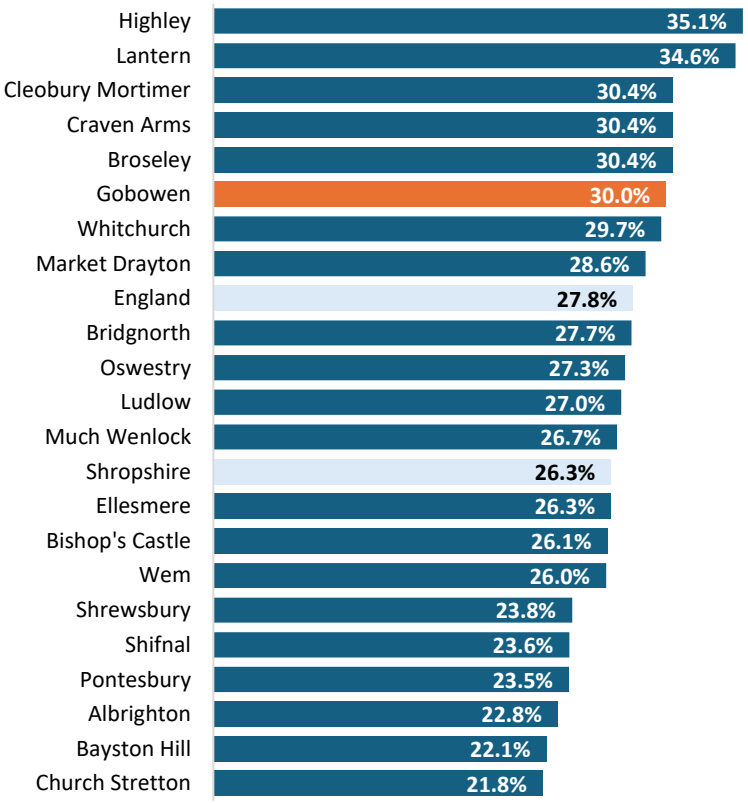
Employment

- 1,245 people in Gobowen were in employment in 2021, which equates with 57.1% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 35.3%. Slightly more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and a notably more in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Gobowen: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

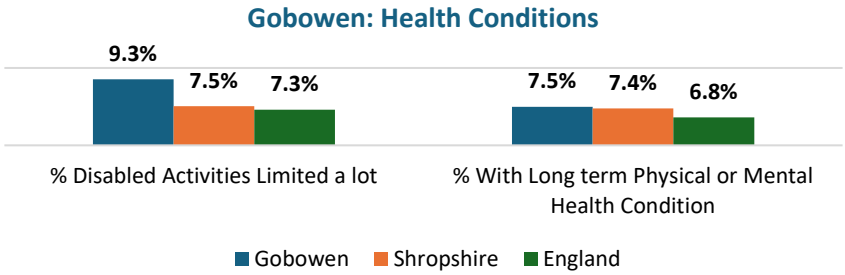
- The proportion of the Gobowen population with no or low qualifications is higher than the Shropshire average at 30.0% of the 16+ population. This is also higher than the national average.

Unemployment

- 39 people living in the Gobowen catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.8%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England and is low compared with most library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

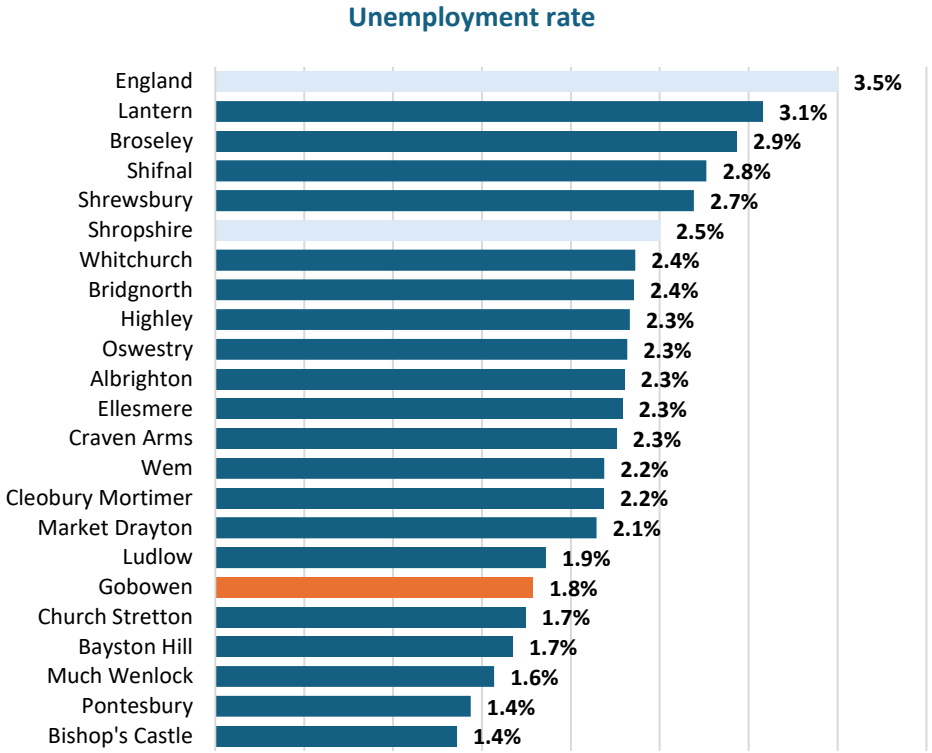
Health Conditions

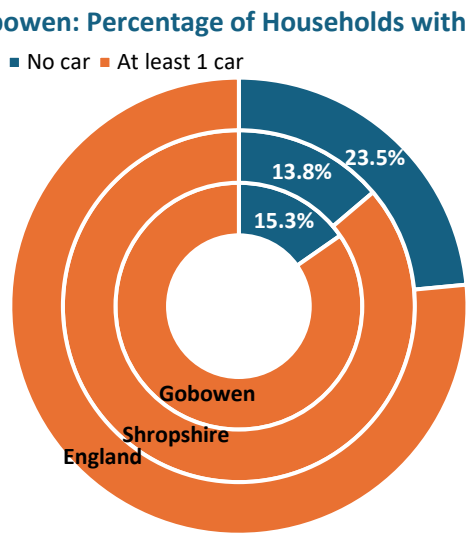
- 9.3% of residents in the Gobowen library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.5% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Gobowen is higher than the Shropshire average at 15.3%.

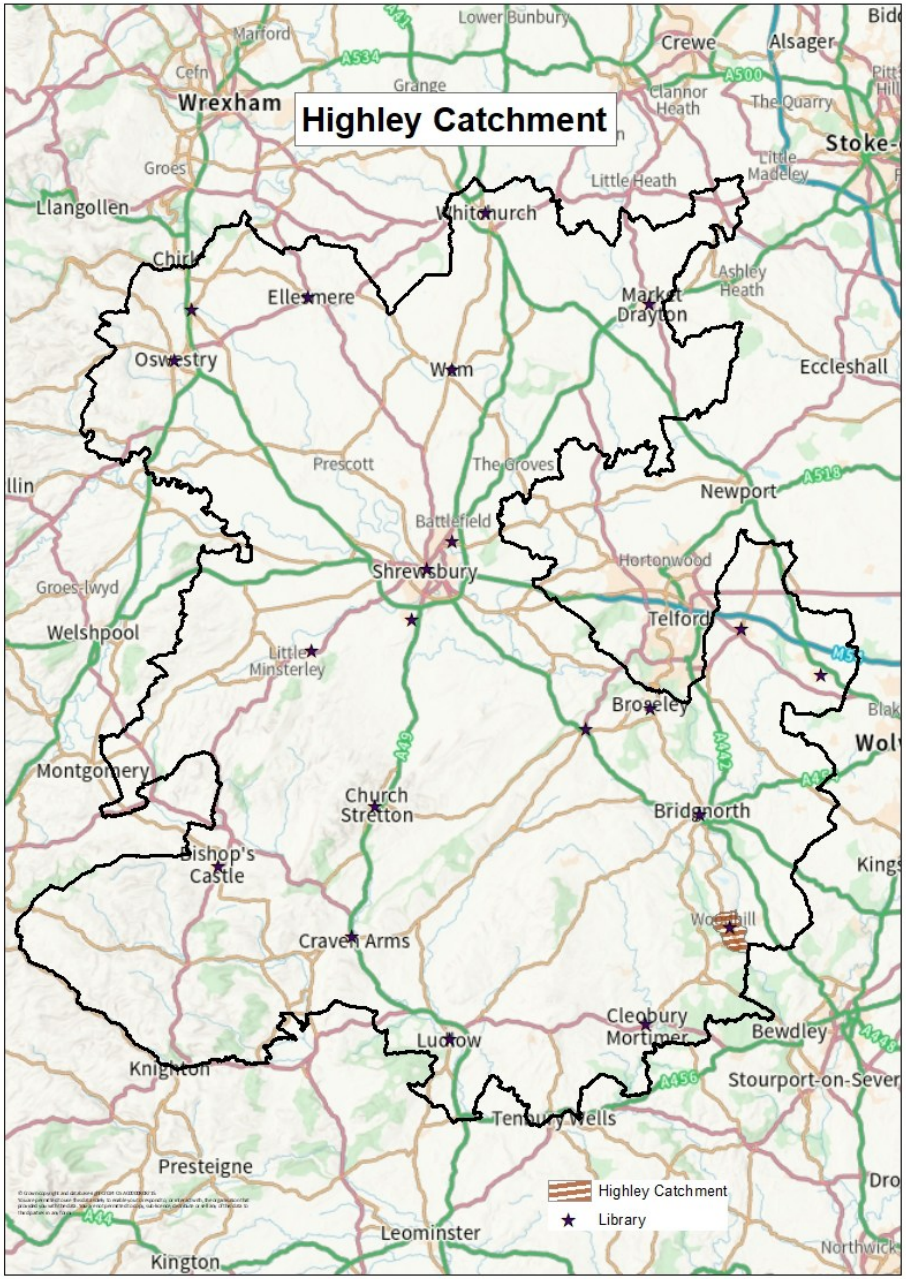




Highley Library Profile

Background

- Highley is a large village in the south east of Shropshire, close to the Worcestershire border.
- The library is located within the Severn Centre in the middle of the village and offers on-site parking.
- The Severn Centre is a multi-purpose facility with an outdoor pool, gym, sports hall and cafe as well as the library.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 638 hectares which is about 0.2% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely in Shropshire and is adjacent to the Bridgnorth and Cleobury Mortimer catchments.
- The total population within the Highley library catchment area is 3,785 comprising 1,668 households.



Opening Hours

The library is open 57.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

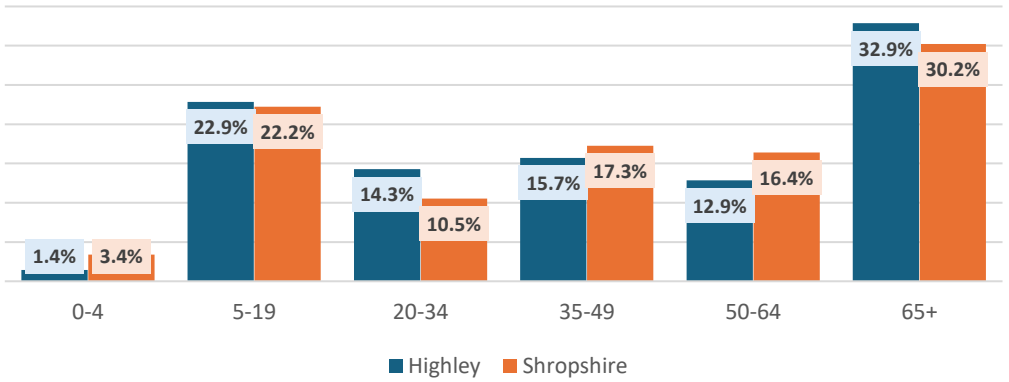
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Tuesday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Wednesday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Thursday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Friday	6.30am-17.00pm	10.5
Saturday	9.00am-14.00pm	5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library has 2 FTE employees.in 2025/26 the library benefited from one volunteer offering a total of 17 hours.

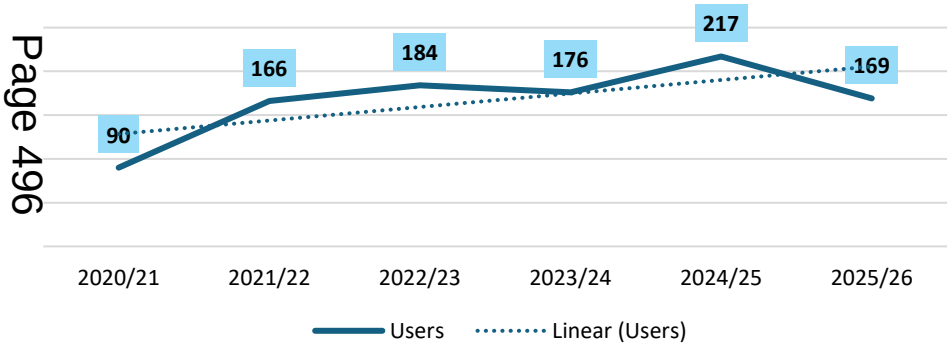
Library Users

- Highley library had 169 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 0.5% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 5.2% of the Highley catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all libraries not just Highley.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more people aged 65 and above and also more aged 5-34.

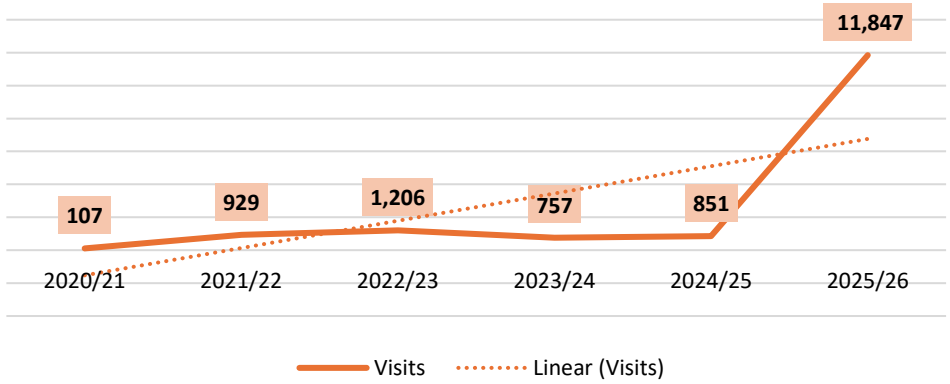
Breakdown of Highley Library Users by Age



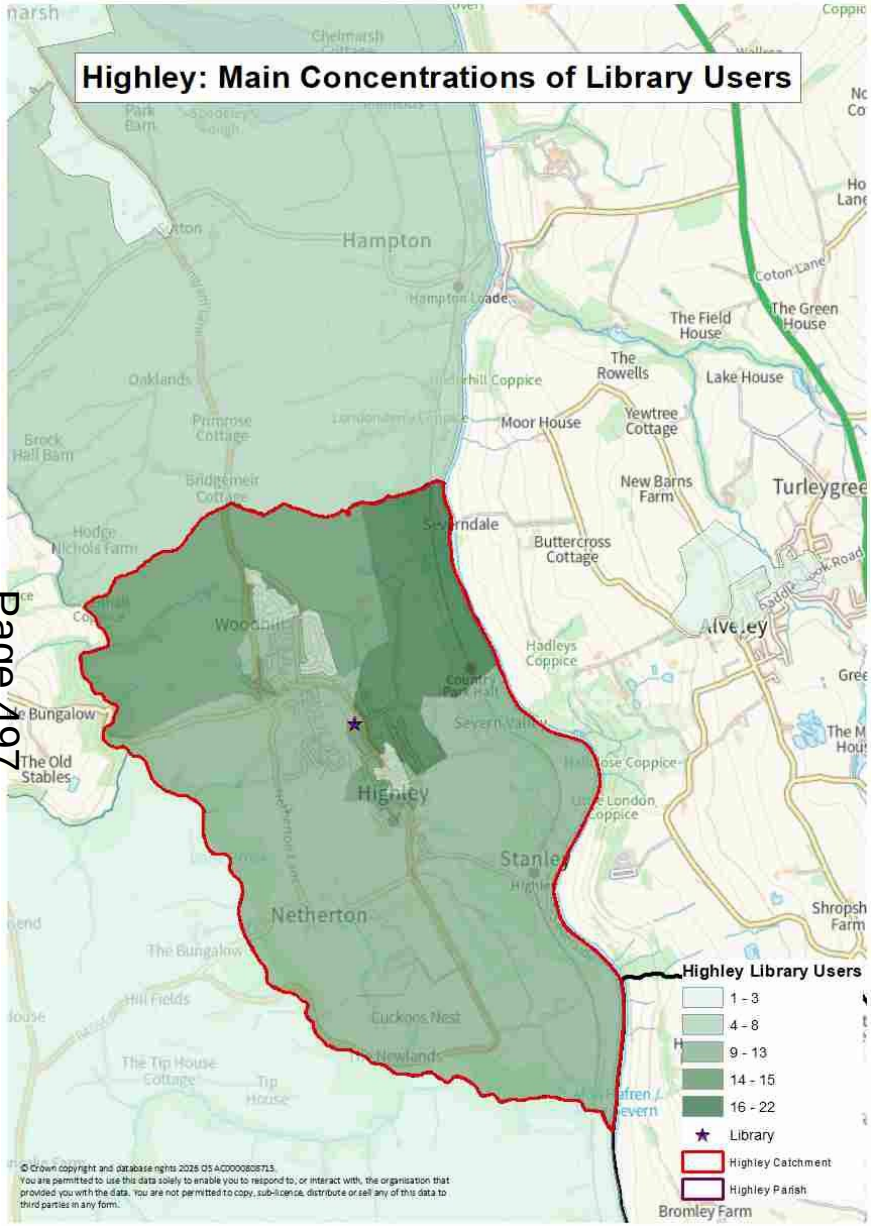
Highley: Number of Active Users



Highley: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery, although user numbers declined by 28 in 2025/26.
- Since 2020/21 user numbers rose by 79 (+87.8%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2024/25 stood at 11,847, which is the equivalent of about 70 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business; thereafter, visits increased but the number of visits spiked upwards in 2025/26 from less than 1,000 in 2024/25.
- 2,135 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 13 per active user and 0.2 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 2% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 110%.
- Computer usage was up by a significant 91%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 82.6% of all Highley library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is slightly higher than the average for Shropshire.
- The library catchment is identical to the parish boundary.
- 5.2% of the population in the catchment area are Highley active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 3% to 7.7%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 17.4% of Highley library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Bridgnorth catchment.
- People that live in the Highley catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Bridgnorth library.
- Over the six months to May 2022, 80.9% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Highley library were to Highley, and these accounted for 78.2% of all issues.
- Bridgnorth was the most frequently visited alternative library.

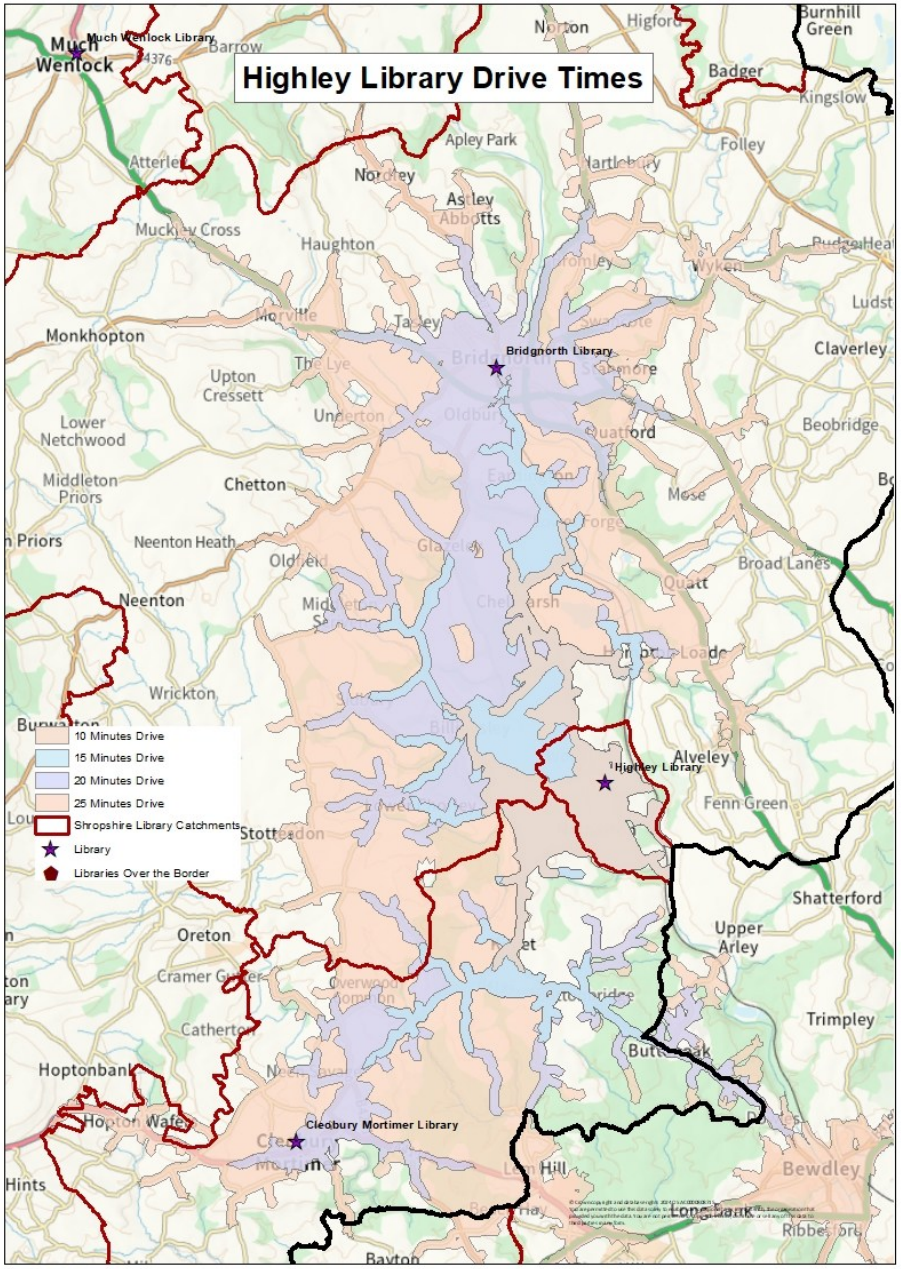
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Highley library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	72.7%
30 Minute Walk	84.5%
10 Minute Drive	86.3%
15 Minute Drive	89.4%
20 Minute Drive	91.3%
25 Minute Drive	93.8%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Highley is in the south east of Shropshire between Bridgnorth to the north and Bewdley in Worcestershire to the south.
- The closest library to Highley is Bridgnorth, which is located 7.4 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 14 minutes.
- It can also be reached via a regular bus service between Bridgnorth and Highley which takes about 40 minutes.
- Neither Bridgnorth nor Highley is on the mainline rail network, although both are located on the Severn Valley Railway.



Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Highley	Bridgnorth	7.4 miles	14 mins	125 Bus	25 mins

Costs

- Highley is the 6th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual Shropshire Council costs are £24,480 (2025/26).
- However, the library ranks as the fourth most expensive per visit and the most expensive per book loan. Long opening hours mean that Highley ranks amongst the least expensive per visit and per hour open.

Most deprived

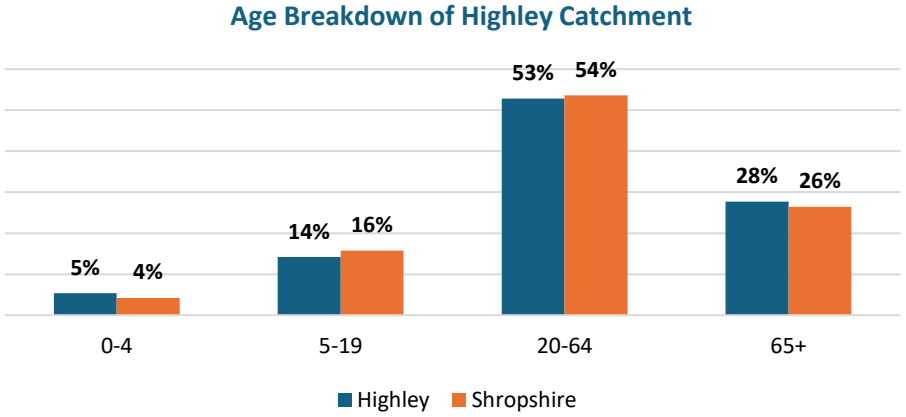
	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£8.19	£78.80	17th
Per Active User	£144.85	£81.29	4th
Per Visit	£2.07	£4.23	18th
Per Book Loan	£11.47	£5.07	1st

Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

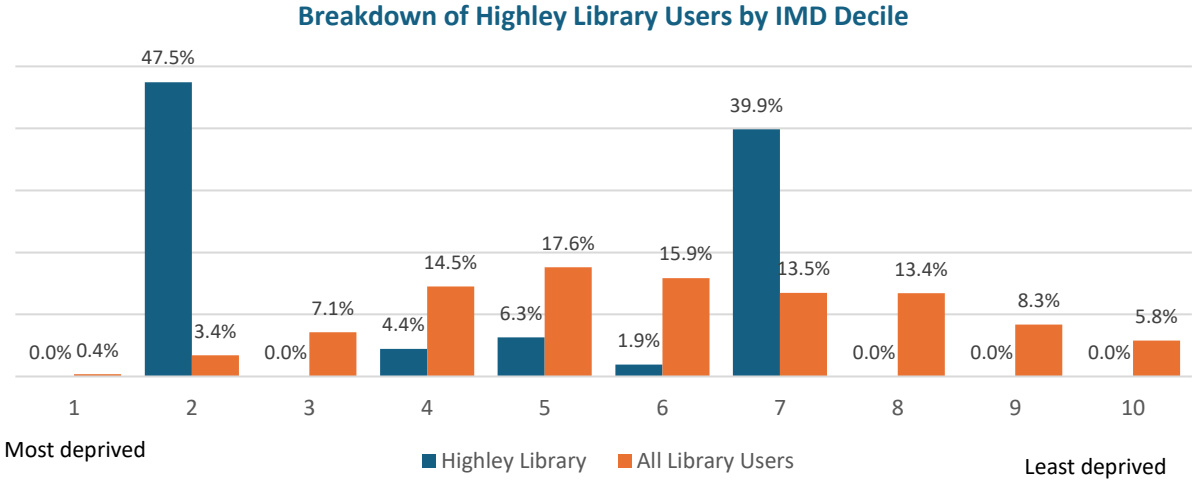
Socio-Economic Characteristics of Highley Catchment Area

Population

- Highley library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 3,785.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of 65+ but is broadly similar to the Shropshire breakdown.
- There are 1,668 households in the catchment, with no people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.24 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.



Deprivation



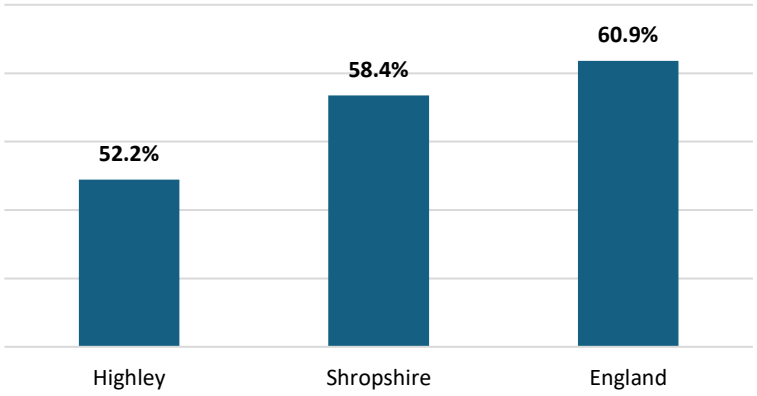
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Highley library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2025, which means it is one the five libraries in Shropshire located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost half of users are drawn from this decile compared with 3.4% of all Shropshire library users.
- A further 39.9% of users live within the least deprived 40% of the country (all in decile 7).

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Highley library catchment is much lower than the Shropshire average at 52.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Highley library catchment area is the 3rd lowest in Shropshire.

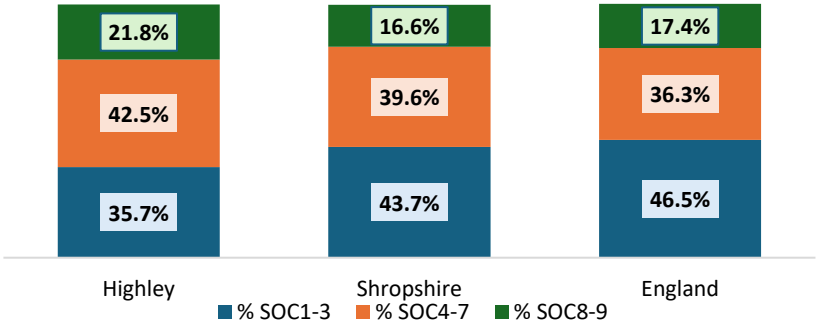
Highley: Economic Activity Rate

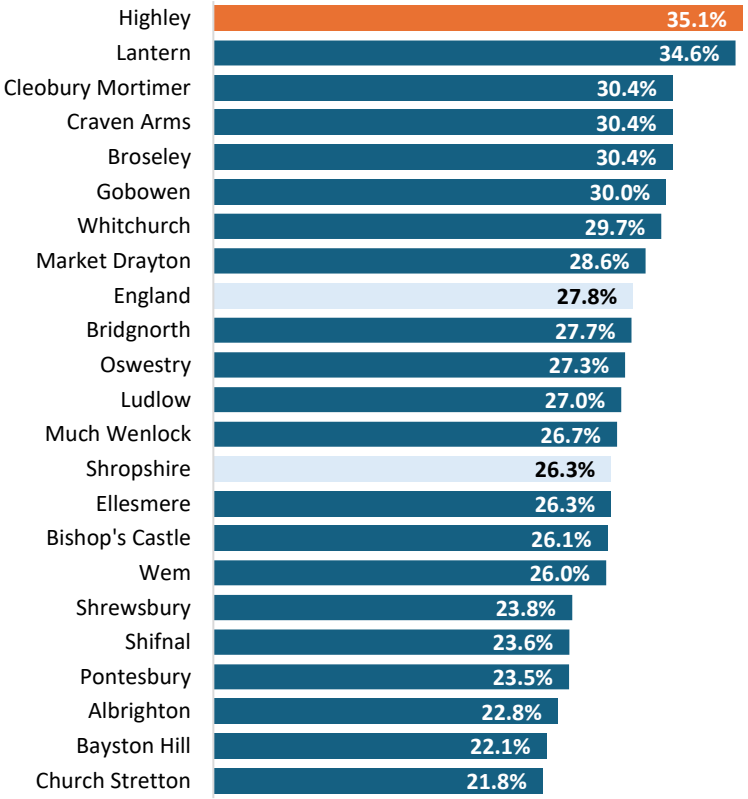


Employment

- 1,575 people in Highley were in employment in 2021, which equates with 50.3% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 35.7%. Notably more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and slightly more in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Highley: Occupation Types



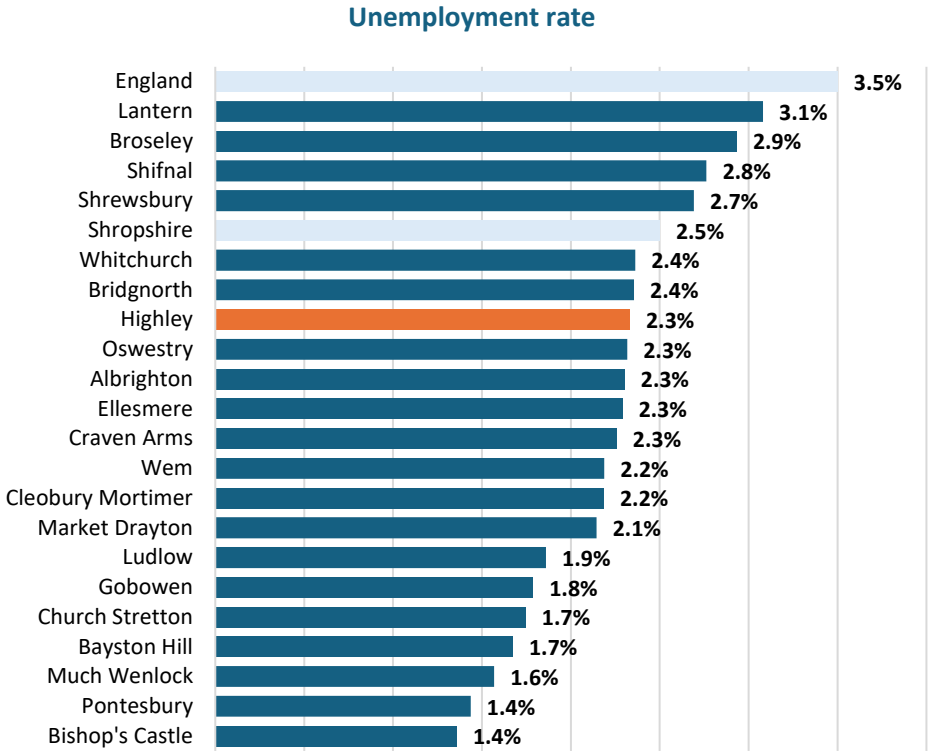


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Highley population with no or low qualifications is the highest in Shropshire at 35.1% of the 16+ population.

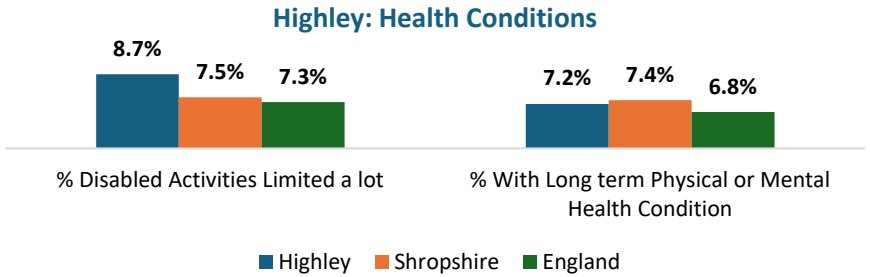
Unemployment

- 73 people living in the Highley catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England but is higher than for most library catchments.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



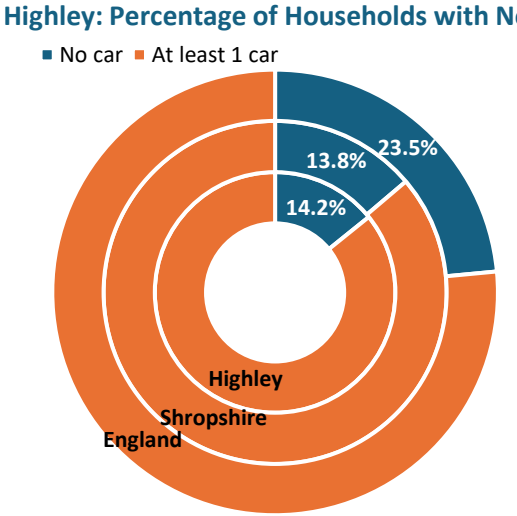
Health Conditions

- 8.7% of residents in the Highley library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.2% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Highley is slightly higher than the Shropshire average at 14.2%.



Library at the Lantern Profile

Background

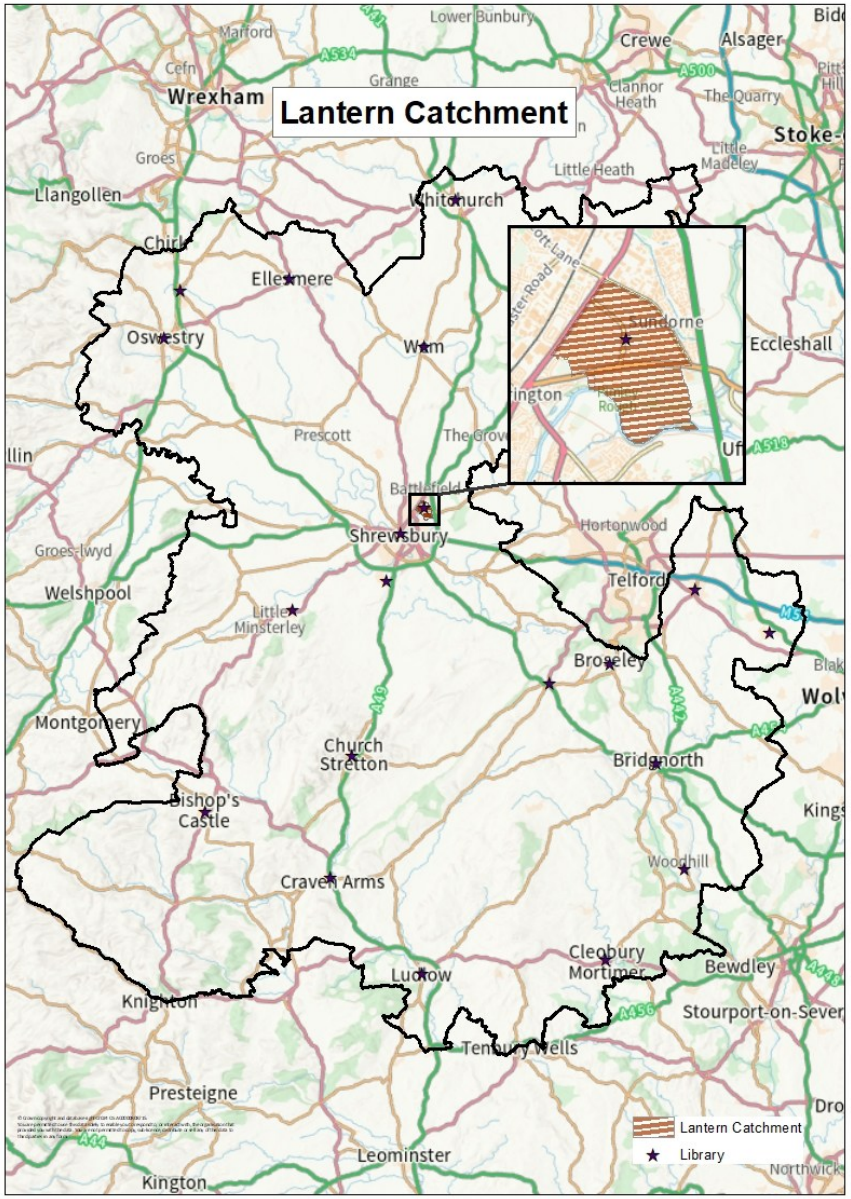
- The library at the Lantern is located in north east Shrewsbury, approximately two miles from the centre of town.
- The library is located within the Lantern Community building which has bookable rooms and a cafe. On-site parking is available.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 143 hectares which is less than 0.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely in Shropshire and is also entirely within the catchment for Shrewsbury's main library.
- The total population within the Lantern library catchment area is 4,642 comprising 1,845 households.

Opening Hours

The library is open 24.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Friday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

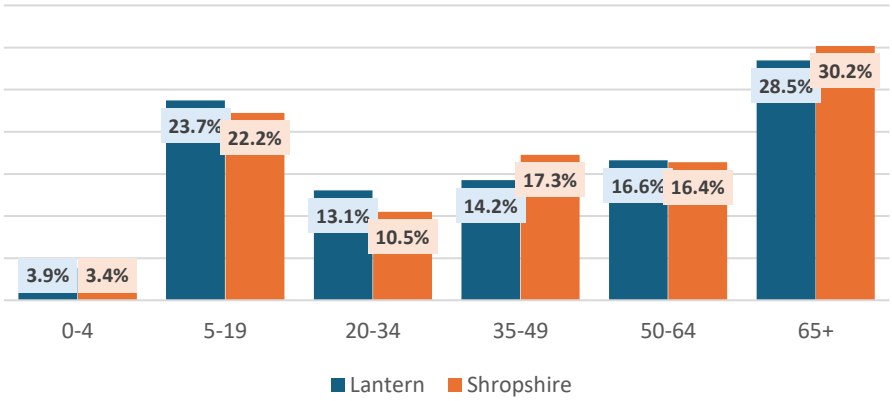
- The library has 1.21 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from 5 volunteers providing a total of 60 volunteer hours.



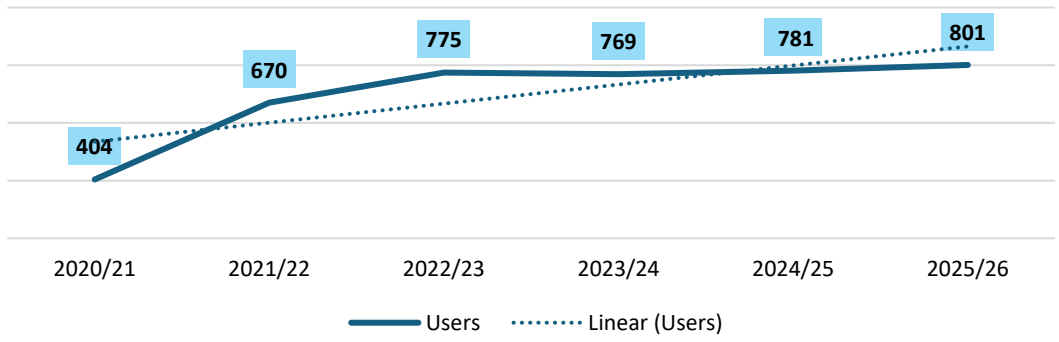
Library Users

- The Lantern library had 801 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 7.9% of the Lantern catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes other Shropshire libraries as well as the Lantern.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young adults and fewer users over the age of 65.

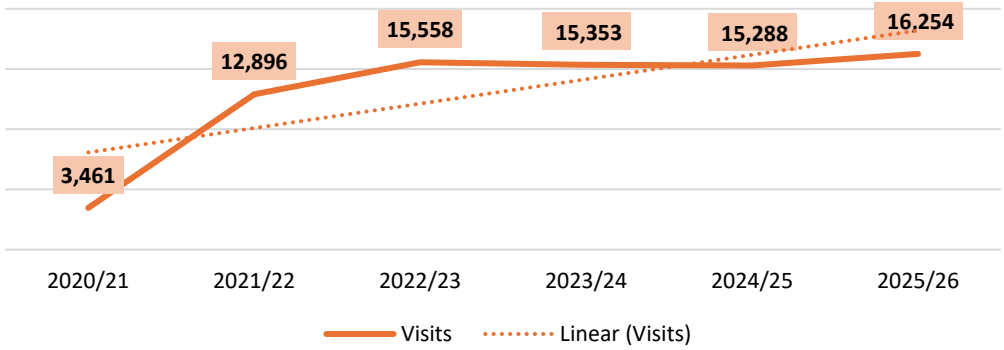
Breakdown of Lantern Library Users by Age



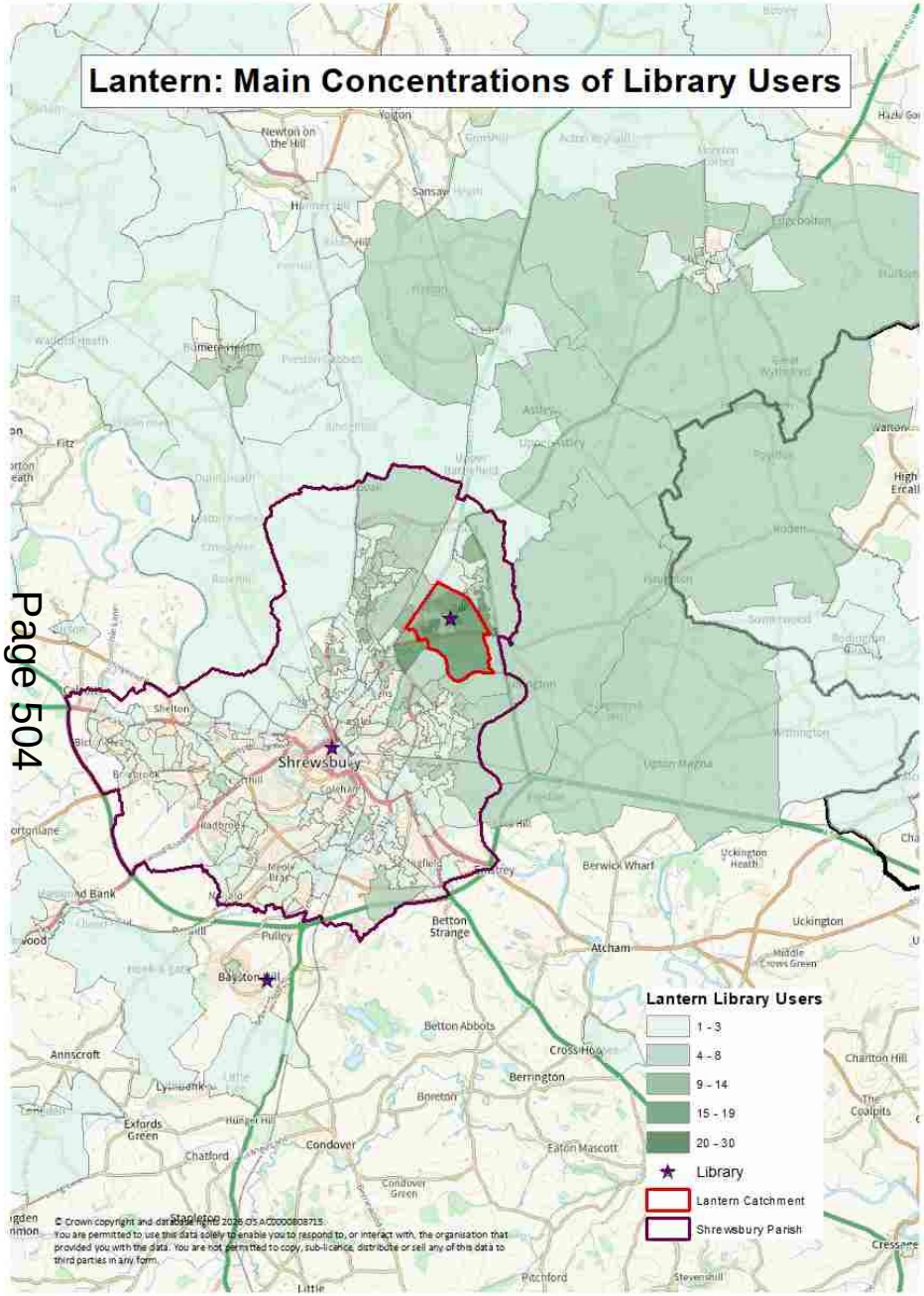
Lantern: Number of Active Users



Lantern: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been some recovery year-on-year. However, numbers are still down compared with the pre-pandemic period.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 397 users (+98.3%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 16,, which is the equivalent of about 20 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has now recovered to the level seen pre-pandemic (20 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was more than four times higher in 2025/26 than it was in 2020/21.
- 24,000 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 30 per active user and 1.5 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 4% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 8%.
- Computer usage was down by 12%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 29.0% of all Lantern library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is the lowest in Shropshire.
- The library catchment forms part of the Shrewsbury town council area – 82.6% of all Lantern library users live within this geography.
- 7.9% of the population in the catchment area are Lantern active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 6% to 11.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 71.0% of Lantern library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury catchment.
- People that live in the Lantern catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library. Almost a third of library users living in the Lantern catchment use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 87.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with the Lantern library were to the Lantern, and these accounted for 89.7% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

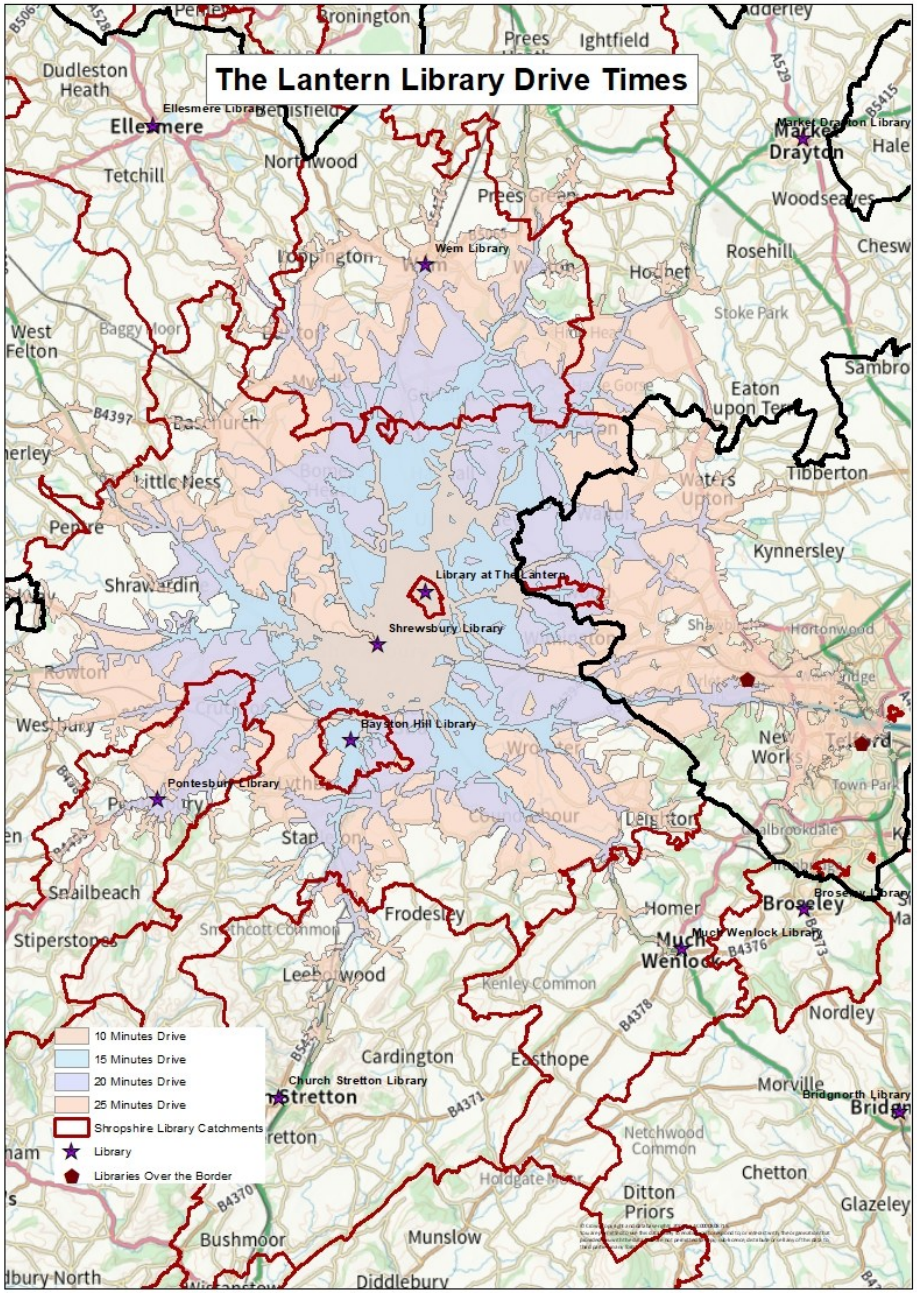
- The following table shows the proportion of active Lantern library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	37.5%
30 Minute Walk	55.4%
10 Minute Drive	83.1%
15 Minute Drive	91.2%
20 Minute Drive	93.4%
25 Minute Drive	96.8%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- The Lantern is in the north east of Shrewsbury in the centre of Shropshire.
- The closest library to the Lantern is Shrewsbury, which is located 2.1 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is eight minutes.
- It can also be reached via a regular bus service between which takes about 20-25 minutes.
- As shown on the adjacent map, Pontesbury, Bayston Hill, Much Wenlock and Wem libraries are all within a 25 minute drive of the Lantern.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
The Lantern	Shrewsbury	2.1 miles	8 mins	24 or 511 Bus	20-25 mins



Costs

- The Lantern is the 9th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the third most expensive after the main six.
- Annual running costs are £53,510 (2025/26).
- However, the library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£42.00	£78.80	14th
Per Active User	£66.80	£81.29	12th
Per Visit	£3.29	£4.23	14th
Per Book Loan	£2.23	£5.07	16th

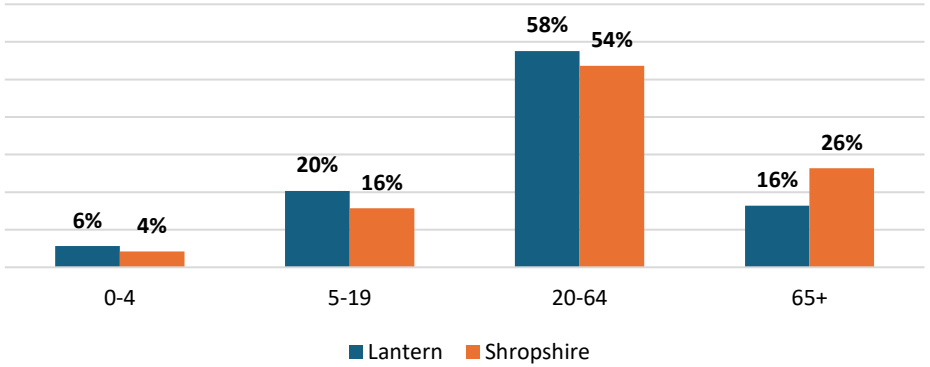
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Lantern Catchment Area

Population

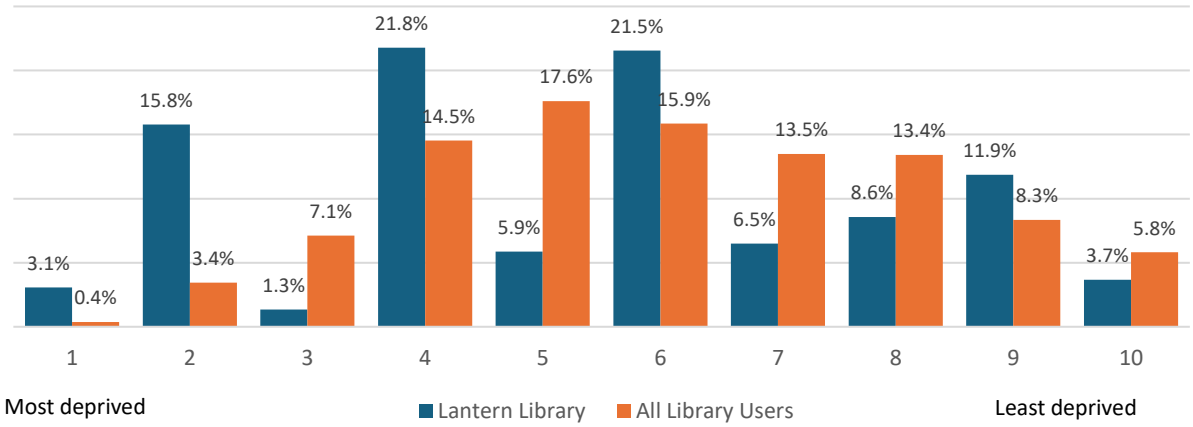
- The Lantern library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 4,642.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a higher proportion of children and young people and fewer adults over the age of 65.
- There are 1,845 households in the catchment, with 61 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.47 which is the largest of all catchments and compares with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

Age Breakdown of the Lantern Catchment



Deprivation

Breakdown of Lantern Library Users by IMD Decile



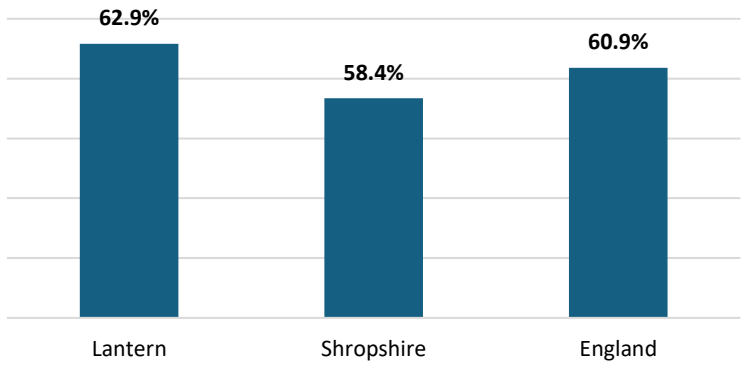
- The Lantern library is in the second decile according to the IMD 2025, which means it is one of only five Shropshire libraries located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that almost a fifth live within the 20% most deprived areas nationally compared with 3.8% of all Shropshire library users.
- The library also attracts users from less deprived areas, with 15.6% living in the least deprived 20% of the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Lantern library catchment is much higher than the Shropshire average at 62.9% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also higher than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. However, the demographic profile of the Lantern catchment is much younger than the County average.
- The economic activity rate in the Lantern library catchment area is the 2nd highest in Shropshire.

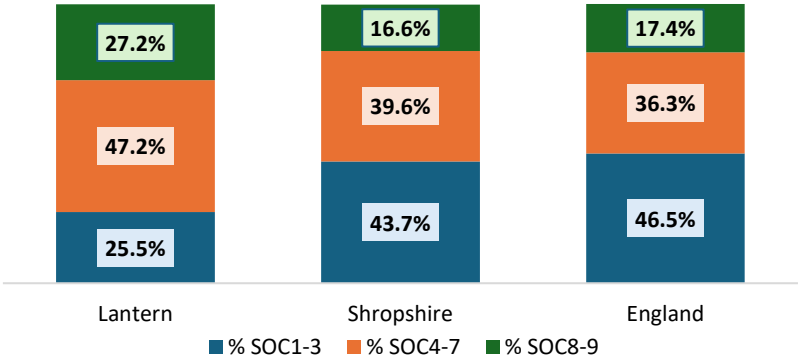
Lantern: Economic Activity Rate



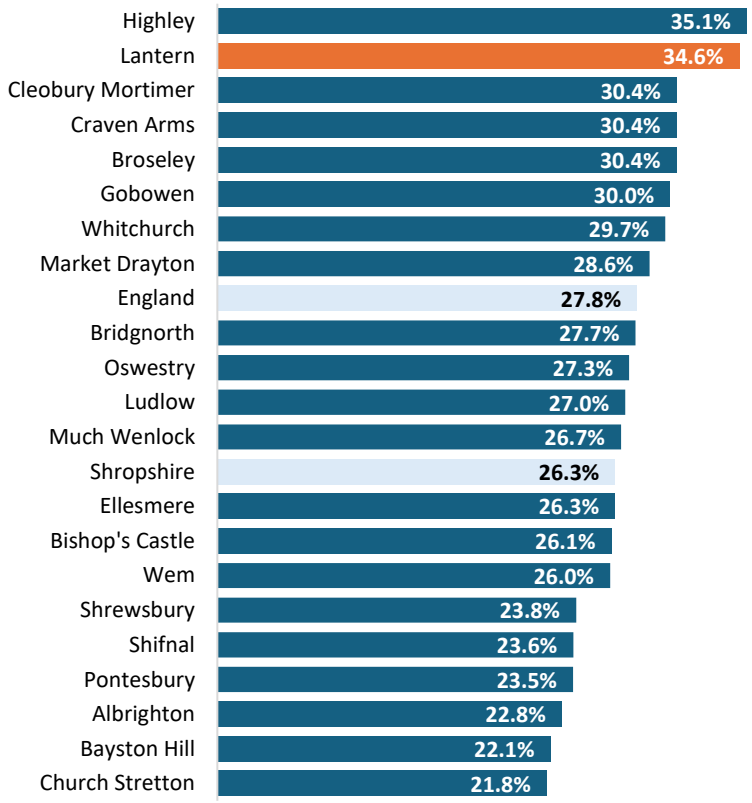
Employment

- 2,212 people in the Lantern catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 60.3% of the 16+ population.
- A much lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 25.5%. Notably more are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Lantern: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

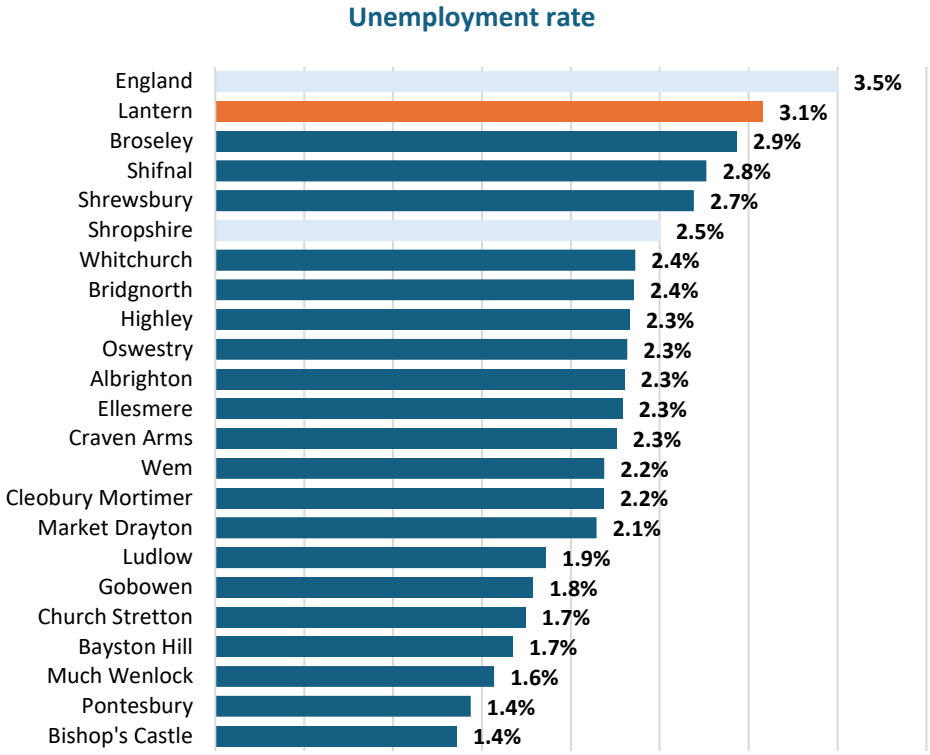


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Lantern population with no or low qualifications is the second highest in Shropshire at 34.6% of the 16+ population.

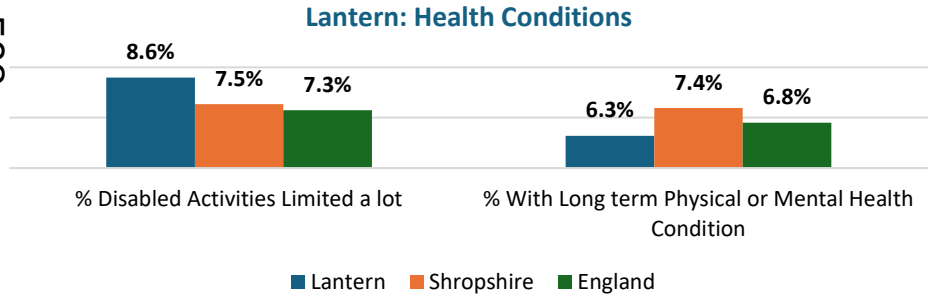
Unemployment

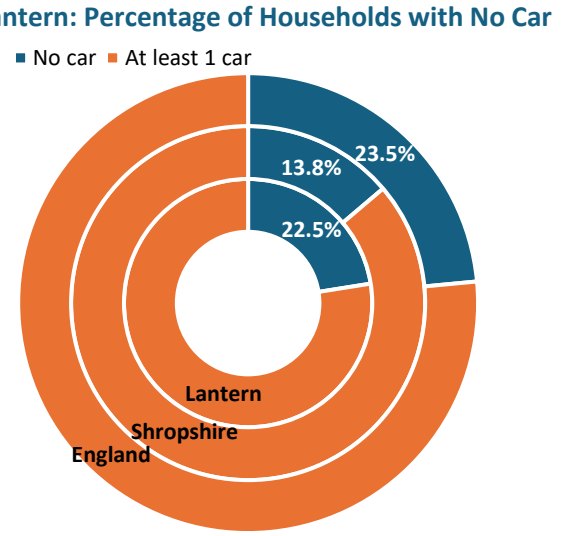
- 113 people living in the Lantern catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 3.1%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average but it is only marginally lower for the Lantern.



Health Conditions

- 8.6% of residents in the Lantern library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is higher than for Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.3% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.





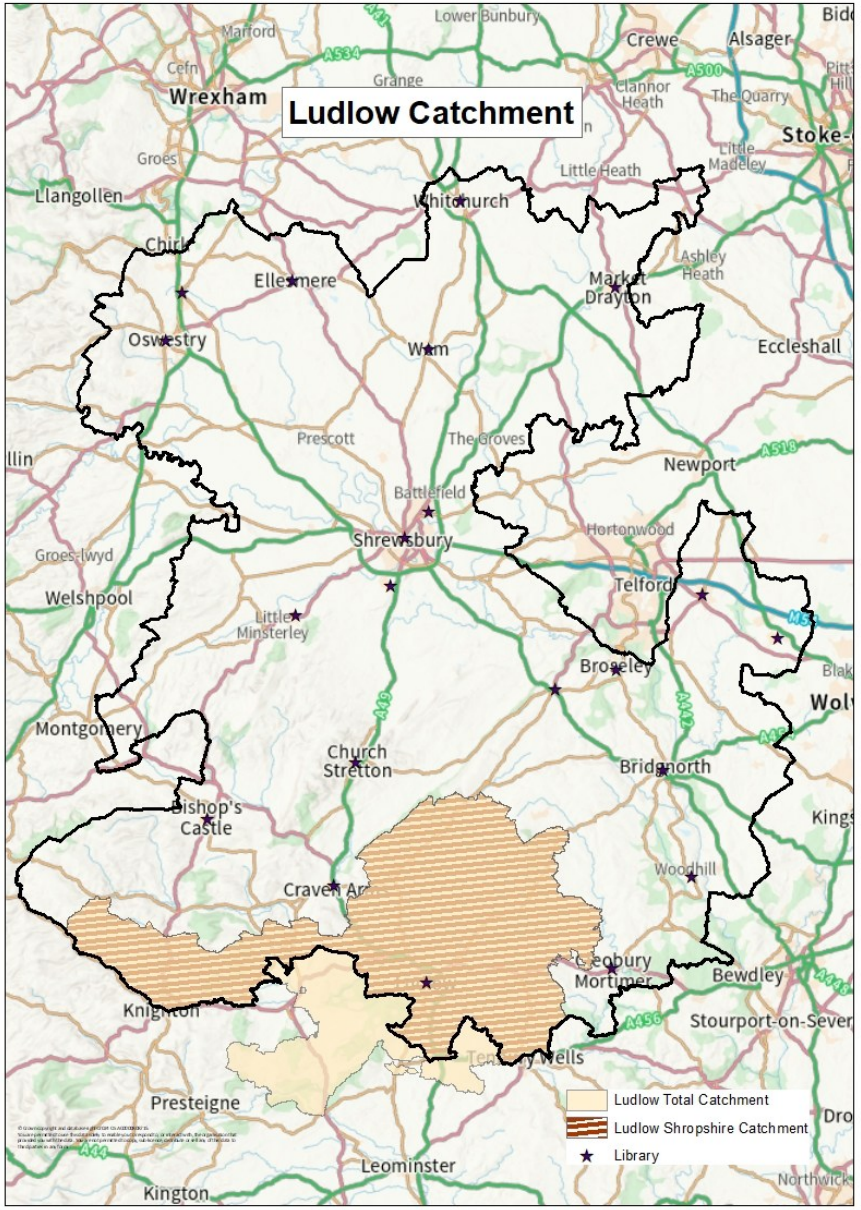
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in the Lantern catchment is much higher than the Shropshire average at 22.5%, which is close to the national average.

Ludlow Library Profile

Background

- Ludlow is a town in the south of Shropshire close to the Herefordshire border.
- The library is in purpose-built accommodation in the town centre which is owned and operated by Shropshire Council. It is adjacent to a public car park.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 44,684 hectares within Shropshire which is about 14% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends outside of the Shropshire border into Herefordshire – in fact 23% of the total catchment is not in Shropshire as shown on the adjacent map.
- The total population within the Ludlow library catchment area is 27,314 comprising 12,041 households. 84% of the catchment population – 22,939 people- are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Ludlow is the fifth largest catchment in Shropshire.



Opening Hours

The library is open 34.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

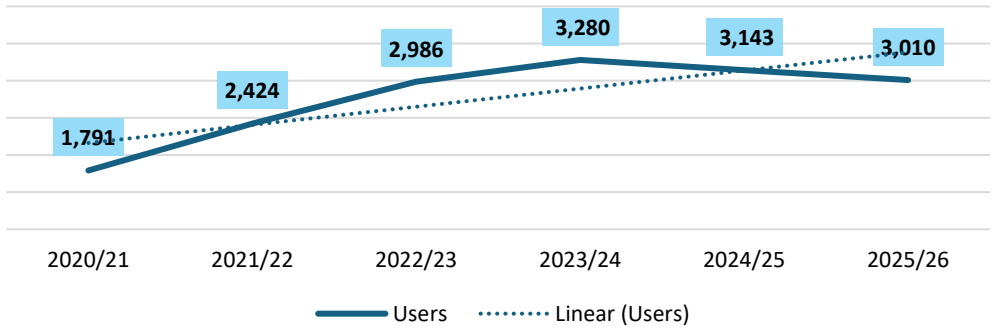
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 5.29 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 28 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 1,158 volunteer hours.

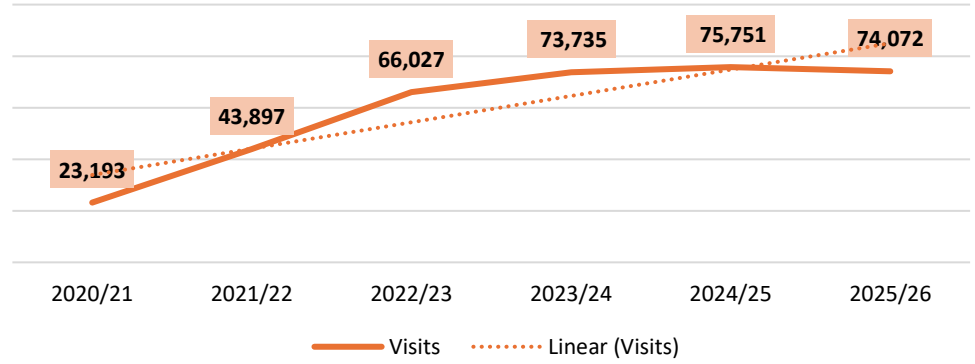
Library Users

- Ludlow library had 3,010 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 9.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 10.7% of the Ludlow catchment population are active library users, which comparable with the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries as well as Ludlow.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are comparable numbers of children and young people and more users aged 65 and above.

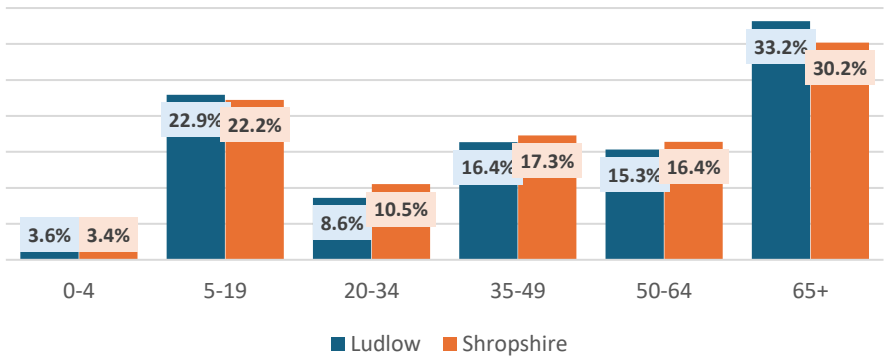
Ludlow: Number of Active Users



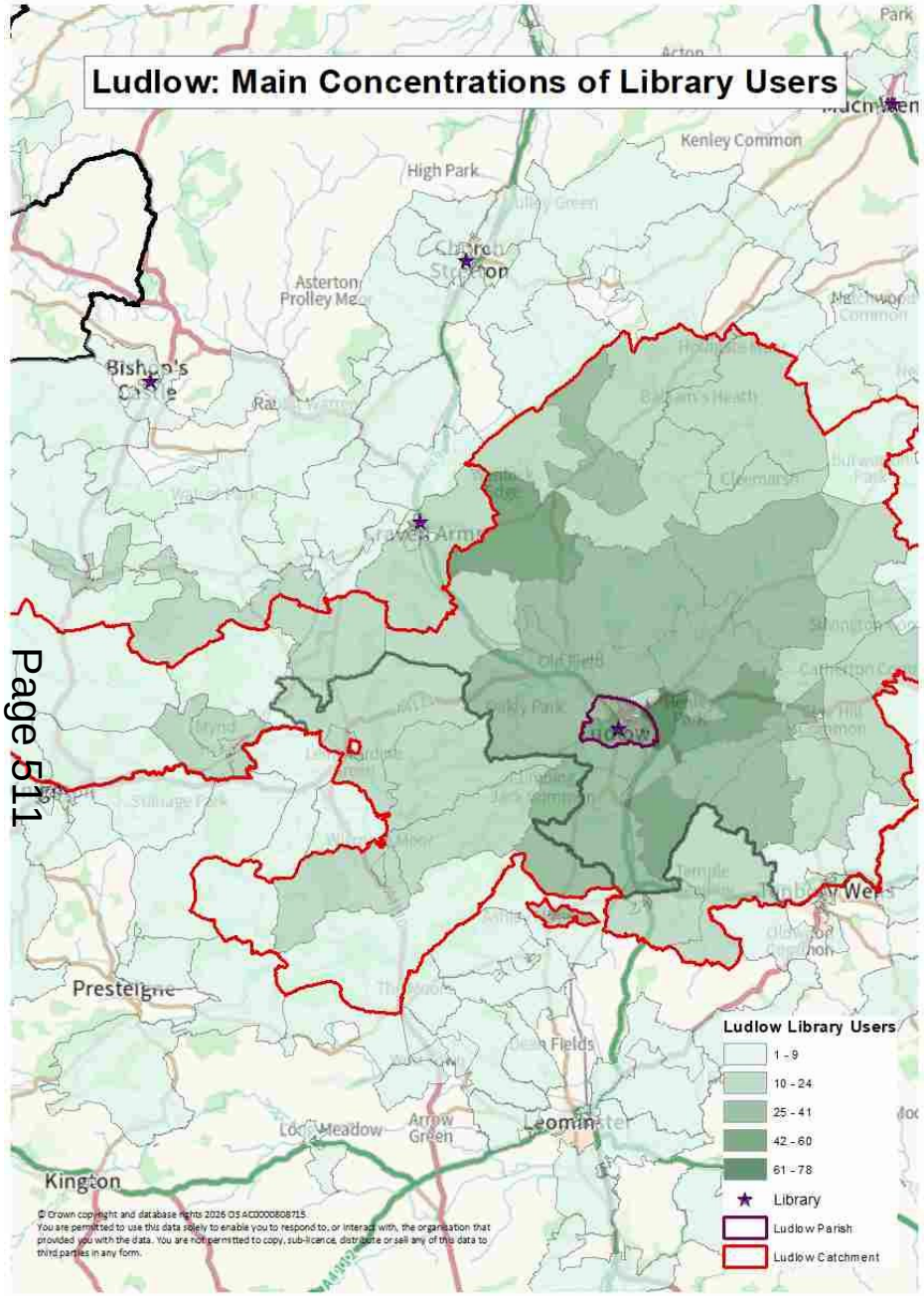
Ludlow: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Ludlow Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year to 2023/24, albeit with numbers still falling short of pre-pandemic levels. In 2023/24, user numbers have fallen by 270.
- The change in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 1,219 users (+68.1%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 74,072, which is the equivalent of about 25 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels (23 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was three times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 53,495 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 18 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 5% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 8% over the last year.
- Computer time was down by 14%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.5% of all Ludlow library users live within the main catchment area.
- 50.9% live within the Ludlow town council area.
- 10.7% of the population in the catchment area are Ludlow active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 24.9%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 12.5% of Ludlow library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in Craven Arms. Significant numbers also live in Church Stretton, Bishop's Castle, Cleobury Mortimer and Bridgnorth. There are also relatively high numbers that live outside of Shropshire.
- People that live in the Ludlow catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Craven Arms library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 92.2% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Ludlow library were to Ludlow, and these accounted for 92.5% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Ludlow include Church Stretton, Craven Arms and Shrewsbury as well as the Brooks mobile service.

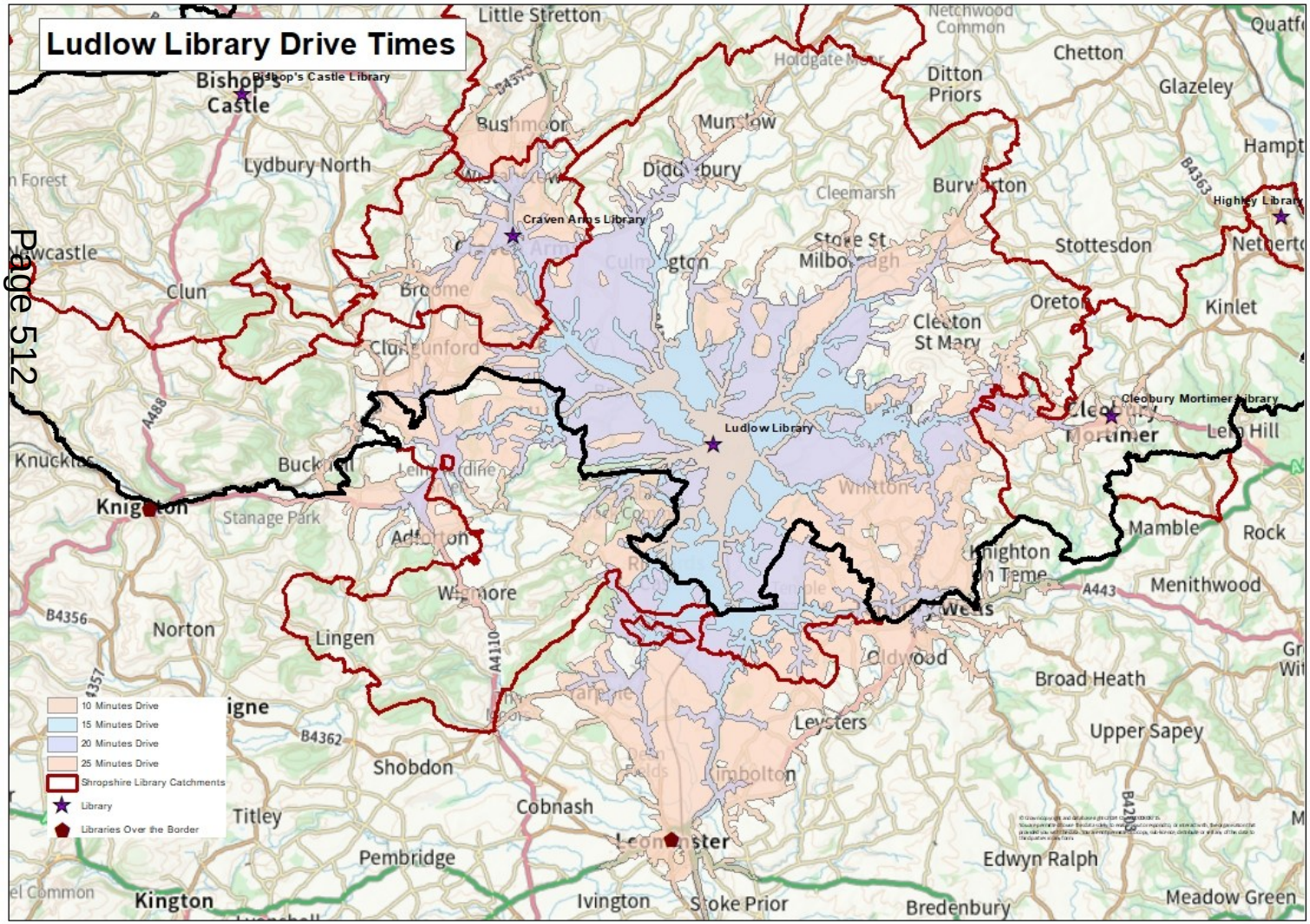
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Ludlow library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	33.1%
30 Minute Walk	55.0%
10 Minute Drive	56.5%
15 Minute Drive	71.8%
20 Minute Drive	82.0%
25 Minute Drive	89.2%

Access

- Ludlow is in the south of Shropshire close to the border with Herefordshire.
- Craven Arms is the closest alternative library, located approximately 7.9 miles north of Ludlow on the A49. Cleobury Mortimer library is also accessible within a 25-minute drive as is Leominster, over the border in Herefordshire.
- The nearest of other main six libraries is Bridgnorth, which is approximately 19.5 miles away with a drive time of 35 minutes. Shrewsbury is slightly further afield at 29 miles, or a 56-minute drive.



Costs

- Ludlow is the second most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury.
- Annual running costs are £442,179 (2025/26)
- Ludlow library costs more than average per active user, per visit and per book loan and is the most expensive of all per hour open.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£246.47	£78.80	1st
Per Active User	£146.90	£81.29	2nd
Per Visit	£5.97	£4.23	3rd
Per Book Loan	£8.27	£5.07	3rd

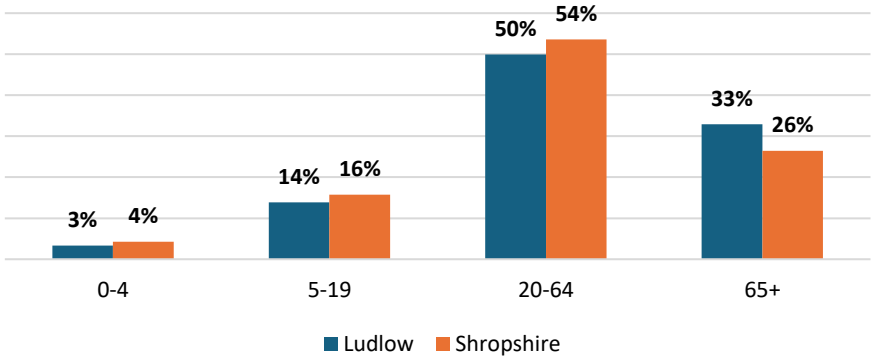
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ludlow Catchment Area

Population

- Ludlow library catchment is the fifth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 22,939 and a total population of 27,314.
- The age breakdown of the population is older than the Shropshire profile, with significantly more people aged 65+ and fewer people in younger age brackets.
- There are 12,041 households in the catchment, with 304 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.19 which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

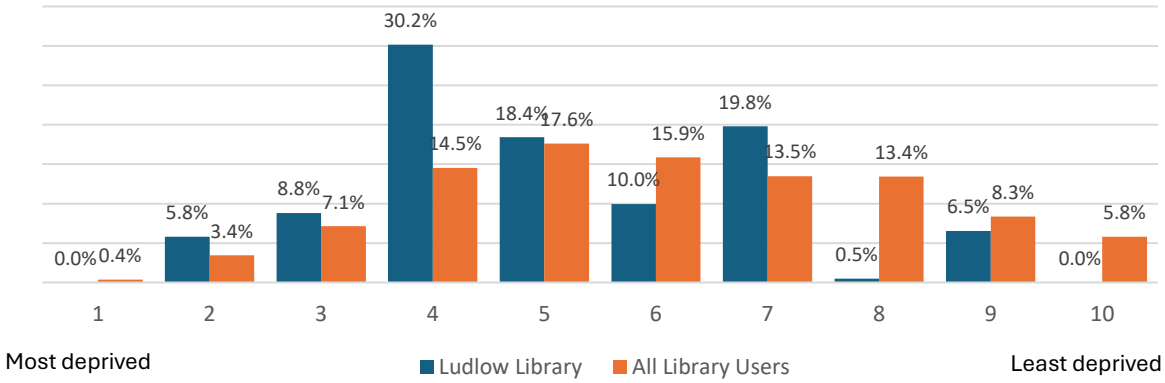
Age Breakdown of Ludlow Catchment



Includes Non-Shropshire Population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Ludlow Library Users by IMD Decile



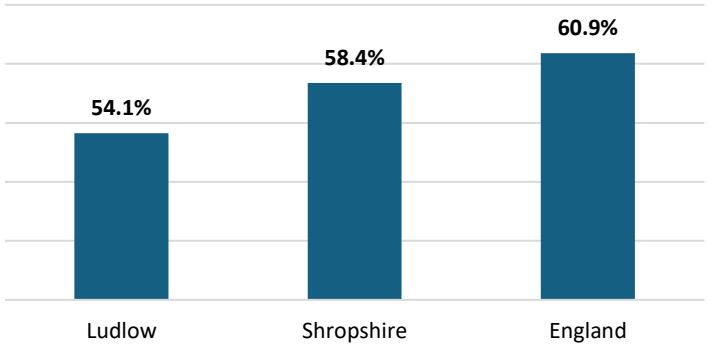
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Ludlow library is in decile three according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of 10 Shropshire libraries within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 14.6% of Ludlow library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.9% for all Shropshire library users).
- More than three-quarters of users are drawn from deciles four, five, six and seven, with 7.0% living in the least deprived 30% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Ludlow library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 54.1% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. There are proportionately more people aged 65+ in the Ludlow catchment than in Shropshire as a whole.
- The economic activity rate in the Ludlow library catchment area is the third lowest in Shropshire.

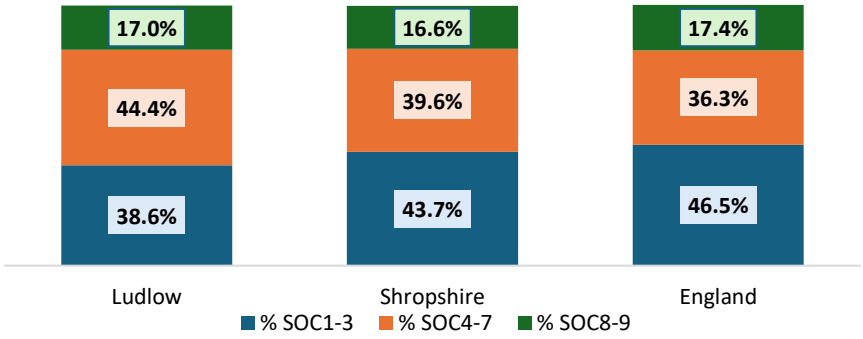
Ludlow: Economic Activity Rate



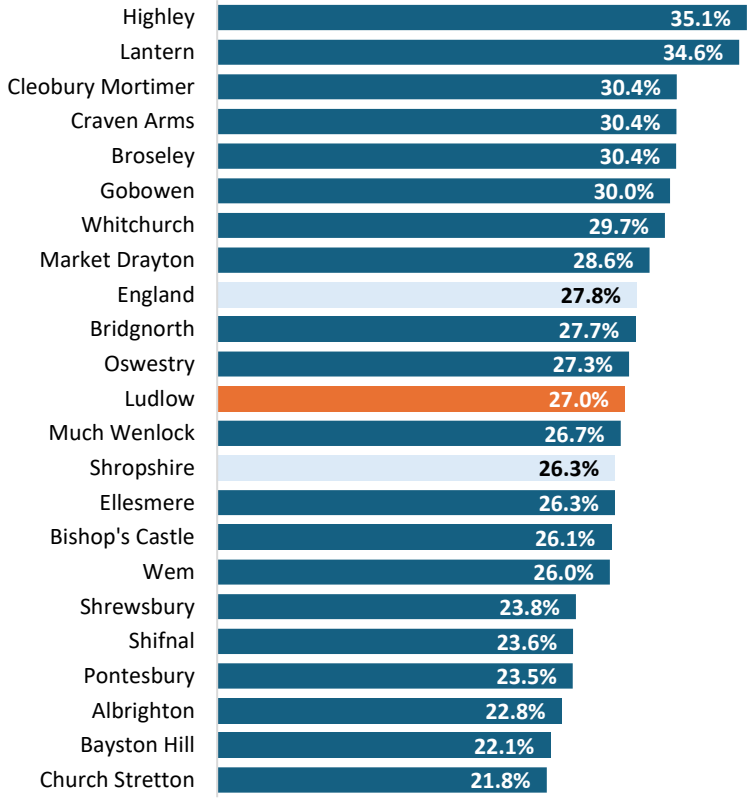
Employment

- 12,049 people in Ludlow were in employment in 2021, which equates with 52.5% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 38.6%. More are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) while a similar proportion work in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Ludlow: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

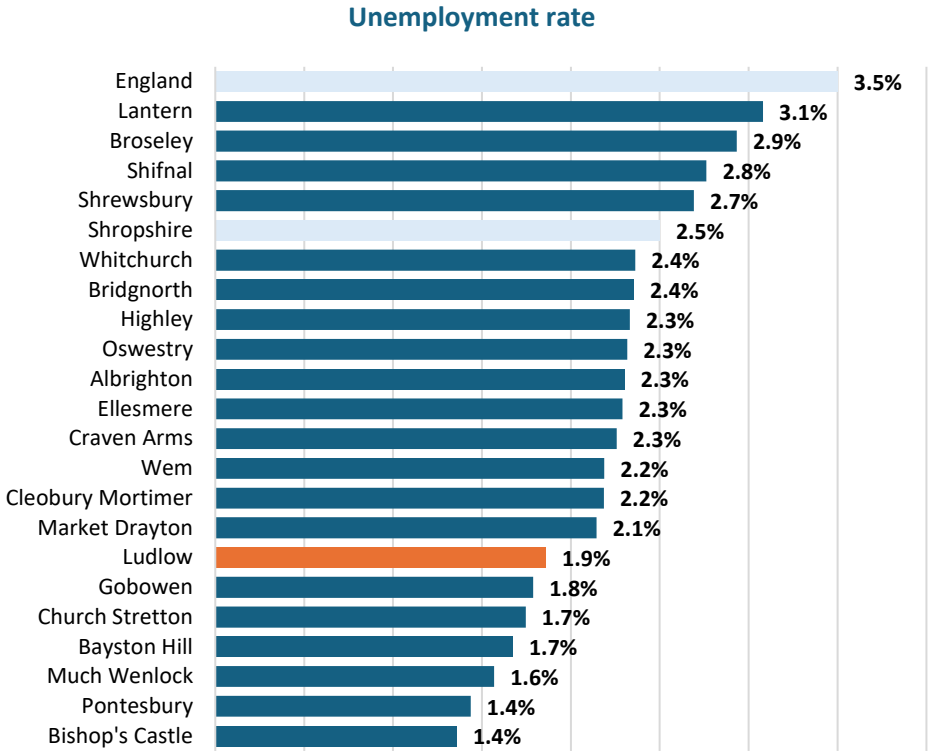


Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Ludlow population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.0%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

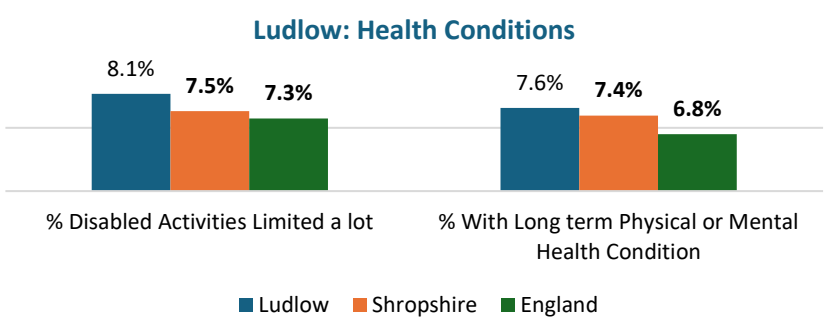
Unemployment

- 427 people living in the Ludlow catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.9%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



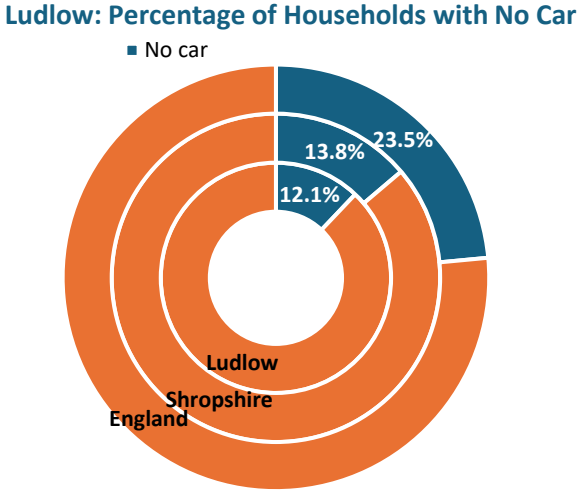
Health Conditions

- 8.1% of residents in the Ludlow library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

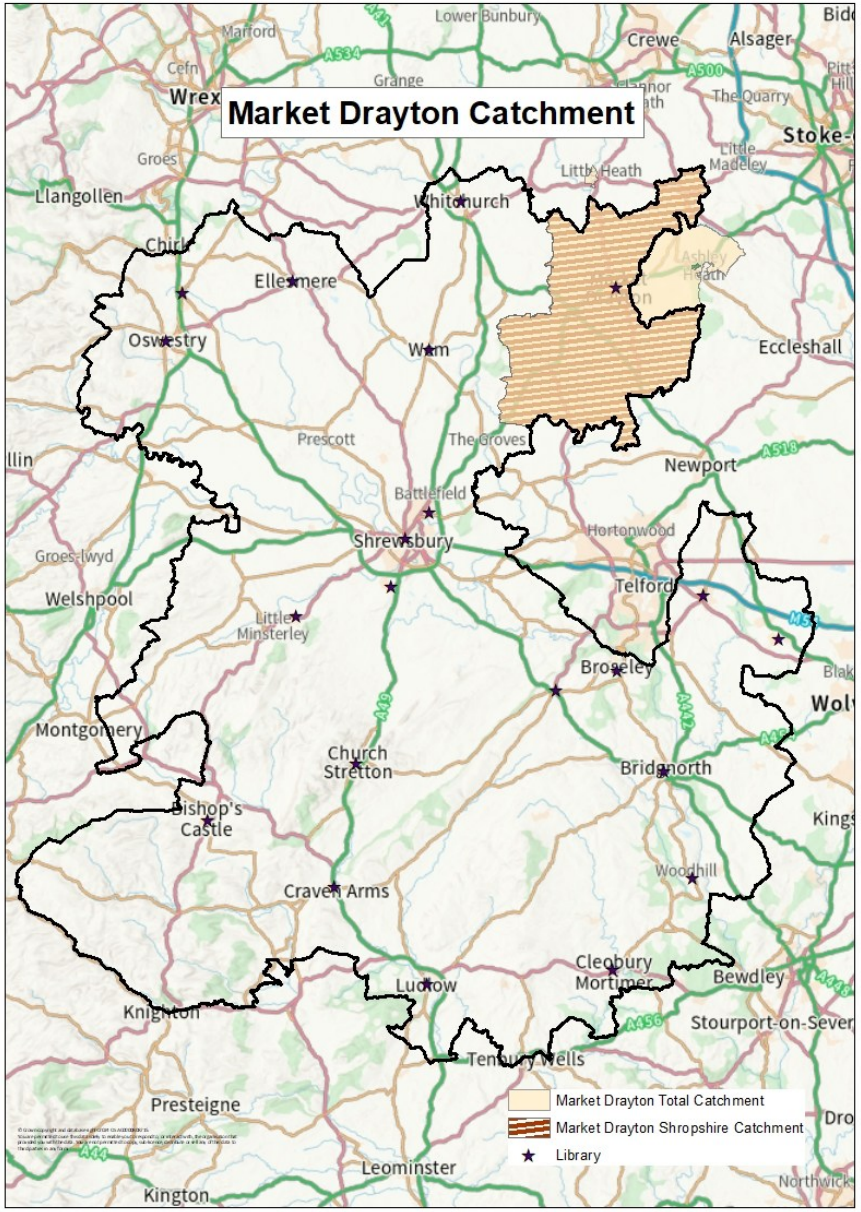
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Ludlow households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 12.1%.



Market Drayton Library Profile

Background

- Market Drayton is a town in the north east of Shropshire close to the Staffordshire border.
- The library is in the centre of town in a flat-roofed building dating back to 1974. The library is owned and operated by Shropshire Council, but there are parts of the building that are owned by third parties.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 22,702 hectares within Shropshire which is about 7.1% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends outside of the Shropshire border into Staffordshire – in fact 17% of the total catchment is not in Shropshire as shown on the adjacent map.
- The total population within the Market Drayton library catchment area is 28,237 comprising 11,294 households. 86% of the catchment population – 24,303 people- are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Market Drayton is the fourth largest catchment in Shropshire.



Opening Hours

The library is open 34.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

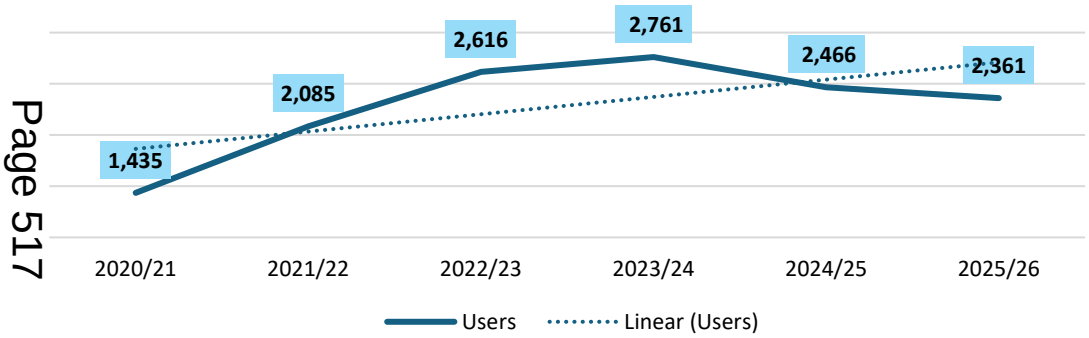
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 3.67 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 230 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 776 volunteer hours.

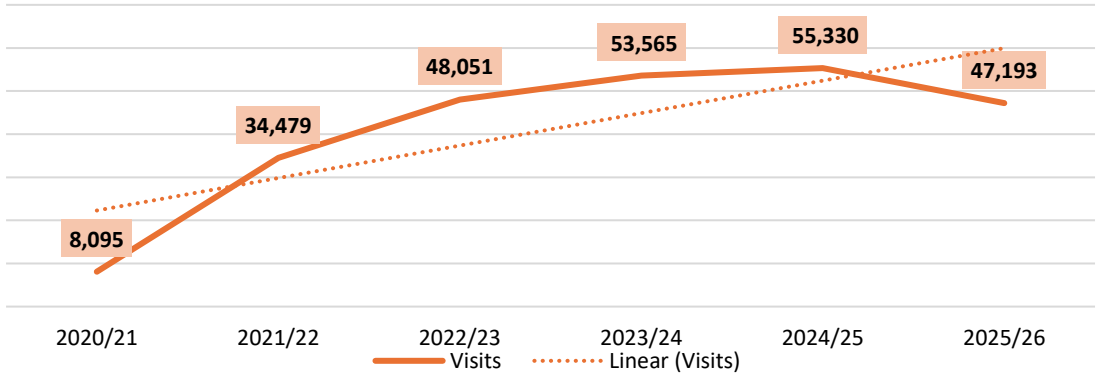
Library Users

- Market Drayton library had 2,361 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 7.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.8% of the Market Drayton catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes usage of all Shropshire libraries, not just Market Drayton.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young people and fewer users aged 65 and above.

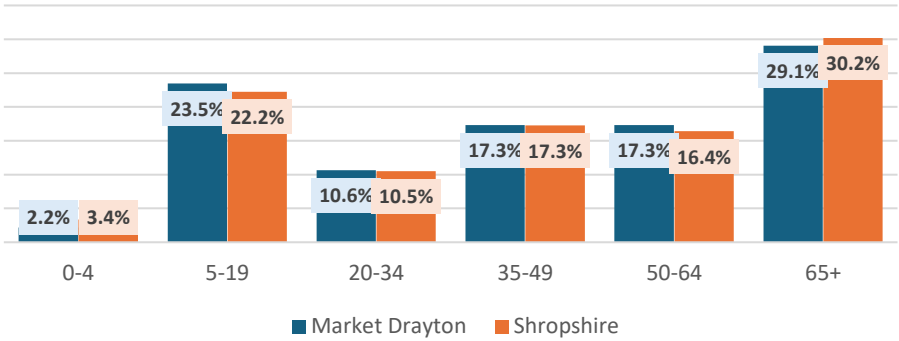
Market Drayton: Number of Active Users



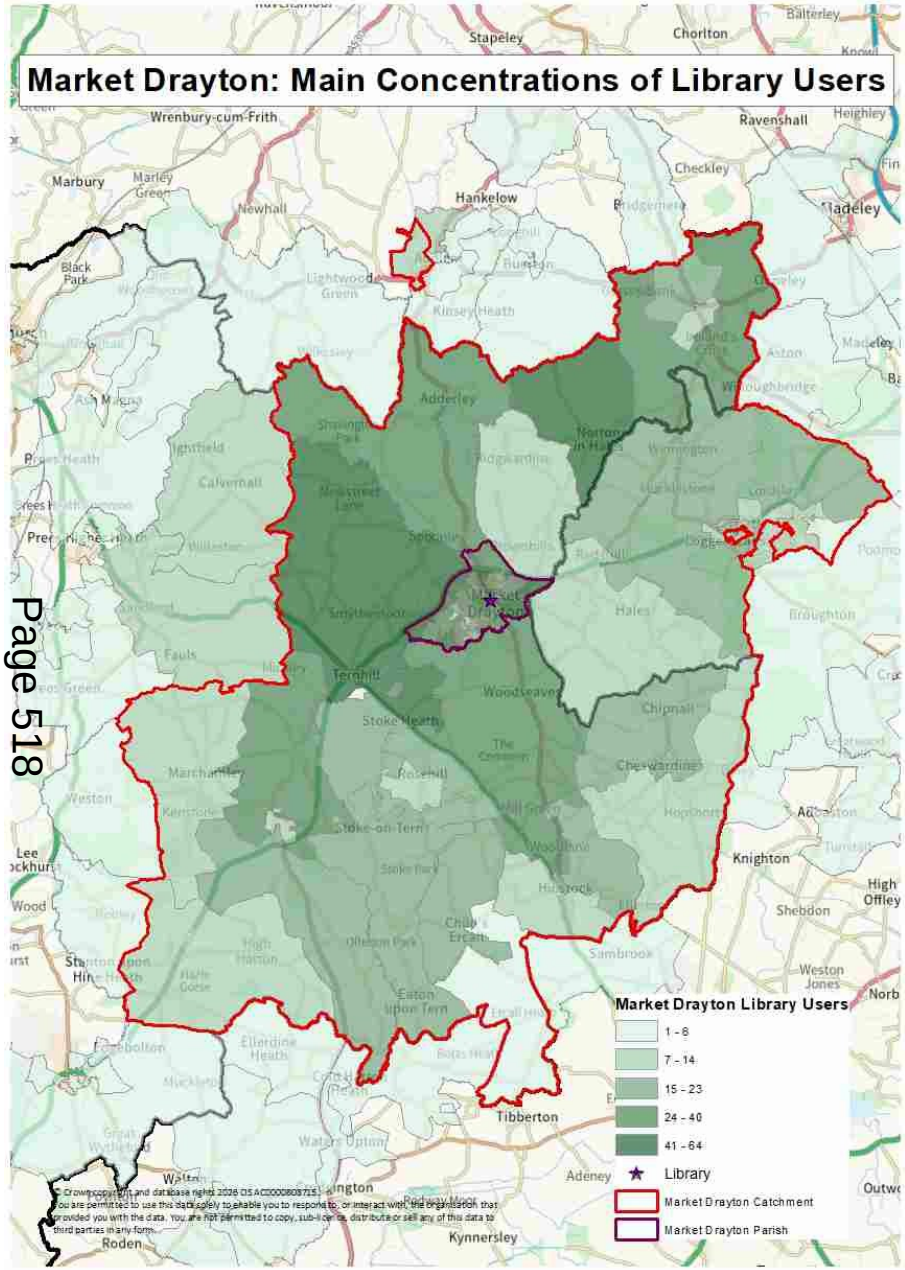
Market Drayton: Number of Visits



Breakdown of Market Drayton Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery each year until 2024/25, since when the number of users has reduced by 400.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 926 users (+64.5%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 47,193, which is the equivalent of about 20 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library, has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels (20 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost six times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 36,898 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.9 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 4% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 16% over the last year.
- Computer time was down by 2%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 89.4% of all Market Drayton library users live within the main catchment area.
- 55.4% live within the Market Drayton town council area.
- 8.8% of the population in the catchment area are Market Drayton active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to over 18%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 10.6% of Market Drayton library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in Whitchurch or Shrewsbury catchments or out-of-county.
- People that live in the Market Drayton catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library, the library at Stoke's Heath YOI or the Owen mobile service.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 93.4% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Market Drayton library were to Market Drayton, and these accounted for 93.6% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Market Drayton include Shrewsbury, Whitchurch, the Lantern, Oswestry and Wem as well as the Owen mobile service.

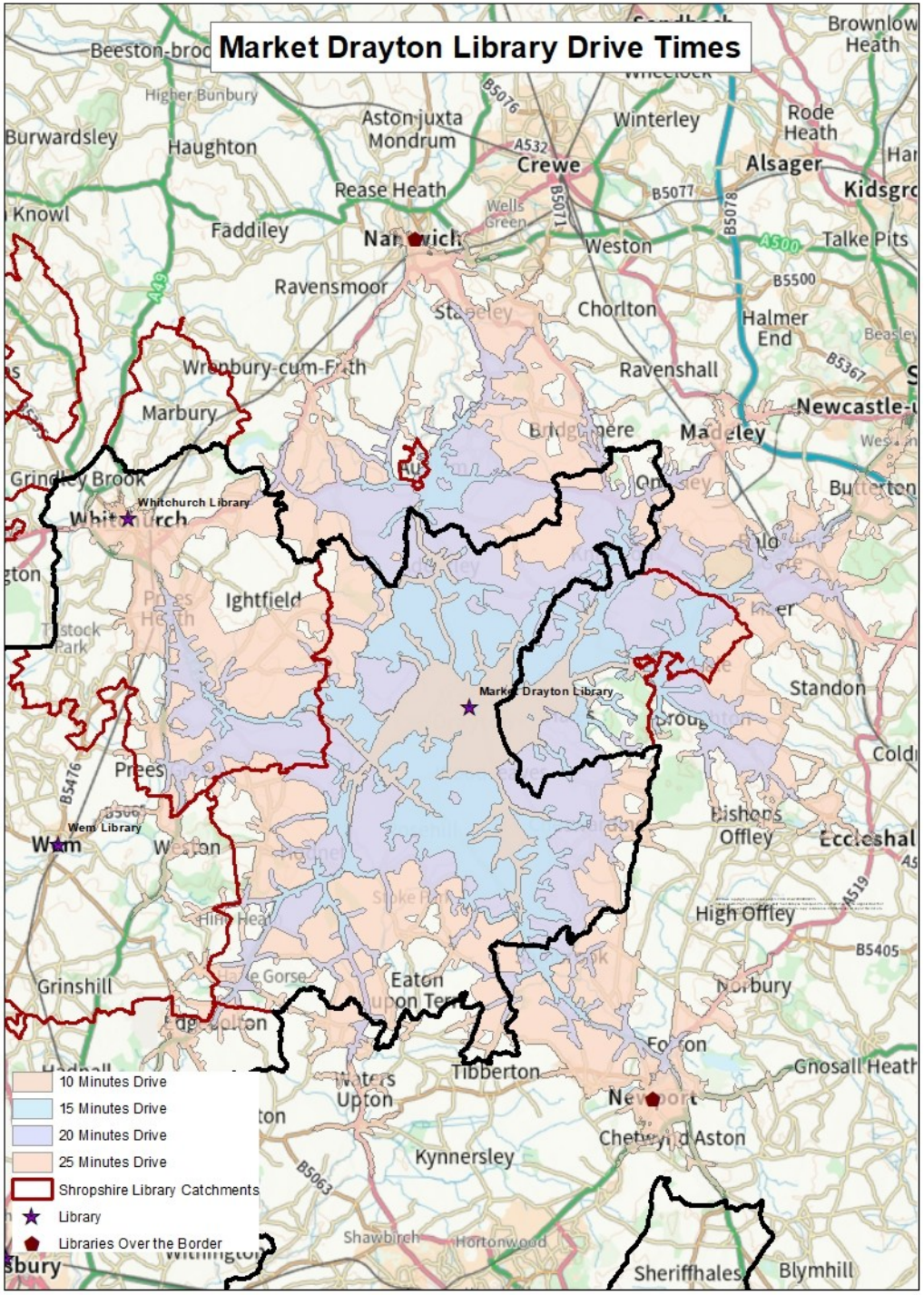
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Market Drayton library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	29.9%
30 Minute Walk	55.9%
10 Minute Drive	66.6%
15 Minute Drive	82.9%
20 Minute Drive	91.4%
25 Minute Drive	95.8%

Access

- Market Drayton is in the northeast of Shropshire close to the border with Staffordshire.
- Whitchurch is the closest alternative library, located approximately 12.7 miles west of Market Drayton via the A53 and A41. According to the AA route planner, the journey time between the two libraries is 24 minutes.
- Two out-of-county libraries are also within a 25 minute drive time – Nantwich to the north in Cheshire and Newport in Telford & Wrekin.



Costs

- Market Drayton is the fifth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Oswestry and Bridgnorth.
- Annual running costs are £185,130 (2025/26).
- Market Drayton library costs more than average per hour open but is less expensive than average per active user, per visit and per loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£103.19	£78.80	7th
Per Active User	£78.41	£81.29	10th
Per Visit	£3.92	£4.23	8th
Per Book Loan	£5.02	£5.07	9th

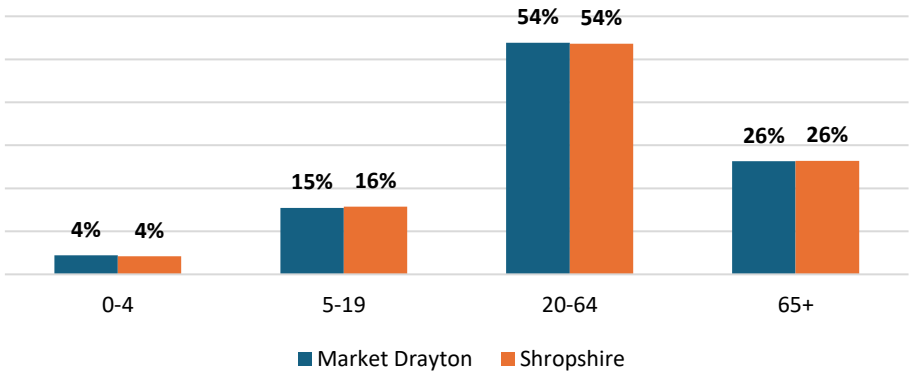
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Market Drayton Catchment Area

Population

- Market Drayton library catchment is the fourth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 24,303 and a total population of 28,237.
- The age breakdown of the population is broadly similar to the Shropshire breakdown.
- There are 11,294 households in the catchment, with 1,266 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.35 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.

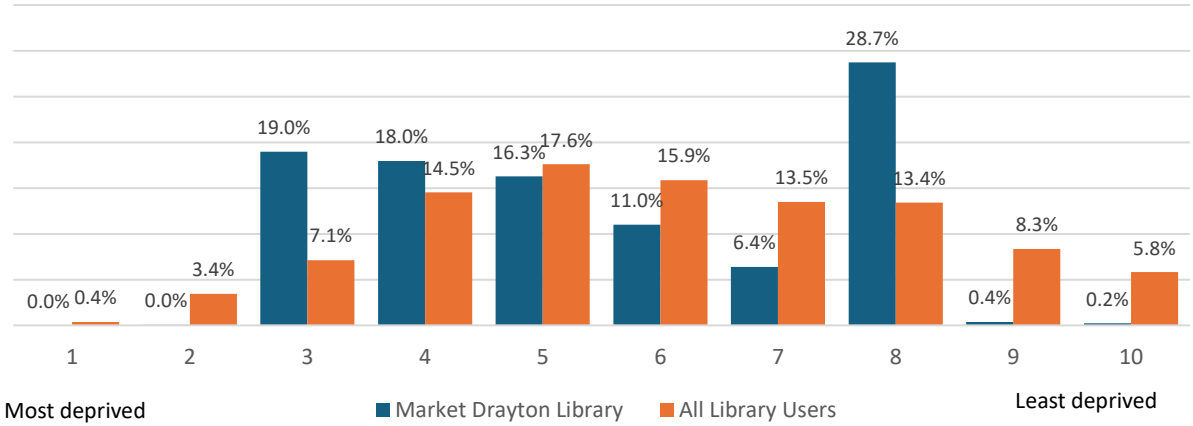
Age Breakdown of Market Drayton Catchment



Market Drayton includes Non-Shropshire Population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Market Drayton Library Users by IMD Decile

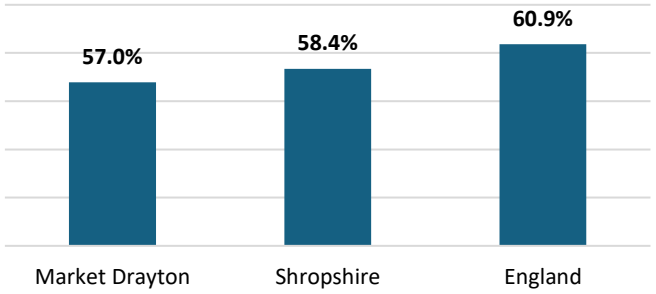


- Market Drayton library is in decile three according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of 10 Shropshire libraries within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 19% of Market Drayton library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.9% for all Shropshire library users)
- Around 45% of users are drawn from deciles four, five and six, with almost a third living in the least deprived 30% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Market Drayton library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 57.0% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Market Drayton library catchment area is the tenth highest in Shropshire.

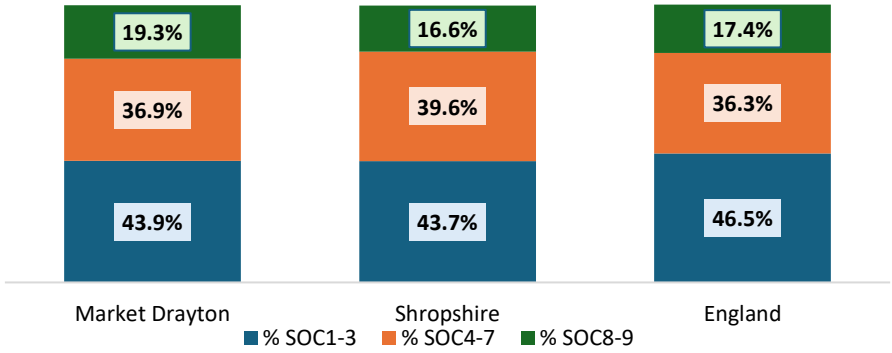
Market Drayton: Economic Activity Rate



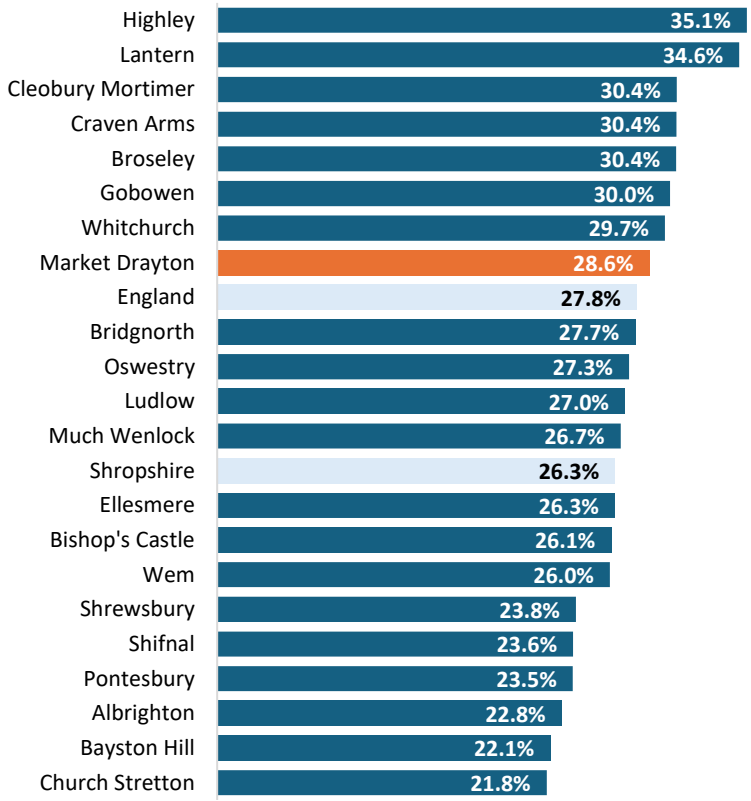
Employment

- 12,857 people in Market Drayton were in employment in 2021, which equates with 55.0% of the 16+ population.
- A similar proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 43.9%. Fewer are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) while a slightly higher proportion work in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Market Drayton: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

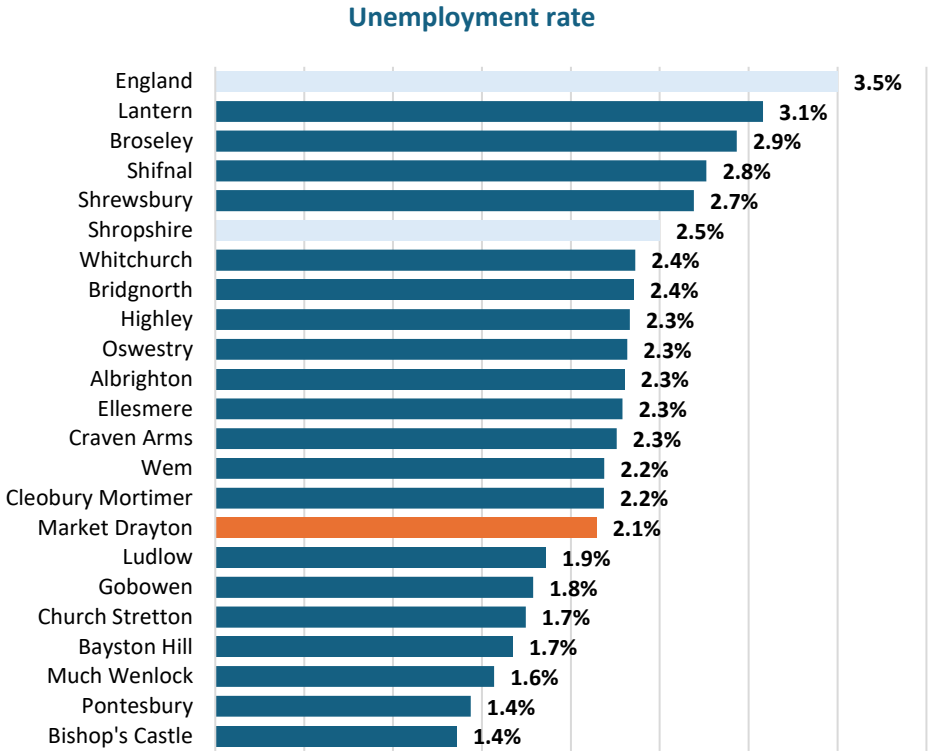


Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Market Drayton population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 28.6%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

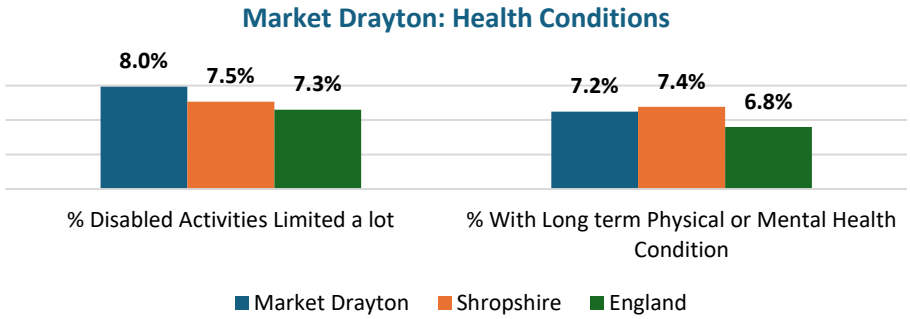
Unemployment

- 501 people living in the Market Drayton catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.1%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



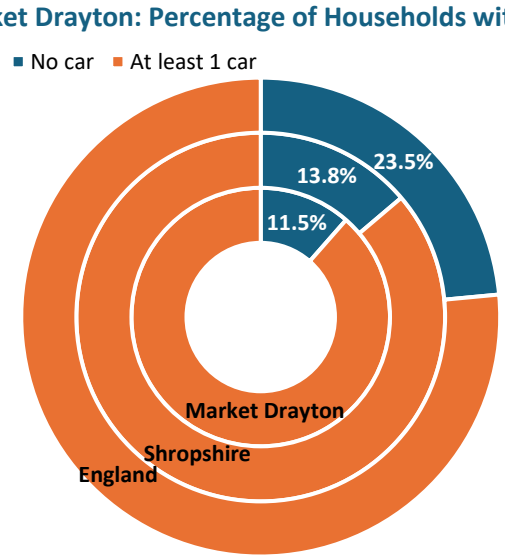
Health Conditions

- 8.0% of residents in the Market Drayton library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.2% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Market Drayton households that do not have access to a car or van is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.5%.



Much Wenlock Library Profile

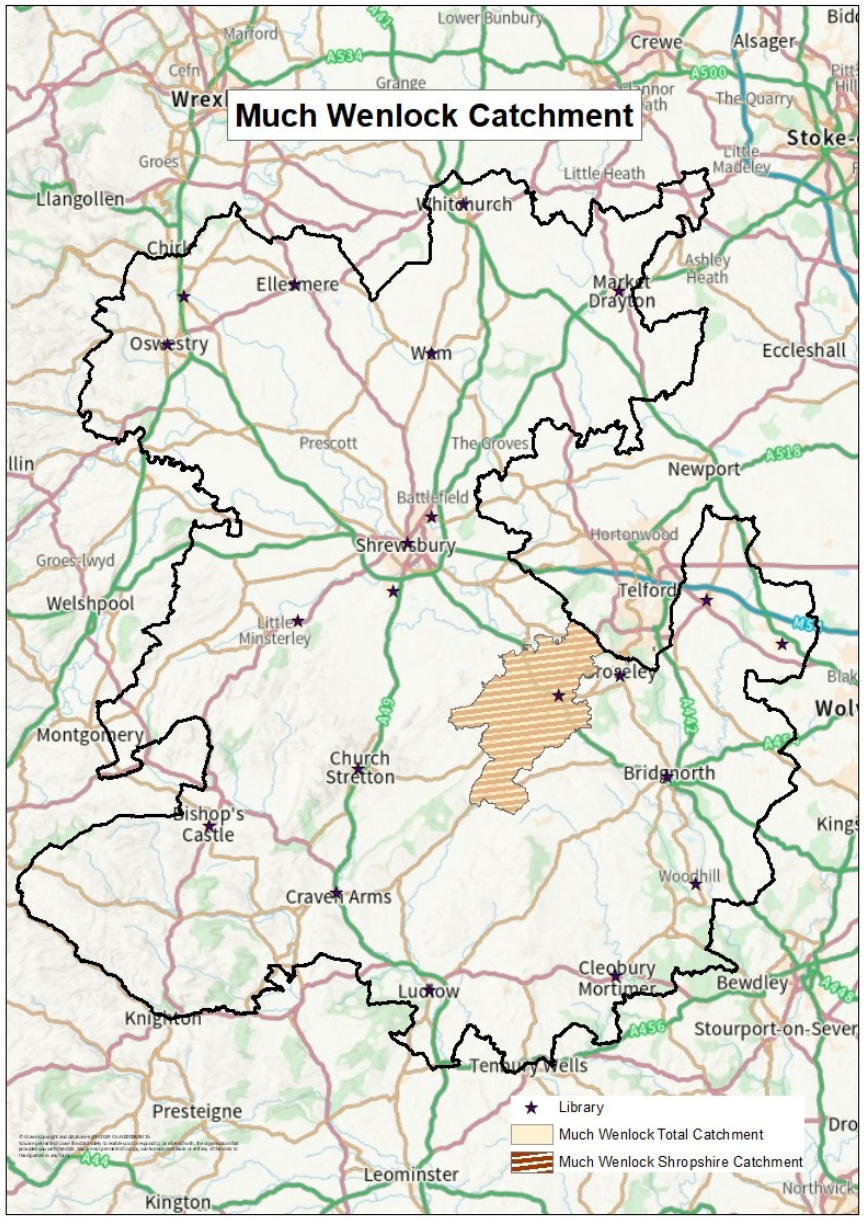
Background

- Much Wenlock is located south east of Shrewsbury, between the county town and Bridgnorth.
- The library is located on the ground floor of the imposing Grade II listed Corn Exchange in the centre of the town. The building is owned by Much Wenlock Town Council. Parking is available to the rear.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 10,051 hectares which is approximately 3.1% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends very slightly out of Shropshire into Telford & Wrekin.
- The total population within the Much Wenlock library catchment area is 5,260 comprising 2,294 households. 91.9% of the population live in Shropshire – the equivalent of 4,834 people.

Opening Hours

The library is open 16.5 hours a week according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	9.30am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	9.50am-13.00pm 14.00pm -17.00pm	6.5
Friday	Closed	0
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

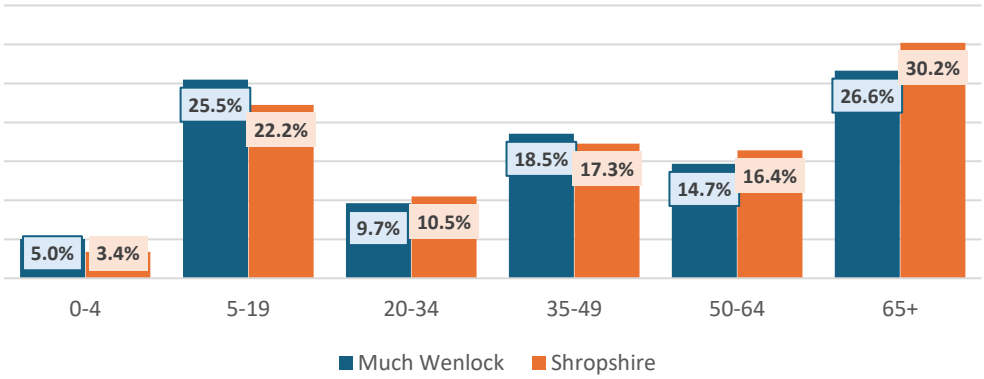


- The library has 0.5 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from 6 volunteers providing a total of 210 volunteer hours.

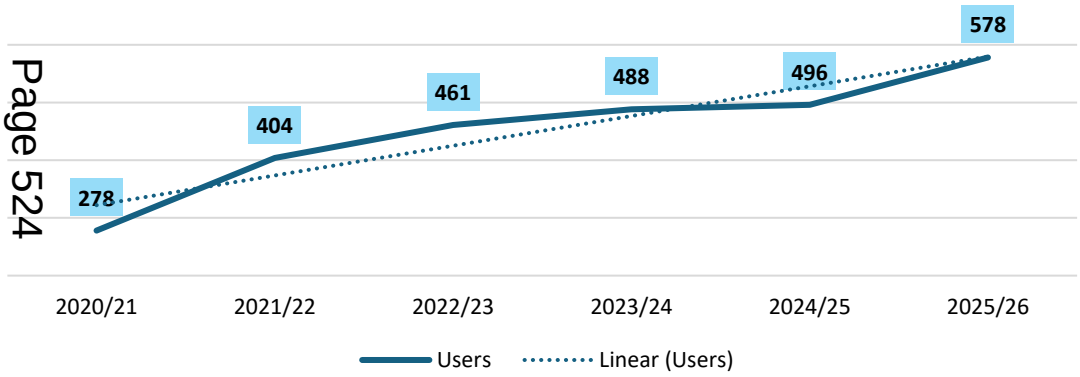
Library Users

- Much Wenlock library had 578 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.8% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 11.0% of the Much Wenlock catchment population are active library users, which is about the same as the Shropshire average. This includes usage at other Shropshire libraries as well as Much Wenlock.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are more children and young adults and fewer users over the age of 50.

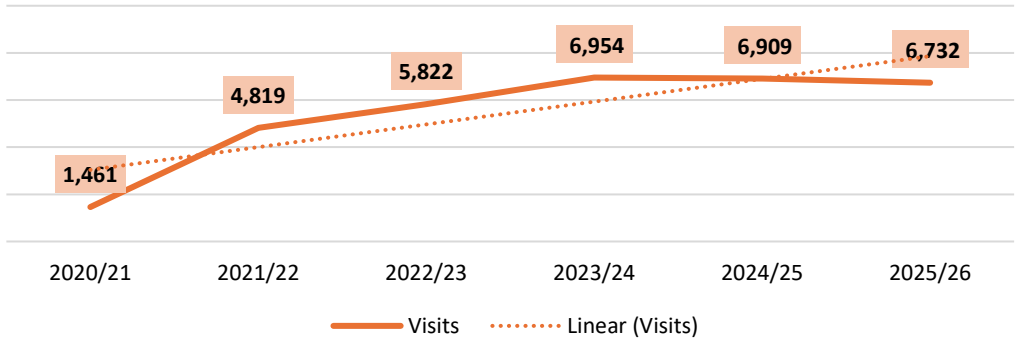
Breakdown of Much Wenlock Library Users by Age



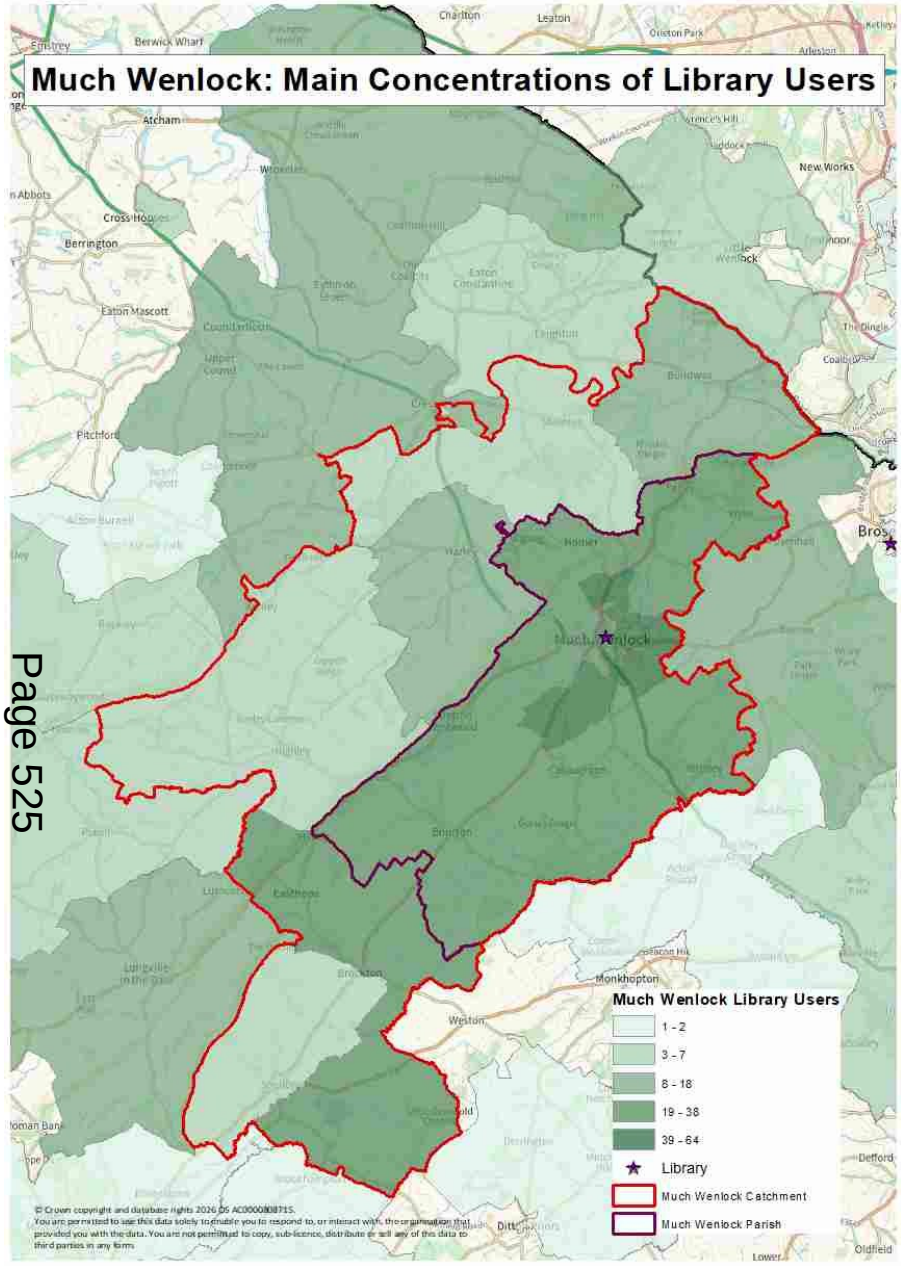
Much Wenlock: Number of Active Users



Much Wenlock: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year and numbers are now higher than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 300 users (+107.9%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 6,732, which is the equivalent of about 12 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with remains below the level seen pre-pandemic (15 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost five times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 8,810 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 15 per active user and 1.3 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 11% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 21%.
- Computer usage was down by 15%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 72.2% of all Much Wenlock library users live within the main catchment area.
- 59.0% of users live within Much Wenlock parish boundary.
- 11.0% of the population in the catchment area are Much Wenlock active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 20%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 27.8% of Much Wenlock library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Broseley or Church Stretton catchments.
- People that live in the Much Wenlock catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury or Bridgnorth libraries.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 85.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Much Wenlock library were to the Much Wenlock, and these accounted for 81.4% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth were the most frequently visited alternative libraries.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Much Wenlock library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

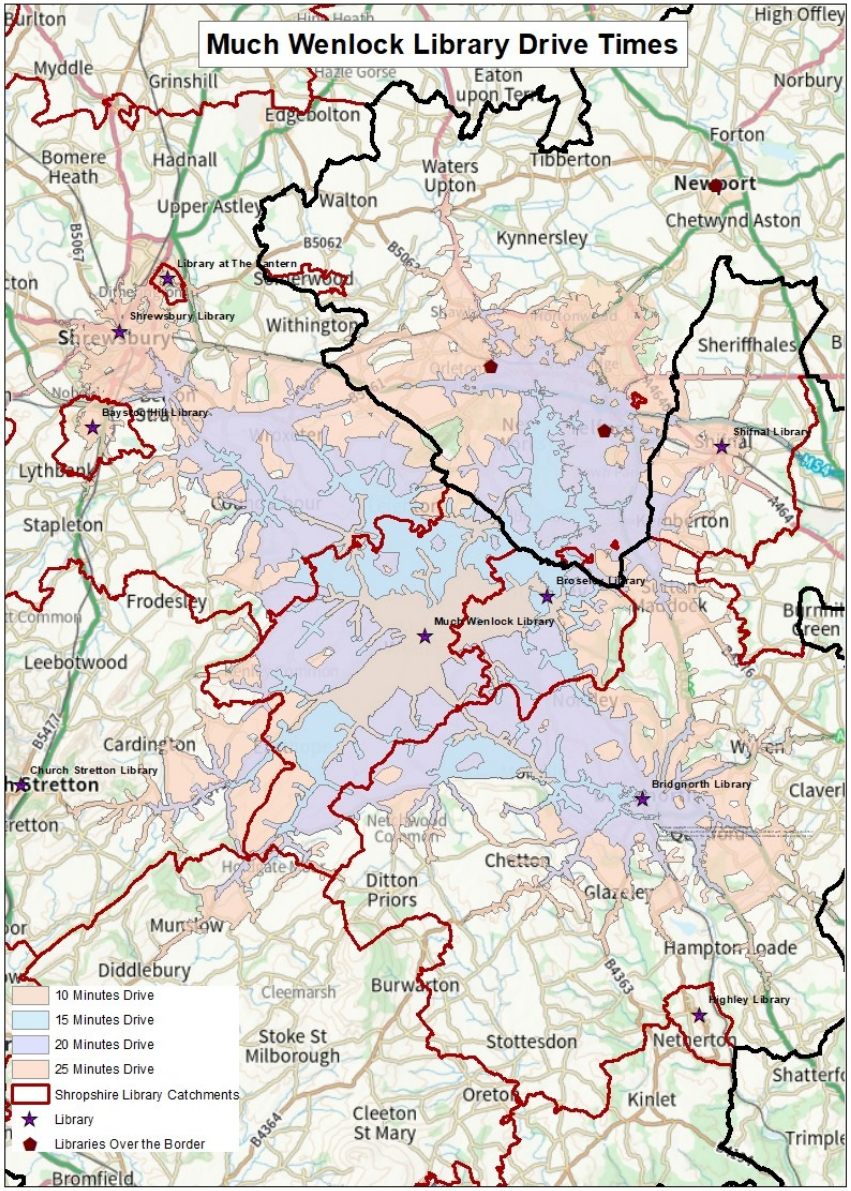
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	48.6%
30 Minute Walk	54.3%
10 Minute Drive	71.4%
15 Minute Drive	85.1%
20 Minute Drive	92.2%
25 Minute Drive	96.1%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Much Wenlock is in the centre of Shropshire between Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth.
- The closest library to Much Wenlock is Broseley, which is located 4.5 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 10 minutes.
- It can also be reached via a regular bus service between the two towns which takes about 20 minutes.
- The nearest main library is Bridgnorth, which is 8.1 miles or a 14-minute drive away. The 436 bus service takes approximately 35 minutes between the destinations.
- Shrewsbury, Bayston Hill and Shifnal libraries are all within an approximate 25-minute drive.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Much Wenlock	Broseley	4.5 miles	10 mins	8A Bus	20 mins

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Much Wenlock	Bridgnorth	8.1 miles	14 mins	436 Bus	35 mins



Costs

- Much Wenlock is the 5th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £23,580 (2025/26).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£27.48	£78.80	15th
Per Active User	£40.80	£81.29	17th
Per Visit	£3.50	£4.23	13th
Per Book Loan	£2.68	£5.07	15th

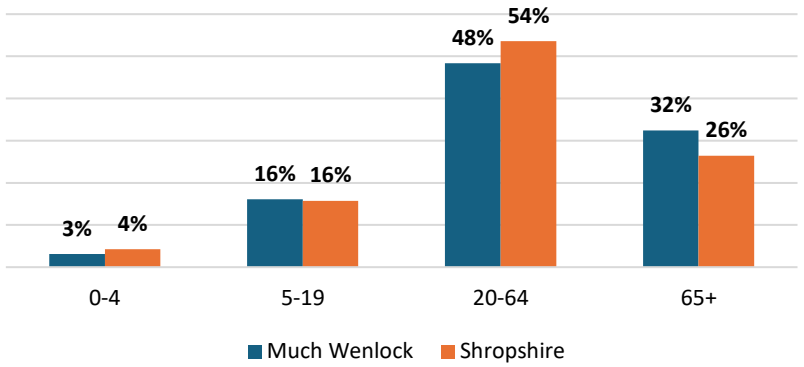
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Much Wenlock Catchment Area

Population

- The Much Wenlock library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 5,260 (4,834 in Shropshire).
- The age breakdown of the population shows a lower proportion of children and young people and more adults over the age of 65.
- There are 2,294 households in the catchment, with 46 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.31 which is comparable with the Shropshire average of 2.27.

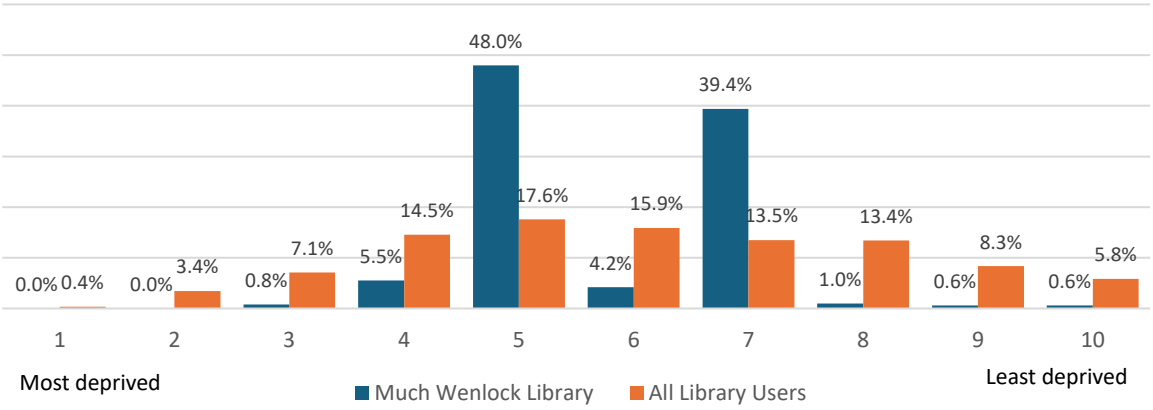
Age Breakdown of Much Wenlock Catchment



Much Wenlock catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Much Wenlock Library Users by IMD Decile



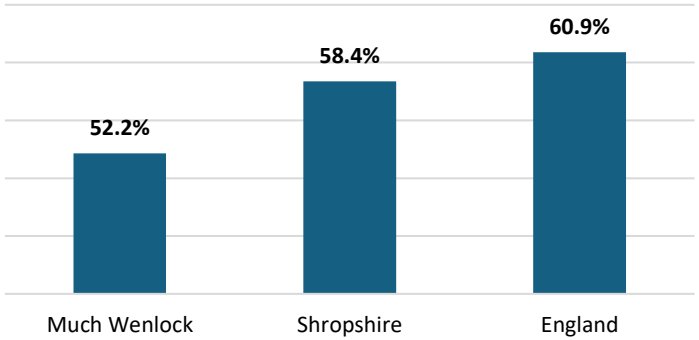
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- The Much Wenlock library is in the fifth decile according to the IMD 2025 and as such is located in an area with average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that more than 90% of all Much Wenlock library users are drawn from deciles five to seven compared with 47% of all Shropshire library users.
- Just 6.3% of users live within the least deprived 40% of areas in the country, and an even smaller proportion (0.8%) from the most deprived 30%.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Much Wenlock library catchment is much lower than the Shropshire average at 52.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also significantly lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic profile of Much Wenlock is particularly skewed to older age groups.
- The economic activity rate in the Much Wenlock library catchment area is the 2nd lowest in Shropshire.

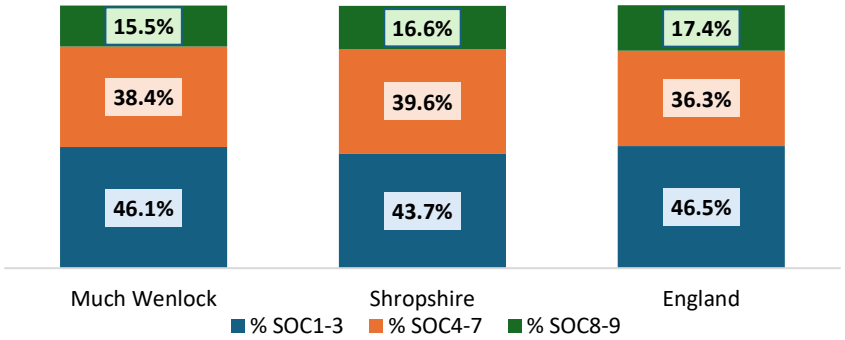
Much Wenlock: Economic Activity Rate



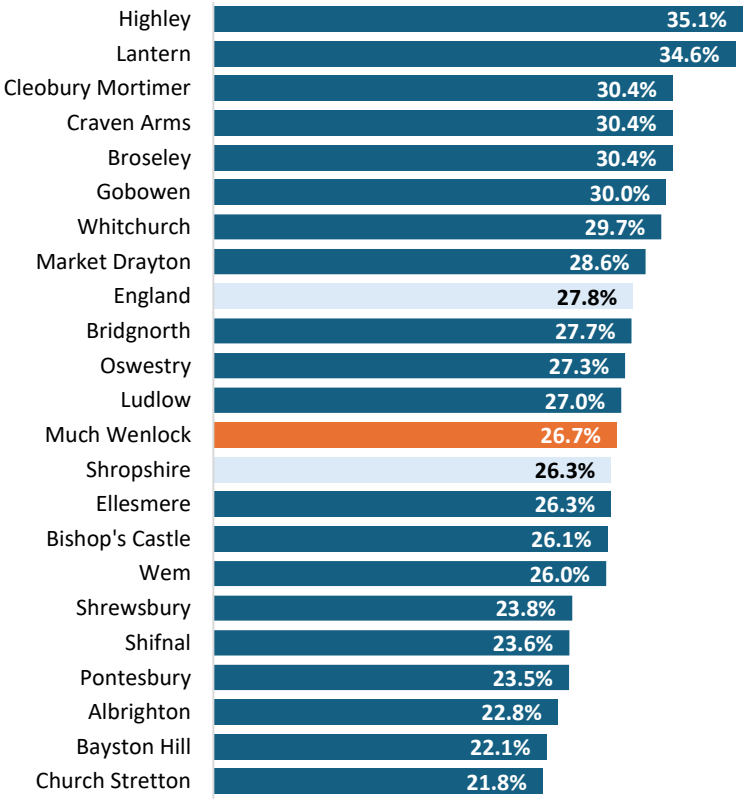
Employment

- 2,288 people in the Much Wenlock catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 51.3% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 46.1%. Notably fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) and slightly fewer in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Much Wenlock: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

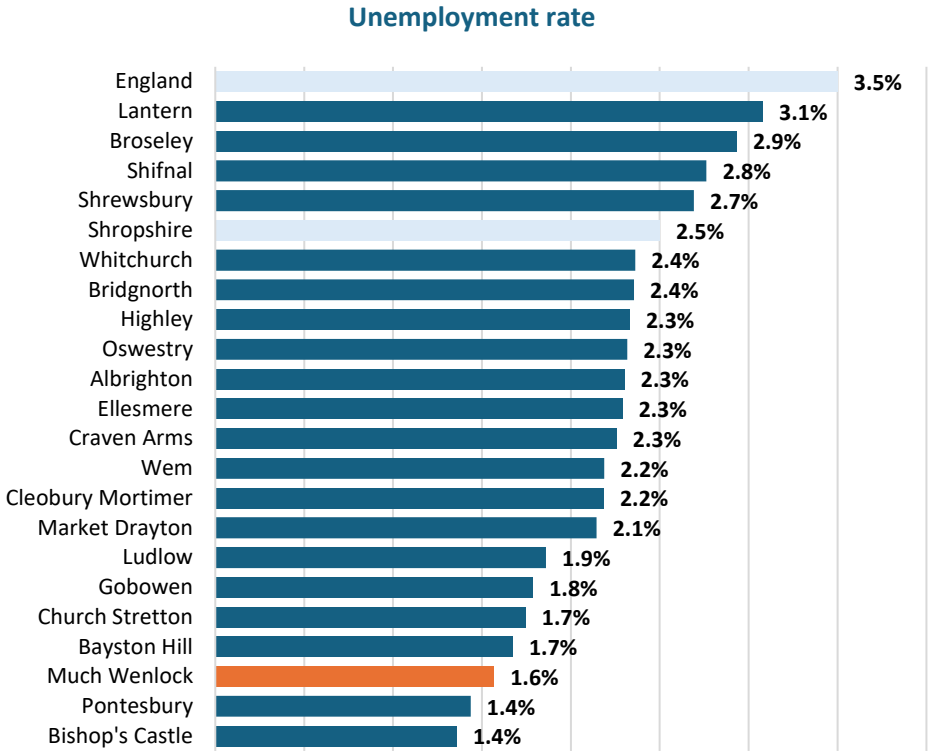


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Much Wenlock population with no or low qualifications is close to the Shropshire average at 26.7% of the 16+ population. This is lower than the national average.

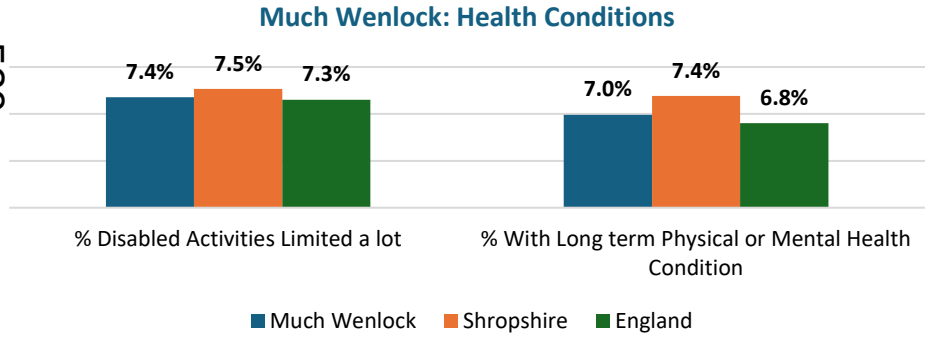
Unemployment

- 70 people living in the Much Wenlock catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.6% which is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average but it is only marginally lower for the Lantern.



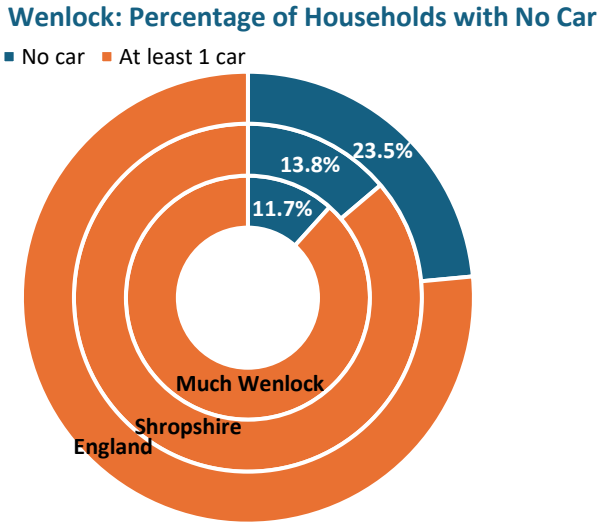
Health Conditions

- 7.4% of residents in Much Wenlock library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable to Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.0% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Much Wenlock catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.7%.



Oswestry Library Profile

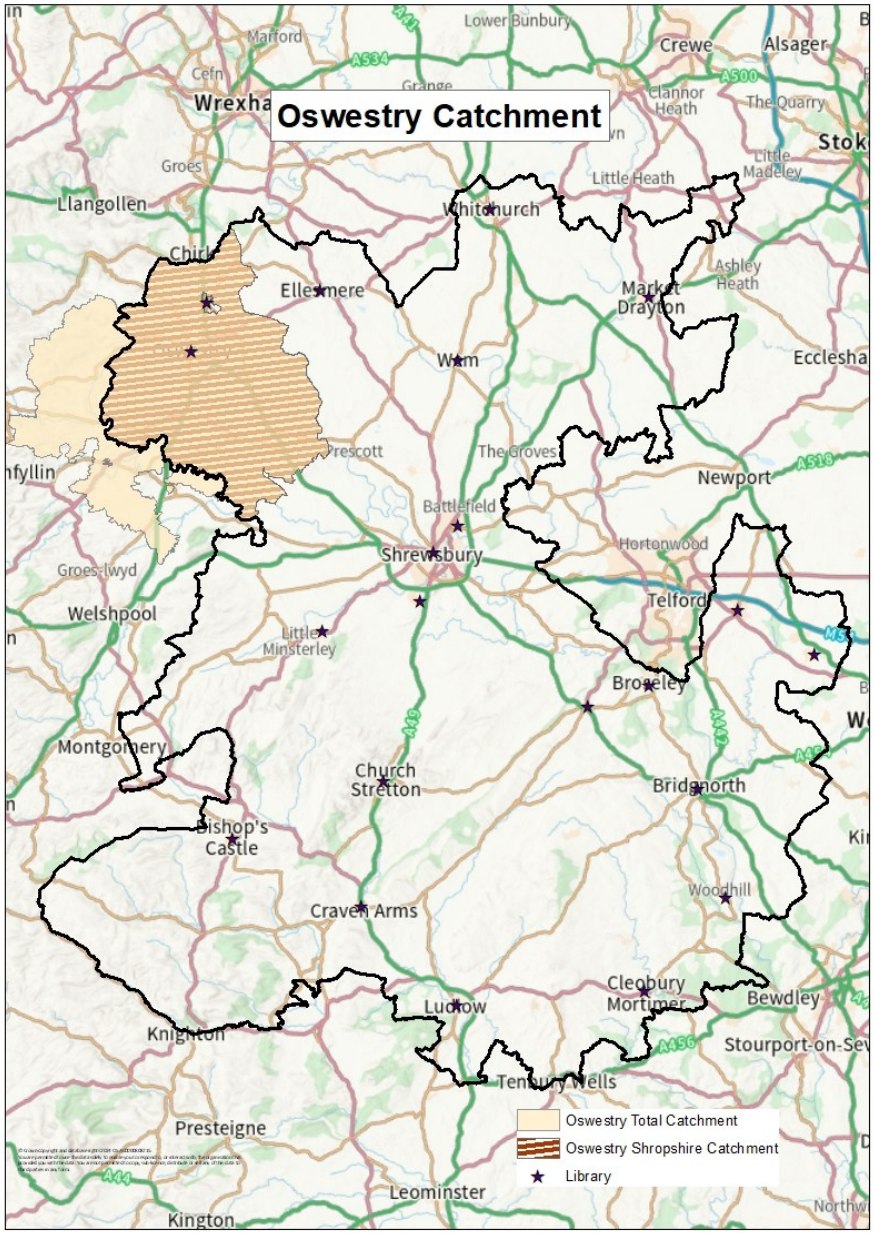
Background

- Oswestry is a town in the north west of Shropshire close to the Welsh border. It is the second largest settlement in the county behind Shrewsbury.
- Oswestry is a large public library situated within a four storey multi-occupancy complex with council offices and several independent organisations. The original building dates from early 1900s but the library was refurbished in 2007 and now occupies two accessible open plan floors with lift access.
- The library is in the centre of town with public parking nearby. The library is owned and operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 26,072 hectares within Shropshire which is about 8.2% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment one of the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends outside of the Shropshire border into Wales – in fact 36% of the total catchment is not in Shropshire as shown on the adjacent map, reflecting Oswestry's importance as a service centre for much of rural mid-Wales.
- The total population within the Oswestry library catchment area is 46,570 comprising 19,446 households. 88% of the catchment population – 41,162 people- are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Oswestry is the second largest catchment in Shropshire.

Opening Hours

The library is open 45 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Tuesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	9.30am-18.00pm	8.5
Thursday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-16.00pm	6.5
Sunday	Closed	0

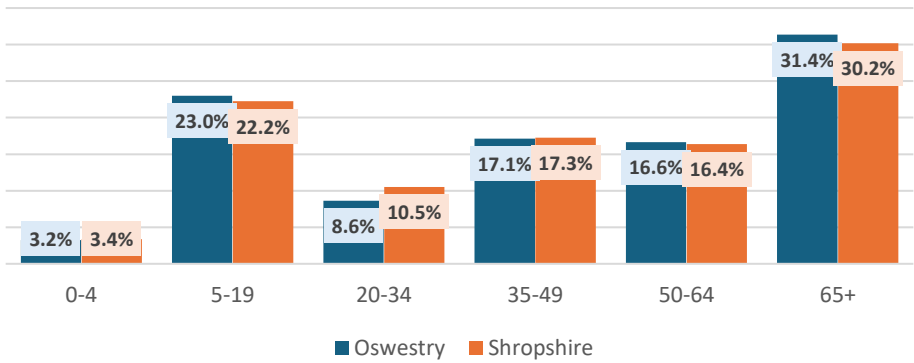


- The library employs 6.42 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 123 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 1,463 volunteer hours.

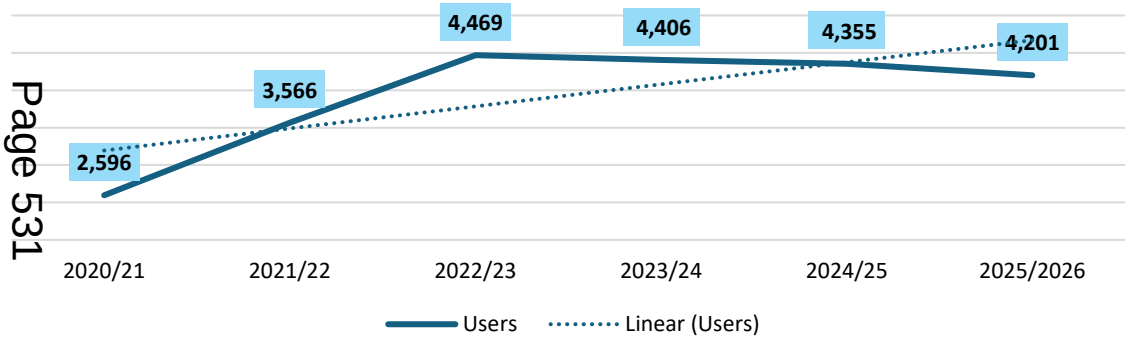
Library Users

- Oswestry library had 4,201 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 13.0% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 8.2% of the Oswestry catchment population are active library users, which is slightly lower than the Shropshire average. This includes use of all Shropshire libraries.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more children and users aged 65 and above but fewer adults aged 20 to 64.

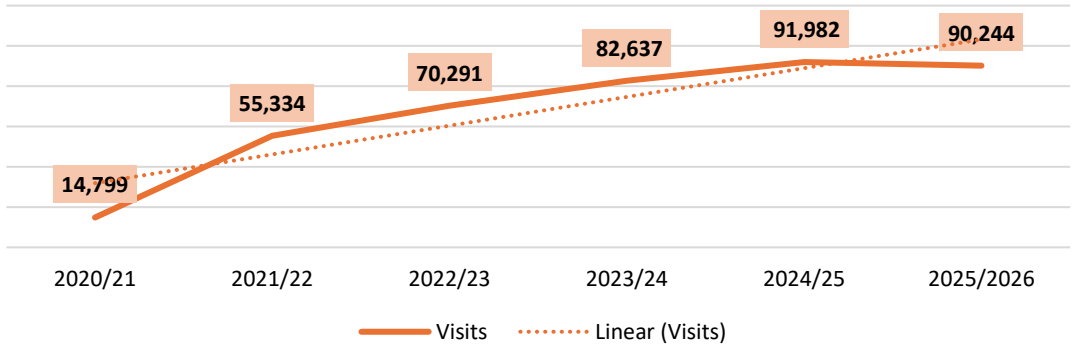
Breakdown of Oswestry Library Users by Age



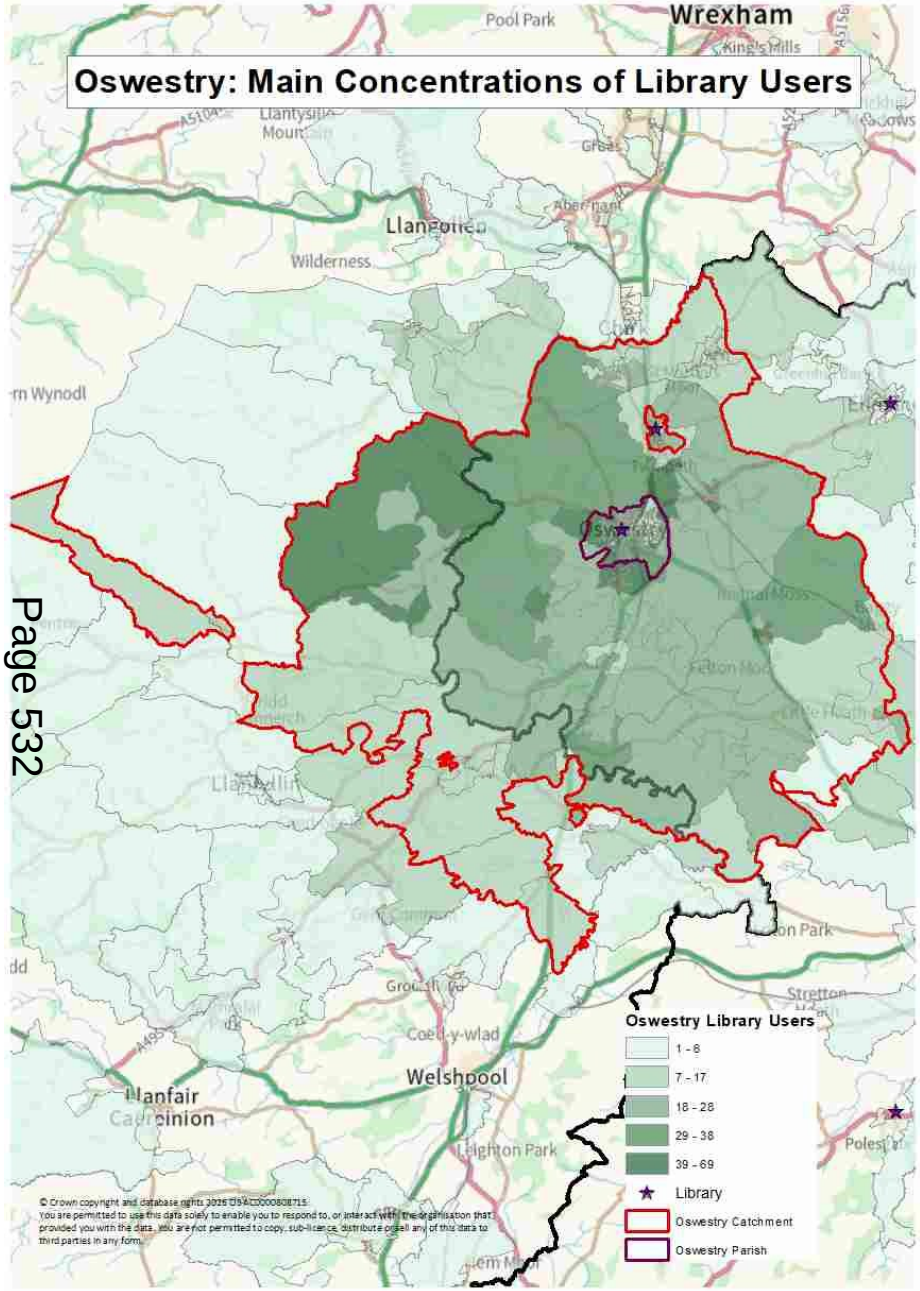
Oswestry: Number of Active Users



Oswestry: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although active user numbers have been in gradual decline since 2022/23.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 1,605 users (+61.8%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 90,244, which is the equivalent of about 21 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and the frequency with which users visit the library has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels (26 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was six times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 67,540 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 16 per active user and about 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 4% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 9%.
- Computer time was down by 13%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

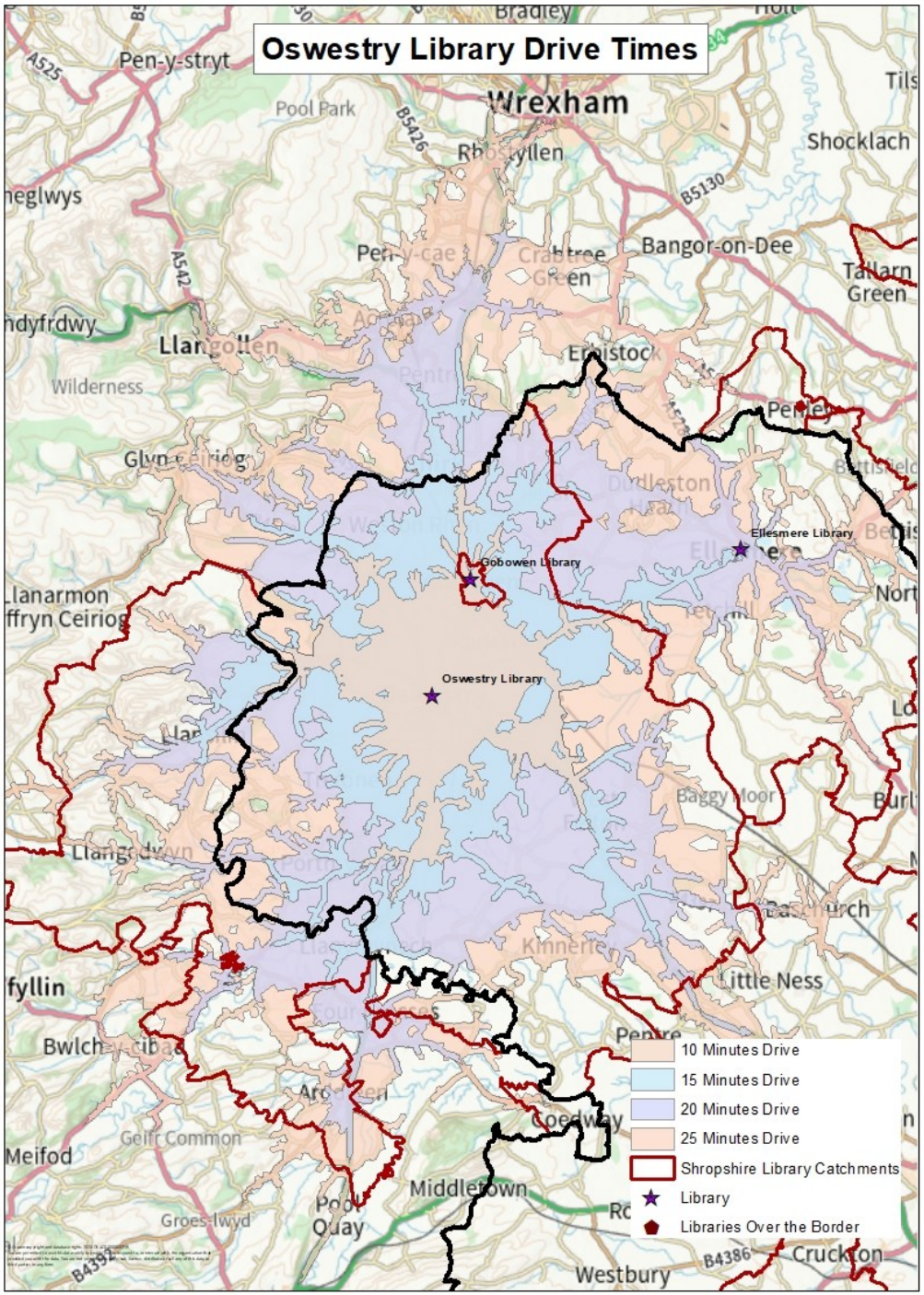
- 85.2% of all Oswestry library users live within the main catchment area.
- 40.8% live within the Oswestry town council area.
- 8.2% of the population in the catchment area are Oswestry active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1.8% to 19.2%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 14.8% of Oswestry library users that do not live in the catchment, the highest number live in the Gobowen, Ellesmere or Shrewsbury catchments or libe out-of-county.
- People that live in the Oswestry catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Shrewsbury or Gobowen library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 90.7% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Oswestry library were to Oswestry, and these accounted for 91.9% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Oswestry include Shrewsbury, Ellesmere and Gobowen as well as the Owen mobile service.

- The following table shows the proportion of active Oswestry library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	23.9%
30 Minute Walk	43.0%
10 Minute Drive	59.0%
15 Minute Drive	78.7%
20 Minute Drive	88.2%
25 Minute Drive	93.1%

Access

- Oswestry is in the north west of Shropshire close to the border with Wales.
- Gobowen is the closest alternative library, located approximately three miles north of Oswestry via the A5. According to the AA route planner, the journey time between the two libraries is 8 minutes.
- The Gobown library catchment is entirely contained within the Oswestry catchment.
- Ellesmere library is also within a 20-minute drive.



Costs

- Oswestry is the third most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) behind Shrewsbury and Ludlow.
- Annual running costs are £431,280 (2025/26)
- Oswestry library costs more than average per active user, per book loan, per hour open and per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£184.31	£78.80	3rd
Per Active User	£102.66	£81.29	7th
Per Visit	£4.78	£4.23	6th
Per Book Loan	£6.39	£5.07	7th

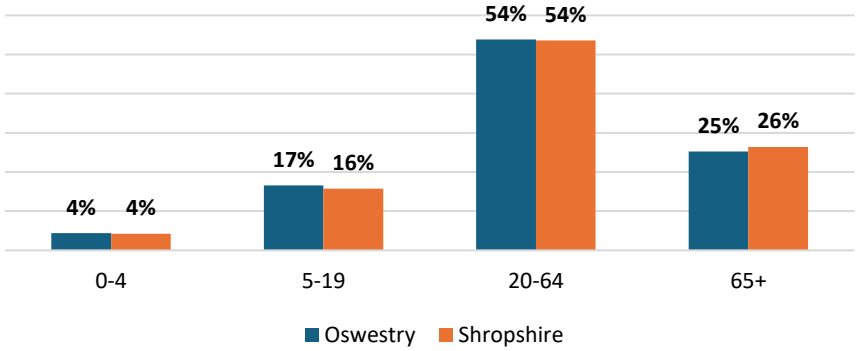
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Oswestry Catchment Area

Population

- Oswestry library catchment is the second largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 41,162 and a total population of 46,570.
- The age breakdown of the population is comparable with the overall Shropshire population.
- There are 19,446 households in the catchment, with 738 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.28 which is similar to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

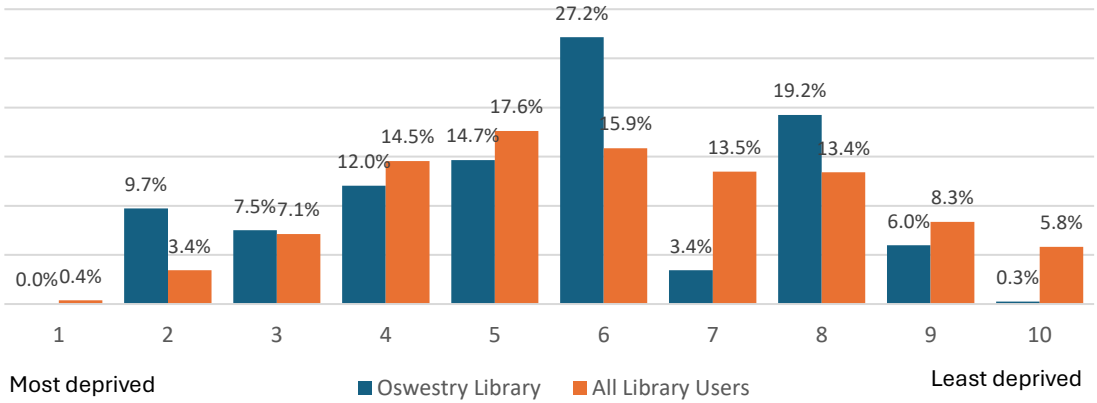
Age Breakdown of Oswestry Catchment



Oswestry catchment includes non-Shropshire population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Oswestry Library Users by IMD Decile



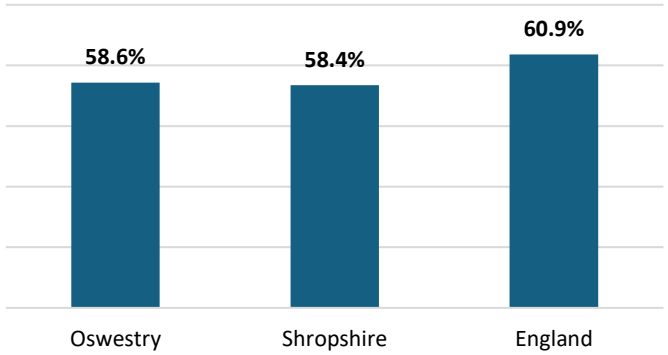
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Oswestry library is in decile two according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of five Shropshire libraries within the 20% most deprived areas of the country.
- Despite this, the adjacent chart shows that just 17.2% of Oswestry library users live in the most deprived 30% of the country (10.9% for all Shropshire library users)
- Over half of users are drawn from deciles four, five, six and seven, with 25.5% living in the least deprived 30% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Oswestry library catchment is slightly higher than the Shropshire average at 58.6% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- However, it is lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Oswestry library catchment area is the fifth highest in Shropshire.

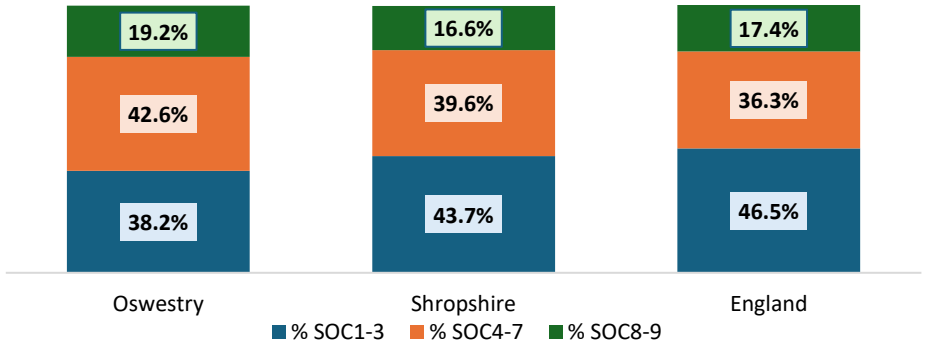
Oswestry: Economic Activity Rate



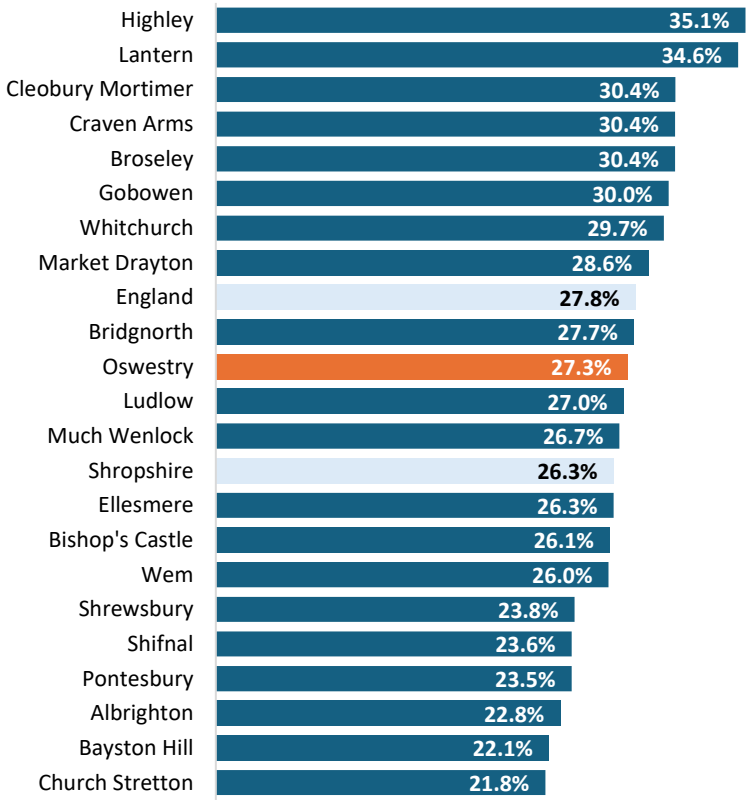
Employment

- 21,304 people in Oswestry were in employment in 2021, which equates with 56.3% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 38.2%. More are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) while a slightly higher proportion also work in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Oswestry: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

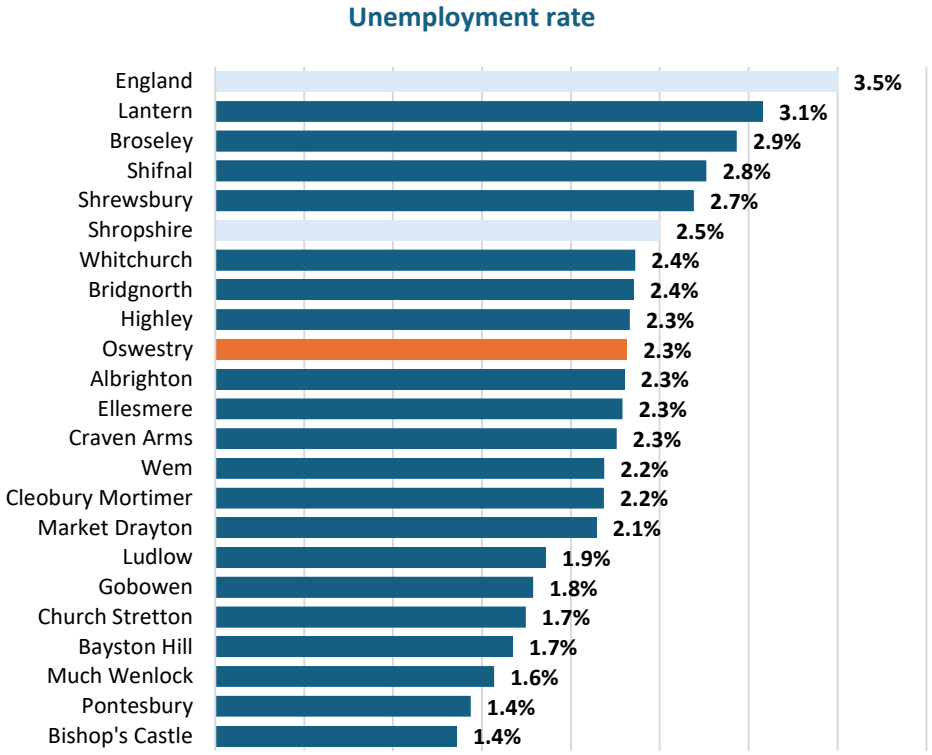


Qualifications

- A similar proportion of the Oswestry population have no or low qualifications to the England average at 27.3%. This is slightly higher than the Shropshire average.

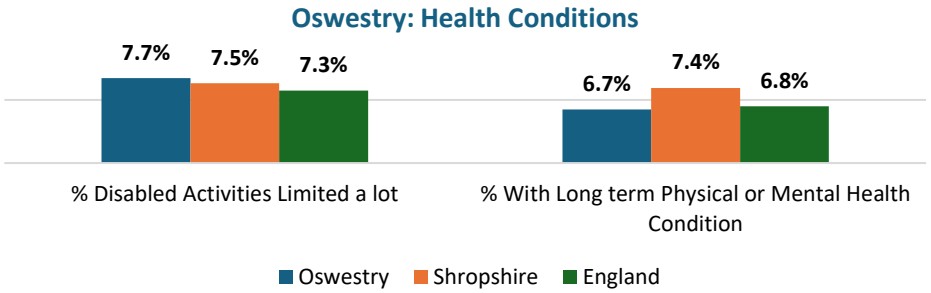
Unemployment

- 876 people living in the Oswestry catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.3%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



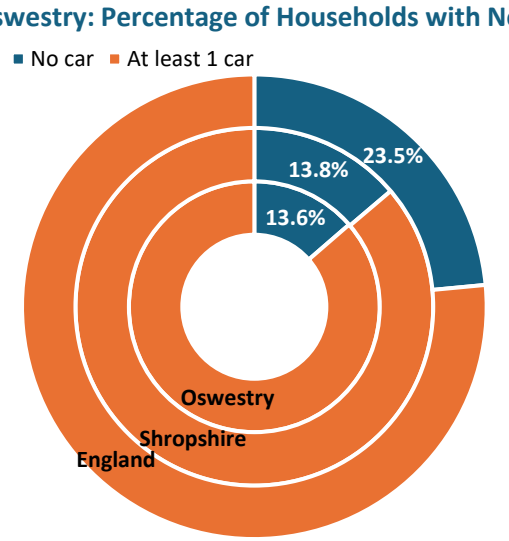
Health Conditions

- 7.7% of residents in the Oswestry library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.7% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

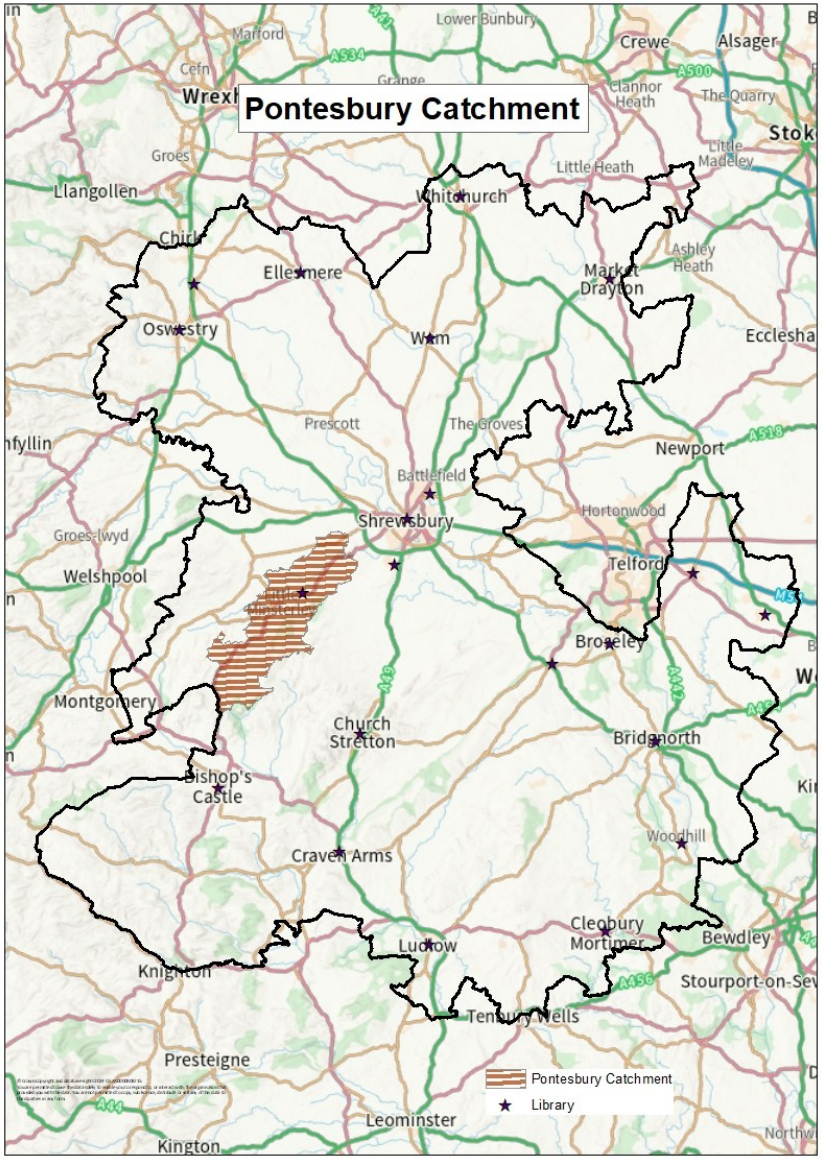
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Oswestry households that do not have access to a car or van comparable to the Shropshire average at 13.6%.



Pontesbury Library Profile

Background

- Pontesbury is located south west of Shrewsbury, between the county town and Bishop's Castle.
- The library is located in a purpose-built modern one storey building which was constructed in 2019. The building is shared with the local police. Library services are operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 8,253 hectares which is approximately 2.6% of the county's land mass. The catchment is entirely contained within Shropshire although it does extend to the border with Wales.
- The total population within the Pontesbury library catchment area is 6,718 comprising 2,819 households.



Opening Hours

The library is open 15 hours a week according to the following schedule:

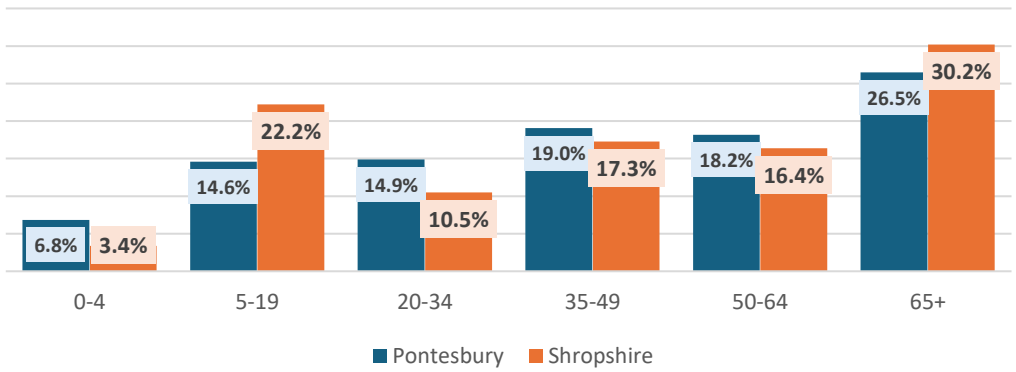
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Tuesday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	14.00pm -17.00pm	3
Friday	Closed	0
Saturday	10.00am-13.00pm	3
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library has 0.46 FTE employees and in 2024/25 benefitted from 18 volunteers providing a total of 254 volunteer hours.

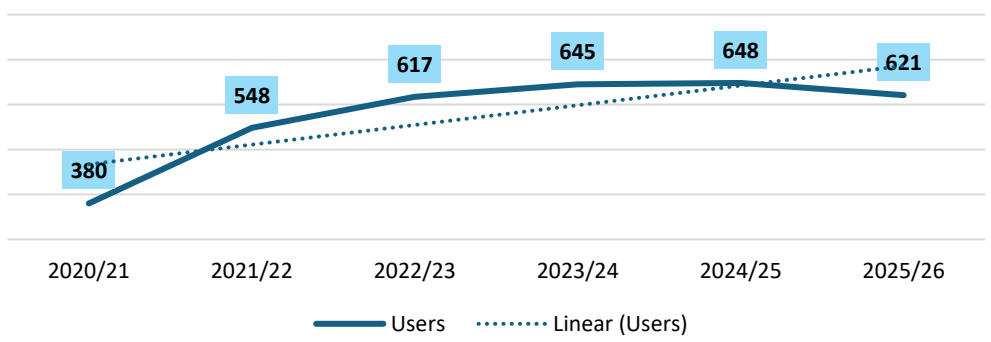
Library Users

- Pontesbury library had 621 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 1.9% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 11.1% of the Pontesbury catchment population are active library users, which is about the same as the Shropshire average. This includes usage of other Shropshire libraries as well as Pontesbury.
- Around two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and older adults (65+) and more users of working age.

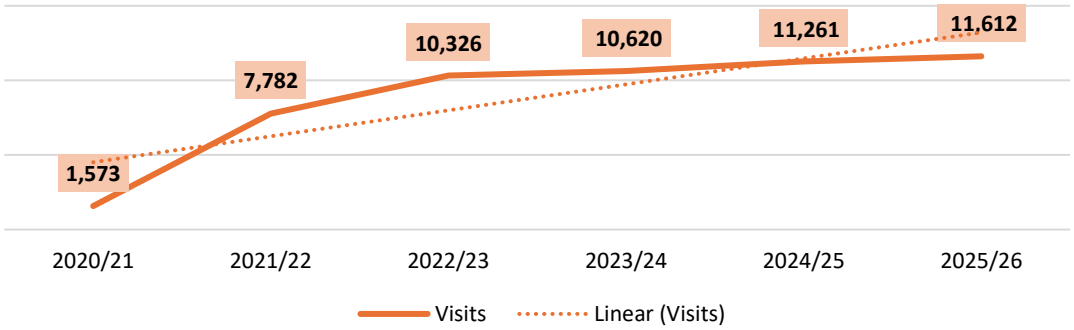
Breakdown of Pontesbury Library Users by Age



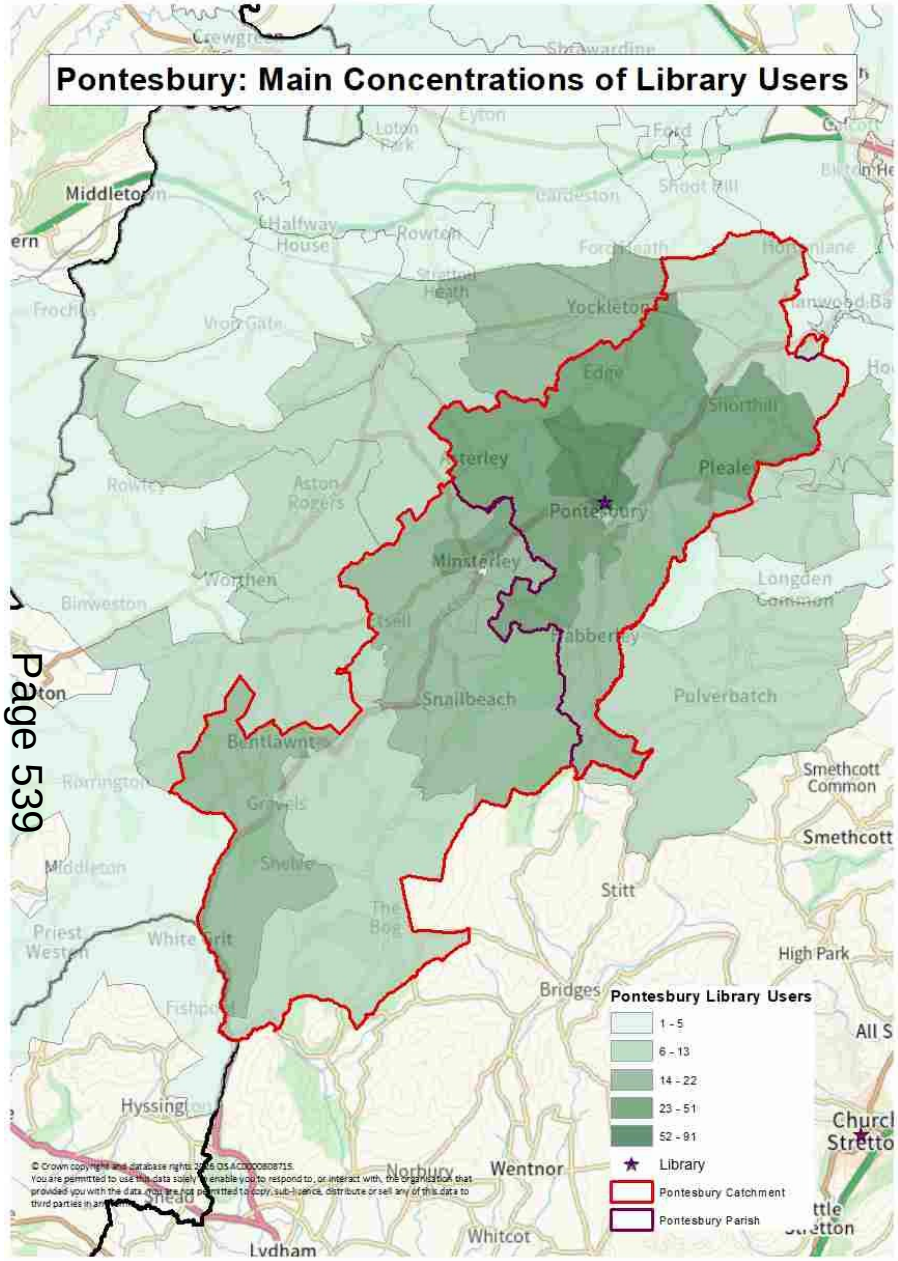
Pontesbury: Number of Active Users



Pontesbury: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year (until 2025/26 when there was a small downturn) and numbers are now higher than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 241 users (+63.4%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 11,612, which is the equivalent of about 19 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library now surpasses the level seen pre-pandemic (12 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was more than seven times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 12,897 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 21 per active user and 1.1 per visit.
- The number of loans decreased by 5% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 7%.
- Computer usage was down by 4%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 76.7% of all Pontesbury library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is around average for Shropshire.
- 53.2% of users live within Pontesbury parish boundary.
- 11.1% of the population in the catchment area are Pontesbury active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 5% to over 19%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 23.3% of Pontesbury library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Shrewsbury catchment (about a fifth of all Pontesbury library users).
- People that live in the Pontesbury catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 82.1% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Pontesbury library were to Pontesbury, and these accounted for 81.9% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Pontesbury library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

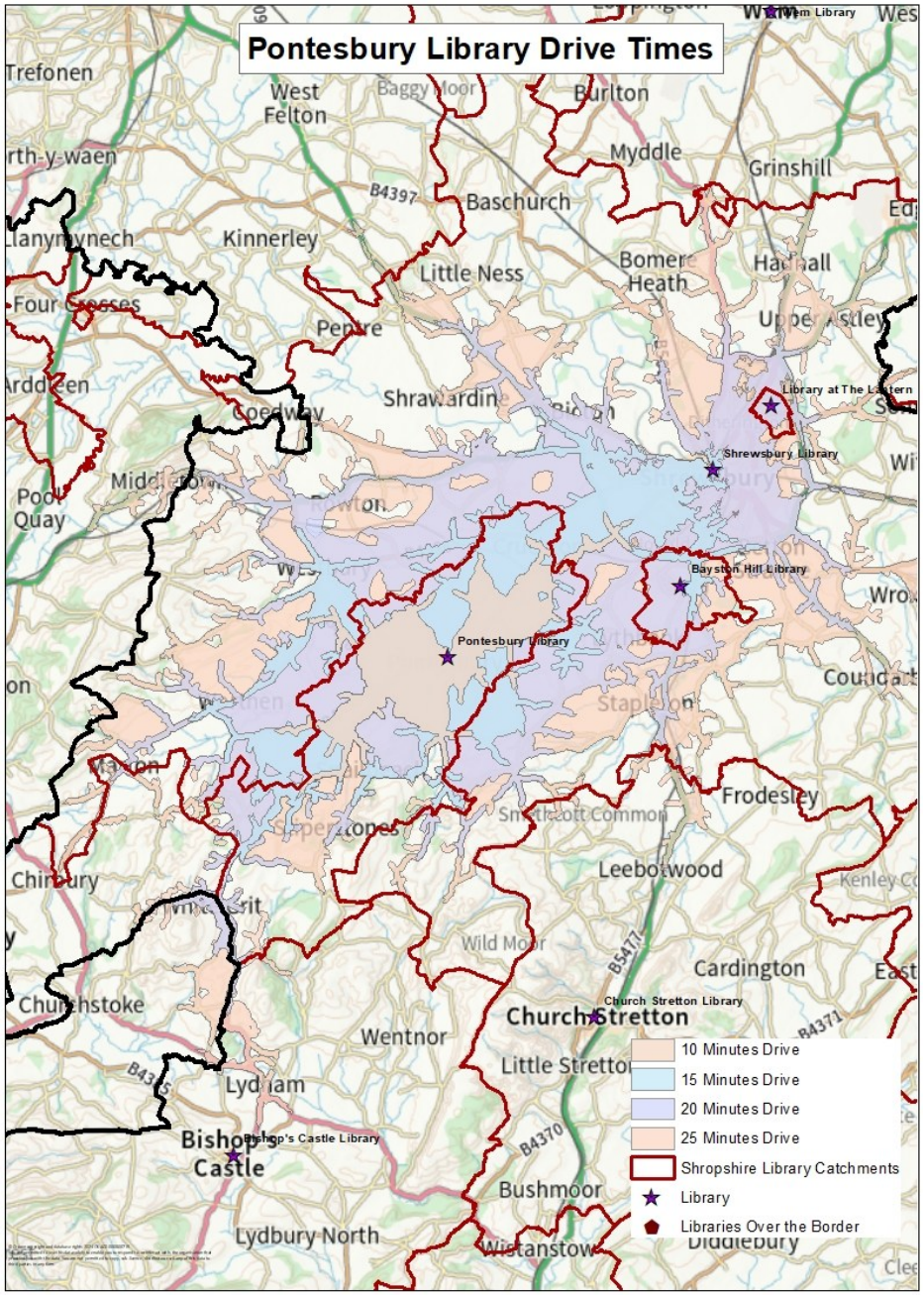
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	34.6%
30 Minute Walk	42.3%
10 Minute Drive	70.6%
15 Minute Drive	85.3%
20 Minute Drive	95.7%
25 Minute Drive	97.8%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Pontesbury is in the centre of Shropshire slightly south west of Shrewsbury.
- The closest library to Pontesbury is Bayston Hill, which is located 8.1 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 14 minutes.
- Shrewsbury is the closest main library – it is the same distance away, but a longer drive time at 19 minutes.
- While Shrewsbury library is easily accessible via public transport with a regular bus service that takes less than an hour, Bayston Hill is more challenging to reach without a car and would involve changing buses in Shrewsbury.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Pontesbury	Bayston Hill	8.1 miles	14 mins	Via Shrewsbury	1 hour plus

Library	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Pontesbury	Shrewsbury	8.1 miles	19 mins	552 or 553 Bus	27 mins



Costs

- Pontesbury ranks as the 9th least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual running costs are £43,260 (2025/26).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan.

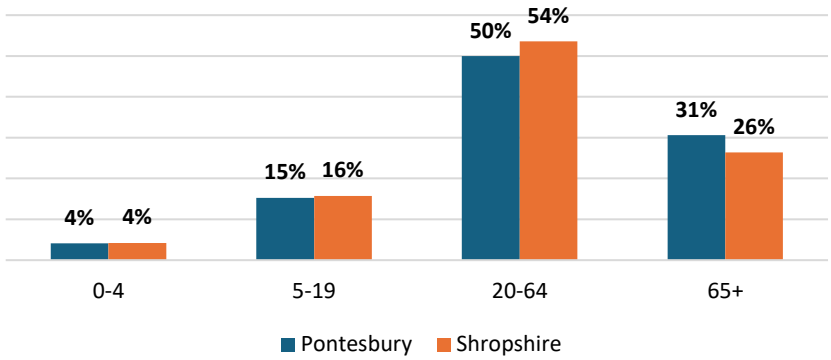
	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£55.46	£78.80	9th
Per Active User	£69.66	£81.29	11th
Per Visit	£3.73	£4.23	11th
Per Book Loan	£3.35	£5.07	13th

Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

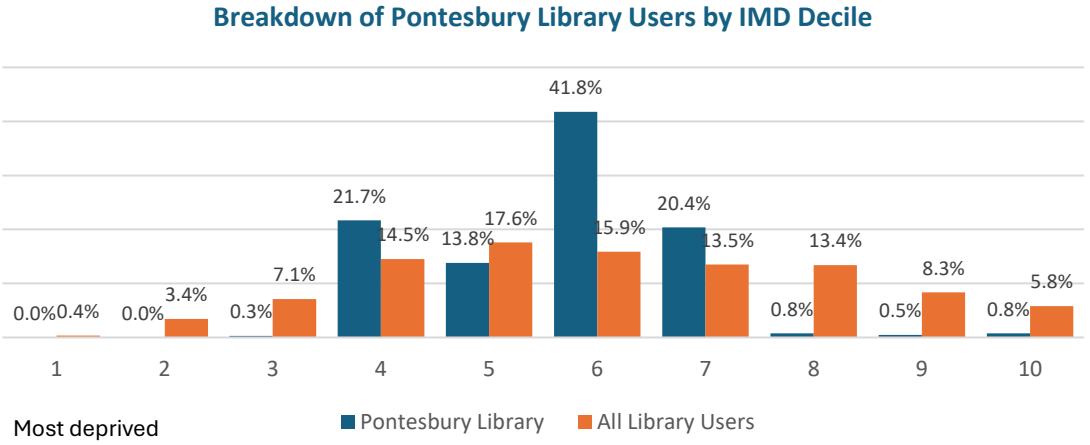
Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Pontesbury Catchment Area

Population

- The Pontesbury library catchment is amongst the smallest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 6,718.
- The age breakdown of the population shows a slightly higher proportion of people age 65+ and slightly fewer aged 20-64.
- There are 2,819 households in the catchment, with 86 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.27 which is identical to the Shropshire average of 2.27.



Deprivation



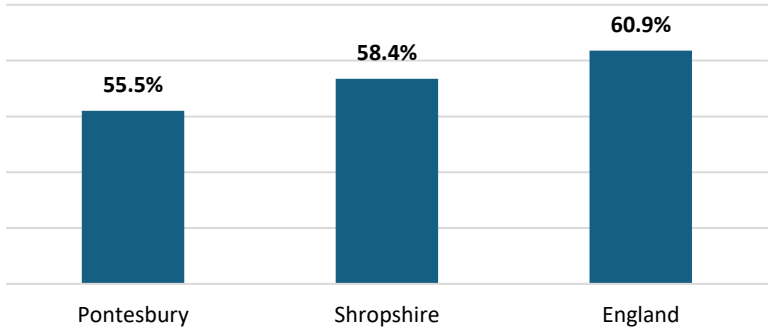
- The Pontesbury library is in the sixth decile according to the IMD 2025 which means the library location has average levels of deprivation.
- The adjacent chart shows that a high proportion of Pontesbury library users are drawn from this decile 41.8% compared with 15.9% for Shropshire).
- Less than 1% of users live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Pontesbury library catchment is lower than the Shropshire average at 55.5% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is also significantly lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. The demographic profile of Pontesbury is skewed to older age groups.
- The economic activity rate in the Pontesbury library catchment area is the 8th lowest in Shropshire.

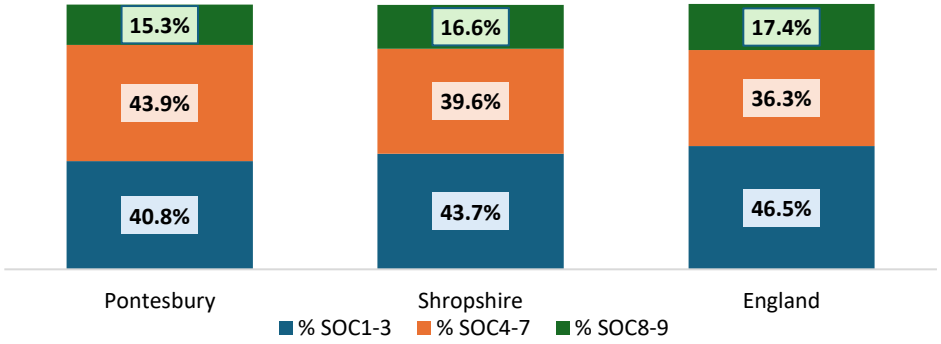
Pontesbury: Economic Activity Rate



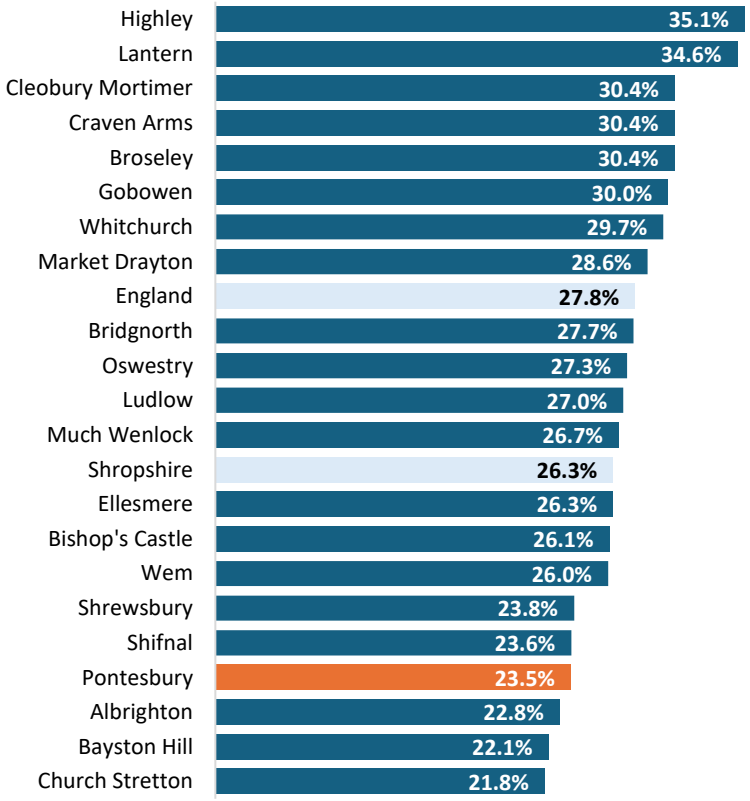
Employment

- 2,996 people in the Pontesbury catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 54.5% of the 16+ population.
- A slightly lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 40.8%. Slightly fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) with above average employment in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Pontesbury: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

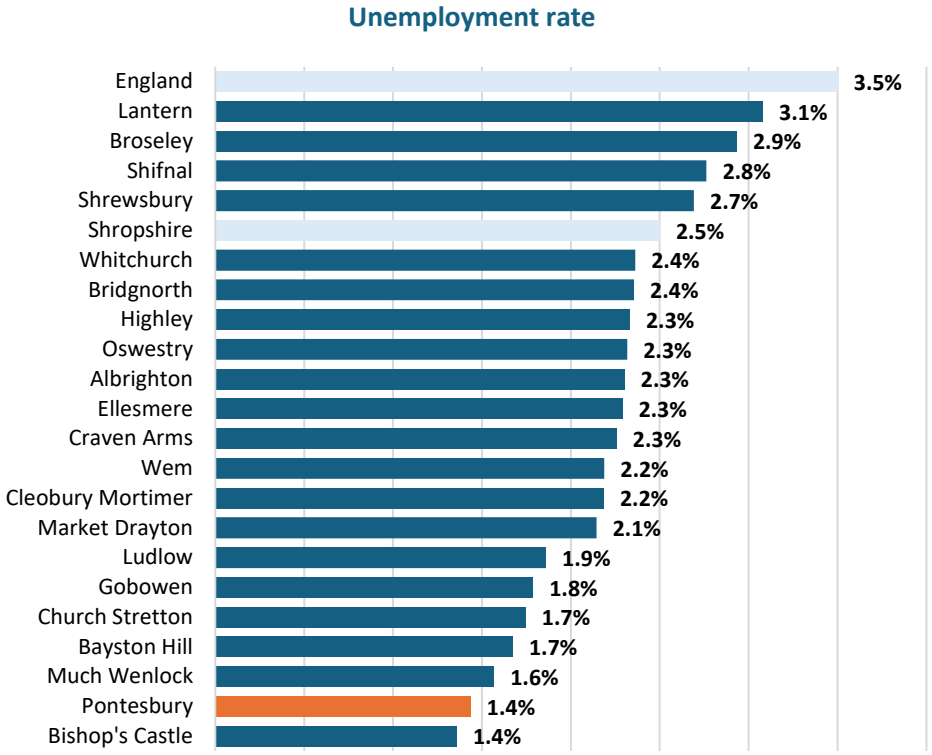


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Pontesbury population with no or low qualifications is below the Shropshire average at 23.5% of the 16+ population.

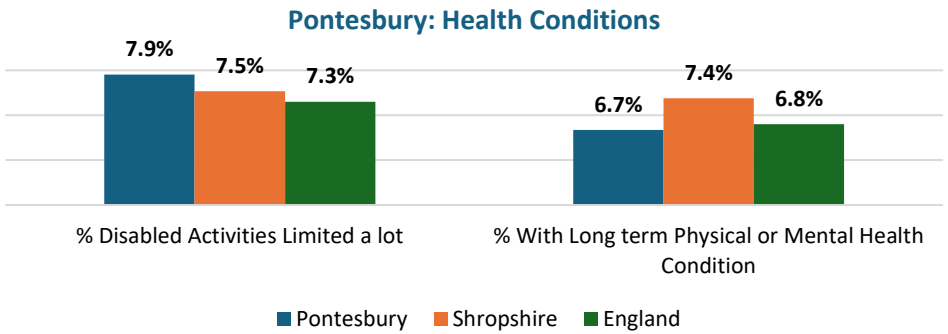
Unemployment

- 79 people living in the Pontesbury catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 1.4% which is amongst the lowest in Shropshire.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



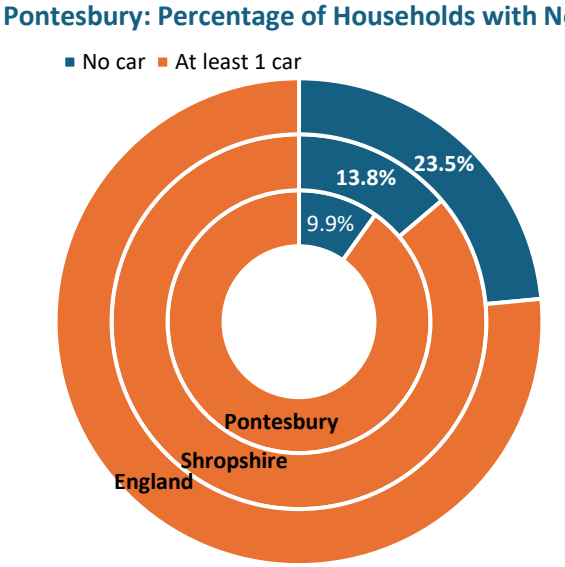
Health Conditions

- 7.9% of residents in the Pontesbury library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is comparable to Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 6.7% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

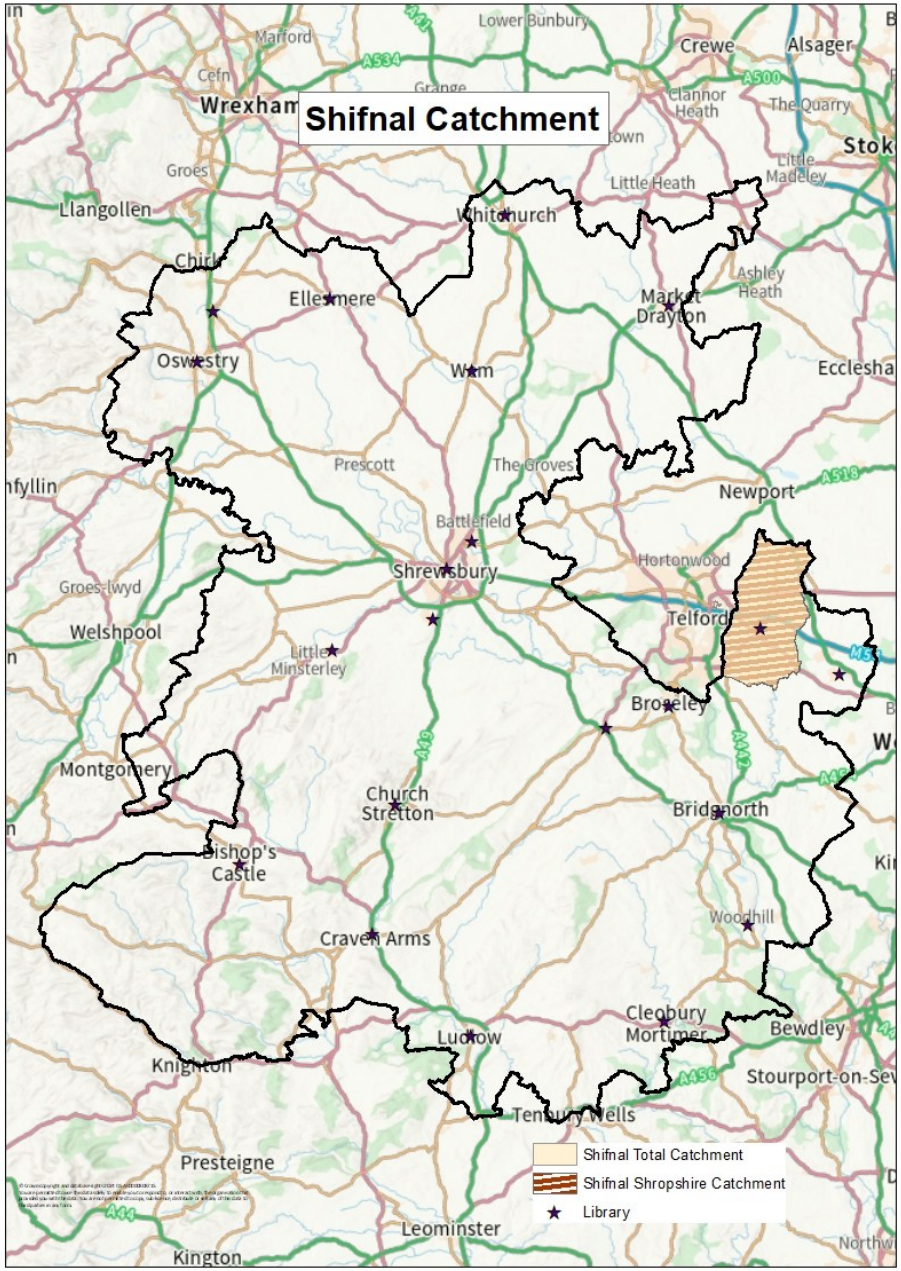
- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Pontesbury catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 9.9%.



Shifnal Library Profile

Background

- Shifnal is located in the east of Shropshire close to the border with Telford & Wrekin.
- The library is located in the centre of the town close to shops and other local amenities.
- The building is leased to the town council which operates the library services on behalf of Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 6,398 hectares which is approximately 2.0% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends very slightly into Telford & Wrekin.
- The total population within the Shifnal library catchment area is 11,773 comprising 4,742 households. 97.4% of the catchment population (11,471 people) are Shropshire residents.



Opening Hours

The library is open 19.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following

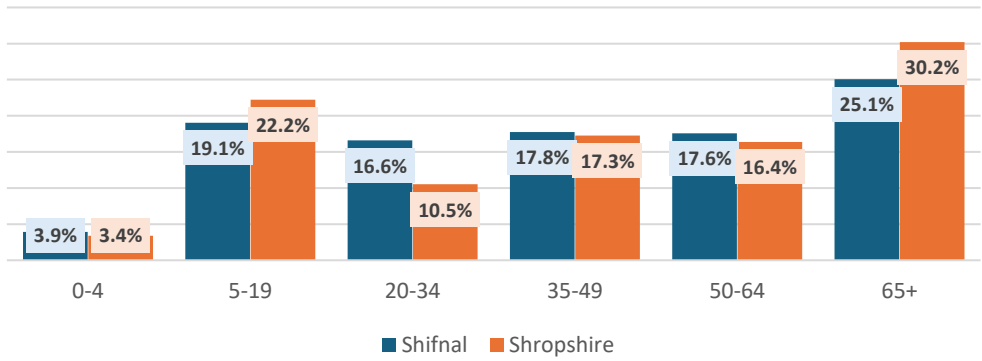
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	13.00pm-17.00pm	4
Tuesday	Closed	0
Wednesday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Thursday	Closed	0
Friday	10.00am-13.00pm 14.00pm-17.00pm	6
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library has 0.74 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from one volunteer providing a total of 14 volunteer hours.

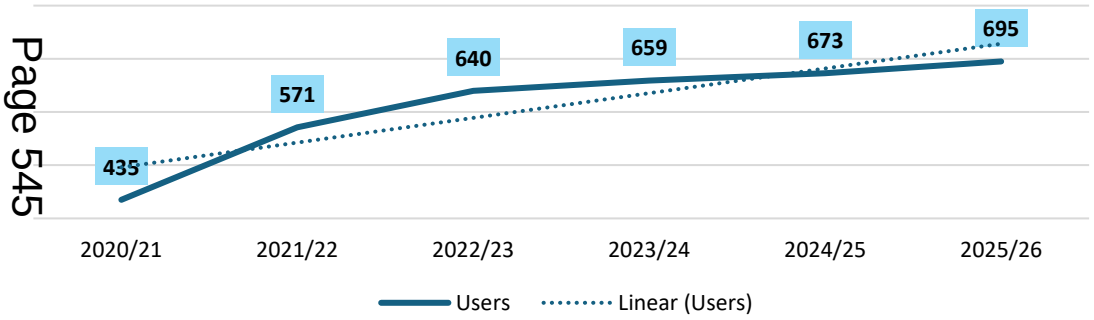
Library Users

- Shifnal library had 695 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 2.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 6.0% of the Shifnal catchment population are active library users, which is lower than the Shropshire average. This includes all Shropshire libraries as well as Shifnal.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and older adults (65+) and more users of working age.

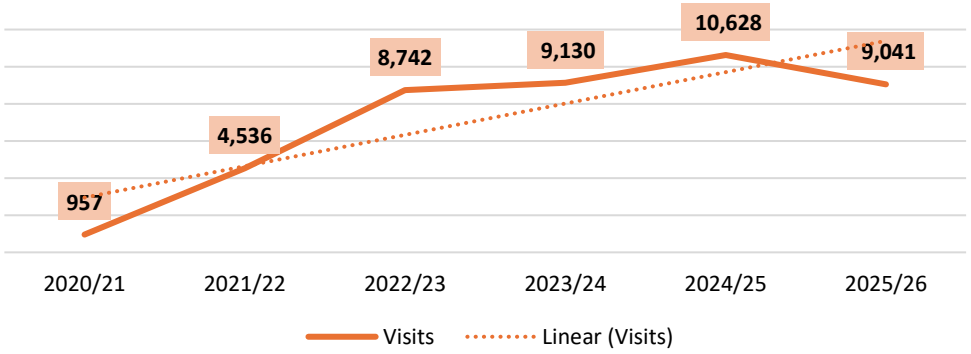
Breakdown of Shifnal Library Users by Age



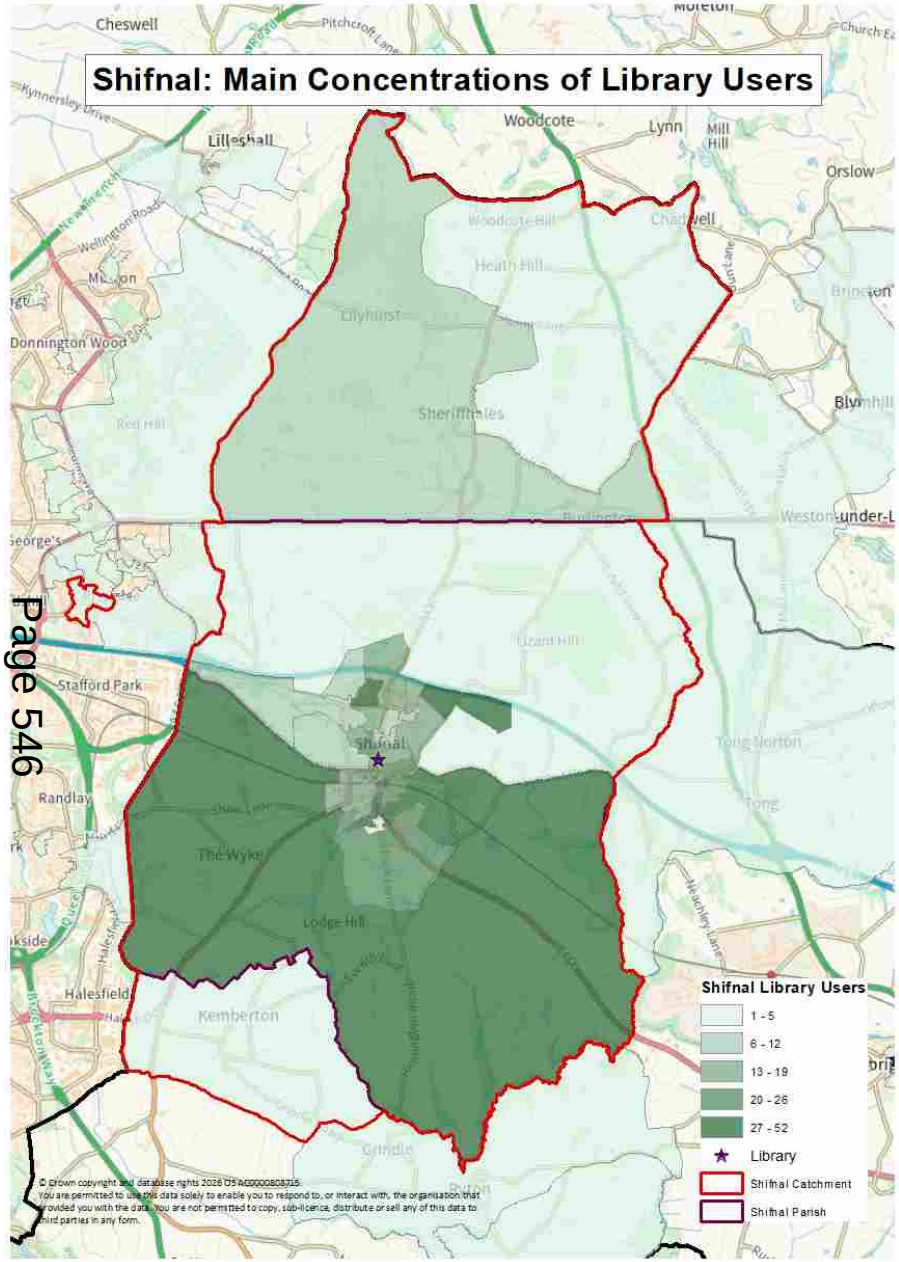
Shifnal: Number of Active Users



Shifnal: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year although numbers remain lower than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 260 users (+59.8%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 9,041, which is the equivalent of about 13 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and the frequency with which users visit yet to recover to the level seen pre-pandemic (17 per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was almost 10 times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 12,565 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 18 per active user and 1.4 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 9% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 2%.
- Computer usage was down by 24%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 87.3% of all Shifnal library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is slightly above average for Shropshire.
- 84.8% of users live within Shifnal parish boundary.
- 6.0% of the population in the catchment area are Shifnal active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 1.3% to 14.0%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 12.7% of Shifnal library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Albrighton catchment or outside of the Shropshire boundary (in Telford & Wrekin).
- People that live in the Shifnal catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Albrighton, Broseley or Shrewsbury libraries or the Brookes mobile library service.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 92.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Shifnal library were to the Shifnal library, and these accounted for 93.0% of all issues.
- Albrighton was the most frequently visited alternative library.

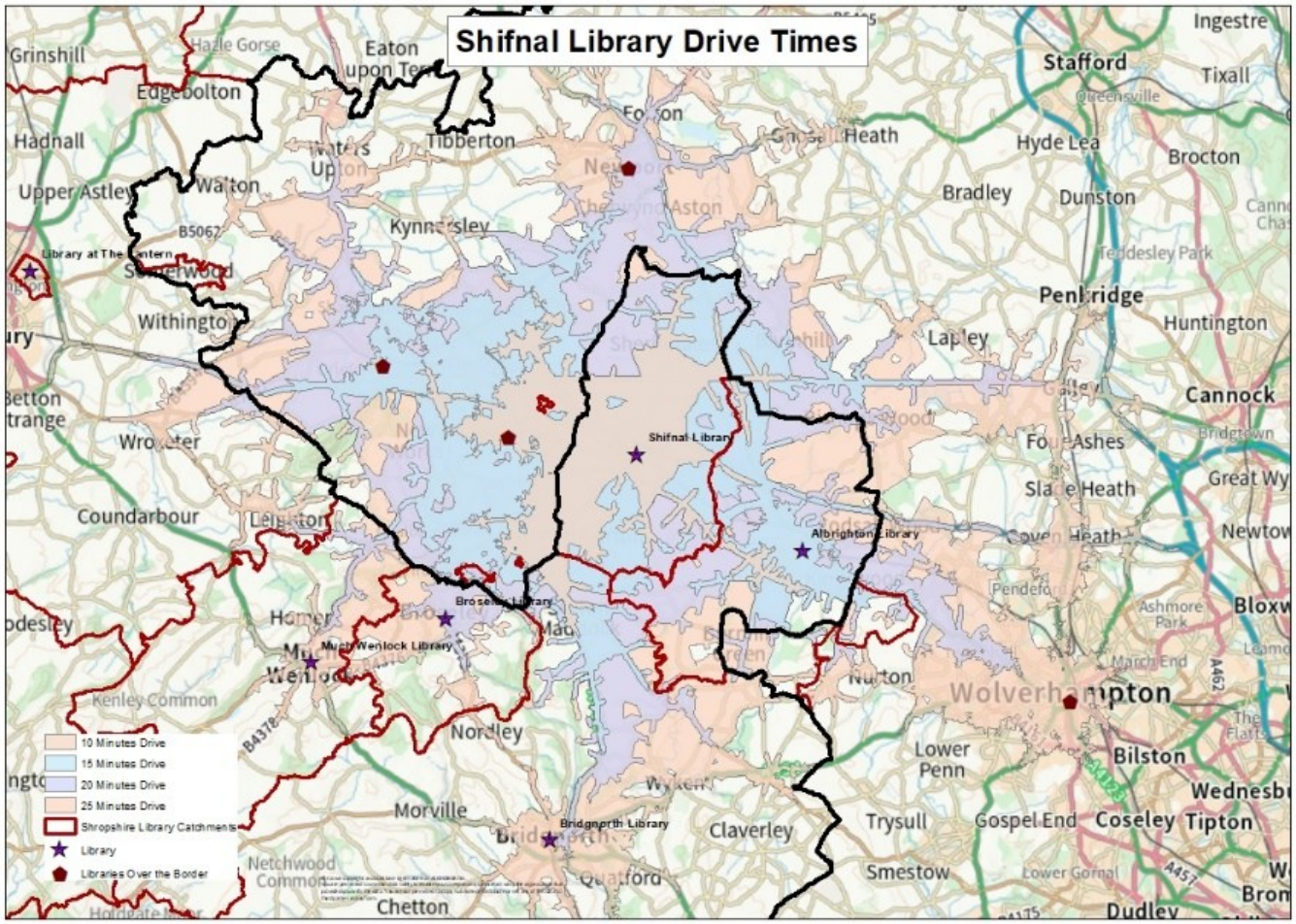
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Shifnal library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	68.9%
30 Minute Walk	83.8%
10 Minute Drive	89.8%
15 Minute Drive	94.6%
20 Minute Drive	97.5%
25 Minute Drive	98.5%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Shifnal is in the east of Shropshire close to the border with Telford & Wrekin. Proximity to the M54 motorway means that Shrewsbury and Telford are both easily accessible by car.
- The closest library to the Shifnal library is Albrighton, which is located 5.6 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 10 minutes. Both towns are on the mainline railway.
- Bridgnorth is the closest main library – it is 11.7 miles away with a drive time of about 20 minutes.
- It is more challenging to travel to Bridgnorth from Shifnal by bus, with the service taking about an hour.



Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time	Nearest Main Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Shifnal	Albrighton	5.6 miles	10 mins	Train	8 mins	Bridgnorth	11.7 miles	20 mins	114 Bus	1 hour

Costs

- Shifnal ranks as the least expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council).
- Annual costs to the Council are £5,790 (2025/26).
- The library has below average costs per hour open, per active user, per visit and per book loan ranking as the first, second or third cheapest in each case.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£5.71	£78.80	18th
Per Active User	£8.33	£81.29	21st
Per Visit	£0.64	£4.23	19th
Per Book Loan	£0.46	£5.07	21st

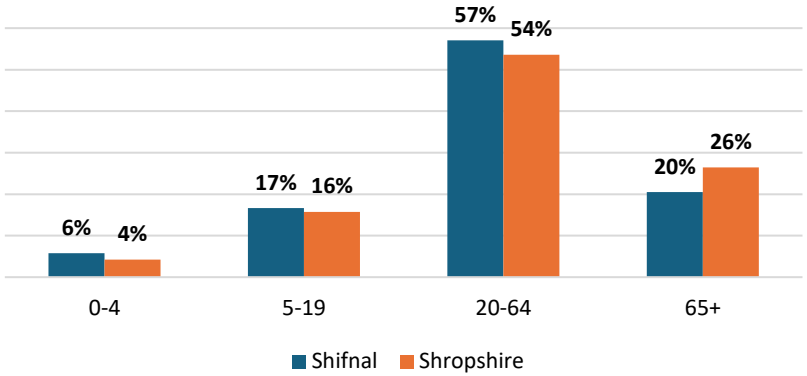
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Shifnal Catchment Area

Population

- The Shifnal library catchment is the eighth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 11,773 (Shropshire population 11,471).
- The age breakdown of the population shows a lower proportion of people age 65+ and more aged 20-64.
- There are 4,742 households in the catchment, with 43 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.30 which is comparable to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

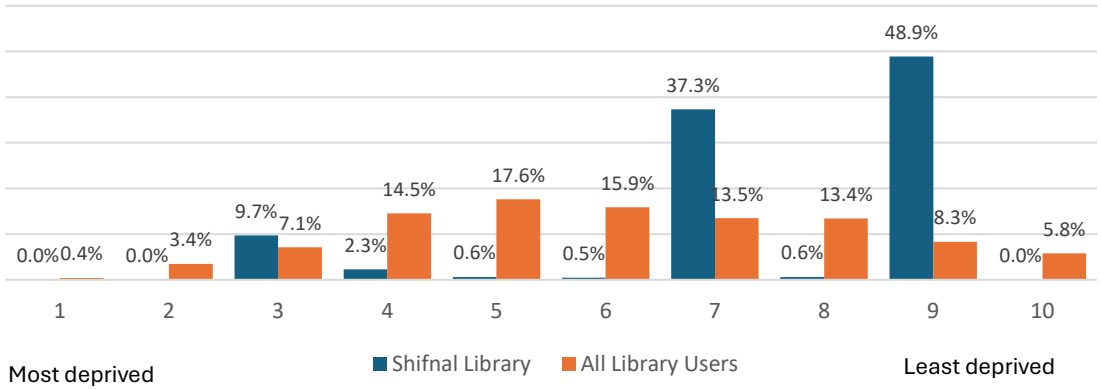
Age Breakdown of Shifnal Catchment



Shifnal catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation

Breakdown of Shifnal Library Users by IMD Decile



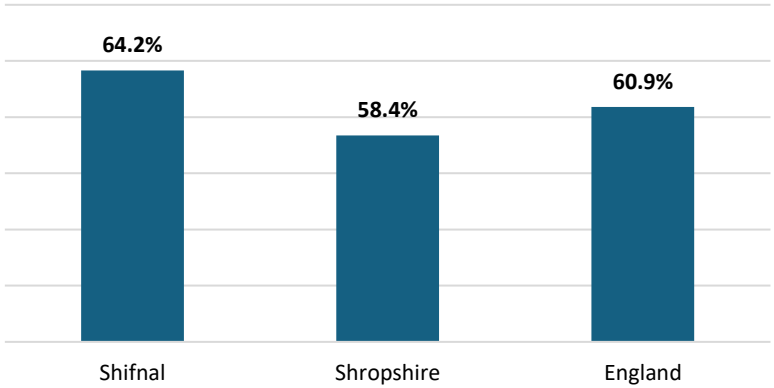
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Shifnal library is in the seventh decile according to the IMD 2025 which means the library's location is within the 40% least deprived areas of England.
- The adjacent chart shows that a high proportion of Shifnal library users are drawn from the 20% least deprived areas of the country (48.9% compared with 14.1% of all Shropshire library users).
- Around a tenth of users live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Shifnal library catchment is much higher than the Shropshire average at 64.2% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- This is also higher than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market. However, the demographic profile of Shifnal is much younger.
- The economic activity rate in the Shifnal library catchment area is the highest in Shropshire.

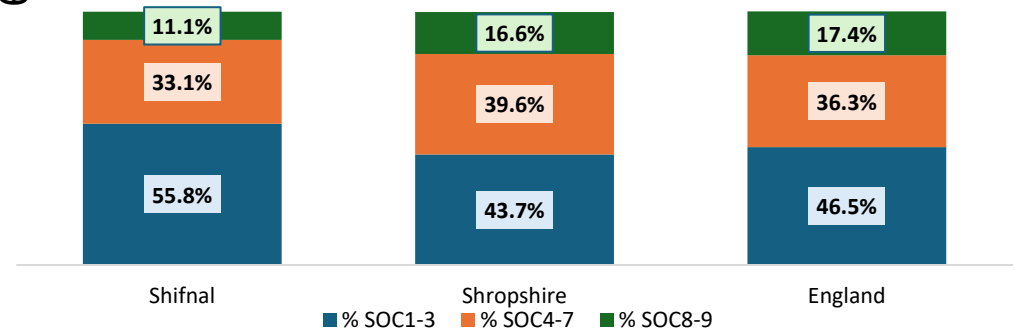
Shifnal: Economic Activity Rate



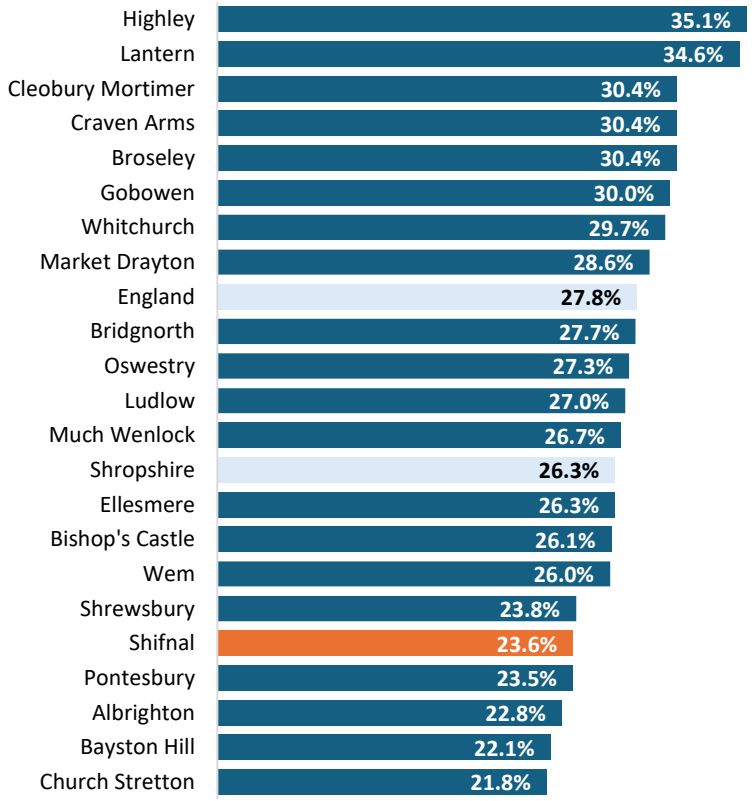
Employment

- 5,567 people in the Shifnal catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 61.8% of the 16+ population.
- A much higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 55.8%. Fewer are employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) or SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Shifnal: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

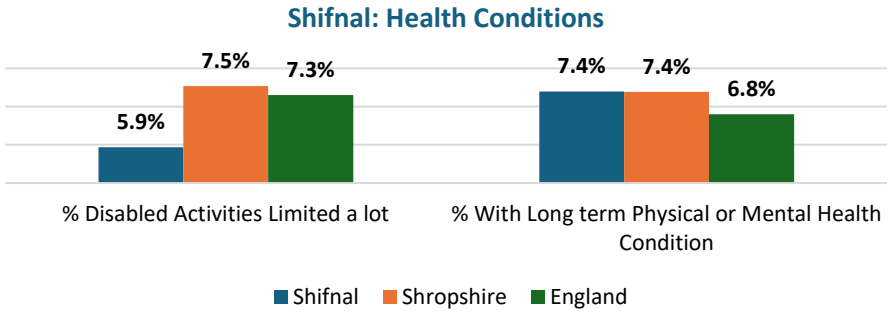
- The proportion of the Shifnal population with no or low qualifications is below the Shropshire average at 23.6% of the 16+ population. This is also below the national average.

Unemployment

- 249 people living in the Shifnal catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.8% which is amongst the highest in Shropshire.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Other catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

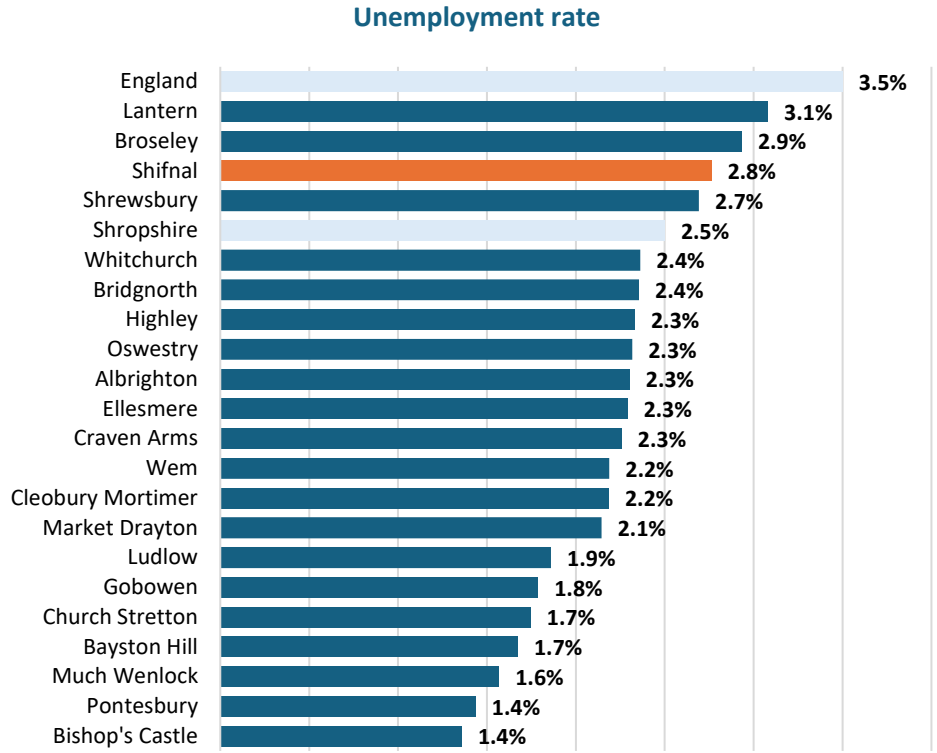
Health Conditions

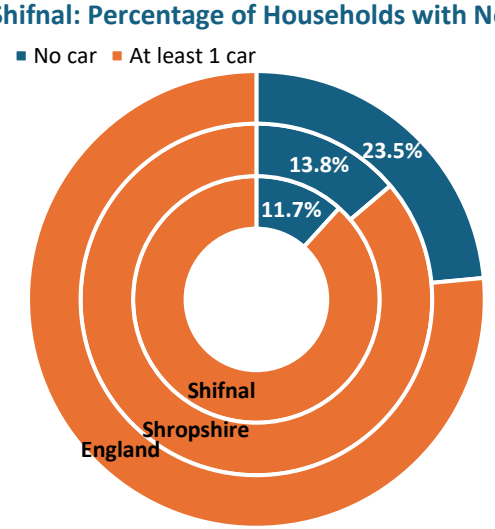
- 5.9% of residents in the Shifnal library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is low compared with Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.4% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Shifnal catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.7%.

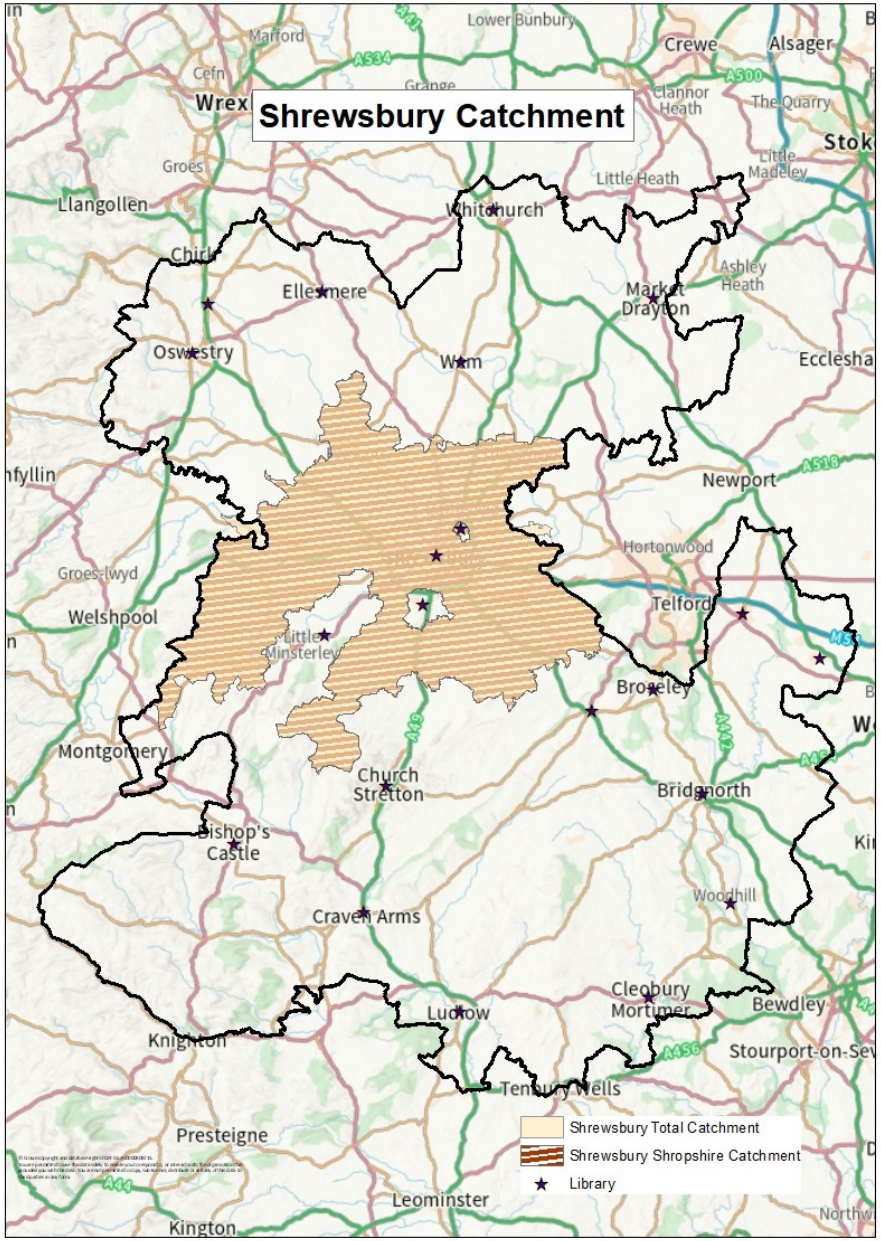




Shrewsbury Library Profile

Background

- Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire, located in the centre of the county.
- Shrewsbury is more than four times larger than the next largest Shropshire town, and the library is the largest in the county.
- The library is in the centre of town and is within close walking distance of the train station and the bus station. The library occupies a Grade I and II listed building across multiple floors. It has several meeting rooms, a staff room, public toilets and is owned and operated by Shropshire Council.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 54,507 hectares within Shropshire which is about 17% of the county's land mass. This makes the catchment the largest in Shropshire. The catchment also extends slightly outside Shropshire, although 99% is within the county boundary.
- The total population within the Shrewsbury library catchment area is 104,406 comprising 43,329 households. 99% of the catchment population – 103,705 people - are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Shrewsbury is twice the size of the second largest catchment (Oswestry).



Opening Hours

The library is open 46 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

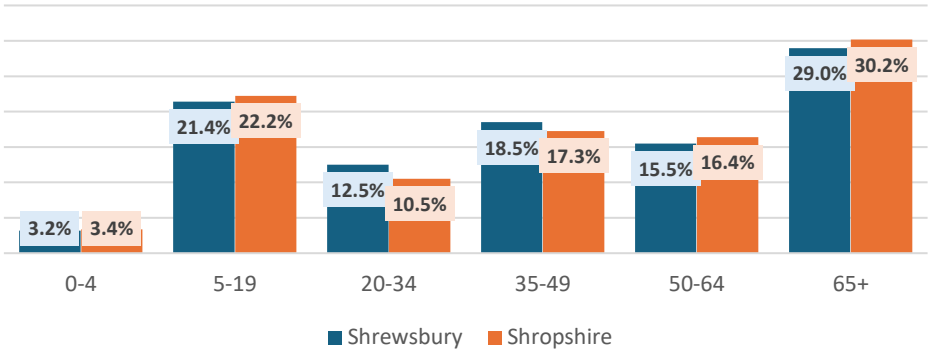
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Tuesday	9.30am-19.00pm	9.5
Wednesday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Thursday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Friday	9.30am-17.00pm	7.5
Saturday	9.30am-16.00pm	6.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library employs 9 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from 124 volunteers throughout the year, contributing 809 volunteer hours.

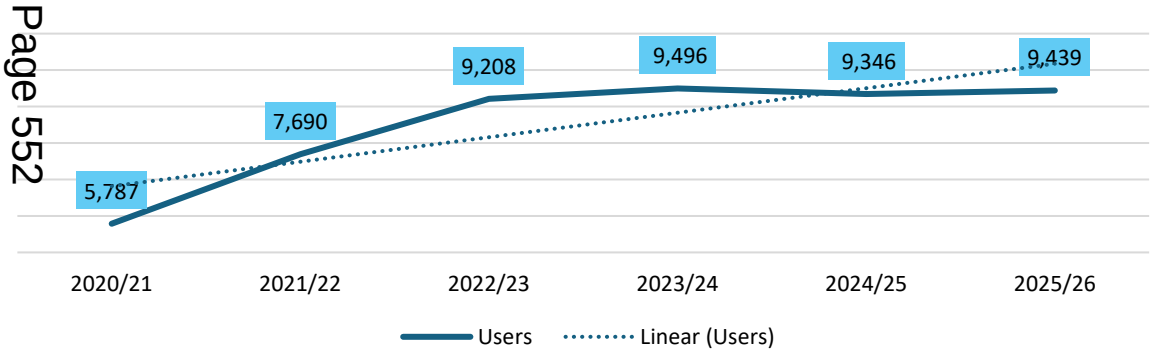
Library Users

- Shrewsbury library had 9,439 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 29.2% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.4% of the Shrewsbury catchment population are active library users, which is comparable to the Shropshire average. This includes residents who use other Shropshire libraries as well as Shrewsbury.
- Just under two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and young people, fewer users aged 65 and above but more adults aged 20 to 64.

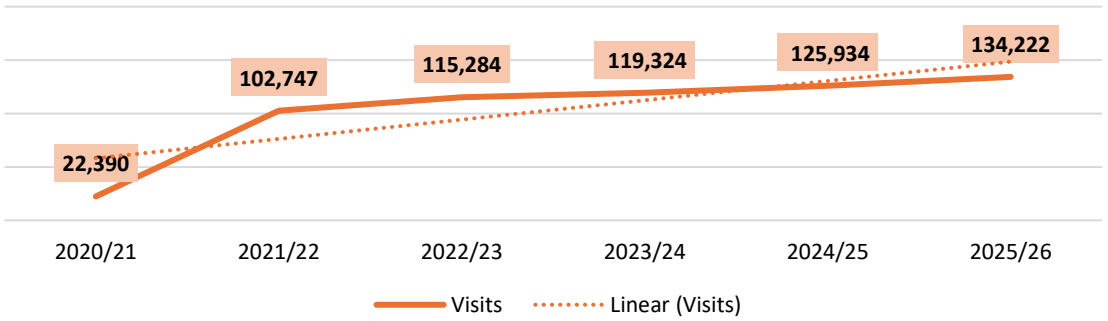
Breakdown of Shrewsbury Library Users by Age



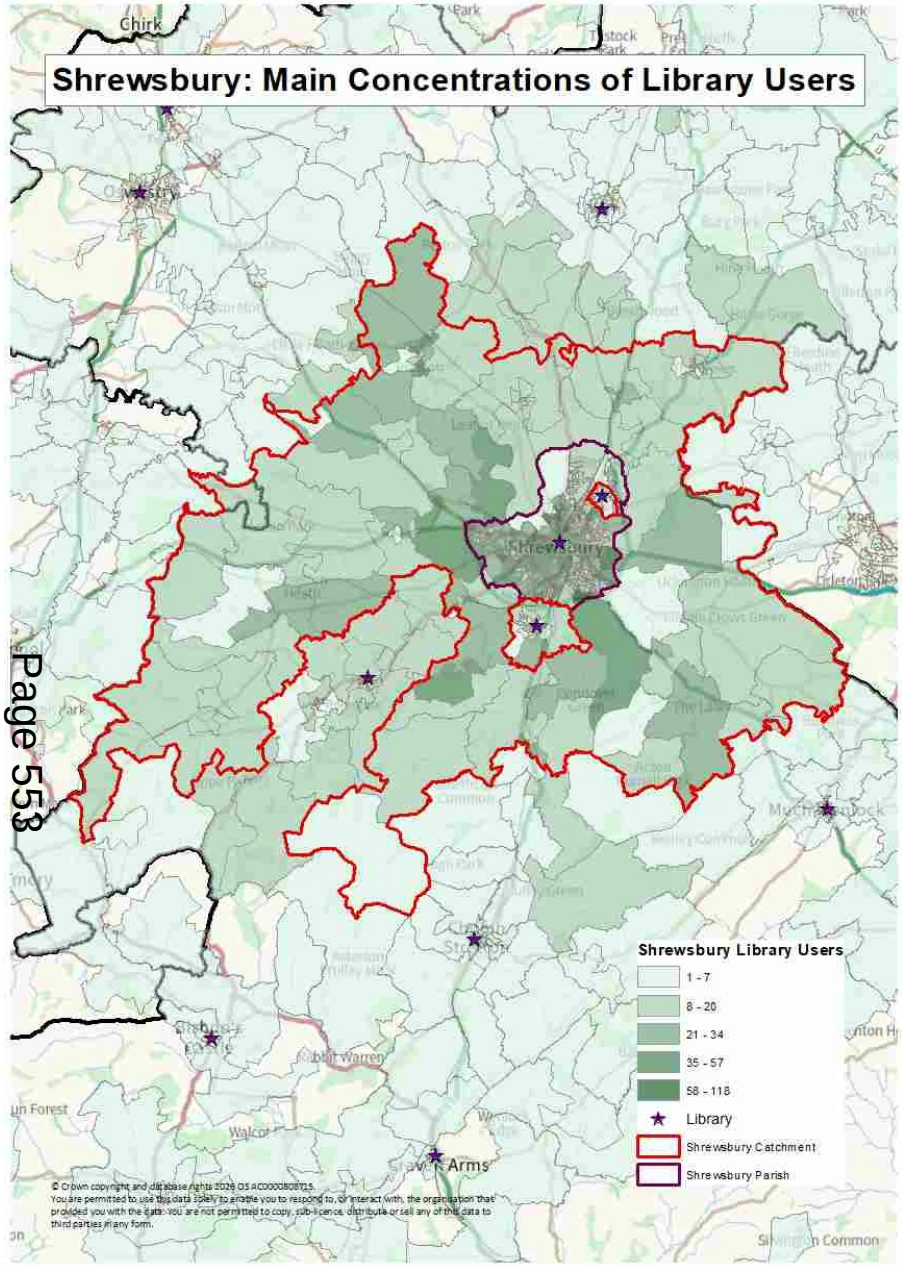
Shrewsbury: Number of Active Users



Shrewsbury: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although this had flattened by 2024/25, and number remain below pre-pandemic levels.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 3,652 users (+63.1%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 134,222, which is the equivalent of about 14 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business but the frequency with which users visit the library has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels (14 visits per user in 2019/20).
- The overall number of visits was six times higher in 2025/26 than in 2020/21.
- 109,385 loans were made in 2025/26 which equates with 12 per active user and 0.8 per visit.
- The number of loans fell by 7% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library increased by 1% in 2025/26 compared with 2024/25.
- Computer time was up by 2%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 83.5% of all Shrewsbury library users live within the main catchment area.
- 71.1% live within the Shrewsbury town council area.
- 9.4% of the population in the catchment area are Shrewsbury active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 2% to over a quarter. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 16.5% of Shrewsbury library users that do not live in the catchment, significant numbers live in the Bayston Hill, Pontesbury, Oswestry, Lantern and Wem catchments.
- People that live in the Shrewsbury catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Lantern and Bayston Hill libraries. Both these libraries are within the Shrewsbury catchment.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 82.0% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Shrewsbury library were to Shrewsbury, and these accounted for 79.5% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Shrewsbury include the Lantern, Bayston Hill, Church Stretton, Oswestry and Pontesbury as well as the Sabrina mobile service.

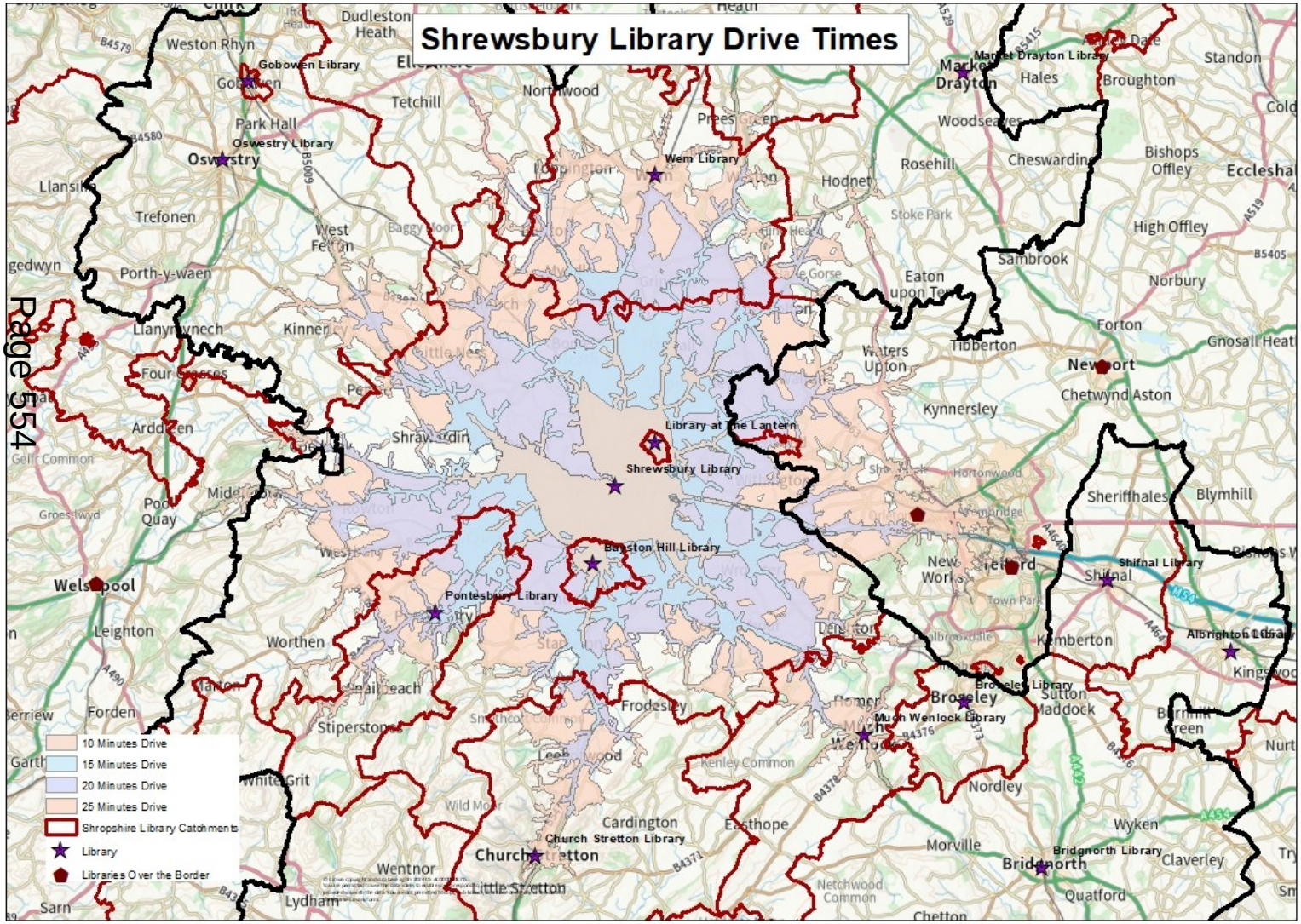
Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Shrewsbury library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	10.5%
30 Minute Walk	38.8%
10 Minute Drive	75.9%
15 Minute Drive	81.2%
20 Minute Drive	87.8%
25 Minute Drive	92.2%

Access

- Shrewsbury is in central Shropshire.
- There are two libraries that are contained within the Shrewsbury catchment in addition to Shrewsbury library – the Lantern to the north of the town and Bayston Hill to the south. Both are within a 10-minute drive of Shrewsbury's main library.



Costs

- Shrewsbury is the most expensive library in Shropshire that Shropshire Council operates ahead of Ludlow and Oswestry.
- Annual running costs are £507,370 (2025/26).
- Shrewsbury library is the second most expensive per hour open. However, it costs less than average per active user, per book loan and per visit.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£212.11	£78.80	2nd
Per Active User	£53.75	£81.29	16th
Per Visit	£3.78	£4.23	10th
Per Book Loan	£4.64	£5.07	10th

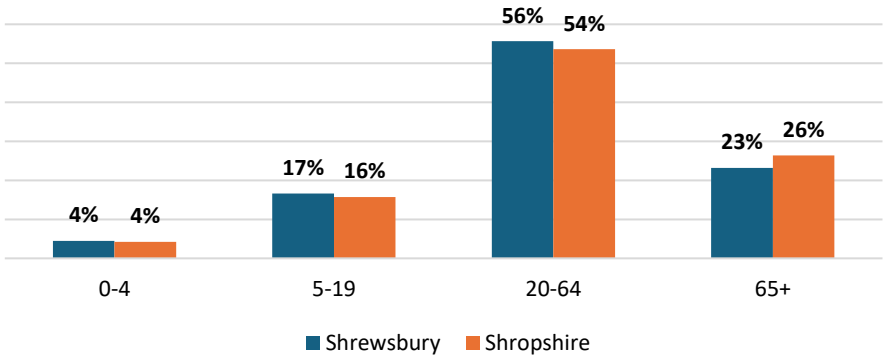
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Shrewsbury Catchment Area

Population

- Shrewsbury library catchment is the largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 103,705 and a total population of 104,406.
- The age breakdown of the population is comparable with the overall Shropshire population, albeit with slightly fewer aged 65+.
- There are 43,329 households in the catchment, with 1,959 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.26 which is similar to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

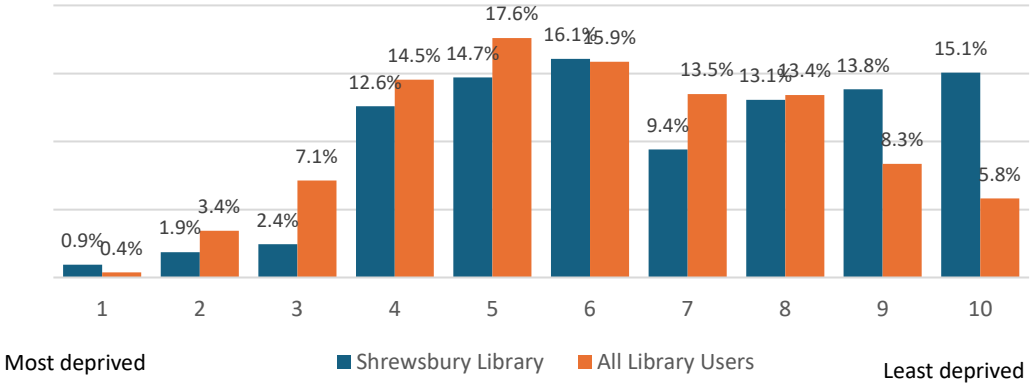
Age Breakdown of Shrewsbury Catchment



Shrewsbury catchment includes non-Shropshire population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Shrewsbury Library Users by IMD Decile



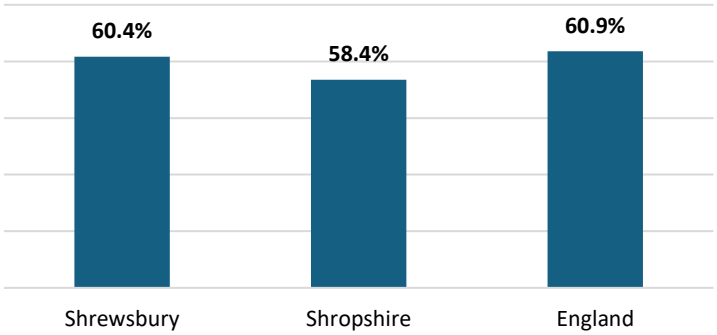
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Shrewsbury library is in decile five according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it has average levels of deprivation.
- There is a stronger bias towards users living in less deprived areas, with 28.9% living in the least deprived 20% of the country (14.1% for all library users).
- Less than 6% of users are drawn from the most deprived 30% of England.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Shrewsbury library catchment is higher than the Shropshire average at 60.4% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- However, it is marginally lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Shrewsbury library catchment area is the fourth highest in Shropshire after Shifnal, the Lantern and Albrighton.

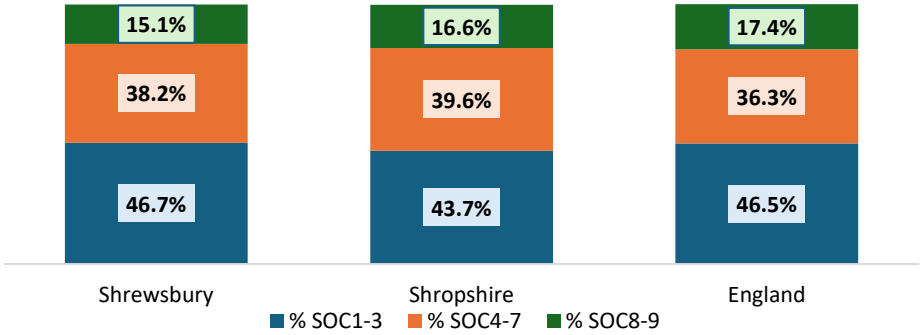
Shrewsbury: Economic Activity Rate



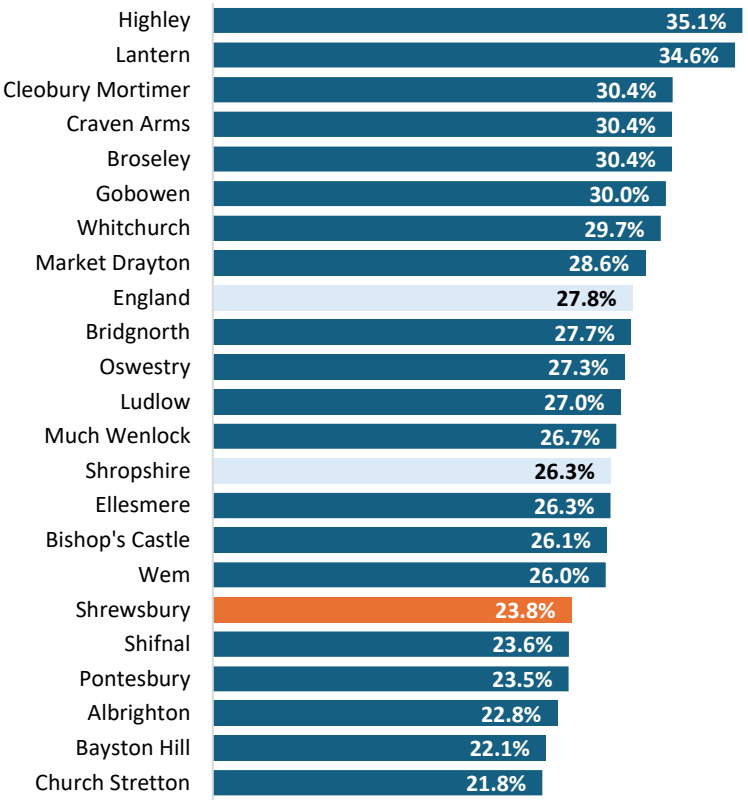
Employment

- 48,185 people in Shrewsbury were in employment in 2021, which equates with 58.0% of the 16+ population.
- A higher proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 46.7%. Fewer are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) and in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Shrewsbury: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications



Qualifications

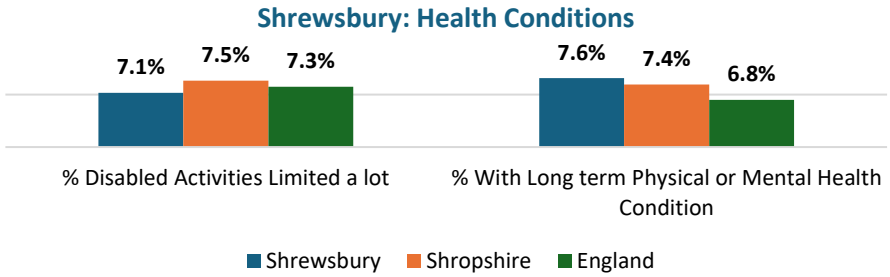
- A lower proportion of the Shrewsbury population have no or low qualifications compared to the England average at 23.8%. This is also lower than the Shropshire average.

Unemployment

- 2,235 people living in the Shrewsbury catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.7%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal as well as Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.

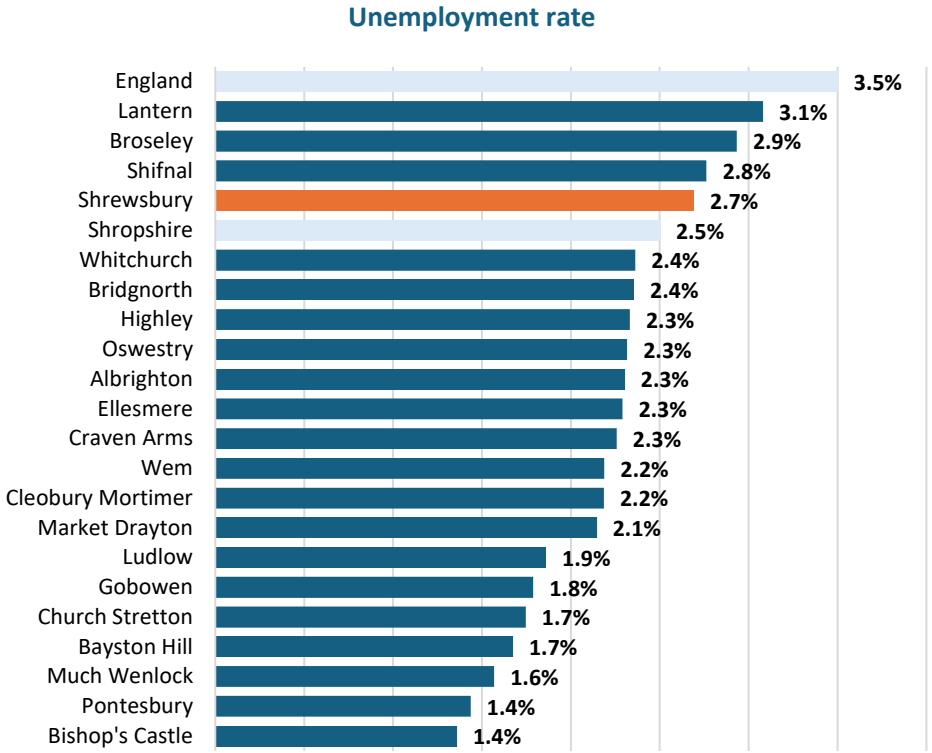
Health Conditions

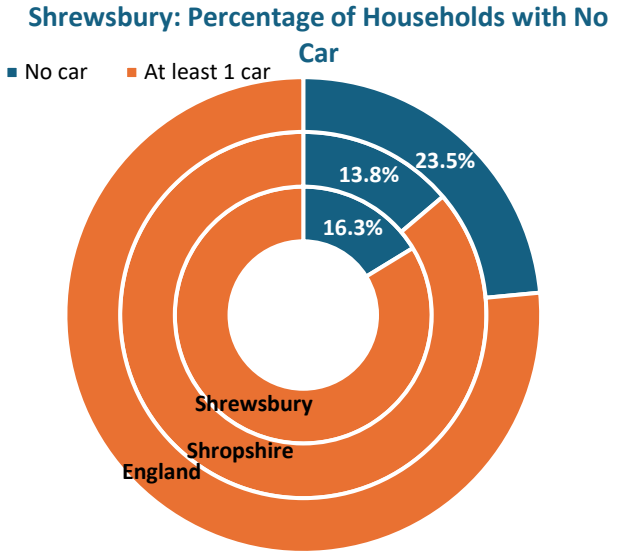
- 7.1% of residents in the Shrewsbury library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.6% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is comparable to the Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Shrewsbury households that do not have access to a car or van is higher than the Shropshire average at 16.3%.

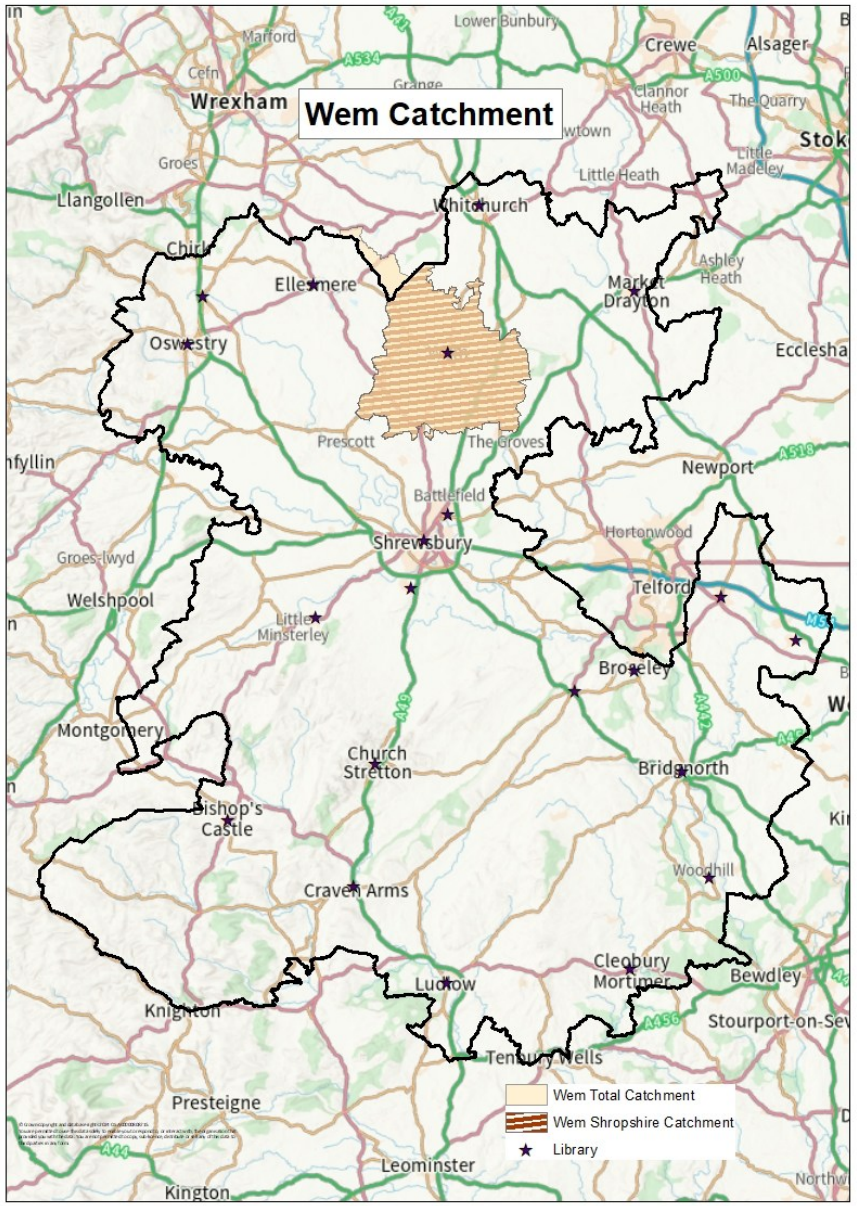




Wem Library Profile

Background

- Wem is located in the north of Shropshire between Shrewsbury and Whitchurch.
- The library occupies the ground floor of a building on Wem High Street close to the town car park.
- The building is leased to Shropshire Council which manages the library.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 13,958 hectares which is approximately 4.4% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends into Wrexham to the north.
- The total population within the Wem library catchment area is 11,954 comprising 5,117 households. 96.8% of the catchment population (11,573 people) are Shropshire residents.



Opening Hours

The library is open 20.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

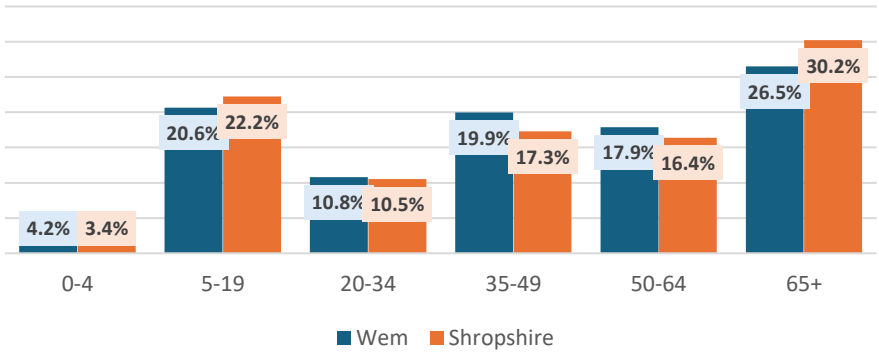
	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	Closed	0
Tuesday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	10.00am-17.00pm	7
Friday	14.00pm-17.00pm	3
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

- The library has 1.116 FTE employees and in 2025/26 benefitted from 18 volunteers providing a total of 550 volunteer hours.

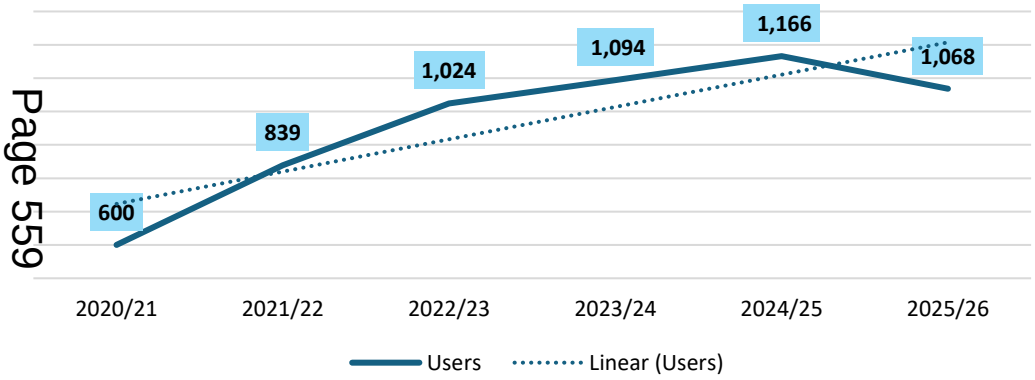
Library Users

- Wem library had 1,068 active users in the 2024/25 financial year. This is the equivalent of 3.3% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 9.6% of the Wem catchment population are active library users, which is about the same as the Shropshire average. This includes users of all Shropshire libraries, not just Wem.
- Over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are fewer children and older adults (65+) and more users aged 20- 50.

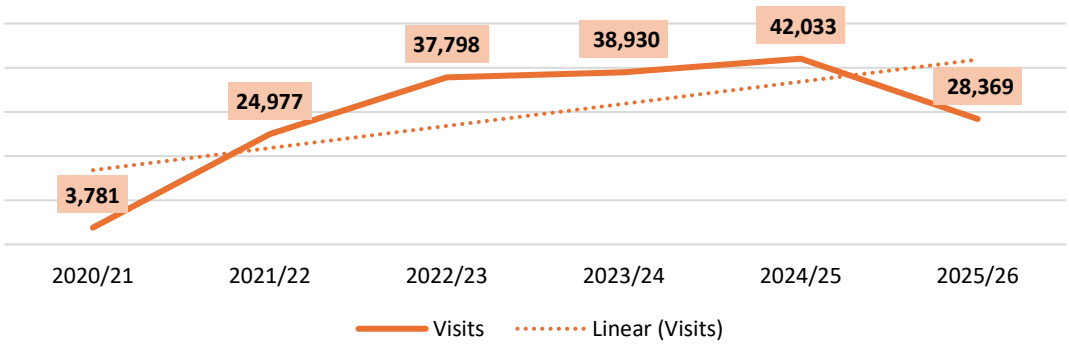
Breakdown of Wem Library Users by Age



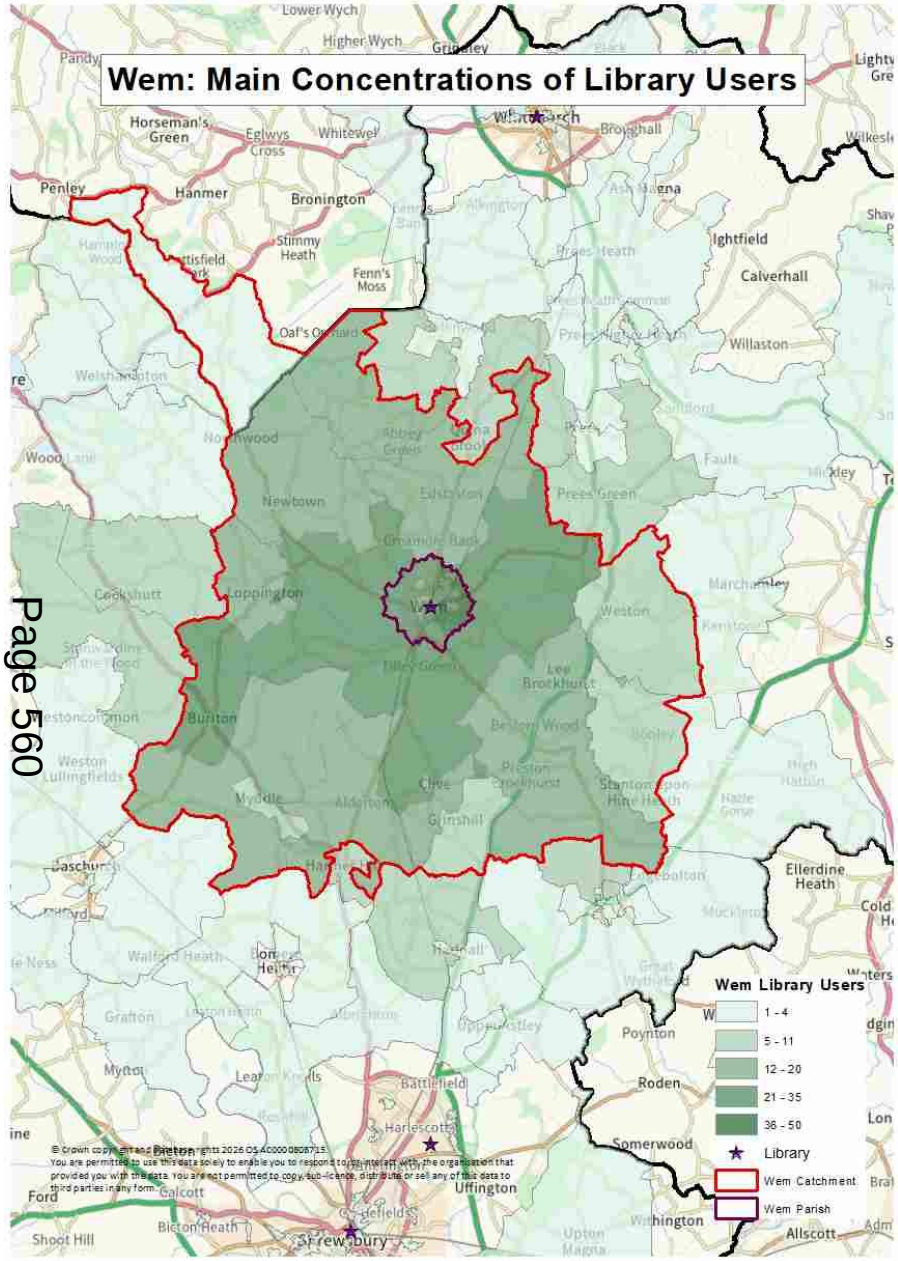
Wem: Number of Active Users



Wem: Number of Visits



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been recovery year-on-year until 2025/26 when user numbers dipped. Numbers remain lower than they were pre-pandemic.
- The increase in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 468 users (+78.0%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 28,369, which is the equivalent of about 27 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business, but the number of visits recovered rapidly after 202o/21 until 2024/25. In 2025/26the number of visits fell by a third.
- 19,299 loans were made in 2025/26, which equates with 18 per active user and 0.7 per visit.
- The number of loans declined by 21% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library fell by 2%.
- Computer usage declined by 32%.



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 80.2% of all Wem library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is similar to the average for Shropshire.
- 56.1% of users live within Wem urban parish boundary with an additional 8.7% in Wem Rural.
- 9.6% of the population in the catchment area are Wem active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from 3.4% to 17.2%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 19.8% of Wem library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Whitchurch or Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Wem catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Shrewsbury library.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 78.3% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Wem library were to Wem library, and these accounted for 72.9% of all issues.
- Shrewsbury was the most frequently visited alternative library.

Walk/Drive Times

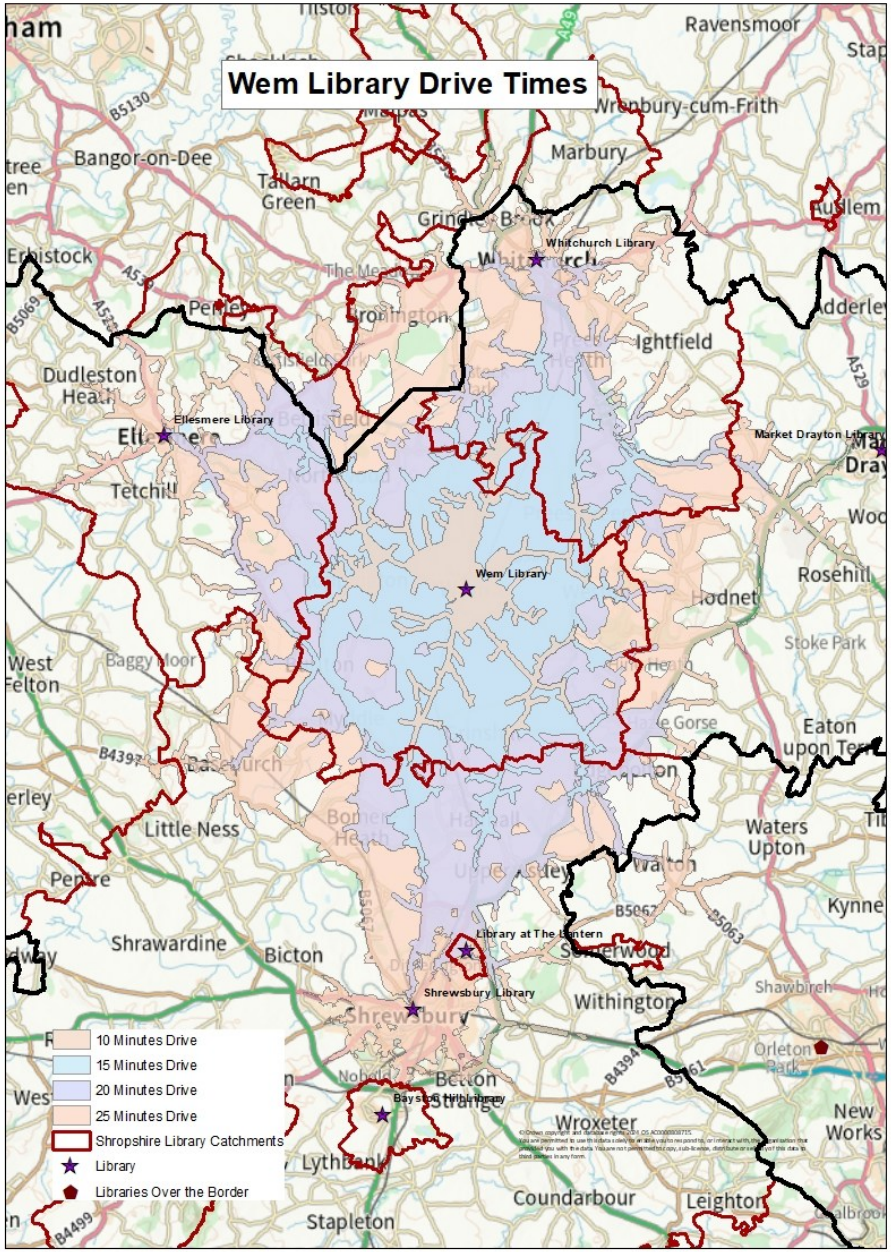
- The following table shows the proportion of active Wem library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	54.8%
30 Minute Walk	59.0%
10 Minute Drive	69.0%
15 Minute Drive	85.1%
20 Minute Drive	91.6%
25 Minute Drive	96.0%

Access to Alternative Libraries

- Wem is in the north of Shropshire between Shrewsbury and Whitchurch. Proximity to the A49 means that both Shrewsbury and Whitchurch are easily accessible by car.
- Wem is on the mainline rail network on the Shrewsbury to Manchester route, so Shrewsbury and Whitchurch can also be accessed using public transport.
- The closest library to the Wem is Whitchurch, which is located 9 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 18 minutes.

Library	Nearest Library	Distance	Drive Time	Public Transport	Approx Time
Wem	Whitchurch	9 miles	18 mins	Train or Bus	12 mins (Train)



Costs

- Wem ranks as the 8th most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) and the second most expensive excluding the main six.
- Annual running costs are £135,910 (2025/26).
- The library has above average costs per visit, per hour open, per user and per book loan.

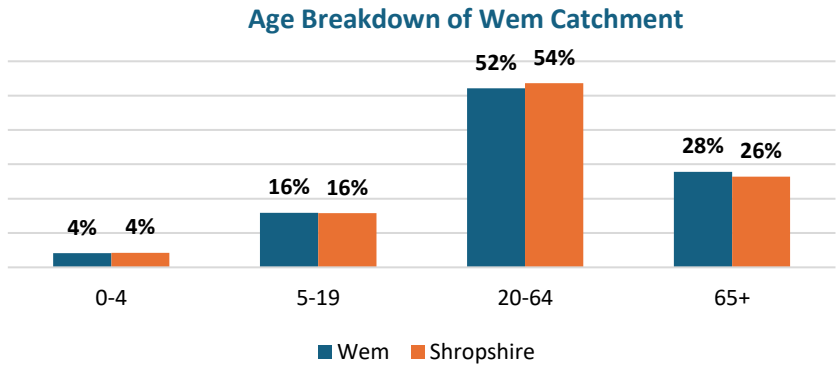
	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£127.50	£78.80	4th
Per Active User	£127.26	£81.29	5th
Per Visit	£4.79	£4.23	5th
Per Book Loan	£7.04	£5.07	5th

Excludes HMP Stoke Heath Prison 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Wem Catchment Area

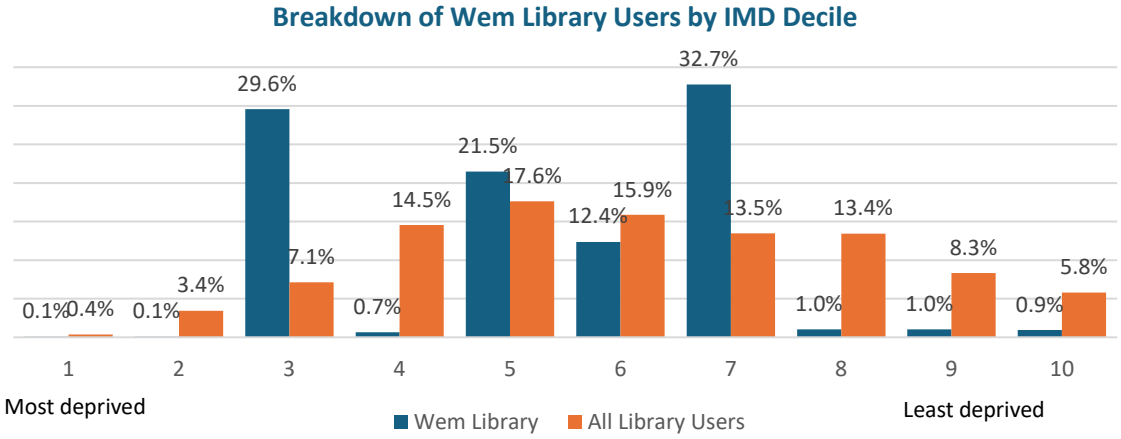
Population

- The Wem library catchment is the seventh largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a total population of 11,954 (11,573 Shropshire residents).
- The age breakdown of the population is broadly similar to the Shropshire breakdown.
- There are 5,117 households in the catchment, with 119 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.31 which is slightly larger than the Shropshire average of 2.27.



Wem catchment population includes non-Shropshire residents

Deprivation



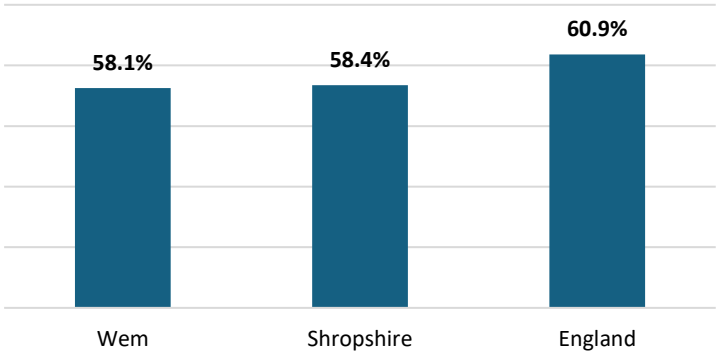
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Wem library is in the third decile according to the IMD 2025 which means the library is one of 10 in Shropshire in the 30% most deprived areas nationally.
- The adjacent chart shows that a low proportion of Wem library users are drawn from the 20% least deprived areas of the country (1.9% compared with 14.1% of all Shropshire library users).
- A low proportion of users also live within the most deprived 30% of areas in the country.

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Wem library catchment is slightly lower than the Shropshire average at 58.1% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- This is also lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Wem library catchment area is the eighth highest in Shropshire.

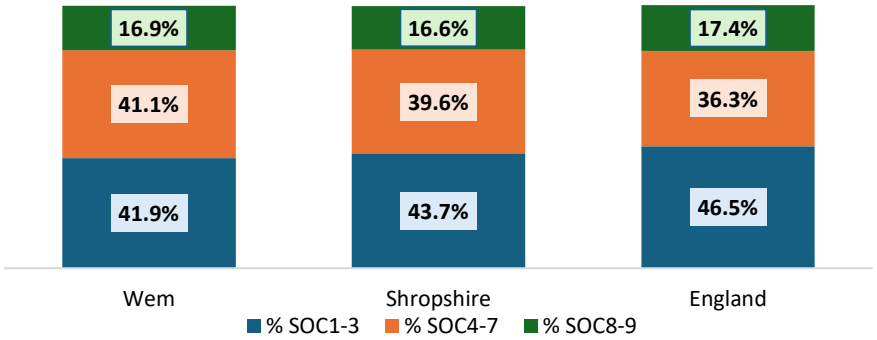
Wem: Economic Activity Rate



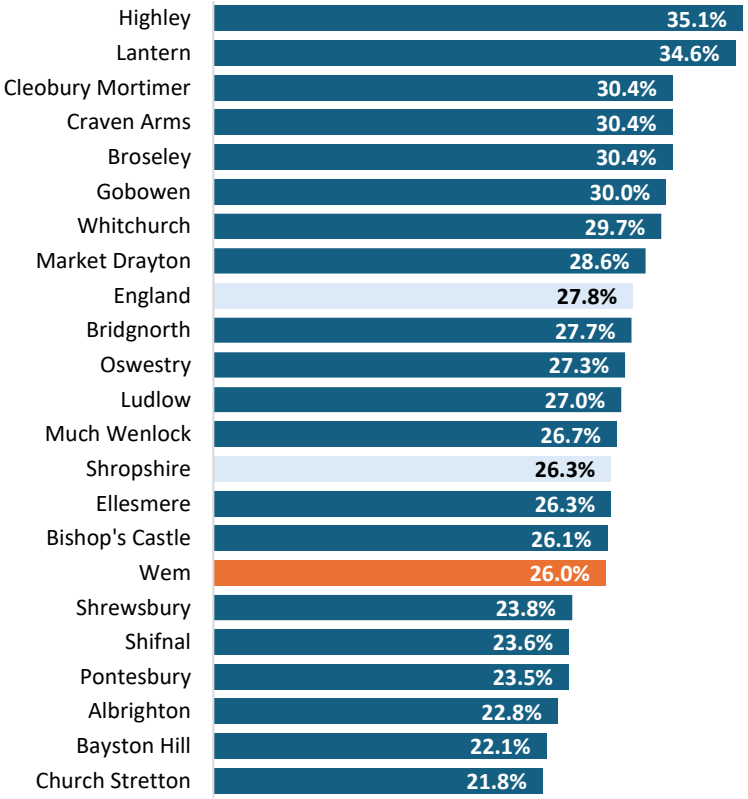
Employment

- 5,660 people in the Wem catchment were in employment in 2021, which equates with 56.0% of the 16+ population.
- A slightly lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 41.9%. The proportion employed in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations) is comparable with the Shropshire average, while slightly more are employed in SOC4-7 (skilled trades and services) occupations.

Wem: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

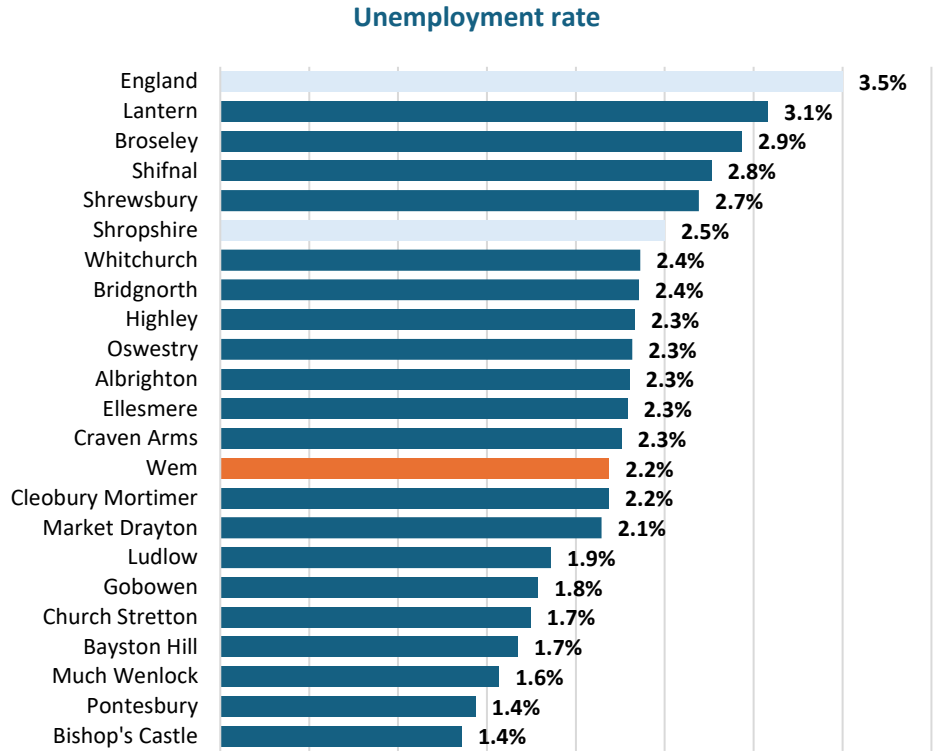


Qualifications

- The proportion of the Wem population with no or low qualifications is comparable with the Shropshire average at 26.0% of the 16+ population. This is lower than the national average.

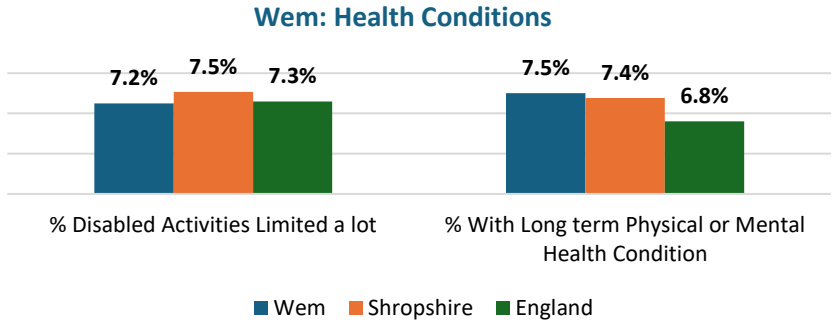
Unemployment

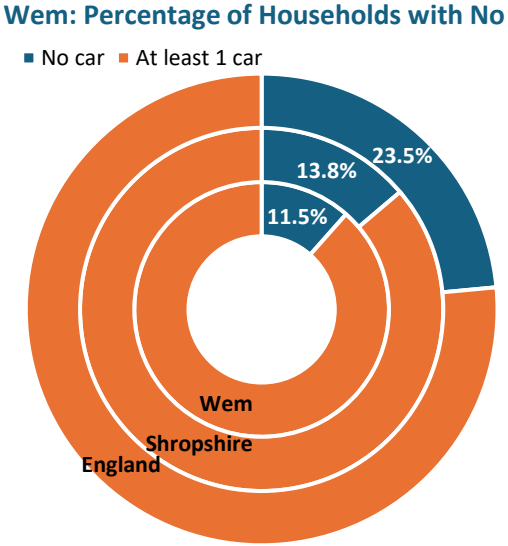
- 221 people living in the Wem catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.2% which is around average amongst Shropshire catchments.
- It compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- Catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include The Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



Health Conditions

- 7.2% of residents in the Wem library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar compared with Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%).
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.5% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This compares with 7.4% in Shropshire and 6.8% in England.





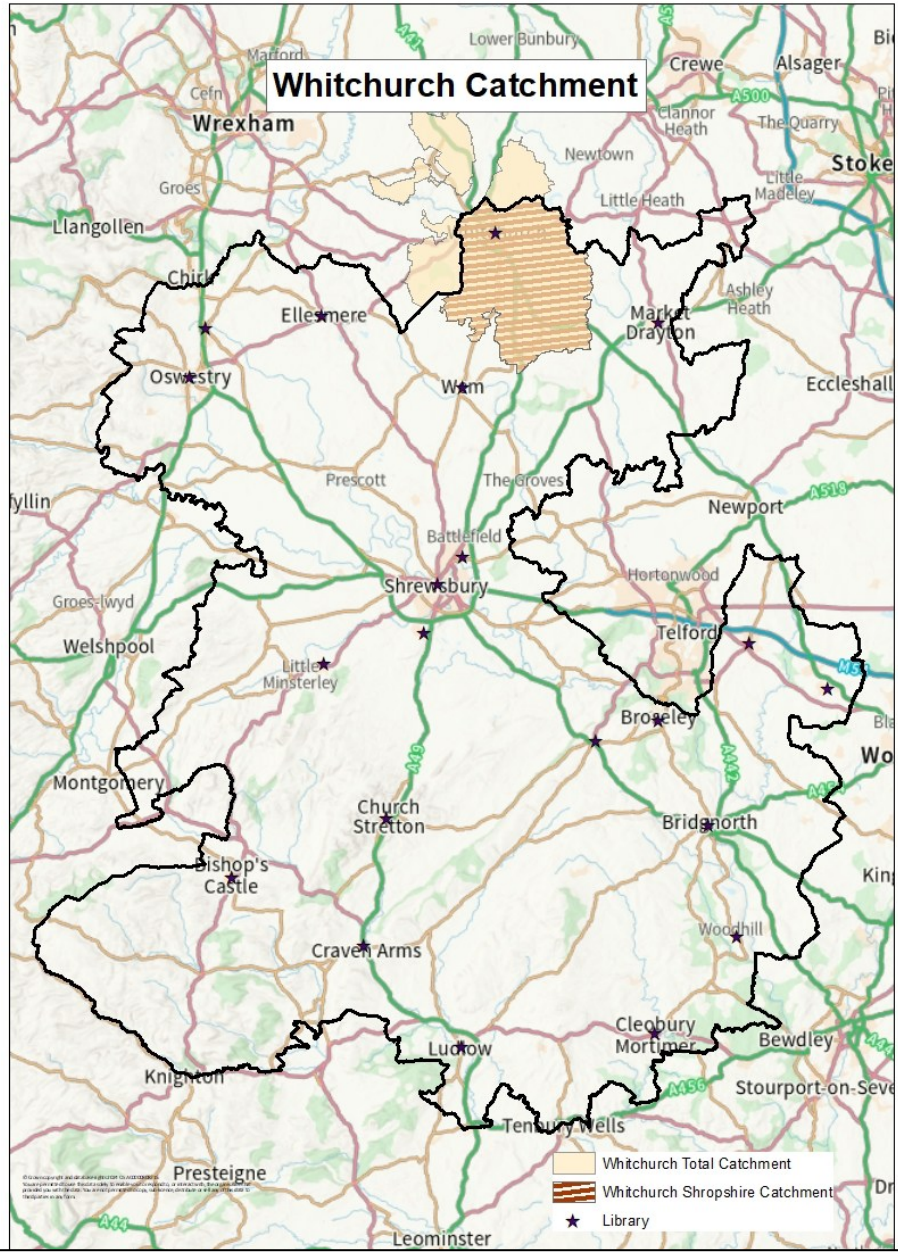
Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that access to services for those without a car can be very challenging.
- The proportion of households without access to a car in Wem catchment is even lower than the Shropshire average at 11.5%.

Whitchurch Library Profile

Background

- Whitchurch is in the north of Shropshire, close to the Cheshire border. It is the sixth largest town in the county.
- Until recently, the library has been located in the Civic Centre building in the town centre. However, the presence of RAAC throughout the building has forced its closure; the library is now being accommodated in St Mary's Arcade.
- The library catchment covers an area of approximately 11,892 hectares within Shropshire which is about 3.7% of the county's land mass. The catchment extends outside Shropshire, into Cheshire and also Wrexham, with 38% of the catchment outside Shropshire.
- The total population within the Whitchurch library catchment area is 20,209 comprising 8,560 households. 82.0% of the catchment population – 16,566 people - are Shropshire residents. In terms of the Shropshire population it serves, Whitchurch is the sixth largest catchment.



Opening Hours

The library is open 30.5 hours a week (as of March 2025) according to the following schedule:

	Opening Hours	Number of Hours
Monday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-17.00pm	6.5
Tuesday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-18.00pm	7.5
Wednesday	Closed	0
Thursday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-17.00pm	6.5
Friday	9.30am-12.30pm 13.30pm-17.00pm	6.5
Saturday	9.30am-13.00pm	3.5
Sunday	Closed	0

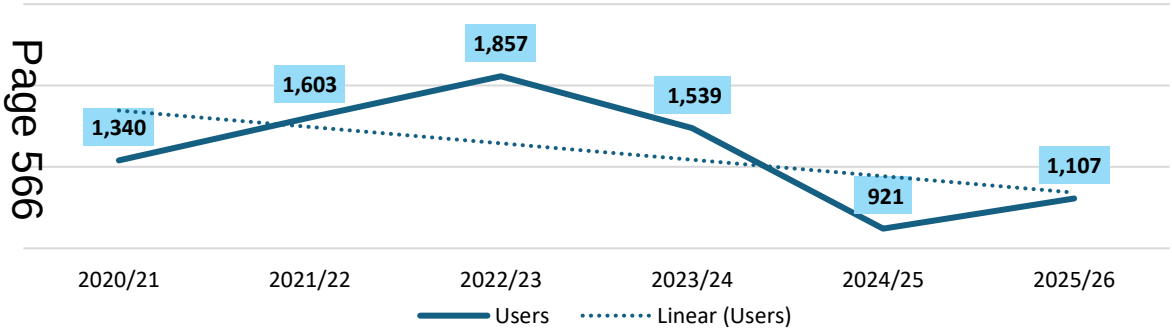
- The library employs 3.82 FTE persons and in 2025/26 benefited from four volunteers throughout the year, contributing 40 volunteer hours.

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023

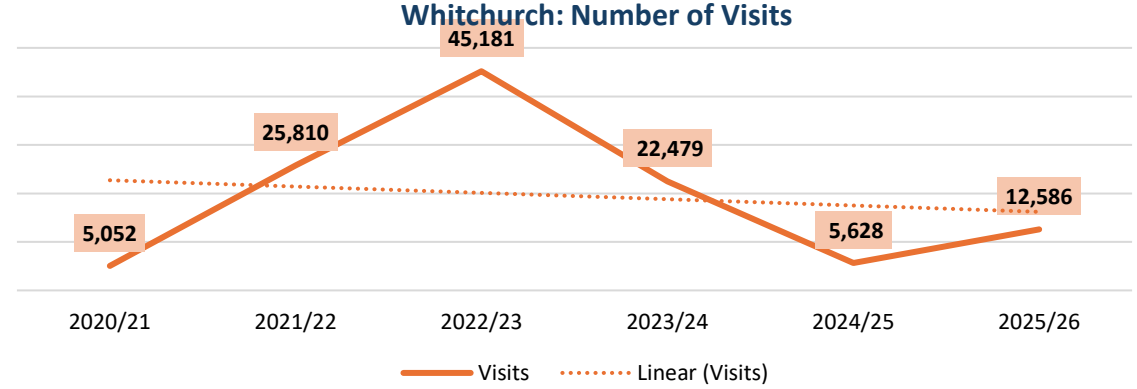
Library Users

- Whitchurch library had 1,107 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is the equivalent of 3.4% of all Shropshire library users (excluding mobile library users and Stoke Heath).
- 5.9% of the Whitchurch catchment population are active library users, which is much lower than the Shropshire average. It includes usage at all libraries, not just Whitchurch.
- Just over two-thirds of users are female (2023/24 financial year).
- The age breakdown of users (2025/26) is shown in the adjacent chart.
- Compared with the Shropshire profile of library users, there are slightly more children and young people but fewer users aged 65 and above.

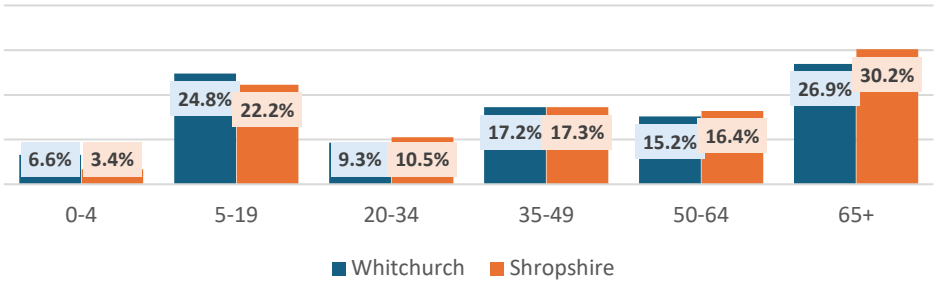
Whitchurch: Number of Active Users



Whitchurch: Number of Visits

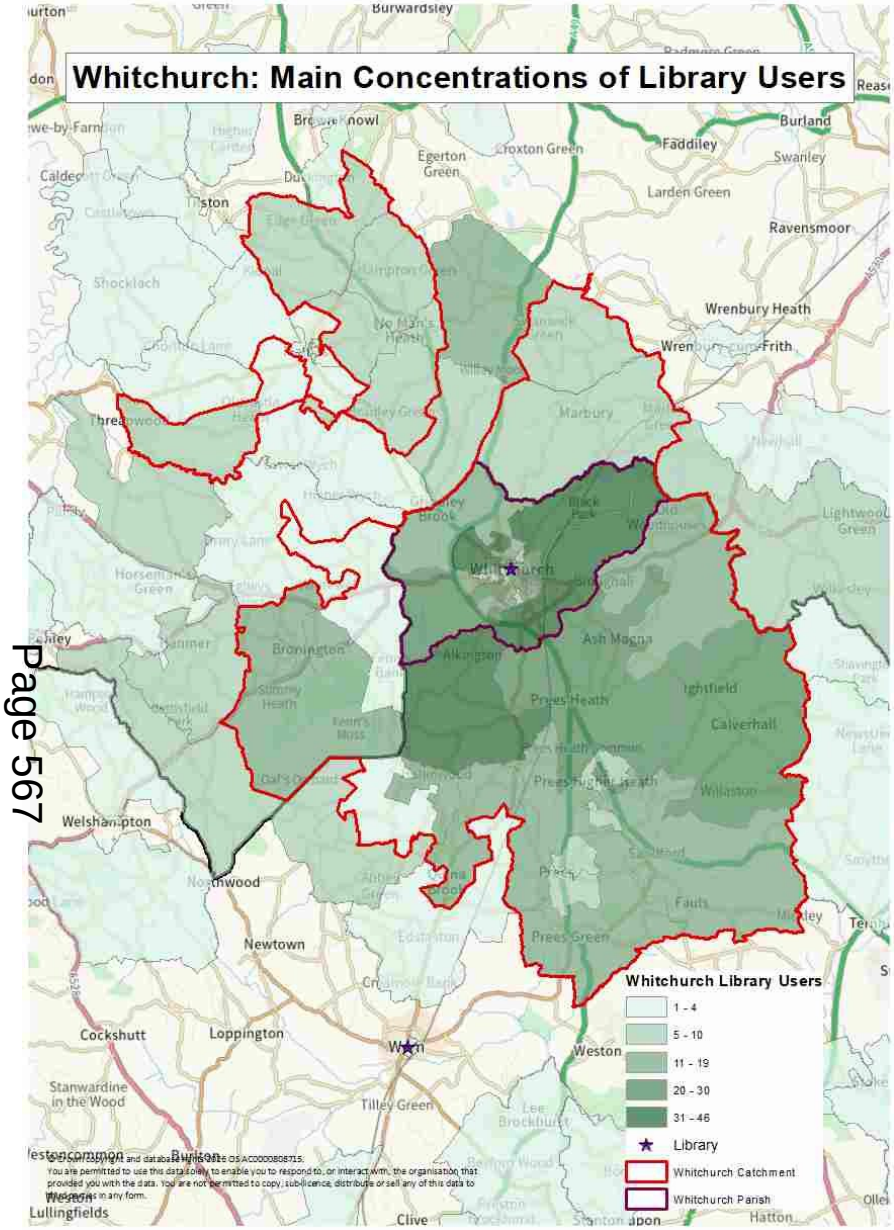


Breakdown of Whitchurch Library Users by Age



- As in all locations, the number of users fell significantly during the pandemic – subsequently, there has been considerable recovery although the library closure has clearly impacted on user numbers in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- The decrease in users between 2020/21 and 2025/26 is 233 users (-17.4%). This compares with an average increase in users of 57.7% across all 21 Shropshire libraries.
- The number of visits in 2025/26 stood at 12,586, which is the equivalent of about 11 visits on average per active user.
- Footfall plummeted in 2020/21 when libraries were mostly closed for business and the frequency with which users visit the library has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels (26 visits per user in 2019/20).
- Although the overall number of visits was more than twice as high in 2025/26 than in 2020/21. The number of visits has fallen from over 45,000 in 2022/23.
- 17,613 loans were made in 2024/25, which equates with 16 per active user and 1.4 per visit.
- The number of loans increased by 92% between 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- The number of requests received by the library rose by 16% in 2025/26 compared with 2024/25.

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023



Note: Map based on output areas. Includes only users with a complete and accurate home postcode.

Geographic Location of Library Users

- 83.6% of all Whitchurch library users live within the main catchment area.
- 54.7% live within the Whitchurch town council area.
- 5.9% of the population in the catchment area are Whitchurch active library users. The percentage of the population using the library according to each output area in the catchment ranges from less than 1% to 12.6%. Please note that this includes only library users with an accurate and complete postcode.
- Of the 16.4% of Whitchurch library users that do not live in the catchment, small numbers live in Wem, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Ellesmere and Shrewsbury catchments.
- People that live in the Whitchurch catchment but use a different library are most likely to use Market Drayton, Shrewsbury or Wem libraries.
- Over the six months to May 2026, 88.5% of all visits to libraries made by users registered with Whitchurch library were to Whitchurch, and these accounted for 85.9% of all issues.
- Other libraries visited by users registered to Whitchurch include Market Drayton, Wem, Oswestry, Ellesmere and Shrewsbury as well as the Owen mobile service.

Walk/Drive Times

- The following table shows the proportion of active Whitchurch library users that live within certain walk and drive times of the library. The areas that are accessible based on the drive times are shown on the following map.

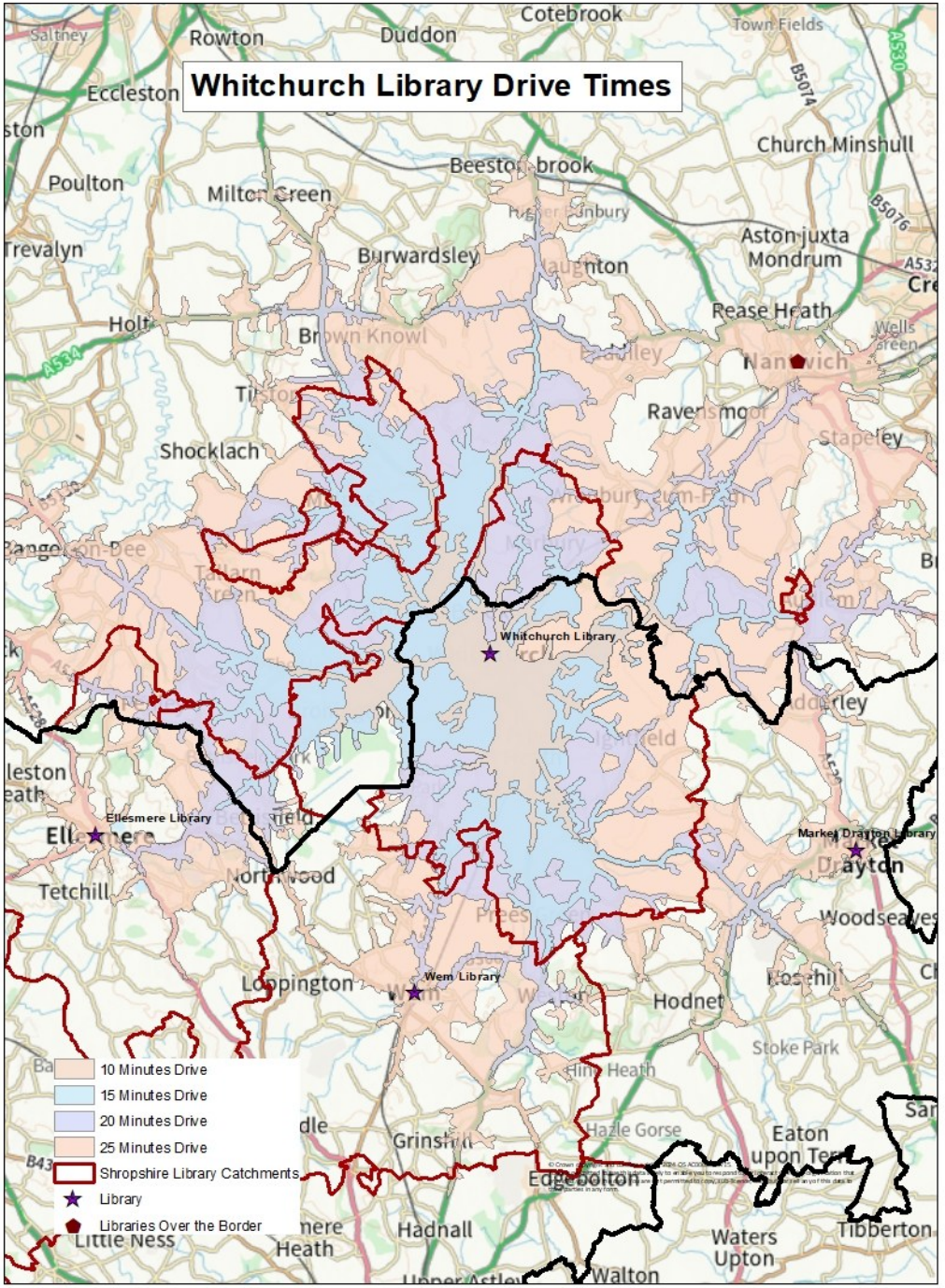
Walk/Drive Time	Proportion of Active Users
15 Minute Walk	40.2%
30 Minute Walk	54.7%
10 Minute Drive	68.4%
15 Minute Drive	82.8%
20 Minute Drive	90.7%
25 Minute Drive	94.3%

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023

Access

- Whitchurch is in north Shropshire with strong road links via the A41 and A49 and it is also on the rail network on the Manchester to Shrewsbury line.
- The closest library is Wem, which is located 9 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 18 minutes.
- Wem can also be accessed by train, with a journey time of approximately 12 minutes.
- Other libraries within a 25-minute drive include Ellesmere and Nantwich, which is in Cheshire.

ALL DATA IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF WHITCHURCH LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER 2023



Costs

- Whitchurch is the sixth most expensive library in Shropshire to operate (for Shropshire Council) but is the least expensive of the main six libraries.
- Annual running costs are £177,810 (2025/26).
- Whitchurch library is the most expensive Shropshire library per active user and per visit and ranks second per book loan. These figures have been impacted by the library's enforced relocation.

	Cost	Average	Rank
Per Hour Open	£112.11	£78.80	6th
Per Active User	£160.62	£81.29	1st
Per Visit	£14.13	£4.23	1st
Per Book Loan	£10.10	£5.07	2nd

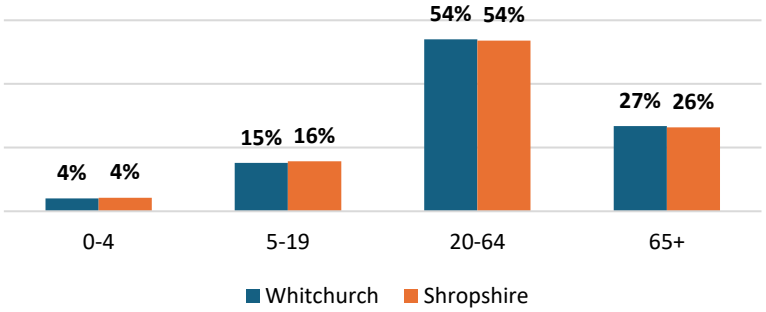
Excludes HMP Stoke Heath 1= most expensive

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Whitchurch Catchment Area

Population

- Whitchurch library catchment is the sixth largest in terms of Shropshire population size, accommodating a Shropshire population of 16,556 and a total population of 20,209.
- The age breakdown of the population is comparable with the overall Shropshire population, albeit with slightly more aged 65+.
- There are 8,560 households in the catchment, with 188 people living in a communal establishment. The average household size is 2.28 which is similar to the Shropshire average of 2.27.

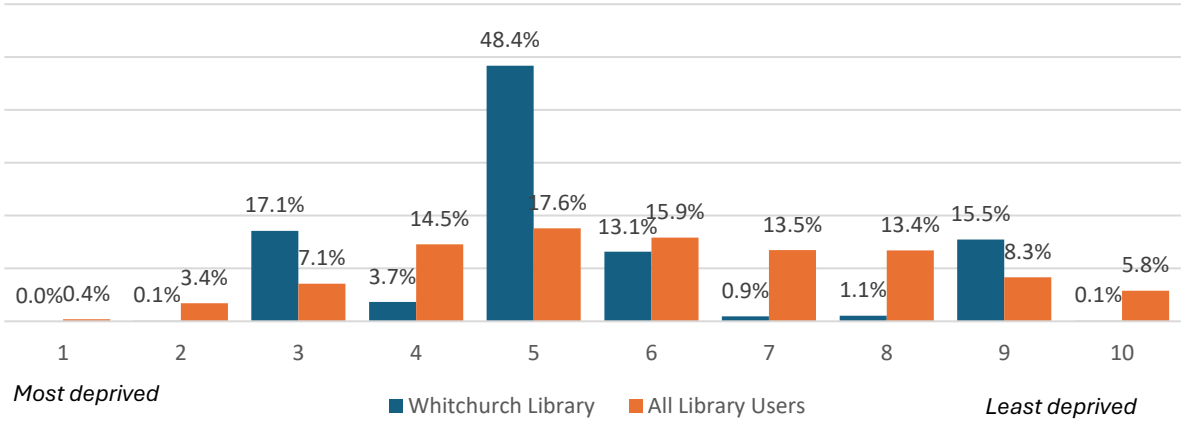
Age Breakdown of Whitchurch Catchment



Whitchurch catchment includes non-Shropshire population

Deprivation

Breakdown of Whitchurch Library Users by IMD Decile



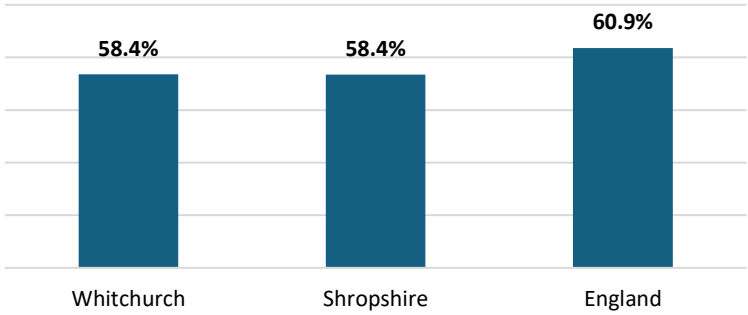
Note: Only includes library users who are resident in Shropshire

- Whitchurch library is in decile three according to the 2025 IMD, which means that it is one of 10 libraries located within the 30% most deprived areas of the country.
- 17.1% of users are drawn from the most deprived 30% of England, while 16.7% are from the least deprived 30%. The highest proportion of users are from decile five (48.4%).

Economic Activity

- The level of economic activity amongst the 16+ population in the Whitchurch library catchment is identical to the Shropshire average at 58.4% at the time of the 2021 Census.
- It is marginally lower than the England rate of 60.9%. Shropshire's older demographic means that more people are retired, and fewer people participate in the labour market.
- The economic activity rate in the Whitchurch library catchment area is the sixth highest in Shropshire after Shifnal, the Lantern, Albrighton, Shrewsbury and Oswestry.

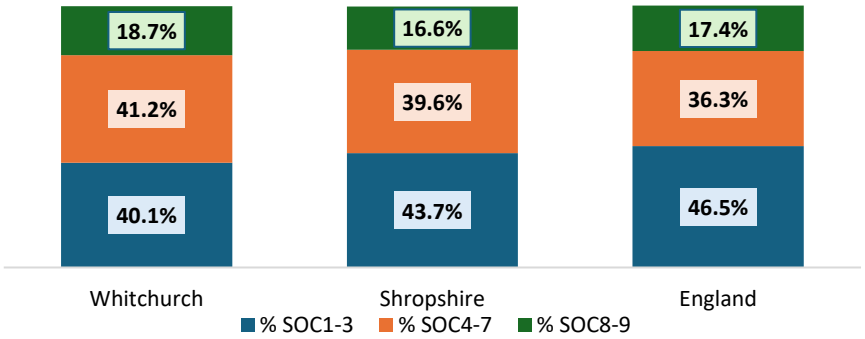
Whitchurch: Economic Activity Rate



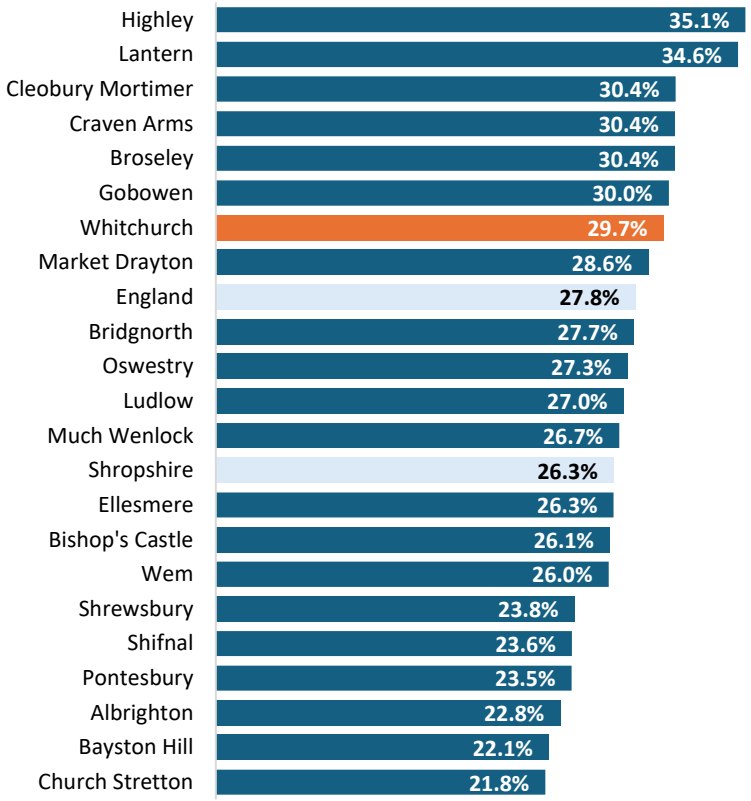
Employment

- 9,346 people in Whitchurch were in employment in 2021, which equates with 56.2% of the 16+ population.
- A lower proportion of people are employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (SOC 1-3) compared with Shropshire, at 40.1%. More are employed in SOC4-7 occupations (skilled trades and services) and in SOC 8-9 occupations (process and plant operatives and elementary occupations).

Whitchurch: Occupation Types



% of Population with No or Low Qualifications

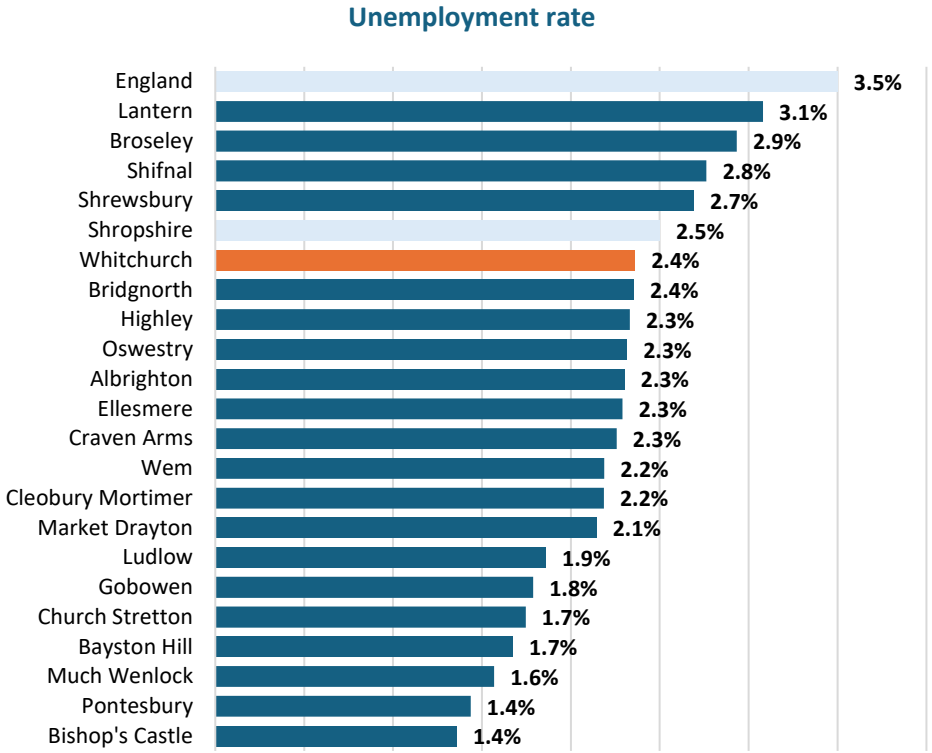


Qualifications

- A higher proportion of the Whitchurch population have no or low qualifications compared to the England average at 29.7%. This is also higher than the Shropshire average (26.3%).

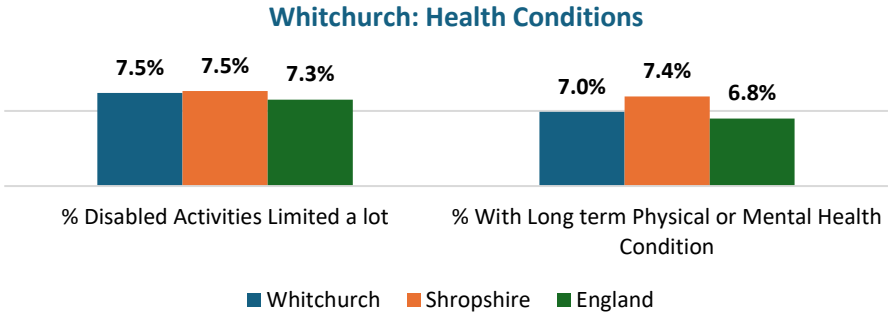
Unemployment

- 393 people living in the Whitchurch catchment were unemployed in March 2021 at the time of the last Census. This is the equivalent of an unemployment rate of 2.4%.
- This compares with a rate of 2.5% for Shropshire and 3.5% for England.
- The catchments with the highest levels of unemployment include the Lantern, Broseley, Shifnal and Shrewsbury.
- All catchments in Shropshire have lower unemployment than the national average.



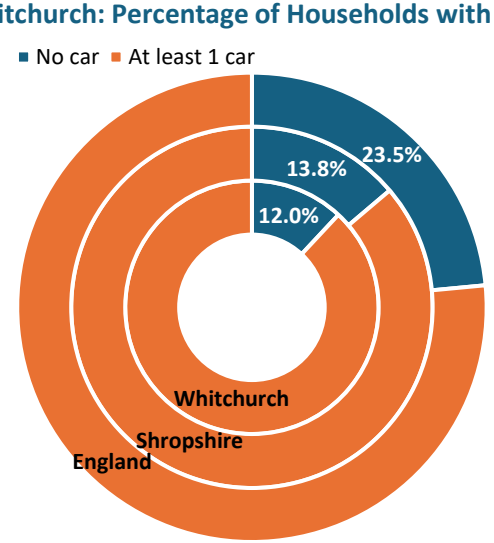
Health Conditions

- 7.5% of residents in the Whitchurch library catchment area are registered as disabled and state that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. This proportion is similar to the Shropshire (7.5%) and England (7.3%) averages.
- Although not registered as disabled, 7.0% of the population say that they have a long term physical or mental health condition. This proportion is slightly lower than Shropshire average (7.4%) and slightly higher than in England (6.8%).



Car Ownership

- Car ownership across Shropshire is high, with only 13.8% of households not having access to a car or van. This compares with 23.5% in England. The rural profile of Shropshire means that for many, access to services without use of a car is extremely challenging.
- The proportion of Whitchurch households that do not have access to a car or van is lower than the Shropshire average at 12.0%.



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Appendix B

The proposals to reduce the opening hours of the 6 principal market town libraries would lead to a reduction in service throughout the week. Below are examples of what a 30 hour a week opening could look like, the aim is to provide consistency whilst responding to the specific needs and circumstances of each community.

Two examples are given for each library each retaining a choice of opening times for customers across the week, late opening and on Saturdays.

These will be tested through the consultation with impacts and alternatives considered ahead of any decision being recommended to Cabinet.

Shrewsbury Library

Shrewsbury Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Current opening times	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 19:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 16:00	46hrs
Option 1 Proposed opening hours	Closed	9:30 - 19:00	Closed	9:30 -17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 15:00	30hrs
Option 2 Proposed opening hours	Closed	10:00 - 19:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:30	10:00 - 13:30	30hrs

Oswestry Library

Oswestry Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Current opening times	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -18:00	9:30 -17:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 16:00	45
Option 1 Proposed opening hours	Closed	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -18:00	Closed	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 16:00	30hrs
Option 2 Proposed opening hours	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 18:00	Closed	10:00 - 14:30	10:00 - 13:30	30hrs

Ludlow Library

Ludlow Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Current opening times	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -17:00	Closed	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	34.5hrs
Option 1 Proposed opening hours	9:30 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	Closed	9:30 - 13:30	10:00 - 13:30	30hrs
Option 2 Proposed opening hours	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -17:00	Closed	9:30 - 12:00	9:30 - 13:00	30hrs

Market Drayton Library

Market Drayton Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Current opening times	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -17:00	Closed	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	34.5hrs
Option 1 Proposed opening hours	9:30 - 18:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	Closed	9:30 - 13:30	10:00 - 13:30	30hrs
Option 2 Proposed opening hours	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 -17:00	Closed	9:30 - 12:00	9:30 - 13:00	30hrs

Bridgnorth Library

Bridgnorth Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Current opening times	9:30 - 18:00	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	Closed	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 – 15:00	36.5hrs
Option 1 Proposed opening hours	Closed	9:00 - 18:00	9:00 - 17:00	Closed	9:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 15:00	30hrs
Option 2 Proposed opening hours	9:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 18:00	Closed	10:00 - 13:30	10:00 - 13:30	30hrs

Whitchurch Library

Whitchurch Library	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Current opening times	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 18:00	Closed	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	30.5hrs
Option 1 Proposed opening hours	9:30 – 12:30 13:30 – 17:00	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 18:00	Closed	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 17:00	10:00 - 12:30 13:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 13:00	30hrs
Option 2 Proposed opening hours	9:30 – 12:30 13:30 – 17:00	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 18:00	Closed	9:30 - 12:30 13:30 - 17:00	9:30:00 -12:30 13:30 - 17:00	9:30 - 12:30	30hrs

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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
Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries - Consultation

Name of the officer carrying out the screening
Pete Banford

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

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 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
Through a proposed comprehensive public consultation, the council is exploring potential options regarding significant service changes to its Library Service. The proposals in the consultation focus on how residents access the library service whilst maximising efficiency. Ahead of the consultation, the purpose of this initial ESHIA is to identify and record possible equality impacts of the proposals (noted as positive, neutral or negative impacts in line with appropriate guidance). The assessment is applied in regard to people with protected characteristics across the nine groupings as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This initial assessment will be used as a basis for updating the ESHIA throughout the consultation process in line with the consultation feedback received. This assessment relates to proposals to consult on proposed service changes. At this stage they should be viewed as proposals; no final decisions have been made. Ahead of the consultation, the overall likely anticipated impact of the proposals is that these will be low negative across the whole community, with potential for

medium negative impacts for some individuals. This may also include some negative impacts specifically focusing on the nine Protected Characteristic groupings defined in the Equality Act 2010 and intersectionality across these groupings e.g. Age and Disability.

At this stage ahead of approval to commence consultation, there is also potential for negative impact for the additional groupings of people that we think about in Shropshire, of Social Inclusion, Carers, and Young People Leaving Care. The Council also considers those in the grouping of veterans and serving members of the armed force and their families, in a separate grouping, in order to visibly demonstrate that 'due regard' is being given to people in this grouping, as per the requirements of the Armed Forces Act 2021.

Our additional categories help us to seek to ensure that we consider the needs of the following: rural households; households on low incomes; households in fuel poverty; and those we may consider to be vulnerable. This includes refugee families, people living in fuel poverty, people fleeing domestic violence, and those who are rough sleepers or at risk of homelessness for what may be a variety of circumstances.

The consultation, if approved, will seek to test out the extent of impact to individuals and communities, including people with protected characteristics and other vulnerabilities. Targeted engagement methods will be used throughout the consultation process to ensure broad reach across our communities, with monitoring ongoing to both update the ESHIA and to ensure as broad a reach as possible of people responding to the consultation.

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

The overall outcome of the proposed changes as set out in the proposals presented for public consultation regarding health and wellbeing are projected to be low negative for the whole community with potential for medium negative impacts for some individuals and protected characteristics groupings.

Library services support strong connected communities by providing safe spaces where individuals and groups can come together, reducing social isolation and loneliness in our communities. Libraries provide services and events that help address health needs (e.g. some libraries offer audiology appointments), support reducing health inequalities for individuals, families and groups across all ages (through for example provision of community and family hubs at some libraries). As trusted, safe and welcoming community spaces, libraries offer opportunities for social contact and routes for other services to reach communities. Library staff are also viewed as trusted officers who communities will turn to when they need help and support with specific issues.

Shropshire Council also operates additional services through our libraries. This includes, in some libraires, our Shropshire Local Offer, where residents can receive help and guidance to access services closer to home. Community and Family Hubs also operate from some library buildings. This may include providing

residents with access to a broader range of council provision such as Early Help sessions from children's services, partner agency support from such as Health Visitors etc. A range of community events are also offered which also supports communities to come together providing safe spaces to connect and reduce social isolation.

The Council recognises that proposed closures of two libraries in areas that are more deprived within Shropshire may particularly impact on individuals who have more vulnerabilities than others. This may include children and young people. We also recognise that a proposal to close the mobile libraries may also impact particularly on individuals who may find it harder to access static libraries than others. We will seek to test out the impacts further during the consultation process if approved, and to consider further possible mitigations to support people most impacted. This could include for example expanding the Home Library service offer and working with Community transport schemes such as Dial a Ride, amongst others. Possible expansions of digital provision such a E-Library books may expand access for others.

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

Any proposed changes to Shropshire Councils Library service must be subject to a full public consultation process with as wide an audience as possible, including library users (all ages to include children and young people), staff, local community groups, town and parish councils, and other stakeholders. In addition, the Council will make efforts to engage as fully as possible with those people who do not currently use the library service.

The Consultation will be widely publicised, with targeted activities to reach people with protected characteristics, or social inclusion groups, and targeted activities for people who may be impacted by certain proposals (e.g. public meetings for libraries with proposals to close). During the 12-week consultation period the number and, where possible, demographic breakdown of returns will be monitored to ensure coverage and promotion is being effective. Children and young people will be particularly encouraged and supported to participate in the consultation.

Where it is noted through the consultation that feedback is not received from particular groupings, the Council will strengthen endeavors to seek to engage.

The Council will use information provided during the consultation to add to the evidence base and its ESHIA assessment to determine the impact levels of the proposals. The ESHIA will be updated through the consultation process and after the Consultation has concluded.

Shropshire Council has a legal duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all those who "live, work or study and want to access the service" in the Shropshire Council area. (Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964). The proposed service changes, as a result of public consultation, must consider and show how the statutory duty and the local need is being met. A comprehensive Needs Assessment has been updated annually (the Most recent

update being October 2026). The Needs Assessment provides a detailed breakdown of the library service, user demographics, accessibility and annual user statistics. The proposed service changes have been derived through the Council's statutory duties, the Needs Assessment and taking consideration of the Council's financial position.

Associated ESHIAs

Following the period of consultation, a full assessment and analysis will be made of the consultation feedback and recommendations will be presented to cabinet for determination in an additional report. At this point a second follow up Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment will be completed in order to record and account in detail the assessment of feedback from people across groupings and from stakeholders.

The ESHIA for the Council's Corporate Plan is also pertinent in this regard.

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

Climate change

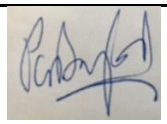
Ahead of the consultation, there is anticipated a potential low negative impact with regards to climate change, in regard to the proposals as currently presented. If there is a closure to the mobile library offer a significant number of service road miles will not be made resulting in a decrease in vehicle emissions. However, this potential positive impact is likely to be reduced to low negative due to potential additional customer car mileage as an alternative method of accessing the library service, or through expansion of the use of volunteers to deliver a Home Library Service offer.

Economic and societal/wider community

Ahead of the consultation, there is an anticipated low negative impact across the whole community in regard to the proposals as currently presented. This is due to the potential for reduced access to community libraries. In specific areas a broader impact on specific communities where libraries are proposed for closure may occu and the consultation will seek responses from a broad range of stakeholders to determine possible impacts – this could include, for example, any local businesses surrounding a library that is proposed for closure or reduced opening hours which may be impacted by reduced footfall in the locality.

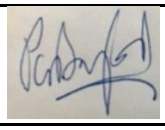
The Service will listen directly to residents and work in partnership with schools, healthcare providers, businesses, cultural groups, town and parish councils, voluntary and community sector, and other council teams.

Scrutiny at Stage One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer for the proposed service change **Rawden Parslow**		19/10/2026
Officer carrying out the screening **Mr Pete Banford**		
*External support** **Mrs Lois Dale** *Senior Insights and Research EDI Specialist* **Mr Phillip Northfield** *Integration & Inequalities Officer – Public Health*	 	 15/10/2026 26/10/2026

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 Rawden Parslow**		12/10/2026
Service manager's name **Mr Pete Banford**		12/10/2026

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

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
The recommended proposals for consultation seeks to strike a balance in meeting local need, preserving the value that Shropshire Council's library service holds within communities alongside legal requirements, whilst ensuring that the Council operates an efficient library service that can adopt to changing need.

The proposal is for a public consultation that considers:

1. Reduction to opening hours of 6 principal libraries to 30 hours per week (Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch, Ludlow, Bridgnorth).
2. Closure of the library at the Lantern – other services and activities that take place at the Lantern will not be impacted.
3. Closure of Gobowen library
4. Closure of the mobile library service.

Following the period of consultation, an assessment will be made of the consultation fundings, and recommendations will be presented to cabinet for determination with an updated ESHIA undertaken and presented alongside.

The proposed consultation options presented below have considered all aspects of library provision – principal libraries, rural branches, mobile provision and the core library offer, within the context of the Statutory duty.

Proposed service changes for public consultation

1. Reduction to opening hours of 6 principal libraries to 30 hours per week.
2. Closure of the library at the Lantern - this will not impact on the rest of the activities and services at the building.
3. Closure of Gobowen Library
4. Closure of the mobile library service.

Reducing the opening hours at the principal libraries seeks to ensure a balance between delivery of the principal libraries with also ensuring good access to community branches across the whole of Shropshire.

Should the consultation lead to the closure of the mobile library service, mitigations through community transport bodies to support residents to attend a static library, and/or through enhancing the Home Library Service book delivery will be considered and, where possible, implemented. Potential enhancement of the digital offer will extend access to on-line services.

Maintaining a strong static library offer across the County would also enable the service to work with local partners to maximise the use of these assets by communities. This could be for library delivery, other public service delivery (e.g. community and family hubs), and hire of the asset as a general community resource.

A strong static library offer also offers some mitigation for the poor public transport infrastructure, and the resulting times to travel to libraries and the need to ensure good levels of access for Shropshire's communities.

Shropshire Council's Static library buildings have and continue to evolve into vital community hubs that deliver public services far beyond book lending. The mobile service in comparison is more limited in what it can offer. The biggest increase in library usage has been associated with events, activities and multi-agency / service access. Event attendance at static libraries has risen a great deal since

2021/22 showing a significant upward trend from 17,149 to 82,257 in 2025/26, a rise of (379%). Community and Family Hubs have been established in some libraries which will have influenced this trend. Closure of the Lantern Library will potentially provide additional capacity for other services to be provided at this location, such as Community and Family Hub activity.

The Lantern library is located in northeast Shrewsbury, within a community building that features bookable rooms, a cafe, and on-site parking. Serving a small catchment area of 143 hectares, it falls completely under the broader catchment of Shrewsbury's main library. For those travelling between the two sites, the main Shrewsbury library is just 2.1 miles away, equating to an eight-minute drive or a 20-to-25-minute bus ride. Other nearby branches within a 25-minute drive include Pontesbury, Bayston Hill, Much Wenlock, and Wem. Shrewsbury is the only town to have two libraries.

During the 2025/26 financial year, the Lantern library recorded 801 active users, representing 2.4% of all library users in Shropshire (excluding mobile services and Stoke Heath). Many residents within the Lantern's catchment area choose to utilise alternative facilities instead; specifically, almost a third of the active library users living in the Lantern's catchment prefer to use the main Shrewsbury library.

Gobowen is a small town in the north-west of Shropshire, close to the Wrexham border, just north of Oswestry, the library is located in the centre of Gobowen.61.3% of all Gobowen library users live within the main catchment area. This proportion is amongst the lowest in Shropshire. 70.3% live within Selattyn and Gobowen Parish, which covers a much larger geographic area than the library catchment. 10.4% of the population in the catchment area are Gobowen active library users. Of the 38.7% of Gobowen library users that do not live in the catchment, the majority live in the Oswestry catchment. People that live in the Gobowen catchment but use a different Shropshire library are most likely to use Oswestry library- almost as many users in the Gobowen catchment use Oswestry library as they do Gobowen. Oswestry Library also facilitates a free-to-use public phone for contacting Shropshire Local for advice and support.

The closest library to Gobowen is Oswestry, which is located 3 miles away. According to the AA route planner, drive time between the two libraries is 8 minutes. It can also be reached via a frequent bus service between Gobowen and Oswestry which takes about 20 minutes. Although Gobowen is on the rail network, Oswestry is not.

The mobile library service is impacted and limited by drive times, vehicle maintenance and high fuel costs. Older vans break down frequently, and expensive replacement vehicle costs, annual maintenance, fuel, staffing, adverse weather and repair costs can negatively impact on the continuity of service for local communities, these impacts do not affect static libraries. However, we recognise that for the smaller proportion of library users this service is an important offer for them.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Shropshire Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' who live, work or study in the area. Therefore, the intended audience is all those who live in, work in or study in Shropshire, across all ages, including children and young people. We will also make every effort to engage those who do not currently use the library service.

The consultation will also seek to engage with local stakeholders, specifically Town and Parish Councils, Community & Voluntary Sector organisation, Friends of Libraries Groups, and community transport and local transport groups, amongst others.

There will be additional interest in the public consultation and the outcomes at local, regional, national and central government level.

There will also be interest from other local authorities, and library, information and cultural institutions, particularly the Arts Council, Libraries Connected, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport as part of the Libraries Taskforce and the Local Government Association (LGA).

The library service is accessible to all; therefore, the proposed public consultation has implications for all Shropshire Electoral Divisions and all Elected Members.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

When considering the proposed service changes for the public consultation a comprehensive Needs Assessment has been created. This screening process serves as the legal and operational foundation to ensure Shropshire council meets its statutory duty under the Public Libraries and museums Act 1964.

The critical bodies of data and evidence screened within the library Needs Assessment includes the following datasets and methodology streams:

Community & Socio-Economic Demographics

- **Population Profiles:** Census data, population density, rurality indices, and growth projections within specific catchment areas.
- **Deprivation & Socio-economic Mapping:** Indices of Multiple Deprivation data to evaluate literacy, education levels, employment landscapes, and digital exclusion risks.
- **Health and Wellbeing Indicators:** Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) provided by local health boards to identify how Shropshire libraries intersect with public health and community support objectives.

Internal Library Performance Metrics

Data extracted directly from the Shropshire council's Library Management Systems highlights how physical spaces are being used.

- **Usage Footprints:** Gate counts, visitor numbers, and transaction trends across distinct service segments.
- **Resource Demand:** Physical book loans versus digital/e-book issues.
- **Digital Infrastructure Capacity:** Public Wi-Fi access frequency, computer session lengths, and digital workstation utilization.
- **Event and Hub Participation:** Attendance rates for local community events, children's groups, or targeted adult education classes

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change
Any proposed changes to Shropshire Councils Library service must be subject to a full public consultation process with as wide an audience as possible, including library users, staff, and local community groups, across all ages, including children and young people. In addition, evidence must be provided to show that the Council has made every effort to engage those who do not currently use the library service. The consultation period will be for a minimum of 12 weeks. The Public Consultation will use a range of engagement / feedback methods, including printed and online surveys, focus groups, key stakeholder meetings and public meetings. The consultation will be clear about how feedback will be used and when decisions will be made. Targeted engagement will take place with children and young people, and those individuals and groupings who may be more impacted by certain proposals. The consultation will be primarily digital based with access to hard copies on request at all Libraries. Public meetings will be held during the consultation period at The Lantern and the principal libraries. Leaflets and posters will be available on mobile libraries during the consultation period. The literature will provide contact details for those individuals who want to discuss the proposals as set out in the consultation.

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	**High negative impact**	**High positive impact**	**Medium positive or**	**Low positive, negative, or neutral impact**

groupings locally identified in Shropshire	*Stage Two ESHIA required*	*Stage One ESHIA required*	**negative impact** *Stage One ESHIA required*	**(please specify)** *Stage One ESHIA required*
<u>Age</u> (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)				Impact expected to be low negative for the whole community with potential for medium negative impacts for some individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
<u>Disability</u> (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)				Impact expected to be low negative for the whole community with potential for medium impacts for some individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce

				impact and will be assessed through consultation.
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral but will be assessed through consultation
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral but will be assessed through consultation
Pregnancy and Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be low negative due to reduced access in line with certain proposals. Parents and carers with young children may be impacted by specific proposals. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller)				Impact expected to be neutral but targeted engagement will take place through the consultation to assess.
Religion or Belief				Impact expected to be

(please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Veganism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				neutral but will be assessed through consultation.
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral but will be assessed through consultation.
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact expected to be neutral but will be assessed through consultation.
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)			.	Impact expected to be low negative overall with potential for medium negative impacts for some individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
Other: Carers (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities)				Impact expected to be low negative. Intended enhancement and mitigation

				actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
Other: Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families (as per Armed Forces Act 2023)				Impact expected to be neutral but will be assessed through the consultation.
Other: Young people leaving care				Impact expected to be neutral but will be assessed through the consultation

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 negative for the whole community, with potential for medium negative impacts for some individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals which will be tested through consultation.

				Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
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 negative for the whole community, with potential for medium negative impacts for some individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals which will be tested through consultation. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
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				Low negative for the whole community, with potential for medium negative impacts for some

development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation? .				individuals and groupings impacted by specific proposals which will be tested through consultation. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.
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?				Low negative for the whole community, with potential for some medium impacts which will be tested through consultation. Intended enhancement and mitigation actions will seek to reduce impact and will be assessed through consultation.

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	**Socio- Economically deprived** Shropshire as a County is ranked 154th most deprived authority in England out of 396 authorities. The Lantern library is located in northeast Shrewsbury. Serving a small catchment area of 143 hectares, it falls completely under the broader catchment of Shrewsbury's main library. The catchment area is home to 4,642 residents across 1,845 households, sitting within the second decile of the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This makes the Lantern library situated within one of the 20% most deprived areas in England, and for parts of the location at Harlescott situated within the 10% most deprived. Only 7.9% of the catchment's population are active library users, a figure that falls below the Shropshire average. The consultation will test out the impacts, proposed mitigations and alternative delivery suggestions to inform updates to this ESHIA through the consultation. A second ESHIA which will be produced for any service decisions recommended to Cabinet after the consultation has concluded. Gobowen Library had 262 active users in the 2025/26 financial year. This is equivalent to 0.8% of all library users. Compared with other library users, there are significantly more children and young people and fewer adults over the age of 35. Gobowen library is also within the 20% most deprived areas of England. The consultation will test out the impacts, proposed mitigations and alternative delivery suggestions to inform updates to this ESHIA through the consultation. A second ESHIA which will be produced for any service decisions recommended to Cabinet after the consultation has concluded. **Geographic Deprivation / Rurality**

	It is recognised that those individuals and groups living in rural areas may have hidden deprivation and inequalities. They may also find accessing services more difficult due to poorer public transport and longer driving times that those living in urban areas. The consultation will test out the impacts, proposed mitigations and alternative delivery suggestions to inform updates to this ESHIA through the consultation. A second ESHIA which will be produced for any service decisions recommended to Cabinet after the consultation has concluded. **Inclusion Health & Vulnerable Groups** It is recognised that specific proposals, such as the proposal to close the mobile library service may impact on individuals with health or mobility needs or other vulnerabilities. This could include for example older adults with mobility needs who currently rely on the mobile library offer to access provision. The consultation will test out the impacts, proposed mitigations and alternative delivery suggestions to inform updates to this ESHIA through the consultation. A second ESHIA which will be produced for any service decisions recommended to Cabinet after the consultation has concluded.
What mitigations/enhancements are already in place, or what mitigations/enhancements do you plan to include for the foreseeable consequences of these changes?	**The Library at the Lantern Consultation proposal** During the 2025/26 financial year, the Lantern library recorded 801 active users, representing 2.4% of all library users in Shropshire (excluding mobile services and Stoke Heath). Many residents within the Lantern's catchment area choose to utilize alternative facilities instead; specifically, almost a third of the active library users living in the Lantern's catchment prefer to use the main Shrewsbury library. For those travelling between the two sites, the main Shrewsbury library is just 2.1 miles away, equating to an eight-minute drive or a 20-to-25-minute bus ride. Other nearby branches within a 25-minute drive include Pontesbury, Bayston Hill, Much Wenlock, and Wem. The proximity of the main Shrewsbury Library is a potential mitigating factor, noting that Shrewsbury is the only market town with two libraries. Through the consultation we will also explore

	opportunities to offer a targeted outreach service to the Lantern as an additional mitigation. Further enhancement of the digital online offer may extend access for some. The Library service will continue to offer and support digital training skills at the static libraries. **Gobowen library consultation proposal** In the 2025/26 financial year, Gobowen Library served 262 active users (0.8% of Shropshire's total), representing 10.4% of its catchment population, which aligns with the county average. The library recorded 4,134 stable visits (averaging 16 per user) and 6,062 loans (averaging 23 per user), marking a 4% increase in loans from the previous year. While 61.3% of users live in the main catchment area and 70.3% reside within Selattyn and Gobowen Parish, the remaining 38.7% mostly live in the Oswestry catchment. Conversely, nearly as many local catchment residents choose to use Oswestry Library instead of Gobowen; located just 3 miles away, Oswestry is accessible from Gobowen via an 8-minute drive or a 20-minute frequent bus service, though unlike Gobowen, it lacks a rail link. The proximity of Oswestry is a potential mitigating factor and the consultation will test the views of the community to this and help us to understand the potential impacts. Further enhancement of the digital online offer may extend access for some. The Library service will continue to offer and support digital training skills at the static libraries. **Mobile Library Service** The Council recognises the seriousness of the proposal to close to the mobile library service, and the impact this could have on the current 1,100 users of this service. The consultation will explore potential mitigations. These will include discussions with the community transport providers to assess if they can support residents to attend a static library. The Council will also

	explore enhancing the Home Library Service that is currently a targeted offer in some libraries whereby volunteers deliver and collect books to peoples homes. Further enhancement of the digital online offer may extend access for some. The Library service will continue to offer and support digital training skills at the static libraries.

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

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Committee	Cabinet
Date and Time	18th November 2026 10.30 am Public

Asset Strategy & Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer Kassandra Polyzoides, Interim Service Director Place Shaping
Service Area:	Finance/Place Shaping
Report Author	Kassandra Polyzoides – Interim Service Director Place Shaping
Officer contact details	01743 254797 – kassandra.polyzoides@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All Divisions
Key Decision?	Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	8 October 2026
Report considered by	Cabinet – 18 November 2026

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report updates Cabinet on progress with the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme and the Council's asset disposal programme, including the current 2026/27 disposal pipeline, and seeks the delegations required to progress the next phase of the programme.

1.2. The Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme will establish the strategic framework for how the Council uses, invests in, manages and disposes of its land and buildings. The new five-year Asset Strategy will replace the Asset Management Strategy that ran to 2025. The programme will also assess and develop the Corporate Landlord model, under which the estate is managed as a single corporate portfolio aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan and operating

model. Development of the replacement Asset Strategy was originally scheduled for completion by 28 February 2025. It was subsequently deferred to 30 June 2026 to align with wider Council improvement work and the development of the new Corporate Plan, which was then targeted for completion by May 2026. The replacement Asset Strategy is now being progressed through the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme.

1.3. The first phase of the transformation programme has delivered: (i) an independent review of the Green and Amber disposals pipeline; (ii) an assessment of the governance, assurance and oversight arrangements supporting property and disposal decisions; (iii) a review of the methodologies used to assess deliverability, valuation, risk and forecast capital receipts; and (iv) further internal review and factual verification of the evidence supporting reported positions and key property and development decisions.

1.4. The programme responds at pace to the Best Value Notice issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 15 July 2026 and the findings on asset disposals in the External Assurance Review undertaken by CIPFA in May 2026. It forms one of the six programmes within the transformation, improvement and change portfolio submitted to MHCLG in September 2026. Cabinet is asked to note the progress made and current disposal pipeline, delegate delivery of the next phase within the approved £3 million programme allocation and agree that a further report be brought to Cabinet in Quarter 1 of 2027/28.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

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

2.2. Support the new governance arrangements in place since June 2026, set out in **Appendix A**, including the Asset Transactions Group, chaired by the Section 151 Officer, which oversees two workstreams:

(a) the Council's asset disposal programme;

(b) the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme.

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

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

2.5. Agree that provision of up to £3 million for the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan across 2026/27 and 2027/28, with the final profiling of expenditure between financial

years determined in accordance with programme requirements and the Council's financial planning arrangements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Background

The Council's financial position

3.1. On 11 February 2026 Cabinet approved the Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2030/31, which included £15 million within the draft budgets to finance the transformation and change programme, subject to a business case. Full Council approved the 2026/27 budget on 26 February 2026, including that provision and the use of £121 million of Exceptional Financial Support.

CIPFA's findings on the Council's assets

3.2. The Government made the Exceptional Financial Support conditional on an external assurance review. CIPFA carried out the review in May 2026 and it was published on 18 August 2026. On the Council's assets it found that:

(a) there was no clear strategy for a more ambitious programme of asset disposals;

(b) the values assumed for disposals had not been independently validated on a consistent basis;

(c) previous forecasts of capital receipts had not proved reliable;

(d) of £109.539 million in further potential capital receipts identified for future years, nearly all were rated red. The Council was therefore relying on receipts it could not evidence.

CIPFA's recommendations on assets

3.3. Of CIPFA's 22 recommendations, two are relevant to this programme:

- **Recommendation 12:** the Council should set a clear, short deadline for feasibility work on the future of Shirehall and sell the asset as soon as possible. Shirehall is the subject of a separate report to this meeting of Cabinet on 18 November 2026.
- **Recommendation 13:** the Council should identify the assets that can be sold, and develop a strategy for selling them that secures best value, by December 2026.

The Best Value Notice

3.4. On 15 July 2026, a month before CIPFA's review was published, the Government issued a Best Value Notice. It cites concerns about the Council's financial sustainability and about its leadership capacity, governance, scrutiny and culture. Two of its requirements bear on the Council's assets:

(a) to continue taking urgent steps to improve financial sustainability, including delivering CIPFA's recommendations; and

(b) to ensure governance and scrutiny enable decisions to be made at pace and performance to be accurately monitored.

The Council's response

3.5. Cabinet accepted CIPFA's findings on 9 September 2026, and Full Council supported the initial responses to CIPFA's recommendations on 24 September 2026. The Council's September 2026 response to MHCLG sets out a transformation, improvement and change portfolio of six programmes. The fourth is the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme, and the response committed the Council to reporting on it to Cabinet.

Funding for this programme

3.6. On 9 September 2026 Cabinet received the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring Report, which confirmed a base budget provision of up to £15 million to support service transformation, and that transformation funding is approved through the BTCP. A formal submission by the Interim Service Director – Place Shaping had been made on 7 September 2026, seeking £3 million from that provision for the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme. The BTCP approved the £3 million in the week beginning 21 September 2026.

3.7. Full Council approved the £15 million provision on 26 February 2026. Cabinet confirmed on 9 September 2026 that transformation funding is approved through the BTCP, and approval of the £3 million for this programme was granted in the week beginning 21 September 2026. The £3 million is therefore drawn from a provision Full Council approved and was allocated through the route Cabinet confirmed. Recommendations 2.1 and 2.4 ask Cabinet to note the approved funding. Recommendation 2.5 asks Cabinet to agree that provision of up to £3 million is reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan across 2026/27 and 2027/28. Recommendation 2.6 delegates authority to commission and incur expenditure required to deliver the initial phase within the approved funding envelope.

Requirements on the Council

3.8. CIPFA Recommendation 13 requires the Council to identify the assets it can dispose of and to develop a strategy securing best value on disposal by

December 2026. The Best Value Notice requires urgent steps to improve the Council's financial sustainability, and governance and scrutiny that enable decisions to be taken at pace and performance to be monitored accurately. Section 4 sets out the Council's response to Recommendation 13, which it meets ahead of that deadline; the five-year Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review that will build on it; and the next phase of the programme.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

The review and independent assurance

4.1. A draft brief for an externally supported Asset Review and development of a new Asset Management Strategy 2026–31 was presented to the Council's Leadership Board in February 2026. By March 2026, following further senior management review, it was identified that further work was required to assure the accuracy and completeness of the Council's estate information before the new Strategy could be developed. The scope of the work was also subsequently broadened to include a review of the Council's Corporate Landlord model, which had not been fully implemented corporately. This addition recognised the need to consider not only the future strategic direction of the estate, but also the governance, accountability and operating arrangements required to deliver it. An independent phase 1 review of the asset disposal pipeline, amber and green rag rated, with its findings informing the scope and priorities of the wider Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord work.

4.2. In March 2026, on the appointment of the Interim Service Director – Place Shaping, the Council began a review of the governance and assurance arrangements for its assets and the robustness of the asset disposal pipeline. The review was led by the Interim Service Director – Place Shaping with the Section 151 Officer, supported by the Property and Development senior leadership team and with direction from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leadership Board. It considered the governance and decision-making arrangements for disposals, the credibility of the disposal pipeline, factors delaying delivery, the timing and financial assumptions underpinning forecast receipts, and the foundations required for the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord work. The review identified that forecast capital receipts for 2026/27 materially exceeded the level of disposals realistically achievable and that governance, oversight and assurance needed to be strengthened so that:

(a) risks and blockages are actively captured, managed and resolved;

(b) decision-making is in line with delegated authority; and

(c) corporate oversight, sign-off and escalation sit in one place.

4.3. In April 2026 the review concluded that independent assurance of the disposal pipeline was required, so that the Section 151 Officer and Cabinet could be assured of the capital receipts the Council is relying on. The independent assurance was commissioned in May 2026 to test whether the capital receipts assumed in budget planning could be delivered within the forecast timescales, and to provide targeted actions to expedite the realisation of those receipts. Its findings were reported in early July 2026 to the Interim Service Director – Place Shaping, the Section 151 Officer, the Head of Property and Development and the Portfolio Holder for Finance. It found that:

(a) more than half of the assets rated Green, the highest level of confidence in delivery and value, could not be relied upon to deliver receipts within the period of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan;

(b) capital receipt forecasts were in places optimistic or unsupported by market evidence; and

(c) reporting relied on optimistic headline assumptions rather than on the assets genuinely capable of disposal in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

The Council's response to CIPFA Recommendation 13

4.4. The review's outcome in April 2026 identified a key gap in the Council's asset governance: the absence of a single point of corporate assurance and oversight led by a senior officer at Corporate Director level, with senior legal and finance representation. Decisions and oversight were historically split between the Disposals Board and the Property and Assets Board, without a single corporate assurance structure in place for key decisions, direction and oversight. Stronger corporate governance, oversight and assurance of the Council's asset decisions were therefore required. Both boards were stood down in June 2026 and replaced by the Asset Transactions Group, chaired by the Section 151 Officer, which oversees the Council's asset disposal programme and the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme. The Council acted on its own assessment of what was needed: the Group was in place a month before the Best Value Notice of 15 July 2026 and two months before CIPFA's review was published on 18 August 2026.

4.5. The independent assurance findings were presented to the Asset Transactions Group on 8 July 2026, within days of the assurance report submission, and the Council's response was reported to the Improvement Board in material dated 10 July 2026. The Group began reclassifying the pipeline following the July meeting, and a disposals tracker was implemented in July 2026 to record: lead officer responsibility, risks and mitigation measures, clarity on valuations and key decisions. Subsequent updates have strengthened change control and project management oversight, via the corporate PMO. The response to the independent assurance findings had four elements:

- **Reclassify:** move constrained assets out of the near-term receipts profile.
- **Prioritise:** concentrate resources on assets with the clearest route to disposal.
- **Accelerate:** expedite the deliverable assets by resolving the constraints identified against each asset and escalating those that cannot be resolved at officer level.
- **Track:** monitor and report progress via the disposal tracker as outlined above.

4.6. Reclassification did not remove those assets from the programme. The assets rated Amber remain in active management for disposal, and the assets rated Red will be reviewed through the commissions described in paragraph 4.16.

4.7. From September 2026 every disposal in the 2026/27 pipeline has been recorded on that tracker with a route, a target date and a named officer. The disposals rated Red – those not expected to be deliverable in the foreseeable future because of significant constraints, including cost and legal issues – will be reviewed through the commissions described in paragraph 4.16, with their classification planned for completion in Quarter 1 of 2027/28.

4.8. The Group will report monthly to Leadership Board on the disposal tracker and on the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review and disposal pipeline updates. It provides quarterly assurance to the Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Portfolio Holder for Finance is briefed weekly. Progress on the programme is reported to One Shropshire Board and the Improvement Board as per their forward plan.

4.9. Taken together, the arrangements set out in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.5 are the Council's response to CIPFA Recommendation 13. They deliver it in three ways:

(a) identifying the assets: the 2026/27 pipeline is recorded as set out in paragraph 4.7; further sites come forward during 2026/27 as the Council's service and operational requirements are reviewed, with the Asset Transactions Group considering and making recommendations for declaring each asset surplus; and the Corporate Landlord review will identify further opportunities for the Group's consideration;

(b) securing best value, under the duty in section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 and, on disposal, the duty in section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable**:** each asset is valued to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Red Book standard when it is ready to go to market and is then tested in the market, and the Asset Transactions Group weighs on balance the capital receipt available, any uplift that planning could deliver, the social value of alternative uses, the cost of continuing to hold the asset, and how long a disposal would take; and

(c) expediting delivery: interim internal capacity is being put in place to sustain the pace of disposals, in addition to the escalation arrangements set out in paragraph 4.8.

The 2026/27 disposal pipeline

4.10. As at 25 October 2026 the Council has received £2,637,700 in capital receipts from completed sales in 2026/27, within a General Fund disposal pipeline for the year totalling £5,900,120, made up as follows:

Position as at 25 October 2026	**Value**
Completed sales (receipts received)	£2,637,700
Sales agreed but not yet completed	£1,409,000
Disposals in preparation or on the market (indicative value)	£1,853,420
Total	**£5,900,120**

4.11. Sales agreed but not yet completed are those agreed with a buyer where the sale has not concluded, and disposals in preparation or on the market are shown at an indicative value, before a sale is agreed. Those two amounts may change in value or timing as the sales progress.

The Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review

4.12. The Asset Strategy will be a five-year strategy for the Council's whole estate. Its purpose is to establish what the Council needs from its land and buildings to deliver its services, what it should therefore hold, and how that estate is managed, maintained and paid for under a Corporate Landlord model, in which the estate is held and managed as a single corporate portfolio rather than by

individual services. Disposal is one of the outcomes the Strategy will produce, alongside retention, investment, shared use and increased income.

4.13. The Asset Strategy will define the contribution the estate makes to the Council's financial sustainability: matching land and buildings to service need under the Corporate Landlord model, increasing income, lowering running costs and maintenance liabilities, and extending disposals beyond the current pipeline over the medium term, answering CIPFA's finding that the Council had no clear strategy for a more ambitious programme of asset disposals.

4.14. The criteria for determining which assets the Council should dispose of in future will be established through the Asset Strategy, informed by Phase 1: Discovery and Scoping set out in paragraph 4.19.

The next phase

4.15. The Council's land and buildings had a net book value of £521.2 million at 31 March 2026: £408.3 million in buildings and £112.9 million in land. The £3 million approved by the BTCP, across 2026/27 and 2027/28, is less than 0.6% of that value. The Council's corporate target for the return from its land and buildings is a minimum of 0.5% of that value each year in capital receipts and income. The Council publishes details of its land and building assets annually as open data, as the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 requires, at https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/open-data/datasets/land-and-building-assets/. That published dataset is wider than the net book value above: it covers both the property the Council holds freehold and the property it holds under a lease, including the service and office properties it occupies, property occupied or run under Private Finance Initiative contracts, and future commitments under an agreement for lease.

4.16. The next phase will be delivered through commissioned support in three parts:

(a) Part 1: a new Asset Strategy and options for a Corporate Landlord model;

(b) Part 2: a review of the disposals rated Red, to establish which can be delivered and when;

(c) Part 3: Interim: internal capacity and commissioned specialist technical specialist support will supplement the Council's existing Property & Development team not replace their roles and responsibilities.

4.17. The commissions will be procured under relevant public sector frameworks. They are planned for issue in Quarter 3 of 2026/27, with contracts awarded and suppliers starting in Quarter 4 of 2026/27.

4.18. As the Council's wider transformation programme has developed, the interdependencies between programmes have become increasingly apparent. In particular, the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Digital and IT Transformation programmes involve significant changes to future service delivery and operating models which will directly influence future estate requirements. The Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme will therefore need to identify relevant milestones and outputs from these programmes and the wider transformation portfolio and reflect these within its own programme plan.

This is particularly important during Phase 1: Discovery and Scoping, which will identify the relevant milestones, outputs and decision points from other

transformation programmes and reflect these dependencies within the programme plan, governance and risk arrangements.

4.19. Phase 1: Discovery and Scoping will commence in Quarter 4 of 2026/27 and continue into Quarter 1 of 2027/28, establishing the foundations of the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme before the principal work and expenditure are committed. The principal outputs of Phase 1: Discovery and Scoping will include:

a) **estate baseline:** the estate recorded from the data the Council holds, with the gaps in that data identified;

b) **vision and objectives:** a vision and objectives for the estate, informed by engagement with services, Members and partners, and aligned with the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan 2026/27–2030/31, service priorities and the Council's strategic programmes, including the new Shropshire Local Plan, the Commercialisation Strategy, and the decarbonisation of the estate, including the energy performance and carbon emissions of the Council's buildings;

c) **review criteria:** the criteria against which buildings are assessed, so that each transfer is tested against the Asset Strategy, the needs of services and the capital receipts the Council is relying on;

d) **heritage assets:** the scope and approach for a Heritage Asset Strategy;

e) **Corporate Landlord:** an assessment of the extent to which the Council's existing arrangements meet the requirements of a Corporate Landlord model, including the arrangements for holding, managing and making decisions on property and the supporting data and systems.

f) **early opportunities:** savings and income capable of delivery ahead of the Asset Strategy;

g) **programme governance and risk:** programme governance, risk and dependencies: how the programme is run and reported; the identification of the principal risks, mitigations and arrangements for their ongoing monitoring and escalation; and the identification of relevant milestones, outputs and dependencies across the Council's wider transformation programme.

Outputs from Phase 1, informed by relevant milestones and outputs from the Council's wider transformation programme, will form the basis of the report intended to return to Cabinet in Quarter 1 of 2027/28.

5. Alternative Options

5.1. The options below concern the work delegated under recommendation 2.6: the three parts of the commissioned support set out in paragraph 4.16.

Option 1: Do nothing

5.2. Doing nothing is not recommended. A new Asset Strategy would strengthen the Council's financial sustainability, as set out in paragraph 4.13. CIPFA found (May 2026) that there was no clear strategy for a more ambitious programme of asset disposals, and its Recommendation 13 requires the Council to identify the assets that can be sold and to develop a strategy for selling them that secures best value by December 2026. Doing nothing would confine the Council to the

assets already in the disposal pipeline, and the Corporate Landlord model would not be taken forward.

Option 2: Deliver the work in-house

5.3. Delivering the programme entirely through existing internal resources is not recommended, given the scale and pace of the transformation programme, the requirement for additional specialist capacity and the benefit of independent assurance in specific areas. The commissioned support will supplement the Council's existing Property & Development professional capability and provide additional capacity and expertise to support delivery. In particular

(a) Part 1: development of the new Asset Strategy and the review and further embedding of the Corporate Landlord model require dedicated transformation capacity and specialist experience of developing corporate property operating models at organisational scale. The commissioned support will work alongside Property & Development and wider Council services to assess existing arrangements and identify the governance, operating model, systems, data and capability required for the future model;

(b) Part 2: independent review of the Red-rated disposal pipeline will provide additional assurance over deliverability, timing, dependencies and value. This will supplement the professional valuation, market evidence and asset knowledge held by the Council and provide independent challenge to the assumptions used for corporate financial planning; and

(c) Part 3**:** additional specialist Property & Development resource will increase capacity to progress individual disposals and resolve asset-specific constraints while the existing team continues to manage the wider estate and disposal programme. The additional resource is intended to support and accelerate delivery and does not replace the Council's existing professional capability.

Option 3: Procure each piece of work separately

5.4. Procuring each piece of work separately is not recommended, because procurement advice is to group the commissions and run mini-competitions under the relevant public sector frameworks.

Option 4: Direct award without competition

5.5. A direct award without competition is not recommended, because competition is needed to demonstrate value for money.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Pace, discovery and evidence base • Programme progressing at pace while the evidence required to support strategic estate decisions is being developed. • Includes estate data, condition, performance, costs and other information required to inform the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord model. • Gaps or changes could affect scope, sequencing, timescales or benefits.	• Discovery establishes and validates the estate baseline and identifies information gaps. • Assumptions, risks and emerging evidence reviewed through programme governance. • Principal phase informed by discovery before further commitments are made.	Transformation programmes and significant projects
Future service and corporate requirements / programme dependencies • Future estate requirements depend on clear, strategic and reliable service and corporate operating requirements. • Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Digital and IT Transformation will significantly influence those requirements. • Changes to relevant milestones or outputs could affect programme scope or timing.	• Discovery identifies relevant milestones, outputs and dependencies from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Digital and IT Transformation and the wider transformation portfolio. • Emerging service and corporate requirements inform development of the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord model. • Dependencies monitored through programme governance and reflected in programme planning.	Transformation programmes and significant projects
Council-wide capacity and capability • Programme pace and complexity require sufficient Council-wide	• Commissioned specialist support supplements internal capacity and expertise. • Discovery identifies capacity and capability requirements for subsequent	Workforce capacity and capability

capacity and specialist expertise. • Includes property and development, finance, legal, commercial/procurement and programme capability. • Capacity constraints could affect pace, quality or delivery.	delivery. • Requirements kept under review through programme governance.	
Financial requirements and benefits • Programme costs, resource requirements and anticipated benefits will continue to be refined through discovery. • Capital receipts, revenue savings, income or other benefits may differ in timing or scale from current assumptions.	• Costs, resource requirements and anticipated benefits tested and refined through discovery. • Early savings and income opportunities identified where possible. • Expenditure, requirements and benefits monitored through programme governance and the subsequent Cabinet gateway.	Achieving long-term financial sustainability
Disposal timing and value • Individual disposals may complete later or at a different value from forecast due to market conditions or asset-specific dependencies.	• Asset Transactions Group oversight through the single disposal tracker. • Deliverability, timing and value kept under review. • Red disposals subject to further commissioned review.	Achieving long-term financial sustainability Governance, assurance and value for money

Opportunity	**How it is realised**
Further capital receipts beyond the 2026/27 pipeline	The Asset Strategy will identify and release further surplus land and buildings for disposal, in response to CIPFA Recommendation 13 (May 2026), which requires the Council to identify the assets that can be sold and to develop a strategy for selling them that secures best value
Increased income from the retained estate	The Asset Strategy will establish how the Council maximises the income from the land and buildings it retains
Lower running costs and liabilities	The Corporate Landlord model will hold and manage the estate as a single corporate portfolio, reducing running costs, maintenance liabilities, the cost of holding vacant buildings, energy costs and carbon emissions, and the risk of buildings failing statutory compliance requirements

Shared use of buildings, and strategic sites for development	Services will be brought together in shared buildings, including with other public bodies through One Public Estate, and the estate baseline and the Asset Strategy will identify strategic sites that could deliver housing and employment

7. Council Priorities

7.1. The Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme contributes to two ambitions of the Corporate Plan 2026/27–2030/31:

- **a financially sustainable council:** by maximising the capital receipts and income from the Council's land and buildings and reducing their running costs;
- **a thriving economy:** through the early identification of potential strategic sites for the new Shropshire Local Plan.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. The Budget, Transformation and Change Panel has approved funding of up to £3 million across 2026/27 and 2027/28 for the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme, from the £15 million transformation and change provision approved by Full Council on 26 February 2026. The provision will be reflected within the Medium Term Financial Plan, with expenditure profiled between financial years as programme requirements are confirmed.

8.2. Phase 1: Discovery and Scoping will establish the evidence base, scope, delivery requirements and anticipated financial benefits of the principal phase, which will inform the subsequent report intended to return to Cabinet in Quarter 1 of 2027/28. Expenditure on Phase 1 will be contained within the approved £3 million programme envelope and monitored through the Asset Transactions Group.

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1. The Council has a range of statutory responsibilities relevant to the management and disposal of its land and property. In particular, section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 generally requires the Council, when disposing of land, to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable, subject to the statutory exceptions. The Council must also have regard to its duty under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised.

9.2 The strengthened governance and assurance arrangements described in this report, together with the development of a new Asset Strategy and review of the Corporate Landlord model, will support the Council in demonstrating that property decisions are taken on a properly informed, consistent and transparent basis. Decisions relating to individual assets will continue to be taken in accordance with the Council's Constitution, relevant statutory requirements and adopted policies, with appropriate regard to all relevant financial, procurement, equality and other considerations. This report does not determine the future of any individual asset.

9.3 The external commissions proposed as part of the programme must be procured in accordance with applicable procurement legislation and the Council's Contract

Procedure Rules. The proposed delegation will enable the authorised officers to commission and incur expenditure for the initial phase within the approved funding envelope. The outcome of the discovery and scoping work, together with the proposed scope and delivery arrangements for the principal phase and any further approvals required, will be reported to Cabinet.

9.4 The proposed fixed-term appointments will be managed in accordance with the Council's established employment policies and procedures.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1. The Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme covers the Council's land and buildings in all electoral divisions. This report does not decide the future of any individual asset.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1. The Asset Strategy will consider the health, social and economic implications of how the Council uses its estate, including implications for children.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1. The Asset Strategy will take account of equality impacts in setting how the Council uses its estate.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1. The Council's decarbonisation commitments are built into the vision and objectives for the estate developed through Phase 1: Discovery and Scoping, as set out in paragraph 4.19(b).

14. Background Papers

14.1. The background papers for this report, which do not include items containing exempt or confidential information, are:

Financial Strategy 2026/27 – 2030/31 – Cabinet 11 February 2026

Draft 2026/27 General Fund budgets and Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 – 2030/31 – Council 26 February 2026

Exceptional Financial Support: External Assurance Review – Cabinet, 9 September 2026

Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2026/27 – Cabinet 9 September 2026

Exceptional Financial Support: External Assurance Review – Full Council 24 September 2026

15. Appendices

Appendix A – Governance: Asset Strategy & Corporate Landlord Review Transformation programme

Appendix A – Interim Corporate: Asset Transactions & Strategic Review Governance Framework

INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

The Asset Transactions Group is the Council's single point of corporate oversight and sign-off for its assets, covering both the asset disposal programme and the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme. The Chair of the Group takes decisions within officer delegation, having considered the Group's recommendations and the dashboard updates provided by the groups below.

Member decision-making and scrutiny · Corporate oversight and assurance · Delivery groups · To be established

Cabinet

Any decision that sits outside officer delegation, including Key Decisions, is reported to Cabinet for decision

Asset Transactions Group

Chair: Section 151 Officer · Deputy Chair: Deputy Section 151 Officer

Takes decisions within officer delegation on the recommendation of the Group. Decisions outside officer delegation are reported to Cabinet.

Workstreams overseen by the Asset Transactions Group

The Council's asset disposal programme

- Disposal Working Group
- Shirehall Decommissioning Group

Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme

Standing delivery groups

Established for the life of the programme.

Task and finish panels

Convened for a specific piece of work. Time-limited in line with programme requirements and stood down on completion.

Each group provides dashboard updates to the Asset Transactions Group. Decisions on assets are not taken at this level.

REPORTING FROM THE ASSET TRANSACTIONS GROUP, AND STEER PROVIDED TO IT

Portfolio Holder for Finance

Briefed weekly on the disposal pipeline and the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme

Leadership Board

Live dashboard, to be reported monthly

Shropshire Council Improvement Board

Holds assurance and steer for the programme

Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Quarterly assurance

One Shropshire Board

Progress on the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme

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Committee	Cabinet
Date and Time	18th November 2026
	Part Exempt (appendices only)

Shirehall Marketing Proposals

PART EXEMPT BY VIRTUE OF THE PROVISIONS OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND PARAGRAPH 10.4 [3] OF THE COUNCIL'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION RULES

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Heather Kidd, Leader Councillor Roger Evans, Finance
Lead Director:	Duncan Whitfield, Section 151 Officer Kassandra Polyzoides, Service Director – Place Shaping
Service Area:	Finance and Place Shaping
Report Author	Steve Law, Head of Property & Development
Officer contact details	Steve.law@shropshire.gov.uk
Electoral Divisions Affected	All Divisions
Key Decision?	Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	Yes – 7th October 2026
Report considered by	N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report updates Cabinet on progress since its decision of 14 July 2026 regarding the disposal of Shirehall and presents the draft disposal prospectus at Exempt Appendix A for approval.

1.2 In July, Cabinet agreed to progress urgently towards the marketing and disposal of Shirehall with minimum conditions attached; to prepare a marketing prospectus for Cabinet approval; to minimise the Council's continuing costs; and to seek the earliest and optimum return from the site.

1.3 Significant work has progressed since that decision. This includes the continued decommissioning of Shirehall, work towards vacant possession, preparation of property and technical due diligence, assembly of information to support the disposal process, and preparation of the draft prospectus now presented to Cabinet. The formal Cabinet report also identifies the disposal as currently forecast within the 2027/28 disposal pipeline.

1.4 The prospectus is intended to provide sufficient flexibility for the market to bring forward financially robust and deliverable proposals. It allows for residential-led and mixed-use proposals and provides scope for redevelopment, partial retention and refurbishment, rather than prescribing a single development solution.

1.5 The context within which the disposal is being progressed has also developed since July. The Government issued the Council with a Best Value Notice on 15 July 2026. CIPFA's subsequent External Assurance Review recommended a clear and short deadline for feasibility work relating to Shirehall and that the Council seek to sell the asset as soon as possible.

1.6 More recently, discussions with Homes England have provided an opportunity to establish whether Government support could materially improve the Council's position before the final route to market is determined. The proposed approach allows this opportunity to be explored within a defined timeframe, alongside completion of due diligence and continued preparation for disposal.

1.7 This engagement is being considered alongside, rather than in place of, the work required to prepare Shirehall for disposal. The intention is to maintain momentum while establishing whether Government support can materially improve the disposal outcome.

1.8 Cabinet is therefore asked to note the progress made since July, approve the disposal prospectus and agree the proposed approach to the next stage, including a defined period of engagement with Homes England and relevant Government partners alongside continued preparation for disposal.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Cabinet is recommended to

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

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

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

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

3. Background

3.1 On 14 July 2026, Cabinet agreed to progress urgently towards the marketing and disposal of Shirehall, with minimum conditions attached and to prepare a marketing prospectus for Cabinet consideration in the autumn. The agreed approach was intended to reduce ongoing costs and risk while seeking the earliest and optimum return from the site.

3.2 The July decision identified a preference for housing, including private and affordable housing, while retaining sufficient flexibility to consider wider mixed-use proposals and secure the best overall outcome. The prospectus has been developed on that basis and does not prescribe a single development solution.

3.3 The context has developed since the July decision. The Best Value Notice was issued on 15 July 2026 and the subsequent CIPFA External Assurance Review has reinforced the requirement for a clear and timely approach to Shirehall. This provides an important context for the progress set out in this report and the proposed next steps.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

4.1 The prospectus presents Shirehall as a substantial brownfield redevelopment opportunity and is intentionally flexible as to the form of future development. It does not prescribe demolition or a single end use and allows the market to bring forward proposals involving redevelopment, refurbishment or partial retention, including residential-led and mixed-use proposals, subject to planning and the Council's statutory duties.

4.2 The prospectus will be supported by a data room containing relevant legal, property, planning and technical information to enable purchaser due diligence. This information is being assembled and reviewed as part of the Council's preparation for disposal.

4.3 The public report therefore sets out the key features of the disposal opportunity, together with the proposed strategy, process, controls and timetable. Detailed commercially sensitive information, including valuation context, cost assumptions, market advice and detailed evaluation principles, is reserved to Exempt Appendices A and B where disclosure at this stage could prejudice the Council's commercial position or its ability to secure best consideration.

Market conditions and value

4.4 Current professional advice is that the development land market is exceptionally difficult for complex urban brownfield sites requiring material enabling works. Market participants are increasingly cautious where demolition, abnormal costs, planning risk, build-cost uncertainty and lengthy delivery periods remain unresolved.

4.5 The site's current financial outcome is uncertain and may be materially affected by demolition, planning, vacant-possession, rating and abnormal-cost assumptions. The Council should therefore avoid creating an expectation of a particular capital receipt in the public report. Updated valuation and commercial advice should inform each material decision and the final marketing strategy.

4.6 The principal opportunity is not limited to the immediate receipt. Bringing the site back into productive use could support housing delivery, economic activity, regeneration, council-tax income and wider place benefits. Those benefits do not replace the statutory requirement to obtain best consideration, but may be relevant when assessing deliverable bids and any lawful wider public-value considerations.

Homes England engagement

4.7 Recent engagement with Homes England provides an opportunity to establish whether Government support could improve the deliverability and marketability of Shirehall. Areas being explored include access to specialist property and development expertise, support with planning and enabling strategy, access to an appropriate professional supply chain, and potential funding or assistance with abnormal costs such as demolition and site preparation.

4.8 No binding arrangement has been concluded and Homes England is not currently proposed as the purchaser of the site. The Council must therefore avoid an open-ended process or dependency that causes further delay. Officers will set out clearly the support being sought, the benefit required, governance, costs, procurement implications and the timetable within which an agreement must be capable of conclusion.

4.9 A twin-track approach is accordingly proposed. The Council will continue the Homes England discussions while retaining the prepared route to appoint a national property agent. By 31 December 2026 officers will determine which route is demonstrably more advantageous, taking account of pace, cost, market access, proposed funding or support, procurement, risk transfer, best consideration and the Council's financial recovery requirements.

4.10 If Homes England's involvement materially changes the strategy approved by Cabinet, introduces a substantive partnership or procurement arrangement, requires material Council expenditure, or otherwise falls outside existing delegations, a further report will be brought to Cabinet before the Council becomes committed.

Decommissioning and vacant possession

4.11 The main staff decant to the Guildhall has been completed and Shirehall is in a residual operational phase. Final activities relate principally to records and archive clearance, building services, information and communications technology, telecommunications equipment, utilities, security, residual contents and specialist items.

4.12 The external records-management and storage arrangement required to complete archive clearance has been progressed. Final contract negotiations have taken place with the appointed provider and the programme duration and the date by which archive access requirements will cease, is being finalised. Archive removal remains a critical dependency because building systems cannot be fully closed down while access and suitable environmental conditions remain necessary.

4.13 A consolidated decommissioning programme is being finalised through the current governance arrangements overseen by the Section 151 Officer. It will identify activities, dependencies, accountable officers, target dates, costs, decisions and escalation routes. The programme will report to the Section 151 Officer and material changes will be logged through the agreed change-control process.

4.14 Remaining works include, as applicable, final IT and data-centre clearance (following successful migration of the Council's data requirements to a 'cloud' based platform); isolation or termination of mechanical, electrical and utility services; management of rooftop telecommunications apparatus and power; solar-photovoltaic equipment; basement and general building clearance; retained or restricted-disposal contents; security; the memorial stone; the cast-iron frieze; and steps necessary to secure vacant possession.

4.15 The baseline approach should be proportionate: make the building safe, secure and capable of being managed at minimum reasonable cost, but do not undertake substantive or irreversible works beyond those necessary for effective decommissioning without evidence that the benefits exceed the cost and risk to the Council.

Further decommissioning considerations

4.16 The Council will continue to reduce the operational and holding costs associated with Shirehall as decommissioning progresses. The extent of any further physical works to the building will be informed by appropriate specialist property, planning, rating, valuation and legal advice, having regard to cost, marketability, future development potential and the Council's statutory and financial responsibilities.

4.17 Until that advice has been completed, irreversible works beyond those required for safety, security and effective decommissioning should not be undertaken where they could adversely affect the Council's ability to secure the optimum disposal outcome.

Cornovii Developments Ltd

4.18 Following Cabinet's decision on 9 September 2026 to approve the structured closure of Cornovii Developments Ltd (CDL), the Shirehall disposal is now being

progressed directly by the Council. Relevant surveys, planning work, technical reports and site information previously commissioned through CDL are being reviewed for use in the disposal process where appropriate.

Governance, assurance and programme

4.19 The appropriate governance is in place to provide corporate assurance, track material changes and escalate matters where required. This is overseen directly by the Section 151 Officer.

Period	Milestone	Evidence / decision
November 2026	Cabinet considers this report and the exempt prospectus.	Cabinet decision; approved prospectus; agreed delegations.
November–December 2026	Complete material due diligence; continue Homes England discussions; keep national-agent route ready; finalise decommissioning programme and specialist advice brief.	Due-diligence tracker; Homes England proposition; procurement readiness; approved programme.
By 31 December 2026	Determine whether to progress through an advantageous Homes England-supported route or appoint a national property agent.	Recorded delegated decision supported by Finance and Legal advice.
Early 2027	Complete remaining archive and decommissioning activities; complete data room; implement chosen route and progress to market as soon as reasonably practicable.	Vacant-possession plan; data-room index; agent/partner instruction; marketing launch plan.
Following market exercise	Evaluate bids against approved criteria and statutory duties; obtain further authority where required.	Evaluation report, valuation and legal advice; Cabinet or delegated decision as applicable.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 Proceed immediately to an unrestricted open-market disposal. This would demonstrate pace but risks exposing an incompletely prepared and operationally constrained site in a difficult

market, before the potential Homes England offer and key decommissioning decisions are understood. It could produce weak or highly conditional bids, price reductions following due diligence, or an outcome that fails to reflect the site's potential. This option is not recommended at this stage.

5.2 Retention or recommissioning of Shirehall is not proposed. This would be inconsistent with the direction agreed by Cabinet in July and would reintroduce significant operational and financial considerations.

6. Key Risks and Opportunities

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation / control	Link to strategic risk
Delay and continued holding costs if Homes England discussions remain open-ended.	31 December 2026 gateway; parallel agent-procurement readiness; monthly ATG monitoring; escalation of slippage.	Managing transformation programmes and significant projects; Achieving long-term financial sustainability; Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)
Weak market response, low or negative land value, or highly conditional bids.	Professional marketing; updated valuation; comprehensive data room; broad but controlled prospectus; realistic evaluation criteria.	Achieving long-term financial sustainability; Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support (EFS); Assurance and value for money
Premature marketing before key abnormal costs and decommissioning constraints are understood.	Complete proportionate due diligence; disclose material site information; clarify Homes England support; experienced agent or supply chain.	Managing transformation programmes and significant projects; Achieving long-term financial sustainability; Assurance and value for money
Council assumes unaffordable demolition, planning or delivery risk.	Default position is transfer of risk to purchaser; no material enabling expenditure without an approved business case and funding.	Achieving long-term financial sustainability; Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support (EFS); Assurance and value for money
Irreversible or premature decommissioning works adversely affect marketability, development potential or value.	Integrated property, planning, rating, valuation and legal advice before substantive works; options appraisal and decision	Managing transformation programmes and significant projects; Achieving long-term financial sustainability;

	through the agreed governance route.	Assurance and value for money
Continued rates, energy, security and maintenance costs.	Dated decommissioning programme; archive clearance; progressive shutdown of services; active cost monitoring.	Achieving long-term financial sustainability; Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support (EFS); Assurance and value for money
Residual archives, telecoms, utilities or specialist contents delay vacant possession.	Critical-path programme with named owners, dependencies, dates and escalation; contractual and legal management.	Managing transformation programmes and significant projects; Workforce capacity and capability; Breakdown of critical contracts, providers or strategic partnerships
CDL records, warranties or consultant information are incomplete or cannot be relied upon.	Document-transfer audit; confirm ownership, reliance and warranties; commission gap-filling work only where proportionate.	Governance & Performance; Effective internal control framework; Assurance and value for money
Complex bids, partnerships or joint ventures trigger procurement, subsidy-control or governance issues.	Early Legal and Finance advice; distinguish land disposal from procurement; refer materially different structures for further approval.	Governance & Performance; Effective and transparent decision making and scrutiny arrangements; Effective internal control framework
Opportunity: Homes England support improves viability and reduces abnormal-cost burden.	Define the Council's ask; test funding and delivery support; document value; conclude within fixed timetable.	Managing transformation programmes and significant projects; Achieving long-term financial sustainability; Impact of financing Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)
Opportunity: flexible prospectus attracts a wider range of deliverable uses and structures.	Avoid unnecessary restrictions; evaluate deliverability, value, planning fit and public benefit through published criteria.	Managing transformation programmes and significant projects; Achieving long-term financial sustainability;

		Assurance and value for money

7. Council Priorities

7.1 The report supports the Council's financial sustainability and recovery objectives by progressing a surplus asset towards disposal, reducing the period of ongoing holding costs and seeking the earliest deliverable route to secure best consideration.

7.2 The proposals also support the Council's place-shaping, housing, regeneration and economic objectives by creating an opportunity for a prominent brownfield site to return to productive use. The prospectus permits credible proposals for housing-led, mixed-use, retained-building or alternative redevelopment solutions, subject to planning and deliverability.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Shirehall remains a surplus asset with no identified future operational requirement. Continued ownership creates revenue costs including business rates, utilities, security, maintenance, insurance and statutory compliance. Current budget for 26/27 is circa £0.364m which has been proposed as a saving in 27/28 on the basis of marketing and a sale before 1 April 2027 and therefore no running costs in 27/28. The current forecasted position in 26/27 is a net cost of £1.010m and this is already being played through in the reported monitoring position. This is based on assumptions of revenue costs being required for the full financial year (not previously assumed at budget setting in last financial year.

8.2 Indicative disposal and marketing costs are currently estimated at up to £75,000 and will be treated as a cost of sale. Further costs associated with decommissioning, surveys and technical due diligence are currently being quantified.8.3 The July report established that an early disposal supports the Council's Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy and that sale proceeds should be prioritised to reduce reliance on Exceptional Financial Support. The present report maintains that direction while recognising that immediate marketing in an exceptionally difficult market, without adequate preparation, may not secure the optimum net outcome.

8.4 The recommended twin-track approach is designed to preserve pace while testing whether Homes England can reduce abnormal costs or provide expertise and funding that improves deliverability. Any Homes England proposal must be assessed on its full financial effect, including Council contributions, funding conditions, professional costs, timing, risk allocation, effect on receipt and any future obligations.

8.5 No authority is sought through this report for speculative Council-funded demolition, planning promotion or major enabling works. Material expenditure beyond approved budgets will require an identified funding source, Finance approval and any further member decision required by the Constitution.

8.6 The September CDL report recognised that early Shirehall planning work may have no future value and recorded an assumption of up to £886,000 within its options analysis. The amount, recoverability, value and accounting treatment remain subject

to Finance review through the structured closure of CDL and should not be treated as a settled Shirehall cost in this report.

9. Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Council must exercise its property and decision-making powers in accordance with legislation, the Constitution, Financial Rules and Procurement Rules. Any disposal must secure best consideration reasonably obtainable unless a lawful exception or specific consent applies, supported by up-to-date professional valuation and legal advice.

9.2 Before marketing or disposal, officers must confirm title, boundaries, rights, covenants, access, utilities, occupational interests, telecoms apparatus, retained land, adjoining ownerships and any restrictions affecting development or vacant possession. The data room must distinguish verified information from material that cannot be warranted or relied upon.

9.3 A conventional land disposal, development agreement, services appointment, partnership or joint venture may engage different procurement, subsidy-control, governance and tax considerations. Legal advice must be obtained before selecting or committing to a structure, and any materially different route outside existing authority must return for approval.

9.4 The prospectus and commercially sensitive supporting information are proposed as exempt appendices under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 because they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council and prospective counterparties. The public interest in maintaining the exemption is considered to outweigh disclosure at this stage because premature publication could prejudice negotiations, competition and best consideration. Legal must confirm the exemption wording and public-interest test before publication.

9.5 The structured closure of CDL requires separate legal, tax, accounting and governance arrangements. The Council must confirm its rights to use and disclose consultant material transferred from CDL and whether assignments, licences, warranties or reliance letters are required.

9.6 No direct staffing change is proposed by this report. Any workforce implications arising from decommissioning, CDL closure, procurement or future delivery arrangements will be managed separately with HR advice and consultation where required.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1 Shirehall is located within the Abbey electoral division. Disposal and future redevelopment could have local implications relating to planning, access, traffic, neighbouring uses, heritage, the adjoining conservation area and retained Council land.

10.2 The relevant local member should be consulted in accordance with the Local Member Protocol. The Council must avoid any engagement that could fetter the Local Planning Authority or prejudge a future planning application.

10.3 The Council-wide financial implications of the disposal and the potential contribution to housing, regeneration and reduced reliance on Exceptional Financial Support are wider than the host division.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1 The immediate recommendations concern disposal preparation and do not determine the future use of the site. Future proposals could, subject to planning and viability, contribute to housing supply, affordable housing, supported living, healthcare, employment, sustainable access and wider regeneration.

11.2 The prospectus should invite bidders to explain the social, health and economic outcomes of their proposals, while keeping the process sufficiently open to secure deliverable competition and best consideration.

11.3 No specific direct impact on children or care leavers arises from approving the prospectus. Any future development proposal with material implications for children, young people or protected groups will be assessed through the planning and decision-making processes, including consultation and equality assessment where required.

11.4 Redevelopment would create temporary construction impacts and longer-term movement, service and infrastructure implications. These matters should be addressed through planning, transport assessment, construction management and statutory consultation rather than predetermined through this disposal report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The recommendations do not select a purchaser, development partner or end use and do not directly change access to a Council service. No specific adverse equality impact has been identified at this decision stage.

12.2 The marketing and evaluation process must be fair, transparent and accessible. Future proposals should be assessed for equality implications where relevant, including accessible design, housing need, community impact and compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.

12.3 [CONFIRMATION REQUIRED: recommended an Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment is not required at this stage and should accompany the later preferred-bid/disposal decision.]

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 Continued operation of a largely vacant, inefficient building creates avoidable energy use and carbon emissions. Progressive decommissioning, including shutdown of redundant cooling and building systems where safe, should reduce those impacts and associated costs.

13.2 Demolition, refurbishment and redevelopment each involve different embodied-carbon, operational-energy, waste, contamination and biodiversity consequences. The broad prospectus allows bidders to set out how their proposals address retention or reuse, demolition waste, energy performance, climate resilience, sustainable transport, biodiversity net gain and wider environmental effects.

13.3 The Council should not assume that demolition or retention is environmentally or financially preferable without evidence. The marketing and evaluation process should request proportionate environmental information while avoiding requirements that unnecessarily suppress competition or value.

13.4 Any development will require separate planning and environmental consideration, including relevant surveys, contamination and drainage work, biodiversity requirements and assessment of transport impacts.

14. Background Papers

1. The Future of Shirehall – Cabinet, 14 July 2026.
2. Cornovii Developments Ltd – Cabinet, 9 September 2026.
3. Draft Shirehall Disposal Prospectus, prepared October 2026.
4. Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy, July 2026.

15. Appendices

1. Appendix A EXEMPT – Draft Shirehall Disposal Prospectus. Contains the detailed property opportunity, proposed commercial presentation and information intended for future market use.

2. Appendix B EXEMPT – Commercial, Valuation and Market Advice. To include the latest Red Book valuation context, market commentary, value sensitivities, demolition/enabling assumptions and any advice which could prejudice best consideration if published.

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