



**Committee and Date**

Transformation & Improvement Scrutiny  
11<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Cabinet  
12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Item

Public



# Performance Monitoring Quarter 3 2024/25

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## 1. Synopsis

The Shropshire Plan clarifies our vision and priorities, aligning our resources to deliver positive outcomes for our people, businesses and communities. Delivery of our outcomes is measured through the developing Performance Management Framework, demonstrating progress to date

## 2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Shropshire Plan (TSP) was created to clarify Shropshire Council’s vision, priorities and Strategic Objectives. These objectives reflect the outcomes we aim to achieve within our available financial envelope. We measure the achievement of TSP by monitoring our performance, using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help measure, drive and understand delivery of our Strategic Objectives) and managing our overall financial position (ultimately delivering our outcomes while remaining within our agreed financial envelope).

2.2 This is the third report for 2024/25 and sets out the key issues to manage this year; delivering acceptable performance while remaining within our available financial envelope. Over the year we need to monitor and review our finances, aligned to TSP, to support delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

(MTFS). We are seeking to rebase our budgets over several years, in line with the outcomes defined in TSP, to secure a modern, efficient, and sustainable base for the Council finances across the 5-year period of the MTFS. This approach is aligned to the recommendations of the LGA peer review and is comparable with the best approaches seen in local government. We must adjust each year to ensure financial survival, with the aim to move towards financial stability and sustainability over the medium term. Against this backdrop we are seeking to manage our performance and therefore expectations, within our available financial envelope. Our plans will focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness, redefining the way we deliver interventions to optimise delivery of our vision wherever and however possible.

## Summary

- 2.3 The focus of the Council in 2024/25 and the immediate future is necessarily directed at the delivery of a balanced budget, and is currently, therefore, the highest priority Strategic Objective within TSP balanced alongside protecting our most vulnerable children. Our new Performance Management Framework (PMF) has been reviewed and strengthened to align with all our strategic objectives to enable us to become an evidence-led performance managed council.
- 2.4 Development of our KPIs will continue with Portfolio Holders, Executive Directors and Assistant Directors identified for each indicator. Targets, tolerances and benchmarks will be clarified over the coming months, where possible, with regularly updated monitoring information published via the performance webpage at - [Performance | Shropshire Council](#) . Online performance reporting will be the main source of performance information enabling greater insight, transparency and scrutiny of the Council's performance and delivery of its outcomes as set out in TSP.
- 2.5 Through engagement across all Directorates the PMF has been launched with the focus on using data to inform decisions and actions particularly where performance may not be meeting targets and expectations. As part of the necessary arrangements for delivering TSP, the Council has reviewed and updated its approaches to both performance and financial monitoring. Both areas are now more pro-actively informed by timely activity data and are available to a range of officers to help guide decision making. Interactive dashboards using 'PowerBI' are being developed which will show a summary of KPIs for each Healthy priority through to agreed strategic objectives. It will then be possible to drill down into more detailed information for each KPI including status which is RAG (red, amber, green) rated, trend information and benchmarking where available comparing Shropshire's figure to the national average and nearest statistical neighbours.
- 2.6 The Q3 Finance report (elsewhere on this agenda) sets out the financial envelope of the Council and how spending plans and patterns are being managed to deliver a balanced budget.
- 2.7 This Q3 Performance report complements the Finance report but provides a different perspective. We may therefore find that the position on KPIs is favourable, but that the finance position is adverse because the activity levels (the cost drivers) are higher than anticipated. Likewise, as Shropshire Council

continues to manage an unprecedented financial position significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival, this may involve scaling down initiatives, changing the scope, delaying implementation, or extending delivery timescales and impacting performance in some areas.

- 2.8 As part of our new approach feedback on the design and usability of the new report and performance webpage is welcomed. A feedback form will be available for questions and queries, and this will be reviewed with responses provided and published where appropriate alongside the dashboard.

### Key Indicators and Context

- 2.9 The Q3 performance report is written as an exception report with all key performance indicators being provided in the dashboard **which should be viewed in conjunction with this report:** [Performance | Shropshire Council](#).
- 2.10 The Q3 report is not fully complete with all the agreed performance indicators due to the time taken to implement the new approach, obtain data and the focus on getting it right. Those outstanding are noted in the report. It should also be noted that some of the performance indicators are baseline figures from which targets will be established and then performance monitored against this.
- 2.11 It should be noted that the approach being taken by Shropshire Council is progressive and in advance of many other authorities and places us in a strong position to continually improve our approach to managing performance, identifying areas of under and over performance, and ultimately providing evidence of our ability to deliver the outcomes set out in TSP.

## 3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Review and consider performance dashboard information alongside this exception report.
- Note progress to date in achieving the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan (TSP) and comment as appropriate.
- Confirm that the KPIs currently agreed remain the same for Q4 of 2024/2025 and thereafter be aligned to the refresh of TSP in 2025/26.

# Report

## 4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 The management of the Council's Performance Management Framework is a key process in ensuring strategic risks are mitigated and the Council can carry out business as intended and planned for within TSP.
- 4.2 The management of key performance indicators is a key process to monitoring progress in the delivery of outcomes as set out in TSP. This provides insight into whether corrective action is required to bring performance back on track.
- 4.3 The performance reports and dashboards 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.
- 4.4 Regular financial reporting is part of the governance and risk management approach within the Council ensuring that it delivers sustainable and value for money services as required under statute. Risk management continues to be an active part of this process, and Officers review potential risk and opportunity scenarios each month. The Council holds two finance related strategic risks regarding managing the current financial situation and so this remains under constant review to consider appropriate management action of the situation.
- 4.5 The dashboards include instructions for use and a feedback form is available for completion should there be questions or feedback. Members will be shown how to use the dashboards.
- 4.6 Monitoring will be in place using the dashboards so any issues can be resolved in a timely manner.
- 4.7 Ultimately, the Council must risk assess the delivery of Strategic Objectives within TSP and adjust, accordingly, to ensure an acceptable balance of outcomes are achieved at a strategic level. This may mean the prioritisation of some objectives over others to react to the evidence presented within the PMF. It may not be possible to achieve optimal performance across all indicators and it may be necessary to oversee expected reductions in performance in some areas to remain within the overall financial envelope and ensure full focus is given to prioritised areas of activity by officers including significant management action required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival.

## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Shropshire Council is currently managing an unprecedented financial position as budgeted for within the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 29 February 2024 and detailed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. This demonstrates that significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all Cabinet Reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve
  - scaling down initiatives,

- changing the scope,
- delaying implementation, or
- extending delivery timescales.

5.2 The considerations set out in para 5.1 (above) may mean that some areas of performance decline in the coming months while new operating arrangements are put into place which will ensure the longer term financial sustainability of the Council.

5.3 The performance report provides progress on key activity targets which will have correlation to financial performance.

5.4 It should be noted that positive improvement on activity may not necessarily correspond to financial improvement, and this should be drawn out in the narrative of the financial and performance reports.

## 6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 The performance report includes KPIs for Healthy Environment with measures for monitoring Shropshire Council's direction of progress on climate change.

6.2 Recommendations within the Climate Strategy and Action Plan Monitoring Report 2023 were agreed by the Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024, including two recommendations specific to key performance indicators which will be incorporated into the Shropshire Plan Performance Report for future reporting:

- Specific carbon emission reductions by activity
- Energy efficiency to support point 3.5 in the Progress Report

6.3 Climate Change also has significant implications for Healthy People, a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Organisation and further work to develop additional KPIs, in partnership with the Climate Team will reflect this. There has been a reduction in size of the Climate Change team and as a result, future work programmes are being reviewed. Further indicators will be made available as new data becomes available to ensure that as high a percentage as possible of primary data collected is based on measured carbon emissions via a clear and transparent process such as carbon accounting, rather than estimating scope 3 emissions based on spend.

6.4 Measuring emissions also provides a baseline for setting climate targets and deciding where to start reducing emissions. Repeating the measurement process annually allows Shropshire Council to track and report progress in a clear, transparent way to ensure that key stakeholders - members, regulators, employees, members of the public, other local authorities and system partners are informed about our collective climate action and impact.

## 7. Background

7.1 Quarter 3 – a total of 52 Key Performance Indicators have been updated in the Shropshire Plan report. Additional information will be added in the period between writing of this report and its presentation to members. To date, included the

percentage of all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception(HP8a). A new indicator included in this update is the rate of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of reception (HP8b).

- 7.2 Information on each of these indicators can be found via the performance webpage at – [The Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard](#).
- 7.3 The online performance report is now the main source of performance information. This report highlights any exceptions or downturns and explains the causal issues and any corrective actions the service is taking.
- 7.4 In quarter 3, there are 16 exceptions that have been raised and these are reported in the additional information section below.

## 8. Additional Information

8.1 During quarter 3, a total of 18 out of the newly updated 52 performance indicators showed an improvement and are above their target. Of which the following are the most notable:

- **HP32 The proportion of long-term adult social care users in receipt of community-based services.** Research suggests that, where possible, people prefer to stay in their own home rather than move into residential care. However, it is acknowledged that for some client groups that admission to residential or nursing care homes can represent an improvement in their situation. The service is committed to increasing support in the community. Performance has exceeded target at quarter 3.
- **HEc14 Out of work claimant rates to remain lower than the Region and England** The employment and self-employment rates in Shropshire are better than the national and regional rates. As at November 2024, the number claiming out of work benefits stood at 5,010. Numbers have shifted downwards slightly over the last quarter. The claimant rate stands at 2.6% of the workforce compared with 5.7% in the West Midlands and 4.3% in England.
- **HEN16 Increase the proportion of Premises with access to superfast broadband (>30Mbps)** 99.6% of premises in Shropshire have access to superfast broadband (download speeds >30mbps), with the number edging upwards over the last two years. Coverage is marginally better in Shropshire than it is nationally (98.2%). The remaining gaps tend to be in very rural hard-to-reach locations.
- **HO18 % of staff and members who have completed the cyber security training (on time).** Although this measure has come close to target over the last few quarters, at Q3 the figure of 96% has exceeded the target of 95%.
- **HP8a School Readiness: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception** The 23/24 figure, newly reported in Q3 is 68.0%, above the target of 65.0%. Reporting to date has included the overall school readiness for all children achieving a good level of development. A new

indicator has been added for this update to include the rate of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of reception . See HP8b.

- **HP8b School Readiness: percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception** The 23/24 figure, newly reported at Q3, is 47.1%, a slight rise from 22/23 (46.7%) and statistically similar to the national average of 51.5%. Target is in development and will be published in the next quarterly report.

School readiness leaflet has been relaunched. There has been a significant increase in 1 and 2 year old reviews being undertaken by Health Visitors which will help to identify any developmental concerns at an earlier age and provide appropriate early intervention. Health Visitor open access clinics and support through Community and Family Hubs are now in place provide to early support to children and families. Best Start in Life offer has been published on the Council web-pages: [Shropshire Best Start in Life Programme | Shropshire Council](#)

There are 16 exceptions out of the newly reported 52 performance indicators this quarter:

## 8.2 HP6 Reception: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

Newly reported at Q3, the 23/24 figure of 23.6% is slightly above the target of 21.5% and has shown an increase on the 22/23 figure of 21.5%. However, Shropshire's rate remains statistically similar to the national rate (22.1%)

Shropshire has developed a Healthier Weight Strategy with key systemwide strategic objective areas one of which is early years. This includes support during pregnancy through the early years to ensure the best start in life to help prevent childhood obesity. This also links to the Women's health hub work and support available through Community and Family Hubs. A system task and finish group is being set up to look at training requirements for frontline professionals to assist them with having conversations with families around weight. As part of the Healthier Weight Strategy actions are being identified to improve the food environment and increase physical activity.

## 8.3 HP7 Year 6: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

Also newly reported at Q3, this 23/24 figure of 34.0% is slightly above the target of 32%, and has increased compared to the 22/23 figure of 31.2%. However, Shropshire's rate remains statistically similar to the national rate of 35.8%

See comments as above.

## 8.4 HP18 % Children's Social Work Assessment timeliness: within 45 working days

Quarter 3 at 65% against a target of 84%. While the year-to-date rate has dropped, the service has been prioritising social work assessments which are

overdue. Our figure over the previous 6 months is 76%, where the same measure on 2nd December gave a rate of 68%. Our open overdue assessments have reduced by over 60% in the month that we have been focussing on these.

#### **8.5 HP19 Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement**

Quarter 3 at 72% against a target of 80%. This rate has increased in the last quarter and remains higher than national and statistical neighbours' which were at 68% when last published (March 2024). Despite this relatively high figure, we still endeavour to improve this, demonstrating a continued commitment to provide the best possible stability for children in our care.

#### **8.6 HP31 % of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 weeks (exc exceptions).**

There is a weekly focus with EHCP Team Manager and Senior EHCP Case Officers (EHCP Team) together with wider agency partners to consider all Education, Health and Care Assessments (EHCNAs) and the timeliness of all cases, highlighting those which can be completed within the 16 week timescale. Consideration is also given to assessments where a plan is determined and the timeliness of those to achieve the 20 week timescale, plus where additional casework is required to finalise the EHC Plan, in collaboration with parents, carers and educational settings. There are monthly monitoring meetings with Shropshire's DfE advisor. Despite rigorous monitoring and focus, there has been a decline in the 20-week performance to 36.35% in Q3. Work continues within the service area, following a significant restructure, and we expect to see an improvement during Q4.

#### **8.7 HP33a Top quartile performer for the rate of admissions per 100,000 people to residential and nursing care (18-64)**

This is a key measure within the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework ("ASCOF") and aligns with the priority to support people in the community.

There have been changes to the reporting methodology for KPI's HP33a and HP33b for 24/25, meaning the data for quarter 1,2 and 3 are not comparable to data previously reported, hence noting these KPI's as exceptions.

The Adult Social Care Short and Long Term Return (SALT) has been replaced with a new Client Level Data (CLD) return. NHS Digital has published a new methodology for deriving the new admissions indicators. This methodology will also apply to the ASCOF indicators set centrally from Local Authorities CLD submissions.

Work is ongoing between local authorities and NHS Digital to realign this data. The quarter 3 data has improved since quarter 1 and work to realign the data continues into Q4.

We support a high number of people in the community. We do continue to monitor admissions, but overall performance is good in this area.



**8.8 HP33b Top quartile performer for the rate of admissions per 100,000 people to residential and nursing care (65+)**

See HP33a regarding methodology changes. We continue to maintain excellent performance and keep this figure lower than the national rate in line with our strategy to support people to live at home with self-directed support in the community.

**8.9 HEc2 Reduce the workplace pay gap with the national average by 50% by 2027**

The workplace pay gap in the 2021 baseline year was 9.3%. The aim by 2027 is to reduce that gap by at least 50% to 4.6%. The target profile is to close the gap by 0.8% per year.

Results from the ONS Annual Population Survey of Hours and Earnings for 2024 show the pay gap to be 9.1%, which falls below the target for the year of 6.9%. Workplace pay in Shropshire is £662.90 gross per week for full-time workers compared with £729.60 in Great Britain. Workplace wages in Shropshire grew at a slightly slower rate than they did nationally in the year to April 2024 (+5.5% compared with +5.8%).

Macro-economic indicators like wage levels are affected by national and global economic trends that are outside the control of Shropshire Council. However, closing the gap between national and local wage levels remains a key priority of the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy, and we are acting to mitigate external influences by encouraging inward investment to the county and by working with FE/HE/training providers to ensure businesses have access to the skilled workers they require.

**8.10 HEc11 The rate of people with Learning Disabilities who are in paid employment**

The rate of people with Learning Disabilities who are in paid employment needs to be collected with a replacement classification for 2024/25, as mentioned in previous quarterly performance reports, therefore the Q3 figure of 5.45% is not comparable to previous data.

As the replacement classifications are added, the numbers will get back to a comparable level during the year; there has already been a significant improvement during the year.

The service continues to work with its clients to find opportunities to develop skills and positive experiences through training, volunteering and where suitable to find paid employment.

**8.11 HEc18 Reduction of households in B&B accommodation**

The Q3 figure of 90 households in B&B accommodation has just missed the target of 85 but is an improvement on the Q2 figure of 104.

As per previous updates, the number of households in B&Bs are subject to fluctuation due to changes in demand. There were 88 households in B&B's as of 20th December 2024, but due to a lack of move on options over the Xmas / New Year period that number has increased. A new temporary accommodation scheme is due to open January 2025 which we hope will significantly decrease the number of households in B&Bs going forward.

#### **8.12 HEn11 % of streetlights converted to LED**

Work continues with the conversion of the remaining streetlights to have LED lanterns fitted.

The remaining conversions are slow due to problems with sites that are not readily accessible for the following reasons, and include: -

Parked cars - these are slowly being resolved with the notices being issued.

Birds nesting - these sites are now being revisited following nesting season finishing earlier in the summer.

Requirement of complex traffic management for example lane closures - the details of this are currently being established as this involves work with contractors Kier.

Programmed works – Joint working with major projects sharing Traffic Management to reduce disruption and costs.

Slow progress has also been exacerbated by reduced levels of staffing, by Kier, which reflects the corresponding reductions in spend necessary to respond to budget pressures.

Overall, 95% of the streetlight stock has been converted, with a target of 100% for 2024/25.

#### **8.13 HEn15 Number of Environmental Permit inspections completed against statutory target (100%)**

The number of environmental permit inspections completed at Q3 has missed the target, however, is still on track to meet the statutory target of 100% by Q4.

Measures to ensure the 100% is met by the end of quarter 4 have been put in place, including 2 further Officers in the team taking on this function.

The bulk of the environmental permit inspections are normally carried out in the winter, this is because we are very busy in the spring and summer with other work (statutory nuisance complaints) and then catch up on Permits during the (normally) less busy winter.

#### **8.14 HO1 Number of Compliments**

The number of compliments received during quarter 3 is 100, this has missed the target of 112 but is in line with previous quarters, 117 at Q2 and 95 at Q1.

#### **8.15 HO6 Budget vs Outturn**

Comments taken from Q3 finance report.

The forecast set out in the Q3 finance report is for a central projection (“most likely”) of £35.56m spend over budget, in a range of £30.56m-£58.46m. The ‘most likely’ central projection is based on the position from which least variance is anticipated. The favourable scenario assumes potential likely improvements to the position; the adverse position assumes potential likely deteriorations. This is set out in detail in the report.

	£m
‘adverse’ projection	£58.46m
<b>Central projection (‘most likely’)</b>	<b>£35.56m</b>
‘favourable’ projection	£30.56m

### 8.16 HO13 Average number of days lost to sickness absence per year

The Q3 figure of 10.93 days is an increase on the Q2 figure of 9.22days, this has also missed the target of 7 days.

Quite a significant increase on sickness absence this quarter with rises in absence due to stress up by 25% from last quarter, however, there has been a much greater increase in absences due to Coughs, Colds and Influenza which has increased by over 60% from last quarter. This is to be expected given seasonal influences with rises in respiratory type illnesses in community nationwide.

### 8.17 HO17 Responding to Freedom of information Requests within statutory timescales (20 working days)

69% of freedom of information requests were responded to within the statutory 20 days during this quarter which represents a decline in compliance since the previous quarter. Although this represents an improvement on recent years, the compliance rate is below the required target and this has been raised directly with Executive Directors. This has been raised with Information Governance representatives at the Information Governance Leadership and Organisational Oversight (IGLOO) meetings in September and November 2024. A further report will be presented to the March 2025 meeting. A new corporate FOI system is currently being designed in partnership with PwC as part of the Customer Journey Programme.

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The development of the new reporting sees a substantive step change in the reporting of performance with more emphasis on target delivery and comparator information.
- 9.2 The key performance pressure remains the delivery of a balanced budget which are detailed in the financial report.

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

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**Local Member:** All

**Appendices**