

Shropshire Council Improvement and Assurance Board – DRAFT Terms of Reference

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1.0 Status

The Shropshire Council Improvement and Assurance Board (“SCIAB”) was convened by Shropshire Council in response to the recommendation in the Corporate Peer Challenge and the Council declaring a financial emergency in September 2025. Its purpose is to provide assurance that the Shropshire Council is focussed on the key activities which support the on-going financial sustainability of the Council, its improvement journey and improved outcomes for the residents of Shropshire.

The SCIAB will consider transformation and improvement activity through the perspective of the Best Value statutory guidance themes of good practice for an authority: Culture, Leadership, Governance, Use of Resources, Partnerships and Community Engagement, Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement. The SCIAB will provide assurance that improvement activity across the Council is being effectively managed, progress is being made and that it is owned by the Leadership Board supported by the wider Senior Leadership (SLT) Team and by the Political Leadership of the Council.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of the SCIAB is to provide external advice, challenge, and expertise to Shropshire Council in driving forward the development and delivery of the Improvement Plan.

The SCIAB will provide external advice, challenge, and expertise on the full range of Council improvement and transformation activities.

3.0 Aim

The aim of the SCIAB is to oversee and drive the delivery of the Council’s Improvement Plan and transformation activity.

4.0. Key Objectives

- To proactively monitor and oversee the management of the delivery of the Council Improvement Plan.
- Challenge the delivery and direction of the actions contained within the Improvement Plan to ensure that improvement deadlines are met.
- Ensure financial sustainability of the Council is achieved through the delivery of the agreed Improvement Plan actions and MTFP.

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- To challenge the pace and impact of the Council's improvement Plan.
- To receive assurances from Cabinet Members and responsible Officers for ensuring delivery at pace of the transformation and improvement plan.
- To assure key stakeholders, including Government, External Auditors, Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees about progress in delivering the agreed Improvement Plan actions.
- Provide clear advice, challenge, and support to the Council on the full range of improvement activities to ensure financial stability and assurance about the longer-term position of the Council.
- Explore key issues and challenges through detailed exploration and drill-downs.
- To identify issues that could lead to non-achievement of the Council Improvement Plan, along with the required remedial action.
- Seek assurance that key decisions are cognisant of the financial implications and impact on in-year budgets and the MTFS.

5.0 Servicing of Meetings

The SCIAB Improvement Advisor/Programme Management Office (PMO) will be responsible for ensuring:

- (a) dissemination of agenda and reports
- (b) taking of minutes and recording of actions and recommendations.
- (c) dissemination of minutes and Action Log
- (d) management of the forward plan
- (e) Meetings will be held in private, minutes not published but actions and progress reported through the Council's Cabinet.

6.0 Frequency of meetings:

Meetings will be monthly, unless otherwise agreed by the SCIAB.

7.0 Format of Meetings

Meetings will be a combination of in-person and Microsoft Teams at the direction and agreement of the Chair and Panel Members.

8.0 Membership

Chair: Independent Chair
Chief Executive
Group Leaders (Shropshire Council)
Executive S151 Officer
Monitoring Officer (As required)

Group Leader Member External Peers (Advisors)
Local Government Association Representative (In attendance)

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MHCLG Representative (tbc In Attendance)

Portfolio Holders and Executive/Service Directors (As required)

Changes to Membership:

Changes to membership can be agreed by the SCIAB. The SCIAB may invite anyone who it believes will be useful in achieving its aims and purpose to attend meetings or join the SCIAB as a full member or a co-opted member including, members of the Council's Leadership Board, Senior Leadership Team and other subject matter experts, at the direction of chair.

9.0 Governance

The SCIAB will work within the governance framework of the Council as an Advisory Panel, it will not vote on decisions and instead would provide constructive challenge and advice in the round. However, it will, with the officer and political leadership of the Council, agree messaging around progress and delivery of the Improvement Plan.

10. Costs and Support

- 10.1 Any costs associated with the SCIAB will be met by Shropshire Council. This includes the officer time required to support the SCIAB, and the delivery of the Council's Improvement Plan. The LGA will meet the costs of the Chair, Group Leader members external peers, and LGA member representative for this financial year.
- 10.2 SCIAB members will need to work flexibly as the demand of the role. The Chair will have access to elected Members and the executive team.
- 10.3 The SCIAB will be supported by the Improvement Advisor's office PMO to ensure that the overall programme plan is proactively tracked, kept up to date and that issues and risks are managed.