



Committee and Date

Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17.11.2025

Item

Report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group

Public



Report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):		Councillor Alex Wagner	

1. Synopsis

This report summarises the first phase of the work of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group, which focuses on enhancing collaboration between Shropshire Council and Town and Parish Councils to improve local service delivery and community outcomes. The group aim to make recommendations as to the development of sustainable partnership models that respect the diverse needs of Shropshire's communities.

The Task and Finish Group is made up of councillors from both town and rural areas who have worked together to conduct research and interviews which have informed their work to date and ongoing. This is the first of a series of regular updates to Committee which will be provided as the Task and Finish work develops.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee (T&I OSC) members recognise the importance of our partner organisations in particular Town and Parish Councils and therefore identified that a Task and Finish Group should

consider ways in which partnership working could be developed to deliver outcomes for Shropshire people and communities more efficiently and effectively at a local level.

- 2.2 Given the scale and nature of the topic and its relationship to the delivery of outcomes and use of resources, the Task and Finish Group feel that it is important to report back on findings and recommendations to both Transformation and Improvement OSC and Cabinet at specific points in their work.
- 2.3 By doing so, T&I OSC and Cabinet would remain regularly sighted upon the progress and findings of the Task and Finish Group and be advised upon any new or refined related work as it emerges, mindful of the timeliness of, and alignment with, budget setting.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The outcome of the Task and Finish Group's work to date has identified 3 key strategic areas as follows -
 - Communication
 - Support and training
 - Essential Information

These are areas which the Task and Finish Group feel are essential to successful partnership working and have helped in informing the recommendations that are detailed in full within Appendix One of this report.

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4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Partnership Working Task and Finish Group recognise that each community has unique challenges and understand that what works well for a rural parish may not be suitable in a large market town. They aim to review ways in which financial and non-financial benefits might be achieved through the adoption of a partnership approach.
- 4.2 Shropshire Councils' future approach may well be shaped by the work of the Task and Finish Group and therefore regular and timely updates to Cabinet need to be timed to align with informing future budget setting and the setting of Town and Parish precepts.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

- 5.1 As part of their continuing work the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group will consider how the different needs of communities, geographic areas, and partners should be built into any framework and arrangements for effective partnership working. Developing this understanding and being able to map community relations, ie; where people go to access services, may realise the potential for clustering of

parishes to build neighbourhood resource and strong relationships which could be positive in reducing fuel consumption and carbon offsetting.

6. Background

- 6.1 Survey results received in early September 2025 from Town and Parish Councils have aided the Task and Finish Groups' understanding of which services could be more effectively delivered locally either by the Town and Parish Councils themselves, through use of local providers, or in partnership with Shropshire Council.
- 6.2 These results have been circulated and considered by the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group, chaired by Councillor Dawn Husemann, and made up of a range of both town and rural Councillors with a geographic spread across the County.
- 6.3 As a result of the survey findings and the knowledge and insight of those Councillors represented at the Task and Finish Group, a list of initial witnesses was agreed. In meeting with this group, the Task and Finish members were able to explore in detail any opportunities or barriers to working more closely with strategic partners, in particular town and parish councils.
- 6.4 Research and benchmarking was also shared to develop an understanding of what has worked well, both elsewhere and within Shropshire, as well as where there were opportunities for improvement.
- 6.5 Since September 2025, the group has held four meetings, reviewed survey feedback, engaged with local representatives, and focused on the planned transfer of Streetscene services as a pilot in selected areas.

7 Additional Information

- 7.1 The Task and Finish Group recognise that this won't be a case of one size fits all and that communities have differing needs, expectations and resources to deliver services. Developing an understanding of these and listening to the needs of our partners is key to its success.
- 7.2 Effective communication, voluntary participation, potential parish clustering, and alignment with national frameworks are critical. A Memorandum of Understanding and pilot projects in Shrewsbury, Oswestry, and Shifnal support these themes. The Task and Finish Group recommend that communications are clear and consistent with all stakeholders to ensure clarity of message and to build confidence.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The Partnership Working Task and Finish Group will continue to meet and feedback to Transformation and Improvement OSC and Cabinet at regular intervals to keep them informed of work as it progresses.
- 8.2 The group have also agreed upon two areas of focus where they feel that value can be added, these are as follows.

- The Task and Finish Group recommend carrying out a scrutiny review of phase one – the transfer of Streetscene to Shrewsbury, Shifnal and Oswestry town councils - 6 months after the transfer has taken place to gather the learning from these areas.
- The Task and Finish Group recommend reviewing the “foundations development phase” to assess the effectiveness of communication, support and training, and information provision.

8.3 The full report, listing the activities and findings of the group, and their recommendations in detail is attached at Appendix One.

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

APPENDIX ONE - Report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group - T&I 17.11.2025.docx

Local Member: All Members