

**Committee and Date**

Cabinet

3 December 2025

CABINET**Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025****In the The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ****Responsible Officer:** Amanda.Holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk**Present****Cabinet Members:**

Councillors Heather Kidd (Leader), Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader), Bernie Bentick, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, Ruth Houghton, James Owen, Rob Wilson and David Walker

Councillor Tom Dainty, Deputy Portfolio Holder Highways & Environment

Group Leaders/Deputy Group Leaders: Dawn Husemann – Reform UK, Duncan Kerr – Green and PI, Ed Bird (Deputy Group Leader) – Conservative,
Via MS Teams – Rosemary Dartnall, Labour

64 Disclosable Interests

Councillor James Owen and David Walker declared an interest in item 10 as they were members of Oswestry Town Council.

65 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor David Vasmer.

66 Minutes**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

67 Public Question Time

Public questions were received from:

Jane Gallagher, on behalf of Save our Shirehall in relation to Shirehall, and how any proposal to demolish had been environmentally assessed in relation to the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

Keith Trubshaw in relation to the Sports Village Development and use of new technology

John Palmer in relation to the Financial Monitoring Report and the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road spend.

The questions and answers provided are available using this link: [Response to Public Questions - 19 November 2025.pdf](#)

68 Member Question Time

Councillor Duncan Kerr read out a question on behalf of Councillor Craig Emery in relation to plans to bring safer streets to Shropshire especially outside schools, SEND colleges and built up residential areas.

The full question and response are available from this link: [Response to Member Questions - 19 November 2025.pdf](#)

69 Scrutiny Items

a Scrutiny Item - Levelling Up Fund Round 2 (LUF2): Project 2 - Transforming Movement and Public Spaces in Shrewsbury

The Chairman of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided a verbal report on the committee's scrutiny to date of the Levelling Up project around the gyratory station in Shrewsbury which it had added to its work programme in response to public concern, including a petition with over 6,000 signatures.

The committee had heard from Portfolio Holders and officers about the scheme's background and the challenges it had faced. The committee had decided to conduct a deeper dive into the project, aiming to hear from a wider range of witnesses, such as members of Shrewsbury Town Council, local businesses, blue light services, WSP, Shropshire Council Highways Officers, Economic Growth Officers, and relevant portfolio holders. A rapid task and finish group was planned for the following Monday, with the intention to report back to Cabinet with firm recommendations as soon as possible, ideally for the December Cabinet meeting.

The Committee had already outlined three initial recommendations from the scrutiny committee which were:

- Commission an independent safety audit review of the current proposals to ensure risks like congestion and emergency access are robustly addressed.
- Cabinet should review the council's strategic partnerships.
- Lessons learned from this process should be applied to future and existing schemes to assure robust governance and prevent similar issues.

The Committee wished to emphasise the importance of scrutiny, transparency, and learning from the process to strengthen oversight and promote best practice across ongoing programmes.

Cabinet members welcomed the rapid work of the committee, supported the recommendations made to date and confirmed that officers had already begun commissioning an independent safety review. It was hoped that it would be possible to receive a further report at the next meeting.

70 Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report which revealed a worsening financial position for Shropshire Council, with a significant overspend and depleted reserves. The discussion focused on the causes, including national pressures, previous budgeting practices, the actions being taken – seeking government support and a deep dive review, and the challenges ahead – in relation to staffing, service delivery and the need for savings. There was a strong emphasis on transparency, realism in budgeting, and the need for structural change.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report, highlighting that the council was facing an increased overspend, with the forecast rising from £35.5 million in period 5 to £47.1 million in period 6. This increase was attributed to a more detailed and realistic review of the council's finances, revealing that some previously assumed savings were not deliverable and that delivery plans for certain savings were not in place. The report detailed steps being taken to control spending, including the establishment of financial boards and ongoing discussions with the government for exceptional financial support (EFS) of £15 million to avoid issuing a Section 114 notice.

It was noted that the council's reserves were extremely low, with a projected balance of just £2.2 million by March, leaving little room for unexpected costs such as winter pressures or emergencies. Members discussed the causes of the financial situation, with the current administration attributing much of the problem to previously set unrealistic savings targets and use of reserves.

The report also highlighted the impact of staff reductions and the strain on remaining staff, with concerns raised about the council's capacity to deliver services. Members agreed on the need for more realistic budgeting and for lessons to be learned from past financial management. All present acknowledged the seriousness of the financial position and the need for urgent action to restore stability.

RESOLVED:

- A. To ensure emergency action is continued by all Officers in the second half of the financial year to improve further the Quarter 2 forecast of a projected spend over budget of £47.069m (30th September 2025). Such action should predominantly focus on reducing spend, increasing income, delivering remaining savings and significant mitigating actions to control in-year spending pressures.
- B. To support the continued use of Operations Boards, which have been in place from August 2025, to challenge all in-year spending, and more recently have been further enhanced to bring greater Service Director scrutiny. Further details to be included in future Finance Monitoring reports.
- C. To consider the Period 6 position (as at the end of September) forecast indicative level of savings delivery of £21.304m (36%),
- D. To continue to review the projected General Fund Balance which is forecast to be negative (-£12.789m), indicating a potentially illegal financial position by the end of the financial year if proposed action does not improve this position.
- E. To continue to support, in light of the Council's current financial position and ongoing engagement with MHCLG, the active discussions regarding Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) are continuing.

71 Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2025/26

The report was presented by the Leader of the Council, who explained that the performance report was being reformed to be more meaningful and informative. She referred to the live dashboard which would inform the actions of the Improvement Board.

She reported that 74% of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were meeting their targets, early years provision was ranked second in the country and teams were working hard throughout the council under extraordinary pressure.

Discussion covered areas of concern including staff sickness absence and turnover, and an increase in households in bed and breakfast accommodation. In terms of staff, the Leader reported that the Corporate Peer Challenge the new administration had requested had identified low staff morale and understaffing; another Pulse Survey was being conducted to gather current staff feedback, and a People Plan was being developed to improve working conditions, staff engagement, and organisational culture. Senior leadership forums and informal staff webinars had also been introduced to increase visibility and transparency and had helped managers from different departments to connect and share ideas.

The reduction of households in B&B accommodation was a priority, with recent improvements and new units coming online.

Other areas of discussion covered capacity in environmental health for food hygiene inspections, recycling rates and broadband access. It was felt the Performance Indicator for broadband access did not accurately represent the situation in Shropshire and work was underway to measure this in a more meaningful way.

It was acknowledged that financial and operational constraints were impacting performance but there was a commitment to ongoing improvement, staff support, and more realistic reporting and planning.

RESOLVED:

1. To note progress to date in achieving the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan, utilising the interactive [Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard](#)
2. To collectively review and align Shropshire's Performance Management Framework and the associated suite of KPIs with the new administration's priorities, Corporate Plan and the Local Government Outcomes Framework metrics.

72 Annual H&S Performance Report 2024/25

The Health and Safety Performance Report was presented by the Portfolio Holder for Finance who explained it was a routine, factual update. He asked Cabinet to note its contents and pay particular attention to the points highlighted.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report, particularly noting:

Good progress has been maintained during 2024-2025 on managing health safety and wellbeing across the Council. Internal Targets for 2025-2026:

- Auditing/compliance checks across Directorates.
- Procurement and delivery of Management Training course.
- Review and respond to changes that arise from restructure of teams in light of the Resizing programme.
- Staff Protection Register – implementation of corporate system to coordinate and collate risk information relating to Potentially Violent Persons and premises of concern relevant to service areas.

73 Skateboard & BMX Pump Track Provision in Oswestry

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reminded members that Cabinet had asked for the matter to return within a month so progress could be made. The proposal was to work in partnership with Oswestry Town Council, which had agreed to contribute and undertake the groundwork for the project with Shropshire Council handling the legal work to transfer the site.

The report identified four potential sites in Shropshire Council's ownership for the pump track.

The Green Group Leader and local member for Oswestry South asked about criteria used to identify sites, feeling that two potential sites were missing from the list. He also highlighted the importance of natural surveillance, proximity to services, accessibility for new housing developments, and the need for lighting and CCTV and expressed strong opposition to the inclusion of the Coppice as a potential site, citing environmental damage and local opposition. Cabinet members said that the Town Council would be able to consult on all proposed sites and make the final decision on location.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree that Oswestry Town Council undertake the final consultation to determine the preferred site.
2. To agree that a lease will be put in place for the site OTC select from those shortlisted and delegates to the Head of Property and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to agree terms and finalise the lease for the agreed piece of land for a pump track and or skate park to be built based on the outcome of the consultation.
3. To agree that Oswestry Town Council carry out detailed feasibility and design work to determine what the new facility will look like.

74 Update on Severn Valley Water Management Scheme

The report was presented by the Deputy Portfolio Holder Highways and Environment, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder with the Portfolio Holder Transport and Economic Growth. The Severn Valley Water Management Scheme (SVWMS) was a major initiative to address flooding in Shropshire and the wider Marches region by working with nature to

reduce flood risk, restore habitats, and improve water quality. The forward thinking, innovative and collaborative approach would transform vulnerable land into spaces that support water storage, biodiversity, and carbon capture.

The scheme was built on strong partnerships between councils, farmers, landowners, and communities. It focused on prevention and delivering multiple benefits keeping people safe, protecting jobs and securing Shropshire's future through flood resilience, environmental gains, and rural economic strength. Cabinet approval would begin immediate community engagement and consultation, ensuring local voices shaped the strategy from the outset.

There was a commitment to consult with every layer affected by the scheme, including town and parish councils, residents, and the Welsh Government

Members noted that communities were already aware of the scheme and are beginning to discuss local resilience measures. The importance of integrating the scheme with local planning policy was highlighted, ensuring strong policy support for water management and resilience. The need for ongoing communication and transparency with affected communities was stressed.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the Council's role as part of the SVWMS Joint Project Board and in advocating for a water management approach which maximises benefits for the cross border communities in Shropshire and Powys.
2. To endorse and support the next stage of public and stakeholder consultation for the SVWMS, undertaking this jointly through the Joint Project Board.
3. To delegate to the Chief Executive, responsibility for progressing the Council's support for the SVWMS through the Joint Project Board and agree to embedding the programme within the Marches Forward Partnership, thereby ensuring a joined-up approach to cross border working between Shropshire and Powys.

75 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

76 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

To confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 as a correct record.

77 Education Place Planning Phase 4

78 Special Education Needs Provision - Capital Works

79 **Chief Executive and Chief Officer 2025/26 Pay Award Options**

80 **Date of Next Meeting**

Signed (Chairman)

Date: