

**Committee and Date**

Cabinet

11 February 2026

CABINET**Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 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, Alex Wagner, Bernie Bentick, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, Ruth Houghton, James Owen, Rob Wilson, David Vasmer and David Walker

In attendance

Councillor Dawn Husemann (Group Leader – Reform UK), Councillor Rosemary Dartnall (Group Leader – Labour), Councillor Dan Thomas (Group Leader – Conservatives), Councillor Duncan Kerr (Group Leader – Green and Progressive Independent Group, via Teams)

Councillor Ed Potter (Chair of Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Robert Jones (Local Member)

Tanya Miles – Interim Chief Executive, Rachel Robinson – Executive Director for Public Health, Mannie Ketley – Finance Director (via Teams), Tim Collard – Service Director for Legal & Governance (via Teams), Duncan Whitfield – Interim Director for Finance for Improvement (via Teams), Daniel Powner - Service Manager, Community Partnerships and Day Opportunities (via Teams), Ashley Kendrick – Democratic Services Officer

102 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from James Walton, Executive Director (S151).

103 Disclosable Interests

No declarations were received.

104 Minutes**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2025 be approved as a correct record.

105 Public Question Time

Four public questions were received:

Geoff Elner, in relation to winter preparedness. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport committed to reviewing the winter

maintenance programme, maintaining open communication with stakeholders and it was hoped that the grit bins in Ellesmere would be filled by the end of the week.

John Palmer, in relation to Covid-19. In response to a supplementary question regarding the number of Cabinet members who had read the inquiry report, the Portfolio Holder for Health advised that he would need to consult with members before providing a response.

Christopher James, in relation to road safety audits. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Economic Growth confirmed that the recommendation of the task and finish group for an audit had been commissioned as the interim Stage 3 audit, and he committed to sharing the report once available.

Megan Frost, in relation to Shrewsbury Sports Village. In response to concerns about the potential closure of the Quarry pool, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure stated there were no current plans to close the Quarry, but acknowledged the risk. It was noted that there was ongoing investment in the Quarry to reduce closure risk and a commitment was given to reviewing all options for future swimming provision.

The questions and answers provided can be found [here](#).

106 Member Question Time

Three members' questions were received:

Councillor Julian Dean, in relation to energy planning.

Councillor Harry Hancock-Davies, in relation to the fraud investigation motion.

Councillor Craig Emery, in relation to signage and white lining. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment confirmed that road marking and signage will be part of the review for any new contract or in-house service delivery, with a paper coming to cabinet in the future.

The full questions and answers provided can be found [here](#).

107 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

108 Draft Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2029/30

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (to be known as a Plan in future), highlighting the Council's financial challenges, reliance on exceptional financial support, and the need to borrow up to £130 million. He highlighted the disparity in funding between rural and urban authorities.

Members noted that a public consultation on budget proposals was conducted, with findings to inform the final MTFS. The Portfolio Holder assured members that the Council was working to be transparent, increase staff capacity, and improve internal competence, with scrutiny reports being brought forward.

Members were advised that the MTFS represented a realistic assessment of the Council's financial position; transformation and improved processes are expected to chip away at the funding gap. It was clarified that the MTFS presented a worst-case scenario, and any successful transformation would improve the outlook.

Cabinet members called for cross-party and MP support to lobby for fairer funding and interest terms, stressing the impact on residents and the importance of joint action.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Work with Officers during Q4 in the current year and into 2026/27 to develop a Financial Sustainability Strategy and transformation and change programme which will deliver savings and generate income, in order to reduce the duration of time for which EFS (exceptional financial support) is required across the medium-term financial period.
2. Work with Officers during Q4 in the current year and into 2026/27 through the establishment of a joint working group to develop and progress an approach to business and budget planning.
3. Ask Officers to continue to work with MHCLG in support of its application for exceptional financial support and actions required to return to financial stability.

109 Capital Strategy 2025/26 – 2030/31 - In-Year Review

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the draft capital plan, noting that many previously approved schemes are paused or under review due to financial constraints. The focus is on statutory and operational priorities, with further changes dependent on government decisions regarding borrowing and funding.

The Portfolio Holder explained that paused projects may resume if financial conditions improve, and some are being actively pursued as circumstances allow.

Members noted that an urgent asset review was planned to identify surplus assets for potential sale, but the Council will avoid a “fire sale” to ensure best value.

The use of S106/SIL developer contributions was under review to support essential projects, but funds may be insufficient for large-scale schemes.

Members were advised that the Council aimed to improve grant funding applications and partnership working to deliver capital projects without increasing debt.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved progression of next steps as identified in Appendix A for Council funded capital schemes within the Capital Programme.
2. Approved progression of next steps as identified in Appendix B for Priority schemes within the Capital Strategy.
3. To commence work in Quarter 1 of 2026/27 on an accelerated review of all Council owned and leased land and building assets, in order to inform a refreshed Capital Strategy for the next 5 years which is aligned to enabling financial stability for the Council.

110 Approval of Shropshire Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30 and new Shropshire Hills National Landscape Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure introduced the management plan, explaining it sets out partnership priorities for the next five years, focusing on improving the area for both residents and visitors, expanding biodiversity, decarbonisation, and flood management. The plan is advisory, not binding, and implementation depends on securing external funding.

The plan was welcomed, and the importance of balancing landscape protection with sustainable development for local communities, affordable housing, and tourism was emphasised.

Concerns were raised that the plan could overly restrict development, potentially harming rural families, farm diversification, and affordable housing. There was support for limiting large-scale renewable energy in the area, but also a call to protect productive farmland and support local agriculture. It was clarified that the management plan cannot block all development and that the Local Plan will address genuine community needs, with cross-council collaboration to ensure balanced growth.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet formally approve on behalf of Shropshire Council the new Shropshire Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.
2. That Cabinet formally approve on behalf of Shropshire Council the Terms of Reference for the new Shropshire Hills National Landscape Advisory Committee.

111 Baschurch Neighbourhood Plan - Area Designation

The Portfolio Holder for Planning introduced the proposal to designate Baschurch parish as a neighbourhood plan area, explaining it aligned with Shropshire's objectives for a healthy economy and environment and allowed the community to shape local development policies. He encouraged broad community participation in the steering group to ensure the plan reflects local needs.

The local member spoke in support, highlighting that neighbourhood planning empowers residents to influence growth, protect green spaces, set design expectations, and prioritise

local infrastructure needs such as GP capacity, schools, roads, and reopening the railway station. He requested continued officer support for the process.

RESOLVED:

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

112 Recommendation for the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review to Proceed to Referendum

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report seeking cabinet approval to proceed to a local referendum on the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan review, noting the plan had undergone consultation, drafting, and independent examination, with positive feedback from the examiner.

Councillor Thomas, as Shropshire Councillor, Mayor of Much Wenlock, and Chair of the Steering Group, urged approval, emphasising the plan's balance between preserving heritage and enabling vibrant, practical development. He highlighted extensive community involvement and the plan's alignment with Shropshire's Local Plan.

The Cabinet expressed support for communities planning their own futures, noting the challenge for smaller parishes to undertake such work.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed:

1. The Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review meets the 'Basic Conditions' and all the other legal requirements as summarised in the Independent Examiner's Report, subject to the modifications proposed in the Schedule of Modifications (Appendix 2)
2. The required modifications be agreed, and that the final 'referendum' version of Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review (Appendix 3) proceed to local referendum.
3. The referendum area be that as defined as the designated area to which the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Review relates.

113 Provider Services Redesign (in-house)

The Portfolio Holder for Social Care introduced proposals for the redesign of in-house provider services, including consultation on the closure of specific day centres and a wider review of day service provision. Members noted that the consultation would include drop-in options, one-to-one discussions, and accessible communications for users and families. Equality and health impact assessments will be updated after consultation.

Concern was expressed for affected residents but members acknowledged the lack of statutory duty and financial viability.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised efforts to mitigate impacts by signposting users to alternative services and supporting community-based options, especially in Ludlow.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- (i) agreed public consultation for 8 weeks on the future of Helena Lane Day Service, including the potential option to close the service. New admissions should be paused during the consultation period to avoid further impact.
- (ii) agreed public consultation for 8 weeks on the potential transfer of the Aquamira day service to the Abbots Wood site.
- (iii) endorsed public engagement for 8 weeks on the reprovision of the remaining InHouse Day Services Provision.

Following the period of consultation, final recommendations will be presented to Cabinet for determination.

114 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.

115 Leisure Service Contract Retendering

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed the recommendations contained within the report.

116 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 11 February 2026.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: