

**Committee and Date**

Economy and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12th March 2026

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2026**

In the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

6.00 p.m. – 8.10 p.m.

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend Committee Officer

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Present:

Councillors Ed Potter (Chairman), Sam Walmsley (Vice-Chair), Donna Edmunds, Craig Emery, Gary Groves, Brendan Mallon, Chris Naylor, Wendy Owen and Sharon Ritchie-Simmons

Other Members in Attendance:

Councillor Bernie Bentick – Portfolio Holder for Health

Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance (remotely)

Councillor Dawn Husemann – Group Leader (remotely)

Councillor David Vasmer – Portfolio Holder for Highways & Environment

Officers in Attendance:

Claire Braddock – Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Rhian Cains – Interim Head of Legal Services

Tom Dodds – Scrutiny Manager

Lisa Gardner – Development Officer, Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership

Rachel Robinson – Executive Director Public Health

Gavin Waite – Waste Management Services Manager

Duncan Whitfield – Director: Financial Improvement

36 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alan Holford and David Minnery. There were no substitutes in attendance.

37 Disclosable Interests

There were no interests declared.

38 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13th November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

39 Public Question Time

A public question had been received from Mr John Palmer regarding the introduction of weekly food waste collections and not adhering to legislation. Mr Palmer was in attendance to ask his question and the response to the question was provided by the Chairman. A full copy of the question and response provided is available from the web page for the meeting.

40 Member Question Time

No member questions had been received.

41 Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2024-25

The Executive Director Public Health and the Development Officer, Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership introduced the report which fulfilled the Community Safety Partnerships statutory duty to produce a needs assessment and its duty for committee to review and scrutinise decisions made and actions undertaken by the Responsible Authorities for Community Safety in Shropshire. The report outlined the key actions and achievements realised by Shropshire's Community Safety Partnership during the 2024-25 period. It also provided an overview of the strategic plans and priorities that are currently being developed for the forthcoming year, 2025-26.

It was noted that the year was marked by significant organisational change as the partnership transitioned back into three separate boards and that whilst it was a year of change, there were several achievements to be celebrated.

Members asked why Shropshire Council contributed 62% of the Community Safety Partnership budget and how this figure was set. Officers explained that the budget shown is for the partnership which supports all three boards so, it supports the Adults and Children's Safeguarding and the Community Safety Partnership and the Council contributes more because of its wider statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

It was questioned how reductions in crime and antisocial behaviour and violence could be confidently attributed to Community Safety Partnership activity rather than standard policing. Officers commented that direct attribution was difficult, but multi-agency working has clearly strengthened local responses, with revived partnership meetings enabling earlier interventions and better joint problem-solving.

Questions were raised about how the Community Safety Partnership impact is measured and reported and it was confirmed that detailed dashboards, monitoring and police supported analysis existed internally. Whilst some data was officially sensitive and unable to be published, more detailed information could be shared with Members outside of the public meeting.

Clarification was sought on domestic homicide reviews, including the learning that is generated and how it is shared. Officers explained that domestic homicide reviews

focused on learning and prevention with the need for this to be effectively communicated whilst protecting family confidentiality,

A question was asked regarding the road safety priority and how it would be delivered. In responding, it was explained that a multi-agency group, chaired by the Fire Service, was analysing detailed collision data and developing an evidence based action plan aligned with national strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Health expressed confidence in the partnership's multi-agency work and encouraged people to continue reporting local concerns. It was noted that the Community Safety Partnership were aware of unreported crimes and in particular, conversations were happening around rural policing.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as detailed within the report be endorsed:

1. That the committee considers and notes the content of the report.
2. That the committee consider priorities proposed for 2025 - 2028 and how these will positively impact the lives of residents in Shropshire.

42 Introduction of Weekly Food Waste Collections

The Waste Management Services Manager introduced the report by outlining the new legal duty, arising from the Environment Act 2021 and subsequent Simpler Recycling Legislation, requiring Councils to provide weekly food waste collections to all households from 31 March 2026. A PowerPoint presentation outlining the various options was presented to the committee and it was explained that while Shropshire had received £3.6m in capital funding, no ongoing revenue funding had been provided, creating a substantial financial challenge.

The purpose of the report was for the committee to consider the three options detailed in table 7.9 of the report, taking into account resources and risks associated with implementing a weekly food collection, with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet on which of the proposed food waste collection options the Council should implement. Cabinet would then be considering this at their 11th March 2026 meeting. These three options were as follows:

- Option 1 – Do nothing.
- Option 2 – Introduce a fortnightly collection of food waste to all households collected with garden waste.
- Option 3 – Weekly food collection by introducing a fortnightly separate collection of food waste only.

It was noted that to implement Option 3 would create a £3.8m annual pressure and that the Council could not commit to delivery without clarity on funding.

Members questioned whether collecting food waste via the paid for garden waste service would breach legislation that prohibits charging residents for food waste collection. It was clarified that the Council would not be charging for food waste;

residents paying for garden waste would simply be allowed to place food waste into that bin as an interim measure. The fee remained solely for garden waste collection.

A question was raised about why the Council could not simply provide compost bins to all households, avoiding the need for new vehicles and revenue costs. The Waste Management Services Manager responded that while subsidised compost bins already exist and are encouraged, not all households can compost (e.g. flats, small gardens), and that the legislation still required a collection service for food waste, not just disposal options.

Members queried whether the Council had flexibility to use another contractor instead of Veolia, since the collection of weekly food waste was not part of the original PFI contract. It was confirmed that the Council is contractually bound to Veolia for all household waste collections.

Questions were asked about carbon impacts, with one member concerned that adding new collection rounds could create more emissions than the environmental benefit of food waste recycling. It was explained that under modelling, the overall system, accounting for energy recovery and other recycling activities, still produced a net positive carbon outcome and that more detailed figures could be shared separately.

Several questions focused on funding and the Interim Director Financial Improvement explained that although capital funding had been given, expected revenue funding had instead been rolled into the general settlement with no identifiable allocation, leaving a £3.8m annual funding gap. It was noted that there was currently no established case law or clear precedent regarding Defra's response to non-compliance with statutory weekly food waste collection requirements and that other councils were facing similar challenges, largely due to financial constraints, with some looking to implement it via a staged approach.

Concerns were raised regarding residents living in flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) asking how a food waste service would operate in areas without garden waste bins. It was acknowledged that around 12,000 such properties exist and that alternative smaller container systems would need to be developed so that these households could still participate.

It was questioned whether a longer formal transition period could be agreed with Defra, allowing the Council more time to reach full weekly collections. In responding, the Waste Management Services Manager explained that Defra allowed long transition periods only for authorities unable to collect food waste at all and that because Shropshire was already capable of collecting food waste with garden waste, Defra had rejected such an exemption.

Clarification was sought on practical issues, including what would happen during snow disruption and whether the collection of black bin frequency might change. It was explained that winter protocols would need revisiting because priorities could shift once food waste was separated. It was also confirmed that three weekly refuse collections had been modelled but were not considered viable without major further discussion.

RESOLVED:

- a) Following debate, the Committee did not reach a unanimous view. A vote resulted in an equal split (4–4) between the following two recommendations:

Recommendation 1 (supported by four members):

To recommend Option 1 (“Do nothing”), on the basis that:

- The Council wishes to deliver Option 3 (“Weekly food collection by introducing a fortnightly separate collection of food waste only”) in full but cannot responsibly implement the statutory requirement without the necessary ongoing revenue funding from Government.
- The Council should therefore not introduce a new unfunded statutory service and should maintain its current arrangements until Government meets its new burdens obligations.

Members supporting this recommendation considered it essential to make a stand against unfunded mandates.

Recommendation 2 (supported by four members):

To recommend Option 2 (“Introduce a fortnightly collection of food waste to all households collected with garden waste” using the existing garden waste rounds and new caddies), on the basis that:

- This provides universal access to food waste disposal for all households.
- It represents a practical and deliverable transitional arrangement while Government funding remains unresolved.
- It demonstrates progress towards compliance with statutory requirements without immediately incurring the full cost of a weekly service.

- b) Unanimous Additional Recommendation:

Regardless of the preferred option, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend that Cabinet:

- Undertake urgent and sustained lobbying of Government, including Defra, MHCLG, local MPs, the County Councils Network and other affected authorities.
- Seek clarity and appropriate ongoing revenue funding to deliver weekly food waste collections as required in legislation.
- Work collaboratively with other Councils facing similar challenges to present a coordinated position.

43 Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Chairman commented that the committee had been dealing mainly with urgent, reactive items coming from Cabinet and that it was now important to refocus on committee member led topics. He proposed holding a work programming session to review and refresh the committee’s future work plan, with an emphasis on creating capacity for task and finish groups to look at issues raised by members.

In responding to a question, the Chairman confirmed that existing task and finish work would continue to be revisited and that the Shrewsbury station gyratory would

be re-visited once the outstanding safety audit information was available. The committee agreed with this proposed approach.

44 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 Procedure Rules, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items.

45 Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13th November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

46 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee

It was noted that the next meeting of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday, 12th March 2026 commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Signed: (Chairman)

Date: