

**Committee and Date**

Cabinet

8 July 2026

CABINET**Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2026****In the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.30 am – 5.05 pm****Responsible Officer:** Amanda Holyoak

Email: amanda.holyoak @shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

Present

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

Group Leaders: Councillors Duncan Kerr (Green & Progressive Independent), Dawn Husemann (Reform UK)

175 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence from Cabinet Members. Councillor Dan Thomas, Conservative Group Leader sent his apologies.

176 Disclosable Interests

Councillors Ruth Houghton, James Owen and Alex Wagner all declared an interest in item 18, Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policies and all were absent from the room for the duration of this item.

177 Minutes**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

178 Public Question Time

Public questions were received from the following:

Jason Dorricott in relation to withdrawal of some grant funding to the Stroke Association

Caroline John, on behalf of Shrewsbury Residents Association, regarding the public register of premises licenses. By way of supplementary question she questioned the responses that she had received to previous enquiries about licenses and said that the Residents Association would be pleased to contribute to any review of the council's licensing function going forwards. The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited her to contact him outside of the meeting regarding issues she had raised.

Mike Streetly – in relation to provision of opportunities for staff and elected members to view the People's Emergency Briefing on the climate and nature crisis.

John Palmer – in relation to the council's housing enforcement work

Marion Atiken – (read on her behalf by Nino Binns and Derek Young) – in relation to the proposed closure of the day service at Helena Lane, Ludlow. A petition was also presented to the Leader of the Council

Care Johnson – in relation to the school streets pilot scheme at Woodside School in Oswestry

The questions and answers provided to them are available here: [Responses to Public Questions - Cabinet 10 June 2026.pdf](#)

The Leader also permitted other members of the public to ask questions during the consideration of the Helena Lane Older Peoples Day Service and Hills Ford Rally items later in the agenda.

179 Member Question Time

Member questions were received from the following:

Councillor Chris Lemon (read on his behalf by Cllr Duncan Kerr) - in relation to availability of public transport in Shropshire and when the Shropshire Transport Strategy would be published. By way of a supplementary question, Cllr Kerr asked when the Plan would be published and about discussions with town and parish councils about uses. The Portfolio Holder explained that work was ongoing to understand the costs of implementation, to avoid having a strategy with no route to delivery, and he welcomed the suggestion of working with town and parish councils on community transport in general.

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall – in relation to speed limits and road safety measures on London Road, Shrewsbury

Councillor Dawn Husemann – in relation to the Shirehall review and next steps

Councillor Susan Coleman (read on her behalf by Cllr Dawn Husemann) – in relation to the suitability of the Guildhall for the Council

Councillor Peter Husemann (read on his behalf by Cllr Dawn Husemann) – in relation to improvements needed to Bridgnorth High Street and availability of CIL funding

Councillor Thomas Clayton (read on his behalf by Cllr Dawn Husemann) – in relation to Key Performance Indicators and the clarity and consistency in use of RAG ratings. By way of supplementary question, Cllr Husemann asked that real numbers be presented in performance reports as well as percentages.

The full questions and responses provided to them are available from this link: [Responses to Member Questions - Cabinet 10 June 2026.pdf](#)

180 Scrutiny Items

Cllr Rosie Radford, introduced the report of the Task and Finish Group, a well-evidenced, significant scrutiny exercise, highlighting its importance in linking planning decisions with health outcomes and broader service delivery. And thanked all those who supported the work and evidence gathering – which was triangulated using a variety of view points. Strong foundation

Cllr Rosie Radford and Cllr Dawn Husemann, presented the Health in All Policies Task and Finish Group report as a thorough, evidence-based piece of scrutiny, emphasising that planning decisions are fundamentally about people and have a significant impact on health, wellbeing and independence. The need for early cross-department working between planning, health, housing and social care to improve outcomes was identified, policies must be practical and deliverable to ensure homes are actually built. She also underlined the importance of recognising Shropshire's rural context and sustaining community life, concluding that health and social outcomes must be more consistently embedded in planning and service delivery to reduce inequalities and support residents to live independent, healthy lives.

Members welcomed the report as a comprehensive and valuable piece of scrutiny work, with particular support for its emphasis on prevention and the links between planning, housing and health outcomes. Comments highlighted the importance of embedding health considerations more broadly across policy areas, whilst acknowledging that the Task and Finish Group had necessarily focused on planning. Members discussed the challenge of balancing ambition, particularly around affordable housing targets, with viability and deliverability, and emphasised the need for pragmatic, evidence-based approaches. There was strong support for improved early collaboration across services and for “designing out” issues at the outset of development, alongside suggestions to learn from other authorities and continue further scrutiny work in this area.

emphasised the importance of ensuring that policies deliver appropriate housing across all communities, including rural areas, to help people remain healthy and independent in their own homes, especially as they age or if they have disabilities, and thanked the Task and Finish Group for its comprehensive work.

Following discussion, Members reiterated the importance of recognising that health considerations should underpin all aspects of Council activity, not just planning, and supported the report's focus on prevention and long-term outcomes. Comments underlined that good design and appropriate housing can enable residents to remain independent for longer while also reducing future service pressures and costs to the Council. The overall tone was strongly supportive, with Members welcoming the report as a valuable contribution to shaping more joined-up, sustainable policy and service delivery across the authority.

□ Dawn highlighted that a key takeaway from the Task and Finish Group's work was the need for **earlier and better communication between planning and other service areas**.

□ She referenced case studies where **lack of early coordination (e.g. involving children's services and planning)** had led to **significant negative consequences for**

residents, particularly those supporting vulnerable groups such as looked-after children and adopters.

□ She stressed that this reinforced the Group's central message that **services must engage with each other at the right time to avoid problems and improve outcomes.**

a Scrutiny Item - Report of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee-Health in All Policies and Planning

Councillor Rosie Radford, previous Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Dawn Husemann, Chair of the Task and Finish Group presented the report. The Task and Finish Group had established the significant impact planning policy and practice could have on health, wellbeing and independence, supporting prevention, independence and reduced demand on adult social care and children's services. The review emphasised the need for early collaboration between planning, housing, public health and social care services to support healthy and sustainable communities, particularly in rural areas.

A question was raised regarding delivery of the Council's 40% affordable housing ambition and how a pragmatic approach would be balanced against this objective. In response, the Group advised that evidence gathered during the review demonstrated the importance of considering scheme viability to ensure developments are delivered, recommending greater focus on viability assessments to maximise the provision of suitable homes.

Cabinet commended the thorough evidence-based approach and supported the report's focus on prevention, accessibility, healthy communities and joined-up working. It fully endorsed the recommendations and agreed that a formal response and action plan be provided to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- To consider and comment on the report and recommendations of the Health in All Policies & Planning Task and Finish Group attached at Appendix I.
- To endorse those recommendations of the Task and Finish Group which relate to Shropshire Council, as set out in Section 8 of the appended report.
- To provide a formal response to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including an action plan setting out what will be done, by when, for recommendations that are accepted, and reasons for any recommendations that are not accepted.

181 Aquamira Learning Disability Day Service

Cabinet considered proposals to transfer the Aquamira Day Service to Abbots Wood and close the Aquamira building due to the Council's ongoing financial pressures. Members acknowledged the difficult nature of the decision and thanked service users, families,

carers and staff for their engagement during consultation. It was stressed that specialist day support would continue, with staff and sensory provision transferring to Abbots Wood to maintain continuity of care.

Questions were raised about the preventative value of the service and the loss of the hydrotherapy pool. Members were advised that Aquamira primarily provided support to vulnerable people with assessed Care Act eligible needs which were multiple, profound and complex, was not a preventative service, and that provision would continue from a different location, Abbots Wood. It was also noted that hydrotherapy was not a statutory local authority function and alternative provision could be accessed through NHS and community facilities where appropriate.

Cabinet noted that individual Care Act assessments and carers' assessments would be undertaken to ensure any transition meets the needs of service users. Members also highlighted that transport arrangements at Abbots Wood could provide greater opportunities for access to community activities.

RESOLVED:

To agree to transfer Aquamira Day Service to the Abbots Wood Site

To agree to delegate the practical arrangements to the Director (DASS) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

182 Helena Lane Older Peoples Day Service

Cabinet considered the proposal to close the Helena Lane Older People's Day Service in Ludlow. The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health both emphasised that this was a very difficult and regrettable decision, affecting people who valued and relied upon the service. It was stressed that the decision was one for Cabinet collectively, rather than an individual decision, and that it was being considered in the context of the Council's severe financial pressures. The Chair of the Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed that no concerns about process had been raised during its consideration of the report.

The Portfolio Holder explained that Helena Lane was a valued day service, but that usage had reduced significantly, with five people currently attending across ten visits per week. Members were advised that some current users self-funded their places at a fee significantly below the running cost, and that continuing the service in its current form cost the Council around £150,000 more per year than alternative arrangements. It was emphasised that the proposal was not to close the Helena Lane building, but to close the day service and meet individuals' needs in different ways following Care Act and carers' assessments. The Council did not have a duty to provide a service, but rather influence and shape the market so that needs could be met.

In response to comments made, the Portfolio Holder reported that the Council had met requirements of the Freedom of Information Act in responding to requests for information and had conducted two equality impact assessments, one at the outset and another taking into account feedback received through the consultation.

Stakeholders and service users in attendance spoke strongly about the impact of the proposed closure. Concerns were raised that, unlike Aquamira where the service was being relocated, Helena Lane users were being offered closure without an equivalent replacement. A family member stated that the service was essential to his wife and others, challenged the availability and suitability of alternatives, and highlighted wider demand in Ludlow, including people on a waiting list and future need arising from housing growth. Assurances were given that individual Care Act reviews would be undertaken, where personal circumstances were involved, to identify eligible needs and explore appropriate support options. The Council had a duty to provide a Care Act Assessment and a Carer's Assessment and people were actively encouraged to take up that offer.

Further stakeholder representations raised concerns that the service had not been properly promoted, that Helena Lane was purpose-built for day care, and that facilities such as bathing and showering were not available elsewhere on the same basis. It was suggested that the service had been allowed to decline over time through reduced opening days, transport changes, staffing reductions and lack of visibility in service information. Stakeholders questioned whether demand had been properly assessed and whether alternative provision, including Alexandra House and community-based options, would be sufficient or suitable.

Officers clarified that the Council's statutory duty was to assess eligible needs and arrange for those needs to be met, but not necessarily through a specific building-based day service. They advised that modern support for older people is increasingly personalised, often involving personal assistants, direct payments, domiciliary care or community-based support. Officers stated that the service had not been deliberately run down, but that changes over time had reflected attempts to manage costs and changing patterns of demand. Members were advised that the original model required around 20 attendees per day to be viable, compared with current much lower levels of attendance. Cabinet also noted that the local social work team was based in Helena Lane and people presenting to them had been aware of the service and its offer but the Council was finding that people wanted more personalised types of support, particularly in accessing their community.

Members discussed both the human and financial implications of the proposal. A Group Leader questioned whether the decision should be deferred until a petition opposing the closure had been debated at full Council, noting the importance of public engagement and ensuring residents felt heard. It was explained that the petition process was separate from Cabinet's executive decision-making role, and that the Council needed to make difficult decisions at pace in order to address its financial position. The strength of feeling expressed by stakeholders was acknowledged, including a direct plea from a service user who described Helena Lane as a "lifeline" and asked Cabinet not to close it.

In concluding the debate, the Leader reiterated that no member underestimated the impact of the decision or the distress caused to service users and families. She stated that the Council cared deeply about those affected, but it had to consider the wider financial position and its duties to all residents requiring social care. Cabinet agreed the recommendations to close the Helena Lane day service, with an emphasis on working with affected individuals and carers to undertake assessments and identify appropriate support. The decision was taken with clear regret, acknowledging both the impact of stakeholders and the difficult financial circumstances which had led to the proposal.

RESOLVED

- i. approve the closure of Helena Lane Older People's Day Service in Ludlow.
- ii. delegate authority to the Director of Adult Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health to implement closure through a managed transition, including Care Act assessment and/ or review for individuals and carers to secure alternative arrangements.
- iii. approve the mitigation and support arrangements set out in this report, including active engagement with current attendees and carers, Care Act assessment and/or review, carers' assessments where appropriate, person-centred transition planning, support to access suitable alternative provision, and monitoring during and after transition

183 Financial Outturn 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reported that the outturn reflected a significant adverse variance against what he described as an unrealistic and inadequate budget set by the previous administration, resulting in a substantial overspend and financial challenge for the Council.

There was recognition that financial pressures, particularly in social care, were driven by rising demand and costs, which remained difficult to predict and largely outside the Council's control.

Improvements in financial monitoring and governance were highlighted and welcomed, though concerns remained about achieving long-term financial resilience. The Council was operating in an exceptional financial context, requiring both cost reduction and targeted investment (e.g. transformation and prevention), creating difficult and sometimes conflicting decisions.

Members emphasised the need for greater transparency and earlier scrutiny involvement, including proposals for exception reporting to identify and address issues sooner.

Overall, the discussion reflected a shared understanding that the Council faces a prolonged and challenging journey, requiring continued discipline, improved forecasting, and difficult decision-making to reach a sustainable financial position.

RESOLVED:

In respect of the revenue budget:

- a) Note that the outturn variance in the year is £49.428m above budget.
- b) Note that £19.637m has been funded by EFS, leaving £29.278m to be funded from the General Fund reserves and balances.
- c) Note the consequent level of the General Fund Balance is £5.000m.
- d) Note the increase of £5.658m in Earmarked Reserves & Provisions and the resulting level of earmarked reserves of £29.812m (£25.113m is the balances held by schools are excluded).
- e) Note the £17.722m level of savings delivery achieved over the year.

- f) Note that the current combination of earmarked and un-earmarked (General) reserves of £34.069m is at a level that is below that would normally be seen as appropriate for a Council of this size.
- g) Note that the MTFP sets out an agreed plan to restore these balances to more appropriate levels over time, including further requests for Exceptional Financial Support in 2026/27 and beyond.
- h) Note that £61.8m of EFS has been applied in 2025/26, some £9.6m less than what was requested originally and approved by MHCLG.

Related to ringfenced funding:

- i) Note the performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) this is an account associated with Shropshire Councils housing stock - £1.372m (5.75%) surplus outturn for 2025/26 on £23.861m turnover, and the resulting level of the HRA reserve of £13.489m.
- j) Note the £28.029m overspend for the DSG and the consequent level of the DSG reserve of £45.655m in deficit.
- k) Note that the level of school balances has decreased by £1.994m, from £6.693m in 2024/25 to £4.699m, in the financial year.

In respect of the capital programme:

- l) Note the net budget variations of £26.932m to the 2025/26 capital programme (in Appendix 7) and the re-profiled 2025/26 capital budget of £77.375m.
- m) Note the re-profiled capital budgets of £145.380m for 2026/27, including slippage of £15.258m from 2025/26, £129.536m for 2027/28 and £89.113m for 2028/29 as detailed in Appendix 11.
- n) Accept the outturn expenditure set out in Appendices 8, 9 and 13 of £68.698m representing 88.79% of the revised capital budget for 2025/26.
- o) Approve retaining a balance of capital receipts set aside of £22.309m as at 31st March 2026 to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.363m in 2026/27.

General

- p) Note that these outturn results will now be incorporated in financial statements for external audit and oversight by the Audit and Governance Committee
- q) Note that the Finance risk register is subject to review and will be incorporated in the July Cabinet report that will provide an updated MTFP?.

184 Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance outlined the treasury management activities of the Council in the fourth quarter of 2025 – 2026 highlighting the economic environment in which decisions had been made. All activity was aligned with the Council mid-year Treasury update strategy and prudential indicators.

RESOLVED:

- a) To note that new borrowing of £100m for the General Fund has been taken out during quarter 4, in line with the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26.
- b) To note that this borrowing includes borrowing undertaken in line with the Council's approval from government for Exceptional Financial Support for 2025/26.

- c) To note that the drawdown for Exceptional Financial Support was some £9.6m less than approved, thereby reducing future revenue costs by c £900,000 per annum over original estimates.
- d) To note the summary of the wider economic environment and the Council's borrowings and investments set out in Appendix A.
- e) To note the performance within prudential indicators for quarter 4, 2025/26 in Appendix B.

185 Q4 Performance Report

The Leader set out the final performance report for the Shropshire Plan 2022–25 and the proposed framework for the Corporate Plan 2026–30. While performance was mixed, strengths were noted in adult social care, children's services, planning performance and reductions in temporary accommodation, with concerns raised about waste and recycling, Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) timeliness, staff sickness and school readiness. Members stressed the importance of linking performance more clearly to outcomes, financial sustainability and resident benefit.

The Leader and officers advised that the new framework would evolve to include both KPIs and measurable delivery commitments, providing a clearer assessment of progress against Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes. It was also noted that EHCP delays reflect increasing national demand, although a local recovery plan remains on track.

Members also questioned whether some environmental indicators adequately demonstrate local impact and value for money. Officers acknowledged the limitations of nationally prescribed measures and confirmed that performance indicators would be reviewed to ensure they were meaningful, locally relevant and focused on tangible outcomes.

RESOLVED:

To note the progress and position against the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan.

To approve the proposed Corporate Plan 2026-2030 Performance Management Framework (Appendix 1 and 2) and delegate authority to the Service Director (Strategy & Change) in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any final amendments to KPIs and delivery commitments

186 Local Transport Plan - Consultation

Cabinet discussed the importance of the Local Transport Plan in providing a clear strategic framework for decision-making, helping to avoid unaffordable projects and strengthening the Council's ability to secure external funding.

The affordability and realism of the Plan was questioned, particularly in relation to consultation costs, road maintenance and the practicality of public transport provision in a predominantly rural county. In response, it was clarified that consultation costs were

significantly lower than suggested, that transport funding was often ring-fenced for specific purposes, and that the Plan was necessary to ensure accountability and alignment between priorities and available resources.

Members emphasised the need to balance continued reliance on private vehicles with increased transport choice, recognising that while many residents depend on cars, bus services and active travel was important for accessibility, health and independence, particularly for those without access to a vehicle.

The importance of a wide and inclusive consultation process was also highlighted, with confirmation that engagement would be available through a range of accessible channels and that members would have a key role in promoting participation across their local communities, including rural areas.

RESOLVED

To approve the development of an engagement and consultation strategy and associated programme of activities on the draft Local Transport Plan for Shropshire 2027-2037.

187 Commissioning and Procurement Strategy

Cabinet welcomed the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy as an important tool for improving efficiency and outcomes, while recognising that success would depend on effective implementation, strong governance and organisational accountability. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for robust contract management, better use of data and strengthened commercial skills across the Council.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that a number of contracts were due to end within similar timescales, creating pressures which would be addressed through improved forward planning and consideration of longer-term contracts where appropriate. It was also confirmed that decisions on whether services were delivered in-house or externally will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Strengthened arrangements were outlined, including central procurement oversight, enhanced scrutiny at the commissioning stage, improved governance, new contract monitoring systems and greater engagement with local providers. Members noted that work was underway to improve consistency in contract management and embed training across the organisation as part of a longer-term programme of improvement.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Commissioning, Procurement and Contract Management Strategy (CPCM) in appendix 1;

To delegate authority to the Service Director Commissioning in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance to update the strategy annually aligned to any legislation change and best practice.

188 Children's Services Reforms

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education set out the ambition to rebalance spending towards early help and prevention. Cabinet acknowledged that this would require upfront investment without guaranteed short-term savings, creating financial risk.

Questions were raised about the evidence base for projected benefits, delivery capacity, reliance on partners, and workforce pressures, alongside the need for clearer financial modelling, measurable outcomes, and contingency planning. The approach used was based on national best practice, learning from other authorities, and external challenge, but demand and outcomes could not be predicted with certainty.

Discussion focused on special educational needs and disabilities and the rising demand for education, health and care plans (EHCPs). Recovery plans were in place and reforms aimed to improve early identification and inclusive support in mainstream settings. Officers also highlighted ongoing work to manage placement costs, strengthen commissioning, and explore options for local provision, including foster care and residential capacity, while maintaining safe and effective services.

RESOLVED:

3.1 To note the work completed to rebalance the Children's Services budget for 2026/27, alongside managing the additional known pressures for this financial year.

3.2 To note the successful work already undertaken to safely reduce the total number of children in care.

3.3 To note the nationally prescribed children's reforms and programmes outlined in this report and the expectations they place on Shropshire Council and its multi-agency partnership arrangements.

3.4 To note the investment requirements of up to circa £8million over 4 years to deliver an anticipated £21 million savings for the local authority contained in the report and instructs the Director for Children's Services and the Section 151 officer to make arrangements to include these estimates within the councils Medium Term Financial Plan for future consideration by Cabinet with a view to approval by Council.

3.5 To endorse that the Families First Partnership (FFP) requires multi-agency agreement of operating models and supporting business cases for Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), to drive earlier intervention and that these will be progressed through the relevant safeguarding partnership governance.

3.6 To endorse the Council's proposed integrated approach to deliver these reforms through a single Children's Transformation Programme ("one plan to guide them all"), aligned to the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and the thematic pillars (Point 4.32) set out in the report and recommends it approval to Council.

3.7 To endorse the draft Best Start in Life (BSIL) Family Hubs Delivery Plan (outlined in 4.45 of this report), including the requirement to enhance the supporting digital offer

(including a GDPR-compliant registration/insight system) to enable effective engagement, communication and timely access to support for families.

3.8 To endorse that progress, delivery risks and mitigations will be monitored through the governance structure described in the report (Section 8 of this report) with at least annual updates provided to Cabinet and the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.9 To approve the proposed locations for the three BSIL Family Hubs in Shrewsbury (at The Lantern), Oswestry and Ludlow, and the proposed additional multi-disciplinary team (MDT) bases in Highley, Market Drayton and South Shrewsbury, to provide coverage across the county's rural geography.

3.10 To delegate authority to approve the final BSIL Delivery Plan for submission to the Department for Education (due 12th June 2026) to the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

3.11 To delegate authority for exploring and confirming premises options for Oswestry, Ludlow and the additional multi-disciplinary team bases to the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. Ensuring that they are considered in conjunction with the current Community and Family Hub locations, on-going Council Asset review and the development of the NHS Neighbourhood programme to strike a balance between efficient use of public sector assets and effective delivery across the county's rural geography.

3.12 To delegate authority to approve, on behalf of Shropshire Council, the Council's participation in, and commitments arising from, the Family First Partnership business cases (including any Council owned implementation decisions and associated resourcing or locality work base implications) to the Chief Executive (as Lead Safeguarding Partner), in consultation with the Director for Children's Services (as Delegated Safeguarding Partner) and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

3.13 To delegate authority to approve the Council's position on consequential updates required to the local safeguarding framework documentation, including the Threshold Document (including any renaming), Local Protocol, Escalation Policy, and Information Sharing Agreement, as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, to the Chief Executive (as Lead Safeguarding Partner), in consultation with the Director for Children's Services (as Delegated Safeguarding Partner) and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

3.14 To delegate authority to approve the Local Area SEND Reform Plan for submission to the Department for Education (deadline 19 June 2026) to the Director for Children's Services and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education, working with system partners as required, particularly the Integrated Care System (ICS) Executive Lead for SEND, noting the financial implications described in the report (including eligibility for up to 90% High Needs Stability Grant historic deficit write-off subject to Department for Education approval). The latest draft versions are included as Appendix F and G.

189 St. Andrews, Shifnal – Asset Decision

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report seeking approval to declare St Andrew's, Shifnal, surplus to requirements and authorise its disposal as a non-core asset. The previous leaseholder surrendered the lease in May 2025 and, following consideration through the Community Asset Transfer process, retention of the building was not considered viable. Disposal of the asset would provide a capital receipt to support the Council's future investment priorities.

A concern was raised regarding the loss of a community facility in a growing town and the perceived lack of partnership working with Shifnal Town Council; and that financial pressures should not override the need to protect valued local facilities.

It was confirmed that the property had been offered to Shifnal Town Council through the Community Asset Transfer process at nil consideration, and that extensive discussions had taken place. The Town Council had commissioned its own condition survey and subsequently decided not to proceed with the transfer due to the building's condition. Officers confirmed that no further requests had been received following the conclusion of that process. Cabinet also noted the Council's financial position and the Government's expectation that surplus assets should be disposed of where appropriate to reduce borrowing requirements.

Cabinet agreed that, given the building's poor condition and lack of a viable community transfer proposal, the asset should be declared surplus and disposed of.

RESOLVED

To declare St Andrews, Shifnal (in accordance with the red line plan detailed in Appendix 1) surplus to requirements and approve its disposal as a non-core asset.

To delegate authority to the Head of Property and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to take all necessary steps to progress disposal, including title resolution, determination of the appropriate disposal strategy and completion of the sale in accordance with the Council's constitutional and legal requirements.

190 Hills Ford Rally

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval of the Motor Race Order and associated Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders required to facilitate the Hills Ford Stages Rally in September. Members were advised that the event would include approximately 140 competing vehicles and was expected to provide a significant economic benefit to Shropshire, with an estimated visitor spend of around £750,000. The decision before Cabinet related only to the road closures and traffic management arrangements, rather than approval of the rally itself, and ongoing discussions with organisers would continue if approval were granted.

Public questions were received from Peter Phillips – in relation to particular concerns about the Linley section of the route and David Taylor, Vice Chair of Pulverbatch Parish Council in relation to the proposed road closure in Church Pulverbatch. A member question was also presented by Cllr Chris Naylor in relation to concerns raised by rural Pulverbatch residents and Parish Council and whether these had been received and

considered. Questions covered the potential impact on the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, tranquillity, wildlife, tourism, farming operations, public rights of way and local businesses. Concerns were expressed that residents could experience lengthy access restrictions, that visitor attractions and holiday accommodation businesses could be affected, and that vulnerable road users including walkers, cyclists and horse riders would be inconvenienced.

Questions were also raised about lessons learned from a previous rally proposal in Herefordshire, the adequacy of consultation undertaken by organisers and whether further consideration should be given to removing specific route sections.

Officers confirmed that representations received had been reviewed as part of the assessment process and that the proposed route had already undergone revisions. It was confirmed that the event had received a Motorsport UK permit, that insurance arrangements were in place, and that no fundamental operational or technical issues had been identified that could not be addressed through mitigation measures. Officers explained that road closures for competitive stages would operate for approximately 2½ hours in the morning and afternoon, with managed access arrangements where operationally safe, and that environmental, agricultural, access and community issues remained the subject of ongoing discussions with organisers.

During the debate, questions were raised by members present about the extent of consultation with affected communities, particularly relating to routes between stages, the impact on rural residents and farming operations, and the suitability of holding a rally within the National Landscape. Some members argued that Shropshire Council had a duty to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty and tranquillity and questioned whether the environmental impacts outweighed the benefits. Requests were made for further mitigation measures and consideration of alternative routes, particularly for the Linley and Pulverbatch sections.

Other members highlighted the wider economic and tourism benefits of the event, noting that some disruption was inevitable with major events but could be managed through appropriate planning and engagement. It was argued that similar community concerns arose with other large events and that a balance must be struck between temporary inconvenience and economic opportunities for local businesses. Rally organisers had committed to ongoing engagement with residents, businesses and parish councils, and that measures would be in place to inspect and repair any damage to roads or verges following the event.

Following a free vote, Cabinet approved the recommendations to make the necessary road closure orders, with six members voting in favour and three against. Cabinet requested that further work continue with organisers, local members and affected communities to address outstanding concerns, particularly in relation to the Pulverbatch and Linley sections, and that any mitigation measures and revised arrangements be communicated to those affected as the event planning process progressed.

RESOLVED

3.1 Consider the proposal to hold the Hills Ford Rally in Shropshire and, if agreed to approve the Motor Race Order and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders required to facilitate the Hills Ford Stages Rally on 19–20 September 2026;

3.2 In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways & Waste, delegate authority to the Service Director for Infrastructure to finalise and implement the associated TTROs and operational arrangements should approval be granted.

191 Town and Parish Council Asset Transfers (Verbal Update)

The Portfolio Holder for Assets provided a verbal update on the ongoing programme of asset transfers to parish and town councils. Members noted that the transfer of Albrighton Skate Park to Albrighton and Donington Parish Council had been successfully completed, as had the transfer of the Langley Old Play Area to Stoke upon Tern Parish Council, with plans to reinstate the facility for local children and young people. Further transfers and discussions were progressing with a number of councils, including Oswestry Town Council, Bridgnorth, Whittington, Ellesmere, Ellesmere Rural, Craven Arms and Ashford Carbonell. The Council remained committed to working collaboratively with parish and town councils where community assets could be more effectively managed locally for the benefit of residents.

192 Improvement Plan - Progress Report

The Leader presented a six-month progress update on delivery of the Council's Improvement Plan, approved in December 2025 in response to the Council's financial emergency and external recommendations. Members noted that progress was broadly on track, with key milestones achieved including securing Exceptional Financial Support, setting a realistic 2026/27 budget, strengthening financial management, improving governance and compliance, and developing the new Corporate Plan and supporting strategies. Positive feedback had been received from the externally chaired Improvement Board and peer reviewers.

It was recognised that the Council continued to face challenges relating to finance, capacity and capability, and that recovery would require sustained cultural change, improved workforce capacity and disciplined delivery over several years. Assurance was provided that detailed transformation proposals and an updated Medium Term Financial Plan would be brought forward over the coming months, with an emphasis on maintaining momentum, robust due diligence and continued support and investment in the workforce as the Council's most important asset.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report and the progress it summarises.
2. To provide guidance and instructions as appropriate on the Council's plans for continued improvement and financial sustainability.

193 Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement & Civil Penalty Policies

Councillors James Owen, Alex Wagner and Ruth Houghton had declared an interest in this item and were not present in the room for the duration of the debate and decision.

Cabinet considered the proposals for Housing Authority Enforcement and Civil Penalty Policies to implement the requirements of the Renters' Rights Act 2025. The legislation strengthened tenant protections and required the Council to take a more proactive approach to enforcing standards in the private rented sector. The policies provided a clear and consistent framework for enforcement, with provision for future updates and a formal review in June 2027.

During discussion, members supported the need to tackle poor housing conditions while ensuring enforcement remained proportionate and did not discourage responsible landlords. Officers confirmed that the Council would continue to work proactively with landlords and tenants, monitor the impact on the local rental market and use Government funding to support both enforcement and preventative work.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy, to take effect immediately, with transitional arrangements allowing the existing policies to operate in tandem for a six-month period to conclude legacy cases.
2. To delegate to the Service Director - Communities and Customer to undertake required updates to the Shropshire Housing Authority Enforcement Policy and Civil Penalty Policy as the implementation of the Renter's Rights Act continues, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
3. To direct that a formal review of the policies to come back for consideration in June 2027, with any delegated changes made in accordance with Recommendation 2 should be reported to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

194 Adoption of Design of New Dwellings and Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report seeking adoption of two Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) providing design guidance for new dwellings and for residential extensions and alterations. These had been informed by public consultation and would support applicants, communities and planning officers in interpreting existing design policies when determining planning applications, while remaining as guidance rather than policy.

During discussion, concerns were raised that overly prescriptive design guidance could affect viability, limit architectural creativity and create unnecessary barriers for householders seeking to extend or adapt their homes. In response, the Portfolio Holder and officers emphasised that the SPDs would not dictate design outcomes but provide a framework for achieving good design, with all planning applications continuing to be assessed on their individual merits. It was noted that the guidance would assist both

applicants and decision-makers while allowing flexibility where justified by site-specific circumstances.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve adoption of the Design of New Dwellings SPD (Appendix 1), to provide guidance on the application of Development Plan policies and to form a material consideration in the planning application decision-making process.
2. To approve adoption of the Design of Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD (Appendix 2), to provide guidance on the application of Development Plan policies and to form a material consideration in the planning application decision-making process.

195 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8 July 2026 at 10.30 am

Signed (Chairman)

Date: