Appendix A

Shropshire Council

Corporate Plan Performance report Quarter 1 2026/27

Rebuilding Shropshire Together

Quarterly progress and impact report - Introduction

Quarter1 2026/27 has seen a number of new and refreshed strategies and plans that, together with the Improvement Plan provide direction for the council over the next 12 months and beyond:

- At Council on the 14 May 2026 our Corporate Plan for 2026-2030 was adopted, confirming the priority ambitions and focus for the council over the next 4 years, and confirming the Future Council Principles role in how these will be delivered.
- This was closely followed by a refresh and reinforcement of our Performance Management Framework which was confirmed at Cabinet on the 10 June 2026.
- Our Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy was approved by 8 July 2026 Cabinet as part of the draft Medium-Term Financial Plan 2027/28 – 2031/32, setting out our 11-point route map to achieve this and reducing reliance on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

This quarterly report is the first in a new style that tells a more rounded story of the Council's progress and impact through its improvement and financial sustainability journey, delivering the Corporate Plan priority ambitions, the key decisions taken in the reporting period, and progress demonstrated by the key performance indicators (KPIs). A new and refreshed set of KPIs has been developed drawing on those previously reported that are relevant to the new Corporate Plan Delivery Commitments, measures from the MHCLG Local Outcomes Framework as well as some that have been locally defined.

The report is structured around each of the six priority ambitions but recognises that many of the programmes or work and projects being implemented are cross council and deliver more than one priority. It reports on an exception basis, which can be both positive where we should be celebrating successes and more negative where performance or progress has not been to plan. In doing so reflect the different delivery timescales that are being taken to develop and implement the programmes, projects and initiatives that will see the council achieve its priority ambitions over the next 4 years. As such each priority ambition may be covered in differing levels of detail each quarter.

Almost all of the corporate plan delivery commitments are on track to deliver the work in the timescales that have been set, with a number being completed as planned. A small number have been identified as likely to slip slightly on the timescales set out in the performance management framework reported to, but senior responsible officers are confident that this will have minimal implications on the overall delivery. A RAG rated view of the Delivery Commitments is attached at appendix B, and a summary table of overall RAG rating for each one is set out below.

Quarterly progress and impact report - Introduction and context

Priority Ambition (Summary)	Overall RAG – Delivery Commitments	Additional comment
Financially sustainable council	Green	1x minor change to timescales at Q1.
Connected communities	Green	1x minor change to timescales at Q1.
Safe inclusive places	Green	
Healthy and thrive	Green	1x change to timescales at Q1.
Environment and well-being	Green	
Thriving economy	Green	

Green	On target	Amber	Off target	Red	Original delivery date missed

The Corporate Plan KPIs provide a strategic view of the Council's performance in terms of the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Overall view of the Corporate Plan, forming the top layer of the performance management framework.

This link is to the Corporate Plan KPI Dashboard. A copy of the dashboard at Q1 is attached at appendix C. The dashboard provides a view of the most recent performance data which has been published nationally, a RAG rated view of how the council's performance compares to the national average, the direction of travel for the measure based on the previous reporting period.

Considered alongside the delivery commitments, the dashboard provides a baseline position to understand Shropshire Council's performance and is a tool to help inform understanding of progress and impact to help drive continuous improvement.

Shropshire Council

Progress and impact delivering our priority ambitions

A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel

Our Ambition	Our ambition is to secure the Council's financial future through clear priorities, strong governance, an engaged workforce and efficient, high-quality services. We will address our financial position, deliver robust and achievable savings plans, and remove the need for Exceptional Financial Support.

Delivering our priority ambition in quarter 1

The first quarter of 2026/27 has been about continuing to build the conditions for a more financially sustainable, well-governed and delivery-focused council. Early financial performance is positive, with a forecast underspend of £2.291m against the general fund budget and savings of £5.238m already forecast to be achieved, exceeding the £5m target for 2026/27, with a further £523k still to be delivered by March 2027. This progress is being reinforced by clearer strategies and stronger decision-making frameworks. The Commissioning and Procurement Strategy agreed by Cabinet in June now provides a stronger basis for managing externally delivered services and aligning future commissioning decisions with business and budget planning. At the same time, development of the refreshed Medium-Term Financial Strategy remains on track, supported by the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy's 11-point plan to reduce reliance on Exceptional Financial Support. A new business and budget planning approach will be rolled out in quarter 2 to support a more inclusive, disciplined and transparent budget-setting process ahead of Council in February 2027.

The council is also strengthening the foundations needed to modernise services and improve how residents experience support. The new Digital Strategy and route map will help transform how services operate and how quickly residents can get answers, while the Cyber Strategy strengthens the council's ability to protect data and systems. Delivery of the Improvement Plan remains central to building a more effective organisation, with the six-month progress report recognising the steps taken to June 2026 while reinforcing the need for continued focus through the rest of the year and beyond. Progress continues to be tested through Leadership Board, Improvement Board and independent review, supporting stronger financial management, clearer priorities and better conditions for staff to excel through the People Plan. However, there are also areas requiring sustained attention: sickness absence remains above target, with anxiety, stress, depression and related illness the main cause, and quarter 1 saw continued increases in Freedom of Information requests and complaints. Alongside this, the first phase of asset disposals is generating capital receipts to support the Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy, including decisions such as the disposal of St Andrews in Shifnal, while a developing Customer Charter will help reset the council's relationship with residents and customers by supporting a more responsive, resident-focused organisation.

What we are doing in quarter 2

- New Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord function
- Review of the council relationship with Cornovii Development Ltd
- Continued delivery of the Improvement Plan
- Continued delivery of the People Plan
- Asset decisions including The Future of Shirehall, Oswestry SUE Corner Site, Whitchurch Civic Centre & Library

Communities are connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure

Our Ambition

We want every community to be connected by safe, well-maintained roads and accessible, greener transport. Through improving infrastructure, journey times and access to public transport, and enabling and promoting options and opportunities for walking and cycling, we will reduce isolation. Linked to our inclusive growth plans this will help open-up opportunities to access work, education, healthcare and trade, strengthen wellbeing and protect the natural environment.

Delivering our priority ambition in quarter 1

Shropshire's transport and highways work is focused on delivering safer, more reliable and more sustainable journeys for residents, businesses and communities across a large rural county. Recent changes to Department for Transport funding mean that, for the first time since 2015, highways funding is now sufficient to reach a steady-state level. This creates an opportunity to arrest the decline of the highways asset, strengthen the evidence base and target investment where it will have the greatest impact. The refreshed Highways Maintenance Strategy and Inspection Policy, now due to be developed for October 2026, will support this by aligning national requirements with local need, asset condition and available resources. Condition surveys completed in 2025 provide the baseline for measuring progress and show that Shropshire is below the national average for A, B and C roads, reflecting the scale of maintenance pressures across an extensive and dispersed rural network.

The immediate priority is to stabilise the network by responding effectively to weather-related damage and continuing to tackle potholes. In quarter 1, 9,956 pothole repairs were completed, continuing an upward trend from 7,870 in Q2 2025/26, 7,120 in Q3 and 8,864 in Q4. Over time, as sustained investment becomes available, the focus will shift from reactive repairs towards a more planned and preventative approach that protects the asset and delivers better value. At the same time, public transport is beginning to show positive signs, with passenger journeys on local bus services increasing by 5.4% as a result of service enhancements, socially necessary routes, partnership working with operators and affordable fares. However, Shropshire remains one of the lowest-ranked authorities for bus passenger journeys, underlining the challenge of providing viable services in rural areas. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) will bring this work together with the Council's wider strategic direction, alongside the Local Plan, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Housing Strategy. Cabinet agreed for consultation on the LTP at their meeting on the 10 June which is due to take place in the autumn.

What we are doing in quarter 2

- Continued delivery of highways maintenance statutory responsibilities
- Preparing to carry out consultation of the Local Transport Plan

People live in safe, inclusive places with homes that meet their needs

Our Ambition

Working across the council and partners, we will deliver an integrated approach to identify and address the root causes of housing pressures and safety in our communities. We will deliver affordable, well-located homes, safer and more cohesive places for our communities, with resilient rural services, and enabling sustainable inclusive growth.

Delivering our priority ambition in quarter 1

Our focus is on making Shropshire a place where people can live well, in safe, suitable and sustainable homes, with support available before problems become crises. Work is progressing on the new Local Plan, with early scoping consultation completed with residents, town and parish councils, businesses and other stakeholders. This has helped identify the key issues and gaps that need to be addressed. Over the next year, important milestones will move the plan forward, closely aligned with the new Housing Strategy and the wider Corporate Plan.

Improving housing outcomes remains central to this work. Cabinet agreed new policies in June to support the council's role in enforcing the Renters' Rights Act. This strengthens our ability to improve housing standards, particularly in the private rented sector, and supports our wider aim of reducing and preventing homelessness. We have made good progress in keeping the use of B&B accommodation low for families who become homeless (KPI P08). Our quarter 1 performance was 0% which was the best nationally. The next challenge is to increase successful prevention of homelessness (KPI P07), where current performance has a positive direction of travel towards the national average. Action is now focused on earlier identification of housing issues, targeted to households vis the floating support team, better access to welfare advice, private rented options, family mediation and supported housing pathways. These measures are intended to help more households remain safely housed and reduce pressure on temporary accommodation. Housing quality also remains a priority. Standards in council-owned rented homes remain high (P09), while new responsibilities under the Renters' Rights Act are strengthening the council's focus on private rented housing. The relevant national performance measure looking at all rental housing in the area (P10) has been added to the Performance Management Framework to ensure that this new responsibility is kept in view.

Alongside this, wider work is strengthening safety and resilience in communities. Training on recognising and responding to economic abuse is being shaped by people's lived experience, including the impact on young people and families. Community safety activity is also progressing through a revised road safety action plan, the blue light alcohol project, and partnership work to address community tensions and secure additional funding from the Home Office to support community engagement.

What we are doing in quarter 2

- Local Plan Green Belt review
- Updated HRA Business Plan
- Homelessness prevention
- Strengthening food standards and private water supplies
- Discretionary Housing Payments

Shropshire Council

Everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life

Our Ambition

Our ambition is for everyone to be healthy, safe and thrive throughout life. We will enable this by tackling inequalities through prevention and early help, provide the right support at the right time, protect vulnerable people and promote independence. With partners, multi-agency hubs and a local workforce, we will deliver child-friendly, joined-up services.

Delivering our priority ambition in quarter 1

Overall, quarter 1 demonstrates a consistent direction: earlier intervention, stronger partnerships, more integrated services and a sharper focus on helping people live healthier, more independent and more resilient lives.

For children and families, the Single Children's Transformation Programme was agreed by Cabinet in June 2026. Its focus is to rebalance the system towards prevention, inclusive practice, stronger family voice, better use of data, improved commissioning and multi-agency support. This includes child protection arrangements, family hubs, school-based support and work with DWP to reduce the impact of child poverty for families on benefits. The programme is also being used to target children who need additional support, including those affected by disadvantage in early development outcomes. Good child development is central to delivering our priority ambition, and this is now reflected more clearly in the way we are tracking improvement with a stronger line of sight from activity to outcomes: improving completion of the 2–2.5 year review (HC11), supporting children aged up to five (HC17), and reducing the gap between children eligible and not eligible for free school meals (HC19). Although validation of the HC11 data is still awaited, the expected direction of travel is positive. For HC19, targeted work is already underway to identify and support the small number of children most at risk of poorer outcomes across our large geography. The Local Area SEND Reform Plan was submitted to the Department for Education in June, with feedback expected in September. Recruitment is underway for specialist "Experts at Hand" support, including speech and language therapists, occupational health and educational psychologists, to help schools meet children's needs earlier and keep more children in mainstream education (HC18). The proportion of children supported in mainstream schools is showing an improving direction of travel, although EHCP timeliness remains below where the council wants it to be, with Q1 performance sustained at 26% against continuing high demand. Alongside this, the council has strengthened its focus on children achieving and thriving through the new education strategy, finalised in Q1, and through the continued development of Community and Family Hubs under the Best Start in Life approach. Prevention funding through the Shropshire Integrated Place Partnership will support VCSE infrastructure and activity aligned to priority areas from September 2026.

Support for residents facing financial hardship has also been strengthened. Crisis payments, housing payments and heating oil schemes have been launched, alongside increased funding for advice and support partners. Referral pathways and cost-of-living information are being simplified so residents can access help more easily when circumstances change.

For adults, rising demand, an ageing population and ongoing support needs are driving the development of a single Adult Social Care transformation programme. This will align with the new Adult Social Care Strategy and focus on achieving the best outcomes within available resources. Early delivery is already underway through the optimal care and community independence pathway, including use of technology to help people remain at home for longer. The pathway will be validated over the coming year, with benefits and outcomes reported in future updates. Cabinet took difficult decisions to close Helena lane Older People Day Service in Ludlow and move the Aquamira Day Service to the Abbots would site, closing the Aquamira building.

What we are doing in quarter 2

- Implementing the single Children's Transformation Programme
- Developing the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme and developing the Adult Social Care Strategy
- Foster Payments Arrangement Policy
- Expand integrated neighbourhood working (Community and Family Hubs)

An environment that harnesses our natural assets and supports wellbeing

Our ambition

We will harness Shropshire's natural and cultural assets to improve prosperity, health and wellbeing. By widening access to healthy lifestyles, supporting independent choices and strengthening community resilience, we will help people adapt to climate and energy pressures. We will promote locally generated renewable energy, reduce waste and encourage sustainable behaviour.

Delivering our priority ambition in quarter 1

Shropshire Council is taking practical action to improve environmental performance, strengthen resilience, and support long-term sustainable growth. Although recycling performance remains below target, the latest data provides a clearer understanding of the factors affecting delivery and the actions needed to improve outcomes. The quarter 4 2025/26 recycling rate was 45.3% against a target of 52.6%, a reduction from 47.4% in quarter 3. This reflects the continuing impact of green-waste charging introduced in autumn 2024, seasonal reductions in garden waste during the winter period, and severe weather that led to a fortnight of missed garden waste collections while crews were redeployed to address backlogs in household waste and glass, plastic and cardboard collections. However, performance was stronger than the same period in 2024/25 (Q3 46.4% and Q4 43.47%). This is also reflective of the 3.3% increase in green waste subscriptions in 2025 compared to 2024.

The council is also strengthening its understanding of carbon emissions across the services it commissions and procures, where most emissions from council activity arise. Funded support from the Midlands Net Zero Hub will help develop more robust carbon accounting, enabling the council to identify where emissions can be reduced and where environmental action could also deliver financial benefits.

Alongside this, work is continuing to develop the strategy for the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme with partners by March 2027. This will provide the foundation for future outline business cases for a major infrastructure programme designed to manage water more effectively, reduce risk, and support future growth. Through the Marches Forward Partnership, the council is also helping to shape national thinking on the links between water management, land use and growth. Participation in a Government round table with Defra and MHCLG provided an opportunity to showcase local leadership and support stronger alignment across government departments. Together, these activities demonstrate a clear shift from measuring environmental challenges to building the partnerships, evidence and investment case needed to deliver cleaner, more resilient and more sustainable places.

What we are doing in quarter 2

- Review and update the Council's Climate Change Strategy
- Continue to work with partners on the strategy for the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme

A thriving economy that benefits everyone

Our ambition

A more prosperous, connected and resilient county by driving sustainable inclusive growth, attracting investment and strengthening local opportunity. Through bold spatial planning, stronger partnerships, improved connectivity and a skills system aligned to employer needs, we will support priority sectors, attract and retain talent and create high-value jobs. This will help build a more inclusive, future-ready economy where ambition and opportunity are shared across the county.

Delivering our priority ambition in quarter 1

Shropshire is building the foundations for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic growth. The new Inclusive Growth Strategy is on track and will provide a clear framework for how the Council works with partners to improve opportunity, productivity and prosperity across the county. It is being developed alongside other major strategies, including the Local Plan, Housing Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Achieving and Thriving in Education Strategy, so that growth is joined up with housing, transport, place, skills and public service priorities. Working with our neighbouring Council to progress early scoping to understand existing strategic priorities and to review evidence base in preparation for work on a joint Spatial Development Strategy. Shropshire continues to perform strongly on employment, with working-age employment (E01) and the proportion of 18–24-year-olds in full-time education or employment (E02) both in the top quartile nationally. The births of new enterprise (E04) are lower than the national picture but enterprise survival stronger in Shropshire, with 63% of new businesses surviving three years compared with 53% nationally. However, average pay (E05) remains below the national average reflecting the nature of the jobs and main employment sectors in Shropshire compared to other areas of country.

Through the Marches Forward Partnership, Shropshire is strengthening its regional role and positioning the Marches as a practical model for cross-border collaboration that complements English devolution. The Marches Business Resilience Coalition now brings together major infrastructure providers, local businesses, civic leaders, food suppliers, supermarkets and academic partners to develop a regional resilience model that supports economic growth. Ministerial events in the Senedd and Westminster will showcase this approach and help secure wider government and partner support. Innovation is also being used to open up new opportunities for residents and businesses. A skills proposition linked to environmental innovation, the Marches and the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme has been developed to create pathways into employment for people experiencing mental ill health, ahead of a forthcoming £60 million DWP innovation fund. The completed DSIT-funded Advanced Wireless Innovation Region programme has demonstrated how digital technology can improve rural industries, water management and public services, creating commercial opportunities that can be scaled.

Good digital connectivity is essential to a thriving, inclusive economy, enabling residents, learners, businesses and communities to access services, skills, markets and social connection. Shropshire's gigabit-capable broadband coverage (E06) is improving but remains below the national average and in line with our most comparable rural counties, reflecting the challenge of connecting physically to dispersed premises across a large rural geography. Earlier investment prioritised wider superfast coverage, balancing cost, reach and delivery speed.

What we are doing in quarter 2

- Developing the inclusive Growth Strategy
- Continuing to work on arrangements for a Spatial Development Strategy