

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE
7 JULY 2025**

Officer: Helen Ball Town Clerk

NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Purpose of Report

To consider a response to the National Scheme of Delegation public consultation

Key Points & Potential Response Themes

1. National Delegation Scheme

- Support for national consistency, especially to streamline minor/householder applications.
- Concern about local flexibility: they'd likely emphasise the importance of retaining member call-in rights for applications of local importance or raising community concern—mirroring Shropshire's approach of allowing discretion democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk+1.

2. Size & Composition of Planning Committees

- The government's proposal to limit committee size to a maximum of 11 members is unlikely to affect Shrewsbury (as the Town Committee currently meets with around 8 members) addleshawgoddard.com+1.
- They might advocate for flexibility to scale committee membership based on workload and specific planning issues.

3. Mandatory Training & Certification

- While endorsing the need for training, the committee may resist a fully national certification scheme, preferring localised training tailored to Shrewsbury's specific planning context (e.g., conservation areas, heritage sites, Hencote appeal lessons) .

4. Quality-Controlled Decision-Making

- The technical consultation hints at performance thresholds (e.g., reducing appeal-overturn targets from 10% to 5%). Shrewsbury might support maintaining a more realistic threshold—arguing that low volumes mean even one appeal could disproportionately impact performance metrics democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

5. Preserving Democratic Oversight & Local Nuance

- They are likely to emphasise that while improving efficiency is welcome, it shouldn't come at the expense of democratic scrutiny—given Shrewsbury's frequent engagement with sensitive or visible developments (e.g. Hencote care home project) shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk.

Suggested Structure for Their Formal Response

Section	Content
Intro	Acknowledge the government's drive for more efficient, consistent planning committees.
Delegation	Support clearer guidance on delegated decisions, while calling for robust call-in and exception mechanisms.
Committee Size	Accept the maximum cap, but emphasise need for local flexibility.
Training	Back mandatory training—advocate for combining national standards with local contextual modules.
Performance Metrics	Recommend maintaining the 10% appeal overturn threshold, or introduce graduated thresholds based on authority size.
Conclusion	Endorse the objectives of the reforms, with strong caveats about preserving community engagement and local oversight.

Shropshire Council's Previous Response to the Working Paper

Shropshire's formal response to the earlier Working Paper and national consultation (Feb–Jul 2025) advocated:

- Using existing local delegation schemes with member call-in rights over a rigid national tiered system.
- Caution over a national certification scheme, favouring local training.
- A resistance to lowering appeal-overturn threshold from 10% to 5% Shrewsbury is likely to take a similar stance—supporting sensible streamlining, while ensuring democratic checks and community representation remain strong.

Summary

In summary, Shrewsbury Town Council's Planning Committee will probably welcome proposals aimed at efficiency, but press for local discretion on call-ins, customised training, retention of current appeal performance benchmarks, and safeguards for democratic oversight and community voice.