

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
14 JANUARY 2026**

Officer: Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

Operational Mobility of the Devolution Programme

Purpose of the Report

To brief the Operations Committee on the operational mobility of the Devolution work as presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, and to outline the practical implications for service delivery, staffing, assets, and operational governance.

Background

The Devolution programme seeks to transfer or share responsibility for certain services and functions from Shropshire Council to the Town Council where this can deliver improved outcomes, value for money, and stronger local accountability.

At its recent meeting, the Policy & Resources Committee considered the strategic, financial, and governance aspects of the Devolution work. This report primarily focused on the due diligence and financial planning for service delivery. Once the budget is set by Full Council a programme of operational mobility will commence to ensure services are smoothly transferred from Shropshire Council's external contractor an in-house team.

Summary of Policy & Resources Committee Considerations

The Policy & Resources Committee:

- Noted the progress of discussions with partner authorities regarding potential service devolution;
- Considered the financial envelope and high-level risk profile associated with devolved services;
- Emphasised the need for operational flexibility, clarity of roles, and robust transition planning;
- Requested that operational implications be considered in detail by the Operations Committee.

Implementation Plan for 1 April

The report detailed the Implementation Plan which in the first instance will be overseen by the Policy & Resources Committee.

To ensure a smooth transition by 1 April, the following course of action is proposed:

A. Establish a Transition Project Team

- Preferably including Officers from Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council to help to work collaboratively
- Clear governance and escalation routes.

B. Service Costing & Financial Planning

- Remodelling of service areas in line with existing services
- Identify funding sources (precept, reserves, grants, user charges).

C. Legal & Contractual Workstreams

- Undertake due diligence on existing Shropshire contracts specifications.
- Develop an operational devolution agreement that sets out governance arrangements
- Prepare new procurement processes in line with public contracts regulations.

D. Human Resources & TUPE

- Identify staff affected and commence TUPE consultation early.
- Plan recruitment for any required new posts.

E. Equipment & Infrastructure

- Audit existing vehicles and machinery.
- Determine purchase, lease or service contract options for new vehicles and equipment
- Reviewing the building capacity of current depots.
- Review of IT infrastructure

F. Public Communication Plan

- Clear messaging to residents about service changes, expectations and benefits.

G. Performance & Monitoring Framework

- Agree KPIs for service quality, budget adherence and resident satisfaction.

Timetable for Implementation to 1 April

To ensure continuity of service and a smooth transition, a clear and tightly managed timetable is required. The following indicative timetable is proposed:

Early January

- Initial discussions with Shropshire Council Administration and Senior Officers on scope, costs and deliverability of devolved Street Cleaning services.
- Review of public responses to the Town Council's survey on protecting local services.
- High-level financial modelling and risk assessment.
- Member briefings on budget and operational delivery

January

- **Policy & Resources Committee (early January):**
 - Consideration of the devolution proposals, risks and implementation framework.
 - Recommendation of budget provision and delegated authorities.
- **Full Council – 26 January:**
 - Setting of the Town Council's annual budget and precept, including provision for devolved Street Cleaning services and contingency funding for protecting other non-statutory services.
 - Approval of delegated authority arrangements to enable implementation.

February

- **Policy & Resources Committee (February meeting):**
 - Update on negotiations with Shropshire Council.
 - Confirmation of implementation plans, including staffing, procurement and legal agreements.
- Commencement of recruitment processes (including TUPE where applicable).
- Procurement of vehicles, plant and equipment.
- Drafting and negotiation of formal service devolution agreements.

March

- **Policy & Resources Committee & Operations Committee (March meetings):**
 - Final assurance on readiness for service commencement.
 - Confirmation of communications plan and performance monitoring arrangements.

- Completion of staff onboarding and training.
- Finalisation of operational procedures and service schedules.
- Public communications to residents and stakeholders.

1 April

- Formal commencement of devolved Street Cleaning services under Shrewsbury Town Council.

Delegated Authority and Governance Arrangements

To meet the 1 April deadline, the pace and complexity of the work required means that additional delegated authority is necessary.

It has been recommended that Full Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to:

- Lead and conclude discussions with the Administration & Senior Officers of Shropshire Council.
- Develop and implement the detailed transition and implementation plan.
- Recruit staff and manage TUPE processes where applicable.
- Procure vehicles, plant, equipment and operational contracts.
- Negotiate and enter into the necessary legal agreements to enable service devolution.
- Instruct and obtain specialist legal, HR and procurement advice as required.
- Take all necessary operational decisions to ensure services are live by 1 April.

This approach balances democratic accountability with the need for agility and timely decision-making in a rapidly evolving financial and operational environment.

It would also seem sensible for the Town Clerk to involve the Chairman of the Operations Committee in the implementation stage.

RECOMMENDATION

The Operations Committee is asked to:

- (i) **Note the contents of this report.**
- (ii) **Provide any feedback on the operational considerations outlined.**
- (iii) **Identify any additional operational issues that should be addressed as the Devolution work progresses.**