SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee
Held in Committee Room, Livesey House
At 6.00pm on Monday 13th April 2026

PRESENT

Councillors: R Wilson (Chair), B Bentick, R Dartnall, J Dean, A Fejfer, A Mosley, D Vasmer and A Wagner

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Heather Phillips (Committee Clerk)

85/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

86/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bentick	Portfolio Holder for Health & Public Protection, Shropshire Councillor. Dispensation relating to 93/25 Service Delegation Update..
Councillor Dartnall	Shropshire Councillor. Group Leader – Labour Group, Shropshire Council
Councillor Dean	Shropshire Councillor. Chair – Northern Planning Committee, Shropshire Council.
Councillor Fejfer	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Mosley	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Vasmer	Shropshire Councillor. Portfolio Holder for Highways & Environment, Shropshire Council. Dispensation relating to 93/25 Service Delegation Update.
Councillor Wagner	Shropshire Councillor Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council – Item 93/25 declared an interest in Service Delegation Update.
Councillor Wilson	Shropshire Councillor Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth. Dispensation relating to 93/25 Service Delegation Update.

87/25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 9th February 2026 were submitted and circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 9th February 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

88/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Min 77/25 Quarry Management Plan - the Town Clerk reported that the tendering process was complete and that Camlins, a local landscape architects, had been awarded the contract. Meetings to discuss logistics were to take place with stakeholders. Camlins had also been instructed to map the Quarry and all its building, utilities, trees etc, which would be useful for any future works. Workshop to discuss these works were to take place at Annual Town Meeting on 30th April 2026.

Councillor Dartnall asked for members to be sent the list of stakeholders.

89/25 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Town Clerk reported that Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed annually at Full Council. Councillors were given this opportunity to review the terms of reference of this committee to see whether they are fit for purpose given that the meeting structure was changed last year. Terms of Conditions were to be presented to the Annual Meeting on 11th May 2026 but would be considered by the Chairs' Committee ahead of that meeting.

There were no comments.

90/25 PAYMENT SCHEDULES

Prior to the meeting, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated the Schedule of Payments for the period 31st January 2026 to 31st March 2026. These had been agreed by two signatories before the RFO and Town Clerk uploaded for payment. No comments or concerns were raised.

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of payments passed for payment for the period 31st January 2026 to 31st March 2026 be approved.

91/25 PREPARE END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated a report to appraise members on the process for the year end accounts for 2025/26 and relevant submission dates.

PKF Littlejohn were the appointed external auditors for Shropshire for the 5 year period ending 2026/27. The external auditor sets the date when the accounts were to be submitted. As in previous years, the Council chose the dates for the exercise of elector's rights.

The statutory deadline by which the Council must approve the Accounts, Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and relevant schedules was 29th June 2026. These are then sent to the external auditors by Wednesday 1st July 2026.

The internal auditor needed to complete the inspection of the 2025/26 accounts and sign page 3 of the AGAR prior to submission to the external auditor. The RFO provided the timetable as follows (subject to confirmation of dates from external auditor):

- 28/04/26 – Close down 2025/26 accounts system after all invoices raised, purchase invoices posted and year end adjustments made.
- 25/05/26 – Draft Accounts prepared for meeting with leader.
- 01/06/26 – Draft accounts for P&R to consider.
- TBC – Internal audit visit/remote final year end check.
- 29/06/26 – Council meeting to agree Accounts and sign the AGAR.
- 01/07/26 – AGAR and working papers sent to PKF Littlejohn to meet 1st July deadline.
- 01/07/26 – Notice of appointment of date for exercise of elector's rights for the 24/25 accounts for a 30 day period commencing 1st July 2026.
- 30/09/26 – latest date for completion of Annual return by PKF Littlejohn.
- 30/09/26 – Notice of conclusion of the audit and right to inspect the annual return published.

RESOLVED:

That the Report and timetabled dates be noted.

Councillor Vasmer joined the meeting.

92/25 INTERNAL AUDITOR

Prior to the meeting, the Internal Audit Report 2025/26: Interim Update was circulated to members. There were no issues to report.

Councillor Wilson thanked the RFO and the Finance & Administrative Officer for their work.

Councillor Dean added that it was good to see that payroll was properly managed and that no issues had arisen.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Report 2025/26: Interim Update be accepted.

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Councillor Wagner left the meeting.

93/25 SERVICE DELEGATION UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had commenced the Streetscene works from the 1st April. All the necessary staff had been recruited and had been in position the week before commencement to ensure onboarding had been completed. The two staff who transferred from Shropshire Council's contractor also commenced work on the 1st April and the whole team had settled in very well.

All the kit, including vehicles and roadsweepers, had arrived and all staff trained on their use. The roadsweepers were to have new Town Council branding and be given names which had been chosen from a local poll.

Whilst staff were scheduled to commence bin collection on the 1st April, it was evident that Shropshire Council's contractor had ceased bin collection a number of days earlier, so staff were on catch up right from the start. All bins on the Shape File list had been emptied and bins were being identified as having been emptied by the Town Council by virtue of the fact they have clear liners. The detritus in the bottom of bins had also been cleared out allowing for greater volume of collection.

The larger sweeper was concentrating on major arterial roads whilst the smaller sweeper was targeting footpaths in commercial centres.

Officers were currently working to the DEFRA Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse which was updated on the 10th March 2026. This allowed for the prioritisation of zones in the town as:

1. Town Centre Shopping with High Footfall
2. Schools and High Residential Footfall
3. Normal Streets
4. Woodlands, Parklands & Play Areas

The agreement with Shropshire Council was still a work in progress. An interim agreement provided the legal powers to undertake Streetscene works together with the governance arrangements for the payment and monitoring requirements of the service. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had met with senior officers in early May regarding the finer detail of a broader delegation agreement.

So far feedback was exceptionally positive, social media coverage had been strong and the engagement with the press had been excellent.

The Council was now establishing the boundaries between the Stepping Up Team and the Streetscene Team in order to maximise collaboration and minimise duplication.

Councillor Wilson thanked all staff involved for enabling the Service Delegation to get underway.

Councillor Bentick expressed his congratulations but asked for a schedule of when other areas of the town would be serviced. He was keen to advertise on local social media so that residents could be notified to move their cars. The Town Clerk said that this would be available in due course.

Councillor Dartnall asked if "grot spots" could be identified and the Town Clerk replied that a separate email address was being set up to enable councillors to easily report these. The Stepping Up Team were also to be called upon to help with this.

Councillor Dean asked for an update on the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council's Fix My Street service. The Deputy Town Clerk said that anything reported on Fix My Street that was now under the Town Council's responsibility would be emailed to the new Customer Services Department. Once the Town Council's own CRM was in place, these two systems would share information. She added that the Town Council's website was going to be updated with a list of Shropshire Council's and Shrewsbury Town Council's responsibilities. For now, any issues received that were the responsibility of Shropshire Council would be emailed directly.

Councillor Vasmer congratulated the Town Council on the takeover. He asked about the provision for the collection of litter/clean-up following bank holidays and other busy times. The Town Clerk said that staff would be working on bank holidays (except Easter Sunday and Christmas Day) to cover this and hot spots would be recorded for future reference. No information of this kind was forthcoming from Shropshire Council.

Councillor Mosley asked what was advised to residents to report any issues for Streetscene and requested that councillors be sent an email giving details so that the information could be added to local newsletters. The Deputy Town Clerk said that residents could use the designated email address or the form on the Town Council's website, and would email councillors with the details as requested.

Councillor Mosley was also pleased with the way this service transition had progressed. He asked about other items listed on the Streetscene portfolio eg weed spraying, graffiti removal, etc. The Town Clerk said that some weed spraying had taken place in March by Shropshire Council and that the Town Council had appointed a contractor to carry out this work twice a year. The Town Clerk asked that graffiti be reported as usual and would be tackled by the Streetscene or Stepping Up teams. Operatives had been trained in the use of the necessary chemicals required to remove graffiti.

Councillor Mosley also enquired about the progress of the takeover of CCTV operations and covering any shortfalls in other services. The Town Clerk said that discussions had taken place with Shropshire Council re CCTV and that funding via Safer Streets was being pursued in relation to new CCTV columns to be erected. With regard to other service shortfalls, there was currently nothing to report regarding budget cuts. It was noted that other parish and town councils who had not taken on the street cleaning responsibility were complaining about litterbin collections.

Councillor Bentick requested an updated list of the respective responsibilities of Shropshire Council and the Town Council for sending to local social media channels. He also asked if details on how to report issues was included for each. The Town Clerk said that these would be issued, added to the website and displayed on noticeboards. The Town Council telephone message had also been updated.

Councillor Fejfer asked for an update on the CRM system. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the project plan was done and tender documents compiled. It was hoped that the contract would be awarded by early September.

Councillor Mosley asked about the replacement of bins, particularly those most damaged, and how these would be prioritised. Some of these were in a dangerous condition. It was also noted that some have also been fly posted. The Town Clerk said that the Streetscene Foreman was compiling a list of bins and their condition and that the Operations Manager, Stuart Farmer, would be sourcing multiple bins with the Town Council logo. The bins in the worst condition will be replaced initially with priority given to arterial routes first.

It was noted that some public bins were overflowing with refuse from local businesses. This was classed as fly-tipping and was to be reported.

There had not yet been any decisions about new bins being installed in new locations but any bins that filled up very quickly were to be emptied more frequently. The Town Clerk asked councillors to send any requests for new bins to the Town Council and permission to install would be sought in the first instance. Councillor Mosley asked if larger bins could replace smaller bins in these cases. The Town Clerk said that this might be possible but that emptying larger bins posed lifting and handling challenges.

Councillor Dean suggested that, to discourage fly posting on the bins, residents be provided with something on which to display their posters. The Town Clerk said that this would be considered but that planning and conservation area consent may be an issue. Councillor Bentick suggested electronic noticeboards; this had been discussed previously and was found to be very expensive.

The bin at the bottom of Kingsland Bridge was in very poor condition and the area was prone to flooding. Councillor Dartnall asked if the bin could be relocated. The Town Clerk said that this would be investigated.

Councillor Mosley asked about street cleaning under the bridge at Cross Street and the Town Clerk confirmed that it was being jet-washed.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal report be noted.

Councillor Wagner re-joined the meeting.

94/25 GOOD FOOD PARTNERSHIP

The Town Clerk reported that at a recent meeting of the Communities & Environment Committee the Good Food Partnership made a presentation on the need for greater food resilience in relation to external forces like weather, pandemics and recent geopolitical tensions which had seen fuel prices rise exponentially over the last few weeks and had cascaded into the food chain. The Committee considered proposals for the Town Council to financially support its work on resilience. Committee members had been supportive and Councillor Mosley had suggested that this might be a perfect project for the Cost of Living Grant Programme.

Since then, officers had compiled the necessary documents so that the programme could go live. The Working Group had met and approved the forms, the press releases and the documents and these were to be added to the Council's website.

The Town Clerk proposed that she contact the Good Food Guide in relation to how it might develop proposals that may work through the Cost of Living Fund or be considered as a separate project.

Councillor Dartnall asked about Shropshire Council funding for the Good Food Partnership (GFP). The Town Clerk replied that this had not been mentioned but that there was no resource from Shropshire Council in relation to this Food Resilience Proposal.

Councillor Mosley remarked that if the country's food supply was interrupted there would surely be national initiatives to ease this. He added that food banks undertake food poverty easement and operate effectively already.

Councillor Dartnall clarified that the GFP endorses the provision of locally grown food and of sharing food production excellence ie it was not about sharing food.

The Town Clerk said that she would speak to existing GFPs already operating, like the one in Oxford, to find out more detail to bring to the next meeting of this committee.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal report be noted.

95/25 SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN

The Big Town Plan Partnership was meeting on a regular basis to act as the monitor of the various plan documents, holding the three partners to account. Activity had included:

- Application for Town of Culture which had now been submitted.
- Dealing with prime buildings like the old House of Fraser building, Lion Hotel and Buzz Bingo
- Shop Front Design and a wider Shrewsbury Design Code
- Overseeing minor Shrewsbury Moves Projects especially Abbey Foregate, e-bikes and secure bike shelters
- Riverside
- Communications

Officers of the Town Council and the Shrewsbury BID had been tasked with meeting up to look at the new project plan and were to report back to the May meeting of the Partnership with more detail.

The Town Clerk said that this was the second year of the Three-Year Plan and that contributions from Partners had been received.

Councillor Wagner added that the proposed improvements to the Abbey Foregate area had been well received by local residents. Works included refurbishment of the old red telephone box. Funding came from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

96/25 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The draft Medium Term Financial Plan had been circulated prior to this meeting. This first draft was not yet ready to be adopted but to seek clarification on the direction of travel for the Plan.

Councillor Wagner noted that it was a draft but that there were few figures included, eg the Precept. Councillor Dartnall had looked at the figures that were included and noted interest inflation, growing surplus and Precept rise. The RFO said that higher rates had been factored in as detailed in the Plan. He had made an estimation of the position the Council would be in based on current services and was confident that it would continue at the current rate. Recent inflationary rises would impact all costs and would not be sustainable in the medium term if they continued.

Councillor Wagner said that the Plan was vital especially as the organisation was growing. It allowed a more strategic input from members into the portfolio to enable development in the medium-term to scrutinise how the money was being spent.

Councillor Bentick enquired about investment portfolios. The RFO said that the Plan focussed on the Town Council's current assets and properties gifted to it and not any expansion as an income generator. This was to be considered in the future.

Councillor Wilson asked that members were informed if land etc was available for place management. The RFO said that if members were aware of land of strategic benefit they could bring to the Council's attention. Input from staff or councillors on availability would be welcomed.

Councillor Mosley said that the Plan was commendable and was needed for some of the aspirational projects that had been proposed. However, he also noted the lack of figures and that he found it quite repetitious. There was nothing in the document re the use of CIL or S106 monies. He also suggested that the Capital Plan for the next 2/3 years needed to be included.

It was decided that the next stage was to set up a Working Group to discuss the Plan and progress it towards a more useful document. Councillors Mosley, Wagner and Bentick volunteered.

RESOLVED

(i) That the first draft of the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.
(ii) That a Medium Term Plan Working Group be established, with Councillors Mosley, Wagner and Bentick and the RFO.
(iii) That the Medium Term Plan Working Group be tasked to review and amend the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan with a view to presenting a revised Plan at the next meeting.

97/25 INSURANCE EXTENSION

A report on Insurance Extension was circulated to members prior to this meeting to appraise members of the Council's position regarding insurance and to agree that the insurance was extended for another 2 years with its current provider.

The RFO explained that the Council had a legal obligation to insure against some risks such as Employer's Liability but it also had a wider policy for other perils such as public liability, property and loss of income, which it insured against. Some assets were self-insured where risk was low eg bus shelters but cover was still in place for Public Liability, and any damage from a third party would be claimed through their policy.

Insurance was in place for 2026/27, however the Council's existing broker was offering a discount on the current terms and security for a further 2 years.

The Motor Policy was in place for 26/27 and placed with a different broker. It was an easier proposition as the vehicles were typically low mileage, low geographical radius, well maintained, and with a lower risk profile, unlike the main insurance policy.

The insurance broker, James Hallam, took out a number of policies covering different aspects including cyber insurance but the main commercial combined policy was very council specific and diverse, covering children in play areas to events in the Quarry, all activities undertaken and other assets.

The current main commercial combined policy for 2025/26 was £106,814 and under the existing agreement was £121,555 for 2026/27 incorporating the new risks and expanded workforce and budget.

The current insurer (Aviva) offered an extension to the current agreement for a further 2 years, issue a CN for premiums paid reducing to £115,769 with estimated premiums for YE28 £118,663 and YE 29 £121,629 (subject to changes in requirement).

RESOLVED:

(i) That the report be noted.
(ii) That the 2 year option be accepted.

98/25 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following items being considered involve the disclosure of confidential information.

99/25 INVESTMENT PROPERTIES DISPOSAL

In accordance with Council Policy, the RFO presented proposals from a tenant to purchase his and a neighbouring property from the Town Council.

The report summarised the history of these properties together with its associated financial information. Members discussed the various options.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the report be noted.
(ii) That the offer be declined.

100/25 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked members of the public that had logged in. All papers relating to this meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk and the minutes would appear in draft on the website within the next month. He thanked Councillors and all staff involved in the meeting.