Agenda No

5(v)

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Date 14 October 2026

Officer: Helen Ball

LOCAL YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

1. Purpose of the Report

To consider the proposed involvement of Shrewsbury Town Council in the development of a Shrewsbury Local Youth Partnership as part of Shropshire Council's Youth Transformation Programme.

The proposal is that the Town Council should seek to play an active place-based leadership role, working with Shropshire Council and local partners to develop a partnership that improves outcomes for young people across Shrewsbury.

2. Background

Shropshire Council has been selected as one of 12 national Local Youth Transformation pilot areas and has received approximately £621,000 to support the redesign of youth services across the county.

The programme seeks to move away from isolated youth projects towards a sustainable local youth infrastructure based upon:

- youth voice and leadership;
- partnership working;
- stronger voluntary and community organisations;
- improved coordination between providers;
- local governance and decision-making; and
- sustainable youth provision beyond the life of the pilot funding.

A key principle within Shropshire Council's development approach is for Town and Parish Councils to lead or facilitate Local Youth Partnerships, supported by a county-wide Strategic Youth Partnership.

This provides a significant opportunity for Shrewsbury Town Council to build upon its existing role and investment in youth services.

3. Alignment with the Town Council's Youth Strategy

There is a strong alignment between the objectives of the Youth Transformation Programme and the Town Council's existing Youth Service 2030 Vision.

Youth Transformation priority	**Shrewsbury Town Council**
Youth voice and leadership	Youth-led design and participation
Prevention and early intervention	Detached and targeted youth work
Partnership working	Strong local partnerships
Safe spaces and local provision	Youth centres and outreach
Community leadership	Place-based Town Council leadership
Volunteering	Community involvement
Long-term sustainability	Youth Service 2030 Vision

The Town Council is therefore not starting from scratch. It already has established youth facilities, experienced youth workers, detached youth provision, relationships with young people and schools, experience of securing external funding, and established links with voluntary and statutory partners.

4. Proposed Role for the Town Council

It is proposed that the Town Council should position itself not simply as another delivery partner, but as the place-based convening organisation for youth provision in Shrewsbury.

This should not mean controlling the Partnership or determining the priorities of other organisations. Instead, the Town Council could provide the infrastructure and coordination required to enable partners to work effectively together.

The proposed approach would be:

Lead by enabling, rather than leading by directing.

The Town Council could:

- convene the Partnership;
- provide appropriate administrative and secretariat support;
- bring together statutory, voluntary, community, education, health, police, business and other partners;

- ensure young people have a meaningful role in decision-making;
- support the mapping of existing youth provision, resources and gaps;
- facilitate collaborative funding opportunities;
- coordinate agreed priorities and projects; and
- support monitoring and reporting of outcomes.

This would build upon the Town Council's existing infrastructure while supporting Shropshire Council's county-wide Youth Transformation objectives.

5. Principles for the Partnership

If the Town Council is to become involved, it is proposed that the following principles should underpin the development of the Partnership:

1. **Young people first** – young people should have a meaningful and ongoing role in identifying priorities, shaping services and evaluating outcomes.
2. **Place-based** – priorities should reflect the specific needs and opportunities of young people in Shrewsbury.
3. **Partnership rather than control** – the Town Council should convene and facilitate rather than seek to control the Partnership.
4. **Build on what already exists** – existing services, organisations and networks should be strengthened rather than duplicated.
5. **Outcomes rather than activity** – success should be measured by the difference made to young people, rather than simply the number of meetings or projects delivered.
6. **Less governance, more delivery** – the Partnership should avoid becoming another layer of bureaucracy.
7. **Long-term sustainability** – arrangements should be capable of continuing beyond the Youth Transformation funding period.

6. Initial Priorities

Before establishing detailed governance arrangements, it is proposed that the Town Council should work with Shropshire Council and partners to undertake a short co-design process.

This should establish:

- the shared outcomes the Partnership is seeking to achieve;
- the current youth provision and assets available in Shrewsbury;
- identified gaps and unmet need;

- the organisations and sectors that need to be involved;
- how young people will participate in decision-making;
- the resources and funding currently available; and
- the priorities for the first 12 months.

It will be important that this process is evidence-led and that Shropshire Council provides information on the available Youth Transformation funding, existing governance arrangements and the relevant youth needs assessment before the Partnership's detailed structure is finalised.

7. Potential Partnership Structure

Subject to the co-design process, a Partnership Board could provide strategic leadership, with smaller delivery groups established around agreed priorities.

The Board's role would be to:

- agree priorities;
- coordinate activity;
- identify and influence investment;
- reduce duplication;
- monitor outcomes; and
- ensure young people's interests remain central.

Young people should have meaningful representation on the Board, rather than being engaged solely through consultation.

The Partnership could also establish focused delivery groups around areas such as:

- youth work and safe spaces;
- health, wellbeing and inclusion;
- skills, employment and volunteering;
- culture, sport and the environment; and
- community safety.

The detailed governance model should, however, be developed through the proposed co-design process rather than determined in advance.

Agenda No

5(v)

8. Risks

The principal risks identified are:

- the Partnership becoming another meeting rather than a mechanism for delivery;
- duplication of existing partnerships and forums;
- unclear accountability between commissioners, funders, coordinators and delivery organisations; and
- county-wide approaches reducing the ability to respond to local priorities.

These risks can be mitigated by establishing a clear purpose, avoiding duplication, agreeing responsibilities at the outset and maintaining a strong focus on outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

1. **Notes the Report**
2. **Supports the Town Council taking an active role in the development of a Shrewsbury Local Youth Partnership as part of Shropshire Council's Youth Transformation Programme.**
3. **Supports the principle that the Town Council should seek to act as the place-based convening/backbone organisation, building on its existing Youth Service, infrastructure, partnerships and Youth Service 2030 Vision.**
4. **Authorise officers to work with Shropshire Council, young people and local partners to undertake a co-design process to establish the Partnership's purpose, membership, priorities, governance and measures of success.**
5. **Require the development of the Partnership to be based on the principles of youth voice, partnership, local decision-making, avoiding duplication, measurable outcomes and long-term sustainability.**
6. **Request that a further report be brought to the Committee once the co-design process has been undertaken, setting out the proposed Partnership structure, Town Council role, resource implications and first-year priorities.**