

Shrewsbury Town Council

Process for Establishing a Councillor-Led Forum

1. Purpose and Scope

A Councillor-Led Forum is a non-decision-making body created to:

- Facilitate cross-party discussions on specific issues.
- Gather insight and community perspectives.
- Develop recommendations for formal committee consideration.

The forum must align with the council's Standing Orders and support the strategic objectives of the council.

2. Establishment Procedure

Step 1: Proposal Submission

- Any councillor or group of councillors may submit a proposal to the relevant committee or Council Leader.
- The proposal should outline:
 - Purpose and objectives.
 - Scope of discussion.
 - Proposed membership.
 - Frequency of meetings.
 - Level of officer involvement required.

Step 2: Approval

- The relevant committee must approve the establishment of the forum.
- Terms of Reference (ToR) should be formally adopted.

3. Membership and Structure

- Membership should reflect political balance where possible.
- Chairs may be appointed by forum members or designated by the approving committee.
- Officers may attend in an advisory or support capacity only.

4. Rules Concerning Meetings

a. Frequency and Notice

- Meetings shall be scheduled in advance, with at least 5 working days' notice.
- Agendas should be circulated at least 3 working days prior to meetings.

b. Public Access

- Forums are informal and not subject to public meeting rules but transparency is encouraged.
- Notes or summaries of meetings should be published where appropriate.

c. Conduct

- Meetings should be conducted respectfully, adhering to the Council's Code of Conduct.
- Conflicts of interest must be declared at the start of each meeting.

d. Record Keeping

- A designated officer or forum member should take notes.
- These notes should capture key discussions, outcomes, and any agreed recommendations.

5. Reporting to Committees

a. Reporting Format

- Reports to committees should include:
 - Summary of forum discussions.
 - Background or contextual information.
 - Clear and actionable recommendations.
 - Evidence or rationale supporting recommendations.

b. Submission Process

- Reports should be submitted to the appropriate parent committee
- The Chair of the forum or a nominated member presents the report.

c. Committee Consideration

- Committees may:
 - Adopt recommendations.
 - Request further investigation.
 - Refer matters to another committee or full council.
 - Reject recommendations with rationale.

6. Review and Evaluation

- The forum's effectiveness should be reviewed annually by the parent committee.
- Adjustments to scope, membership, or ToR can be made as needed.