

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Operations Committee Held in Committee Room, Livesey House, 7 St John's Hill At 6.00pm on Wednesday 4 March 2026

PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Chair), K Halliday, V Moore, A Mosley, J Tandy, B Jephcott (substitute for R Wilson), J Dean and A Wagner

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Danny Powell (Operations Manager) and Ruth Jones (Office Manager).

65/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be received and accepted from Councillor Wilson.

Apologies were also noted from Stuart Farmer (Operations Manager) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk)

66/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor Wagner	Declared an interest in Future Service Delivery due to his involvement in delegation arrangements to Town & Parish Councils as the Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council.
Councillor Vasmer	Referenced his Dispensation to discuss matters between Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council for the Future Service Delivery item.

67/25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held on 14 January 2026 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held on 14 January 2026 be received and adopted.

68/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no Matters Arising for consideration.

69/25 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Town Clerk advised that it would be an opportune time to review the Terms of Reference of our Standing Committees to see whether there needs to be any movement in delegation ahead of ratifying Terms of Reference at Annual Council. Some additions have been identified including the oversight of the Street Cleansing Functions and collection and disposal of waste.

The Town Clerk reported that the Horticultural Services Contract, together with Bloom Operations, would be transferred from the Communities & Environment Committee to the Operations Committee. It was further noted that responsibility for Beavers should also be considered for inclusion within the Operations Committee's Terms of Reference.

Councillor Dean queried whether the removal of these matters from the Communities & Environment Committee would result in replacement items being added to that committee's agenda. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be the case as there was likely to be movement of actions between the Standing Committees.

Councillor Mosley emphasised that all decisions should continue to be ratified by Full Council and only urgent decisions should be taken by the Committee. The Town Clerk advised that full delegated authority had been granted to the Operations Committee by Full Council to reduce the bureaucracy of having to debate the same matter twice. The Leader was keen that decision making was as streamlined as possible to ensure service delivery.

Councillor Halliday had noted several additional points and would forward them to the Town Clerk for consideration by Full Council.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

70/25 POLICY UPDATES

The Town Clerk advised that every two years the operational procedures were reviewed and confirmed that three were due for renewal this year. These had been updated to meet new and revised legislation, but in the case of the Security Plan would need further review upon the publication of Martyn's Law Guidance due this Spring.

70.1 Land Adoption Strategy

Councillor Mosley sought clarification regarding the provision and management of public open space, including woodlands and hedgerows. The Town Clerk confirmed that these details should be set out within the Landscape Management Plan, a condition of any planning approval rather than the Land Adoption Strategy.

Councillor Dean asked whether the proposed 15-year commuted sum payable by developers aligns with comparable arrangements elsewhere and emphasised the importance of encouraging land adoption to avoid residents effectively paying twice. The Town Clerk advised that when the Land Adoption Policy was established approximately 12–13 years ago, research had been undertaken and the policy was set at the mean average at the time. Since that time many local authorities had resolved not to adopt public open space, leaving developers the only option but to place management in a Management Company. The Town Clerk would make enquiries with other Town Councils nationally.

Councillor Vasmer proposed that a review be undertaken, with a particular focus on ensuring that all residents have adequate access to open space. Councillor Halliday asked whether the financial contributions were index-linked to inflation and material costs. The Town Clerk confirmed that the amounts are calculated using a matrix that incorporates inflationary factors but also incorporates compound interest from receipt of a 15 year maintenance sum.

Councillor Mosley requested clarification on the purpose and use of financial contributions. The Town Clerk reported that in the case of larger developments like Bowbrook Meadows and Oteley Road there were two types of contributions: s106 payments and Community Infrastructure Levy Funds. Invariably maintenance contributions were dealt with via the s106 agreement. In the case of play installation and management, these were funded through CIL Local which was the element retained by Shropshire Council.

The Town Clerk further noted that CIL payments were distributed as follows:

- Shropshire Council: 5% top slicing for maintenance
- Town & Parish Councils: 15%

- Remainder of CIL Payments: was split between Strategic Infrastructure (10%) and Local Infrastructure (90%).

Councillor Dean also noted that reference should be made to the Nature Recovery Strategy, particularly regarding its relationship with nature corridors.

RESOLVED:

- i. **That the update be noted;**
- ii. **That the Town Clerk undertakes a benchmarking review on the Land Adoption Policy with other larger town councils.**

70.2 Security Plan for the Quarry Park & Other Council Land

The Town Clerk advised that the Quarry Park has had an approach to terrorism management ever since the Manchester Arena Bombing in 2017. This has been updated to reflect the Inquiry into that event and the subsequent introduction on the Statute Books of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025. National guidance is to be published imminently which will inevitably lead to further amendments being required

RESOLVED:

- i. **That the update be noted;**
- ii. **That the Security Plan for Quarry Park & Other Council Land be adopted;**
- iii. **That the Plan be considered for early review pending Martyn's Law national guidance.**

70.3 Policy for Outdoor Music Events in the Quarry & Other Council Owned Land

Councillor Dean referred to section 6.2.5 and the two types of events. The Town Clerk provided an update on the inclusion of larger events; a number of smaller events could continue to take place.

Councillor Wagner referred to Section 3.1, emphasising the importance of minimising complaints and ensuring that events do not cause nuisance to nearby residents. He noted that this aligns with the Council's sensible objectives of delivering community benefits while generating revenue for the people of Shrewsbury.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the update be noted;**
- ii. That the Policy for Outdoor Music Events in the Quarry & Other Council Owned Land be adopted.**

71/25 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

71.1 Review the Capital Programme

The Town Clerk advised that the 2026/27 Capital Programme has been updated, moving all outstanding matters into the new format and adding planned works from either to Corporate Plan or matters that were added to the 2026/27 Budget.

All recent activity had been included including:

- Shorncliffe Drive – there is a consultation exercise being supported by Camlins. Consultation closes on the 13th March
- Quarry Management Plan Inception Meeting is on Thursday 5th – this will be a 12 month project
- Play Areas a Tilstock Crescent and Hermitage Walk are complete
- The Wheeled Track at Mary Webb Road is now complete
- Roushill Park Planting Scheme has been agreed with a planting schedule for October

Councillor Mosley highlighted that the refurbishment of the Castlefields Community Centre should be added to the Capital Programme. The Town Clerk advised that full project details, including costings, would be required before inclusion and recommended that Councillor Mosley liaise with Stuart Farmer, Operations Manager, to progress this.

Councillor Dean enquired about progress concerning the County Ground pavilion. The Town Clerk confirmed that a meeting has been scheduled to discuss the matter further and she would include Councillor Dean in that meeting.

Councillor Halliday expressed thanks to staff for their work on the refurbishment of Hermitage Green.

Councillor Jephcott made reference to the Solar Lights at Greenfields; he was glad to see the scheme progressing.

Councillor Vasmer asked for an update on the Taylor Wimpey site. The Operations Manager reported that work was ongoing; however, progress was currently limited due to ground conditions being too wet to proceed further.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Plan update be noted

71.2 Update on the Reserve Allocations in relation to potential Capital Spend

The Town Clerk advised that a Neighbourhood Fund of £1,838,114 is currently being held, which will be used for the various budget lines highlighted. The RFO reports on spend as part of his annual reporting.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Spend budget be noted

72/25 PLAY AREA PRIORITIES

72.1 Play Area Priorities

The Town Clerk advised that the Play Priority Report was detailed as part of the budget papers at the January Full Council Meeting. Officers had reviewed the priority for replacement play areas in a number of key locations. This replacement programme was based upon the assumptions that a Play Area will last 20 years, a MUGA 25 years and in the case of the Quarry, the highest football play facility and within the flood zone 10 years. Officers had detailed the number of play upgrades for the remainder of this electoral year.

In terms of budget allocation, there was an Ear-marked Reserve of £769,624, an annual additional budget of £150,000 and there were a number of legacy developer contributions of £100,865 that were proposed to be transferred to the Play Reserve.

The NEAPs (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play) at Bowbrook Meadow & Oteley Road should be covered by CIL Local and the Town Clerk would seek drawdown of funds from Shropshire Council.

The Town Clerk advised that, subject to Members' agreement to proceed, procurement for the 2026/27 play facilities programme would commence as outlined in the report.

Councillor Mosley requested clarification on the *Legacy fund*. The Town Clerk explained that these were historic Section 106 contributions that were inherited from the former Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council and it was likely that the spend aligned to these budget lines had already been

discharged. This was a tidying up exercise of those small pockets of funding within the reserve account.

Councillor Dean thanked Officers for their work and expressed satisfaction that inclusive play provision forms part of the programme; he welcomed the explanation in the Town Clerk's report.

Councillor Tandy asked about the anticipated timescales. The Town Clerk outlined that the process involved finalising the specification and undertaking the procurement exercise. ROSPA inspection reports would be taken into consideration, and any equipment not being disposed of would be refurbished, reused, or relocated as appropriate.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the update be noted;**
- ii. That the procurement schedule for 2026/27 be approved for commencement.**

72.2 Councillor Hancock-Davies' Request for additional play at Shillingston Drive

The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Hancock-Davies had contacted to enquire about how he might be able to tap into the £150,000 a year play budget to improve play on Shillingston Drive. The site had a MUGA on the right-hand side with a play area within the Persimmon Estate on the left-hand side. This met the Council's 15 minutes' walk time policy to access play. Further discussions would take place with Councillor Hancock-Davies to understand what he wanted to see on site.

Councillor Vasmer reported that the condition of the play area on the Shillingston Drive site was very poor, noting that the ground becomes excessively hard in summer and extremely wet during the winter months. The Town Clerk added that the precise location of any future provision would need to be confirmed to ensure public safety, given proximity to the highway and the speed of traffic.

Councillor Mosley advised that Councillor Hancock-Davies should bring the request back to Committee, ensuring that it is aligned with existing Council policy.

Councillor Tandy highlighted the importance of considering local demographic data, specifically the number of children living in the area. The Town Clerk confirmed that data can be sourced from the Shropshire Council Insights Team, with the ability to analyse information by ward. It was noted

that the current assessment framework is based on a 15-minute walk-time between play locations.

Councillor Jephcott stated that he had not previously been aware of the Shillingston Drive play area but was willing to review the demographic information. He further suggested that the Council should develop a process for identifying areas that fall short of adequate play provision, citing northern Herongate as an example.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the update be noted;**
- ii. That Councillor Hancock-Davies submit his request for additional play facilities to a future meeting of the Operations Committee.**
- iii. That the Town Council produces a map detailing all play areas are their 15-minute walk time radius;**
- iv. That the Town Council obtains the demographics information for each ward.**

73/25 STEPPING UP TEAM

The Operations Manager provided an update on the Stepping Up Team. The planned ward visits had continued over recent months with the visit to Copthorne being completed in January. The dates of the ward visits had been diarised with the ward members and other organisations who had been encouraged to attend. Planned visits between this meeting and the next were as followed:

- Harlescott 18th February – Works planned 16th March 2026
- Meole 11th March – Works planned 6th April 2026
- Monkmoor 1st April - Works planned 27th April 2026

During the Autumn season the team had focused on leaf clearing at all locations across Shrewsbury; this had continued through recent weeks.

Bench installations had taken place in areas following Councillor requests; this had been completed alongside the Shrewsbury Menshed who had been refurbishing them. Benches were currently being refurbished from Coleham Head, one of them was in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation and would be red on its return with a plaque produced by the BHF.

Leaf Clearance Oakfield Estate - As part of the ward visit to Copthorne, the leaf litter on the open spaces was highlighted as a concern. Councillor Rob Wilson had organised a community event with residents to clear these leaves; the Stepping Up

Team would provide the vehicles to transport the leaf matter away.

Arden Close Footpath - One of the bigger jobs that had been carried out recently was the footpath at Arden Close in Underdale. This work was carried out alongside the Tree Team to widen the footpath back to the original width and remove the self-setting growth.

Following a successful recruitment process the vacant positions within the Stepping Up Team had now been filled, they were currently awaiting start dates for the new recruits. All new personnel would have an induction arranged as part of their on-boarding.

Litter Picking had continued in all areas of the Town and Town Centre on a regular basis, this was focused on areas that had been highlighted as being hot spots. The team assisted with the bags and equipment and removal of waste following a community litter pick in the Belle Vue and Column Wards organised by Cllrs Halliday and Dartnall.

If Councillors were looking to arrange litter picks the team would be able to assist with the delivery of equipment and collection of the bags. This could be arranged by contacting the Operations Managers, giving advance notice.

Re-visits to some of the original sites had also been required to maintain the areas. These had included areas such as the Sutton Bridge. This was mostly due to leaf litter and weed growth. This would continue to be an issue and was something that the Operations Manager was very conscious of. Time had been allocated for some re-visits to prevent the build-up occurring again wherever possible.

The Operations Manager reported that several major tasks had been completed over recent months, with teams collaborating effectively and specialist equipment hired where required.

Councillor Vasmer expressed thanks to staff for the work undertaken.

Councillor Tandy stressed the importance of ensuring that Shrewsbury Town Council is not called upon to remove litter or fly-tipping where responsibility lies elsewhere, such as with private management companies. The Operations Manager noted that Shropshire Council currently leads on fly-tipping investigations.

Councillor Tandy also queried whether discussions could be held with major takeaway companies regarding the possibility of marking packaging with an identifiable registration number. Councillor Wagner confirmed that a company in Whitchurch is currently trialling such an initiative.

Councillor Wagner expressed his appreciation for the work of the Stepping Up Team, noting their positive contribution. He also thanked Officers for ensuring appropriate boundaries are maintained when responding to requests.

Councillor Halliday thanked Officers for their support in delivering litter-picking equipment and collecting filled bags.

Councillor Mosley also extended thanks to staff for the work undertaken along the river towpath. The Operations Manager confirmed that the towpath had been closed for five days to allow multiple tasks to be completed as part of a co-ordinated programme of works.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

74/25 SERVICE DEVOLUTION PLANS

Councillor Wagner left the meeting.

The Town Clerk provided Members with a progress update following the Devolution Report presented to Full Council on 26 January 2026. Full Council received a report outlining the opportunities available to the Town Council in taking on Street Cleaning Services from Shropshire Council. The report outlined other less priority areas around the monitoring of CCTV and greater involvement in other non-statutory services within Shrewsbury that may be at risk of service diminution or closure as financial pressures deepen.

Shropshire Council Cabinet met in February to determine their approach to delegation of Services to Town Councils. Cabinet approved the delegation of full or part operational and managerial responsibility for Street Scene services to participating pilot areas

- Broseley Town Council
- Oswestry Town Council
- Shifnal Town Council
- Shrewsbury Town Council

Delegation of the final terms of the individual arrangements, (to be agreed by the 31st March 2026) to the Service Director for Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment.

An Operations Board was to be established to meet a minimum of once a year to monitor the operation of the delegated services with joint membership from Shropshire Council and the Town Council.

The Town Clerk detailed in the report the work undertaken last month.

Additional to that further TUPE information had been received that the Deputy Town Clerk was working through. Very productive discussions with colleagues at

Shropshire Council had taken place around how Fix My Street could be more intuitive and send enquiries directly to the Town Council and arrangements for the disposal of waste has also taken place.

Councillor Jephcott welcomed the update and expressed that the Town Council was well-placed to support the forthcoming devolution of services, noting that their involvement would make a positive difference. He added that he had never known litter levels to be as high, particularly in neglected areas such as Park & Ride sites and roadside verges and stressed the need to get this under control.

Councillor Tandy requested a list of the specific responsibilities being taken on under the devolution arrangements, such as whether abandoned vehicles would fall within the Town Council's remit, so that accurate information could be relayed to residents.

Councillor Halliday supported this request and added that it would be helpful to have clarity on the risks to Shrewsbury Town Council and which obligations would remain with Shropshire Council. She also asked that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy be updated to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to deliver the devolved services, noting that this represented a completely new area of financial activity for the Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that a Medium-Term Financial Plan covering the full range of services was being prepared, which would be a substantial document.

Councillor Halliday emphasised the importance of identifying and tracking the budget for devolution. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Responsible Financial Officer was setting up dedicated budget lines to allow effective monitoring.

Councillor Halliday then asked whether the TUPE transfer remained on track for implementation on 1 April 2026, and whether any risks had been identified. The Town Clerk confirmed that all work remained on schedule.

Councillor Dean asked how many FTE posts were expected to transfer under TUPE and questioned whether the proposed Operations Board, set to meet once per year, was correct. The Town Clerk confirmed that monitoring arrangements had been discussed and that Shropshire Council was satisfied that Shrewsbury Town Council could deliver. The Town Clerk noted that TUPE staffing details were not able to be disclosed publicly; these were being dealt with by the Personnel Committee.

Councillor Mosley raised concerns regarding the Service Delegation Agreement, particularly what would be included within it and how Shropshire Council would monitor delivery. The Town Clerk advised that Members had previously received a Service Specification and briefing document in January, and that discussions with Shropshire Council's legal services were underway to enable signing of a Delegation Agreement by 1st April 2026 in accordance with the Cabinet decision.

Councillor Mosley stated he could not recall seeing the document.

Councillor Vasmer requested that the document be retrieved and circulated to all Members.

RESOLVED:

- i. **That the update be noted;**
- ii. **That the Town Clerk circulates the Service Specification to Members.**

Councillor Wagner returned to the meeting.

75/25 ASSET IMPROVEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had leased an operational depot at Sundorne Sports Village from Shropshire Council. This was one of a number of operational depots run by the Town Council primarily to facilitate the delivery of the Horticultural Service Contract with Shropshire Council. These leases had a co-terminus end date with the SLA; therefore, all were now subject to review.

There were a number of reasons why the continued future use of the Sundorne Sports Village site meaning that an alternative site was more favourable.

This report set out:

- The condition and refurbishment implications of the existing facility.
- Strategic risks associated with tenure and service uncertainty.
- The operational case for additional space.
- The comparative advantages of relocating to a purpose-built facility.

The combination of building condition issues at Sundorne, significant refurbishment cost, lack of long-term lease security from Shropshire Council, uncertainty over continued grounds maintenance arrangements at the Sports Village together with growing operational and administrative space requirements collectively provided a strong strategic rationale for relocation.

The opportunity at Centurion Park offered:

- Long-term stability.
- Purpose-built accommodation.
- Improved energy efficiency.
- Greater security.
- Enhanced staff welfare.
- Financial prudence over a 10-year horizon.

The proposed lease, commencing in November with occupation in November, represented a timely opportunity to secure fit-for-purpose accommodation aligned with the Council's expanding operational responsibilities.

The Town Clerk added that the report went through the rationale for relocating from the Depot at the Sundorne Sports Village to a more bespoke and modern facility at Centurian Park owned by Morris Property. Officers had agreed Heads of Terms with a view to the facility being ready by early November. This facility would better meet the Town Council's requirements, gave capability to locate customer service and admin staff there to support the team and most crucially the security of tenure that Leisure Services wasn't able to provide. This facility would work within the 2026/27 budget allocation both in terms of rental and additional relocation and establishment costs.

The Operations Manager reported that he had met on site with Morris Property and the Architects to discuss proposed modifications to the new building. The facility would accommodate the mowing team's equipment as well as staff currently based at Sundorne. The Operations Manager noted that remaining at Sundorne would result in additional costs, and that operating from the new site would ensure a continued presence in the north of the town, whereas working from the Weeping Cross depot would present operational barriers on a number of levels.

Councillor Vasmer commented that he had seen the conditions at Sundorne and asked whether the new facility would provide sufficient space. The Operations Manager confirmed that the new building would be of similar size to the Sundorne site but fully enclosed and secure, with the same overall footprint but under cover.

Councillor Halliday asked whether the lease included a break clause or any extension provisions. The Town Clerk confirmed that there was a three-year break clause, and the lease fell under the Landlord and Tenant Act, giving a right to renew.

Councillor Mosley queried the £100,000 allocated in the budget and sought clarification on its purpose. The Operations Manager explained that costs were being sought for modifications including alterations to the entrance for improved access, the installation of a mezzanine level, wash-down facilities, and internal lighting. These works would be managed within the allocated budget.

Councillor Mosley then asked whether the Council was paying rent at Sundorne. The Operations Manager confirmed that no rent was paid, but the Council had been responsible for repairs and security improvements, including the installation of a cabin and gates following a break-in. Work had been undertaken to make the site functional, but there had been no formal tenancy agreement providing security of tenure.

Councillor Mosley asked about the additional rent payable for the new building. The Town Clerk advised that the rent would be just over £50,000 per year, adding that this compared favourably, compared to the levels of capital expenditure on an aging set up at the Sports Village. It should also be noted that the new facility would have an excellent EPC rating.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the update be noted;**
- ii. That Officers proceed with the necessary legal arrangements to move locations to Centurion Park.**

76/25 PROJECT UPDATES

76.1 Shorncliffe Recreation Ground

The Town Clerk provided an update on the public consultation being undertaken currently at Shorncliffe Recreation Ground.

Shrewsbury Town Council had contracted the services of Camlins, a Shrewsbury-based architectural practice, to lead a public consultation exercise to better understand:

- How residents currently used Shorncliffe Recreation Ground
- What improvements residents would like to see in the future
- What elements of the park may need enhancement, removal or replacement
- The consultation would inform the development of future design proposals for the park.
- Camlins had undertaken a site visit to Shorncliffe Recreation Ground to review:
- Existing assets (play equipment, open space, football pitch and associated features)
- Access routes into and around the park
- Site layout and general condition
- This assessment had enabled them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the space and to develop six themed interpretation boards. The boards were designed to:
 - Encourage residents to think creatively about the park's potential
 - Prompt discussion around improvements and investment priorities
 - Highlight opportunities for new facilities
 - Consider whether any existing elements should be removed or repurposed

The boards were linked directly to the online consultation survey hosted on the Town Council website. Following the close of the consultation on 13 March, Camlins would analyse the survey data and feedback from in-person engagement. A summary of findings would be prepared for the Town Council and Officers and Camlins would review priorities and agree the next steps. Artist impression concept ideas would be developed and presented to the public later in the year. This staged approach ensured that any future proposals were community-led and evidence-based.

6. Conclusion The consultation process at Shorncliffe Recreation Ground was progressing well, with strong early engagement and clear evidence that residents wished to see improvement.

Councillor Mosley asked what funding had been allocated for the project. The Town Clerk advised that no specific sum had yet been identified for any capital works, as the Council was awaiting feedback from the public consultation. It was noted that £10,000 had previously been set aside, and the ambition was to develop a facility comparable to Monkmoor Recreation Ground, for the west of the town. It was suggested that the project could be incorporated into the Council's investment portfolio, the Shrewsbury Place Plan and potentially linked to and Shrewsbury West Master-planning and CIL funding.

Councillor Jephcott commended the survey, stating that it utilised the correct methodology and had already received positive feedback. He asked whether this approach was intended as a one-off exercise or a model for future consultations, noting that it was an excellent method for gathering public opinion. The Town Clerk confirmed that the work undertaken by Camlins, in collaboration with the Communications Officer, had significantly strengthened public engagement. Additional reports had been included within the documentation, and posters had been placed in strategic locations. The high-profile communications campaign had been successful and could be replicated for future projects across other areas.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

76.2 Quarry Splash Park

The Town Clerk informed Members that the commissioning works for the Splash Park had been scheduled for 27 April, with the intention for the facility to be open for use over the May Day weekend

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

76.3 Update on solar lighting progress at Greenfields

The Town Clerk advised that the Operations Manager has been in contact with the electrical contractor who had taken delivery of the ground sleeves that were required to install the lighting columns. Lighting columns were due to be delivered imminently. The solar panels batteries and lighting units had been tested at the factory.

Delivery of this project was still planned for the end of March and once the lighting columns had been delivered, groundworks would commence on site.

Councillor Jephcott commented that he was pleased with the progress.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

76.4 Councillor Vasmer's discussions around a possible pétanque court at Monkmoor Recreation Ground

The Town Clerk advised that proposals were on slow time as officers had quite a bit of work on at the moment. When the club last met with officers, they did cost out creating the court and the materials alone were £13,000. There was also a need to do some structural work to both the retaining wall on the old tennis court and the periphery fencing. It was envisaged that material costs would be around £20,000 not including staff time.

Councillor Vasmer reported that he had spoken with neighbouring residents, who were content with the proposed use of the area. Residents had expressed a desire for further information and indicated that they would welcome a consultation process.

Councillor Mosley commented that the level of financial support being indicated was greater than anticipated.

Councillor Vasmer noted that the proposal appeared to be well supported.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the update be noted;**
- ii. That officers proceed with formalised plans for construction.**

76.5 Update on the Town Council's involvement in the Big Town Plan - Abbey Foregate Project

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting took place with colleagues at Shropshire Council. This project was funded through UK Shared Prosperity Funding and involved creating more of a pedestrian feel on the road to the left of the Abbey by the Crown Pub. The BID would purchase the planters, and parklets (seating areas similar to what they had at the St Julians end of the Quarry) and the Town Council would arrange for planting up and ongoing maintenance. This would hopefully be finished by the end of May before their busy planting period commenced.

Councillor Vasmer stated that the proposals would create an excellent space for outdoor socialising.

Councillor Mosley expressed the view that the parklets were not a suitable idea. The Town Clerk noted that there were various types of parklets available for consideration.

The Operations Manager reported that both a standard parklet and a forest-style parklet were being examined. Consideration was also being given to the use of planters in several locations. Plans illustrating how the installations would appear were available.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

76.6 Update on the Levelling Up Fund Roushill Park Development

As the Committee were aware, much of the demolition work and park development was funded by the Levelling Up Fund that the Big Town Plan Partnership submitted to government. Currently Morgan Sindall were on site building the hard landscaping of the park including the lift to the podium and once complete they would hand over to the Town Council to plant the beds, install mulch and lay turf. The Operations Manager had sourced all the plants to meet the specification drawn up by Spacehub. They would be delivered to the Greenhouse and they would be delivered to site on a bed by bed basis.

The Town Clerk reported that works were expected to commence in late September or early October.

Councillor Mosley queried future maintenance arrangements. The Town Clerk advised that Shropshire Council was keen for Shrewsbury Town Council to be involved in the maintenance of the area. The proposed street scene improvements would require careful consideration of the associated costs.

Councillor Mosley asked if this would likely be appended to the Devolution of Services discussions. Councillor Mosley also sought clarification regarding the proposed meanwhile location. The Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council wished to understand whether the Town Council was amenable to working with a local landscaping company to review the value and potential use of the meanwhile space. Shrewsbury Town Council would assist with layout and ongoing maintenance.

Councillor Mosley asked whether there remained an intention to include an amphitheatre within the plans. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was not currently being considered.

Councillor Jephcott asked whether the identified area was within the flood zone. The Town Clerk clarified that the space being considered was located on the podium section, and was therefore suitable as a temporary area for potential market use.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

77/25 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

Danny Powell, Operations Manager, updated the Committee on Grounds Maintenance. The weather had an impact on the work staff had been able to carry out because of how sodden the ground had become. They hoped that with a sustained period of dry weather they would be able to start grass cutting in mid-March similar to last year. If the weather started to improve then they could look at getting machinery back on to the sports pitches and other surfaces.

Amenity Team - The replacement trees had been planted in the Quarry. Some shrub bed maintenance had been completed and the edging of the paths through the Quarry had also started.

In the nursery, they had carried on with their plant production for the summer but again the lack of sunlight had impacted the rooting of their plant cuttings. The darker days had caused the Heliotrope cuttings to die off but with hopefully sunnier days the recently taken cuttings should increase their plant numbers. Staff had sown the seeds from several perennial plants to boost the number of plants they had instead of buying plant plugs.

Also, in the nursery staff had installed new work benches and put in new pathways to help make movement around the greenhouse easier. They would be soon receiving the first of their summer bedding plant deliveries. The pruning of shrub beds around the town and suburbs was now complete.

Countryside Team - The Tree team were still working through their list of work. They carried out the Ash Die back work on Mansel Williams Way during the Half Term Holiday week. The Countryside team had taken over the management and maintenance of Dana Gardens. They had started a programme of laurel removal to allow more light into the garden. The team had also been carrying out their winter maintenance programme on the sites they managed.

Recs and Greenspace Team - The weather had impacted their daily maintenance considerably, the sodden conditions had caused the cancellation of football matches, and they had not been able to access the facilities with machinery to carry out any planned operations.

Instead, they had been installing gates and fences in the Quarry depot, tidying maintenance sheds and yards where they were based, edging paths on recreation sites, carrying out shrub and tree work and servicing gates on recreation sites across the Town.

All hedges in the Cemetery had been cut and some paths edged. They were looking to mow some areas of the cemetery where the ground conditions allowed the use of smaller lighter machines

Logistics Team - Machine winter servicing was on-going ready for the new cutting season. The mechanics had fabricated two sets of gates for the Quarry depot, which the Recreation Team had fitted. Playground and toilet maintenance was following its normal itinerary. They had also delivered tree bark to several of the Allotment sites where requests had been made.

The Stepping Up Team had been working across the Town.

The wet sodden ground conditions had caused some work to be delayed until later in the year, but this had allowed the teams to undertake work that they would have used contractors to do. With a period of dry weather, the ground conditions would improve, and this would allow the staff to start working on grass areas and carry out horticultural work. The kind conditions last autumn where they mowed grass until late October meant that at this time, they should not struggle with overly long grass when they start mowing this year.

Even with the poor weather conditions during the first 2 months of the year, staff had been carrying out work which would help during the summer months ahead.

The Operations Manager added a further update on current operational activities:

- Grass-cutting commenced this week, including work on a number of island sites.
- Shrub-bed maintenance has now been completed, and teams have moved on to addressing epicormic growth.
- Works within the Quarry are progressing well.
- At the Recreation Ground, football fixtures had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.
- Maintenance continues at Castlefields/Dana.
- The Mechanics team has fabricated gates for repurposing and reuse.

Danny concluded that the recent wet weather had enabled teams to redirect efforts towards other priority tasks.

Councillor Tandy raised concerns regarding Mytton Oak Road roundabout, near Squinter Pip Way, noting that the area appeared never to have been cut and was not adopted. Visibility over the roundabout was significantly impaired, and despite efforts since election, the situation had continued to deteriorate. The Operations Manager advised that there may be underlying structural issues and confirmed that this would be investigated.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

78/25 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

78.1 Heart of England in Bloom

The Operations Manager reported that judging for Shrewsbury in Bloom was scheduled to take place on 22nd July 2026, with a three-hour tour planned. Work had already been undertaken on the walking routes, and it was proposed that the driving route be revised from the previous two years, incorporating a number of different locations.

The Operations Manager confirmed that work had commenced on the Planter Project with the local schools, and the intention was for the walking tour to conclude at the Museum, where winners would be invited to the Museum for the judges to present certificates. The closing date for entries was 1st May 2026.

Councillor Tandy raised a query regarding the Orchard Garden. The Operations Manager responded that the comments had been noted; however, the route must consider the broader interest of locations along the way. He emphasised that the route should not create excessive additional work for staff, high-maintenance interventions along the driving route would not align with the ethos of the Bloom campaign. It was important to ensure that a balance of locations was considered throughout the judging route

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

78.2 Notes of the Bloom Meeting

The notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 12 February 2026 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group Meeting held on 12 February 2026 be accepted and approved.

78.3 Bloom Sponsorship

The Operations Manager provided an update to Committee regarding Bloom sponsorship.

On 21st July 2021 Shropshire Council agreed at cabinet that the roundabout sponsorship would be taken back in-house and then placed with an external advertising company, which resulted in the STC Bloom Sponsorship scheme ceasing with immediate effect. However, reviews had recently begun to investigate the possibility of re-invigorating the original scheme and even expanding it beyond its original bloom framework.

Reviews of the old sponsors had taken place, along with the potential of new companies, including the best way in encouraging companies to sign up. The project was also being used as part of an end-point assessment for college for the Town Councils Administration Apprentice, Esme Breeze, in creating an improvement in the workplace or to improve an existing project.

A Floral Sponsorship Form had been created for obtaining the relevant information they would require for processing the sponsors, including background information into why the Bloom Sponsorship would be a good opportunity for their business. The Sponsorship form had been issued to the past and potential sponsors. The Sponsorship Form would be revised to include new location options once sponsors had confirmed and accepted the locations currently listed on the form.

Potential locations had been identified, and the pricing framework (based on the previous Bloom sponsorship) had been confirmed. The locations focused on Shrewsbury Town Council's floral displays in the town, including shrub beds, floral infrastructure, where there was high footfall and high prominence.

Currently they had 3 new sponsors in the following locations:

- Quarry Shrub Bed, near the Flagpole sponsored by Bellway. Bellway previously sponsored this location in the past.
- The St Chads Terrace Shrub Bed (next to the blue gates), sponsored by Persimmon Homes.
- Hazeldine Way, sponsored by Shropshire Tuning.

Each sponsor would receive the following benefit:

- Sponsorship sign
- Sponsor details published with bloom events
- Sponsor details published on website

A Sponsorship page was being created on the Shrewsbury Town Council website, detailing:

- Information as to why they were re-starting the Bloom sponsorship
- Floral display locations which were yet to be sponsored
- Floral displays which had been sponsored, detailing who the sponsors were. This was creating another marketing opportunity for the sponsors, as the public would be able to see the sponsor logo on the sponsorship page as well as on the physical sponsorship signs.

Bringing back the Bloom Sponsorship was important as it brought in funds for the Bloom application, and it could assist in their floral displays.

The annual fee was determined by which profile category each location would fall into e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum. The profile category itself was based on elements like passing vehicle volume/footfall, visibility and the prestige of each location.

The three-year incentive agreement was a reduction in the 12-month rate if the company signed up for three years. The level of reduction depended on how significant the 12-month rate was to begin with. For example, the sponsoring of a floral display for 12-months at £1,500 could be offered at £1,000 per year for 3 years, which would be £3,000 in total.

The Operations Manager reported that officers were reviewing areas that fell under the ownership and responsibility of Shrewsbury Town Council. As part of this work, existing sponsorship signs would be reused with new sign faces installed where appropriate.

Councillor Dean asked whether the replacement signs would remain the same size. The Operations Manager confirmed that the signage remained the same size.

Councillor Vasmer welcomed the initiative, noting that it was encouraging to see the project being re-invigorated.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

73/25 COMMUTED SUMS

The Town Clerk provided an update on negotiations with developers and transfer arrangements. They had not reached any trigger points for any further Town Council involvement and would continue to liaise with planners on development progress:

- (i) *Copthorne Barracks Play and Open Space*** – offsite contributions to play (£30,498 - £20498 for Shorncliffe Drive & £10000 for Silks Meadow – to be paid on 75% occupancy) and open space (£115,000 for sports pitches & associated facilities at County Ground – paid on 50% occupancy) - funds in relation to landscaping at the County Ground have been drawn down
- (ii) *Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road*** – Phase 1 adopted; Snagging Phase 2/3 commenced. No identified date for transfer. **Significant work has been made on site and it is hoped transfer will**

take place later in the year. The developer has also asked us to adopt the railings on site.

(iii) Shrewsbury South Urban

1. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2024/25 – recent meeting with Taylor Wimpey to discuss logistics for transfer. **Following a hiatus in work the Technical Director of Taylor Wimpey is pressing adoption. Solicitors have been appointed to develop transfer documents.**
2. Bellway Homes site – discussion on land adoption and adoption of acoustic fencing
3. Galliers site – early discussions on land adoption
4. Community Centre – location on the site

(iv) Radbrook College site – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption once all phases are complete

(v) Weir Hill – Agreements to adopt the land at a future time have been signed -meeting with Taylor Wimpey looking at the possibility of the countryside land to be transferred ahead of the POS on the development site. **Persimmon has sought solicitors to develop transfer documents and it is hoped transfer will take place later in the year. Taylor Wimpey are leading on the initial Phase III works and they are keen to have a conversation about the possible adoption of that countryside space so that it links up with Phase I & II land.**

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

74/25 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked Councillors for attending and taking part in this Town Council meeting and thanked the staff involved in this meeting. All papers related to the meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk.