

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Date 1 April 2026

Officer: Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

KNIFE ANGEL VISIT & KNIFE CRIME AWARENESS PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out the proposed approach for Shrewsbury Town Council hosting the Knife Angel in July 2026, alongside a coordinated programme of knife crime awareness and prevention activity throughout June, July and August.

It outlines:

- Strategic rationale
- Proposed programme of activity
- Costs and resources
- Expected outcomes
- Delivery considerations

2. Background and Context

Knife crime remains a national concern, with increasing emphasis on:

- Early intervention
- Education and awareness
- Community-based prevention

While Shrewsbury does not experience the same levels of serious violence as major urban areas, there is clear value in:

- Preventative education
- Raising awareness among young people
- Equipping professionals and communities to respond early

The Knife Angel, constructed from confiscated weapons, has toured towns and cities across the UK as a national symbol against violence and aggression, often acting as a catalyst for local engagement and education.

3. Strategic Opportunity

Hosting the Knife Angel provides Shrewsbury with an opportunity to:

3.1 Deliver a Coordinated Prevention Programme

Linking schools, youth services, community safety, and partners through a shared campaign

3.2 Engage the Wider Community

The aim of this campaign is to create a visible focal point that encourages Reflection, Conversation and Participation under the auspices of Team Shrewsbury Partners.

4. Proposed Programme of Activity

The Knife Angel will act as the centrepiece of a two-month campaign.

Phase 1: Awareness Campaign (June 2026)

Schools Programme

Youth Workers will look to visiting School Assemblies and workshops, delivering using established national toolkits (e.g. No Knives Better Lives, PSHE resources), focussing on consequences of knife crime, peer pressure and decision-making and personal safety

Youth Services & Community Groups

As part of the Million Hours project there will be structured group sessions with targeted discussions on risk, conflict, and youth choices all delivered in a creative way.

Detached Youth Work & Town Rangers

The Town Rangers are working extended shifts to 8pm as part of the Million Hours Programme to deliver Street-based engagement in key locations, using intervention messaging. They will be promoting the upcoming Knife Angel events

Communications Campaign

The Communications Officer is developing a “Shrewsbury Together Against Knife Crime” campaign for Social media, local press, and partner messaging using Youth-led content where possible.

Phase 2: Knife Angel Installation (July 2026)

A programme of structured and open-access activities will be delivered alongside the installation.

Installation

Discussions have taken place with Shropshire Council regarding the Knife Angel being installed in the Square, in front of the Clive Statue. Operations Managers are looking at the operational logistics of its installation.

School Visits

Youth Workers will continue to deliver timetabled educational visits and facilitated reflection sessions to capture young people’s thoughts and perceptions around knife crime.

Community Engagement Events

As part of the Million Hours programme there will be community engagement sessions with partner/stakeholder information stalls. awareness activities and family-friendly engagement.

Phase 3: Legacy Activity (Post-July 2026)

Throughout August the Million Hours programme will continue with targeted youth interventions, linking with the school curriculum (PSHE). Detached Youth Workers and Town Rangers will continue the detached youth work engagement and monitor and evaluate in line with the National Lottery requirements for the programme.

5. Workforce Development

The whole aspect of Knife Crime has established a need to carry out a programme of Knife Crime Awareness with public facing staff including Town Council staff, Shopping Centre Security, Town Rangers and any other Community-facing workers in the town centre in a collaborative Team Shrewsbury way.

A Shrewsbury contextual training course is being developed which will increase awareness of risk factors and warning signs, improved confidence in responding to concerns and set out clear understanding of safeguarding pathways to follow.

6. Cost Overview

There are minimal costs in hosting Knife Angel other than transportation costs and insurance for the week. British Ironworks require a refundable deposit to guarantee the booking. This has been paid.

Youth worker hours, training costs and creation of educational materials will be covered by the Million Hours Funding from the National Lottery.

7. Expected Outcomes

There are potentially significant benefits for the Town as a whole in running this type of campaign including:

For Young People

- Increased awareness of risks and consequences
- Improved decision-making and resilience
- Reduced likelihood of knife carrying

For Professionals

- Improved confidence in identifying risk
- Earlier safeguarding intervention

For the Community

- Increased awareness and reassurance
- Stronger partnership working
- Visible commitment to prevention

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Impact will be measured through pre- and post-engagement surveys, feedback from schools and youth groups, counting participation levels, qualitative feedback from young people as well as Staff confidence assessments around dealing with Knife Crime. A final impact report will be produced.

9. Conclusion

Hosting the Knife Angel provides Shrewsbury with a significant opportunity to deliver a high-impact, coordinated knife crime awareness campaign by combining education, community engagement and workforce training using a nationally recognised symbol on Knife Crime.

The Town Council is well placed, given its role managing Team Shrewsbury in leading on a very proactive, preventative approach that supports young people, strengthens communities and builds long-term resilience.

10. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. Approves the development and delivery of the Knife Angel awareness programme
2. Supports partnership working with key stakeholders
3. Endorses the communications campaign linked to the installation