

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting of Council
Held at Livesey House, 7 St Johns Hill, Shrewsbury at
6pm on Monday 26 January 2026

PRESENT

Councillors A Wagner (Mayor), B Bentick (Deputy Mayor), J Daniels, R Dartnall, J Dean, A Fejfer, R Gratton, K Halliday, H Hancock-Davies, B Jephcott, E Micklewright, V Moore, A Mosley, K Pardy, J Tandy, D Vasmer and R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Operations Manager), Danny Powell (Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer). Three members of the public were also in attendance.

85/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That no apologies were received.

86/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council
Councillor Wagner	Declared an interest in Item 10 & 11 of the agenda (Future Service Delivery & Budget) as he is the Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council and will not take part in any discussions

87/25 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 17 November 2025 be submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council on 17 November 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

88/25 MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising for consideration

89/25 ANNOUNCEMENTS

89.1 MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had a very busy calendar since the last meeting of Full Council and that there were too many announcements to go through. He attended many Christmas services throughout the town but made reference to the Shrewsbury River Patrols. West Mercia Search and Rescue did a fantastic job keeping the general public safe and the Mayor joined them on one evening to see the work they did and they carried on well into the night after the Mayor had left them.

Councillor Hancock-Davies questioned the Mayor on the Holocaust Memorial Day as the engagement sheets showed that neither the Mayor or Deputy Mayor attended this event and he wished to know why. He also added that a communications post should be published regarding this Memorial Day.

The Mayor acknowledged that neither he nor the Deputy Mayor were able to attend due to other engagements which can happen. He agreed that a communications post should be put out to mark the Holocaust Memorial Day and he would talk with the Town Council Communications Officer.

89.2 TOWN CLERK ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that nominations for Mayors Awards were now open. Further information & details on how to make a nomination were on the Mayor's page on the Town Council website. The closing date for receipt of nominations was 12.30pm on Friday 6 March.

The Town Clerk also reported that Government had announced the first UK Town of Culture competition. The Town Council had been reviewing the application form to consider applying to be the first ever UK Town of Culture in 2028. The deadline for preliminary applications was the 31 March. The successful towns would receive £60,000 to support a full application. They believed that they should try and take this opportunity to promote the town on the national stage. They had organised a brainstorming session with people attending who supported events and culture in Shrewsbury. The Town Council would, in due course, bring this item to the relevant Committee for further discussions/updates.

90/25 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that standing orders had been followed in seeking questions ahead of the meeting, but she had accepted questions up until 4pm on the day of this meeting.

One public question had been received. The resident wished to remain anonymous:

“As a Harlescott resident, I'd like to welcome Shrewsbury Town Council's budget plans to invest in cleaning up our town and to protect vital services like CCTV, which many residents see as essential for keeping our neighbourhoods safe and welcoming. It's disappointing that previously Labour didn't prioritise this kind of practical action when they had the chance. If I have to pay a small additional charge for good services, I'm happy to do that for our town. Could the council say how quickly residents can expect to see improvements on the ground, particularly in areas like Harlescott and how progress will be communicated to residents?”

Councillor Wilson thanked the member of the public for their question. He replied to say that it must be made clear that if the decision was made this evening that the Town Council would take on street cleaning from Shropshire Council, it would not take effect until 1 April. He asked that the public recognised that there was a large backlog of work and that improvements would come but it would take some time.

91/25 MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no motions submitted by Members.

Councillor Wagner left the meeting. Councillor Bentick took over the role as chairman.

92/25 FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

The Town Clerk reported to Council that whilst presenting the report on Future Service Delivery, she had to recognise the input from the whole of the Senior Management Team, bringing together their individual expertise in them being able to show due diligence. She hoped she had been able to address feedback officers had received from the members of both the Policy & Resources Committee and the Operations Committee, particularly around clarity of scope, financial assumptions, operational capacity, risk, and governance — and it sought to provide members with a clearer and more balanced evidence base to consider service delegation and the associated resources needed to deliver those services.

The context for this remained difficult. Shropshire Council continued to face significant financial pressures, and those pressures had very real implications for the

future of non-statutory services that affected the day-to-day experience of residents in Shrewsbury. The report was written on the basis of previous discussions around the fact that Shrewsbury Town Council was best placed to deliver localised service delegation and what it could look like, should members wish to pursue it, and what the implications would be for this Council.

The report provided Members with an overview of proposals for the Town Council to take on Street Cleaning services — including street sweeping, litter picking and bin collection — from Shropshire Council, the case for and against devolution at this time, and the strategic, financial and operational considerations for implementation by 1 April this year.

It provided further assurance and evidence to support the proposed increase in the precept for 2026/27 by:

- Setting out the background of the Town Council's aspirations to take on more services from Shropshire Council as set out in the Corporate Plan
- Background to Shropshire Council reaching out to Parish & Town Councillors to take a more hands on approach to the delivery of services at the most local level in light of the increasing financial position of the unitary authority
- Setting out detailed staffing, governance, mobilisation and operational requirements;
- Clarifying the scope, specification and geographic coverage of proposed services;
- Demonstrating alignment with existing Town Council services, particularly the Stepping Up Team;
- SWOT, PESTLE, Equality, Environmental Sustainability and Value for Money assessment of carrying out the works
- Presenting a Strategic Risk Assessment comparing delivery of the services versus delaying or not proceeding.
- The Town Council's legal position in relation to the consideration and delivery of Streetscene Services
- Community Consultation in support of service transfer. This report was intended to support informed decision-making ahead of final budget setting.

Importantly, the paper also reflected the concerns expressed by members about pace, capacity, and affordability. It acknowledged the risks involved, the limits of their current resources, and the need for any future approach to be realistic, sustainable, and clearly accountable. Officers had attempted to set out those considerations honestly, including areas where further work would be required should members wish to progress matters further.

The Town Clerk appreciated the report was long but officers wanted to demonstrate their usual practical back-office approach to service delivery which had been used in previous service transfers and hopefully it would give members reassurance that this

had been constructively considered to answer all the feedback received to deliver a service deserving of Shrewsbury's residents, business and visitors.

The whole of the Senior Management Team were present at the meeting and were happy to answer any questions members had.

The Town Clerk also wished to share comments that had been raised by the Youth Council, who had expressed a strong desire to have their voices represented at this Full Council meeting. The Youth Council had received a presentation from the Town Council Communications Officer who delivered the final report on the Future Services Survey and the Service Devolution Review. Members of the Youth Council held a detailed discussion on the findings, noting in particular the low engagement levels from young people. Notably, only one member present had been aware of the survey prior to the meeting.

Following discussion, and through the Chair, the Youth Council agreed in principle to support the proposed devolution of street sweeping, litter picking and public bin collection from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council.

Councillor Mosley commented that at the Policy & Resources Committee there was some confusion regarding street sweeping as in the Shropshire Council documents the existing arrangement said that the specification was that streets outside of the Town Centre would be swept 4 times per year, but Town Council officers stated that the road sweeper manufacturer had visited Shrewsbury and had recommended that 2 times per year would be sufficient.

The Town Clerk reported that the Shape Files received from Shropshire Council listed 600 linear miles of streets (2 sides of single carriageways and 4 sides of dual carriageways) and in sweeping all 4 times a year required operatives to sweep 48 miles of roads per week. The main roadsweeper alone could operate 40 hours per week, doing a conservative 2 miles an hour, would be able to cover 80 miles a week, so the mechanical sweeper and compact sweeper were within capacity to deliver 4 sweeps a year.

Councillor Dean commented that reassurance was needed between now and 1 April and at what stage would Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) be done. He also questioned the allocation towards other threatened Shropshire Council services as there was already £190,000 allocated last year and asked if this allocation had been used or was it there as a reserve. The RFO confirmed it was a reserve. The Town Clerk commented that they needed to look at what they knew. They had been working with the museum to help maximise their income. The Town Council had their eyes wide open and if the budget was agreed this evening, procurement would start tomorrow. She stressed the need to continue engagement with the public. She confirmed that they did have ideas for Key Performance Indicators going forward.

The Town Clerk added that the recruitment of back-office staff was required regardless of this proposal and the current depot at Sundorne desperately needed renewing. Weeping Cross depot was not achieving its capacity and it needed to be made more operational based. In regard to back-office staff, the Town Council needed to enter into a more digital age and bring up to the 21st century.

Councillor Halliday thanked the Town Clerk for the reports. She commented on CCTV and that they hadn't had a level of service since July 2024. The system was consistently down in the town centre, and it was clear that CCTV had limited efficiency to reduce crime as also stated on the College of Policing website. She asked if the Town Council had looked at any other methods or a better way than spending an extra £260,000 on CCTV.

The Town Clerk confirmed this figure covered Shropshire Council's proposal to reduce CCTV staffing down to 2 operators and a leader between the hours of 2pm – 2am. CCTV was relied upon though. It was used alongside the Town Centre Police and Town Rangers who all co-ordinated together to tackle criminal issues. The relationship was effective and the CCTV service was needed.

Councillor Halliday added that Oswestry Town Council paid for their own CCTV and were we looking at reducing, were they having KPIs to make the town safe? This was a lot of public money being discussed. The Town Clerk confirmed that they had looked at Oswestry and different alternatives were being looked to determine whether it could be run as a hybrid system. She confirmed that there had been more cameras on since the Town Council had stepped in to maintain the system. The Town Clerk also confirmed they were not in a position to look at KPIs.

Councillor Fejfer commented that he looked at the Policing website that Councillor Halliday referred to and that he could not find where it stated CCTV had limited efficiency to reduce crime. The site stated that overall, CCTV had reduced crime by 7% and that he would like the CCTV service extended out to outside of the town centre and into the parish wards. The Town Clerk commented that CCTV had stopped people being assaulted, stopped drug dealing and directed officers to correct locations. She did comment that there was potential to work with others to progress this further.

Councillor Daniels asked if there was an opportunity to extend CCTV within his ward. The Town Clerk responded saying that the cameras needed to tie in where there were policing issues and there was a need to understand the system further. This could be looked into and possibly look at funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Tandy brought up the issue of bins and commented he was pleased the Town Council were using Men's Shed as this was a fantastic organisation and could there be new bins placed within his ward. The Town Clerk confirmed they were looking at bins and that cast iron bins were more robust. The newer bins that had been placed on Pride Hill were not up to standard and had either broken or been crashed into. There were a lot that needed replacing and they were looking at experiences from other Councils where bins had been renewed leading to greater use, less anti-social

behaviour and greater pride in the town. They needed to ensure that bins were placed in the right locations and would be used and not placed in unsuitable locations and either never used or never emptied as was the case with some bins now.

Councillor Micklewright commented that many bins were privately run that were not emptied. She also asked about play areas and asked if it was necessary to add £150,000 to expenditure as she was concerned on the impact to residents and council tax.

The Town Clerk replied that 20 play areas would need replacing throughout the current electoral term and that whilst the Council had a healthy set-aside earmarked reserve, it would not be enough to replace all that need replacing.

Councillor Moore commented that there were no bins on Oteley Road, and the Town Clerk responded that the Town Council weren't responsible for bin allocation in new development sites. They had received a list of bins from Shropshire Council, and they still couldn't understand why some bins were located where they had been. They needed to crack on with the 550 bins to optimise how they would work and then look further.

Councillor Pardy commented that he had always supported outside teams, but he was worried on the risk of affordability and what would happen in twelve months if things went wrong. The Town Clerk confirmed that they had looked at costings provided by Shropshire Council and they had tried to counteract using their own finances. Whilst Shropshire Council agreed 66% they say they would meet the statutory duty. The RFO had budgeted to see at least 50% of it. There was a need to utilise this year. There were a lot of initiatives to help them and that they could create a more rounded complimentary service. They had tried liaising with Shropshire Council contractors, but this had been unsuccessful.

Councillor Micklewright commented on Appendix Z of the reports provided which was the Environmental Impact Assessment and asked if they were committing to mitigation measures and could they still commit to net zero. The Town Clerk said that the climate aspect was primarily looked at and there was the potential to use electric vehicles but for some jobs, electric simply wouldn't be efficient.

Councillor Hancock-Davies asked Councillor Wilson a question regarding negotiation with Shropshire Council and the figures that Shrewsbury Town Council would receive for the street scene services as it was 75% then 66% then 50%. He asked who Councillor Wilson was negotiating with and was it himself. Councillor Wilson said he would answer this question during the later debate.

Councillor Jephcott commented that they did need to look at the 'bin network' on active travel routes to see where demand was. He also asked if there was scope for new, smaller play areas. The Town Clerk confirmed there was a lot of work to complete regarding bins and they needed to understand where the black spots were and that a list would be completed for each ward. Regarding play areas, the Town Clerk reported

that the Council worked on the basis every child was within a 15-minute walking distance of a play area, and that it was a case of the quality of the play areas and not quantity. They would investigate whether there were any gaps.

Councillor Mosley asked if Appendix M, which referred to Street Scene Performance Standards, would become their KPIs. The Town Clerk replied that there was a requirement to monitor locations and they had the Stepping Up team to review locations for them and where improvement was required. Councillor Mosley added that the Stepping Up team had eight members of staff and how would they manage between the Stepping Up team and the Street Cleansing Team. The Town Clerk replied that the Stepping Up team workload was not in the specification for Shropshire Council. The Town Council had continued to do this work, and it would continue. The Stepping Up team could transfer cleaner work to the Street Cleansing team. In regard to graffiti, if it was in a highway setting it would fall under the Street Cleansing Team but Stepping Up could look at areas not in the highway. The question was then raised regarding the issue of fly tipping. The Town Clerk confirmed they would endeavour to find the owner of the fly tipping and would continue to liaise with the Environmental Team at Shropshire Council who still had enforcement responsibility.

Councillor Wilson, Leader of Shrewsbury Town Council, then addressed Council. He stated that there was a clear choice before them as a Council. The Town Council needed to take big, bold and brave step forwards, listen to their residents, deliver on one of the key aims of this Council's adopted corporate plan and trust in the professional work of the Town Council's staff. The other option would be to stay still, accept the decline and risk residents blaming this Council for failing to act when it had the opportunity to do so.

The results of the public consultation were clear in that residents wanted them to continue in the vein of the Stepping Up team and tackle the cleanliness of the streets, the security of the town centre and to be prepared to act if important assets or services faced cuts or closure.

They must not underestimate the vital role the public realm plays in the vitality of their businesses, and these proposals had gained the support of the Shrewsbury Business Chamber and Shrewsbury Business Improvement District. As a Town Council, they had a role to play in their success. At a basic level, they could provide them with a clean and safe environment in which to operate.

This was a generational opportunity; it was tied to Shropshire Council's extension of their outsourced contract and delay was not really an option like some members had suggested. He agreed that scrutiny was important, and should the Council support the proposal, it would be incumbent on all of us to work together positively to make this work.

The Town Council had an experienced staff team, who delivered for the community on a daily basis. Officers had provided all members with the information that they had, which was more information than they had received before on any other topic

in the 16 years of the Town Council, including the negotiation which was going on between officers from both councils – and the %s were the same for all 4 pilot councils, no individuals. There would be Shropshire Council cuts whether in a pilot or not. He added they would never have perfect information, and they would never have every question answered, and yes there was always risk but this was a manageable risk.

The role of a Councillor was to set the strategic direction of the Council, and it was the job of officers to deal with the detail and delivery. The papers provided at this meeting had given him the confidence that staff were ready to do this. The worst thing that Councillors could do was to try and micromanage them.

Whilst they looked to take this decision in the shadow of Shropshire Council's financial emergency, they must not be unduly influenced by it. They needed to take a decision that they believed was in the best interests of residents based on all the information they had available, regardless of whether they were Shropshire Councillors or not.

Councillor Wilson raised the comment of double taxation. Double taxation was when you paid twice for the same service, but this was categorically not what this was. He confirmed that Shropshire Council would be paying Shrewsbury Town Council to provide the legal minimum service. The proposal was that the Town Council would top this up to provide a vastly improved service. He commented that the residents were asking us to do the service, the business community was in full support, and the Town Council staff were ready to put the plan into action. He urged members to vote in favour of the recommendations.

Councillor Mosley spoke regarding the consultation completed by the Town Council. He complimented Shropshire Council on their recent consultation as they asked the right questions, the Town Council did not do that. To raise the council tax precept overnight was unprecedented and they owed the ratepayers to scrutinise and study the reports provided. He agreed that some aspects of the report were good and that other aspects were not necessary at this time. He didn't believe that CCTV should be funded as they did not know enough about it. He commented that he would provide an amendment to the proposal later in the meeting that would take the precept down.

Councillor Jephcott supported the delegation proposal. He commented that we all live in difficult times and that service delivery was facing an emergency. The Town Council had to step up and take action whilst they could, with the resources whilst they could. This had been under discussion for several years; it was not something that had come out of the blue. They had to take the opportunity and deliver the service the town needed. They had the staff to do it and the rise in precept was not unreasonable.

Councillor Hancock-Davies agreed that the Town Council could deliver the services and they would put their heart and soul into it. But in terms of the double taxation or stealth tax this was not acceptable. Town & Parish Councils could increase their

precept by what they saw fit, Shropshire council can increase theirs by 4.99% before a referendum was required. It was astonishing that the increase had doubled overnight, and he did not appreciate taking more disposable income away from workers who were already bearing the brunt for benefit claimers. In addition, he said the cost to TUPE staff was astronomical and would the next financial year be raised by astonishing amounts.

Councillor Halliday had concerns for the future and wanted assurances for council taxpayers. They had been warned what would happen next as Bridgewater Council were raising their tax again. She was not confident in the street cleaning or CCTV and there were no guard rails. The Town Council would take this on and raise council tax again. There was no forward planning.

Councillor Gratton commented that this was not double taxation. Shropshire Council could not deliver in the current situation. Residents want a town/place to be proud of, and as this was not an ideal situation they were in, they were, and they needed to carry on.

Councillor Fejfer said that they had been discussing delegation for over 2 years and they were now taking decisive action. If residents wanted a town that was attractive and that they could be proud to live here, this proposal needed to happen. The Town and surrounding wards needed higher standards, the duty was to the residents who want cleaner streets, CCTV etc. Delegation did come with a risk but so do most things. They needed to bring accountability back to a local level as they could not wait for Shropshire Council to solve the problem. The Town Council needed to take control and manage the future.

Councillor Dean spoke about street scene and said that yes there was a risk, but Shropshire Council would pay for the minimum service – that was a small risk. Regarding CCTV, he was comfortable with this, and they should carry on with it now but perhaps review the service after one year. Councillor Dean also commented that he was not happy with Councillor Hancock-Davies comment regarding benefit claimers. They were trying to bring the Town Council up to date and there was a greater risk if they did not as they could end up like Shropshire Council. Councillor Dean confirmed he had submitted an amendment to the budget proposal that would be discussed at that agenda item.

Councillor Dartnall commented that this was not about politics but balance and they were here to represent their residents. Her concern was the rising costs and that increasing the precept without any mandate was wrong. She confirmed that she was not opposed to the street cleansing service, but she was against CCTV cost. It was too much at the same time and they were asking the residents to pick up the bill.

Councillor Pardy added that he did not recognise this Town Council anymore and what he saw was the Liberal Democrats stopping people from talking. He saw a scared and afraid Liberal group, and they hadn't thought enough about this proposal.

Councillor Vasmer commented that the town was going down hill and they had now got the opportunity to reverse this with proper street cleaning. He asked members how many times they had received resident complaints that had never been actioned. He hoped that in one years' time they would all be celebrating this moment.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and accepted.

93/25 BUDGET 2026/27

The Responsible Officer presented the budget to Full Council as the budget needed to be agreed and the precept requirement submitted to Shropshire Council S151 Officer by no later than 31 January 2026.

The draft budget was presented to Policy & Resources two weeks ago where a lot of time had been spent on the appendix of the additional services, but the committee did also look at and discuss the forecast outturn which helped form the basis of the budget for next year 2026/27 and the reserves.

The Policy & Resources Committee previously agreed the assumptions and factors to be applied to the forecast and budget, and this included some additional staff, but this was for a stand still position. Incorporating these additional costs and reducing income from the SLA (Service Level Agreement) with Shropshire Council and falling interest rate. The RFO did raise that he had missed off some additional income which totalled £112,000. This had now been added into the revised budget presented this evening.

The budget and forecasts presented were in the usual format for this meeting by cost centres as opposed to nominal analysis for each expense heading.

Looking at the forecast there was a £31,622 deficit. Hopefully this would come closer to a breakeven position looking at the most recent data. This deficit arose primarily due to lower income received from Shropshire Council for the Service Level Agreement. For the expenditure, delays in recruitment and vacant posts had helped offset the lower income, while there were some negative variances, the expenditure would come in under budget.

Turning to the budget, the additions which were agreed at Policy & Resources Committee, including staff, had contributed to the corporate cost increase. Other factors applied were inflationary pressures at 2% and 3% for pay award.

Income streams overall had decreased excluding the precept due to the previous Service level Agreement which lapsed and would become part of the new devolution agreement, albeit at a lower amount reflecting the minimum standards and costs Shropshire Council would pay which Shrewsbury Town Council would enhance. To

keep things simple, any new services were detailed in Appendix 1 and highlighted in yellow with a cost of £1.4m, excluding this the changes to expenditure previously agreed would have necessitated a precept increase of £380,000 – 15.7% and reduction in income £523,000 – 21.7%. in total £903,000 – 37.4% precept increase - £32.59 Band D property to stand still.

Appendix 1 showed new services and enhancements from the standstill budget and totalled £1.4m net cost and required a 58.1% increase in the precept, a £50.53 band D increase.

Councillor Dean proposed an amendment to the budget but added that they were talking about an extra 80p a week and that letting the services deteriorate was not on. They recognised that securing the provision of improved 'street scene' maintenance with an in-house service provided by the Town Council, providing a contingency to enable other threatened services in the town to continue to function, and investing in other necessary public realm and public safety improvements were all appropriate and necessary steps to take this year. However, the near doubling of the Town Council precept, together with the maximum increase in Council Tax likely to be introduced by Shropshire Council, would bring additional pressures to many residents' finances.

He further noted that since the beginning of the year an additional £119,000 had been allocated to support Town Council service provision by Shropshire Council.

The Town Council had a track record of looking for opportunities to support residents with cost-of-living pressures; in recent years grants were made available to 'top-up' insulation and energy efficiency measures through a partnership arrangement with the Marches Energy Agency.

In order to further develop their work in this area he proposed to raise an additional £80,000, representing a slightly smaller figure than the additional funding identified from Shropshire Council which reduced the expected increase during this month, to support a Cost-of-Living 3-year partnership project (subject to support for continued funding in subsequent budgets, based on a review of the project in year 1). Funds would be made available to support robust initiatives from partner organisations with the skills and capacity to directly increase income or reduce costs for residents in Shrewsbury.

Councillor Dean apologised that he had not sent the amendment out prior to the meeting.

Councillor Micklewright added that some residents may have trouble paying energy bills and proposing help from organisations that could assist households was a great idea.

Councillor Wilson said the Town Council would be right to take the step that Councillor Dean had proposed and supported his amendment.

Councillor Halliday was in favour in principle, but the precept was going up and up. It was difficult as they had not long had the reports and this was not how they should be doing this; there was not enough scrutiny.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Dean's amendment be approved

11 votes for, 5 against.

Councillor Mosley proposed his amendment to the budget as there was no information on several items in the RFO report. He proposed that the following should be removed from the budget:

- CCTV - £260,000
- Protect SC Services - £250,000
- Sundorne replacement - £100,000
- Play Area - £150,000
- Youth - £75,000
- Contingency £45,000

Total = £880,00

All of the above were in need of detailed scrutiny. He didn't agree with committing £100,000 to Sundorne for a year as Shropshire Council were to start a procurement of Sports & Leisure Services with all centres included and at present this would include grounds maintenance in a single specification at the Sports Village. He also added that there was a £600,000 commission on the way for Youth Services.

Removing the above would reduce it by £880,000 and in the interest of precept payers this would make a significant difference. The Town Council would be on a slippery slope if they agreed to a 100% increase this year.

The RFO confirmed that if the budget was reduced by £880,000 it would bring the precept to £137.59 (£31.75 reduction) = 58.1% rise in the precept.

Councillor Dean didn't understand why Councillor Mosley wished to delay the Sundorne proposal and he was thinning out the ability to do stuff.

Councillor Wilson did not support this amendment.

Councillor Vasmer couldn't agree with the amendment or the removal of Sundorne replacement. The depot was in a really bad state, and a change was required now.

Councillor Tandy did not agree with the amendment as it was a backwards step.

Councillor Jephcott stated they faced as choice – go forwards or go backwards. Statutory minimum means very little by Shropshire Council. Trust the assessment the Town Council had made. This was an integrated budget, not a pick and mix.

Councillor Halliday said there was no rationale for buying CCTV and asked what the Town Council wanted to achieve, this was a massive uplift. She was worried what would happen in next year's budget. Massive risks were being taken, and she urged members to support Councillor Mosley amendment.

Councillor Hancock-Davies reiterated that the precept increase was astonishing and he would support Councillor Mosley's amendment.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mosley's amendment not be supported.

5 votes for; 10 against, 1 absention.

One member of the public left the meeting.

Councillor Wilson commented that this was a budget for a cleaner, safer Shrewsbury, with overdue investment in its social and physical fabric.

They must consider the context for their decisions. Shropshire Council was facing government funding cuts. Shrewsbury's precept was an outlier compared with other towns in Shropshire and councils of similar size nationwide. This had been portrayed as a strength, but in reality, it had left the Town Council overly reliant on Shropshire Council and operating on an increasingly tight budget. This proposal corrected that course, strengthened their independence, and delivered on residents' priorities.

Before the local elections Councillor Wilson had spoken to thousands of residents across Shrewsbury. One issue arose repeatedly: town-wide cleaning needed urgent improvement. Residents recognised that Shropshire Council couldn't address this and that taking on these services would come at a cost. They understood this, as reflected again in the consultation.

They had already discussed delegating Street Cleaning, but he wanted to highlight the wider investment this budget made in our town and its people.

The Town Council previously took on maintenance of the CCTV system and significantly improved its operation. This budget provided additional funding to protect this into the future.

£250,000 was set aside so the Town Council could protect other services if needed during the year. They could not predict where this may be required, but it was prudent that they were prepared.

Beyond responding to pressures at Shropshire Council, this budget invested directly in community wellbeing.

He had asked a local police officer where investment would have the greatest impact, the answer was immediate: detached youth workers. This aligned with work already underway, so £75,000 was allocated to expand our youth service.

Many play areas were tired, and this budget increased funding so that two can be upgraded each year instead of just one. They had long discussed diversifying their play facilities, and this investment would finally allow progress.

The council also maintained many footpaths—vital links across communities. They had already installed successful solar lighting schemes on Victoria Avenue in The Quarry and Stanley Lane in Meole Brace. Plans were well advanced for Greenfields, with interest raised about Kynaston Road Recreation Ground and Upton Lane. This budget allowed more paths to be lit across the town.

The Town Council faced a choice: act to clean the streets, protect residents, and invest in the town, or continue to talk whilst ignoring what residents had clearly told them. Councillor Wilson chose action, and he urged other members to do the same and proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor Halliday commented to the RFO that reserves were low and were they looking to boost them in the longer term. The RFO confirmed that this was a worry and this may be flagged by the auditor. The RFO had budgeted for less interest and looked at the way the projections were going. The Town Clerk added that the smaller the council, the bigger the reserve requirement.

Councillor Halliday questioned the 50% cut in street scene services and commented that she had been trying to get this figure as she had not seen it anywhere. It was said that this would be confirmed in the Shropshire Council Cabinet papers soon and the Town Clerk had been in conversations with Shropshire Council to obtain the figure.

Councillor Pardy commented that he did not understand why the Quarry play area needed to be changed every 10 years and this was money that shouldn't be spent. The Town Clerk reported that all play areas receive a ROSPA assessment and if all is well, nothing would be changed but after 10 years there would be wear and tear due to the high usage of the Quarry Play Area and also the effect floods had in this location.

Councillor Mosley asked if CCTV expenses were still provided by the PCC (Police Crime Commissioner). The Town Clerk reported that the PCC would support capital upgraded but they not the day to day running costs. Councillor Mosley asked if the Business Improvement District had been approached and the Town Clerk confirmed they had set their business plan and nothing had been accounted for CCTV.

Councillor Mosley asked if the Town Rangers were allocated in the budget. The Town Clerk said she had spoken to the BID and they needed further talks, but they had not committed to taking on their services.

Councillor Halliday wished to add that she was not arguing to end CCTV but asking not to spend any money and to keep it at the same level.

Councillor Vasmer commented that CCTV was a good and vital tool, and he couldn't understand the opposition to it.

Members then voted on whether to accept the budget with Councillor Deans amendment included:

RESOLVED

- (i) That the inclusion of £80,000 for the Cost of Living campaign be incorporated into the 2026/27 budget as presented;
- (ii) That the forecast out-turn for the 2025/26 Financial Year as presented be accepted;
- (iii) That a Revenue expenditure budget of £6,784,893 be set for the financial year 2026/27;
- (iv) That a Precept be levied against the Taxpayers of Shrewsbury of £4,772,978 equating to a Band D Levy of £172.23 for the financial year 2026/27;
- (v) That the proposed Fees & Charges as recommended by both Policy & Resources Committee be approved.

Votes were 11 for; 5 against.

Councillor Wagner returned to the meeting and took over the Chair from Councillor Bentick

94/25 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 8 December 2025 and 12 January 2026 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 8 December 2025 and 12 January 2026 be received and adopted.

95/25 OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Operations Committee held on 14 January 2026 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED

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

96/25 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held 9 December 2025 and 13 January 2026 were submitted as circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 9 December 2025 and 13 January 2026 be received and adopted.

97/25 COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Communities & Environment Committee held on 3 December 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Communities & Environment Committee meeting held on 3 December 2025 be received and adopted

98/25 WORKING GROUPS

98.1 JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 21 January 2026 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 21 January 2026 be received and adopted

98.2 GRANTS SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Grants Sub Committee meeting held on 20 November 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Grants Sub Committee meeting held on 20 November 2025 be received and adopted.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

99/25 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.

The Mayor advised that live streaming of this meeting would now stop. He thanked members of the public for logging in. All papers relating to the meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk

100/25 EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS/FOI COMMITTEE

The minutes of the External Complaints/FOI Committee meeting held on 2 January 2026 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the External Complaints/FOI Committee meeting held on 2 January 2026 be received and adopted.

101/25 CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor thanked members and staff for their attendance and closed the meeting.