

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
DATE 4 MARCH 2026**

Officer: Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

SERVICE DEVOLUTION UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Members with a progress update following the Devolution Report presented to Full Council on 26 January 2026, outlining developments to date, engagement undertaken, areas of advancement, and next steps.

2. BACKGROUND

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.

Officers have been working to a number of recommendations from the January Policy & Resources Committee listed below:

- (i) Shropshire Council's financial position be noted, including the declaration of a financial emergency, the application to Government for emergency financial support and the ongoing risk of a Section 114 notice, and the potential implications for the continuity of local services in Shrewsbury.
- (ii) The outcomes and emerging themes from the public survey hosted on the Shrewsbury Town Council website seeking residents' views on protecting local services be noted.
- (iii) There be an agreement in principle to the devolution of Street Cleaning services, including street sweeping, litter picking and bin collection, from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council, subject to satisfactory implementation planning and budget provision.
- (iv) The proposed implementation timetable to enable service commencement by 1 April be approved, including:
 - Setting the annual budget and precept at Full Council on 26 January; and
 - Monthly updates to the Policy & Resources Committee to maintain Member oversight during the transition period.
- (v) Delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council be granted for the following:
 - Lead negotiations with the Leader and officers of Shropshire Council.
 - Develop and implement the detailed service transition plan.
 - Recruit staff and manage TUPE processes where applicable;

- Procure vehicles, plant, equipment and operational contracts;
- Negotiate and enter into the necessary legal agreements;
- Instruct and obtain specialist legal, HR and procurement advice; and
- Take all necessary operational decisions to ensure services are in place by 1 April.

- (vi)** The strengthening of organisational capacity be approved, including:
- Additional management and professional support;
 - Increased customer services capacity;
 - Short-term accommodation solutions where required;
 - An overhaul of health and safety arrangements;
 - Investment in CRM, reporting systems and operational infrastructure.
- (vii)** The following further work be undertaken by officers:
- Assess non-statutory services currently delivered in Shrewsbury by Shropshire Council;
 - Evaluate the potential impact of service withdrawal in the event of a Section 114 notice; and
 - Identify interim measures the Town Council may need to put in place during the next financial year.
- (viii)** The inclusion of budget provision or earmarked reserves be approved to enable the Town Council to respond swiftly to risks to other priority services not currently included within the Street Cleaning devolution proposals.
- (ix)** Further engagement with key stakeholders, including the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District and other partners, be agreed to develop a shared understanding of future service priorities and opportunities for collaborative delivery.
- (x)** The experience of other town councils, including Bridgwater Town Council be noted, and agree that learning from comparable authorities continues to inform Shrewsbury Town Council's approach to service devolution.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 Shropshire Council Cabinet

Cabinet met in February to determine their approach to delegation of Services to Town Councils.

That 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. The commercial terms of the individual arrangements are detailed within section 5 of this report.

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

3.2 Staff Engagement

All quarterly Staff Meetings have involved service devolution discussions with every department and staff have been given the opportunity to feed into discussions

3.3 Recruitment

All staff posts have been advertised with closing date of 20 February 2026. Staff have been shortlisting and inviting successful applicants for interview.

3.4 TUPE

Officers have had initial meetings with relevant HR personnel to determine TUPE staff. Those details have been dealt with by the Personnel Committee.

3.5 Procurement of Kit

All Invitations for Tender concluded on 20th February and those submissions are going through evaluation stage

3.6 Routes

All shape files detailing areas to be covered by the agreement have been received and staff are formalising the initial route and how they may complement other operational route. As an example, Litter Pickers will visit a site followed by Grass Cutters and then Road Sweepers to establish a more comprehensive service.

3.7 Communications

The Communications Officer is developing a Communications Plan for informing the public and stakeholders of progress.

3.8 Back Office

The Deputy Town Clerk is leading work to develop the necessary Back-Office support for the new work streams. This includes increased Customer Service Functionality.

Shropshire Council has confirmed that any queries relating to Shrewsbury Town Council activity will be automatically transferred to the Town Council to ensure a more joined up approach to service mutual residents.

3.9 Due Diligence and Risk Assessment

Officers have commenced:

- Insurers are aware of new arrangements to factor into the new Insurance Agreement effective 1st April.

3.10 Organisational Capacity Review

An internal capacity assessment is been undertaken, focusing on:

- Management oversight capacity.
- Reporting to Council and its Committees
- Operational workforce capability.
- Procurement and contract management readiness.
- ICT and systems requirements.

3.11 Financial Position and Budget Planning

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is being reviewed to consider:

- Potential phased assumption of services.
- Reserve allocation for transition costs.
- Impact on precept setting in future financial years.
- The RFO is remodelling the Financial Management System to better reflect new service delivery

4. NEXT STEPS

1. Continue structured negotiations with Shropshire Council in relation to the development of a Service Delegation Agreement
2. Development of Service Routes and Plans
3. Risk Assessment Review in the new service areas
4. Interviewing of Staff
5. Onboarding of TUPE Staff
6. Kit & Uniform Purchase

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- 1. Note the progress made since the Full Council report of 26 January 2026;**
- 2. Endorse the next steps towards service delegation on the 1st April**