

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

Officer: Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

ASSET IMPROVEMENTS

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To outline the rationale for the relocation from the existing depot at Sundorne Sports Village and to a new-build unit at Centurion Park, owned by Morris Property and currently marketed by Towler Shaw Roberts.

2 BACKGROUND

The Town Council has leased an operational depot at Sundorne Sports Village from Shropshire Council. This is 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 have a co-terminus end date with the SLA; therefore all are subject to review.

There are a number of reasons why the continued future use of the Sundorne Sports Village site means that an alternative site is more favourable.

This report sets 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.

3 CONDITION OF EXISTING DEPOT – SUNDORNE SPORTS VILLAGE

3.1 Building Condition

A review of the current premises has identified the following:

- Ageing building fabric requiring significant capital intervention.
- Inefficient heating and insulation performance.
- Suboptimal welfare facilities.
- Layout constraints that limit operational efficiency.
- Security vulnerabilities relative to modern standards.

The building was not originally designed as a modern operational depot and does not meet current expectations for energy efficiency or staff welfare provision.

3.2 Cost of Refurbishment

Preliminary assessment indicates that substantial refurbishment would be required to:

- Upgrade insulation and heating systems.
- Reconfigure internal spaces.
- Improve welfare facilities.
- Enhance security.
- Address lifecycle maintenance liabilities

Indicative costs suggest that a comprehensive refurbishment would represent a significant capital investment. When considered against the limited security of tenure (see below), this level of capital expenditure presents material financial risk.

4. TENURE AND STRATEGIC UNCERTAINTY

4.1 Lease Security

The site is owned by Shropshire Council. Shropshire Council has indicated unwillingness to grant a long-term lease on the depot accommodation.

This creates:

- Insecurity of tenure.
- Risk exposure for any capital investment.
- Strategic uncertainty for workforce planning.
- Reduced ability to plan long-term service expansion.

Investing significant sums into a property without long-term security is not considered prudent.

4.2 Grounds Maintenance Uncertainty

There is ongoing uncertainty as to whether Shropshire Council will wish Shrewsbury Town Council to continue delivering grounds maintenance services at Sundorne Sports Village in the future. Should these arrangements change, the strategic need to retain a depot at that specific location may diminish. Retaining flexibility is therefore considered advantageous.

5. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Growth in Operational Services

The Town Council's operational responsibilities have expanded significantly in recent years, including:

- Increased open space management.
- Enhanced environmental services.
- Additional community asset management responsibilities.
- Potential further service delegation under devolution arrangements.

The current depot provides limited:

- Internal operational space.
- Secure storage.
- Vehicle manoeuvring capacity.
- Dedicated administrative workspace.

5.2 Administrative Support Needs

The Operations function now requires:

- Additional desk-based accommodation.
- Improved meeting and welfare space.
- Adequate changing and welfare facilities for staff.
- Compliance with modern workplace standards.

The existing premises cannot be easily or economically adapted to provide the required space.

6. PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE – CENTURION PARK

Heads of Terms have been agreed for the lease of a new-build industrial unit at Centurion Park, owned by Morris Property and marketed by Towler Shaw Roberts.

The proposed lease would:

- Commence in November 2026.
- Enable occupation from November 2026.
- Provide a 10-year term.

6.1 Strategic Location

Centurion Park is:

- More centrally located within North Shrewsbury.
- Better positioned relative to the Council's operational footprint.
- Accessible to major transport routes.
- Greater security arrangements

This improves deployment efficiency and reduces travel time across service areas.

7. BENEFITS OF RELOCATION

7.1 Purpose-Built Accommodation

The unit can be configured to meet the Town Council's specific operational requirements, including:

- Gated and fenced facility
- Adequate access points for vehicles with trailers
- Adequate vehicle and plant storage.
- Dedicated workshop space.
- Modern welfare facilities.
- Sufficient administrative offices.

7.2 Energy Performance and Efficiency

The building will be designed to modern energy performance standards. The facility will have an EPC rating of 1 in its construction meaning:

- Significantly more energy efficient than Sundorne.
- Lower long-term utility costs.
- Reduced carbon footprint aligned with Council sustainability objectives.

The energy performance achievable at Centurion Park materially exceeds what could realistically be delivered through refurbishment at Sundorne.

7.3 Financial Considerations

Indicative financial modelling suggests:

- A 10-year rental commitment is likely to be lower than the capital outlay required to comprehensively refurbish Sundorne.
- Reduced ongoing maintenance liabilities.
- Greater cost certainty over the lease term.

When combined with tenure security, this presents a lower-risk financial option.

7.4 Security

The fact that the facility is on a Business Park which is locked overnight, has enhanced perimeter and building security with a reduced risk of unauthorised access creates improved protection for Council vehicles and equipment as well as personal safety for staff.

7.5 Staff Welfare and Morale

Modern changing and welfare facilities, including improved office accommodation, better heating and environmental control creates an improved working environment overall.

Staff have been formally consulted regarding the proposed relocation and feedback has been positive, with staff expressing support for the move, particularly in relation to improved facilities and operational efficiency.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

Key risks considered include:

- Financial commitment under a 10-year lease.
- Transition and relocation costs.
- Fit-out expenditure.

However, these risks are considered proportionate and manageable when compared to refurbishment risk without security of tenure, operational inefficiencies, growing spatial constraints and strategic uncertainty at Sundorne.

9. CONCLUSION

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 provides a strong strategic rationale for relocation.

The opportunity at Centurion Park offers:

- 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, represents a timely opportunity to secure fit-for-purpose accommodation aligned with the Council's expanding operational responsibilities.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS**That:**

- 1 The report be noted;**
- 2 The strategic and financial rationale for relocation be supported;**
- 3 Endorses the decision to enter into the agreed Heads of Terms for a 10-year lease at Centurion Park;**
- 4 Authorise officers to finalise lease arrangements and oversee relocation;**
- 5 Note that staff consultation has been undertaken and feedback is supportive.**