

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee

Held in Committee Room, Livesey House

At 6.00pm on Monday 9th February 2026

PRESENT

Councillors: D Vasmer (Chair), B Bentick, J Dean, A Fejfer, A Mosley, K Pardy, J Tandy and A Wagner

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Heather Phillips (Committee Clerk)

69/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Dean (arrived late), Dartnall and Wilson

70/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Vasmer invited any members of the Town Council who had been granted any dispensations under the Granting of Dispensations Policy to declare any item on the agenda to which that dispensation relates to in accordance with section 4.3 of that policy

Councillor Bentick	Portfolio Holder for Health & Public Protection, Shropshire Council – Granted Dispensation relating to Item 76/25
Councillor Dean	Chair – Northern Planning Committee, Shropshire Council
Councillor Fejfer	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Mosley	Unofficial member, Shropshire Council
Councillor Pardy	No interest to declare
Councillor Tandy	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Vasmer	Portfolio Holder for Highways & Environment, Shropshire Council – Granted Dispensation relating to Item 76/25
Councillor Wagner	Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council – Item 76/25 declared an interest in Service Devolution

71/25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th January 2026 were submitted and circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 12th January 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

72/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

In reference to minute 65/25 Budget 2026/27 Appendix, Councillor Mosley asked that it be noted that the information given in the meeting on how many sweeps of the town were to be undertaken each year was incorrect. A subsequent meeting confirmed the number of sweeps per year to be 4.

73/25 PAYMENT SCHEDULES

Prior to the meeting, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated the Schedule of Payments for the period 1st December 2025 to 30th January 2026. These had been agreed by two signatories before the RFO and Town Clerk uploaded for payment. No comments or concerns were raised.

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of payments passed for payment for the period 1st December 2025 to 30th January 2026 be approved.

74/25 QUARTER 3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated a report to appraise members of the financial position of the Council for the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year. There was an overall positive variance of £70,203.

There was a negative variance for Q3 on expenditure of (£12,368) for this 3 month period. The major variances were due to the timing of building maintenance, Quarry tree works and capital purchases for the Stepping Up Team. This was offset by an underspend in the salaries budget due to unfilled posts. The Year to Date (YTD) position was positive and would come in around budget at year end.

Income was a positive £82,571, primarily due to backdated element of the SLA as Q1+2 lower payments on account had been made. The YTD position was positive £192,479 but it was noted that this was distorted by the Neighbourhood Fund receipt of £165,836 which, if discounted, would have resulted in a small surplus of £26,643 which should continue to year end.

The Balance Sheet showed reduced working capital (net assets) but this was not going to impact the ability to meet liabilities.

Looking ahead, net income and expenditure were expected to come in around budget, but that some expenditure was expected to be incurred in Q4 in relation to setting up of the new 2026/27 services in readiness for 1st April 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 3 Management Accounts report be noted and accepted.

75/25 EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Prior to the meeting, a report on the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit was circulated to members together with an Internal Audit Review. This was on an annual basis and a key component was to allow the AGAR to be signed off.

The Audit Review circulated included evidence of achievement required to meet the expected standards and whether they had been met. The RFO said that the auditor employed was very competent. There were no areas of concern to highlight.

There was one recommendation: that future years may require an expansion of the scope of the audit due to increased budget and changes to the Council's service delivery.

The next visit of the auditor was set for late summer when it was expected that the new services be underway.

RESOLVED:

That the report into the Effectiveness of Internal Audit be accepted.

Councillor Wagner left the meeting.

76/25 SERVICE DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The Town Clerk had circulated a report prior to this meeting updating members on Service Delivery since the budget had been agreed at the end of January. The report included a list of all the activities since undertaken which had also been documented in the Project Plan shared with Full Council. These were:

- Finalising Job Descriptions & Person Specifications for the new roles – the closing date for applications was next week
- Advertising the new posts
- Preparation of tender documents for all kit
- Advertisement of Invitations to Tender
- Attending meetings with Shropshire Council's current Streetscene Contractors in relation to the TUPE of staff

- Terms had been agreed for temporary accommodation for administrative staff
- Terms were under discussion for changes to a northern operational base to replace Sundorne (the current accommodation was in poor condition and not a long-term tenure)
- Terms agreed for the extension of operational depot leases in the horticultural service locations eg the Castle and Cemetery
- Architects appointed to carry out indicative drawings for redesign of non-operational space at Weeping Cross which would be open plan
- Tender specifications were nearing completion for a CRM system – this was to be put out to tender shortly
- Staff meetings taken place with all staff to update them on plans for 2026
- Unions contacted to discuss the Council's operational plan for service transfer
- Dates set for the Leader to visit all staff to provide an elected member update.

It was noted that Cabinet were soon to meet to discuss formal agreement on process for delegation. Once agreed, a discussion on the details would take place between officers and the Officer with delegated authority to proceed with transfer.

Councillor Mosley said that it was still not clear what the difference between delegation and devolution was. The Town Clerk explained that devolution referred to the transfer of service functions and that delegation was the function by which it was transferred.

Councillor Mosley asked if terms had been agreed for the temporary office accommodation. The Town Clerk advised that a couple of offices at the Roy Fletcher Centre (easily accessible through the back door of Livesey House) had been acquired and that the current administration budget would be able to cover the cost.

Councillor Mosley also asked about where the new northern base would be situated and who would be based there. The Town Clerk said that this was subject to negotiation on Heads of Terms and that she would email councillors separately to clarify the current position. The base would house the sports turf management staff together with equipment used to maintain the Sports Village grounds. She added that even if the Town Council lost the Sports Village maintenance contract that there would still be a significant number of staff based in the northern part of the town to warrant a new base.

Councillor Tandy asked for details about the TUPE arrangements. The Town Clerk said that no details had yet been disclosed. The matter would not be discussed at a public meeting and would be dealt with by the Personnel Committee in private session. The Town Clerk added that current staff were positive about their capability in taking on these new services.

Councillor Vasmer thanked all the officers involved with this work and for making such a good start.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

77/25 QUARRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Operations Manager provided a report on the Quarry Conservation Management Plan which was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk summarised that, as previously reported, the Town Council had published an Invitation to Tender based upon the tender specification agreed by this Committee. Upon closing, 5 proposals had been received which, following review, resulted in 3 being invited to interview at which there was a requirement to present around their proposals, together with more detailed questioning by the panel which included member involvement, members of the Senior Management Team and operational staff from the Quarry. The report included the preferred tenderer with details of the scores. It was proposed that Tenderer C be appointed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the contract be awarded to Tenderer C.**

78/25 SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN

The Town Clerk circulated a report on the activity of the Big Town Plan prior to the meeting. She brought members attention to the list of workstreams that the Big Town Plan Partnership was currently involved in as follows:

- Holding the Highways Authority to account on the delivery of the Movement Strategy which all three partners have adopted by their respective decision makers
- Facilitation of Stakeholder Groups to inform wider infrastructure delivery including Riverside
- Development on Town Wide Design Guides including the Design Code
- Facilitation of the Night Bus Trial to expand the public transport offer
- Active working with partners on Strategic Infrastructure projects including Rowley's House

Partners were also looking to expand into all of the key themes that the Vision detailed. These included:

- Movement & Place
- Place for Enterprise
- Vitality, Life & Mix

- Nurturing Natural Shrewsbury
- Safer & Cleaner

The Town Clerk said that plans would probably be amended due to the increase in the service delegation. New membership had settled down, risk strategies for the town had been done, as well as audits of staff capacity to support the BTP process. The BTP was entering year 2 of the 3-year agreement.

Councillor Wagner confirmed that the Police & Crime Commissioner had agreed to fund the Night Bus trial, which was considered to be economically viable. He thanked both the Police & Crime Commissioner and Julia Buckley MP for making this possible.

Councillor Mosley suggested that the Partnership appeared to be identifying itself as the natural leader in issues surrounding the town. Its portfolio and functions were increasing year on year. He was also concerned that there would be a duplication of work due to Shropshire Council also being involved in these activities.

Councillor Mosley said that under the Movement & Place theme, discussions in sub-groups had taken place re the state of the gyratory system near the station, which had been badly planned and implemented. He asked if there was an update on this. Councillor Wagner said that a safety audit had been commissioned, which would go to Shropshire Council, and he hoped that this would make recommendations for alterations. Councillor Mosley said that it was more than health and safety that was at stake but also reputational damage, the congestion it was now causing in the town, the danger caused to drivers and cyclists, and the traffic lights not working intelligently as envisaged. He suggested that the disturbance amongst the public was casting doubt on the ability to implement the Movement Strategy and that it should be reviewed and lessons learned so that this was not repeated.

Councillor Vasmer said that the gyratory was not part of the Movement Strategy. It did not need to be reviewed because the safety audit was being carried out to ensure that action be taken to improve its safety. Councillor Mosley disagreed that the gyratory was not part of the Movement Strategy and that the modelling had been done with the building of the North West Relief Road in mind. He welcomed the safety audit but noted that there needed to be an audit of traffic modelling as a consequence of the new configuration in this area of town. He added that the impact on people's lives was being overlooked. Councillor Wagner replied that detailed modelling was to be undertaken and then reviewed before work done.

Councillor Tandy asked how Highways were to be held to account in relation to the delivery of the Movement Strategy as mentioned on the Big Town Plan report. The Town Clerk said that this would take the form of regular engagement with Highways. The Big Town Plan was not a delivery agent but a held the Big Town Plan Partners to account..

Councillor Tandy asked about Martyn's Law. The Town Clerk advised that it related to the protection of the public and premises against acts of terrorism. It was soon to be a statutory duty.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

79/25 RISK MANAGEMENT

The following Town Council papers were circulated to members prior to the meeting:

- Risk Management Strategy
- Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy

The Town Clerk reported that every year the Town Council was required to undertake an assessment of risks to the Council. This was part of the Audit Process which fed into the requirements of the Annual Return. It was broken down into two areas: general assessment of risk and assessment of potential financial fraud and/or corruption. The Town Clerk said that she oversaw the general risk assessment and that the RFO undertook the financial risk.

The Council was moving away from the Local Council Risk Service as the breadth of the Council's service delivery was beyond the scope of the software. But the process was the same. Looking at service delivery, the kind of risks faced in carrying out those services and the likelihood and severity of those risks if they were to happen. Control measures are considered and run along the likelihood & severity again. That generates an action plan of measures that need further consideration.

That action plan of service risks includes:

- Risk of ASB & Vandalism of our infrastructure – particularly around allotments, bus shelters, toilets and community buildings
- Not meeting our Climate Declaration – we will take a report to the Communities & Environment Committee
- Risk of unauthorised encampments on Council land – we have done as many mitigations to address the risk without impacting on the authorised use of these sites
- Failure to maintain Data Protection integrity for which additional works under Assertion 10 of the AGAR is planned
- Risk from Flooding – It would be great to mitigate against it but we have to live with it
- Staff employment issues include risk of loss of senior staff – This is a conversation that is ongoing with the Leader of the Council and will go to personnel

- Safeguard against risk of fire – there is a huge piece of work in undertaking Fire Risk Assessments currently and we'll detail Action at a future meeting
- Financial Management – we have a programme of segregation of duties to protect the organisation
- Risk of staff from alcohol and substance misuse – this involves greater engagement with Rangers, close work with CCTV, increased H&S assessments and enhanced PPE
- Injuries from use of play – there is a piece of work looking at play replacement and general assessments both internally and externally
- Provision of accommodation – our biggest risk is the condition at Sundorne and work is ongoing around potential relocation of that base to a more efficient and long-term facility
- Threat of die back from trees – we have raise this with the Operations Committee
- Safeguarding – we have stringent Safeguarding policies and arrangement with the County Safeguarding Board to ensure children and young people remain safe
- Shropshire Council Finances – we have already report the risks around service transfer to this Committee and Full Council

The Town Clerk commended the approach to risk management to the Committee.

Councillor Bentick asked about risk of terrorism. The Town Clerk replied that terrorism risk was considered in a separate Terrorism Management Plan and not made public.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Town Clerk's Report into the Management of Risk be noted;**
- (ii) That the existing Risk Management Strategy be re-affirmed;**
- (iii) That the existing Counter-Fraud & Corruption Strategy be re-affirmed;**
- (iv) That the Council approves the actions within the Risk Management Action Plan.**

80/25 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Town Council's Annual Investment Strategy 2026/27 was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The RFO drew members' attention to the list of objectives and priorities of investments of the Town Council at 2.3 and these were, in order of importance:

- The security of its reserves

- The adequate liquidity of its investments
- The return (yield) on investments

Appendix A showed the Statement of the existing position as at 31 December 2025 and this was as follows:

Specified Investments

- NatWest Bank PLC – Day to day accounts £641,740
- NatWest Bank PLC– Various Fixed term deposits <12months
£3,000,000
- CCLA – The Public Sector Deposit Fund £3,100,000

Non-specified Investments

- CCLA – The Local Authorities Property Fund (pooled funds)
£1,040,000

Non-financial Investments

- Investment Properties £705,000

The RFO explained that non-specified investments were those that do not meet specified investment criteria. Non-financial investments were defined as physical assets.

There were no changes from the previous year. If agreed, the Town Council would continue to invest along these lines taking note of liquidity and safety. However, the RFO said that he would be happy to explore any areas councillors might suggest.

Councillor Bentick asked if this low-risk strategy for investments was the appropriate action to take due to its very low returns, and asked if, for example, Reserves could be moved to medium risk. He also said that some funds had active trackers and were therefore much less of a risk than those individually managed.

The RFO agreed to explore other options that might also meet the current plan and report these back to this committee. He added that the pension fund did invest in the stock market. The Town Clerk reminded members that any changes must stay within the parameters of Governance rules.

Councillor Tandy asked about Town Council owned properties. The RFO said that the return yield was still good but that this was always reviewed. Councillor Bentick said that the properties in Frankwell were in strategic locations, being adjacent to Welsh Bridge, and that therefore their value may increase.

RESOLVED:

That the Investment Strategy for the financial year 2026/27 be accepted.

81/25 GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

The Financial Regulations and Standing Orders documentation was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that the Council annually resolves to adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations during Mayor Making. Officers had reviewed these documents and they reflected the current National Templated Documents for both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The Town Clerk recommended their inclusion for adoption at Annual Council.

Councillor Mosley asked if any alterations made to these documents could be highlighted with track changes so as to make it clear what changes had been made. The Town Clerk said that if any changes were made to legislation that these would be tracked.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be submitted to the Annual Council meeting for approval.

82/25 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Town Clerk reported that the Council was in the throes of developing a Medium-Term Financial Plan for the remainder of this Electoral Term. Due to other work constraints it was not yet ready for approval and further financial analysis was required. A copy would be circulated in plenty of time because it was turning out to be quite a lengthy document. This would either be tabled at the next Policy & Resources Committee meeting in April or at an additional meeting in March.

RESOLVED:

That the Medium Term Financial Plan be tabled at the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

83/25 COST OF LIVING PROJECT

The Town Clerk reported that a report on the Cost of Living Project and associated draft documents were presented to the last meeting of the Communities & Environment Committee and that a lively discussion had ensued. This resulted in the report and its recommendations being approved, and a budget recommended to this Committee for approval.

Additionally, a separate Committee had been established to discharge this project and to ratify the finances which were part of the agreed 2026/27 budget. It was

agreed that Councillors Daniels, Micklewright, Pardy and Wilson were to sit on the Committee.

Councillor Dean commented that he welcomed these documents which appeared to be robust.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed budget for the Cost of Living Project be accepted.

84/25 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked members of the public that had logged in. All papers relating to this meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk and the minutes would appear in draft on the website within the next month. He thanked Councillors and all staff involved in the meeting.