Service Devolution: Case to Support the transfer of Street Cleaning Services and associated Budget Increase (2026/27)

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Purpose of Report

To provide 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.

This report also looks to respond to concerns raised by Members of the Policy & Resources Committee & Operations Committee regarding the level of detail contained within the initial Service Devolution report.

It provides 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 is intended to support informed decision-making ahead of final budget setting.

1. BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.1 Shropshire Council is currently facing a severe financial crisis. Latest financial monitoring reports presented to the Cabinet have shown that if no corrective action is taken, the authority is projected to overspend its budget by a substantial margin this financial year, with figures rising to tens of millions of pounds in deficit.

1.2 As a result:

- Shropshire Council declared a financial emergency at its Cabinet meeting in September 2025 and is actively implementing spending controls.
- It has sought urgent financial support from Government, including loans to sustain service delivery through March 2026 and to underpin a longer-term transformation plan.
- There remains a real risk that, with the absence of sufficient savings or additional funding, the Council may be required to issue a Section 114 notice — effectively halting non-essential spending and triggering potential government intervention via appointed commissioners.
- Government have announced the settlement for Shropshire Council for 2026/27 which in effect sees a 10% reducing in budget

1.3 In this context, Shropshire Council has been engaging with local town and parish councils about greater collaborative working, including service devolution.

1.4 This has been extensively discussed by both Full Council, Standing Committees and Working Groups. Details of the Meeting notes are appended to this report.

1.5 It should be noted that taking on services was a key component of the development of the Town Council's Corporate Plan from 2021 onwards. Copy of the Corporate Plan is appended to this report.

1.6 Shrewsbury Town Council has already signed the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to a more collaborative approach to service delivery and has engaged actively with senior managers to understand the levels of service delivery requirements that could be placed on the Town Council

1.7 Shropshire Council has indicated its intention to withdraw or significantly reduce the delivery of a range of streetscene services within Shrewsbury as part of its wider financial recovery programme. These services are highly visible, resident-facing and integral to the quality, safety and appearance of the town.

1.8 Shrewsbury Town Council has been asked to consider taking on responsibility for elements of streetscene provision to protect service continuity, maintain standards, and provide local accountability. The proposed budget increase reflects the scale and risk associated with assuming responsibility for services previously delivered by a principal authority.

APPENDIX

- **APPENDIX A - Letter from Deputy Leader Shropshire Council**
- **APPENDIX B - Response to Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council from the Town Council**
- **APPENDIX C – Council Meeting Notes in relation to Service Delegation**
- **APPENDIX D – Corporate Plan**
- **APPENDIX E - Memorandum of Understanding**
- **APPENDIX F - Response to Memorandum of Understanding**

2. DEVOLUTION VS DELEGATION – THE CORE DIFFERENCE

2.1 Introduction

During recent meetings there has been some confusion between the term Devolution and Delegation. This section aims to set out the difference and how this applies to Shropshire Council's plans to transfer Streetscene services to the Town Council.

2.2 Devolution

Devolution is a formal transfer of power, responsibility, and decision-making from a higher tier of government to a lower tier. The receiving authority gains long-term autonomy over the service.

2.3 Key characteristics include:

- Legal responsibility moves to the town/parish council
- Decision-making is local and permanent (unless reversed through formal process)
- Funding is normally transferred or new income-raising powers are provided
- Accountability is to local residents, not the upper-tier authority

In practice the town council owns the service, sets standards, priorities, and budgets and bears the financial and operational risk.

Example

employing staff, owning equipment, and funding through precept or transferred budget.

2.4 Delegation

Delegation is a management or delivery arrangement, not a transfer of power. The higher-tier authority retains legal responsibility.

2.5 Key characteristics include:

- Responsibility and accountability remain with the principal authority
- The lower-tier council delivers the service on its behalf
- Usually governed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA)
- Can be time-limited or withdrawn

In practice the town council acts as a delivery agent under standards, scope, and funding, defined by the principal authority and risk largely remains with the upper tier

Example

Shrewsbury Town Council carrying out litter picking to Shropshire Council's standards using delegated funding.

2.6 Simple comparison

Aspect	**Devolution**	**Delegation**
Legal responsibility	Transfers	Retained by principal authority
Decision-making	Local	Principal authority
Funding	Transferred or local	Provided by principal authority
Risk	Local	Principal authority
Permanence	Long-term	Usually temporary
Accountability	Residents	Principal authority

3. GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the structured legal review of the basis on which Shrewsbury Town Council can undertake streetscene functions (e.g. street cleaning, litter picking, street furniture, street trading administration etc.) that are currently the responsibility of Shropshire Council. The focus is on English local government law, statutory powers, delegation/devolution mechanisms, and relevant statutory frameworks.

3.2 Basic Position: Town/Parish Councils' Legal Nature

Shrewsbury Town Council is a parish-level authority under English local government law. As such its core powers are largely discretionary; it does not automatically have statutory duties to deliver services like streetscene functions that are the statutory responsibility of a county or unitary authority.

A list of Powers and Duties are appended to this Report

The town council's activities are funded primarily by its precept and other income sources but statutory responsibilities for major functions like highways maintenance, waste collection, traffic regulation etc., rest with Shropshire Council.

3.3 Principal Legal Powers That Enable Service Delivery

A. General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011)

- The Localism Act 2011 provides the General Power of Competence (GPC) to eligible parish and town councils, which states that these councils "have power to do anything that individuals generally may do" unless prohibited by law.
- The GPC is a broad enabling power of first resort. It allows councils to initiate projects, engage in activities not explicitly stated in historic local government legislation, and enter commercial/operational arrangements, subject to compliance with other legal duties and public law principles.

Limitations of GPC:

- It does not remove statutory duties of principal councils, nor can it permit a town council to unilaterally assume a statutory duty that is imposed on Shropshire Council.
- Financial limits and other restrictions may apply (e.g. duties under environmental protection or highways law).

Application in streetscene context:

- GPC gives legal cover for the town council to provide services or activities that an individual might undertake, such as litter picking or street cleaning, but it does not by itself transfer statutory responsibility from Shropshire Council.
- GPC can support local delivery if Shropshire Council agrees a delegation/devolution arrangement or if activity is voluntary and funded by the town council.

B. Delegation / Devolution Agreements

The actual transfer of responsibility from Shropshire Council to the town council must be under a formal legal arrangement:

1) Delegation Under Local Government Act 1972

- Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a local authority to delegate the discharge of its functions to another local authority or body, including parish councils, where permissible by law.
- This is widely used for delegation of discretionary functions (e.g., street trading consent administration) from principal councils to town/parish councils.
- Shropshire Council's Street Trading Policy explicitly recognises that street trading powers (under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982) can be delegated to parish/town councils under LGA 1972.
- Shropshire Council's initial report to Cabinet sets out these legal requirements

2) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) / Service Level Agreements

- Shrewsbury Town Council and Shropshire Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore devolution/delegation of services, including street cleaning initiatives, with pilot arrangements.
- This MoU forms a framework for service delivery, specifying collaboration, project management, accountability and oversight mechanisms.
- In practice, detailed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) or contractual arrangements would need to follow, setting out service standards, funding, liability, compliance with statutory duties (e.g., Environmental Protection Act 1990), and reporting requirements.

3.4 Statutory Context for Streetscene Functions

A. Statutory Duties that Cannot Be Unilaterally Assumed

- Shropshire Council holds statutory duties for functions such as waste management, highways, environmental health, traffic enforcement etc. These cannot be legally dropped without formal legislative or delegated arrangements.
- Shropshire Council has provided a Quality Performance Management System that sets out how their statutory responsibilities shall be determined

B. Delegable / Discretionary Functions

- Certain functions, like administration of street trading consents and local street cleaning activities, are declaratively delegable and commonly delegated to town/parish councils across the country under Section 101 LGA 1972 or similar frameworks.
- Environmental duties (litter control, waste receptacles, open spaces) are generally enabled through powers under the GPC and specific acts (e.g., Environmental Protection Act duties remain statutory obligations of principal councils but may be delivered locally under agreement).

3.5 Practical Governance and Compliance Considerations

A. Eligibility for GPC

- To use the provisions of the General Power of Competence, the town council must satisfy eligibility criteria (e.g., at least two-thirds of councillors elected and a qualified clerk), and reaffirm its adoption at relevant meetings. This must be recorded in minutes to remain valid.
- Shrewsbury Town Council has met that criteria and duly recorded the fact at its Annual Council Meeting on 12th May 2025 and remains in force throughout this electoral term (i.e. until the 2029 Local Council Elections).

B. Operational and Legal Risk

- Service delivery must comply with overarching statutory duties (health and safety, environmental protection, highways law, employment law, procurement rules). This is not an issue as the Town Council already complies with overriding statutory duties as part of its existing operations.
- The town council needs to ensure that insurance, indemnity, risk management and appropriate financial arrangements are in place where it

undertakes delegated functions. These arrangements are reported elsewhere within this report.

C. Accountability

- Residents have rights of redress under the Council's Complaints Procedures as well as routes to the External Auditor as part of the Accounts & Audit Regulations.

3.6 Summary: Legal Basis for Streetscene Delivery

Legal Basis	Purpose	Applies to Shrewsbury Town Council?
General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011)	Broad discretionary power to act, subject to legal limits	Yes – eligibility criteria met
Delegation under Local Government Act 1972 (s101)	Formal delegation of functions from principal to parish/town council	Yes – with formal agreement
Memorandum of Understanding	SLA with Shropshire Council Framework for service devolution and local delivery	Yes – already signed and being implemented
Statutory duties of principal authority	Core statutory obligations remain with Shropshire Council unless expressly delegated	Town council cannot assume statutory duties without delegation

APPENDIX G – Powers and Duties

4. GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF WORKING PARTNERSHIP WITH SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

4.1 Purpose of the Report

4.1.1 This report sets out the governance, financial assurance, and risk management arrangements that Shrewsbury Town Council has in place, and proposes additional safeguards where appropriate, in response to concerns raised during the Policy & Resources and Operations Committee meetings regarding Shropshire Council's financial sustainability, governance arrangements, and the implications for partnership working and service delegation.

4.1.2 The report aims to provide assurance to Members that:

- The Town Council's own governance and value-for-money arrangements are robust;
- Risks associated with partnership working and service transfer are identified, assessed, and mitigated; and
- Decisions relating to the 2026/27 budget and beyond are taken in a transparent, evidence-based, and prudent manner.

4.2 Background and Context

4.2.1 Shrewsbury Town Council has worked with Shropshire Council as a key strategic partner since 2009 and has, in recent years, considered and in some cases taken on responsibility for services previously delivered by Shropshire Council.

4.2.2 During the Policy & Resources Committee meeting considering the 2026/27 budget, concerns were raised about Shropshire Council's governance and financial position, referencing recent external audit findings and reports on governance arrangements.

4.2.3 Members sought reassurance that:

- Entering into or continuing partnership arrangements represents value for money;
- The Town Council is not exposed to unacceptable financial or reputational risk; and
- The Town Council's own governance arrangements remain proportionate, effective, and independent.

4.3 The Town Council's Governance Framework

4.3.1 Shrewsbury Town Council operates within a well-established governance framework, including:

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations reviewed regularly by Members;
- A Scheme of Delegation that clearly defines officer and Member responsibilities;
- An Audit and Governance function (via the Policy & Resources Committee) overseeing internal control and risk;
- A Corporate Governance Policy established in 2009 when the Town Council was originally subject to Best Value and subsequent annual reports;
- An Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) subject to independent external audit;
- Regular budget monitoring and medium-term financial planning.

4.3.2 The Town Council's governance arrangements are proportionate to its statutory role, scale, and risk profile, and are subject to annual review and Member scrutiny.

4.4 Financial Management and Value for Money

4.4.1 The Town Council sets a balanced budget annually and maintains adequate reserves in line with best practice and sector guidance.

4.4.2 All decisions to take on additional services or enter partnership arrangements are subject to:

- A financial appraisal;
- Consideration of ongoing revenue implications and affordability within the medium-term financial plan;
- Explicit Member approval through the relevant Committee and Council decision-making processes.

4.4.3 Value for money is assessed not solely on cost, but also on service quality, local accountability, community outcomes, and risk.

4.5 Partnership Working with Shropshire Council

4.5.1 Partnership working with Shropshire Council remains important to achieving positive outcomes for residents, particularly where services:

- Are place-based and benefit from local delivery;
- Align with the Town Council's strategic objectives; and
- Can be delivered more responsively or effectively at a town level.

4.5.2 The Town Council recognises that partnership working must be underpinned by clear governance and financial safeguards, particularly in the context of financial uncertainty at principal authority level.

4.6 Arrangements for Service Transfer and Delegation

4.6.1 Where services are transferred from or delivered in partnership with Shropshire Council, the Town Council will ensure that:

- Roles, responsibilities, and liabilities are clearly defined in written agreements;
- Funding arrangements are transparent, time-limited where appropriate, and subject to review;
- There is clarity on asset ownership, maintenance responsibilities, and exit arrangements.

4.6.2 No service transfer will proceed without a business case approved by Members, setting out:

- Strategic rationale;
- Full financial implications;
- Risks and mitigation measures;
- Governance and performance monitoring arrangements.

4.7 Risk Management and Mitigation

4.7.1 The Town Council maintains a corporate risk register, which includes financial, operational, and reputational risks. The Council's Risk Strategy is reviewed annually and any significant risks are reported to the Policy & Resources Committee in compliance with its Annual Governance Policy & Statement.

4.7.2 Risks associated with partnership working with Shropshire Council will be explicitly identified and assessed, including:

- Financial exposure arising from changes to funding or service demand;
- Dependency risks linked to Shropshire Council's financial position;

- Reputational risks arising from association with wider governance issues.

4.7.3 Mitigation measures may include:

- Break clauses or review points within agreements;
- Phased or pilot approaches to service transfer, which is currently the case with the delegation agreement with Shropshire Council;
- Maintaining appropriate reserves to manage transition or withdrawal risks;
- Regular reporting to Members on performance and financial position.

4.8 Due Diligence and Ongoing Assurance

4.8.1 Prior to entering into new or expanded arrangements, officers will undertake proportionate due diligence, including:

- Review of relevant audit and inspection findings;
- Assessment of financial assumptions and risks;
- Legal and governance advice where required.

4.8.2 Ongoing assurance will be provided through:

- Regular monitoring reports to Committees;
- Annual review of partnership arrangements;
- Inclusion of partnership risks within the Council's governance and risk framework.

4.9 Independence and Decision-Making

4.9.1 While partnership working is important, the Town Council continues to exercise independent judgement in the best interests of the town and its residents.

4.9.2 Decisions will not be driven solely by the financial position of partner organisations, but by:

- The Town Council's statutory responsibilities;
- Its strategic priorities;
- Its ability to deliver and sustain services effectively and affordably.

4.10 Risk of s114

4.10.1 Members have raised concerns regarding the absence of any legally binding agreement, particularly in the event of a Section 114 notice being issued by Shropshire Council.

4.10.2 Proposed governance arrangements include:

- A formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
- Defined service specifications, performance standards and review mechanisms which set out the statutory minimum requirements of the service;
- Clear exit clauses and break points;
- Transparency over funding assumptions.

4.10.3 In the absence of a legal contract, funding guarantees are limited. Mitigation measures include:

- Phased mobilisation linked to confirmed funding;
- Retention of local control over service standards;
- Ability to scale services to available resources;
- Regular reporting to Members on financial exposure.

4.11 Conclusions

4.11.1 The Town Council has robust governance and financial management arrangements in place and is well positioned to make informed decisions about partnership working and service delivery.

4.11.2 Acknowledging the financial and governance challenges facing Shropshire Council, the Town Council will continue to adopt a cautious, evidence-based approach to partnership working, supported by clear agreements, strong oversight, and active risk management.

4.11.3 These arrangements provide Members with assurance that taking on services or working with Shropshire Council can be done prudently, transparently, and in a manner that safeguards the Town Council's financial sustainability and reputation.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEY HEADLINE FINDINGS

5.1 Background

5.1.1 Shrewsbury Town Council undertook a comprehensive *Future Services Survey* during late 2025 to determine public view on the Town Council taking over Streetscene Services and potentially protecting wider Non-Statutory Services which may be at risk of diminution or closure should the financial emergency currently faced by Shropshire Council escalate.

5.1.2 Details of this survey were presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 12 January 2026 by the Communications Officer and details of his presentation are appended to this report.

5.1.3 The survey was widely promoted across the town via a mailed newsletter to approximately 39,000 households and through online social media channels. A small paid social media campaign was also used to boost engagement.

5.2 Strong Engagement and Representative Sample

5.2.1 The survey closed on 2nd January 2026, with 1,200 completed responses, significantly exceeding early response targets and providing a robust dataset for analysis.

5.2.2 Statistical analysis indicates a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of ±2.80%, suggesting the results are representative of local resident views.

5.3 **Resident Profile and Awareness**

5.3.1 Respondents represented a broad cross-section of the Shrewsbury community in terms of tenure and age.

5.3.2 Awareness and satisfaction with the Town Council varied, with notable percentages of respondents feeling either well informed or uncertain about council activities. This is indicative of the Town Council's continued promotion of the services that both authorities provide within the town.

5.4 Key Priorities Identified

Residents were asked about their priorities for current and future service delivery. Across multiple sections of the survey, clear themes emerged:

5.4.1 Core Local Services Most Valued:
Respondents highlighted the importance of basic service functions such as street cleaning, litter control, green space maintenance, and graffiti removal.

5.4.2 Maintenance and Upkeep:
Open-text responses strongly emphasised concerns over cleanliness, road and pavement conditions, drain clearance, and general upkeep of public spaces.

5.4.3 Transport and Public Realm:
Traffic management, congestion, parking, and improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure were frequently cited as significant community concerns.

5.4.4 Strong Support for Local Decision-Making:
A majority of respondents indicated that decisions about local services should be made at the most local level possible, with many expressing confidence that locally-based governance could deliver better outcomes for the town.

5.5 Support for Protecting Key Services

5.5.1 When asked which services should be protected or taken on by the Town Council in light of potential reductions from Shropshire Council, respondents consistently prioritised highly visible environmental and place-keeping services.

5.5.2 Additionally, there was notable agreement that protecting key services remains important even if it results in modest increases to local taxation, underscoring community willingness to support enhancements financially.

APPENDIX H – Big Drop Newsletter

APPENDIX I – Survey Responses presented to Policy & Resources

6 PROPOSED SERVICES AND SCOPE

6.1 Background

This section outlines proposals for the transfer of Streetscene services which Involves recruitment of staff and the procurement of vehicles. It also looks at the backoffice functions and all supplementary functions required to enable these services to embed within the Town Council as well as have the appropriate interface.

6.2 Services to be Mobilised

6.2.1 The proposed service package includes:

- Bin emptying (litter bins)
- Manual pedestrian sweeping
- Mechanical road sweeping
- Litter picking (reactive and scheduled)
- Weed control (hard surfaces)

6.2.2 These services represent a mix of routine programmed work and responsive activity linked to events, seasonal pressures and resident reports.

6.2.3 These services will sit alongside the existing Horticultural Services work undertaken by the Town Council on behalf of Shropshire Council and will retain independence from the Stepping Up Team whose work has been ongoing for the last year and will continue.

6.3 Level of service provision

6.3.1 The core service area includes:

- Shrewsbury town centre (including pedestrianised zones)
- Residential wards within the Town Council boundary
- Key transport corridors, gateways and visitor routes
- Public realm assets managed or influenced by the Town Council

6.3.2 A detailed service map and frequency schedule is being developed during mobilisation to ensure clarity, avoid duplication and prioritise high-footfall areas. It is necessary to point out that this will not be a mere transfer of existing functions from Shropshire Council more a redevelopment of service structure. This however will take time to complete.

6.3.3 Operational staff are working through a schedule of shape files to determine the full nature of service locations; the revised shape file list is appended to this report detailing the ward details.

6.3.4 Officers working alongside a proposed service specification and a Quality Performance Management System, both of which are attached to this report.

6.4 Service Delivery Options

6.4.1 Officers have considered options for Streetscene Services moving forward

6.4.2 **Doing nothing and retaining the services with Shropshire Council** – this has determined to not be a viable option. Shropshire Council has already indicated that they will be forced to develop a statutory minimum standard which is not to the existing standard. The public has already identified this as not an acceptable standard.

6.4.3 **Subsidising the existing service provided by Kier/Idverde** – This is not a viable option as the level of service standard has already identified as below the statutory requirements

6.4.4 **In-house delivery** – The Town Council already has a large direct labour organisation covering large service delivery. This is small in comparison to the existing workload.

6.4.5 **External Contractor** – Given the above and the fact that the service is already contracted out there seems little appetite to consider with this approach

6.5 Cost Comparison

6.5.1 Members have been clear that service standards are the defining rationale to developing this facility in-house and the comparison of in-house versus external are clear.

6.5.2 **In-house delivery**: Higher initial costs but greater control, flexibility and accountability.

6.5.3 **External contractor**: Lower short-term costs but reduced responsiveness and profit margins built into pricing.

6.6 Non-Financial Benefits

6.6.1 Officers have also highlighted a number of non-financial benefits to these proposals

6.6.2 ***Improved service quality and local responsiveness*** – the public want a service that meets local expectations but is also responded to when those service standards are failing. The responsiveness of the Stepping Up Team is a case in point

6.6.2 ***Protection of town centre standards and reputation*** – the public have been critical of town centre standards and yet very complementary of the minor improvements that the Stepping Up Team have managed to achieve

6.6.3 ***Reduced complaints and reactive costs*** – much of this is about the broken glass mentality. The more the Town Council shows leadership in managing the public realm, the more the public will care. Other Town Councils who have taken on these services have reported less litter picking die to generally tidier streets and reduced ASB

6.6.4 ***Stronger partnership working*** – the Town Council already benefits from strong Partnership Working through Team Shrewsbury and the Big Town Plan. These will be enhanced further. Organisations like the Business Improvement District and the Shrewsbury Business Chamber have expressed support in this initiative and have already offered their help in encouraging businesses to also step up to maintain the public realm.

6.7 Staff Numbers

Whilst detail on staff numbers and level of service under the QPMS has not been forthcoming from Shropshire Council or its contractor, Operations Managers have looked at developing a 7 day a week programme from 06.00-18.00 utilising 9 full time operatives. New equipment includes a 15tonne Road Sweeper, a 3.5t Multi-Hog Road Sweeper and 3 Side Loaders working across North, South and Town Centre Teams. Details of current proposals both for staffing a vehicle procurement are appended to this report.

6.8 Budget

Shropshire Officers have outlined budget transfer of funds for 2025/26 of £1.36 million, with a sum of 66% of that value for 2026/27. Officers have also indicated that this figure shall be further reduced to a statutory minimum throughout this electoral term; they are however unable to provide details of that budget reduction as this is subject to Cabinet approval in February 2026. For the basis of sound financial planning the RFO has worked on 50% of the 2025/26 for sustainability.

Further clarification has been sought on the services provided in the rural areas. Whilst there is an appreciation that the residents of Shrewsbury would fund any subsidised services in the town boundary, there is no appetite that there would be a rural subsidy of services.

APPENDIX J – Shape Files

APPENDIX K – Horticultural Service Specification

APPENDIX L – Streetscene Service Specification

APPENDIX M – QPMS

APPENDIX N – Staffing Proposals

APPENDIX O – Procurement Proposals

7 TUPE / Staffing Information

7.1 Legislation - The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) was introduced on 6th April 2006. An amendment / update of legislation took place in 2014 which has now updated the 2006 legislation.

The legislation was introduced to protect employees' rights when their employer changed as a result of a transfer of an undertaking or business.

7.2 Points for consideration:

7.2.1 All employees assigned to the transferring business (or part of it) or service will automatically transfer to STC employment on existing terms and conditions. STC must recognise their continuous employment, meaning their start dates do not reset.

7.2.2 STC inherit all rights, powers, duties, and liabilities in relation to the transferred employees. This includes ongoing disciplinary, grievance or other HR processes, and any existing claims or liabilities.

7.2.3 The outgoing employer is required to provide STC with specific information about the transferring employees ("employee liability information") at least 28 days before the transfer. This includes details such as identity, terms and conditions, disciplinary and grievance records, and claims. STC must ensure they receive and review this information promptly to prepare for any issues or required changes.

7.2.4 Although the outgoing employer is primarily responsible for consulting with affected employees and their representatives, STC have a duty to provide sufficient information about any measures we envisage taking in relation to the incoming employees (e.g. changes to working locations, working hours, or business structure). If STC anticipate taking any such measures, they must inform the outgoing employer so they can consult with the affected employees in advance. Failure to properly inform or consult can result in protective awards (compensation) for affected employees.

7.2.5 Any dismissal connected to the transfer will be automatically unfair except in very limited circumstances, such as where there is an Economic, Technical, or Organisational (ETO) reason entailing changes in the workforce and a fair procedure is followed. Caution is needed before considering redundancies or restructures during or immediately after the transfer.

7.2.6 While occupational pension rights relating to old age, invalidity or survivors' benefits do not transfer in full under TUPE, certain pension entitlements (such as accrued benefits to date of transfer and rights under stakeholder or auto-enrolment schemes) may require consideration.

7.2.7 Ensure compliance with data protection laws throughout the TUPE process, particularly when processing employee information received from the outgoing employer.

7.3 Update of Work So Far

7.3.1 The HR Manager / Deputy Town Clerk has reached out to the current contractor and initiated the introduction conversation with their HR Business Partner as a matter of courtesy to ensure the possible transfer of employees is as respectful and smooth as possible.

7.3.2. At this stage no employee information or number of staff that could transfer have been provided to STC by the current contractor. Therefore no ‘measures’ have been drafted and no incoming employee consultation has been arranged.

7.3.3 The design of the internal project plan for both the collation of data requirements for any possible TUPE transfers, the consultation / introduction of STC to any possible employee and the on-boarding has been completed. This will be continually updated during the process of any possible TUPE transfers.

7.3.4 The HR Manager / Deputy Town Clerk has an open case with WorkNest and is working closely with a dedicated Employment Law Advisor to ensure that STC are working to the latest legislation by delivering the duties of STC and reduce possible risk for the Town Council.

8. Implementation & Mobilisation

8.1 Implementation Plan

The report to the Policy & Resources Committee set out an Implementation plan to mobilise the operations by the 1st April.

This included:

A. Establish a Transition Project Team

- including Officers from Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council to help to work collaboratively
- Clear governance and escalation routes.

B. Service Costing & Financial Planning

- Remodelling of service areas in line with existing services
- Identify funding sources (precept, reserves, grants, user charges).

C. Legal & Contractual Workstreams

- Undertake due diligence on existing Shropshire contracts specifications.
- Develop an operational devolution agreement that sets out governance arrangements
- Prepare new procurement processes in line with public contracts regulations.

D. Human Resources & TUPE

- Identify staff affected and commence TUPE consultation early.
- Plan recruitment for any required new posts.

E. Equipment & Infrastructure

- Audit existing vehicles and machinery.
- Determine purchase, lease or service contract options for new vehicles and equipment
- Reviewing the building capacity of current depots.
- Review of IT infrastructure

F. Public Communication Plan

- Clear messaging to residents about service changes, expectations and benefits.

G. Performance & Monitoring Framework

- Agree KPIs for service quality, budget adherence and resident satisfaction.

8.2 Timetable for Implementation to 1 April

To ensure continuity of service and a smooth transition, a clear and tightly managed timetable is required. The following indicative timetable is proposed:

Early January

- Initial discussions with Shropshire Council Administration and Senior Officers on scope, costs and deliverability of devolved Street Cleaning services.
- Review of public responses to the Town Council's survey on protecting local services.
- High-level financial modelling and risk assessment.
- Member briefings on budget and operational delivery

January

- **Policy & Resources Committee (early January):**
  - Consideration of the devolution proposals, risks and implementation framework.
  - Recommendation of budget provision and delegated authorities.
- **Full Council – 26 January:**
  - Setting of the Town Council's annual budget and precept, including provision for devolved Street Cleaning services and contingency funding for protecting other non-statutory services.
  - Approval of delegated authority arrangements to enable implementation.

February

- **Policy & Resources Committee (February meeting):**
  - Update on negotiations with Shropshire Council.
  - Confirmation of implementation plans, including staffing, procurement and legal agreements.

- Commencement of recruitment processes (including TUPE where applicable).
- Procurement of vehicles, plant and equipment.
- Drafting and negotiation of formal service devolution agreements.

March

- **Policy & Resources Committee & Operations Committee (March meetings):**
    - Final assurance on readiness for service commencement.
    - Confirmation of communications plan and performance monitoring arrangements.
- Completion of staff onboarding and training.
- Finalisation of operational procedures and service schedules.
- Public communications to residents and stakeholders.

1 April

- Formal commencement of devolved Street Cleaning services under Shrewsbury Town Council.

It is proposed that Policy & Resources Committee meets monthly during this period, or receives interim briefings, to ensure Members are kept fully informed and able to provide strategic oversight. The Operations Committee shall be prepared ready for delivery and oversight from April. The Service Delivery Working Group shall be stood down given a more open and democratic process of member and public engagement through the Policy & Resources Committee.

8.3 Implementation Plans

Officers have developed the following Plans to facilitate delivery in the required timescales

APPENDIX P – Implementation Plan

APPENDIX Q - Recruitment Plan

APPENDIX R - Procurement Plan

APPENDIX S - TUPE Plan

APPENDIX T - Onboarding Plans

9. BEST VALUE ASSESSMENT

Officers have reviewed the proposals in terms of value for money under the Best Value regime as suggested by Councillor Halliday who is also the Vice Chair of Shropshire Council's Audit Committee.

9.1 Best Value and the Town Council

9.1.1 The Best Value regime was established by Part 1 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, requiring local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way they deliver services (economy, efficiency, effectiveness). It included audit and inspection arrangements for those authorities subject to the duty.

9.1.2 The government recognised that applying the full Best Value obligations (including external audit of Best Value performance plans) to small entities like town and parish councils would be onerous. To address this, the Local Government Best Value (Exemption) (England) Order 2003 (SI 2003/3343) was made. This Order exempted most parish and town councils from the full Best Value regime, leaving only the larger councils with a budget in excess of £500k in the three consecutive years 1996/7, 1997/8, 1998/9. At the time there were 41 Best Value Parish Councils

9.1.3 S136 Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 subsequently removed Parish & Town Councils as a qualifying authority under the best value duty.

9.1.4 Shrewsbury Town Council was created in 2009 and along with Salisbury City Council were added to the 41 Best Value Councils requiring full compliance. During the 2009/10 financial year the Town Council was audited externally by the Audit Commission and were required to undertake a Value for Money Audit on its operations; this was subsequently audited and passed the compliance test.

9.1.5 By 2010/11, the statutory landscape for local audit and Best Value reporting was already shifting away from the older Audit Commission-led Best Value performance plan model.

9.1.6 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 (and related audit framework changes) began to supersede the old external Best Value requirements for smaller authorities.

9.1.7 In practice this meant that from 2010/11 onwards Shrewsbury Town Council no longer had the statutory best value duty.

9.1.8 As of April 2025, the government has backed plans to further raise the audit threshold for smaller authorities to £15 million, effective for the 2025/26 financial year.

9.2 Best Value Assessment of Shropshire Council devolving streetscene services

Officers have taken the sentiments of Best Value to review Shropshire Council devolving streetscene services (e.g., street cleaning, litter removal, bin emptying) to Shrewsbury Town Council. This is based around the statutory "Best Value" principles of continuous improvement, economy, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and community engagement.

1. Strategic Rationale and Drivers

Current context

- Shropshire Council has entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Shrewsbury Town Council (STC) to explore devolving various services, starting with streetscene as a pilot. This is part of a broader partnership framework to improve local service delivery and responsiveness.
- Shropshire Council is facing significant financial pressures and has already declared a financial emergency and has imposed formal expenditure restrictions through their Spend Control Board. This process poses a genuine risk of reductions in non-statutory services.
- Shropshire Council has already applied to Government for Emergency Financial Support and has publicly warned that if this application is not approved it will inevitably have to declare s114.

Implications for Best Value

- Addressing unavoidable budget pressures by exploring alternative delivery models supports continuous improvement in service delivery — a core Best Value requirement.
- Locally tailored services may better meet resident expectations for visible public realm services, aligning with evidence of strong local demand from public consultation.

2. Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness

Economy (spending less for the same outcomes)

- STC has scoped creating dedicated neighbourhood and streetscene teams, which could reduce unit costs through more focused local operations. However, these proposals require increasing the Town Council's precept to fund these services — resulting in higher local costs per household for enhanced service levels.
- Efficiency gains may arise from reduced complexity, tighter local oversight, and agile decision-making compared to larger county-wide commercial contracts.

Efficiency (doing things well)

- STC already manages other local assets and services and has considerable operational experience and existing capacity that could be extended to developing a localised streetscene service)
- Investment in local jobs and operational structure (e.g., health & safety, customer service) is included in the proposal — strengthening delivery capability. There will however be short-term implementation costs.

Effectiveness (delivering desired outcomes)

- Public consultations show strong local support for improved environmental services and for devolved delivery (71–79% backing service transfer and protecting key functions).
- Residents value cleaner streets and improved green spaces, indicating that effective services could enhance satisfaction and quality of life.

Assessment

Economy: Likely trade-off of higher local tax for improved local outcomes.

Efficiency: Potential improvements through streamlined local management, but requires robust organisational capacity at STC.

Effectiveness: High potential if STC delivers services responsive to local priorities.

9.3. Governance, Transparency & Accountability

Governance structures

- The MoU creates a framework for collaboration with clear project management and communication channels, which supports accountable governance.
- Shropshire Council's Task & Finish Group is monitoring pilot devolutions (including Shrewsbury) to evaluate progress and learning.

Transparency & scrutiny

- The Council has already undertaken a consultation process with residents to seek their views. This strengthens democratic legitimacy and meets statutory duties to consult before significant service changes.
- STC's budget proposals and service plans are subject to Council/Committee review and public engagement, reinforcing scrutiny.

Risk Management

- Proposed implementation plans recognise operational and financial risks and emphasize a managed transition with capacity building.

Assessment

- The governance arrangements appear structured to support scrutiny, transparency, and shared oversight — key components of Best Value.

9.4. Use of Resources & Financial Sustainability

Financial considerations

- Financial modelling shows likely increases in council tax precept to fund devolved services on the basis that Councillors seek improvements to the service
- Resources will need to be allocated for staff recruitment, equipment, and management overheads.

Sustainability

- Long-term viability depends on STC's ability to sustain service costs without compromising other local services or requiring excessive taxpayer burden.
- The proposed budgetary increase is designed to ensure sustainability of the service

Assessment

- While devolved services might improve responsiveness and quality, the sustainability of funding and value for money relative to Shropshire Council's broader economies pose a risk hence officers' recommendation to budget for the 50% contribution which is the estimated baseline funding envelope.

9.5. Partnerships and Community Engagement

Local engagement

- Substantial community engagement and consultation has underpinned these proposals, with clear evidence residents value improved streetscene services.

Partnership working

- The MoU commits both councils to collaborative delivery and learning from joint pilots.
- Shrewsbury Town Council already services Team Shrewsbury, the integrated community management partnership established in 2014 which brings together a wider partnership
- Both Shrewsbury Town Council and Shropshire Council are partners in the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Partnership alongside Shrewsbury Business Improvement District which is equally supportive of these proposals.

Assessment

- Proposals demonstrate strong partnership ethos and community involvement, enhancing legitimacy and alignment with local needs — a Best Value priority.

9.6. Risks & Mitigations

Risks

- ***Cost pressures***: Increased precept may be unpopular or unaffordable for some residents.
- ***Operational capacity***: STC needs to rapidly scale up service delivery capability, hence the development of an Implementation Plan detailed elsewhere within this report.
- ***Benchmarking & performance***: The Town Council has already gone through robust testing of its existing work for Shropshire Council through APSE. It has also used its Larger Town Council network to seek examples of other Town Councils that are facing similar demands for service devolution.

Mitigations

- Shrewsbury is in the Pilot phase of a wider programme of service devolution to Town & Parish Councils and will be subject to evaluation after a defined period.
- Regular performance monitoring and transparent reporting is required and Shropshire Council has already established its QPMS requirements
- Clear service standards and specifications have already been established
- The Town Council is already accustomed to customer feedback mechanisms through its existing service delivery. Since members publicly expressed a wish to take on services, administrative staff have already reported an increase in customer calls, seeking support for improvements to the Streetscene often borne out of frustration on the lack of progress of the current service.

9.7. Comparative & Measurable Outcomes

To fulfil Best Value obligations, clear performance indicators should be established, including:

- Cost per household for service delivery.
- Resident satisfaction with cleanliness and maintenance.
- Response times to service requests.

- Benchmarking against comparable towns.
- Comparison of services against the Service Specification and QPMS.

9.8. Conclusions & Recommendations

Pros

- Enhanced local responsiveness and service alignment with resident priorities.
- Strong community engagement and transparent governance processes.
- Potential for more efficient, tailored delivery in the context of broader financial pressures.

Cons

- Higher local costs and uncertainty about long-term financial sustainability.
- Requires significant organisational capacity building within the Town Council.
- Needs robust metrics and benchmarking to demonstrate clear Best Value gains.

While the proposed budget increase is significant, it reflects the true cost of delivering visible, labour-intensive services previously subsidised within a principal authority structure. Over the medium term, in-house provision represents better value for money and greater resilience.

10. RISK

10.1 Officers have reviewed all aspects of RISK to ensure that the Town Council is able to take on the service, meet the necessary statutory requirements, meet community aspirations and does not pose any risk to existing operations.

10.2 Risk Management

The Town Council operates its risk under its Risk Management Strategy that is reviewed on an annual basis by the Policy & Resources Committee at the end of the financial year.

This process will continue to take place and the Strategy & Register will be on the Policy & Resources Agenda for February 2026.

For the purpose of this exercise a separate Strategic Risk Assessment has been carried out (Appended to this report). The Risk Register has looked at the wider view of managing this service under a backdrop of financial uncertainty within the Principal Authority.

10.3 SWOT/PESTLE

Officers have reviewed service under a traditional SWOT Analysis as well as Pestle looking at the wider technical, political and environmental issues. These are also appended to this report.

10.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have developed an Equality Impact Assessment looking at the key protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010 and any likely impact. At worse there is no change, at best there is a significant improvement in people being more confident in accessing open space. This assessment is appended to this report.

10.5 Environmental Impact Assessment

Officers have developed an Environmental Impact Assessment on key activity looking at impact on the environment and the potential of the Town Council achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. This assessment is appended to this report

10.6 Structured legal and practical assessment of the likelihood that Shrewsbury Town Council could be subject to a judicial review (JR) challenge arising from its proposal to increase council tax to fund expanded streetscene services, including taking on functions from Shropshire Council.

10.6.1 Legal Basis for Judicial Review in the UK

A judicial review is a legal challenge in the High Court that questions how (not whether) a public authority has exercised its powers. It focuses on the lawfulness of a decision, not on whether the decision was good policy.

The traditional grounds are:

- Illegality – acting outside the authority's legal powers (ultra vires)
- Irrationality – decisions so unreasonable no reasonable decision-maker could have made them
- Procedural Impropriety – failing to follow required procedures

Judicial review is only available if challengeable elements relate to a public law decision by a body exercising public functions, which Town Councils do.

10.6.2 Core Legal Question: Can an Increase to Council Tax Be Challenged by JR?

Yes — but only on limited legal grounds

A council tax increase itself is a statutory power under the Local Government Finance Acts. Town and Parish Councils set a precept for their functions, which is legally permitted. A direct challenge to the amount of council tax on grounds of mere disagreement with policy or affordability would not succeed simply because the decision is unpopular — JR does not assess merits or policy choices.

However, the process by which that decision was made could be subject to JR if there was a failure in law, such as:

- failing to consult properly where a consultation duty applies;
- taking into account irrelevant considerations or ignoring relevant ones (e.g., equality impacts);
- acting outside legal powers.

This is consistent with case law where JR against council tax policies focused on process rather than the fact of the increase itself.

10.6.3 Potential Grounds for Judicial Review in This Context

a) Procedural Impropriety

1. Consultation quality

If Shrewsbury Town Council carried out consultation but it was inadequate (e.g., not enough information to inform responses, insufficient time, or misleading materials), a JR could argue the consultation did not meet legal standards.

2. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Local authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and foster equality under the Equality Act 2010. If the tax increase impact on protected groups (e.g., disability, low income) wasn't considered in a proportionate impact assessment, that could be a ground.

b) Illegality or Acting Beyond Powers

If Shrewsbury Town Council lacked explicit legal authority for a specific funded activity — e.g., spending on a service not within its statutory remit — this could be challenged as ultra vires. It's unlikely on council tax itself, but specific uses of the funds must be proper and lawful. It should be noted that Shrewsbury Town Council has the General Power of Competence which was ratified by the Town Council at its Annual Meeting on 12th May having met the two criteria of an Electoral Mandate and Competent Clerk

c) Irrationality or Unreasonableness

Courts are generally hesitant to intervene on policy choices unless they are perverse. Simply choosing to increase precepts to fund services will not meet that threshold. It can also be argued that this is not a decision the Council has taken lightly with it having identified a wish to take over local services provided by Shropshire Council in its Corporate Vision which was developed at the beginning of the last administration in 2021.

10.6.4 Likelihood Assessment: Low to Moderate

- Raising a precept to fund services is within a council's powers.
- JR will not be available just because residents disagree with the tax rise.
- Courts defer to democratically elected bodies on spending priorities.
- This is a process that similar Town Councils across the Country are going through as their principal authorities face financial crisis

Judicial review could be more plausible if there were procedural failures:

- **The consultation process is active and high-profile**: it has undertaken a direct mailout of 39,000 households and invited through that an a targeted social media campaign to respond to a public survey. 1200 response have been received which provides a 95% accuracy with a +/- 2.5% margin that the views adequate represent those of the 70,000 residents that live in Shrewsbury. It is therefore unlikely to be argued that the town council failed to give consultees adequate information, or to consider responses properly.

- **PSED**: If the impact on protected groups wasn't assessed, this is exactly the kind of point seen in other council tax judicial review cases (e.g., discriminatory effects leading to court quashing schemes). The Equality Impact Assessment has not identified any risks with this regard

10.6.5 Practical Factors That Reduce JR Risk

10.6.5.1 **Public involvement & transparency**: The Town Council has been open with its aspirations to take on services and undertaken a public consultation; all meetings at which this has been discussed have been open to the public and all reports have been made available and are published on the Council's website

10.6.5.2 **Smaller scale increase**: A modest increase is less likely to provoke a JR challenge, especially if clearly linked to services residents value. However this may mean that some non-statutory services that are planned as part of these proposals may be reduced or event diluted

10.6.5.3 **No statutory requirement for referendum**: For parish and town councils, are there is *no referendum threshold* like with principal councils. The Local Government Finance Act framework allows precepts without referenda.

10.6.6 What Could Increase JR Risk?

- If consultation was misleading or material information was withheld.
- If there's evidence the decision ignored relevant legal duties (e.g., equality analysis).
- If legal errors (ultra vires) occurred in budgeting or decision framing.

APPENDIX U – Strategic Risk Register

APPENDIX V – Take on Services

APPENDIX W – Don't Take On

APPENDIX X – PESTLE

APPENDIX Y – Equality Impact Assessment

APPENDIX Z – Environment Impact Assessment

11 ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE APPENDIX 1 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Detailed below are the additional budget lines identified within Appendix 1

11.1 CCTV – MAINTENANCE & MONITORING

Budget: £260k to add to the existing £40k Maintenance Budget

11.1.1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out the justification, financial implications, and operational arrangements for Shrewsbury Town Council (STC) to assume responsibility for the whole of the CCTV operations in Shrewsbury town centre. It builds on the Council's existing commitment to fund ongoing maintenance and proposes a structured approach to capital expansion and effective monitoring of the system.

11.1.2. Background and Context

The town centre CCTV system plays a critical role in:

- Supporting community safety and crime prevention
- Assisting West Mercia Police with detection and evidence gathering
- Reassuring residents, visitors, and businesses
- Supporting the town's evening and night-time economy

Historically, responsibility for CCTV in Shrewsbury was developed by Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council. At the time of local government re-organisation in 2009, there were no discussions on Shrewsbury Town Council operating the services, therefore all assets, staff and functions were absorbed by the new unitary authority. Of late CCTV Shropshire Council has sought a more partnership approach with Shrewsbury Town Council, Shrewsbury Business Improvement District and West Mercia Police, but there has only ever been the Town Council willing to accept and responsibility (West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner has been clear that whilst he will look at supporting capital initiatives for CCTV, he will not fund any revenue costs and the Business Improvement District has not provisions within its current business plan to take over a service which is defined within its identified Baseline Assessments. Changes in local government priorities and funding pressures have led to a reduction in county-level capacity to manage discretionary services such as CCTV. Shropshire Council therefore advised all partners that if there wasn't a solution to alternatively fund maintenance (from 2025/26) and monitoring thereafter the service faced closure. In response, Shrewsbury Town Council has already demonstrated leadership by committing revenue funding to sustain the system.

Assuming full operational responsibility would provide clarity, continuity, and local accountability for a service that is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing and economic vitality of the town centre.

11.1.3. Strategic Justification for Full Transfer

11.1.3.1 Local Control and Accountability

- CCTV is primarily a town-centre-facing service; local management ensures priorities reflect Shrewsbury-specific needs.
- Decisions on coverage, operating hours, and upgrades can be aligned directly with town centre strategies, including community safety, tourism, and regeneration.

11.1.3.2 Service Continuity and Risk Reduction

- A single accountable authority reduces the risk of service degradation caused by split responsibilities.
- Direct control ensures maintenance, monitoring, and upgrades are planned proactively rather than reactively.

11.1.3.3 Value for Money

- Integration of maintenance, monitoring, and future expansion under one authority enables more efficient procurement and contract management.
- Local oversight ensures investment is targeted where it delivers the greatest benefit.

11.1.4. Revenue Commitment: Maintenance and System Continuity

Shrewsbury Town Council has already committed **£40,000 per annum from the 2025/2026 budget** for the ongoing maintenance of the town centre CCTV system.

This funding provides for:

- Routine and reactive maintenance of cameras and associated infrastructure
- Software licensing and system support
- Ensuring compliance with data protection and surveillance legislation

Continuation of this commitment under full Town Council control will:

- Secure the operational integrity of the existing system
- Prevent asset deterioration and avoid higher future replacement costs

- Provide confidence to partners, including the police and local businesses

11.1.5. Capital Expansion Plan: Safer Streets 4 Funding

11.1.5.1 Available Capital Resource

Shropshire Council currently retains **£95,000 of unspent capital funding** from the Home Office Safer Streets 4 programme. This funding was awarded to enhance community safety and remains aligned with the purpose of CCTV expansion in the town centre.

11.1.5.2 Proposed Transfer and Use

It is proposed that, alongside the transfer of operational responsibility, the £95,000 capital allocation is transferred to Shrewsbury Town Council for delivery.

The capital programme would focus on:

- Expansion of CCTV coverage in identified crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots
- Replacement of obsolete or low-resolution cameras with modern, evidential-quality units
- Improved coverage of gateways, pedestrian routes, and night-time economy areas

11.1.5.3 Delivery Principles

- Projects to be developed in consultation with West Mercia Police and town centre partners
- Phased delivery to ensure minimal disruption and effective use of funds
- Capital assets to be designed for long-term durability and reduced maintenance costs

11.1.6. Monitoring and Operational Programme

11.1.6.1 Core Monitoring Times

To maximise the effectiveness of the CCTV system, a structured monitoring programme is proposed, focusing on core risk periods:

- Peak daytime town centre activity
- Early evening transition periods
- Late evening and night-time economy hours

- Various pinch point events including Remembrance Parades, Christmas Lights Switch on and Carols in the Square and various football matches where the conflict with away supporters might prove confrontational.

11.1.6.2 Monitoring Model

The Town Council would establish:

- Defined monitoring schedules aligned with crime and incident data
- Clear protocols for live monitoring, incident escalation, and police liaison
- Performance standards for response times and evidential capture

Options for delivery may include:

- Contracted professional monitoring services
- Shared-service arrangements
- A hybrid model combining live monitoring at core times with recording-only outside those periods
- Potential for developing a Volunteer System on monitoring similar to the model at Oswestry

11.1.7. Governance and Compliance

- All operations already comply with GDPR, Surveillance Camera Code of Practice, and relevant legislation
- Regular audits of system use, data retention, and access controls
- Member oversight through the Operations Committee

11.1.8. Financial Implications

- **Revenue:** £40,000 per annum already committed for maintenance (2025/26 onwards) plus additional funding to undertake monitoring arrangements
- **Capital:** £95,000 Safer Streets 4 funding proposed for transfer and expansion
- **Medium-term impact:** Improved asset condition and targeted expansion reduce longer-term costs and risk exposure

11.1.9. Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient monitoring coverage	Targeted monitoring at core times; scalable contracts
Capital underspend or delays	Phased delivery and project management
Compliance and data protection breaches	Robust governance, training, and audits

11.1.10. Outcome of Public Consultation

In both the 2025 and 2026 Public Consultation, public safety was high on the priority list. Residents consistently prioritised feeling safe in the town centre and neighbourhoods. This included better lighting, CCTV, visible enforcement, road safety, safer pavements and action on ant-social behaviour, drug use, aggressive begging and vandalism. Safety is seen as essential for residents, businesses, tourism and community well-being

11.1.11. Conclusion

Taking over the whole of the CCTV operations represents a logical and proportionate step for Shrewsbury Town Council. The Council has already demonstrated commitment through revenue funding for maintenance. Full control would secure the future of a critical community safety asset, enable effective use of retained Safer Streets capital funding, and ensure monitoring is focused where and when it is most needed.

The proposal offers clear benefits in terms of service continuity, value for money, and local accountability, and supports the wider objectives of a safe, vibrant, and confident town centre.

11.1.12. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

1. **Support Shrewsbury Town Council assuming full responsibility for town centre CCTV operations.**
2. **Confirm continuation of the £40,000 annual maintenance budget from 2025/26 onwards.**
3. **Confirm a revenue budget for ongoing monitoring of the system**

4. **Seek the transfer of the £95,000 unspent Safer Streets 4 capital funding from Shropshire Council.**

5. **Approve the development of a capital expansion and monitoring programme as set out in this report.**

11.2 BACK OFFICE FUNCTIONALITY ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH STREETSCENE & ADDITIONAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Budget: £167,521

11.2.1. Background

With the potential expansion of services being delivered by STC the Town Council has taken great care to review its back-office function to ensure this function leads in supporting the successful and sustainability of this expansion.

The back-office function is the administration element and maintains the stability of an organisation and includes the following areas:

- HR
- Facilities, Asset and Equipment Management
- Information Technology (IT)
- Information Governance
- Compliance, Risk and Governance
- Finance and Accounting
- Customer Services

With the expansion of street cleansing services for STC there is a knock-on effect to the back-office functions which creates the need to expand these functions and capacity to accommodate the increase demand to the organisation.

The most obvious is the increase in customer contact with an unknown increase in public enquiries. The organisation has already recognised that the current back-office function is at full capacity, there is therefore a need to build capacity within this team as well as develop the positive customer experience and interaction to be as helpful and streamlined as possible.

The increase in street cleansing services to create a positive impact for the residents, visitors and businesses of Shrewsbury but as we all know not everyone will receive these changes positively and the organisation will see an increase in complaints, compliments, FOI’s, enquiries and requests, all of which will need to be managed and responded too.

To support the growth there will be capacity built into our HR to support the members of staff and their welfare and in Finance and Accounting which will support the growth in the procurement within the organisation and the increase for the administration of spending that will be created.

11.2.2. Staffing

The following staff have been identified to build the capacity within the organisation.

Job Title:	Number:	Customer Services / Administration:
Customer Services / Administration x 2	2 x FTE	Customer Enquiries - answering the phone / emails and general enquiries Administration assistance to both the Operational Managers, procurement and H&S for the organisation. Develop the CRM system, and customer services to ensure the customer experience is high quality and positive.
Communication Officer	1 x FTE	To develop the communication stream through the Website. Improve the information held and increase traffic through our on-line facilities. Increase our on-line presence
Finance Officer	1 x 0.8 FTE	To create capacity with the increase in sales ledger / purchase ledger and payroll.
HR Officer	1 x 0.4 FTE	To create capacity with the increase in the number of staff, to aid the welfare and training requirements.

11.2.3. Recruitment

A project plan has been developed for the timeline for recruitment of all new staff associated with the devolution of services. There will be a total of 14 staff members to complete the recruitment and selection process within this project plan.

The draft job descriptions and person specifications are being developed by the HR Manager and Operational Managers prior to these being job evaluated in line with all previous jobs within the Town Council.

Diary Management is key to the recruitment and selection process, with more than one vacant position being recruited at the same time.

Capacity within the team for the administration of the recruitment and selection process is being created but will put pressure on the other team members who will be required to increase their workload to support the delivery of this process.

Team Managers are being asked to assist in the shortlisting and interview stage, with a number of sites being identified to hold interviews and help accommodate the process.

11.2.4. Information Governance

- Data Protection
- FOI

The Town Council has a legal requirement to manage data in all forms effectively and within the government guidelines including the Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000. Data Management is managed by the Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) and they are the independent regulatory body responsible for enforcing data protection laws and regulations.

A new governance requirement for Assertion 10 has been incorporated into the 2025/26 AGAR. This is a focus on digital and data compliance, emphasizing the importance of managing digital data effectively.

With the increase in data being shared with and by the Town Council, and with the handling of this data moving towards a digital format, capacity is needed within the organisation to ensure compliance to both internal process and legal requirements.

It is envisaged that there will be an increase in the number of FOI's received with the response dates remaining the legal 20 working days. The organisation will need to continually review its management of data and the data it holds and manage any data breeches with the ICO.

Data sharing and protocols will need to be developed as part of our procurement to move our data handling to electronic formats with suppliers.

11.2.5. Insurance

STC has an extensive and varied insurance policy which covers the organisation to protect against various risks and unexpected events that could disrupt operations or lead to financial impact on the organisation with insufficient or inaccurate insurance level.

The current policy is due for renewal on the 1st April 2026 and work by the Head Resources / RFO for this renewal will include the cover for the increase / extended fleet, and additional employers and public liability as well as the additional new services potentially being delivered by STC.

On-going work will ensure the Town Council has sufficient cover as part of our current insurance policy and protocols as well as incorporating any need as part of the annual audit process.

Any increase in costs for this additional insurance has been reviewed and incorporated within the projected budget for 2026/27.

11.2.6. HR / Payroll

With the increase in the number of staff both within the administration team and environmental teams' capacity has been created to manage the on-going recruitment and selection process, employee enquiries, training and development, review and implementation of policies and procedures and performance management.

Performance management supports the performance evaluation processes, helping managers conduct reviews and track employee development plans. Playing a vital role in setting performance standard and address performance issues.

Developing the role of working with WorkNest in updating policies in line with legislation, informing employees of their rights and workplace investigations where necessary.

The monthly payroll information is collated internally by the Town Council and processed by our external provider with an in creased number of staff capacity has been built in to address this additional collation time and the increased number of staff enquiries.

11.2.7. IT

The proposed budget includes the hardware and software costs for the administration staff and the increase in numbers with our IT provider.

Low level IT issues are currently dealt with in house by our Office Manager; however, capacity will need to be built into our internal system for this. This includes password issues and general assistance with the use of the programmes we use.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment is in the process of being completed to help the Town Council systematically analyse, identify and minimize data protection risks. This will also help the Town Council to identify monitor and mitigate risk related to data processing activities ensuring privacy risks are addressed early in a project life cycle.

11.2.8. CRM

In the first instance the system for the creation of jobs / tasks required will remain the same with information supplied to the on-site teams through their managers via morning briefings or phone calls.

The team is working on the procurement of a CRM system, which will identify and map all areas of responsibility from play areas to bins, to open spaces, to areas in the Town Centre. Eventually all enquiries into the Town Council will be fed through an online portal, where the jobs/tasks can be distributed directly to the team in real time, with real time responses being logged. The CRM system will automatically send email updates and completion information sent directly back to the customer.

The purchase of a new system will ensure that better records can be kept and managed as well as statistical information can be pulled together at ease. However, this is not only a major change for the organisation and how it operates but a large investment for the organisation in purchasing the software and hardware, licenses, training, development of on-line forms and ensure this data is safe.

The project team wants to ensure that this procurement is as detailed as possible but not too complicated that it creates unnecessary work for the organisation to manage.

The intended route has been process mapped for enquiries, this is for both internal enquiries, Councillor enquiries, Members of the Public enquires and Shropshire Council enquiries.

A project plan and project life cycle is currently being developed to identify all stages required from procurement, the installation, the testing, implementation and go live with all members of staff.

This will be the biggest organisation operational change the Town Council will complete and the project team want to ensure that on-going reviews and improvements can be made in the future in line with any further service plans or additional services.

Impact assessments are being reviewed for equalities, data, risk and privacy.

11.2.9. Accommodation

A review of the accommodation for both administrative staff and operational staff has started by the SMT team. For some time, the organisation has identified that accommodation is at capacity as well as pressure being placed on the utility's capacity.

All sites are having a H&S General Risk Assessment, and any immediate issues will be dealt with as required. A general review at each location used by the Town Council is being completed and the sites are receiving some internal attention to tidy up and where possible re-configure to create space both inside the buildings and outside in the working yards.

In the interim an office facility close to Livesey House has been identified with an initial 6-month rental which can be accommodated within the existing budgets. But there will be a requirement to review the Livesey House as the main administrative office base during this time and try to source a larger or additional permanent base for administrative services.

It has been identified that a new working depot is required to replace the Sundorne depot. The Operational Managers are currently in the process of identifying a suitable replacement for this site. This will provide an up to date and appropriate location for the storage of machinery and equipment as well as good welfare facilities.

11.2.10. Restructure

It is recognised that a complete organisational restructure is required for the organisation but at this time there is no capacity to develop and implement this within the timescale to introduce new services.

Once the implementation of the devolved services has taken place with some time to bed these services into the organisation a full review will take place involving the Personnel Committee. At this time a staged plan will be created which will include communication with staff and their union representatives.

11.3 SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL RISK TO NON-STATUTORY SERVICES – PROTECTING SERVICES

Budget: £60K (added to existing £190k)

Senior Officers have had on-going conversations with the Cultural Services Managers to gain some understanding of the levels of non-statutory service delivery in Shrewsbury. This includes:

- Theatre
- Sports Village
- Museum
- Old Market Hall
- Library Services (though there is an element of statutory service requirement)
- Castle

These discussions have always been on the back of discussions within this Councils last Administration of what would happen to those services in the event a s114 notice is served. Whilst non-statutory in their function, all play a crucial role in town life, not just benefitting the wellbeing of residents but providing economic vitality and viability to a town that is steeply embedded in its tourism offer.

During those discussions it has been clear that many of these services are not stand-alone services therefore it is difficult to extract the Shrewsbury element of the service. Provisions made within the draft budget are Officers' best guess as to budget deficits of these services relating to Shrewsbury. This has been based on the following:

- The 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy published a three-year programme of savings requirements across a number of services including libraries; their 2026-7 allocation require a minimum saving of £112k.
- The Cabinet meeting on 21st January is scheduled to review both its Capital Strategy and its MTFP which shows the severity of the situation. Papers suggest that and capital projects will need match funding from partner agencies.
- Shropshire Council's budget consultation for 2026-7 has included question specific to non-statutory services including culture, leisure and tourism. Options included reductions in services and opening hours amongst others.

It is important to note that Shropshire Council has also received the statutory recommendation from their auditors Grant Thornton – the statutory recommendation requires the council to continue, at pace, the action taken to address the financial challenges it faces, including an immediate review of all services, both statutory and non-statutory. These reviews for non-statutory services such as those in culture, leisure and tourism team are ongoing.

The budget allocation is designed to support the ongoing running of these services at short notice in the event that statutory recommendation of reviewing services finds they are no-longer viable.

11.4 BIN REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

Budget: £100k

Shropshire Council has provided a schedule of some 550 bins that are to be emptied as part of the Streetscene Works. This schedule is appended to this report.

Upon initial inspection the bins are generally in a poor state of repair, with many holding residue waste between collections as operators do not clear out or cleanse the bins.

Officers have contacted the major litter bin providers so as to ascertain a favoured bin which will be branded. Favourable terms have been discussed regarding bulk purchase. £100k budget could fund 300 bins. This will be a similar replacement programme to the highly successful Bus Shelter Replacement Programme.

Some of the more ornate cast bins have been reviewed to determine whether they can be refurbished. Officers have costings from Men's Shed for sand blasting and repainting as well as costings from the various bin providers for replacement hinges, locks and internal bins. Replacement bins are virtually the same as refurbishment of existing bins.

11.5 PLAY AREAS

Budget £150k

The Town Council has 59 areas of play including:

- Local Areas of Play (LAPs)
- Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs)
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs)
- Splash Parks
- Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs)
- Wheeled Tracks

The Town Council operates on an established Lifespan of these Facilities:

- Play – 20-25 years
- MUGAs 25-30 years
- Splash Park – 10 years
- Quarry – 7-10 years (depending on use and flood risk)

- Wheeled Tracks – 10 years

The RFO sets aside funding in a dedicated reserve to fund replacements of these facilities. The Play Area Scheduled is appended to this Report and identifies that a number of play site reach their lifespan within the period of this electoral term. This additional resource supplements the existing Reserve to ensure that replacement needs can be met.

APPENDIX AA – Play Ares Schedule

11.6 WEEPING CROSS & SUNDORNE DEPOTS

Budget: £175k

Officers have previously reported that all buildings owned by the Town Council are currently being reviewed for Health & Safety and Fire Risk. This has identified a number of risks that need to be addressed at both the Weeping Cross and Sundorne Depots. This will ensure that Streetscene Service staff can be accommodated in these principle depots which cover the north and south of the town.

11.7 SOLAR LIGHTS

Budget £50k

Council has undertaken successful installation of solar lights at both the Quarry (Quarry & Coton Hill) and Stanley Lane (Meole). It has identified significant savings in terms of the need for excavation and trunking for traditional electricity powered lights, reduced power output with lights being able to function in the winter under tree cover as well as reduced revenue cost of repair and maintenance. A new scheme has been commissioned for Greenfields and members have also identified a number of additional sites including Kynaston Road Recreation Ground, Upton Lane and areas of the old canal path. This sum will allow for feasibility work and the commissioning of a further site.

11.8 YOUTH SERVICE

Budget: £75k

The Town Council operates a larger Youth Service Budget than Shropshire Council and is a principal provider of youth services in the county. The Service has developed is Youth Strategy and is beginning to review that Strategy against the recently published National Youth Strategy. The Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk submitted a bid to the National Lottery Million Hours Fund to address youth related ASB in the Town Centre. This was a fund that was only open to Quarry & Coton Hill as Youth ASB had already been highlighted in national youth data. Officers have now responded twice to questions raised by the funder and it is understood that the application is considered by the Panel in late January. This fund allows the Youth Service to operationalise what has been considered a really detailed and proactive proposal. This additional funding will expand the Town Council's youth service provision from traditional Open Access Sessions in Youth Clubs, to Detached Work reaching out to young people in their own environment

APPENDIX

A	**Letter from the Deputy Leader Shropshire Council**
B	**Response to Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council from the Town Council**
C	**Council Meeting Notes in relation to Service Delegation**
D	**Corporate Plan**
E	**Memorandum of Understanding**
F	**Response to Memorandum of Understanding**
G	**Parish Council Powers & Duties**
H	**Big Drop Newsletter**
I	**Survey Responses presented to Policy & Resources**
J	**Shape Files**
K	**Horticultural Service Specification**
L	**Streetscene Services Specification**
M	**QPMS**
N	**Staffing Proposals**
O	**Procurement Proposals**
P	**Implementation Plan**
Q	**Recruitment Plan**
R	**Procurement Plan**
S	**TUPE Plan**
T	**Onboarding Plan**
U	**Strategic Risk Register**
V	**SWOT - Take on Services**
W	**SWOT - Don't Take on Services**
X	**PESTLE**
Y	**Equality Impact Assessment**
Z	**Environmental Impact Assessment**
AA	**Play Area Schedule**