

## Shropshire Council Report January 2026

### **Governance & Financial Oversight**

Scrutiny continues on the Council's financial papers. Work is ongoing to stabilise the budget, with the Local Government Association (LGA) carrying out detailed reviews—particularly into Children's Services. Additionally, the authority submitted the application for 'exceptional financial support' and should receive a decision in February.

Scrutiny also continues on the Shrewsbury Gyratory, with a Task & Finish Group gathering evidence and an independent safety review commissioned.

### **Town & Parish Devolution**

Progress continues on the Town & Parish Devolution Programme. Pilot models are being developed in several towns, and a new Asset Transfer Board is being established to allow parishes to make productive public use of council-owned land.

### **Social Care**

Children's and Adults' Services are working on detailed budget modelling to manage increasing demand.

The LGA deep dive into Children's Services finances is underway, with feedback expected shortly.

### **Education**

Cabinet approved two significant papers:

- Education Place Planning Phase 4 – 13 projects to meet rising demand from population growth and new housing.
- Expansion of SEND Provision – 358 new specialist places, increasing provision from 11 to 29 sites by 2028.

These represent major investment in schools and SEND support countywide.

### **Highways & Environment**

Garden waste subscriptions are significantly higher than this time last year, with over 61,000 subscribers by mid-November.

Discussions continue shifting more highways expenditure into the capital budget, which would ease pressure on the revenue budget if agreed by external auditors.

### **Housing & Leisure**

The Sports Village project has passed Northern Planning Committee and now progresses to Cabinet and Full Council.

The Housing Allocations Policy is under review, with public consultation expected early this year. Housing Enabling and Enforcement responsibilities have been formally aligned under one portfolio.

### **Transport & Economic Growth**

The Shrewsbury night bus trial began and was well received. Thanks to funding from West Mercia Police, it picks up again from 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and will run through February and March.

Work continues on the 20mph programme, including school zones, with completion expected in 2026/27.

Discussions are ongoing with Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust regarding improvements to NCN 81 (National Cycling Network Route 81).

Further refinements to the Station gyratory's signal phasing have been made, and an independent safety review is underway.

### **Shirehall Strategic Review**

Following the Council's decision to vacate the building in September 2024, Shirehall now stands as a substantially vacant asset (with final document archives currently being cleared) incurring significant annual costs.

A comprehensive options appraisal was conducted, considering a range of scenarios including retention, refurbishment, sale, and redevelopment for various uses. The review concluded that the recommended option is to demolish the existing Shirehall building and deliver a mixed-use redevelopment featuring extra care facilities, new GP medical centres, mixed tenure residential accommodation, and commercial space. Outline planning will also keep the option open for a fully residential scheme if a mixed-use plan proves unviable. This approach allows the Council to retain parts of the existing site if viable and market demand exists.

This recommendation was accepted at full Council on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Councillor's Report**

Finally, I am contributing to the CIL Task and Finish Group for the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee, helping to shape a new policy that will guide future decisions. This work focuses particularly on how funding is allocated with the possibility of greater member involvement.