



SERVING LOCAL COUNCILS IN SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD & WREKIN  
Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils

## North Shropshire Area Committee

### Minutes of the North Shropshire Area Committee

7.00 pm on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 in Wem Town Council Meeting Room.

#### Present:

##### Committee Members

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Andy Woodthorpe              | Baschurch PC                       |
| 2. Patricia Budgen              | Baschurch PC                       |
| 3. Andrew Thompson              | Cheswardine PC                     |
| 4. Merv Roberts                 | Shawbury                           |
| 5. Paul Goulbourne (Vice Chair) | Ellesmere TC                       |
| 6. Sylvia Hammond               | Myddle, Broughton & Harmer Hill PC |
| 7. Claire Crackett              | Stanton PC                         |
| 8. Kathryn Holland              | Welshampton & Lyneal PC            |
| 9. Huw Edwards (Chair)          | Wem Rural PC                       |
| 10. Barbera Cotterall           | Wem TC                             |
| 11. Claire Weedall              | Whixall PC                         |
| 12. Jason Hawkes                | Whixall PC                         |
| 13. Matt Procter                | Ightfield PC                       |
| 14. William Allen               | Whitchurch Rural PC                |
| 15. Malcolm Carter              | Woore PC                           |
| 16. Bob Cole                    | Norton in Hales                    |

#### Also Present

- |                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cllr Alex Wagner | Shropshire Council          |
| Lynda McOrmack   | Loppington PC Clerk         |
| Chris Mellings   | SALC Chief Officer          |
| Amanda Roberts   | NS Area Committee Secretary |

#### Apologies Received

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Peta Smith       | Moreton Say PC    |
| Rachel Gascoigne | Wem TC            |
| Tony Hodge       | Sutton on Tern PC |
| Lynn Bearman     | Stoke on Tern PC  |
| Liz Vernon       | Wem Rural PC      |
| Thompson         | Hordley PC        |
| David Walker     | Grinshill PC      |
| Tumelty          | Hordley PC        |
| Andy Hall        | Whitchurch TC     |
| Ray Wickson      | SALC Chair        |
|                  | Hadnall PC        |

#### Speaker

1. **Cllr Alex Wagner, Shropshire Council: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities.**

Cllr Wagner has been tasked with looking at partnership working. He gave a short presentation covering:

1. Shropshire Council Finances
2. The style of new relationships and new streams of work being considered

3. Examples of schemes
4. Timeline for the next steps

1. Shropshire Council Finances

Described as 'bleak', particularly due to the ongoing financial pressures of social care provision, which is a statutory duty. Shropshire Council acknowledges that it cannot continue to run facilities and services on a long-term basis and believes it must change from a delivery model to a model in which enables others to deliver should they wish to.

2. New Relationships and streams of work

The Council also recognises that an internal culture change is needed to address the lack of trust that TPCs have in it and to address poor communications. The first stage was a call for information which is leading to a new policy of partnership working with 3 levels:

- a. Fixing existing relationships with TPCs through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding which is both a statement of intent and a forum for the small issues to be easily agreed.
- b. Outright partnership agreements which share services, management and finances. It is hoped that these will protect non-statutory services such as libraries, youth centres etc. This relies on Shropshire Council giving up power to others and AW stated that they are willing to do this.
- c. Full-scale delegation of services, particularly those related to the Streetscene contract. This contract is worth £3.7m pa which equates to £60k per Unitary Councillor.

3. Examples of Schemes

Pilot schemes in Shifnal and Shrewsbury will see responsibilities and authority around streetscene work delegated to the Town Councils along with the associated funding for those areas.

Alongside this documents are being drafted which will show how this arrangement may look within a parish as well as giving advice to T&PCs.

AW sees the advantages to TPCs being that they will have increased power, some additional funding and more authority within their area. However, the impact on precepts could be significant. He reminded the Committee that the services being discussed are non-statutory and Shropshire Council will soon have no choice but to make cuts in non-statutory services and partnership working is a way to ensure these local services continue.

Questions and Answers

The Q&A session covered 4 key themes:

1. The impact of social care costs
2. Management of the Streetscene Contract
3. Issues of concern and lack of trust in Shropshire Council
4. The delegation proposals

They are recorded by theme rather than in chronological order:

**Impact of Social Care Costs**

Committee Comments/Questions

AW Comments

- *1 family with complex needs will cost SC £1m pa*
- *£6k pm for social care place*

- Social Care seen as the main problem with 80% of the Council's spending, yet the delegation proposal is looking at the remaining 20%. What can be done to reduce the Social Care costs?
- Concern that a percentage of the SC budget is for services contracted out to profit making bodies (possibly over 50%).
- *Legal obligations have to take precedent over non-statutory ones*
- *SC accounts are freely available via search engines*
- *Successful efforts have been made but these savings are eaten up by increasing costs.*
- *Educational Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) have increased from 800 pre Covid to 3,000 now.*
- *In-house provision is extremely expensive.*

Agreed that Committee Members want to understand more about Social Care needs, trends and funding.

### **Management of the Streetscene Contract**

#### Committee Comments/Questions

#### AW Comments

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical question raised re the form of contract used in the IDVERDE contract.</li> <li>• The view was raised that it's important to understand the detail of the contract, and how it is managed. It was suggested that, if the contract is dysfunctional it needs to be sorted out before parts of the work are delegated to T&amp;PCs.</li> <li>• Members also asked what had been done to improve delivery by the contractor. Had if SLAs, targets etc. been introduced?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Not known</i></li> <li>• <i>IDVERDE are subcontracted by Kier. The contract is for £3.7m. 28FTE employed by the Contractor, plus 2 SC officers and one manager.</i></li> <li>• <i>Not known</i></li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### **Issues of Concern and lack of trust in Shropshire Council**

#### Committee Comments/Questions

#### AW Comments

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPCs need to see accountability in order to trust Shropshire Council.</li> <li>• Working from home was raised (particularly in relation to contacting planners) but it was agreed that the concerns were more around</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Administration intends to make significant changes to the staff culture and structure. Also, other T&amp;PCs can watch the pilot projects to see if the new relationship between SC and T&amp;PCs works.</i></li> <li>• <i>SC isn't a clear unit and isn't structured clearly. The new building is not big enough (eg planners do not actually have an office in the</i></li> </ul> |
|--|---|

competence and commitment combined with a willingness to deliver and work with others and that WFH wasn't the main issue.

- CIL local and funding allocation gives cause for concern

*building). Keen to get formal agreements in place including responding and response times*

- *The current system where 90% of CIL funding is allocated by Officers will be replaced by a transparent process. Scrutiny Task & Finish Group will report to the November Cabinet meeting and changes will happen in the coming months. The 15% CIL local will not change.*

### **Delegation Proposals**

#### Committee Comments/Questions

- Why does the TPC precept have to go up if there is no service improvement for residents?
- S114 notice is almost inevitable, what can we do to move faster?
- Concern that small parishes might lose economies of scale within current contact and have limited reserves for capital purchases such as vehicles, machinery.
- Concern was raised that a PC could take on delegated functions with an associated budget from SC only for a 114 notice to effectively remove the budget.
- Will the funding level be consistent?

#### AW Comments

- *To protect services which would be cut otherwise*
- *TPCs asked to think about what they actually can do. Could small PCs working in partnership with neighbours do a better job than SC locally?*
- *Condoover and neighbouring PCs plan to employ 1FTE to carry out lengthsman work. This has been led by the Unitary Councillor bringing the parishes together. NB Around 2000 properties are needed to make this viable.*
- *SC is capital rich and revenue poor – assistance may be available for capital purchases.*
- *Commissioners cannot rip up a contract so any delegated funding agreement would be retained.*
- *Probably not. Expected to reduce over time and be shored-up by precept increases. However, if the impact is not acceptable the PC can hand the delegated service back to SC on the understanding that it will probably not be provided in future.*
- *It is predicted that over time the SC service will reduce until it deals with safety issues only.*

## **Committee Business**

1. **Apologies**  
As listed above.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 were approved.
3. **SALC Reports -**
  - a. **Chris Mellings, SALC Chief Officer**  
Report Circulated in advance. Its content was noted.
  - b. **Ray Wickson (SALC County Chair)**  
Ray was not present but the minutes of the Area Committee Review meeting was circulated and noted. All TPCs are urged to comment on the recommendations which have been circulated by Dianne Dorrell.
4. **Finance and Banking**  
The secretary provided a verbal update:
  - Balance: £1995.80
  - Commitments £180.00
5. **Matters Raised by Parish Councils**  
Loppington – concerns re conservation areas and advice given.
6. **Suggestions for Future Speakers/Topics**  
Helen Morgan – to be invited to the January meeting  
Shropshire Council Streetworks Team  
Social Care costs, pressures and demographics.  
Conservation Officer
7. **Date of next meeting**  
12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7pm (Zoom)

**The meeting closed at 20.45**

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