

# **Shropshire Councillor Report**

**5<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

## **1. 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.

## **2. 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.

## **3. 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.

The Health & Wellbeing Board noted concerns around low flu vaccination uptake, which may increase winter pressures.

#### **4. 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.

#### **5. Planning**

Meetings with officers have covered planning, enforcement and building control, focusing on transparency and capacity within tight financial constraints.

#### **6. 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.

## **7. 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.

## **8. 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.

## **Bayston Hill- Councillor's Report**

I am pleased to report that the light-pollution issue caused by the A49 streetlighting has now been resolved. Route Manager Joe Walmsley has worked closely with affected residents, and the lighting has been successfully redirected back onto the A49, ensuring that villagers no longer experience intrusive glare into their homes. I am also pleased to confirm that Joe will be

attending my councillor's surgery on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, where he will be available to answer any questions or concerns residents may have regarding the A49, including upcoming improvements.

I am delighted that the mini-roundabout has now been fully repainted. This was achieved through the hard work of the highways team, supported by sustained pressure from both myself and the Parish Council. Further highway works are scheduled, including additional lining around the parade of shops, alongside patching of existing potholes. The highways officer continues to undertake regular patrols of the village, responding to potholes brought to his attention and identifying any further issues relating to pavements or the wider highway network. This proactive approach will continue.

Planning remains a significant area of work, particularly in the context of the ongoing absence of a five-year housing land supply and the withdrawal of the Local Plan. I have been heavily involved in the emerging Sulis/Bloor Homes proposals for land North of Pulley Lane. I attended both the public exhibition and presentation at Meole Brace Peace Memorial Hall, as well as the subsequent full Parish Council meeting. In addition, I have recently attended meetings in Meole Brace, working alongside the local councillor and residents to prepare for the Bloor Homes proposal, which is expected imminently. This has included helping residents understand the planning process, preparing for potential objections, and ensuring that clear communication is in place so that both Meole Brace and Bayston Hill residents can be informed promptly once the application goes live.

The application for Land West of Lyth Hill Road was approved by the Northern Planning Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> December. This was a disappointing outcome and was narrowly approved by the Chair's casting vote. Several procedural concerns have since been raised with the responsible officer. We now await the formal planning decision and will be closely monitoring the conditions and considerations that Redrow are required to address as the development progresses.

Finally, I am contributing to the rapid Task and Finish Group on Health in All Policies, helping to shape a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will guide future planning decisions. This work focuses particularly on appropriate housing types and tenures for elderly and vulnerable residents. While we continue to wait for a new Local Plan, it is essential that Shropshire develops robust supplementary guidance so that developers clearly understand expectations around health, wellbeing and community sustainability.