Shropshire Councillor Report – April 2026

Counter Fraud at Shropshire Council

Preventive fraud controls currently are imbedded within service areas and are designed to prevent as well as identify fraud and the subsequent funds to be recovered. There is an expectation across service areas that controls are in place to identify and correct errors as opposed to being recognised, recorded, and dealt with as counter fraud activity.

The reduction in council capacity in recent years may have acted unintentionally to raise the risk of fraud. During this time, a number of internal audits have only been able to offer limited assurance of internal control mechanisms. This has made it more challenging to pinpoint any potential for fraudulent activity or to determine the underlying cause of the issue.

A fully costed proposal for a corporate fraud team will now be included as an option for approval within the 2027/28 budget.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The LNRS is one of 48 being completed across England to deliver the requirements of s104 of the Environment Act 2021. The Responsible Authority appointed by the Secretary of State was Shropshire Council with Telford & Wrekin Council as Supporting Authority.

To generate engagement and allow the right priorities and actions to be developed, numerous stakeholder and public consultation events have been held across Shropshire since September 2024. The public consultation was exceptionally successful, and it is thought that Shropshire LNRS had by far the largest response yet for any LNRS in England with 3,782 comments received.

Shropshire's LNRS was presented to a Defra panel for assessment on 17th December 2025. They made a number of suggested technical amendments which have, been incorporated and amended into the final LNRS. However, they "*agree that the Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin LNRS is already a sound, comprehensive and well-written document*".

The cabinet approved the LNRS Strategy in March (subject to parallel approval by Telford and Wrekin Council) and noted the work of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Steering Group and stakeholders in supporting co-ordinated biodiversity action, to enable nature recovery across Shropshire.

The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund

Shropshire Council has agreed to utilise over £2m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding programme from the Dept. for Transport, alongside significant private-sector investment, to deliver new EV charge points and expand pavement-charging options for residents without driveways.

Initial analysis indicates that over 550 new charge points could be installed, doubling current provision.

The programme requires no Council capital and is expected to be financially self-sustaining. Under the concession model, the Charge Point Operator will fund installation, operation and maintenance, while the Council will receive an annual concession fee plus a share of charging revenue once utilisation grows. Income will be modest initially but is expected to increase as the network expands and EV uptake rises.

Work is underway to determine suitable locations and areas for delivery of this number of charge points. Charge points will be located on-street, in Council-owned car parks, or on third-party land where appropriate agreements are in place

Food Waste Collections

Weekly food waste collections will not be introduced across the Shropshire Council area on 1 April 2026 due to insufficient long-term Government funding to deliver the service.

Shropshire Council is not alone in facing these challenges. According to recent BBC reporting, at least 57 councils across England have confirmed they will also miss the 1 April deadline for introducing weekly food waste collections. Many of these councils are now aiming to launch services later in 2026, while others have been granted transitional arrangements to delay implementation due to existing contracts or affordability issues.

While the Government has provided funding to cover the purchase of vehicles and food waste bins, along with some short term transitional funding for delivery, communications and project management (totalling just over £3.6 million), its most recent financial settlement did not include adequate ongoing revenue funding to run a weekly food waste collection service.

As a result, introducing the service from April this year would place a significant financial risk on the council at a time when it is already facing unprecedented pressure on existing essential services.

A report will be presented to Shropshire Council's Cabinet on 15 April, setting out the current position and recommending the next steps required to introduce a food waste collection service at a later date.

Potholes: an open letter from the Cabinet member for highways

Dear residents, businesses and road users,

In recent weeks there has been a big increase in the number of potholes on roads across Shropshire. In January 2113 new potholes were reported compared to 1216 in January last year – that's an increase of 77%.

Unfortunately, winter is the time of year when potholes most commonly appear and this year the situation is worse as a result of recent extreme periods of wet, cold and further wet conditions – a situation faced by other councils across the country.

Water gets into cracks in the road, then freezes and expands, and that's why we've all seen a big increase in the number and severity of potholes. Such is the dramatic rise in the number of potholes and their severity we cannot tackle them all at once, and it's not always possible to

make permanent repairs due to emergencies or where road conditions don't allow. So, on occasions we resort to a temporary safety repair until we can return in better weather to make a permanent repair. I know that this can annoy people but please be patient as we tackle the pothole backlog.

I am determined to improve Shropshire's roads and when the new administration took control of Shropshire Council last May we made it clear that tackling potholes and improving the county's roads was one of our top priorities. We immediately set up a new pothole repair team to tackle potholes on rural roads and so far, they have tackled over 2200 potholes.

Since May last year we've tackled a total of more than 25,000 potholes on roads across Shropshire – an average of more than 595 every week. However, to deal with the increase in potholes we have created three new repair teams from existing staff and increased the use of night-time working so that the average number of potholes repaired each week is over 800.

Of course, we can only carry out the work that our resources allow. In Shropshire we have one of the biggest road networks to maintain in England (the council is responsible for 3200 miles of roads) but we receive lower funding per mile than many other councils.

However, with the limited resources we receive we need to improve the roads and make them less susceptible to potholes as best we can.

How are we doing that?

Through our annual resurfacing and surface dressing programmes we've been working to improve the county's roads and prevent potholes forming in the first place. Since May last year 25 stretches of roads – measuring 61km – have been surfaced dressed, and more than 40 roads – measuring over 50km– have been resurfaced.

We're about to begin this year's programme of surface dressing, with 72 stretches of road across the county being treated to help prevent problems arising in future. And we'll soon be announcing our resurfacing programme for this year.

We have made changes to our highways contract to help ensure that we carry out more proactive surfacing work, and more, better, reactive repairs

And we've received an increased funding allocation from the Government that we'll be investing in the county's roads – but we'll continue to lobby Government for fairer funding for Shropshire.

A warm, dry spell of weather will also be of great help – ensuring that we can carry out more repairs, and reducing the number of newly created potholes.

In short, I'm determined to improve the county's roads and to make them safer for all who use them. I know this will be a challenge, but it's a challenge that councils are facing across the country and one that I'm determined to meet here in Shropshire.

It's also a challenge that you can help us with. If you spot a pothole or series of potholes in need of repair, please let us know. To report a problem, use the FixMyStreet app or visit our website – www.shropshire.gov.uk/highways. Alternatively, you can call us on 0345 678 9006. I know that there have been problems with FixMyStreet where potholes are reported to be fixed when this is

not always the case. We are working to improve FixMyStreet but, in the meantime, do let me know if a response is not accurate.

I want to record the thanks of everyone at the council for the hard work undertaken by our teams who are out across the county every day fixing potholes, often in terrible conditions and at night. If you see work taking place please be patient and respectful. Our teams are working as hard as they can.

I am determined that the situation will improve over the coming months.

Yours

Councillor David Vasmer

Local Casework

I have written to the leader of Shropshire Council and the Cabinet member for Highways regarding the recent traffic incidents on the A528 between Cockshutt & Ellesmere to ask for improvements to make the 'S' bends safer. This was also requested by Helen Morgan MP, and we are awaiting a response.

I have been in contact with Atlas Tower Group (ATG) regarding a mobile phone mast installation to bring improved coverage to Cockshutt. They have carried out a desk analysis of the feasibility of a new mast and will shortly arrange a meeting with myself and the Parish Council to discuss their findings. I am also pursuing an alternative company that are interested in placing masts on church towers. Shropshire Council's Digital Infrastructure Officer is going to investigate if there is any possibility of the company working with us.

Road Closure: A528, through Burlton, Burlton (Sunday working)

Start Date: 31st May 2026

End Date: 31st May 2026

Purpose: Road Closure - Repair defective manhole frame and cover

Works Promoter: Severn Trent Water

Works Promoter Ref: LB7012204-000013701768B-02

Enforcement pattern for A528, through Burlton, Burlton: 9.30 - 15.30hrs

You can view the closure and diversion route by clicking here: https://one.network/?tm=GB146673911