

Shropshire Councillor Report – September 2026

This report provides a brief update on recent Shropshire Council decisions and service developments that may be of interest to parish councillors and local residents.

Shropshire Council issued with Best Value Notice

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has today (15 July 2026) issued a [Best Value Notice to Shropshire Council](#).

The Notice is a formal notification that MHCLG has concerns about the council and its financial position. There are also concerns about leadership capacity, governance, and culture which were identified in reports from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and External Auditor in 2025.

The council already has plans in place to address these concerns, including an Improvement Plan and Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy. The Notice stresses the importance of the council continuing to deliver its plans and in doing so, provide assurance that progress is being made and concerns are being addressed.

The Notice confirms that MHCLG expects the council to continue leading their own improvement and engage with support provided by the Local Government Association (LGA), including regular reporting to the Improvement Board established in November 2025.

There is also a requirement to engage with MHCLG on a quarterly basis to discuss progress. The council welcomes the ongoing engagement with MHCLG and remains committed to addressing the concerns it has raised.

Shropshire Council Update: CIPFA Assurance Review

Shropshire Council has received the final report from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) following its review of the council's financial position. The review was required as part of the council's Exceptional Financial Support arrangements.

Key points include:

- CIPFA recognised the positive progress made in recent months, including the change in leadership, development of the Council's Improvement Plan, and the commitment of councillors and officers to delivering improvements.
- The report highlights strengths in the council's new direction, commenting positively on the Improvement Plan, leadership approach, and efforts to address gaps in capacity and capability.
- The review examined the council's financial resilience, governance, capital programme, debt position and service delivery arrangements, making 22 recommendations for further improvement.
- While acknowledging recent progress, CIPFA notes that the council continues to face significant financial challenges, including issues linked to historic financial

management, leadership arrangements, delivery of savings programmes and organisational restructuring.

- The council has stated that it is already addressing these issues through its Improvement Plan and Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy.

Shropshire Local Mobile in Ellesmere

Shropshire Local Mobile is being trialled in Ellesmere, giving residents another way to access face-to-face help with Shropshire Council services.

The service launched on Tuesday 28 July at Our Space Community Hub, Trimpey Street, Ellesmere, SY12 0AE. Sessions run from 10am to 4pm on every fourth Tuesday of the month during the initial trial. Parish councils are encouraged to share the details with residents who may benefit from in-person support.

Proposed sale of the former Shirehall headquarters

Cabinet has agreed in principle to take urgent steps towards selling the former Shirehall headquarters and wider site in Shrewsbury.

The decision followed a special Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 14 July 2026. Shirehall is no longer needed for council operations, is much larger than required and would need substantial investment to bring it back into use.

The council considers a sale with limited conditions to be the option most likely to reduce ongoing costs and financial risk while securing best value for taxpayers.

A marketing prospectus is due to return to Cabinet in the autumn. It will set out the site boundary, planning considerations, valuation information and the proposed method of sale.

The council's preference is for housing, including private and affordable homes, subject to planning permission. The prospectus will also recognise previously identified possibilities such as healthcare, supported living, commercial and mixed residential uses.

The proposal forms part of the council's response to its financial emergency and its efforts to reduce the cost of assets it no longer needs, lower borrowing and stabilise its finances.

Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge

The Local Government Association carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge in July 2025. This is a sector-led review in which experienced councillors and officers from other councils assess leadership, governance, performance and the organisation's capacity to improve.

The latest progress review found significant improvement since July 2025, including stronger financial management and governance, renewed pace from political and officer leadership, and a more positive and collaborative organisational culture. However, it also stressed that the council remains at an early stage of a long and challenging improvement programme. Transformation plans must now be delivered at pace, with clear routes to financial sustainability and sufficient organisational capacity.

Shropshire Council Digital Roadmap 2026–2030

Cabinet approved the Digital Roadmap on Wednesday 5 August. It sets out how the council intends to improve access to services over the next four years by making them simpler, quicker and more joined up.

The programme is not intended to remove telephone or face-to-face support. The guiding principle is “digital by choice, human when it matters”, with assisted and non-digital options continuing for residents who need them.

What residents should experience

- Clearer and more consistent ways to access services online, by telephone or in person.
- Less need to repeat the same information to different council teams, where information can appropriately be reused.
- Better progress updates and improved ability to track requests, applications and cases.
- Faster responses through improved processes, technology and automation.
- Better coordination where a resident needs support from more than one council service.