

Teams meeting with Shropshire Council re devolution of Street Scene services – 25th August 2026, 12 – 1:10pm

Present: J Hernandez, Shropshire Council; P Carter, D Morgan, R Evans, C Higgins, Longden PC

1. Introductions – JH is officer responsible for street scene services, PC, DM RE are Longden Councillors, CH Parish Clerk

2. Open discussion

JH gave a summary of pilot schemes in operation at Shrewsbury, Shifnal & Broseley from April 26, which differ in scope and scale. The pilots in Shrewsbury & Broseley have undertaken all street scene functions and have received funding from SC based on 66% of budget, which will reduce to 50% next year. Current position is for funding to remain at 50% thereafter.

Shifnal is providing an enhanced service using their existing staff and receive no funding as SC continues to deliver the statutory services. Service level agreements are in place with Shrewsbury & Broseley to ensure statutory services are delivered as the obligation to provide these remains with SC.

JH is working to digitise the delivery of grounds maintenance services to optimise resources. Data accuracy has improved but he welcomes local knowledge where data is missing or inaccurate. Street Scene services have already been digitised and are being brought back 'in house'. Contractor's staff will transfer in to ensure local knowledge is not lost. Once available, this knowledge will be shared with parishes.

CH explained Longden has limited capacity and no other staff, so any services would need to be carried out by contractors or in collaboration with another council. She also acknowledged that the issues with overflowing bins had largely been resolved and thanked JH for updating the records. She requested details of route frequencies so that any slippage can be monitored.

3. Longden data – verge and amenity grass maintenance

JH shared a spreadsheet containing additional detail but without sufficient detail to enable LPC to calculate potential costs. JH agreed to provide the background polygon data and frequency of grass cutting. He confirmed that the data excluded highway visibility splays, which will remain the responsibility of SC Highways although they would eventually be brought into the same team under one officer in Infrastructure.

PC observed that the spreadsheet does not describe what work is supposed to be done at any location. JH replied that the frequency of verge maintenance varies and that if a verge is not on the Schedule of Rates it will not be routinely cut. Rural verges and visibility splays are maintained by a collective of contractors and local farmers and the frequency of verge cutting varies. SC is seeking greater clarity on who does what and when.

LPC identified sections of verge which are never cut or are cut by residents. LPC invited to add a comments column to the spreadsheet to feedback key local information.

CH asked for clarity on the maintenance responsibility for Annscroft bank. JH stated there are areas in SC ownership which do not have a maintenance plan but have previously been maintained under instruction from a senior officer. Recent budget restrictions have not allowed for such work to be done lately.

LPC would like to know who to contact to request a verge has a late cut or no cut to encourage wildflower verges. DM raised issue of the collection and disposal of arisings which reduce wildflower growth if left on the verge. JH is investigating the use of a hopper to collect arisings, but SC does not yet have this facility. SC are working with Lyn Parker to identify key wildflower / wildlife habitats.

JH stated that the frequency of street scene service deliveries (bin emptying, road sweeping, grass cutting, etc) will soon be available through a public website enabling customers to self-serve where problems are identified. This requires technical input.

4. Funding

JH stated that if a parish receives funding for service delivery, SC will require a minimum level of service to ensure they meet their statutory obligations. Where there is no statutory obligation, a parish can decide whether to do the work or not. The level of future funding is under review and is not guaranteed.

SC is reviewing the Environmental Maintenance Grant, which they recognise is value for money, as parishes match fund any grant. The budget for the EMG may revert to previous levels to enable parishes to support resilience in the network, eg. wildflower verges and ditch clearance. Church Preen already runs a Parish Road Warden scheme which is supported by SC by the provision of training in traffic management and PPE.

5. Next Steps

JH to provide a full data set for LPC to review and will attend a follow up meeting in a few weeks if LPC wishes to take something forward.