

Our Plan to Fix Shropshire Together



*Shropshire has been let down by the Conservatives for decades.
Everything feels **BROKEN**, and we need to **CHANGE** to **FIX** it.*

*Let's have a fresh start after **THURSDAY 1ST MAY** with the
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS and **FIX SHROPSHIRE TOGETHER**.*

Liberal Democrat Manifesto
Shropshire Council Elections 2025

SHADOW CABINET

for Shropshire Council 2024/5



CO-LEADERS *This portfolio includes Housing and Assets*



ROGER EVANS
(Longden)



HEATHER KIDD
(Chirbury & Worthen)

Finance, Corporate Responsibilities & Communities

ROGER EVANS *(Longden)*



Climate Change, Environment & Transport

ROB WILSON *(Cophorne)*



Children & Education

RUTH HOUGHTON *(Bishop's Castle)*



Growth & Regeneration

DAVID MINNERY *(Market Drayton West)*



Culture & Digital

ALEX WAGNER *(Bowbrook)*



Highways

DAVID VASMER *(Underdale)*



Adult Social Care & Public Health

BERNIE BENTICK *(Meole)*



Planning & Regulatory Services

MARK WILLIAMS *(Highley)*



Finance, Economy & Communities

Immediate actions

- 1. Rein in spending on consultants.**
- 2. An end to vanity projects - scrap the proposed new Riverside Multi Agency Hub.**
- 3. Launch a new Shropshire Partnership where Shropshire Council will work together with Towns, Parishes and communities and other Shropshire organisations to deliver services more effectively and efficiently.**

Our plan

- Carry out a full review of the financial situation to see if we need to approach Government for consent to use further capital receipts and prudential borrowing to allow time to bring in the changes that are needed.
- We will create a new 'Shropshire Partnership' (Shropshire Working Together) to protect services and facilities; we will work collaboratively with Town & Parish Councils, voluntary groups, local businesses and community organisations within Shropshire.
- Look to establish a 'Shropshire Lottery' to raise funds for local organisations, both voluntary and charitable.
- Reduce wasteful third-party spending on consultants and contractors by bringing more jobs back in house.
- Establish a specialist external funding team to win more funding bids.
- Commence a complete review of Shropshire's use of Community Infrastructure Levy, to ensure it is actually being spent to benefit all local communities.
- Prioritise keeping the money spent by Shropshire Council in Shropshire.
- Encourage more employers to participate in the apprenticeship scheme
- Work with Shropshire colleges to provide training courses to help both young people into work and adults to change careers.
- Bring Shropshire Council back into communities, so residents can speak face-to-face to a real person again, not just a computer on the end of a phone line.
- Realign Smithfield Riverside development.
- Reorganise the governance structures of Shropshire Council to ensure better scrutiny and improved decision making.
- Hold Shropshire Council meetings in our major towns to encourage public awareness and enable local communities to make their views more easily known.



Councillor David Minnery

Shadow Cabinet Member for Growth & Regeneration



Councillor Roger Evans

Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Economy & Communities

Environment & Climate

Immediate actions

- 1. Tackle fly tipping and review the Green Bin tax.**
- 2. Act on the worst areas of air pollution across the county.**
- 3. Use enforcement powers to clean up our waterways and green spaces.**

Our plan

- Pressure the government for faster action on sewage spills.
- Undertake a County wide review of waste bin provision and general waste management.
- Grapple the task of making Shropshire Council carbon neutral by 2030.
- Act as a leader to make Shropshire as a whole carbon neutral by 2040 by making Shropshire a leader in renewables and new technologies such as pyrolysis.
- Introduce a food waste collection service.
- Work with partners to clean up our towns, rivers and parks.
- Designation of new local nature reserves and preservation of existing ones.
- Create a map of valued local green spaces and heritage sites that require protection and to promote biodiversity.
- Work with residents' groups and others to petition for faster Government action on flooding and make our town centres and local economies more resilient to the effects of extreme weather events.
- Work to provide more jobs nearer to where people live to reduce the dependency on travel.



Councillor Rob Wilson

Shadow Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Children & Young People

Immediate actions

- 1. Launch a new strategy aiming at attracting and keeping young people and families in the county.**
- 2. Work with the bus companies address the inequality of post-16 bus travel.**
- 3. Maximise free school meal take up by eligible families.**

Our plan

- Maximise the use of in-house Children's care home provision
- Review secondary school provision in the county – especially in Shrewsbury
- Build new links between the agricultural sector and higher education in the county to provide more post 16 training opportunities, particularly in the construction and social care sectors, and encourage new businesses
- Get more children walking and cycling to school
- Reorganise school transport to help all children, including those with disabilities, to access schools and colleges including resolving Post 16 unfair education travel costs
- Expand 'out of hours' use of school facilities including promoting joint use schemes within the new Shropshire Partnership
- Ensure suitable accommodation is available for children leaving care
- Encourage Academy Trusts that work effectively with the Local Authority around school standards by bringing schools together to share best practice and raise standards across the county
- Act to reduce the backlog of SEND assessments, including a transparent audit of the current situation



Councillor Ruth Houghton

Shadow Cabinet Member for Children & Education

Adults & Older People

Immediate actions

1. **Work with the council-owned house builder Cornovii, STAR Housing and other Housing Providers to build or provide more supported living accommodation for vulnerable people.**
2. **Using our Shropshire Partnership open up existing community facilities as day centres.**
3. **Conduct an audit of 'out of county' care placements.**

Our plan

- Run more of our own residential care services instead of contracting out.
- Review 'out of county' care placements with the aim of supporting people in Shropshire closer to their families and communities.
- Provide support for those applying for the help and assistance they need – open direct access to council buildings and staff.
- Reduce spending on 'out of county' care.
- Ensure that all areas of the Council play an active part in supporting disabled and older people to live independent lives through inclusive employment policies, transport provision and by developing age/disability accessible public spaces.
- Develop services that support people with additional health and care needs to remain supported safely in their own home wherever possible.
- Work with partners to improve access to a broad range of local mental health services, including community based support services as well as specialist care for those with high levels of need.
- Enhance both Children's and Adults services, to ensure a smooth transition between Children's and Adult Services for those with ongoing health and care needs.
- Ensure every rough sleeper is offered supported accommodation.
- Review the temporary homes strategy for families and individuals who are made homeless or at risk of being made homeless.



Councillor Ruth Houghton

Shadow Cabinet Member for Children & Education



Councillor Bernie Bentick

Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health

Highways

Immediate actions

- 1. Investigate the handling and decision making process relating to the North West Relief Road.**
- 2. Deal with potholes locally as part of Shropshire Partnership to get them fixed faster and cheaper.**
- 3. Tackle illegal and pavement parking through increased enforcement and adequate signing.**

Our plan

- Conduct a root and branch review of the contracts for core highways services.
- Reprogramme traffic lights for better traffic flow and pedestrian waiting times.
- Commit to spending a higher proportion of the Highways budget on improving walking and cycling routes, including resurfacing and upgrading existing routes.
- Ensure that all schools have the chance to benefit from projects that support safer access to schools, using legislation where appropriate, including 20mph limits.
- Accelerate the installation of new pedestrian crossings across the county in towns, villages and hamlets where there is support from the local councillor and Town or Parish Council.
- Introduce 20mph speed limits where there is the support of the parish council and local councillor, including outside schools.
- Work with partners to act on the backlog of overgrown footpaths and cycle ways
- Review the winter maintenance programme to ensure that more residents are able to access services.
- Expand our enforcement teams.
- Work with communities to build a team of volunteer local snow and flood wardens.
- Introduce better regulation of A-boards on footpaths so that streets are accessible for all.
- Plant new street trees where there is community support.
- Through the new Shropshire partnership remove obstructive vegetation growth on footpaths and around street signs.
- Finally complete the work of converting all Council street lights to LED
- Consult on a new Transport Plan for the whole county.
- Review parking provision across the county to improve flood resilience, ensure adequacy, and allow for the trend towards wider private vehicles.
- Conduct an audit of the location of public parking to protect residential parking areas from overspill parking.



Councillor David Vasmer

Shadow Cabinet Member for Highways

Transport

Immediate actions

- 1. Review Park & Ride schemes and to improve the quality of the service.**
- 2. Establish a countywide Road Danger Reduction group with emergency services, experts and others supported by local road safety groups and town/parish councils to prioritise areas for investment.**
- 3. Prioritise pedestrians and improve services for those with disabilities.**

Our Plan

- Begin the work to bring buses back under public control in Shropshire.
- Plan how to restore evening and Sunday buses.
- Establish plans for a new Bus Station in Shrewsbury in its current location.
- Support the reopening of the Oswestry-Gobowen rail line.
- Champion the reopening of Baschurch Station, and the creation of a new station to the east of Shrewsbury.
- Re-establish local road safety groups.
- Work consistently to enable more children to be able to walk and cycle to school. Enabling transport independence for the next generation.
- Work with our communities towards the reduction of traffic in Shrewsbury and our other towns with a suitable movement plan.



Councillor Rob Wilson

Shadow Cabinet Member for Transport

Culture, Leisure, Digital & Tourism

Immediate actions

- 1. Open up the Guildhall to the public - use the new Shropshire Partnership to change how in-person services are delivered**
- 2. Support the ongoing campaign for a law change to guarantee mobile signal in rural areas.**
- 3. Back the county's tourist industry by forming stronger links with organisations like Visit Shropshire and Film Shropshire.**

Our plan

- Focus on improving on pre-pandemic footfall and visitor numbers (key targets on Shropshire Hills AONB, Shrewsbury Town Centre, North Shropshire visitor economy).
- Make a bigger, bolder pitch for Shropshire as a tourist destination, showcasing what we have and backing local businesses.
- Support town centre regeneration through keeping facilities central for all residents to access by all modes of transport.
- Continue to deliver improved digital infrastructure, lobbying Government to expand broadband improvements.
- Back Helen Morgan MP's campaign for rural roaming, giving residents access to signal everywhere in the county.
- Work with partners to expand the School Holiday activity programme for school pupils.
- Support cultural provision across Shropshire including strengthening links with large national galleries and museums to encourage them to continue exhibiting at Shrewsbury.
- Work with Towns, Parishes and other partners to change the delivery model for Culture and Leisure services.



Councillor Alex Wagner

Shadow Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Digital & Tourism

Housing and Planning

Immediate actions

- 1. Fix the Conservatives broken 'Local Plan'**
- 2. We will increase the percentages and availability of mixed tenure affordable homes**
- 3. Make Homepoint more accessible and bring empty homes back into use**

Our plan

- Ensure that we are building housing aimed at all to buy and rent, to enable young people to live and work in Shropshire.
- Use our planning powers to help level the playing field for Town Centres in relation to out of town retail.
- Use the Local Plan Review to ensure a range of mixed tenure affordable and social housing across the County and help improve social sustainability.
- Review employment land allocations and encourage more small business start ups.
- Reform the Homepoint lettings service.
- Bring empty homes back into use.
- Encourage housing associations to not sell off homes without rebuilding in the same area.
- Develop a grant system to make it viable for Housing Associations to upgrade to EPC rating C (reducing sell off).
- Develop new housing policies to deal properly with transport, infrastructure, flooding, energy efficiency and climate change, including amending Shropshire's planning rules to lessen the impact of new developments on surface water flooding, increasing permeability and the ability of the land to retain water.
- Ensure that development sites contain safe and effective surface water drainage and storage facilities that are wildlife friendly.
- Open up Shropshire Council owned brownfield sites to build new homes and/or economic development sites.
- Develop a decent homes strategy and review minimum building standards to improve the quality of affordable homes on developer sites.
- Review the structure of Cornovii and STAR Housing to ensure improved delivery of housing for the people of Shropshire.
- Increase the minimum percentage of mixed tenure affordable homes in line with government targets and in line with Shropshire housing need.
- Make planning more transparent. If a local councillor and Parish Council asks for it, applications will be considered by the planning committee. This includes publishing notes from any Chairman's Agenda meeting.



Councillor Heather Kidd & Councillor Roger Evans

Joint Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Public Protection

Immediate actions

- 1. We will encourage Shropshire Council to work with partners to harmonise activities to increase public health levels and also to safeguard communities.**
- 2. We will encourage increased investment in Primary and Community Health Care.**
- 3. We will work towards improvements in Emergency/Urgent Care, including the use of Key Performance Indices and timescales.**

Our plan

- To work with GPs and other partners to identify those most at risk within our communities.
- Through our partnerships encourage increased investment in Primary and Community Health Care, to include comprehensive Family and Community Hubs providing wide ranging outpatient investigation, treatment and therapy facilities together with additional Community Bed provision.
- To improve the assessments of patients waiting for discharge in partnership with NHS colleagues.
- Campaign to improve access to Dentistry across Shropshire.
- To work with Schools to identify the level of mental health support required.
- We will seek to guarantee that every patient discharged from hospital with a Discharge Care Package prescribed receives that support within 24 hours.
- To work with West Midlands Ambulance Service to ensure an optimum triage system for GP calls so ensuring better prioritisation of responses and delivery of 'Fit for Purpose' response times for Rural areas.
- To introduce a Shropshire Health and Care Dashboard of KPIs including national targets such as Ambulance response times, Urgent Care waiting times including waiting times for admission and delayed discharges.
- Encourage Secondary Care to provide therapists and other staff needed to deliver Community Care Packages to those discharged from hospital for 6 weeks
- Encourage Shropshire Council to work more closely with West Mercia Police and Shropshire Fire & Rescue to improve public safety and the protection of vulnerable people.
- Encourage more investment into Trading Standards.



Councillor Bernie Bentick

Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health



Councillor Mark Williams

Shadow Cabinet Member for Planning & Regulatory Services