

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Shrewsbury

Council notes:

- That climate change is already affecting Shrewsbury, with increasing risks from prolonged periods of extreme heat, drought, intense rainfall, surface-water and river flooding, storms, damage to trees and green infrastructure, and pressures on biodiversity, food production and public health.
- That the impacts of climate change are expected to become more frequent and severe, even with continued action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- That climate change adaptation and carbon reduction are not competing priorities. Many of the actions needed to reduce emissions can also make Shrewsbury healthier, greener and more resilient, including increasing tree canopy, restoring nature, improving soil and water management, reducing car dependency, improving walking and cycling infrastructure and increasing the energy efficiency of buildings.
- That the Town Council has an important role to play in climate adaptation through its responsibility for parks, open spaces, countryside, trees, cemeteries, community facilities, youth services and other local services, as well as through its role as a landowner, community leader, partner and advocate for the town.
- That the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan, the Council's Vision, its commitment to carbon neutrality, its Biodiversity Plan and its developing Food Resilience Strategy provide an important framework through which climate adaptation can be embedded in the future development and management of Shrewsbury.
- That restoring and connecting nature is fundamental to climate resilience, including through increased tree canopy, wetlands, healthy soils, hedgerows, meadows, riverside habitats and connected green corridors, which can help to manage heat, surface water, flooding and biodiversity loss while improving the quality of life for residents.
- That access to affordable, nutritious and locally produced food is also an important element of community resilience, particularly in the face of increasing climate and economic pressures.

Council believes:

That Shrewsbury should be a town which is not only reducing its contribution to climate change but is actively preparing for the climate impacts that are already unavoidable.

That climate adaptation should therefore be embedded across the Town Council's policies, projects, land management and service delivery, rather than being treated as a separate environmental issue.

That the future development of Shrewsbury should be climate-resilient, nature-positive and people-centred, reflecting the principles of the Big Town Plan and the Council's Vision.

That investment in nature, green infrastructure, sustainable transport, resilient buildings, local food systems and community preparedness can simultaneously address climate change, biodiversity loss, public health, inequality and the quality of the town's public realm.

That the Town Council should use its position as a major local landowner, service provider, employer and community leader to demonstrate what practical climate adaptation can look like at town level and to work with Shropshire Council, the Environment Agency, local communities, businesses, voluntary organisations and other partners to increase the resilience of Shrewsbury as a whole.

Council resolves:

1. Climate resilience and the Shrewsbury Test within the Local Plan

To incorporate climate adaptation and resilience into the Council's consideration of major policies, strategies, capital projects and development proposals, including through the Shrewsbury Test, so that future decisions consider their contribution to:

- reducing carbon emissions;
- reducing vulnerability to extreme heat, flooding, drought and other climate risks;
- protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ecological networks;
- increasing green infrastructure and tree canopy;
- improving sustainable transport and reducing car dependency;
- supporting resilient local food systems; and
- improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life of Shrewsbury's communities.

2. A climate-resilient town

To ensure that the principles of climate adaptation are embedded in the implementation of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and the Council's Vision, with particular emphasis on creating a town which is greener, healthier, more walkable, better connected to nature and better able to withstand extreme weather.

3. Nature as climate infrastructure

To continue to expand and improve the Council's programme of nature recovery and biodiversity enhancement, recognising the role of:

- trees and urban woodland;
- green corridors;

- hedgerows and meadows;
- wetlands and river corridors;
- healthy soils;
- sustainable drainage and natural flood management; and
- connected habitats

in reducing climate risks as well as supporting biodiversity.

To ensure that the Council's Biodiversity Plan and its work with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy are used to identify opportunities to strengthen Shrewsbury's natural resilience.

4. Climate-resilient public spaces

To review the management and future design of the Council's parks, open spaces, streetscapes and other public places to identify opportunities to:

- provide greater shade and cooling during periods of extreme heat;
- increase tree canopy and other vegetation;
- improve rainwater infiltration and sustainable drainage;
- reduce the risk of surface-water flooding;
- protect soils and biodiversity; and
- provide accessible green and blue spaces which support health and wellbeing.

5. Food resilience

To ensure that the emerging Food Resilience Strategy considers the implications of climate change for the availability, affordability and resilience of food, and explores opportunities for the Town Council to support:

- local food production;
- community growing;
- allotments and productive green spaces;
- local food networks and markets;
- reduction of food waste; and
- greater public understanding of sustainable and resilient food systems.

6. Council operations and workforce

To ensure that climate adaptation risks are incorporated into the Council's corporate risk-management arrangements and business continuity planning.

To ensure that the Council continues to provide safe working arrangements for its employees and contractors during periods of extreme heat, flooding, storms and other severe weather, including appropriate arrangements for modifying or suspending work where conditions create an unacceptable risk.

7. Community resilience

To consider how the Town Council's community programmes, including its work with young people and community organisations, can contribute to building local resilience to extreme weather and climate impacts.

To explore opportunities through existing Council funding programmes and partnerships to support practical community-led projects which help residents, particularly those who may be more vulnerable, to prepare for and respond to extreme heat, flooding and other climate-related risks.

8. Leading by example

To ask officers to prepare a public-facing report setting out how climate adaptation and resilience are currently being addressed across the Town Council's services, land and projects, identifying opportunities for further action and demonstrating how the Council's work on:

- carbon neutrality;
- biodiversity and nature recovery;
- green infrastructure;
- public realm;
- sustainable transport;
- food resilience; and
- community resilience

can contribute to a more climate-resilient Shrewsbury.

9. Working with partners

To use the Town Council's role within the Big Town Plan Partnership and its relationships with Shropshire Council, the Environment Agency, local communities, businesses and voluntary organisations to promote a coordinated approach to climate adaptation across Shrewsbury.

10. National advocacy

To ask the Leader of the Council to write to Julia Buckley MP seeking Government support for:

- properly funded locally delivered climate adaptation and resilience measures;
- appropriate powers and resources for town and parish councils to contribute to local climate adaptation;
- investment in climate-resilient public infrastructure, schools, health and care settings and housing; and
- a national adaptation strategy which recognises the important role of town and parish councils in delivering practical resilience at community level.

Council further resolves:

To recognise that climate resilience is not simply an environmental issue but a fundamental part of the future prosperity, health, wellbeing and sustainability of Shrewsbury, and that the Town Council will seek to ensure that adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity recovery, food resilience and sustainable development are considered together in shaping the future of the town.