

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, FRANKWELL QUAY, SHREWSBURY
AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2019**

PRESENT

Councillors P Nutting (Mayor), P Gillam (Deputy Mayor), P Adams, J Dean, N Green, I Jones, N Laurens, Ms J Mackenzie, Mrs P Moseley, A Mosley, K Parady, A Phillips, K Roberts and Mrs R Wall.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk) & Seb Slate (Executive Director – Shrewsbury Business Improvement District)

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs H Fraser, H Taylor and D Vasmer

72/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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| Shropshire Councillors | Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council |
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73/18 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND

Councillor Mosley reported on a recent call to action by Shropshire Council seeking representations from all Town Councils in the county to support a submission featuring their town to the Future High Streets Fund.

The last Finance & General Purpose Committee discussed the potential for a Shrewsbury submission and were unanimous in their agreement that a submission be made. The Town Clerk was instructed to work alongside the Executive Director of the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District to prepare a draft for consideration at this meeting.

In proposing the draft submission, Councillor Mosley congratulated both Helen Ball and Seb Slater on preparing an excellent submission. He felt that such a vision for Shrewsbury was great for the County Town but also for the whole of Shropshire as there was much synergy between the various Market Towns. Shrewsbury has vitality and vibrancy but also significant challenges and many of the projects contained within the draft could be exemplars for development. He commended the collaborative work of Shrewsbury Town Council, Shropshire Council and the Shrewsbury BID in developing the Big Town Plan, which had been universally endorsed. He had every confidence that the three organisations could work together to develop a credible bid to the fund.

In seconding the draft submission, Councillor Laurens recalled the visit of representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on their research tour to establish the Future High Street Fund. Their question to him was “When the fund comes out you will be bidding won’t you”. Councillor Laurens also detailed the levels of significant funding that Shropshire as a whole have received both directly from government and via the Local Enterprise Partnership. This reflected the fact that the county as a whole was developing good plans and visions and had the ability to deliver. He believed Shrewsbury was in a prime position to deliver on proposals having developed the Big Town Plan.

The Town Clerk reported on both the details of the Future High Streets Fund and Shropshire Council’s call for submissions from Market Towns. She and Seb Slater had worked collaboratively in developing the draft submission. It reflected the ambitions contained within the Big Town Plan. Whilst Shrewsbury has a vibrant town centre, it is not without significant challenges. The work of the Big Town Plan had begun to garner significant interest from outside of Shropshire and this had been reflected in the fact that MHCLG had chosen Shrewsbury as one of its case-studies for the development of the fund. She, Seb Slater and Hayley Owen from Economic Growth at Shropshire Council have been invited to the Future High Streets Fund Conference on 21st February to present Shrewsbury’s experiences.

The Future High Streets Fund was £675m and Government was seeking single submissions from local authorities highlighting one high street. Representations from larger populous local authorities had led to those with populations about the local authority average being able to submit multiple applications. In Shropshire’s case, two submissions could be prepared. It was anticipated that the average submission would be between £5-10m though there was potential for bid of up to £25m. The Town Clerk felt that given the ambition within the town a high value submission should be put.

Seb Slater gave the Business Improvement District’s support for the draft submission. The Future High Streets Fund was calling for submissions showing transformational structural change in high streets, led by strong partnerships and he believed Shrewsbury had a strong vision but also good leadership with the two councils and the BID working exceptionally well together for the betterment of the town.

In discussing the submission further members made the following comments:

- It was good that the submission recognised the need for good public transport
- The priorities contained within the document reflected the same priorities of other groups and forums and it was good all were in effect “singing from the same hymn sheet”
- Initiative to develop the tourism offer were crucial to the vitality of the town
- The timing of the funding was right

Members questioned Shropshire Council’s capacity to deliver multiple bids to the Fund. The Mayor detailed the capabilities of the Economic Growth Team but suggested that to develop a bid of quality the Town Clerk and the BID Executive Director would need to input into the process. He suggested both might wish to attend Cabinet when the Future High Street Fund is to be presented.

RESOLVED:

That the draft submission as presented be approved and be forwarded to Shropshire Council for consideration of their preferred bids to the Future High Street Fund.