

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
ACTIVE TRAVEL WORKING GROUP
VIA TEAMS
12 FEBRUARY 2024

Present – Councillors Rosemary Dartnall (Chairman), Mary Davies, Julian Dean, Kate Halliday, Alan Mosley & Rob Wilson

In attendance – Phil Jones & Jane Overton (Phil Jones Associates); Tim Pritchard & Claire Evans (Shropshire Council); Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

19/03 PRESENTATION

All members had received a copy of the Movement Strategy Document ahead of the meeting.

Phil Jones & Jane Overton gave a presentation (appended to the minutes) on proposals contained within the Movement Strategy. The Strategy has been built upon previous Big Town Plan work looking at how the visions of the plan can be operationalised. This Strategy has been tested with Stakeholders and is now out for public consultation.

20/03 COUNCILLOR COMMENTARY

There was a general consensus that the Town Council should wholeheartedly support the Strategy and advocate that the Strategy needs to be embedded into any transport related decision making be it highway or alternative movement across Shrewsbury. Members advocated that any transport related initiative should now be tested against the Movement Strategy.

Members discussed their view on public opinion, with all saying that of late it was being looked on favourably. Initial review of Commonplace comments were very positive.

Members were supportive of the need to control pedestrianisation in the town centre and the loop system was the best option. Members had a significant role to play in advocating taking unnecessary traffic from out of the town. Members would also be critical in chasing funding. The Movement Strategy and subsequent delivery plan could only go so far. It was important that this was not going to become another strategy document that sits on a shelf.

Aligned to this Movement Strategy were two other very current initiatives; the North West Relief Road and the Levelling Up 2 Project around Chester Street and the Railway Station. It was hoped that neither would prejudice the sentiment of the Movement Strategy.

Members felt it was important that individual elements, which will inevitably be controversial (like the location of the Bus Station, development of a Parkway and the reconfiguration of the Railway Station) does not override the sentiment of the Movement Strategy. The key long-term objective of the Movement Strategy was to change the behaviour of people in how they move about the town, establishing sustainable transport thereby addressing climate change. This was a blueprint for change.

It was recognised that this was not going to happen overnight with phasing of the plan being over short (0-3 years), medium (4-8 years) and long term (9 years +).

Members saw the need for the Movement Strategy to support and inform other work streams, strategies and initiatives for they feared that they were being developed without any regard to the Movement Strategy. They highlighted a number of initiatives.

The Levelling Up 2 Project around Chester Street and the Railway Station would cause disconnect with the Strategy. The 2-way cycle route along Castle Street would have to be temporary until the loop system was operationalised which begged the question as to whether the Castle Street Loop should be operationalised at the same time as the Levelling Up project.

Members also questioned what would be in the long-awaited Parking Strategy and it would need to incorporate many of the Movement Strategy suggestions including:

- Future size of carparks
- Level of modal shift
- Park & Ride Usage
- Public Bike Usage & Hire
- Micro-consolidation of deliveries and the potential drop offs to cargo bikes
- Walking Routes like the access to the Railway Station from Abbey Foregate
- Disabled Parking

Parking Charges were discussed and whilst the charging policy made reference to the Movement Strategy it was more about income generation than incentivising people to utilise alternative transport as no alternative means have been installed.

The whole aspect of Bus Services was considered, which also included the location and function of a bus station. All recognised that the Bus Service was not fit for purpose and also did not harmoniously work with the Park & Ride Service.

There were a number of suggestions that had not been considered that maybe should. These included:

- Residential Parking and the impact that the Movement Strategy might have on residents' ability to park just outside the loop
- Work-Place Parking and potential for levies
- Retail Park parking levies given the affect retail parks have on town centre viability.

21/03 WHAT NEXT

The consultation runs until 22 March 2024 and includes a dedicated Commonplace Site for electronic comments as well as a physical exhibition in St Marys Church. So far, the comments had been predominantly positive. The Movement Strategy Working Group would review the comments and report back to both the Big Town Plan Partnership and the respective partners decision making bodies.