

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Monday 13 September 2021

Officer: Helen Ball – Town Clerk

VISIONING EXERCISE

Purpose of Report

To seek Council's approval in undertaking an in-house visioning exercise to develop a Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan to assist the Town Council in its service delivery over the next 4 financial years ending in the 2025/26 financial year.

Introduction

As the new Council heads towards its first budget setting process of this new electoral term, it is never more critical to set out the aspirations of the Council and establish the most effective ways to approach and deliver what the Council wants to achieve for the residents of Shrewsbury.

Given the size of the town with 17 wards the population of each being bigger than the majority of Parish Councils in the county, understanding where the council's priorities lie is quite challenging.

The aim of a Strategic Plan is to give Shrewsbury residents a clear understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver. It would recognise the pressures and changing context of what the Council finds itself in from Government issues around reducing budgets, the devolution agenda and the need to create resilient communities to Community issues around increased demands, rising expectations and changes and the demographic profile of the town to bigger global impacts of Climate Change and COVID.

Appended to this report are links to Corporate & strategic Plans and Medium Term financial Plans that other Town Councils have prepared.

Strategic doesn't necessarily mean it has to be difficult, more it focuses on what matters.

A Strategic Plan isn't just a standalone document. It would provide narrative in the Annual Town Reports, develop a Medium Term Financial Plan as well as help to inform county Strategic Documents like the Place Plan, Local Plan and the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan. We often talk about having "shovel ready projects" should funding opportunities arise; this too would help.

Visioning Exercise

The Council undertook a Visioning Exercise after the 2017 Elections that was facilitated by an external consultant, but it failed to achieve the necessary buy in from members. Following a discussion with Group Leaders, the Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk will, pulling on their previous experiences, facilitate the Visioning Exercise in-house.

This will be done by a series of Workshops:

- Initial Member Workshop looking at the basic Vision, Mission Statement and Values, SWOT analysis of the Council
- Follow-up Session establishing the Corporate Priorities and Key Objectives of the Council
- Third Session delving into more detail around the Actions that would meet those priorities and objectives

Allied to those sessions, the Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk would facilitate:

- Staff Visioning Session to capture any thoughts and aspirations that the Council's employees have
- Stakeholder Session to capture any thoughts fellow stakeholders and partners have about how the Council could operate more effectively and efficiently in the future

The outcome of all of these sessions will be considered at a final Member Workshop designed to develop the plan.

These sessions would best work as physical meetings but there would need to be consciousness about the COVID position at the time and whether such meeting need to revert to virtual ones.

For this to work efficiently it would require all members commit to active participation, they come with an open mind and that all suggestions are tabled for consideration.

Proposed Timetable

Initial Session	W/c 27 th September
Follow-Up Session	W/c 18 th October
Action Plan Session	W/c 15 th November
Final Session	W/c 29 th November

Finance & General Purpose Committee 6th December

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i) That the contents of the report are noted.
- ii) That the plan for the Visioning Exercise is agreed.
- iii) That members of Full Council commit to active participation in this exercise.

Links to other plans

<https://stowmarkettowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Corporate-Plan-2018-23-2020-21-version.pdf>

<https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Item-9-Appendix-A-Corporate-Plan-2021-2025.pdf>

<https://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/docs/downloads/201102-Corporate-Plan-Summary.pdf>

<https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Town-5-yr-Plan-2019-2024-v.5-AGREED-for-consultation.pdf>

<https://www.birchwoodtowncouncil.org.uk/images/strategy/birchwood-town-council-updated-strategic-plan-21-february-2018.pdf>

https://www.dunstable.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/DTC_Corporate_Plan_2020_SP_Web.pdf

https://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/_UserFiles/Files/Documents/Corporate%20Plan%202015%20-%202019.pdf

https://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MTFP_2019_20_to_2023_24.pdf

<https://www.swanage.gov.uk/userfiles/file/Medium%20Term%20Financial%20Strategy.pdf>

<https://www.newmarket.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/14-Medium-Term-Financial-Plan-2018.pdf>

<https://www.chippenham.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/MTFP-IE.pdf>