

Shrewsbury Town Council Response to the Shropshire Local Plan Scoping Consultation

Shrewsbury Town Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the scope and direction of the emerging Local Plan review.

As the county town and principal settlement within Shropshire's settlement hierarchy, Shrewsbury will continue to play a critical role in accommodating future growth, employment, infrastructure and service provision. It is therefore essential that Shrewsbury Town Council remains actively involved in shaping the strategic direction of development throughout the preparation and implementation of the Local Plan.

The Town Council believes the revised Local Plan presents an important opportunity to establish a more ambitious, integrated and sustainable framework for growth — one that responds positively to the climate and ecological emergencies while reflecting the aspirations of local communities.

Future development must be infrastructure-led, climate-resilient and supported by comprehensive strategic masterplanning that integrates housing, transport, green infrastructure, biodiversity and community wellbeing.

Vision and Strategic Priorities

Shrewsbury Town Council supports a Local Plan vision that:

- prioritises sustainable development and climate resilience;
- protects the character, heritage and identity of Shropshire's towns and villages;
- strengthens local economies and high streets;
- supports the delivery of genuinely affordable housing;
- improves active travel and public transport connectivity;
- enhances biodiversity, green infrastructure and river quality; and
- encourages healthy, inclusive and resilient communities.

The Local Plan should place equal importance on quality of place, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing alongside housing and economic growth objectives.

Climate resilience, biodiversity recovery and sustainable movement should not be treated as separate policy considerations, but embedded within a single integrated approach to placemaking and growth.

Role of Market Towns and Infrastructure Delivery

Shrewsbury and Shropshire's market towns perform a vital strategic role as service, employment, cultural and transport centres. Future growth must be aligned with timely investment in:

- healthcare and education provision;
- highways and sustainable transport infrastructure;
- flood mitigation and water management;
- leisure, cultural and community facilities;
- digital infrastructure and connectivity; and
- green spaces and biodiversity networks.

Infrastructure delivery should be planned alongside development rather than following after it. Strategic growth must be supported by coordinated infrastructure planning to ensure communities remain sustainable, connected and resilient over the long term.

Community Engagement and Local Democracy

Meaningful engagement with town and parish councils, community organisations, residents and businesses will be essential throughout the plan-making process.

The Town Council encourages Shropshire Council to:

- maintain transparent communication throughout the process;
- provide accessible consultation materials;
- engage communities at an early stage before preferred options are developed; and
- recognise the role of local councils as democratic partners in shaping place-based solutions.

Neighbourhood plans and locally developed evidence should continue to carry significant weight within the planning framework.

Role of Shrewsbury Town Council in Strategic Planning

The Town Council wishes to emphasise the importance of meaningful and ongoing engagement with town and parish councils in both the preparation and implementation of planning policy. As the tier of local government closest to communities, Shrewsbury Town Council has significant knowledge and understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the town.

Given the scale and significance of development proposed in and around Shrewsbury, the Town Council considers it essential that local councils play a formal and continuing

role in shaping strategic growth, infrastructure planning, placemaking and environmental policy.

The Town Council would particularly welcome stronger involvement in:

- the preparation of strategic masterplans;
- the development of design guidance and supplementary planning documents;
- the coordination of green infrastructure and public open space strategies;
- active travel and connectivity planning; and
- the implementation of environmental and climate-related policy objectives.

The Town Council believes strategic masterplanning should underpin the delivery of major growth areas to ensure infrastructure, movement networks, biodiversity and placemaking are considered in an integrated and coordinated way.

Housing and Affordability

The Local Plan should ensure that housing delivery reflects local need rather than speculative market demand alone.

In particular:

- greater emphasis should be placed on affordable and social housing;
- housing mix should reflect changing demographics, including older residents and younger households;
- brownfield and previously developed land should be prioritised where appropriate; and
- design quality and energy efficiency standards should be strengthened.

Development should support cohesive, walkable neighbourhoods rather than isolated and car-dependent expansion.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity

The Town Council strongly supports the inclusion and integration of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) within both plan-making and development management processes.

The emerging Local Plan should clearly demonstrate how development proposals will contribute positively to nature recovery, biodiversity enhancement and ecological connectivity. The LNRS should not be treated as a standalone environmental document, but as a central component of decision-making relating to site allocation, masterplanning and development design.

In particular, the Local Plan should:

- require developments to contribute to connected ecological networks;
- support the creation of green corridors across and between development sites;
- ensure biodiversity net gain delivers meaningful local ecological improvements;
- protect and enhance existing natural assets, waterways and habitats; and
- embed long-term ecological management arrangements from the outset.

The Town Council considers that coordinated strategic planning across development sites will be essential to ensure ecological networks and green infrastructure are delivered comprehensively rather than in a fragmented or piecemeal manner.

Design Quality and the Shrewsbury Test

The Town Council supports the development of stronger design guidance and expects the Local Plan to place significantly greater emphasis on placemaking, local character and high-quality urban design.

The aspirations of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and the principles of the “Shrewsbury Test” should be embedded within the planning framework to ensure that new development contributes positively to the town’s identity, heritage, sustainability and quality of life.

The Local Plan should support:

- context-sensitive and locally distinctive design;
- walkable neighbourhoods and mixed-use communities;
- high-quality public realm;
- green infrastructure integrated into development layouts;
- healthy and socially connected places; and
- development that reflects the character and setting of Shrewsbury.

The Town Council would welcome the preparation of a robust design code or design guide framework that reflects these objectives and provides greater certainty around development expectations.

Climate Change, Carbon Efficiency and Sustainable Development

The Town Council believes the Local Plan should adopt ambitious climate and carbon reduction objectives consistent with national net zero targets and local climate commitments.

All new development should be expected to demonstrate high standards of carbon efficiency and environmental performance. This should include:

- energy-efficient building design;
- low-carbon construction methods;
- renewable energy integration where appropriate;
- sustainable drainage systems;
- urban greening and tree planting; and
- measures to reduce overheating and improve climate resilience.

The Town Council would support policies that go beyond minimum national standards where this can be robustly justified.

Active Travel and Connectivity

The Town Council strongly supports a transport strategy focused on active travel and sustainable movement.

New development must be planned around walking, wheeling and cycling from the outset, rather than relying predominantly on private vehicle use. Active travel infrastructure within development sites must integrate effectively with Shrewsbury's existing network to create coherent and usable routes across the town.

The Local Plan should:

- prioritise active travel connectivity between new and existing communities;
- require safe and accessible walking and cycling routes;
- support integration with public transport infrastructure; and
- ensure strategic development sites contribute to wider town-wide connectivity objectives.

The Town Council considers that coordinated planning across adjacent development sites will be essential to ensure movement networks and green corridors connect effectively and support wider sustainability objectives.

Public Open Space and Long-Term Management

The Town Council remains concerned about the increasing reliance on private management companies to maintain public open space within new developments.

There is increasing public concern regarding the growing use of private management arrangements for spaces that function effectively as public realm, often without sufficient transparency, accountability or clear service standards.

The Local Plan should promote fairer and more sustainable approaches to long-term green space management. In particular:

- management arrangements should be transparent and accountable;
- public open space should be designed to adoptable standards where appropriate;
- long-term maintenance responsibilities should be clearly established at the planning stage; and
- greater consideration should be given to public sector or community-based stewardship models.

The Town Council also wishes to see more effective and enforceable green management plans to ensure biodiversity, landscape quality and public amenity are maintained over the long term.

Conclusion

Shrewsbury Town Council supports the preparation of a forward-looking Local Plan that delivers sustainable growth while responding positively to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and infrastructure demand.

The Town Council believes future development must be infrastructure-led, climate-resilient and supported by comprehensive strategic masterplanning that integrates housing, transport, green infrastructure and community wellbeing.

Given Shrewsbury's role within the county's settlement hierarchy, ongoing collaboration between Shropshire Council, town and parish councils, communities and stakeholders will be essential to delivering successful and locally supported growth.