



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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Please ask for:

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Date:

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Consultation on the Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code

1. General Comments

Shrewsbury Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code.

The Council strongly supports the principle of introducing a Design Code to raise the quality, coherence and distinctiveness of new development in the town. The document represents a positive step in embedding design excellence, sustainability and place-making at the heart of decision-making and will be an important tool in achieving the ambitions of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan.

The Town Council recognises the substantial work that has gone into ensuring the Draft Code reflects the special character of the historic town centre, and its focus on movement, nature, built form, identity, public space, uses, homes and resources is welcomed.

The inclusion of a self-assessment checklist is particularly helpful in translating broad aspirations into practical tools for applicants, designers and planning officers.

2. Relationship to the Big Town Plan and the Shrewsbury Test

The Town Council is pleased to see the Design Code explicitly linked to the Big Town Plan Vision and its commitment to high-quality, people-centred design.

We consider the Draft Code to be broadly consistent with the Big Town Plan's four key themes:

- Creating a place for enterprise
- Improving movement and place
- Nurturing natural Shrewsbury
- Supporting vitality, life and mix

However, the Council believes this alignment could be strengthened further by embedding the Shrewsbury Test more explicitly throughout the Code.





Each design principle and checklist could reference the three central questions that underpin the Shrewsbury Test:

1. Does it support our shared vision for Shrewsbury?
2. Does it strengthen the identity of the place?
3. Does it make life better for people who live, work or visit here?

Making these questions explicit in every design category would ensure that all development proposals are consistently assessed against the agreed town-wide principles and deliver tangible outcomes for people and place.

3. Scope and Application

While the Town Council supports the Draft Code as a robust framework for the town centre, it is concerned that its current geographic limitation risks creating a two-tier approach to design quality.

High design standards should not stop at the River Loop or gyratory; they should be consistent across the wider Shrewsbury area.

The challenges and opportunities that face the town—housing growth, changing work patterns, climate resilience, transport, and identity—extend well beyond the town centre boundary.

The Council therefore recommends that this Draft Code be treated as Phase 1 of a wider Shrewsbury Design Code, with future phases to cover:

- Neighbourhood and suburban areas, including key corridors and gateways (e.g. Northern Corridor, Meole Brace, Battlefield, Monkmoor, and Sutton Farm).
- Edge-of-town and growth areas, where pressures for development and change are highest.
- River corridor and landscape transition zones, ensuring sensitive responses to heritage, flood risk and ecology.
- Employment and mixed-use areas, to promote design quality, active travel, and identity in non-residential environments.

Such an approach would align fully with the Big Town Plan Vision, which applies across the whole settlement, not just the centre.

4. Movement and Connectivity

The Town Council welcomes the Code's treatment of movement and public space but encourages stronger linkage with the Shrewsbury Moves strategy and the Movement & Public Space Framework.

Design guidance should explicitly promote:

- Seamless connections between the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.



- Integration of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure.
- Design solutions that reduce car dependency and enhance accessibility for all users.
- The creation of attractive, inclusive and well-connected streets and public spaces that encourage activity and social interaction.

5. Nature, Sustainability and Climate Resilience

The Council supports the emphasis on “Nature” and “Resources” within the Code and recommends expanding these sections to include:

- Specific guidance on biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and flood resilience.
- Standards for energy efficiency, materials and embodied carbon.
- Guidance on retrofit and adaptation of existing buildings as part of a circular economy approach. These elements are crucial for delivering the environmental objectives of the Big Town Plan and the Council’s climate and ecological commitments.

6. Implementation, Monitoring and Delivery

The Town Council emphasises that the success of any Design Code depends on consistent application and effective monitoring.

We therefore recommend:

- Establishing a Design Quality Panel or cross-authority design review process to support implementation.
- Requiring applicants to submit a completed Design Code Compliance Statement as part of all relevant planning applications.
- Annual monitoring of design quality outcomes and publication of results.
- A review mechanism every three years to ensure the Code remains current and responsive to evolving policy, climate, and community priorities.

7. Engagement and Capacity Building

The Town Council encourages continued collaboration through the Big Town Plan Partnership to ensure shared ownership of the Design Code across organisations and communities.

It would be beneficial to provide:

- Developer and community workshops on how to apply the Code.
- Accessible online tools and visual guidance to illustrate principles.



- Case studies showing how good design delivers better outcomes for residents and investors alike.

8. Summary of Key Recommendations

Shrewsbury Town Council:

1. Supports the Draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code as an important step towards design excellence and place quality.
2. Endorses its alignment with the Big Town Plan Vision but seeks stronger integration of the Shrewsbury Test throughout.
3. Recommends expansion into a comprehensive Shrewsbury-wide Design Code, ensuring design quality, sustainability, and identity are embedded across all neighbourhoods.
4. Encourages explicit connections to movement, sustainability, and climate resilience strategies.
5. Requests clear arrangements for implementation, monitoring and periodic review.
6. Supports ongoing partnership engagement to ensure the Design Code continues to reflect the shared ambitions for Shrewsbury's future.

9. Conclusion

Shrewsbury Town Council commends Shropshire Council for bringing forward the Draft Design Code and for its commitment to high-quality place-making.

We believe this initiative offers a major opportunity to raise the standard of design across the whole of Shrewsbury—creating an attractive, sustainable and distinctive town that truly reflects the spirit of the Big Town Plan Vision.

The Council looks forward to working collaboratively to develop future iterations of the Design Code so that it applies not only to the heart of the town but also to the communities, gateways and neighbourhoods that make up the wider Shrewsbury area.

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Yours Sincerely

Helen Ball BA Hons FSLCC
Town Clerk

