



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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Please ask for:

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Date:

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to draft “Design of New Dwellings” Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

On behalf of Shrewsbury Town Council (STC), we welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft “Design of New Dwellings” Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). We recognise and support the intention of the SPD to raise design quality, promote sustainable development, inclusivity, and connectivity for new dwellings across Shropshire.

Below we set out:

- our support
- our key comments and suggested amendments
- our requests for implementation and monitoring

Support

1. We strongly support the five high-level design principles (layout; character & appearance; integration; inclusivity & sustainability; function). These align with STC’s own aspirations for high-quality development in and around Shrewsbury.

2. The emphasis on sustainability (energy efficiency, water efficiency, active travel, green infrastructure) is timely and important, and aligns with wider climate, health and wellbeing objectives.

3. We welcome the acknowledgement that the SPD will support the adopted Development Plan (including Core Strategy policy CS6, SAMDev policy MD2) and will provide more detailed guidance to assist applicants, developers and decision-makers.

4. We note that the SPD is designed to operate alongside the draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code, which is appropriate given the town’s unique character.





Key Comments / Suggested Amendments

1. Local distinctiveness:

While the SPD is county-wide, we believe it should expressly recognise the special historic character of towns such as Shrewsbury (e.g., conservation areas, river corridors, listed buildings). We suggest an additional paragraph emphasising that in such locations this guidance should be applied with sensitivity to local heritage, materials, vernacular forms, and setting.

For example, within the town or riverside fringe, setbacks, façades, roof forms, and materials may need bespoke treatment beyond generic standards.

2. Scale, density and site context:

The SPD's guidance on layout, function and amenity space should emphasise that site context (urban vs rural vs edge-of-town) will determine appropriate scale and density. The term "one size fits all" must be avoided.

In Shrewsbury's urban core, smaller plots and higher density may be appropriate, but guidance must ensure amenity, connectivity and character are not compromised.

3. Flood risk and climate resilience:

Given the town's riverside location (River Severn) and history of flooding, we suggest the SPD include a clearer reference to flood risk, flood resilience, and adaptation measures (e.g., raised finished floor levels, resilient materials, drainage integrated with open space). While broader sustainability is addressed, flood-risk deserves explicit mention for towns like Shrewsbury.

4. Implementation in town centre / infill sites:

In infill, back-land or brownfield sites within Shrewsbury, the guidance needs to recognise challenges around constrained sites, existing built context, servicing and amenity. The SPD should provide specific commentary (or an annex) for such constrained urban sites.

5. Affordable housing and viability:

We support high design standards, but we urge the SPD to recognise that increased design/technical requirements may potentially increase development costs and affect viability – especially for affordable housing. We suggest the SPD includes language about balancing design ambitions with viability, and enabling flexible approaches where affordable housing delivery is affected.



6. Monitoring and review:

We would welcome a commitment to monitor how the SPD is used in practice – e.g., examples of planning applications where guidance has been applied, feedback on outcomes, and how any unintended consequences (e.g., slower delivery/lower viability) are addressed.

STC would like to be involved in any periodic review of the SPD's effectiveness, particularly within the town context.

Implementation & Collaboration

We request that Shropshire Council works closely with STC (and relevant stakeholders) in delivering the SPD and any associated design review or pre-application processes within Shrewsbury. We also suggest that the SPD is accompanied by practical toolkits or worked examples, including for town-centre, edge-of-town and rural contexts.

Finally, we suggest that Shropshire Council considers commissioning or publishing case-studies of best-practice in Shropshire to illustrate how the guidance has been applied (or could be) in places like Shrewsbury.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Shrewsbury Town Council welcomes the draft SPD and the direction it sets for raising design standards for new dwellings across the county. We believe it offers significant opportunity to improve the built environment of Shrewsbury, subject to the guidance being applied with appropriate regard for local distinctiveness, context and viability. We look forward to working with Shropshire Council to ensure successful implementation of the SPD and positive outcomes for the town's residents, communities and built environment.

Helen Ball
Town Clerk

