

SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN



SHREWSBURY
BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT



Shropshire
Council



Shrewsbury
Town Council

Results of Phase 2 Public Consultation 1st August to 5th September 2018

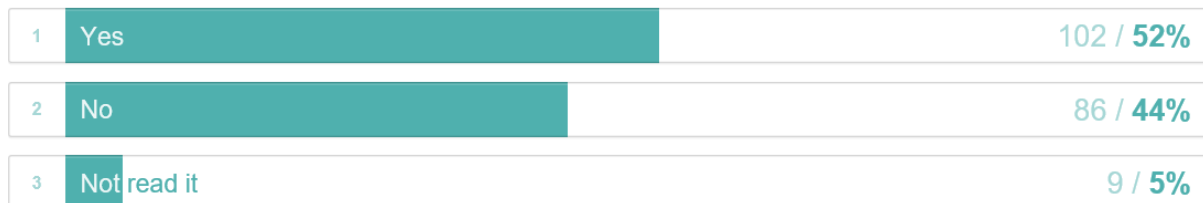
214 people responded to the survey of which:

- 102 completed a paper copy at the Exhibition
- 74 completed via a PC or laptop
- 23 completed via a smartphone
- 15 completed via a tablet

Summary Results

Are you satisfied with the way the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan has been presented?

197 out of 214 people answered this question



52% of respondents said they were satisfied with the presentation of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan, 44% said they were not satisfied.

10 people who answered this question said they had a long term limiting illness or disability that affected their daily life (LTLI). This is a small number and so analysis within this cohort should be treated with cautious. However, it is worth pointing out that 8 of these 10 people say No, they were not satisfied with the presentation of the plan.

Some comments praise the way the SBTP had been presented, others suggest that the maps in the plan could be improved with greater contrast between legend colours and symbols making the map detail clearer and that additional location identifiers would help with map bearings.

"I found your maps pretty but vague"

"I do like the presentations and graphics. Would like ...more annotations. Where is the new bus station or stop provision for example?"

"excellent presentation of the booklet"

Of the 4 themes / topics set out in the Big Town Plan which one do you think will have the greatest impact on Shrewsbury?

	Average rating
Rethinking movement and place	6.7
Nurturing natural Shrewsbury	6.7
Supporting, creating and nurturing vitality, life and a mix of uses	6.4
Creating a place for enterprise	6.2

Respondents felt all the themes set out in the Big Town Plan will have an impact on Shrewsbury - , all four themes scored very similarly with average ratings varying between 6.2 and 6.7.

The themes ‘Rethinking movement and place’ and ‘Nurturing natural Shrewsbury’ scored highest with an average rating of 6.7. These themes cover priorities including pedestrian priority in the town centre, a cycle and pedestrian network including new development areas, and measures to reduce through traffic; and Severn Way national footpath, Valley parks and new west and north leisure corridor. Respondents aged 30-44 tended to be most positive with average scores over 7.

Those aged under 30 years old were least positive about movement and place with an average score of 4.9. Eight people from this cohort commented about this topic and those comments talked about the need for convenient and cheaper parking including blue badge parking provision and having good transport links into the town.

How do you rate the key elements of the Big Town Plan – 0 to 10

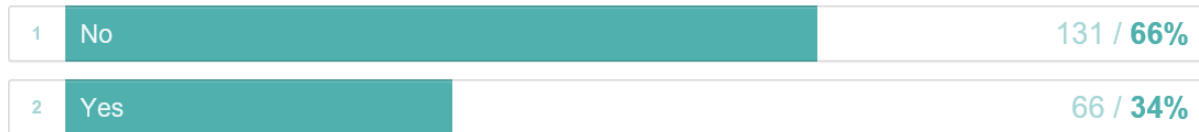
	Average rating
The Shrewsbury Green Network	6.5
Raising Design Quality – the Shrewsbury Test	6.3
10 Goals for Shrewsbury	6.2
The Big Connection	6.2
The Big Town Plan Vision	6.1
The Big Network	6.0
Balancing growth	6.0
Making movement better	5.9

Looking more closely at the aspirations and projects set out in the Big Town Plan, all were seen as important areas of work. Respondents rated most highly those related to the Shrewsbury Green Network which received an average rating of 6.5. The Shrewsbury Green Network project aims to improve accessibility of green space by connecting up green corridors, making more of the water ways, and including quality green space in new development.

Respondents aged 30-44 were most positive about the Shrewsbury Green Network with an average score of 6.8. The under 30 years old cohort rated it lowest with an average score 5.7. They did not provide any comments about the Green Network.

Did you comment at the first public consultation in September 2017?

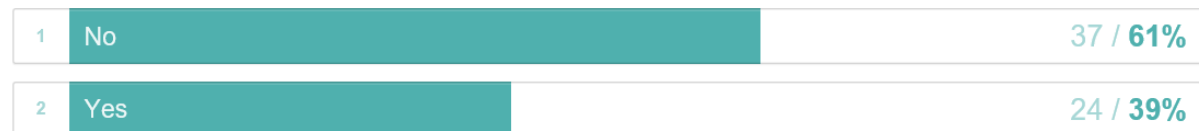
197 out of 214 people answered this question



Just over a third of respondents had taken part in the first consultation that took place the previous September. However, this consultation has reached a new audience, 66% of respondents, which is very positive.

Are you happy your comments have been included in the Big Town Plan?

61 out of 214 people answered this question



Over half of respondents said that their comments had not been included in the Big Town Plan presented to them in August 2018. (*Note, the number of people who responded to this question is higher than the number who said they took part in the August 2018 consultation.*)

Comments

Getting around Shrewsbury

Almost half of the comments related to how people will move around Shrewsbury town either by foot, bicycle, car, or some form of public transport.

- The most frequent comment related to the **bus station** which people felt appeared to be missing from the plans, and questioning how future plans may affect its use and accessibility to the town and the railway station.
- They talked about the importance of a good bus station, central to the town with good links to the railway station, in connecting people to the county as well as bringing people to the town. They also commented that the current bus transport system is poor. (received 28 comments)

“Bus station SHOULD NOT be re-located, but instead improved as a 'hub' for this county town. Improvements would include a better cafe, toilets, public information, and signage to railway station.”

“The bus station provides a vital service. On a regular basis I witness passengers from outlying areas dashing to catch a second bus within minutes of arrival”.

“Need buses at night and Sundays”

“Poor bus service is an issue”

- Many people talked about **access to/from and around the town centre** under the new proposals in the SBTP. A number of roads and localities were named (including Smithfield Road,

Welshpool Road, Victoria Street, Benyon Street, Ellesmere Road, Ditherington Road, Coton Hill, Mytton Oak Road, Hereford Road, Old Potts Way, Greenfields, Castlefields, Abbey Foregate, Frankwell) as traffic pinch points and where they wanted greater detail in how rerouted traffic would work.

“would like to see more detail of how some of the new routes and links would fit in.”

“Plans for Smithfield Road should be re-considered, since the suggestions are not practicable.”

“Also radial routes are good for getting into town but most people live around the edges so the arterial routes are necessary eg getting from home to hospital, sports village etc without having to change buses in the town centre.”

- Heavily linked into access was the issue of **cars and car parking**. There was sense from some people that cars necessary in a town centre, and they called for parking fees that were attractive to visitors (including evening charges), as well as parking/access arrangements for people who live in the town. A couple of people questioned the design and development of multi-storey car parks around the town.

“People will always want to park close to the shops, who wants to carry heavy bags of shopping miles back to the car?”

“Housing in town requires transport by car. Residents will need their cars, This conflicts with the idea of reducing cars, they will not walk or cycle”

“Cheaper parking to encourage visitors.”

“main concern is about suggestion of multi story car parks at Frankwell, Abbey and Castlefields - not sure that these could be designed in a way that is consistent with the overall principles”.

“increasing parking at Yorton, Wem, Church Stretton for greater numbers to get in and out of Shrewsbury can be done quickly, cheaply and cutting emissions - additionally opening up Baschurch Station should be considered and using old rail lines for electric buses and bikes”

“parkway stations which could be provided at flaxmill and football ground - huge opportunity to improve public transport”

Some of references to car parking may have been instigated because of, and will be addressed through, the car parking strategy that was under consultation at the same time as the SBTP.

- **Cycling** was talked about by a few people who questioned if demand/popularity would be as suggested in the SBTP. Whilst the topography of the town (being based on a hill) was seen to be a deterrent to cycling to some, of greater concern was the lack of secure cycle parking, and the current cycle path network which was considered poor.

“how many people actually cycle into town? Even with less traffic within the town there are still the hills to climb to actually access the shops/cafes etc. Visitors won't be cycling...”

“People walk and cycle when the weather is good. In the winter when it is dark and wet even many keen cyclists and pedestrians resort to cars and/or use public transport if it is available. ”

“It is difficult to reach the town centre by bike, yes there are cycle paths but many interactions between cycle paths and roads are difficult for cyclists.”

“this will not happen unless there is a commitment to a major provision of secure parking”

- Those people who discussed **pedestrianisation** mainly talked about the area around the railway station and were concerned that proposals needed to include drop off spots for people with baggage as well as easy access to taxis and bus stops. However, a number of people felt positive about the concept of pedestrianisation – they mentioned Smithfield Road as a good place to reroute traffic and create a promenade.

“It is essential that there is immediate pedestrian access to further transport links. This includes short-term car parking, an adequately sized (and serviced) taxi rank and bus stops. ... A new arrival experience in pouring rain or the freezing cold, with the need to tramp carrying heavy bags and the like to some distant parking area, taxi rank or bus stop is not the type of experience most would relish.”

“Whole plan is unclear - need to see evidence of how pedestrianisation in front of the railway station will work in practice. How do people drop off / pick up there?”

“Pedestrian Smithfield Road is v good.”

“Smithfield Road should be pedestrianised between The Alb and The Salopian, with traffic taken around the back of the Riverside Centre along Roushill and Raven Meadows.”

“Removing traffic from certain areas of town will really make the most of our great history”

- Access to and around the town for people with, or caring for people with, **disabilities** was discussed and included varying elements from the impact of pedestrianisation, to the need to maintain blue badge parking in the centre to the need for elevators to connect the lower and upper town.

“Not everyone who is disabled will use a wheelchair (my dad included), so he would need to be able to park (with his disabled badge) near restaurants in the town centre”

“How do disabled people get around this hilly town?”

“If you pedestrianise the station area then wheelchairs users will have to try and get up the steep hill to the car park to get into their cars”

“getting rid of the bus station alone will have a negative impact on everyone with mobility issues who relies on the easy to access elevators within the station to get up and into the town.”

The remaining comments relating to how people get around Shrewsbury covered the need for improved Park & Ride services, general concerns over the concept of shared space, a desire for electric public transport, the need for taxi ranks (at the railway station) and (divided) views on the North West Relief Road.

Other Comments

The remaining comments about the proposals, just over half, covered a large number of topics but with less frequency (typically fewer than 6 people):

- It was felt that **anti-social behaviour** and individual safety around the town centre had not been address in the SBTP.

“the town centre should be designed to deter antisocial behaviour, rather than encourage it. Where, for example, is the red-light district to be located?”

“We have a problem with vandalism, public drunkenness, narcotics and antisocial behaviour.”

“a strategy to deal with the homelessness people - generally from Liverpool and Manchester - who can make the town centre experience quite unpleasant”

Some of the anti-social behaviour concerns raised during this consultation may have been prompted as a result of local press coverage of homeless people in Shrewsbury and allegations of drug abuse and threatening behaviour to locals and visitors.

- Everyone who mentioned **green space** was in favour of protecting the areas we have.

“ Ideas for green spaces are most welcome, but greater protection for some (eg Radbrook) is needed”

- Shrewsbury **USP** was important to some people who felt that it was Shrewsbury’s independent shops that made the town individual and that this should be embraced.

“Yes we need the brand shops, but it isn’t those that give us our vibrancy. It is the independents who should be given incredible support so that we encourage even more diversity and experimentation.”

“Small 'unique' businesses are also destination brands.”

- The needs and requirements of **local residents and shoppers** was felt, by some, to have been overlooked:

“The Big Town Plan seems geared to tourists and wealthier shoppers, not local middle to lower income families who use buses and have basic shopping needs”

“The needs of the residents of Shrewsbury and its environs, who pay taxes to support the town. The plan seems to focus entirely on the needs of the local business community”

- A small number of people pointed to the **canal** at the Flaxmill and potential opportunities it would bring:

“.. the “Northern Corridor”. Make it a blue corridor (as well as green) with the opportunity to provide water transport by trip boat (just look at central Birmingham) from town to Flaxmill to countryside.”

“I note on the artists impression of the flax mill that the canal has been excluded. I think that it is vitally important that the line of the canal is preserved. My vision is that in the future the canal will be transporting tourists from the town centre to the flax mill and beyond”

Additional comments included:

- A need for better jobs in Shrewsbury - professionals will commute to Telford, Wolverhampton and Birmingham
- Including play space for young children to young adult – like Telford
- Preserving and incorporating the historic buildings within Shrewsbury, namely Rowleys House, Darwins House, Town wall and buildings to the back of Pride Hill:
- Divided opinions of the notion of building houses in/near the town
- Keeping the streets, and public areas (including toilets) clean
- The links to improved well being from green spaces
- Providing town information using modern technology, eg QR Codes, interactive maps, audio trails.

Comments relating to the strategy, decision making and process

There were a large number of comments, almost 50, that related to the principles behind the SBTP rather than the content of the plan and those are dealt with here:

- **Designing the town centre** in sympathy with the town history, heritage and location was important to people, as was considering the need to boost economic activity to the town.

“Failure to recognise the impact of steep hills, poor weather, darkness and congested roads on pedestrian and cycle use.”

“We are meant to be the county town but Telford is acting like it is.”

“we need to retain that charm to keep visitors expectations and the reason other decided to live here.!”

“The redesign of the two shopping centres is essential. They don’t attract people and are dying.”

- Some people talked about the **strategy and management process**, and the challenges to bring it to fruition, the need for a delivery plan and to be clear as its scope and reach.

“The ideas put forward are great and show a real vision for our fantastic town. It will take passion and a sense of open-mindedness to get it all through”

“Shrewsbury always suffers due to mismanagement and poor decision making by public authorities. We need the right people to lead this.”

“We... have some concerns that elements of the BTP may inadvertently prejudice future decisions around necessary strategic-scale growth to be made as part of the ongoing Local Plan process.”

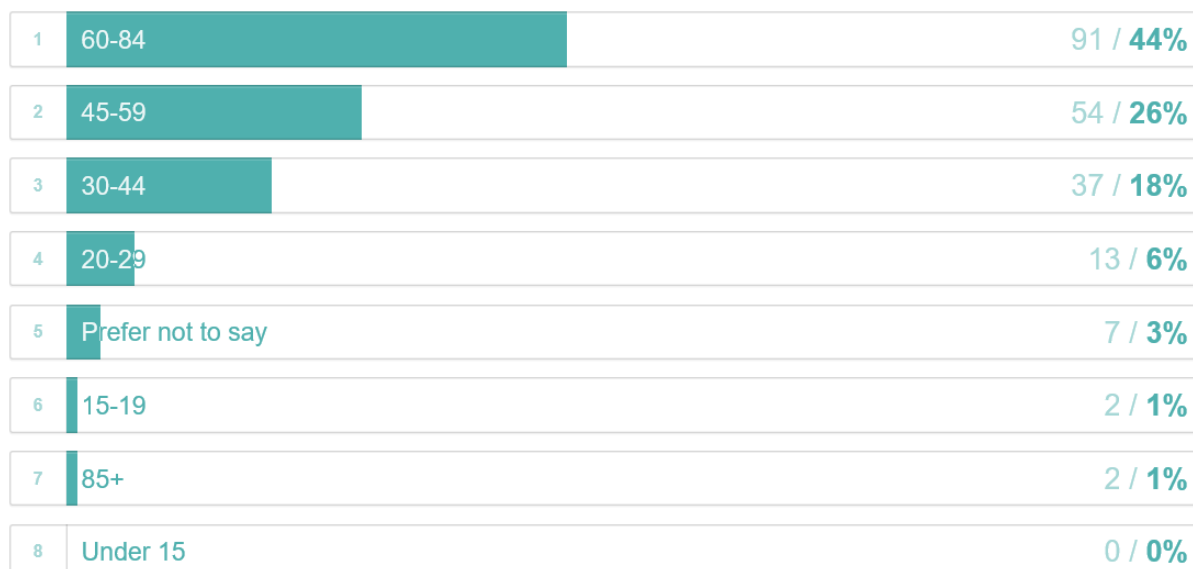
“Delivery Strategy”

- There was a desire to see more **detail**. In general where people asked for more detail they had been positive about the plan and its vision, but they were keen to see more!
- A small number of comments questioned how the projects outlined would be **funded**.

Respondent Profile

What age group are you?

206 out of 214 people answered this question



There was good representation across most of the age groups – particularly from those aged 30-84. This is encouraging and suggests that the mixed method consultation approach (an online survey with walk in exhibition and hard copy surveys) has worked well in engaging people.

The engagement did not hear from a significant number of people under the age of 20 and consideration should be given to this. Options for engagement with this sector could include workshops at the schools, Sixth Form College and University, located in Shrewsbury town centre.

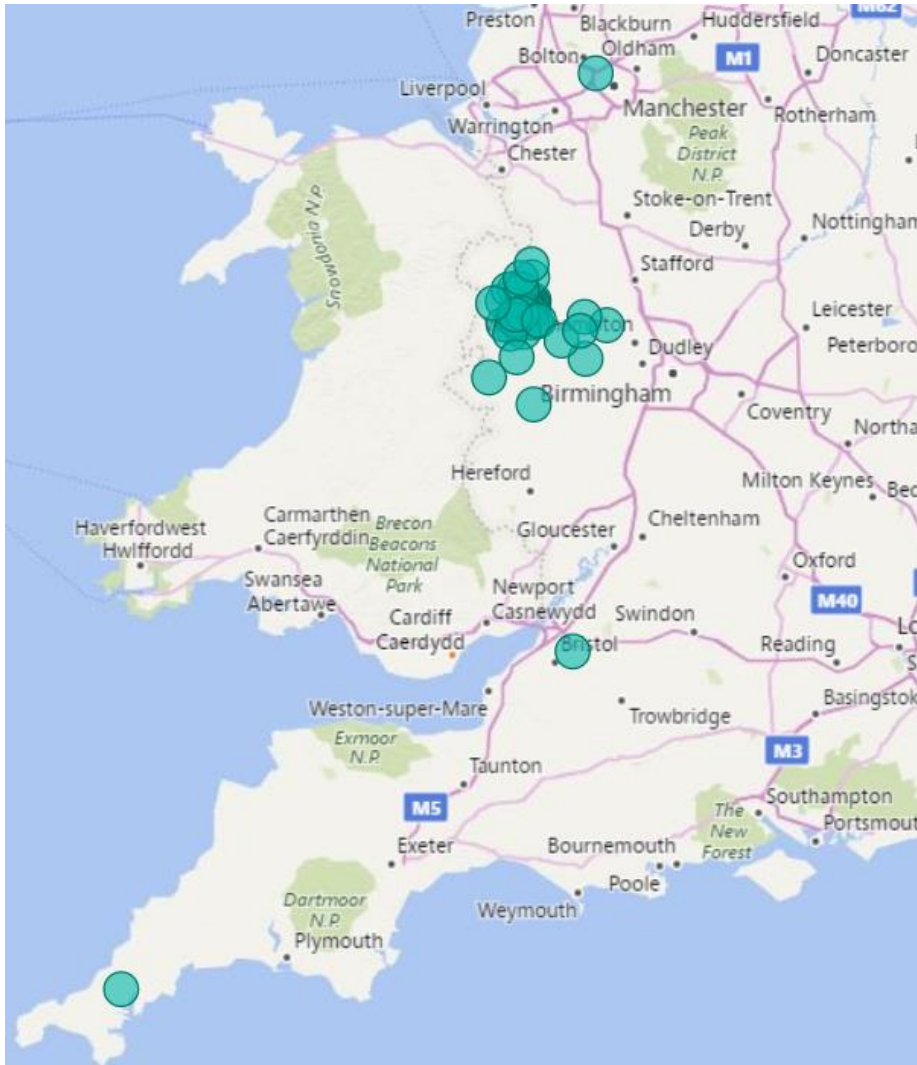
Do you have any long-standing illness or disability that limits your daily activity?

202 out of 214 people answered this question



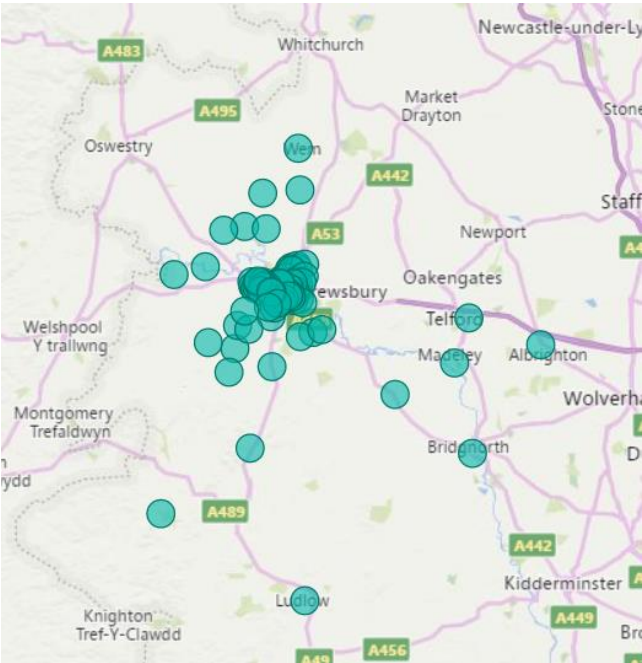
5% of people responding to the survey said that they had an illness or disability that limited their daily activity. It is important to hear from people with disabilities in this consultation due to the physical and environmental nature of many of the proposals.

Further engagement with people with disabilities is planned to take place in the coming weeks.

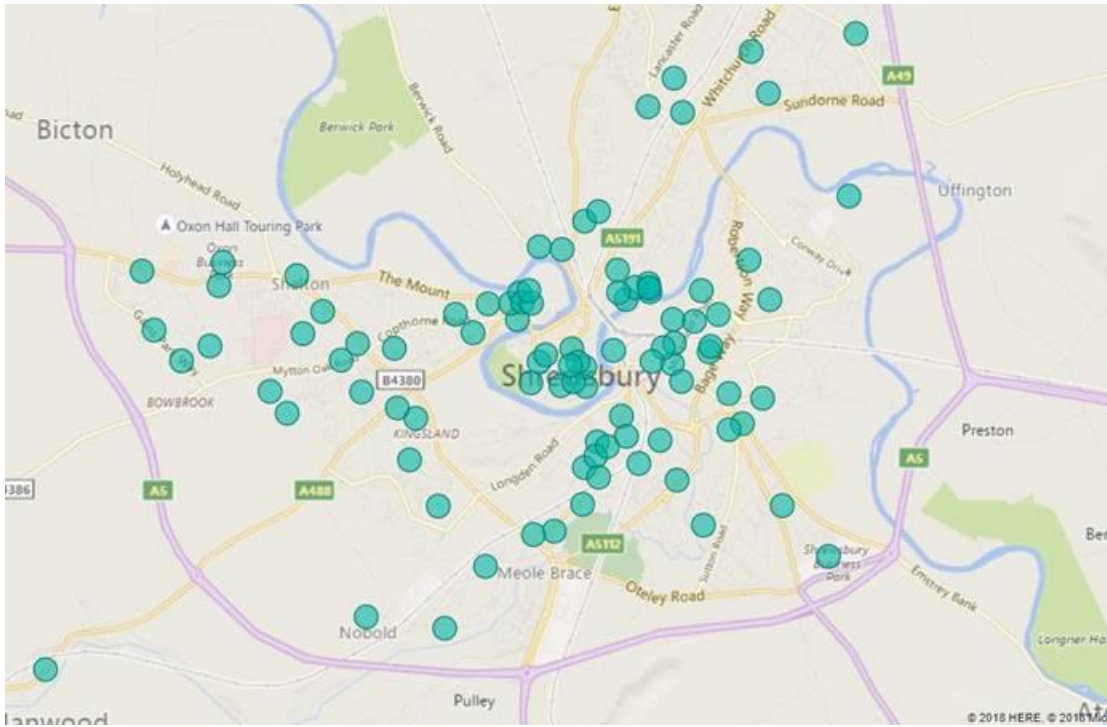


Map of respondent postcodes (where provided)

Focus on Shropshire



Focus on Shrewsbury



Report prepared by Shropshire Council's Insight Team
September 2018