

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Extraordinary Planning Committee Meeting held at Livesey House, 7 St John's Hill At 6.00pm on Wednesday 12 November 2025

PRESENT

Councillors J Dean (Chairman), J Daniels, K Halliday, H Hancock-Davies, B Jephcott and R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

Also in attendance were Claire Evans, Emma Williams and Edward West from Shropshire Council.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bentick, Mosley, Pardy, Tandy and Vasmer.

69/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

(i) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

(ii) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest

Shropshire Councillors	Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
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70/25 DESIGN CODE

Claire Evans, Senior Programme Officer (Shropshire Council) gave a presentation on the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code which is currently out for consultation.

In 2022, Shropshire Council became one of 25 local authorities to become a Design Code Pathfinder joined. The funding allowed for a Project Manager and paid for LDA Design who were involved in the original Big Town Plan to write the code. Government required there be a defined area for the code hence it being restricted to the town centre. This plan once adopted would become material considerations in the planning system.

The purpose of the Design Code was to improve design quality and place-making. To also provided enough flexibility to attract investment, innovative approaches and new uses whilst ensuring design

quality reflected Shrewsbury's special qualities and was clearly putting people at the heart of the place. This was another tool to support delivery of the Big Town Plan.

The Design Code had eight key themes

- Movement
- Nature
- Built form
- Identity
- Public space
- Uses
- Homes
- Resources

The Design Code would;

- provide a check list for applicants
- Empower Development Managers and Planning Officers
- Change the conversation from enforcement to co-creation
- Support pre-application discussions
- Create inward investment opportunity
- Highlight the importance of the Big Town Plan and its vision
- Hold the Local Authority to a high standard with new developments.

Movement - This was a benefit as the aim was people over vehicles. The expected design outcome being a town centre where vehicular traffic had been significantly reduced and the focus of streets was on walking, cycling and place.

Nature & Green Infrastructure – this would lead to a better environment where everyone could thrive including Permeability of the site for wildlife and people and creating a varied multi-functional network of spaces and uses. Opportunities for play, recreation and exercise should be incorporate where possible and provide access points and paths that were conveniently on desire lines for walking and cycling. The overall design outcome would be a green town centre that maximised the potential for health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience through the design of a new and improvements of existing green infrastructure.

Built Form - this was the next benefit in keeping development for the town by respecting its heritage. Proposals for new development should be at an appropriate scale and density in relation to their immediate context and that of the wider town centre. Infill development proposals must demonstrate how their design responded to neighbouring buildings. Tall buildings should not compromise quality in terms of daylight, overshadowing and overbearance. New development blocks should demonstrate how a permeable perimeter was created, was well defined and had activated pedestrian corridors. The aim was that the town centre had a coherent form to which new development appropriately responded.

Identity - the aim was that Shrewsbury would always still feel like Shrewsbury. Interpretation must

avoid simple duplication or imitation. Signage should be simple, integrated and contextually appropriate. It should also positively contribute to the streetscape, utilising a consistent and complementary style. Shopping fascia's should be of a consistent height and depth throughout the town centre, whilst also reflecting changes in level. The aim was a place that contributed to and enhanced the positive character of Shrewsbury Town Centre.

Public Space - they aimed for a town centre where the public spaces were well designed, robust, inclusive and safe. Developers must recognise the importance the town places on play, safety and security and improve public spaces along with the importance of play and hostile vehicle mitigation. When importance was placed on good public realm it had proven economic, health and social benefits.

Uses – The aim was a town centre where a vibrant mix of uses supported everyday activities and brought life, activity and bustling streets. Active frontages on buildings were key to the vitality of the town centre. Active commercial terraces could create diversity and increase footfall, improve natural surveillance and demonstrate activity within buildings. Spill out space onto the street was encouraged where it could be clearly defined and comfortably accommodated without unduly compromising other uses.

Homes – The aim was for a town centre which was proud of the high design standard of all new residential buildings, which were of exemplar quality in terms of functionality, accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability. Proposals should include an appropriate and diverse mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures that responded to local need. Building design should promote natural surveillance of adjoining public spaces, encourage community interaction, engagement and participation. Canopies and balconies could add life and variety.

Resources – The expected outcome would be a town centre where new development was exemplar – sustainable design of buildings, efficient use of water and energy and local materials. New development should demonstrate how they had considered optimising orientation, massing and shade to minimise overheating. Sustainable sourcing and carbon footprint should be priorities when selecting materials. New development should maximise energy efficiency.

Consultation for the Design Code was launched on Friday 17 October 2025 and would end 14 January 2026.

There were also two further Supplementary Planning Documents that were being consulted on:

- Design of Residential Extensions & Alterations
- Design of New Dwellings

Councillor Dean thanked Claire for the presentation; he was supportive of a tool kit that Planning Officers, Councillors and the public could use.

Councillor Halliday questioned the legality of the Design Code and would the Council be opening itself up for appeals? The Design Code was not part of the development plan but a material consideration. It was guidance and not a requirement. It was not the same as a Planning Policy but the next best thing. This document was to not a mechanism to refuse planning applications, more improve them.

Councillor Hancock-Davies asked if the Design Code and Big Town Plan was to force behavioural change. Claire responded to say elements did come down to that, but they were trying to encourage other options to residents by creating an environment to provide wider options for people.

Councillor Wilson joined the meeting.

Councillor Jephcott welcomed the Design Code as it gave Shrewsbury a vocabulary. He asked if around the country how many other Design Codes there were to look at and compare.

There were Design Codes in Mansfield and Lichfield. Oswestry had completed a Shop Front Design Code.

Edward West commented that this had been pitched at a certain level and that some Design Codes were very prescriptive, but this one wasn't. The consultation was designed to understand if the priorities within the Code were correct. Councillor Wilson commented that this Design Code should work for Authorities and Developers.

Councillor Halliday commented that Shrewsbury was a lovely town which did not want to be spoiled but it would be nice to see a mix and did the Design Code welcome innovation? Edward replied that they did not want to stifle innovation, and this document would enable that and make it clear.

Councillor Dean commented it needed to make sure it was future proofing.

The Town Clerk asked if the Design Code was relevant to places in the wider town area which Edward confirmed that certain parts of the documents tended to the wider town area. The Code was not unique to the Town Centre but it had to be defined somewhere so the Town Centre was chosen.

71/25 PLANNING POLICY

Edward West (Planning Policy Manager) gave an update on the Local Plan process.

The Council was awaiting details of new plan arrangements from Government. This information would set out the infrastructure requirements. They were using the time to commission various needs assessment documents including a Green Belt Assessment and an Economic Needs Assessment.

The Call For Sites process had been completed. A map of potential sites would be made public as soon as possible. There had been 700 submissions for sites with a wide range of options they could assess.

The Local Plan Process was now 30-month which included 6-month Examination. It was envisaged adoption would be midway through 2028.

It was asked how the Town Council could engage in this process, and it was suggested they explored the possibility of a Working Group again. Shropshire Council had a similar member group which had worked well in the past. It was agreed that the Town Clerk and Edward would talk further regarding this and ensure that Terms of Reference were put in place.

The Town Clerk commented that previously the Working Group had worked well and that she would work with Edward to construct the Terms of Reference for the Working Grupo. Once these were completed, she would share with Councillor Dean first as Chairman of the Planning Committee, then send out to all Councillors.

Councillor Dean thanked Claire, Edward and Emma for attending the meeting and giving their time. They then left the meeting.

72/25 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Councillor Dean explained to members that the Town Clerk had looked through the three consultations on Shropshire Council website and had condensed them into shorter reports as they were lengthy documents. The Town Clerk's reports had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

Each document gave a summary, potential impacts, possible effects, how the Code aligned with the Big Town Plan vision, challenges and considerations. The Town Clerk had provided a draft response from Shrewsbury Town Council to all three documents.

Councillor Dean thanked the Town Clerk for her time completing the draft responses for Councillors to consider and he would read through all of the three documents and make comments with a view to Full Council signing off the response.

RESOLVED:

That subject to amendment by the Chair of the Planning Committee, the Draft Responses to the following documents as prepared by the Town Clerk form the formal response by Shrewsbury Town Council to Shropshire Council:

- **Design of Residential Extensions & Alterations**
- **Design of New Dwellings**
- **Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code**