

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams At 6.00pm on Tuesday 19th January 2021

PRESENT

Councillors N Green (Chairman), J Dean, P Gillam, K Halliday, A Mosley, P Moseley, P Nutting, K Pardy & K Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Michelle Farmer (Planning Committee Clerk)

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor D Vasmer.

40/20 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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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41/20 SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

This additional meeting of the Planning Committee had been convened to consider consultation comments regarding the Regulation 19 pre-submission draft of the Shropshire Local Plan. All members of the Council had been invited to the meeting, had been sent links to the plan and details of the Town Councils comments at Regulation 18 stage.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk detailed the expectations on the Council at this stage of the Local Plan Review Process.

Shropshire Council were inviting representations on compliance with all legal requirements, including the duty to co-operate and soundness. It was the intention that the Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk collate comments with a view to presenting a draft letter for consideration by Full Council.

The Town Council have always maintained an active interest in the Local Plan process and Forward Planning Officers had always been key to engaging with the Town Council.

The key reasons for the Town Council to engage in such a process was to:

- Understand the local plan process and the need for a sound strategy for the county as a whole
- Influence Shrewsbury's role in that plan including recommending levels of growth, direction of and priorities for growth and inclusion of sometimes Shrewsbury specific key policies
- Provide local knowledge of proposed allocations and potential impact on the current town infrastructure
- Press how this county plan needs to embed the vision of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and take forward some of those key defining principles

Throughout the initial Local Plan and this subsequent Review, the Town Council has established a Working Group to work alongside Planners to provide local commentary on the plan and this group had been engaged at all stages including:

- Issues and Strategic Options (January 2017);
- Preferred Scale and Distribution of Growth (November 2017);
- Preferred Site Allocations (November 2018);
- Strategic Sites (June 2019);
- Draft Pre-Submission Local Plan (August 2020)

Members made the following comments:

- There was concern about the level of robustness in which planners were influencing the development plan process with a number of sections referring to the authority's encouragement of developer direction rather than prescribing direction. This, members feared, could in turn lead to the delivery of inadequate infrastructure and poor ambition on energy delivery and biodiversity.
- Concern was expressed about the loss of the greenfield land as development was being driven to the edge of the town's development boundary; this was very different from loss of the greenbelt as this did not affect Shrewsbury.
- Questions about the sustainability of the North West Relief Road and the rationale in the development of large infrastructure projects like this following the predict and provide method rather than the reduce and shift method. There was however the counter argument that NWRR would bring huge economic advantages to Shrewsbury and was key to enabling active travel.
- Reference was made of the evolving Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and whether the Local Plan would override the local document. Officers detailed the hierarchy of these documents.
- In discussing the references to the Big Town Plan, members made reference to the inclusion of the Shropshire Test rather than the Shrewsbury Test which was recommended in the local document. Members extolled the virtues of having good design policies; the more robust the design policies the better the delivery on design.

- Linkages were made to the Shrewsbury Place Plan and emphasis within on active travel. In an era when walking, cycling and public transport was dominating discussion members wished to be assured that the Local Plan was not advocating that the Car was King.
- There was a need for a Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Strategy. Discussion extended to the fact that the lion's share of development in Shrewsbury was focused in the west; how would there be assurances that new developments would link up to existing transport infrastructure and was there a need to invest in this to ensure smooth linkages.
- There was a need for integrated travel arrangements linking multiple modes of travel together and concerns were expressed within the Big Town Plan of the loss of the existing Bus Station.
- There was reference in the Local Plan to a Green Infrastructure Strategy but members were unaware of its existence.

The Deputy Town Clerk detailed the comments raised at the Regulation Stage; these had all been referenced in the Consultee Response List appended to the plan. There was also reference that the employment development site at Battlefield Roundabout presented in the Regulation 18 Local Plan had been removed as it had been considered there was no need to allocate such a level of employment land.

Discussions then focussed around the commentary needed for this consultation at the Regulation 19 Stage. It was no longer the time to question content; members should have made such comments at the Regulation 18 Stage in August. Therefore, it was a matter to consider whether the comments that had been made needed to be directed elsewhere particularly around ongoing work in developing other strategies:

- The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan was now out for public consultation. Were there other work streams required, including developing a Shrewsbury Test as supplementary planning guidance.
- Active Travel Plans in light of COVID were being developed; how might the Town Council best influence content.
- A Green Infrastructure Plan was in the development stage; how might the Town Council input into that development.
- Engagement on the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Plan 4 will begin later in the year.
- It was anticipated that the NWRR Planning Application would be submitted shortly; this was the time to further debate the merit of otherwise of the scheme.

There was a need to actively engage with developers early in the development plan process; there were good examples of how early engagement had been beneficial on a number of development sites in the town.

The Local Plan allocations had sought to group some land allocations together and that Masterplans for these sites should be prepared. The Town Council needed to influence those plans to ensure that many of the comments raised could be addressed.

Reference was made to potential for Shropshire not having a current Local Plan. In the adoption of the current plan there had been a requirement to review early. Reference was made to the time when Shropshire Council couldn't rely on the relevance of the Local Plan nor could it be assured of a 5-year land

supply; this had resulted in a number of developments, though refused locally could not be defended at appeal.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk collate comments and prepare a draft response for consideration by Full Council on 25th January 2021.