Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Friday, 25 September 2020

Committee:
Cabinet

Date: **Monday, 5 October 2020**
Time: **1.00 pm**
Venue: **THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING**

Members of the public will be able to listen to this meeting by clicking on this link:
www.shropshire.gov.uk/CabinetMonday5October2020

- Please note that this meeting will be made available through Microsoft Teams Live Events - your device will need to meet the minimum specification as detailed on the Microsoft website at this link: **Device Specification**
- You will need to download MS Teams (free) and click on the link to listen to the meeting if you are using a PC
- If using a mobile device, you will need to download the MS Teams app (free) before clicking the link
- Use the link at 1.00 pm on the day of the meeting and click on 'Join as Guest'
- You may receive an error message or a request for login details if you try to gain access before 1.00 pm

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Cabinet
Peter Nutting (Leader)
Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader)
Gwilym Butler
Dean Carroll
Lee Chapman
Steve Davenport
Robert Macey
David Minnery
Lezley Picton
Ed Potter

Your Committee Officer is: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk 01743 257714

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020, attached

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is not later than 1.00 pm on Thursday 1 October 2020.

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions of which Members have given due notice, the deadline for notification for this meeting is 5.00 pm on Wednesday 30 September 2020.

6 Scrutiny Items

7 New Cultural Strategy: Vibrant Shropshire - Independent by Nature (Pages 7 - 142)

Lead Member – Councillor Lezley Picton – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

8 Local Nature Reserves (Pages 143 - 158)

Lead Member – Councillor Lezley Picton – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

9 **Residential and Nursing Beds Review of Commissioning Arrangements and Setting of Standard Fee Rates** (Pages 159 - 190)

Lead Member – Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services and Climate Change

Report of Director of Adult Services

Contact: Andy Begley, 01743 252421

10 **Draft Community and Rural Strategy** (Pages 191 - 230)

Lead Member – Councillor Gwilym Butler – Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

11 **Park and Ride - Proposed New Operating Model** (Pages 231 - 274)

Lead Member – Councillor Steve Davenport – Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

12 **Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report 2019/20** (Pages 275 - 308)

Lead Member – Councillor Lee Chapman – Portfolio Holder for Organisational Transformation and Digital Infrastructure

Report of Director of Workforce and Transformation

Contact: Michele Leith, Director of Workforce and Transformation, 01743 258913

13 **Response to Planning White Paper - Planning for the Future** (Pages 309 - 346)

Lead Member – Councillor Robert Macey – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow 01743 258916

14 Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 (3) of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s)

15 Exempt Minutes (Pages 347 - 348)

To approve as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020, attached

Committee and Date
Cabinet
5 October 2020

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020
1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak
Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257714

Present
Councillor Peter Nutting (Chairman)
Councillors Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Robert Macey, David Minnery, Lezley Picton and Ed Potter

125 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Lee Chapman and Steve Davenport.

126 **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None declared.

127 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2020 and 20 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

128 **Public Question Time**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services read out questions submitted by Mr Charles Green regarding the consultations for the Statement of Community Involvement and Local Plan. The full questions and responses provided by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services are attached to the signed minutes and to the web page for the meeting.

129 **Member Question Time**

The following Members were invited to ask their questions by the Leader. The full questions and responses provided are attached to the signed minutes and are attached to the web page for the meeting.

Councillor David Turner asked a question regarding agenda item 7, River Severn Partnership Flood Prevention, and the focus of proposed water management including flood risk management measures. By way of a supplementary question he requested that a copy of the full assessment of needs be made available to him when available.

Councillor David Vasmer asked a number of questions also in relation to agenda item 7, regarding:

- Water management measures to reduce flooding in conjunction with the North West Relief Road
- Whether any consideration had been given to a third option to promote flood alleviation
- Whether benefits of flood alleviation measures in the report would be quantified and whether barriers would be considered for Smithfield Road, Shrewsbury
- The business case and planning application for the North West Relief Road
- Overall environmental impact of flood alleviation proposals and amelioration of any negative impacts
- Creation of new wetlands

Councillor Roger Evans asked a question about council officers working from home.

130 **Scrutiny Items**

There were no scrutiny items.

131 **River Severn Partnership Shropshire Flood Prevention**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning introduced the report of the Director of Place. He proposed a number of amendments to the recommendations with the insertion of the wording 'to explore in principle' to the first two of the recommendations, the addition of 'to explore the opportunity' to the start of the third recommendation, and 'this is to have a particular focus on engaging those directly affected by any proposals' at the end of the fourth recommendation.

During discussion Cabinet Members welcomed the changes to the recommendations, asked that it be made clear that all possible solutions would be looked at; and reiterated the need to ensure all those affected by any possible scheme be contacted as soon as possible. It was suggested that this was a potential area for a Scrutiny Committee's consideration. The Leader reported that he was keen to talk to the Welsh Assembly to look at potential measures on the Welsh side of the border.

RESOLVED: To

(i) Explore in principle the potential development of water management measures north of Shrewsbury that would reduce future risk of river flooding for all communities within Shropshire along the River Severn south of Shrewsbury.

(ii) Explore the principle of a holistic approach to development of the North West Relief Road in conjunction with (i) above.

(iii) Explore the opportunity, in conjunction with (i) above, to explore the potential to develop a water based, leisure resource that includes enhanced natural wildlife and habitat, visitor economy facilities that would include enhanced highway, cycling and walking infrastructure.

(iv) Support the work of the River Severn Partnership and Environment Agency in a joint approach to a programme of community consultation and engagement that will explore and develop potential options for future flood risk management outlined in the report. This is to have particular focus on engaging those directly affected by any proposals.

132 **Statement of Community Involvement**

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which explained the need to bring the Statement of Community Involvement up to date and in line with changes in the law.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Statement of Community Involvement be agreed for public consultation and a further report to Cabinet will follow this with any recommended amendments for Cabinet to consider prior to adopting the revised SCI.

133 **Transfer of Apprenticeship Levy Funds 2020 - 2021**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report of the Director of Workforce and Transformation explaining. This would enable any unused funding to be spent within Shropshire to enable the creation of new opportunities for employers and communities in key employment sectors and for vulnerable and priority groups within the county.

RESOLVED:

That:

(i) Cabinet agrees to transfer up to 25% of annual Apprenticeship Levy Funds, in line with the ESFA Funding Rules, to local businesses including voluntary aided schools, voluntary and community sector organisations and small to medium sized enterprises via a transparent and robust application process (Appendix 1).

(ii) Cabinet agrees to support the following priority sectors within the process of Apprenticeship Levy Transfers;
Health and Social Care
Engineering and Manufacturing
Digital and Creative
Construction
Visitor Economy
Education and Childcare

(iii) Cabinet agrees to support the following priority groups:

People in Protected Characteristic groups and people at risk of social exclusion (i.e. Care Leavers, NEETs) outlined on the Shropshire Council webpages for Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion.

People who are currently unemployed or have been affected by COVID-19 (i.e. redundancy)

16-18-year olds who cannot access training via other funding opportunities.

134 **Quarter 1 Performance Report**

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and the impact of Covid-19 on Quarter 1 performance was discussed.

RESOLVED:

To consider the emerging issues in this report

To review the performance portal and identify any performance areas that they would like to consider in greater detail or refer to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

135 **Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2020 - 2021**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support introduced the report and explained that the projected revenue outturn position was an overspend of £1.925m. The Leader said he was looking for a balanced budget, the savings required could be made and this would be delivered.

RESOLVED

To note that at the end of Quarter 1 (30 June 2020), the full year revenue forecast is a potential overspend of £1.925m;

To consider the impact of this on the Council's General Fund balance.

136 **Annual Treasury Report 2019 - 2020**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support introduced the report which reflected the extremely low interest rates over the year. The Treasury Team had nevertheless outperformed the investment benchmark by 0.42%.

RESOLVED:

to accept the position as set out in the report.

137 **Treasury Management Report Quarter 1 2020 - 2021**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support set out the Treasury Management Quarter 1 position. He expressed his appreciation to the internal treasury team which had achieved a return of 0.83% on the Council's cash balances, outperforming the benchmark by 0.87%

RESOLVED:

To accept the position as set out in the report.

138 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 (3) of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item

139 **Alveley Industrial Estate**

RESOLVED:

That the two recommendations set out in the report be agreed.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....

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Committee and Date	Item
Cabinet- 5th October 2020	Public

Vibrant Shropshire; Shropshire's Cultural Strategy 2021-31.

Responsible Officer Clare Featherstone, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager
e-mail: Clare.featherstone@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255067

1. Summary

1.1 Vibrant Shropshire; Independent by Nature is a new 10-year cultural strategy for the Unitary area of Shropshire, which sets out the ambition and strategic priorities for the cultural sector for the next 10 years (appendix 1).

1.2 Our Vision
By 2030, Shropshire's vibrant culture will be inspiring more people – both local communities and visitors alike - to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.

1.3 Our Ambition
In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. The importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.

1.4 This strategy will help deliver the planned Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire, focusing on keeping people happy and healthy helping people who are lonely to connect with others, embracing the skills and experience of the older generation, attracting and keeping young people in the county.

1.5 It was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, through the Cultural Strategy Working Group; the membership of which is shown at the end of the document. It follows one to one consultation with sector leaders and three workshops with individuals representing the wider cultural sector.

1.6 The draft Cultural Strategy will be available for public consultation between October and beginning December 2020.

1.7 Once published, an Implementation Plan will be created, setting out the actions across a range of partners for the next three years. This will be monitored annually, and a report will be published that sets out the progress against the priorities set out in this document.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees to the draft Cultural Strategy (Appendix 1) being published for public consultation in October 2020.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 The public sector has seen significant change since the last Cultural Strategy was produced in 2010; in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, current economic climate and associated budget pressures, economic growth aspirations aiming to significantly increase the population and business base of Shropshire, and the growing need for cultural activities for health and wellbeing. This is also having an impact on the voluntary and private sectors and there is now even greater need to have a clear, evidence-based, prioritised plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach is needed, delivering across multiple policy areas and integrating activity across local authority services. partner organisations and businesses.

3.2 Vibrant Shropshire raises the profile of the exceptional cultural assets that we have in Shropshire, identifying gaps, clarifying the opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and community cohesion, the local economy and the environment, and bring together partner organisations with similar goals, encouraging more co-ordinated, cost-effective approaches. It does not attempt to duplicate other plans and strategies but will link to them where appropriate.

3.3 The Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) initial screening attached at appendix 2 has been carried out and an assessment follow up is planned for after the public consultation phase, in order to take account of and feed in views from people in the Protected Characteristic groupings, seek to maximise positive impacts in terms of equality, and mitigate any negative impacts. The second ESIIA will be completed before the final strategy is published. The strategy sets out to have a positive impact across all the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly the groupings for age and disability, with regard to all ages and with regard to seen and unseen disabilities. This will itself then include not only children and young people but also older people, given the ageing demographic profile of the county. A positive impact is also anticipated for groupings including people with caring responsibilities, as well as those at risk of social exclusion. Efforts were made to seek views from communities as well as from stakeholders in the development of the draft strategy, and further ongoing engagement will continue across all groupings, particularly those where low or no responses are received during the consultation itself. The Council is also mindful, as a large and sparsely populated rural county, of the need to seek views from across the county, particularly around physical and digital access to services and cultural opportunities, and utilise these in informing and developing the strategy.

3.4 The consultation will run for 2 months from the 12th October to 11th December 2020. The draft strategy was generated as a result of engagement with key

stakeholders and the public consultation is designed to gather views relating to the strategy and to inform next steps for implementation.

3.5 The information that will be presented as part of the public consultation to ensure respondents are able to make informed comments include:

- Evidence base (appendix 3)
- Results from completed stakeholder engagement (appendix 3)
- Strategic evidence review (appendix 5)

3.6 Stakeholders and members of the public will be given a choice of ways in which to comment on the draft strategy, options include:

- complete an online survey
- complete a paper version of the survey
- comment by email
- leave comments over the telephone

3.7 A further series of meetings and workshops are planned to gather further feedback on the draft strategy and implementation plan from key partners.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 Funding for the Culture, Leisure and Tourism service areas will follow the usual budget process and the delivery of this strategy does not change this, although any significant reduction in these budgets would impinge on the deliverability of "Vibrant Shropshire".

4.2 Improvements to cultural assets and activities highlighted in the priorities will mostly be funded outside core public sector funds. Increasingly, external funding will need to be found and this could include:

- Earned income from parks and sites, events and commercial activities
- Project funding from external sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England, Arts Council and other charities and trusts
- Countryside Stewardship or alternatives following the introduction of the new schemes
- Business support or sponsorship
- Funding associated with new housing and commercial developments, the provision of greenspace and developer contributions to canal towpaths and other access
- Memberships, donations and legacies

4.3 Major funding organisations, such as Arts Council England and National Lottery have raised concerns about the lack of strategic direction for the Cultural sector and had previously called for a partnership approach to clarifying priorities for the county. The strategy evidences the need for further investment in cultural activities and venues, which will help secure external funding.

4.4 External funding is becoming increasingly competitive and joint working between partners will be key although match funding will need to be considered.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

5.1 Climate change mitigation needs to be considered across all activities. One of the cross-cutting themes of the draft strategy is:
"Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together"

5.2 This could be in the form of encouraging active travel, introducing energy efficiency measures in buildings or tree planting and habitat conservation for nature recovery and carbon off-setting. Activities would also be encouraged that increase public awareness or interpret climate change through cultural activities.

6. Background

6.1 The previous Cultural Strategy for Shropshire was published in 2010 and is not current.

6.2 Summary of Vibrant Shropshire priorities

6.2.1 Several key priorities have emerged as instrumental to the development of a vibrant, healthy, prosperous culture for residents and visitors to Shropshire. Their implementation will be phased over the next 10 years.

- Create Culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living
- Explore Delighting and surprising visitors and residents with independent, authentic experiences
- Enjoy Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected
- Live Harnessing the power of distinctive places for the benefit of all
- Nurture Shropshire's high-quality natural landscapes are valued and enhanced for future generations
- Innovate Driving digital development to enhance cultural experiences, improve physical and intellectual access and tackle social isolation
- Connect Forge strong partnerships to drive forward our shared cultural ambition

6.3 Cross-cutting themes

6.3.1 We developed a number of cross-cutting themes to help ensure that the priorities address Shropshire's core challenges:

- Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together
- Developing volunteers – Supporting volunteers through promoting good practice, providing opportunities for training and development and recognising their achievements
- Young people's skills and learning – Engaging young people in all of our priority areas and providing clear pathways into all of the cultural sector
- Marketing and communication – Ensuring that there is a joined-up marketing and communication strategy to promote greater joint working and reach new audiences

6.4 Strategic links

6.4.1 The priorities outlined in Vibrant Shropshire are in line with national thinking and will help deliver against a range of national, regional and local strategies, including:

- The Cultural White Paper, DCMS - maximising the opportunities to transform communities through culture; everyone should enjoy the opportunities culture offers, no matter where they start in life, the riches of our culture should benefit communities across the country and the power of culture can increase our international standing
- Everyone Active Every Day, Public Health England - encouraging regular physical activity.
- The Industrial Strategy, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - strengthening cultural assets and developing skills.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan, Defra - better connecting people, health and the outdoors, especially for young people and to benefit those with mental health issues; improving the delivery of biodiversity and greenspace gains through the planning process and raising awareness of the economic benefits of the outdoors.
- Strategic Enterprise Plan, Marches LEP - promoting Shropshire as a business investment opportunity, building on individuals' quality of life, staff wellbeing and company reputation.
- Marches Visitor Economy Strategy- developing the visitor economy of the county
- Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy - developing the visitor economy, agricultural support following exit from the EU, developing skills, improving quality of life and ensuring attractive environments.
- Shropshire's Local Plan - better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, protecting environmentally and culturally-sensitive sites.
- Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy - harnessing the power of the culture to increase physical activity, address mental health issues, and help people to stay independent for longer.
- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan - helping to deliver care for those in need at any age, a good place to do business, a healthy environment, sustainable places and communities, embracing our rurality.
- Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy
- Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan
- Shropshire Museums Service Strategy- helping develop museums and collections for the benefit of all
- Shropshire Library Strategy
- Shropshire Leisure Strategy
- Actively Improving Lives – Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Schools Partnership- helping to improve lives and empower communities through the power of physical activity and sport
- Shrewsbury Big Town Plan
- Shrewsbury and Oswestry BID business plans

6.5 A review of the strategic evidence is included in appendix 4.

7. Additional Information

7.1 A detailed evidence base has been commissioned to build the foundation for this Cultural Strategy (appendix 2). This provides a good snap-shot of where we are starting from.

7.2 It includes national data from:

- Visit Britain - Day visits and overnight stays
- MENE data - Visits to the natural environment and environmental attitudes
- Active Lives survey - Children and adult engagement with arts and culture, sport and volunteering
- Lottery investment - Amount of funding invested in the county
- Health profile - Health of the population
- ONS survey - Levels of Wellbeing and Life Satisfaction.

7.3 We will monitor local data held by Shropshire Council including:

- Numbers of unused/underused buildings
- Energy and water monitoring.

7.4 We will conduct local research on progress to date including the numbers and locations of:

- Creative businesses and cultural enterprises, including charities and CICs
- Cultural Venues and workspaces
- Festivals.

7.5 We will also work with partners to develop a local framework of indicators to include:

- Investment in environmental change mitigation projects
- Visitor numbers to key destinations
- Number of volunteers
- Number of children and young people involved
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Investment and finance metrics

7.6 Delivery and Ownership

7.6.1 This Strategy has been led by Shropshire Council and is supported by a range of strategic partners through the Cultural Strategy Working Group. A new Cultural Partnership will be set up to guide the delivery of this Strategy, whose purpose will be to connect the cultural sector in the county, creating opportunities for engagement and enabling collaboration with partners.

7.6.2 The Strategy will work alongside the individual business plans and artistic ambitions of the cultural sectors, the strategic plans of key stakeholders such as Arts Council England and Historic England, and Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan.

7.6.3 Delivery of the Strategy will adapt and respond to local, regional, national and international policies to ensure the vision and priorities remain valid.

7.6.4 An implementation plan will set out detailed outcomes under each of the high-level priorities. The plan will be published online and will be a live document.

8. Timescales

8.1 The draft strategy will be published for consultation from October until the beginning of December 2020. Final amendments will be made, with a view to publishing the completed strategy in January 2021, following approval by Cabinet. The strategy will apply until March 2031. It will be evaluated and reviewed after five years. A new 10-year plan will be published, following a full evaluation of Vibrant Shropshire in 2031.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Vibrant Shropshire is a partnership Cultural Strategy, which clarifies the priorities for the cultural sector in Shropshire for the next 10 years. It will be published following public consultation and approval by Cabinet of the final version.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr Lezley Picton
Local Members
Appendices Appendix 1: Vibrant Shropshire; Independent by Nature. Draft Cultural Strategy for Shropshire 2021-31 Appendix 2- ESIIA Initial Screening Appendix 3- Evidence Base for the Cultural Sector Appendix 4- Cultural Strategy Consultation Results Appendix 5- Strategic evidence review

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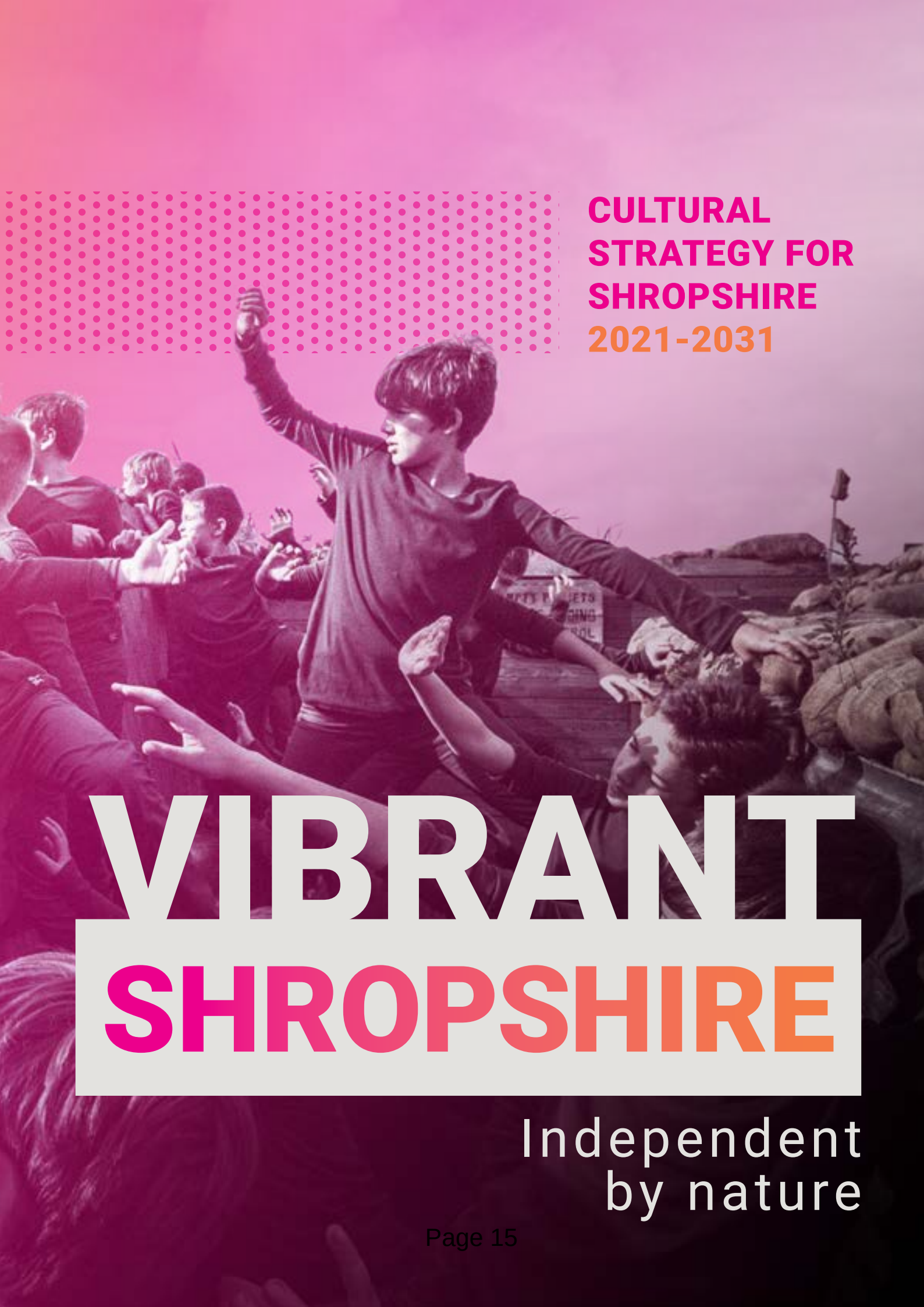
CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR SHROPSHIRE 2021-2031



VIBRANT SHROPSHIRE

Independent by nature

UNPRECEDENTED

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Forward

Unprecedented. Not a word that's usually banded around much but 2020, after all, was an 'unprecedented' year. In February 2020, Shropshire was hit with the worst flooding in 20 years, with residents and businesses evacuated from Shrewsbury and Ironbridge following two severe danger-to-life flood warnings.

Then came the Coronavirus lockdown. From 23rd March 2020, all non-essential organisations were closed, including cultural venues, leisure, hospitality and retail.

After that, the world changed for all of us.

This Cultural Strategy for Shropshire therefore comes at a challenging time. Culture has been, more than ever, accessed on line and through the TV and outdoor spaces have become a lifeline for many. There are also unprecedented opportunities. With the lockdown, we have had the time to reflect on what happens next, as individuals and cultural providers.

We have set out unprecedented aspirations for the development of culture in Shropshire - for residents and visitors to the county. This follows extensive consultation with a broad range of people involved in culture across Shropshire and beyond and has been developed in partnership with organisations from across the sector.

Our strategy lays out Shropshire's cultural priorities for the next ten years.

Cllr Lezley Picton,Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications, Shropshire Council, July 2020

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Sleeping on the Hills of South Shropshire.

Front Cover: 'Shropshire Boys Dancing'. Photo by Mark Anderson.

Introduction

Welcome to a new draft Cultural Strategy for the unitary area of Shropshire. This document sets out the ambition and strategic priorities for the cultural sector for the next 10 years.

This strategy will help deliver the planned Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire, focusing on keeping people happy and healthy helping people who are lonely to connect with others, embracing the skills and experience of the older generation, attracting and keeping young people in the county.

It was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, through the Cultural Strategy Working Group; the membership of which is shown at the end of this document. It follows one to one consultation with sector leaders and three workshops with individuals representing the wider cultural sector, which were held in Craven Arms, Shrewsbury and Wem. A total of 70 individuals took part in the workshops. Thank you to those that took part.

The draft Cultural Strategy will be available for public consultation between September and December 2020.

Once published, an Implementation Plan will be created, setting out the actions across a range of partners for the next three years. This will be monitored annually, and a report will be published that sets out the progress against the priorities set out in this document.

'Thinking Path' by Shirley Chubb (2004) at Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

UNIQUE SHROPSHIRE

Shropshire is a unique and diverse county with a rich blend of natural, industrial and social heritage.

Cultural vibrancy flows across Shropshire from the distinctive county town of Shrewsbury with its major cultural assets including Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery and Shrewsbury Market, to its sixteen market towns each with active cultural communities and distinctive stories to tell. The county is home to four Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations: Arts Alive; DASH (Disability Arts Shropshire); Meadow Arts and Pentabus Theatre.

Farming diversification has nurtured a high-quality artisan food and drink sector, which in turn supports a highly independent retail and leisure offer for residents and visitors supported through food markets and food festivals.

Almost a quarter of the county is designated as the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the fascinating heritage of the Industrial Revolution is recognised in two World Heritage Sites - The Ironbridge Gorge and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal in Llangollen. There are over 3,600 miles of Rights of Way, 29 rivers and 35 miles of canal, 51 museums and heritage attractions including RAF Museum Cosford, Severn Valley Railway, Ludlow Castle and Ironbridge Gorge Museums and over 400 hundred sports facilities and leisure centres.

Bordering Wales, with good connections to major cities in the North, South West and Midlands, Shropshire has an enterprising and independent spirit that manifests in higher than average numbers of small businesses and self-employed people and strong arts, music and creative industries, heritage, leisure and visitor economies - many with potential for growth.

Cyclists on The Portway, The Long Mynd. Photograph by Simon Whaley.

CULTURAL OFFER

There were 2,346,896 visits to council facilities over 2018/19

- There were 918,755 Library visits
- There were 182,728 Museums visits
- There were 977,522 Outdoor Recreation visits
- There were 199,362 visits to Theatre Seven
- There were 68,529 visits to The Old Market Hall

Local communities

- Population of 323,136 people
- 83% of local people rate their life satisfaction as Good or Very Good
- 79% of local people engage with arts, museums and libraries

Regional, national and overseas visitors

- Over 11 million visitors a year to Shropshire
- Tourism spend of £539m, indirect impact of £200m and support for 14,767 jobs
- Ranked 40th out of 50 most visited county in the UK

Rhyme Time at Shrewsbury Library.

BBC Midlands Today filming the archaeological excavations in the grounds of Shrewsbury Castle, 2019.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

At one level, 'culture', is about those special places to go and things to do that attract and inspire visitors- both local and from further afield. Culture includes arts and craft, museums, heritage, history, archaeology, architecture, open spaces, countryside recreation, sport, hospitality, cafes and restaurants, visitor attractions, locally produced food and drink. It is that unique blend of experiences that gives a place its own sense of spirit and identity.

Culture is also about much more than this. It is about what is special to us as a community and as individuals.

It can characterise:

Our sense of self

by developing our spiritual, intellectual and emotional wellbeing and connection to others

Our sense of place

and the way we feel about places to make them somewhere we want to live, work and visit

Our sense of purpose

by connecting us to traditions, beliefs, values and shared stories

Shropshire Libraries Reading Group.

Late third century AD silver Roman mirror found at Wroxeter, from the collections at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

D. Davies, Dining Rooms, 13 Castle Gates, Shrewsbury.Photograph by Joseph Lewis Della Porta, 1888.Shropshire Archives ref: 8877/143013

DASH (Disability Arts Shropshire)

VIBRANT SHROPSHIRE

Independent by nature

Our Vision

By 2030, Shropshire's vibrant culture will be inspiring more people – both local communities and visitors alike - to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.

Our Ambition

In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. The importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.

Summary of our priorities

Several key priorities have emerged as instrumental to the development of a vibrant, healthy, prosperous culture for residents and visitors to Shropshire. Their implementation will be phased over the next 10 years.

Create	Culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living
Explore	Delighting and surprising visitors and residents with independent, authentic experiences
Enjoy	Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected
Live	Harnessing the power of distinctive places for the benefit of all
Nurture	Shropshire's high-quality natural landscapes are valued and enhanced for future generations
Innovate	Driving digital development to enhance cultural experiences, improve physical and intellectual access and tackle social isolation
Connect	Forge strong partnerships to drive forward our shared cultural ambition

Cross-cutting themes

We developed a number of cross-cutting themes to help ensure that the priorities address Shropshire's core challenges:

Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together

Developing volunteers – Supporting volunteers through promoting good practice, providing opportunities for training and development and recognising their achievements

Young people's skills and learning – Engaging young people in all of our priority areas and providing clear pathways into all of the cultural sector

Marketing and communication – Ensuring that there is a joined-up marketing and communication strategy to promote greater joint working and reach new audiences

Who will we focus on?

Culture is for everyone and we will ensure it is as accessible to as many people as possible.

Shropshire has a higher than the national average older population, which offers advantages in terms of skills, expertise and a good volunteer base but presents longer-term challenges around health and wellbeing. As a largely rural county, access to culture for all can be a challenge in Shropshire, and this will need to be addressed through this strategy. We also need to do more to facilitate younger people's engagement with culture as audiences, participants, leaders and makers.

We will work with Shropshire children and their families, young and older people, public sector and community organisations to make sure that cultural activities are available to everyone.

Shrewsbury Folk Festival, Amadou Diagne and Mordou N'Diaye. Photograph by Steve Oliver.

The visitor economy in Shropshire is growing, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. There is still room for growth and improvement of tourism. Shropshire is valued for its authentic experiences and off the beaten track vibe and independent visitors of all ages will be targeted in the future.

We will ensure awareness of Shropshire's rich vibrant culture grows and more visitors are attracted from wider catchments. Visitor experiences, products and services will be developed 'Independent Explorers' in line with the Marches Visitor Economy Strategy, and we will work with arts, creative and heritage businesses to help them innovate, grow and thrive.

Shrewsbury Severn Bridges 10K Road Race.

Heyday arts activities at Shrewsdbury Museum & Art Gallery.

OUR PRIORITIES

'In The Hands of Boys' dance project, at RAF Cosford. Photograph by Mark Anderson.

CREATE

Culture is made by people. Our principle is to support the people that make and look after our culture and to develop new talent for future generations. Shropshire has award-winning visitor attractions, internationally recognised heritage locations, a vibrant independent arts, crafts and retail offer and a renowned foodie culture. For Shropshire to thrive the focus will need to be on investment and funding for those businesses and professionals that make up the county's cultural economy which will include the development of products, services and experiences for residents and visitors alike.

We will...

- Support new and existing cultural organisations in the sector, working with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Develop stronger links to professional practice including research with University Centre Shrewsbury
- Provide a training programmes for cultural organisations to support innovative and sustainable practices – commercially, environmentally and technologically
- Explore affordable, flexible co-working space in key locations
- Promote opportunities for volunteering, work placements and apprenticeships
- Better understand the value of volunteering in supporting economic and social outcomes

Embroidery workshop at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery.

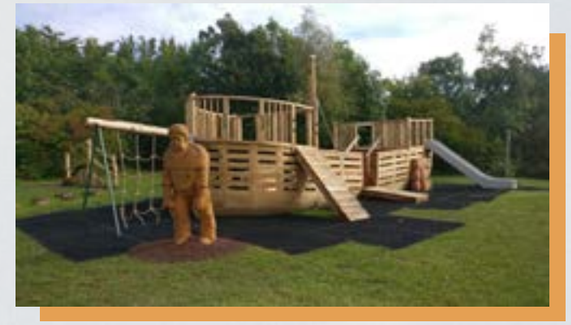
Poles Coppice installation.

"There's a wealth of creativity in the region - a lot of self-starters who have moved here as well as creative locals. Often the more rural, the more creative - simply because they've had to be more inventive with their resources!"

Consultee, Shropshire Culture Workshop

EXPLORE

Ludlow from Whitcliffe at sunrise. Photograph by Jon Hodgson.



Play area at Severn Valley Country Park.

Culture inspires, delights and surprises us. It is an expression of shared human experience seen through the distinctive lens of a particular place. There is a strong cultural tourism market in Shropshire, with a huge variety of things to see and do. These drive high levels of local engagement and are much loved by Shropshire people. We also recognise that much more could be done to attract visitors from elsewhere to explore all the county has to offer.

We will...

- Agree branding and marketing for the county that promotes Shropshire as a cultural destination for local, national and international visitors
- Encourage joint promotion of local cultural activities that celebratesvariety and diversity linked to sustainable transport and digital access
- Encourage a more sustainable approach to tourism including behaviour change, nature recovery approaches, energy efficiency, and carbon off-setting
- Develop outdoor adventures and experiences
- Develop activities based on influential Salopians and what they represent
- Promote artisan producers of local food and drink through markets, festivals and business support

Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.

ENJOY

Late 20th Century painting entitled 'House of Birds' by John Farrington, from the collections at Shrewsbury Museums & Art Gallery.

Culture makes us feel good and there is growing evidence that it can also help prevent, manage and treat a range of public and individual health problems. This is already happening in Shropshire - from supporting mental health in young people and adults to volunteering in nature and creating regular events for families affected by dementia to read, sing or dance together. The county's cultural sector helps young and old, and everyone in-between.

We will...

- Continue support for existing health and wellbeing projects
- Collaborate with youth providers to ensure countywide inclusion in culture for young people
- Continue to develop families and school's programmes at key cultural venues and sites to foster an active love of culture from an early age
- Invest in and support cultural hubs to increase the opportunity to take part in culture across the county
- Better understand and respond to the aspirations of under-represented groups in Shropshire and help address cultural diversity
- Transform leisure provision in Shropshire, so that there is a more joined-up, commercial approach that works with local communities for the benefit of all

A school group visiting the conservation department at Shropshire Archives.

Inclusive cycle trail at Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre.

Shrewsbury 'Walking for Health'.

"It's great to feel happy – participating in cultural activity, going out, joining in gives you a good feeling"

Consultee, Shropshire Culture workshop

LIVE

The most successful places have a strong 'sense of place' forged through distinctive natural and built environments and the interactions of people with them, and with each other. In other words, Culture Makes Place. Shropshire has a wealth of cultural assets and activities across its towns and villages, with a strong foundation in its rich heritage and rural traditions. There is huge potential for people-led place-shaping, supported by creative communities and businesses.

"The best kept secrets are the unlocked potential of our village halls and our historic churches."

Consultee, Shropshire Culture workshop

We will...

- Support the successful delivery of Place Plans including the Oswestry Heritage High Street project and Shrewsbury Big Town Plan
- Explore investment for re-purposing heritage buildings for example creative workspace and music venues
- Ensure existing venues are energy efficient and accessible
- Create a network of community cultural hubs and help ensure good transportation, access and facilities
- Encourage cultural diversity through providing opportunities for more communities and communities-of-interest

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury.

NURTURE

'Love the Shropshire Hills' by Ben Osborne.

Kingfisher at Severn Valley Country Park. Photograph by Tony Colton.

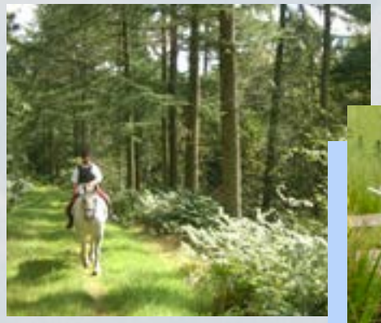
Shropshire's natural assets are some of the most magnificent in the country. They are supported by strong local partnerships and have global recognition. These assets give us the opportunity to focus on nature recovery and climate change mitigation, alongside on-going habitat management and public engagement. Following the Coronavirus outbreak, the importance of our outdoor spaces has been reaffirmed.

We will...

- Develop and promote sustainability and nature as a core part of the Shropshire destination brand
- Use culture to foster an active love of nature that helps more people engage with the environment in a sustainable way
- Help ensure the Shropshire Hills AONB is recognised for its high-quality environment and supported so that this is sustained and enhanced
- Develop habitat conservation and enhancement projects for key sites including in towns

> "Shropshire has an active environmental campaigning network, independent whole foods suppliers, green party. Linked to the fact it appears to have a good percentage of culturally switched on people there is room here for something unique and important."

Consultee, Shropshire Culture workshop



Horse riding through Eastridge Wood, Stiperstones.

Above: Volunteers working to maintain Shropshire woodland.

Left: Children pond dipping at Severn Valley Country Park. Photograph by 'Marketing at the Mill'.

A child explores Shropshire using virtual reality.

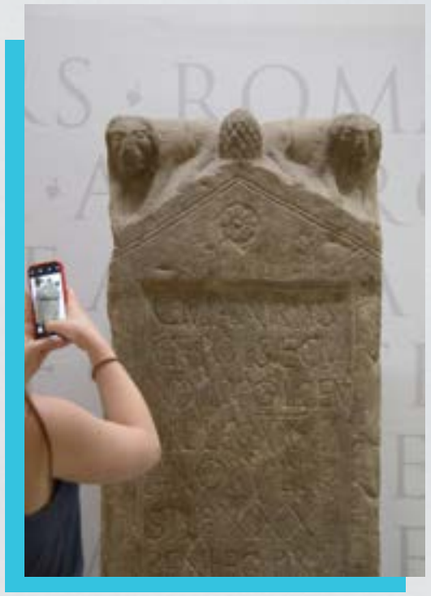
Innovate

In the early eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution was built on Shropshire's innovation, resources and entrepreneurial spirit. Today's cultural practitioners have the opportunity to embrace the 4th industrial revolution in how they shape products and services and engage with people. Social media, live streaming and the possibilities of virtual and augmented reality all came to the fore during the Coronavirus lockdown months in 2020. There are a good number of tech companies in the county and excellent connectivity in most areas, which together present a great opportunity for Shropshire to develop its capacity, profile and reach, and open-up new income streams for culture.

We will...

- Embed digital knowledge in the cultural sector through better engagement with creative tech companies to develop new cultural experiences
- Develop digital capacity through events and training programmes for cultural participation
- Utilise technology to make sites more accessible to encourage greater use by those with specific needs
- Present culture in a way that is relevant and exciting for new audiences by making better use of digital media
- Increase digital capacity of staff, volunteers and audiences
- Ensure that there is fit-for-purpose digital connectivity across the county

> "Shrewsbury is becoming a base for co-working and creative enterprise being driven by both private and social enterprises"
>
> **Consultee, Cultural Workshop**



Top: The Roman tombstones on display at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery.

Middle: Digitisation of historic documents at Shropshire Archives.

Bottom: 'Hello World' by Thompson and Carighead (2014) at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery.

CONNECT

Map of Shropshire by John Rocque, 1752,
from the collections at Shropshire Archives.

‘In The Hands of Boys’ dance project.
Photograph by Mark Anderson.

Culture is about connecting people. Existing partnerships bring together organisations to agree shared ambitions and priorities that help shape the landscape of culture in Shropshire. There is also a strong tradition of effective collaboration and partnership working. There is however a need to establish a dedicated partnership to develop and deliver the Cultural Strategy.

We will...

- Develop a Cultural Partnership which brings together a range of organisations and networks in the county representing all sectors
- Develop a Community Forum for grass roots cultural organisations to network and share practice – and connect this to the work of the Cultural Partnership
- Scope out a potential Tourism BID proposition
- Develop a core Place proposition - a major county-wide project that delivers the Cultural Strategy and enables employment of paid professional staff
- Develop a Cultural Compact with ACE and partnership agreements with National Lottery, Sports England and others
- Develop a framework to create better data about how culture impacts positively on economy, health and wellbeing and the environment
- Explore the development of the Partnership into a Cultural Trust to enable greater fund-raising and protection of assets.

Volunteers at Severn Valley Country Park,
a Green Flag Award winner.
Photograph by James Brookes.

> “Personally, I’d like to see Shropshire regarded as the Cultural Capital of the West Mids”

Consultee,
Shropshire Culture workshop

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Walking on the Offa's Dyke path. Photograph by Jim Saunders.

A detailed evidence base has been commissioned to build the foundation for this Cultural Strategy. This provides a good snap-shot of where we are starting from.

It includes national data from:

- Visit Britain - Day visits and overnight stays
- MENE data - Visits to the natural environment and environmental attitudes
- Active Lives survey - Children and adult engagement with arts and culture, sport and volunteering
- Lottery and Arts Council England investment - Amount of funding invested in the county
- Health profile - Health of the population
- ONS survey - Levels of Wellbeing and Life Satisfaction.

We will monitor local data held by Shropshire Council including:

- Numbers of unused/underused buildings
- Energy and water monitoring.

We will conduct local research on progress to date including the numbers and locations of:

- Creative businesses and cultural enterprises, including charities and CICs
- Cultural Venues and workspaces
- Festivals.

We will also work with partners to develop a local framework of indicators to include:

- Investment in environmental change mitigation projects
- Visitor numbers to key destinations
- Number of volunteers
- Number of children and young people involved
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Investment and finance metrics

A performance of Mother Goose at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury.

Delivery and ownership

This Strategy has been adopted by Shropshire Council and is supported by a range of strategic partners through the Cultural Strategy Working Group.

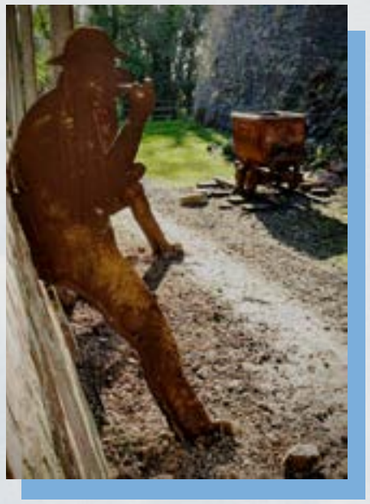
A new Cultural Partnership will be set up to guide the delivery of this Strategy, whose purpose will be to connect the cultural sector in the county, creating opportunities for engagement and enabling collaboration with partners.

The Strategy will work alongside the individual business plans and artistic ambitions of the cultural sectors, the strategic plans of key stakeholders such as Arts Council England and Historic England, and Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan.

Delivery of the Strategy will adapt and respond to local, regional, national and international policies to ensure the vision and priorities remain valid.

An implementation plan sets out detailed outcomes under each of the high-level priorities. The plan will be published online and will be a live document.

The vision and key priorities of the Strategy should also be viewed alongside plans from other stakeholders, in particular the Marches LEP Local Industrial Strategy, Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy, Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan, the Actively Improving Lives Strategy and the Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy.



The Hoffman Kiln at Llanymynech.

Charter of King John, 1200. Shropshire Archives ref: 3365/3.

Resources

The impact of Covid on the economy is likely to be felt for the lifetime of this strategy.

Given the ongoing local authority funding pressures, the development of culture in Shropshire cannot be reliant on Council revenue funding. For the Strategy to be delivered, we will need to work collaboratively with the private sector, charitable donations and grant giving bodies on innovative funding and investment models. Funding sources may include Arts Council England Cultural Development and Investment Funds, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, DCMS Tourism Action Zone and the potential development of a Tourism Improvement District, alongside opportunities for business sponsorship, Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) investment, planning gain, carbon off-setting and a range of other funding.

The effective fundraising activity of volunteers and Friends Groups has and can continue to play an important part in this.

This will require a true partnership approach to share staff resources, reducing competition for funding and minimising duplication of effort.

CULTURAL STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Organisation	Key interests	Representative
Arts Council England	Arts and culture funding and development	Alison Vermee
Caring for God's Acre	Museums, industrial archaeology, built heritage, conservation, designed landscapes and regeneration	Harriet Devlin
Culture Consortium Shropshire and Shropshire Council Arts Development	Cultural activities for young people and schools, specialising in the arts	Alexa Pugh
Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin	Sports and leisure	Chris Child
Health and Wellbeing Board	Health and wellbeing	Susan Lloyd
Historic England	Historic buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Bill Klemperer
Local Enterprise Partnership/ Landau	Economic growth, employment and young people	Sonia Roberts
Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group	All aspects of culture and heritage- focus on people	Marion Blockley
National Trust	Historic buildings, special landscapes, outdoor activities	Marcus Halliwell
Natural England	Natural heritage	Mike Robinson
Rural Services Network	Rural communities	Cecilia Motley
Shropshire Council	Culture, Heritage, Leisure, Libraries, Outdoor Activities, Shropshire Hills AONB	Cllr Lezley Picton
Shropshire Council	Communities	Cllr Gwilym Butler
Shropshire Council	Culture Leisure and Tourism	Sue Finnigan and Clare Featherstone
Shropshire Council	Shropshire Libraries	Michael Lewis
Shropshire Council	Insight and Intelligence	Tom Dodds
Shropshire Council	Economic Growth Place Planning and Shrewsbury Programme	Sarah Hughes and Tim Pritchard
Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board	Outdoor activities, country parks, Rights of Way	Alex Carson-Taylor
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	Cultural and natural heritage	Phil Holden
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Natural heritage and outdoor activities	John Hughes
University of Chester	Culture and Humanities	Prof. Tim Jenkins

Shropshire Council

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Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)
Part One Screening Record 2020

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Vibrant Shropshire; Independent by Nature. Cultural Strategy for Shropshire 2021-31.

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Clare Featherstone Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Part One ESIIA Only?	yes	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		No

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. The importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation. This strategy will help deliver the planned Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire, focusing on keeping people happy and healthy helping people who are lonely to connect with others, embracing the skills and experience of the older generation, attracting and keeping young people in the county. The Strategy thus sets out to have a positive impact across the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly the groupings for Age, with regard to children, and Disability, with regard to all ages and with regard to seen and unseen disabilities. This will itself then include older people, given the ageing demographic profile of the county. A positive impact is also anticipated for groupings including people with caring responsibilities, as well as those at risk of social exclusion.

Efforts were made during consultation on the draft Strategy to seek views from communities as well as from stakeholders. Impact had not for example been able to be assessed ahead of consultation with regard to Race, for people whose first language is not English, including tourists as well as residents. However, some data has now been obtained.

Actions set out in the draft Strategy that will help ensure a positive outcome for people in the Protected Characteristic groupings include:

- Promote opportunities for volunteering, work placements and apprenticeships
- Continue support for existing health and wellbeing projects
- Collaborate with youth providers to ensure countywide inclusion in culture for young people
- Continue to develop families and school's programmes at key cultural venues and sites to foster an active love of culture from an early age
- Invest in and support cultural hubs to increase the opportunity to take part in culture across the county
- Better understand and respond to the aspirations of under-represented groups in Shropshire and help address cultural diversity
- Create a network of community cultural hubs and help ensure good transportation, access and facilities
- Encourage cultural diversity through providing opportunities for more communities and communities-of-interest
- Utilise technology to make sites more accessible to encourage greater use by those with specific needs.
- Present culture in a way that is relevant and exciting for new audiences by making better use of digital media
- Develop a Community Forum for grass roots cultural organisations to network and share practice – and connect this to the work of the Cultural Partnership

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

Efforts will need to be made to ensure that ongoing engagement will continue across all groupings, particularly those where low or no responses are received during the consultation itself from rural areas of the county. The Council is mindful, as a large and sparsely populated rural county, of the need to seek views from across the county, particularly around physical and digital access to services and cultural opportunities, and to utilise these in informing and developing the strategy.

The Working Group will also work in particular with ~~the other~~ groupings ~~that were~~ under represented in the survey responses i.e. the 15-19 year olds and the over 85's. This will also help the Council and partners to pick up on any equality related matters identified as gaps in the Strategy, which would assist positive outcomes for these age groups as well as for people in the Disability groupings. The Strategy prioritises work with children and young people and

with older age groups, so communication and engagement with these groupings is of particular importance.

Once published, an Implementation Plan will be created, setting out the actions across a range of partners for the next three years. This will be monitored annually, and a report will be published that sets out the progress against the priorities set out in this document.

The policy intention is that the Strategy will be reviewed after 5 years, with a new 10 year plan being published following a full evaluation of the Strategy in 2031.

We will liaise with the elected members of the Council as community leaders and with all communities to seek feedback on an ongoing basis about impacts for people in Protected Characteristic groupings and for those at risk of social exclusion.

It is recognised that there will need to be ongoing efforts to engage with people in the Protected Characteristic groupings. Links may usefully also be made with specific target groups such as children and families, people with mental health problems, and people with physical disabilities, through projects and partnership initiatives already under way. Actions may then be more readily identified from evidence gathered to enhance the positive impact of the Strategy for these groupings, leading to better outcomes overall for communities in Shropshire

Associated ESIIAs

Libraries ESIIAs, Leisure ESIIAs, the Great Outdoors Strategy, and the Shropshire Museums Strategy.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change and health and well being considerations

The impacts in relation to the economy across sectors and to health and well being across demographics are anticipated to be positive.

The strategy sets out to raise the profile of the exceptional cultural assets that we have in Shropshire, identifying gaps, clarifying the opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and community cohesion, the local economy and the environment, and bring together partner organisations with similar goals, encouraging more co-ordinated, cost-effective approaches and a maximisation of the opportunities. It does not attempt to duplicate other plans and strategies but will link to them where appropriate

Additionally, there are a number of cross-cutting themes that have been developed to help ensure that the priorities address Shropshire's core challenges. These include:

"Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture

can help us engage with these challenges creatively together"

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer carrying out the screening **Clare Featherstone** **Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager**		20th September 2020
*Any internal support**		
*Any external support*** **Mrs Lois Dale** **Rurality and Equalities Specialist**		20th September 2020

This refers to other officers within the service area
****This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority***

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name **Clare Featherstone** **Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager**		21st September 2020
Accountable officer's name **Sue Finnigan** **Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism**		21st September 2020

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
Vibrant Shropshire is a partnership document that sets out the ambition and strategic priorities for the cultural sector in Shropshire unitary area for the next 10 years.

Our Vision

By 2030, Shropshire's vibrant culture will be inspiring more people – both local communities and visitors alike - to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.

Our Ambition

In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. The importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.

Our Priorities

- Create Culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living
- Explore Delighting and surprising visitors and residents with independent, authentic experiences
- Enjoy Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected
- Live Harnessing the power of distinctive places for the benefit of all
- Nurture Shropshire's high-quality natural landscapes are valued and enhanced for future generations
- Innovate Driving digital development to enhance cultural experiences, improve physical and intellectual access and tackle social isolation
- Connect Forge strong partnerships to drive forward our shared cultural ambition

Cross-cutting themes

- Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together
- Developing volunteers – Supporting volunteers through promoting good practice, providing opportunities for training and development and recognising their achievements
- Young people's skills and learning – Engaging young people in all of our priority areas and providing clear pathways into all of the cultural sector
- Marketing and communication – Ensuring that there is a joined-up marketing and communication strategy to promote greater joint working and reach new audiences

This is a new strategy. The last cultural strategy was in 2010 and is no longer relevant.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The intended audience for the cultural strategy once adopted is everyone who lives in, works in or visits Shropshire and therefore all groupings within the community, as well as those who serve them. By this we mean the Council, town and parish councils, the wider business sector, the voluntary and community sector, the health and social care sector, and organisations and bodies involved in the development and delivery of cultural services.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

A full evidence base for the strategy has been compiled by the Insights and Intelligence Team at the Council.

Importance to the creative industries and tourism economies:
The cultural sector is important to Shropshire not just because it enriches the quality of life for its residents and visitors, it is also a vital contributor to the County's economy.

- According to forecasts prepared by Oxford Economics, the value of the creatives sector in terms of GVA generation was £114.5 million in 2012, projected to reach £176.4 million in 2018.
- This is the equivalent of around 3% of the value of the Shropshire economy.
- Between 2012 and 2018, GVA generated by the creatives sector rose by 54% compared with growth of 14% within the total economy across all sectors.
- The value of the creatives sector is forecast to rise almost three times more quickly than the value of the total Shropshire economy between 2012 and 2036.
- According to forecasts prepared by Oxford Economics, the value of the tourism sector in terms of GVA generation was £210.7 million in 2012, projected to reach **£256.0 million** in 2018.
- This is the equivalent of around 4% of the value of the Shropshire economy.
- Between 2012 and 2018, GVA generated by the creatives sector rose by 21% compared with growth of 14% within the total economy across all sectors

Engagement with the natural environment:
The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (MENE) is funded by Natural England, with support from DEFRA and the Forestry Commission. The survey collects information about the ways people engage with the countryside and green spaces in towns and cities. The survey shows that 69.9% of Shropshire residents visited the natural environment at least once a week in 2018/19. The proportion has fluctuated in recent years but is consistently above the national average (65% in 2018/19).

Participation in Cultural Activities:

- More than half of Shropshire residents have attended an event, performance or festival within the last 12 months. This is in line with the national average.
- Almost four out of 10 residents had spent time doing creative, artistic, theatrical or musical activities – this is higher than the average for England
- 46% have visited a museum or gallery, very marginally lower than the national average
- 36% have used a public library service, slightly more than the national average
- 16% have participated in some form of dance, although for only a small minority of the population was this creative or artistic dance.

Number of Visits to Shropshire Council Owned Cultural Facilities:

- There were 2,346,896 visits to council facilities over 2018/19
- There were 918,755 Library visits
- There were 182,728 Museums visits, with the largest number in Shrewsbury MAG (104,183)
- There were 977,522 Outdoor Recreation visits
- There were 199,362 visits to Theatre Seven

- There were 68,529 visits to The Old Market Hall

Volunteer hours:

- Over 2018/2019, 71,989 volunteer hours were provided over 8 key Council cultural sites

Participation in Sporting Activities:

- 61.2% of adults in Shropshire are physically active, achieving the recommended 150 minute or more per week.
- This is slightly lower than the national average (63.3%), which is due to Shropshire's older demographic.
- Notwithstanding the ageing population the proportion of the population which is inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week) is comparable with the national average.

Well-Being and Life Satisfaction:

In 2018/19:

- 63.9% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of anxiety as either good or very good (40.1% very good)
- 77.0% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of happiness as either good or very good (40.9% very good)
- 82.3% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of life satisfaction as either good or very good (33.4% very good)
- 84.5% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of feeling that things are worthwhile as either good or very good (38.4% very good)

Public Health England: Health Profile for Shropshire:

Focus on preventing diabetes, cancer, falls and obesity.

A strategic review has been undertaken and is shown in appendix 4. This includes consideration of:

Local Strategies:

- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 'Innovate to Thrive' 2019/20 to 2021/22
- Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017 – 2021
- Building an economic vision for Shropshire: a research report by IPPR North for Shropshire Council (November 2016)
- Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021
- The Social Value Charter for Shropshire
- Shropshire Museums Service Strategy 2018 – 2023
- Shropshire's Great Outdoors 2018 – 2028
- Actively Improving Lives – Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Schools Partnership

Regional Strategy

- The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2019
- The Marches SEP Evidence Base
- Visitor Economy Strategy for the Marches (June 2019)
- Midlands Engine – Vision for Growth

National Policy and Strategy

- Arts Council 10-year plan Shaping the Next 10 years (draft summer 2019)
- Industrial Strategy (2017)
- Culture White Paper (2016)

- Industrial Strategy: Creative Sector Deal/ Bazalgette Review (2017/ 2018)
- DCMS Culture is Digital (2018)
- Healthy Lives Healthy People (2010)
- Creative Health: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing
- Inquiry Report (July 2017)
- DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

The strategy was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, through the Cultural Strategy Working Group. It follows one to one consultation with sector leaders, on-line surveys and three workshops with individuals representing the wider cultural sector, along with workshops with the VCSA, Cultural Consortium Shropshire (working with children and young people) and with independent musicians. The details of this are available in appendix 3 and summarised below:

One to one consultation:

- Marion Blockley – Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group
- Lezley Picton – Portfolio Holder Culture & Leisure
- Sue Finnigan – Culture & Leisure Specialist
- Richard Parkes – Shropshire Youth Association
- Diane Walton – Upstart Projects
- Michael Lewis – Head, Shropshire Libraries
- Tim Jenkins – University of Chester (Head of Humanities)
- Marcus Halliwell – National Trust
- Jessica Kent – Arts for Health Lead, South Staffordshire & Shropshire Health Trust
- Beth Heath – Shropshire Festivals
- Laura Penman – Shropshire Tourism
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- Seb Slater - Executive Director, Shrewsbury BID
- Chris Child - Chief Executive, Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
- Gemma Davies - Head of Economic Growth, Shropshire Council
- Mandy Thorn - Chair, Marches LEP

Three 'World-Café' workshops were organised by consultants, FEI at different locations across the county, targeted at the cultural sector:

Workshop 1 - Craven Arms Community Centre, 21 November 2019, 10.15 - 13.15
Workshop 2 - Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, 21 November 2019, 17.30 - 20.30
Workshop 3 - Wem Town Hall, 22 November 2019, 10.00 - 13.00

A total of 70 people attended.

Online stakeholder survey targeted at cultural sector- 39 responses

Online survey follow-up with workshop attendees - 10 responses

Other workshops:

- Cultural Strategy workshop with the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly

(VCSA)- 6 December 2019
- Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services Away Day workshop notes
- Music Independents Workshop 29.01.2020
- Cultural Consortium workshop, representing children and young people, the results were included in the on-line survey

Public consultation and consultation with specific groups will take place between October and December 2020 to inform the final strategy.

As indicated in the Cabinet report, the public consultation will run for two months from the 12th October to 11th December 2020. The strategy was generated as a result of the engagement with key stakeholders and the public consultation is designed to gather views relating to the strategy and to inform next steps for implementation

The Council wishes to consult with the public and stakeholders on the Strategy before seeking to finalise it. We want to fully understand the needs and views of as many members of the community as possible to help us plan the best way to support the provision of cultural facilities in the future. We want to hear from people who don't currently access cultural opportunities and amenities as well as people who do.

A second follow up screening is planned for after the public consultation phase, in order to take account of and feed in views from people in the Protected Characteristic groupings, seek to maximise positive impacts in terms of equality, and mitigate any negative impacts. The second ESIIA will need to be completed before the final strategy is published

As per the Cabinet report, the information that will be presented as part of the consultation to ensure respondents could make informed comments includes:
- Evidence base (appendix 2)
- Results from completed consultation (appendix 3)
- Strategic evidence review (appendix 4)

Stakeholders and members of the public will be given a choice of ways in which to comment on the strategy, including:
- complete an online survey
- complete a paper version of the survey
- comment by email
- leave comments over the telephone

A further series of meetings and workshops are planned to gather further feedback on the strategy and implementation plan from key partners.

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative	Low positive or negative impact

	Part Two ESIIA required	*Part One ESIIA required*	**impact** *Part One ESIIA required*	*Part One ESIIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)			Prioritises outreach, children and young people, older people who are socially isolated, and volunteering	
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)			Prioritises Social Prescribing and other health initiatives and physical and digital access	
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				Impact likely to be neutral or positive
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)			Prioritises outreach, children and young people, older people who are socially isolated, easier	

			access and volunteering	

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being
The public sector has seen significant change since the last Cultural Strategy was produced in 2010; in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, current economic climate and associated budget pressures, economic growth aspirations aiming to significantly increase the population and business base of Shropshire, and the growing need for cultural activities for health and wellbeing. This is also having an impact on the voluntary and private sectors and there is now even greater need to have a clear, evidence-based, prioritised plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach is needed, delivering across multiple policy areas and integrating activity across local authority services. partner organisations and businesses. Cabinet gave approval in February 2020 to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, in order to more fully capture the health and well being benefits anticipated. It is timely that such approval was sought and given, as the decision was made just before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Shropshire, and as the Council will be able to focus and shape local outcomes to improve health and well being across groupings through joint efforts across sectors, utilising emerging national evidence and national learning points. This is particularly so for people in BAME groupings, for men, for people who are obese, and for older people. . Maximising the positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits is focussed upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities. We also engage directly with Government Departments on such issues, for example with the Department of Health on the Industrial Strategy Grand Challenge of an Ageing Society. We will continue to do so.

Guidance Notes

1. Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIIA in your service area~~,~~ this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand alone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age. We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose. You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESIIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESIIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes. Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

2. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

Appendix 3: Cultural Strategy Consultation Results

One to one discussions

One to one consultation was carried out with the following key cultural stakeholders:

- Marion Blockley – Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group
- Lezley Picton – Portfolio Holder Culture & Leisure
- Sue Finnigan – Culture & Leisure Specialist
- Richard Parkes – Shropshire Youth Association
- Diane Walton – Upstart Projects
- Michael Lewis – Head, Shropshire Libraries
- Tim Jenkins – University of Chester (Head of Humanities)
- Marcus Halliwell – National Trust
- Jessica Kent – Arts for Health Lead, South Staffordshire & Shropshire Health Trust
- Beth Heath – Shropshire Festivals
- Laura Penman – Shropshire Tourism
- Alex Carson Taylor – Chair, Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board
- Seb Slater - Executive Director, Shrewsbury BID
- Chris Child - Chief Executive, Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
- Gemma Davies - Head of Economic Growth, Shropshire Council
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'World Café' Workshop Report

Three 'World-Café' workshops were organised by consultants, FEI at different locations across the county:
Workshop 1 - Craven Arms Community Centre
Thursday 21 November 2019, 10.15 - 13.15
Workshop 2 - Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery
Thursday 21 November 2019, 17.30 - 20.30
Workshop 3 - Wem Town Hall
Friday 22 November 2019, 10.00 - 13.00
This report provides details of the format and findings of the workshop events and consultation.

1. Format

World Cafes are flexible consultation method that puts the community at the heart of conversations and creates a safe and flexible space for dialogue, conversation and comment. Developed as a participatory leadership tool, it works on the assumption that the 'wisdom is in the room' and is powered by what can be achieved by a small group of committed people around a table having a conversation.
The café was structured as four conversations:

- The People involved – Individuals employed in the sector, volunteers and audiences
- Places and Spaces – Where culture takes place
- Networks and Projects – Where the sector come together with each other and other sectors
- Resources, Training and Support – The support the sector gets and needs.

For each topic the groups considered four questions:

1. What happens already? Where is the good practice? What are the strengths? Who is doing good work?

2. Where are the gaps? What's missing? What could be done differently? What should we stop doing?
3. Who is involved? Who is taking part and who isn't? Who is supporting the sector? How can we work with other sectors? What can we do ourselves and where do we need more support?
4. Where do we want to be? Where do we want to be in 5-10 years? What does success look like for us? How do we want to be talked about outside the area?

In total 70 individuals took part in the workshops: 22 in Craven Arms, 29 in Shrewsbury and 23 in Wem.

2. Findings

2.1 Key points

The following were some of the key ideas that emerged through the workshops and wider consultation.

Leadership

- Leadership from SCC is needed to develop projects that transcend business-as-usual
- Links to regional opportunities – 2022 Commonwealth Games
- Potential for Tourism BID
- Must think big and quality and include provision for people to pay
- Culture should be embedded in all local place plans
- Vision needs to reflect the diverse quirky variety of what is on offer
- The strategy needs to be bold and inspiring

Volunteers

- The cultural sector is over-reliant on volunteers. The sector has difficulty in planning for succession as volunteers are ageing.
- Volunteers have greater responsibility (for festivals and events and venues) and require training to take these on.
- Many volunteers are still active and bring with them decades of expertise and experience but changes to retirement age and circumstances may change this in the future.

Audiences

- Shared audience data and development strategies are needed
- Changes in cultural tastes provides a challenge to existing organisations especially as traditional cultural education is diminished and new technologies affect the way culture is made.
- Many retired people can pay for tickets but there is a lack of free and affordable culture for families
- Cultural organisations need to help attract tourists

Places & Spaces

- Unique outstanding locations inside and outside that are well used and have strong local engagement
- Huge variety of places hosting different activities – problem is joining these up
- Churches are a good opportunity with some good practice happening (Ludlow)
- Lack of a large venue – for music etc?
- Do we need mobile venues?
- Not many spaces for young people to make or see culture
- Some venues have access and sustainability issues
- Can venues share assets, resources and information – what would an 'enabling network' of venues look like?

- Rural touring is successful and popular

Networks and Projects

- Inclusive and with a broad definition of culture
- Recognising Shropshire as a Cultural Destination
- Bring together dispersed populations and different partners
- Joining up activity – cultural programming and audience development
- Good for community building
- Promote working across county lines
- Collective fundraising and inward investment
- Mark the shift in role of council from delivery to strategy

Employment & Enterprise

- A sector skills plan is needed to encourage growth
- There is a lack of career opportunities in the sector. There are few paid and F/T opportunities.
- There is a lack of career advice for culture/ creative sector
- There are no creative apprenticeships
- How do we work more closely with university on retaining young people?

Skills development

- Business skills needed by the sector in fund-raising/ commercialisation
- Digital skills required to make better use of digital infrastructure
- Lack of facilities to learn skills and build networks
- How can we make Community Asset Transfer more effective – for example with wrap-round support and training?
- Outdoor and unusual spaces could be used more effectively but requires training

Digital

- What opportunities does digital offer – for example live streaming
- Communication needs to be improved so people know who is doing what
- Digital capacity needs to be developed to reach more people
- How do we encourage tech companies to be part of developing digital capacity and reach?

Advocacy/ Evidence

- Cultural strategy needs to help guide actions
- Festivals are strong but need support – and evidence
- More evidence needed to demonstrate value/ impact to new partners
- Greater involvement of health partners

Access

- Transport affects all aspects of the cultural sector – volunteering, jobs, attendance
- Overnight accommodation is an issue

Role of council

- Leadership
- Towards enabling to delivering
- Providing skills and business support
- Seed funding innovative ideas
- Join up Tourism and Culture

- Impact framework to encourage open data
- Levering potential space – un-used, under-used, planned

Other partners
- University is key and has made a big difference
- More work needed to engage schools, LEP, Parish Councils – needs evidence

Good Examples of distinctive working
- Social Prescribing
- Rural touring
- Shropshire Culture Consortium
- Wild Club

Sector role
- Community volunteer led and professional sectors need different support
- Better networking and sharing needed
- It needs to be more enterprising and commercially focused
- It needs to be more ambitious
- Community co-design is critical
- Solutions need to be co-designed with partners – for example to address mental health, young people

Useful Resources/ examples
- Shropshire Rural Communities Charity – provide advice and support to groups and individuals. Run a Wheels to Work scheme
- Village Outreach provides equipment for hire
- BID Shrewsbury Ambassadors https://originalshrewsbury.co.uk/volunteer-ambassadors
- Shorpshire Community Directory http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/shropshire/cd/home.page
- Shropshire Culture Consortium
- Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly
- Locality Convention: https://locality.org.uk/events/convention/

Steering Group Workshop
Cultural Strategy Steering Group
28 November 2019

Topic One: The People Involved
What happens already:
- Everything is happening at grass roots level
- NPO – limited crossovers
- County issue – lots of spaces under used.

Who is involved:
- Groups can be closed and cliquey - inequality in this?

Where are the gaps:
- Would we attend a big event coming in? or do we go out to get our culture?
- Can't think about access without wider issues

Where do we want to be:

- Content, communication and infrastructure
- Live streaming of events?
- Connectivity

Topic Two: Places and Spaces

What happens already:

- Great outdoors
- Outdoors is important and unique
- It's got everything there
- Community spaces and local churches
- Lots of community culture - Am-dram

Who is involved:

- Joint communication – open data – exceptional at all levels and for all ages
- Missing serious sector skills plan
- Must get better with other sectors – use their languages
- Involving other sectors for example - Shrewsbury School – do they have cultural strategy?

Where are the gaps:

- We need to frame this conversation with resources
- Identify the interests they have – for example – the school wants a better place on its doorstep

Where do we want to be:

- Young people – charter with theatres and centres – free tickets at theatre – how do we make it accessible to young people.
- Make it exceptional then people will pay – if they can afford to

Topic Three: Networks and Projects

What happens already:

- Cultural Consortium Shropshire
- Lots of festivals
- Lots of these projects are voluntary led
- Main festivals rely on money – ticket source
- If not volunteers – freelancers and SME

Who is involved:

- Mostly white middle class
- Volunteers
- Micro-businesses

Where are the gaps:

- Evidence base
- Proof of value
- Model to prove impact
- Lack of joined up-ness especially when it comes to sharing assets
- Lack of effective communication
- Support for volunteers
- Access for all

Where do we want to be:

- Diversity of cultural offer
- A better connected cultural sector and cross sector networks providing more and better inclusive cultural opportunities
- Building up trust and breaking down silos
- Real collaborative working – with tangible large-scale investment
- More understanding of what culture is and does
- More young people in the offer
- Meeting the needs of ageing population
- Having a clear view of the impact we are having

Topic Four: Resources and Support

What happens already:

- Huge range of culture here
- Huge amount of funding – but how much goes to culture
- Business rates – we need to consider the impact of these
- Good business support/ growth hub, but does it engage with culture?
- Community capacity and assets – this is a real strength
- Community spaces and village hall – good spaces for us

Who is involved:

- Volunteers
- But people need to learn a living – can't 100% rely on volunteers
- Not diverse enough when we talk about culture – white m/c
- Redundant churches – opportunity? What about 'Champing'
- Council owned redundant buildings access and leases

Where are the gaps:

- Lack of collaboration – rural access
- Not one single point of information
- Young people – are a source of ideas and insight
- Diversity
- Funding and alternatives
- Paid roles – it's necessary to have some paid roles
- Venue maintenance and management – but training and planning is needed

Where do we want to be:

- The strategy should be bold and ambitious
- Digital solutions important for the rurality
- Independent Shrewsbury a good basis to build on
- Community asset transfers
- Sustainable single source of information
- Shropshire is niche and diverse

The group were asked two additional questions:

Why is Culture important?

- Culture is identity and about what place Shropshire wants to be
- It shapes who we are as people, and makes and shapes a place

- Sense of identity and belonging
- Makes people happy
- Culture is important to develop communities
- A sense of belonging
- Provides balance and opportunities for reflection
- A change of pace helps people think differently about different things
- A way of life
- Wellbeing, enjoyment, health
- Confidence building
- Sense of community
- Fun
- Enjoyment
- Confidence
- It feeds the soul
- We all do it whether we realise it or not
- It is part of us all and makes life worth living
- It attracts investment
- It is fun
- It shapes communities
- It regenerates
- It changes lives
- It is education
- It makes us feel better
- It improves lives by shaping social connections, making us feel better, skills development, tourism
- Quality of life
- Essential to health, wellbeing, quality of life

What do we want the strategy to do?

- We want it to be bold, surprising, challenging, off-kilter.
- Inspire creativity and attract investment and funding
- Attract investment
- Raise Profile
- Create joint vision and ambition
- Create an evidence base
- Create partnerships
- Bring about positive change
- Allow the sector to be taken seriously
- Give the sector a voice.
- Improve lives of people who have challenges – health education, loneliness, jobs, crime, obesity – though collaborations
- Improve accessibility and communication
- Promote high quality profitable sector
- Identify tangible achievable priorities
- Give powerful messages about the sector
- Have our impact and influence other LIS
- Set out a clear framework for culture which can be adopted as appropriate in communities and which can bring investment

- Provide a clear direction and tool for all Shropshire's cultural organisations and communities to drive forward participation, skills development, income generation and health and wellbeing.
- Raise arts and culture up the county agenda

Online Surveys

Online Stakeholder Survey
39 responses

Online Workshop Survey
10 responses

1. **Selected quotes:**

1.1 Stakeholder Survey
The diverse landscape of the county creates a diverse cultural offer.

Historically it has served the needs and wants of the Shropshire audience - supply and demand - but it could be much more ambitious and thus have much more to celebrate and promote in order to attract more people to the area

The best kept secrets are the unlocked potential of our village halls and our historic churches.

We do pride ourselves on having a model of excellent and inclusive practice with regards to youth theatre.

Creative Conversations is a three-year project being led by Media Active and Arts Alive, in partnership with a number of organisations including Age UK, arts and cultural venues and Shropshire Providers' Consortium members. The project is funded through the Arts Council Celebrating Age programme – it was the only project to receive funding in Shropshire. As part of project in May, there were eight performances of Curious Shoes (a dementia friendly performance) and a day of training for the sector

This is a rural county, so communities are accustomed to working in small groups and being self-sufficient.

(On whether culture can strengthen local communities) It already works in Ludlow. We have Friends of Ludlow Museum, Civic Society, History Research Group who takes tour around town, Slow Food, festivals using volunteers.

Shropshire has an active environmental campaigning network, independent whole foods suppliers, green party. Linked to the fact it appears to have a good percentage of culturally switched on people there is room here for something unique and important

What should the Vision be?

A vibrant cultural offer driven by local engagement in decision making, planning and delivery. More investment enabling hubs of Cultural activity accessible for everyone in the county

Shropshire would be a cultural destination, with a thriving, year-round, focused programme of events and activity, led by a consortium of key partners and supported by the diverse and exceptional groups and individuals working in the county.

For Shropshire's culture to be taken seriously and not seen as being the icing on the cake.

What do you want the strategy to achieve?

Collaboration and communication

To have a bold vision that engages wider with communities

Focusing attention, unlocking funding

1.2 Workshop Survey

I live near Oswestry, so my answers will reflect this. There is great cultural provision in and around Oswestry. Oswestry Library, Heritage Open Days, Kinoculture, Qube and many great small societies and organisations are doing fantastic work. They have a huge - astonishing - range of skills and expertise to draw on, from fine artists to community historians. By and large, the good work on the ground is being done by volunteers and committed enthusiasts.

There is less works between the educational establishments (schools, colleges, UCS etc.) and other cultural organisations than in some other parts of the country.

The most obvious group that isn't taking part are younger people. There is virtually no one under the age of 30 involved in professional cultural jobs, and they are almost non-existent among volunteers. This is not to say younger people aren't as interested - but they struggle to find the time and money required to support volunteer involvement. Working more closely with art and culture in education - colleges, universities and schools - as well as providing meaningful support (bursaries, etc) would help younger contributors make the transition from there into internships, jobs or even into volunteering. We need these people to be able to be involved if the sector is to survive.

Personally, I'd like to see Shropshire regarded as the Cultural Capital of the West Mids.

The people doing good work are exhausted and demoralized. They have become apathetic.

I'm a member of several art groups, a local archaeologist and a comics creator. I bring all of these things together in both my professional capacity as an archaeological illustrator and in my art and heritage volunteering. I can certainly be part of broader, county-wide cultural projects - arts festivals, heritage trails, library course programmes - but I can't also be a project manager, event coordinator and networker. Like many of my professional and volunteer colleagues, we are all willing to bring our specific cultural talents and skills to bigger initiatives - as long as we have help.

Cultural Strategy consultation with the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA)
6 December 2019

Introduction
Shropshire Cultural Strategy Working Group (CSWG); a partnership of representatives of 16 organisations from across Shropshire's cultural sector, has commissioned FEI (Festivals & Events International) to help the sector develop a cultural strategy for Shropshire. The final Strategy will be focused around an ambitious, clear and deliverable vision.
The aim of the Strategy is to raise the profile and quality of culture across Shropshire. CSWG are seeking help with collating the existing evidence base and results from the consultation in 2017, by consulting with a broad range of stakeholders and developing a new draft Strategy for public consultation.

Consultation
The consultation exercise was as follows:
We are interested in hearing your thoughts about all aspects of culture in the county:

- The people involved – Individuals employed in the sector, volunteers and audiences
- Places and Spaces – Where culture takes place
- Networks and Projects – Where the sector come together with each other and other sectors
- Resources, Training and Support – The support the sector gets and needs.

For each area we will ask you to think about 4 questions in terms of your experience of culture in Shropshire:

1. **What happens already?** Where is the good practice? What are the strengths? Who is doing good work?
2. **Where are the gaps?** What's missing? What could be done differently? What should we stop doing?
3. **Who is involved?** Who is taking part and who isn't? Who is supporting the sector? How can we work with other sectors? What can we do ourselves and where do we need more support?
4. **Where do we want to be?** Where do we want to be in 5-10 years? What does success look like for us? How do we want to be talked about outside the area?

Results

What's happening already?
Lots of voluntary and community activity
Lots of clubs- but can be intimidating to newcomers
Loads of things going on- music, dance, walks, boat trips, book festivals
Much Wenlock, Ludlow, Church Stretton
Community Connectors- but are they connected to micro organisations?
<u>Culture of volunteering</u>
Village halls, churches and community spaces- need to be supported to maximise use
Village halls- range of activities
Libraries
Children's activity- play schools/ mums & tots
Bowling
Wide range of activities for older people
Museums, theatre and venues
Shropshire is a county of festivals
Community centres are hubs

Volunteering gives people a sense of belonging
People support each other and improves the individual's wellbeing. Recognition that they are not on their own
Arts Alive
Local panto's
Music services
Party groups
Village Halls
Qube
Fringe and Festivals- festivals cost money but there are free activities in pubs
Park Runs
Quiz
U3A

Where are the gaps?

Some areas are less well catered for- the North?
Very difficult to find out what's available/ on unless you are in the know
Youth provision is not very diverse or multicultural
Accessibility- lack of public transport
Financial support for the most vulnerable
Support to access activities e.g. Cultural Buddies
More stuff to do
Greater resources- money, people, transport, equipment/ activity
Celebrate diversity/ intergeneration
Health- NHS
Co-ordination and marketing? "The Shropshire Brand"
School involvement
Barriers to participation- disabilities. People in criminal justice system
Transport- young people with disabilities problem with getting taxis who can serve them
Safety- people with learning disabilities don't always feel safe going out socialising
Young people feel excluded
Cost e.g. Theatre Severn hire costs
Linking people to groups
Social media- 'where to go' site for all activities
Buddies to welcome new members
Breaking isolation and barriers to joining established groups

Who is involved?

172 Indian nurses are coming to Shropshire (SATH)- opportunity for cross-cultural activity?
Lots of organisations- more collaborative approach in local places
Councils- 2 x Unitary, parish and town
Volunteers/ T&PCs
Experts
People who do
VCSA Organisations
Volunteers
Small scale performers
Health/ Public Health
Local people
Volunteers- gives people a sense of belonging
Volunteer organisations e.g. Care Farms- give people an opportunity to take part

Where do we want to be?

Celebrate local history
More encouragement to access 'self-care/ Culture'
Celebrate individual places- spotlight on a place for a month
Empower local community and provide incentives
Current offer- sustainable
Large well supported volunteer offer- more and younger volunteers, training/ support/ maintenance/ celebrate
Affordable
Perceptions- overcoming barriers for excluded groups
Seed funding available to respond to needs e.g. to put on events/ exercise groups
Recognition that not everything will be financially viable e.g. need to work in small groups
Need infrastructure to support volunteering
More community events
Link parish councils and medical practice

Discussion
Key aspects that came out through discussion in the group and with individuals:

- Need for joined up communication and marketing, using multi-media approach, targeted at difference audiences. Need a Shropshire-wide brand
- Lots of festivals- can be expensive but there are free carnivals and events and 'fringe' activities that are less expensive and need to be promoted
- Volunteering should be a theme in its own right in terms of giving people a sense of belonging
- Some people, especially those who are isolated and lonely, may not feel comfortable approaching new groups- a Culture Buddy system may help address this
- There is almost too much going on! How can this be better co-ordinated?
- There is a need for a new music venue that is reasonably priced in terms of hire and tickets- maybe on a profit share basis. Need to consult with musicians- no network currently.
-

Next steps

- Sector consultation continues to 23 December
- Key Themes consultation between end Jan and beg of March - if anyone would like to do a workshop at an upcoming meeting at this time, Clare can come along and run this
- Final draft strategy – submitted by 31 March 2020
- Public consultation April - end June 2020
- Final strategy published - Sept 2020.

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services Away Day workshop notes

1- What are the main outcomes/Challenges/Success Criteria for the next 5 years?
- Resolve storage at Hortonwood for Archives and Museum services
- Develop digital preservation for archives
- Develop Image Downloads on website for Archives and staff capacity to do this
- Recognition of infrastructure as key to accessing our heritage – ROW infrastructure and all of the above
- Better data capture on who are our customers and what do the need/want
- Brand identity for Museums service as a destination for visits
- Resolve the desire for community hubs at museums verses paid for facilities (The two are in opposition presently)
- Develop a contemporary collection for archives and museums to keep the service relevant as our culture and heritage changes
- Being aware of the need for tranquillity as well as commercial development
- Funding is key- statutory issues still need to be addressed and some of our assets require significant investment above and beyond a balanced budget
- Better communication with the community
- Better understanding of community needs
- Improved relationships/ response from legal and finance colleagues to help facilitate commercial activity
- Improved diversity/ access to assets
- Securing the future of parks and sites by increasing income through a range of different site-specific approaches
- Working with colleagues in Planning to connect new green spaces with the wider landscape and work towards habitat connectivity and joined-up public open spaces for both wildlife benefits and benefits to people
- Continuing to make PROW accessible to all (there is likely to be an increasing need for accessible access to the countryside with the ageing population f Shropshire and the trend for the population to grow
- Making sure that the work of volunteers is recognised and valued with the introduction of a more comprehensive Volunteer Policy and training programme for lead volunteers
- Better partnership working with other organisations
- Use our expertise in countryside and greenspace management to offer services to other organisations as a fee-earning service
- Consistency across facility operations - enhancing management information systems - fulfilling potential in terms of using customer data
- Successful implementation of re-branding
- Development of hub/community facilities
- Better use of technology - Instagram, Snapchat, advertising - modern culture
- Need to invest to develop - get the product right!!
- Digital strategy.
- Shared resources
- Inward investment
- Shared use of venues across the County
- County wide programming

2- How can the Cultural Strategy help address this?

- The Cultural Strategy can raise the profile of our services to partners and Shropshire Council senior staff and Councillors and demonstrate their value to Shropshire's economy and wellbeing
- The Strategy can demonstrate that managing our infrastructure (a, b, c, d & h above) is not an expensive liability, but key to the delivery of cultural activities and an opportunity to develop further activities.
- A Branded offer for the county could be developed to cover all services to give confidence in the offer we have.
- The strategy must be Shropshire Council Specific to lead to a commitment of their value from Shropshire Council senior staff and councillors. Partnership working is key to this, but specifically, infrastructure maintenance, is a council function that underpins all activities
- Raise awareness of the commercial imperative in the public sector to help people understand the issues
- Use the strategy as a community development tool- making sure the document is accessible and well designed
- Highlighting range of volunteering opportunities available
- Highlighting UCS and other educational opportunities- Ofsted are looking for local connections/ heritage/ history- need to help schools understand what is on the doorstep
- Low Carbon events/ activities
- Encouraging local purchasing- food, drink, arts and crafts
- Clear links to Marches VE Strategy/ Economic Growth/ Heath and Wellbeing
- Must be inclusive and include minorities- building on sense of identity and belonging
- By making sure that staff are able to work in a joined-up manner. Encouraging staff to learn best practise from colleagues across Cultural Services. Benefitting from ideas such as cross-sites marketing/events
- Needs to be inter-generational
- Ensure groups consulted are appropriate
- Clear indication of use of digital technology

Music Independents Workshop 29.01.2020

Thinking about performers, venues, support, genres, promotion, audiences and economic returns:
What's going well at the moment and should continue

- More independent music venues
- More live music in the Quarry
- Increased diversity in audience
- Lots of performers – but are all working in silo
- Serendipitous
- Need to set up an informal network
- Vast supply of all genres
- Big venues work
- Smaller venues work
- Health and well-being events are going well – especially at The Hive
- Events in the Quarry
- Cycle competition, half marathon, mile run
- Book festival
- Outdoor market
- West Mids Showgrounds are being used more.
- University

- More bars than previous years

What are the gaps

- German market
- Support for young people for the creative industry
- Using / enhancing potential partners
- Big name acts coming to the area
- Music venues
- Cultural diversity in the OMH and Theatre Severn
- There used to be foreign language films at the OMH
- Link the canal to Shrewsbury
- Charles Darwin link
- A world class music festival – poss links to heritage and evolution of music
- Need to establish ways of communicating effectively between independent promoters
- A sounding board
- Lack of funding
- Lack of communication from Shropshire Council
- Conservatism / conservatism restricts what we can do
- Council and BID
- Far too much risk aversion
- Not enough grassroots
- Massive gap between grassroots events that are happening
- Accessibility
- Transport infrastructure
- Building access for people with additional needs
- Business costs – rates etc
- Sustainability for performers

How might these gaps be addressed?

- Better one to one relationships
- Latch onto similarities in each other and work together
- Nominate Sarah to organise a network and hold quarterly meetings
- Applying for funding as joint efforts
- Make more effort
- Sponsorship
- Collaborative festivals
- Foundations to invest in talent coming through long term
- Lack of affordable accommodation to make people stay and spend -investment needed
- Interlinking with other events in the West Midlands
- Create awareness – make Shrewsbury a more available tourist destination
- Use of social media for networking
- Mentors for musicians
- Better advertising, promotion and communication of events
- Evolution of music festival
- Look at Sheffield's model of operation with music – Tramlines festival in the city centre
- Public transport improvements
- Change parking times – back to 6pm and free parking
- Reduce business rates
- Encourage more businesses to open later

What are the barriers to doing this?

- Transport accessibility
- Noise management
- Parking
- Funding
- Noise complaints
- Access to venues – e.g. The Buttermarket and Theatre Severn – almost impossible
- More cheap hotels
- Later trains
- Shropshire Council
- Legislation – too aggressively enforced
- Funding
- Town Centre Association
- Time
- Lack of cooperation from others
- Need a workable structure – less bureaucracy
- Opposing ideas
- Shropshire Council always goes for the obvious solution – ie uses bigger companies. Sometimes we, as independents have more knowledge and experience than bigger organisations. Employ us – we want to work with you.

How can we work better together?

- A more open policy towards noise abatement orders within the town centre
- Make sure town centre residents and venues work together
- Stronger network
- Better communication
- Funding – look at what matches and align strategic priorities
- Working together
- Look at what the value is for people
- Time
- Pay people a real rate for the work they do – remove the "Pay to Play" element that exists

General discussion points:

- Culture is about evolving and taking on other people's philosophies as well as our own.
- Culture is of an organic nature and does not feel clumsy.
- Innovation gets confused and often what people think of as innovation is just recycled ideas.
- Areas in need do not always get the funding that they need.
- There is a lack of support for culture in disadvantaged areas.
- We need to be allowed to demonstrate that risk is sustainable in the arts.
- There is a need for a central place for reporting issues.
- Shrewsbury is a University town now, but it does not feel as diverse as it should.
- Transport links are poor – given that we are a rural county.
- People need to be paid a living wage to be able to incest in leisure activities.
- Independent Shrewsbury.
- Shrewsbury needs an affordable venue – Theatre Severn and The Buttermarket are too expensive. Given that Theatre Severn is a flagship arts venue, it does not want to involve local independents - it is only about making money.
- We need to look at other local festivals and design one for Shrewsbury using our knowledge as independent music makers / promoters. Look at Focus Festival in Wrexham, Sensatoria in Solihull, London Remixed in Shoreditch.

- Come to us for our creative skills – independents can help around what to focus on in Shropshire.

The Cultural Sector in Shropshire: Key Metrics

September 2020

Prepared by the Information, Intelligence & Insight Team

3i Information Intelligence & Insight Team

Employment in the Cultural Sector and its Impact on the Economy

- The cultural sector is important to Shropshire not just because it enriches the quality of life for its residents and visitors, it is also a vital contributor to the County's economy.
- The sector is broad, capturing activities in:
  - Creative industries
  - Tourism
  - Sport & Leisure
- Official statistics, though useful, underplay the size of the sector as small organisations tend not to be captured. Although there are some large organisations in the cultural arena in Shropshire, many are small, some are seasonal and a high proportion depend on volunteers rather than employees. Whilst these may not be included within official data and are therefore hard to quantify, there is not doubt that they make a significant contribution to the cultural offer from an economic perspective.
- Notwithstanding this, the sector supports 15,000 jobs which are captured by official data (15,750 when sole proprietors are included), 1,380 organisations and generates a value in gross value added (GVA*) terms of an estimated £432 million.
- This means that at least 12% of employment in Shropshire can be classed as cultural, with the sector contributing around 7% to the overall economy.

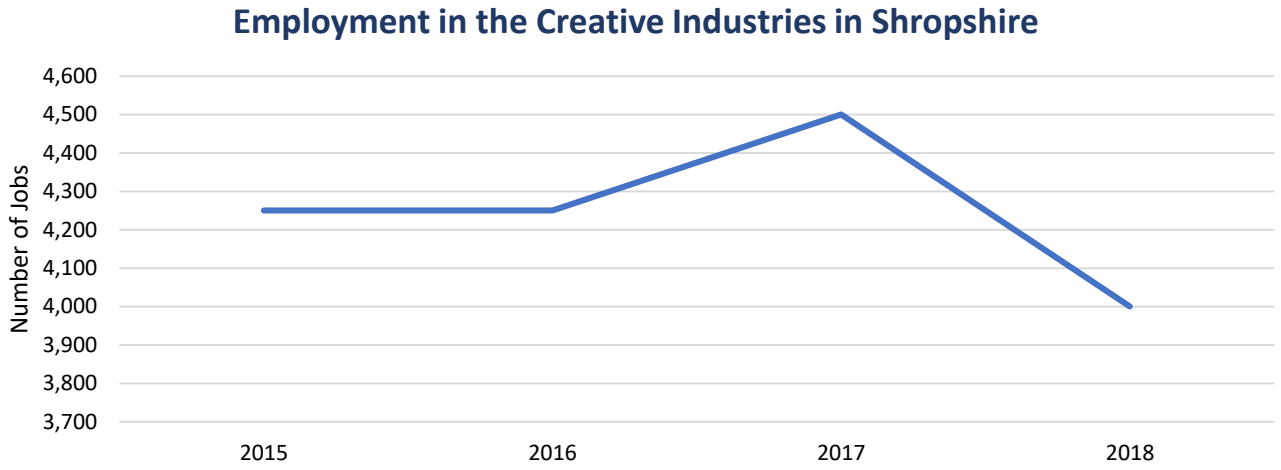
* *GVA is a means of measuring the contribution to the economy made by producers or sectors. It is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used in production.*

Creative Industries

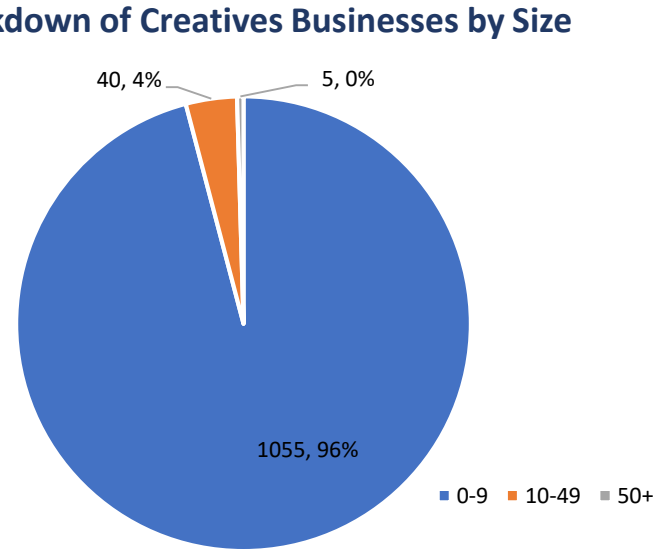
Creative industries includes[1]:

- *Creative Industries*
- *Media*
- *Tech*

- Approximately 1,100 creative businesses (2019), employing 4,000 (2018)
- Number of creative jobs down by 250 (-5.9%) since 2015 (down from 4,500 in 2017)
- Number of businesses up slightly since 2015 (+55)
- In addition, approximately 250 self-employed/business owners in this sector who are registered for either VAT or PAYE taking total employment in the sector to 4,250
- There is likely to be a significant number of self-employed people earning below the VAT threshold who work in the creative industries who will not be captured by these figures
- Average size of business is small and reducing (3.6 employees on average in 2018/19)
- 96% of businesses have fewer than 10 employees
- Just 5 businesses employ 50 or more



Source: ONS, Business Register of Employment Survey, 2018, Crown Copyright©, 2020



Source: ONS, Inter-Departmental Business Register, 2019, Crown Copyright©, 2020

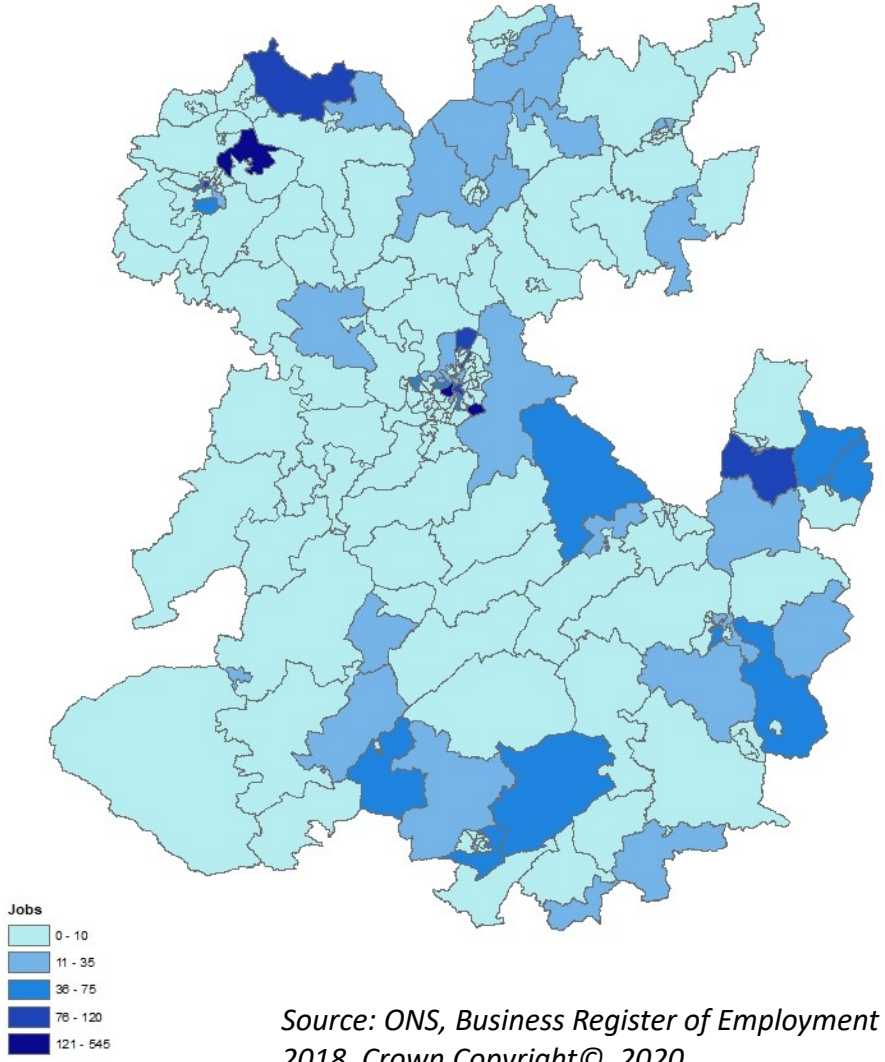
[1] *See Appendix A for complete list of SICs included within the definition of creative industries*

Creatives Employment by Location

- Highest levels of employment in Shrewsbury & Oswestry
- As a percentage of total jobs, creatives most important in Albrighton (7% of all jobs) and Shifnal (5.4%), and least important in Pontesbury & Minsterley (0.6%)

Place Plan Area	Jobs	% of creative jobs	% of total jobs
Albrighton	150	3.7%	7.0%
Bishops Castle	70	1.7%	2.9%
Bridgnorth	300	7.4%	3.6%
Broseley	20	0.5%	2.3%
Church Stretton	80	2.0%	3.5%
Cleobury Mortimer	50	1.2%	3.3%
Craven Arms	120	3.0%	4.5%
Ellesmere	140	3.5%	3.6%
Highley	25	0.6%	2.8%
Ludlow	220	5.4%	3.3%
Market Drayton	110	2.7%	1.4%
Much Wenlock	40	1.0%	3.7%
Oswestry	600	14.8%	3.8%
Pontesbury & Minsterley	10	0.2%	0.6%
Shifnal	150	3.7%	5.4%
Shrewsbury	1,750	43.2%	3.5%
Wem	100	2.5%	2.4%
Whitchurch	120	3.0%	2.3%

Employment in the Creatives Sector

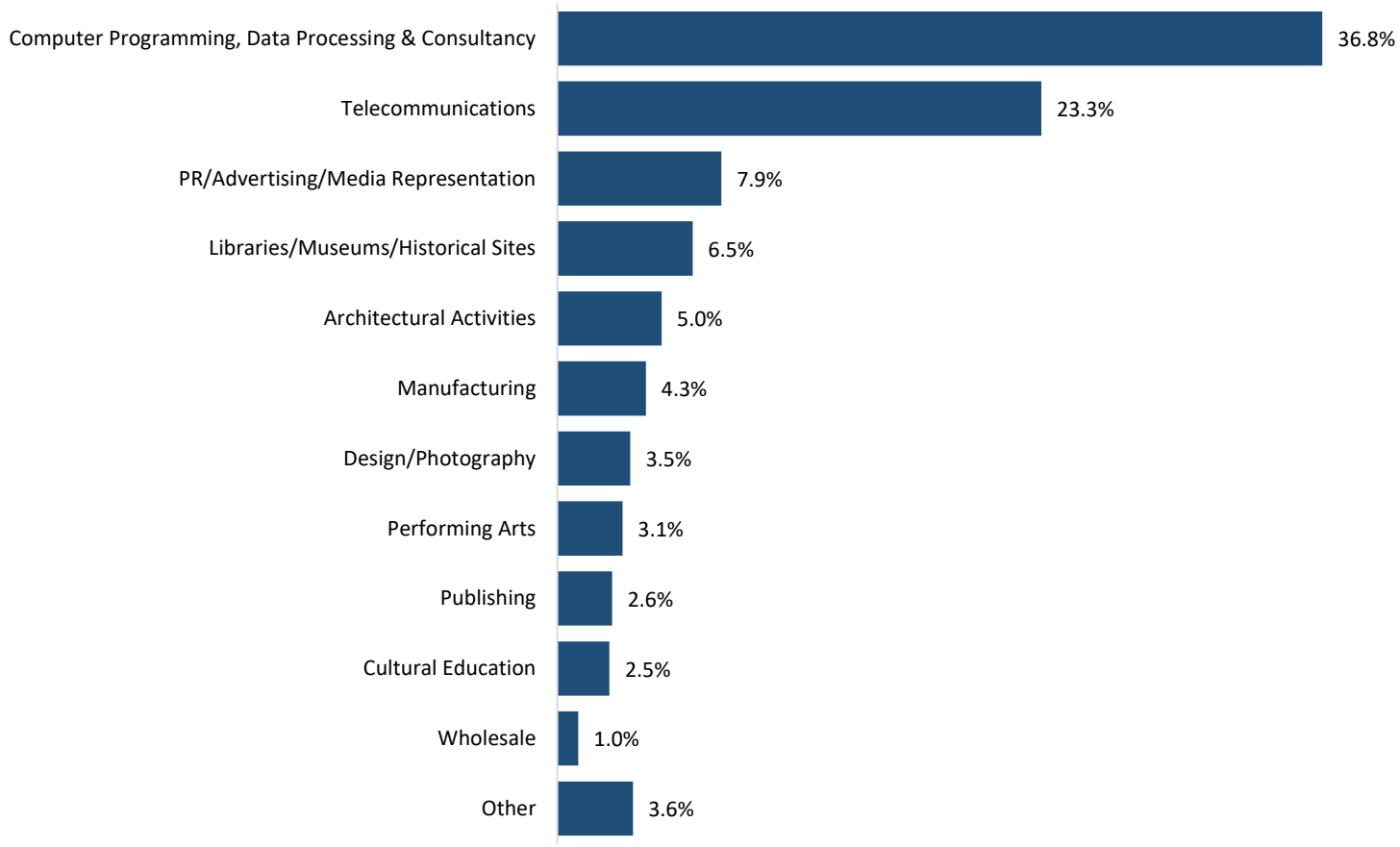


Source: ONS, Business Register of Employment Survey, 2018, Crown Copyright©, 2020

Creatives Employment by Sub-Sector

- The creative industries includes a wide range of sub-sectors, ranging from technology through to performing arts.
- The highest proportion of jobs are in computer programming and data processing (36.8% or approximately 1,500 jobs.
- Telecommunications also account for a large share of the sector, at 23.2%.
- PR/advertising/media representation, libraries/museums/historical sites and architectural activities all account for between 5 and 10% of the sector
- Almost half of all businesses operating in the sector are in the computer sub-sector
- There are also significant numbers in PR/advertising/media representation (75), architecture (80) and design/photography (105)
- There are fewer telecommunications businesses (35), but these are larger which an average staff of 26 people

Breakdown of Creatives Jobs by Sub-Sector

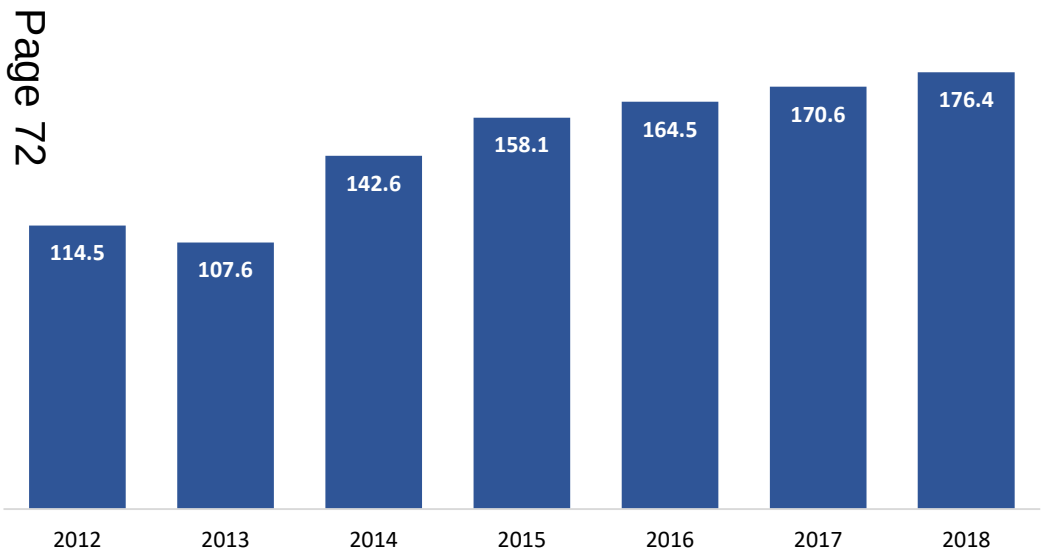


Source: ONS, Business Register of Employment Survey, 2018, Crown Copyright©, 2020
Please note that a high proportion of people working in the creative industries will not be captured by these sub-sectors

Gross Value Added[1]

- According to forecasts prepared by Oxford Economics, the value of the creatives sector in terms of GVA generation was £114.5 million in 2012, projected to reach **£176.4 million** in 2018.
- This is the equivalent of around 3% of the value of the Shropshire economy.
- Between 2012 and 2018, GVA generated by the creatives sector rose by 54% compared with growth of 14% within the total economy across all sectors

Growth in GVA: Creatives Sector in Shropshire



Source: Oxford Economic, 2012 baseline

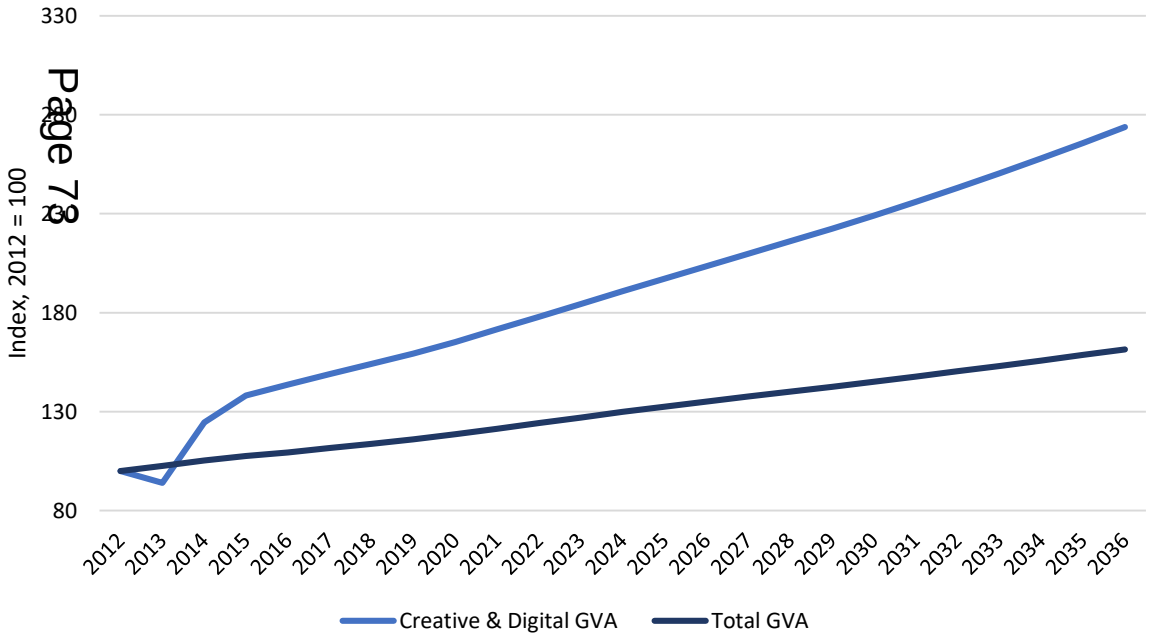
- Based on Oxford Economics data, each job in the creatives sector generates GVA to the value of £50,400.
- This is £7,015 more than the average per job across all sectors (+16% more)

[1] GVA is a means of measuring the contribution to the economy made by producers or sectors. It is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used in production.

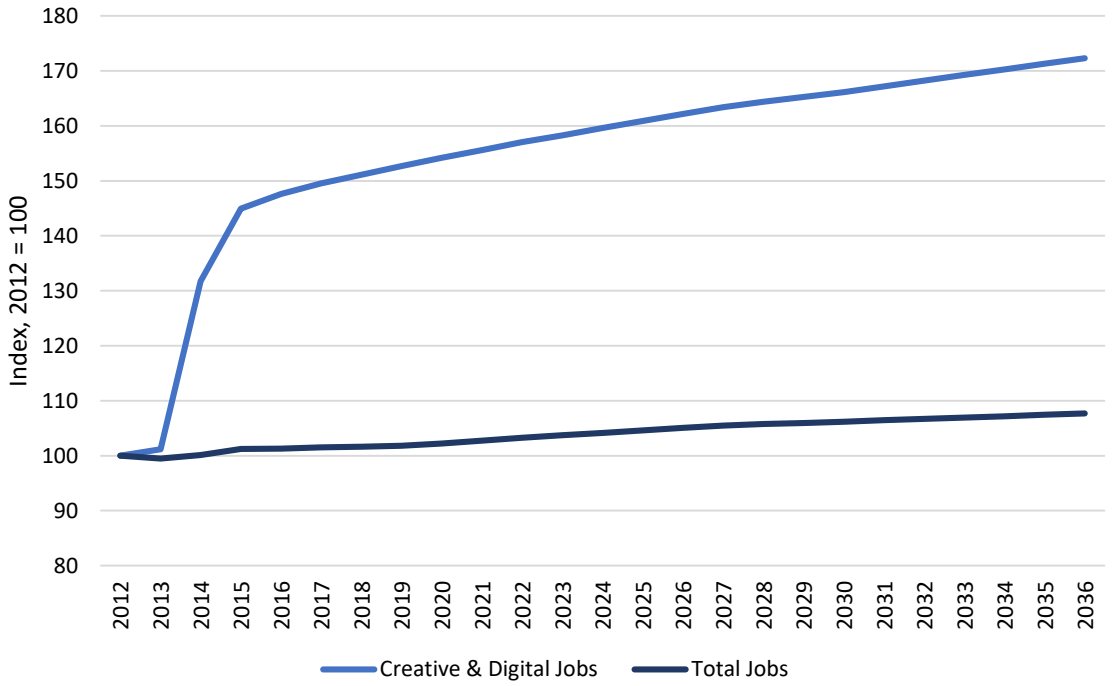
Creatives: Forecasts

- The value of the creatives sector is forecast to rise almost three times more quickly than the value of the total Shropshire economy between 2012 and 2036.
- Growth of 174% is projected, which will take GVA to £313.4 million.
- The contribution the creatives sector make to the economy will edge up to 3.4%
- Meanwhile, growth in the number of jobs will also exceed overall job growth (+72% compared with +7%).

Forecast Growth in GVA



Forecast Growth in Jobs



Source: Oxford Economic, 2012 baseline

Please note that these forecasts were prepared before the Coronavirus pandemic, which will undoubtedly influence how the economy performs in the future across all sectors, including the creative industries

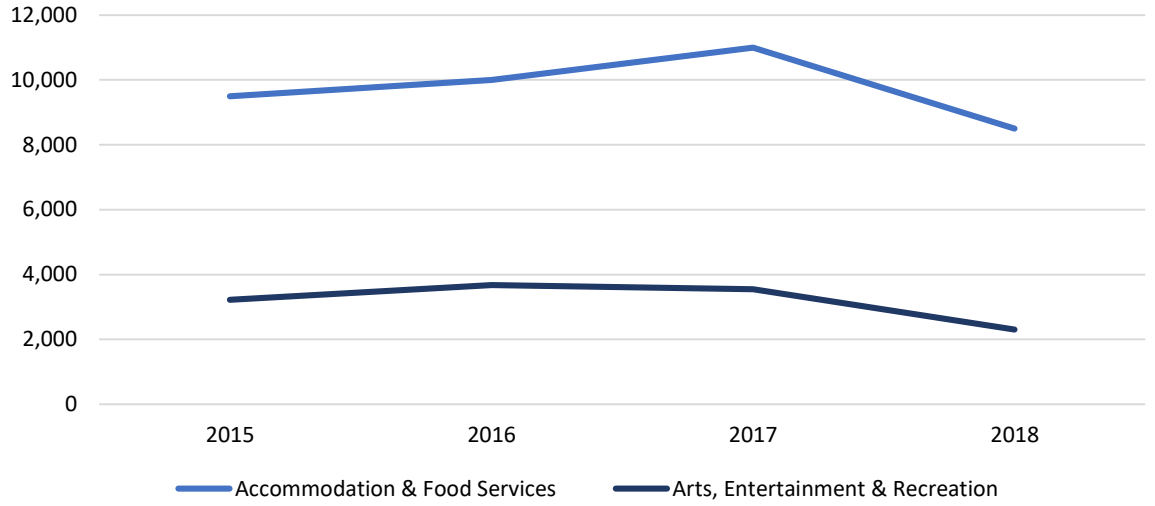
Visitor Economy

The visitor economy sector includes[1]:

- *Accommodation and food services*
- *Arts, entertainment and recreation*

- Approximately 1,280 tourism businesses (2019), employing 11,000 (2018)
- Number of visitor economy jobs down by 2,000 (-15.4%) since 2015 (down from 14,500 in 2017)
- Number of businesses up slightly since 2015 (+15)
- In addition, approximately 500 self-employed/business owners in this sector who are registered for either VAT or PAYE taking total employment to 11,500
- Average size of business is small and reducing (8.6 employees on average in 2018/19)
- 77% of businesses have fewer than 10 employees
- Just 5 businesses employ 250 or more, with an additional 25 employing between 50 and 250.

Employment in the Visitor Economy in Shropshire



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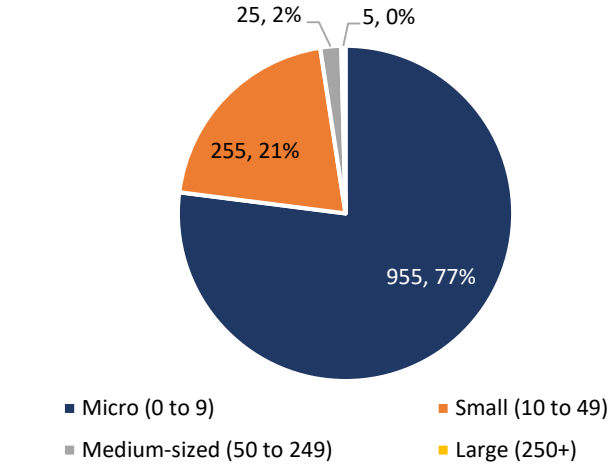
Breakdown of Visitor Economy Businesses by Size



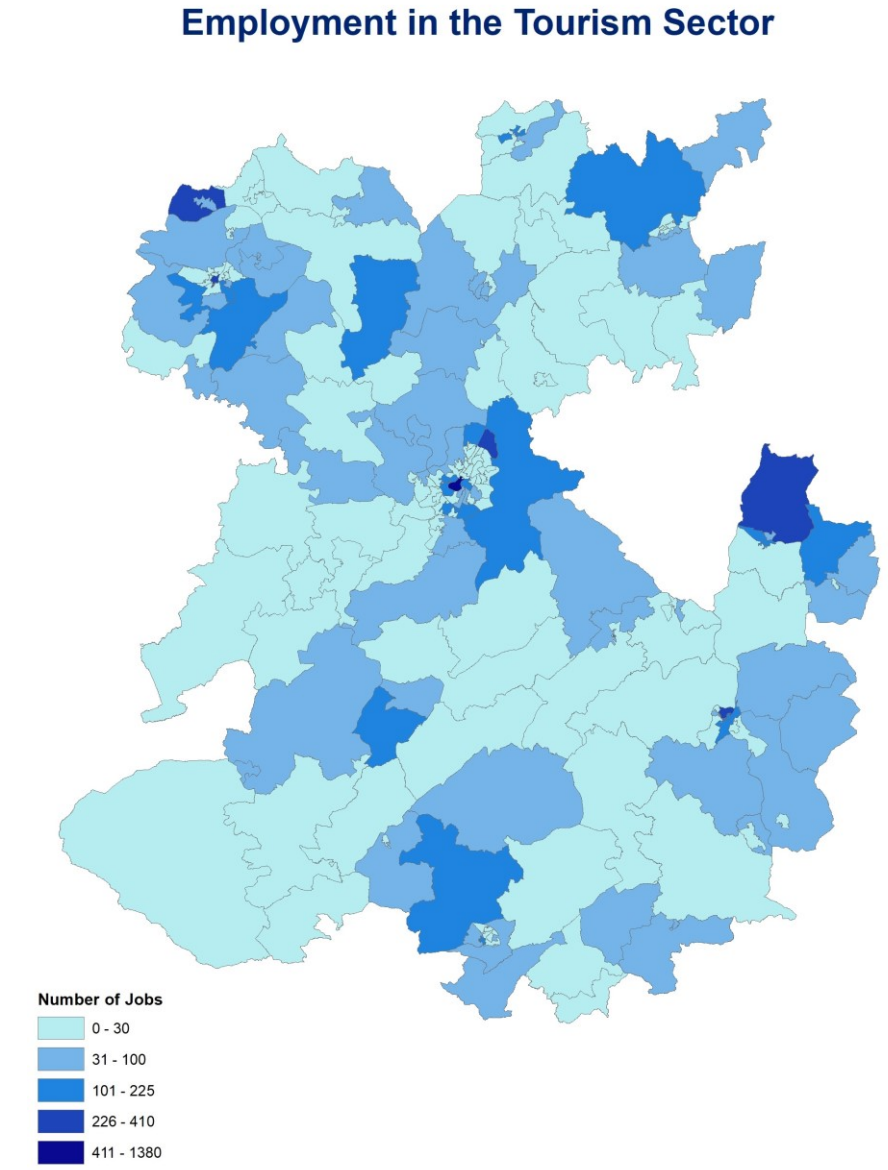
Source: ONS, Inter-Departmental Business Register, 2019, Crown Copyright©, 2020

[1] *See Appendix B for complete list of SICs included within the definition of the visitor economy*

Tourism Employment by Location

- More than a third of tourism jobs in Shrewsbury place plan area
- As a percentage of total jobs, tourism is a particularly important employer in Shifnal (26.6% of jobs) and Highley (16.9%)
- In contrast, tourism accounts for less than 8% of employment in Pontesbury/Minsterley, Wem, Ludlow, Broseley and Much Wenlock.

Place Plan Area	Jobs	% of tourism jobs	% of total jobs
Albrighton	230	2.1%	10.5%
Bishops Castle	200	1.8%	8.3%
Bridgnorth	920	8.4%	11.1%
Broseley	50	0.5%	5.8%
Church Stretton	250	2.2%	10.7%
Cleobury Mortimer	160	1.5%	10.5%
Craven Arms	310	2.8%	11.6%
Ellesmere	380	3.5%	9.7%
Highley	150	1.4%	16.9%
Ludlow	490	4.5%	7.4%
Market Drayton	680	6.2%	8.8%
Much Wenlock	90	0.8%	7.9%
Oswestry	1,470	13.4%	9.2%
Pontesbury & Minsterley	40	0.4%	2.5%
Shifnal	740	6.7%	26.6%
Shrewsbury	3,990	36.5%	8.0%
Wem	260	2.4%	6.2%
Whitchurch	430	3.9%	8.2%

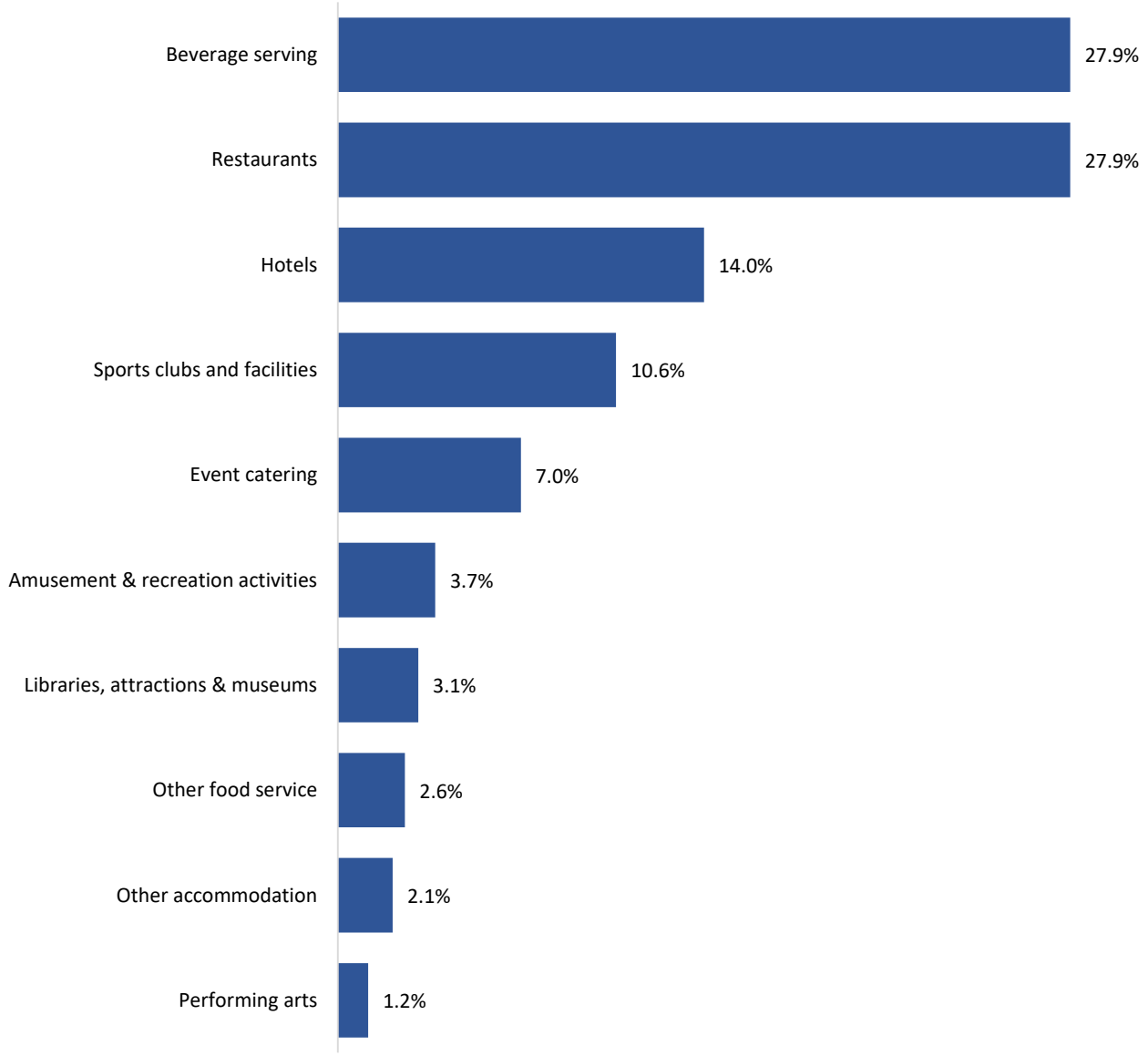


Source: ONS, Business Register of Employment Survey, 2018, Crown Copyright©, 2020
Note: Job count will be under-estimated in some Place Plan Areas where self-employment levels are high and where employment is more likely to be seasonal

Visitor Economy Employment by Sub-Sector

- The tourism sector includes jobs in a variety of sub-sectors ranging from accommodation and food services, visitor attractions to performing arts.
- More than three-quarters of employment is in accommodation and food services, with restaurants and beverage serving establishments (pubs and cafes) accounting for 27.9% of all jobs
- 14% of jobs are in hotels and guesthouses, with other types of accommodation accounting for 2.1% of jobs.
- More than a tenth of jobs are provided by sports clubs and facilities
- Amusement and recreational activities account for 3.7% of jobs, while 3.1% of sector jobs are attributable to libraries, museums and other visitor attractions
- In terms of business numbers, the highest number of operators are restaurants (435) and beverage serving establishments (350).

Breakdown of Visitor Economy Jobs by Sub-Sector

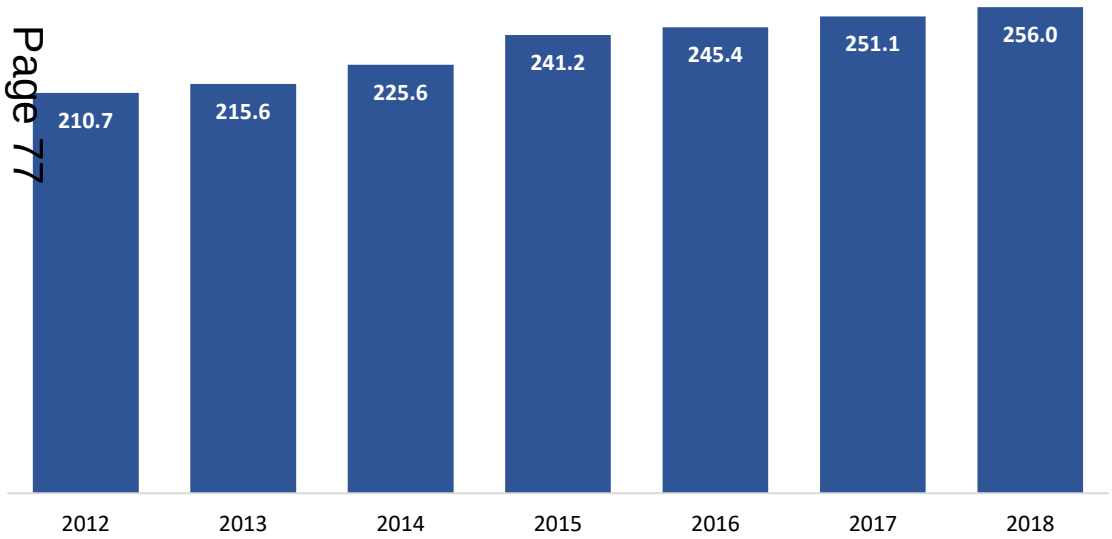


Source: ONS, Business Register of Employment Survey, 2018, Crown Copyright©, 2020

Gross Value Added[1]

- According to forecasts prepared by Oxford Economics, the value of the tourism sector in terms of GVA generation was £210.7 million in 2012, projected to reach **£256.0 million** in 2018.
- This is the equivalent of around 4% of the value of the Shropshire economy.
- Between 2012 and 2018, GVA generated by the creatives sector rose by 21% compared with growth of 14% within the total economy across all sectors

Growth in GVA: Tourism Sector in Shropshire



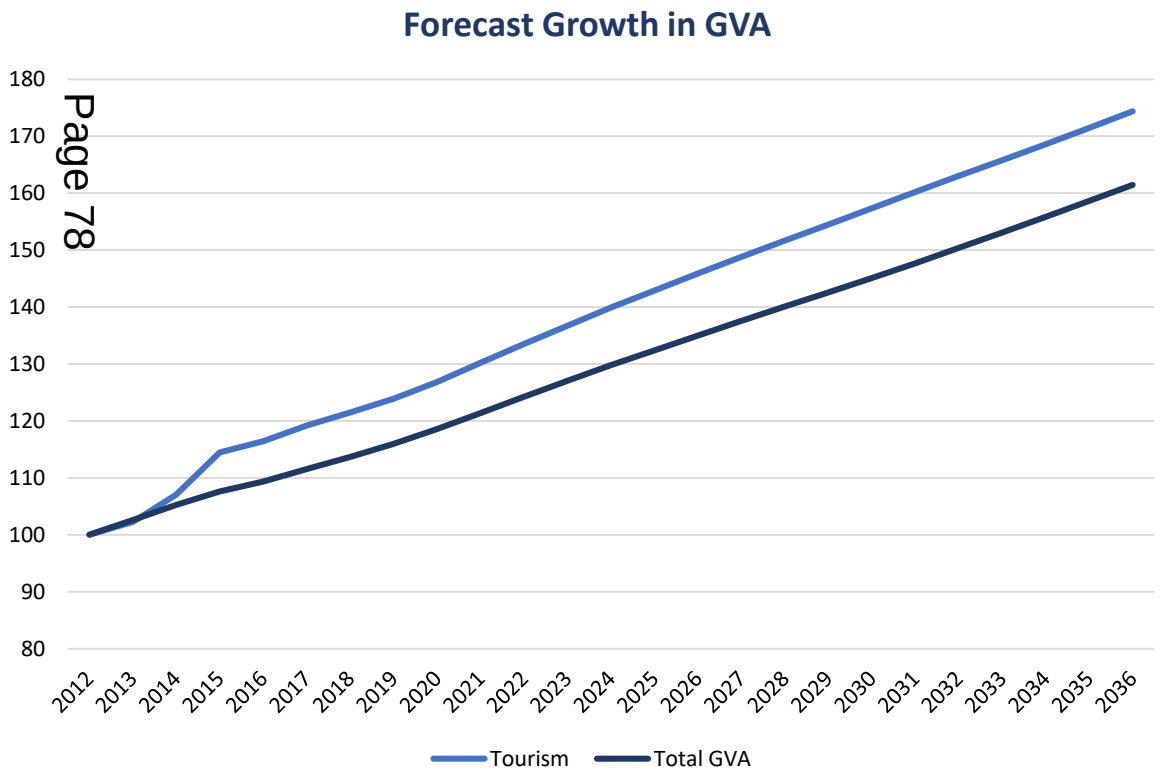
Source: Oxford Economic, 2012 baseline

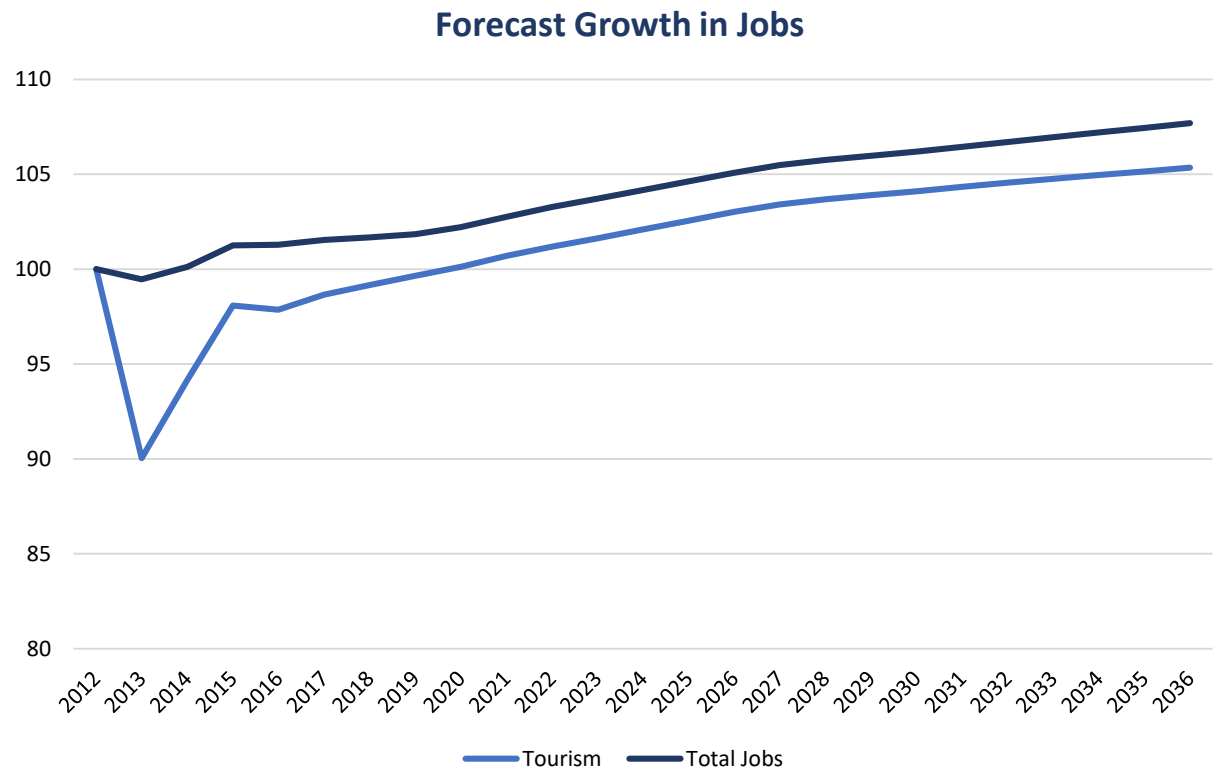
- Based on Oxford Economics data, each job in the tourism sector generates GVA to the value of £20,320.
- This is less than half of the value of the average per job across all sectors

[1] GVA is a means of measuring the contribution to the economy made by producers or sectors. It is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used in production.

Tourism: Forecasts

- The value of the tourism sector is forecast to rise slightly quicker than the value of the total Shropshire economy between 2012 and 2036.
- Growth of 74% is projected, which will take GVA to £367.4 million.
- Meanwhile, growth in the number of jobs will fall below overall job growth (+5% compared with +7%).





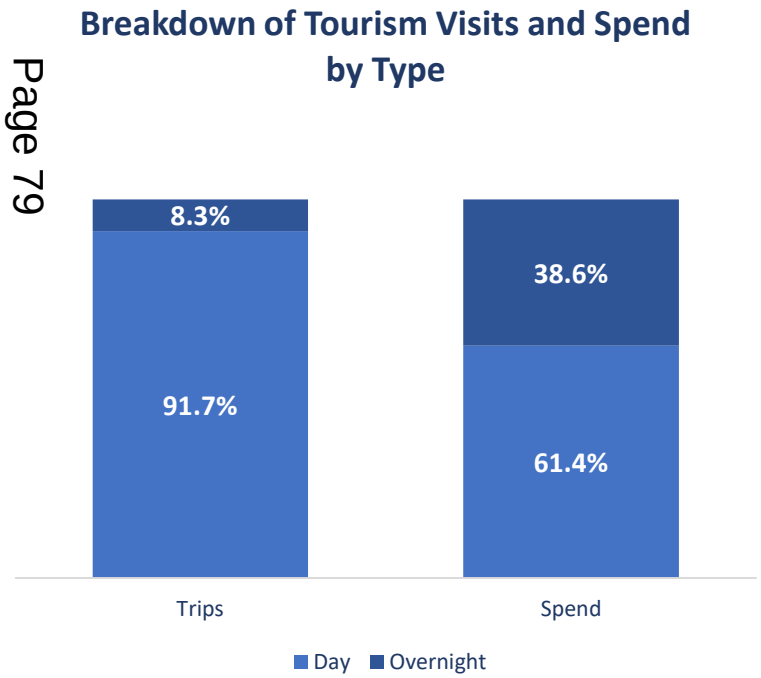
Source: Oxford Economic, 2012 baseline

Please note that these forecasts were prepared before the Coronavirus pandemic, which will undoubtedly influence how the economy performs in the future across all sectors, including the visitor economy

Shropshire as a Tourism Destination

- 13.11 tourism trips were made to Shropshire in 2018[1].
- This represents an increase of 2.6 million trips, which is the equivalent of 24.5% growth.
- Total visitor spend on these trips was £470.9 million.
- Spend rose by £57.9 million between 2016 and 2018 (+14%).

	Day	Overnight	Total
Trips	12.02	1.09	13.11
Spend	288.9	182.0	470.9



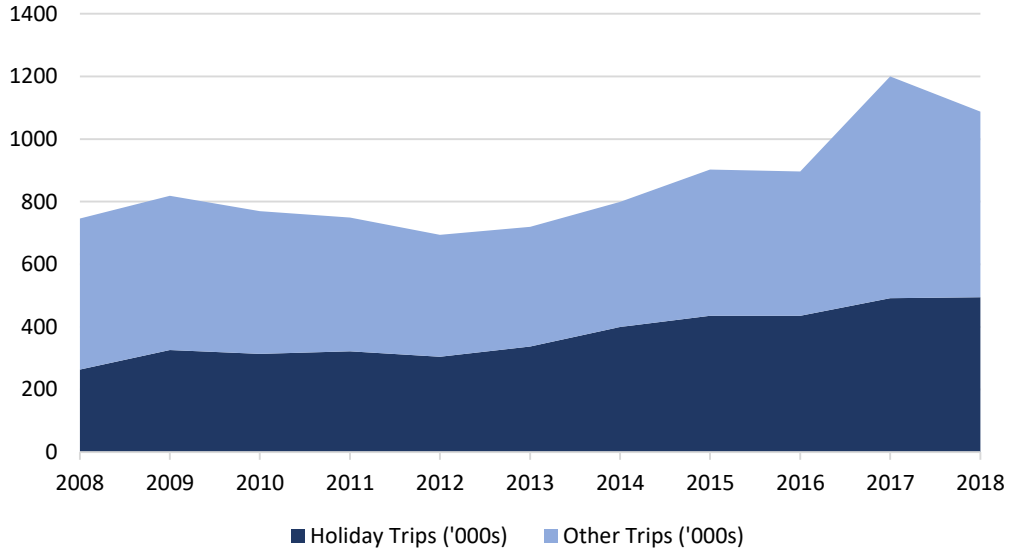
- More than nine out of 10 trips made to Shropshire are day trips.
- However, trips involving at least one overnight stay account for a much higher share of spend, at 61.4%,
- Average spend on a staying visit is around seven times higher than on a day trip. Even for a visit involving just one night away, spend is more than twice as high.
- Across both day and overnight visits, the average spend is £35.92. This has fallen by £3.30 since 2016 (+8.4%), primarily due to a notably rise in the volume of day trips to Shropshire.

[1]*Based on rolling three year average (2018 figure reflects average of 2016, 2017 and 2018)*

Overnight Visits

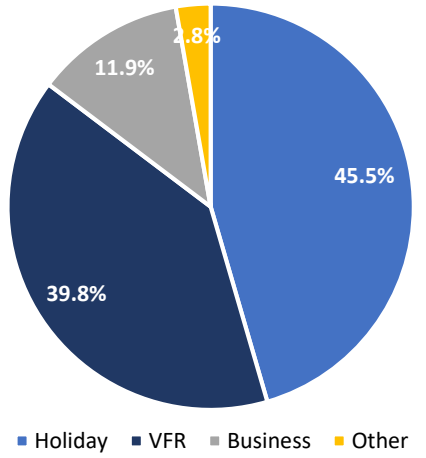
- Total number of overnight trips to Shropshire in 2018[1]: 1,088,000
- Number of trips has risen by 342,000, or by 45% over the last decade
- Holiday trips (i.e. those that involve staying in commercial accommodation) account for 45% of all trips (495,000 trips in 2018).
- The number of trips for holiday purposes has risen by 88% since 2008. Growth in the number of trips for all purposes has been much more muted at 23% over the 10 year period)
- A substantial number of trips made to Shropshire are to visit friends and relatives (VFR), with these accounting for almost four out of five trips in 2018.
- 12% of trips are for business purposes
- The total number of nights associated with tourism visits was almost 3.5 million in 2018, with the average length of stay 3.2 nights
- The average length of stay has increased from 2.6 nights in 2008
- The purpose of trip makes very little difference to the length of stay (holiday 3.2 nights, VFR 3.1 and business 3.3)

Number of Trips to Shropshire



Source: Visit Britain

Breakdown of Tourism Overnight Trips by Purpose

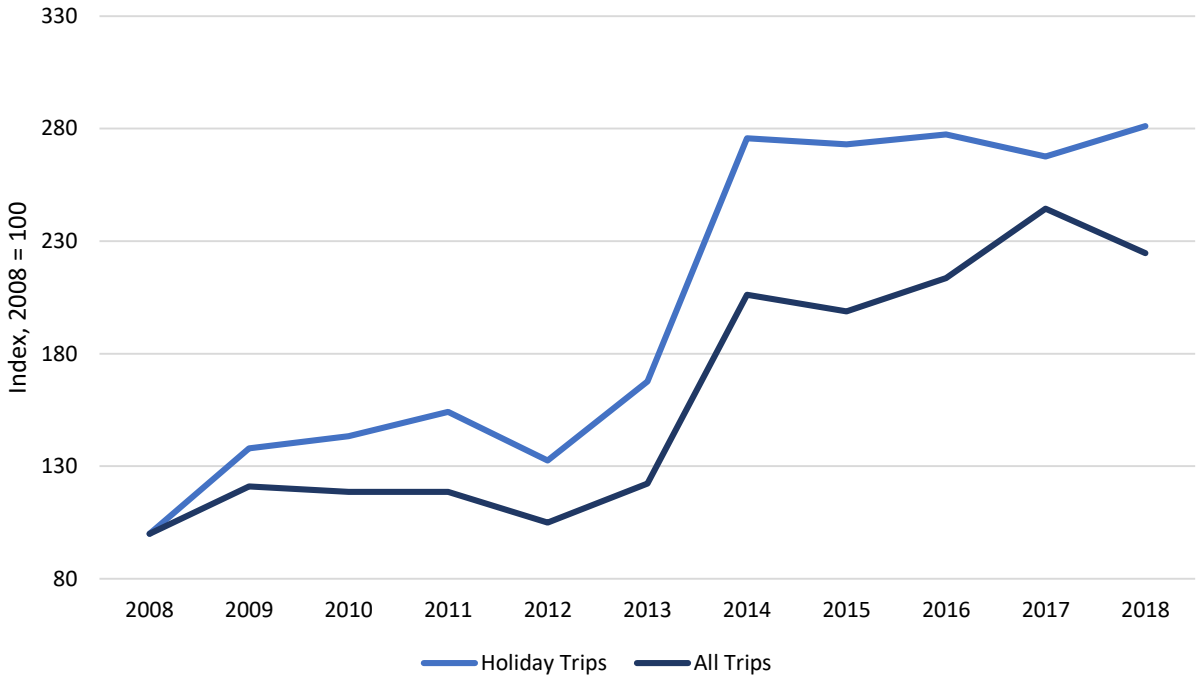


[1] *Based on rolling three year average (2018 figure reflects average of 2016, 2017 and 2018)*

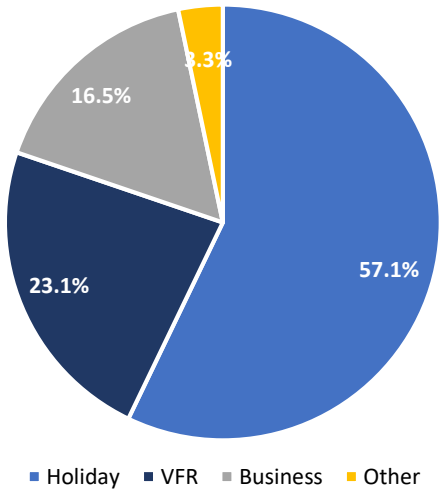
Overnight Trips – Visitor Spend

- Consumer spend on overnight visits to Shropshire rose by 125% in the 10 years to 2018 to reach £182 million.
- This is the equivalent of £167.28 per trip (£52.51 per night).
- Spend on holidays spent in commercial accommodation have risen more quickly than spend on trips overall (+181% to £104 million).
- Spend per trip is also higher for holidays than for trips overall at £210.10, which is the equivalent of £64.84 per person per night.
- Spend per trip for business purposes is highest while spend on VFR trips is notably lower.

Growth in Spend on Tourism Overnight Visits



Breakdown of Spend on Tourism Overnight Trips by Purpose



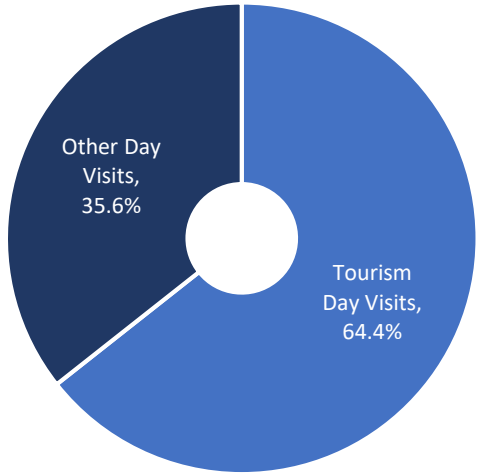
	Total Spend	Spend per Trip	Spend per Night
Holidays	£104 million	£210.20	£64.84
VFR	£42 million	£97.00	£31.77
Business	£30 million	£232.74	£70.93
Other	£6 million	£200	£53.25
All Trips	£182 million	£167.28	£52.51

Source: Visit Britain

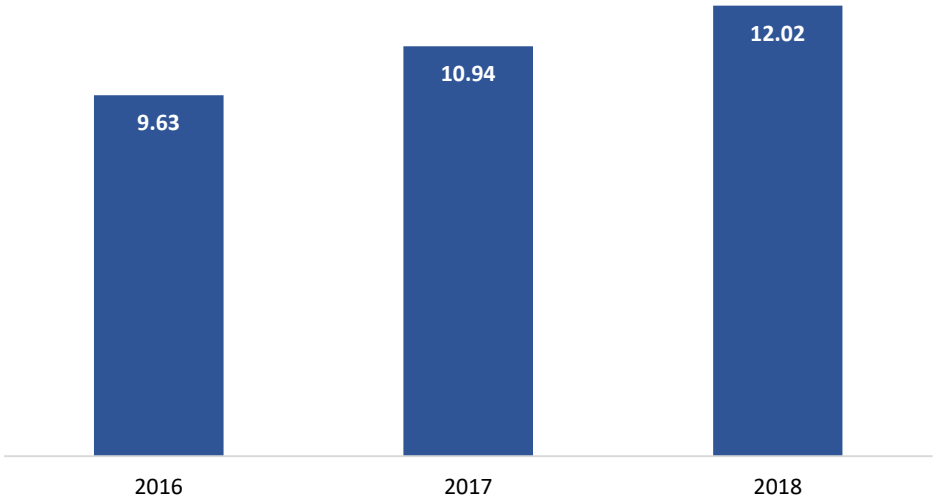
Day Visits

- The total number of leisure visits to Shropshire lasting for three hours or more (but not involving an overnight stay) stood at 18.67 million in 2018[1].
- The majority of these are classed as tourism day visits (64.4%). These are trips that are not taken on a regular basis.
- The number of tourism day visits has risen by 2.39 million since 2016 to 12.02 million.
- This represents a rise of 25%.
- Consumer spend on day visits amounted to £413.7 million in 2018
- 70% (£288.9 million) is attributable to tourism trips

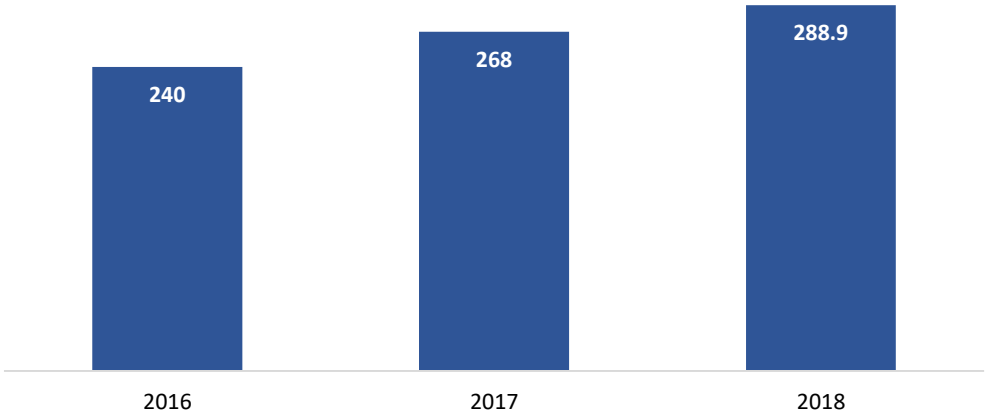
Breakdown of Day Visits by Type



Number of Tourism Day Visits (millions)



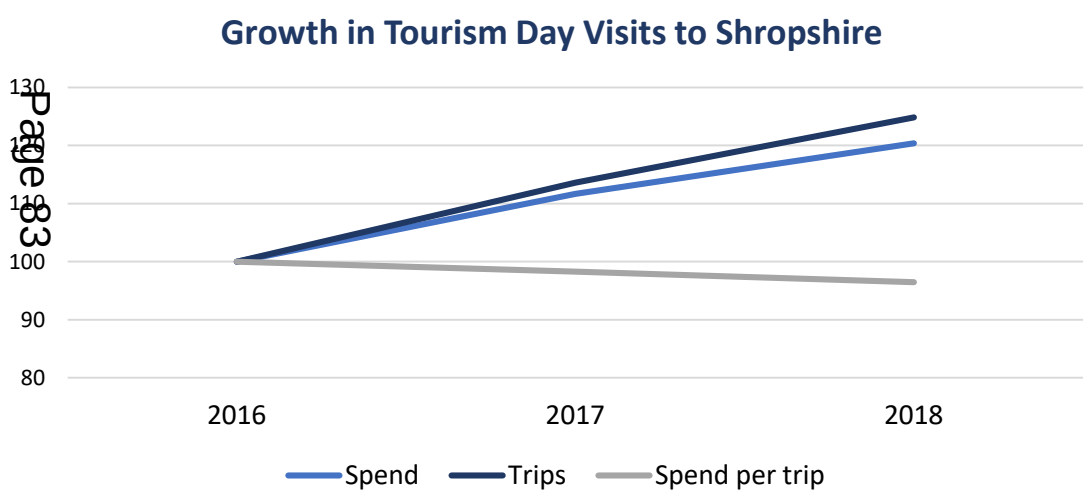
Spend on Tourism Day Visits (£ million)



[1] *Based on rolling three year average (2018 figure reflects average of 2016, 2017 and 2018)*

Source: Visit Britain

- The volume of tourism day visits rose by almost a quarter between 2016 and 2018
- Spend also rose, but not as quickly (+20%).
- This means that the average spend per trip has fallen, by 3.6% or by £0.89.
- Notwithstanding this, average spend on a tourism trip is £5.27 more than on other types of leisure trip (28.1% more)
- Spend per trip is around £10 per person per trip lower in Shropshire than the national average. The same is true for many rural locations, but if spend could be increased by £5 per trip, this would add around £60 million to the value of the day visitor market.



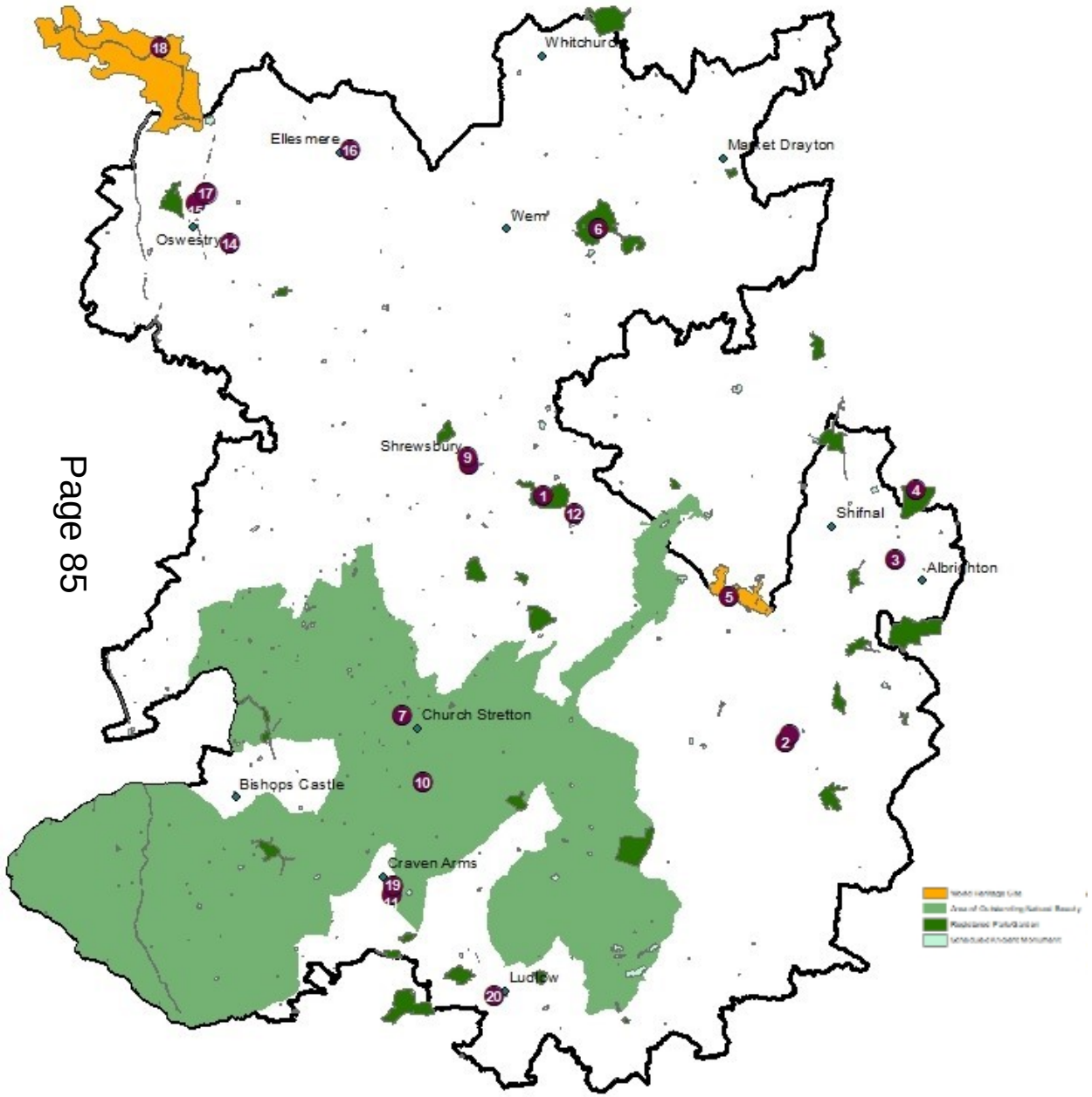
	Total Spend	Spend per Visit
Tourism	£288.9 million	£24.03
Other	£124.8 million	£18.76
All Leisure Day Visits	£413.7 million	£22.15

Source: Visit Britain

Shropshire's Natural and Historic Heritage Offer

- Shropshire is the only county in England to have part of two World Heritage Sites (Ironbridge and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct).
- It has the third highest number of listed buildings (6,906) and Registered Parks and Gardens (30), and the fourth highest number of Conservation Areas (127) in the country
- 23% of the county is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the Shropshire Hills).
- The county has 80km of canals that link the Midlands with mid and north-east Wales, 14 internationally important wetland sites, 7 Special Areas of Conservation (of European significance), 107 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and more varied geology than anywhere else in Britain
  It is rightfully recognised as an exceptionally historic and beautiful county.
- These fantastic outdoor assets are not just important for heritage and wildlife; they bring in over £100 million annually to the local economy, employ at least 2,200 people, and make a significant contribution to improving mental and physical health and wellbeing.

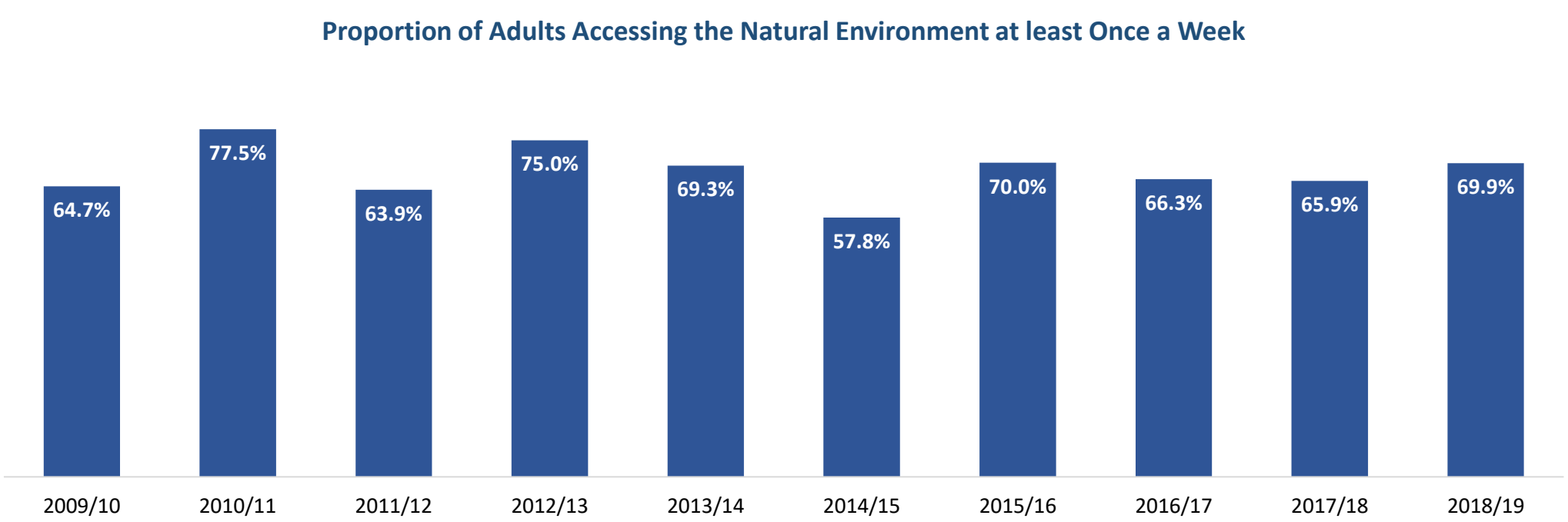
Shropshire's Natural and Cultural Offer



1 = Attingham Park
2 = Severn Valley Railway
3 = RAF Museum Cosford
4 = Weston Park
5 = Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust
6 = Hawkstone Park Follies
7 = Cardingmill Valley
8 = Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery
9 = Theatre Severn
10 = Acton Scott Working Farm
11 = Stokesay Castle
12 = Wroxeter Roman City
13 = Bridgnorth Cliff Railway
14 = British Ironworks Centre
15 = Oswestry Hill Fort
16 = The Mere
17 = Park Hall Far,
18 = Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
19 = Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre
20 = Ludlow Castle

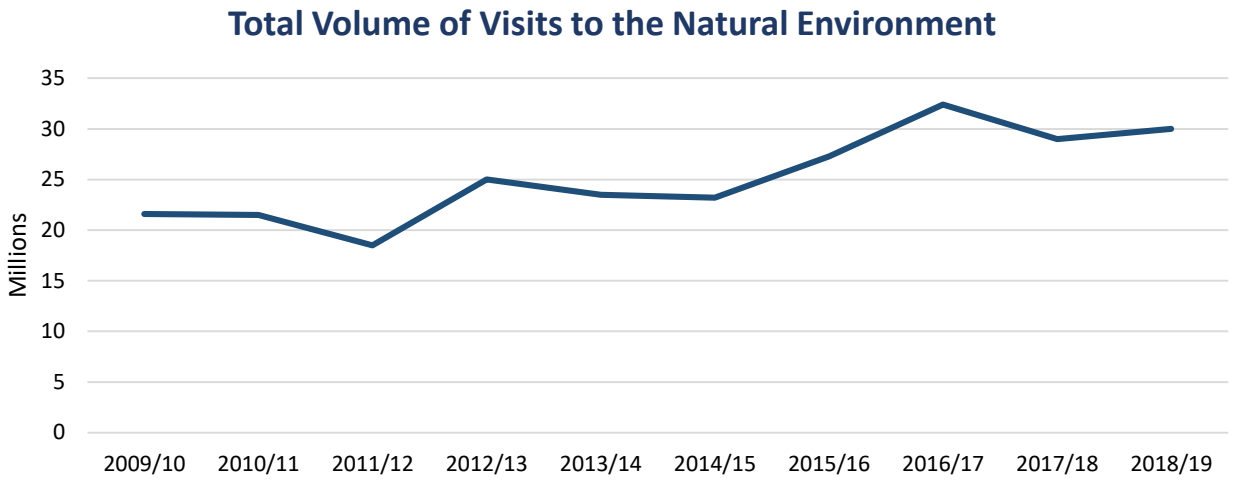
Engagement with the Natural Environment

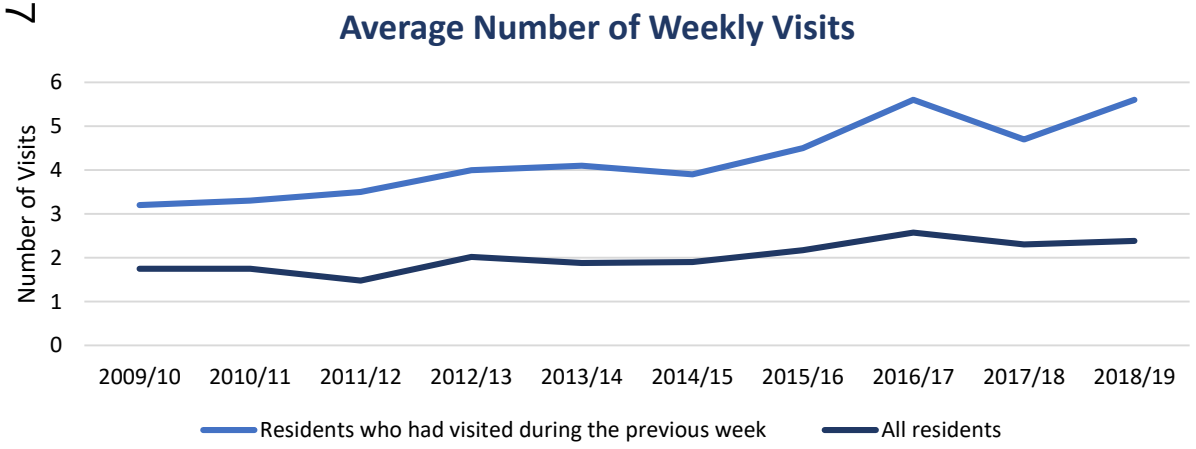
- The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (MENE) is funded by Natural England, with support from DEFRA and the Forestry Commission. The survey collects information about the ways people engage with the countryside and green spaces in towns and cities.
- The survey shows that 69.9% of Shropshire residents visited the natural environment at least once a week in 2018/19. The proportion has fluctuated in recent years, but is consistently above the national average (65% in 2018/19).



Source: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment

- The total number of visits to the natural environment made by Shropshire adults amounted to an estimated 30 million in 2018/19.
- This represents an increase of 8.4 million visits since 2009/10 (+38.9%).
- It is however down from a peak of 32.4 million in 2016/17.
- On average, each Shropshire adult visited the natural environment 124 times in 2018/19, compared with 91 times in 2009/10.





- The average number of visits to the natural environment amongst all Shropshire adults was 2.4 in 2018/19.
- Amongst those that had accessed the natural environment at least once in the week before they were surveyed, the frequency of visits was far higher at 5.6 visits.
- The average duration of each trip is 114.1 minutes.

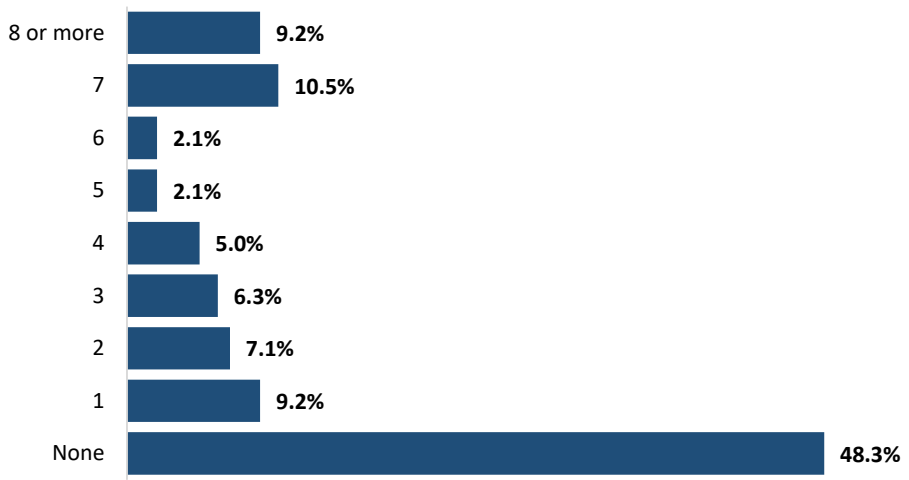
Source: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment

- 48% of survey respondents had not accessed the natural environment at all in the week prior to being questioned.
- At the other end of the scale, around one in five had visited at least once a day.
- 22% of visits were with children*
- 50% of visits were made alone*
- The average party size was 2 people*
- The average number of adults per party was 1.6*

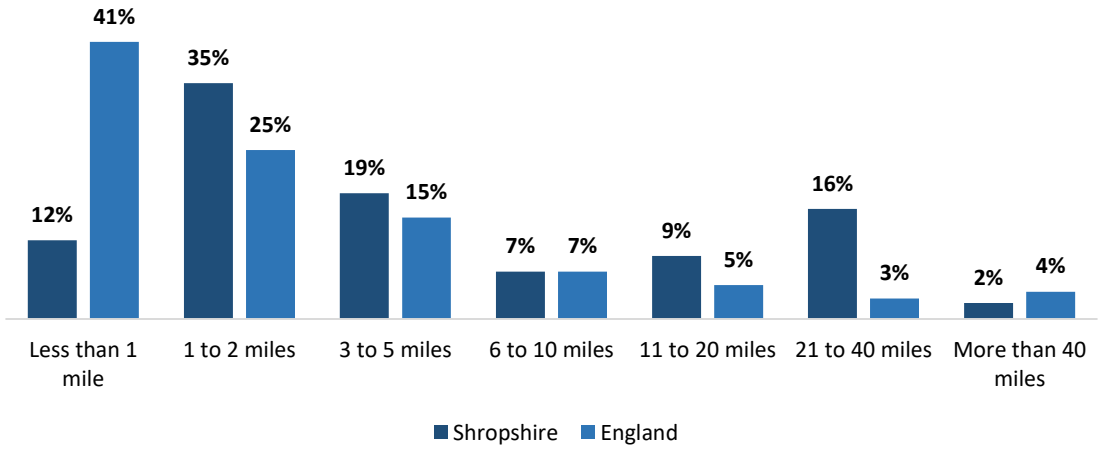
* Average over last three years of survey

- Two-thirds of visits were within a distance of 5 miles, but just 12% are within a mile compared with 41% for England. As a consequence, Shropshire visitors were less likely to arrive on foot.

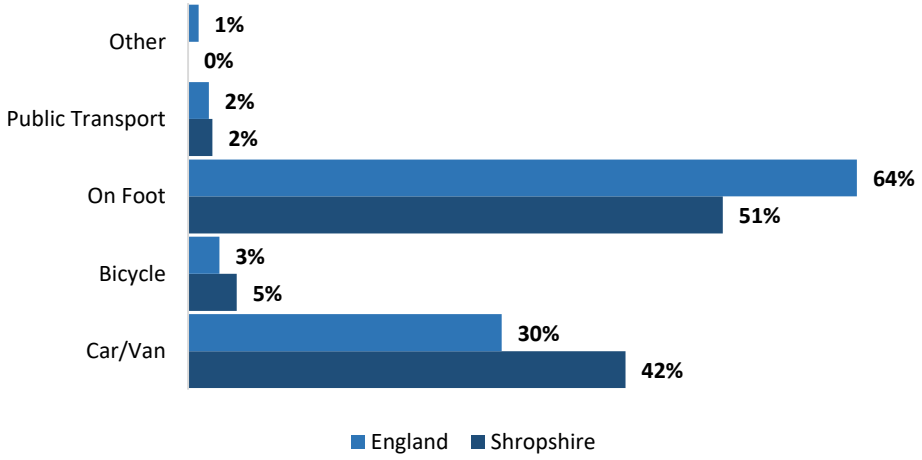
Number of Visits per Week in the Week Before Survey



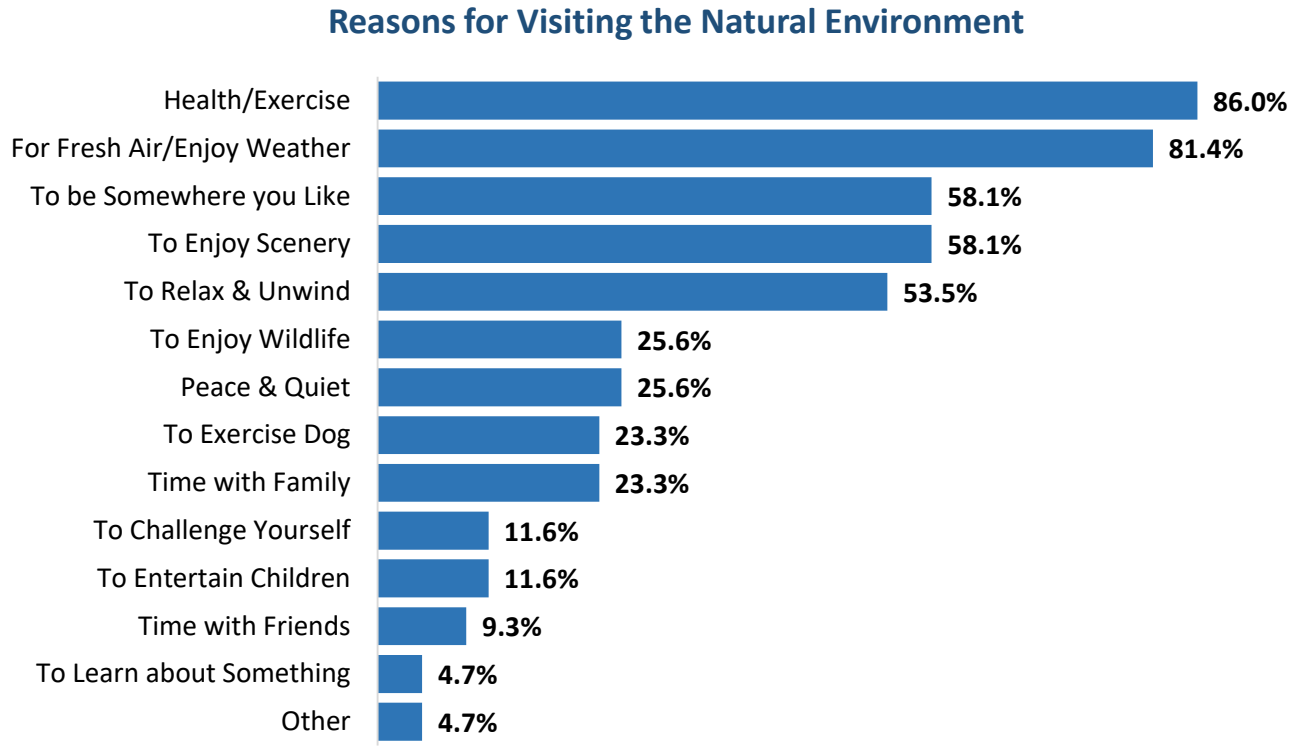
Distanced Travelled to Natural Environment



Means of Travel to the Natural Environment

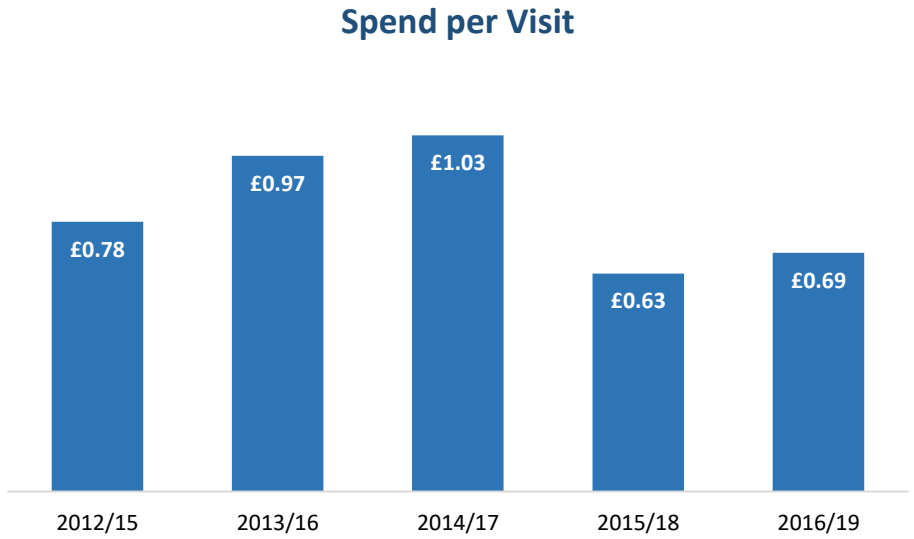


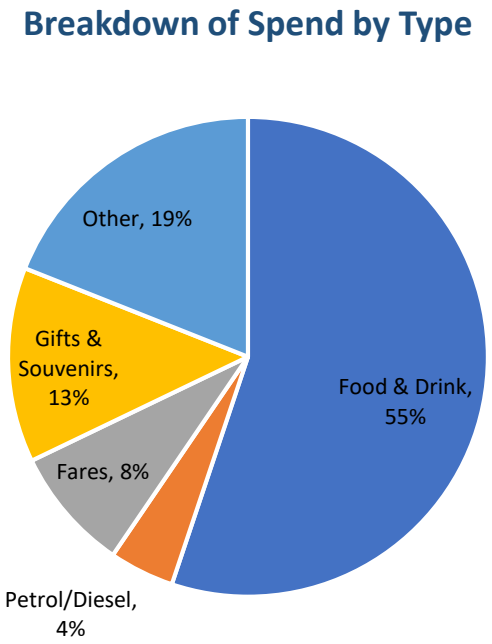
- The main motivation for visiting the natural environment is for health/exercise (86%)
- More than four-fifths of residents also said the reason for their visit was to enjoy the weather or for some fresh air
- More than half wanted to enjoy the scenery and /or to be somewhere they like
- More than half of visits were to relax/unwind
- Other significant reasons for enjoying the natural environment were for peace and quiet, to enjoy the wildlife, to exercise the dog or to spend time with family



- The two main reasons given for not spending time in the natural environment are old age (50% of those not participating) and ill health (42%).

- Spend per person per trip to access the natural environment is very low, at just £0.69 on average based on a three year rolling average.
- Although this represents a very small increase (+£0.06) compared with the previous three year average, the long term trend is downward.
- Almost three-quarters of all trips do not incur any expenditure at all (74%).
- Where expenditure is incurred, at the average spend per person is £2.63



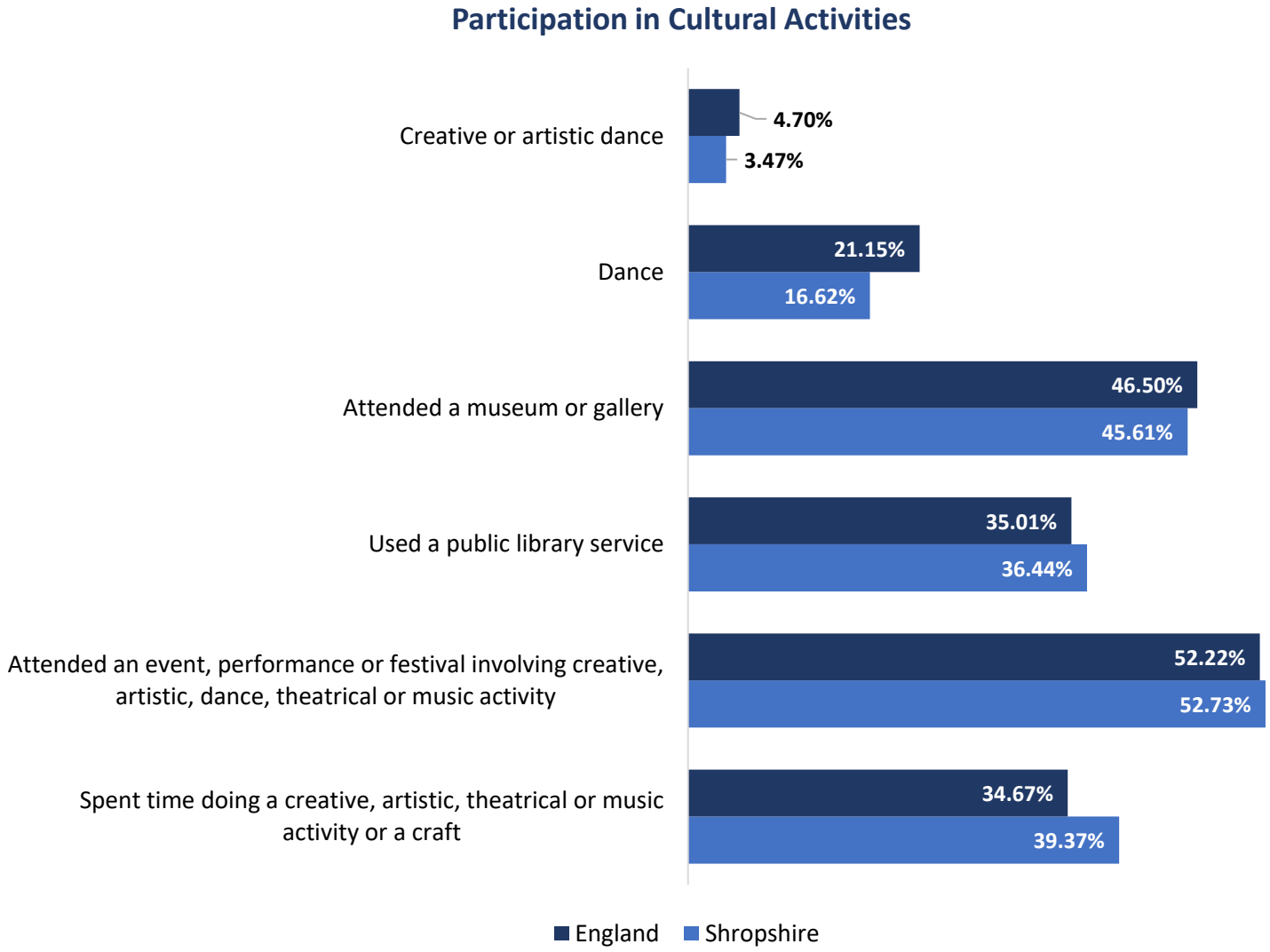


- The majority of spend is on food and drink (55%)
- Gifts and souvenirs represent 13% of spend
- 12% of spend is related to transport – 8% on fares and 4% on petrol or diesel.

Source: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment, figures based on rolling three year average due to small sample size

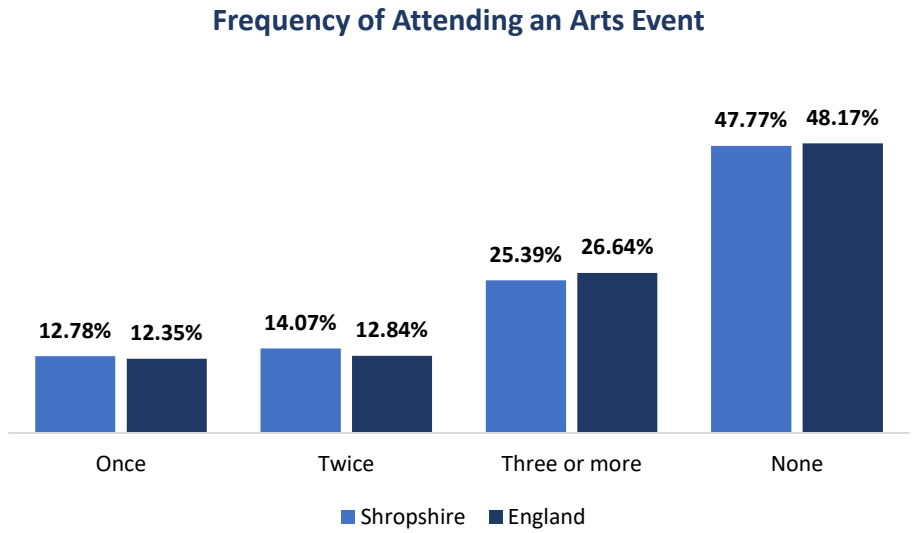
Participation in Cultural Activities

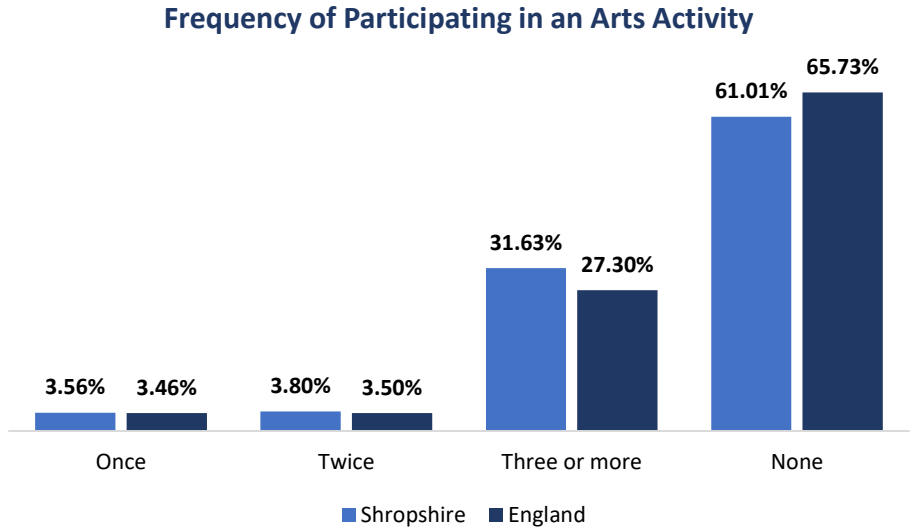
- More than half of Shropshire residents have attended an event, performance or festival within the last 12 months. This is in line with the national average.
- Almost four out of 10 residents had spent time doing creative, artistic, theatrical or musical activities – this is higher than the average for England
- 46% have visited a museum or gallery, very marginally lower than the national average
- 36% have used a public library service, slightly more than the national average
- 16% have participated in some form of dance, although for only a small minority of the population was this creative or artistic dance.

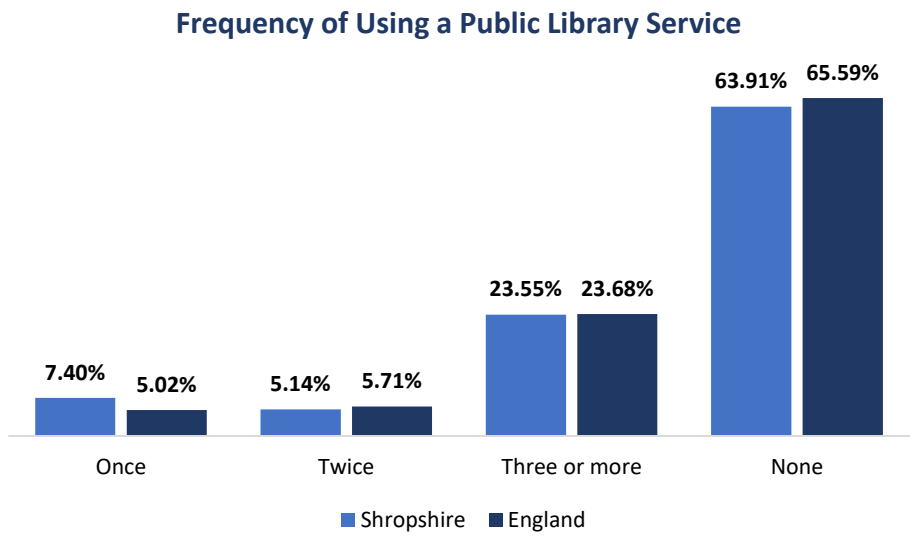


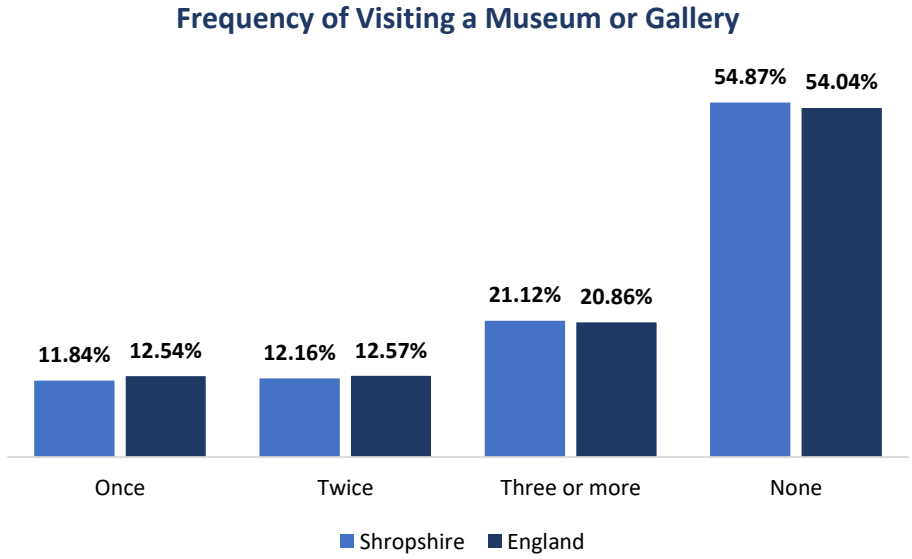
Source: Active Lives, Survey undertaken between 2015 and 2017

- The charts below show that across the range of different cultural activities, consumers who participate are much more likely to do so on three or more occasions in a year than only once or twice. This is particularly true for public library service users and those who take part in arts activities.





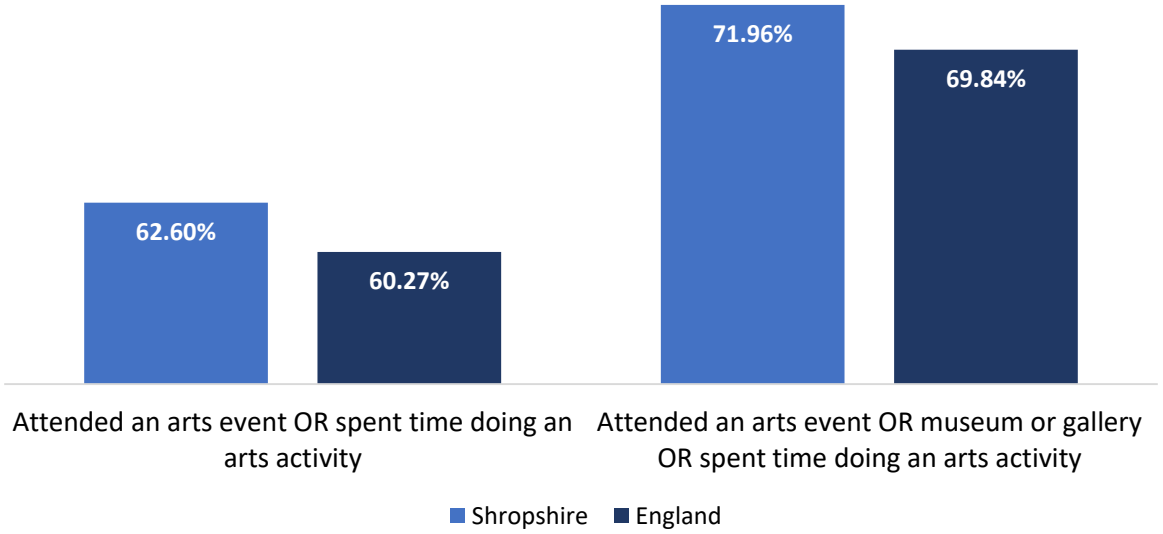




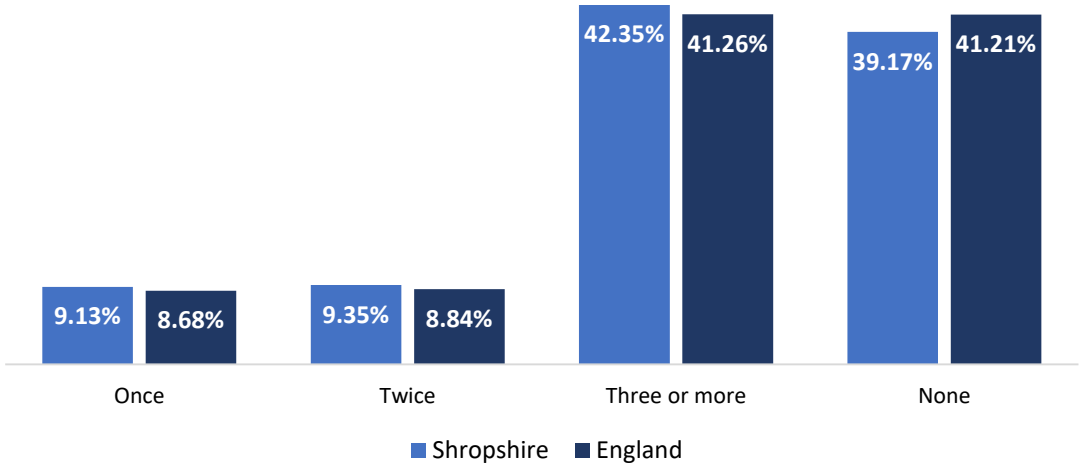
Source: Active Lives, Survey undertaken between 2015 and 2017

- 72% of the Shropshire population has attended an arts event, participated in an arts activity or visited a museum or gallery over the last year.
- This is slightly higher than the average for England.
- Almost 63% have either attended an event or participated in an arts-related activity – again, this is slightly higher than the national average.
- Consumers are more than twice as likely to participate in at least one type of cultural activity than at least three times a year as they are once or twice.

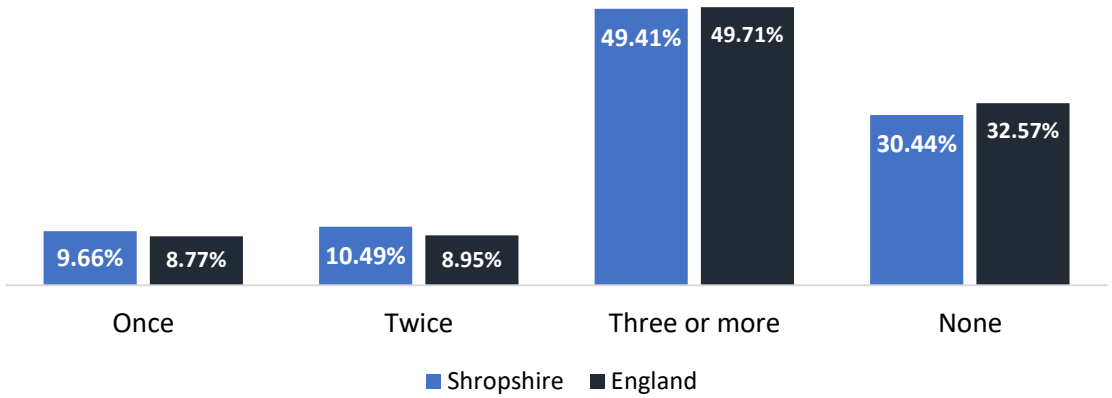
Participation in one or more Cultural Activity



Frequency of Attending Arts Event or Participating in an Arts Activity



Frequency of Attending Arts Event or Museum or Gallery or Participating in an Arts Activity

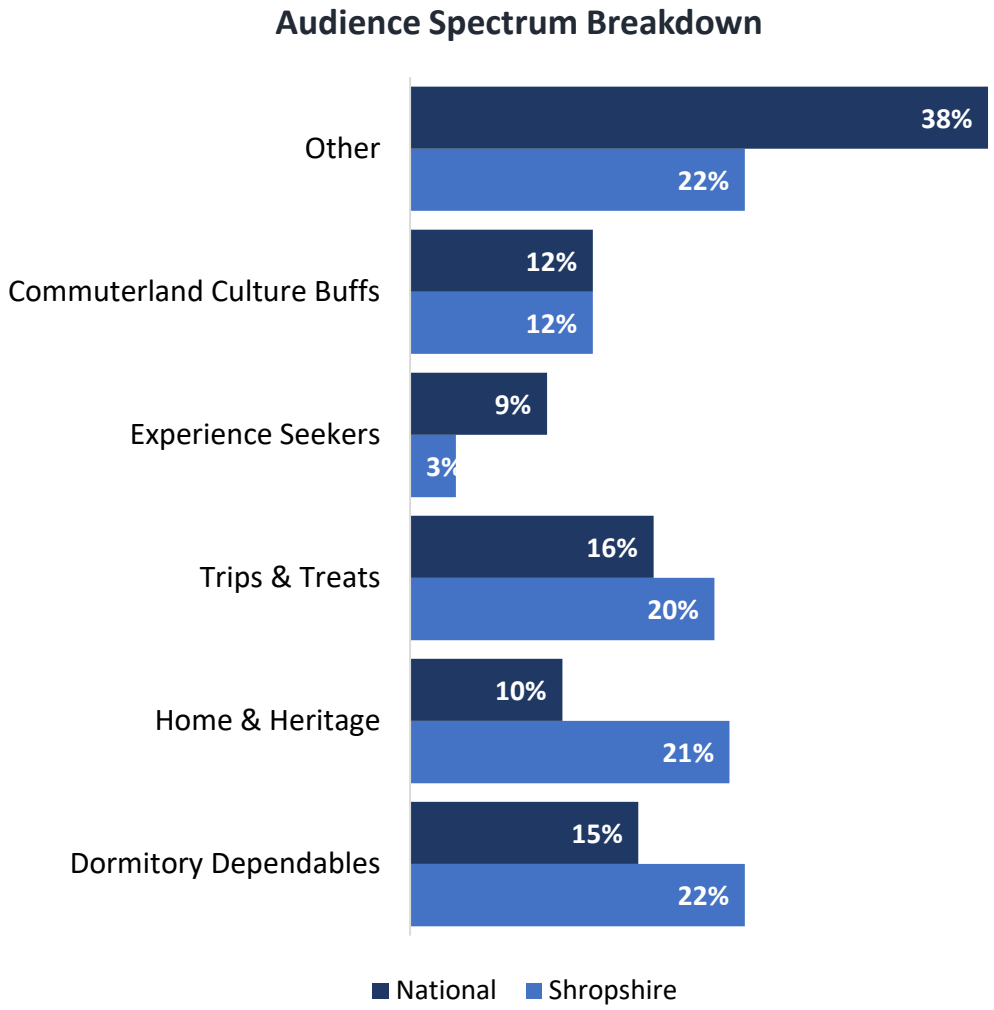


Source: Active Lives, Survey undertaken between 2015 and 2017

Audience Segmentation

The most prominent audience spectrum in Shropshire are:

- Dormitory Dependables - Regular but not frequent cultural attenders living in city suburbs and small towns. Predominantly older families and singles, with a large proportion of households with children. They are warm to museums and the arts, and in particular to popular and mainstream events. They are very keen on live music events and have a particular preference for the heritage offer.
- Home & Heritage - Conservative and mature households who have a love of the traditional. This is a not a highly engaged group, limited by physical access to an appropriate arts and cultural offer and the means to get there.
- Trips & Treats - Suburban households, often with children, whose cultural activities usually are part of a day out or treat. Suburban adults and families enjoying active lives which involve arts and cultural engagement for predominately social and educational reasons.



Source: Audience Agency Audience Spectrum

Number of Visits to Shropshire Council Owned Cultural Facilities

There were 2,346,896 visits to council facilities over 2018/19

- There were 918,755 ***Library*** visits
- There were 182,728 ***Museums*** visits, with the largest number in Shrewsbury MAG (104,183)
- There were 977,522 ***Outdoor Recreation*** visits
- There were 199,362 visits to ***Theatre Seven***
- There were 68,529 visits to ***The Old Market Hall***

Volunteer hours by site

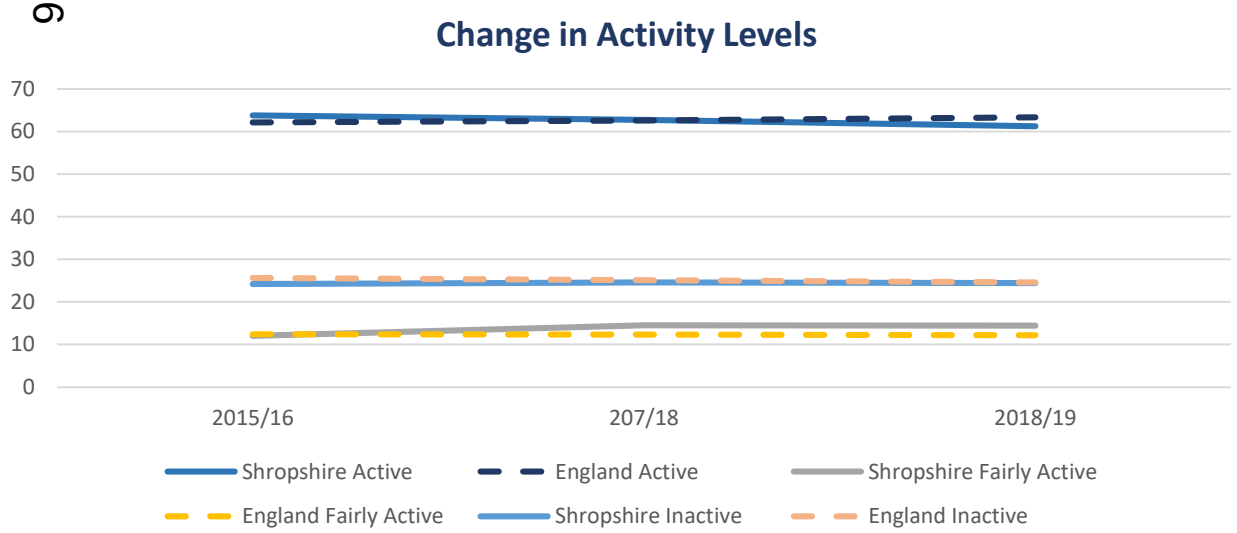
Over 2018/2019, 71,989 volunteer hours were provided over 8 key Council cultural sites:

- Libraries
- Archives
- Outdoor Recreation
- Shrewsbury MAG
- Acton Scott
- Shrewsbury Castle
- Much Wenlock Museum
- Ludlow MRC

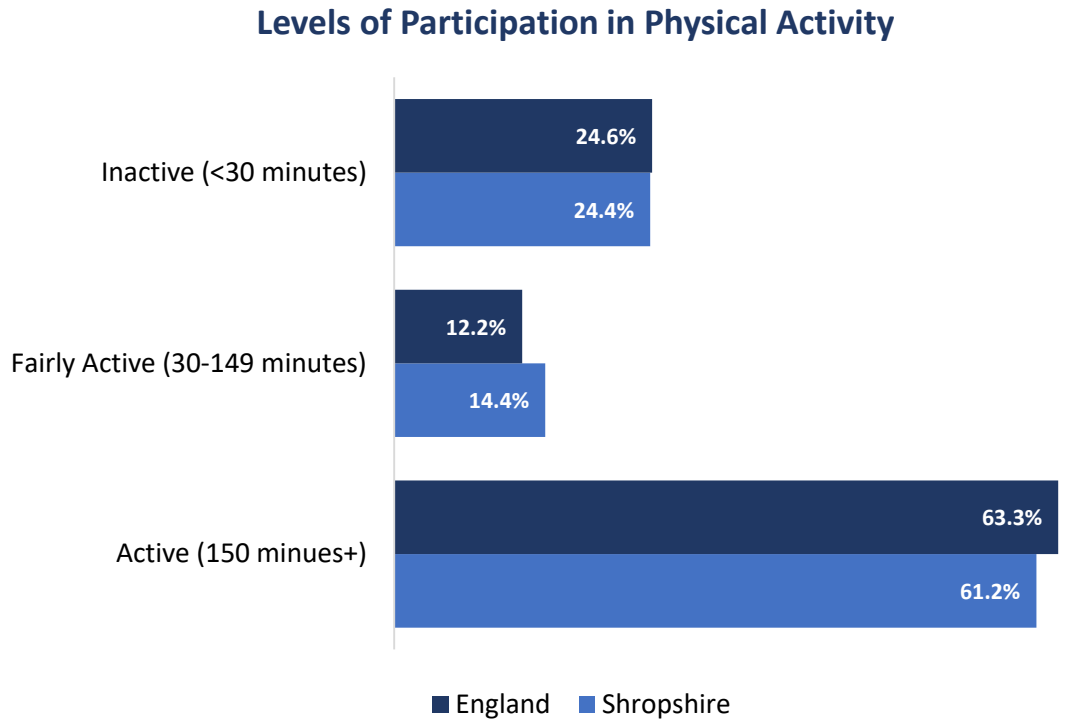
The largest number was 35,618 for Outdoor Recreation

Participation in Sporting Activities

- 61.2% of adults in Shropshire are physically active, achieving the recommended 150 minute or more per week.
- This is slightly lower than the national average (63.3%), which is due to Shropshire's older demographic.
- Notwithstanding the ageing population the proportion of the population which is inactive (less than 30 minutes physical activity per week) is comparable with the national average.

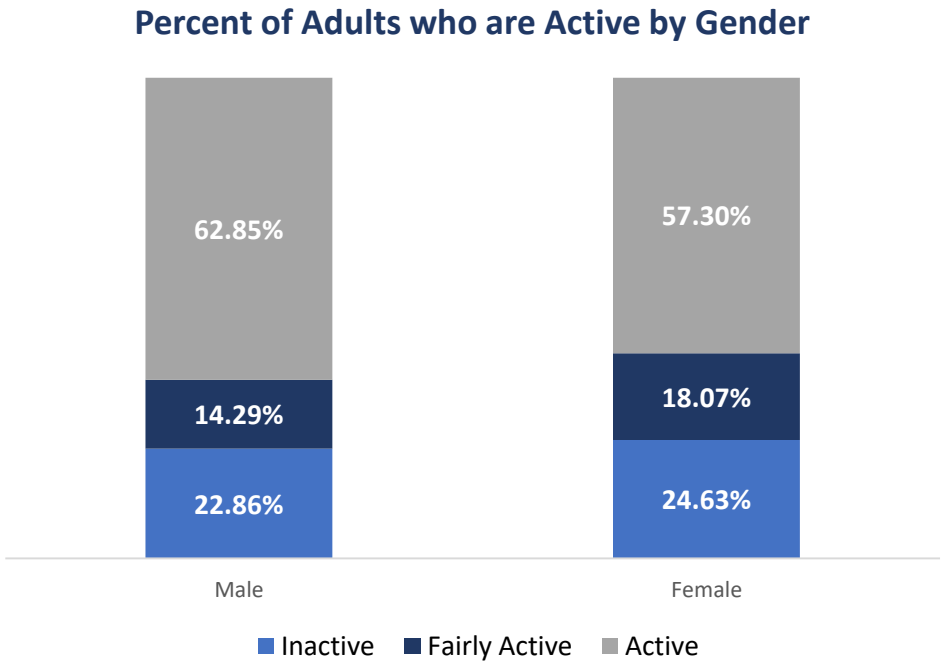


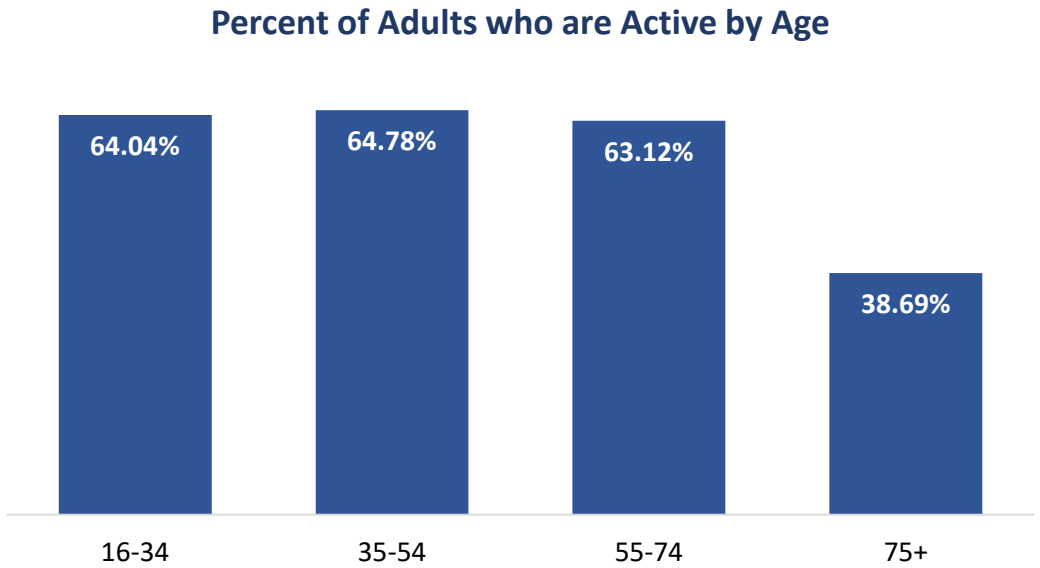
Source: Sports England Active Lives Survey, November 2018-2019

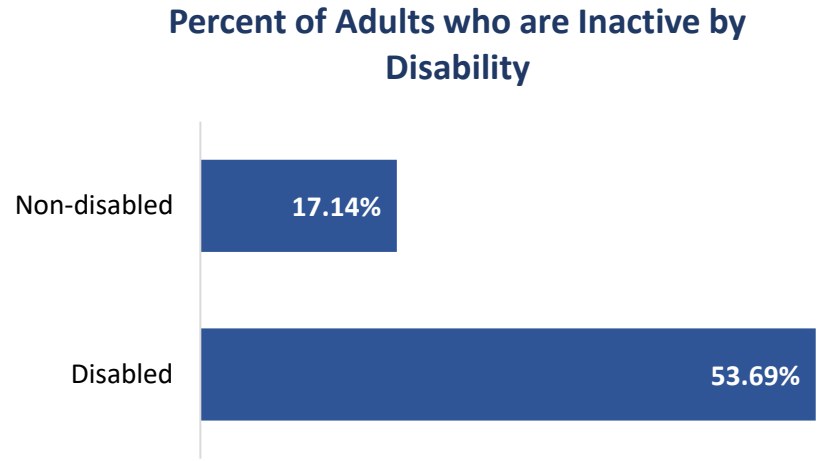


- Since 2015/16, the proportion of the Shropshire population that is active has declined very slightly (from 63.8%), although the proportion that is inactive has held stable.
- In contrast, the proportion of active adults has increased across England.
- However, as shown in chart opposite, change in activity levels has been very slight since 2015/16.

- Levels of participation in physical activity in Shropshire are fairly consistent across age groups until the age of 75, when they tail off significantly.
- Women are more likely to be inactive than men, and are less likely to undertake 150 minutes or more physical activity a week.
- Shropshire residents with a disability are more than three times more likely to be physically inactive than their able-bodies counterparts.

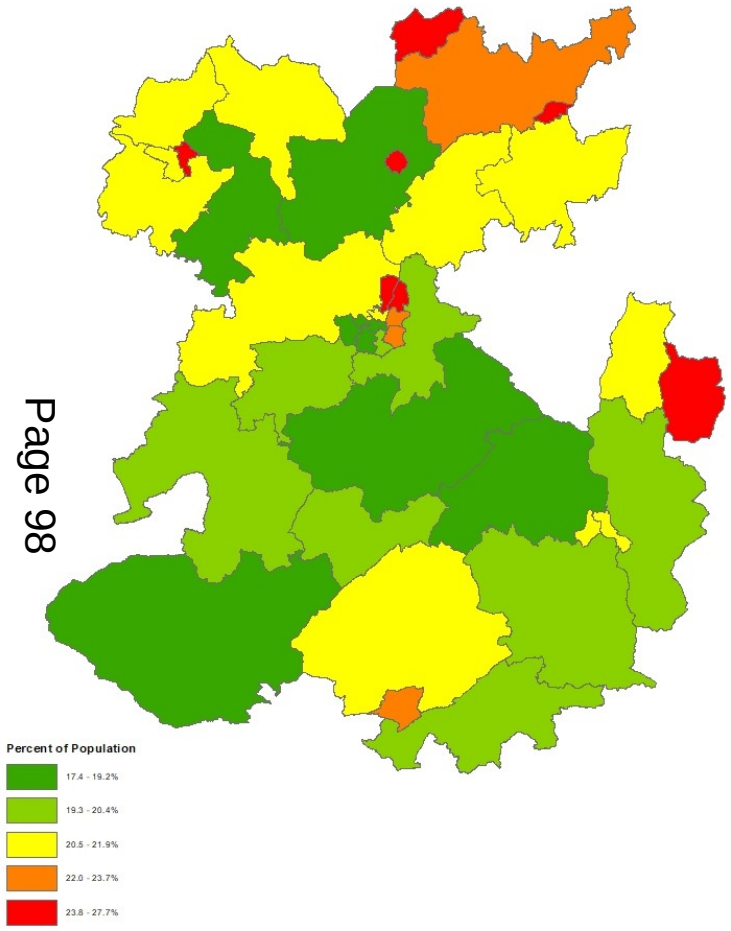




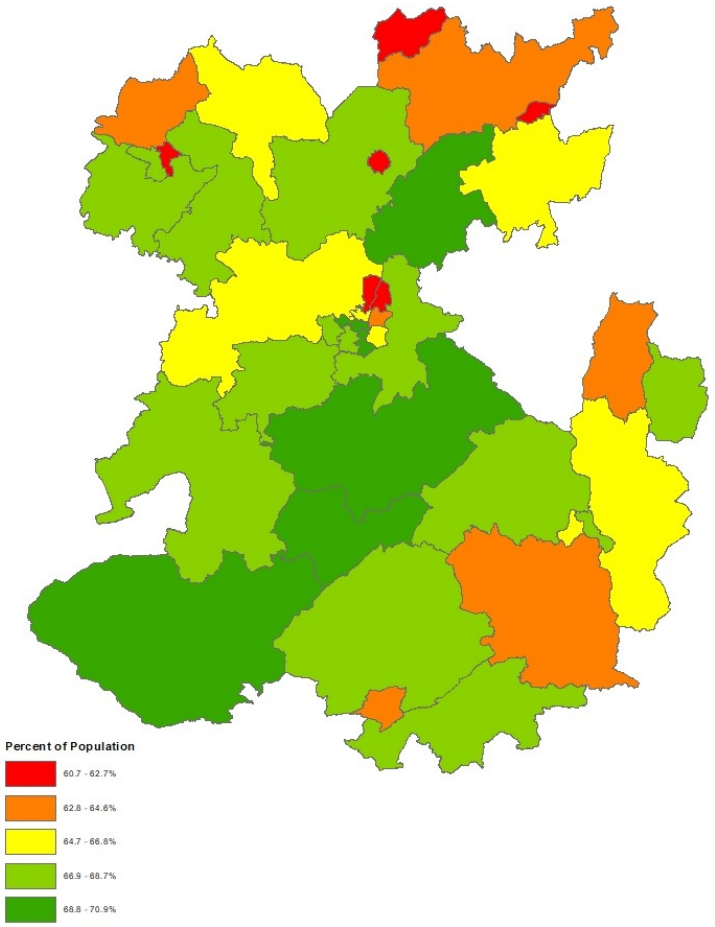


Source: Sports England Active Lives Survey, May 2018-2019

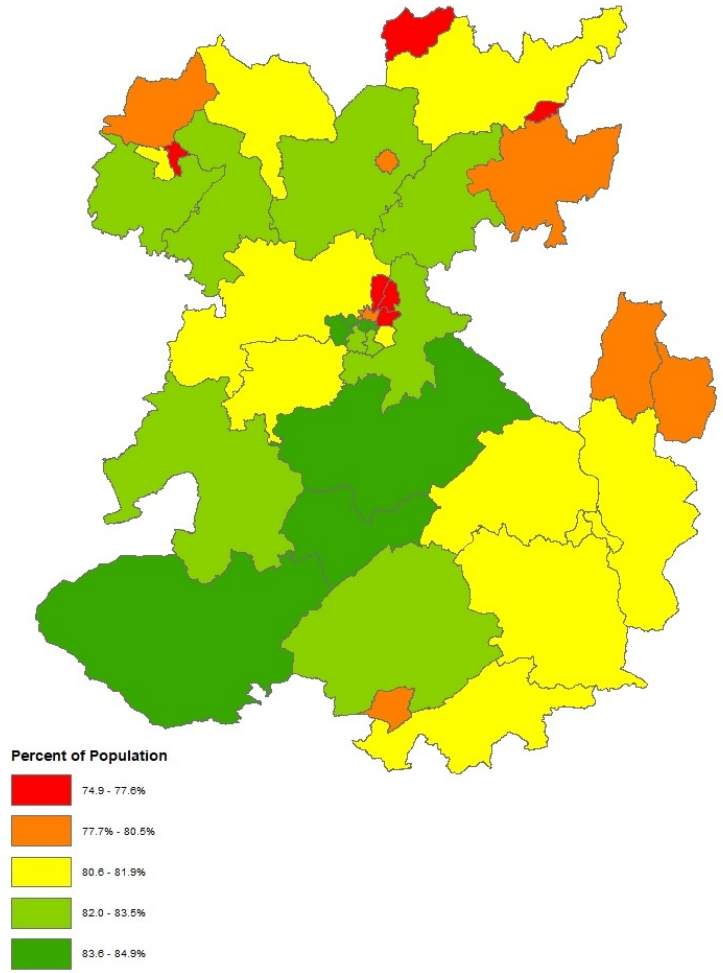
Percentage of the Population which is Inactive



Percentage of the Population with is Active



Percentage of the Population Taking Part in Sport at least Twice a Week



Source: Sports England Active Lives Survey, November 2018-2019

Well-Being and Life Satisfaction

In 2018/19:

- 63.9% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of anxiety as either good or very good (40.1% very good)
- 77.0% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of happiness as either good or very good (40.9% very good)
- 82.3% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of life satisfaction as either good or very good (33.4% very good)
- 84.5% of Shropshire residents rated their levels of feeling that things are worthwhile as either good or very good (38.4% very good)

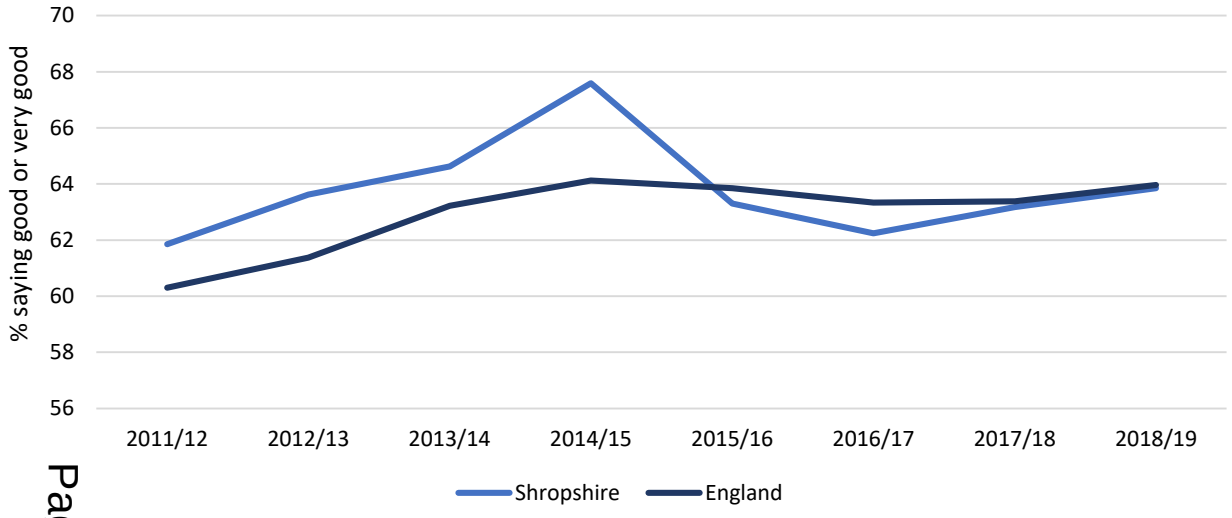
Generally, feelings of well-being are on a slight upwards trajectory, albeit with notable annual fluctuations:

- Anxiety: +2 percentage points in proportion reporting good or very good
- Happiness: +0.76 percentage points in proportion reporting good or very good
- Life Satisfaction: +2.7 percentage points in proportion reporting good or very good
- Worthwhile: +0.14 percentage points in proportion reporting good or very good

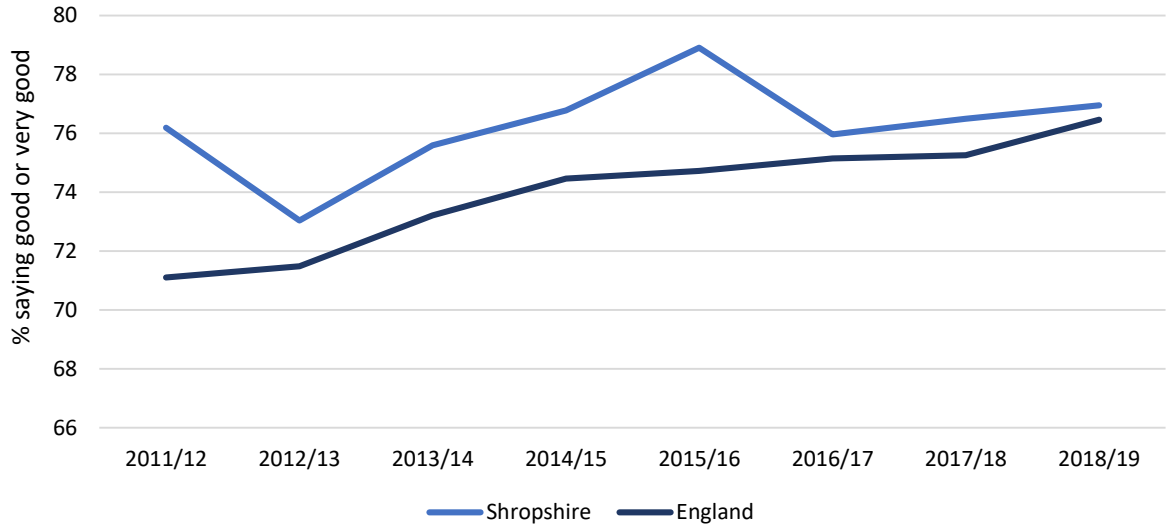
Across the four well-being indicators, Shropshire scores higher or on a par with the national average, although the gap is closing across the board:

- Anxiety: -0.11% fewer reporting good or very good compared with England
- Happiness: +0.49% more reporting good or very good compared with England
- Life Satisfaction: 0.98% more reporting good or very good compared with England
- Worthwhile: 0.19% more reporting good or very good compared with England

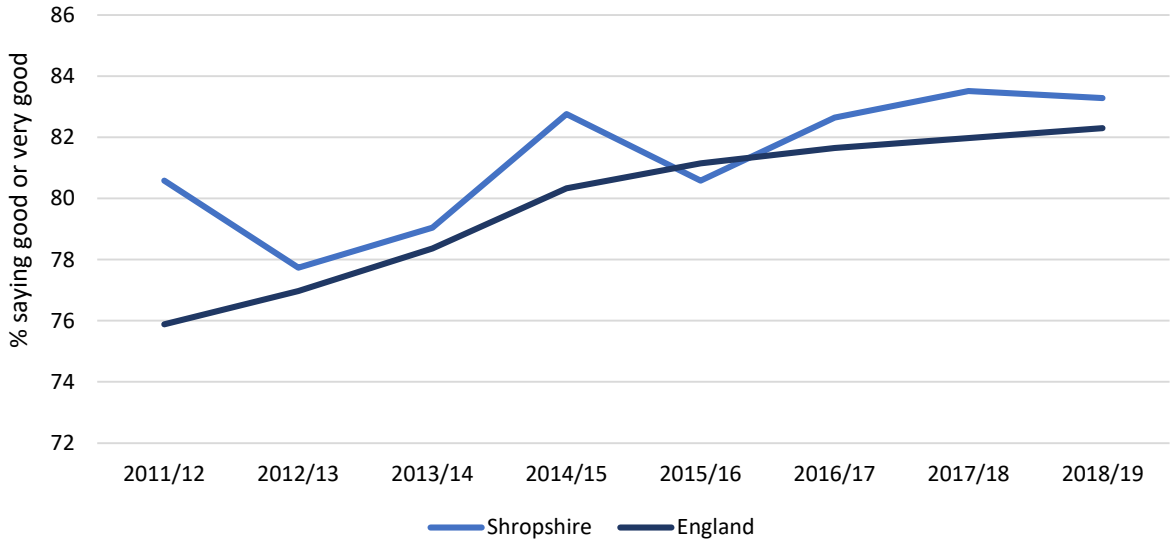
Positive Personal Estimates Relating to Anxiety



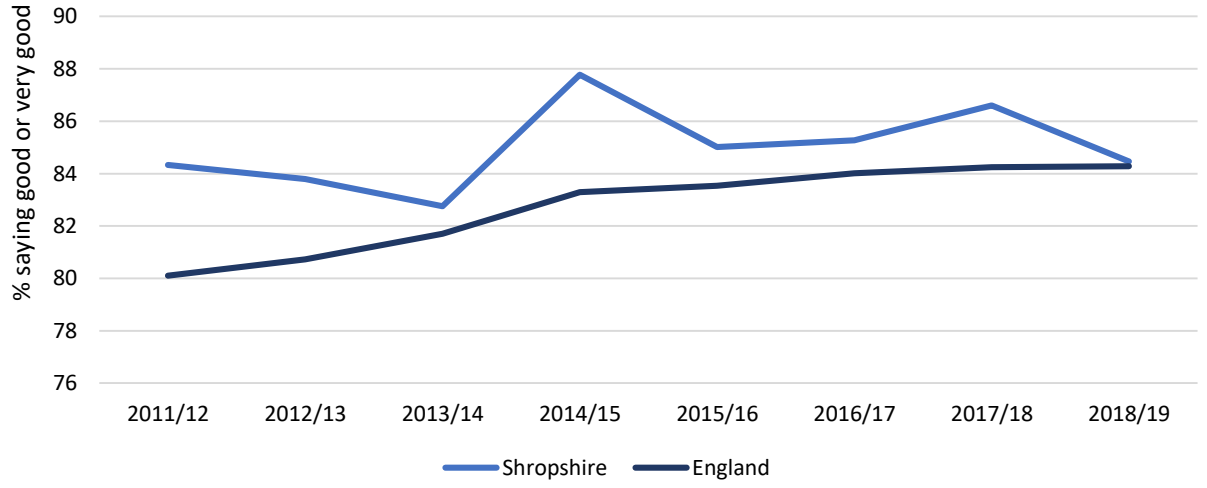
Positive Personal Estimates Relating to Happiness



Positive Personal Estimates Relating to Life Satisfaction

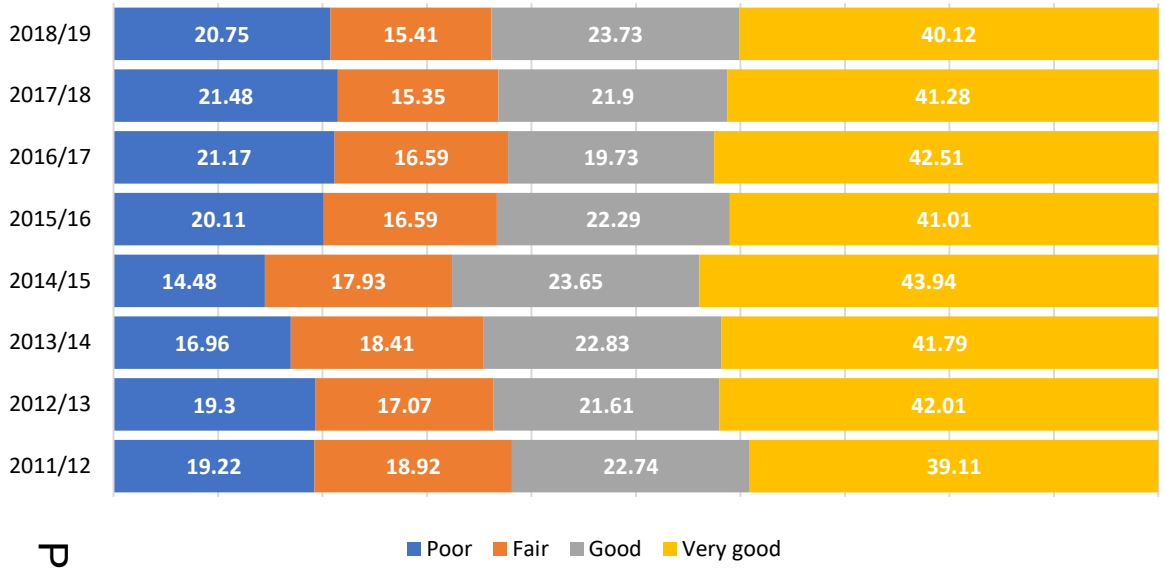


Positive Personal Estimates Relating to Feeling Things are Worthwhile

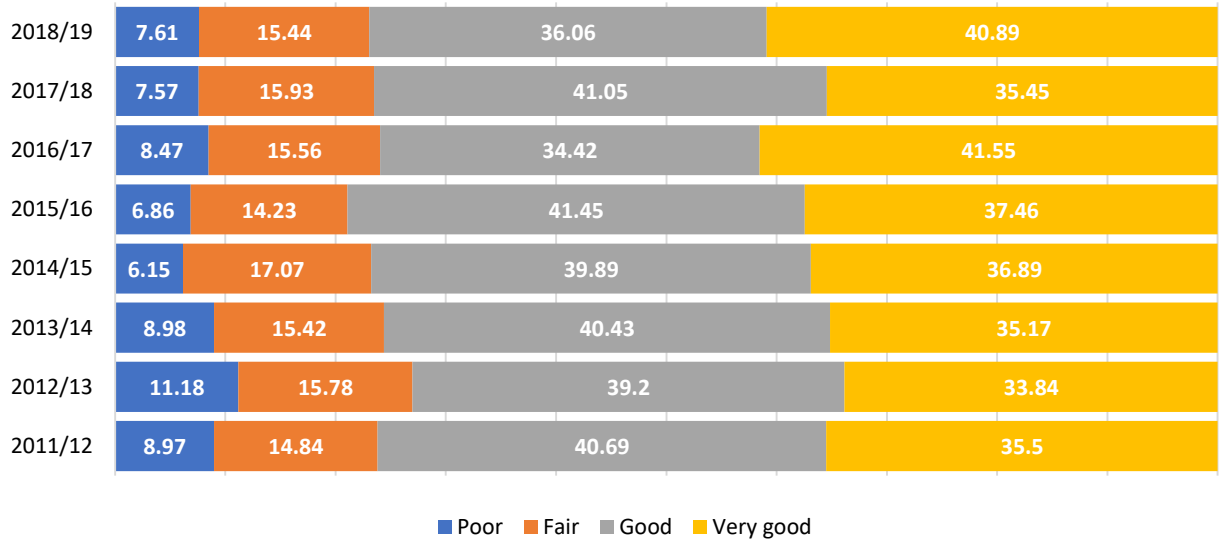


Source: Office for National Statistics Well-Being Survey

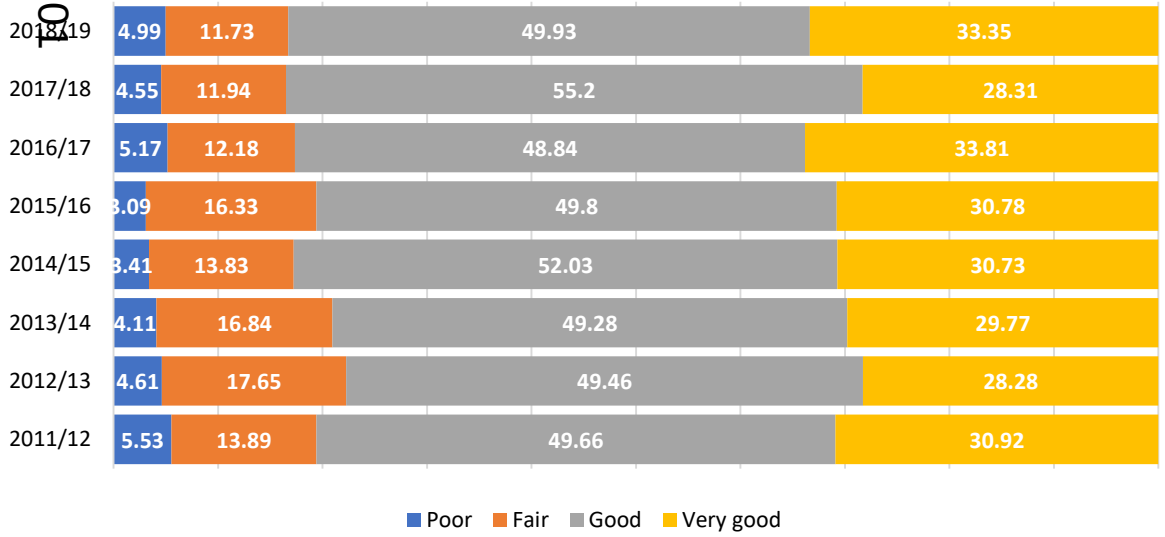
Personal Well-Being Estimates: Anxiety



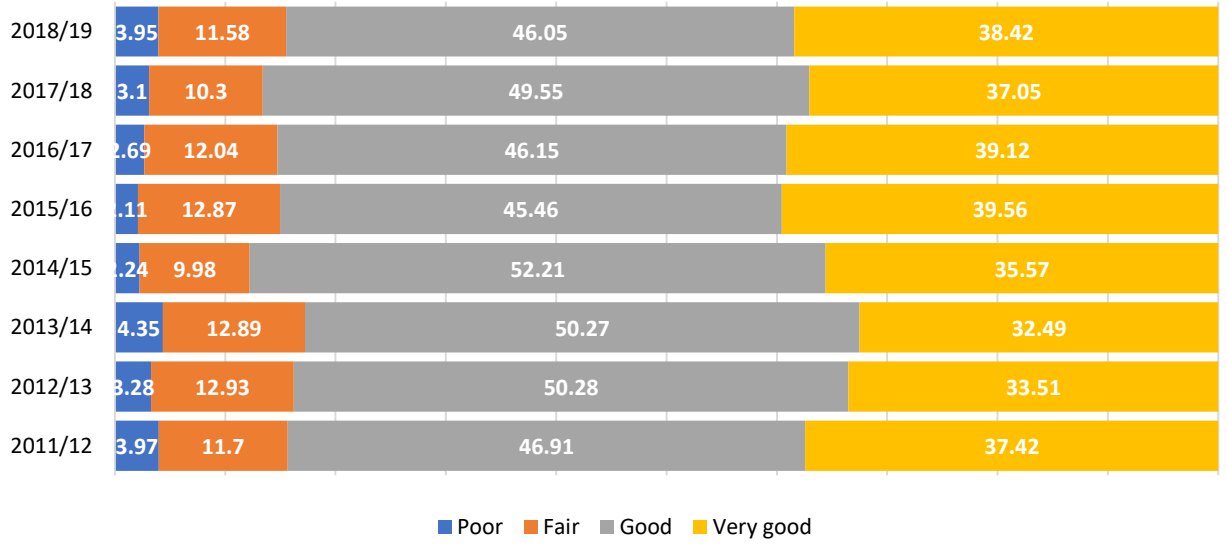
Personal Well-Being Estimates: Happiness



Personal Well-Being Estimates: Life Satisfaction



Personal Well-Being Estimates: Worthwhile



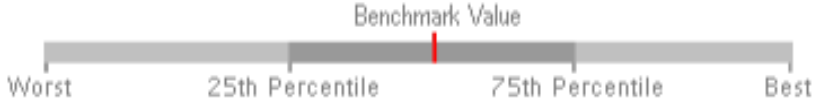
Source: Office for National Statistics Well-Being Survey

Public Health England: Health Profile for Shrophire

Life Expectancy & Causes of Death

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Not compared

Recent trends: – Could not be calculated; No significant change; Increasing / Getting worse; Increasing / Getting better; Decreasing / Getting worse; Decreasing / Getting better; Increasing; Decreasing



Indicator	Period	Shropshire			Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best
Life expectancy at birth (Male)	2016 - 18	–	-	80.5	78.9	79.6	74.5		83.9
Life expectancy at birth (Female)	2016 - 18	–	-	83.5	82.7	83.2	79.5		87.0
Under 75 mortality rate from all causes	2016 - 18	–	2,946	295	354	330	544		223
Under 75 mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases	2016 - 18	–	623	61.5	78.4	71.7	124.6		41.8
Under 75 mortality rate from cancer	2016 - 18	–	1,259	123.2	138.3	132.3	190.3		94.8
Suicide rate	2016 - 18	–	72	8.7	9.7	9.6	19.5		5.1

Injuries & Ill Health

Compared with benchmark: Better | Similar | Worse | Not compared

Recent trends: – Could not be calculated | No significant change | Increasing / Getting worse | Increasing / Getting better | Decreasing / Getting worse | Decreasing / Getting better | Increasing | Decreasing

Indicator	Period	Shropshire		Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst/ Lowest	Range	Best/ Highest
Killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties on England's roads	2016 - 18	–	501	52.6	38.4	42.6*	97.4		17.7
Emergency Hospital Admissions for Intentional Self-Harm	2018/19	→	480	164.0	200.5	193.4	433.4		51.6
Hip fractures in people aged 65 and over	2018/19	→	460	589	585	558	772		350
Cancer diagnosed at early stage (experimental statistics)	2017	→	693	49.2%	51.4%	52.2%	41.9%		57.7%
Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate	2018	–	-	71.4%	86.3%	78.0%	54.3%		97.5%
Estimated dementia diagnosis rate (aged 65 and over) ≥ 66.7% (significantly) similar to 66.7% < 66.7% (significantly)	2019	–	3,616	71.7%	66.1%	68.7%	53.6%		90.2%

Behavioural Risk Factors

Compared with benchmark: Better | Similar | Worse | Not compared

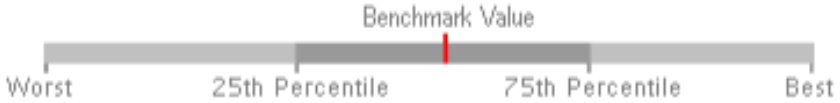
Recent trends: – Could not be calculated | No significant change | Increasing / Getting worse | Increasing / Getting better | Decreasing / Getting worse | Decreasing / Getting better | Increasing | Decreasing

Indicator	Period	Shropshire			Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best
Admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions - Under 18s	2016/17 - 18/19	–	45	25.1	26.1	31.6	106.7		7.8
Admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions (Narrow)	2018/19	↑	2,368	689	739	664	1,127		389
Smoking Prevalence in adults (18+) - current smokers (APS) New data	2019	–	35,713	13.7%	14.1%	13.9%	23.4%		8.0%
Percentage of physically active adults	2018/19	–	-	68.5%	64.0%	67.2%	46.7%		79.6%
Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese	2018/19	–	-	72.4%	65.6%	62.3%	75.9%		41.7%

Child Health

Compared with benchmark: Better | Similar | Worse | Not compared

Recent trends: – Could not be calculated | No significant change | Increasing / Getting worse | Increasing / Getting better | Decreasing / Getting worse | Decreasing / Getting better | Increasing | Decreasing



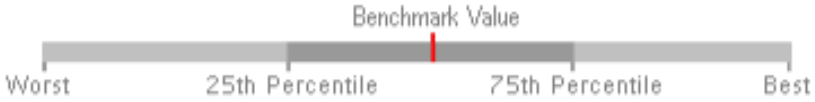
Indicator	Period	Shropshire			Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best
Under 18s conception rate / 1,000	2018	→	58	11.0	19.1	16.7	39.4		3.6
Smoking status at time of delivery	2018/19	→	347	14.0%	11.9%*	10.6%	25.7%		1.6%
Breastfeeding initiation	2016/17	–	2,019	78.4%	68.9%	74.5%	37.9%		96.7%
Infant mortality rate	2016 - 18	–	36	4.3	5.8	3.9	8.2		1.0
Year 6: Prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)	2018/19	→	451	16.6%	22.9%	20.2%	29.6%		10.7%

Inequalities

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Not compared

Quintiles: Best Worst Not applicable

Recent trends: – Could not be calculated; No significant change; Increasing / Getting worse; Increasing / Getting better; Decreasing / Getting worse; Decreasing / Getting better; Increasing; Decreasing



Indicator	Period	Shropshire			Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best
Deprivation score (IMD 2015)	2015	–	-	16.7	-	21.8	42.0		5.7
Smoking Prevalence in adults in routine and manual occupations (18-64) - current smokers (APS) New data	2018	–	-	22.3%	23.4%	25.4%	46.5%		13.6%
Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Male)	2016 - 18	–	-	5.4	9.7	9.5	15.2		3.8
Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Female)	2016 - 18	–	-	2.1	7.2	7.5	13.8		1.8

Wider Determinants of Health

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Not compared

Recent trends: – Could not be calculated; No significant change; Increasing / Getting worse; Increasing / Getting better; Decreasing / Getting worse; Decreasing / Getting better; Increasing; Decreasing

Benchmark Value

Worst | 25th Percentile | 75th Percentile | Best

Indicator	Period	Shropshire			Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best
Children in low income families (under 16s)	2016	↓	5,850	12.2%	20.3%	17.0%	31.8%		6.4%
Average Attainment 8 score	2018/19	–	132,267	46.5	45.7	46.9	39.0		57.5
Percentage of people aged 16-64 in employment	2018/19	→	152,200	83.5%	73.8%	75.6%	61.7%		84.3%
Statutory homelessness - Eligible homeless people not in priority need	2017/18	→	388	2.8	1.1	0.8	8.1		0.1
Violent crime - hospital admissions for violence (including sexual violence)	2016/17 - 18/19	–	190	22.3	42.9	44.9	127.6		12.1

Health Protection

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Not compared

Recent trends: – Could not be calculated; No significant change; Increasing / Getting worse; Increasing / Getting better; Decreasing / Getting worse; Decreasing / Getting better; Increasing; Decreasing

Indicator	Period	Shropshire			Region	England	England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best
Excess winter deaths index	Aug 2017 -Jul 2018	–	259	23.2%	30.8%	30.1%	49.2%		9.3%
New STI diagnoses (exc chlamydia aged <25) / 100,000	2018	→	730	380	680	851	3,823		380
TB incidence (three year average)	2016 - 18	–	16	1.7	11.3	9.2	49.3		0.7

Investment

Arts Council for England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) funding 2018 – 2022

- There are 5 National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) in Shropshire which brings in an annual investment of £815,285 from ACE which equals £3,308,164 over the years 2018/22.
- This compares with 5 NPOs in Herefordshire.
- As AIM is a national organisation, there may be an opportunity to leverage more impact from its presence in the county.

	Per year	2018-2022
Arts Alive	£47,025	£235,124
Association of Independent Museums (AIM)	£300,000	£1,200,000
Disability Arts in Shropshire	£120,000	£480,000
Meadow Arts	£160,928	£643,712
Pentabus Arts	£187,332	£749,328
TOTAL	**£815,285**	**£3,308,164**

ACE Project Funding – 2018 - 2020

- In 2019/2020 there were 17 Project Grants awarded by ACE to artists and organisations based in Shropshire, with a total value of £259,529. The average value of each grant was £15,266. The highest grant was awarded to the Arty Party Secret Lives project (£42,385).
- In 2018/19, the total number of projects supported was 21, with a total value of £335,358.
- This means that over the last two years, there has been investment worth £594,887 through ACE project funding in Shropshire.

2019/2020 ACE Project Funded Projects in Shropshire

Recipient	Activity name	Award amount
Wildcard	Electrolyte, National Tour (2)	£15,000
The Shrewsbury Morris Dancers	Shrewsbury Giant	£15,000
Michael Rust	Wenlock Edge Festival of Words	£14,800
Arty Party	Secret Lives	£42,385
Whittington Music Festival	Folklassical 2020	£15,000
Amy Douglas	From Fireside to Facebook	£14,800
Deborah Alma	The Poetry Pharmacy	£12,190
Dan Shutt	Albanian polyphony in the UK	£3,445
Tony Phillips	20th Century Chapel (II)	£5,161
Halima Cassell	Publication and talk programme	£15,000
National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Art in the Landscape: Connecting People to Nature	£14,900
Nadia Kingsley	Umbrella - mentoring, inclusive workshops, creating high quality creative animation and eBook	£16,128
Ellesmere Sculpture Initiative	Labyrinth	£15,000
Suzanne Thomas	Where Dragons lead	£15,910
Wildcard	Wildcard's 2020 Season	£15,000
Carole Thorpe-Gunner	Dystonic Forms	£14,810
shropshire music trust	Music for All 2020	£15,000
TOTAL		£259,529

- Shropshire invests £10,648,164 into cultural provision (2017/18)
- The largest proportion is allocated to Theatres and Public Entertainment at £4,839,758 (45%).
- Shropshire receives income of £5,026,391 from Theatres meaning they generate an annual excess of £186,633
- Across all investment area expenditure outstrips income by £4,786,862.

	Income	Expenditure	Net Income
Archives	£140,245	£531,167	-£390,922
Arts Development & Support	£4,621	£122,682	-£118,061
Library Services	£253,682	£3,691,630	-£3,437,948
Museums & Galleries	£436,363	£1,462,927	-£1,026,564
Theatres & Public Entertainment	£5,026,391	£4,839,758	£186,633
Total	£5,861,302	£10,648,164	-£4,786,862

Source: ACE Cultural Dashboard for LEPs

Lottery Funding

- In 2018/2019 organisations in Shropshire raised **£712,352** from the National Lottery for 85 projects.
- Of these, 8 were primarily cultural totalling £636,965 including a project from Designs in Mind who received £148,700 towards their costs over the next 3 years.
- £59,500 was invested in improving 6 village and parish halls.

Shropshire Council Funding

2019/20

In 2019/2020, Shropshire Council provided grant-in-aid funding of £24,550. The largest awards of £1,300 were given to:

- Arts Alive & Flicks in Sticks
- Designs in Mind
- Hive Music and Media Centre
- MediaActive Projects CIC
- Pentabus Arts Limited

22 organisations were funded sharing £20,600 and 7 festivals were funded, sharing £3,950.

- 24% of organisations work countywide
- 24% of organisations are based in north Shropshire
- 28% of organisations are based in central Shropshire
- 24% of organisations are based in south Shropshire.

The programmes delivered attracted audiences of 547,339, of which:

- 535,000 people aged 16+
- 12,338 children and young people aged under 16
- 287,970 people aged 16+ and 25,590 children and young people aged under 16 engaged in the programmes as participants.

This equates to 2 pence per person.

2,946 volunteers supported the activity, working between them a total of 45,698 hours
4,740 artists were employed

The council grant supported organisations in securing over £3 million pounds from other sources.

Shropshire Council Funding

2020/21

In 2020/21 Shropshire Council provided grant funding of £20,000 to four organisations, receiving £5,000 each.

- MediaActive Projects CIC
- Mythstories
- Pentabus Theatre
- SpArC Theatre

It is estimated this funding will benefit 164 artists; engage 1660 participants and reach audiences of 271,900 people.

For more information on Shropshire's demographic and socio-economic characteristics, please visit:

https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/information-intelligence-and-insight/facts-and-figures/shropshire-snapshots/

Appendix A: Industry Classifications for the Creatives & Tech Sector

- 7021 : Public relations and communication activities
- 7311 : Advertising agencies
- 7312 : Media representation
- 7111 : Architectural activities
- 8552 : Cultural education
- 2611 : Manufacture of electronic components
- 2612 : Manufacture of loaded electronic boards
- 2620 : Manufacture of computers and peripheral equipment
- 2630 : Manufacture of communication equipment
- 2640 : Manufacture of consumer electronics
- 2680 : Manufacture of magnetic and optical media
- 4651 : Wholesale of computers, computer peripheral equipment and software
- 4652 : Wholesale of electronic and telecommunications equipment and parts
- 5811 : Book publishing
- 5812 : Publishing of directories and mailing lists
- 5813 : Publishing of newspapers
- 5814 : Publishing of journals and periodicals
- 5819 : Other publishing activities
- 5821 : Publishing of computer games
- 5829 : Other software publishing
- 6110 : Wired telecommunications activities
- 6120 : Wireless telecommunications activities
- 6130 : Satellite telecommunications activities
- 6190 : Other telecommunications activities
- 6201 : Computer programming activities
- 6202 : Computer consultancy activities
- 6203 : Computer facilities management activities
- 6209 : Other information technology and computer service activities
- 6311 : Data processing, hosting and related activities
- 6312 : Web portals
- 6391 : News agency activities
- 6399 : Other information service activities n.e.c.
- 9511 : Repair of computers and peripheral equipment
- 9512 : Repair of communication equipment
- 9001 : Performing arts
- 9002 : Support activities to performing arts
- 9003 : Artistic creation
- 9004 : Operation of arts facilities
- 5911 : Motion picture, video and television programme production activities
- 5912 : Motion picture, video and television programme post-production activities
- 5913 : Motion picture, video and television programme distribution activities
- 5914 : Motion picture projection activities
- 5920 : Sound recording and music publishing activities
- 1820 : Reproduction of recorded media
- 3212 : Manufacture of jewellery and related articles
- 3220 : Manufacture of musical instruments
- 4763 : Retail sale of music and video recordings in specialised stores

- 6010 : Radio broadcasting
- 6020 : Television programming and broadcasting activities
- 7410 : Specialised design activities
- 7420 : Photographic activities
- 7430 : Translation and interpretation activities
- 9101 : Library and archive activities
- 9102 : Museum activities
- 9103 : Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions

Appendix B: Industry Classifications for the Tourism Sector

- 5510 : Hotels and similar accommodation
- 5520 : Holiday and other short stay accommodation
- 5530 : Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks
- 5590 : Other accommodation
- 5610 : Restaurants and mobile food service activities
- 5621 : Event catering activities
- 5629 : Other food service activities
- 5630 : Beverage serving activities
- 9001 : Performing arts
- 9002 : Support activities to performing arts
- 9003 : Artistic creation
- 9004 : Operation of arts facilities
- 9101 : Library and archive activities
- 9102 : Museum activities
- 9103 : Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions
- 9104 : Botanical and zoological gardens and nature reserve activities
- 9311 : Operation of sports facilities
- 9312 : Activities of sport clubs
- 9313 : Fitness facilities
- 9319 : Other sports activities
- 9321 : Activities of amusement parks and theme parks
- 9329 : Other amusement and recreation activities

Appendix 5- Evidence Review and Mapping - Strategic Context

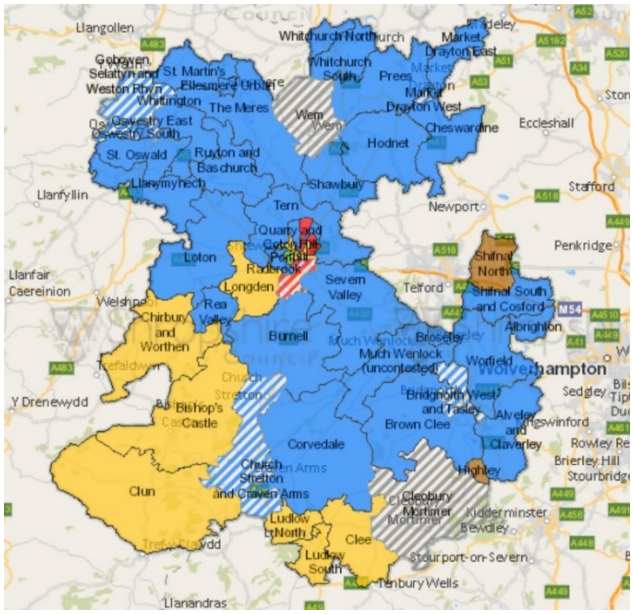
1. Local Strategy

1.1 Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 'Innovate to Thrive' 2019/20 to 2021/22
1.2 Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017 – 2021
1.3 Building an economic vision for Shropshire: a research report by IPPR North for Shropshire Council (November 2016)
1.4 Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021
1.5 The Social Value Charter for Shropshire
1.6 Shropshire Museums Service Strategy 2018 – 2023
1.7 Shropshire's Great Outdoors 2018 – 2028
1.8 Actively Improving Lives – Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Schools Partnership

1.1 Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 'Innovate to Thrive' 2019/20 to 2021/22
Developed by Shropshire Council

Key ideas:

- Environment and rural nature key to identity, economy and health and wellbeing
- Ageing population is big issue - 30% above national average
- There is a need to develop local creative economy
- Access to services is challenging due to rural nature
- Largest Rights of Way network in the UK
- Partnership is key on regional and local level
- Low productivity and high travel to work times
- Target Return on Investment of 1:10.



Map of wards

Priorities:

- More people with a suitable home
- Care for those in need at any age
- A good place to do business
- A healthy environment
- Sustainable places and communities
- Embrace our rurality.

Values:

- Environment
- Equality & Inclusion
- Excellence
- Fairness
- Innovation
- Listening
- Partnership
- Self-Reliance.

1.2 Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire 2017 – 2021
Developed by Shropshire Council

Key ideas:

- Natural and cultural heritage central to profile / investment
- Opportunities to build hubs in different towns
- Partnership across the borders important – Wales and Midlands
- Creative industry growth could be linked to agri-tech and health-tech
- Volunteering hubs
- Wellbeing important and linked to skills and employment.

Vision:
To be the best place to do business and invest, renowned for its pool of local talent and expertise. We will strive to maximise our economic potential and increase productivity by fully utilising the benefits of our special environment and high quality assets.

Objectives
To increase productivity:
Support and grow new and existing businesses
Attract inward investment
Develop and retain talent and skills

Priorities:
1. Target actions and resources where there are economic opportunities
2. Enable businesses to start, grow and succeed
3. Deliver infrastructure to support growth
4. Meet skills needs of businesses and people's aspirations for work
5. Promote Shropshire to investors

6. Build our reputation as a Council that is 'good to do business with'

Targets to 2021:
Increase GVA (currently £6 billion) by 12%
£300 million of private sector investment
At least 3,700 new jobs
1,375 new homes per annum

1.3 Building an economic vision for Shropshire: a research report by IPPR North for Shropshire Council (November 2016)
In 2016, IPPR North was commissioned by Shropshire Council and the University of Chester to develop a new economic vision for Shropshire's economy in the future.

Vision
By 2030 Shropshire can be a world-leading rural economy.
With its dynamic and diverse workforce, cutting-edge capabilities in agritech and digihealth, and as an area of outstanding natural beauty, well-connected to the Midlands Engine, there is no good reason for it not to flourish in post-Brexit Britain.
With the right ambition, strategy and leadership, Shropshire will be a case study in England's modern industrial strategy.

Key Findings:

- Proportionately high rates of ageing in comparison with neighbouring areas and with England as a whole, with implications for health and social care costs but opportunities to unlock the potential of this relatively affluent and active population group through developments such as digi health
- Relatively low productivity but with a higher employment rate and higher gross disposable household income compared with surrounding areas
- Good economic linkages with neighbouring areas and a diverse business base but with significant dependency on agriculture, tourism and manufacturing which have lower productivity levels than many sectors
- A relatively well-skilled labour force in comparison with neighbouring areas and the UK average with good school performance but challenges concerning graduate retention and skill shortages in specific service sectors.

1.4 Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021
Developed by Health & Wellbeing Board, governed by CCG, Shropshire Council

Key Ideas:

- Big commitment to wellbeing as a determinant for health
- Rural nature of the county calls for different approaches and systems leadership
- Ageing population is increasing pressure on services
- Focus on empowering communities to use their assets to help improve their own outcomes – 'social value'
- Healthy environment lined to health outcomes
- IT solutions to access challenges are important.

Vision:
For Shropshire people to be the healthiest and most fulfilled in England

Aims:
- To improve the population's health and wellbeing
- To reduce health inequalities that can cause unfair and avoidable differences in people's health
- To help as many people as possible live long, happy and productive lives by promoting health and wellbeing at all stages of life.

Priorities:
- Start Well
- Live Well
- Age Well.

The HWBB defines wellbeing as 'personal contentment, fulfilment and ability to remain resilient in difficult times, in addition to having good health'

Has been developed according to the Social Value Charter for Shropshire

The key issues in Shropshire are:
- Mental health including dementia
- Rising obesity
- Child poverty
- Ageing population
- Outcomes
- Reduce health inequalities
- Increase healthy life expectancy.

Principles:
- Empowerment
- Respect
- Communication and engagement
- Evidence
- Compassion
- Flexible infrastructure
- Governance and accountability
- Social value and social action.

1.5 The Social Value Charter for Shropshire

Key ideas:
- Clear framework which all stakeholders are signed up to
- Clear principles; economy, wellbeing and place.

The Social Value Charter for Shropshire sets out how public sector commissioners, service providers, voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations and businesses will aim to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Shropshire. The charter requires all commissioners and suppliers to consider the following principles:

1. Supporting the Shropshire economy:
a. Supporting / purchasing from the local supply chain where possible
b. Supporting or creating the conditions for growth in the Shropshire economy
c. Developing education, skills and training opportunities within the Shropshire economy
d. Employment opportunities for local people
e. Good conditions of employment and fair wage rates and structures

2. Promoting wellbeing in Shropshire:
a. Keeping people connected and maximising use of community infrastructure
b. Initiatives to address social and rural isolation
c. Supporting people and communities to be self-reliant, resilient, safe and mutually supportive
d. Addressing the social, economic and environmental factors which contribute to poverty and inequality (prevention)
e. Residents are involved in the design and delivery of integrated and accessible quality services

3. A great place to live:
a. Support or contribution to community initiatives
b. People are able to contribute through volunteering opportunities
c. People have a good, decent and appropriate place to live
d. People are proud to live in Shropshire and have a stake in their communities
e. A green and sustainable county

1.6 Shropshire Museums Service Strategy 2018 – 2023

Developed by Shropshire Council Shropshire Museums Services

Mission:
We will work as a team to ensure that all of our customers have a wonderful experience of our museums and collections. We will focus on attracting families, embracing their diverse make-up and needs. Our services will benefit the health and well-being of our local communities and we will strengthen our resilience by planning for the future.

Shropshire Museums Service:
- Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery
- Acton Scott Historic Working Farm
- Ludlow Museum Resource Centre
- Much Wenlock Museum
- Shrewsbury Castle
- Coleham Pumping Station.

Values:

- Customer experience,
- Family focus
- Health and well-being
- Resilience
- Teamwork.

Objectives:

- Provide a high quality well organised and accessible collection that supports the values of the Museums service and helps us tell Shropshire's stories
- Provide places where all customers feel welcome, comfortable, educated and excited to return
- Proactively engage with partners to welcome and diverse audience into our museums and to strengthen the cultural offer across Shropshire including (3.2) deliver an annual programme of activities aligned to the cultural calendar and (3.3) We will take our museums out to new spaces through a pop-up museum
- Increase our resilience by developing our fundraising capability and making the best use of our assets.

Priority Projects

- Increase access through rationalisation and digitisation
- Adopt the 'Kids in Museums' Manifesto
- Introduce an 'Object of the Month'
- Deliver a Customer Insight Plan
- Maintain visitor numbers and develop income streams
- Continue to recruit active volunteers
- Introduce a membership scheme
- Install 'wow' objects
- Redesign the Shropshire gallery to create more playful spaces.

1.7 Shropshire's Great Outdoors 2018 – 2028
Inspiring action to improve health, prosperity and happiness by cherishing Shropshire's Great Outdoors
Developed by Shropshire Council but governed by a Strategy Board.

Key Ideas:

- Partnership led and delivered
- Clear KPIs
- Opportunities for the public to take part.

Vision:
By the end of 2028, people will be happier, healthier and more prosperous by being better connected to Shropshire's Great Outdoors through safe and cherished publicly accessible outdoor assets.

Aims:

- Happy – Encourage enjoyment of Shropshire's Great Outdoors by more people, of all ages and abilities
- Healthy – Benefit the health of residents and visitors through increased physical activity and improved mental wellbeing in the Great Outdoors
- Prosperous – Promote opportunities to improve the local economy by sympathetic commercial use and development of the outdoor assets
- Connected – Bring people together within their communities to appreciate the potential of their outdoor assets, to make decisions locally about these, and to participate actively in their maintenance and improvement
- Cherished – Conserve and enhance special places that are important for nature, heritage and people.

Targets:

- Increase economic return by 25% (to £125m)
- Increase the amount of accessible natural green space from 1.66ha/ 1,000 population to 2.0ha
- Create four new visitor facilities across the county. Increase visits to the natural environment from 57% to 65% of the population
- Increase users of the Shropshire's Great Outdoor website from 135,000 to 200,000.
- Ensure the Best Value Performance Indicator for the Rights of Way network at or above 70%
- Increase the ORVal Welfare Value of sites by 10% from £43,882,000.

Becoming a member of the Great Outdoors entitles members to a range of discounts including 10% of Theatre Severn and The Old Market Hall.

The website includes an interactive map of Shropshire

1.8 Actively Improving Lives 2022 – Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Schools Partnership

Mission

Our mission is to improve lives and empower communities through the power of physical activity and sport

Work with

Objectives

- Work with organisations new to us to reach inactive audiences and empower them to
- use physical activity as a vehicle for change
- Explore innovative approaches and partnerships to encourage those who are occasionally active to make physical activity / sport a regular habit
- Help deliverers to sustain and improve their provision whilst considering new audiences and approaches
- To become a renowned local charity that achieves the highest standards of governance and a balance of national and local investors.

Approach
Identified audiences:

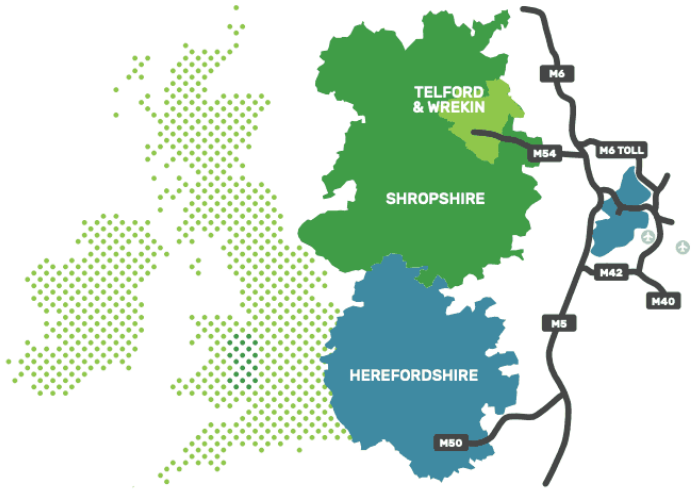
- Independence in Later Life
- Actively Ageing Well
- Building Active Families
- Stabilising Young Lives.

The organisation works as:

- A project partner
- An independent advisor
- An expert enabler.

Other interesting facts:
Over 65,000 people in the county have dementia – set to increase by 55% by 2025.
1/3 of the Shropshire population will be over 65 by 2033
4/5 young people aged 5-15 are not active enough and 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school
Shropshire has significantly more care homes for young people than the national average.

2. Regional Strategy
2.1 The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2019
2.2 The Marches SEP Evidence Base
2.3 Visitor Economy Strategy for the Marches (June 2019)
2.4 Midlands Engine – Vision for Growth



The Marches map

2.1 The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2019
Key ideas:

- Focus on digital connectivity for business to thrive
- Destination development ambitions linked to enabling wider economy

- Ambition to pioneer digital health and social care
- High quality places key to economic success.

The Marches is the LEP for Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Herefordshire.
The SEP sets out a plan to by 2038 to grow its economic output to £23.8BN, adding £8.7bn to the UK economy, and creating approximately 58,700 new jobs. Also, to be in the top 25% for life satisfaction.

There are four strands to the Marches LEP's work:

- Innovation and Business Environment – developing new spaces and business support
- Skills – developing partnerships between business and learning providers
- Infrastructure – supporting digital networks
- A High Quality of Place - Improving the fabric of place including a new 'Opportunity Town Programme' investing in distinctive strengths and needs of Market Towns.

Vision:

1. A place which is open for business, up for business and pro-growth.
2. At the forefront of changes in how people live and work using new technology and improved physical and digital connectivity to enable businesses and people to develop and succeed.
3. A growing place, attracting more people to come, stay and build their careers and businesses.
4. A destination not a boundary - gateway to markets in the Midlands, Wales, South West, North and Europe. A visitor destination with significant natural and cultural resources that is well known and attracts people looking for a high-quality experience.
5. A pioneer in the provision and testing of digitally driven health and social care for dispersed populations supporting healthy ageing and economic participation in later life.
6. A global centre of excellence in advanced manufacturing specifically automotive, cyber security, and the next phase of technology development in agriculture, environment and food production.
7. An inclusive place that enables residents from all communities to thrive and develop with quality jobs offering good wages, training and progression.
8. A collaborative and proactive place with businesses, further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs) and public organisations working together to agree what needs to happen and getting things.

Interesting points:

- We are pioneering new approaches to health and social care in dispersed communities
- We have a very high quality of life with rich natural, cultural and heritage assets, and high-quality schools, attracting professionals and families
- The age profile of our area is older than the UK average and our dispersed population is relatively slow growing – this provides a core market and test bed for innovative health and social care technologies and approaches
- Historically low skills levels in some of our communities are being tackled by active, community level partnerships between businesses, schools, learning providers, our colleges, now strengthened following the Area Review process, and a growing university sector

- Micro businesses (those with fewer than 10 employees) make up 89.7% of the Marches business base, which is similar to the UK average of 89.4%
- Shrewsbury is the second largest town in the Marches with a population of 71,864
- The Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre in Shrewsbury is one of only 10 centres nationally. It offers food production start-ups and SMEs excellent production units equipped to the highest standard with on-site business support.

Sectors

- Core sector: Food and drink: The legacy and heritage of the Marches as a farming region has evolved into a nationally significant food and drink sector with over 9,000 jobs
- Emerging sector: Innovative Health and Social Care - An ageing population in a rural area offers opportunity to pioneer new innovative health and social care approaches and technologies. 'Shropshire has been selected as one of nine local authorities in a Government funded programme to explore how technology can shape the future of social care through piloting a data visualisation tool to identify areas of need for care homes and domiciliary care. Another technology project being trialled in Shropshire brings together the Council, The Lady Forester Centre, UCS, local GPs, the community and large technology companies Hitachi, Microsoft and Amazon to use smart watches, voice activated devices and messaging to support independence amongst vulnerable people. (p38)
- Enabling sectors: Visitor Economy - The Marches has a diverse visitor economy offer, comprising our beautiful natural landscape, including three AONBs, high quality locally produced food, World Heritage Site and historic market towns. The visitor economy plays an important role in our economy. Our natural, cultural and heritage assets are essential to attracting people to live and work in the Marches. The visitor economy is also a large employer with almost 4,250 jobs in accommodation, supporting thousands more jobs in related sectors such as restaurants, museums, transport, and visitor and leisure attractions
- Retail - Retail is a large employer. There are 33,700 retail jobs across the Marches, amounting to over 12% of total jobs. Only 3 BIDS – 2 in Shropshire plus Hereford
- Health and social care - A high number of people are employed in health and social care. The sector has 41,000 jobs with 23,500 of these in human health and a further 10,500 in residential care
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) - There are more than 4,000 registered VCSE organisations with a further 2,418 small informal groups in the Marches. The sector employs 6,760 people and has a large voluntary workforce, contributing over £6m to the local economy.

Innovation and Business Environment:

- Develop incubator, accelerator and grow on space at our key employment sites, such as Hereford Enterprise Zone, the Flaxmill, and Ni-Park, offering resources, mentoring and business support for new businesses in the early stage development and those which are rapidly growing. Through these we will encourage firms to be creative, learn about new ways of doing things and try new technologies
- Bring together SMEs and larger firms (starting with construction and agri-tech), as well as our HEIs, to develop business-led networks, events and workshops for companies to

understand the opportunities which exist in their sector to innovate and boost productivity
- Continue to work with local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups, the NHS and businesses to trial new innovative health and social care technologies.

Business Environment
- In an economy with such a high proportion of small businesses and high level of economic activity there is a real opportunity to strengthen the ability of the overall business environment to support growth and innovation. This can be through providing the right kind of space, networking opportunities and support for smaller scale commercial research projects and business/FEI/HEI links to engage with real world technical and business solutions.

Skills
- Our schools have a vital role to play in allowing young people to understand the careers available and to experience work, particularly in our more rural and less connected communities
- Build on the work of our local authorities, Young Enterprise and Careers and Enterprise Company programmes to develop a 'Future Leaders' scheme. This will offer schools the opportunity to engage with businesses locally to provide short term mentoring, workplace experiences and real world problem solving projects for 13 to 14-year-olds.

Infrastructure & Place
- High-spec broadband and mobile coverage is also essential for high productivity growth. Given the shift towards remote/agile working and an internet-based economy, provision of ultrafast broadband across the area is vital to support home-based businesses and home-workers, as well as larger companies based in rural areas.

A High Quality Place
- The Marches is a beautiful place with a high quality of life. People choose to live here and visit because of the many outdoor experiences that our countryside offers; the quality of our historic towns, large and small, and the opportunities of our larger urban centres. Our approach is two-fold:
  1. Our three main urban centres of Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford
  2. Market towns across the Marches, which are important economic and employment centres serving the rural hinterland, with different specialisms and opportunities.

Shrewsbury:
Shrewsbury is a renowned historic market town with excellent cultural and heritage assets a gateway town to Wales. Also mentions Darwin and the University Centre, Shrewsbury Big Town Plan, Flaxmill and Riverside schemes, food and drink

Opportunity Towns:
- Oswestry (17,400)
- Ludlow (11,000)
- Bridgnorth (12,000)
- Bishops Castle.

Our rural places are important for their contribution to our high quality of life – identified opportunities: Digital connectivity, One Public Estate approach to land management and mobility innovation.

Investing in our brand

- Work with our investment (Invest in Telford, Invest in Shropshire, and Invest Herefordshire) and tourist partners (Shropshire Tourism, Visit Herefordshire and Discover Telford) to develop a campaign to attract families and young people to locate here. This will use physical and digital connectivity, housing choice and affordability, education and employment alongside quality of life as drivers, and/or a 'Start your business in the Marches' campaign.

2.2 The Marches SEP Evidence Base

This uses data from 2016/2017 and compares that to 2014 figures in order to inform the SEP above.

In summary:

- The Marches contributes £14.3bn to the UK economy
- Economic activity and employment rates are high
- The business base is characterised by micro businesses and has a high survival rate and low death rate
- Businesses in the LEP area have a strong trading relationship with the EU
- However, the economy of the Marches area as a whole is less productive than the national average
- Low productivity in part reflects the fact that the Marches has a relatively low proportion of residents with high-level skills.
- The Marches is an attractive place with a high quality of life
- Because of the high quality of life, the Marches area attracts more residents than those who leave
- The Marches has an ageing population, many of whom live in rural areas
- The Marches area's infrastructure is both a strength and a weakness – good connectivity generally but significant gaps.

General

- Since 2014, strong population growth in Ludlow, Bridgnorth and north of Shrewsbury with population falls in Oswestry
- Evidence base does not measure Creative and cultural
- Older residents in the south west of the county (Bishops Castle, Clun, Church Stretton).

2.3 Visitor Economy Strategy for the Marches - Blue Sail (June 2019)

Key ideas:

- 'Independent' is golden thread for tourism
- Festivals identified as key strength and opportunity especially considering target markets
- Sector skills development strategy prioritised

- Potential for a joined-up approach across Marches area.

To deliver the full potential of the visitor economy as a contributor of wealth and local jobs, and to ensure the visitor economy is a showcase for the excellent quality of life that Herefordshire, Shropshire & Telford offers to everyone, whether they come for a day or stay for a lifetime.

There are five objectives that create the focus for the strategy.

1. To raise the profile of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin as a distinctive short-break destination within target markets, to showcase the special quality of the place and its people, and to use targeted promotion to drive more visitors and higher spend.
2. To raise the profile of Telford as a destination for conferences, meetings and exhibitions in priority sectors and industries.
3. To grow the capacity of local businesses and organisations, to support their role as ambassadors for Herefordshire, Shropshire & Telford and to raise the profile of the visitor economy as a career choice.
4. To show leadership and direction in the public sector and lever the resources required for the visitor economy to achieve its potential.
5. For public sector partners and businesses to work together productively to deliver a competitive visitor economy.

The golden thread is 'Independent': 'This is what differentiates the Marches from many other rural destinations.'

Target audiences: Independent Explorers

- Late 20s to 40s
- Professionals
- Couples, groups and families
- Interested in a culture of a place
- Attracted to places off the beaten track
- Activities
- Food and drink very important
- Want interesting, quality places to stay, eat, drink
- Enjoy cool niche festivals
- A bit of quirkiness a good thing.

The strategy calls for:

Investment in Visitor experiences including creative use of townscapes and landscapes, and for festivals:

'Festivals are a reason to visit now and create more to do and see. Presenting the Marches as the natural home to interesting, niche and quirky festivals will profile the Marches particularly among the younger/family end of the Independent Explorers. Festivals present the opportunity for creative collaboration across assets, for example showcasing local food

& drink and crafts, local artists/makers running workshops and creating learning opportunities.' (p23)

Investment in People –
'skills and entrepreneurship are an enabler for this strategy'
Volunteers can be cultivated as champions and incentivised with discounts.
Micro-businesses need training and business advice at times and places which are business-friendly
Call for digital skills development

Next steps include commissioning a baseline visitor survey and audited skills need of tourism businesses.

In the longer term a Destination Partnership for the Marches is proposed, which calls for representation form the Cultural Sector as well as joining up Local Authority resources.

2.4 Midlands Engine
Key Ideas:

- Taking holistic view across Midlands highlights Shropshire as a high quality place to live and work

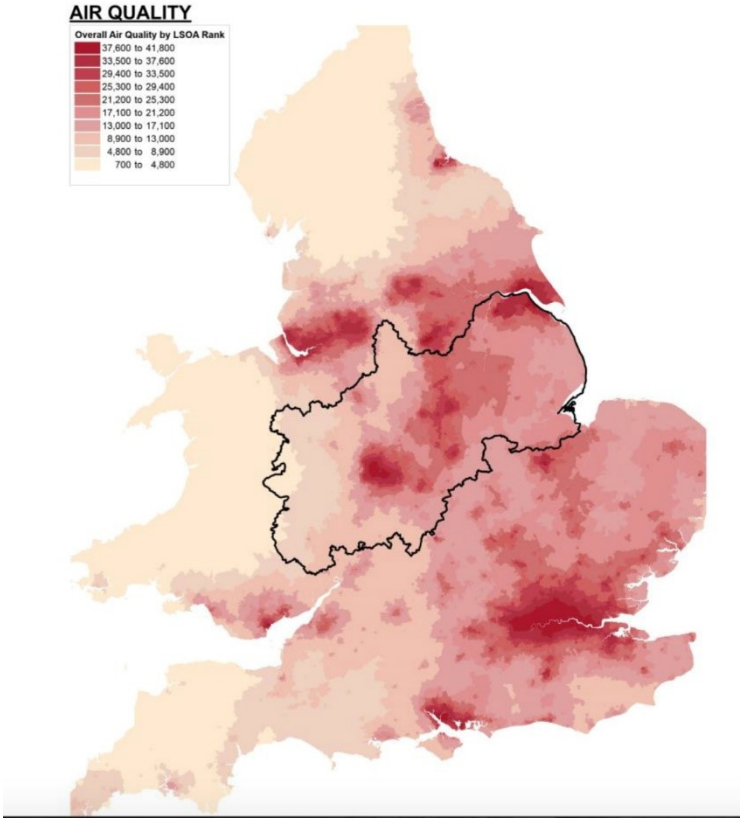
2.3.1 Vision for Growth
The vision for growth is a manifesto for the region that focuses on the priority areas where partnership can add value of the work of LEPs and LAs.
These are:

1. Connect the Midlands
2. Invest in Strategic Infrastructure
3. Grow International Trade and Investment

4. Increase Innovation an Enterprise
5. Shape Great Places - Promote the Midlands as a great place to live, visit, learn and work

Home to over 10 million people and 440,000 large and small businesses, the Midlands economy has grown by 18% over the last five years, slightly higher than the UK rate, but continues to under-perform nationally.

2.3.2 Midlands Engine Quarterly Economic Commentary (August 2019)
There is not much to report in this except that the information shows that there is significant better air quality in the Shropshire area than anywhere else in the Midlands area.



3. National Policy and Strategy
3.1 Arts Council 10 year plan Shaping the Next 10 years (draft summer 2019)
3.2 Industrial Strategy (2017)
3.3 Culture White Paper (2016)
3.4 Industrial Strategy: Creative Sector Deal/ Bazalgette Review (2017/ 2018)
3.5 DCMS Culture is Digital (2018)
3.6 Healthy Lives Healthy People (2010)
3.7 Creative Health: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report (July 2017)
3.8 DEFRA 25 Year Plan

3.1 Arts Council 10 year plan Shaping the Next 10 years (draft summer 2019)

Arts Council England has consulted extensively over the last 18 months on a new national strategy to guide their work from 2020 to 2030. The new strategy is planned to come into effect in April 2020 and is likely to have focuses on creative education, digital and place.

The draft strategy states its vision as:

'Over the next decade, we want England to become a country where the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a rich and remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. We envisage a country transformed by its culture and at the same time, constantly transforming it: a truly creative nation in which we all can play our part.'

The draft strategy details three outcomes:

1. Creative People – every person can develop and express creativity throughout their lives.
2. Cultural Communities – a collaborative approach to culture helps villages, towns and cities across the country to thrive.
3. A Creative and Cultural Country – England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

There also three investment principles:

1. Ambition and Quality - cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work.
2. Inclusivity and Relevance – England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce.
3. Dynamism and Environmental Sustainability - cultural organisations are dynamic and environmentally sustainable.

ACE is expected to continue its commitment to environmental sustainable practices which are embedded in the reporting requirements for National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) following an extensive research project with environmental charity, Julies Bicycle. ACE has an on-going focus on the Creative Case for Diversity and evidence of inclusive practice is required for all of their major investments.

ACE support both project and capital funding with an increasing focus on 'doing' not 'being': i.e. supporting specific projects aligned to evidenced need instead of core funding for strategic organisations.

ACE are committed to helping creative practitioners and cultural organisations made more use of new technologies to make and share work and to develop new audiences and new experiences. They have a Digital Culture Network to facilitate the cultural sector's adoption of digital tools and technologies.

3.2 Industrial Strategy (2017)

The Industrial Strategy is the economic white paper that sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK.
The strategy describes five foundations of productivity:

- Ideas — how we make the UK the world's most innovative economy
- People — how we build a successful, high-calibre workforce, now and in the future, ensuring good jobs and greater earning power for all
- Business Environment — how we secure the UK's position as the best place to start and grow a business
- Infrastructure — how we drive improvement to the country's connections, delivering a major upgrade to the UK's infrastructure
- Places — how we put our national strategy on a local level, creating prosperous communities across the UK.

The strategy also outlines four grand challenges: Artificial Intelligence and Data; Clean Growth; Future of Mobility and Ageing Society. All of these are underlined with the need for global reach and partnerships.

3.3 Culture White Paper (2016)
Published in 2016 and the first Culture White Paper for 50 years, this is still driving the DCMS agenda:

- Everyone should enjoy the opportunities culture offers, no matter where they start in life: with pledges around Arts Education; Skills and Talent Pathways; Diversity.
- The riches of our culture should benefit communities across the country: Productivity and Wellbeing; Place-making; Heritage including HAZ and Technology
- The Power of culture can increase our international standing: Cultural Exports; Brand Britain and Protecting World Heritage
- Cultural Investment, resilience and reform: Invest in growth and impact: Mixed economy and alternative financing, impact evaluation.

3.4 Industrial Strategy: Creative Sector Deal/ Bazalgette Review (2017/ 2018)
This sector deal announced in March 2018, was developed in response to The Bazalgette Independent Review of the Creative Industries published in November 2017.

The government and the creative industries sector, through the Creative Industries Council (CIC), have agreed a Sector Deal to unlock growth for creative businesses.
The Sector Deal has invested more than £150 million across the lifecycle of creative businesses, including:

- Places of the future - by funding leading creative clusters to compete globally
- Technologies and content of the future - via research into augmented reality and virtual reality
- Creative skills of the future - via a careers programme that will open up creative jobs to people of every background.

3.5 DCMS Culture is Digital (2018)
This document has led the way for the AHRC Creative Economy programme, Innovate UK and Immerse UK. The policy has three themes:

- Audiences: Using digital technology to engage audiences
- Skills and the digital capability of cultural organisations
- Future Strategy: Unleashing the creative potential of technology: Digital Infrastructure for Culture; Innovation: Collaboration and Partnership.

3.6 Healthy Lives Healthy People (2010)
The public health White Paper '**Healthy Lives, Healthy People**' published in 2010, with its focus on promoting healthier lifestyles to prevent illness and promote wellbeing, there has been a growing body of evidence to support arts and culture's role in public health; much of this is documented in the all-party enquiry which produced the Creative Health report (2017).

3.7 Creative Health: All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report (July 2017)
A comprehensive and wide-ranging inquiry into the evidence, policy context and practice of arts contribution to arts, health and wellbeing. The key messages are:

- The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived.
- The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health.
- The arts can help save money in the health service and social care.

3.8 DEFRA 25 Year Plan
A Green Future: Our 25 year plan to improve the environment (2018)
The policy document sets out a vision for a 'green Brexit' and sets out 25 year goals:

1. Clean air.
2. Clean and plentiful water.
3. Thriving plants and wildlife.
4. A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought.
5. Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently.
6. Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

Whilst managing pressures:

7. Mitigating and adapting to climate change.
8. Minimising waste.
9. Managing exposure to chemicals.
10. Enhancing biosecurity.

The plan will be achieved through six actions:

1. Using and managing land sustainably
2. Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
3. Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
4. Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste
5. Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans
6. Protecting and improving the global environment

Of particular relevance is (3) Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces and Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school.

Spending time in the natural environment – as a resident or a visitor – improves our mental health and feelings of wellbeing. It can reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression. It can help boost immune systems, encourage physical activity and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as asthma21. It can combat loneliness and bind communities together. P70

As part of a development of social prescribing across England, specialist social prescribing teams could help to connect patients with environmental support.
We will do this by seed-funding a project, led by The Conservation Volunteers and supported by NHS England

We will launch a three-year 'Natural Environment for Health and Wellbeing' programme, focused on supporting local authorities, health organisations, health professionals, teachers and planners in promoting the natural environment as a pathway to good health and wellbeing.

Developing a Nature Friendly Schools programme for schools and supporting more access from young people in PRUs

2. Local Plans
2.1 Shropshire Hills AONB 2017/2018 review of progress against business plan
2.2 Shrewsbury BID Business Plan
2.3 Shrewsbury Big Town Plan
2.4 Oswestry BID Business Plan
2.5 Oswestry Town Plan
2.6 Oswestry HAZ

2.1 Shropshire Hills AONB Business Plan and 2017/2018 review of progress
2020 is 62nd year of the Shropshire Area of Outstanding Beauty. It is governed by a 41 member strong board.

Statistics:
Size 804km² (approximately 23% of Shropshire)
Parishes 82 parishes, but only 16 wholly within the AONB
Population around 20,000

A rich natural and built heritage with:
- 126 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- 315 Local Wildlife Sites (+70 candidate sites)
- 2 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) covering 588ha
- River Teme SSSI & River Clun Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- 145 Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)
- 180 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)

Public access:

- 1275km public footpaths
- 448km bridleways
- 97km byways
- 81km² of open access land

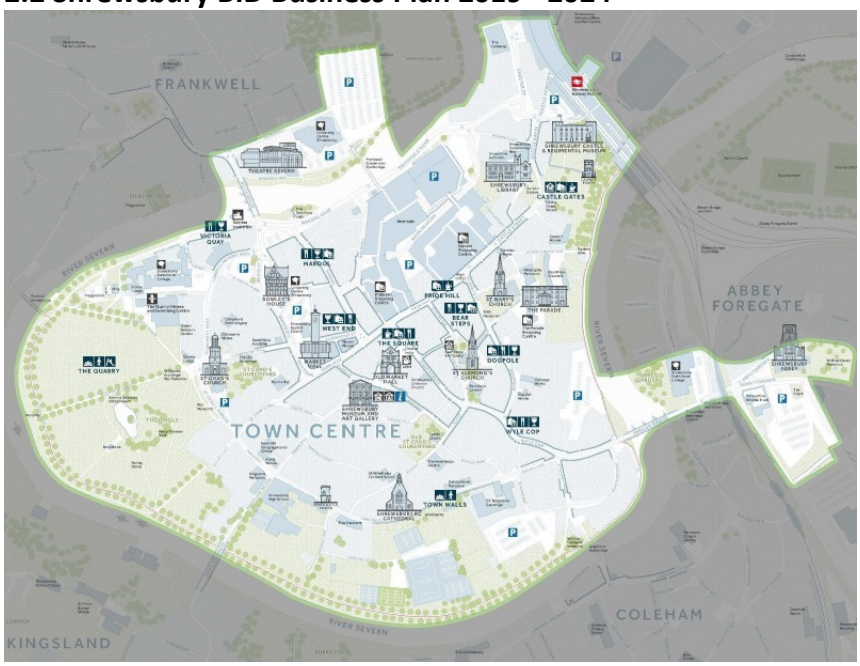
Projects:
2017-18 was the final year of a £2.32million, Heritage Lottery funded Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme.

- £60,000 awarded in 43 small grants to landowners and community groups for natural and built heritage conservation work.
- 491 volunteers supported the Scheme, contributing over £150,000 worth of voluntary effort.
- 129 public events were delivered by the Scheme, involving at least 3,450 people.
- 47 traditional rural skills courses were delivered to 390 people.

Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership brings together local tourism groups, public sector bodies and tourism businesses in the area. EU funded tourism co-operation project

In 2017, between April and October, three artists used different media (song, visual and theatre) to explore and help people understand the fragile Shropshire Hills landscape. 'Heartland' _was a partnership with National Trust, Stiperstones & Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme, Arts Alive and Ben Osborne Photography.

2.2 Shrewsbury BID Business Plan 2019 - 2024



Shrewsbury BID is in its second term. The first was established in 2014

- Invested £1.9millon including £430,000 raised above levy
- Developed the Big Town Plan
- Supported festivals and events including the DarwIN Shrewsbury Festival.

- 500 attendees to business workshops
- 20,000 social media followers on 'Original Shrewsbury'
- Footfall went up 2% between Jan and June 2018 (4% more than regional average)
- Purple Flag 3 years in a row.

The priorities for BID 2 are:
- Promoting and attracting more people
- Improving the experience

The proposed budget is £2m with 82% from the levy and a fundraising target if £310k.

Plans include:
- £800k into Promoting and Animating including: Promoting Shrewsbury as the birthplace of Darwin and New seasonal experiences for families
- £460k into Supporting and Enhancing including Improving visitor experience and Enhancing Public Realm
- £15k into Representing and Influencing including Influencing Local Decision Making and Driving the Big Town Plan forward.

2.3 Shrewsbury Big Town Plan

Developed by LDA Design for local partners including Council and the BID.
Vision for the plan - 'We see the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan as a blueprint for how County Towns or other towns might adapt and evolve in the middle part of the 21st Century. As the birthplace of the father of evolutionary science we want to celebrate Darwin's legacy by developing the Big Town Plan as a blueprint for thoughtful and purposeful change and adaptation in the Town into the future.'

500 residents engaged with shaping the vision. Have developed a 'Shrewsbury Test' to ensure development is best for the town.

10 goals for Shrewsbury includes these where culture can make a particular impact:
- (2) We recognise the rapid changes in working patterns and working practice. We want to create new, flexible workspace environments built around buzzy, active places, both in and around the town centre and out on the edge of town.
- (4) We want to build strong physical and virtual networks connecting education, healthcare, business start-ups, new industries and sports provision across the town to improve mobility and to form new alliances. The importance of well-being in Shrewsbury is key.
- (6) We are very proud of our education establishments. We want to retain more of our best young talent in the town and attract new talent from outside. We want to support innovation and start-ups in exciting new places.
- (7) We want to strengthen the all-round appeal of the town centre based around better place-making and the visitor experience. We want to strengthen independent shopping whilst continuing to attract destination brands. We want to inject greater diversity of use into the centre, housing leisure, entertainment, culture and the arts.

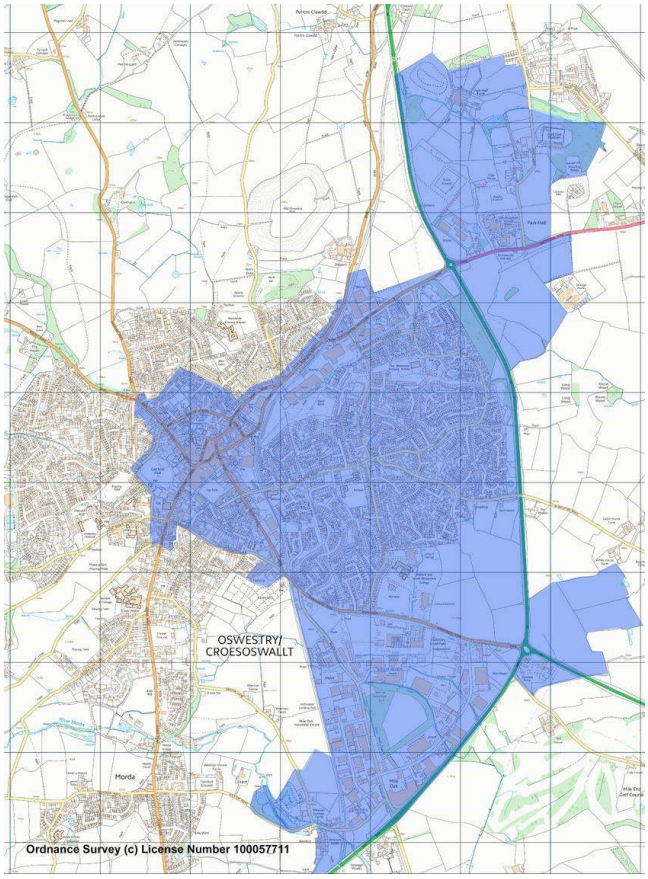
- (8) We want to make this green town greener still, by connecting existing green spaces across the town, making new links and new parks where we can and making much more of the River corridor. We want to make strong connections from the town centre, through the suburbs and out into the wider countryside and improve the health and well-being for everyone.

Four priorities:
- Rethinking movement and place
- Supporting, creating and nurturing vitality, life and a mix of uses
- Creating a place for enterprise
- Nurturing natural Shrewsbury

A Place for Enterprise includes plans for a Flagship Creative Hub at West End and high quality shared space/ studios along northern corridor

2.4 Oswestry BID Business Plan 2018 - 2023

The BID covers Oswestry's commercial core with surrounding commercial areas. It is one of 2 in Shropshire.



The income is expected to be £1.5m over 5 years with £270k from levy revenues per year.

The vision is for the town:
• To be recognised regionally & nationally as a great place to live, work, shop, relax and be entertained.
• To be a high performing centre for business growth and a national destination of choice for business investment.

The objectives are:
Raising Profile

- To effectively develop and promote the strengths and characteristics of Oswestry to prospective visitors and business investors

Business Support & Investment

- To actively support the growth and development of existing local businesses
- To attract and support start-ups, young businesses and new investment which complements and builds upon Oswestry's existing strengths

A Great Place To Be

- To build upon Oswestry's multi-faceted heritage and cultural assets to further develop a welcoming, vibrant & enriching environment where visitors, workers & residents want to be
- To be recognised regionally & nationally as a great place to live, work, shop, relax and be entertained.
- To be a high performing centre for business growth and a national destination of choice for business investment.

Accessible & Safe Environment
- To facilitate safe, functional.

A survey was conducted of local businesses – 161 took part:
- Floral displays (81%) and festive lighting (74%) were rated highly
- Developing area's identity and branding to attract more visitors was considered to be the second most important initiative for businesses within the town centre (76%) after bringing derelict buildings back to i.e. (81%) and then developing the night-time economy (74%)
- Specific outcomes and outputs including pledge to get Purple Flag status (Shrewsbury has a Purple Flag).

2.5 Oswestry Town Plan
Developed over 2012 and 2013 this presented a vision for Oswestry in 2020.
Second largest town in Shropshire, close to the Welsh border
Relatively younger profile
Retail biggest employer
Indoor and outdoor markets
Relatively affluent but pockets of deprivation
Identified opportunity around 'developing the town's growing arts and culture scene'
Also needs to enliven town centre and attract tourists

Vision:
Oswestry – A distinctive and progressive borderland market town

Themes:
- A vibrant and welcoming town centre
- A strong and enterprising local economy
- A sustainable town with an attractive physical environment
- A caring, healthy and safe community
- A well-connected town.

Interesting ideas:
Vacant Premises
Town Team
Oswestry season of festivals
Wilfred Owen born in Oswestry
Ambition to develop a multi-purpose arts venue
Identified funding through CiL
Developing Oswestry's cultural, arts, sporting and heritage offer is a 'very high' priority for investment for 30% of resident survey respondents. 78% of resident survey respondents feel Oswestry should be looking to build on its growing arts, events and music scene.

2.6 Oswestry HAZ
Oswestry received £40m for a High Street Heritage Action Zone in 2019 led by the Future Oswestry Group.

High Streets Heritage Action Zones will deliver a four-year programme of physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities to revive England's struggling historic high streets and town centres. Historic England will be working closely with a variety of local partners, including local authorities, Business Improvement Districts, Chambers of Commerce, community groups and cultural organisations to deliver positive change; supporting high streets adapt to the challenges they face by investing in their local heritage.

As a Heritage Action Zone councils, businesses and community groups can access expert advice and investment to bring historic buildings back into use and support historic high streets to adapt to the challenges they face.

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Committee and Date	Item
Cabinet- 5th October 2020	Public

Declaration of Shropshire Council owned Country Parks as Local Nature Reserves.

Responsible Officer Clare Featherstone, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Manager
e-mail: Clare.featherstone@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255067

1. Summary

1.1 Shropshire Council owns and manages the following 4 sites:

- Nesscliffe Country Park
- Llanymynech Heritage Area
- Poles Coppice
- Lyth Hill

and cabinet approval is sought to dedicate them as Local Nature Reserves.

1.2 Shropshire Council has the power under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to dedicate land as a Local Nature Reserve. This is an executive function for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2000.

1.3 Dedicating the sites as Local Nature Reserves will offer an enhanced status for the land. This can help to raise awareness about the sites both within local communities and for attracting visitors to an area. It also has advantages when it comes to applying for external funding and can offer an increased level of protection against changes in land use that could negatively impact on the wildlife, geology and community value of these spaces.

1.4 Specifically, dedication of Local Nature Reserves can help Shropshire Council to achieve the following objectives;

- Access to high quality green space can help to improve quality of life, health and wellbeing for local people.
- Creates opportunities for education, enjoyment and recreation and preserves links with the local community's past.
- Local Nature Reserves can help to attract visitors into an area.
- High quality green space can help to safeguard local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water.
- Protect and enhance the natural heritage as a key part of building sustainable communities.
- Dedication of Local Nature Reserves can help to raise awareness and recognise the nature conservation status, community value and recreational potential of a site.
- Dedication of sites as Local Nature Reserves can afford protection within the planning system from future development.

1.6 Outdoor Partnership officers have been working with Natural England in respect of these proposals to ensure nature conservation and ecosystem services are safeguarded and community interaction and involvement ensured. Natural England has agreed to these proposals (appendix 2).

1.7 The anticipated benefits of a Local Nature Reserve dedication in these locations lead to the conclusion that it would be appropriate to formally agree Local Nature Reserve dedications in respect of the land known as Nesscliffe Country Park, Llanymynech Heritage Area, Poles Coppice and Lyth Hill.

2. Recommendations

A. That Cabinet agrees to the dedication of Nesscliffe Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve

B. That Cabinet agrees to the dedication of Llanymynech Heritage Area as a Local Nature Reserve

C. That Cabinet agrees to the dedication of Poles Coppice as a Local Nature Reserve

D. That Cabinet agrees to the dedication of Lyth Hill as a Local Nature Reserve

E. That Cabinet delegates to the Director of Place, the authority to agree any associated actions to ensure the successful dedication of Local Nature Reserve status for these sites.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 Along with the benefits identified above, LNR designation meets the Shropshire Council strategic outcomes set out in the following Strategies:

- Shropshire's Great Outdoor Strategy 2018-2028
- Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy- developing the visitor economy, agricultural support post- Brexit, developing skills, improving Quality of Life and ensuring attractive environments.
- Shropshire's Local Plan- Better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, new destination country parks, protecting environmentally-sensitive sites.
- Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy- harnessing the power of the outdoors to increase physical activity, address mental health issues and help people stay independent for longer.
- Local Transport Plan for Shropshire- encouraging walking and cycling.
- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan- helping deliver the priorities; 'a healthy environment'; 'sustainable places and communities' and 'embrace our rurality'.

3.2 There are no discernible risks to Shropshire Council of making this delegation. The dedication of land as Local Nature Reserve does not carry with it any significant

responsibilities for land management above and beyond the normal management planning that the team currently carry out

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications of the delegation beyond staff time for undertaking all relevant procedures with Natural England etc to give effect to the dedication.

5. Background

54.1 There has been consultation with Natural England and a letter of support is shown in Appendix 2.

5.2 Recommendations have changed since the 2018 Briefing Paper (Appendix 1) when it was proposed that Eardington Quarry and Severn Valley Country Park were included. These are awaiting completed management plans before designation can be pursued. There was also mention of Copthorne Park and Monkmoor Meadows in Shrewsbury in the 2018 Briefing Paper. These sites are listed for transfer to Shrewsbury Town Council, so it is not proposed to take forward designation of them as LNRs at this stage. The Cliffe, which is managed by Shropshire Council but owned by Ruyton-XI Towns Parish Council may be dedicated once future plans have been agreed by the Parish Council.

5.3 Section 15 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended) (1949 Act), describes a 'nature reserve' as:

- land managed solely for a conservation purpose, or
- land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.

5.4 Land is managed for a conservation purpose if it is managed for:

- providing, under suitable conditions and control, special opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live, and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area; or
- preserving flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area or for both these purposes.

5.5 Land is managed for a recreational purpose if it is managed for the purpose of providing opportunities for the enjoyment of nature or for open-air recreation.

5.6 The power to dedicate a Local Nature Reserve rests with Shropshire Council as the principal authority under the 1949 Act. However, under that 1949 Act, the local authority must first have or acquire a legal interest in the land in question through ownership, lease or an agreement with the owners and occupiers involved. Shropshire Council owns all 4 sites which are the subject of this report.

5.7 Declaration of a Local Nature Reserve is an executive function and Cabinet has the authority to make dedications on Shropshire Council owned.

6. Additional Information

6.1 Benefits of a Local Nature Reserve

6.1.1 A LNR is a protected area of land designated by a local authority because of its local special natural interest and, where possible, educational and community value. The Outdoor Partnership Service believes that having environmental designations on its sites raises their profile with the public and can increase visitor usage and the health and wellbeing benefits this provides. Environmental designations also provide some protection for the sites nature conservation and recreation interest, as well as specifying a positive use for land that might otherwise be perceived as available for development, thus safeguarding access to the sites for future generations. Declaring an LNR offers many benefits to the Council, such as:

- Access to high quality green space can help to improves quality of life, health and wellbeing for local people.
- Creates opportunities for education, enjoyment and recreation and preserves links with the local community's past.
- Local Nature Reserves can help to attract visitors into an area.
- High quality green space can help to safeguard local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water.
- Protect and enhance the natural heritage as a key part of building sustainable communities.
- Dedication of Local Nature Reserves can help to raise awareness and recognise the nature conservation status, community value and recreational potential of a site.
- Dedication of sites as Local Nature Reserves can afford protection within the planning system from future development.

6.1.2 Along with the benefits identified above LNR Designation meets many strategic outcomes set out in the following:

- Shropshire Great Outdoor Strategy 2018-2028
- Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy- developing the visitor economy, agricultural support post- Brexit, developing skills, improving Quality of Life and ensuring attractive environments.
- Shropshire's Local Plan- Better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, new destination country parks, protecting environmentally-sensitive sites.
- Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy- harnessing the power of the outdoors to increase physical activity, address mental health issues and help people stay independent for longer.
- Local Transport Plan for Shropshire- encouraging walking and cycling.
- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan- helping deliver across the board: resilient communities, healthy people and prosperous economy.
- Strategic Enterprise Plan, Marches LEP- promoting Shropshire as a business investment opportunity, building on individuals' quality of life, staff wellbeing and company reputation.

- The Governments 25 Year Environment Plan, - Better connecting people, health and the outdoors, especially for young people and to benefit those with mental health issues; improving the delivery of biodiversity and greenspace gains through the planning process and raising awareness of the economic benefits of the outdoors.
- Everyone Active Every Day, Public Health England- Encouraging regular physical activity.
- The Cultural White Paper, DCMS- Maximising the opportunities to transform communities through natural and cultural heritage.

The specific reasons for dedication and benefits for each of the sites are outlined below:

6.1 ***Llanymynech Heritage Area***

Llanymynech Heritage is 7.5 ha in size and is a mix of industrial heritage, woodland and wildflower meadows. The site represents a nationally significant 'industrial production line in the landscape' together with a rich history dating back to the Bronze Age. Having strong community ties, together with a local group The Llimeys who regularly help with site management and community participation. The site also offers a circular walk and is popular with locals. School parties regularly use the restored stable block buildings and local specialist groups are involved with natural history recording. The recreational elements do not compromise the conservation purposes of the site.

6.2 ***Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Site***

This 53ha site is a popular destination for walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers. The site sits in a prominent position in the landscape above the village of Nesscliffe and is primarily a plantation on an ancient woodland site. Within the site can be found Nesscliffe hill fort, an iron age fortification, recently excavated by Oxford University as part of an ongoing investigation to understand, protect and interpret this nationally important heritage area. Community participation is strong with monthly work parties together with periodic meetings with the Nesscliffe Advisory Group, made up of representatives from stakeholder groups. The site is regularly used by local schools and the Field Studies Council at Preston Montford as part of their studies. The long term aim for this site is to restore the ancient woodland, continue to provide a place for quiet recreation and develop a state-of-the-art interpretation package revealing the iron age hillfort.

The part of the site called The Cliffe is owned by Ruyton XI Towns Parish Council and managed by Outdoor Partnerships. It is not included in the recommendation at this present time.

6.3 ***Poles Coppice Countryside Heritage Site:***

Poles Coppice is a countryside heritage site located in Pontesbury and Minsterley. It is managed by Outdoor Partnerships Team with support from Pontesbury Parish Council. The site is 30 ha in size and is predominantly oak woodland with some grassland and some scree habitat within quarries. There are close links with the local community. Many local people help to volunteer on site. Pontesbury parish councils contribute funding towards site management.

Semi-natural ancient woodland is an important habitat. Poles Coppice has a history as an oak coppice woodland. Local industry such as leather tanning would have

created a demand for timber. The ancient woodland is dominated by sessile and hybrid oak with occasional silver and downy birch and rowan. The understorey is mainly comprised of hazel, holly and rowan. In spring there is a wonderful display of bluebells and stitchwort. Quarrying has taken place in Poles Coppice since the early 18th century, only ceasing in 1971. The extracted stone was used for roadstone and local buildings. There are several quarries within the site. The open scree and grassland habitat within them is an important habitat. At one time, 5000 spikes of common spotted orchids were counted in the base of the main quarry.

The site is an important destination for local people to walk the dog and benefit from better health and well-being. Volunteer days also offer the opportunity for people to get physically active in the Shropshire countryside.

The local secondary school uses Poles Coppice for training students who show an interest in countryside management and conservation. Students work with a member of staff from Shropshire Council.

Through the Stiperstones and Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme, some excellent conservation work was undertaken. This included woodland management to create glades and rides and work to remove scrub from the quarries. Through the management plan, this work will be continued.

In terms of ecosystem services, the volunteers regularly plant trees on site. There is also lots of habitat for pollinating insects, which are a vital resource across the landscape, including amongst farm crops.

6.4 Lyth Hill Countryside Heritage Site

Lyth Hill is a countryside heritage site located in Bayston Hill and Longden on the edge of Shrewsbury. It is managed by Outdoor Partnerships Team in partnership with Longden and Bayston Hill Parish Councils. The site is 28 ha in size and is a mix of woodland, grassland and open hillside. There are close links with the local community. Many local people help to volunteer on site. Both parish councils contribute funding towards site management. Lyth Hill Advisory Group (with representation from both parish councils and the volunteer group) meets regularly to look at management tasks that need completing.

Ecologically the site is very important. Areas of the open hillside still have remnant acid grassland plant communities that are threatened with scrub and bracken encroachment. Grazing management and annual mowing and bracken treatment is helping the acid vegetation to spread. There are also areas of hay meadow and ancient oak woodland (Spring Coppice). The site is an ecological island amongst intensive agricultural land.

Historically the site has links with the rope-making industry and also Mary Webb once lived next to the site. Today the site is a popular recreational area for many visitors from Shrewsbury and further afield. Public footpaths and permissive paths allow ample opportunity for walking and running thereby helping with health and well-being targets. The views across the Shropshire landscape from the top of Lyth Hill are magnificent.

There is lots of potential for education work at Lyth Hill. Already the weekly volunteer days offer a great opportunity for people of all ages to learn new skills and gain experience. With the support of the local parish councils, huge progress has been made with conservation land management on site. A Countryside Stewardship Agreement has funded fencing that has allowed grazing with hardy cattle to be extended.

In terms of ecosystem services, the volunteers regularly plant trees on site. There is also lots of habitat for pollinating insects, which are a vital resource across the landscape, including amongst farm crops.

6.5 The LNR designation is vital to recognise the value of these sites for people and wildlife and offer a degree of protection.

7. Conclusion

6.1 The benefits of Local Nature reserve status for these sites are considered justification for their declaration as such.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

A briefing note was taken to informal Cabinet and Directors in July 2018 (appendix 1)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Lezley Picton

Local Members
Nesscliffe Country Park & The Cliffe – Cllr. Ed Potter

Llanymynech Heritage Area – Cllr. Matt Lee

Poles Coppice – Cllr. Nick Hignett

Lyth Hill – Cllr. Jane Mackenzie, Cllr Ted Clarke, Cllr Tony Parsons and Cllr Roger Evans

Appendices
Appendix 1 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR) Designation Briefing Paper - July 2018

Appendix 2 - Letters of support from Natural England

Appendix 3 - Map of Llanymynech Heritage Site

Appendix 4 - Map of Poles Coppice Countryside Heritage Site

Appendix 5 - Map of Lyth Hill Countryside Heritage Site

Appendix 6 - Map of Nesscliffe Country Park

Appendix 1- Local Nature Reserves (LNR) Designation Briefing Paper - July 2018

Introduction
This briefing paper outlines Outdoor Partnerships request for Shropshire Council to designate 8 of its countryside sites as Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

Background
The Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Service priorities are to improve people's health and wellbeing and to support local communities, the local environment and tourism economy. We do this through the management and development of recreational access in Shropshire i.e. Public Rights of Way network, County Parks & Countryside Heritage Sites, Green Spaces and Open Access Land.

The Country Parks and Heritage Sites are those sites with specific natural and cultural heritage features and are major assets to the local community, with local people taking great pride in their parks, many of whom join our 'Friends of Park Groups' to volunteer their time to help look after the site and help raise funds and apply for small grants to develop projects. Many of the sites are also used by a wider audience, attracting visitors from across the county and beyond.

The 24 countryside sites that the Outdoor Partnerships Service manages, includes 2 major country parks (the Mere at Ellesmere & SVCP) having circa 387,000 visitors p.a., with a further 16 countryside heritage sites attracting 436,000+ visits p.a., and 6 smaller sites that have around 57,000 visits p.a. About half of the sites have some environmental designation, such as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Schedule Ancient Monument (SAM), QEII Fields in Trust or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status. The full list is provided in Appendix 1 below.

Budget Implications
The sites being proposed for LNR designation already meet the requirements of being managed for conservation and recreational purpose and therefore there are no financial implications, other than officer time in consulting with Natural England and the local communities.

Benefits of a LNR
A LNR is a protected area of land designated by a local authority because of its local special natural interest and, where possible, educational and community value. The Outdoor Partnership Service believes that having environmental designations on its sites raises their profile with the public and can increase visitor usage and the health and wellbeing benefits this provides. Environmental designations also provide some protection for the sites nature conservation and recreation interest, as well as specifying a positive use for land that might otherwise be perceived as available for development, thus safeguarding access to the sites for future generations. Declaring an LNR offers many benefits to the Council, such as:

- Access to high quality green space can help to improves quality of life, health and wellbeing for local people.
- Creates opportunities for education, enjoyment and recreation and preserves links with the local community's past.

- Local Nature Reserves can help to attract visitors into an area.
- High quality green space can help to safeguard local ecosystem services – the benefits nature provides for people – such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere or absorbing surface water.
- Protect and enhance the natural heritage as a key part of building sustainable communities.
- Dedication of Local Nature Reserves can help to raise awareness and recognise the nature conservation status, community value and recreational potential of a site.
- Dedication of sites as Local Nature Reserves can afford protection within the planning system from future development.

Along with the benefits identified above LNR Designation meets many strategic outcomes set out in the following:

- Shropshire Great Outdoor Strategy 2018-2028
- Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy- developing the visitor economy, agricultural support post- Brexit, developing skills, improving Quality of Life and ensuring attractive environments.
- Shropshire's Local Plan- Better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, new destination country parks, protecting environmentally-sensitive sites.
- Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy- harnessing the power of the outdoors to increase physical activity, address mental health issues and help people stay independent for longer.
- Local Transport Plan for Shropshire- encouraging walking and cycling.
- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan- helping deliver across the board: resilient communities, healthy people and prosperous economy.
- Strategic Enterprise Plan, Marches LEP- promoting Shropshire as a business investment opportunity, building on individuals' quality of life, staff wellbeing and company reputation.
- The Governments 25 Year Environment Plan, - Better connecting people, health and the outdoors, especially for young people and to benefit those with mental health issues; improving the delivery of biodiversity and greenspace gains through the planning process and raising awareness of the economic benefits of the outdoors.
- Everyone Active Every Day, Public Health England- Encouraging regular physical activity.
- The Cultural White Paper, DCMS- Maximising the opportunities to transform communities through natural and cultural heritage.

The Outdoor Partnership Service believe that more of its countryside sites are worthy of having an environmental designation, and as Shropshire Council has the power under s21 National parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to designate LNR's. We are recommending the Council supports the list of sites below to become LNR's.

1. Severn Valley Country Park
2. Eardington Quarry
3. Lyth Hill
4. Nesscliffe Country Park
5. Poles Coppice
6. Llanymynech Heritage Area
7. Monkmoor Meadows, Shrewsbury
8. Copthorne Park, Shrewsbury

Although Shropshire Council has the power to designate an LNR, Natural England (NE) must be consulted to show that the sites meet the legislative requirements, in that:

- The land is managed solely for a conservation purpose, or
- land is managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.
- The land has an identified management plan is in place.

Natural England Recommendations

Natural England believes LNRs should be:

- Of high value locally for environmental education and/or research.
- People are more likely to be aware of and value the natural environment when they can experience it at first hand in places such as LNRs.
- Of high natural interest locally.
- LNRs can help safeguard not just rare but also more common, locally valued species, habitats and geodiversity. They can play an important part in Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Local Geodiversity Action Plans.
- Of reasonable natural interest and of high value locally for enjoyment of nature by the public.
- Natural England recommends that everyone should have an accessible greenspace of 2 ha within 300 m of home; at least one accessible 20 ha site within 5 km of home; at least one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km of home; and at least one 500 ha site within 10 km of home. LNRs can contribute to these targets and the ANGSt standard of a minimum of 1 ha of LNR per 1000 head of population.
- They can also play an important part in sustainable development initiatives.

Process for LNR designation

It is proposed that following process be followed:

1. Briefing to Informal Cabinet to agree LNR site designation at 8 sites set out above.
2. Outdoor Partnerships will then undertake the consultation with NE and following their agreement
3. Report back to Cabinet for formal agreement
4. Arrange legal formalities for LNR designation
5. Provide public notices of LNR declaration

Appendix 1

Site	**Current Site Designation**	**Proposed LNR designation 2018**
The Mere at Ellesmere Country Park	Charitable Trust	
Severn Valley Country Park		LNR
Birchmeadow Park	Charitable Trust/FIT	
Brown Moss Countryside Heritage Site	SSSI/Common/LNR/SAC	
Colemere Countryside Heritage Site	SSSI/LNR	
Corbet Wood Countryside Heritage Site	SSSI/LNR	

Donnington & Albrighton LNR	LNR	
Eardington Quarry Nature Reserve		LNR
Ifton Meadows Local Nature Reserve	LNR	
Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area	SAM	LNR
Lyth Hill Countryside Site		LNR
Merrington Green	Common	
Nesscliffe	SAM	LNR
The Cliffe	Common	
New England		
Oswestry Racecourse	Common	
Poles Coppice		LNR
Snailbeach Lead Mine	SSSI/SAM	
Stanmore Park		
Steel Heath	Common	
Whitchurch Waterway Linear Park	LNR	
Hodnet Disused Railway		
Wollerton		
The Bog Mine		
Walkmill Meadows (leased)		

SSSI - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
LNR - Local Nature Reserve
Ramsar - International wetland designation
SAM - Scheduled Ancient Monument
SAC - Special Areas of Conservation
Common - Common land (open Access)
FIT - Field in Trust

Appendix 2- Example of letter of support from Natural England

Dear Mark,

PROPOSAL TO DECLARE NESSCLIFFE HILL COUNTRY PARK AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

I am writing regarding the proposal to declare Nesscliffe Hill Country Park a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended).

Natural England's purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings .Nesscliffe Hill Country Park, managed according to the management plan is of value to both local wildlife and the local community. As such, Natural England is delighted to support the declaration of the site as a LNR. Protecting this site and its habitats will allow it to continue to be used and valued by local people for recreation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Natural England confirms that it has been consulted on your proposal to declare Nesscliffe Hill Country Park a nature reserve under the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). The requirements for consultation contained in Section 21(6) of that Act have therefore been met subject to following:

As a member of the Engagement Local Delivery Team, I would like to formally welcome these proposals on behalf of Natural England.

The next step is for Shropshire to make the necessary arrangements for the formal declaration of the reserve. This can be limited to the issuing of public notices or can be extended to include an event to celebrate the declaration.

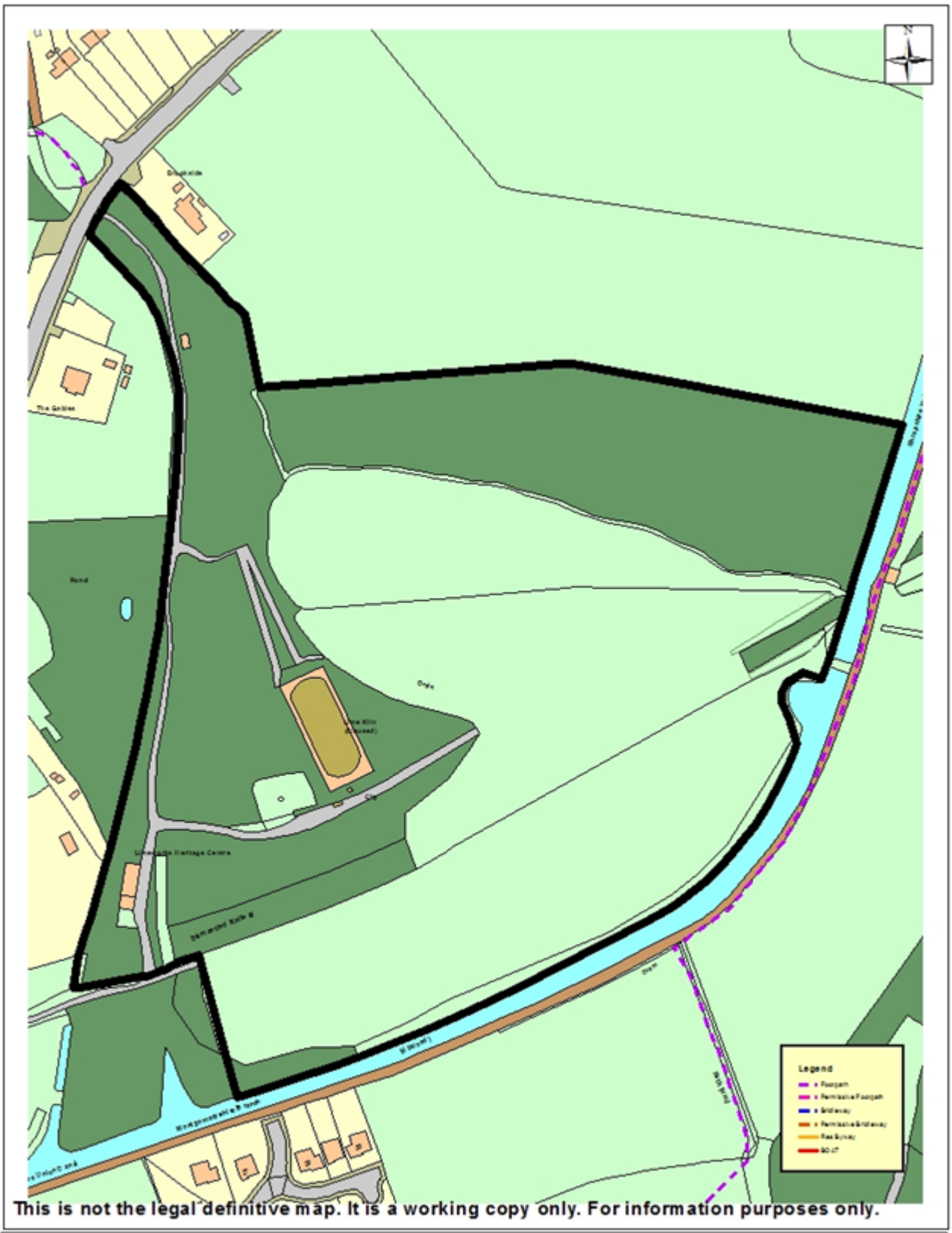
Once the declaration is complete, we will need confirmation of the declaration date, and a copy of the declaration papers and a map showing the exact boundaries of the declared area. The site will also be promoted through Natural England's internet site finder. To ensure our records are up to date, I would be grateful if you could also complete and return to me the attached Local Nature Reserve Fact Sheet once the site has been declared.

If you are unsure about any part of the declaration process, please refer to the guidance booklet from our website (http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31039?category=15005) or contact me using the details below

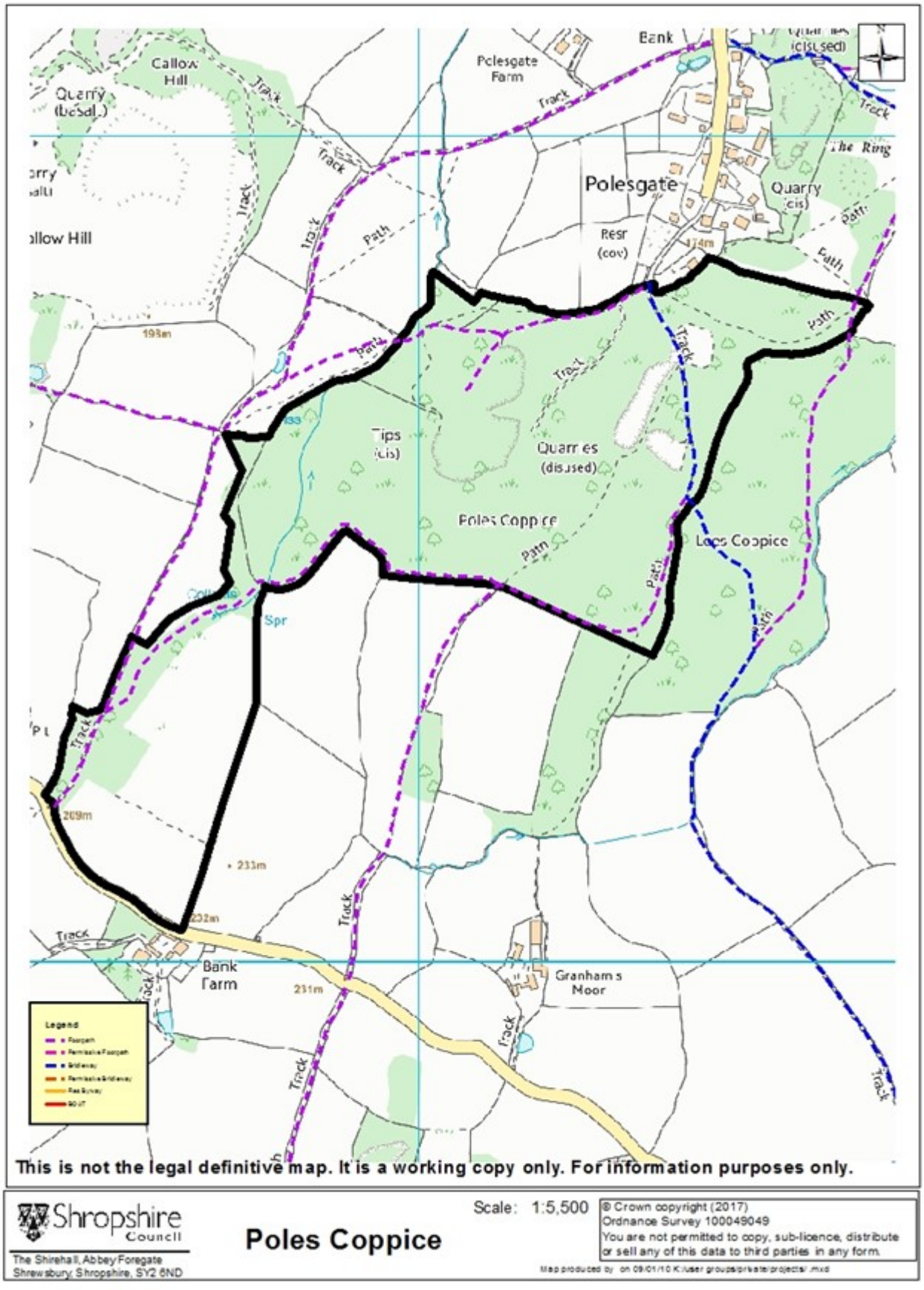
Yours sincerely

Peter Loat
West Midlands Area Team Lead Adviser – Local Nature Reserves
peter.w.loat@naturalengland.org.uk Tel: 02080261226 Mob: 07769 641550

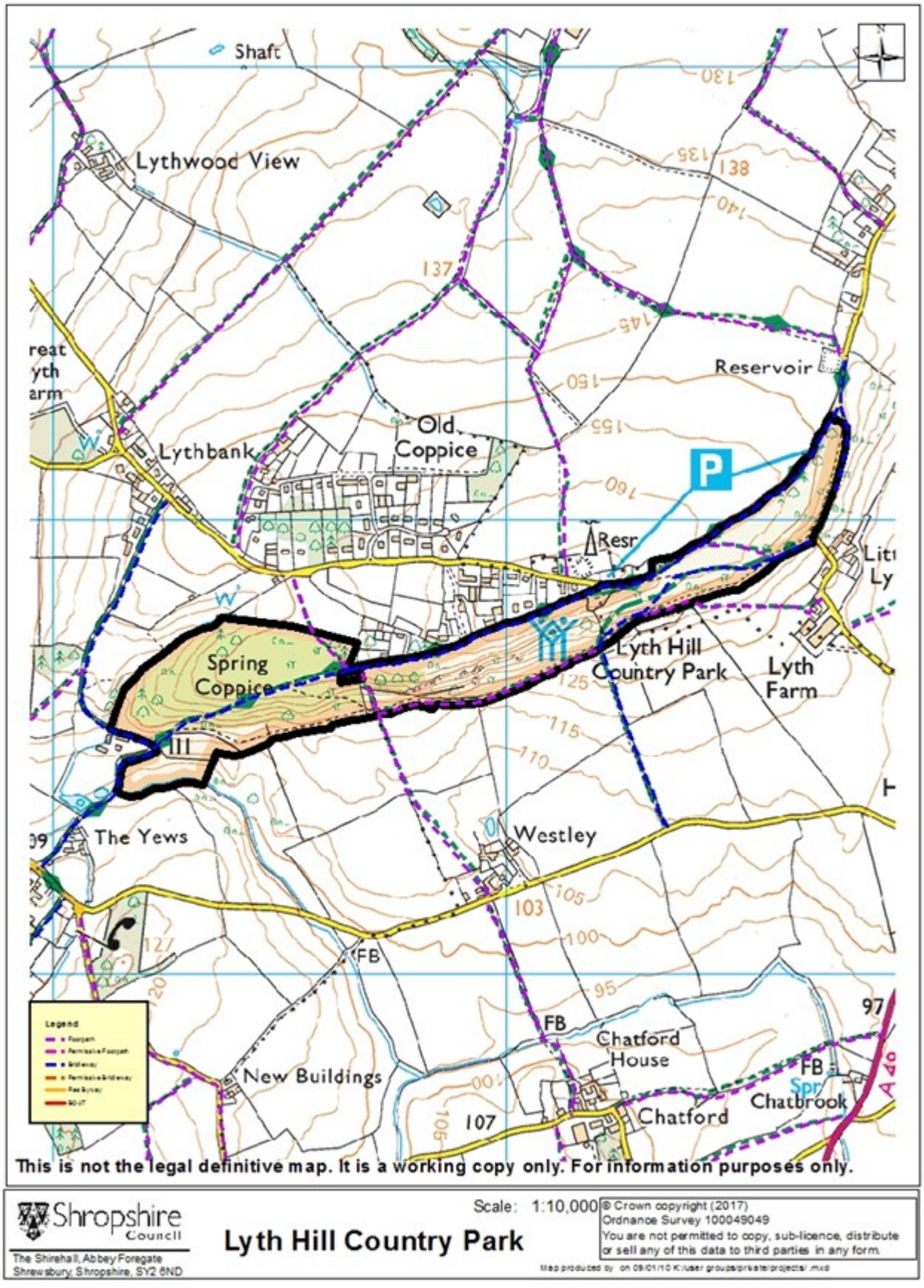
Appendix 3: Plan of Llanymynech Heritage Area



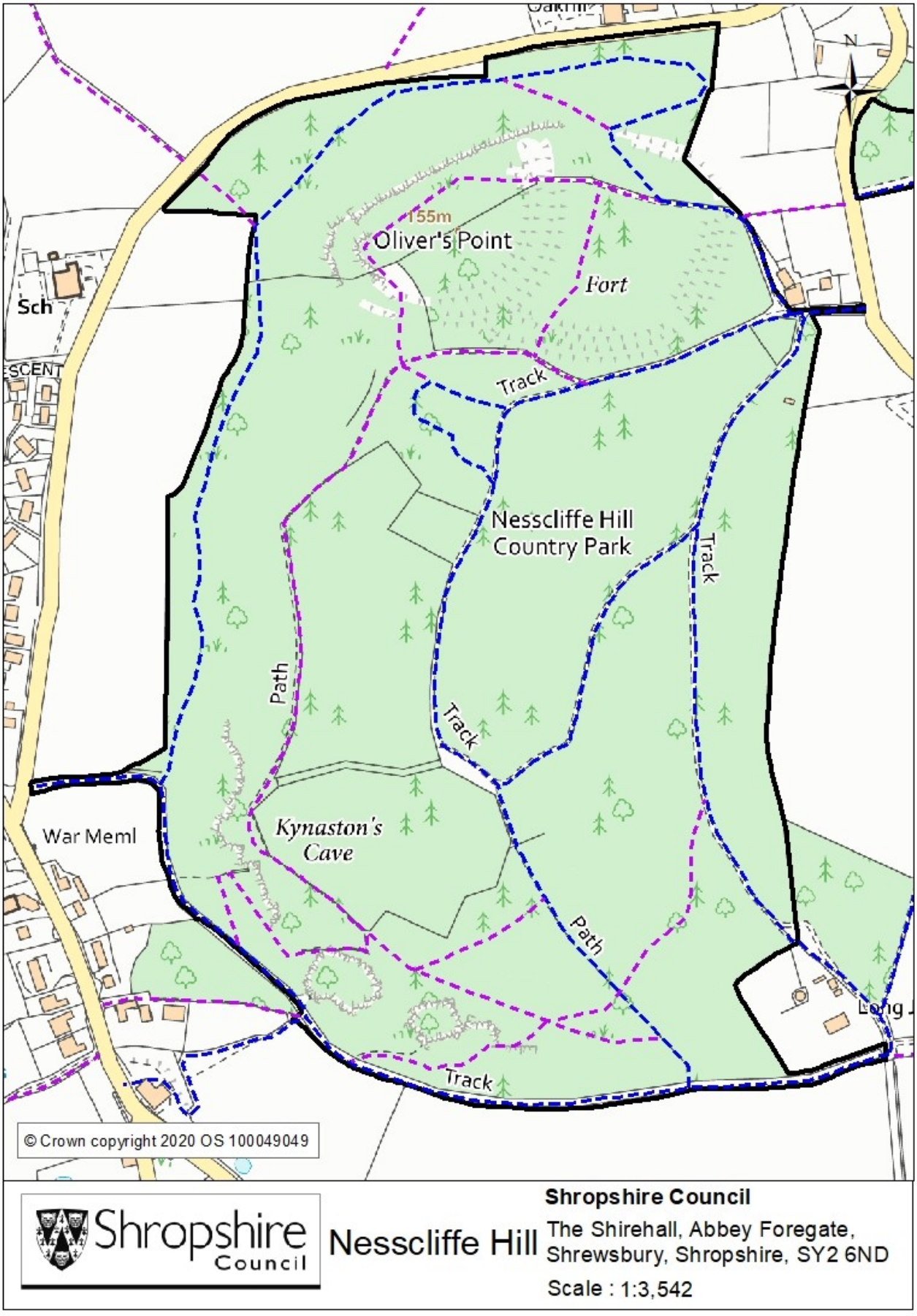
Appendix 4: Plan of Poles Coppice



Appendix 5: Plan of Lyth Hill



Appendix 6: Plan of Nesscliffe Country Park



Committee and Date	Item
Cabinet – 5th October 2020	**Public**

Residential and Nursing Beds – Approval of Reviewed Commissioning Arrangements

Responsible Officer Andy Begley

1. Summary:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for changes to the standard rates the Council will pay for residential and nursing beds in Shropshire, and to report on the outcomes of the pilot which has been undertaken to test the proposed changes. It is important to note that whilst the Council will seek to commission care at these standard rates wherever possible, it is always open to it to deviate from them in exceptional circumstances where the needs of the individual require it.

1.2 The Council is committed to using its resources efficiently and this review of Adult Social Care (ASC) commissioning arrangements ensures we can continue to meet duties, control costs and maintain budget affordability whilst supporting a fair and sustainable marketplace, and evidence fairness and equity in our approach.

1.3 Whilst historically Shropshire Council has used standard rates for beds, the rates had not been reviewed for some years and consequently the project was required to refresh and renew the practice. The proposed rates set out in this report follow on from the public consultation which Cabinet approved in February 2019, and the pilot which took place in December 2019 - June 2020.

1.4 The pilot focussed on purchasing of new bed placements in care homes. During the pilot of these rates, we have seen 43% of providers agree to accept the new standard rates, an additional 39% of providers have negotiated down from their original fees, meaning 82% of providers have agreed better prices than originally or previously offered for placements.

1.5 The rates which have been used through the pilot were based on average rates charged by the market. Through consultation, benchmarking and modelling, the revised rates have been assessed as being fair and adequate to meet the cost of delivering residential and nursing care.

1.6 Fair rates promote an efficient and effective market, ensuring a sustainable and vibrant marketplace and allowing the council to be assured that:

- our fee levels do not (amongst other things) compromise the provider's ability to pay at least minimum wages.
- We encourage a variety of different providers and types of services, ensuring that there is reasonable choice for people who need care and support.
- our fee levels allow providers to effectively plan their finances and their business models. Shropshire Council is committed to supporting a wide variance of providers, and Small and Medium Enterprise's. The setting of fair standard rates can support and encourage smaller businesses through clarity, consistency and support for business planning.

1.7 Overall the pilot has successfully met the requirement to prove the concept that having revised rates:

- Allows the Council to better control prices
- Evidences that Shropshire Council commissions fairly and equitably
- Evidences a willingness within the market to work with the Council towards standard prices
- Has achieved annual savings target, and a positive impact on the ASC budget
- Gives the provider market clarity on the rates the Council will pay which supports effective business planning

1.8 We recognise that these are very challenging times across the care market, and we want to do all we can to support our markets. Separately to this project and pilot decisions have been taken by the Council to support the market with Covid 19 related expenses by making an upfront payment to providers which is representative of an additional 10% of their current contract value for three months from 31/3/2020. We have also sent out Infection Prevention Grant Funding of over £4.6 million has been distributed across the care market in Shropshire. In addition, we established a business grant fund for providers who have experienced financial loss due to Covid 19 of up to £10,000. We have also been providing emergency PPE which has been regularly accessed by providers.

(Note: This report refers to the purchasing of in County beds for older people only. Learning disability and Mental Health support and out of county placements will be included in future project work but is excluded from this report)

2. Recommendations:

2.1 Members agree that:

2.1.1 Shropshire Council should **proceed with the standard rates shown at paragraph 4.8 for all new purchasing**

2.1.2 Historical placements made prior to the implementation of the pilot and currently being paid below the new proposed standard rates, will be increased gradually through annual inflation review process.

REPORT

3 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 Identified Risks and opportunities of the recommendations are as follows:

- Analysis indicates that weekly rates would increase at levels higher than inflation unless (as demonstrated below in 5.2) measures are introduced to manage prices for Council-commissioned beds: this presents a significant financial risk to the Council

- Paying different prices for broadly similar services carries a level of risk of challenge to the Council and a strategy is required to evidence that the Council is working to address this issue. Having standard prices is the first step towards this.

- The strategies have potential to manage future expenditure without uncontrolled escalation but carry a level of risk to the marketplace due to providers not being able to escalate costs

- Due to market forces, it is not possible to completely avoid any risk of instability in the market place with the implementation of these proposals. Nor is it possible to guarantee that all beds can be brought in line with published rates immediately. Representation has been made to the Council from Shropshire Partners in Care that some areas of the market may be at risk if rates are not increased further from these proposed rates. There have been providers concerned about long term viability in recent months due to increased costs for providers including national living and minimum wage increases announced in December and the coronavirus pandemic has thrown up new challenges and increased financial pressures for providers (though as explained above much of the additional financial burdens have been off-set by grants). However, analysis of the pilot outcomes indicates that the current rates are being accepted by a significant proportion of the market.

- These proposals will impact on the market however the risk is minimised because the market:

    - Is currently considered to be buoyant and providing good quality of care. In the first quarter of 2020 CQC rated Shropshire Care Home providers as follows: 87% of providers are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' which is higher than the national average and only 1.5% are rated as 'requiring improvement' which is lower than the national average.

    - Is of significant size – we currently purchase from 115 of the 120 homes in Shropshire and we purchase about half of the total beds

    - Whilst, the local marketplace report staff turnover and vacancy pressures, CQC data reports show that although both turnover and vacancy rates have increased, they are lower than in comparator areas and England as a whole.

  The Council does and will continue to facilitate assistance to providers in partnership with SPIC (Shropshire Partners in Care) to support development of the marketplace.

- The proposal has been put together following full consultation and a six-month pilot to ensure robust market engagement and a managed and gradual implementation in order to manage risks to the market. Providers are accepting the new standard rates and Shropshire Council are closely monitoring and supporting providers throughout this time so any concerns and risks can be identified at the earliest opportunity.

- The risks associated with these proposals are significantly outweighed by the risk of not doing anything.

- The ESIIA has been updated to reflect the risks and mitigating actions at **Appendix A.** The proposals identify a low impact on protected characteristic groups and all other groups of people.

4. Background

4.1 Analysis of expenditure on nursing and residential care beds from 2017-2020 evidenced key issues that the Council needed to address:

- Overall costs per bed were rising at a rate well beyond inflation,
- The Council was paying different rates across the county for comparable services,
- The previous standard rates model was out of date and not usable and
- We needed to address these issues to satisfy ourselves that we were acting in compliance with the requirements of the Care Act

4.1 the overall demand for Adult Social Care support is rising each year as people are living for longer and have more complex and long-term conditions. The Council's focus is to operate in a way that promotes the best use of resources for everyone assessed as having eligible needs.

4.2 the Councils published rates for residential and nursing care were originally developed in 2016. Although, there have been annual rate increases on these previously published rates during the last few years, such rates have become unsustainable for the market leading to businesses being unable to meet these rates without incurring financial risk as follows:

Care category	**2018/19 <u>previous</u> Standard rates - price per bed per week (Rate awarded depended on CQC quality rating)**
Residential	**£297.78 – £362.15**
Residential EMI	**£347.55 - £416.10**
Nursing	**£377.63 - £455.38**
Nursing EMI	**£395.18 - £491.53**

4.3 These rates used a provider performance scoring system to identify the appropriate rate for a provider. This system was confusing for the market and unpopular with providers, and consequently the performance system is no longer maintained by the Council, as it is out of date and no longer a relevant process to use.

4.4 Previous engagement with the marketplace in Autumn 2015, and in June 2018 concluded that providers were keen to review the existing rates and consultation was undertaken in order to seek their views about the proposals and suggested new rates.

4.5 The Public Consultation to check that the rates and methodology would be acceptable to the market was undertaken for 6 weeks from 18th March to 26th April 2019 and a range of engagement and communication activity was undertaken to gain feedback on the proposals.

4.6 Mixed views were expressed about the proposals by providers. Overall 56% of providers disagreed with the original consultation rates (they were noted to be too low). Many comments regarding financial pressures upon providers were reported in the responses. Further details are included in the Consultation summary Report at **Appendix B.**

4.7 It is important to note that the original rates that were consulted upon were based on the average rates being paid to the market at that time and had been benchmarked

against other statistically comparable neighbouring authorities as well as being based on a market standard costing model.

4.8 Following analysis of the consultation findings, a range of options were identified and appraised and scored against desirability, feasibility and viability criteria and the original proposed rates were raised by an average of 8%. This was primarily in response to suggestions from the market that rates were not high enough and that a wider difference was required between payments for bed types to recognise the increased costs per bed for more complex care. The new standard rates following consultation were set as follows:

Care Category	**New Pilot Standard Rates following consultation – price per bed per week**
Residential	£520
Residential EMI	£570
Nursing (excluding FNC)	£670
Nursing EMI (ex FNC)	£720

4.9 These rates were also benchmarked against other neighbouring and comparable authority rates as follows:

Care Category	**Shropshire new standard Rates**	**Powys 20/21 Standard prices**	**Hertfordshire 20/21 Standard prices**
Residential	£520	£539	£515.96
Residential EMI	£570	£559	£597.66
Nursing (excluding FNC)	£670	£544	£554.37
Nursing EMI (ex FNC)	£720	£580	£625.68

4.10 Benchmarking with other Local Authorities illustrates a mixed picture; the rates we are proposing are very close to, and in most cases higher than comparators. However:

- The average rates we were already paying were in some cases (particularly Nursing EMI) higher than other Local Authority's published rates and to cut rates down to the same level as other Local Authorities would be a significant cut in prices in some areas and create the risk of provider failure.
- We have a statutory responsibility (Care Act) to support a sustainable market
- CQC recognise a high standard of care in Shropshire which would be at risk of declining if market loses stability,
- There is also a risk of legal challenge if we ignore consultation findings

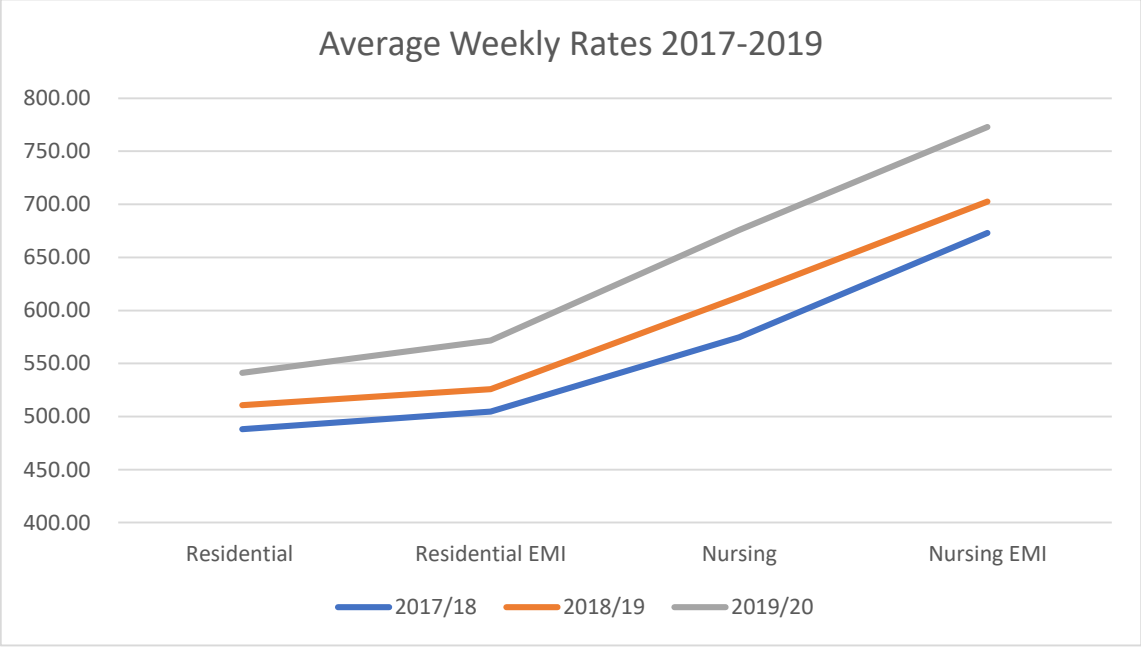
The proposed fees are therefore mainly higher than comparators because we have considered the findings of the consultation feedback, analysed the risks to the marketplace whilst balancing budget affordability with the pressures associated with delivery of care.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Analysis of current situation

Analysis of the overall expenditure from 2017/18 to 2019/20 showed an upwards trend in costs per bed. Overall in 17/18 we spent £17.7m on nursing placements and £15.6m on residential placements and in 19/20 we spent £18.8m on Nursing and £17.1m Res (excluding LD and MH)

5.2 Whilst overall Adult Social Care has proactively managed demand by significantly reducing the numbers of beds being commissioned in recent years (due to reducing overall demand and also supporting more people at home), the expenditure for residential and nursing care has not reduced proportionately because the average cost per week per bed has continued to increase. This is because the market is setting its own rates and our published rates have not been realistic.



5.3 Expenditure has been and is predicted to continue increasing because average weekly costs being paid are increasing. This area of expenditure has been largely reliant on market forces, it represents the highest area of risk for Adult social care budgets. Managing escalation of this expenditure is a vital component of managing the overall ASC expenditure in order to ensure that budgets are effectively deployed and that resources are used to continue to meet all the Council's statutory duties.

5.4 Analysis of expenditure illustrated a wide variance of rates being paid to providers for individuals with similar assessed needs. This did not provide transparency, equity and fairness in the prices paid for standard provision, which ultimately does not support the development of a vibrant and resilient marketplace as required by section 5 of the Care Act 2014.

5.5 Analysis also evidenced that even though less beds were being purchased the trajectory of spend would cost Shropshire Council an additional £7 million over the next 3 years if we did not work with the market to manage pricing.

5.6 The actual paid rates have increased by 6% for residential beds and 8.1% for nursing beds over the last 2 years and we anticipate further year on year growth by the market. These increases far outstripped an annual expected increase attributable to inflation alone.

Average weekly rate increases			
Care type	**Over the 6 months prior to the pilot**	**Over the year prior to the pilot**	**Over the 2 years prior to the pilot**
Residential	10.4%	7.4%	6%
Nursing	3.8%	10.1%	8.1%

5.7 These variances create difficulties for the Council in planning to meet future demand and create inequities for providers. It was also noted that SMEs were more likely to be paid at lower rates which again does not support a fair and equitable market.

5.8 **Pilot rates – outcomes**

5.9 The pilot has successfully demonstrated that a significant proportion of the market will accept the new standard rates for new placements. The response from providers has been that during the pilot we have seen 43% of providers agree to accept the new standard rates, and an additional 39% of providers have negotiated down from their original fee, meaning 82% of providers have agreed alternative prices than they originally offered for placements. Detailed analysis of the pilot outcomes is in **Appendix C.**

5.10 Comparison of average prices during and before the pilot (excluding third party top ups on new standard rates) evidences reductions in three categories and a slow increase in Nursing EMI costs.

- Average Residential placement prices reduced by 10% for the same period year on year
- Average Residential EMI placement prices reduced 7% for the same period year on year.
- Average Nursing placement prices reduced by 7% for the same period year on year.
- Average Nursing EMI placement prices have increased by 4% for the same period year on year.

5.11 **Savings**

5.12 The wider project which covers the pilot had an allocated saving target for the current financial year which was set in the Financial Strategy 2019-2023 and publicly consulted on. Savings target - 'A16 Market Stewardship' had a savings requirement for 2021 of £300,000 From the negotiations that have taken place by operational teams though the pilot, the savings target will be realised. For the final quarter of 2019-

2020, **£66,191** has been saved in negotiations with providers and a further **£298,908** so far for the financial year 2020-2021 with savings still being made.

5.13 Consequently, there has been reduction in spending in the ASC budget on nursing and residential beds due to the long-term effect of the reductions in prices. The annual impact of the above savings is as follows:

Annual expenditure: packages commissioned		
	Annual financial impact of agreements made between Dec 18 - May 19	Annual financial impact of agreements made between Dec 19 - May 20
Residential	3,578,940	3,221,261
Residential EMI	2,361,126	2,202,427
Nursing	3,380,881	3,159,205
Total	12,690,271	12,073,351
	Annual Saving	**616,921**

5.14 **Historical rates**

5.15 The pilot of new standard rates has been focused on new purchasing. There are historical rates for beds already contracted that are below the standard rates. It is recognised that these need to be addressed in a manageable way which supports the lowest end paid of the market and is affordable for the Council.

5.16 Consideration will be given as part of the annual inflationary uplift offer each year to the market that historically low rates will need to be gradually uplifted as budgets allow. This would be done though an annual rise in the minimum rate to be paid.

5.17 Adult social care started this approach, in consultation with Shropshire Partners in Care, for the current financial year, uplifting all rates below £450 per bed to that level. It is proposed that each year a minimum level is set to ensure that the principles behind having standard rates and a fair and equitable market are adhered to and the Council evidences a clear plan to address historical inequities.

5.18 The following gives some estimated impacts of this approach, but it needs to be noted clearly that these are based on current numbers and rates which will change so is intended as an illustration only:

- There were 49 agreements below £450pw for the current financial year. Uplifting all to £450pw at 01/04/20 cost the LA £58,696k pa (worst case scenario as some of these agreements will end during the year)
- Of the 830 in county packages, at the time of budget setting for 20/21, there were 309 packages still below the standard rate, 39 packages at the standard rate and 482 packages above the standard rate.
- If we were to increase all 309 packages to the standard rate that would cost £1,434,191. This would happen over the course of several years either through uplifting or through packages ending and being replaced with the new 'standard rate'

- To counter this, of the 482 packages above the standard rate, by reducing these to the standard rates, which would be done naturally through packages ending and being replaced by packages at the new standard rate there would be a saving made of £3,909,330.

5.19 Finally, it is also acknowledged that all standard rates must be reviewed in line with inflation on an annual basis.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Overall the pilot has successfully met the requirement to prove the concept that having new standard rates:

- allows a better control of prices
- evidences that Shropshire Council commission fairly and equitably
- Evidences a willingness within the market to work with the Council towards standard prices
- Gives the market clarity and information for effective business planning
- Has achieved annual savings target and positive impact on the ASC budget

6.2 Information on prices has provided anchor points for pricing and has allowed for social work teams to confidently negotiate prices. A consistent approach across all operational teams from hospital discharge to community placements, has ensured expectations are clearly standard for service users and their family's users.

6.3 The risk and consequences of not having a standard rate for care will likely see costs spiral and control will be lost; in three areas average costs have reduced compared to the previous year. However, it is acknowledged that Nursing EMI placements will need to be reviewed as they have proved volatile and difficult to control and have the lowest acceptance of the new standard rates.

6.4 Whilst, it is recognised that it is unlikely that the publication of standard rates will lead to a total management of expenditure in a competitive marketplace, it can certainly provide a structured basis for effective commissioning arrangements. A consistent commissioning approach together with standardised rates can provide the basis of a move towards stronger market stewardship which is the responsibility of an effective Council in sustaining its marketplace.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Project Initiation Document: March 2017

Supporting information:

Working with care providers to understand costs: A guide for adult social care commissioners
Shropshire Vision and Strategy for Adult Social Care 2018/19 – 2020/21
Shropshire Council Market Position Statement 2019-2022
Shropshire Council Older People Profile Report 2018
CQC Shropshire Local System Data Summary Report 18/3/19
CQC Shropshire Area Profile Report: January 2020
Shropshire Partners in Care, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council Fair Cost of Care Report: November 2016
Competitive Markets Authority (CMA) market study: November 2017
The Institute of Public Care Market Shaping in Adult Social Care: July 2017

CQC The state of health care and adult social care in England 2017/18
Minimum Income Guarantee Survey: July 2018
Annual ASC Survey
Shropshire Personal Budget Contributions Policy 2018-19 (published Shropshire rates)
The Care Act 2014 Guidance
Shropshire Council Financial Strategy for 2018/19-22/23

Benchmarking data:
Hertfordshire Council: Standard In-County Prices for 2020/21
Powys Council: Care Fees Review, 2020
ADASS Budget Survey

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Dean Carroll

Local Member

All members

Appendices

Appendix A – Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA): September 2020
Appendix B – Consultation Findings summary Report (You said, we did): May 2019
Appendix C – Pilot Outcomes Review - August 2020

Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)
Part One Screening Record

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change *Please use this box for the full formal name of the proposed service change, whether it is a policy, a procedure, a function, a project, an update of a strategy, etc. The term "service change" is used in this form as shorthand for whatever form the changes may take.*
Residential and Nursing Care beds Commissioning Review project – Review of Rates Consultation and Pilot Project implementation.

N**ame of lead officer carrying out the screening**
Louise Forbes Project and Development Manager.

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Part One ESIIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to separate full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
This Residential and Nursing Care beds commissioning review project is likely to have a neutral effect on all groups of service users in society. This first stage of the project was to review rates being paid for provision. The use of published rates is intended to ensure transparency for providers and ensure cost effectiveness in expenditure. The aim is to continue to develop a vibrant and sustainable marketplace whilst ensuring that the future residential and nursing care needs of citizens of Shropshire will be met. Engagement and consultation ensured that the Council fully identified the risks associated with revising the current published rates, enabling us to ensure we fully consider the implications and identify mitigating actions to inform decisions about introducing any revised arrangements.

The project is intended:

- To ensure that we commission services which will meet our current and future residential and nursing care needs for the citizens of Shropshire.
- To ensure that we commission quality services that support people well in a value led and outcome focused manner.
- To ensure that we commission services which represent value for money for the Council and deliver efficiencies.
- To ensure that we commission services in a way which supports a vibrant and sustainable market
- To ensure that we meet the duties on Local Authorities that the Care Act 2014 created relating to market shaping and commissioning and in regards individual choice.

The Council needs to ensure that wider views are collected and considered including other groups particularly those service users and their families in receipt of the services.

There are a range of engagement and consultative activities being planned to engage the following groups in the analysis, planning and development and implementation of the recommendations from the review project.

These include:

Care providers in the marketplace
Service users and their families
Key Partner Agencies
Relevant Practitioners, Team Managers and Service Managers
Local Councillors (Cabinet and Portfolio Holder)
Local Members of Parliament as community leaders
VCS Assembly

Officers will work with these audiences in a range of different ways (including engagement events, questionnaires, informal discussions and social media) to understand the impact on all affected individuals and groups including people in protected characteristic groupings.

http://www.shropshiretogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/HWB-Comm-Strategy-2017-18.pdf

Where groupings are under-represented groups are identified, additional measures will be identified to continue to engage and involve those groupings in the process.

Any feedback and/or concerns raised will be considered and actions will be identified to mitigate any negative impact.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
This ESIIA has been updated following the engagement and consultation with the

stakeholders detailed in the project plan prior to implementation.

The project plan has been monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis via the Project Group and when appropriate, Director's Management Team for Innovation and Commissioning (DMT).

Ongoing engagement and consultation will continue via the Quarterly ASC Provider Forum and Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC).

Shropshire Council will continue to monitor the impact of the changes in national policy and implications for meeting the statutory duties of the Care Act 2014.

Shropshire Council is an active contributor to national policy consultations on national policy proposals which may have a differential or adverse impact on the county.

Associated ESIIAs

Growth in this area of expenditure is recognised within the Council Financial Strategy for 2018/19 - 22/23. Savings have been identified to be delivered by this review as part of the Council's 2019 budget proposals which are subject to a separate consultation and ESIIA. The budget consultation period runs from 07 January 2019 - 18 February 2019.

This is the initial ESIIA for this project consultation and has be reviewed and updated following engagement and consultation activities in the Spring of 2019 and the subsequent implementation of the pilot and its outcomes Dec 2019-June 2020.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations

Additional Review and Monitoring of overall impacts:

Council's Corporate Plan
https://staff.shropshire.gov.uk/media/708264/corporate-plan-2016-2017.pdf

Council's financial strategy
https://staff.shropshire.gov.uk/media/708265/corporate-financial-strategy-201819-202223.pdf

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer carrying out the screening Louise Forbes Project and Development Manager.		03.09.2020
*Any internal support** N/A		
*Any external support*** Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist		

This refers to other officers within the service area

****This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g. from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, e.g. from a peer authority***

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name Louise Forbes Project and Development Manager.		03.09.2020
*Accountable officer's name** Deborah Webster Service Manager Commissioning and Governance		

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

The overall expenditure for Adult Social Care in Shropshire is continuing to increase. There is an ongoing need to balance additional pressures due to growing demand, delivery of statutory services and demographic changes with sustainability and development of the care provider market. This growth in expenditure is recognised within the Council Financial Strategy for 2018/19 - 22/23. Savings have been identified to be delivered by this review as part of the Council's 2019 budget proposals which are subject to a separate consultation. The budget consultation period runs from 07 January 2019 - 18 February 2019.

Expenditure for residential and nursing provision in Shropshire is the single biggest area for Shropshire Council Adult Social Care and spends just over £50 million per year. Expenditure for individual beds is categorised by 'Primary Support Reason' and this expenditure includes all categories including Adult Learning Disabilities (ALD) and Mental Health (MH).

The consultation proposal and subsequent Pilot Project does not include the rates for people categorised with Learning Disabilities and Mental Health needs. These rates will be explored separately at a later stage in the review.

The expenditure for beds for 17-18 was £33.3m (Nursing care £17.7m, Residential Care £15.6m). This excludes ALD and MH categories.

Shropshire Council currently reviews and publishes rates on an annual basis, and these are set out as an Appendix to the Personal Budget Contributions Policy 2018-19. Please see Appendix A/Schedule 6.

Although the Council have increased rates annually, with a 2% increase in 17-18 and a 2.5% increase for 18-19, analysis of rates for 17-18 indicates that there is a wide variance in rates being paid. It is recognised however that the level of the rates the council currently offers have not been fundamentally reviewed for some years and consequently do not reflect current market pressures (increases to the minimum wages, employee pensions contributions, The COVID 19 pandemic).

We want to ensure future rates published and paid accurately reflect the costs of delivery of care, are transparent in the marketplace and deemed to be equitable by providers.

The model and pricing rates that were identified for the purposes of consultation had an acceptance rate of 65% by the respondents in the consultation. The model is based on the industry recognised 'Laing Buisson' model and reflects the costs associated with delivery of care Following feedback the prices were adjusted from those proposed in the initial consultation and the model was then used in the Pilot Project.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All residents in Shropshire who could have needs identified and are assessed as eligible for Council funded care home placements.

Following the pilot project service users and families did not to see a difference to the service they received and the outcomes of their involvement with the revised arrangements. The changes lead to transparency and equity and improve the speed of arrangements.

Service users and their families were not adversely affected by the implementation of the standard prices.

This has been evidenced in the pilot project. Assessments and placements have been agreed in a timely manner and there has been improved transparency across the market.

To support planning to effectively transition to any new pricing arrangements, we will need to manage a difficult transition period for some groups of people.

- Market response: The market has responded differently depending on whether their current prices are under or over any revised rates. However, 82% of the market have agreed to the standard pilot rates or negotiated on their original price. Following the Pilot Project and implementing a standard pricing structure full engagement with the market is recommended and potentially a two-year transition should be considered to minimise market impact. The report and Pilot Project outcomes fully assess the risks associated with implementation and involves providers in developing solutions.
- Shropshire Council Internal response: The current culture and practice means that rates are agreed on a case by case basis. Whilst it is anticipated that a revised transparent and equitable pricing structure will be welcomed, we have identified certain types of care such as Nursing EMI are more difficult to secure at a standard rate owing to the complexity of the needs of these individuals.
- Commissioning/Contracting: In order that we can manage a potentially difficult transition period we may need to undertake some short term over commissioning of beds on a block basis in order that delayed transfers of care are not affected and urgent community cases are catered for.
- Due to the variance in rates currently paid, we anticipate that some elements of the market will respond positively to the change and want to plan with providers for any changes.
- The Pilot Project has reiterated the need to support those people who self-fund their own care. This group of people are often sourcing care at an incredibly difficult time and can be subject to very high cost placements. Early identification of this demographic of service user. This is paramount and something the Local Authority need to work on to ensure that self-funders are better equipped to make informed choices relating to their care, to ensure their income is maximised and managed appropriately. This would reduce the risk of them running out of capital and becoming reliant on their Local Authority before necessary.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Project documentation:

Project Initiation Document (PID) - Residential and Nursing Care beds Commissioning Review project – February 2018.

DMT report – December 2018
Appendix 1 - Previously published nursing and residential care rates 2015-2019
Appendix 2 - Review of Residential & Nursing Care commissioning practice 2017-18
Appendix 3 – Engagement with providers report

Background research and reports to inform project plans:

Shropshire Partners in Care, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, November 2016 – Fair Cost of Care analysis.

Older People Profile Shropshire 2018 – Information, Intelligence and Insight Team, Shropshire Council. https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/10220/older-people-in-shropshire-profile-and-forecast-to-2036.pdf

Shropshire Council Key Facts and Figures Shropshire Data 2017/18 https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/11592/shropshire-council-key-facts-and-figures-ammendments-oct-2018-v2.pdf

Competition & Markets Authority, Care homes market study https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a1fdf30e5274a750b82533a/care-homes-market-study-final-report.pdf

Working with care providers to understand costs – A guide for adult social care commissioners

https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/reports/working-with-care-providers-to-understand-costs

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

An initial provider engagement event was undertaken in June 2018.

Further consultation is planned with the following stakeholders as detailed below:

Stakeholder group	***Channel***
Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Director of Adult's Services	• Face to face briefings from senior team • Papers tabled at Cabinet and scrutiny • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter)
Directors Management Team	• Attendance at meetings and involvement in design • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter)
Providers in the marketplace	• Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter) • SPIC newsletters • SPIC/LA Facebook group • Formal consultation via Shropshire Council Consultation Portal • Face to face meetings/discussions

	• Workshops and focus groups
Residents and Families	• Workshops and focus groups
Community Agencies	• Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter)
CCGs	• Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter) • HWBB • Workshops and focus groups
Shropshire Council Social Work and brokerage teams	• Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter) • Workshops and focus groups

The Consultation/Project Pilot implementation activity timeline is detailed below:

Date	**Activity**
18th March 2019 to 26th April 2019	Consultation Launch: Proposals and supporting document published on the Consultation on: Shropshire Council website, SPIC website and social media Press release issued to promote consultation
During consultation period	ASC Provider Forum: Workshop to discuss proposals and capture feedback
During Consultation period	Focus group meetings: Agree any residents/families meeting or groups to attend to capture any feedback
During Consultation period	Individual provider meetings: Identify any providers who would like individual meetings to discuss the impact of proposals
During Consultation period	Identify other interest parties: Identify other stakeholders who want to express their views
Consultation close date 26th April 2019	Review of responses: Prepare analysis of feedback and findings and produce report for publication
April 2019- Nov 2019	Proposal/report produced for Cabinet/Directors?? Local Authority Pilot implementation intentions

	communicated to Providers, Stakeholders, Operational teams and SPiC.
1st Dec 2010-1st June 2020	Pilot project launched and implemented. Focus and project groups formed, and meetings set. Ongoing review and feedback.
1st June 2020- 4th September 2020	Pilot Project analysis and outcomes identified, feedback and findings produced in a report for Cabinet, Directors and Senior Managers.
October 2020	Project report to Cabinet.

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Part Two ESIIA required*	**High positive impact** *Part One ESIIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Part One ESIIA required*	**Low positive or negative impact** *Part One ESIIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g. child for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g. older person with disability)				✓
Disability (please include mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				✓
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓

Race (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				
Religion and belief (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)				

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations

Sustainability of the care homes marketplace:

The Local Authority is required by the Care Act 2014 to ensure it has a sustainable and vibrant marketplace. It is also required to commission services which will meet the current and future residential and nursing care needs for the citizens of Shropshire.

The Care Act 2014 ("the Act") places a new duty on the Council to promote an efficient and effective market "with a view to ensuring that any person in our area wishing to access social care has access to a variety of high-quality services to choose from." The Act goes on to provide a range of provisions such as the "market oversight" arrangements involving CQC and a temporary duty on the Council to intervene if a particular provider "fails". The Council must ensure that it properly considers the actual cost of care when setting the rates, we are prepared to pay providers.

The guidance goes on to say that when we commission services, we must assure ourselves that our fee levels do not (among other things) compromise the service provider's ability to pay at least minimum wages and provide effective training and development of staff.

Although the Council reviews and publishes rates on an annual basis, the financial analysis illustrates that rates being paid are often higher and varied. It is considered that this is because the current published rates do not accurately reflect the costs associated with providing care. Whilst, there have been increases during the last few years, the environment within which care providers operate is complex, variable and subject to regulation. It is recognised that agreement of prices with providers needs to reflect the providers' operating environment. This review provides the opportunity to ensure the rates are reflective of the delivery of care.

Where a Shropshire resident is placed in a bed outside of Shropshire, we intend to continue

to agree to pay the rates published by that Local Authority.

The statutory guidance that supports the Act stipulates that the Council's commissioning procedures "must encourage a variety of different providers and types of services. Whilst the guidance envisages that the Council may have approved lists and frameworks it directs that we "must consider how to ensure that there is still a reasonable choice for people who need care and support".

The current purchasing of residential and nursing beds for older people is undertaken on an individual case by case basis following a care assessment by a Social Worker which determines whether a person needs care and support to help them live their day to day life. Additionally, a financial assessment will be undertaken to determine how the care needed will be paid for. Following these assessments which determine needs and the type of provision required, placements will be sourced that can meet the care needs identified. Prior to the Pilot Project the current commissioning arrangements resulted in individual rates are being proposed by providers. The result of these individual negotiations is a wide variance in the rates the Council is paying to the care providers. The Pilot Project has highlighted that standard rates can be agreed and will reflect actual costs of delivery of care.

The Council does not currently have an approved list or framework for residential and nursing provision. The identification of a placement is based on the assessment of the individual's needs which identifies the type of provision required to meet those identified needs. In addition, there is consideration given to the individual and families choice of placement. In some circumstances, this can lead to placements being commissioned out of county where identified as appropriate.

A recent trial of brokerage arrangements like the arrangements currently operating for domiciliary care reaffirmed the need to have a clear, equitable and transparent pricing structure for payment of beds. Revised rates are also important for the Council to ensure that it's commissioning arrangements are as efficient as possible in the longer term, support market development and create positive outcomes for service users in need of care. Additionally, this would provide a clear and transparent pricing structure for providers and facilitate equity and parity amongst providers for the payment of care.

Following the Pilot Project, the next stage of this review is to explore how a framework will be developed using a brokerage system. It is intended that the brokerage system will enable a range of providers to be involved and mean that the Council can fulfil its responsibilities in offering choice to the individual.

The council currently commission a mixture of block purchased beds and spot contract beds for both residential and nursing care. Block purchased beds are contracts with providers for an agreed number of beds over a contract period. These contracts are awarded following a tendering process.

Spot commissioning of residential and nursing care are individual beds commissioned on a single basis and this practice has historically been built up according to need and addressed on a gradual basis. Whilst this was an effective response to individual need it has led to a significant number of short-term commissioning solutions and increases in price. The prices that the Council commission beds at prior to the Pilot Project were not reflective of the prices published by the Council. The Council had not updated or enforced the price structure for some years and worked with the marketplace throughout the Pilot Project to ensure that the commissioning of spot purchased beds are realistic and sustainable for the Council, the provider and those in receipt of the care provided.

The implementation of standard rates in the Pilot Project has highlighted;

These changes did not adversely impact the human rights of individuals or groups.

These changes did not have a negative impact on fostering good relations or on social inclusion.

It is intended that ongoing engagement following the Pilot Project will ensure that the Local Authority is able to consider the views of the residents of Shropshire to inform any service changes and to identify mitigating actions where necessary.

We did

Review of Rates for Commissioning of Residential and Nursing Beds

Consultation March/April 2019

week 6 consultation

The consultation ran from Monday 18 March 2019 to Friday 26 April 2019.

It included meetings with providers, voluntary groups, staff and the public.

We created consultation documents/ materials including supporting documentation, and frequently asked questions.

33%

Of the provider market were engaged in the consultation

130 comments received from **64** people via 13 meetings

We issued press releases and posted messages on websites, newsletters and social media

We promoted the consultation to the public and 20 partner organisations including seldom heard groups

We issued an online survey and offered paper copies too.

We shared consultation information with

96 providers

We had:

381 visits to the page on the consultation portal

9 responses to the online survey

124 comments

Consultation led by Adult Services, Shropshire Council in partnership with SPIC. Infographic by Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team, Information, Intelligence and Insight Unit.

SPIC Shropshire Partners In Care

Shropshire Council

Date: 30 April 2019

You said

Review of Rates for Commissioning of Residential and Nursing Beds
Consultation March/April 2019

Overall views: The summary below is our evaluative interpretation of the survey results, comments and feedback received via the consultation meetings. Further details are within the report:

Model: Overall, there were mixed views expressed about the model

- 67% of respondents to the survey agreed with the 'LangBuisson' model. However, many comments noted in the survey and received via the consultation meetings expressed opposing views about the model proposed.
- Contradictory views were expressed about the details within the model including the elements and the values. 56% of the survey respondents disagreed with the elements proposed in the model. Many providers comments/feedback disagreed with the contents in the proposed model. Some providers felt that the proposed model covered most of the business cost areas and yet others commented that other costs elements were not represented.
- Most providers considered that a model should reflect the differing needs of the individual as well as business costs. This was a re-occurring theme during the consultation meetings and the survey. nted.
- Members of the public (engaged with) didn't consider they knew enough to be able to comment

Rates: Overall, the rates proposed were considered too low

- 56% of survey respondents disagreed with the rates proposed. Most comments noted in both the survey and via consultation meetings considered that the rates proposed were not high enough.
- Most LA staff welcomed the concept of set rates although didn't comment on the level of the rate. Comments also identified implications for the 3rd party top-ups and the differential between LA funding and self-funders. These were also noted by providers in both the survey and the consultation meetings.

Processes:

- Based on the proposals implications were identified for businesses where the proposed rates are much lower than current fees received.
- Risks were identified regarding placements where LA rates are lower than self-funded rates when circumstances change.
- Implications were identified for block contracts and views expressed that many voids exist.

Other:

- Most providers welcomed the consultation and the opportunity to comment on proposals.
- Risks were identified regarding placements where LA rates are lower than self-funded rates when circumstances change.
- Implications were identified for block contracts and views expressed that many voids exist.

Appendix C - Pilot outcomes review:

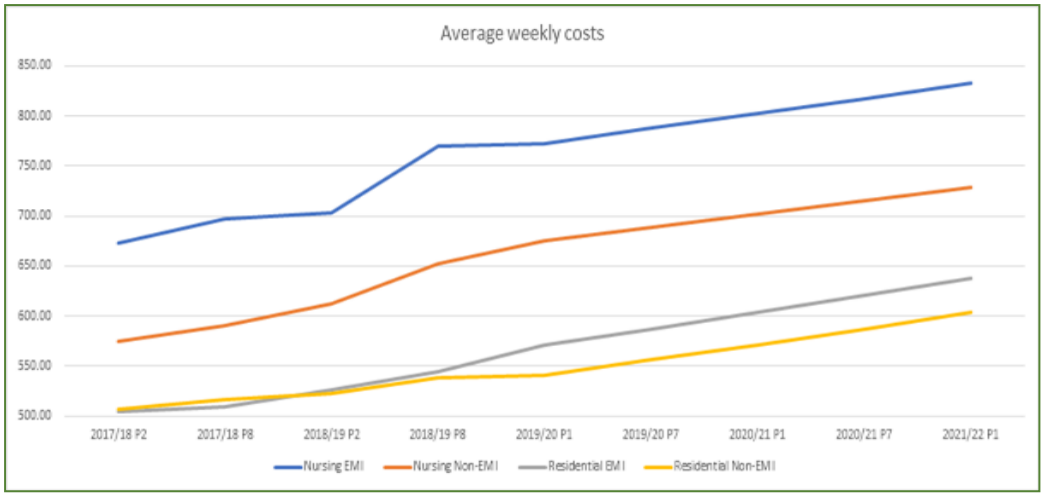
Using new standard rates for spot purchasing Residential and Nursing placements in Shropshire care homes.

1. Background:

On December 1st, 2019, following agreement with Directors, Shropshire Council began a pilot project to commission placements at new standard rates for residential and nursing care across Shropshire care homes. The pilot was agreed to test the proposal that new standard rates would allow the Council better control over purchasing costs and evidence fairness and equity in our approach. It will also provide clarity for the market and support them with effective business planning and forecasting. Whilst historically Shropshire Council have used standard rates for beds, the rates had not been reviewed for some years and consequently the project was required to refresh and renew the practice.

Analysis of the overall expenditure from 2017/18 to 2019/20 shows an upwards trend in costs per bed. Overall in 17/18 costs were £33.3m (£17.7m on nursing placements and £15.6m on residential placements) and even though less beds were being purchased it was evidenced that the trajectory of spend would cost Shropshire Council an additional £7 million over the next 3 years if we did not intervene to manage market led pricing.

Figure 1: Average weekly cost by bed type



Analysis of expenditure also illustrated a wide variance of rates that did not create transparency, equity and fairness in the prices paid for provision, which ultimately does not support the development of a vibrant and resilient marketplace as required in section 5 of the Care Act 2014.

In order to consult meaningfully with the market on the issue of new standard rates for beds, initial rates were established based on average fees at that point. Following the consultation in March 2019 and feedback from the market and discussion with legal and finance, the rates were then increased by an average of **8%** due to 56% of providers deeming the proposed rates too low. The new rates were set in response to feedback with an overall increase in rates and clear delineation between rates for different bed types due to the requirement for increasing levels of care between each.

Care type	Proposed March 2019	Dec-19
Residential	£500	£520
Residential EMI	£510	£570
Nursing (exc FNC)	£590	£670
Nursing EMI (exc FNC)	£690	£720

The proposal to implement new standard rates following the consultation and analysis was put to Directors in October 2019 however Directors were concerned that standard prices would increase costs overall and had other associated risks, so a 6-month pilot was agreed to fully assess risks and evidence a proof of concept.

2. Project Implementation:

In order to ensure successful implementation of the project key operational milestones were identified.

2.1 Collate intelligence about issues relating to implementation.

- Engagement at the earliest opportunity with the operational teams and providers was paramount in supporting the project with the support of Shropshire Partners in Care (SPiC); the key dates and rates were communicated in advance of the go live date allowing providers to challenge and question.
- Project groups and regular meetings were set up with operational teams and separate ones for providers to ensure communication and operational processes were clear throughout and concerns identified at the earliest opportunity, solutions agreed and put in place.

2.2 Exceptions process for agreement of rates above the standardised rates.

- Due to the requirements in the Care Act to allow choice with regards to placement a process to agree rates above the new standard rates was required for certain circumstances. Placements above the rates are discussed with senior managers and A.D. Tanya Miles at a weekly planning forum and either agreed and signed off or declined and sent back to the worker with the actions required.

2.3 Capacity of beds available analysis.

- An interactive map plotting the locations of all the commissioned placements in Shropshire was developed and shared with social work teams, to work alongside the SPiC app (live app to identify available beds county wide) to make capacity and placements easy to identify.

2.4 Develop guidance, training and briefing sessions for Social Workers.

- Training sessions were put in to share the project intentions and to support negotiation with providers.
- A tool kit to support the social work teams was pulled together and shared at the negotiation training sessions.

2.5 Negotiation training:

- Social work teams are required to secure care home placements and negotiate on the fee with the provider if it is above the standard rate The teams would require and benefit from negotiation training to support them with this challenge and help them establish and build relationships with the providers.
- Training delivered to **103** social workers, brokers and team managers across all social work teams with successful outcomes.

3. Pilot Outcomes

Outcome - placements have been made at or below new standard rates,

Since 1st December 2019 half of all placements have been made at or below the new standard prices; the levels differ between placement type and all show a significant improvement on rates previously commissioned, summarised as follows

58% of Residential placements have been made at or below new standard rates **compared to 44% in the 6 months prior to the pilot**

65% of Residential EMI placements have been made at or below new standard rates **compared to 39% in the 6 months prior to the pilot months**

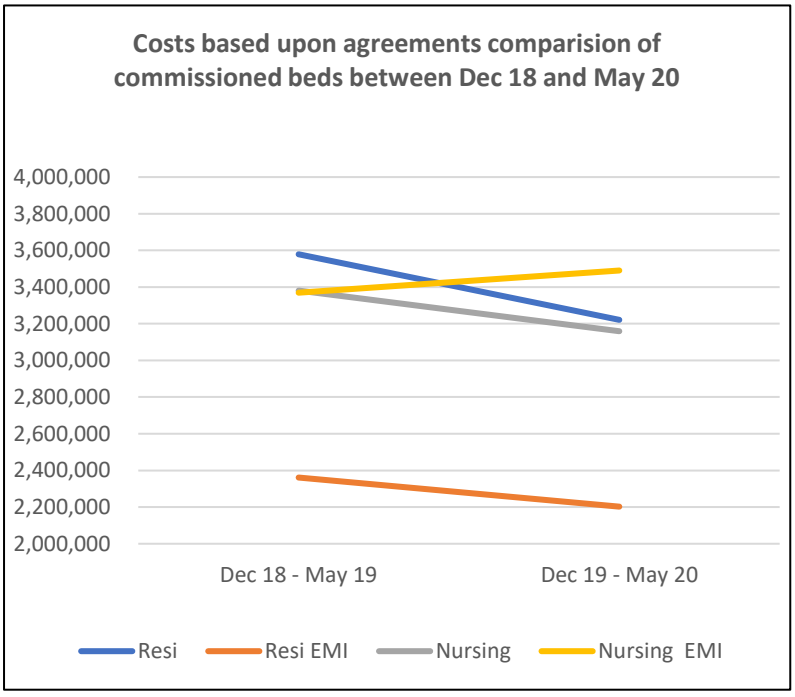
50% Nursing placements have been made at or below new standard rates **compared to 31% in the 6 months prior to the pilot months**

21% Nursing EMI placements have been made at or below new standard **rates compared to 15% in the 6 months prior to the pilot**. (availability of this type of placement is limited in Shropshire and have proved more difficult to source)

Outcome – Overall Prices are stabilising

During the pilot we have seen 43% of providers agree to accept the new standard rates, and an additional 39% of providers have negotiated down from their original fee, meaning **82% of providers have agreed alternative prices than they originally offered for placements.** Comparison of average prices during and before the pilot (excluding third party top ups on new standard rates) evidences reductions in three categories and a slow increase in Nursing EMI costs. It needs to be noted that we were already negotiating with the market following consultation in March 2019 so the following table evidences the start of cost reduction prior to formal pilot starting as well as pilot outcomes.

	Dec 18 - May 19	Jun 19 - Nov 19	Dec 19 - May 20
Residential	647.52	594.04	582.81
Residential EMI	646.88	636.54	603.40
Nursing	790.72	783.93	738.87
Nursing EMI	873.21	891.15	904.60



- **Summary**
- **Residential reduced by 10% for the same period year on year**
- **Residential EMI reduced 7% for the same period year on year.**
- **Nursing has reduced by 7% for the same period year on year.**
- **Nursing EMI has increased by 4% for the same period year on year.**

Outcome – the pilot was implemented only for new purchasing

In recognition that rates needed to be controlled in a managed way the decision was taken to only use the pilot rates for new purchasing. This intention was made clear in the consultation with the market. The concerns that all providers would want to uplift to the new rates have not been realised.

Outcome - a small number of providers challenged

Two providers did request a rate review during the pilot, due to historically very low rates; on review the requests were agreed for some residents due to changing needs. Going forward there may be additional challenges, however given that it is now 8 months since the implementation of these rates, the positive

outcomes in regards the savings to date, the control of rates evidenced and the positive impact on the ASC budget overall, these low numbers of challenges are considered to be low risk in the face of the overall positive impact the pilot has evidenced.

Consideration needs to be given as part of the annual inflationary uplift offer to the market that historically low rates will need to be gradually uplifted as budgets allow. This would be done though a 'cap and uplift' process which annually reviews and caps standard rates and gives a larger uplift percentage to rates which are below it. For example: instead of giving a 2% uplift across all contracts, rates at standard would receive 1% uplift and historical rates below standard would receive 3%. This would be carefully reviewed on an annual basis.

Outcome – Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance controlling provider price changes has been implemented

On 1st November 2019 the CMA published a report on care homes, the report is summarised in Appendix 1. Its release coincided with the pilot launch and highlighted the need to help people to make good decisions about their care options, protect residents and their consumer rights and make the complaints system work well for care home residents, their representatives and families. Specific attention was also placed on the lack of indicative pricing information on provider websites and aimed to prevent care homes having wide discretion to increase fees after a person has moved in and the charging of large upfront fees and deposits. In partnership with SPiC training was implemented and we shared information across the sector about the responsibilities of provider organisations to publish and not arbitrarily increase their prices.

Outcome – current additional costs have been met through other funding

Covid19 has given providers additional challenges and seen their costs increase, to support with this and to mitigate the cost providers received a one off 10 % payment of their contract value as at 31/03/2020 to support with increased costs associated with Covid 19 from government grant funding. In addition, they are currently receiving additional support for infection control costs for staffing from the governments ICF Grant.

Outcome – Social work teams have been successfully negotiating prices through the pilot

Negotiation training and operational support has improved the skills of the social work teams through successful negotiations. The Integrated Care Services (ICS) team who discharge residents from hospital into a care placement have successfully discussed and negotiated with providers to agree fair and suitable rates where they were not confident to do so before the pilot. The impact of this is significant, in that if that person requires long term care and cannot return home the case is handed over to the community team, having already secured the placement at new standard rates it ensures the placement can continue without the risk and upheaval caused by a move to a more cost-effective placement.

Outcome- operational teams feel more confident

The outcomes from the training were analysed and **79%** of the delegates felt their confidence to negotiate after the training had increased following the training. For the **21%** who did not see an increase **88%** already had high confidence levels in negotiating and this remained the same after the training.

Operational feedback:

"It has given workers more confidence to go back and push further with negotiation, especially when they can see the home has recently accepted someone at a lower rate. I think if we can continue to have lists of the fee's homes have recently charged this will be a good tool to use for negotiation discussions" ***Team manager.***

"*This has provided some development to the workers with their negotiation skills and educated them to not 'just accept' Also provided an opportunity for them to have more communication and get to know the care home managers."* ***Team manager.***

"At first I was very sceptical about the pilot scheme and had many issues and comments from care homes saying 'how can we afford to drop our prices' etc, but that didn't last long, and I think it's been a brilliant pilot scheme. I'm finding homes are much happier with the local authority rates now which is also seeing a different side to how families are when it comes to looking for 24-hour care. Families understand that this is now how we work, and we stay within LA rates, families are much more accepting of this now" ***Social Worker feedback.***

Outcome – we have seen no evidence of any provider refusing to contract beds with the Council

82% of providers have either accepted the new standard rates or have negotiated down from their original price. **18%** have refused to negotiate, however we have not seen any area of the market close to Local Authority placements

Outcome – no significant financial failures or closures have happened attributable to the project

Whilst there have been providers concerned about long term viability in recent months increased costs for providers including national living and minimum wage increases announced in December and the Coronavirus pandemic has thrown up new challenges and increased financial pressures for providers. However, providers are still accepting the new standard rates and Shropshire Council are closely monitoring and supporting providers throughout this time so any concerns and risks can be identified at the earliest opportunity.

4. Conclusion:

Overall the pilot has successfully met the requirement to prove the concept that having new standard rates:

- allows a better control of prices
- evidences that Shropshire Council commission fairly and equitably
- evidences that the operational teams have significant skills and confidence to achieve the outcomes and build relationships with providers.
- Has achieved annual savings target and positive impact an ASC budget

Information on prices has provided anchor points for pricing and has allowed for social work teams to challenge providers successfully and confidently to negotiate prices. A consistent approach across all operational teams from hospital discharge to community placements, has ensured expectations are clearly standard for service users and their family's users.

The data of acceptance of rates enables teams to identify areas where there are gaps in the market but also where areas are saturated, this data supports with future commissioning allowing for effective planning of future care home locations.

The risk and consequences of not having a standard rate for care will likely see costs spiral and control will be lost; in three areas average costs have reduced compared to the previous year. However, it is acknowledged that Nursing EMI placements will need to be reviewed as they have the lowest acceptance of the new standard rates. The pilot has highlighted that these residents have complex and challenging needs making placements hard to secure at new standard rates as residents often require a very bespoke package.

During the pilot and the Covid 19 pandemic it has been highlighted some providers have been changing pricing regularly which is not in line with the CMA guidance. We are looking to tackle providers who have arbitrarily increased their fees in this time.

Appendix 1

Briefing - Competition and Markets Authority Care Home Review and guidance	Shropshire Council

Summary
The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) have looked at how well the care homes market is working, for self-funders who purchase care services themselves, as well as for those individuals whose care is funded by the state. The CMA considers that the market needs to work differently for current and prospective care home residents because people must be able to make well-informed choices and must be protected if things do not work out as expected.

Support and protections for those requiring care -

In the main, the CMA's consumer research found that residents had received good care. Ideally, for the care home market to meet people's needs as well as it should, those entering care must be able to make an informed choice, and those within care must be sufficiently empowered to identify and address shortcomings in the service they receive. The CMA consider that there are barriers to achieving this including:

- Choosing a care home is often an extremely difficult decision for people to make at a point in their lives when they are particularly vulnerable.
- It is only at that point that many people begin to try to understand a very complex system. The information and guidance they receive can be confusing and providers often do not clearly provide all the important information people need to make an informed choice.
- Once in care, it is very difficult for residents to correct a poor choice, as once settled in a care home they find moving to a different home extremely stressful.
- Many residents and their representatives find it difficult to make complaints and seek redress, partly due to complaints systems being perceived as confusing and people are also worried that if they complain, there could be reprisals against the resident receiving care, or their friends and relatives could be stopped from visiting them.

The protections of consumer law against potential exploitation and adverse outcomes are especially important in this market given the vulnerability of people, the harm that may arise from residents being treated unfairly, and the importance of social care as a service. The CMA study has found some significant shortcomings in this regard, with some care homes not treating residents fairly. The CMA recommendations to improve consumer choice and protection can be grouped into 3 broad areas:

- helping people to make good decisions about their care options,
- protecting residents and their consumer rights,
- and making the complaints system work well for care home residents, their representatives and families.

Protecting residents and their consumer rights - CMA have identified specific problems in the way that care homes interact with individuals which include:

- the lack of indicative pricing information on websites;
- the non-provision of contracts in a timely way or at all;
- the charging of large upfront fees and deposits;
- care homes having wide discretion to increase fees after a person has moved in;
- requirements to pay fees for an extended period after a resident's death;
- and care homes having a wide discretion to ask residents to leave at short notice.

Care home residents must receive the full protections of consumer law, and the sector must ensure it complies with it. The CMA are already taking forward enforcement action using consumer powers against several providers they consider have been unfairly charging large upfront fees and charging fees for extended periods after a resident has died.

They will continue to monitor practices in the sector and will take enforcement action where appropriate on other issues of concern where they identify providers engaging in serious and harmful practices. They will be working with enforcement partners in Trading Standards, as well as the sector regulators, to help hold care homes to account.

Next steps - For care homes in Shropshire SPIC have already shared information across the sector and engaged Anthony Collins solicitors to provide training which took place just prior to the guidance going live on 1st November 2019. The information and training provided clarity to care homes in regards the expectations of them in the guidance on all the charging issues listed as above

Appendix 1 Has been shared with the market and gives clear guidance of how these issues should be addressed in contracts. Providers must now be completely transparent about how they charge, what they charge and when they charge, and they cannot increase costs arbitrarily. In addition, we have:

- **Contacted Trading Standards to discuss implications for the market in Shropshire**
- **Shared information with SPIC on where local care homes can get additional guidance**
- **Contacted the Complaints team to make them aware of the guidance and the expectations of the complaints process**
- **Worked with contracts team to ensure our own contracts are compliant and standard out expectations regarding CMA guidance in PPCs**
- **Utilised information to inform and direct the Nursing and residential fees pilot**

Committee and Date	Item
Cabinet 5 October 2020	Public

Draft Community and Rural Framework Strategy 2020 to 2023

Responsible: Tom Dodds, Intelligence and Insight Manager

e-mail: tom.dodds@shropshire.gov.uk 01743 258518

1. Summary

1.1 The paper presents the draft Community and Rural Strategy ("the draft Strategy"), attached at appendix 1, including the draft shared priorities bulleted below. It also highlights the work done so far and introduces the proposed framework approach to delivering the shared priorities with Shropshire communities.

- Keeping everyone happy and healthy, safe and well whatever their age
- Helping people who are lonely to connect with others and enjoy themselves
- Finding effective and sustainable ways for people to travel around
- Embracing the skills and experience of our older generation
- Making sure we have the right homes in the right places
- Attracting and keeping young people in the county and developing a skilled workforce
- Sorting out physical and digital connectivity
- Reducing our impact on the climate, nature and wider environment

1.2 It should be noted that the shared priorities and the proposed approach to deliver the draft Strategy were developed before the coronavirus pandemic and the local response and learning that has taken place, particularly from the work to support communities and vulnerable people. The draft Strategy recognises the strong relationship between this learning and the proposed approach, and that the learning can help inform how the approach and the delivery of the shared priorities could be supported by the Council.

1.3 Collaboration, based upon shared verification of collated evidence, has been central to the development of the draft Strategy and is an underpinning

feature of the way that shared priorities will be delivered. The draft Strategy proposes a model where Shropshire Council will be an enabler, possibly through delivering projects and initiatives itself, and possibly through finding the best way that it can assist local areas to deliver their own actions in their communities.

1.4 The draft Strategy provides an opportunity to refresh how the Council and local areas work together to deliver shared priorities which they have identified and confirmed; progressing activities and projects which will achieve the outcomes required in a place.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

A. Endorse the draft aim and shared priorities as outlined in paragraph 4.3 of this report and the draft Strategy
B. Endorse the proposed framework approach for delivering the draft Strategy's shared priorities, in paragraph 4.4 of this report and the draft Strategy
C. Approve the final draft Strategy subject to 8 weeks consultation period and delegate confirmation of the final Strategy to the Director of Place and the Portfolio Holder Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services.

3. Risk Analysis

3.1 The draft Strategy (appendix 1) aims to make Shropshire a great place to live, work, visit and play for everyone. At its core it identifies the value of communities in rural and urban areas, how different communities relate to each other and utilise their assets and resources, and what enabling opportunities for communities exist to assist them to become even more resilient and central to meeting the needs of their residents.

3.2 As such the draft Strategy seeks to help address inequalities and should not adversely impact anyone within Protected Characteristic groupings. A screening Equalities and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been completed and is attached at appendix 2. It will be revisited following the completion of the consultation to identify whether any areas emerged that require further consideration, and where there have been gaps in responses, either from geographical areas of the county or from specific groupings such as younger people, older people, and people with mental health needs.

3.3 Carrying out this approach towards equality impacts will enable us to adjust where necessary in the light of feedback received. This may include mitigating negative impacts or enhancing positive impacts for people in the Protected Characteristic groupings, or to endorse actions and approaches. It is also consistent with the Council's approach using screening ESIIAs to bookend consultations, and in so doing demonstrates ongoing engagement and efforts to get feedback from groupings.

3.3 The importance of climate change is recognised in the draft Strategy, there is a specific shared priority "Reducing our impact on the climate and wider environment" which will be cross-cutting and will need to be considered for all of the actions which are taken deliver the other shared priorities, at both the countywide perspective and actions taken at the local level.

3.4 The draft Strategy is expected to help identify actions, projects and initiatives that will deliver the shared priorities, and in doing so help to inform budget setting and decision making at the Council, and by partners delivering the shared priorities at a local level. As such the draft Strategy itself does not have any direct financial implications at this stage.

4. Report

4.1 The development of the draft Strategy has been based on evidence and intelligence to help to understand the issues and challenges that need to be addressed and the priorities that relate to them.

4.2 The draft Strategy development has included engagement through workshop sessions with Shropshire's Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector, and with Members and senior managers. There has also been discussion with the Shropshire Business Board and with the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) working group. This work has helped inform the draft shared priorities.

4.3 The draft shared priorities for the draft Strategy do not stand in isolation and in many cases are dependent on each other to be realised. This will be essential remain in focus when delivery planning takes place.

Vision: Sustainable Shropshire communities through local action (think globally: act locally)

Aim: Shropshire; a great place to live, work, visit and play for everyone

Shared priorities:

- Keeping everyone happy and healthy, whatever their age
- Helping people who are lonely to connect with others and enjoy themselves
- Finding effective and sustainable ways to move people around
- Embracing the skills and experience of our older generation
- Making sure we have the right homes in the right places
- Attracting and keeping young people in the county and developing a skilled workforce
- Continuously improving physical and digital connectivity
- Reducing our impact on the climate, nature and wider environment

4.4 The draft Strategy includes a proposed framework approach for the delivery of the draft shared priorities. This proposed approach has been developed taking account of published literature and learning that best met the emerging opportunities and issues arising from the work on the evidence base and engagement with stakeholders. A key reference document has been Building Collaborative Places: Infrastructure for System Change (Collaborate, 2017). The approach is framed around but not limited to the following:

- A shared understanding of local challenges which informs the vision for the place, whether this is a community, a town, or a wider geographic area.
- A cross-cutting, cross-sector and collaborative model of governance
- Shared priorities and outcomes driving local accountability for their delivery
- A model that enables areas to identify priorities for them and the right solutions for their place
- Utilising social value and an asset-based approach to collaboratively make best use of resources in communities
- Evidence based understanding of the challenges and issues and progress and impacts by all partners involved
- Enabling space (digital and physical) for those who connect directly to individuals or communities or that communities or individuals connect through
- Enabling collaboration and changes to service delivery to take place as and when it needs to through effective communication and feedback arrangements, including responding to insights and evidence

5. Learning from the Shropshire response to the coronavirus pandemic

5.1 The development of the draft Strategy evidence base, shared priorities, and the proposed approach was completed before the flooding and coronavirus

pandemic lockdown restrictions and the national shielding requirements came into place.

5.2 The opportunity has been taken to take the learning from the local response to these challenging situations and reflect it in the draft Strategy. The proposed approach to deliver the draft Strategy and the learning share many consistencies. One of the pieces of learning which is also central to the draft Strategy is that communities can and do, do a lot for themselves, requiring the Council to facilitate and enable them to support themselves rather than doing it to or for them.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Community and Rural Strategy provides the opportunity to shift the relationship between Shropshire Council and Shropshire Communities, building on their resilience and spirit, and the individuals, groups, organisations, and businesses that they are made up of. Communities do a significant amount for themselves and this has been highlighted through recent months.

6.2 Feedback received over the past year also indicates that there is an appetite in communities to work together to progress local actions and initiatives that will not all require the Council to be involved as a lead organisation, and where it does need to be involved, this might be more focused on enabling the actions to take place.

6.3 The draft shared priorities reflect the outcomes of engagement activity and analysis evidence base, and the proposed framework approach for the delivery of the shared priorities is based on codesign and co-development, with agile and flexible models of working in communities to respond to changing need and demand. Not only does this reflect the learning from literature, it also reflects the learning from the local response to the February flooding events and the coronavirus pandemic.

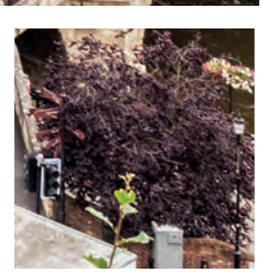
6.4 As engagement has taken place to inform the development of the shared priorities and the proposed framework approach for the delivery of the draft shared priorities, an 8 week period of consultation is being recommended. The consultation will provide the opportunity for stakeholders and the wider public to feedback on the Strategy, and also take account of any new considerations that need to be taken into account following experiences over the past 6 months.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Gwilym Butler
Local Member All
Appendices Appendix 1 – Shropshire Community and Rural Strategy Appendix 2 – Equalities and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment

Community and Rural Strategy

Collaborate, change together and achieve

September 2020



Shropshire Council
Community and Rural Strategy
September 2020

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Version	Change	Made by	Date
v.1	High Level Delivery Plan and Foreword added	Tom Dodds	26 June 2020
v.2	Amended following feedback	Tom Dodds	3 July 2020
v.2i	Amended further	Tom Dodds	8 July 2020
v.3	Amended following feedback from Gemma Davies	Tom Dodds	13 July 2020
v.4	Paragraphs on health needs added	Tom Dodds	16 July 2020

Foreword

Shropshire is the second largest inland county in the country and whilst the biggest population centres are Shrewsbury and Oswestry the remainder of the county is more rural and sparsely inhabited. We have communities living across our wonderful landscape and the Council recognised that there needed to be a strategy that was based on an understanding of place and that embraced the fact that different communities had different needs and ways to meet them, some they could address themselves, and others they would need support of one form or another to tackle.

In the summer of 2019 Shropshire Council agreed to embark on a Community and Rural Strategy. We have reviewed the significant amount of data and information the Council has access to, to give us an evidence base and we have been able to combine this understanding with the local knowledge to help identify the shared priorities, for which there has been general understanding and support. We have also listened to how local areas would like to work with Shropshire Council and the role that they would like the Council to fulfil as an enabler, as well as providing direction and a strategic lead. We have used this to help us draft this strategy.

Whilst we have been having conversations and listening to what local areas would like to see in the strategy we have also been considering what the local governance arrangements might be to support the locally led delivery of the shared priorities. We need to design this together with our partners in the communities. There are questions to answer through this process including what are the most effective geographies, how will communities be engaged, how will Shropshire Council local Members help to influence and enable local delivery, and how would the local arrangements work? We also need to factor into our thinking the boundary review of Town and Parish Councils scheduled to start in May 2021.

Since we started working on the Strategy Shropshire has been the subject of significant flooding and then the coronavirus pandemic. These events had and continue to have a big impact socially and economically. I believe the shared priorities endorse the energy that glowed in our communities during the pandemic, and that the purpose of this strategy will also be to embrace and provide solutions our different communities need in light of the pandemic, and how we move forward together for the benefit of us all. These challenging times have highlighted the diversity across the county and how resilient a lot of our rural areas are.

We have the opportunity to use the strategy to change the way we work together across the council, with our partners and with communities to realise our shared priorities and make a real and lasting difference.

As I finish this foreword I would like to introduce the draft shared priorities we have developed together with representatives from our town and parish councils, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, and Shropshire Councillors. I look forward to working together to progress their delivery:

- Keeping everyone happy and healthy, whatever their age
- Helping people who are lonely to connect with others and enjoy themselves
- Finding effective and sustainable ways to move people around
- Embracing the skills and experience of our older generation
- Making sure we have the right homes in the right places
- Attracting and keeping young people in the county and developing a skilled workforce
- Continuously improving physical and digital connectivity
- Reducing our impact on the climate, nature and the wider environment

Gwilym Butler
Portfolio Holder for Communities,
Place Planning and Regulatory Services

The context of the strategy

The development of the Community and Rural Strategy has taken place over the past 12 months. The opportunity to develop the strategy came from the recognition that a holistic view of the needs of Shropshire communities would provide a solid starting point to help promote sustainability and resilience, and to ensure that the challenges and benefits of living in rural areas are taken into account. Since work on the strategy started Shropshire has experienced significant flooding in February 2020 which was quickly followed by the introduction of the lockdown requirements as the Covid-19 pandemic struck. Communities across the county have been considerably impacted, but have pulled together, demonstrated their strength and spirit as they have helped and supported themselves. This strength and resilience is at the heart centre of what this strategy aims to reinforce and enable.

The strategy has two elements. The first is based around developing evidence based shared priorities for Shropshire as a whole, that are also relevant and recognisable to local communities. The second looks at how these can be implemented across the County and providing the framework for their delivery at a Shropshire Council area level and through action and delivery within and by local areas.

National context: The development of a Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire sets out to realise local policy intentions and to reflect Government policy and strategy, including the Industrial Strategy, the Clean Growth Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan. The stated policy ambitions of the national administration are also being noted and factored in, including commitments around the levelling up of regional disparities and approaches towards climate change mitigation.

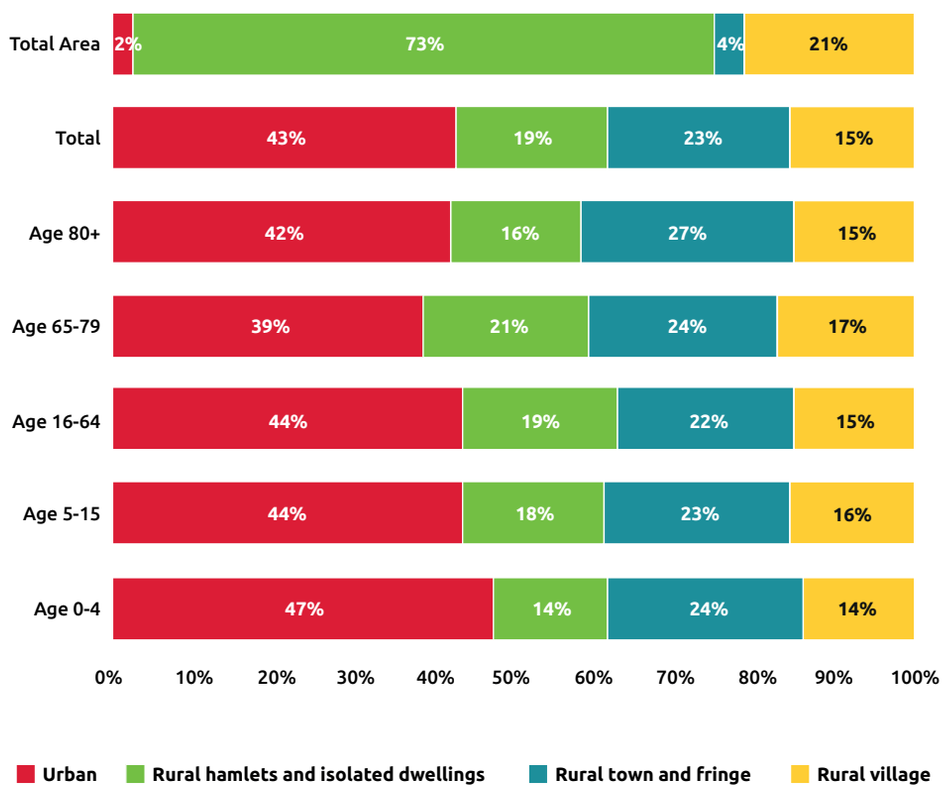
The Shropshire strategy work seeks to complement collaborative endeavours at national level with other rural authorities, including through the Rural Services Network, and through the County Councils Network and the “Leading Edge” initiative being led by Cornwall Council to seek to address current inequities for rural and coastal authorities.

Sub-regional context: Additionally, the local work draws upon and is informed by local strategic partnership working, across borders with Wales and with other local authorities, through the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), ”Midlands Engine” and Midlands Connect infrastructure work, and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), and through ongoing work with other public sector bodies and community and voluntary sector organisations .

About Shropshire

Shropshire is a large rural county, the second largest inland county in England, with a population density of 1 person per hectare. Around 57% of Shropshire's population of 323,136 people (2019 mye) live in villages, hamlets and dwellings dispersed throughout the countryside. The remainder live in one of the 17 market towns and key centres of varying size, including Ludlow in the south and Oswestry in the north, or in Shrewsbury, the central county town. This geographic spread of diverse communities creates the social, economic and cultural patchwork set in flourishing natural environments that contributes to the quality of life of Shropshire people.

Figure 1: Shropshire geographic area and population by age range



The rolling green landscape, open spaces and the culture and heritage of the County make Shropshire an attractive place to live, work and visit, whether in rural areas or within one of the historic market towns, with excellent schools, low crime rates and opportunity for everyone.

Shropshire has a rich cultural heritage to discover and natural landscapes to explore, for residents and tourists alike. There are Roman and Iron Age sites; castles and historic buildings; theatres and museums; the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers 23% of the county; parts of two World Heritage Sites, rivers and canals; walking and cycling routes including one of the largest Rights

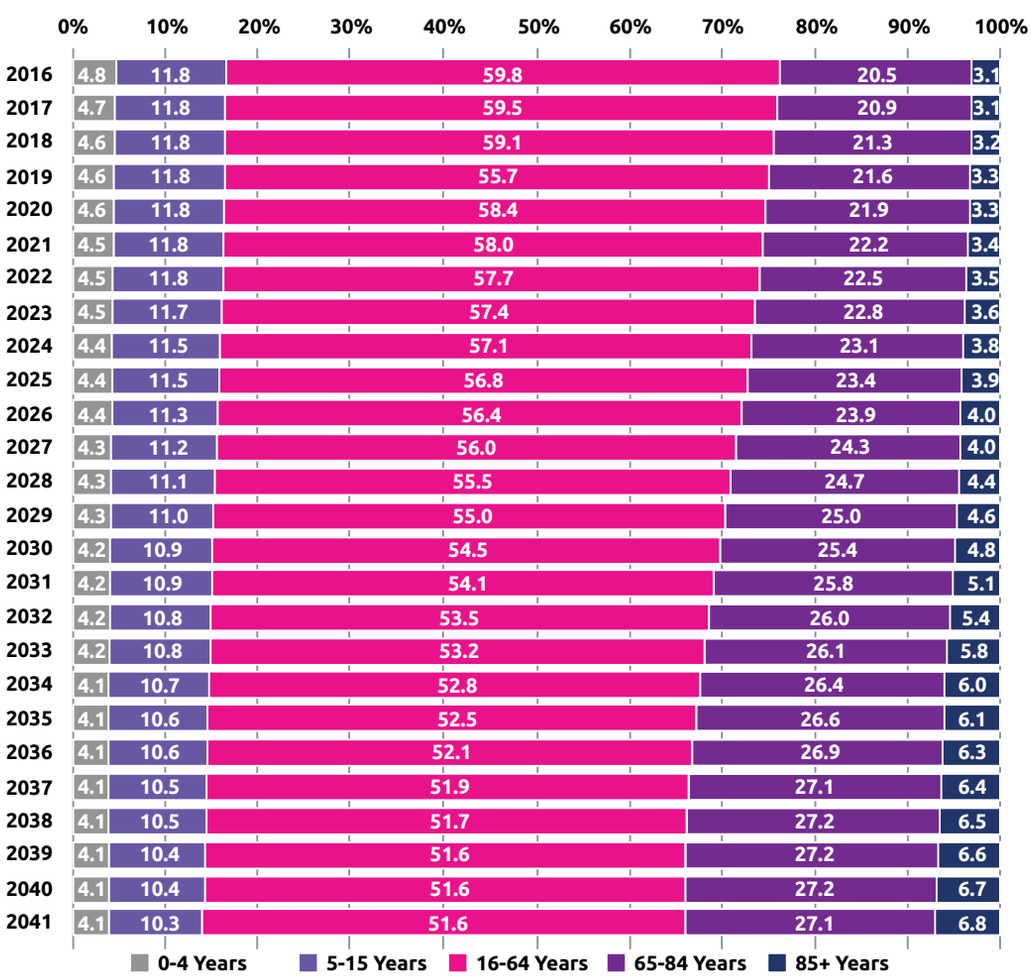
of Way networks in the country; geology and wildlife; and natural and industrial archaeology.

Our large geography means that our economy operates and reaches in different directions. We have Birmingham and the Black Country south and east, Wales on our longest border to the west and Manchester and Staffordshire north and east, as well as Herefordshire and Worcestershire to the south.

Shropshire is a beautiful and attractive place appealing to visitors and drawing people to move here, and there are opportunities and challenges which need to be taken into account in the strategy.

The population is older with the proportion of people aged 65 years and over being well above the national average and this is projected to continue. A higher proportion of Shropshire's older population live in rural areas rather than urban areas, whilst young adults leave the county to go to university or for employment, and there is a falling birth rate. Population growth is due to the in migration of adults.

Figure 2: Population change by broad age group

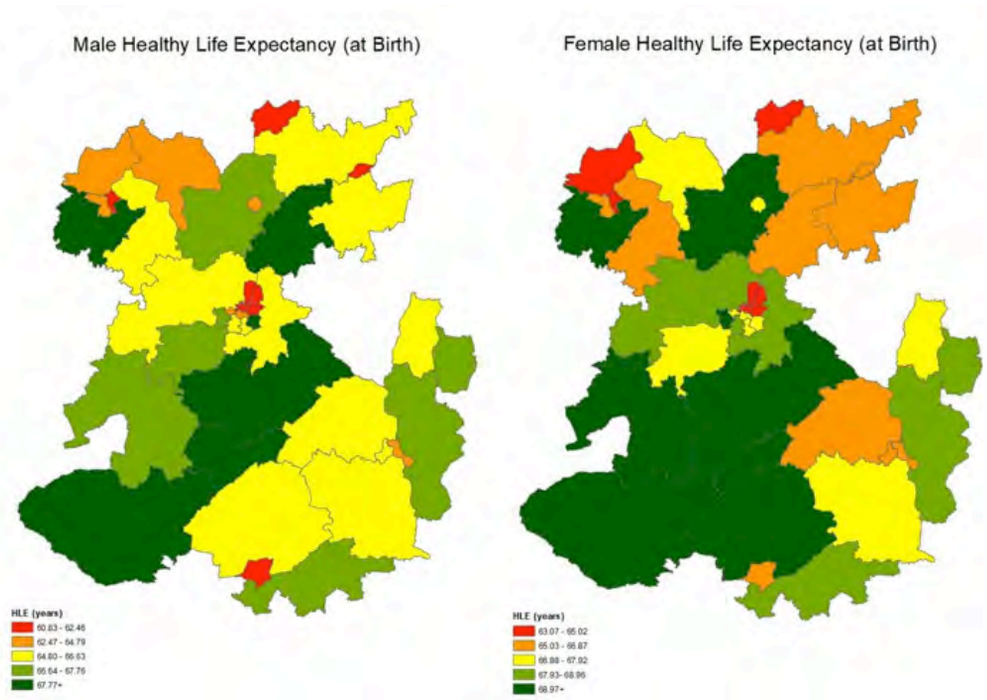


This is an established pattern that presents future tests and opportunities to innovate and find solutions for the Council and others. By 2041 the working age population (16-64) will be almost the same size as the dependent population (0-15 and 65+). Whilst this doesn't reflect the growing proportion of people aged 65 and above in the workforce, it does provide a strong indication that as Shropshire's population is getting older the proportion and number who are of working age is projected to be reducing.

There is also a projected growth in single person households in the future, particularly in the 65 years and older age group, which may change demand for types of housing and the need for social care support over time.

Health needs in Shropshire do vary from place to place, but there are some conditions which are more prevalent and which are preventable. Cancer, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, obesity and diabetes are amongst these conditions. Some of the prevalence of the conditions may be linked to the older age of the population, but raising awareness and promoting the changing of lifestyles and behaviours across all age ranges will help people remain healthy for longer. Considering healthy life expectancy at birth by gender illustrates the differences between places on the expected average age that a person would be diagnosed with a disability or condition that would require treatment. This suggests that both males and females living in rural areas are likely to have more healthy life years, particularly in the south of Shropshire.

Figure 3: Healthy life expectancy

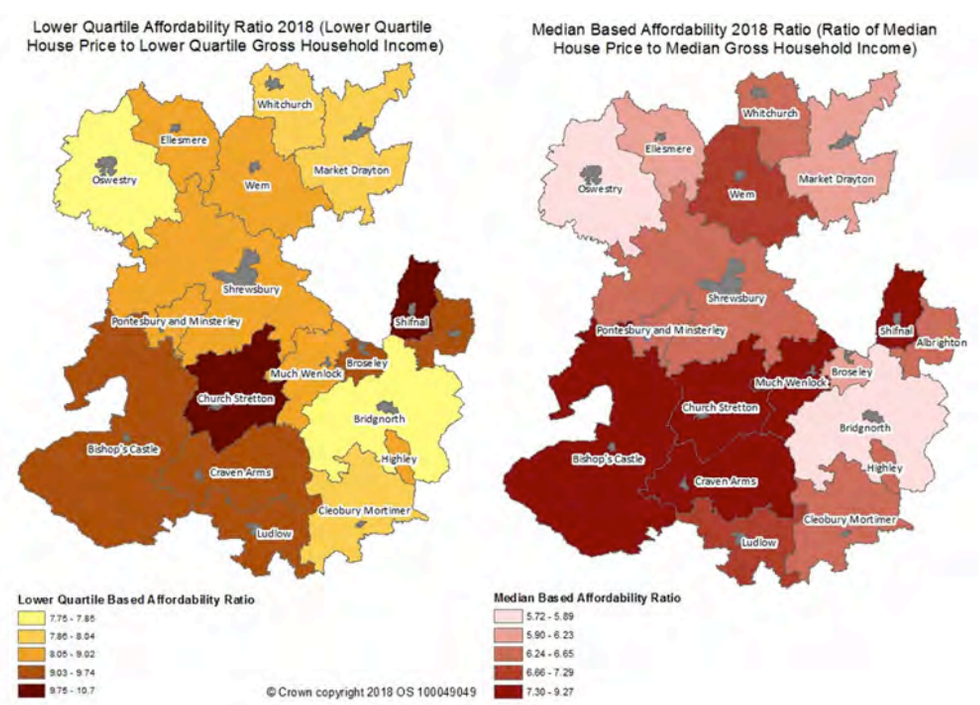


Being a large rural area, connectivity is vital to provide access to education, employment and leisure, shopping and health and care. This relates to both physical connectivity through highways and transport and digital connectivity through broadband and mobile phones. It is a key enabler for the economy and influences where people can live, particularly if they do not have access to a car.

Good digital connectivity provides businesses with the opportunity to operate in different areas of the county, employees to work from home, and during the coronavirus lockdown it has enabled school pupils to carry-on learning at home. An issue that has come more into focus for pupils during the lockdown period is digital poverty, where families may not have had digital devices for children to use for lessons and school work at home. This also highlights the importance of ensuring and enabling social mobility. Schools and the Council have provided equipment to help reduce this digital divide during the lockdown.

Access to affordable housing of all tenures is a consistent challenge across Shropshire communities, and particularly in rural areas. This can lead to situations where young people who grew up in communities move away to find a home that they can afford, and sees rural populations get older as a result. There are also strong links between the larger affordability gaps (salary and house prices) and areas with an older population.

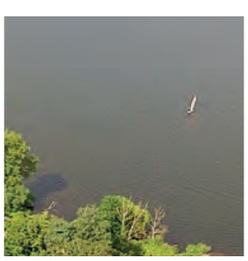
Figure 4: Lower quartile and median quartile housing affordability ratio (the darker the shade the bigger the gap)

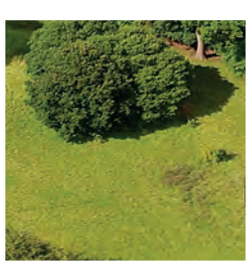


Shropshire is one of the most self-contained local authority areas in the country. 71% of working people that live here also work here, although the south of the county does see more people commuting out for their work. On average those who travel out of the county for work earn more per week than those who live and work here.

Whilst there are a small number of large employers, the majority are SMEs (small and medium sized businesses) with a higher proportion at the smaller end of the scale. Shropshire is a low wage economy and has a gross value added (GVA) that is lower than the England average with the gap continuing to grow.

Unsurprisingly for a rural county agriculture and land-based industry are significantly more important for the local economy than they are for the national economy. Health and care accounts for 1 in 7 jobs, with manufacturing and retail both having 10% of employment in Shropshire. The fastest growing sectors since 2010 are professional services, property and accommodation and food services which have strong links to the visitor economy and opportunities offered by Shropshire's great outdoor spaces for leisure activities. As the county reopens following the coronavirus lockdown, the impact on all sectors of the economy and how recovery plans can help businesses bounce back will become clear.





Developing our insights

In order to develop an evidence led strategy there has been a significant period of identifying, collating and analysing a wide range of information covering social, environmental, and economic factors at both local and county wide geographies.

In addition to this evidence base a survey was carried out of the town and parish Councils and the voluntary community and social enterprise sector.

The key messages and insights arising from this work have been shared in forums where the data and the local knowledge have helped to inform the intelligence and shape the draft shared priorities.

- Workshop session with the town and parish Council's and the voluntary community and social enterprise sector
- Workshop for Members and senior managers
- Discussions with the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) working group
- Presentation to and discussion with the Shropshire Business Board

Key issues and messages

The workshop sessions and wider discussions identified a range of issues and challenges, as well as potential solutions and possible action areas. They will be useful to inform initial discussions in identifying actions to deliver the shared priorities in localities and for the whole of Shropshire.

Mental Health for all ages came through strongly. There were particular concerns raised about support for children and young people with the role of school nurses and college support highlighted, as was support for parents from pre-school upwards.

Loneliness for all ages also resonated across all of the engagement work carried out. Access to support and services, both more formal and informal like local clubs and groups were raised, with access to opportunities in rural areas for children and young people a challenge, especially were transport was an issue. Access to venues, costs of the venues, and the availability of volunteers to run sessions were identified, leading to the challenge – "How can best use of assets in communities be made?"

The unintended consequences of changing how services are provided was used to illustrate how opportunities for interaction, particularly by older people, could inadvertently be reduced in communities. An example shared was changes being made to the provision of pensions with pensioners no longer picking up their pension from the Post

Office; reducing opportunities to meet others socially, and potentially impact the local high street through a change in spending habits.

The challenge of getting people around a large rural county like Shropshire was frequently raised. There is a reliance on private motor vehicles which can impact on those not old enough to drive, or who don't have access to a vehicle. Transport for young people, especially in rural areas, came through, as did the safety of the roads and safety whilst on the roads. This included young drivers and parents of children at rural schools with poor pathways and narrow roads. Community transport has been a feature of community life particularly in rural areas where volunteer drivers help people access shops and services including health appointments. A number of risks and issues were shared including barriers such as fuel and cost; the huge burden on volunteer drivers; and new legislation which risked making community transport untenable. In addition, many volunteer drivers involved in community car schemes are retired and of an older age.

Shropshire's growing older population is often referred to as challenge for the public sector and the voluntary community and social enterprise sector. However, through the workshop discussions the value of their experience and knowledge was recognised and the opportunity to harness this and look at multi-generational learning and volunteering were suggested. One challenge that was shared was that older people are working for longer and this could impact on the numbers volunteering.

Housing of the right type in the right place for people to access education, employment, services and support was robustly communicated. Affordable housing and housing for key workers was regularly raised. For example, if there is a desire to reduce travel to work home care workers need to be able to access affordable homes in the communities they work in. Currently there is a strong connection between areas with higher older populations and bigger gaps between salary and house prices. Similarly housing and access to employment must link. The availability of affordable 1 and 2 bed properties close to employment or education for young people to move into when they leave home was highlighted.

A particular challenge shared on a number of occasions was how to stop young people from leaving Shropshire, and how to attract young people to want to live here. The need to understand what young people are looking for in terms of education, employment, leisure and lifestyle, and housing and how to make Shropshire somewhere they want to be.

Connectivity, whether digital or physical was raised and linked to many of the issues and challenges made through the engagement work. The importance of ensuring that the quality of highways was maintained wherever possible was made, as was road safety enforcement. The condition of Rights of Way was also raised.

In terms of digital infrastructure, the importance of access to high speed broadband and mobile signal 4G/5G for all communities for business, education, social contact and leisure was a consistent message. This was balanced with concerns that the resistance to infrastructure developments such as the erection of mobile phone masts, would slow down progress. The use of digital technology to increase access to services and reduce the need for people to travel eg for appointments, was popular, particularly in relation to Health.

A cross-cutting theme that would need to factor in all plans was climate change and nature recovery, ensuring that actions and policy strengthened the focus on reducing or removing the impact on the environment. The ambition that arose from the engagement work was to make Shropshire the place for best practice on these issues.

There were also some key messages that came through the wider engagement work in the development of the strategy. From the survey of the town and parish councils and the voluntary community and social enterprise sector two specific points stood out:

- Respondent's did not feel that they could influence decisions in Shropshire
- A call for Shropshire Council to take a stronger role as an influence and leader, providing clarity of direction.

Through the workshops and engagement with the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) Working Group there was a clear message that one size does not fit all. The county is made up of a range of different communities that have different local needs and different structures and relationships. There could be a Shropshire wide plan that set out the actions that Shropshire Council would be progressing, but there would need to be bottom-up plans based on localities and developed from and owned by those communities.

Insights from the February 2020 Floods and the Coronavirus Pandemic
The development of the Community and Rural Strategy evidence base, shared priorities, and the proposed approach, set out later in this strategy, was completed before the coronavirus pandemic lockdown restrictions and the national shielding requirements came into place.

A significant component of the Council's response was to move quickly to support communities. The work is ongoing, but substantial learning has already taken place which can have a direct bearing on how the Community and Rural Strategy could be delivered. A key feature of the learning so far has been the similarity between the effective response from communities, organisations and the Council and the previously developed approach to delivering the shared priorities set out in the Delivering the Strategy section of this document.

The learning has reinforced the recognition that rural and urban communities across Shropshire can and do, do a lot for themselves, requiring the Council to facilitate and enable them to support themselves rather than doing it to or for them.

The value of a clear shared purpose has come through as a key driver for staff to change behaviours and operate in a flexible and agile manner. In addition to this, there are under-pinning principles that have been identified through the learning, which could support successful implementation of the Community and Rural Strategy share priorities in localities:

- Making a difference for residents
- Having clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities
- Implementing adaptive and effective decision-making
- Being open-minded, embracing changes and learning from feedback
- Demonstrating leadership by everyone involved
- Dealing with uncertainty by looking for and implementing solutions
- Communicating in a clear, concise, and timely way to all
- Avoiding assumptions (get everyone on the same page)

Actions emerging from the learning which are relevant to the implementation of the shared priorities and working with localities include:

- Developing the evidence base by integrating it with the new datasets that have and continue to emerge from the work to respond to coronavirus pandemic that allow for ongoing understanding of community needs, identification of inequality and areas for action
- Building on multiagency partnerships in localities to sustain them for longer term, working closely with the VCSE, town and parish councils and other public sector colleagues to develop locality working

Voluntary organisations and community groups have been at the heart of efforts to support vulnerable people, the shielded and communities more widely, working with the Council, private sector organisations and others to do this. Feedback from a survey of these groups carried out in April 2020 provided the following insights:

- Loss of volunteers aged over 70 years. Although a number were 'lost' because they were shielded many volunteer managers believed that there was a risk that volunteers would not come back after the lockdown.
- Loss of income is a big concern, particularly where it was generated through training, charity shops, fundraising events, transport, and equipment loan.
- Diversion of funds into Coronavirus grant schemes is a big concern with questions over whether there will be less money to fund the wider activities and support when the crisis has past.
- Increased demand is a big concern. Many are worried they would not cope if there is a big recession and more people end up in hardship and debt (with basic needs not being met). A recession may also impact negatively on charitable giving.
- Befriending has been in high demand but is a service area that has seen reduced investment in recent years. Some organisations are worried that people getting more regular support now will start to rely on it but there may not be the ability to keep up regular befriending contacts after the crisis.
- Mental health support is a widely shared concern that has been raised for a while but highlighted further during the lockdown period. There is a sense that there not enough of the right support or training in place.
- Widely raised concerns about burn-out and mental health of staff and volunteers.
- Risks to jobs and future redundancies where there are paid staff.
- Risks that the sector will inevitably shrink. Organisations have run out of reserves now and some organisations normally expected to be in 'good health' are on the brink of collapse.
- Positively many have highlighted that they have new volunteers but that there are people coming forward who won't stay in place because a) they will go back to work and b) there is not any infrastructure support.
- The lack of general voluntary community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) infrastructure has been a concern for a number of years. Most organisations think that they will need help later when things are operating more normally again and fear there will not be any help later.
- VCSE and private sector partnerships have developed and that is seen as a real positive. How can this be maintained in the future?

Many of the insights emerging from the VCSE survey chime with both the shared priorities and the proposed approach to implement to deliver the strategy the shared priorities on page 17.

Our Shared Priorities

Through the analysis of the evidence base and the feedback received through the engagement work it has been possible to develop a vision, aim and priorities which should resonate with all. The shared priorities and the actions taken to deliver them cannot stand in isolation. They are interdependent.

Vision:

Sustainable Shropshire communities through local action

Aim:

Shropshire; a great place to live, work, visit and play for everyone

Shared priorities:

- Keeping everyone happy and healthy, whatever their age
- Helping people who are lonely to connect with others and enjoy themselves
- Finding effective and sustainable ways to move people around
- Embracing the skills and experience of our older generation
- Making sure we have the right homes in the right places
- Attracting and keeping young people in the county and developing a skilled workforce
- Continuously improving physical and digital connectivity
- Reducing our impact on the climate, nature and the wider environment

Delivering the strategy

The development and delivery of the Community and Rural Strategy has been about how the Council and communities, particularly those in rural areas who may have reduced access to services, amenities, and public transport, can best work together to achieve solutions and outcomes that are right for that place. From the outset the approach has been collaborative, developing shared priorities with the vision that local areas identify local solutions to deliver the priorities, and listening to how the strategy could be implemented together. Through this process the role of the Council should be more focused on enabling the local solutions to take place whilst it provides direction and leadership of place and delivering strategic and county wide schemes and initiatives.

This approach has been developed taking account of published literature and learning that best met the emerging opportunities and issues arising from the work on the evidence base and engagement with stakeholders. A key reference document has been Building Collaborative Places: Infrastructure for System Change (Collaborate, 2017). The approach is framed around but not limited to the following:

- A shared understanding of local challenges which informs the vision for the place, whether this is a community, a town, or a wider geographic area.
- A cross-cutting, cross-sector and collaborative model of governance
- Shared priorities and outcomes driving local accountability for their delivery
- A model that enables areas to identify priorities for them and the right solutions for their place
- Utilising social value and an asset-based approach to collaboratively make best use of resources in communities
- Evidence based understanding of the challenges and issues and progress and impacts by all partners involved
- Enabling space (digital and physical) for those who connect directly to individuals or communities or that communities or individuals connect through
- Enabling collaboration and changes to service delivery to take place as and when it needs to through effective communication and feedback arrangements, including responding to insights and evidence

The proposed approach of having countywide and local plans for the delivery of the shared priorities has been developed with the development and implementation of other local strategic resources. The development of Local Economic Growth Strategies and Local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments have and will be taking place.

The local delivery plans for the shared priorities are a mechanism to bring together the different actions and activities to assist with the coordination of their delivery. These will provide the opportunity for town and parish councils, voluntary and community groups, private businesses and Shropshire Council services to set out how they will work together to contribute to the local delivery of the shared priorities. They may also identify enabling actions or support from Shropshire Council or other organisations to support the delivery of the local delivery plan.

There will need to be local governance arrangements in place to guide the development and delivery of the local delivery plans, identifying and allocating resources, and setting local actions for the future where required. These will need to be representative of the communities within their defined geography and membership would be expected to include town and parish councils, the voluntary community and social enterprise sector, and public services as a minimum.

High Level Delivery Plan 2020/21

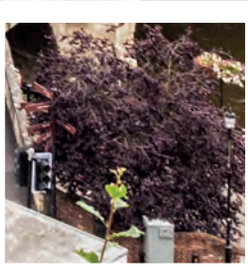
Action	Responsible	By when
Co-design local governance arrangements	Executive Director of Place	December 2020
Reviewing actions to deliver Shropshire Council strategies and projects to identify how they support or deliver the Shared Priorities	Executive Director of Place	November 2020
Complete gap analysis and identify any additional actions that are required to be delivered by Shropshire Council	Executive Director of Place	November 2020
Develop the Countywide delivery plans for the shared priorities (to be reviewed and updated annually as required)	Executive Director of Place	January 2021
Develop the local delivery plans for the shared priorities (to be reviewed and updated annually, as required)	Local Area Groups	June 2021
Integrate elements from local delivery plans into the relevant Place Plans	Executive Director of Place	Annually by October
Use the evidence base and local delivery plan actions to inform the development of local JSNAs	Director of Public Health	March 2022

Community and Rural Strategy

Collaborate, change together and achieve

September 2020

www.shropshire.gov.uk



Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)
Part One Screening Record 2020

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire

N**ame of lead officer carrying out the screening**
Tom Dodds

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	**Yes**	**No**
Part One ESIIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		No

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations
Screening indicates that a medium positive impact is anticipated for all groupings within the community and thus for the whole community, as the Community and Rural Strategy sets out to help the Council make progress towards achieving the three national equality aims set out in the general equality duty placed upon local authorities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). There is potential for this to move up to a high positive impact for Disability, Age, Sex, and Social Inclusion, with regard to access to services. Considerations around social inclusion and access to services are to the forefront of our minds as a large and sparsely populated rural county, as well as in the minds of national policymakers, not least as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the evidence emerging about these impacts, have thrown inequalities into sharp relief. As with the related Local Plan Review, and Local Economic Growth Strategies for six of our key market towns, the Community and Rural Strategy is likely to have a positive effect on all groups in society and is intended to do so, given overall aims of driving Shropshire's sustainable development, economic growth and proactive responses to clean growth, climate change and other environmental considerations, consistent with the Council's strategic vision and objectives. The Community and Rural Strategy is likewise anticipated to generate a positive impact for the following groups in particular:

- Hard to reach in rural areas such as families, children and young people, older people, rural businesses and homeworkers, gypsies and travellers, and low income households;
- Vulnerable households in market towns, including families, older people and people on low incomes.

It is not possible at this stage to say with certainty what the likely impacts of the service change will be upon the community and upon groupings within the community.

Actions to maximise the positive impacts will include:

- encouraging Place Plan areas or clusters around market towns and key centres to fully consider opportunities to involve all elements of their communities in the identification and delivery of actions that will achieve the shared priorities and be involved in the decision making where this is possible;
- asking Town and Parish Councils and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector organisations to help reach into their communities during the consultation phase to encourage and enable all elements to take part if they want to;
- ongoing efforts to engage with people in the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly where low levels of responses to public consultation have been received to date;
- officers continuing to work with the intended audiences for the service change, on the basis that this is all who live, work in and visit Shropshire.

The recent Public Health England (PHE) report, entitled: *"Beyond the data; understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups",* has identified the additional challenges in Black, Asian and ethnic minority groupings around finding out about and accessing services, in terms of the information and support that we provide, and the ways in which we seek to provide such help. This also brings in joint efforts across our area and work with other neighbouring authorities, public sector organisations, and the voluntary and community sector across our borders, either in Wales or across to the West Midlands, or North to South.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

The Community and Rural Strategy will be underpinned by a SMART delivery plan at the Shropshire Council level, and it is proposed that plans to deliver the shared priorities will be in place at the Place Plan area or cluster level.

Progress with the Shropshire Council Plan will be monitored using the delivery milestones and appropriate measures related to the actions and outcomes to be achieved. Feedback from stakeholders will also provide an indication of progress and impact, and progress updates will also be sought from the Place Plan areas or clusters.

We will continue to target efforts at identifying any gaps in equality and diversity data, and in finding out where there may be barriers to accessing particular services, and how this might be addressed, for people with one or more of the Protected Characteristics and for people at risk of social exclusion. This will also be reported upon in the annual Service User and Workforce Diversity Reports published online. Baseline work with town and parish councils, the VCSE and Shropshire Council councillors on development of the Community and Rural Strategy was reported upon in the Service User Diversity Report for 2019.

The Council is developing actions to enhance any positive impacts for groupings arising from the pandemic, due to realising the potential of online services to increase social inclusion, eg for faith communities eg for younger people, older people, and people at risk of social isolation, subject to acquisition of digital skills and to assured digital connectivity.

Any changes to service configurations towards greater use of online resources will need to ensure that the importance of physical access to such facilities and amenities, not least in minimising social isolation for groupings such as people with disabilities, remains to the forefront of our minds.

From an outcomes angle for communities, engagement with all Members as community leaders, and through Cabinet and Portfolio Holder, will help service areas and therefore the Council to ensure that information, feedback and concerns are raised through a variety of channels and that actions may then be identified as necessary to seek to mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive impacts that are envisaged.

Associated ESIIAs

- Local Plan Partial Review Stage One: Issues and Strategic Options; January 2017;
- Local Plan Partial Review Stage Two: Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development; October 2017;
- Shropshire Local Plan Partial Review: Third Stage: Preferred Sites, November 2018
- Shropshire Local Plan Partial Review: Fourth Stage: Strategic Sites, July 2019
- Shropshire Local plan partial Review: Fifth Stage. Regualtion 18 Pre Submission Draft, August 2020

These screening assessments accompanied or are accompanying reports to Cabinet, published on the website at www.shropshire.gov.uk

The ESIIA accompanying the Local Economic Growth Strategies report was completed as part of documentation to Cabinet in March 2020.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change and health and well being considerations

Cabinet gave recent approval to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an early opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed for use in this regard, in order to more fully capture the health and well being benefits anticipated. It is timely that such approval was sought and given, as the decision was made just before the Covid-19 pandemic reached Shropshire, and as the Council will be able to focus and shape local outcomes to improve health and well being across groupings through joint efforts across sectors, utilising emerging national evidence and national learning points. This is particularly so for people in BAME groupings, for men, for people who are obese, and for older people.
.
Maximising the positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits is focussed upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector

Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities. We also engage directly with Government Departments on such issues, for example with the Department of Health on the Industrial Strategy Grand Challenge of an Ageing Society. We will continue to do so.

The groupings likely to benefit in economic terms are younger people, people who do not have digital skills to enable them to make the most of online opportunities to access services and support, and people at risk of physical and digital isolation, whether they live in one of our more rural areas or within one of our market towns and villages.

Environmental impacts of activities through schools and maximisation of use of outdoor amenities and green spaces, to further promote mental and physical well being and opportunities for people to access such amenities regardless of their location within Shropshire, could for example include community transport arrangements.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
Lead officer carrying out the screening **Tom Dodds, Intelligence and Insight Manager**		3rd August 2020
*Any internal support** **Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist**		4th August 2020
*Any external support***		

This refers to other officers within the service area
****This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority***

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
Lead officer's name		4th August 2020
Accountable officer's name		4th August 2020

This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description
The Community and Rural Strategy has been developed following the recognition that an holistic view of the needs of Shropshire communities would provide a solid starting point to help promote sustainability and resilience, and to ensure that value and the challenges and benefits of living in rural areas. The strategy has two elements. The first is based around developing evidence based shared priorities for Shropshire as a whole, that are also relevant and recognisable to local communities. The second looks at how these can be implemented across the County and also to provide the framework for their delivery at a Shropshire Council area level and through action and delivery within and by local areas. It is expected that the strategy should help to identify and address inequalities, For example access to services, and improve outcomes for communities and individuals. **Shared priorities** A substantial evidence base has been developed which has been used to inform workshops with Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector, and with Shropshire Councillors and Senior Managers. Engagement has also taken place with the VCSA Board, the Business Board, and discussions have also taken place with the SALC Working Group. The evidence base and the outcome of the engagement activity have been used to shape the shared priorities: • Keeping everyone happy and healthy, whatever their age (Mental Health) • Helping people who are lonely to connect with others and enjoy themselves (Loneliness) • Finding effective and sustainable ways to move people around (• Embracing the skills and experience of our older generation • Making sure we have the right homes in the right places • Attracting and keeping young people in the county and developing a skilled workforce • Sorting out physical and digital connectivity • Reducing our impact on the climate and wider environment **Local Governance Proposals - the framework for delivery** The proposed approach for local governance is based around effect collaborative working, involving the local Shropshire Council Members, representatives from the Town and Parish Councils in the area, the voluntary community and social enterprise sector, schools, local GPs, police, fire, the business community. Shropshire Council will provide direction and operate as an enabler.

Place Plan areas, possibly grouped, would identify the shared priorities relevant to them, the actions that they would need to take, and how they would use their collective resources to do this. They may also have 'asks' of Shropshire Council to help them achieve their outcomes.

National evidence to date has identified a disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic for groupings including Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) communities, faith communities, younger people, older people, people with disabilities, and those for whom there is a gendered economic impact. These groupings all fall within what are termed Protected Characteristic groupings under the Equality Act 2010.

Alongside the local actions already scoped, the Community and Rural Strategy will therefore also need to include proposed actions for joint work to identify and seek to address the inequalities emerging to date across a range of groupings and communities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This should then facilitate tie in with national actions in response to a range of groupings affected, as well as to the recommendations made in the Public Health England report *"Beyond the data; understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups"*; PHE, June 2020, and any further national evidence arising.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All those who live in, work in and visit Shropshire.

All those who seek to serve and support communities and groupings within them across Shropshire, including, in alphabetical order:

- Defra and other Government Departments, and Government agencies
- Health providers including primary care (GPs, dentists, pharmacists), NHS Foundation trusts, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- Inter faith forums and faith communities
- Local authorities and collectives thereof, including the County Councils Network (CCN), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Rural Services Network (RSN), and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)
- Local Members of Parliament
- Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Other public sector and business sector organisations
- Parish and town councils
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Shropshire Business Board
- Shropshire Council councillors
- Shropshire Council workforce
- Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly
- Voluntary and community organisations, alliances and movements

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but it is intended to demonstrate inclusive approaches alongside the need to engage with specific target groupings according to specific circumstances eg approaches to achieve digital connectivity across the county involve a range of sectors and organisations.

Evidence used for screening of the service change
The Community and Rural Strategy has been developed using a significant evidence base that has been analysed to identify trends, correlations and specific issues. These were presented in workshops in October and November 2019, to inform the engagement discussions. The evidence and the workshop notes will be published on the Information, Intelligence and Insight pages of the Council's website. Contextual information about Shropshire is already published on the website through the Performance Feedback and Insight team, with analyses of demographical information, area profiles, Shropshire Snapshots of population, etc. This is in the section on Facts and Figures at www.shropshire.gov.uk The evidence being used It draws upon the following: • Local authority and rural authority comparator data • ONS Statistics • Public Health England statistics and analyses with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic • Rural Services Network resources on rural issues and needs • Shropshire Council county level and area profiles, statistical analyses and reports • Shropshire Council service area data This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but it is intended to demonstrate the breadth of evidence not only collated to date but also required to be kept up to date, in order to facilitate timely and evidence based decision making processes. Use has also been made of: evidence collected for annual service user and workforce diversity reports; feedback from communities, stakeholders and staff in development of approaches including place based approaches towards working with communities; Council and other contributions to national consultations and opportunities to submit evidence about needs, such as through the RSN for tis Revitalising Rural campaign; and good practice examples of strategic approaches towards supporting rural communities and businesses.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change
The shared priorities have emerged from engagement with Town and Parish Councils and VSCE organisations, and Shropshire Councillors and Senior Officers. Engagement has also taken place with the VCSA Board, Shropshire Business Board and with the SALC Working Group. The shared priorities and the options for local governance arranges will be consulted on. The outcomes of this consultation will inform the final shape of the shared priorities and inform the local governance arrangements. The results of the consultation will be used to review this ESIIA and identify whether updates

will be required.

The length of the consultation will be determined following discussion with Legal and Democratic Services. It will be likely to involve surveys, as well as potentially attending meetings within place plan areas to collect views and feedback

Consultation and engagement will therefore be adapted according to the actions to be carried out, and it may be that specific screening ESIIAs will need to be undertaken, particularly if there is public consultation planned.

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	**High negative impact** *Part Two ESIIA required*	**High positive impact** *Part One ESIIA required*	**Medium positive or negative impact** *Part One ESIIA required*	**Low positive or negative impact** *Part One ESIIA required*
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)		✓potential	Medium positive impact	
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)		✓potential	Medium positive impact	
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Medium positive impact	
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Medium positive impact	
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Medium positive impact	
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)			Medium positive impact	
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)			Medium positive impact	
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)			Medium positive impact	

Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)			Medium positive impact	
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)		✓potential	Medium positive impact	

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and health and well being
It is expected that the delivery of the shared priorities will develop a wide range of dependences and interdependences on the strategies of the Council. Cabinet gave recent approval to the use of health impact assessments. This proposal provides an early opportunity for utilising the guidance that has been developed by Public Health colleagues with regard to impact upon health and well being, in order to more fully optimise evidence alongside it and capture health and well being benefits across groupings. The Community and Rural Strategy as proposed is intended to have positive impacts in terms of the human rights of individuals and groups. There are intended to be positive equality impacts in terms of economic benefits, which are focussed upon joint efforts to influence national policy around social inclusion, including through the Rural Services Network, and joint work through the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This has involved collating and submitting evidence to parliamentary select committee inquiries around digital and social inclusion issues, the rural economy, and regional disparities. We have also engaged directly with Government Departments on such issues. We will continue to do so. The groupings likely to benefit in economic terms are younger people, people who do not have digital skills to enable them to make the most of online opportunities to access services and support, and people at risk of physical and digital isolation, whether they live in one of our more rural areas or within one of our market towns and villages. Looking at environmental impacts, there is anticipated to continue to be a neutral to low positive outcome in relation to the following aspects of climate change mitigation, with efforts to introduce and maximise online resources matched by efforts to improve digital connectivity and reduce social isolation across the county. Any energy efficiency changes to the fabric of community assets and buildings that improves their energy and fuel outputs will be of benefit to the communities that make use of them, as well as to the wider environment, just as better use of local buildings that reduces or obviates the need to travel other than on foot or by bicycle will also be of benefit to the wider environment. There is a clear link with the Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan, which includes a draft policy specifically about health and wellbeing and the ways in which development can positively contribute to the health and well-being of individuals, communities and places. There are also draft policies relating to such issues as high-quality design,

residential mix, affordable housing, the natural and built environment which provide opportunity to manage the contribution of new development to the health and wellbeing of communities.

The Regulation 18 Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan also includes draft policies relating to infrastructure provision, to ensure that the infrastructure necessary to support new development (physical, social, environmental and digital) and the associated communities is provided. This also specifically includes Green Infrastructure and Open Space which could improve opportunities for exercise, safe cycling and walking routes

These environmental considerations around enhancing quality of life, combined with concerns around safer and well maintained roads as well as safe cycling and walking routes, and safe drop offs for schools, were also high up on the community priorities identified for joint action.

Guidance Notes

1. Corporate and Service Area Policy and Practice on Equality and Social inclusion

This involves taking an equality and social inclusion approach in planning changes to services, policies or procedures, including those that may be required by Government.

The decisions that you make when you are planning a service change need to be recorded, to demonstrate that you have thought about the possible equality impacts on communities and to show openness and transparency in your decision making processes.

This is where Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessments (ESIIAs) come in. Where you carry out an ESIIA in your service area~~,~~ this provides an opportunity to show:

- What evidence you have drawn upon to help you to recommend a strategy or policy or a course of action to Cabinet;
- What target groups and audiences you have worked with to date;
- What actions you will take in order to mitigate any likely negative impact upon a group or groupings, and enhance any positive effects for a group or groupings; and
- What actions you are planning to review the impact of your planned service change.

The formal template is there not only to help the service area but also to act as a stand alone for a member of the public to read.

The approach helps to identify whether or not any new or significant changes to services, including policies, procedures, functions or projects, may have an adverse impact on a particular group of people, and whether the human rights of individuals may be affected.

This assessment encompasses consideration of social inclusion. This is so that we are thinking as carefully and completely as possible about all Shropshire groups and communities, including people in rural areas and people we may describe as vulnerable, for example due to low income or to safeguarding concerns, as well as people in what are described as the nine 'protected characteristics' of groups of people in our population, eg Age.

We demonstrate equal treatment to people who are in these groups and to people who are not, through having what is termed 'due regard' to their needs and views when developing and implementing policy and strategy and when commissioning, procuring, arranging or delivering services.

When you are not carrying out an ESIIA, you still need to demonstrate that you have considered equality in your decision-making processes. It is up to you what format you choose. You could use a checklist, an explanatory note, or a document setting out our expectations of standards of behaviour, for contractors to read and sign. It may well not be something that is in the public domain like an ESIIA, but you should still be ready for it to be made available.

Both the approaches sit with a manager, and the manager has to make the call, and record the decision made on behalf of the Council. Help and guidance is also available via the Commissioning Support Team, either for data, or for policy advice from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist. Here are some examples to get you thinking.

Carry out an ESIIA:

- If you are building or reconfiguring a building;
- If you are planning to reduce or remove a service;
- If you are consulting on a policy or a strategy;
- If you are bringing in a change to a process or procedure that involves other stakeholders and the wider community as well as particular groupings

For example, there may be a planned change to a leisure facility. This gives you the chance to look at things like flexible changing room provision, which will maximise positive impacts for everyone. A specific grouping that would benefit would be people undergoing gender reassignment

Carry out an equality and social inclusion approach:

- If you are setting out how you expect a contractor to behave with regard to equality, where you are commissioning a service or product from them;
- If you are setting out the standards of behaviour we expect from people who work with vulnerable groupings, such as taxi drivers that we license;
- If you are planning consultation and engagement activity, where we need to collect equality data in ways that will be proportionate and non-intrusive as well as meaningful for the purposes of the consultation itself;
- If you are looking at services provided by others that help the community, where we need to demonstrate a community leadership approach

For example, you may be involved in commissioning a production to tour schools or appear at a local venue, whether a community hall or somewhere like Theatre Severn. The production company should be made aware of our equality policies and our expectation that they will seek to avoid promotion of potentially negative stereotypes.

Specific groupings that could be affected include: Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, and Sexual Orientation. There is positive impact to be gained from positive portrayals and use of appropriate and respectful language in regard to these groupings in particular.

2. Legal Context

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess the equality and human rights impact of changes proposed or made to services. It is up to us as an authority to decide what form our equality impact assessment may take. Carrying out ESIIAs helps us as a public authority to ensure that, as far as possible, we are taking actions to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, and to thus demonstrate that the three equality aims are integral to our decision making processes. These are: eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations.

Service areas would ordinarily carry out a screening assessment, or Part One equality impact assessment. This enables energies to be focussed on review and monitoring and ongoing evidence collection about the positive or negative impacts of a service change upon groupings in the community, and for any adjustments to be considered and made accordingly.

If the screening indicates that there are likely to be significant negative impacts for groupings within the community, the service area would need to carry out a full report, or Part Two assessment. This will enable more evidence to be collected that will help the service area to reach an informed opinion. Please contact the equality policy lead within the Council for more advice and guidance in this regard, as per details below.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist and Council policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 258528, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

Committee and Date	Item
Cabinet – 5th October 2020	Public

Shrewsbury Park & Ride Report

Responsible Officer James Willocks
e-mail: james.willocks@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252474 Fax

1.0 Summary

1.1 Shrewsbury's Park & Ride service started operation in 1994. It provides a frequent bus link between three Park & Ride sites (Meole Brace, Oxon and Harlescott) to Shrewsbury town centre.

1.2 This report outlines the vision and ambition to develop the existing Shrewsbury Park & Ride service into a next generation transport system that becomes the first choice of travel in and around Shrewsbury.

1.3 This vision for Park & Ride will support and complement other key Council strategies and initiatives such as Economic Growth Strategy, Movement Strategy, the Big Town Plan and the challenge of climate change across the organisation.

1.4 This Report formally seeks approval to begin the remodeling, preparation and assessment works associated with the ambition of creating a Shrewsbury Connect transport strategy in line with the Council's vision for a "Next Generation Park & Ride Transport System". This will formally launch the Park & Ride Transformation program and the necessary works required to bring to cabinet a detailed report at an appropriate time.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 This report formally seeks approval to undertake a detailed analysis of the proposals outlined here to transform Shrewsbury Park & Ride into a 'Next Generation Transport System' and to return to cabinet with a Strategic Report outlining the key elements that will be required to realise the vision outlined in this report.

2.2 This will include:

2.2.1 **Finance** – To review the capital and revenue commitments that will be required to introduce a next generational "Park & Ride" service for Shrewsbury.

2.2.2 **Interchange Hubs** – To review the suitability of the existing Park & Ride sites and identify any alternative locations that would provide passengers with interchange facilities that reflect a “Next Generational Park & Ride Service”. Whilst at the same time understanding the market value of any of the existing sites should alternative locations be identified. Initial consideration will be given to the current Oxon site that is not currently seen as being in a suitably strategic location.

2.2.3 **Service Frequency** – To identify an optimum journey frequency, operating hours and days of operation, with the ambition of attracting additional passengers to the service over and above what has previously been achieved.

2.2.4 **Fare & Ticket Structure** – To adopt a fares structure that will enable funding of the Park & Ride improvements and lay the foundations for a commercially viable service

2.2.5 **Alternatively Fueled Vehicle Options** – To identify the options available, taking note of the evidence from a number of successful electric vehicle trials over the past 12 months and exploring the opportunities for funding through the DfT

2.2.6 **2.2.26Bus Priority Measures** – Commission a study to understand where bus priority measures could be introduced to improve journey reliability and passenger experience.

2.2.7 **Stakeholder Discussions & Identify Formal Public Consultation Process** - To enter formal discussions with partners and stakeholders, including but not limited to, SaTH, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Bus Users Shropshire, Shrewsbury Bid, Shrewsbury Town Council and the Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin Sustainability & Transformation Partnership.

2.2.8 **Branding** – To create a brand strategy that is synonymous with our vision, an example of which is highlighted in **Appendix D**

2.2.9 **Covid-19 Pandemic** – Understand how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the transport industry and reflect within the strategy any learning that can be taken from how passenger and stakeholder requirements may have changed as a result.

2.2.10 **Wider Public Transport Integration** – Explore the opportunities within the Bus Act to integrate the wider public transport network into the park and ride service. With the ambition of creating a “Shrewsbury Connect” Transport Eco System that provides for efficiencies through the coordination of vehicle and other assets.

2.3 Ultimately the timescales for delivery of these proposals will be dependent upon a number of other strategies such as the Big Town plan, Movement and Parking strategies, redevelopment of the Riverside and the construction and completion of the North West Relief Road to ensure that the maximum complementary value is achieved.

2.4 Subject to the outcome of a formal consultation it is planned that the phased introduction of the Shrewsbury Connect transport model would start in 2021 along with a modernisation of the existing sites and the introduction of EV buses into the operation. Further reports to cabinet will be required as the detailed assessments are completed.

REPORT

3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 A Risk and opportunities appraisal as well as an ESIIA will be included in the report that will be brought back to cabinet following this study, complying with our equalities duties.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 To be presented to cabinet in the form of a full strategy document, following the relevant input from the Councils Capital and Revenue finance teams. Future reports to cabinet will detail all the associated costs once the modelling is fully completed.

5.0 Climate Change Appraisal

5.1 The Shrewsbury Connect proposals include a recommendation to identify alternatively fuelled vehicles that would be suitable for the service to realise the ambition of reducing the carbon footprint of public transport and to report back to cabinet on any proposals as part of a wider strategy.

5.2 Reference will also be made to the successful trials that have been undertaken on the current Park & Ride service, considering comments made by passengers, residents, businesses and the Shropshire Bus Users Group.

6.0 Background

6.1 An initial assessment of Shrewsbury Park & Ride was undertaken in 2019 considering best practice nationally to understand how we could potentially modernise the service and increase passenger numbers, to better support the

economy of the county town, as well as creating the platform for a sustainable transport system.

6.2 Shrewsbury has a Park & Ride service operating on three sites, north, west and south of the town centre.

6.3 The Park and Ride service is currently organised and funded by Shropshire Council, and operated by Arriva on a 20-minute frequency.

6.4 Annual passenger numbers on Park and Ride have halved in just ten years, dropping from 1.2m to 0.6m. Research has demonstrated that the reason for decline is a cumulation of the following factors:

- Reduction in frequency (every 12 minutes in 2011 to every 20 minutes as it is now)
- Journey time on bus increased (no longer a frequent, quick service with increased traffic and road closures)
- Lack of promotion and public awareness
- Reduction in investment and subsidy
- Public perception (tired and outdated)
- Customer experience and site amenities
- Changing social habits

6.5 Shrewsbury Town centre is on the cusp of some major changes that may need to see a greater reliance on a remodelled and integrated Park and Ride service that is intrinsic to movement within the town.

6.6 Evidence from successful best practice services has highlighted that the formula to a successful Park & Ride service should have a number of key elements, including an attractive price (based on other options available), convenience, quality and a travel time that is at least as equitable to a similar journey by car, to encourage car drivers to switch from town centre car travel..

6.7 It is not a coincidence that the most heavily used Park & Ride services are also in cities/towns where town centre parking is more expensive and/or constrained.

6.8 Research undertaken and demand assessments for Shrewsbury showed the need to target both commuter and shopping/leisure use of Park & Ride, to give a large enough market for the service to be viable. Commuters give a consistent base demand through the year, but a clear potential to attract shoppers and visitors to Park & Ride is also critical.

6.9 Officers have developed a vision to address all the key drivers of demand – cost, time, quality and convenience, with the aim of attracting commuters, shoppers and visitors to the town.

6.10 As part of the initial review we held several Stakeholder meetings that have helped to inform and shape our vision and in particular the meetings we held at

the Darwin Shopping Centre with Shrewsbury BID and other partners were most useful.

6.11 We also acknowledge the support and advice the current Park & Ride operator Arriva has provided for this initial study, and in particular for their help in undertaking the various service trials, including the operation of EV (Electric) buses and the 10-minute bus frequency trial last Autumn.

6.12 Finally, the current Covid-19 pandemic is far from resolved and it is recognised that this emergency may continue for some time. As the Covid-19 emergency begins to subside in the time ahead, the world may look a very different place. It is important however to continue to plan for the development of the county town and its transport infrastructure, to maximise the post Covid-19 resurgence of economic and social activity. The plans in this report stand ready to adapt, bend and flex as required, as the recovery evolves and gathers pace.

7.0 Best Practice Study

7.1 In Autumn 2019 Shropshire Council made a number of visits to other English Park & Ride sites and held meetings with the Council officers responsible (**Appendix A).** We'd like to place on record our thanks for their help, advice and support in helping Shropshire Council in its development of shaping a re-imagined Shrewsbury Park & Ride service.

7.2 All the visits were very useful and much appreciated, and in particular we'd like to highlight the Nottingham City Council P&R with its Electric buses and dedicated links to Queens Medical Centre and for the help still being provided to us by the City of York Council re site development. The P&R visits included:

- Oxford
- Chester
- York
- Bath
- Coventry
- Nottingham
- Cambridge

7.3 The key elements highlighted from these visits included:

- Their P&R Sites were welcoming and easily accessible and had been optimised for both location and passenger facilities
- The vast majority of the P&R bus services were integrated with Local Bus Services (public buses)
- 'Real Time Information' was mostly provided to enhance the customer experience
- 10-minute bus frequency (not 20-minute) tended to be the norm
- Most P&R's had integrated strategies with town centre parking
- Most buses were modern and Eco friendly
- Smarter fare payments were available

- Fares were based on service costs and parking alternatives in the Town/City Centres and ranged from £3.00 to £4.20 return
- Key strategic stops were incorporated into the routes, with the health sector being the most prominent.
- Passenger number trends were mainly rising, not falling
- Generally, there was no taxpayer subsidy for P&R services

7.4 Most of these themes are at variance with many aspects of the current Shrewsbury P&R arrangements and therefore offer us great potential for modernisation

The Vision

8.0 Shrewsbury Connect – Appendix B

8.1 Shrewsbury Connect is a reimagining of the tried and tested Park and Ride formula. The current service provides passengers with a semi-express link from three strategically placed sites across the outskirts of Shrewsbury to the town centre, ultimately giving passengers one choice in destination, and whilst there is plenty for Shrewsbury Town Centre to offer, a change in customer demand requires more choice and potentially access to more destinations across the entire town, outside of the river loop.

8.2 A new network is vital for its revival and encouraging the public to access this service rather than park in the town centre. In the concept, Shrewsbury Connect will now expand upon the existing Park and Ride model by providing cross route travel, Passengers boarding at one site can now access every stop along the whole network and continue to access the service as a 'hop-on-hop-off', Monday to Saturday, 6.30am to 7.30pm.

8.3 To improve upon this, additional strategic stops have been added along all three routes, and this can be adapted as Shrewsbury and the Town Centre develops and people's travel habits change as a result. These currently include, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shrewsbury Business Park, Flax Mill and Theatre Severn to name a few. This new service can be marketed at tourism, visitors, residents and commuters alike.

8.4 Under these proposals, passengers will be able to access the service, as before, from one of the three sites and will be presented with a fare choice:

- 'Line Ticket' which enables the passenger access to any stop along that particular line only, catering to customers that wish to continue to access the park and ride service as it was before.
- 'Connect Ticket' which expands upon the above but allowing full access to any stop, all day, on any of the 3 routes.

8.5 To make connections easily, it is proposed that all vehicles in the Shrewsbury Connect fleet be colour coded in their own specific route colour, Blue for West Shrewsbury, Orange for North and Green for South. This allows passengers to identify quickly which route they want to interconnect with for their onwards travel.

8.6 Publicity and branding will need to feature heavily in this relaunch, a clear, simple and impactful campaign so that passengers do not feel confused and overwhelmed by the changes. Shelters and stops will be branded with clear logos and signage so that they are clear which routes serve which stops.

8.7 Electric vehicles will feature prominently on this service, promoting a greener and eco-friendly travel option

9.0 Interchange Hubs – Appendix C

9.1 Currently the Park & Ride service operates from the three Park & Ride sites (Harlescott, Meole Brace and Oxon) taking passengers directly into town without stopping. The vision for the future is to develop these sites into 'interchange hubs'.

9.2 The plan for a new next generational Park & Ride service is for its sites to become true interchanges (hubs) where users can access key strategic locations by not only interchanging at the sites themselves, but by also interchanging at the Park & Ride stops within the town centre, to gain access to locations served by the other Park & Ride services in town.

9.3 In terms of improvements to the sites, our research shows that customer experience and amenities at the sites play a key part in the public repeatedly using the Park and Ride service and increasing passenger numbers. Key elements include:

- Reception buildings for seating, comfort and shelter
- Refreshments
- Toilets
- Good site security
- Automated ticket machines
- Through ticketing to all Park & Ride services
- Staff presence
- Excellent car park lighting
- CCTV
- Contactless payments
- EV charging points for electric cars

9.4 These and other improvements will all help make sites more attractive and provide a much better travelling experience for passengers, thus significantly increasing ridership, as well as helping to better promote the county town.

9.5 By having the ability to interchange to another Park & Ride service within the town this would provide essential links to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital for both staff and visitors, whether that be for passengers who travel in from the Park & Ride locations, or for those passengers that access Shrewsbury by rail or rural bus services.

9.6 There is potential that the re-location of Oxon Park & Ride site would provide for better links to Shrewsbury Hospital, this will require a multi service approach across the Council and with its partners, with collaborative working to ensure that outcomes for all the stakeholders meet the highest expectations and are neatly weaved together in one delivery plan.

10.0 Additional Information - Conclusion

10.1 A transformation of the existing Park & Ride service is an intrinsic element to movement within the town, supporting the intended transformation of the town centre.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) **Steve Davenport**
Local Member **All**
Appendices **Appendix A –Research of other English Park & Ride services** **Appendix B – Shrewsbury Connect – A visual representation** **Appendix C – An Interchange Hub** **Appendix D – A Branding Example**

Confidential

Shropshire Council
Passenger Transport Group

Shrewsbury Park & Ride Review
Research of other English Park & Rides
Summer/Autumn 2019

Introduction

A 'Review' of Shrewsbury Park & Ride (P&R) was launched Summer 2019 by Shropshire Council with a view to modernise the service and increase passenger numbers, and to better support the economy of the county town and become eco-friendlier.

To research 'best practise' of other Park & Ride services in England, a number of visits were undertaken by the Passenger Transport Group in later Summer/Autumn 2019 across England and the reports on these visits are shown below at Report 'A' to 'G' below.

These reports are officer technical reports provided to allow a more in depth understanding of the main Park & Ride Report.

It should be noted that the information given to Shropshire Council staff was on an informal 'colleague to colleague' basis and does not necessarily represent the position of other councils. As such, these reports should be treated in this context and with appropriate discretion.

We wish to record here our thanks and appreciation for the help and hospitality we have been provided with by other councils and their staff in this research. This has been really helpful in progressing the review of Shrewsbury's Park & Ride services and in demonstrating best practise across England.

Index

Report ‘A’ – Oxford P&R Report

Report ‘B’ - Chester P&R Report

Report ‘C’ – York P&R Report

Report ‘D’ – Bath P&R Report

Report ‘E’ – Coventry P&R Report

Report ‘F’ – Nottingham P&R Report

Report ‘G’ – Cambridge P&R Report

Report 'A'
Report on Meeting with Oxford City Council and Visit to their Pear Tree Park & Ride – Wednesday 21st August 2019

Staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled from Shirehall, Shrewsbury to Oxford's Pear Tree Park and Ride at OX2 8BF and arrived just after 12.30 pm. Pear tree P&R is one of Oxford city Council's three P&R sites and is situated to the north of the city. The other two are Thornhill to the east and Redbridge to the south.

The County Council also run Seacourt P&R site to the west of the city, and Oxford Parkway for train use to the north, near Pear Tree P&R.

We were told afterwards by Oxford City Council that their total three site car capacity is around 4,000 cars. The Parkway site which provides a train link to London in 60 minutes and costs £2 to park daily.

Both the Parkway and Seacourt sites are being taken over by Oxford City Council in September 2019, after an agreement between the two councils.

P&R Parking

There was a £2 charge for parking and we used their automated telephone system 'Ringo' to pay our £2, which we felt was a little tedious but would become quicker once registered. We could have paid at the ticket machines in the bus shelter, or on line.

The car park held 1,100 cars and spaces were very few, with over 1,000 cars parked up on the site when we arrived.

We walked quite a way across the car park to the bus shelter, which was modern and clean, but with no added facilities, apart from the ticket machines. The site had CCTV & lighting & felt safe to walk through even parked at the furthest point of the car park. There was a map showing the route & various locations in the city centre & a timetable of the service which operated 7 days a week.

P&R Service

The bus was at the stand and we boarded immediately, and in addition to the £2.00 parking charge the driver asked for a £2.40 return fare each – with hindsight we're not sure if we could have paid this fare at the parking ticket machines or not. The driver had asked us what parking fee we'd paid and hence charged our fare accordingly.

We understand that a University owns part of the site and charge Oxford City Council a significant lease for its use - the parking charges are levied to help fund this lease payment.

Bus Journey into City

Buses leave every 10 minutes and there was no queue to get on our bus. Another 20 passengers or so traveled with us into the city, on a journey of about 20 minutes to our destination at Westgate.

We over heard one of the passengers had complained to the driver as he boarded at the P&R site that another P&R was totally full, and he couldn't park, even though the display board was showing spare places – the driver said he couldn't help with that.

During our journey we were surprised that the bus stopped and picked up passengers at LBS bus stops as we got further into the city, but this was later explained to us by Oxford City Council – P&R is a commercial service not subsidised or controlled by the Council. The two bus companies in Oxford (Stagecoach and Oxford Bus Company) work together and the former has the express service into London and the latter the P&R.

The bus was a diesel bus but was modern and clean. It was a double decker. It had both audio and visual displays announcing the stops coming up.

After a couple of stops in the city centre, the driver told us we were at Westgate, and we thanked him and got off. He directed us to our meeting location with Oxford City Council at Oxpens Car Park in Oxford City Centre, OX1 1RQ. This seemed to be the last stop. The driver told us to pick up the return bus on the opposite side of the road.

Westgate is a new development and a modern, airy shopping Centre with roof top restaurants – we were told this had changed and improved the city Centre a lot, but some smaller shops at the margins had suffered. Saturdays were always very busy in Oxford.

Meeting with Oxford City Council

We met the Customer Relations Team Leader, Oxford City Council and his colleague at Oxpens Car Park in Oxford City Centre, OX1 1RQ at just after 1.00 pm, after a 5-minute walk from Westgate.

We spent nearly 1 ½ hours in their meeting room discussing a whole range of P&R, traffic, congestion, retail/tourism, economic and parking issues.

The notable highlights for us were:

- P&R is commercial – there is no taxpayer subsidy
- Their P&R is well used, very successful and thriving
- Their P&R fares are realistic and commercial, and buses frequent and modern
- Parking tariffs and P&R charges are geared to encourage P&R usage – parking tariffs included rates of £7 for 3-4 hours and £18 for 6-12 hours, but P&R was only £2.40 return for the whole day
- There was still traffic congestion in the city, but around 4,000 cars were kept out of the city at the three orbital P&R sites run by the City Council

- The city car parks were still well used though, with drivers seemingly happy to pay £35 for the day to park on Saturdays, for instance
- The Oxford city economy was doing well, but only places like Bath and London offered any serious competition – Oxford was clearly a tourist hot spot and commercial centre for the region
- They had lots of coaches bringing in foreign tourists as well as other visitors and tourists, and shoppers – a facility for coach stacking had been made at one the P&R sites, to ease city coach parking & charged £10 per coach to park. (passengers are dropped off within the city centre)
- Also, express buses to London also used a P&R site where cars could be parked for the day – although not helping the Oxford economy, it was for the greater good
- There were no EV buses in the city, but there were some hybrid buses on LBS – P&R buses were modern diesels
- We informed our Oxford counterparts that Shrewsbury's P&R was losing passengers, not really very successful and not really geared to our town centre parking strategy – he understood why we wanted to improve things

Return P&R Journey

We picked up the P&R at the stand opposite Westgate – there was a countdown display telling us how many minutes our Pear Tree bus was away, which was reassuring – we saw it count down from 10 minutes to 1 minute, and it then arrived

It was a decker again and only a few passengers getting on with us. We then slowly travelled through city centre traffic and lights, and after 5 minutes or so stopped at another stand in the city where about 40 passengers got on.

We then travelled north out of the city, and the journey was tedious and slow as there was congestion.

We got back to the Pear Tree P&R site at just before 4.00 pm and got off the bus and went back to the car. We left the car park through their 'automated vehicle number recognition system' and commented again on how well signed the P&R site was, particularly with the live display board showing spaces available and other info.

Overall, we were very impressed by Oxford's P&R system and their wholistic planning of parking and traffic management.

Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report - 27th August 2019.

Authors – AE/FR
Document Created 28th August 2019

ENDS

Report 'B'
Report on Visit to Chester Park & Ride – Friday 23rd August 2019

A member of Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled to Chester's Broughton Heath Park and Ride (on the eastern side of the city) on the late morning of 23rd August. This is one of their 4 x P&R sites, the others being at Sealand Road (west), Upton (north, at the Zoo) and Wrexham Road (south).

It was surprising how few cars there were in the Broughton Heath P&R car park and how few people were using the P&R, particularly as it was a Friday in the August during the summer holidays.

The buses were clean and modern, with electronic displays inside and outside, and *clearly signed 'Chester Park & Ride'.*

The side of the buses advertised *'Free 4G Wi-Fi, Air Chill, Green Travel and USB charging'*, with a *'Service frequency* of *12 minutes and 15 minutes on Sundays and Bank holidays'.*

Broughton Heath P&R Parking

There was no charge for parking, although a new sign on the site says:

> ***"New machines will soon be available on this site which will both offer 'Park Only' and 'Park & Ride' options. Charges for both options will shortly be displayed near to the pay stations"***

From looking at the car park, it was estimated it had spaces for about 700 cars or thereabouts, with Chester and Cheshire West and Chester Council later confirming 750 spaces.

The site was secure, with height barriers protecting it at all entrances from 'travellers' and other trespassers, unlike our Harlescott site which is regularly disrupted by trespassers.

It was estimated that the car park was only around 30% full and this was a Friday at the end of August, in the summer holidays, when you might expect it to be a lot busier.

Parking was reasonably close to the bus pick up point, it was only a 30 second walk to the ticket machines, which were next to the bus stand, where the bus was parked up.

The P&R charge was not displayed anywhere I could see and was only apparent when I started keying the ticket machine. There was also an option to buy *"6 days for the price of 5"* which was £20.

Bus Journey into City

The bus was at the stand and I boarded immediately after purchasing a £2 return P&R ticket from a pay machine, in the shelter close to the bus stand.

The driver punched the ticket on boarding.

Buses leave every 12 minutes.

There were 14 other passengers on the bus.

The bus was a large diesel-powered single decker bus.

On the bus, there was an electronic display which showed which P&R it was (in this case 'PR2 to Boughton Heath P&R').

Below this display, there was a TV showing 'live' (?) CCTV images of the inside of the bus.

Disembarkation was at the Chester Bus Interchange (aka Chester Bus Station), on George Street – this is a large, modern bus station.

Traffic had been light.

Travelling time was 12 minutes start to end.

At the Interchange, there were electronic countdown displays showing how many minutes various buses were due to arrive in, and this seemed impressive. It included Boughton Heath P&R with three separate entries showing arrivals in 3, 14 and 26 minutes, which with hindsight must have reflected scheduled times I guess, not real time information, although I speculate that the system many well update scheduled arrivals with real time arrivals at some point, may it not(?).

Chester City Centre

The City Centre seemed very busy in what was the August holiday period. Also, the weather was very warm and sunny.

Additional pedestrianisation had taken place on Frodsham Street and Foregate Street in recent times, although it did appear that buses and taxis were allowed through.

A lot of central Chester has been pedestrianised for many years.

The Chester economy probably relies as much on the leisure/tourist industry as it does on retail.

Chester is not particularly easy to navigate or that car friendly, but the Council has 14 x car parks totaling 2,220 car spaces. The tariffs at their car parks seem to vary widely – some are free, some 20p for two hours, or 50p for two hours; others are £1 for an hour, or £5 for over 6 hours; and then

one £7 for over 7 hours and one £8 for over 12 hours. Clearly, there doesn't appear to be any strategic direction in these charges.

NCP also have three car parks providing 599 spaces. And there'll be other car parks as well.

The 4 x P&R sites have spaces for 3,170 cars in total.

So, the small P&R ridership that was observed on 23rd August is perhaps easier to understand with so many city centre car parks and such low parking tariffs on offer.

And maybe Broughton Heath P&R is a lot less well used than some or all the other three P&Rs sites?

That said, Broughton Heath is on the A41 trunk road into Chester from the west midlands, and this is an extremely busy road, often with traffic queues trailing back south a few miles to Hatton Heath and beyond, trying to access the major (and seemingly inadequate) Broughton Heath traffic light-controlled road junction. The point here is that this volume of traffic should generate quite a bit of P&R patronage at Broughton Heath P&R, even if most of this trunk road traffic is heading to North Wales or Merseyside.

NB The A41 is a major trunk road in England that links London and Birkenhead, although it has now in parts been superseded by motorways. It passes through or near various towns and cities including Watford, Kings Langley, Hemel Hempstead, Aylesbury, Solihull, Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton, Newport, Whitchurch, Chester and Ellesmere Port

Return P&R Journey

Whilst disembarkation was at Chester Bus Interchange (aka Chester bus Station), on George Street from the inbound P&R journey, for the return journey the choice was to embark at the bus stop on Foregate Street.

The on-bus electronic display showed that the next stop, as per 'Next Stop: Boughton Heath P&R'.

There were 15 other passengers.

Traffic was a little heavier than on the inbound journey.

Travelling time was 15 minutes start to end.

Summary

The P&R was efficient and modern but under used for what you might have expected in August. Clearly a lot of people in Chester city centre had accessed the city via other transport modes than the Broughton Heath P&R.

(Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report - 28th August 2019.
ENDS

Report 'C'
Report on Meeting with City of York Council and visit to their Poppleton Bar Park & Ride – Monday 16th September 2019

Staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled from Shropshire to York's Poppleton Bar Park and Ride at YO26 6QF and arrived at 12.50 pm. Poppleton Bar P&R is one of the City of York Council's six P&R sites and is situated 4.4 miles to the west of the city centre. Clockwise from Poppleton Bar, the others are at Rawcliffe Bar to the north, Monks Cross to the north east, Grimston Bar to the east, Designer Outlet to the south and finally Askham Bar to the south west.

The capacity of Poppleton Bar is for 600 cars. It is a modern P&R site, well set out, with a modern central building holding toilets, staff room, ticket office, general office and waiting room, clad in wood to fit in with its rural surroundings. The site had rapid EV chargers fitted.

It goes without saying that York constitutes one of the UK's major historical sites and as such is a major tourist and visitor centre. Their P&R services need to be considered in this context.

York's P&R services are all commercially operated (with no taxpayer subsidy) and moreover they generate a significant income for the Council.

P&R Parking

There was no charge for parking and the car park was about ¾ full when we arrived, midday on a Monday.

We parked the car near the main building and the bus stands, which were a thirty second walk away. The parking was designed in a crescent around the main building and was well signed and well laid out. All parking spaces were close to the main building.

The site was protected with height restriction barriers and there was no indication of trespass problems. There was a barrier controlled adjacent car park for higher vehicles such as camper vans, holding about 20 vehicles.

P&R Service

We went into the P&R building where there were ticket machines and a ticket office, but a member of staff told us to buy our tickets from the driver on the bus.

The return P&R bus fare was £3.20 per passenger. Adult singles were £2.50, Concessionaries £1.10 after 9.00 am weekdays, and a range of advance tickets from 5 days at £14.50 to annual at £500; and all-day travel on any First bus in York for £3.90.

Monday to Saturday the service operates from 07.00 to 19.45 hours. Sundays only from 09.30 to 17.30 hours. The frequency for most of the day is 10 minutes, with the off-peak end of the day being 15 minutes.

Bus Journey into York City

The bus was operated by 'First'.

We had a five-minute wait at the stand before an EV bus that had been charging at a Rapid charger moved up to collect passengers.

Buses leave every 10 minutes and there was no significant queue to get on our bus. Another 8 passengers travelled with us into the city, on a journey departing at 1.00 pm.

We paid the driver for two £3.40 return tickets.

There was CCTV on the bus but no electronic destination signs or audio, and no Air Conditioning. It was quite warm on the bus.

The bus picked up three fare paying passengers about half way into the city at 1.06 pm.

Most of the passengers got off in Bridge Street at 1.15 pm, as did we, for the short walk to the Station Rise City of York Council offices.

The off-peak journey time is scheduled to be 19 minutes, but clearly our trip was faster at only 16 minutes. Traffic was light when we travelled in. the peak time journey is scheduled for 23 minutes.

They lock their P&R car park at 20.30 hours Mon-Sat with a £50 release fee for locked in cars.

Meeting with City of York Council

We met the Head of the City of York's Council Transport Office at their Station Rise Council Offices at 1.30 pm, along with a colleague who was their P&R expert.

Their team deal with LBS, P&R and some concessionary transport, but is not involved with school or social care transport.

We had an hour's long discussion with them about their P&R services and how they were developing them.

The key points of the meeting were:

- We talked about how parking and P&R were geared strategically – it was clear that there was some tension, with free parking offered at Christmas, thus encouraging more cars into the city and discouraging people from P&R

- They had 4.2m P&R passengers pa – the loss of some retail and office employment in the city in recent years had largely been offset by an increase in leisure, tourism and visitors
- City centre car parking cost £2 an hour and there was broadly some strategic sense in the way both parking and P&R services operated
- P&R was commercial, with no subsidy, and moreover, P&R bus operators had to pay a licence fee to use the P&R site, raising funding for the Council – the licensing for site use was tendered
- The six P&R sites were managed by the Council and the licence fee mainly covered all maintenance costs
- York had several bus companies and competition was reasonably healthy
- They had several EV buses but at a 5-6-year life, batteries were down to about 70% capacity and couldn't operate all day without charging
- So, there were trickle chargers at the bus companies garage for overnight use and Rapid chargers at the P&R sites for day time use
- P&R operated on a seven-day week, with restricted times on Sundays
- There were 16 x EV double decker buses on order, arriving soon for P&R – these had been procured with a Government Low Emissions grant (LEF) of about £100k per bus, with the buses costing about £400k each
- On one P&R site existing diesels were being upgraded to Euro 6, as double deckers couldn't travel under a low bridge on the route
- There were worries that registering P&R services could result in de-registration of the LBS routes they duplicated

Return P&R Journey

We picked up the P&R at the stand on Bridge Street, where we had been dropped off. The bus was another EV bus.

We had arrived there as the bus was on the stand and departed at 2.55 pm.

There were only another 2 x passengers on the bus but at another LBS stop in Clifford Street we picked up another 8 x passengers at 3.00 pm.

And then in Station Road we picked up another 3 x passengers at 3.07 pm.

We had a smooth journey back to Poppleton Bar, arriving there at 3.25 pm.

We then returned to Shropshire.

Conclusion

We were very impressed with this P&R overall. EV buses were a clear plus, being quiet for passengers and pedestrians in the city centre, as well as being fumes free, helping reduce pollution and particulates in the city centre air.

The P&R waiting room building offered reassurance and security, with toilets, seats and staff there to support passengers.

The site was clean, modern and well-marked, with good security barriers.

We'd have liked to see a digital display board both at the site and on the bus, along with audio announcements for the stops. Air Conditioning would have made the trip more pleasant. Even though it was five years old, the bus was however clean, modern and had nice leather type seats.

Moreover, in terms of funding, the taxpayer makes no subsidy to the P&R bus operation, unlike Shropshire taxpayers. And the site licencing arrangement means that bus companies pay for the right to use the site, again reducing the burden on the taxpayer by mainly funding all site maintenance from P&R operation.

York can be rightly proud of their Poppleton P&R.

Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 17th September 2019.

END of REPORT

Report 'D'
Report on Meeting with Bath & North East Somerset Council and Visit to their Lansdown Park & Ride – Monday 23rd September 2019

Staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled from Shropshire to Bath on 23rd September 2019 for a meeting with Bath & North East Somerset Council, combined with a visit to their Lansdown Park and Ride at BA1 9BJ.

Lansdown P&R is one of Bath & North East Somerset's three P&R sites and is 2.8 miles to the north of the city, with 837 spaces.

The two other P&R sites are at Odd Down which is 2.8 miles to the south of the city centre with 1,252 spaces, and Newbridge to the north west, which again is 2.8 miles from the city centre with 698 spaces.

It goes without saying that Bath constitutes one of the UK's major historical sites and as such is a major tourist and visitor centre. Their P&R services need to be considered in this context.

Bath's P&R services transport 1.8m single passenger trips annually and are all commercially operated (with no taxpayer subsidy); moreover, they generate a significant income for the Council.

P&R Parking

There was no charge for parking and on surveying the car park it was judged to be about 60% full, midday on a Monday.

There was clearly a major on-going trespass event in the far corner of the site, with around a dozen well established caravans in place, with their paraphernalia. There were no P&R user cars parked near this area.

Parking spaces were available not far from the main bus shelter, which was built of timber and sympathetic to it rural surroundings.

There was an electronic display board in the shelter which provided a count down time to the next buses - this was reassuring and informative.

The site was well laid out but was looking a little tired.

The site was not protected by any height restriction barriers, but we understood that gates were locked by a security company in the evening, with one-way crocodile teeth barring entry on the ungated exit.

P&R Service

The Lansdown P&R service included the LBS public service 31 and this was integral to its operation. Payment for the P&R bus was 'on-bus' with no ticket machines in the shelter.

The standard return P&R bus fare was £3.40 per passenger. A group ticket for two adults after 10.00 am was only £6.00.

Concessionaries were free after 9.00 am.

Monday to Saturday the service operates from 06.15 to 20.30 hours. Sundays and Bank Holidays only to 18.00 hours. The frequency for Monday - Friday peak and Saturdays are 10 – 12 minutes, with the off peak 12-15 minutes. Sundays and Bank Holidays were every 15 minutes and 20 minutes after 19.30.

Buses were double deckers that provide significant capacity.

Bus Journey into Bath City Centre from Lansdown P&R

The bus was operated by 'First'.

As the service was a combined P&R and LBS Service 31, on routes stops were anticipated.

Boarding was immediate, with payment to the driver of £6.00 for a group ticket and departure was very shortly afterwards. There was a total of 10 passengers. The journey was as per:

- Departed 12.24 pm – 10 passengers embarked
- Stop at 12.25 pm at Hamilton House and 3 more passengers embarked
- Stop at 12.27 pm at Kingwood School and 1 more passenger embarked
- Stop at 12.32 at Belvedere and 1 passenger disembarked
- Arrived Milsom Street and all remaining 13 passengers disembarked

Traffic was light and the journey quick and uneventful. The regular stops were part of the LBS service, with this P&R doubling up as an inbound commercial LBS to the city centre – this has removed the need for another bus on the same route.

There was an excellent electronic display on the bus and this was backed up by audio messages. The display told passengers what the next stop was and then told passengers the stop they were just leaving. It provided good reassurance and information for passengers, making the journey more relaxing and less stressful.

The driver was helpful and after stopping at Milsom Street, provided directions to the Guildhall.

This Milsom Street terminus was on a shopping street and had a bus shelter. There was a choked access to Milsom Street, but cars were still allowed to use it.

Meeting with Bath & North East Somerset Council

Officers met the Public Transport Team Manager and a colleague from the Public Transport Team at 1.00 pm in the Guildhall.

The team deal with LBS, P&R, rail and concessionary transport, but is not involved with school or social care transport.

They began a presentation using a recent Council Power Point document about Bath's P&R services.

The presentation and subsequent discussions lasted one and a quarter hours.

The key points of the meeting were:

- Bath's parking and P&R policies were geared strategically
- They have 3 x P&R sites
- They provide Real Time information
- They noted the trespass at Lansdown but don't know how it happened
- There were toilets on the three sites, with a cleaning company contracted to service them
- Parking was free – if they did charge for parking, VAT would apply
- They had funding of £26k pa from Wessex Water for the use of 50 P&R spaces at their Odd Down site
- 'First' are keen on bio-methane powered buses, maybe, rather than EV buses
- The P&R services are all commercial with no Council/tax payer subsidy
- In fact, the licence fees for the use of the P&R sites generate Bath & North East Somerset Council £700k pa in funding revenue from First – this indirectly helps subsidise their LBS supported service network
- This income stream also pays for all P&R site maintenance
- Lansdown P&R is an LBS and stops at all bus stops on its route. It has replaced what had been the commercial Service 31.
- The standard return adult fare of £3.40 is going to increase soon
- Parking in the city is £12 all day, which helps encourage P&R usage
- Bath never offer 'free' city centre parking, even at Christmas or at other key times
- P&R passenger numbers were 1.8m pa single trips (i.e. 0.9m return trips) but they'd check to see the trends and let us know
- The PVR (max buses needed at any time) is 9 buses for the total of the three sites
- We reflected that Shrewsbury's 20-minute P&R frequency probably wasn't enough
- We said that research suggests that P&R users will compare P&R charges with town centre car parking charges to inform their decision about how to travel
- It was also mentioned that nationally of the 51 x P&R services, 41 charged passengers for P&R, 7 just for parking at P&R sites and 3 a mixture of the two
- They said that they preferred not to charge for car parking at P&R sites – one reason was that VAT is applicable to parking charges
- Their concessionary passengers are free after 9.00 am
- Fares are all 'on-bus' fares

The key highlights from Bath's P&R 'Power Point Presentation' that are not mentioned above or are of enough importance to reiterate, are:

1. There is a site gap to the east but it's not likely that their Administration will return to its plans to install a fourth site; rather they'll look for some smaller orbital sites in the east
2. 'On bus' adverting revenue is shared between the Council and First
3. All bar two buses were Euro 6 diesels (the odd two being Euro 5 diesels)
4. WIFI and next stop announcements on all buses
5. Enhanced P&R services for events, Christmas, rugby, etc.
6. Operator has exclusive licence to operate from P&R sites
7. Plans for later evening operation
8. Re-tender of P&R services in 2020
9. SWPTI research via focus groups shows bus users comparing costs with driving, but P&R users comparing costs with parking – and P&R users are not typical bus users and don't see it as 'bus use'; they expect good frequency and reliability
10. Bath prefer bus fares not parking charges for P&R users – parking charges makes all users pay, incurs VAT, has a higher headline rate and cash collection and maintenance costs
11. Re concessions, ENCTS applies to all registered services (and Bath's P&Rs are all LBS registered) and so concessions must travel free
12. Bath's list of 'not to do' – don't over complicate payments, don't provide too many sites/spaces, don't undercharge, don't underestimate the customer, don't pay VAT re parking charges
13. And Bath's list of things 'to do' – short and reliable journeys, 10-minute frequency, rational pricing, generate off peak demand

They subsequently confirmed their passenger numbers trend – he said it fluctuates from year to year but it is still going up, and they've had 4.5% growth since 2010/11.

Return P&R Journey

The return journey was as per:

- Boarded bus at 2.55 pm
- Departed 3.00 pm from Milsom St – 10 passengers plus 2 embarked
- Stop at 3.04 pm at Alfred St and 2 more passengers embarked
- Stop at 3.05 pm at Balance St and 1 passenger disembarked
- Stop at 3.06 pm at St Steven's Church and 2 passengers disembarked
- Stop at 3.07 pm at Sion Rd and 4 passengers disembarked
- Stop at 3.09 pm at Hamilton House and 2 passengers disembarked
- Arrived at Lansdown P&R and the remaining 5 passengers disembarked

Conclusion

We were very impressed with this P&R overall.

The highlight was seeing an excellent P&R with sound finances, with the P&R services making a net contribution of £700k pa to the Bath& North East Somerset Council.

The P&R site may have been a little tired, but the buses were frequent and the journey quick and comfortable.

Operating as an LBS public service on its route in and out of the city centre was another apparent plus, as it meant that the historical service 31 bus was no longer needed, and P&R could serve two purposes at the same time.

The digital display and audio stop information on the bus was impressive, as was the real time displays both on the site and at the stops in the city.

Perhaps the 2020 tender will result in more environmentally friendly buses, which would enhance the service even more.

Charging realistic fares helped promote the service we thought, as well as contributing to Council coffers, rather than being a drain on the taxpayer.

Bath can be rightly proud of their Lansdown and other P&R services.

Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 24th September 2019.

END of REPORT

Report 'E'
Report on Visit to Coventry Park & Ride at the War Memorial Park – Friday 27th September 2019

Introduction

Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group visited Coventry Park & Ride on 27th September at CV3 6PT, 2.5 miles south west of the city centre. The service terminates at the Coventry Transport Museum. The service is operated by Coventry City Council.

There are no other Coventry City Council P&R sites.

The Park & Ride service is a registered LBS route and part of the X17 service operated by Stagecoach.

Coventry is a major city in England and 9th largest in terms of population. As such, Coventry has a major public service bus infrastructure.

P&R Parking

It was estimated that the War Memorial Park car park had capacity for around 400 cars and it was about 2/3 full at mid-morning at the time of the visit.

There was no charge for parking.

The bus turning circle was close to the entrance of the car park, which was sited just off the Kenilworth Road in Coventry.

There were no electronic display boards in the shelter or anywhere else, although there was an X17 timetable.

The site was well laid out and walking distances to the bus shelter at the bus turning circle were reasonable.

There was a height restriction barrier which spelt out the name of the car park (i.e. War Memorial Park'), so it looked more like an elegant sign than a security barrier, which would be more pleasing to passengers.

P&R Service

The Coventry P&R service was part of the LBS public service X17 from Warwick, which operates between Warwick and Coventry. Payment for the P&R bus was 'on-bus' with no ticket machines in the shelter.

The service operates every 20 minutes and has a journey time of between 10 and 15 minutes.

The standard return P&R bus fare was £3.30 per passenger.

The buses were operated by Stagecoach and the ones observed were from 2013, with Euro 5 diesel engines. The inbound bus was a double decker and the return bus a single decker.

Bus Journey into Coventry

There was a 10-minute wait for the bus to arrive and 6 passengers boarded for the inbound journey to the city centre.

The bus had come from Warwick and had 'X17' in its display board.

Once arrived at the P&R site, the driver waited for 7 minutes prior to departure.

After 5 minutes travelling time, the bus was in the city and dropped off 6 passengers in Queen Victoria Street. Another 2 passengers got off in Corporation Street and finally 2 in Hales Street, after a total of 9 minutes travelling.

Coventry City Centre

The city centre was busy and most of the retail area was 2/5 mile to the east of the three P&R bus stops.

The P&R terminus was adjacent to Coventry Transport Museum and again the bus stop was just a road side glass type bus shelter, similar to those in Victoria St and Corporation St..

There were many other buses using these stops and it was clear that P&R was only a very small part of the overall bus network and it didn't have any dedicated/bespoke facilities.

The X17/P&R stops were very accessible for the city.

Return Journey to War Memorial Park

After a 14-minute wait at the bus stop, the X17 bus departed Hales St with 3 passengers, and via Fairfax St stopped at Cox St 2 minutes later when another passenger boarded.

Another stop at Warwick Road saw another passenger board, which was another 5 minutes into the return journey.

At the War Memorial Park all 5 passengers disembarked and the journey had taken a total 15 minutes.

Summary

The Coventry P&R is essentially just one stop on the X17 public service (LBS). The War Memorial Park car park is on a key city access route from the south (i.e. Kenilworth Road). The car park is well maintained and has spaces for 400 cars but it is also a car park for people visiting the War Memorial Park at its southern end, so this will take up some parking spaces.

It is assumed that some years ago the City Council saw that with the simple addition of a fixed bus stop at the War Memorial Park for the X17 service, they could create a new P&R service at a stroke at little/no cost. So, this P&R is simply an extra stop to the X17, inbound and outbound.

The P&R is well signed from the Kenpas Highway road network to the south of the city and the concept seems to work well. Essentially, Coventry have been able to provide a whole P&R service without any need for significant additional infrastructure nor for any extra (dedicated) P&R buses or additional operating costs.

Cleary the P&R will keep some cars out of the city centre, but the operation is quite a modest one, with no more than a 400-car capacity. Other smaller towns/cities have P&R services with overall capacities in the thousands of car parking spaces.

Whilst it will not have any major impact on Coventry's overall transport infrastructure, it is a useful service and a 'quick win' for the city at minimal cost.

Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 30th September 2019.

END of REPORT

Report 'F'
Report on Meeting with Nottingham City Council and Visit to Queen's Drive Park & Ride – Wednesday 2nd October 2019

As part of the visits to other English P&R services, staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group went to Nottingham on 2nd October 2019, to meet Nottingham City Council and see their Queen's Drive Park and Ride at NG2 1AR.

Queens' Drive P&R has 1,000 spaces and is 2.6 miles and 12 minutes to the south of the city centre. It is one of Nottingham City's nine P&R sites with a total of 6,500 car spaces, and of these seven are Tram P&Rs.

Of the other eight P&R sites, five are north of the city, the most northerly as far out as the village Hucknall which is 7.1 miles and 24 minutes away.

Toton lane is a Tram P&R to the west of the city with 1,400 spaces and is 6.2 miles and 17 minutes from the centre.

Clifton South is another Tram P&R and is 5.9 miles and 15 minutes SW of the city with 1,000 spaces.

Finally, Racecourse P&R is 2.4 miles and 10 minutes to the east of the city and charges per car.

On arrival two meetings took place, one with Nottingham City Council Public Transport Operations Team Leader and one with Nottingham City Council Queen's Drive P&R Site manager. They provided a raft of information about the P&R service sand the P&R site respectively.

It goes without saying that Nottingham is one of the major cities of England with a population of 289,000. Specifically, it is a university city, with over 60,000 students and it is forever linked with the Robin Hood legend. Council staff tell us that their related historical sites are disappointing for visitors (e.g. the Castle is now a Manor House and the remaining parts of Sherwood Forest are poor).

So, modern Nottingham is more a commercial, educational and shopping centre than anything else.

Nottingham's P&R services are successful, commercially viable and integral to their public transport network.

<u>P&R Parking</u>

Queens' Drive is a modern site and well secured, with height restriction barriers, CCTV cameras, rising bollards activated by buses, a Control Centre, Eco hub for charging EV buses and a central P&R office unit, amongst other things.

Nottingham City Council Queen's Drive P&R Site manager did say that they do have trespass events, with travellers sneakily tailgating buses as they travel through rising bollards on to the site, for

instance. She said that they attempt to trespass at selected times of the year (Summer Bank Holiday) but the Council know when.

Nottingham City Council has a contract with private Bailiffs and if there is a trespass event, the Bailiffs are contacted, and they deal with it. The event normally starts early evening and the Bailiffs will serve orders on them the following morning, so they leave the site by evening of the same day. If they don't leave the Bailiffs can call on the Police and on recovery equipment to remove the trespassers physically, which sometimes happens.

There was no charge for parking and on surveying the car park it was judged to be virtually 100% full, with no spare spaces visible. Apparently, Wednesday was their busier day of the week, but even so, it was impressive.

The bus pick-up areas were centrally located and so walking from any car bay wouldn't too onerous.

There was a visitor bay reserved at the main office in the centre of the site for the Shropshire visitors.

Queen's Drive P&R is a bus P&R and two separate bus stands, one for the city centre bus P&R and one for the Medicare P&R which services the QMC hospital for patients, visitors and staff. Queen's Drive also hosts their Eco hub where there are more than 50 EV charging points, mainly buses.

The chargers for EV cars were elsewhere on the public side of the site.

There are ticket machines in the bus shelters or payment can be to the driver.

The main office was in sympathy with its wooded surroundings, clad in wood.

There were electronic display boards in the shelter which provided a countdown time to the next buses - this was reassuring and informative.

P&R Service

The Queen's Drive P&R buses are numbered Navy 49 and use a fleet of new, low emission bio-gas double deck buses.

It operates every 15 minutes on Monday to Saturday daytimes to City Centre stops, including Lace Market, Victoria Centre (George Street), Elite and Old Market Square.

The P&R fare is £4.20 per adult return, if you're travelling on your own and using Park & Ride, or £4 per car, which is up to 5 people (any age) for a return journey between the Park & Ride Site and the City Centre, and which is effectively a group ticket for up to five people, so it's the cheapest fare if you're travelling as a twosome or more. https://www.nctx.co.uk/park-ride-pricing

One of their discounted tickets is a £3.78 per return trip via their Easyrider Anyday.

There were no parking barriers providing tickets, so the on-site ticket machine nor driver cannot verify how many people are in the car or whether a group of up to five ticket should be issued.

Parking is free at all the park and ride sites, you just pay for your journey on either bus or tram.

You can also buy season tickets and an Easyrider Everyday for people travelling on 4 or more days per week is weekly £18 – up to £3.60 per day, or monthly £58 – up to £2.90 per day, or annually £570 - up to £2.43 per day.

As mentioned above, for people travelling 2 or 3 days per week their Easyrider Anyday is 5 days - £18.90 - £3.78 per day or 10 days - £35.70 - £3.57 per day or 20 days - £67.20 - £3.36 per day.

Older persons and disabled concessionary passes are valid after 09:30 weekdays.

One payment method provided is the 'Robin Hood Card' – this is a useful smartcard with an electronic purse from which the cost of travel is automatically deducted as you travel around Nottingham. There are Adult and Under 19 options available for use on tram and most bus operators. You can pick up a PAYG card from one of the 150 on-street ticket machines (first card is £3). When travelling around the Robin Hood Network passengers can top up their card at any of the on-street ticket machines too, you can add amounts of £5, £10, £20 or £50 to your card.

Buses are operated by Nottingham City Transport (NCT) which is a Community Transport organisation, set up by Nottingham City Council. One arm of the business operates under a s.19. the other using an 'O' license.

Eco Hub

Shropshire visitors were invited for a tour around the Eco Hub which was adjacent to the Medicare bus stop. The Eco hub was a large site.

At the time of the visit, it had about 20 EV buses hooked up to EV Rapid Chargers. We were told that four sub-stations had to be built to provide the power for this and the rest of the site, including the EV Car chargers in the main public car park.

There was an inspection of a bus on rapid charge and the engine bay was exposed, and details of how trickle and rapid charging systems worked, with different cables used for each. There were two battery packs, one on the left that travelled a significant way down the bus and one on the right.

The balancing technology software controlling the charging of both sets of batteries was explained.

There was then a tour of the control centre, with about four staff in there monitoring CCTV images of the site and which also had access to all the cities' highways cut cameras.

All the buses were tracked in real time, as was their battery charge status.

Bus Journey into Nottingham City Centre from Queen's Drive P&R

The bus was operated by NCT and was gas powered.

As the service was a combined P&R and LBS Service 49, on route stops were anticipated.

A member of the City Council accompanied the Shropshire visitors who had Robin Hood cards to swipe on the bus ticket machine. We were told that the fare was £4 adult return.

Boarding was immediate, with payment to the driver of £6.00 for a group ticket and departure was very shortly afterwards. There was a total of 10 passengers. The journey was as per:

- Boarded 12.12 pm
- Departed 12.14 pm – 9 passengers embarked in total (i.e. 6 + 3)
- Stopped at 12.17 pm at Electric Ave +2 passengers
- Stopped at 12.18 pm at Pork Farms +1 passengers
- Stopped at 12.19 pm at Prestgate Drive -1 passenger
- Stopped at 12.21 pm at Home Base +2 passengers
- Arrived at 12.24 pm at Nottingham Tram Station -6 and -3 passengers

Traffic was reasonably light and the journey uneventful. The regular stops were part of the LBS service, with this P&R doubling up as an inbound commercial LBS to the city centre – so this will have removed the need for another bus on the same route.

There was an excellent electronic display on the bus and this was backed up by audio messages. The display told passengers what the next stop was.

Meeting with Nottingham City Council offices at Loxley House

Shropshire visitors were taken into Loxley and there was a meeting with staff dealing with Contracts and Operations. A range of matters were discussed involving P&R, transport infra structure and the city.

Key things discussed included were:

- £9m spend on concessionary travel annually
- £1.5m on bus subsidy
- EV buses required two buses for everyone needed, because of limited range (max around 60 to 70 miles) and charge limitations
- Whilst the EV buses were originally funded via a Government emissions grant/green bus fund, they were not sure where the funding would come from for their replacements, when the day came
- Most of the bus network was commercial
- Nottingham didn't have any of the big five bus companies
- NCT operated in the urban area
- And Trent operated in both urban and rural areas
- They got £200k BSOG pa
- They imposed an employers' Work Place Parking Levy which generated significant sums for the city
- There were 60,000 university students in the city (about 20% of the total population)
- There were tensions between parking and P&R strategies
- Parking was £4 per day but £8 a day at the train station
- Medi Link from Queen's Drive was a major cooperative service with the Queen's Medical Centre for staff, patients and visitors

- Public services and P&R were used by students, shoppers, commuters, workers, Boots staff
- Nottingham was a major science location which also generated travel needs
- They also had a good nightlife in the city
- They have two Universities and one College
- There were 6,500 spaces at their P&R sites, serviced by Trams and buses, depending on the site
- The passenger profiles for P&R were roughly 1/3 concessions, 1/3 staff and 1/3 fare payers

Return P&R Journey

The return journey was on a different service bus than we went into the city on, and from the top deck of the double decker gas powered bus there was no observation of passengers embarking or disembarking), as per:

- Arrived 2.10 pm at Carrington St bus stop near Station Rd
- Boarded bus at 2.15 pm
- Departed at 2.15 pm
- Stopped at 2.20 pm at Queens Walk
- Stopped at 2.22 pm at Riverside
- Stopped at 2.24 pm Crossgates
- Stopped at 2.26 pm B&Q
- Disembarked at 2.27 pm at Clifton Blvd adjacent to QD P&R

Conclusion

The whole of the Nottingham transport operation was most impressive, one of the best we have seen.

Their EcoHub for charging EV buses was large and very impressive. The staff were enthusiastic, and their control room was state of the art and looked very capable. The links with the QMC are eminently sensible and a good example of joined up thinking between agencies. Such a large urban hospital would probably find it difficult to fully function without a resource like the QD P&R.

And moreover, they have electric and gas-powered buses for their overall public transport system, including P&R. And their novel CT business arrangement is something very different but seems to work.

The P&R service was commercial and apart from QMC, without any public taxpayer subsidy.

Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 3rd October 2019.

END of REPORT

Report 'G'
Report on Visit to Cambridge Park & Ride at Trumpington – Wednesday 9th October 2019

Introduction

Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group visited Cambridge's Trumpington Park & Ride Wednesday 9th October 20193 6PT, which is 3.3 miles south south west of Cambridge city centre, a journey time of 17 minutes.

The service is managed by Cambridgeshire County Council and operated by Stagecoach.

Trumpington is one of Cambridge's five Park & Ride sites and is their flagship site. It is close to the M11 and hence very accessible.

The other four sites are at Milton 4.6 miles to the north of the city, Newmarket Road 3.9 miles to the east, Babraham Road 4.6 miles to the south west and Madingley Road 3.3 miles to the west.

The Park & Ride services are registered LBS routes and hence integrated into the Cambridge public transport network.

Cambridge is a historic city in England renowned for its University, tech industries and city centre cycling. It has a population of 115,000

P&R Parking

On entry into the car park at midday on Wednesday, it was evident that it was overly full, with every space taken and cars double parked, parked on verges and flower beds and up against trees.

It was subsequently explained that Cambridge is very much an unfriendly car city that is dominated by the bicycle. Hence P&R is one vital means of access to the city.

The car park currently had about 1,400 spaces, with some 200 spaces currently out of commission for development work.

There was cycle storage for many bikes.

There was no charge for parking.

The P&R bus pick up area was close to the car park, but because of its size, many car spaces were some distance from the bus stop.

There was another stand close to the P&R stand for LBS buses, serving other than the city centre (e.g. Addenbrookes Hospital).

The site was well laid out and modern, and was the show piece P&R for Cambridge.

There were height restriction barriers to protect the site from trespass.

There was also a significant modern wood clad building that provided a manned reception desk, a waiting area and toilets, offices, along with other facilities. This was spacious and most impressive.

P&R Service

The Trumpington P&R operates Mon-Sat every 10 minutes from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, with less frequent buses after 6.00 pm, ending at 8.10 pm.

There is a 15-minute service on Sundays.

The adult return fare is £3.00.

Coach services also operate from Trumpington to London, Norwich, Stansted, Heathrow, Gatwick and Brighton.

There is also a major bus service that serves Addenbrookes Hospital which is 2.6 miles to the north east of Trumpington.

There are also a few other LBS serving local towns and villages.

P&R Bus Journey in and out of Cambridge

There was a 5-minute wait for the bus to arrive at the Trumpington stop and up to 20 passengers boarded for the inbound journey to the city centre at about 2.15 pm.

Payment of the £3 return fare was on-bus and via contactless debit card onto the bus card reader machine - this was an easy way to pay and the system worked well.

The bus was modern a Euro 6 double decker.

The journey into Cambridge was uneventful with a couple of LBS stops on route. Passenger numbers on the bus were moderate and the journey took just over 15 minutes.

On arrival in Cambridge city centre it was clear that this was different to most town/city centres, in that major elements were pedestrianised and there were hundreds of cyclists moving around the centre. There were few car/vans in sight. Cleary Cambridge is an historic centre with many historic and university buildings in view. The city was busy and bustling, with many tourists, which apparently is now a year-round phenomenon.

The return journey involved a lay over period of about 7 minutes at the city centre P&R stop, which felt slightly frustrating.

The return bus had a significant number of passengers on it.

The return journey left at just after 3.30 pm and was longer in time than the inbound journey as traffic was heavier, and negotiating jams and junctions was not so easy.

The bus arrived back at Trumpington at just before 4.00 pm and the passengers disembarked.

Meeting with Cambridgeshire County Council

Prior to the journey into Cambridge, a 1.00 pm meeting was held with Cambridgeshire County Council in their offices in the P&R building at Trumpington.

The key things tumbling out of the meeting were:

1. There was a major effort to link Addenbrookes Hospital with Trumpington P&R, thereby providing the hospital with parking for staff and easier access for patients and visitors
2. Cambridge's five P&R sites had a total of 5,500 spaces
3. They had 3.5m passenger return P&R trips pa – in 2014 it had been 3.8m but now the trend was back up again;
4. The 2014 drop off in passengers was because of the introduction of a £1 parking fee which was withdrawn in 2018
5. And in 2018, passenger numbers went up by 14%
6. They offered a 'bike and ride' facility at no cost – but also said that they had hundreds of abandoned bikes and it was difficult to manage their disposal; Cambridge was 'cycle city'
7. They had full electronic signage at the site
8. They thought the future of bus power units was hydrogen, not EV/battery – they had neither type of buses on their P&R at present and no plans for either
9. Passenger number trips were going up overall
10. Cambridge operated some guided bus ways, but there had been conflict with cyclists
11. Parking in the city was £28 per day, so P&R was very popular at £3 per adult return
12. There was a degree of tension between Council and City councils
13. The Council charges Stagecoach an access fee for the use of the P&R sites, thus generating income for the Council
14. There was no taxpayer subsidy of the P&R service, although Council funding was required to maintain the five sites – gross site costs including staff were £1.3m pa, offset by access fee income of £260k pa
15. The city was very much 'anti car'
16. Even though they had site height barriers, they still had trespass events, from the 'travelling community' and it was difficult to get them removed quickly – this led to worries about site safety and crime; clear up costs for rubbish removal and damage repairs were often around £2k per event
17. They said Stagecoach didn't offer free Concessionary Fares on P&R, even though the services were registered as LBS – he said as it was a fundamentally a P&R service, you didn't have to offer free concessions
18. P&R had a 10-minute frequency
19. The team didn't sit in the Council's passenger transport team, but instead they were placed in the highways group
20. They were bemused by Shrewsbury's P&R £1.60 fare, as they said these fare levels were last seen in the 1990s
21. CCC owned the P&R sites

22. CCC were looking at providing 3 or 4 more site for P&R, adding 2,000 to 3,000 extra spaces in the coming years

Summary

The Cambridge P&R services are modern, well used and vital for access to the city where the car is not welcome.

Like many other P&Rs in England, the bus operator runs the Cambridge P&R service, not the Council, and moreover the bus operator pays CCC for the privilege. The Council restricts itself to managing the site and tendering the site access fees.

There £3 adult return fare is at the lower end of national fare rates. They did experience an 8% drop off in passenger numbers when they introduced a £1 parking charge in 2014, but this was removed in 2018 and passengers' numbers are now trending upwards.

For a city devoted to cycling it's perhaps odd that P&R still operates diesel buses, unlike some other P&Rs in England. This may be because the bus operator determines the operational profile of the P&R service whilst CCC focuses on site management.

Like other English P&Rs, CCC generate an income from their P&R service, unlike Shrewsbury P&R where there is significant taxpayer subsidy. Their site costs seem high, but they are very modern sites (Trumpington) and seem to be run at, near or over capacity.

Like many other P&Rs, this P&R is integrated into the LBS network, or at least it offers that facility on its journeys in and out of the city.

Overall Trumpington P&R was most impressive – it's only a couple of minutes away from the M11 that leads to London, it's modern, efficient and is vital in providing one of the major access routes into Cambridge city centre.

Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 30th October 2019.

END of REPORT

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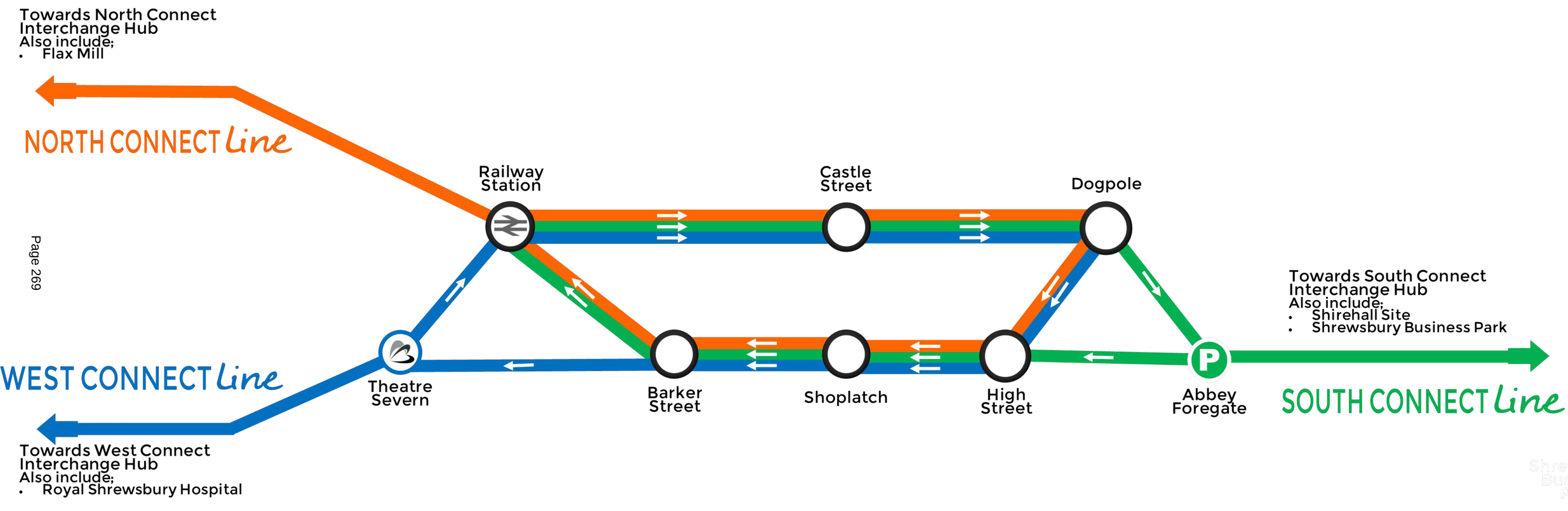
Towards North Connect Interchange Hub
Also include;
• Flax Mill
NORTH CONNECT Line
Railway Station
Castle Street
Dogpole
Towards South Connect Interchange Hub
Also include;
• Shirehall Site
• Shrewsbury Business Park
WEST CONNECT Line
Theatre Severn
Barker Street
Shoplatch
High Street
Abbey Foregate
SOUTH CONNECT Line
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• Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

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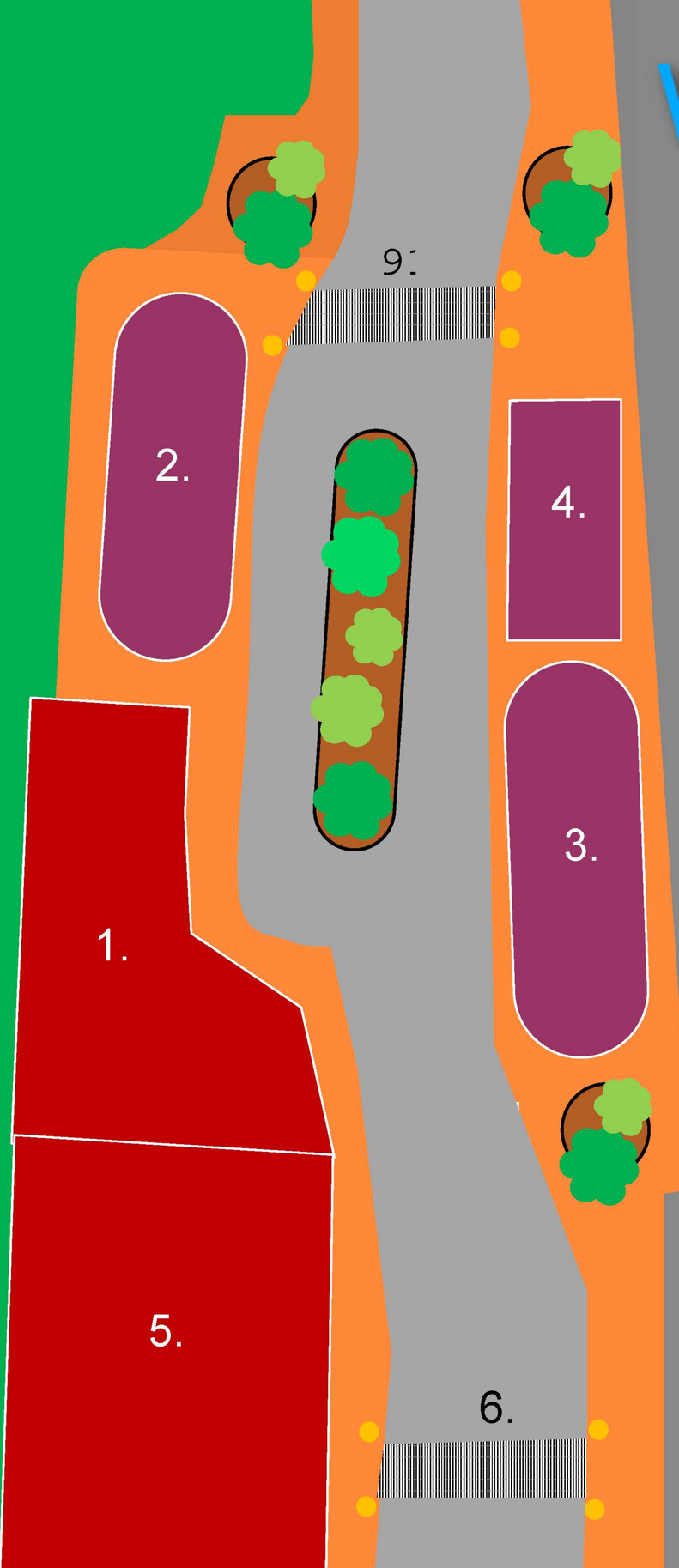
WEST CONNECT *InterchangeHub*



1. Café
2. Bus Shelter #1 —Towards Shrewsbury
3. Bus Shelter #2—Towards Telford
4. Bicycle Parking
5. Office Space / Rest Area / Facilities
6. Zebra Crossing

- ROYAL SHREWSBURY HOSPITAL
- THEATRE SEVERN
- SHREWSBURY TOWN CENTRE
- SHREWSBURY RAILWAY STATION

WEST CONNECT *Line*

- Pavement
- Green Areas
- Building
- Shelter
- Roadway
- Zebra Crossing

Shrewsbury CONNECT

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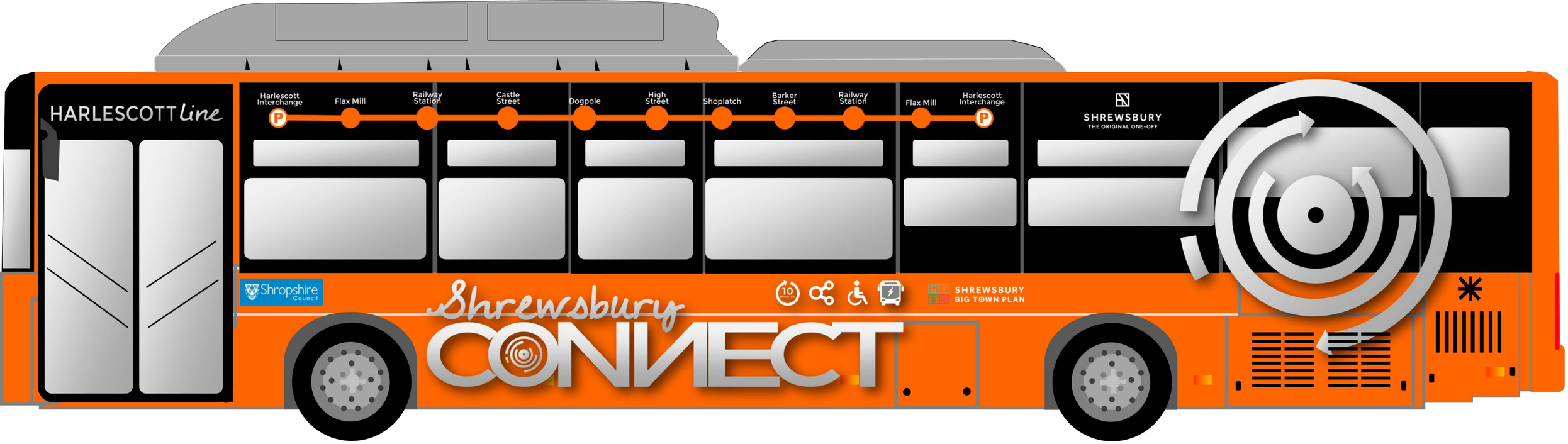
HARLESCOTTline
Harlescott Interchange
Flax Mill
Railway Station
Castle Street
Dogpole
High Street
Shoplatch
Barker Street
Railway Station
Flax Mill
Harlescott Interchange
SHREWSBURY
THE ORIGINAL ONE-OFF
Shropshire Council
Shrewsbury CONNECT
10 MINUTES
SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN

NECT...CONNE
Shrewsbury CONNECT
SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN
Shropshire Council
SHREWSBURY
THE ORIGINAL ONE-OFF

NECT...CONNECT...CONNE
Shrewsbury CONNECT
HARLESCOTTline

10 MINUTES
Shrewsbury CONNECT
£3
PAY ONCE A DAY
(PRICE PER PERSON)
CONNECT BETWEEN ANY STOP
TRAVEL BETWEEN ALL 3 LINES!
SHREWSBURY FLAX MILL
SUNDORNE RETAIL PARK
SHREWSBURY TOWN CENTRE
SHREWSBURY RAILWAY STATION
HARLESCOTTline

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Committee and Date	Item
Cabinet 5th October 2020	Public

Annual Customer Feedback (Complaints, Comments and Compliments) Report 2019/20

Responsible: Tom Dodds, Information, Intelligence and Insight Manager
e-mail: tom.dodds@shropshire.gov.uk tel: 01743 258518

1. Summary

1.1 This report presents Cabinet with an overview of the formal customer feedback the Council received during 2019/20. Formal customer feedback includes complaints, compliments, comments and other types of enquiry. MP enquiries are monitored and reported separately because they can often duplicate complaints.

1.2 Although overall performance remains good in terms of complaints handling, there continues to be a steady increase in complaint numbers. There were 1,833 complaints received in 2019/20 (1,281 in 2018/19, 1,119 in 2017/18 and 922 in 2016/17). Complaints increased by 43% between 2018/19 and 2019/20. The time taken to complete stage 1 complaint investigations has risen to an average of 22 days compared to 14 working days in 2018/19. However, it should be noted that this is well within the Council's target of 30 working days. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) has investigated a similar number of enquiries about Shropshire Council during each of the past four years. The upheld rate for the Council for 2019/20 was 41%, showing a decrease from 61% in 2018/19, and compares to the average upheld rate for other similar local authorities of 56%.

1.3 Complaints formed 57% of all cases of customer feedback during 2019/20, followed by comments and other enquiries at 28% and compliments at 16%. Customer feedback provides the Council with the opportunity to improve services following concerns and recognise where customers have had a good experience. The learning and actions that are identified through the complaint investigations are used to improve service provision.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

A. Approve the Annual Customer Feedback Report 2019/20 (Appendix 1) for publication on the council's website.

B. Agree the recommendations included within the Annual Report, highlighting key issues and areas for improvement.

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 Effective monitoring and follow-up provides the opportunity to manage risks and identify any trends and common issues being raised through customer feedback.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 This report presents information to support decision making and does not itself carry any direct financial implications. Accountable officers and senior managers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for improving service performance and the prioritisation and use of resources.

REPORT

5. Introduction

5.1 The Customer Feedback Annual Report for Shropshire Council covers the formal feedback Shropshire Council received during 2019/20 (excluding MP enquiries; these commonly duplicate complaints). The Annual Report covers all service areas and, as a result, the handling of complaints under all three complaints procedures (the statutory and nationally set processes for Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, and the Council's locally defined Corporate Complaints procedure). More detailed reports have been produced for Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

5.2 The Annual Report details the performance of Shropshire Council during 2019/20. In addition, quarterly monitoring takes place and where necessary issues are addressed within the year.

6. Customer Feedback 2018/19 (focus on complaints)

6.1 Shropshire Council received 2,611 cases of formal feedback during 2019/20, up by 297 from 2.314 in 2018/19. There were 1,487 complaints (57%), 719 comments and other enquiries (27%) and 405 compliments (15%).

6.2 Of the 1,487 complaints received, 1,334 were complaints handled under the Council's corporate complaints procedure, an increase of 250 compared to 2018/19. 153 were statutory complaints (with an element of social care so handled under the nationally set adult or children's complaints procedures), a reduction of 43 compared to 2018/19, with Adult Social Care statutory complaints reducing by 36 and Children's Social Care complaints reducing by 6 complaints.

6.3 Effective stage 1 complaints handling can reduce the number of stage 2 complaints. Most complaints are addressed and closed at the first stage of the complaints procedures. In 2019/20 47 cases progressed beyond stage 1 compared to 50 in 218/19, 26 in 2017/18, 46 in 2016/17 and 38 in 2015/16.

6.4 Considering complaints by service highlights that Highways and Transport received 34% of all Shropshire Council's complaints during 2019/20 followed by Adult Services (including Housing and Public Health) at 17%. Finance Governance and Assurance were allocated 16% of complaints, Waste Management and Planning each received 9% of complaints, and Children's Services received 7%.

6.5 On average it took an average of 22 working days to respond to a complaint in 2019/20 compared to 14 working days in 2018/19 and 20 working days in 2017/18. This remains well within the LGO timescales of 60 days for Stage 1 and Stage 2 investigations to be completed. (The Council works to 30 days for each stage). However, although average performance is good, there are significant numbers of complex and long running cases exceeding timescales, this is sometimes due to reduced officer capacity within a service but can often be the result of highly complex cases that are difficult to resolve or require significant time to resolve.

6.6 In 2018/19 at the end of stage 1, 14% of complaints were upheld, 12% were partly upheld (often where a complaint might have multiple points within it), and 28% were not upheld. The remainder were withdrawn or had no finding. These rates vary slightly compared to the previous year.

6.7 The learning and actions resulting from complaints are an important element of customer feedback reporting and improving services. Understanding the causes of complaints and common themes informs learning and the identification of actions to address the underlying causes of the complaint being made. Learning from complaints during 2019/20 covered a range of issues. As with previous years communication and information provision continues to be the most common theme within learning and includes responding to correspondence and comments in a timely manner, keeping people up to date as cases progress and improving how information is shared. Service delivery/non-delivery of a service was another common learning point. It should be noted that cases not upheld will usually not have any learning.

6.8 Appendix 1 of the Annual Report includes Shropshire Council's annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO publish data on the investigations that they have carried out, including whether they upheld the complaints they looked into. Table 1 below sets out the number of enquiries that the LGO received, the number investigated, the number upheld and the uphold rate as a percentage of the cases investigated.

Table 1	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of enquiries to the LGO	83	90	84	91	85
Number investigated by the LGO	30	23	25	33	27
Number upheld by the LGO	15	11	8	20	11
LGO upheld rate for Shropshire Council	50%	48%	32%	61%	41%
LGO national average upheld rate	50%	54%	57%	58%	56%*

*In a change to previous years, for 2019/20 the LGO provided the average for similar authorities.

Despite the decrease in the upheld rate (and above average performance in the upheld rate compared to similar local authorities) the LGO has requested Shropshire Council look at its performance in relation to delays (time taken to respond and to implement recommendations). Shropshire Council will need to continue in its efforts to ensure complaints are robustly responded to and its procedures adhered to at the local level.

6.9 Appendix 2 of the Annual Report highlights recommendations made by the LGO in 2018/19. All recommendations are monitored and actioned by the Shropshire Council service area responsible for the complaint. The LGO now produce publicly available compliance reports in which they list whether local authorities have completed actions within the timescales set by the Ombudsman.

7. Customer Feedback Development

7.1 The recommendations included within the Annual Report highlight areas of development designed to improve customer feedback handling. Key areas of focus arising from the 2019/20 annual report include:

- There has been an increase in complaints for the Highways department which now form a significant proportion (34%) of the Council's overall complaints. Additionally, 56% of 'no-finding' outcomes in 2019/20 were recorded for Highway and Transport, which can indicate the investigation and reporting back may not have been completed. There appears to be some opportunity to make improvements in complaints handling in Highways and Transport and it is recommended that this is a priority for 2020/21.

- Carry out one-off detailed reviews into long running and overdue complaints cases on a service by service basis, working with senior managers to provide detailed information at the investigator level. This will allow managers to fully understand where there are ongoing obstacles and performance issues.

- Increase the accessibility and use of staff information and guidance on the standards and expectations of complaints investigators and the quality of their responses, including the identification and recording of learning and actions from corporate complaints and how to seek advice and support if it is needed.

- The LGO has requested Shropshire Council look at its performance in relation to delays (time taken to respond and to implement recommendations). It is recommended it forms an area for attention in 2019/20. It will require a response from across the organisation and should be addressed through the delivery of the recommendations in the Annual Report.

- Increase the identification of opportunities to improve people's experiences of Council services during the year across the Council through greater use of the quarterly complaint reports which made available to all service areas via Directors and key contacts within council departments.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) 2015/16 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report 2016/17 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report 2017/18 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report 2018/19 Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr Lee Chapman - Portfolio Holder Organisational Transformation and Digital Infrastructure
Local Member All
Appendices Appendix 1 – Customer Feedback Annual Report 2019/20

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Shropshire Council

Customer Feedback Annual Report
Shropshire Council
2019/20

Feedback and Insight Team, Information, Intelligence and Insight
July 2020

1. Introduction

Shropshire Council's annual customer feedback report presents an annual overview of the formal feedback received and responded to by Shropshire Council between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. The report includes key performance data for complaints, compliments and comments (including other types of formal feedback received by Shropshire Council). The annual customer feedback report is made available to members of the public, councillors and council staff. The report complements the quarterly reporting and regular monitoring reporting that takes place within the Council during the course of the year. This more regular reporting is used to gain an understanding of customer experiences and the identification of any patterns in feedback. It supports the work that takes place to identify learning and actions designed to prevent further complaints and generate improvement.

Complaints containing an element of social care fall under the statutory guidelines. These are classed as statutory complaints for either adult or children's services and are handled in line with the statutory complaints procedures. The remainder of complaints are corporate complaints. Corporate complaints relate to a support service or services that do not provide social care and these are handled under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. You can find out more on Shropshire Council's website.

This report covers both statutory complaints and corporate complaints, providing a whole council view of formal customer feedback. Annual reports are also prepared for Adult Services and Children's Services allowing for a more detailed consideration of feedback for those service areas.

Complaint

We aim to make it as easy as possible to make a complaint. A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about a service provided. Family members and advocates may also make a complaint on behalf of one of our customers.
We will ask for consent to ensure that the complaint is not being made against the customer's wishes.

Compliment

Many people get in touch with a compliment when the information or support they have received has exceeded their expectations.
It is really helpful to learn when a service has been provided well or when a member of staff has done a great job. We like to recognise compliments alongside any complaints. It is good for us to say 'thank you' to our teams and staff members too.

Comment

Feedback about a service could be:

- a suggestion to improve it.
- a question as to whether something could be done differently.
- an idea for delivering a service differently.

2. The Complaints Process

Shropshire Council encourages users of our services, their family members and carers to give feedback and highlight any concerns so that they may be addressed as quickly as possible. If problems cannot be resolved and the customer wishes to make a complaint, staff members can offer advice on how to make a complaint. Support is also available from complaints officers based within Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team.

- Speak to a member of staff
- Telephone us: 0345 678 9000
- Email us at: customer.feedback@shropshire.gov.uk
- Visit the website: https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback/
- Feedback can now also be submitted through the MyShropshire portal.

Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of being received and we let the complainant know how their complaint will be handled.

STAGE 1

An appropriate Investigating Officer will be allocated to the case and asked to investigate the complaint. This is usually a manager within the service area the complaint relates to. The complainant will be provided with a written response within approximately 6 weeks (12 weeks is the timescale for stage 1 and stage 2 responses and 6 weeks is usually allocated to each). In some complex cases it may take longer than 6 weeks at stage 1 but we let the customer know if this extra time is needed and why. The Investigating Officer will write to explain the outcome of their investigation, any learning or actions and information outlining how to progress the complaint if the customer is not satisfied with the outcome.

STAGE 2 - Review

The complaint will be reviewed by a more senior manager, commissioner, or in most cases, the Complaints Monitoring Officer. They will review the Stage 1 complaint and decide if there is more the service can do to address the concerns raised. If the reviewing officer believes the service has done all they can reasonably do, the customer will be written to and advised of this. They will also be given information about the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Ombudsman

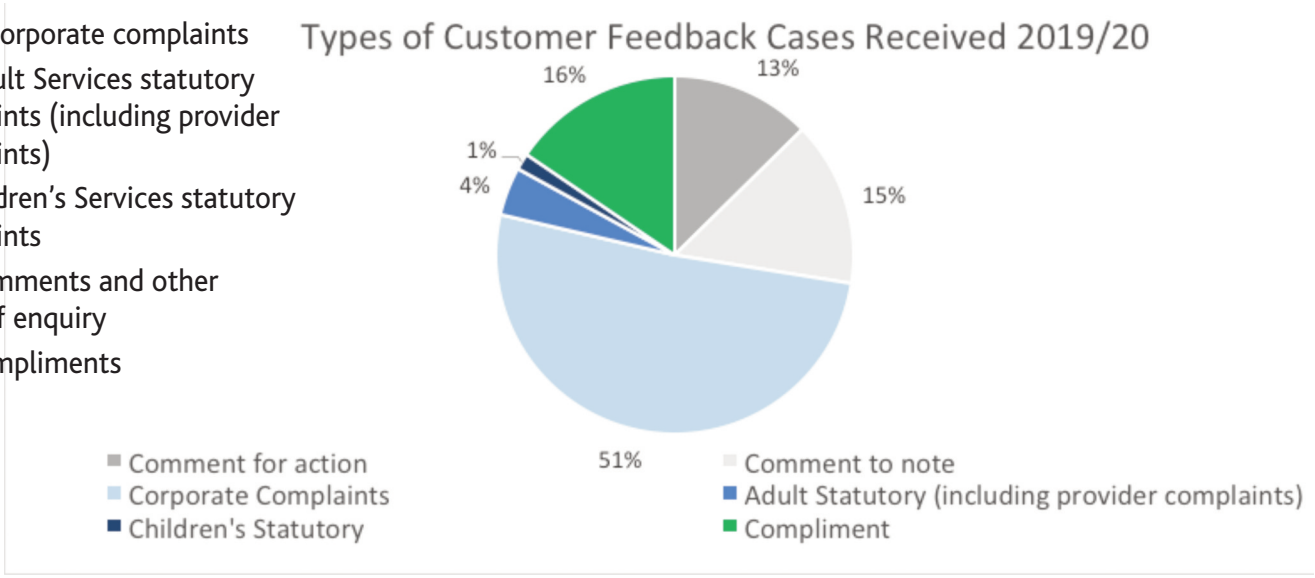
If a complaint cannot be resolved locally it can be investigated by the Ombudsman. The Council has a timescale of 28 calendar days to provide a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). Responses are often complex, lengthy and require a large volume of appendices to be collated, catalogued and returned to the LGO. Complainants can request to go to the Ombudsman without a review if they choose to.

We cannot promise to get the result complainants want, but we do make sure that complaints are dealt with as quickly and as thoroughly as possible and we work to keep customers informed of what is happening and the progress being made.

3. Customer Feedback 2019/20

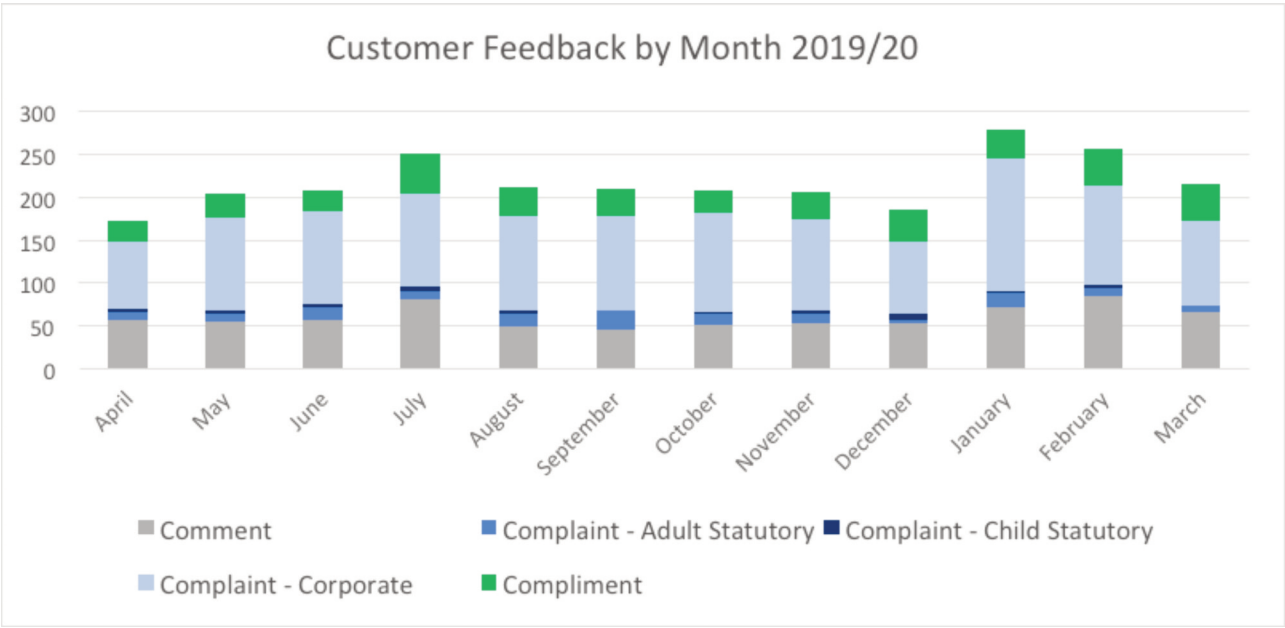
In 2019/20 there were 2,611 cases of formal feedback recorded by Shropshire Council. There were:

- 1,334 Corporate complaints
- 114 Adult Services statutory complaints (including provider complaints)
- 39 Children's Services statutory complaints
- 719 comments and other types of enquiry
- 405 compliments



During the year there were 1,487 complaints, forming 57% of all cases. Comments and other enquiries formed 28% of all cases and 16% of all customer feedback cases were compliments.

MP enquiries are covered separately later in the report since MP enquiries often relate to complaints and inclusion in the figures for feedback would result in double counting and the over reporting of cases.

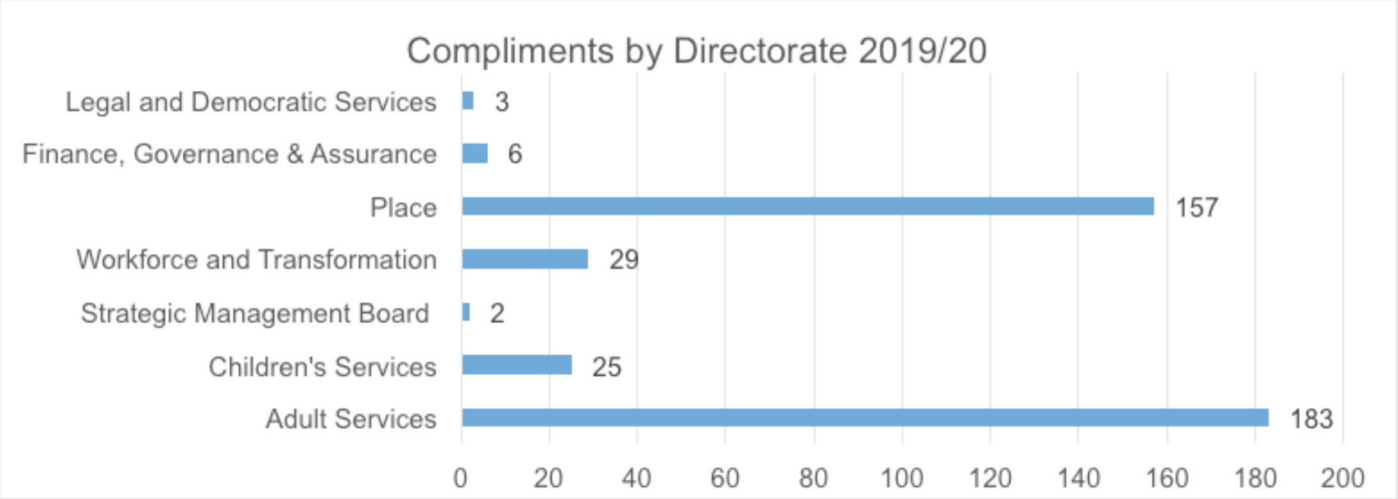


Over the year, the monthly average was 218 customer feedback cases (compared to 193 the year before). January and February 2020 saw the greatest number of cases at 279 and 257, followed by July 2019 with 252 cases. April and December 2019 had the lowest numbers of feedback. The data shows a noticeable increase in feedback for the last quarter (January to the end of March 2020) with 751 cases for the quarter compared to an average of 620 for the other 3 quarters of the year. Overall case volumes increased over the course of the last 4 years. On average 124 complaints were made to Shropshire Council each month compared to an average of 107 complaints each month in 2018/ 19 (93 in 2017/18 and 77 in 2016/17).

The volumes of customer feedback cases received do fluctuate slightly during the year. Longer term patters show steady increases but the data for this year highlights that more feedback was received in the last quarter followed by the period July to September 2019.

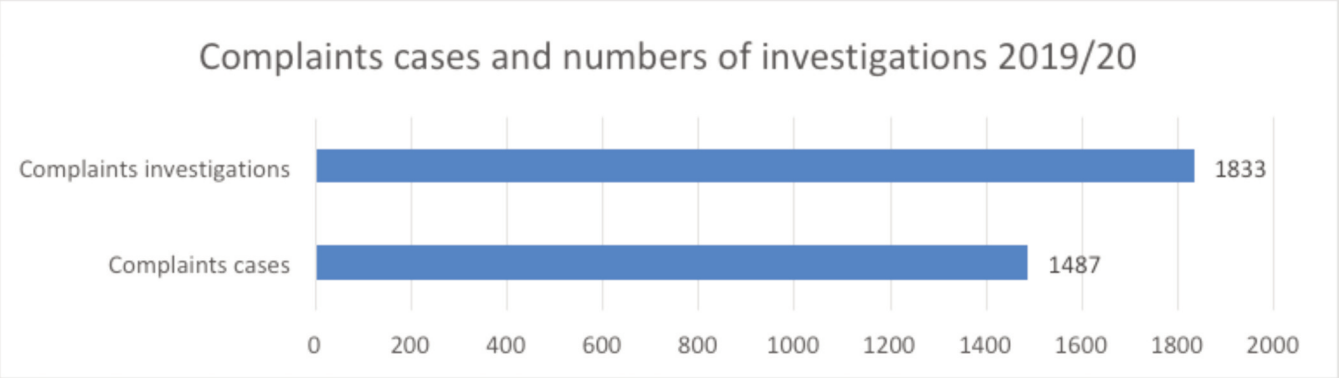
- Quarter 1 (April to June 2019) = 22% of all customer feedback
- Quarter 2 (July to September 2019) = 26% of all customer feedback
- Quarter 3 (October to December 2019) = 23% of all customer feedback
- Quarter 4 (January to March 2020) = 29% of all customer feedback

A closer look at compliments shows that Adult Services received the largest number of compliments (183 compliments in 2019/20) followed by the Place directorate.

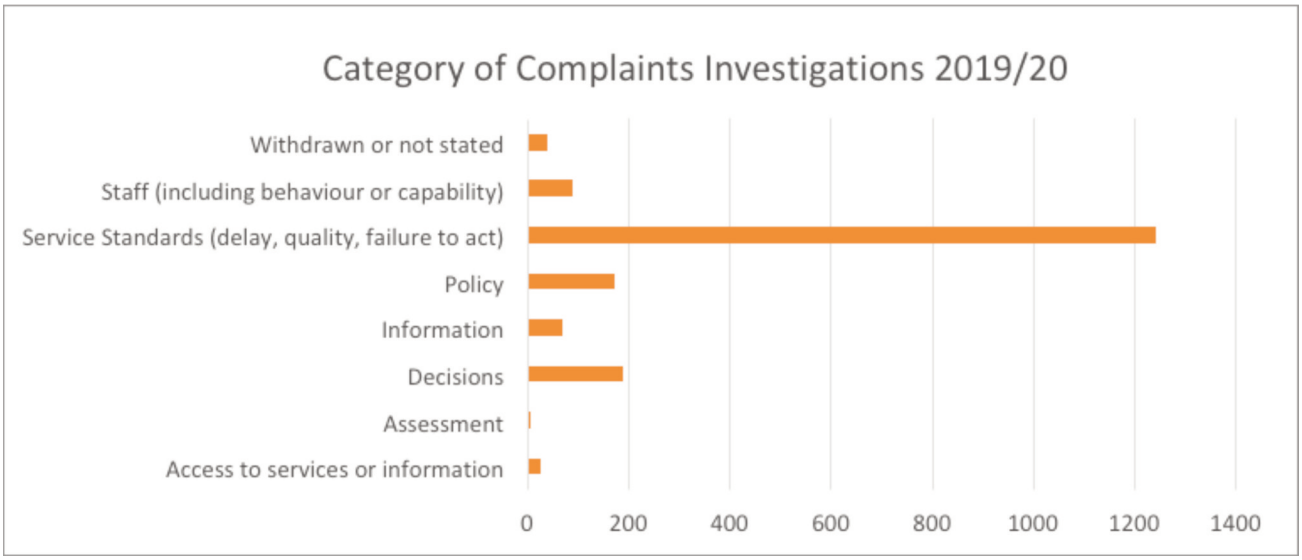


It is important to look at complaints cases in more detail to gain an understanding of customer feedback and any areas of dissatisfaction. Complaints (and some comments) are explored at greater depth than other types of feedback and result in investigations. There may be multiple investigations for each complaints case. For example, a complaint may refer to the services provided by more than one council department, in which case there will be more than one investigation. Investigations are led by officers with a detailed knowledge of the service area, usually a service manager. In 2019/20 there were 1,487 complaints cases and 1,833 complaints investigations.

Complaints investigations do not always result in a complete investigation and outcome. Once a complaints case is explored in more detail, it is possible that a different course of action is required (e.g. an insurance claim or appeals process), or once the complaint is more fully understood it may be concluded that the complainant is merely asking for a simple remedial action to resolve a concern rather than wishing to proceed through a formal complaint investigation. Of the 1,833 complaints investigations, 19% were withdrawn and 10% were closed and a service request was initiated as an alternative course of action. 1,295 investigations resulted in a finding or no finding. This is explored in more detail at the end of this section.



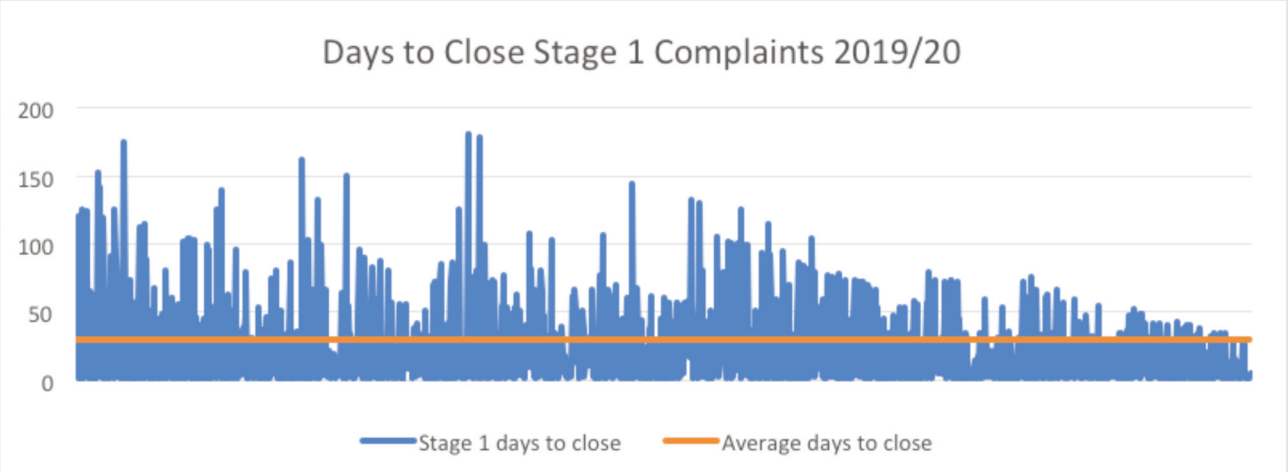
The following paragraphs are based on complaints investigations against which more detailed information is captured. The performance measures Shropshire Council uses to monitor complaints are largely based on complaints investigations. This allows a better understanding of complaints in relation to the services complaints relate to.



During the last financial year (2019/20) there were 1,833 complaints investigations, a 43% increase from 2018/19. This increase is much more significant than increases seen over previous years. Of the1,833 investigations, 2% were withdrawn before completion. This is sometimes at the request of a complainant, but more often because the case is better handled under a different process (for example an appeals process).

'Service standards' was the main category under which complaints were made. Within 'service standards' there are a number of sub-categories and analysis highlights that 'service standards – failure to provide a service/take action' and 'service standards – poor customer care' were the dominant sub-categories. 'Decisions' was the second main category under which complaints were recorded in 2019/20 followed by 'Policy'. Complaints under the category decisions are usually made because someone is dissatisfied with a decision made, and policy complaints often reflect the fact that someone is dissatisfied with council policy (examples in 2019/20 include dissatisfaction with changes to Shropshire Council's recycling and parking policies).

During 2019/20 Shropshire Council took an average of 22 working days to respond to stage 1 complaints (an increase on the 14 working days average in 2018/19). The average is within the 30 day timescale Shropshire Council works to. However, it should be noted that there is significant variation around the average and some cases, particularly complex complaints, can take longer than the 30 days allocated to respond. The Council has 60 working days in total to respond to corporate complaints, 30 working days for each stage (stage 1 and stage 2). Days to close is a key measure within ongoing performance monitoring.

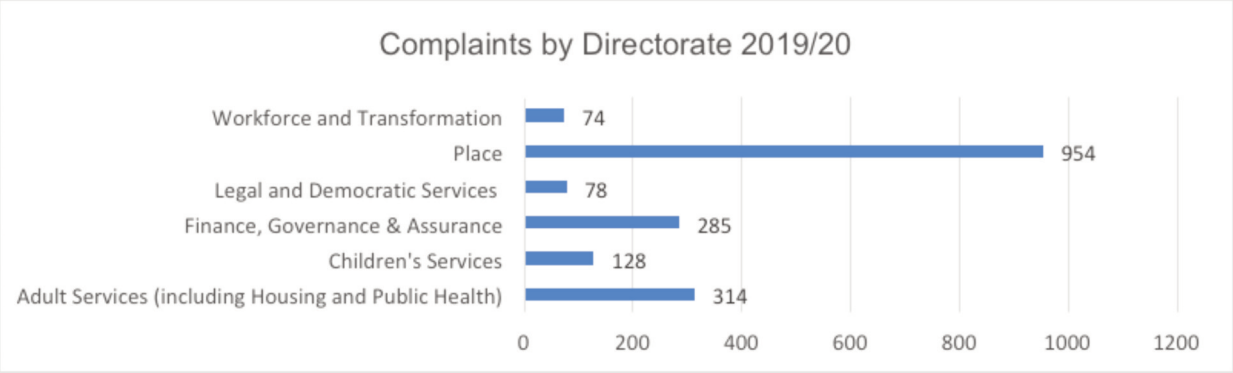


Some types of service are more likely to result in complaints than others and the chart below highlights complaints by directorate. Shropshire Council's Place Directorate handles the largest proportion of complaints compared to other directorates within Shropshire Council (52% of all complaints) followed by Adult Services (17%).

Taking a closer look at the breakdown of complaints by service highlights that, within the Place Directorate, Highways and Transport received 34% of all Shropshire Council's complaints in 2019/20 (compared to 30% of all complaints during 2018/19). Waste services accounted for 9% of all the complaints in 2019/20.

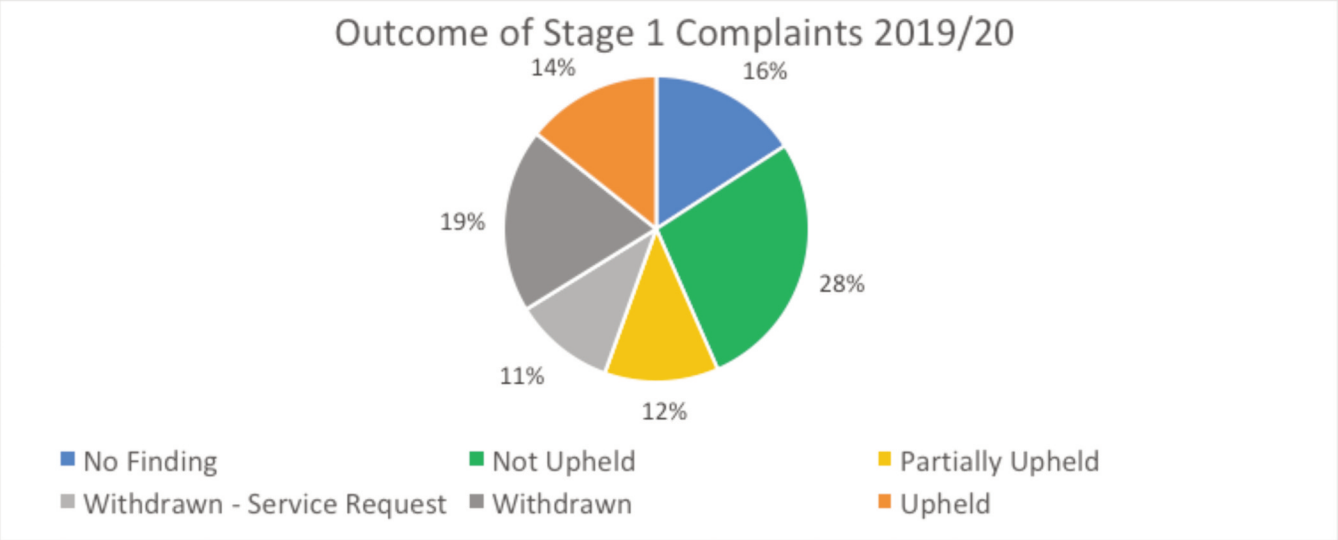
Complaints relating to Adult Services form 17% of all complaints and complaints relating to Children's Services form 7% of all complaints. The number of Adult Services complaints is very similar to the previous year but there were fewer Children's Services complaints in 2019/20 (forming 7% of complaints compared to 12% in 2018/19). Separate reports on Adult Services and Children's services explore the complaints and customer feedback received by these service areas in more detail.

Finance, Governance and Assurance were allocated 16% of all complaints in 2019/20. It is important to note that a large proportion of these were due to the fact that this Directorate handles revenues and benefits cases and insurance cases. Unlike other areas of service, the complaints are not likely to be about the service provided (for example a complaint may be made in order to highlight intention to progress an insurance claim).



Considering the outcome of complaints made within the year highlights that:

- At the end of 2019/20 1,725 stage 1 complaints were completed or closed. 108 stage 1 complaints remained open.
- Of the closed stage 1 complaints 14% were upheld (247 complaints), 12% were partly upheld and 28% were not upheld.
- Considering the complaints that were upheld, 30% were with Highways and Transport and 17% were with Waste Management. Following this, 6% of all upheld cases were for Revenues and Benefits.



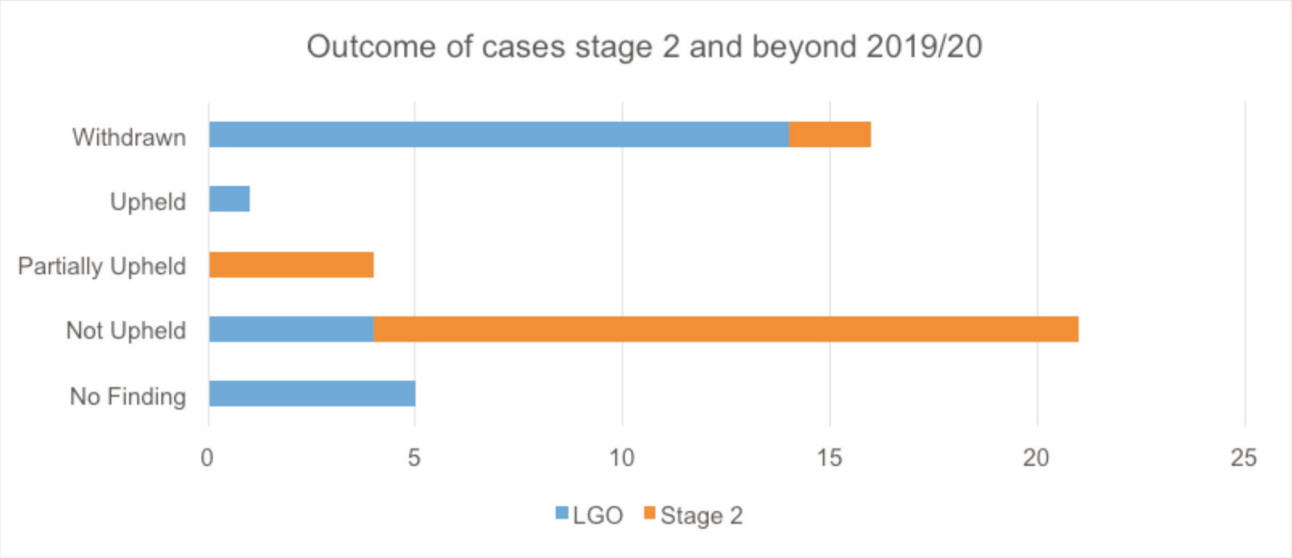
There is a concern that 16% of complaints investigations resulted in no finding. In some circumstances, there is a genuine reason for recording a 'no finding' outcome. A complaints investigator may find that not enough evidence or information is available to draw a conclusion, or they may be unable to obtain enough information from the complainant to fully complete the investigation. However, the large number of 'no finding' outcomes in 2019/20 (254) appear to be largely a result of a failure to investigate allocated complaints. 56% of 'no finding' outcomes are recorded for Shropshire Council's Highways and Transport department with very small numbers spread across other services. This is highlighted within the recommendations.

4. Progression of Complaints

Effective stage 1 complaint handling can reduce the number of stage 2 complaints. It is important to understand how many complaints progress beyond stage 1 and this is a measure included within regular performance reporting. During 2019/20 only a small proportion of all the complaints Shropshire Council received progressed beyond stage 1.

In total, 47 complaints received within the year progressed to a stage 2 complaint case or to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). This number was similar in 2018/19 (50 cases). Occasionally some complaints may progress prematurely to the LGO without a stage 2 investigation. The table below shows the number of complaints within the year that progressed beyond stage 1 and the chart below highlights the outcome of those complaints

Stage 2	LGO	Total investigations beyond stage 1
23	24	47



The Shropshire annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) highlighted that 85 complaints and enquiries were made to the LGO from Shropshire during the year. This total includes complaints received by Shropshire Council in previous financial years' so the data is not comparable with local data covered in this report (looking at cases received within the financial year). Of the 85 cases, 16 were not upheld, 11 were upheld and the remainder resulted in other actions such as referring back for local resolution, offering advice, or closure after initial enquiries. The LGO reports Shropshire Council's upheld rate at 41%. The LGO upheld rate for similar local authorities is reported as 56%.

Complaints and Enquiries Received

Category	Number received
Adult Care Services	19
Benefits & Tax	9
Corporate & Other Services	4
Education & Children's Services	12
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	7
Highways & Transport	12
Housing	1
Planning & Development	20
Grand Total	84

Decisions Made

				Detailed Investigations			
Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete / Invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Not Upheld	Upheld	Upheld rate (%)	Grand Total
1	29	5	23	16	11	41	85

Appendix 2 highlights findings and recommendations made by the LGO within 2019/20. All recommendations are monitored and actioned by the Shropshire Council service area responsible for the complaint, and in most cases overseen by the service area's Director.

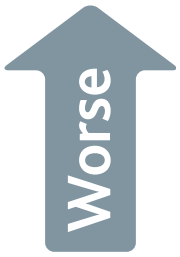
5. Annual Comparison 2018/19 and 2019/20

Number of compliments – decreased

In the last financial year (2019/20) Shropshire Council received 405 compliments. There has been a steady decline in the number of compliments received. In 2016/17 646 compliments were recorded for Shropshire Council in 2017/18 the Council received 541 compliments, and in 2018/19 460 compliments. Compliments average at 34 a month with fewer compliments recorded in April and June than in any other months of the year. More compliments were received in July than in any other month. Adult Services received 45% of all compliments followed by Place (39%).

Number of complaints - increased

The number of complaint investigations instigated by Shropshire Council totalled 1,833 in 2019/20 compared to 1,281 in 2018/19 (1,119 in 2017/18 and 922 in 2016/17). There were 1,487 complaint cases (some cases require more than one investigation). Complaints have increased by 43% since the previous financial year (there was a 14% increase between 2017/18 and 2018/19). A positive consideration is that people feel able to complain but the significant increase does suggest that the consequences of local authority budget reductions may be impacting on customer experience.

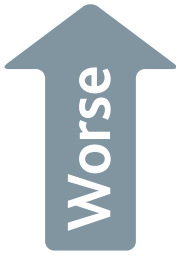


Nature of complaints - problems remain similar

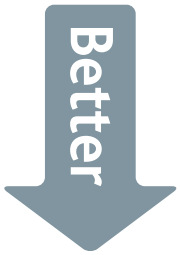
The problems raised within complaints remain very similar to the patterns seen over previous years. Although Shropshire Council has changed the way it categorises complaints in order to improve in year reporting, reading the complaints and considering sub-categories, shows patterns remain stable. There has been an increase in the number of complaints relating to Council policy and reading these in more detail suggests this was, in part, due to policy changes for waste (recycling) and parking. Under the overall category of service standards (under which the majority of complaints fall) complaints commonly refer to failure to take action (sometimes expectations are beyond services the Council can deliver), and poor quality of service/ customer care. Lack of communication is also a common concern expressed by complainants.

Days to close – Average days to close increased

The average number of working days taken to respond to a stage 1 complaint during 2019/20 was 22 working days. In 2016/17 and 2017/18 it took Shropshire Council an average of 20 working days to close stage 1 complaints. In 2018/19 there was some improvement with the average being 14 working days so performance is not as good as the previous year. All averages are within the 30 working day corporate timescale for stage 1 complaints. Despite the good average performance, a significant number of stage 1 complaints are not responded to within the 30 working days timescale. The efficient handling of complaints by some departments is keeping the average response below the target. Quarterly performance reporting is used to identify where there is a need for improvement.



Outcome of complaints – Fewer complaints upheld



14% of complaints were upheld in the last financial year (2019/20). This is a reduction compared to the previous year. 12% were partly upheld, 28% were not upheld and the remainder were withdrawn or had no finding. This performance could be encouraging and suggests that although numbers of complaints have increased, this is not necessarily due to any significant changes in service standards or quality. It will be important to keep reviewing the complaints with the outcome 'no finding' to ensure this is not a result of failure to respond effectively.

In 2018/19 19% of cases were upheld, 16% were party upheld and 34% were not upheld (the remainder were withdrawn, had no finding or were resolved in other ways). In 2017/18 24% of cases were upheld, 22% were partly upheld and 35% were not upheld, (other cases may have been withdrawn, resolved on the spot or resulted in a 'no finding').

It should be noted that, it would be a concern if performance monitoring didn't show some cases being upheld. It is important that Shropshire Council accept where things have gone wrong and are not in line with standards. Recognising where mistakes have been made is essential in any commitment to constant improvement. Quality checking of complaint responses by the Feedback and Insight Team's complaints and customer feedback officers remains in place and enables a more independent overview to achieve a balanced approach.

Complaints progressing beyond Stage 1 – similar proportion

In 2017/18 2.4% of all cases progressed beyond stage 1 and in 2018/19 the proportion was 3.9% (50 cases). In 2019/20 2.7% of cases progressed to stage 2 or the Local Government Ombudsman. This suggests little change in performance and performance remains good, with most cases being resolved at stage 1 of the complaint procedures. 85 cases were considered by the Ombudsman during 2019/20 (a very slight reduction on the previous year, at 91). The upheld rate in 2019/20 was 41% (an improvement on the 2018/19 upheld rate of 61%). However, the LGO raised performance concerns within their letter to the Chief Executive so this improvement in the main performance measure must be considered alongside other supporting information.

6. Example Compliments

Shropshire Council received 405 compliments during 2019/20. Example compliments are included below to illustrate the range of compliments received by different services. Receiving a compliment can make a big difference to a member of staff working hard to provide support for others and deliver services as effectively as possible. Although compliments are not given the same attention as complaints, they are used within the Council to understand where things are working well and to recognise the additional efforts made by individual members of staff.

Compliment for multiple teams: "On behalf of the Partners, staff and myself we cannot thank you and your teams enough for the speedy response and actions to our very distressing situation caused by the floods. We appreciate how busy the council have been with dealing with the flood situation for Shropshire, in particular Shrewsbury. Special thanks to the following people must be mentioned. X [name removed] who helped quickly organise with Ian the engineers, cleaning teams etc. X and X [names removed] for their very helpful meetings and updates and progressing everything with the insurance and procurement in an exceptional timely manner...."

Compliment for Street Scene and Highways North East: "Mrs. X [name removed] phoned to say what an excellent job we did to give them peace of mind with the flooding. We have cleared the nearby weir out twice of rubbish and debris and as they are at the lowest point in the area, they would flood if we hadn't done that. We cleared it last on Tuesday. She and her husband want to say thank you for such a good job."

Compliment for Environmental Maintenance: "X [name removed] would like to pass on her thanks to the team who came out last Sunday after the storm to cut up the fallen trees, and for coming to see her to make sure that she was alright. She said that they were "absolutely excellent" and did a very good job."

Compliment for Property Services Group: "I would just like to thank PSG for the speedy service you gave us with the emergency we had getting a padlock out of the ground last week. It was much appreciated and got us out of a panic!"

Compliment for Planning Policy: The Customer stated they wanted to thank so much, the officers concerned for the speedy reply to his enquiry which appears really helpful; also to say they have "received an excellent service from all the departments in Shropshire Council they have approached recently and that this has been a lesson in not taking at face value some of the poor press which is so freely bandied about these days. Many thanks again".

Compliment for Elections Team: Compliment from a Councillor present at a town council by-election; "may I congratulate your election staff, that were at the [by-election] last night. They were excellent and conducted themselves in a very efficient and professional manner. They were really good ambassadors for the council."

Compliment for Planning Services: "I have received confirmation today that planning consent has been granted for X at X [details removed]. I would like to thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and your help with it. Your efforts are much appreciated. Thank you."

Compliment for Registrars: "Customer wanted to thank everyone in the Registrars Team for all their help to arrange a last minute wedding for their friend who had terminal cancer. All their efforts were greatly appreciated...."

7. Example Complaints

Shropshire Council received 1,487 complaints during the year (2019/20). Some example complaints have been included below to highlight the type of feedback Shropshire Council receives. These examples were not all upheld (26% of closed cases were upheld or partly upheld). Some complaints arise from a lack of understanding of the service Shropshire Council is able to provide. Where necessary wording within complaints has been removed within the examples to ensure anonymity. The next section of this report looks more closely at learning and the actions taken following complaint investigations.

Complaint for Waste Management, Place: "Each and every time the recycling day arrives the binmen leave behind individual items that are effectively litter. This blows down the street into a local water course. The binmen make no attempt to pick up dropped or blown items on street despite being present. They seem to ignore it wilfully…."

Complaint for Commercial Services, Place: "Further to my visit to the Pride Hill Centre on Saturday 14th March, I am contacting you to make a complaint about the public toilets in this shopping centre. I visited the ladies toilets just before 5pm on the date above and was both shocked and angered to find in this time of immense concern over the coronavirus outbreak, that there was not a single drop of hand soap in either of the 2 dispensers at the time of my visit that day. This would be poor management at any time, however, at a time when hand-washing is of the upmost importance as one of the main preventative measures to help stop the spread of this potentially fatal virus, it is completely unacceptable and totally irresponsible."

Complaint for ICT Services: "Pothole reporting and your website is very clunky. It took me about 30 minutes just to enter 3 reports. Maps are inadequate to identify the correct position for the reports that's why I try to send GPS positions."

Complaint for Waste Management: The customer would like to complain about the process for disputing a crew following a waste collection. Customers property was marked by the crew as recycling containers not being presented. Customer disputed this and was not happy with the process of raising a dispute. He felt that Customer Services should have been able to send a crew to collect the missed waste.

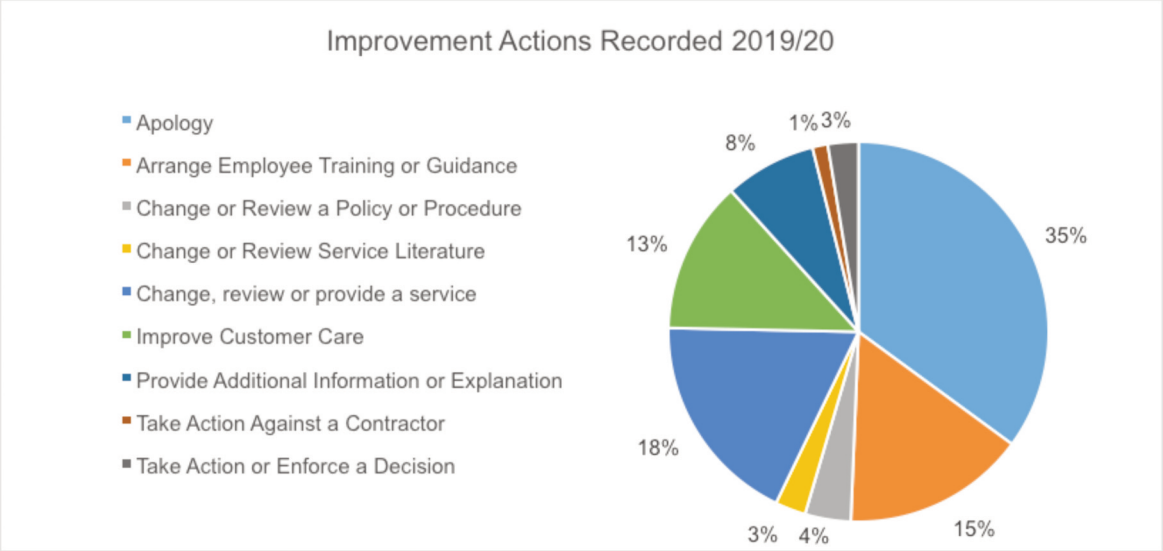
Complaint for ICT Services and Highways, Place: "Please consider this as a second official complaint - we have had to make one prior complaint to the Highways team who seem under-staffed and unable to keep up with demand. There is an issue with your website that prevents people from giving feedback."

Complaint for Highways: Complaint regarding the state and condition of the Shropshire Roads in general: potholes, road signs, road gullies and road sweeping. Customer would welcome a discussion about these and especially the A489, a road the customer travels each day; stating "it's basically rotten and a joke how people are meant to travel to work and leisure each day, it is so dangerous".

Complaint for ICT Services and Highways, Place: The customer requested that the nearby salt box be filled via the 'My Shropshire' web site. "After being away last week and receiving a message saying that the work was carried out and the request closed. As of today, the bin remains empty. It was never filled. Not good enough."

8. Learning and Actions

Shropshire Council recorded learning and/or actions against 11% of closed complaints (this is a reduction from 2018/19 at 17%). The charts below highlight the primary action and learning point recorded. It should be noted that actions and lessons are usually made when complaints are upheld or partly upheld. If small proportions of complaint investigations find fault there will be fewer remedial actions or learning.



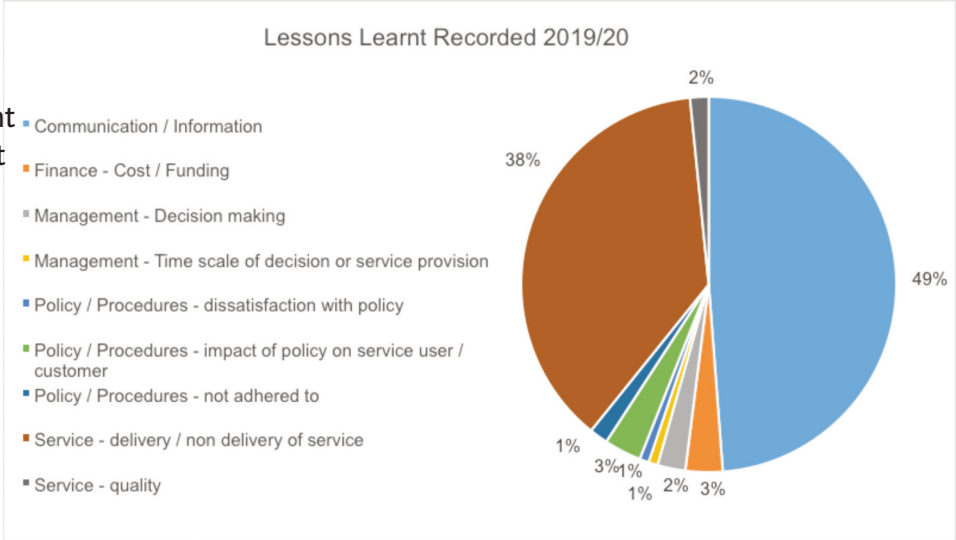
Of the actions that were recorded against complaints closed in 2019/20:

- 35% were to make an apology
- 18% were to change, review or provide a service
- 15% were to arrange employee training or guidance.
- 13% were to improve customer care
- 8% were to provide additional information or explanation

Consideration of the learning points recorded during 2019/20 highlights:

- 49% of learning points related to communication/information
- 38% of learning points fell into the category of delivery or non-delivery of a service
- Other types of learning points were not seen in any significant numbers.

Communication is consistently a common and dominant theme within complaints. Complainants often highlight their disappointment that they were not communicated with enough, or information was not shared effectively. Some complaints cases emphasise that more effective communication at an earlier stage could have led to a better understanding of the issues or the processes council staff work to and prevented the development of a formal complaint. Similarly, a lack of communication and response is commonly the cause of escalation within the complaints process.



9. Example Learning and Actions

The recording of learning is strongly encouraged following the completion of a complaint investigation. Acknowledging, and acting on, learning from complaints can avoid any mistakes from being repeated and lead to ongoing improvement. Examples are shown below to highlight the type of learning and action recorded. This is one element of wider work undertaken to focus on quality, and ensure customers receive a good standard of service. Wording within the examples has been altered slightly for simplicity and to ensure confidentiality.

The Commissioning Team and the Contract Monitoring Team will be following up on the issues that have been experienced with the care provider, to ensure the provider puts measures in place to provide support at agreed times and to effectively manage situations where there are last minute issues with allocated staff.

Concerns were raised that members of staff discussed some more personal matters in front of other service users, without recognising the impact that their comments could have on individuals or members of the group. To address this, actions included additional presence and support from service managers, discussion within supervision and encouraging staff to report any poor practice. It was also decided that further targeted refresher training for staff about Positive Behaviour Support should be arranged.

Concerns were raised within the complaint about delays in issuing minutes for child protection case. The delays were recognised, and apologies provided. It was highlighted that delays were caused by a backlog of work and staff shortages. Action was taken to recruit new staff to support the process and to prevent further delays from occurring.

The complaint arose because a member of the public was given the wrong advice by Shropshire Council's customer services department concerning completion of paperwork in relation to arranging to vote in an election. It was recognised that the member of staff intended to help the customer but unintentionally provided the wrong information. Actions included issuing information to Customer Service Advisors to remind them of the key information and process and to highlight the importance of obtaining all relevant details before providing information or advice to electors.

The complaint arose due to the length of time a customer waited for an Occupational Therapy report. To prevent similar concerns, a waiting list meeting was established to allow teams to discuss people on the waiting list, especially people moving to a priority status. This will enable the Team to get a better understanding of the people waiting and their potential needs and help monitor the number of telephone calls they receive regarding the support being given. People will then be seen in a more timely manner. This will be an ongoing meeting held monthly.

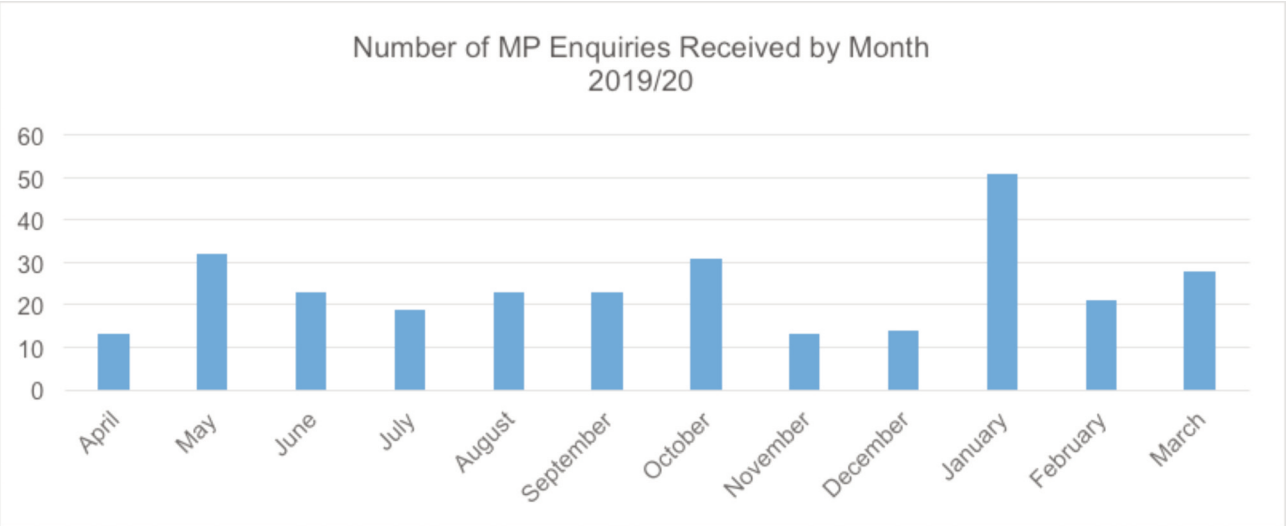
The complaint arose due to staff mistakes including missing appointments, and inaccurate paperwork. Concerns were also raised about the hours of support available. The investigation highlighted some of the causes of the problems raised but concluded that the impact of this was not significant. The actions included checking staff have adequate rest breaks, days off and annual leave in line with Working Time Regulations.

The complaint arose because some information provided within a telephone call was missed. This led to some paperwork being issued with an incorrect detail. The investigation into the complaint highlighted where the information had been missed and suggested action was to make use of recorded telephone calls (where they occur) and to listen back to the information again to double check accuracy.

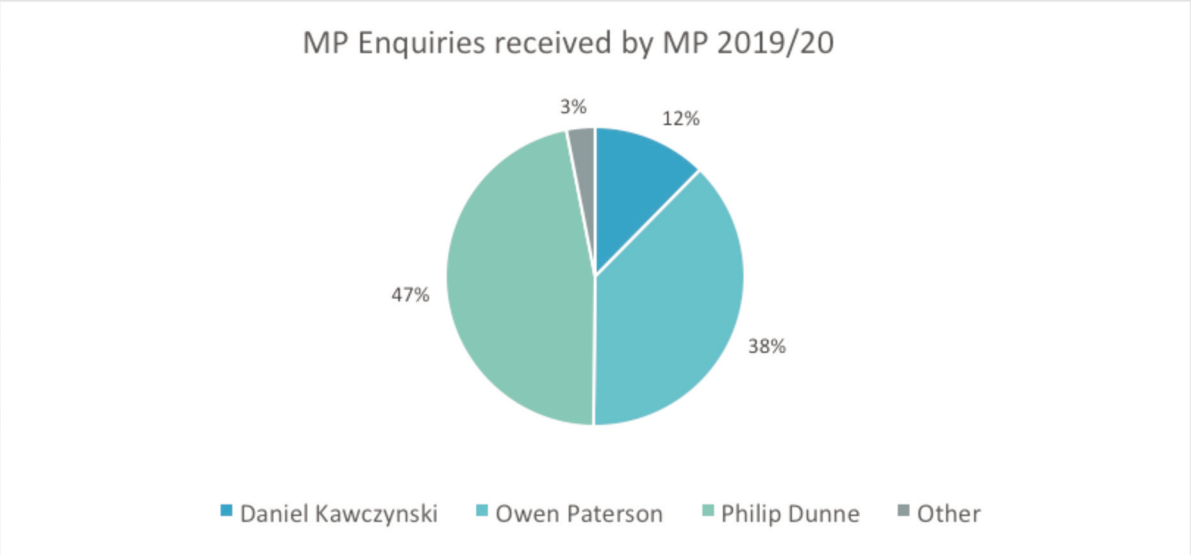
10. MP Enquiries

MP enquiries can commonly duplicate complaints received by Shropshire Council. Often a complainant will choose to make their local Elected Member, MP, Shropshire Council and sometimes the Local Government Ombudsman aware of a complaint at an early stage. For this reason, data concerning MP enquiries is considered and reported separately. Wherever possible Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team will work closely with the Directors' PAs and complaint investigators/service managers to coordinate complaint and MP enquiry responses.

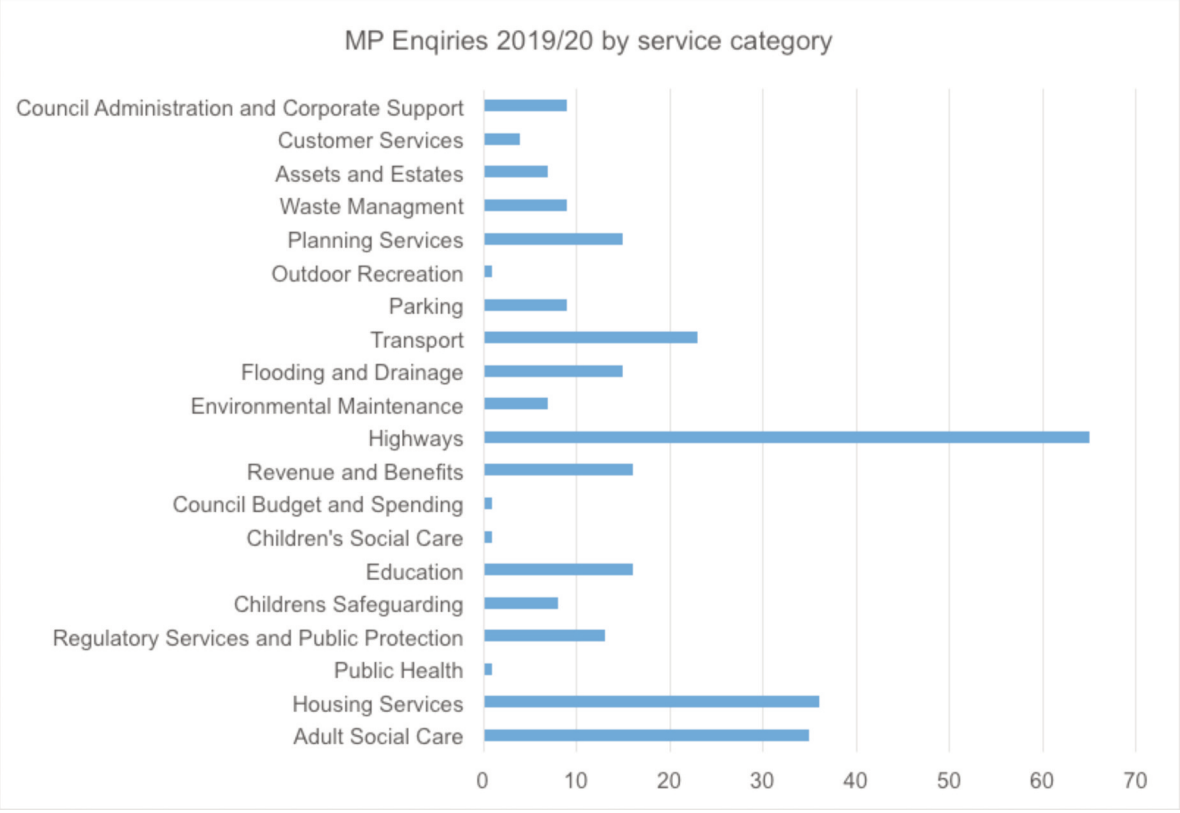
During 2019/20 there were 291 MP enquiries recorded by Shropshire Council (compared to 322 the previous year). The overall pattern of MP enquiries remains similar over time with little variance over the last 2 years and averages around 24 enquiries received a month. In the same way as complaints, there can be seasonal fluctuations caused by seasonal issues such as the impact of winter conditions on the roads or waste collections. January is often a busy month for MP enquiries but this in part may also be influenced by holiday periods. There were 51 enquiries in January 2019, followed by 32 in May and 31 in October.



MP enquiries are received from Shropshire's three MPs, Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham), Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) and Philip Dunne (Ludlow constituency, South Shropshire). The chart below highlights that 47% of all MP enquiries received by Shropshire Council relate to the south of the county.



A consideration of MP enquiries by service category suggests that there are 2 big clusters of topics. 38% of all MP enquiries cover the services Highways, Environmental Maintenance, Flooding/drainage and Transport (infrastructure services). 24% relate to Adult Social Care and Housing (adult support services).



11. Conclusions

The 2019/20 customer feedback data highlights a continued growth in the volumes of formal customer feedback received by Shropshire Council (a 13% increase in cases since last year). The data also highlights a significant increase in complaints investigations with a 43% increase in investigations since the last year. Overall complaints have increased steadily year on year with the number of complaints now more than double the volume 5 years ago (2015/16). This growth is slightly out of line with overall case numbers for two main reasons: a) complaints have increased as the proportion of all cases (there are fewer compliments, comments and other types of formal feedback); and b) increasingly there are likely to be multiple investigations for each complaint supporting anecdotal evidence that complaints cases are becoming more complex in nature.

The nature of complaints remains similar with the allocation of cases across service areas showing similar patterns to previous years. Stage 1 complaints handling remains effective with a small proportion of complaints progressing to Stage 2. It should also be noted that only a relatively small proportion of complaints are upheld (14%) or partly upheld (12%). Reading complaints case summaries highlights that complaints are often generated due to a lack of clear communication, provision of information and delays rather than any fault in following process or service quality when provided. It is possible that that this is the result of the impact of austerity on resource levels within service areas.

A close analysis of complaints by service area (separate and more detailed reports are provided for Children's Services and Adults Services) highlights the main themes for services receiving the greatest number of corporate complaints. Please note that these are reported issues and not necessarily upheld complaints:

- **Highways & Transport –** Highways and Transport received a significantly larger number of complaints than any other area of service (34% of all complaints). Complaints refer to a lack of response/communication, lack of action or delays, complaints about condition of highways such as potholes, parking, road closures/road works and flooding/drainage.
- **Waste & Recycling –** 9% of complaints relate to Waste Management services but it should be highlighted that despite the volumes these complaints are generally handled efficiently by the department. Themes include repeated missed collections, mess caused by rubbish not contained by bins, not returning bins or recycling containers to properties after emptying, attitude and behaviour of individuals collecting waste.
- Risk and Insurance cases feature significantly within the analysis by services, but it should be noted that these cases are not in relation to the services provided by Risk and Insurance Department. They are cases where members of the public express dissatisfaction about issues that are usually withdrawn as complaints and handled as insurance cases.
- Although Planning Services remain within the top 4 services for complaints, and there are some concerns around lack of communication and delay, it should be noted that there has been a significant reduction in case numbers and an improvement in complaint handling over the last year.

Overall the LGO received 85 enquiries from Shropshire in 2019/20, 91 in 2018/19, 84 in 2017/18 and 90 in 2016/17. Overall performance in terms of numbers of cases referred remains similar. The LGO annual data includes upheld rates as key measures of performance. In 2016/17 Shropshire Council's upheld rate was 48%, in 2017/18 it was 32%, in 2018/19 61% and in 2019/20 the upheld rate was 41%. The small numbers mean percentages fluctuate significantly. Performance is slightly better than the average upheld rate for similar local authorities (56%). However, the LGO has asked Shropshire Council, through its annual letter to the Chief Executive to consider its response timescales (the LGO highlight that high proportions of cases are being responded to late).

12. Progress Update

There have been a number of developments over the last 12 months as recommendations set out within the Annual Report 2018/19 have been implemented. Key actions and achievements over the last 12 months are summarised below. It has been highlighted where ongoing action is required:

	Action 2017/18	Progress Made
1	Address increases in complaints through focused preventative work (e.g. increased communications and effective case management).	Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team have implemented a range of actions to try to increase the support available to complaints investigators across the organisation. Careful assessment has taken place to identify cases that may be resolved more rapidly and less formally through comments and service request actions. Where appropriate, suggestions have been made about the actions that may be taken to avoid similar complaints (e.g. by making changes to public information). In addition, regular updates and reminders have been implemented to ensure investigators are aware of any imminent deadlines or outstanding cases to limit escalation of cases. This work has not impacted on complaint volumes and numbers of complaints continue to grow.
2	Undertake closer working with those services within the Place directorate experiencing higher levels of complaints.	Progress has been mixed. There have been some clear successes within this work, most noticeably within Planning Services where numbers of cases have reduced significantly and there is now effective complaint monitoring and regular attention to any outstanding cases. Increased reporting of complaints and joint working with the Place Directorate has been implemented with detailed monthly and/or ad hoc reports supplementing quarterly reporting. The data highlights that this has not yet produced results within the Highways department, in part, due to considerable changes in this service area. It is hoped that a more stable work environment could generate improvement in 2020/21 and this will feature in the recommendations below.
3	Anticipate groups of complaints generated through significant changes in service or policy (highlighted within public consultations).	Over the last 2 years changes in service provision (for example recycling bring banks and parking policy) have led to clusters of complaints on a topic. It has been important in the last 12 months to anticipate where multiple complaints could be likely. A range of actions can then be put in place where needed. This work can include maximising the feedback opportunities within surveys or consultations before a new policy is implemented, anticipating concerns and providing public information to address them, developing core information that may be used within complaints responses (although each complaint is considered separately where there are themes the availability of core information can reduce response times). This proactive work, taking a more holistic approach to feedback, is necessary over the long term.
4	Address the numbers of long running cases exceeding the timescales set.	Although efforts have been undertaken to highlight long running and overdue cases (increasing reporting and reminders) the data highlights that efforts to generate improvement have not been successful overall. This could be the result of staff capacity within services and may, as a result, be difficult to influence without additional resources. This issue remains a concern and is featured again within the recommendations.
5	Improve the recording of learning and actions.	The data for 2019/20 highlights that this remains a concern. The recording of learning and actions for statutory complaints remains effective (complaints investigators respond formally and frequently include feedback concerning learning and actions within response letters). However, despite some good practice within some service areas responding to corporate complaints, there has been a noticeable decline in quality in some areas. Increasingly investigators are responding to complaints in an informal way and not at a standard that would be expected within a formal process subject to external scrutiny.

	Action 2017/18	Progress Made
6	Address the increase in complaints being made across multiple processes.	A noticeable trend over the last 2 years has been for complainants to use multiple processes to raise their complaint. Increasingly complainants may send their concerns to Shropshire Council as a complaint, as an MP enquiry, as a councillor enquiry and if available an enforcement case or other type of case. Over the last 12 months discussions have taken place with key leads in different departments to try to determine how this can be addressed and a more coordinated response designed. Some progress has been achieved in that Customer Services led records can be viewed and read only access has been granted for the Highways IT system. However, without integration between IT systems it is not possible to have the view of all open cases for a customer and this issue remains a challenge.
7	Consider the 2018/19 increase in the LGO upheld rate.	There is a recognition that the relatively small numbers of cases progressing to the LGO can lead to variations in the upheld rate (measured as a percentage), nevertheless the upheld rate was a concern in 2018/19. The 2019/20 data shows a significant improvement in the upheld rate but LGO responses must remain a focus (see recommendations).
8	Take action to increase knowledge of, and further develop processes for, third party provider complaints.	The coordination of third-party provider complaints has been a successful area of work over the last 12 months. Processes and ways of working have become well embedded and joint work across the teams supporting this process (including contracts and Adult Social Care's Commissioning and Business Support Unit) has been very effective. Knowledge of ways of working is increasing gradually within the provider market and although work will be required over the long term, this no longer appears to be an area in need of special attention.
9	Provide staff training for complaint handling and good practice.	Over the last 12 months complaint training has been delivered on request, with a particular focus on statutory complaint handling within Adult and Children's Social Care. New complaint training resources have been developed by the Feedback and Insight Team for face to face training. Due to the significant increase in case numbers there has not been the capacity to develop online complaints training, but this remains an ambition.
10	Integrate Councillor Enquiries and MP Enquiries into the new IT system for customer feedback.	When the new IT system for customer feedback was developed it was designed as a phased implementation with complaints, compliments and comments forming the first phase of development. It was planned that a second phase of development would allow the recording of MP Enquiries, Councillor Enquiries and Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious procedure cases. Therefore, this development was included as a recommendation for focus in the last annual report. There is not currently any corporate commitment to progress the outstanding system development and for that reason no progress can be achieved. The recommendation will be carried forward into 2020/21 with the hope that this can be built into ICT transformation planning.
11	Further develop and improve reporting from the new customer feedback IT system.	This recommendation has been achieved. Reporting is now well established and filterable Power BI reports are available for use by all service areas and teams. These are made widely available by email across the organisation. Ad hoc reports are produced on request and monthly reporting is also in place for some service areas. This increased access to information has not positively impacted on performance.

13. Recommendations

The following recommendations for 2020/21 are designed to allow for ongoing improvement in the application of Shropshire Council's complaints procedures and in the work undertaken to obtain and respond to customer feedback.

1. Overall there are growing numbers of customer feedback cases and a significant increase in the number of complaints investigations being undertaken. In many service areas, a review of complaints suggests there are few opportunities to address this growing volume of cases. Many service areas do not receive clusters of complaints on one topic, nor are large numbers of complaints upheld, both of which would suggest a need for improvement. However, there is one exception in the Highways department where numbers of complaints have increased and now form a significant proportion of the Council's overall complaints (34%). There seems to be some opportunity to make improvements in complaints handling this area and it is recommended that this is a priority for 2020/21.

2. The 2019/20 data highlights that over the year, there were a large number of 'no finding' outcomes recorded. This suggests that in many cases there has been a failure to investigate and report back on allocated complaints. 56% of 'no finding' outcomes are recorded for Shropshire Council's Highways and Transport department with very small numbers spread across other services. This links to the recommendation above, but it is recommended that work takes place with service managers and all investigators within the Highways department to highlight the importance of responding to allocated complaints and completing investigations in line with the corporate procedure.

3. Although average response times are within target, concerns remain about the large number of long running and overdue complaint cases. Performance reporting over the last 12 months has not impacted positively on long running and overdue complaints. For this reason, it is recommended that a one-off detailed review is undertaken on a service by service basis, working with senior managers to provide detailed information at the investigator level. This will allow managers to fully understand where there are ongoing obstacles and performance issues.

4. There is a concern about a drop in the overall quality of complaints responses and the compliance of complaints investigators with the standards and expectations set out by the Feedback and Insight Team. However, there is recognition that guidance and support is perhaps not as easily available as it could be for members of staff who are either new to complaints investigator role or receive complaints only very infrequently. To address this staff information and guidance will be made more accessible and reminders issued to ensure staff know what is expected and how to seek support if it is needed.

5. An ongoing recommendation is needed to address the lack of identification of learning and actions from corporate complaints. This recommendation is linked to the guidance for staff above, but it is important to focus on understanding learning and actions so that ongoing improvement can be generated (this ongoing learning and improvement is an important part of working to address the overall increases in complaints).

Recommendations continued...

6. LGO performance remains similar for the number of cases considered by the Ombudsman, and the upheld rate has improved in 2019/20. Despite the overall improvement in performance (and above average performance in the upheld rate compared to similar local authorities) the LGO has requested Shropshire Council look at its performance in relation to delays (time taken to respond and to implement recommendations). This should not be considered reflective of any team performance, it requires responsiveness from across the organisation and it is recommended it forms an area for attention in 2020/21.

7. The delivery of staff training is another ongoing recommendation from 2019/20. Face to face training continues to be delivered but plans to develop online training have had to be put on hold due to the increase in case volumes. It is an ongoing ambition to implement online complaints training for staff and it is recommended that this work is part of the Feedback and Insight Team's plan for 2020/21.

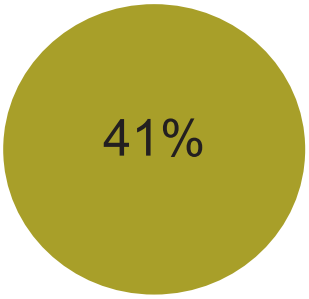
8. The data highlights that there are significant numbers of people making repeat complaints and submitting high volumes of other feedback to Shropshire Council. Where this is reasonable, cases can be handled effectively, and responses made. However, in some cases the level or nature of contact becomes unreasonable and starts to require significant time, negatively impacting on the ability of Shropshire Council staff members to carry out their services. It is recommended that the Unusually Persistent and Vexatious Customers Procedure is supported by the provision of additional staff information so that managers are better aware of the process they can follow where needed to respond to the most challenging cases (note these cases are not necessarily related to complaints).

9. Quarterly complaints reports are made available to all service areas via Directors and key contacts within council departments. Reports identify who has opened and viewed them. This information has highlighted that complaints performance reports are not being widely used. It is recommended that this is explored over the next 12 months to understand the reason for this and see if there are any actions that can be taken to increase use.

Appendix 1 Ombudsman Cases 2019/20

Shropshire Council
For the period ending: 31/03/20

Complaints upheld



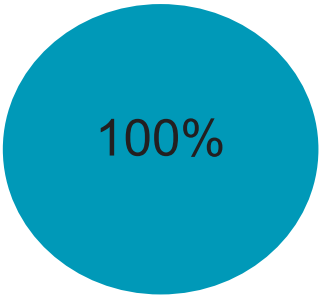
41% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **56%** in similar authorities.

11
upheld decisions

Statistics are based on a total of 27 detailed investigations for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



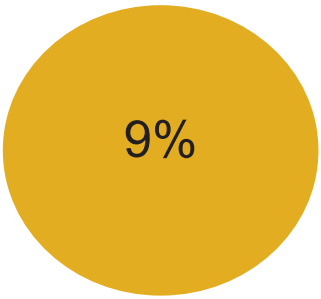
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the authority had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar authorities.

Statistics are based on a total of 12 compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority



In **9%** of upheld cases we found the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **11%** in similar authorities.

1
satisfactory remedy decision

Statistics are based on a total of 27 detailed investigations for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Appendix 2

Recommendations to the Council made by the LGO during 2019/20

This table covers complaints that were upheld by the LGO during 2019/20:

LGO Category	Date decision made	Remedy	LGO's Recommendation	Recommendation actioned
Planning & Development	11/06/2019	Apology	Apology	Complete
Adult Care Services	08/05/2019	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	Apology and financial redress.	Complete
Education & Children's Services	23/04/2019	Apology, Training and guidance	Within one month of my decision the Council should: send a memo to officers dealing with education, health and care plans reminding them of the need to complete the process within 14 weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances. That memo should particularly remind officers to follow up with the school when Council officers are unable to attend the review meeting to ensure there is no delay providing the review paperwork; and send a memo to those dealing with complaints to remind them of the need to follow the Council's complaints procedure.	Complete
Planning & Development	23/07/2019	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	The Council will ensure measurements taken in respect of enforcement investigations are kept on record.	Complete
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07/02/2020	New appeal/review or reconsidered decision, Procedure or policy change/review	The Council has agreed to properly consider whether there is any further action it could take to address the fly-tipping problem in the area. It will provide details of the options it has considered, any action it intends to take and its reasons for not taking any action which is within its power. The Council has agreed to take action to ensure the fly-tipping problem in the area is reviewed periodically. The Council has agreed to review the way it deals with residents' telephone calls and emails to ensure it responds to them in a timely manner.	Complete

LGO Category	Date decision made	Remedy	LGO's Recommendation	Recommendation actioned
Planning & Development	22/01/2020	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Provide information/advice	Financial redress and information provision.	Complete
Planning & Development	12/11/2019	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Provide training and/or guidance	The Council will send a memo to planning officers to remind them of the need to visit development sites and ensure, when doing so, they identify any properties with a boundary with the development site that should have been informed of the proposal.	Part complete. Payment made with ongoing action required.
Planning & Development	24/01/2020	Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss	Financial redress.	Complete
Education & Children's Services	02/09/2019	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, New appeal/review or reconsidered decision	Apology, review and financial redress.	Complete
Adult Care Services	05/12/2019	No further action, already remedied.		Complete
Adult Care Services	10/02/2020	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	Apology and financial redress.	Complete

Customer Feedback Annual Report

Shropshire Council

2019/20

For more information concerning Shropshire Council's customer feedback reporting contact:

Feedback and Insight Team, Information, Intelligence and Insight, Shropshire Council
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6ND

Email: customer.feedback@shropshire.gov.uk
www.shropshire.gov.uk

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Cabinet 5th October	Item Public

Consultation response to the Planning White Paper – Planning for the Future

Responsible Officer
e-mail: Ian.kilby@shropshire.gov.uk Tel:01743 258718

1. Summary

The Government is proposing significant changes to the planning system first introduced with the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and published a White Paper: Planning for the Future for consultation on 6th August.

This is a 12 week consultation closing on 29th October and the paper proposes a series of radical reforms to the process of plan making, decision taking and infrastructure contribution and delivery mechanisms. The Government describes the consultation as reforms of the planning system to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed. The proposals set out in the White Paper are considered under three thematic pillars and 26 questions are posed. Officers have considered the document and the draft response attached as Appendix A sets out the implications of the proposals for planning, development and infrastructure in Shropshire.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet confirms its response to the White Paper: Planning for the Future as provided in Appendix A

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

Analysis of the effects on equality

The White Paper takes into account potential equalities impacts issues as part of the consultation and seeks views on the potential impact on the proposals

raised in the consultation on people with protected characteristics and whether further reforms could broaden access to planning for people in diverse groups and ensure inclusivity is achieved for a wide range of groups. it is the Government's intention to make the planning system more accessible, accountable, digital and transparent to increase access and engagement for all groups. the outcome of the consultation will determine whether this aspiration is realised.

Data protection
There are no data protection implications arising from the recommendation of this report, the White Paper consultation sets out in Annex A how personal data will be managed and used through the consultation process.

Human Rights
No issues identified

4. Financial Implications

No issues identified by the consultation but the recommendations in the white paper would have a number of resource implications which are set out in the the Council's response at Appendix A

5. Background

5.1 The White Paper: Planning for the Future was published on 6th August. The 12 week consultation runs to 29th October and the Government expects changes to be introduced next year. The 82 page White Paper considers the existing planning system to be out dated and ineffective, opaque and uncertain for developers and for communities wishing to engage with the process being based more on discretion than rules leading it suggests frequently to poor outcomes. Themes of modernisation, increased use of data and technology run through the paper which also seeks to meet the Governments aspiration to deliver 300,000 new homes each year.

5.2 Its vision is for the planning system to:-

- *be more ambitious for the places we create, expecting new development to be beautiful and to create a 'net gain' not just 'no net harm*
- *Enhance democracy and engagement*
- *improve the user experience of the planning system*
- *support home ownership*
- *increase the supply of land available for new homes*
- *help businesses to expand with readier access to the commercial space they need*
- *support innovative developers and house builder*
- *promote the stewardship and improvement of our precious countryside and environment*
- *create a virtuous circle of prosperity in our villages, towns and cities*

5.3 The proposals in the White paper are set out under three thematic headings described as “Pillars” and the paper poses 26 questions for consideration throughout the text under these pillars

5.4 **Pillar One – Planning for Development**. This provides a simplified approach to identifying land suitable for development by zoning land into three broad categories:-

Growth areas that are suitable for sustainable development including new settlements, urban extension sites, former industrial sites and urban regeneration sites. Sites categorised as such in the Local Plan would have ‘outline approval’ for development. All flood risk areas would be excluded from this category.

Renewal areas that are suitable for development to include existing built areas that are suitable for smaller scale development, including densification, infill, town centres and village-edge sites. A statutory presumption in favour of development would not stop Local Planning Authorities resisting inappropriate development on residential gardens.

Protected areas including Green Belt, AONB and Conservation Areas where there would be more stringent control over new development.

5.5 **Pillar Two – Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable places**. This outlines proposals to provide a system where there are binding design codes and a planning framework which is rooted in local preferences and character. A new design body would be supported by a new chief officer for design and place-making in each local authority. A proposal to fast-track *planning for beauty* by accelerating high quality development reflecting local character and preferences is one of the areas where meaningful engagement will be required with local communities. In addition, this section deals with sustainability and a renewed commitment to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 alongside ambitious improvements to energy efficient standards.

5.6 **Pillar Three – Planning for Infrastructure and Connected Places.** This proposes a new Infrastructure Levy to replace all CIL and current s106 planning obligations. The new flat-rate charge would be set nationally at either a single rate or area-specific rates and would be charged on the final value of a development and collected at that time rather than on commencement. The levy also applying to Permitted Developments. While greater certainty over contributions is expected, the plan is also to include affordable housing contributions within this levy and for local authorities to have more freedom over how they spend it, which will see more trade-offs between infrastructure investment and affordable housing.

5.7 The Government states that communities will be consulted from the beginning of the planning process and help to shape design codes to guide what development will happen in their area.

5.8 Government considers that the reforms will mean:
• Much-needed homes will be built quicker by ensuring local housing plans are developed and agreed in 30 months – down from the current 7 years it often takes.

• Every area to have a local plan in place - currently only 50% of local areas has an up-to-date plan to build more homes.
• The planning system will be made more accessible, by harnessing the latest technology through online maps and data.
• Valued green spaces will be protected for future generations by allowing for more building on brownfield land and all new streets to be tree lined.
• The planning process to be overhauled and replaced with a clearer,rules based system. Currently around a third of planning cases that go to appeal are overturned.
• A new simpler national levy to replace the current system of developer contributions which often causes delay – this will provide more certainty about the number of affordable homes being built.
• The creation of a fast-track system for beautiful buildings and establishing local design guidance for developers to build and preserve beautiful communities.

6.0 Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 The White Paper makes provision to require development to respond to the challenge of climate change an include a requirement for all new homes to be 'zero carbon ready', with no new homes delivered under the new system needed to be retrofitted as we achieve our commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The White Paper proposes significant and ambitious changes to the planning system although it also acknowledges that many practical issues need to be worked through and the Housing Minister Robert Jenrick has also acknowledged in a keynote speech to the Create Streets annual conference on 22nd September that it will be "very challenging" for local authorities, many of whom have experienced funding cuts and reduced capacity, to cope with the government's proposed changes to the planning system as set out in the Planning For The Future white paper. It is considered that the current planning system, while not perfect does have merits and provides a balance between appropriate consultation, regulation and delivery. In Shropshire the Planning Service has demonstrated significant housing delivery against an adopted local plan with a rising growth trajectory. The potential impacts of the White Paper for Shropshire could be significant in terms of housing numbers and other matters which are considered in detail in Appendix A

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

The Planning White Paper Consultation: Planning for the Future

file:///V:/Planning/Management%20Team/Government%20Consultations/200805_Changes_to_the_current_planning_system_FINAL_version.pdf

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder - Communities, Place Planning and Regulatory Services

Councillor Robert Macey – Portfolio Holder, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning

Local Member

All Members

Appendices

Appendix A – Shropshire Council Response to the White Paper: Planning for the Future.

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Appendix A

Shropshire Council consultation response to Planning White Paper: Planning for the Future

The White Paper Consultation poses 26 questions which are reproduced below with responses under the three pillars of the consultation. For this response a brief summary or context of the issue will preface each response, for the full text please refer to the white paper following the link below:-

file:///V:/Planning/Management%20Team/Government%20Consultations/200805_Changes_to_the_current_planning_system_FINAL_version.pdf

Questions 1 to 14 : Pillar One : Planning for Development

Question 1: What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

The Government considers the existing planning system to be outdated ineffective, controversial, limited in market diversity, complicated, unpredictable, bureaucratic, failing to deliver good design and disconnected from the communities the process is intended to serve. (see forewords to the White Paper by Boris Johnson and Robert Jenrick). Notwithstanding its potential faults the current planning system is transparent, proven, complicated, regulated and legalistic. Decisions are evidence led but sometimes perceptions about the process informs public opinion.

Question 1 Response: This very much depends from what perspective the question is being responded to or experiences. In terms of the Shropshire Council response this might be:-

- Evidence – led
- Influenced by perceptions
- Quasi Legal.

Question 2(a) : Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area? 2(b). If no, why not?

Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify

Here the white paper is seeking to confirm if and why people get involved with planning decisions – it is more aimed at stakeholders than the Local Planning Authority

Question 2 Response: 2(a) Yes – Shropshire Council is the Local Planning Authority

2(b) N/A

Question 3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?

Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify

Again this is a question aimed at those engaging with the planning process more than for the Council as Local planning Authority but the context to this question is that the government is seeking to make more information about local plans and planning applications digitally enabled, interactive and responsive.

Question 3 response: The Council already provides open and transparent access to its planning processes through a well-established and accessible online presence. It would welcome proposals to make information about planning more accessible to more in the community through digital platforms but these cannot be the only method of communication in a large rural and sparsely populated country where there is not complete digital infrastructure connectivity or coverage.

Question 4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify

A further question aimed primarily at communities or stakeholder groups. All of these priorities are important and many are inter-related, i.e. communities may be more accepting of development provided it meets their aspirations about type/quality and there is a timely delivery of infrastructure.

Question 4 response: Shropshire Council considers all of these priorities are important and many are inter-related, i.e. communities may be more accepting of development provided it meets their aspirations about type/quality. Communities often express concern about the lack of smaller or affordable housing. They are concerned about the poor response from the development sector to meet the challenge of climate change through development, the quality and design of housing, and despite utilising both the community infrastructure levy and s106 obligations the timely implementation of infrastructure associated with new development is a concern often expressed by Shropshire communities.

Question 5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals? Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government proposes to streamline the process of plan making by:-

- Simplifying the role of Local Plans, to focus on identifying land under three categories – **Growth areas** suitable for substantial development, and where outline approval for development would be automatically secured for forms and types of development specified in the Plan; **Renewal areas** suitable for some development, such as gentle densification; and **Protected areas** where – as the name suggests – development is restricted
- Local Plans should set clear rules rather than general policies for development
- Local councils should radically and profoundly re-invent the ambition, depth and breadth with which they engage with communities as they consult on Local Plan
- Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory "sustainable development" test, and unnecessary assessments and requirements that cause delay and challenge in the current system should be abolished
- Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new standard template
- Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable (of no more than 30 months in total) for key stages of the process, and there will be sanctions for those who fail to do so
- Decision-making should be faster and more certain, within firm deadlines, and should make greater use of data and digital technology

Question 5 response: Yes

Shropshire Council is supportive of a Plan-led system, which ensures that there is a coordinated approach to development including such issues as the needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the local economy, community facilities and infrastructure; whilst also ensuring appropriate safeguarding of the historic and natural environment, enabling adaptation to climate change and helping to secure high-quality and accessible design.

Shropshire Council also supports the principle of appropriately simplifying the Local Plan process, increasing the use of technology within Local Planning, representing material more visually and standardisation to ensure consistency and transparency.

With regard to the approach to land with Local Plans outlined within the 'Planning for the Future Consultation', Shropshire Council is supportive of the broad concept of classifying land into categories, which is not dissimilar from the current approach. However, it is considered that there is scope for over-simplification with the proposed approach, and indeed some real potential for confusion and overlap between categories. For instance looking at the proposed 'growth' and 'renewal' categories,

given that the ‘growth’ category would include large areas for redevelopment (which could be perceived as renewal), and renewal would potentially include small and moderate sized developments on greenfield land (which could be perceived as growth and does represent a significant component of development sites).

As an alternative proposal the Government suggests that Growth and Renewal areas might be combined into a single category with permission in principle extended to the whole area. Shropshire Council does not support this and suggests extending the description of ‘growth’ areas to ‘substantial growth and redevelopment’. It would also suggest dividing the ‘renewal’ area into two elements ‘renewal’ which focuses purely on the renewal/gentle densification of existing areas – similar to existing areas within development boundaries under the current system, and ‘small and moderate growth’ for the smaller development sites. This would then result in four land categories which are more clearly distinguished:

- Protect;
- Renew;
- Small and Moderate growth;
- Substantial growth and redevelopment;

There is also a need to clarify how land that is constrained e.g. subject to flood risk, but is a corridor/pocket within a wider development site to be categorised as ‘growth’ would be treated. It would appear very strange to exclude it, but equally it would be inappropriate for it to come forward for development. Would the guidelines allow sufficient certainty for this matter, given that such a site could potentially benefit from outline planning permission/permission in principle?

Furthermore, it will be important to understand how buffers of sensitive areas within renewal areas would be treated. e.g. settings of historic assets, proximity of ecology assets and proximity to ‘bad-neighbours’, again it would be strange to exclude such areas but the Council would question whether guidelines allow sufficient certainty for this matter, given that such a site could potentially benefit from outline planning permission/permission in principle?

With regard to the proposal to offer outline planning permission/permission in principle to sites identified within the ‘growth’ or ‘renew’ areas within Local Plans, see the response to Questions 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c).

With regard to the other aspects of simplification of the Local Plan the Council responds to these under the relevant questions.

Question 6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement

Here the Government proposes that development management policy contained in a local plan would be restricted to clear and necessary site or area-specific

requirements, including broad height limits, scale and/or density limits for land included in Growth areas and Renewal areas, established through the accompanying text.

The National Planning Policy Framework would become the primary source of policies for development management and there would be no repetition of generic national policies in Local Plans

Local Planning Authorities would be encouraged to produce design guides and codes either as part of the local plan or as a Supplementary Planning Document. The design code should be produced in a machine readable format for screening purposes to aid validation and assessment of suitability of proposals.

Alternatively, the Government suggests that allow local authorities flexibility to set local policy as at present with the exception that policies that duplicate national policy would not be allowed.

Question 6 response; No

Shropshire Council supports the principle of streamlining the development management content of Local Plans and setting out general development management policies nationally. However, it is important to recognise the diversity of the communities, settlements and the built and natural environment in this country. As such rather than having no general development management policies, we would support the alternative approach proposed of limiting general development management policies to only where they supplement and/or provide local distinction to the national suite of policies.

Shropshire Council also supports the concept of design codes for 'growth' and 'renewal' areas. However, it will be crucial to ensure Local Authorities are adequately resourced to prepare these documents as given the diversity of the communities and settlements in some Local Authorities (such as Shropshire) which have a significant geography, built and landscape heritage which could result in significant range of design codes compared with a small urban Local Planning Authority.

Question 7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of "sustainable development", which would include consideration of environmental impact?

Yes / No / Not sure.

Question 7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

Please provide supporting statement.

Here the Government proposes to abolish the Sustainability Appraisal system and develop a simplified process for assessing the environmental impact of plans, which would continue to satisfy the requirements of UK and international law and treaties

The Duty to Cooperate test would be removed (although further consideration will be given to the way in which strategic cross-boundary issues, such as major infrastructure or strategic sites, can be adequately planned for, including the scale at which plans are best prepared in areas with significant strategic challenges) and a slimmed down assessment of deliverability for the plan would be incorporated into the "sustainable development" test.

Question 7 (a) response: Yes

Shropshire Council is generally supportive of the proposal to replace the existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of "sustainable development", which would include consideration of environmental impact.

However, whilst some elements of deliverability depend on 'sustainable development' considerations, the issue is much broader, relying equally on factors such as land ownership, market capacity and viability, as such we consider that there is some merit in including a separate and complementary 'deliverability' test.

The Council is generally supportive of replacing the current Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process, with a simpler, more transparent system, subject to the specific details of how this might work. As whilst there is a statutory requirement to appraise the environmental impact of Local Plans, the actual implementation of the current SA system is extremely time consuming. Furthermore, many find the process hard to understand and have expectations that it can prevent development or be used as a key point of challenge, often causing unnecessary delays to plan-making and adoption. A simpler, more transparent system which still meets the government's legal requirements would therefore be preferable.

Question 7(b) response: Shropshire Council generally supports the removal of the Duty-to-Cooperate subject to an appropriate mechanism being introduced for strategic cross-boundary issues.

One potential alternative mechanism is for a regional/sub-regional forum of Local Authorities, perhaps meeting bi-annually, which identifies cross-boundary issues and then discusses options for their management.

Question 8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Question 8(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement

Local Plans would identify housing and employment land for a 10 year period. There would be a standardised method for setting housing numbers and a standard

method to meet Governments target of 300,000 homes per annum. Local Planning Authorities would be LPAs responsible for allocating land to meet the requirement. The Green belt policy would remain, the 5yr housing land supply would go and the housing delivery test would remain.

Question 8 (a) response: No

Shropshire Council is supportive of the principle of having a 'standard methodology' for assessing housing need, as this ensures that the calculation of housing need is undertaken more consistently across the country; makes the process more simple, quick and transparent; and reduces potential for challenge and the associated cost and delays to the Plan making process.

The Council also support the principle of introducing an adjustment to take account of constraints that exist within an area, however the specifics of such a mechanism would require careful consideration and further consultation. Further, it is suggested that this could also potentially be extended to include consideration of opportunities for redevelopment of brownfield land, given that this should be the first option for new development and such a consideration may help in supporting the viability of such development, particularly if appropriate mechanisms to support delivery of such sites are introduced in tandem.

However, unless it can be ensured that the underlying data which informs the 'standard methodology' is accurate, we consider that the current approach which requires the 'standard methodology' to be applied unless exceptional circumstances exist should continue, rather than making the new 'standard methodology' binding.

The new proposed 'standard methodology' being consulted upon within the *"Changes to the current planning system, Consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations"* highlights this issue. Shropshire Council is generally very supportive of the proposed methodology; however, Shropshire Council is very concerned with the suggested reliance on the 2018-based Sub-National Household Projections. This primarily relates to the decision by the Office for National Statistics to use only two years of migration data to inform a 25-year projection, which has resulted in what we consider to be totally inaccurate projections for Shropshire.

Question 8 (b) response: Yes

Shropshire Council considers that these factors are appropriate indicators of local housing need.

Question 9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Question 9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Question 9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Government here is proposing there to be automatic outline planning permission in Growth Areas and approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building. Further details agreed and full permission achieved through a streamlined and faster consent route in one of 3 ways:-

(1) a reformed reserved matters process for agreeing the issues which remain outstanding;

(2) a Local Development Order prepared by LPA in parallel with the Local Plan linked to a master plan and design codes; or

(3) for very large sites a Development Consent Order under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime

In Renewal Areas there would be a general presumption in favour of sustainable development to be granted in one of 3 ways:-

- for pre-specified forms of development such as the redevelopment of certain building types, through a new permission route which gives an automatic consent if the scheme meets design and other prior approval requirements (as discussed further under the fast-track to beauty proposals set out under Pillar Two);
- for other types of development, a faster planning application process where a planning application for the development would be determined in the context of the Local Plan description, for what development the area or site is appropriate for, and with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework; or
- a Local or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Question 9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?

Question 9(a) response:- Yes

Subject to clarity regarding the range of information required from site promoters (which will be comparable to that required at Outline Planning Application stage, but earlier in the process) being provided. Otherwise negotiating what information is to be provided may cause significant delays to the plan making process.

However, Shropshire Council considers that it is important to recognise that:

- Much of the evidence base prepared to inform a Local Plan currently relates to the site assessment process and the level of scrutiny of sites would only increase as a result of this proposal. For context within the site assessment process undertaken to inform the ongoing Shropshire Local Plan Review, we considered in excess of 2,000 sites and are currently consulting on proposals to allocate around 80 sites in around 60 settlements with capacity for more than 9,000 dwellings.
- More information will be required from site promoters (such as landowners and developers) at the Local Plan stage, this may discourage some site promoters, particularly those associated with smaller sites who are less able to undertake the assessment work necessary to support an Outline Planning Application until they have the certainty of an allocation. This would have the perverse effect of discouraging site promotions, particularly from landowners without a developer and small and medium developers.
- There will be increased focus on the consultations undertaken during the Local Plan, as there is no subsequent opportunity through the Development Management process. This could also have implications for timescales and level of challenge

Question 9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas?

Question 9(b) response:- No

Shropshire Council considers that it is important to recognise that:

- Much of the evidence base prepared to inform a Local Plan currently relates to the site assessment process and the level of scrutiny of sites would only increase as a result of such proposals. For context within the site assessment process undertaken to inform the ongoing Shropshire Local Plan Review, we considered in excess of 2,000 sites and are currently consulting on proposals to allocate around 80 sites in around 60 settlements with capacity for more than 9,000 dwellings.
- More information will be required from site promoters (such as landowners and developers) at the Local Plan stage, this may discourage some site promoters, particularly those associated with smaller sites who are less able to undertake the assessment work necessary to support an Outline Planning Application until they have the certainty of an allocation. This would have the perverse effect of discouraging site promotions, particularly from landowners without a developer and small and medium developers.
- There will be increased focus on the consultations undertaken during the Local Plan, as there is no subsequent opportunity through the Development Management process. This could also have implications for timescales and level of challenge.

As such, Shropshire Council considers that the alternative approach suggested within Proposal 1, involving focusing outline planning permission/permission in

principle on larger sites within the 'growth' category of Local Plans, whilst other areas of land would, as now, be identified for different forms of development in ways determined by the local planning authority (and taking into account policy in the National Planning Policy Framework), and subject to the existing development management process, represents a more effective approach.

This would make the most effective use of Local Authority resources, ensure that timescales for the site assessment process do not significantly increase, ensure that the process is inclusive and does not exclude those landowners who are unable to undertake any necessary technical assessments required to support a site promotion and will allow communities a further opportunity to comment on the development of smaller sites through the Development Management process. Whilst also ensuring greater certainty for promoters of the larger sites which make significant contributions to the housing land supply.

Question 9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

Question 9c response: No

Shropshire Council is generally of the view that the decision for allowing new settlements to be brought forward should be determined at the Local Authority level as this process is best placed for ensuring involvement from relevant local communities and ensure consistency with other development proposals in the area.

Question 10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government is seeking to make decision taking faster and more certain with firm deadlines and also to make greater use of digital technology.

In particular it proposes:-

- that the 8 or 13 week deadline should be a firm deadline, not an aspiration with an extension of time agreed
- To integrate validation requirements at submission
- For Government to provide investable proposal for modernising planning systems in local government
- Modular software landscape to automate routine processes to support faster decision tasking – more codification…more screening more certainty.
- To reduce information requirements and make machine readable linked to a national data standard for simple applications
- To Standardised supporting statement (50pages max) for major planning applications
- To provide an automatic refund of the planning fee for the application if LPA fails to determine it within the time limit

- For some types of applications should be deemed to have been granted planning permission if there has not been a timely determination
- To ensure that the facilities and infrastructure that communities value, such as schools, hospitals and GP surgeries, are delivered quickly through the planning system.
- That by ensuring greater certainty about the principle of development in Local Plans, Government expects to see fewer appeals being considered by the Planning Inspectorate

Question 10 response: Elements of this proposal are welcomed, such as streamlined validation requirements, Shropshire Council already adopts this approach but proposals for digitally supported validation processes would be welcomed.

The performance sticks element of this proposal are not agreed and could have unforeseen outcomes. Shropshire Council maintains a very positive outcome focussed approach to planning decisions. There is a light touch approach to validation that was agreed in consultation with planning agents and developers some years ago. The approach was agreed on the basis that if the agent/developer did not submit information necessary to determine a planning application at the time of submission then the application would not be determined until it was. This means sometimes it will take longer than the 8 or 13 week deadline. The Council deals with over 5,500 regulatory decisions each year. Over 91% of planning applications are approved. 89% are determined in a timeframe agreed with the applicant and 89% are also determined in accordance with the views of the parish council demonstrating strong community alignment. If firm performance measures are approved then the approval rate is likely to decline in order to maintain performance overall. In addition the Development Management team has undertaken a comprehensive process review supported by the Planning Advisory service and this demonstrated that for simple planning applications the consideration time has been reduced by 25% to around 40 days overall. In a county rich in environmental designations covering the historic and natural environment it is not always possible to determine applications quickly unless the validation requirement is strengthened and applicants are prevented from making applications until all necessary information is submitted. This may not align with the governments stated aim of cutting red tape and making the process simpler.

Question 11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?
Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Government considers that Local plans should be visual and map based, to a standardised template and based on the latest digital technology. It aims to publish a “model” template for Local Plans and subsequent updates, well in advance of the legislation being brought into force. The text-based component of plans would be limited to spatially-specific matters and capable of being accessible in a range of different formats, including through simple digital services on a smartphone.

It proposes that digital plans should be carefully designed with the user in mind and to ensure inclusivity, so that they can be accessed in different formats, on different devices, and are accessible and understandable by all. A new digital civic engagement processes will be enabled, making it easier for people to understand what is being proposed where and how it will affect them. These tools have the potential to transform how communities engage with Local Plans, opening up new ways for people to feed their views into the system, including through social networks and via mobile phones to reach a broader audience (younger people).

Question 11 response: Yes

Shropshire Council supports the principle of accessible, web-based Local Plans. We recognise that such an approach is consistent with how other sectors are evolving and presents an opportunity to extend the reach of consultations. Although it is important to ensure that:

- Such changes continue to effectively include those who 'get involved' through current mechanisms.
- It is recognised that some do not engage in the process through choice rather than because of the chosen mechanisms for consultation and that this is unlikely to change.

Importantly this would need to be reflected in changes to the examination process, reducing the amount of paper copies required. This could also result in cost savings as a result a reduction to the amount of necessary printed material.

With regard to the references to 'more limited evidence' we would reiterate the point that much of the evidence prepared in support of Local Plans is that necessary to undertake a robust site assessment process. The Council does not consider that there will necessarily be a significant reduction in the level of evidence required, particularly if site allocations are to benefit from outline planning permission or permission in principle, which may in fact increase the amount of evidence required during the site assessment and allocation process.

Additionally, with regard to the use of 3D visualisations and other tools to support community engagement, it is important to consider what is an appropriate scale for such mechanisms, otherwise this could represent a significant additional administrative burden which potentially 'slows' the plan making process.

By way of context, Shropshire Council is currently undertaking a Local Plan Review, as part of this process we considered in excess of 2,000 sites through our site assessment process and are currently consulting on proposals to allocate around 80 sites (ranging in size from 7 dwellings to 1,500 dwellings, with total capacity for in the region of 9,000 dwellings) in around 60 settlements.

Furthermore, as per the Council's response to Q6 of this Consultation, in recognition of the diversity of the communities, settlements and the built and natural environment in this Country, we consider that it is important for general development management policies to be included within Local Plans, **where they supplement and/or provide local distinction to the national suite of policies, such policies**

should form part of future accessible, web-based Local Plans, the methods of integrating such policies into a web-based Local Plan would need to be considered.

Question 12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government is proposing a statutory duty for local authorities to adopt a new Local Plan by a specified date – either 30 months from the legislation being brought into force, or 42 months for local planning authorities which have adopted a Local Plan within the previous three years or where a Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. In the latter case, the 42 month period would commence from the point at which the legislation is brought into force, or upon adoption of the most recent plan, whichever is later.

For Shropshire proceeding with the current plan review would mean that it would need to have been reviewed in full only 3 .5 years from adoption.

Plans to be reviewed otherwise every 5 years and Government interventions proposed for those LPAs that do not meet these requirements

Alternative options proposed by Government are:-

1) Speed up existing examination process by removing the automatic right to be heard or to deal with simpler plans through a written representations process.

(2) to remove the Examination stage entirely, instead requiring Local Planning Authorities to undertake a process of self-assessment against set criteria and guidance. However, there is a risk that this option wouldn't provide sufficient scrutiny around whether plans meet the necessary legal and policy tests

Question 12 response: No

Despite Shropshire Council's track-record in expediently producing Local Plans (Core Strategy and SAMDev Plans adopted and a CIL Charging Schedule adopted since the formation of Shropshire Council is 2009 and a significant review of the Local Plan Review is currently ongoing and well advanced), Shropshire Council has significant concerns about the ability to prepare a Local Plan in a 30-month period, even with a scope which focuses on identifying land as 'protect' 'growth' or 'renewal'. This is because:

- Much of the evidence base produced to inform a Local Plan is that required to undertake a robust site assessment process. This evidence such as strategic land availability assessments, a form of Sustainability Appraisal (extent dependent on changes proposed through this consultation), landscape and visual assessments, flood risk assessments, water cycle studies, highway assessments, ecology and tree assessments, heritage assessments, public protection assessments, Green Belt assessments, strategic assessments etc will still be required. Compiling this evidence, some of which have inter-dependencies or require earlier evidence to be available before it can be

prepared within suggested timescales would be very challenging, if not unachievable.

- Proposals within this 'White Paper' will mean that the scope and robustness of the site assessment process required within the Local Plan process is wider and higher given that proposed allocations could potentially have 'outline planning permission' or 'permission in principle', this will increase timescales for the assessment process.
- Proposals within this 'White Paper' will also mean that more information will be required from site promoters at the Local Plan stage, obtaining this information may have implications for timescales.
- The number of sites that require assessment will vary very significantly between Local Authorities, this has a direct implication for timescales and this needs to be given due consideration. For instances whilst some Local Authorities have only a small pool of sites, others will have a very significant number to consider (as previously documented within our response to this consultation, the site assessment process undertaken to inform the ongoing Local Plan Review in Shropshire considered in excess of 2,000 sites).
- The assessment of sites also needs to be informed by a strategy for the distribution of development, again the options available will vary significantly between Local Authorities and this needs to be given due consideration.
- Given that proposals seek to focus consultation at the plan making stage, we are concerned that the timescales suggested within this consultation will not allow for such consultation to occur. Furthermore, whilst increased interest at the Local Plan stage is positive, it does of course have implications for timescales of response analysis (for context within a recent consultation focusing on levels, distribution of development and site allocations (no general development management policies were included), undertaken to inform the ongoing Local Plan Review for Shropshire, we had in excess of 3,000 responses, many of which were extensive, this took considerable time and resource to review).

Furthermore, as stated in the Council's response to Q6 of this Consultation, in recognition of the diversity of the communities, settlements and the built and natural environment in this Country, we consider that it is important for general development management policies to be included within Local Plans, where they supplement and/or provide local distinction to the national suite of policies, such policies should form part of future accessible, web-based Local Plans. This will clearly need to be considered when establishing appropriate timescales for the Local Plan process.

Consequently the Council would suggest **a five-year Local Plan cycle**, although this could be somewhat reduced if appropriate speeding-up of the examination process is undertaken, whilst still ensuring it remains robust.

Shropshire Council continues to support the requirement for a five-year review of the Local Plan and also supports the suggestion that reviews could be undertaken

earlier if there are significant changes in circumstances such as a failure to deliver necessary development.

However, Shropshire Council considers that a longer transition period is required for Local Authorities with recently prepared Local Plans or those close to or in the process of examination/adoption of Local Plans. Specifically, this transition should align with the five-year review period suggested for updates of the Local Plan – a review should commence within five-years of adoption.

Without such measures, there is a risk that:

- Local Authorities and all those who were involved in the preparation of Local Plans (including those engaged in the consultation process) are left with significant abortive work;
- Local communities are left with uncertainty about the status of Local Plans and value of the Local Plan process;
- There are additional delays to plan-making and resultant development; and
- New development is determined via planning by appeal rather than a plan-led approach.

Question 13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Question 13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital

The Government considers that neighbourhood plans should be retained as an important means of community input to the planning process and indicates that it will support communities to make better use of digital tools

Question 13 (a) response: Yes

Shropshire Council is very supportive of Neighbourhood Plans.

Question 13(b) response: Shropshire Council considers that there are opportunities to integrate digital tools into the Neighbourhood Plan process, in a similar way to the Local Plan process. Indeed, aligning these changes would allow ‘lessons learned’ at the Local Authority level to be disseminated to communities.

However, we also consider that it is important to ensure that use of digital tools complements and is within the skill-set available to local communities.

Question 14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government would like a stronger emphasis on the faster delivery of development, especially for Growth areas. Masterplans and design codes for sites should be prepared for substantial development and should seek to include a variety of development types by different builders which allow more phases to come forward together.

Government will explore further options to support faster build out as we develop our proposals for the new planning system.

Question 14 response:- Yes

Shropshire Council supports the concept of placing greater emphasis on building-out development within appropriate timescales. However, it is important to note that this is ultimately the responsibility of the development industry and the mechanisms that are available to ensure that this occurs need careful consideration and to be directed towards the development industry. Removing a consent from a site or removing a site from the supply ultimately does not resolve the issue of delivery of the site.

The principle of ensuring a diverse range of housing types/options are delivered on a site is one supported by Shropshire Council and is already one integrated into many Local Plans, although primarily in recognition of its potential to ensure that local needs are met, rather than to speed-up delivery. We do agree that this could positively influence rates of delivery by extending the range of needs being met and therefore the range of people interested in purchasing properties, although the capacity of the developer and market will remain key factors influencing build rates.

The concept of encouraging multiple developers on a site is more challenging as ultimately this is determined by the land market and not the planning process. Whilst increasing numbers of outlets on a site will increase delivery, how can this be achieved if the land is owned/optioned by a single developer? Furthermore, the increase that can be achieved will again be capped by market capacity.

Questions 15- 20 Pillar 2: Planning for beautiful and Sustainable Places

Question 15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area?

Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/ or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify

The Government considers that Creating a simpler quicker planning process is the starting point. It would like a system in place that enables the creation of beautiful places that will stand the test of time, protects and enhances our precious environment, and supports our efforts to combat climate change and bring greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. It should generate net gains for the quality of our built and natural environments - not just 'no net harm'. It is

Governments view that the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission has shown, all too often that potential has fallen short.

Question 15 response; The Council would support the Government's aim to raise design quality generally. Better designed buildings and places contribute direct to well being, are more sustainable and more likely to be accepted by communities. Shropshire Council has taken steps to improve design quality through the introduction of a design awards scheme, by adopting the West Midlands Regional Combined Authority Design Charter as a material planning consideration and by commissioning master planning work in larger towns to facilitate a positive design framework and investable masterplan. Importantly the focus of many planning departments in maintaining a 5 year housing land supply has been on delivering numbers and the reality is that this has sometimes been at the expense of quality. Developers will provide quality provided there is a level playing field and consistency If Government is serious about raising design standards then it should support decision takers that place a greater emphasis on design through their decision and at appeal where appropriate. The tension here is between quantity (of housing) and quality. Further more resources in planning departments do not always include all necessary skill sets to drive up architectural quality

Question 16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify

This picks upon the preamble to question 15.

Question 16 response: Shropshire Council is of the view that any consideration of sustainability must place a greater emphasis on preventing, mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Furthermore, whilst Shropshire Council very much supports the aim of planting more trees within development; it must be recognised that requiring all streets to be tree-lined would reduce the amount of developable area in new sites and may ultimately lead to more greenfield land being required for development – there are also potential issues with services and reinstatement in the future.

With regard to Proposal 15, Shropshire Council would also not that one of the obstacles to mitigating climate change through the planning system is Footnote 49 of NPPF which only permits wind energy development;

- In areas identified as suitable in the Local Plan; and
- where planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been identified and fully addressed; and
- when the proposal has their backing.

This severely restricts onshore wind energy at a time when public opinion is turning in favour of addressing climate change and wind energy development is being seen

as necessary and acceptable. A more permissive approach which recognises and safeguards the natural and historic environment, including landscape character and visual amenity, should be adopted.

Shropshire Council also supports the intention of Proposal 18 to clarify the role that Local Authorities can play in energy efficiency standards for new buildings. As things stand, Building Regulations are the main mechanism for improving energy efficiency, but the planning system can have a useful and complementary role to play. The planning system also has the advantage of being responsive to public concerns and including energy efficiency in its remit would send a strong signal that both national and local government is serious about reducing carbon emissions.

17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Here Government confirms the importance of Identifying local character and community preferences, to learn from the past and recommends that Council's should use the National Design Guide which defines 10 characteristics of successful places. It confirms that Government will publish a National Model Design Code and a revised Manual for Streets

Question 17 response: The Council supports the principle of raising the design standards for new development, it has led this process through the introduction of local design awards, introduced a design accreditation scheme published ambitious design led regeneration proposals through its Big Town Plan and adopted the West Midlands Combined Authority Design Charter as a material planning consideration. The reality is that the development sector will raise design standards where there is a consistency of policy requirements and a clear indication that design standards or coding would be adhered to and supported at appeal if required. In a context where housing delivery in recent years has focussed on quantity rather than qualitative factors there would need to be a clear indication that where a design code applies it would be supported if tested at appeal. While the principle of design codes is in principle supported their production at a local level will require skills and resources which may not exist currently in local authorities and this would present an additional cost burden then to bring these forward at scale, particularly in a large rural geography where there may be a diverse range of locally distinctive building types and materials.

18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government wants to ensure community engagement with designs codes and indicates that these should only be given weight in the planning process if they can demonstrate that this input has been secured. It encourage LPAs to develop design

skills within their teams and says it will introduce proposals to improve the resourcing of planning departments more broadly; some re-focusing of professional skills. It recommends that each authority should appoint a chief officer for design and place-making, as recommended by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.

Question 18 response: As with the response to question 17 this would be supported in principal but clearly there are resource implications for the Local Authority in producing design codes in consultation with local communities and recruiting design expertise to include a chief officer. The Government acknowledges this resource implications for Local Authorities but provides no clarity as to how this is to be met and implying that "re-focussing" resources indicates that this would been changing the staff skills profile rather than adding to it.

19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government confirms in the white paper that to further embed national leadership on delivering better places, we will consider how Homes England's strategic objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.

Question 19 response: Shropshire Council supports this in principle.

20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The White Paper indicates that the Government intends to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences – updating the National Planning Policy Framework, schemes which comply with local design guides and codes have a positive advantage and greater certainty about their prospects of swift approval. In growth areas legislation will require that a masterplan and site-specific code are agreed as a condition of the permission in principle which is granted through the plan. It intends to legislate to widen permitted development so that it enables popular and replicable forms of development to be approved easily and quickly, helping to support 'gentle intensification' of towns and cities, but in accordance with important design principles – pattern books

Question 20 response: This places a significant reliance on the quality of design codes to test development proposals against. In a location where there is a rich and diverse architectural heritage as in Shropshire this could mean a more comprehensive approach similar for example to the Essex Design Guide first published in 1973 and revised latterly in 2005 which provided a benchmark for residential design across the County. This would require significant resources to commission and deliver.

Questions 21 to 26 Pillar Three: Planning for Infrastructure and Connected Places

Question 21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it?

More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know Other – please specify]

The Government notes that the Environment Bill currently before Parliament will legislate for mandatory net gains for biodiversity as a condition of most new development. All new streets should be tree-lined. Managing flood risk may need to be strengthened along with developing a national framework of green infrastructure standards

Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, and Environmental Impact Assessment – can lead to duplication of effort and overly-long reports which inhibit transparency and add unnecessary delays. Outside of the European Union take the opportunity to strengthen protections that make the biggest difference to species, habitats and ecosystems of national importance, and that matter the most to local communities processes for environmental assessment and mitigation need to be quicker and speed up decision-making and the delivery of development projects. The environmental aspects of a plan or project should be considered early in the process, and to clear timescales.

National and local level data, made available to authorities, communities and applicants in digital form, should make it easier to re-use and update information and reduce the need for site-specific surveys.

Question 21 response: Within Shropshire key infrastructure priorities (in no particular order) include:

- Affordable housing;
- Necessary highway infrastructure;
- Education and health facilities;
- Open space and associated leisure facilities; and
- Infrastructure to respond to our changing climate.

Employment and retail provision are other priorities for inclusion within the development mix rather than as separate infrastructure provision.

Question 22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a

new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government considers that The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished. The current system of planning obligations under Section 106 should be consolidated under a reformed, extended 'Infrastructure Levy

Question 22a response: Not sure

Shropshire Council considers that there is some potential for improving the CIL / S106 approach to securing planning obligations from development, however a more comprehensive proposal, with a clear indication of its implications is required before we can robustly comment.

We would need to fully understand what the thresholds would be, who would set them and how they are determined and then how the appraisals will be checked and validated. As per policy it is up to the applicant to show viability as part of the planning process, this increases time and expense.

The advantage of a system using both CIL and S106 is that you have CIL to secure a clear, consistent and transparent contribution to infrastructure provision, and flexibility from S106 to capture additional infrastructure contributions where there are requirements beyond those which can be afforded by the CIL achieved and sufficient viability exists within the development to secure such contributions. S106 Agreements also provide a clear and separate mechanism for securing affordable housing contributions. It is considered that this approach provides a level of certainty to communities and the development industry, whilst maintaining flexibility in situations where a development has infrastructure requirements beyond those more generally required.

Whilst there are timescales associated with the negotiation of such s106 obligations, these can be minimised where all parties engage proactively in the process.

Shropshire Council is concerned that if any new infrastructure levy process is too rigid and infrastructure contributions are uncertain until development is at/near completion, development proposals may need to be refused as there is no certainty about whether necessary supporting infrastructure can be achieved.

Additionally, if payment of any future infrastructure levy is linked to completion of development, there is significant risk to the Local Authority to secure affordable housing on-site and the process suggested would still involve significant negotiation not dissimilar to that of a S106 legal agreement, but without the associated security (which may mean some form of legal agreement is required anyway).

There is also a risk that if payment is linked to completion, developers may no longer have funds to make payments as they have already been invested elsewhere. Also, ultimately what measures are available following completion to secure payment? The

site will be built out and the land in a myriad of different ownerships. From a conveyancing perspective this could lead to significant risk to potential purchasers and delay sales of properties – in turn impacting on build-out rates.

Furthermore, if the payment of any future infrastructure levy is linked to completion of a development, a situation could arise where developments are deliberately not completed to defer/avoid payment of the levy.

It is appreciated that the aim of this is to assist developer with budgeting etc and reduce cashflow difficulties, however this would have a huge impact on the Council's ability to collect the debt;

Shropshire Council already currently experiences difficulties obtaining payments from small developers upon completion of the build. . Developers have often used the current (S106) extended payment timescales to install a high-end finish to properties, and funds are subsequently not available at the time payment is due as they have overspent on the project. This is more prevalent in Shropshire where the development profile is geared to more smaller sites. Extending this payment due date to 'upon occupation', would exacerbate this problem even further.

There appears to be an assumption that developers 'want' to pay the contributions and whilst most do (eventually), there is increasing resistance to pay the contribution in full at the required time. This has resulted in payments being made by instalments (mainly small developers or one-man-band), resulting in increased admin and officer time tracking payments received.

The current finance 'Pre-action Protocol' does not support extending payment terms in this way. Due to the current economic climate, the protocol aims to discourage organisations taking individuals to court to collect outstanding debts. More support appears to be given to individual debtors, rather than the organisation trying to collect a debt.

Presumably, the new Levy would be paid by the developer? If the new Levy is payable at the point of occupation, it would be difficult to collect this once the developer has parted with their interest in the land. If the Levy is to be paid by the new homeowner, there is an assumption that the homeowners Solicitor would identify the debt from Land Charges searches. Increasingly, this does not appear to be the case.

We already experience difficulties where contributions are to be paid 'upon occupation'. This is a very difficult trigger point to monitor and the onus would be on the Council to continually check numbers. We would simply be unable to rely on the developer/home owner informing the Council at the appropriate time. Often we are unaware of when land ownership changes hands and are reliant on Land Registry searches to confirm this has occurred. 'Pending' applications with Land Registry often take months to process, so up-to-date data would not be immediately available. In addition, data collected by the Council does not assist in identifying properties that are 'occupied'. Whilst Council Tax data is able to identify properties which are 'registered' for CT, this does not mean that the property is occupied. Unfortunately

Council Tax are not able to openly share data with us and the occupier of a property is not always the owner.

How would the Council be able to prevent occupation in the event of non-payment? Would this involve enforcement or legal action?

On site provision of affordable housing is a priority in order to ensure integrated and inclusive communities. If is also considered a more cost-effective means of delivering affordable housing.

Whilst we recognise that it is important to maintain cash flow for developers, it is equally important to ensure that infrastructure funding is secured at the earliest possible opportunity to allow for early infrastructure delivery. Relying on Local Authorities to lend against future infrastructure levy receipts, when the amount and timescales of any payment are unknown places a significant risk on Local Authorities.

Shropshire Council currently secures on-site affordable housing at 50% occupation of the site or phase and this has worked well, giving the developer an opportunity to receive income from sales and ensuring the affordable dwellings are provided on the site well before completion and so mitigating the problems raised above. Financial contributions are collected 12 months after commencement.

As such, Shropshire Council considers that there are clear benefits of linking payment and fixing the value of any future infrastructure levy to commencement of development, with an appropriate lag-period (say 6-9 months) before any first instalment is due. This will ensure that development once commenced is progressed and as such has the additional benefit of acting as an incentive for progression and timely build-out of a development site. Provided development is progressed at reasonable timescales, market conditions should not significantly vary, although we do consider that there is some merit in allowing appropriate phasing of very large sites. This will also provide greater certainty to the development industry, communities and local authorities.

Question 22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?

Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally

Government considers that the Infrastructure Levy should be a flat rate charge set nationally.

Question 22b response : Whilst Shropshire Council recognises the potential benefits of a single rate across the country, including consistency, transparency and simplicity (particularly for the development industry), the significant variances in viability mean that such an approach would be extremely challenging to achieve and would likely not allow for appropriate capturing of the varied uplift to land values

resulting from Planning Permission. As such a more flexible approach which embraces local distinctiveness is more likely to be appropriate.

Shropshire Council considers that the rate should be established either nationally at an area specific rate (dependent on the extent of these areas) or locally. The most appropriate of these two options will depend on the ultimate methodology used to establish the rate. If the methodology allows sufficient flexibility to recognise the extensive variations in viability both across the Country and within Local Authorities, then a national area specific approach may be appropriate as this would offer benefits such as consistency, transparency and simplicity. Another risk of a nationally calculated area specific rate is that it would result in lower value areas achieving very limited or no affordable housing. If such variances and risks cannot be fully recognised it may be best for a locally established rate, otherwise there is a real risk that more viable areas/pockets will be masked by the more general viability of an area.

Question 22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities?

Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government considers that the Infrastructure Levy should be charged on final value of a development (or to an assessment of the sales value where the development is not sold, e.g. for homes built for the rental market), based on the applicable rate at the point planning permission is granted;

• be levied at point of occupation, with prevention of occupation being a potential sanction for non-payment;

• include a value-based minimum threshold below which the levy is not charged, to prevent low viability development becoming unviable, reflecting average build costs per square metre, with a small, fixed allowance for land costs. Where the value of development is below the threshold, no Levy would be charged. Where the value of development is above the threshold, the Levy would only be charged on the proportion of the value that exceeded the threshold and provide greater certainty for communities and developers about what the level of developer contributions are expected alongside new development

Question 22c response: Shropshire Council considers that any new infrastructure levy should aim to capture the maximum amount of uplift in land value possible, whilst also maintaining the viability of development. Ideally this would be at least the same amount as currently achieved if not more, but this will depend on development viability. The reality is that existing contributions are difficult to collect and we believe there would be resistance if the LPA attempts to collect a higher level of funding from developers, particularly in the current economic climate

For information, over the last 4 years Shropshire Council has had an impressive track record in relation to securing infrastructure contributions. Specifically, we have received:

- A total of 1,387 new affordable homes through a combination of S106 sites and exception sites, this is an average of 346 new homes each year and a total of 21% (average) of all housing completions being for an affordable tenure.
- Around £8,200,000 in S106 financial contributions for affordable housing, this is an average of around £2,100,000 per year.
- Around £6,800,000 in S106 financial contributions towards other forms of infrastructure, this is an average of around £1,700,000 per year.
- Around £30,100,000 of CIL contributions towards infrastructure, this is an average of around £7,500,000 per year.

  It would be beneficial to see the calculations based on the new proposed infrastructure levy to understand whether this would be more, less or the same.

Question 22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

Question 22d response: If a new infrastructure levy is introduced linked to completion of development then Shropshire Council considers that in principle, yes, borrowing should be allowed as this is a necessary flexibility to allow for up-front delivery of infrastructure.

However, we are concerned that if the amount and timescales for achieving any infrastructure levy from development are unknown then this places a significant risk on Local Authorities. There would be an increased risk to the Council and far greater pressure put on the monitoring teams to collect the contributions in a timely manner. Again, there appears to be an assumption here that all developers will pay at the appropriate time. This is simply not the case. Strict controls would obviously be required and whilst we would not anticipate problems collecting debts from National developers, borrowing against revenues from smaller developers would need careful consideration due to the increased risk to the Council. As such it is important that a level of certainty about the value of the levy is provided, perhaps by linking the amount and timescales for payment to commencement of development. As suggested elsewhere, this would have the added benefit of acting as an incentive for progression and timely build-out of a development site.

Question 23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights. The Government considers this approach would increase the levy base, and would allow these developments to better contribute to infrastructure delivery and making development acceptable to the community. However, the Government intends to maintain the exemption of self and custom build development from the Infrastructure Levy.

Question 23 response: Yes

All development has an infrastructure burden, whether individually or cumulatively should appropriately contribute. Importantly this also includes many of those currently exempt from CIL such as self-build housing and conversions with no additional floor space but which result in a more intensive use of infrastructure. In reality 100 self-build dwellings likely have a larger impact cumulatively on infrastructure than a single 100 dwelling development, which through the development provides necessary infrastructure.

It should also include smaller development schemes which are currently exempt from affordable housing contributions, such as sites of less than 10 dwellings, as these equally impact on infrastructure and otherwise a disproportionate burden is placed on larger developments. Furthermore, in some more rural communities where no large-scale development arises, no contributions are secured to necessary infrastructure provision (which at worst means development proposals need to be refused).

Provided contributions are established at an appropriate level, viability should remain.

Question 24(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

24(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a ‘right to purchase’ at discounted rates for local authorities?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

24(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

24(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government considers that the reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provision. This could be secured through in-kind delivery on-site, which could be made mandatory where an authority has a requirement, capability and wishes to do so. Local authorities would have a means to specify the forms and tenures of the on-site provision, working with a nominated affordable housing provider

In the event of a market fall, we could allow local planning authorities to 'flip' a proportion of units back to market units which the developer can sell, if Levy liabilities are insufficient to cover the value secured through in-kind contributions. Alternatively, we could require that if the value secured through in-kind units is greater than the final levy liability, then the developer has no right to reclaim overpayments. Government could provide standardised agreements, to codify how risk sharing would work in this way

Alternative option: We could seek to introduce further requirements around the delivery of affordable housing. To do this we would create a 'first refusal' right for local authorities or any affordable housing provider acting on their behalf to buy up to a set proportion of on-site units (on a square metre basis) at a discounted price, broadly equivalent to build costs

Question 24(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?

Question 24 (a) response: Yes

Shropshire Council considers that delivery of affordable housing is a local and national priority. On site provision of affordable housing is considered the most effective means of delivery both in terms of cost and the benefit to communities (schemes integrating a range of types, tenures and affordability of housing are best able to support strong and inclusive communities and lead to higher quality design).

However, if payment of any future infrastructure levy is linked to completion of development, there is significant risk to the Local Authority to secure affordable housing be provided on site and the process suggested would involve significant negotiation not dissimilar to that of a S106 legal agreement.

Currently in Shropshire we have 3 defined areas for calculating the affordable housing contributions, (which through the local Plan review will be amended to two) and these have been based on a robust evidence base and vigorous viability testing. This has ensured that we have been able to secure both on site and financial contributions for all schemes larger than 6 units or more in designated rural areas and 10 units or more in other areas.

For information, as documented in our response to Question 22(c) over the last 4 years Shropshire Council has had an impressive track record in relation to affordable

housing completions and securing financial contributions to support affordable housing delivery. Specifically, we have received:

- A total of 1,387 new affordable homes through a combination of S106 sites and exception sites, this is an average of 346 new homes each year and a total of 21% (average) of all housing completions being for an affordable tenure.
- Around £8,200,000 in S106 financial contributions for affordable housing, this is an average of around £2,100,000 per year.

This is alongside securing contributions to other forms of infrastructure. It would be beneficial to see the calculations based on the new infrastructure levy to show the amount of on-site affordable housing and off-site financial contributions we could obtain to see how they compare.

24(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities?

Question 24b response: Not sure

Shropshire Council considers that until there is further detail on the specific mechanisms proposed for securing an infrastructure levy it is difficult to provide a robust response.

Certainly, if the trigger point for this mechanism was linked to commencement in the way we have suggested under Question 22(a) we could see some merit in the in-kind approach. This trigger point would of course also act as an incentive for developers to progress their development within reasonable timescales.

If the mechanism is linked to completion there is significant risk and extensive negotiation would be required which would have implications for timescales, the volume of affordable housing achieved and ultimately the value of such a mechanism.

Shropshire Council was one of the first adopters of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and have used in kind payments in the past. Our experience is that this has been a very time-consuming and costly process and there is a real risk that this would be the same under any new system, particularly as there would be no existing legal agreement (as S106 agreements would be removed) to secure these units under. As such we would encourage careful consideration of this matter as it could result in time-consuming and costly discussions, culminating in an agreement very similar to a S106 agreement.

Furthermore, there is a real risk that allowing affordable units to flip back to market units if circumstances change will be an easy way out for developers to provide less affordable housing, currently they would need to look at cost savings etc before asking for a viability appraisal as the number of on site and financial contributions are set. This would mean further appraisals will be required throughout the development process.

It would also mean that this could be the first form of levy contribution lost if economic conditions worsen as the 'expected' financial aspects may already have been committed to other forms of infrastructure and are therefore required to repay against borrowing.

Question 24(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?

Question 24 c response: Yes

Shropshire Council agrees that there would have to be some form of protection for Local Authorities if payment is linked to completion of development. However, this complexity could be avoided if payment was linked to commencement. This would also act as an incentive for developers to progress their development within reasonable timescales.

Question 24(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality?

Question 24(d) response: Yes

Shropshire Council considers that affordable housing should be indistinguishable for open market housing and this should be the starting point for any in-kind delivery. As such, whilst we support the proposal for Local Authorities to have an option to revert back to cash contributions if no provider was willing to buy the homes due to their poor quality, we would also encourage the ability for Local Authorities (supported by a Registered Provider) to select a different unit on the site of a similar type, where they are available, in-place of the poor-quality unit. This would reduce the risk that developers deliberately construct poor-quality housing to avoid on-site provision of affordable housing.

In Shropshire, as part of the ongoing Local Plan Review, the Council is proposing policies which stipulate that all affordable dwellings provided on a site should be of a certain size and standard. Similar policies could be provided at the national level to mitigate this risk.

Question 25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?

Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.

The Government proposes more freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy and could increase local authority flexibility, allowing them to spend receipts on their policy priorities, once core infrastructure obligations have been met.

Question 25 response:- Shropshire Council is supportive of an appropriate proportion of the infrastructure levy being provided to local communities to deliver local infrastructure priorities. However, if the infrastructure levy is to also cover affordable housing the specific proportion will require careful consideration. The reason many Local Authorities have not introduced CIL is due to viability and a very

high need for affordable housing, meaning all contributions are targeted towards affordable housing provision. There is a real risk that this proposal could reduce the level of affordable housing being delivered in many areas. Alternatively, it could result in all funding being directed towards affordable housing and no other necessary infrastructure being provided.

With regard to the flexibility of use of infrastructure levy funds, Shropshire Council would highlight that the infrastructure needs within an area are generally so significant that infrastructure funding secured will only fund a small proportion of it, as such infrastructure delivery should remain the focus for infrastructure levy funds.

Question 25(a). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed

Question 25a response: Yes

Shropshire Council considers that this would be important to recognise the need for such housing

26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

Question 26 response :- Not being able to negotiate on a site by site basis will make it more difficult to secure larger and/ or adapted properties or those for tenants with specialist needs.

Additional Comments

Planning Enforcement: Proposal 24 of the White paper indicates that Government intends to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions with:-

- more emphasis on the enforcement of planning standards and decisions. Planning enforcement activity is too often seen as the 'Cinderella' function of local planning services
- to review and strengthen the existing planning enforcement powers and sanctions available to local planning authorities to ensure they support the new planning system. We will introduce more powers to address intentional unauthorised development, consider higher fines, and look to ways of supporting more enforcement activity.
- to strengthen national planning policy against intentional unauthorised development and ensure temporary stop notices are more effective

Enforcement teams are generally under resourced, there are growing demands some arising from breaches of planning control taking place during or because of the Covid 19 pandemic. More needs to be done to provide enforcement teams with clear effective powers to bring significant breaches to a close.

The system is largely based on voluntary compliance to abide by the planning permissions and permitted development rights. To pursue formal action, is time

consuming and stacked heavily in the favour of those infringing powers who have opportunities to delay the process repeatedly. Even where a notice is served, that is not the end of the issues and should that fail to bring a resolution, then it is often referred for court action, and the courts can only seek to instruct again and offer fines.

The direct action power, whilst available, do not come with funding and expertise to follow this through. Such action could be the most suitable and effective solution, as the breach would be remedied as a result and costs recharged against the land.

The planning portal has been an effective central point for assimilating information for new planning cases. This might be a good place to have a centralised point to raise planning enforcement cases, which are then distributed to LPA's, the same way as applications are.

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