



Place Overview
Committee

10th May 2018

10.00 am

Item

3

Public

**MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2018
11.00 AM - 12.55 PM**

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes
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Present

Councillor Gwilym Butler (Leader)
Councillors Julian Dean, Rob Gittins, Simon Harris, Dan Morris, William Parr, Harry Taylor and Paul Wynn

37 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jonny Keeley and Paul Milner. Councillor Hannah Fraser attended for Jonny Keeley and Councillor Matt Lee attended for Paul Milner.

38 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

39 Minutes of the meetings held on 1st February 2018 and 12th February 2018

The minutes of the meetings held on 1st February 2018 and 12th February 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

40 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

41 Member Question Time

There were no questions from members of the Council.

42 Shrewsbury Big Town Plan

The Economic Growth Key Account and Investment Senior Officer gave a presentation on the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan [copy attached to the signed minutes]. Members noted that a dedicated website for the project had been established and workshops and public consultations undertaken. In response to a

Member's question regarding the demographic variety of the respondents to the consultation, the Officer advised that a wide variety of people had been encouraged to participate, including students from the University Centre.

Members discussed the importance of aligning Council Plans and Policies to ensure that there was a common direction and overarching strategy. The Key Account and Investment Senior Officer advised that the document formed part of the overarching strategy from which led to the development of policies and procedures. Members observed that it was important that this document was regularly reviewed and updated as required.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.30am and reconvened at 10.35am to enable Members to take refreshments.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth described the tour of Shrewsbury held before the formal start of the meeting as enlightening and enjoyable and thanked the Officers for arranging it. He continued that it was evident that Shrewsbury was not a broken town and did not need fixing but consideration needed to be given to its future development and maintaining its independent nature which made it attractive to businesses, residents and visitors.

Bernie Folkes of LDA Design, the masterplanning consultants commissioned by the Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and Shrewsbury BID in partnership, agreed that Shrewsbury was already an attractive town. He continued that during his time in the town he had formed the impression that there was an appetite for change which gave a strong starting point. He continued that he had observed that all interested parties already had a positive working relationship and the Council took a 'hands on' approach.

Members heard that the Big Master Planning week had been very intensive. Bernie Folkes advised that in his opinion the town had expanded to its natural boundaries and Shrewsbury risked losing its sense of identity with further expansion. There were also practical decisions to make on a number of significant issues such as the future use of the shopping centres and how to further develop economic growth without damaging the aspects of the town which were valued.

Members noted that the Big Town Plan was considering the key aspects of:

- **Improving Movement and Place:** to make it easier to get around the town.
- **Creating a Place for Enterprise:** recognising the changing nature of the workplace and shaping the working environment to enable people to work in new ways.
- **Supporting Vitality, Life and Mix:** identifying the specific areas that created the lifeblood of the town and developing the land use to promote this.
- **Nurturing Natural Shrewsbury:** recognising the quality of the environment in and around the town, including the river corridor and landscape setting and connections between leisure and landscape quality.

Mr Folkes explained that the Master Planning work had begun with the Consultants gathering the views of trusted partners and using data provided by Council systems. He commented that the masterplan process was challenging and it was important to listen to the views of the participants and judge the appetite for change. Initially the

masterplan was looking to produce a ten-year plan, which had been future proofed and was able to adapt to changes.

Members noted that the work undertaken on improving movement of pedestrians and cyclist through the town had been prioritised and Mr Folkes suggested that access to the town could be possibly improved through the provision of further access points over the river, giving better access to the river corridor which traffic flow currently obstructed.

Mr Folkes continued that the masterplan had recognised the importance of heritage and enterprise particularly at sites such as the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings.

Members considered the arrival experience of visitors to the town and improvements that could be made to the locality surrounding the railway station without losing the unique character of the area. Members suggested that the bus station could be improved or relocated and the shopping centres simplified. The excellent traditional market could also be promoted more. Mr Folkes observed that there was a good balance between independent shops and national chains, which offered an attractive retail experience for both visitors and residents.

A Member suggested that more could be done with the area around the Abbey which was currently used for car parking. She suggested that the traffic in this area made the location unattractive to visitors and the area's historical importance not being used to its full potential. Members also commented that the area around Frankwell was also blighted by traffic, as was the area around the station. Re-routing traffic away from these areas would greatly improve the visitor experience and allow individual neighbourhoods to flourish and re-inforce their unique identities

Mr Folkes advised Members that masterplanning was not about controlling future development but was about exploring options and encouraging and promoting people to view their locality differently. He suggested that it could lead to the instigation of a developers' charter, which would give clarity by setting out the town's expectations and establish an entry level quality standard for development. Members noted that it was important that the finished document caused some discomfort and challenged Members and Officers to think outside the box and look at the town differently.

Members commented that the town had to provide different things for different communities. Suitable housing, transport and working environments had to be created and maintained to suit changing working and residential requirements. Rural communities needed the town to provide a social hub and retail opportunities to combat the problems of rural social isolation. The needs of the visitor economy also had to be met. Members observed that as society changed these needs would also alter and so decisions needed to be future proofed to allow for this.

Mr Folkes explained that the masterplan was considering the next ten to fifteen years. Members agreed that the report had to reflect the aspirations of the community but these might be challenging.

43 Future Work Programme

Members discussed the future work programme.

RESOLVED:

that the following items be included in the work programme:

- **specific areas of place shaping to be identified**
- **review of household waste recycling centres**
- **local transport plan and integrated transport**
- **North West Relief Road update**
- **Brexit review**
- **Business rates**
- **Market towns**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Members of the Committee, recognised that this was the last meeting to be attended by George Candler, Director for Enterprise and Place. He extended the Committee’s gratitude and thanks to the Director for all his hard work on behalf of the Committee and wished him well for his new role as Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: