



*Innovate to thrive*



# SPARSITY

SHROPSHIRE is **1,235** square miles, the 2nd largest inland council

Council looks after over 3,000 miles of road

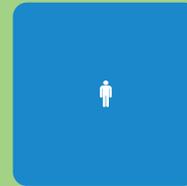
Shropshire's population **313,400** similar to Nottingham

Shropshire is **44x** bigger than Nottingham



Nottingham 29 square miles, 7,511 hectares  
**43.6** people per hectare

**132,500** people spread evenly across rural areas



Shropshire 1,235 square miles, 319,736 hectares  
**0.98** people per hectare

# AGEING

74,300 people

**23.7%** are 65 or more National average 17.9%



Expected to rise to **113,700** by 2039

33.5% compared with 24% nationally

**44** Average age

Population male/female split



## Ongoing challenges

Our population is ageing almost **30%** above national average

Adult Social Care costs increasing **8%** each year

This means costs are increasing by **£8-10m** every year\*



\*Council Tax rise limited to only £4 million extra for Adult Social Care  
Nationally an additional £3.5bn is needed over next 4 years for Adult Social Care

# ECONOMY

Population split between urban/rural areas



61% live in urban areas 39% live in rural areas

Shropshire businesses employ less than **90.4%** 10 people



**21%** more house by 2036 with over third built already

**20%** of pupils eligible for free school transport



Shropshire in government's top 10 areas with longest travel times

# BUDGET

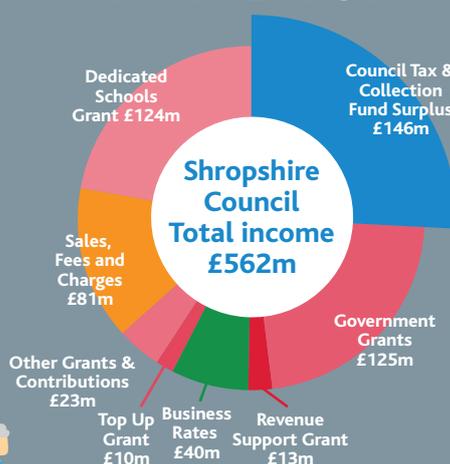
**£50m** cuts in the Revenue Support Grant since 2013



an **80%** reduction



## Income 2018/19



Based on Shropshire's 65+ population it should get £6m more in funding!

## Use of Reserves

We'll use reserves up until 2020/21, by this time Fairer Funding Proposals\* will have been announced



\*The Government's proposal for a new way to fund local government.

# Corporate Plan

2020/2021 DRAFT 4.12.18

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# Foreword

## Who is this plan for?

This is a new Corporate Plan for the Council. It takes account of developments nationally and internationally over the past year, and will benefit from being refreshed annually to ensure that these and local strategy and policy developments are included. This also enables us to articulate our interpretations of the policy implications of Government documents and strategies now in place, like the Clean Growth Strategy, the 25 Year Environment Plan, and the Industrial Strategy White Paper, and to set out our own refocussed vision for the Council.

The primary audiences for the Corporate Plan are:

- elected Councillors and workforce of Shropshire Council;
- organisations with whom we work, at local, regional and national level, across a number of sectors and across our local authority borders; and
- Government Departments and agencies that we seek to influence to positive effect, for example in relation to fair central funding from central Government, on behalf of our underlying audience: the communities of Shropshire

## What is it about?

This Corporate Plan for Shropshire Council is about visibly demonstrating that we understand that economic growth is unlikely to be achieved without support for our communities, including the right homes and schools and healthcare. Our communities equally are unlikely to survive and thrive in the long-term without the right transport and digital infrastructure being put in place at local, regional and national level to support economic growth, and the education and employment opportunities being created that they need, to skill them for life and through life. People also need and deserve a quality of life whereby they have access to fresh air and green spaces, benefit from a clean environment, and can contribute to preserving the natural and historic environment in which we live and work here in the beautiful rural county of Shropshire.

As such, our interlinked priorities are as follows:

- 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

# Part 1

## Context

### Shropshire: its physical location

Shropshire is a large, rural and sparsely populated county, covering a land area of 319,736 hectares, which is approximately ten times that of all the inner London Boroughs put together (31,929 hectares). With a population estimated at 317,500 (Source: ONS mid-year estimates, 2017), this gives a density of only 0.98 persons per hectare. The county is dependent upon a good, well connected and integrated road network, which links effectively to rail networks and to airports. Travel to work patterns across our porous borders indicate large numbers travelling for work to the West Midlands, to the South and East, and North and North West, to Cheshire, Staffordshire and Manchester and beyond, as well as into Wales.

Shropshire is the second largest inland county and one of the most rural places in the UK, yet close enough and connected to the major cities of Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester and to shopping and leisure destinations in Cheshire and Staffordshire, as well as a direct rail link to London. The coast of Wales and Snowdonia is close by, with Holyhead and Ireland only a few hours away.



**Shropshire is a  
fantastic place  
in which to live,  
work and visit...**

## Shropshire: its communities and places

Shropshire is a fantastic place in which to live, work and visit, with a clean and beautiful natural environment, communities who look out for each other, whether in our rural areas or within one of our historic market towns, excellent schools, low crime and opportunity for everyone. The quality of life rightly brings people here, and makes people want to stay. Around 39% of Shropshire's population lives 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.

The county has a rich cultural heritage to discover and natural landscapes to explore, for residents and tourists alike. There are for example Roman and Iron Age sites; castles and historic buildings; theatres and museums; the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); 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.

## Shropshire: its businesses and sectors

Business sectors include agriculture; the care sector; construction; forestry; quality foods via farm shops and food fairs; heritage and countryside related tourism including music and walking festivals; hospitality sector; and significant numbers of home-based businesses including creative sector. On skills, the University Centre Shrewsbury, which works closely with local businesses, is a joint venture between the Council and the University of Chester, whilst the Council also has close links with Harper Adams University and further education colleges.

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.

# Challenges and opportunities

## Economic growth and productivity

We are ambitious as a Council for our communities and businesses to grow, and to optimise development and investment opportunities.

Shropshire's economy has generally been performing well, but it has the potential to do much better and to raise its economic productivity. There are a number of current challenges and future trends that, without strategic approaches and actions targeted to address them, mean that the economy of Shropshire is likely to under-achieve. A key risk is that Shropshire is falling behind regional and national averages in economic output from businesses and employee earnings and this is leading to lower economic productivity compared to the West Midlands and UK as well as some of the surrounding authority areas. There is a declining population of traditional working age (16-64) in Shropshire and a particular lack of younger people staying in the County to work, with talent and skills are being lost to elsewhere.

The retention of existing business, the ability to develop and retain skills and talent and successfully attract new inward investment from outside Shropshire are all key objectives to addressing these challenges and supporting a step change in economic performance. The Council has a key role to play in each of these objectives and a significant opportunity to use its own investment power, services and influences to maximise economic growth.

The new Economic Growth Strategy 2017/2021, positions the Council in readiness for rising to not only these local challenges but also national and international challenges, for example around trade.

We therefore welcome the four 'grand challenges' in the Industrial Strategy White Paper, reinforcing our renewed commitment to our own vision, mission and core values, which are:

- Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) and data-driven economy;
- ageing society;
- clean growth;
- future of mobility

These resonate for us in our rural county, and are we know echoed by for example the South West local authorities and LEPs in their recent Rural Productivity Commission Report.

In regards to the Industrial Strategy it is particularly interesting to note that GVA in Shropshire slightly lags behind the national average in part due to our higher levels of our commuting and a large retired population which is not economically productive. The ageing society 'grand challenge' has particular relevance to Shropshire.

Within Shropshire there is also high employment in sectors which produce less GVA per job which is another challenge to address locally through cross sector opportunities.

The fastest growing sector in Shropshire in terms of job growth in 2016 was Health with an additional 3,000 jobs between 2015 and 2016, but by contrast substantial job losses have been sustained in in construction and transport. Taking a cross sector approach in delivery of an industrial strategy will be important.

It is encouraging therefore to see the construction industry sector deal as one of the Sector Deals announced between Government and industry, to raise productivity, skills and wages in the sector. Discussions have been held with North Shropshire College as it is an area they are keen to focus on at their Oswestry campus.

The Economic Growth Strategy builds on good foundations and robust evidence of what is needed at local level, via six priorities, identified with support from IPPR North. These set out to help the Council and its partners to achieve key objectives.

The six Shropshire priorities are:

- Target actions and resources on economic opportunities;
- Enable businesses to grow and succeed;
- Deliver infrastructure to support growth;
- Meet skills needs of businesses and people's aspirations for work;
- Promote Shropshire to investors;
- Build our reputation as a Council that is 'good to do business with'

Whilst unemployment is very low there is 'underemployment' and a lack of higher paid jobs within our economy. In addition, local housing issues include a proportion of old and poorly heated housing, whilst lack of affordable rented housing for young people, particularly in rural areas, is making it harder for our young people to see a future for themselves here.

We recognise the need to attract and develop new business, taking advantage of our investment in our new university alongside the University of Chester, and exploit and expand our investment in fibre broadband to ensure that we have a connected county ready for business.

We also know that it is more important than ever for our young people to be equipped with the vocational and digital skills that they need to succeed, and for all age groupings, not just within the workforce but also those at risk of digital exclusion, to be able to operate effectively in an increasingly online world. We continue to work with the Government on achieving assured connectivity for everyone.

The following highlights key sector opportunities for Shropshire through the Industrial Strategy:

### **Smart, flexible and clean energy technologies:**

- University Centre Shrewsbury – Centre for Research into Environmental Science and Technology (CREST).
- Supporting development of low carbon innovations by SMEs through supporting the delivery of projects such as Built Environmental Climate Change Innovations.
- Supply chain activities including low carbon within housing.

### **Robotics and artificial intelligence (AI):**

- Agri-tech – use of drones and AI
- Harper Adams University – innovative research and development in robotics to support agricultural systems and processes.

### **Leading edge healthcare:**

- Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital Centre of Excellence, Oswestry. There is opportunity for the centre to become a powerful destination for medical and life sciences, biosciences and digital healthcare.
- University Centre Shrewsbury – supporting development of health and innovation hub with a focus on digital health.

### **Manufacturing processes and material of the future**

- Marches Centre of Manufacturing and Technology – led by industry leaders in the advanced manufacturing and automotive sectors ensuring next generation of skills and driving efficiencies and supporting innovation.
- Harper Adams University – training and upskilling of the current and future workforce locally in precision engineering and food & drink processing.

### **Transformative digital technologies including 5G networks**

- Access to digital technologies across the whole county
- 5G Connectivity to meet with rural requirements
- Cross border working

## The physical and digital infrastructure

Barriers for business scale up and growth in Shropshire include not only infrastructure but also utilities, particularly availability of power and opportunities for increased capacity as company needs grow, and physical and digital connectivity limitations for strategically important sites. Addressing these would help Shropshire to increase its economic output and contribute positively to higher productivity.

Shropshire's physical green and scenic environment helps to contribute to healthy lifestyles as well as itself being of economic value, in attracting businesses as well as in attracting people to visit here and to move here. However, there are logistical challenges in commissioning and providing services over such a large, rural geography.

Examples include:

- the increasing cost of adult social care, exacerbated by the challenges of a markedly ageing population
- the resultant pressures not only on Council budgets but also on providers within the care sector,
- seeking to ensure that there are qualified and trained care staff to support our older people, notwithstanding numbers from EU countries who may choose to return to their country of origin.

Currently opportunities are being taken to engage with local communities and partners in the collation of evidence and the development of local policy, and to influence central government to good effect in their development of national policy. This includes local infrastructure strategies such as the Local Transport Plan 4, the Car Parking Strategy and the Local Plan Partial Review, and regional and national strategies including the Major Roads network consultation, and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) land estate transformation.

## Commercial Council

Our challenging financial situation which is reflected across the public sector, means that we must find ways to ensure that we operate as efficiently as we can. We must also seek ways of generating new and increasing levels of income to provide a sustainable platform for investment, growth and the continuation of services required in local communities. This includes using our one public estate in a more integrated way with partners and to release land for housing and employment and taking up opportunities through technology to improve access to services and information and reduce duplication of activity, as well as identifying where we have services and products which have a financial value to others that we should be realising to help contribute to operating the Council.

Ensuring that the Council can be sustainable over the coming years and can respond positively to changes to the way that the Council is funded, requires us to be more flexible and able to change direction at pace. We will need to make decisions based on a good and clear understanding of the level of demand and needs of local people, communities and businesses, and what works to meet those needs. This will require us to look at our staff and partners and be clear on where the skills, knowledge and experience exists; ensuring that the best people are completing the different tasks and activities to achieve the best quality, outcomes and value for money.

Recognising this, our Commercial Strategy provides the direction and framework for how we will mobilise our organization, deploying three areas of focus:

- leading and demonstrating best practice,
- supporting and growing skills and behaviour of our people, our partnerships and communities;
- maintaining a commercial focus through governance, monitoring progress and achieving the required impact.

More specifically the Council will invest £300m in projects which enable growth in jobs, housing, community hubs and infrastructure over the coming years to generate £15m net revenue income. In doing so the council has established clear governance, management and investment protocols and processes which allow projects to be evaluated, prioritised and resourced using project teams and partnerships with the private sector.

Each investment project is required to achieve a gross return on investment of at least 10% which nets to 5% having taken account of borrowing costs and capital repayment. Other economic, commercial, environmental and social value criteria are applied as part of the business case methodology and approval process. This is consistent with the requirements of the new Prudential Code and need for every council to have a capital and investment strategy agreed by April 2019.

The Council is ahead of schedule in terms of implementing the investment and capital strategy having purchased the Shrewsbury shopping centres (+£50m) and receiving approval from Cabinet to fully refurbish the Shirehall to create a public sector hub with modern managed service offices for commercial lets which is estimated to require up to £20m of investment. The council also has ambition to invest in housing which meets the needs and requirements of local communities and areas of the county earmarked as priorities for economic growth.

Furthermore the council has committed a further £10m to design and build student accommodation in Shrewsbury along with new medical practices in Shrewsbury and Whitchurch. These will create new community hubs with integrated housing, health and care provision enhanced with digital technology to improve quality for the customer at a reduced cost to the public purse. The creation of community hubs will allow poorly used and poorly equipped public owned land and property to be released to support growth, reduce costs and to generate income.

Shropshire Council is the accountable body and lead for the One Public Estate programme which includes all public sector bodies in Shropshire, including Telford & Wrekin. This partnership has been awarded in excess of £1m to progress key projects for Shrewsbury and other market towns, including Whitchurch and Ellesmere.

## Energy and clean growth including water quality and supply

We have emphasised to Government key policy aspects for clean growth and energy efficiency that we saw as missing in the Industrial Strategy Green Paper, around inclusion of natural capital, including water supply and quality and raw materials as well as flood management, and inclusion of land use and land supply, including raw materials and management of public sector land assets;

As a Council, we are also already seeking to optimise energy efficiencies through for example our approaches towards encouraging use of electric vehicles, and towards use of photovoltaic storage cells on the roof to help to keep down the running costs for the main Shirehall offices.

National Grid capacity is an issue in Shropshire which could affect current and future development sites. Shropshire Council is exploring opportunities for microgeneration to unlock larger development sites, cost-effective solutions for distribution of energy generated from low carbon and renewable energy sources to customers, and options to combine power generation with energy storage.

Shropshire Council is exploring options to promote energy efficiency and renewables use in enterprises through loans for investment in energy efficiency measures and processes. Such options to be looked at include how to encourage landowners and businesses to install renewable energy generation facilities, storage and delivery, and exploration of schemes that "buy" energy from local suppliers and sells to Shropshire businesses at a financially attractive rate. This is not necessarily limited to electricity and could be biogas for heating and fuel, recognising the reality for rural households and businesses who live off the grid.

The Council is also a partner in the Business Growth programme scheme which provides grants to businesses to implement energy efficiency improvements, and has proactively established an energy supply company to help address rural fuel poverty issues.

## Education and skills

Providing the right level of experience can be a challenge in rural areas, and it should not be underestimated that accessibility to suitable appropriate experiences both in education and the work place is also a challenge and barrier. An offering we already have in place and would wish to strengthen is of developments via the Growth Deal fund to enhance digital technology training programmes across the Further Education (FE) sector locally. This includes digital access.

There is an aspiration for the Marches Centre for Manufacturing Technology (MCMT), based in the market town of Bridgnorth, to become recognised as an Institute of Technology. Backing of the MCMT as a recognised national Institute of Technology would help ensure the next generation of skills for the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors, drive efficiency and support innovation as one of the global strengths of the UK. It would also help to provide the correct training and upskilling of the current and future workforce locally, and deepen the coherence of the overall training offer.

In addition, the new Marches Centre for Environmental Science and Technology, and CREST based at UCS, is due to focus on issues arising at the intersection of science, technology, environment and society that shape economic development, environmental sustainability, health and well-being.

## Equality and social inclusion

Social inclusion is a priority for us, both in terms of people for whom isolation due to living or working in rural areas may lead to mental well-being challenges, as well as the physical and practical challenges. When we talk about social inclusion, the groups that we are thinking of in particular are: families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; and people considered to be vulnerable.

There is reduced funding in the public sector and the funding of councils within England. This does not recognise the higher costs of service delivery in rural areas, and creates pressure on how we can afford to continue to deliver services where they are needed, and ensure that we ourselves demonstrate fairness in how we do so.

We ourselves recognise that greater economic activity by all groups in society contributes to and boosts the local economy as well as aiding individual prosperity and wellbeing. A society in which everyone feels valued, and where their skills and talents are used to the full, is a productive and resourceful society.

Considering equality, diversity and social inclusion also enables us to plan and deliver services that are responsive to the needs of our diverse communities, with a workforce that is representative of those communities and that is sensitive to the needs of those communities.

As a specific community priority, safeguarding vulnerable people is a responsibility of us all. For example, keeping children safe cannot be done by the Council alone and we use a number of partnership structures and approaches to help us and our partners in this essential role. This includes the Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Board and the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel which is made up of multiagency and cross party representation respectively.

## Working in partnership

Partnership working, whether collegiate or collaborative or both, is what helps us to deliver on outcomes for our local communities and businesses, and helps to influence regional and national policy to shape it to meet our needs. By this we mean using the growing strength and value of our regional partnerships, continuing to work through the voluntary and community sector and through town and parish councils and health and social care, leisure and facilities providers at local level, and continuing to work at the frontline of our service delivery with our workforce and with our elected Shropshire Councillors.

Key angles and partners for us are as follows:

### **Maximising our resources:**

- Financial; natural capital; land capital; people resources; commercial approaches

### **Working with local communities:**

- Town and parish councils, individually and collectively; Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and forums of interest

### **Protecting and safeguarding the vulnerable**

- Health and Well Being Board; Safeguarding Boards; Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

### **Working strategically across our borders:**

- Marches LEP; Midlands Connect; Rural Services Network (RSN); West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA); Welsh Assembly;

## Developing local and regional policy and strategy

Key angles for us are as follows:

### Keeping ahead of the changing regional and national policy context

- Air Quality Strategy; Brexit; Clean Growth Strategy; Industrial Strategy White Paper; LEPs Review; 25 Year Environment Plan

### Taking opportunities to influence national strategy

- Brexit; Broadband and Mobile Connectivity; Fair Funding Review; Major Roads Network Consultation; NERC Act Inquiry;

### Implementing policy and strategy approaches towards local and national challenges and opportunities

- Local: corporate plan and its internal linkages: Commercial Strategy; Economic Growth Strategy; Local Plan Partial Review; Local Transport Plan 4 and Car Parking and Highways Strategy
- Regional and national: Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan; WMCA and Midlands Engine strategies

Looking for example at the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), we recognise the Combined Authority is important to us. Whilst we may appear to be on the periphery as a non-constituent member, we are only going to benefit if we are at the table, promoting Shropshire and building good positive relationships.

The discussions we have had with Marches colleagues indicate the same view. With LEPs projected to assume a significant role in delivery of the Government's Industrial Strategy, and more to come on that via the national LEPs review, there is much good sub-regional collaboration ahead to ensure that the Marches and by inference the whole geographical area benefits as much as possible, whether looking east to the WMCA or west to Wales, or up North.

We have made positive progress as a local authority ourselves with the WMCA. By way of illustration, the involvement that we anticipated in the three Commissions set up by the WMCA is already looking useful. Our Head of Economic Growth attends the Land and Housing Steering Group, our portfolio holder is a member of the Land and Housing Delivery Board, and we have fed into various key documents including the Land and Housing delivery action plan alongside the LEP, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire.

## Part 2

### Plan for Shropshire – what we want to achieve

#### **Our vision: Innovate to thrive**

#### **Our Priorities are:**

- 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

## What we will do in the next 12 to 24 months:

Themes/Issues	Lead Member	Lead Officer
<b>More people with a suitable home</b>		
The Council will work with developers to shape the housing market to ensure the development of housing to meet local need.	Cllr Robert Macey	Mark Barrow
The Council will manage its Housing Stock through appropriate vehicles and work with partners to improve and ensure the availability of social housing.	Cllr Lee Chapman	Andy Begley
<b>Care for those in need at any age</b>		
The Council will ensure that children and young people are safe and fulfil their potential in their future lives.	Cllr Nick Bardsley	Karen Bradshaw
The Council will harness innovation in technology to help people to be as independent as they can be and live and take part in their communities.	Cllr Lee Chapman	Andy Begley
The Council will work with partners and providers to ensure that the right care is available in the right place at the right time.	Cllr Lee Chapman	Andy Begley
<b>A good place to do business</b>		
The Council will work with businesses and developers to identify and pursue appropriate opportunities for investment that will grow Shropshire's economy.	Cllr Peter Nutting Cllr Steve Charmley Cllr Rob Macey	Mark Barrow
The Council will work with its partners in business, training and education to create employment and career opportunities in Shropshire for all.	Cllr Peter Nutting Cllr Steve Charmley	Mark Barrow
The Council will work with businesses and developers to promote clean growth and safeguard our natural assets including water quality and supply.	Cllr Peter Nutting Cllr Steve Charmley Cllr Rob Macey	Mark Barrow

Themes/Issues	Lead Member	Lead Officer
<b>A healthy environment</b>		
The Council will ensure that its infrastructure and assets are as efficient and environmentally sensitive as they can be to reduce environmental pollution.	Cllr Steve Charmley Cllr Steve Davenport	Mark Barrow
The Council will work with partners to maintain Shropshire's landscapes, culture and heritage to support good health, communities and growth of the economy.	Cllr Lezley Picton	Mark Barrow
The Council will encourage positive lifestyle choices and in doing so provide information, advice and opportunities for health and well-being.	Cllr Lee Chapman	Andy Begley
<b>Sustainable places and communities</b>		
The Council will continue to encourage communities to support each other and find local solutions.	Cllr Joyce Barrow	Mark Barrow
The Council will work with Town and Parish Councils to identify opportunities and develop local economies across Shropshire, centred on the market towns.	Cllr Peter Nutting Cllr Steve Charmley	Mark Barrow
The Council will continue to implement a place based approach to optimise physical assets with our partners and deliver services where the greatest number of people can access them.	Cllr Steve Charmley	Mark Barrow
<b>Embrace our rurality</b>		
The Council will continue to influence improvement in mobile and digital connectivity across all areas, for all age groups, and homes and businesses.	Cllr Peter Nutting Cllr Steve Charmley	Mark Barrow
The Council will continue to work with partners from across the West Midlands and into Mid-Wales to improve physical connectivity to the benefit of all those who live, study and work in Shropshire.	Cllr Steve Davenport	Mark Barrow
The Council will continue to work across the business sectors which operate in rural areas to facilitate economic growth and appropriate housing for rural communities.	Cllr Peter Nutting Cllr Steve Charmley Cllr Rob Macey	Mark Barrow

## Behaviours

Our behaviours are our values in action:



## Values

Our values drive our behaviour and demonstrate to our communities, our staff and our partners what we see as being important. These are shown in alphabetical order, because they are equally important:



## Part 3

### How we will know we are achieving our priorities

#### Measures and Milestones

This section is being developed with the Performance Management Overview Committee through a Task and Finish Group.



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