



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet	
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Draft Community and Rural Framework Strategy 2020 to 2023

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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