



<u>Officer and Date</u>
Cabinet
18 th January 2021

<u>Item</u>

SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN MASTERPLAN AND VISION 2020

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1 Summary

- 1.1 The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (SBTP 2018) is the outcome of a collaborative process that has successfully brought together business representatives, key stakeholders, partners, agencies elected Members, education establishments and officers to create a collective vision and strategy, to help guide Shrewsbury’s future.

It sets the aims, aspirations and vision for Shrewsbury moving forward and, following consultation, its implementation was recommended by all parties within the SBTP Partnership.

- 1.2 In developing the work undertaken in 2018 and moving towards the development of an ‘investable masterplan’, a further competitive tender process was undertaken for the conceptual masterplanning with accompanying movement and access strategy, funded by the SBTP Partnership, comprising Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID).

An experienced multi-disciplinary consultancy team, led by Glenn Howells Architects (GHA) and including associates Stantec (movement and transport), Avison Young (commercial development and regeneration), Camlins (landscape architects) and Donald Insall Associates (conservation architects) were awarded the contract in April 2019.

- 1.3 The outcome of the commission, the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision (SBTP Masterplan Vision 2020), focuses on the preparation of concept masterplanning and development for distinctive character areas across the town centre, supported by proposals to improve access, movement and create high-quality public realm improvements.

In addition, it identifies proposals that are supported by an assessment of commercial viability, whilst referencing the town’s unique heritage and conservation. This ensures a balance of priorities that are achievable and demonstrate an understanding of deliverability, viability and with the likelihood of attracting potential investment.

The outcomes of the SBTP Masterplan Vision 2020 enhances and further develops the principles and aspirations identified within the SBTP 2018. It robustly identifies shared and realistic solutions, with people at the heart of the plan-making and

place-shaping and provides the development of an investable and deliverable masterplan vision.

- 1.4 This report summarises the outcomes of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan and Vision (2020) and details the areas of focus for the six character areas of the town, the movement vision and the recommendations for proposed changes; referred to as the “Big Moves”. It also details the nature and scale of commercial opportunities they present and identifies the public, economic and place-shaping benefit that continues to put people at the heart of the place.
- 1.5 The report also provides details of the proposed public and stakeholder consultations that will be undertaken, over a period of six weeks. This activity will ensure that the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision (2020) continues to have the support and engagement of residents, businesses and partners, continuing the co-authored approach that has been a key factor of its success to date.

2 Recommendations

- 1. Cabinet agrees that the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan and Vision - Final Draft be made available for public consultation for a period of six weeks, that will commence at the launch of the Big Town Plan Festival scheduled week commencing 18th January 2021.**
- 2. Cabinet agrees that the officers will report back to Cabinet on the outcome of consultation and present the final Masterplan Big Town Plan Vision 2020 for endorsement.**

REPORT

3 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (2018) incorporated the views obtained from residents, visitors and businesses, since the initial public consultation that began in September 2017.

There has been additional engagement with public sector agencies and partners, business representatives and organisations with specific interests in Shrewsbury, through a series of workshops, events and presentations. The on-going support and commitment of these stakeholders will continue to play an important role in taking the Big Town Plan forward and its subsequent delivery.

- 3.2 Given the nature and scale of proposed development opportunities identified within the SBTP Masterplan Vision (2020), a second high level Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been undertaken, to align with the consultation due to take place in January 2021 for a period of six weeks. More detailed assessments will be undertaken for specific projects as they come forward from action and delivery plans.
- 3.3 Evidence from the public consultation that took place in September 2017 was collated and analysed by Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insights Team and used to inform previous decisions. The intention is to repeat this process with the evidence and engagement provided during the January 2021 consultation.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs incurred in the preparation of the SBTP Masterplan Vision 2020, and the consultation programme proposed, will be met by a budget previously approved by the SBTP Partnership; there are no further financial implications for Shropshire Council resulting from this report.
- 4.2 As development proposals and projects come forward, in the context of the Masterplan Vision and the wider Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (2018), and subject to the Council's role being determined, they will be subject to further business case assessment, financial appraisal, and the Council's governance and reporting procedures.

5 Background

- 5.1 A primary objective of the SBTP (2018) and subsequently supported through the Masterplan Vision (2020) is to provide the basis on which to develop an investment prospectus, to attract appropriate investors and developers looking for opportunities in Shrewsbury. This will provide clarity to the town's vision, aspirations and development opportunities and how they can contribute.

5.2 It also provides a strong statement for residents, business and visitors to Shrewsbury of how they can expect their town to develop over time, and how that growth and change is being planned, coordinated and communicated.

5.3 The agreed vision of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (2018) is that:

“By 2036, we picture a Shrewsbury where in amongst the familiar landmarks and the timeless streets are exciting new and re-used buildings and new spaces where new life and new activities have taken hold.

Parts of the town that were once dormant have been re-colonised...”

“Traffic in the town is very light and slow-moving. Pedestrians and cyclists can walk and move wherever they want, making the streets their own. Accessing the historic town from the riverside now feels intuitive as new buildings and public realm create sight lines and visually exciting routes that draw you to discover new places...”

(SBTP 2018)

5.4 The plan was endorsed by Cabinet on 7 November 2018 which agreed these key recommendations:

- Cabinet endorses the final version of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan following the consultation.
- Cabinet agrees that the final version of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan will form part of the evidence base to inform the emerging review of the Local Plan and will be considered in the Local Plan Consultation on Preferred Sites.
- Cabinet agrees that the principle of using the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan as a material consideration in decision making on relevant planning applications can now be established. The degree of weight that can be attached to the Big Town Plan will depend on the individual circumstances.
- Cabinet agrees for the Council to continue its participation in the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan partnership to take forward implementation of the plan including the development of a delivery plan for each of the key themes. This will involve the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and relevant officers.

6 The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision (2020) by Glenn Howells Associates (GHA)

6.1 The SBTP Masterplan Vision (2020) has been informed by a series of studies of six character areas of Shrewsbury town centre, creating an overall Masterplan Vision with a complementary movement and access strategy.

The six studies collectively contribute to the delivery of wider regeneration and connectivity opportunities in Shrewsbury and its wider context.

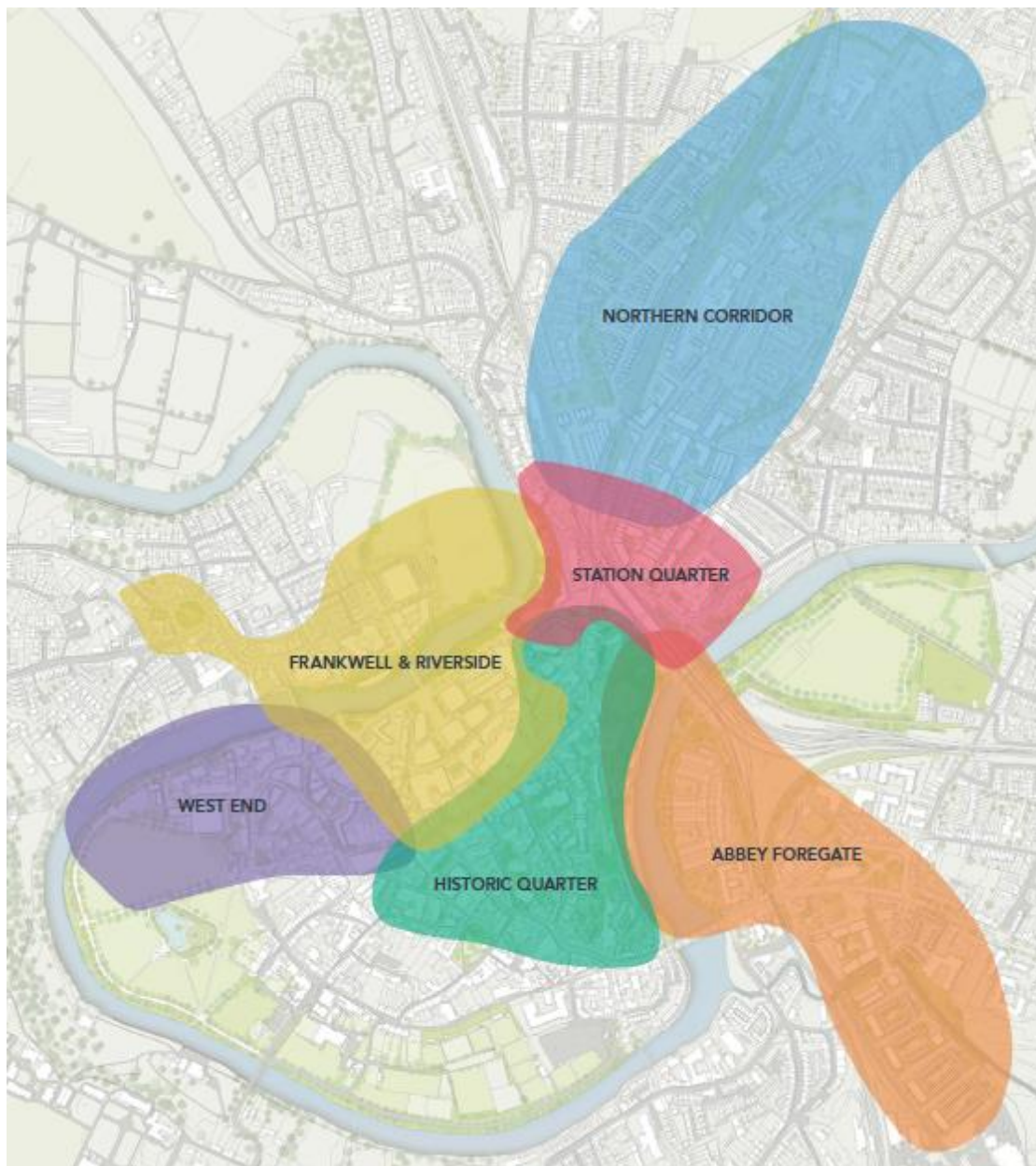


Figure 1: Masterplan Vision Character Areas

- 6.2 The Masterplan Vision provides an opportunity to improve the future commercial viability of the town. Evidence of land values increasing in neighbouring towns, and higher rent/sales values achieved following the delivery of placemaking improvements, supports a town wide strategy for high quality public realm, connecting areas of economic activity and improve access to green and blue space, including the River Severn corridor.
- 6.3 These six areas are defined as Frankwell & Riverside, Station Quarter, the Northern Corridor leading to Flaxmill Maltings, the West End including the Quarry Park, the Shrewsbury Abbey leading towards Abbey Foregate and Old Potts Way, and lastly the Historic Quarter from the English Bridge to Shrewsbury Castle.

The six character areas which constitute the Masterplan Vision, have their own natural and historical assets and identify socio-economic requirements

that contribute to the regeneration of the town centre. The proposed vision for each of the six areas, with their commercial opportunities are detailed below.

6.3.1 STATION QUARTER

THE VISION

The Station Quarter will become part of a high quality gateway experience from the northern approaches and help transform visitors' initial perception of the town. The key to unlocking the development potential of this area will be to improve the environment around the station and its accessibility.

Shrewsbury Castle Quality & Characterful Public Spaces

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT VALUE

This proposal provides flexibility on how development can come forward, primarily as an office-led development with associated ground floor retail, sitting alongside a 300 space car park and approximately 209 new residential units. Based on the development quantum identified we would anticipate a Gross Development Value (GDV) of up to £110m, market depending.

6.3.2 NORTHERN CORRIDOR

THE VISION

The Northern Corridor will see the successful implementation of the SBTP (2018) 'Big Connection' concept linking the Flaxmill Maltings to the town centre. The improvement of the existing green infrastructure will provide the catalyst to regenerate large areas of underutilised industrial land integrating the existing neighbourhoods of Castlefields and Herongate to the town centre.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT VALUE

Expanding on the established residential-led character of the Northern Corridor, the proposals are primarily for a residential-led development, with potential to provide up to 770 new homes for Shrewsbury, with an estimated GDV of up to £230m, market depending. With further potential for a new 120,000sq ft office proposal, with links to transport interchange at Shrewsbury Station, with an estimated GDV of up to £23m.

6.3.3 WEST END

THE VISION

The vision for the West End expands on the emerging theme of a thriving collegiate community. There is potential future growth for student accommodation and teaching space requirements to serve the Colleges Group and University Centre Shrewsbury, supporting the towns ambitions to attract and retain students and graduates.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT VALUE

The primary use likely to come forward on the development sites are educational/co-working type provision or leisure and well-being facilities, with a potential 123,000sqft. Based on the development quantum identified we would anticipate a GDV value up to £32m, however, this will depend upon actual quantum and market appetite at the time.

6.3.4 ABBEY FOREGATE

THE VISION

The setting of The Abbey will be restored to its former grandeur by reducing traffic along Abbey Foregate, creating a new public space on the site of the existing car park, which will respond better to the Scheduled Monument area associated with the historic form of the Abbey. The intention would be to 'activate' this area of the town more effectively and make it a more pleasant and peaceful place to be.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT VALUE

The Abbey Foregate site provides for a significant proportion of the overall number of residential units identified throughout the masterplan, with the potential for up to 486 new homes of various tenure. To complement the residential development a new car park of up to 320 new spaces has been included along with a 124,000sqft co-working building with retail at ground floor. Based on the development quantum identified we would anticipate a GDV up to £148m, depending on market sentiment at the time.

6.3.5 HISTORIC QUARTER

THE VISION

The rich existing context and thriving independent high street require careful custodianship, with light touch interventions that augment the character and enjoyment for the pedestrian experience.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT VALUE

With the development quantum identified, 96,000sqft of commercial with 59 riverside units, we would anticipate a GDV value up to £32m, this will depend upon actual quantum and market sentiment at the time.

6.3.6 FRANKWELL & RIVERSIDE

The Strategic Development Framework for Riverside and Frankwell is nearing completion and will be presented to Cabinet in February 2021. The work undertaken in this study focuses on a high level approach to ensure cohesion between development plans, and consideration of the movement and access recommendations within the SBTP Masterplan Vision.

THE VISION

Frankwell and Riverside will become an exciting, vibrant 21st Century addition to Shrewsbury, where leisure, living and work come together in a place that is well connected to the town centre, train station and The Quarry. The River Severn is a primary attraction and will become the centrepiece of the masterplan. This area presents an opportunity to create significant public spaces that address the river in a positive way, for the first time in the history of Shrewsbury.

Diverting the vehicular traffic via Roushill and Raven Meadows, will transform Smithfield Road, public space will extend to the waterside to create a new natural, biodiverse, riverfront park. In doing so, completing the green and blue corridors of the river loop. A generous and fully accessible new pedestrian bridge will connect Frankwell's improved transport interchange facilities with the riverside development, a welcoming gateway to the west of the town centre.

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT VALUE

This site provides a significant comprehensive mixed-use opportunity, with the potential for over 900,000sq.ft. of development, complemented by up to 400 residential units and 450 car parking spaces. This site will potentially require significant and costly enabling works, however, the quantum of development identified it is anticipated to generate a GDV value of approximately £270m, subject to market conditions. With the Council's significant land interest, the development of the site it is likely to come forward in partnership with a private sector partner.

6.4 MOVEMENT VISION

- 6.4.1 The movement vision for Shrewsbury is for all residents, visitors and workers to be able to travel to their destination in the town by affordable, inclusive modes whilst adopting sustainable behaviours – making Shrewsbury one of the most inclusive and accessible towns in the UK.
- 6.4.2 The movement vision will be realised through implementing a series of measures that promote more sustainable and healthy modes of transport. This will include reducing non-essential traffic passing through the town centre, whilst allowing access for integrated public transport, service and emergency vehicles, town centre residents, disabled users and dedicated yet reduced public parking. This will create opportunities to improve the town's public realm and reallocate former roads and car parks for development, public spaces and provide priority for public transport.

These ideas are appraised for validity and strengthened through the definition of new initiatives to create the 'Big Moves 2020' in terms of Community, Opportunities, Heritage & Public Realm

The key measures which have been identified in the Movement and Access Strategy are:

- Implement measures to reduce traffic driving through the town centre
- Increase Park & Ride bus frequency and allow cross town movements
- Move main car parking out of the town centre
- Relocate bus station
- Create bus and cycle corridors with priority over private traffic
- Deliver a second pedestrian / cycle access to Shrewsbury Rail Station
- Become a 20mph town
- Deliver pedestrian & cycle access from the east to Shrewsbury Rail Station
- Activating the River Severn

6.5 BIG MOVES 2020

6.5.1 The SBTP Masterplan Vision (2020) identifies an ambitious and diverse range of interventions, necessary to deliver the Big Town Plan objectives. This includes the need to balance the priorities of deliverability, viability and investability when considering which projects or actions forward.

The overall intention was to strengthen this sense of place, creating new places which reflect Shrewsbury's ambition for the future, while enhancing and investing in historic places which already hold meaning in the town's development.

BIG MOVE #1 CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

"Connecting new and existing communities or neighbourhoods via quality streets and green /blue corridors for both pedestrians and cyclists."

BIG MOVE #2 QUALITY AND CHARACTERFUL PUBLIC SPACES

"Revitalising the river and existing spaces, whilst adding new characterful spaces to improve legibility around local landmarks."

BIG MOVE #3 CELEBRATING HERITAGE

"Enhancing the setting, creating new vistas of the town's unique heritage assets and embracing local character."

BIG MOVE #4 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND GROWTH

"Creating viable and sustainable development opportunities, bringing further mix, life and vitality into the town centre."

6.6 THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

SITE REFERENCE	COMMERCIAL (SQ. FT)	CO-WORKING (SQ. FT)	RETAIL (SQ. FT)	FOOD & BEVERAGE (SQ. FT)	OFFICES (SQ. FT)	LEISURE (SQ. FT)	CAR PARKING (NO. SPACES)	RESIDENTIAL (UNITS)	EDUCATIONAL (SQ. FT)
FRANKWELL & RIVERSIDE	N/A	N/A	140,000	62,000	175,000	200,000	450	400	355,000
THE BUSINESS DISTRICT	N/A	N/A	50,000	N/A	205,000	N/A	300	200	N/A
THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR	120,000	N/A	N/A	30,000	90,000	N/A	N/A	770	N/A
THE WEST END	N/A	N/A	N/A	30,000	N/A	20,000	N/A	50	123,000
ABBEY FOREGATE	N/A	124,000	30,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	320	490	N/A
HISTORIC QUARTER	N/A	30,000	N/A	N/A	66,000	N/A	N/A	62	N/A
TOTAL	120,000	154,000	190,000	62,000	446,000	200,000	1,070	1,972	478,000

6.7 BALANCING GROWTH

- 6.7.1 The above table identifies a significant quantum of development coming forward through implementation of the Masterplan Vision. It is important to note that the above quantum of development is largely indicative at this stage, however does provide a reasonable mix of alternative uses that should come forward on each site.
- 6.7.2 The reason that the quantum of development has such mixed tenure is to create the opportunity whereby less viable development types can be potentially cross subsidised. For example, it is likely that bringing forward grade A office development in the town centre, based on current rental tones would not be viable (i.e. the cost of construction would be greater than the value associated with the completed building) therefore in packaging more viable uses alongside the offices could support a cross subsidy funding model.
- 6.7.3 Balancing the sequencing of delivery will be fundamental to the success of the town centre going forwards. We would anticipate that the above quantum of delivery will take upwards of 15 years to implement.
- 6.7.4 Place making value can be potentially achieved through a combination early investment in high quality enabling infrastructure, local amenities and public spaces. Placemaking can lead to higher land values and higher rents/sale values achieved through a common and shared range of objectives.
- 6.7.5 Delivering additional value through place making will not be possible on all of the sites across the Town Centre and also will not manifest in higher values across all uses. One of the key principles of place making is taking a longer term and patient view with regard to development returns, however arguably this is the role that the public sector should be adopting when attempting to redevelop its town centres. Placemaking may also require the Council to become more interventionist when bringing forward the sites.

7 Consultation Detail

- 7.1 The consultation will comply with ESIIA assessment which will have been revisited and updated and also ensure any engagement undertaken is Covid-19 secure. It will be launched on 19th January 2021 and run for six weeks closing on 8th March 2021. It is acknowledged that this consultation period is during lockdown, and therefore people who do not have access to the internet may have limited access to other digital resources and facilities. Therefore, digital access will be provided at the Council's libraries, in addition to publicising through radio, newspapers, social media and providing the option to request a hard copy of the document.
- 7.2 The proposed content will be finalised by the SBTP Board at its meeting in early January 2021. It is proposed that engagement will focus on a mix of online workshops, online meetings and questionnaires, alongside Shropshire Council's consultation portal within the website.
- 7.3 The Economic Growth function will co-ordinate the consultation with Shrewsbury BID and Shrewsbury Town Council to undertake the six week public consultation exercise via the SBTP Partnership.
- 7.4 The consultation will focus on identifying key elements, observations and recommendations within the report, prepared by the consultancy team led by Glen Howells Architects. The consultation process will be articulated with narrative, text, maps, CGI's (computer generated images) and other visual/diagrammatic aids to seek views and feedback from the public and wider stakeholders.

Key Audiences

- Residents of Shrewsbury and Shropshire
 - Businesses
 - Elected Members
 - Stakeholders – public and private sector who have been involved and contributed to the 2018 initial Shrewsbury Big Town Plan plus other interested parties including investors (public and private) that can add value to the masterplan
 - Voluntary and community organisations
 - Visitors to the town
- 7.5 The launch of the online consultation will coincide with the SBTP Festival that is taking place over 2 weeks at the end of January, continuing for a further 4 weeks allowing 6 weeks for comments to be registered and the consultation undertaken.
- 7.6 The outcomes of the consultation will be evaluated by Shropshire Council's Insights Team and presented to the SBTP Partnership for discussion with recommendations. It is anticipated that this will be available in early April 2021. The outcome of the consultation and a final version of the report will be reported to Cabinet in the summer of 2021

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 Undertaking a six week consultation will ensure that the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision (2020) continues to demonstrate engagement with residents, businesses, stakeholders and partners.
- 8.2 The Masterplan Vision provides an opportunity to sustain and grow the future commercial viability of the town. Evidence of neighbouring towns land values increasing, and higher rent/sales values achieved with the delivery of placemaking improvements supports a town centre wide strategy for high quality public realm that will connect economic areas and improve the connection and access to green space and the riverside.
- 8.3 The movement vision will be realised through implementing a series of measures focussing on different modes of transport, to reduce private car traffic through the town centre whilst allowing essential movement, including vehicles, servicing and disabled users. This then creates the opportunity to change the use of space in the town centre, allowing road space and car parks to be reallocated for development, public spaces and priority for other modes of transport.
- 8.4 The overall intention of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision is to further strengthen this sense of place, creating new places which reflect Shrewsbury's ambition for the future, while enhancing and investing in historic places which already hold meaning in the town's development.

List of Background Papers

Cabinet report November 2018 -Shrewsbury Big Town Plan

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Steve Charmley

Local Members

Peter Adams, Dean Carroll, Nat Green, Kevin Pardy, Ioan Jones, Julian Dean, Ted Clarke, Pam Moseley, Hannah Fraser, David Vasmer, Alan Mosley, Peter Nutting, Jane McKenzie, Keith Roberts, Tony Parsons, Alex Philips, Kate Halliday, Gwen Burgess

Appendices

Appendix 1: Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan Vision