



Committee and date

Northern Planning Committee

17th February 2026

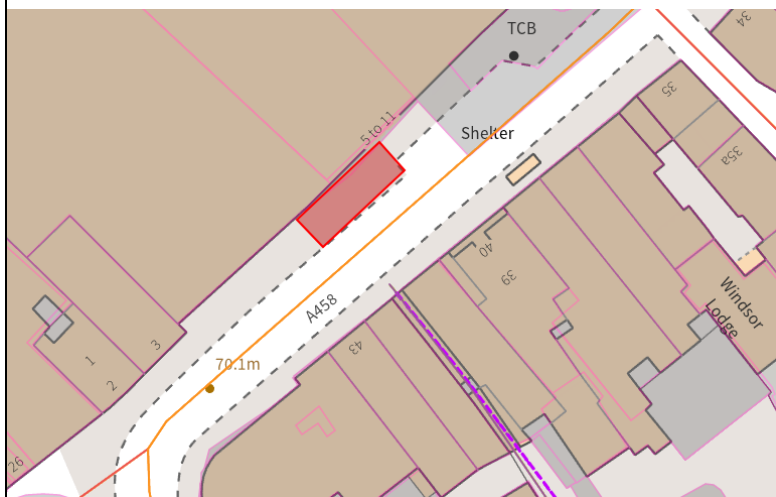
Development Management Report

Responsible Officer: Tim Collard, Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning

Summary of Application

<u>Application Numbers:</u> 25/03854/ADV and 25/03853/FUL	<u>Parish:</u>	Shrewsbury Town Council
<u>Proposal:</u> Installation of BT Street Hub Unit with advertisement panels		
<u>Site Address:</u> Footpath Outside 5 Castle Street Shrewsbury Shropshire SY1 2BD		
<u>Applicant:</u> Global Outdoor Media Limited		
<u>Case Officer:</u> Didi Kizito	<u>email:</u> didi.kizito@shropshire.gov.uk	

Grid Ref: 349276 - 312667



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Recommendation:- Refuse

Recommended reason for refusal

The proposed free-standing BT digital street hub outside 5 Castle Street would, due to its scale, height, design, illumination and prominent siting, introduce a visually intrusive and dominant feature into the Shrewsbury Conservation Area, creating visual clutter and harming both the historic streetscape and the setting of nearby listed and non-designated heritage

assets. The double-sided illuminated screen would adversely affect visual amenity in both immediate and wider views, failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this part of the town centre. As such, the development is considered harmful to the significance of the Conservation Area and is contrary to Local Plan Policies CS3, CS6, CS17, MD2, MD13 and the NPPF.

REPORT

1.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Applications 25/03854/ADV and 25/03853/FUL pertain to the erection of a freestanding BT digital street hub with an illuminated advertising screen. The new hub is designed to stand 2.99 meters high, 1.24 meters wide, and 0.35 meters deep.

2.0 SITE LOCATION/DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The pavement outside 5 Castle Street is within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed and non-designated heritage assets. The location is highly sensitive, with important co-visible and inter-visible views contributing to the historic character of the town centre.

3.0 REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION OF APPLICATION

- 3.1 The works proposed relate to Shropshire Council land but concerns non-statutory functions of the Council and the Scheme of Delegation requires that such applications are considered by Committee.

4.0 Community Representations

Consultee Comment

- 4.1.1 SC Highways
No objection subject to condition.
- 4.1.2 SC Conservation (Historic Environment)
The proposed BT digital street hub, by reason of its scale, height, illuminated digital display and prominent siting within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area, would form a visually intrusive and dominant feature that introduces modern illuminated advertising and visual clutter into a historically sensitive streetscape. The structure would detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would harm the setting of nearby listed and non-designated heritage assets. This represents *less than substantial harm* to heritage assets to which great weight must be given.

The submitted heritage assessment is limited in scope and does not adequately address the prominence of the structure or its impact on key views within the Conservation Area. The proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and would fail to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings, as required by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4.2 Public Comments

4.2.1 Shrewsbury Town Council

The Town Council strongly object to the installation of street hubs as they have no place within the town centre. They do not have a place within the evolving Design Code and are not in keeping within the Conservation Area. Large, internally illuminated signs are not acceptable in this location. Members fully endorse the comments of the Conservation Officer.

4.2.2 Shrewsbury Civic Society objects to this proposal. To our knowledge, these 'hubs' have been appearing in urban locations around the country over the last year or so. Whilst these structures may be appropriate for a city location they are not suited to historical areas and, in our opinion, will just produce unnecessary visual 'noise'

4.2.3 Comments have been received objecting to the scheme for the following reasons:

- Street Hubs function mainly as advertising structures, offering little genuine public benefit.
- Services like WiFi and charging are already widely available, so the units fill no unmet need.
- Claims about air-quality or traffic monitoring are promotional; features are optional, uncommitted, and not regulatory-grade.
- The units take up valuable pavement space and appear out of keeping with the conservation area.

5.0 THE MAIN ISSUES

Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

6.0 OFFICER APPRAISAL

6.1 Impact on local amenity

6.1.1 The proposed installation would be positioned on a busy high street footpath. The

proposed BT digital street hub, by virtue of its scale, height, illuminated digital display and prominent siting within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area, would form an unduly intrusive, modern and visually dominant feature that introduces illuminated advertising and associated visual clutter into a highly sensitive historic streetscape. The development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and would detract from the immediate and wider setting of nearby listed and non-designated heritage assets. The harm identified is considered to amount to less than substantial harm; however, great weight must be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

- 6.1.2 The identified harm is considered localised and, according to the NPPF, would constitute less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. Such harm must be balanced against any public benefits. The submitted documents note that the scheme would offer 438 hours per year, per screen, for free Council advertising and messaging. Additionally, it is stated that the Street Hub can accommodate environmental sensors to monitor air quality, noise, and traffic, and is powered entirely by renewable, carbon-free energy. While these features provide some public benefit, they are not deemed sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area. In addition, the brightness and dynamic nature of the displays, especially after dark, would draw undue attention and appear visually dominant, disrupting the traditional streetscape.
- 6.1.3 The submitted heritage assessment is limited in scope and does not adequately address the prominence of the structure or its impact on key views within the Conservation Area. The proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and would fail to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings, as required by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 6.1.4 In the absence of public benefits sufficient to outweigh this harm, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS6 and CS17 of the Core Strategy, Policies MD2 and MD13 of the SAMDev Plan, the relevant requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the statutory duties under Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6.2 Impact on public safety

- 6.2.1 It is concluded that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on public safety or the safety of highway users.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed free-standing BT digital street hub outside 5 Castle Street would, due to its scale, height, design, illumination and prominent siting, introduce a visually intrusive and dominant feature into the Shrewsbury Conservation Area, creating visual clutter and harming both the historic streetscape and the setting of nearby listed and non-designated heritage assets. The double-sided illuminated screen

would adversely affect visual amenity in both immediate and wider views, failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this part of the town centre. As such, the development is considered harmful to the significance of the Conservation Area and is contrary to Local Plan Policies CS3, CS6, CS17, MD2, MD13 and the NPPF.

8.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

8.1 Risk Management

There are two principal risks associated with this recommendation as follows:

- As with any planning decision the applicant has a right of appeal if they disagree with the decision and/or the imposition of conditions. Costs can be awarded irrespective of the mechanism for hearing the appeal, i.e. written representations, hearing or inquiry.
- The decision may be challenged by way of a Judicial Review by a third party. The courts become involved when there is a misinterpretation or misapplication of policy or some breach of the rules of procedure or the principles of natural justice. However their role is to review the way the authorities reach decisions, rather than to make a decision on the planning issues themselves, although they will interfere where the decision is so unreasonable as to be irrational or perverse. Therefore they are concerned with the legality of the decision, not its planning merits. A challenge by way of Judicial Review must be made a) promptly and b) in any event not later than six weeks after the grounds to make the claim first arose.

Both of these risks need to be balanced against the risk of not proceeding to determine the application. In this scenario there is also a right of appeal against non-determination for application for which costs can also be awarded.

8.2 Human Rights

Article 8 gives the right to respect for private and family life and First Protocol Article 1 allows for the peaceful enjoyment of possessions. These have to be balanced against the rights and freedoms of others and the orderly development of the County in the interests of the Community.

First Protocol Article 1 requires that the desires of landowners must be balanced against the impact on residents.

This legislation has been taken into account in arriving at the above recommendation.

8.3 Equalities

The concern of planning law is to regulate the use of land in the interests of the public at large, rather than those of any particular group. Equality will be one of a number of ‘relevant considerations’ that need to be weighed in Planning Committee members’ minds under section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

9.0 Financial Implications

There are likely financial implications if the decision and / or imposition of conditions is challenged by a planning appeal or judicial review. The costs of defending any decision will be met by the authority and will vary dependent on the scale and nature of the proposal. Local financial considerations are capable of being taken into account when determining this planning application – insofar as they are material to the application. The weight given to this issue is a matter for the decision maker.

10. Background

Relevant Planning Policies

National Policy:
NPPF

Core Strategy and Saved Policies:
CS3, CS6, CS17, MD2, MD13

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None

11. Additional Information

View details online: <http://pa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T44VF4TDLEP00>

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) - Councillor David Walker

Local Member - Cllr Alex Wagner
