

SHREWSBURY



BIG TOWN PLAN



PROJECT BRIEF

Castle Street Vision & Development Framework

1. SUMMARY OF SERVICES REQUIRED

Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Partnership wishes to appoint a skilled and experienced consultant to lead a project focussed on the regeneration of Castle Street ([see map here](#)) - a key gateway and character area of Shrewsbury town centre.

Castle Street runs from the train station into the heart of the town centre and is home to businesses, residential dwellings and two of the town's most significant historic assets - Shrewsbury Castle and Shrewsbury Library (Grade 1 Listed former Shrewsbury School Building) - both owned by Shropshire Council. However the street suffers from vacant units (including upper floors), a lack of identity and coherence, and despite relatively high footfall is economically underperforming.

This project builds on from the substantial work to date on the Shrewsbury [Big Town Plan](#) and in particular relates to the themes of 'Creating Enterprise' and 'Supporting Vitality, Life & Mix'.

The appointed consultant will work closely with the Big Town Plan Team, engaging with relevant land owners, occupiers, partners and stakeholders to co-create a vision and development framework for Castle Street.

The development framework will include soft-market tested and deliverable development proposals including the re-purposing and re-configuration of existing buildings, as well as small scale and temporary interventions that could be delivered now to improve the public realm and experience.

The project will require a mix of disciplines and expertise including visioning, historic buildings, stakeholder engagement, urban design, soft market testing, and viability appraisals.

2. BACKGROUND ON THE BIG TOWN PLAN

Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury BID and Shrewsbury Town Council are working in partnership on the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan project. The Big Town Plan is a new way of working in the town - diverse stakeholders from across the public and private sector are working together - and putting the needs of people at the heart of our plan-making and place-shaping.

The Big Town Plan has been created to guide the development and priorities of the town, ensuring we are creating and making the most of opportunities, and are well positioned to manage current and future challenges. The Big Town Plan will ensure that Shrewsbury develops in a way that is complimentary of, and sensitive to, the place that it is today. It is vital that the identity of Shrewsbury – the place in which our businesses and residents trade and live, and visitors spend their precious free time – is curated and managed.

In Summer 2016 over fifty individuals and organisations participated in a series of workshops about the future of Shrewsbury. The conversations and ideas which flowed from these sessions have formed the basis of the Big Town Plan vision which you can read at shrewsburybigtownplan.org

In September 2017 we consulted extensively on the Big Town Plan through an interactive website and popup shop in the centre of Shrewsbury. We received over 2,500 comments and responses which informed the next stage of development.

In December 2018, following a further consultation, the Big Town Plan was adopted by the three main partners. A three year partnership agreement is now in place to move our vision into reality.

3. THE BIG TOWN PLAN VISION

We see the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan as a blueprint for how County Towns or other towns might adapt and evolve in the middle part of the 21st Century. As the birthplace of the father of evolutionary science we want to celebrate Darwin's legacy by developing the Big Town Plan as a blueprint for thoughtful and purposeful change and adaptation in the Town into the future.

We recognise how special Shrewsbury is and we want to direct and manage change in a way that is sensitive to its identity and its character and respectful of its heritage. Our Big Town Vision supports the Local Plan to provide balanced growth over the next two decades in a way that is centred on people and place, with more attention directed to encouraging development and life in the town centre and those places on the edge of the town centre that are in need of new life and new purpose. We also want to make those places on the edge of town better connected, giving them identity and character that makes them better places and feel a greater part of Shrewsbury.

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 now been re-colonised. Around the Station and the northern corridor, it feels very different.

Great new buildings rub shoulders with re-used older buildings. New workers and residents pour in and out of the station, under the brightly-lit railway arches and colonise new cafes and the new square in front of the Station. Cyclists make their way along the new "low-line" green corridor along the former canal to the busy Flaxmill Maltings.

Traffic in the town centre 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 that link Pride Hill with a new traffic-free riverside promenade.

Shopping patterns have changed, the independents and destination brands are thriving, people spend more time in town, browsing, shopping, eating and drinking in roof-top bars and visiting the cinema. In the evening, people stroll up and down Smithfield, now free of traffic. New housing overlooks the river where the multi-storey and bus station used to be and people sit out in new cafés enjoying the view and the evening sun.

The Market is going from strength to strength and around it are clusters of new business start-ups, many connected to the growing University. The West End has changed too, the network of streets and spaces including Mardol are largely traffic-free. Surface car parks have been repurposed and replaced with capacity at the edges of the town centre with clear routes to move people into and around the town centre so the town remains accessible to all and the environment more welcoming. In their place are a vibrant mix of uses including new parts of the University, workspace and apartments. It feels very different walking down to Victoria Quay or to the Quarry with new, high quality pedestrian routes.

The whole town is much better connected by cycle or on foot, in a safe way, avoiding conflict with vehicular traffic. It is possible now to make your way across town by cycle or on foot. Not only is there a great network of routes into town but there are now new links to the River too and routes leading out into the wider countryside. Places on the edge of town that once felt a bit soulless have changed too. Old-style retail and employment parks are now mixed-use places with new housing, parks and greenspaces and links into town. There are now much closer networks and links between the Hospital, healthcare, sports and leisure and schools and colleges.

We make decisions differently now. The Big Town Plan means that we test everything against the vision. New development and new infrastructure has to pass what we will call "the Shrewsbury Test". – referenced as the Shrewsbury Development Strategy (CS2) in the adopted Core Strategy. Does it support our vision? Does it strengthen the identity of Shrewsbury? Is it right for that part of town and most importantly, does it make life better for people?

4. TEN GOALS FOR SHREWSBURY

The challenges facing Shrewsbury in the next two decades will bring about change whether we like it or not. Many of them are universal pressures and others are more individual to Shrewsbury. We want to face these challenges head-on and we will direct and shape the changes that emerge from them in the Big Town Plan in a way that delivers the greatest benefit to Shrewsbury. They need to fit with our vision and the Big Town Plan.

These are the goals we want to set for now, although we know that there will be others that appear over the next two decades that we don't yet know about. The goals set out below and in setting these we know we can face these challenges head on.

1. We want to make it much better for the pedestrian and cyclist, especially in the town centre. This means shifting the balance of priority given to movement across the town from the private car to walking and cycling and greater use of rail and bus.
2. We recognise the rapid changes in working patterns and working practice. We want to create new, flexible workspace environments built around buzzy, active places, both in and around the town centre and out on the edge of town.
3. We want to plan for future sustainable growth that utilises development opportunities on a mix of sites, including land in and on the edge of the town centre, as well as development on land located on the periphery of town.
4. We want to build strong physical and virtual networks connecting education, healthcare, business start-ups, new industries and sports provision across the town to improve mobility and to form new alliances. The importance of well-being in Shrewsbury is key.
5. We want to open up the housing market in the town through increasing choice and improving affordability. This means increasing town centre living and introducing different housing models and tenures.
6. We are very proud of our education establishments. We want to retain more of our best young talent in the town and attract new talent from outside. We want to support innovation and startups in exciting new places.
7. We want to strengthen the all-round appeal of the town centre based around better place-making, the town's extraordinary built heritage and the visitor experience. We want to

strengthen independent shopping whilst continuing to attract destination brands. We want to inject greater diversity of use into the centre, housing leisure, entertainment, culture and the arts.

8. We want to make this green town greener still, by connecting existing green spaces across the town, making new links and new parks where we can and making much more of the River corridor. We want to make strong connections from the town centre, through the suburbs and out into the wider countryside and improve the health and well-being for everyone.
9. We want to raise the quality of design across the town, particularly for new housing. We will develop what we will call "The Shrewsbury Test" to raise standards for all new development.
10. We want to encourage new development, infrastructure and investment but will take a much more holistic and integrated approach to the way we make decisions making them more joined-up in line with the Vision and Big Town Plan.

We have identified four key aims which are crucial to realising the overall vision.

1. Creating a Place for Enterprise
2. Rethinking Movement
3. Enabling Vitality, Life and Mix
4. Nurturing Natural Shrewsbury

Further information on the above themes and related principles can be found at shrewsburybigtownplan.org

5. THE BIG TOWN PLAN PARTNERSHIP - KEY PEOPLE

The team consists of

TBC	Programme Coordinator, Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Partnership
Hayley Owen	Growth Programme and Strategy Manager, Shropshire Council
Helen Ball	Town Clerk, Shrewsbury Town Council
Seb Slater	Executive Director, Shrewsbury BID

The board consists of

Cllr Peter Nutting	Leader of Shropshire Council
Cllr Alan Mosley	Leader of Shrewsbury Town Council
James Handley	Shrewsbury BID Board Member
Gemma Davies	Head of Economic Growth, Shropshire Council
Helen Ball	Town Clerk, Shrewsbury Town Council
Seb Slater	Executive Director, Shrewsbury BID

6. REQUIREMENTS AND OUTPUTS FOR THE CASTLE STREET VISION & DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Big Town Plan Partnership would expect the appointed consultant team to:

- Carry out analysis of the area at present including ownerships, occupiers, uses, residential mix, vacancies, public realm, movement and stakeholders;
- Work closely with the Big Town Plan team, partners and Castle Street community to co-create a new vision for Castle Street or 'The Castle Quarter';
- Work closely with Shrewsbury Big Town Plan team to manage and facilitate stakeholder and partner engagement including, workshops and meetings.
- Develop development and design options that consider both the development type and the potential phasing and have an appropriate level of design quality deserving of the historic environment

Development options must be deliverable and the report should provide layout plans and potential visuals. As a minimum the partnership would wish to see the following:

- *Indicative layout plans identifying developments, landscaping and public realm*
- *CGI's showing how the proposed development option and design solution could positively improve the experience of the area*
- Explore the potential for change of use and mixed use development
- Evidence the demand and viability of proposed development projects and undertake financial appraisals of the options to confirm viability;
- Produce a constraints plan, clearly identifying areas where key constraints may be identified;
- Integrate soft market testing through the process to ensure the proposals are robust;
- Consider how the Castle Quarter connects to and complements the offer in the wider town centre
- Make suggestions about the animation and marketing of the area for the community and visitors, based on feedback from the consultations
- Liaise with private and public sector landowners to test the proposed options to ensure that plans are deliverable. It will be important that this remains an iterative process throughout the commission so that the main landowners are fully engaged with the project;
- Produce a delivery strategy that clearly identifies how the development proposals can be brought forward and potential funding streams available;
- Identify benefits of the proposed development framework including the economic benefits of delivering the proposed development options.

It is not expected that this project will look in detail at movement strategy for Castle Street. However we would expect comments and ideas on movement to be put forward which will inform the development of a town wide movement strategy later this year.

A town wide Big Town Plan Masterplan, Movement Strategy and a Strategic Development Framework for Riverside are due to start shortly. Further briefing will be given to the successful consultant on how this project should relate to and inform these other pieces of work.

Overall Output

The Big Town Plan Partnership are seeking the production of a new vision and development framework for Castle Street to be used as the basis for bringing forward development proposals.

The output of work will require plans and images to ensure that a robust strategy can be used to outline the vision to Businesses, residents, councillors in the town.

However, at the centre of this project will be the need to ensure that proposals are viable and deliverable. Crucially, the process of the report and its conclusions must stand up to public scrutiny and be credible and supported by key partners such as the Marches Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The partnership would expect to receive a minimum of 3 hard copies of the final report along with an electronic version.

7. TIMESCALES

Submissions by	19 th July 2019
Selection	22 nd July 2019
Inception Meeting	w/c 29 th July 2019
Commission complete and final version completed	30 th October 2019

8. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will be undertaken according to the following breakdown.

Experience	30%
Response to the Brief	50%
Team Capabilities	20%

Responses should include, as a minimum, the following:

- Work programme
- Identified tasks and stages for delivery
- Key personnel involved and fees against each element of the work
- Identification of lead person for each stage of the commission along with overall strategic lead for the project

The Big Town Plan Partnership would expect to see the following areas of expertise as part of the project team:

- Commercial and Property;
- Urban Design;
- Financial;

Please also provide the names of three recent referees we can contact for references. Where possible, at least one should be a Partnership arrangement of private / public sector organisations. Please be aware you will not be scored on this section but the award is subject to references.

9. CONTACT FOR THE SUBMISSION

Contact with the Big Town Plan Team will be through Seb Slater, Executive Director of Shrewsbury BID

Contact details:

seb@shrewsburybid.co.uk

01743 254613 / 07990088097

All submissions are to be made by email by 11pm 19th July 2019.

10. BUDGET AND PAYMENT TERMS

The budget for this commission is within the range of £20,000 to £25,000 exclusive of VAT.

Payment will be made within 30 days on receipt of invoice, with 50% on submission of draft reports and 50% on completion.