

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: 9th September 2021

Committee:
Place Overview Committee

Date: Friday, 17 September 2021
Time: 2.30 pm
Venue: Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached.

Members of the public will be able to access the live stream of the meeting by clicking on this link:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/placeoverviewcommitteemeeting17september2021/>

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public but this will be very limited in order to comply with Covid-19 regulations. If you wish to attend the meeting, please e-mail democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check that a seat will be available for you.

Tim Collard
Interim Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services

Members of Place Overview Committee

Joyce Barrow (Chairman)	Geoff Elner
Paul Wynn (Vice Chairman)	Paul Gill
Andy Boddington	Dan Morris
Steve Davenport	Pamela Moseley
Julian Dean	David Vasmer

Your Committee Officer is:

Sarah Townsend Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257721

Email: sarah.townsend@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To consider the minutes of the Place Overview Committee meeting held on 4th August 2021. (To Follow).

Contact: Sarah Townsend (Tel: 01743 257721)

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions or petitions from the public of which notice has been given. The deadline for notification for this meeting is 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 15th September 2021.

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions of which Members of the Council have given notice. The deadline for notification for this meeting is 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 15th September 2021.

6 Post Covid-19 Economic Renewal (Pages 1 - 36)

To understand Shropshire Council's strategy for economic renewal following the pandemic. (Attached).

Contact: Tracy Darke (tracy.darke@shropshire.gov.uk)

7 Roadworks Diversions Working Group Terms of Reference (Pages 37 - 38)

To consider a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer on the terms of reference for a Roadworks Diversions Working Group. (Attached).

Contact: Danial Webb (Tel: 01743 258509)

8 Place Overview Committee Work Programme (Pages 39 - 46)

To consider the future work programme of the Committee. (Attached).

Contact: Danial Webb (Tel: 01743 258509)

9 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee

The Committee is scheduled to next meet on Monday, 25th October 2021 at 2.00 p.m.



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Place Overview Committee
17th September 2021

<u>Item</u>
6
<u>Public</u>

Post Covid-19 Economic Renewal

Responsible Officer: Tracy Darke Assistant Director Economy and Place

Email: tracy.darke@shropshire.gov.uk;

1. Synopsis

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the work that is on-going and planned to support the Shropshire economy post covid. There has been clearly a significant impact on how businesses operate and a shift in demand and support by the general public towards more local products. There has also been a significant shift in the types of businesses that have developed and grown during the pandemic, many re-inventing themselves. Our town centres are thriving, and many investors and homeowners want to move to Shropshire due to the quality of life it can offer. This is one of our economic strengths. We have major plans to support our economic growth agenda as well as a refresh of our economic development strategy, which is underway. We are engaging with our partners and neighbouring authorities to maximise the benefits for Shropshire and ensuring that health and well-being is woven into this work.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Since covid pandemic, we have seen a significant impact on jobs and businesses and as a Council, we have put in place support mechanisms to help businesses survive during these difficult times. This is to ensure that our economy continues to thrive as businesses re-invent themselves. Many changes to the retail and hospitality sectors have resulted in members of the public doing things differently. For example, as one of the biggest employers, Shropshire Council operates in a very different way than it did two years ago.
- 2.2 We have received over £160 million worth of government grant support for businesses, which has delivered wider economic

outputs. Stakeholder groups have continued to liaise to ensure that the services we are all offering reach the right people, for example, working with the LEP, Chamber of Commerce, Business Board, and the University has ensured that everyone is more informed about the assistance available.

- 2.3 As a Council, we have continued to attract inward investment and interest in developing the growth agenda. Supporting our town centres through regeneration schemes, such as Shrewsbury shopping centres and the Riverside development, together with the master-planning work for Oswestry and the Area Assessment for Bridgnorth, shows the commitment to improving our towns so that they can function to their maximum potential.
- 2.4 Officers are in the process of doing a refresh to the Economic Development Strategy and consultation workshops are to start imminently. This will give a structure to our economic recovery and renewal. We are also dovetailing into this work a few wider topics such as Brexit, to ensure that we fully understand some of the changes that impact on exportation for our businesses in Shropshire. We are also focusing on our rural economies to enable rural businesses to thrive, together with re-skilling our workforce and supporting young people as they leave full time education. We want to keep talent and skills in Shropshire.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That members note and endorse the report and provide feedback as appropriate.
- 3.2. That members advise on any additional areas that may need addressing as part of the post covid economic renewal work, in particular the workshops planned for the Economic Development Strategy refresh.

REPORT

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Whilst economic recovery and renewal affects all our communities, there are no direct impacts because of this report. The information provided brings together all the different workstreams that are taking place during covid pandemic as well as developing strategies for the future of our economy.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. There are no direct climate change implications as a result of this report. Any impacts are addressed through individual projects.

7. Background

- 7.1. Inevitably the covid pandemic has created many challenges for our economy in Shropshire, but it has responded remarkably well. This is due to a number of factors, such as the opportunity to develop businesses with a strong local market, good connectivity and infrastructure, vibrant towns and rural areas, skilled and talented workforce, and the opportunity to have a good work/life balance in a desirable part of the country. More people are moving their businesses and homes to rural locations such as Shropshire. We have also seen an increase in start-ups where the covid pandemic has enabled residents to think differently about their careers and has resulted in many new businesses emerging. We are also seeing an increase in the visitor economy and we are currently investing government funding into developing this area in Shropshire. Appendix A gives an insight into the work that the Council has been doing in conjunction with the LEP Growth hub and the statistics relating to business support and development.
- 7.2. Government support has been significant for businesses in Shropshire during the pandemic. Over £160 m has been distributed over the last 18 months and has kept many of our businesses afloat in the most difficult times. There has also been a programme of support that local businesses are delivering. Some of the work being rolled out over this current year can be seen in Appendix B, which ranges from upskilling young people, to re-skilling others, supporting the visitor economy and events sectors, as well as the work the town centre BID's are doing to support businesses. According to statistics from East and West Midlands DWP offices, Southern Shropshire (Ludlow/Bridgnorth) was the second hardest hit area during covid pandemic for unemployment levels and increase in numbers claiming Universal Credit, yet it has recovered the fastest.
- 7.3. In addition, an Economic taskforce was set up and continues to operate. This group includes economic partners who work

together to provide a collective approach to economic recovery and renewal. Intelligence is shared to ensure we are working with the right sectors that need support and develop our economic growth agenda. One of the areas of interest for the taskforce has been the need to refresh the Economic Development Strategy for the Council. This work has now started, with planned workshops covering a number of themes, which are identified at Appendix B. It is intended to complete this work to enable the refreshed strategy to be adopted by the beginning of 2022. We have recently had a review by the Local Government Association regarding our economic recovery, and it was recognised that the taskforce has been an important forum to bring together key organisations which are committed to making a positive difference to Shropshire. The taskforce is driving future activity recognising the opportunity partner organisations can have on economic recovery.

- 7.4 The Council has also taken a lead in improving and regenerating our town centres, demonstrating the need to attract investment that will help our town centres to respond to the changing needs of our residents. Master-planning work in Shrewsbury and Oswestry, together with the financial investment and confidence the Council has demonstrated in Shrewsbury has attracted significant investor interest and confidence, at a time when many other towns and city centres are contracting and struggling to survive. Footfall levels in Shrewsbury are at the same levels pre-covid pandemic, which is bucking the trend nationally. Other major infrastructure investments, such as the North West Relief Road, will attract housing and economic growth. We have also been bold about Government funding opportunities with three bids submitted for Levelling up Funding, covering Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Craven Arms. Fortunately, plans were advanced for two of the areas and we were able to respond at pace, given the short timescales. We await the decision, which is due late Autumn. Furthermore, we are developing a County Deal following recent government announcements and are encouraged by early dialogue to be as ambitious as possible.
- 7.5 We are really ambitious about the opportunities Shropshire has, as we see more and more people wanting to invest and live here. The life-style available is ever more important since covid pandemic. Being able to work more flexibly has seen a surge in businesses relocating to the area and employees wanting a better work/life balance.
- 7.5 The development of the local plan, which is being submitted for examination also demonstrates the commitment to economic recovery and renewal. Allocated sites within the plan ensure that our existing businesses have room to grow, as well as providing additional sites for new businesses to invest in Shropshire. This provides a pipeline of developable land for the next 15 years.

- 7.6 Officers have also been engaging with the Integrated Care System (ICS) Board that has been set up recently across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. The Board is considering the contribution of economic growth to population health. For example, we are supporting ICS partners to maximise their contribution to economic growth through local employment and procurement, whilst training and preparing young people to take up opportunities in the health sector. We will also support the recruitment and retention of NHS staff, by developing policies for keyworker housing in our communities. Other areas are to continue to promote opportunities for new companies to locate in the area creating new job opportunities, supply chain and spend in our local economies. A better understanding of the close links between health and well-being and the economy is welcomed. Having a job and a home can often play a large part in improving health and well-being. A report was submitted to the ICS Board and is attached to show the connectivity between health and the economy. See appendix D

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. Ensuring that we are equipped to respond to an ever-changing economy is key to the success of Shropshire as a place to do businesses and provide jobs for now and future generations. It has also been important that the Council has had the foresight to understand the need to invest in our town centres, even more so as a result of covid pandemic. As we continue to refresh our strategies and progress the local plan, it will put us on the front foot in attracting significant investment in the future.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

N/A

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Councillor Ed Potter

Local Member – N/A

Appendices

Appendix Report on the work in Shropshire Growth Hub at the LEP.

Appendix B Report on the Additional Restrictions Grant.

Appendix C Workshop themes for the refresh of the Economic development strategy

Appendix D Report submitted to the ICS Board

Appendix A

Marches Growth Hub Shropshire

Notes to Support MGH Operations Group Meeting

June and July 2021 activity

Engagement - General Overview

During June and July, the landscape continued to be exceptionally fluid as the businesses adapted to the 'Return and Recover' phase of COVID 19 restrictions and regulations. This has enabled us to guide our local business communities through the Growth Hub with further support from the Shropshire Council Economic Recovery Plan. It continues to be very challenging for everyone, including our amazing and valuable businesses in Shropshire and will be for many months to come. But the lifting of the COVID 19 restrictions on 19 July was welcomed and has given the businesses more confidence and hope for the summer months and beyond. The access and support through the Marches Growth Hub continues to be a lifeline and critical access point for general business support, but during these last two months, more importantly for accessing COVID 19 information and financial support for the local businesses through the Shropshire Council Discretionary Grant Scheme 5 (DARG 5). After the initial flurry of businesses re-routing their attentions to EU Exit, the level of enquiries has fallen dramatically with only one or two per month. Businesses are receiving support through their local DiT teams, the Export Academy and the West Midlands Cluster EU Business Support Programme, which has been invaluable.

We have continued to strengthen our position as a professional friend and familiar face (virtually) for so many businesses since lockdown and now through the return and recovery phase when they start to adjust, stabilise and grow. We have also connected and engaged with a vast number of businesses who would never have interacted with us, which has been extremely positive and made more Shropshire businesses aware of the level and type of support the Growth Hub can offer. We are now starting to see a greater spread of businesses across all parts of Shropshire, especially South Shropshire, Market Drayton and Cleobury Mortimer.

This was helped by the COVID 19 additional funding that has been made available to the Growth Hubs for this financial year. We are now working with 15 self-employed Specialist Business Advisers/Consultants, supporting local businesses who needed help in key areas of their business. The support was more targeted and bespoke to each business. This funding has enabled the businesses to have 12 hours intensive support and strengthened the Growth Hub's position in the 'space' of offering professional and longer-term support. The interest and take up of the Specialist support, once again, has been very strong. **48** businesses accessed the 12 hrs support in June and July.

To support the 2021-2022 funding from the LEP, the Shropshire Council-led ARG Economic Recovery Fund has awarded the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire **371k** additional funds to support the delivery of **5** programmes. The funds are required to be spent and delivered by 31 March 2022. A suite of programmes were launched which were either an extension to existing LEP programmes, addressed gap in provision or potential market failure.

The Recovery Programme is a £3.2m series of projects, utilising Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) funding from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to fund wider business support activities.

Please see below more detail of the 5 launched programmes:

Access to free general business support and the Business Boost Programme (offline workshops) – 50k

- To support business during the ‘Restart and Recovery’ phase of COVID 19 the Marches Growth Hub is working with start-ups, early stage and growth businesses to access general business advice and support through business 121 sessions. Also a suite of webinars (Business Boost programme) is being developed to aid businesses with their learning and development which can be accessed offline through the Invest In Shropshire website. This follows feedback from Retail and Tourism sectors and will allow the businesses to access a series of webinars covering different business disciplines at the time and place of their choice and not when we are running them in real time. This will be launched in March 2022 and will be a legacy for the SC Economic Recovery Funds.

Intensive 12 Hours Specialist Business Support – 80k

- We are working with a team of 15 expert advisers and consultants to provide detailed free intensive support to help our Shropshire businesses to grow and prosper as the county recovers from the impact of the Covid pandemic. The Hub is able to offer unparalleled support and our advisers bring expertise and knowledge across the full range of business issues from access to finance, sales and marketing to HR and Health and Safety concerns and more. This is an extension to the LEP funding for intensive support.

The Digital Hub – 150k

- The Digital Hub hosts a range of programmes which are centred on the ‘Digital Revolution’ and adopting new technologies in response to COVID 19. This is through various webinar programmes, 15 hours specialist support for addressing cyber security and attaining Cyber Essentials certification, 12 hours specialist support on adopting digital technologies and improving your digital presence as a business. Also, the delivery of a highly successful Tech Severn two-day Conference in June, where 809 businesses logged in and the development of a digital media programme, with Media Insiders.

The Silverpreneurs Programme – 71k

- The Silverpreneurs® programme has been exclusively created to inspire and empower the over 50’s, who are wanting to start up their own business or grow their micro or small business as part of a fun and collaborative business community. Silverpreneurs® is more than just a place to find business support, it’s a space for like-minded people who want to show just how good life is after 50! The programme includes three months of support delivered through a combination of 1-2-1 and group sessions where you can learn, grow and share your unique skills and experience with the group. The Silver Experts will share their business knowledge, experience and networks with you, whilst the community of Silverpreneurs® will be there to share the highs and lows of running a business, supporting and celebrating with each other along the way. Three Cohorts of 14 delegates will be delivered through the life of the programme.

Social Enterprise Conference – Spark Social – 20k

- We are currently developing a Social Enterprise Conference as part of Social Enterprise week in November. The Conference will be centred on celebrating everything Social in Shropshire, especially given we have Social Enterprise Place status and CSR amongst the private sector ‘Purpose to Profit’ and how we build that bridge between the Private Sector and Social Enterprises. The conference will take place on 16 November from 10 – 1.30p.m. and will be delivered virtually through Yarrington who have a purpose-built studio and virtual platform to host the event. Please save the date!

Many of our businesses have been exceptionally creative and innovative in their approaches to COVID 19 and found new ways of working and doing business. They have embraced change to make their businesses stronger and more resilient. It has forced businesses to take time out, reflect and review their business and make the necessary positive changes they have been considering, but never had the time to move forward. We are now working with many Pre-Starts and Start-Ups ‘Born out of COVID 19’ and existing businesses who wish to diversify or launch new products and services or embrace new adaptive technologies ‘Grow your way out of COVID 19’. The soft launch in January of the MGHEDF ‘Step Up for Business programme’ has been crucial in supporting new starts and very timely given the current landscape. The momentum has grown and intensified over this period, with a vast number of individuals and businesses registering and attending the two programmes. Shropshire will reach a critical milestone in the early autumn when we will have reached our full allocation of registrations for the Start-Up aspect of the programme. Discussions are already taking place about an extension, for Shropshire, either through the ERDF programme or a stand alone ‘Solopreneurs’ programme funded by the SC Economic Recovery Fund.

Great news on the Start-Up front but we are seeing some business casualties throughout Shropshire and with more subsequent closures over the coming months, as furlough is phased out. Our help and support will become even more vital.

As part of the Employment and Skills Sub-Group at SC, benefit claimants through the Job Centres have now stabilised and the percentage of unemployed in Shropshire levels out. We may see a further peak once the Furlough Scheme ends. Self-employment may be a potential option for some of these individuals as an alternative to seeking employment in the local area. We know there is huge demand for any recruitment that is taking place, as the marketplace is flooded with individuals looking for jobs. However, the hospitality, agriculture and horticulture sectors are struggling to find appropriate recruits for their available positions.

There has been a positive increase in businesses looking for ERDF funding through the existing programmes. The actual drawdown of grant applications has now improved but many are still uncertain about the recovery phase. Local intelligence also shows that many businesses are concerned about paying back their existing CBIL and bounceback loans as many still haven’t been able to return their businesses to profit and have cashflow problems.

During June and July the Growth Hub has continued to help businesses access the DARG 5 grants through Shropshire Council. The Growth Hub and wider Economic Development Team continued to administer the scheme. The Growth Hub became very busy again with queries and signposting.

Overall, the number of emails and phone calls has reduced by 50% from April and May, due to the reduction in COVID 19 schemes available locally. I am sure this trend will continue unless we have a Lockdown 4!

Good mix of sectors and combination of B2B and B2C engaging with the GH which is partly due to COVID 19. Business Enabling/Service/Professional Services – 30%, Retail – 30%, Food/Hospitality – 15%, Engineering/Manufacturing – 15% Leisure and Tourism – 5%, Other 5%. The figures fluctuate each month depending on what local grant programmes are available, relative to certain sectors and eligibility.

The Growth Hub resourcing pressures continue as Anna Sadler has been on long term sick since mid-December, which will be reviewed again late August. The support from the 15 Specialist Support advisers has been invaluable in delivering professional support to our local business community.

The Growth Hub continues to deliver online events which are working well. In June and July we delivered **31** online events with **1906** attendees. This was another very strong performance. Many businesses view the events as an ability to keep connected, upskilled and develop their respective businesses. The two-day Tech Severn Conference created huge interest and we hosted 809 businesses.

With delivering online events the reach is far greater, so we are engaging with businesses who have never touched us before. Also, we are attracting businesses from outside of the county as online events do not create boundaries. We have been working in partnership with our suite of trainers and delivers to bring a topical, varied and interesting programme of event for our audiences. Also, our trainers and deliverers are bringing new audiences with them too. Many of the businesses which have only just started to engage with us, are now serial event attendees which is extremely encouraging. We have also promoted some of the events as Marches wide to increase take up and visibility of the Growth Hub network.

Some of the best supported events were:- Tech Severn 2 day Conference = 809, Buy From Marketing and Branding series = 106, Fraggelworks Digital Marketing series = 155, Tax Relief and Allowance Catax = 24, Inspired Mindset = 27 and 21, HR for Office Managers = 47, How to build a strong and resilient team = 34, The Friday Hub = 552

The Friday Hub weekly virtual network still goes from strength to strength, still attracting between 60 – 80 businesses every Friday.

Chas Warren from Landau commented:

‘Just wanted to say what a fantastic networking group you have created for Shropshire. It really is awesome.

Just this week I have had really positive meetings with Heather, Jenna, Katie & Kelly, Neville & David as a direct result of meeting them on the Friday hub.

I have attended many similar events, but never found them as effective as the uniquely friendly and supportive group we have every Friday.’

Output and Stats June and July 2021

E-mail enquiries	716
Telephone enquiries	152

Face to Face interventions	50
Number of startups supported	66
Number of businesses supported	907
Number of GHUB events	31
Number of businesses at GHUB events	1906
Number of referrals made	332 or 189
<p>The larger figure includes COVID 19 referrals to schemes. The lower figure just relates to ERDF programmes and other.</p>	

31 events delivered purely by the MGH in partnership with other organisations such as :- Tech Severn 2 day Conference = 809, Buy From Marketing and Branding series = 106, Fraggelworks Digital Marketing series = 155, Tax Relief and Allowance Catax = 24, Inspired Mindset = 27 and 21, HR for Office Managers = 47, How to build a strong and resilient team = 34, The Friday Hub = 552 and more. **Good mix and sectors.**

- **Learns** – We have been delivering suites of events and workshops rather than one offs in a scattergun approach. Creating Hubs for various themes and sectors. We find we retain greater numbers and the businesses also have time to network and collaborate. Also, we are conscious of webinar fatigue, so we are considering the topics and timings of events very carefully to keep businesses interested and attending. Also considering evening webinars.
- **332** actual referrals for June and July. However, **143** were COVID 19 related and **189** for ERDF programmes and other support. Largest numbers of referrals for ERDF programmes were **Transmit Start Up Loans, Step Up for Business, BGP2, SPEED, MBIG and MSEG.**

The Marches Growth Hub also promotes, supports and administers the Shropshire Council, Market Drayton Grant Scheme. Please see below the current position of the scheme.

Total Scheme value	£443,100.00
Value of Grants Awarded	£386,563.57
Value of Grants claimed or waiting to be claimed	£379,854.77
Private Match	£386,563.57
Number of Grants Awarded	5
Value of Grants left to award	£ 63,245.23
Number of jobs created	29

Number of jobs safeguarded	83
Business relocating and investing into the area	2
Prospects in the pipeline and application received	1

Customer Satisfaction

85 customer satisfaction surveys were completed during June and July which were a combination of business 121s and 31 events/workshops. Many events were delivered jointly where the partner feedback forms were completed. 100% were satisfied/very satisfied with the service they received from business 121s and the table below shows the individual responses against the question “In the absence of Growth Hub Support how likely are you to access the same activity?” (1 being very Likely and 5 being very Unlikely)

The strong level of feedback for the business 121s show businesses value the support from the Growth Hub. However, due to the rapid shift to online events we have not been able to gain the level of feedback which we normally do from our face 2 face events. We have been capturing comments from attendees through the deliverers but not in the format that we usually gain the intel. However, we have now set up the feedback on Survey Monkey which we have reported, but the responses are still lower than what we use to report.

1. Very Likely	2
2.	10
3.	44
4.	18
5. Very Unlikely	11

Referrals

The table below gives more detail on which programmes were referred through the hub. **Transmit Start Up Loans** is one of the highest referrals followed by **Step Up for Business, BGP2 and SPEED**. I have not included COVID 19 schemes as part of this narrative.

COVID 19 Grant and Loan Schemes & other Govn Support	143
Transmit Start Up Loans	45
Step Up for Business	35
BGP2	29
SPEED	21

MBIG	15
MSEG	11
Art Business Loans	9
Ladder for Shropshire	4
Silverpreneurs	4
BEEP	2
DiT	2
Shropshire Council Assets team	2
Digital Solutions	1
SOLVD	1
UK Centric Supply Chain	1
Market Drayton Grant Scheme	1
Cooper Green Pooks	1
Landau	1
MSPN	1
Matrix – Tern Valley Development	1
MGP	1
BCRS/MEIF	1
TOTAL	332

- **332** actual referrals for June and July. However, **143** were COVID 19 related and only **189** for ERDF programmes and other support. Largest numbers of referrals for ERDF programmes were **Transmit Start Up Loans, Step Up for Business, BPG2 and SPEED.**
- Created a database of all professionals, intermediaries, fund managers etc for the Growth Hub and wider economic Growth Team.

Spend for 2021-2022

The Growth Hub has been allocated **20k** for CORE funding and a further **54k** for Additional support through Specialist 12 hr 121 sessions.

To support the 2021-2022 funding from the LEP, the Shropshire Council-led ARG Economic Recovery Fund has awarded the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire **371k** additional funds to support the delivery of 5 programmes. The funds are required to be spent and delivered by 31 March 2022.

The Recovery Programme is a £3.2m series of projects, utilising Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) funding from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to fund wider business support activities.

The Quarter 1 LEP Claim

The spend that was claimed for Quarter 1 = **£12,910.47**

Operational

Marches Growth Hub Shropshire Physical Growth Hub – Due to COVID 19 and lockdown, the Marches Growth Hub have been working remotely at home and have not had a presence in the Growth Hub. The management and delivery of the MGH offering has continued, but virtually.

However, there has been a phased return to the Growth Hub one or two days a week and the Business Growth and Inward Investment Team are sharing the space on a rota basis.

Unfortunately, Anna has been off from work on long term sick since mid-December. Emma has been managing the GH on her own with support from the 15 Specialist Advisers to deliver the service. A further review of resource will take place in August.

Evolutive – Referral and signposting lists have been updated. Further reports have been added to cover all the current programmes through the LEP and ARG monies to make output reporting straight forward and correct.

Communications

Aim to be more visible and strengthen the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire Brand and Personality across Shropshire:-

- **Tech Severn 2021 to focus on how technology can help tackle climate change**
- **<https://www.shropshirelive.com/business/2021/06/25/shropshire-climate-conference-hailed-a-huge-success/>**
- **Supercharge your business with free digital webinars**
- **Planet Doughnut creates jobs with move to new production site**
- **Shropshire's silver entrepreneurs offered exclusive business support programme**
- **Fast track grants in support of Shropshire's wider economic recovery launched**
- **Back by popular demand! Free business-boosting webinars will help you hit new heights**
- **£160 million paid out to help Shropshire businesses**
- **Social media coverage of events being delivered.**
- **Strong comms from the Shropshire Council team on all events and programmes.**
- **Articles appeared in Love Shrewsbury.**
- **Visibility through our e-newsletters which have been more frequent.**
- **Articles appeared in Councillor's bulletin at Shropshire Council and staff newsroom.**
- **Sending out partner Blogs to gain more interest from our businesses with relevant topics. This is working well and at times we send out themed newsletters.**

- Oswestry and Shrewsbury BID, Buy From Shropshire, Shrewsbury Business Chamber and FSB are promoting our events regularly.
- **Guest Blogs**
- Created a screen saver page with Shropshire Council comms team to promote the Marches Growth Hub and raise awareness internally.
- All press articles have been sent round the Council newsroom
- Regularly write news articles for internal Staff newsletter and Councillor's bulletin.
- GovDelivery reach now **4789**.

Outreach

Drive to be more accessible and visible across Shropshire for the local business communities. A move away from being deemed Shrewsbury centric:-

Growth Hub 'On the Move'.

All physical activity/presence is on hold due to COVID 19 and lockdown restrictions. However, we have been extremely visible through our virtual/online events/workshops/activities and regular Zoom and Teams meetings with delivery partners and intermediaries.

It's vitally important that we keep connected with our network and not lose momentum as much as possible.

Emma has now been invited to virtually attend various network groups around the county to raise the profile of the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire.

We also delivered our first outreach activity at the end of July at Shropshire Wildlife Trust and will then arrange our monthly schedule with the Libraries around the county. A virtual meeting has taken place to agree a forward plan.

Also attending the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Business Expo on 14 October at the Shrewsbury Town Football Club.

Events

Working more closely with partners, funders and intermediaries to deliver a relevant, timely and informative programme of events and workshops. Either initiated and organised directly by the Growth Hub or working collaboratively with partners. For the benefit of the business and charity communities:-

- Our 2021/2022 events programme is constantly evolving and looking for new partnerships and different workshops for delivery, given the recent changes and a shift to online/virtual workshops and seminars. We have been trying to make the webinars interactive and engaging given the nature of delivery.
- We have also delivered our first outreach activity at the end of July at Shropshire Wildlife Trust as full day Marches Growth Hub Shropshire VIP events. These continue throughout the rest of 2021/2022.
- The Growth Hub moved to online events which are working extremely well. In June and July we delivered **31** online events with **1906** attendees. With delivering online events the reach is far greater, so we are engaging with businesses who have never touched us before. Also,

we are attracting businesses from outside of the county as online events do not create boundaries. We have been working in partnership with our suite of trainers and deliverers to bring a topical, varied and interesting programme of event for our audiences. Also, our trainers and deliverers are bringing new audiences with them too.

- We have also promoted some of the events as Marches wide to increase take up and visibility of the Growth Hub network.
- We have been delivering suites of events and workshops rather than one offs in a scattergun approach. Creating 'Hubs' for various themes and sectors. We find we retain greater numbers and the businesses also have time to network and collaborate. Also, we are conscious of webinar fatigue, so we are considering the topics and timings of events very carefully to keep businesses interested and attending.
- The Friday Hub continues to be a great success with on average 60-80 Businesses attending each week. The attendees like the informal approach connecting with other local businesses, learn new skills and knowledge, share best practise and act as a 'peer to peer' support group.
- Some of the best supported events were:- Tech Severn 2 day Conference = 809, Buy From Marketing and Branding series = 106, Fraggelworks Digital Marketing series = 155, Tax Relief and Allowance Catax = 24, Inspired Mindset = 27 and 21, HR for Office Managers = 47, How to build a strong and resilient team = 34, The Friday Hub = 552

Partnerships

Taking a more collaborative approach to benefit the business communities:-

New for June and July 2021

- **Continue to build a 'Hub' of specialist support from different sectors and disciplines. Have 15 working with the GH – with 3 more to join.**
- **Working with or forging new alliances with many new trainers and deliverers to bring new and refreshed events for the local business community. Such as:-**
- **Arranged quarterly catch ups with Dyke Yaxley from the Professional Services sector to share information on funding and understand the local landscape and any pain points. Invited other partners to attend to share knowledge.**
- Zebra Marketing and PR Ltd
- Landau
- Marie Speight Consulting
- Purple Frog Ltd
- Julie Bricknall ACC – Inspired Mindset
- Ed Nell – The Media Insiders
- Shane Stark – Business Doctors Shropshire
- Recruited 15 Specialist Business Advisers/Consultants from various backgrounds and subjects.
- **Continue to work with the local DiT team with referrals in both directions. Also conduct joint meetings when and where appropriate and attend DiT catch up meetings on a quarterly basis. Also promote DiT opportunities through the e-newsletter.**

Future Plans – next three months

- Events programme is currently evolving with many new topics and speakers, with events mainly online but starting to introduce face to face VIP days. Lots of new trainers and

Notes to Support Marches Growth Hub Operations Group Meeting

Emma Chapman

Prepared September 2021

deliverers with innovative and creative subjects. Also addressing stress, anxiety and health and wellbeing amongst the business community, Digital, e-commerce, Cyber Security/Cyber Essentials and GDPR/Data, Zebra PR VIP Days, Podcasting and addressing the media, Making it Happen and more.

- Continue to create more Hub events such as 'The Business Health and Vitality Hub', 'Access to Finance Hub', The 'Friday Hub' 'Digital Hub' which creates a bubble of themes and not so generalist. This will also tie in with the extension funding to support capacity building around Specialist support. It will potentially create a pipeline of businesses wishing to access the support available.
- **Spark Social online Conference booked for Social Enterprise week 16 November. Have arranged a working group to design the conference and Yarrington appointed to run the digital conference. Strap line 'Purpose to Profit'.**
- **Working on suite of offline webinars covering all topics to be housed on the Invest in Shropshire website as many businesses are unable to attend our organised webinars. Legacy of ARG funding. Programme has been branded Business Boost Programme. Again working with Yarrington.**
- **Exploring the possibility of delivering a Debt Recovery programme for Ltd Companies as part of the SC ERF.**
- **Due to the high demand of referrals to the ERDF Step Up to Start aspect of the wider programme, exploring the possibility to top up the programme or launch 'Solopreneurs'.**
- **Revisiting, revising and refocusing the Friday Hub. New brand launched in August.**
- **Attending the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Business Expo on 14 October at Shrewsbury Town Football Club. Have also booked a VIP box that day for the first face to face Cohort 1 get together as part of the Silverpreneurs Programme.**
- Have contracted with fifteen external business advisers/consultants to deliver the Specialist Support for 2021-2022. In discussions with three more advisers to join the group.

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Appendix B

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Economic Recovery Programme Update

24/08/21

Background

BEIS provided local authorities with ARG funding to provide extra support to their businesses beyond what was covered by the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB). Shropshire Council decided to invest the ARG funds into a) businesses that did not qualify for LRSB support and b) a programme of activity that would see wider economic impacts.

Shropshire was awarded £12,096,178 over the three rounds of ARG. This has been spent or committed on the following key investment areas:

		Spent	Committed
DARG	Grant scheme for businesses that did not qualify for LRSB / Restart	£8,263,416	-
Wider Economic Recovery Grants	One off scheme to provide grants of up to £25k to businesses to support specific investment	£1,114,979	-
Wider ARG activity	Larger projects to deliver longer-term economic benefits	£540,742	£2,200,430
	Total	£9,895,748	£2,200,430

Shropshire Council achieved its initial spend target of £9,330,00 set by BEIS for the end of July 2021, which has allowed for the draw down of the remaining allocation.

DARG

The discretionary grant scheme, designed for businesses that did not qualify for LRSB but were still impacted by the pandemic, ran for three rounds. It supported over 350 individual businesses, including businesses that did not pay business rates and other sectors that were affected but not mandated to close.

Wider Economic Recovery Grants

This scheme provided grants to businesses for specific projects that could demonstrate wider economic benefits. This attracted a great deal of interest with 136 applications received leading towards a total of 54 grants with an average award of £20k.

A broad spread of sectors benefited. The biggest beneficiary was the tourism sector, but other areas also benefited including professional services, environmental businesses and community enterprises. Projects included:

- Installation of wi-fi at Burwarton Show – to support online sales
- Market Drayton Traders CIC – launch of local delivery scheme in TF9 area
- Stiperstones Inn – GPS-guided walks in AONB area & ‘story caches’
- Oswestry Borderland Tourism – launch of ambassador scheme
- Worm Soil – food waste recycling for restaurants, pubs and hotels

- Niche Patisserie – bringing a heritage building back into use to create Shropshire’s own version of Betty’s Tea Rooms here in Oswestry

There was also a good spread of investment geographically, as follows:

Town	No of grants	amount	
Bishops Castle	2	£35,116	3%
Bridgnorth	4	£72,800	7%
Broseley & Buildwas	4	£99,525	9%
Cleobury Mortimer	1	£11,500	1%
Craven Arms	1	£22,800	2%
Ellesmere	1	£16,250	1%
Ludlow	6	£114,393	10%
Market Drayton	1	£25,000	2%
Oswestry	11	£211,502	19%
Shifnal	2	£50,000	4%
Shrewsbury	20	£431,093	39%
Whitchurch	1	£25,000	2%

total 54 £1,114,979

Wider ARG Activity

The remaining funding of £2.7m is being invested in a range of activities that aim to provide a legacy to the funds. There have been some changes to the planned activity following clarification from BEIS on how the funding can be used. The activity is ongoing and needs to be completed by the end of March 2022.

The key components of the package are detailed as followed:

Theme	Spend @ 24/08	Budget
Growth Hub and business support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of 12 hr business support programme - Pre-recorded events & comms to access business support (learning pool) 2/2 - Silverpreneurs (Over 50's programme) - Digital Hub - Digital Academy (including Tech Severn partnership) - Social Enterprise Support - Event - Extension to step up programme (TBC) - Enhanced export audit (TBC) - Debt advice (TBC) 	£126,742	£571,000
Work-based training and employability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uplift to Shropshire Ladder - Employability and skills gaps (TBC) 	£20,000	£170,000
Co-Working offices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 year Pilot to run Hub in Shrewsbury with SBTP (operational costs) (TBC) - Shropshire-wide digital infrastructure (TBC) - Ludlow (TBC) - Bishop Castle - Market Drayton (TBC) - Oswestry - Alt model 	£0	£450,000

Sector development and support: - Targeted support on up to 8 business sectors (TBC)	£0	£200,000
Circular economy and social enterprise - VCS - Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership sector support - Community Asset Fund	£159,000	£199,000
Tourism - Research and insight (TBC) - Destination marketing and branding (TBC) - DMO / Visit Shropshire review	£7,500	£160,000
Partnership work with BIDs (direct grants to BIDs) - Shrewsbury - Oswestry	£227,500	£398,000
Other (TBC) - Oswestry Heritage Zone top up + wider - Victoria Quay - Pop up shops and restaurants - large venues and events grant (pending legislation)	£0	£552,000
Total	£540,742	£2,148,000

(Activity marked TBC remains to be finalised)

As of the date of this report, £2.16m remains in the budget to spend by 31/03/22. Approximately, £1.5m of this remains to be finalised and officers are currently working with delivery partners to ensure that the final commitments are made by end of September 2021 - well in advance of the final claim date – to reduce the risk of underspend.

Several projects have been removed or revised following information from BEIS that was not available at the start of the development of Shropshire’s package. This has meant that officers have had to explore new opportunities and have not been able to finalise the programme as originally intended.

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Appendix C

Economic Recovery and Strategy workshop

4 themes to build the Economic Recovery & strategy

1. Supporting Local Businesses (including social enterprises and charitable sector)

- Flood and Covid-19 impact/long term recovery
- Inward investment
- Support new/existing employment markets and sectors
- Supply chain sustainability
- International Trade

2. Employment and Skills

- 18-24 and over 55 year olds
- Upskilling and training

3. Strategic Location Investment

- Market Towns /Growth Corridors
- High Street regeneration
- Tourism

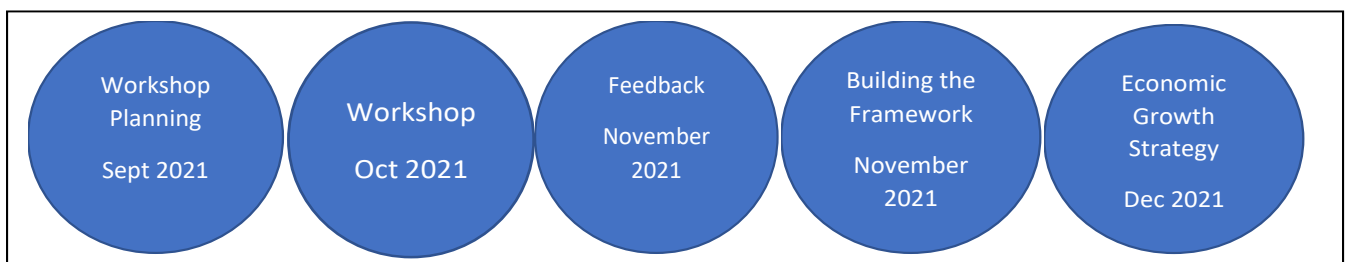
4. Economies for Healthier lives

- Rural communities
- Health investment

Cross Cutting Themes to be captured across the 4 outlined above.

- Connectivity
- Sustainable
- Digital
- Infrastructure
- Climate emergency
- Rurality
- Voluntary Organisations

Timeline for Economic Recovery Strategy development



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The Contribution of Economic Growth to Population Health

23rd June 2021

Appendix D

0. Reference Information

Author:	Tracy Darke, Assistant Director Economy and Place Katherine Kynaston, Director – Housing, Employment & Infrastructure, TWC Jane Trethewey, Assistant Director Homes and Communities	Paper date:	23/June/2021
Executive Sponsor:	Andy Begley	Paper Category:	Strategy
Paper Reviewed by:	Tanya Miles	Paper Ref:	
Forum submitted to:	ICS CEO Group	Paper FOIA Status:	

1. Purpose of Paper

This paper presents an overview of the Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council economic development activities, and their impact upon population health. The ICS CEO Group is asked to note the actions set out and consider any points of potential future joint working.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Context

This paper follows on from a previous paper titled 'Population Health Strategy: Going Beyond Integrated Care' which identified the wider determinants of health and noted the particular contribution that economic development can make to better health outcomes.

2.2 Summary

- There are recognised links between employment and economic prosperity and better health outcomes for our populations.
- There are a wide range of strategies and programmes already in place which are framed to drive economic growth, which will benefit our communities in accessing employment.
- In addition, both Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils have a wide range of activities in train to support economic recovery from the pandemic and recognise the strain this has placed on our communities through the impact on jobs and livelihoods.
- Further plans to attract investment, support our physical and digital infrastructure, and help our neighbourhoods thrive, are set out in the report with planned actions.
- Good quality education, skills training, apprenticeships, and support for our local businesses are key to improving opportunity for those currently most excluded.
- As major investors and employers with significant local spending power there is a role for ICS partners alongside the Councils driving economic prosperity
- Policies and approaches are being developed to directly support the health and care sectors, such as through key worker housing and skills development.

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2.3. Conclusion

There are clear priority activities for both authorities and the ICS in recovering from the economic impact of the pandemic, in driving economic growth, in supporting employment and skills, in place-making for economic prosperity, in the digital infrastructure and in the health and care sector. These will all contribute to improving the health outcomes of our communities.

Through programmes of Recovery, Reset & Reform established to respond to the pandemic links between economic growth and health have strengthened but their opportunities for this to be embedded further through more systematic and regular links forged between partners and teams delivering these work areas.

Whilst we anticipate that health benefits will arise from our economic programmes, it is noted that specific health goals are not identified for them, and so are not explicitly measured as outputs from our activities. ICS support will be welcomed in considering indicators by which to measure the health benefits we hope to achieve, permitting a clearer focus in future on those activities that most improve outcomes.

The development of the ICS creates an opportunity to embed joint working between the Authorities and their allied health and care partners, to highlight further ways in which we can act to address our population health and wellbeing issues.

The current health and economic challenges caused by the pandemic highlights the risks to our communities when our health and care sectors are overwhelmed. In future, we can choose to plan our services more holistically to avoid or mitigate greater demand pressures and seize our opportunities to make use of all the levers at our disposal to drive better health outcomes.

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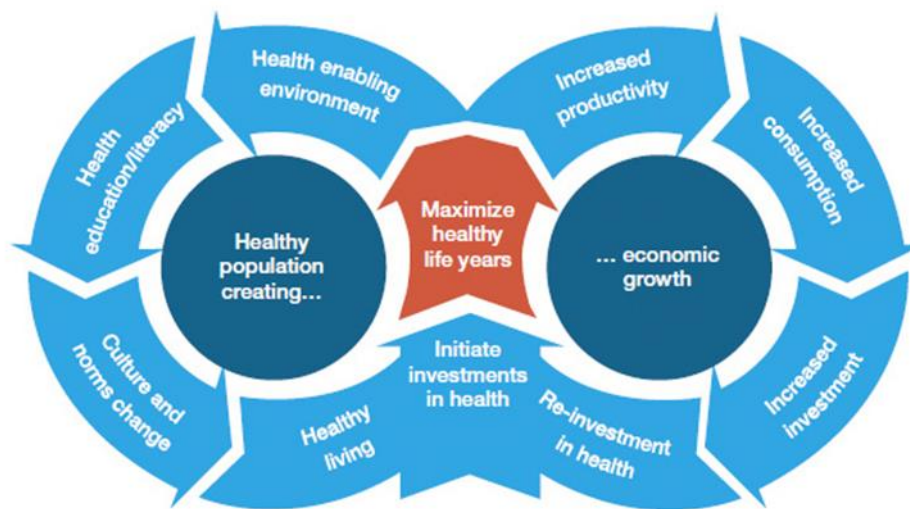
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3. Main Report

3.1 Introduction

Taking a population health approach to improve health and wellbeing is an urgent priority and clear ambition for Shropshire Council (SC) and Telford and Wrekin Council (TWC). To improve population health requires collaboration across all partners. As place shapers in the wider determinants of health, particularly in the areas of economy, education, housing, business and environmental health, Local Authorities, working within communities as leaders across all pillars, have a key role to play to drive change and improve outcomes.

A Virtuous Cycle: Healthy Life Years as a Source for Continuous Economic Growth



Population health is not solely determined by how well health care is funded or functions but depends upon the conditions under which communities are born, grow, live, work and age and tackling the inequalities in access to economic opportunities that continue to exist across our communities and neighbourhoods throughout people’s lives.

Maintaining a strong, growing economy, but also one that directly addresses the inequalities in access and opportunity across communities – that strives to ‘level up’ – will deliver healthy, happy and economically productive communities, building resilience.

Economic Growth = Jobs/Homes/Skills & Opportunity = Health and Well-being

This paper sets out how both Authorities are working to drive economic growth and show how that benefits the health of all communities, in the short and long term.

3.2 Economic Impact of Covid pandemic

The Covid pandemic has had a deep and immediate impact on the economies of both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. For example, at the height of the pandemic 48,500 jobs were furloughed and we are yet to see the full effects of this with many still furloughed.

These impacts have a disproportionate effect on our more deprived communities, where the increase in claimant rates and worklessness has been more pronounced, widening inequalities in those populations which already have worse health outcomes.

Our areas are heavily reliant on manufacturing - 18% of Telford’s employment base is linked with manufacturing (compared to 9% nationally), with an estimated 52% of jobs in sectors identified nationally due to Covid and Brexit as ‘at risk’ sectors.

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More than 80% of businesses in the local visitor economy (including the accommodation and hospitality sectors) have experienced closures. With many low skilled jobs as well as zero-hour employment, this has further hit more deprived neighbourhoods to a greater extent, with unemployment linked to poorer mental and physical health. Levels of activity within the Telford town centre and borough towns declined by 90% during the first lockdown.

The outlook for manufacturing is beginning to brighten, but we need to ensure that our areas remain competitive locations for manufacturing, supporting the sector's changing skills needs and automation, while diversifying our economies. We also need to build local resilience strengthening supply chain links, meeting skills gaps and working with partners, including health, as local ambassadors to promote opportunity.

Across our borough and market towns there is a need and opportunity to re-think how we plan our town centres and introduce new activities, creating stronger places and destinations that will sustain our centres moving forward.

Recovery, Reform, Reset Programme

In responding to the Covid pandemic, both Local Authorities have recognised the need and opportunity for service reform, strengthened partnerships and making public health a cross cutting theme.

The TWC Recovery, Reform, Reset Programme brought together thematic programmes of activity involving Officers, politicians and partner representatives to inform the design and delivery of projects and interventions to support immediate and longer-term reset. This programme has remained agile, able to respond to the different – and repeated – phases of recovery – and to work in a matrix of interconnectivity across themes. A key golden thread is addressing health inequalities and tackling the wider determinants of public health.

SC has a well-established Economic Taskforce which engages with all strategic and local partners to ensure that we work together to support the economy as it recovers from the pandemic, but also as it re-shapes and re-energises. Equally, addressing health inequalities is a key theme.

Actions

- We will sustain the drive to give access to all available grant funding to support businesses and their employees
- We will support the diversification of our local economies to build flexibility and resilience, and create a wider and more stable employment base
- We will rethink our Borough and Market towns to introduce new activities post-pandemic
- Through our programmes of engagement with employers we will design and deliver projects and interventions to support the immediate and the longer term reset

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3.3 Driving Economic Growth

Inward Investment

With Invest in Shropshire and Enterprise Telford both authorities are promoting opportunities for new companies to locate here, creating new job opportunities, supply chain and spend in our local economies. Creating a more diverse industry and employment base will add resilience to the local economy, giving greater protection to communities as they navigate the changes driven by the pandemic and beyond. Stable and sustained employment is critical to enable young people to enter the world of work, and families to settle in our communities with confidence, supporting health and wellbeing across our demographic.

Telford's approach is based on tailored support bespoke to investor need with site opportunities de-risked. The Authority through the Telford Land Deal is responsible for the disposal of all public land in the Borough (LA and Government owned) and has an established £50m Growth Fund used to fast track sites to the market – achieving planning, introducing core infrastructure, delivering design and build solutions.

To further maintain business confidence, retain jobs and supply chain opportunities both authorities have accelerated delivery of Council infrastructure projects. In Telford, for example, work has been accelerated to deliver Ni Park – a 10-hectare agritech employment park - and to deliver additional incubation space to support growth in start-ups.

Both Authorities operate wholly owned housing companies, directly delivering investment and employment into communities as well as building new homes, including specialist housing and provision for key workers. SC's housing company Cornovii has a development programme which will invest nearly £50m in new homes for entry level purchase, as well as affordable homes for rent. SC's ALMO, STAR Housing, also delivers community-led housing schemes in the county. In addition to building homes to modern environmental standards, they drive social value benefits through apprenticeships and work experience, to support careers in the construction sector.

TWC has invested in excess of £60m through Nuplace, delivering a portfolio of c.450 private and affordable rented homes with a recent commitment to invest a further £48m delivering a portfolio of 750 homes over the next 5 years. The portfolio is delivering similar social outcomes to Cornovii, with an increasing proportion of specialist and key worker accommodation and work ongoing to support accommodation solutions for SaTH.

The authorities have used their powers to support local businesses, including using procurement powers to 'shop local', promote local employment and supply chains, build social responsibility into major contracts and ensure swift payment.

Major projects

Both authorities have recognised the importance of establishing transformational plans for Place that set out clear ambition for growth supported by specific investment requirements. The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (BTP) and Oswestry Masterplan are just two examples of interventions SC is making to encourage economic growth, creating homes, jobs and a healthy environment for people to live, work and visit.

Levelling up Bids for three constituent areas are being prepared which, in addition to the BTP and Oswestry, includes Craven Arms. This will help to regenerate the town and bring forward much needed growth, retaining jobs in the area and providing sustainable homes and community facilities.

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Telford has received £22.3m for its Town Investment Plan. This will kickstart delivery of Station Quarter and the transformation of Telford Town Centre linking the station to the town centre, introducing town centre living, new commercial and leisure space designed to respond to changing business requirements and a new Digital Skills & Enterprise Hub. Plans will strengthen links into neighbouring communities which include some of the most deprived in the Borough and maximise green travel connections. Masterplans for Wellington and Oakengates support regeneration through re-purposing of buildings, improved public realm, new jobs and homes and connectivity with a cycling and walking infrastructure.

Business Support

While attracting major new employers into the area is important, both Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin economies and communities rely on expansion and diversification of existing business base to drive job and wealth creation. Both Authorities provide support direct to businesses across sectors including health and care.

In Telford the last 12 months has seen over 3900 business hot line contacts solely linked to Covid recovery, alongside account management, events and digital engagement. Whilst channelling over £60m government Covid recovery grant through the creative repurposing of existing grant programmes, over £3.0m of business growth/diversification grant and Council investment through Pride in Our High Streets has been delivered to enable business recovery and support resilience, maintaining a steady expansion programme.

The Covid pandemic has accelerated changing business practices and both authorities have worked to enable this both short term, e.g. in Telford via joint initiatives between public protection/business support to deliver safe workplaces, and longer term financial and business support as companies adapt production/automation/workforce requirements and changing work practices.

In Shropshire the last twelve months has seen 22,394 business engagements, with 519 start-ups supported. 5369 businesses have attended events through the Growth Hub, with 9,284 enquiries. Business grants for Covid support from Government total over £153m. Whilst there have been some business casualties, others have re-invented themselves.

As part of the pandemic recovery SC is developing the Visitor Economy, working with stakeholders and the Destination Management Organisation on a strategy and business plan that will see it better placed to support the multiple small businesses within this sector. It will also address the branding and marketing of Shropshire to develop an all-season visitor offer, growing this key sector to support many entry level jobs, both rural and urban.

Actions

- We will continue to promote opportunities for new companies to locate in the area creating new job opportunities, supply chain and spend in our local economies
- Our bespoke support to investors will continue to enable them to commit their funds to our sites, fast tracking them to the market to drive growth
- We will accelerate Council infrastructure projects to provide better opportunities and access to new development.
- We will deliver a range of new employment sites, business parks and incubation space for start-up businesses, to provide opportunity for companies to locate and employ here

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- We will drive our newbuild housing development programmes to provide both employment and training opportunities, as well as high quality and affordable homes for our workforce

3.4 Employment & Skills

Skills provision, responsive to business needs and accessible to all communities, is fundamental to economic growth and addressing inequalities. Enabling residents to access employment, gaining confidence and greater economic freedom, provides opportunities for healthier lifestyles, improved diet, better educational outcomes, better housing choices, and improved mental health. Better opportunities for skills and employment are therefore key to health outcomes.

SC and TWC have worked with Marches LEP, employers and colleges to develop a new Marches Skills Strategy. In Telford the Council work with the Skills Provider Network and HR Forum is linking employer needs with skills providers to ensure this is a tailored and agile multi-provider Higher and Further Education (HE/FE) offer.

Specifically addressing skills needs within health and social care, the University of Wolverhampton has developed bespoke provision at Priorslee Campus. Telford College and Shrewsbury College (with Hereford College) have submitted a Skills Development Fund bid with health partners to develop College Business Centres and mobile outreach to fast track health and care skills delivery.

In Telford, despite the quality of HE/FE, clusters of severe education and skill deprivation exist, with young people “lagging behind” in attainment and employment. There is also a recognised need from employers across sectors for strengthened digital skills. Connecting the two challenges to establish a new model of delivery, TWC, Telford College and Wolverhampton University are driving proposals for a new Digital Skills & Enterprise Hub. This will combine a modern lifelong learning offer, a cross-sector digital skills-based curriculum, and enterprise space for established businesses and start-ups. Recognising the barriers to engagement, this will deliver new ways for people to learn and connect to opportunities.

To address the impact of Covid pandemic, TWC has launched Job Box, an all age employment support programme. This digital and physical outreach service targets specific communities that have seen their unemployment rate increase most significantly – typically the most deprived neighbourhoods - working with over 2100 residents since July 2020. Outcomes include over 600 into employment and/or training to date.

While some employers are losing staff, others, particularly in care and food manufacture, are expanding. To maximise opportunities for residents TWC’s Job Match service links companies that are downsizing with those recruiting. TWC is also providing direct support through provision of 100 Kickstart placements for young people across the borough with links through business support into longer term employment options.

SC supports unemployed people through a range of Covid recovery programmes, as well as groups who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. Restart is the Government’s main employment response to Covid and both Authorities will be delivering this from July 2021 (in partnership with Serco) to over 5000 people over the next four years. Young people have experienced especially high unemployment as a result of Covid and both Authorities will partner with DWP from June 2021 to lead on the delivery of Youth Employment Hubs in Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Telford.

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A new two-year ESF/ Marches LEP funded NEETs project will start in July 2021, helping over 1200 young people into education, training and employment. This service covers both areas, led by SC in partnership with TWC. Both authorities deliver specialist employment programmes, to people with learning disabilities and autism (in Shropshire) and to people with severe mental health issues in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Several generic programmes are also running, including Work and Health in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, Work Routes in Shropshire and JETs, an on-line employment support and reorientation programme for Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

Actions

- We will link employers' skills needs with our local skills providers, so residents can access an educational 'offer' tailored to local employment
- We will work with health partners to evolve the health and social care skills offer from our local HE and FE providers
- We will develop a new Digital Skills & Enterprise Hub for lifelong learning, and provide enterprise space for established and start-up businesses
- We will target those communities that have seen their unemployment rate increase most significantly with a skills and employment offer
- We will connect companies who are downsizing with who are those recruiting.
- We will use our powers as employers including to provide kickstart placements for young people and support them into longer term employment

3.5 Place Making

Economic Strategy

Both Authorities are preparing new Economic Strategies which will reflect economic changes and opportunities and the support needed to enable business recovery and resilience. In Shropshire work is being driven by an established Economic Taskforce with the intention of having a refreshed Economic Development Strategy by the end of the year.

Strategic Planning

The Local Plan is the overarching strategic development plan that drives growth over a time horizon of around 15 years. Plan-making responds to all other strategies including Health and Wellbeing, with specific policies to ensure that growth is not purely about buildings, but also about sustainable, resilient communities, a sense of place, and the conditions and infrastructure that will attract investment. This is more important now than ever, where communities value access to green infrastructure, and permeable links to towns and facilities, as well as easy access to jobs, particularly in our rural communities.

TWC has a Local Plan in place to 2031 and has initiated a cross service review accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan being prepared in consultation with stakeholders, including health. Supplementary planning documents are being developed including a focus on delivery of Supported & Specialist Housing that will maintain independent living and reduce reliance on health and care services.

SC will submit a report to Council in July to approve the submission Draft Local Plan, with the intention of submitting the Plan in August. The Examination in Public will be late 2021/early 2022. The Plan has health and wellbeing embedded in its policies with significant input from stakeholders, including the health sector. A Supplementary Planning Document on Housing is planned in the coming year, will include reference to homes for Keyworkers.

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Place Plans

Both Authorities have established 'place planning' programmes in place. The quality of our neighbourhoods is vital to the wellbeing of our communities, and the design of our town centres and streetscapes can create places that feel safe, and nurture healthier lifestyles.

In Telford through the Safer Stronger Communities Programme, Neighbourhood Plans are being developed with key partners and communities, driven by data and intelligence including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. These will set out interventions that address housing, health, employment & skills, linked to investment plans, as well as tackling issues of crime and ASB.

Place Plans are also being established and/or refreshed in both authorities, which will drive the regeneration and investment needed to respond both to the changing High Street and bring investment opportunities into the heart of communities.

Green Infrastructure

The Covid pandemic has seen a huge growth in walking, cycling and in the value of ensuring quality, accessible greenspaces. This is central to the work of both authorities taking forward masterplans, place plans and local plan policies.

In Shropshire engagement is at the heart of plan development, ensuring that communities help to shape them. Green infrastructure is the starting point for communities who want areas where they can practice a healthy lifestyle. This is prioritised in new developments, creating pedestrian links, cycling routes, cycle parking and storage. A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and a Shropshire active travel strategy are in preparation, supporting car-free living to promote fitness, improved air quality and respiratory health.

In addition SC will link into the national Bus Back Better strategy through its Shrewsbury Connect proposals, planned to reimagine Park and Ride and add rural connections, providing access to lower priced goods, making rural housing more sustainable, and connecting people to employment and services.

Telford has an established green network extending to over 2400 Ha, 17 Local Nature Reserves and has invested in 200+ 'green guarantee' sites – land in the Council's ownership protected from development. The Local Plan requires 'biodiversity net gain' on development sites, providing investment opportunities to enhance and develop access to cycling, walking as well as more formal play and recreation provision.

Through Station Quarter rail infrastructure will be integrated with our established network of cycle infrastructure and greenspaces, enhancing sustainable access to opportunity for all residents, including those without access to a car.

Across Telford the Authority is developing plans to increase the connectivity to and use of the 200km of existing green links infrastructure. For example, the Silkin Way is a 14-mile green corridor, bisecting Telford town centre and linking it with towns to the north (including Wellington) and key heritage assets in the south. £2.4 million of Sustainable Travel Fund support has been secured with investment set to secure improvements to wayfinding, interpretation, public lighting and amenities encouraging use of the route to link communities to employment, leisure and support health benefits.

The Contribution of Economic Growth to Population Health

23rd June 2021

Actions

- New Economic Strategies will reflect economic changes and opportunities and the support needed to enable business recovery and resilience
- We will deliver new Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, and Supplementary Planning Documents for housing to support the development of safe and healthy places
- We will develop and refresh Place Plans to capture locally focussed priorities vital to sustaining strong communities
- We will deliver green infrastructures for the county providing greater opportunities for walking and cycling and support access to green space

3.6 Digital infrastructure

We want to ensure that our communities have access to superfast broadband as a minimum, with no community digitally deprived. Development of full fibre and 5G provides the potential for people who need care to be treated in their homes, retaining their independence for longer. In our more rural communities access to better connectivity can address issues of isolation, and better enable people to access services, and engage socially and economically.

SC and TWC have also progressed the roll out of superfast broadband, with plans in place and investor interest in delivering full fibre infrastructure capable of supporting 5G across the area. Local partners have agreed a Gigabit strategy that recognises the importance of complementing investment in infrastructure to meet the needs of cutting-edge businesses through exploiting 'smart' technologies and driving up digital skills proficiency across our business base and workforce. This digital connectivity is integral to our sustained economic success, allowing us to compete for new investment in an increasingly digitally connected market and support our existing businesses to adapt and access new markets and automation.

Actions

- We will progress the roll out of superfast broadband to deliver a full fibre infrastructure capable of supporting 5G
- We will invest in digital infrastructure to meet the needs of businesses whilst driving up digital skills across our workforce

3.7 Health Sector Driving Economic Growth

The NHS is an anchor institution nationally and locally – a major employer with huge spending power and a significant future investment programme. This needs to be leveraged across all elements of the ICS through employing and procuring locally, providing training and development, maximising opportunities for young people via initiatives like kickstart and provision of apprenticeships. The emerging system wide structure offers opportunity to deliver career opportunities across the infrastructure supported by engagement with skills providers.

The NHS is a key 'place champion' with opportunities to engage with communities through the place based, intelligence driven strategies both authorities are embedding and to directly engage with the development of new Economic Strategies over the coming months.

The Contribution of Economic Growth to Population Health

23rd June 2021

A 'clean' economy that mitigates impacts on environment and climate change is fundamental to the future. Health partners have significant investment programmes which need to address climate change but also maximise opportunities for local employment and to work with companies innovating through technology.

In Shropshire the care sector contributes significantly to the local economy, providing a wide range of employment, and seeing significant investment to support our ageing population. Ensuring that the right kind of accommodation is secured, at a range of affordability levels, and that keyworkers are well trained and paid to deliver high quality services, is important to sustaining quality of life. Policies for key workers, particularly in the NHS are being developed. Proposals are being developed for key worker housing, to support the recruitment and retention of staff, and provide them with the opportunity to settle in our neighbourhoods and serve our communities for the long term.

Actions

- We will support ICS partners to maximise their contribution to economic growth through local employment and procurement, whilst training and preparing young people to take up opportunities in the health sector
- We will work with the NHS as a key 'place champion', engaging with communities alongside them to develop our place-based strategies
- We will support the recruitment and retention of staff, by developing policies for keyworker housing in our communities

4. Conclusion

The ICS CEO Group is asked to consider this report and the actions set out and consider opportunities for closer alignment between health and economic strategies across the two Authorities with health and care partners.

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Place Overview Committee

Highways' diversions working group

Terms of reference

Background

At the August 2021 meeting of the Place Overview Committee, committee members considered an overview of how the council manages highways' diversions in the event of roadworks and street works.

Officers attending the meeting listed the pressures that had resulted in a drop in quality of planned diversions, including:

- A significant degradation in the road network, due to chronic underfunding, resulting in an increase in closures to effect repairs.
- Short-term funding, which limits the ability of the service to plan work.
- Additional in-year funding from the Department of Transport of £12 million, which had to be used within a five-month period on top of existing planned work.
- Increased road closures due to a decision to prioritise permanent over (faster) temporary repairs.
- Long diversions, due to a legal requirement to divert traffic along similar roads, in a large local authority area with few such roads.

Members raised concerns about existing arrangements, including:

- Poor communication between the council and local communities, including town and parish councils, in advance of licensing works.
- Lack of detail on highway signs, and poor briefing of staff at road closure barriers.
- Poor communications between the council, its contractors, and the road traffic management companies that they employ.

The committee has therefore agreed to convene a working group to analyse the matter in more detail and to make recommendations for improvement to the service.

Objectives

The group aims to:

- understand how many diversions and closures happen in Shropshire local authority area each year, as well as the reason for their closure
- review current arrangements for managing diversions resulting from roadworks and street works
- learn about the West and Shire permit scheme for roadworks and street works and
- identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of current operations, including:
 - using information technology to push notices to members of the public

- communications with local communities and
- more specific diversionary signage around repair sites.

Information required

Members may wish to review the following documents and information:

- An overview of the West Midlands roadworks and street works licensing scheme.
- Highways repairs revenue budgets for 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21, to include an indication of when funding became available.
- Existing protocols for managing diversions.
- Current and proposed communications when diversions take place.
- Benchmarking of performance against other local authorities.

Membership and meetings

The working group will consist of self-nominated members of Shropshire Council's Place Overview Committee. The group will be chaired by the chair of the committee, Cllr Joyce Barrow.

The working group will carry out its work at a single meeting on a date to be arranged.



Place Overview Committee	<u>Item 8</u>
17 September 2021	<u>Public</u>

Place Overview Committee Work Programme

Responsible officer

Danial Webb, scrutiny officer
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01743 258509

1.0 Summary

1.1 This paper presents the Place Overview Committee's proposed work programme for the 2021-2022 municipal year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee members to:

- agree the proposed committee work programme attached as **appendix 1**
- suggest changes to the committee work programme and
- recommend other topics to consider.

3.0 Next steps

3.1 Officers will present a refreshed work programme at each committee meeting. In addition the committee will meet informally between committee meetings to discuss which topics they wish to scrutinise at future meetings.

List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

None

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

All

Local Member

All

Appendices

Overview and scrutiny work programme

Appendix 1

Overview and Scrutiny work programme for municipal year 2021-2022

Place Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
Roadworks diversions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrutinise current practice for implementing diversions for roadworks.• Make recommendations to strengthen existing arrangements.	Assistant Director, Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National guidance	4 August 2021
Post Covid-19 economic renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand Shropshire Council's strategy for economic renewal following the pandemic	Assistant Director Economy and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business start-up and closure rates• Employment and average wage rates• Retail centre occupancy rates	17 Sep 2021
Roadworks Diversions working group terms of reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree terms of reference for agreed working group.	Overview and Scrutiny Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft terms of reference	17 Sep 2021

Place Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
BRIEFING <i>Planning enforcement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutinise impact of changes to planning enforcement team. 	Assistant Director for Economy and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of alleged planning breaches reported to Shropshire Council. Time taken to investigate reported breaches. Percentage of reported breaches investigated by Shropshire Council. 	13 Oct 2021
Winter maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand progress in reviewing the winter maintenance policy Ensure council responds to recommendations of task and finish group's report. 	Head of Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winter service protocol Task and finish group report Service review reports 	25 Oct 2021
Footpath and cyclepath maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine current maintenance regimes for clearing and maintaining footpaths and cycle paths, 	Head of Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on footpath and cycle path maintenance. Planned schedules of maintenance and cleansing. 	25 Oct 2021

Place Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
Planning Committee Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the outcome of Shropshire Council's decision to reduce from three to two planning committees Scrutinise the impact of delegations 	Assistant Director for Economy and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with committee chairs Number of decisions made by existing committees, compared with previous committees Focus groups/questionnaires with elected members Delegation processes Appeals made, split by delegation outcome 	25 Oct 2021
Highways capital programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the council's capital programme for highways and transport for the period 2021-2025. Ensure Shropshire Council has the staffing and infrastructure in place to plan and deliver programmes of work made possible by increased capital funding. Ensure adequate funding is allocated to programme investments within LTP4. 	Executive Director of Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial strategy 2021-2025 Capital investment plan 	11 Nov 2021

Place Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
LTP 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise findings of thematic consultation on emerging themes underpinning the draft local transport plan. • Ensure the plan's priorities align with and support other council corporate priorities. • Understand how the plan addresses competing and complementary priorities within the plan. • Examine plan priorities and capital investment underpinning the plan. 	Assistant Director, Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft local transport plan • Findings from thematic workshops • Regional transport strategies 	11 Nov 2021
Communicating highways works and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the council communicates disruptions to the highway. • Make recommendations on future development of communications. 	Assistant Director, Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft local transport plan • Findings from thematic workshops • Regional transport strategies 	11 Nov 2021
Further update on signs, banners and barriers task and finish group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive an update on implementing recommendations from the task and finish group, to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fees for housing development signage ○ Policies for banners, bunting and Christmas decorations. 	Director of Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and finish group report • Verbal update from officers 	11 Nov 2021

Place Overview Committee

Topic	Objectives	Participants	Information required	Date
Market town renewal schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise progress in drafting and implementing renewal schemes 	Assistant Director Economy and Place		27 Jan 2022
Active Travel Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise draft active travel strategy • Examine capital funding underpinning strategy • Explore how the strategy will meet the objective of the draft local transport plan 	Head of Environment and Transport		27 Jan 2022
WSP contracting arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			February 2021
LED street lighting programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 			Mar 2021
Waste and recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 			Mar 2021
WSP/Kier annual performance monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			June 2022

Other topics for further consideration for inclusion:

- Decarbonising housing – progress and update

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