

The Contribution of Economic Growth to Population Health

23rd June 2021

Appendix D

0. Reference Information

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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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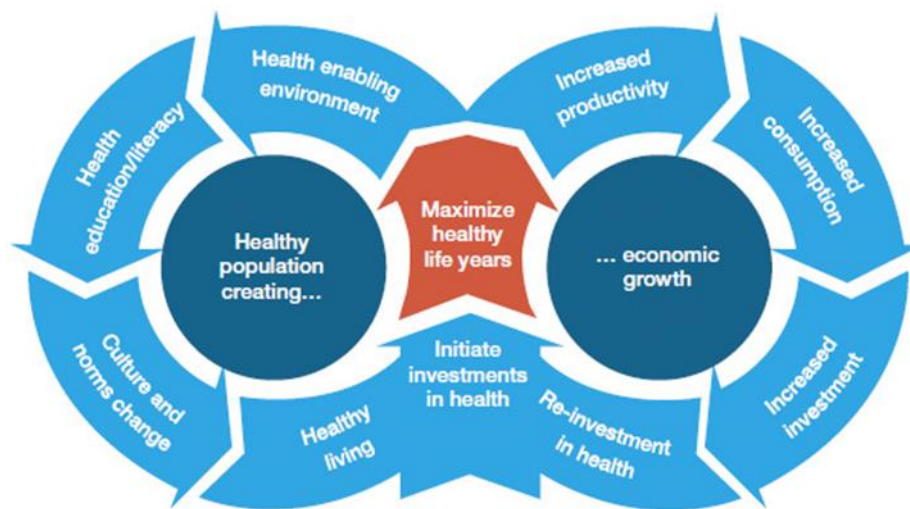
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3. Main Report

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.

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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.

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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.