

Draft Economic Growth Strategy

You Said Report May 2017

The Draft Economic Growth Strategy Consultation Full Report and Summary Report both draw attention to the common comments and dominant themes within the feedback received. However, there were also some points made by just one or two individuals that need to be highlighted and responded to. The You Said report will help us to answer some questions, respond to some statements and, where there are actions required, we can return to this document and review our progress over time.

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| 1 | You want to see how the results of the consultation will be used and the changes that will be made to the Economic Growth Strategy before final publication. | We have analysed the consultation feedback and produced a detailed summary report of the findings which will be shared and published. | We will publish the results of the feedback. We have used the feedback to make amendments to the final strategy (which will be subject to final approval from Shropshire Council's Cabinet). This You Said report highlights many of the changes that have been made. The final strategy will be formally launched and published. |
| 2 | You want to understand how the Economic Strategy fits with other Council and LEP strategies (including the Local Plan Partial Review). You would like greater integration across strategies and policies. | <p>We acknowledge that there are a number of other documents and strategies referenced in the Economic Growth Strategy. The Marches Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) is the overarching strategy for the LEP area as a whole. The current strategic objectives in the SEP are supporting businesses, physical infrastructure, skills investment, low carbon economy and social inclusion. There are strong synergies between these and Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy objectives.</p> <p>Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan has three objectives including Prosperous Economy. The Economic Growth Strategy sets out how this objective will be met by the Council and its partners.</p> | Publish a list of all of those strategies with which the Economic Growth strategy links to. Emphasise how the Local Plan provides the framework for housing and employment delivery to ensure sustainable economic growth in Shropshire. |

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| | | The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and this will set out a plan led approach to housing and employment growth to 2036 once adopted. The Local Plan is the key delivery tool for the economic opportunities that are set out in the Economic Growth Strategy. | |
| 3 | You want to see the next level of detail – an action plan to accompany the strategy with clear timeframes and priority actions/projects. | The strategy was always intended to be supported by a detailed action plan. This will include immediate, short, medium and long term actions and will be reviewed annually by Cabinet to assess progress. | Prepare the detailed action plans once the strategy is finalised. These will be available on the Council's website. |
| 4 | You would like the Strategy's vision to stand out and be more visible. You also suggest a vision for each sector. | The vision overarches the six priorities. We have acknowledged that the vision needs to be more visible within the document and set apart from the priorities. | We will look at the design of the final document and ensure that the vision is more prominent with a clear and defined layout. |
| 5 | You want to know how the Strategy's impact will be measured or see some headline measures of economic prosperity. | We have fed this issue back to the Council's Commissioning Support Unit. The Commissioning Support Unit reports headline economic measures within Shropshire Council's performance portal see: https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/Plan/236 | We will act on your feedback and work to further develop our measures. We will consider the 6 priorities within the Economic Growth Strategy and work to develop additional measures that will reflect those priorities and the key strategic actions for economic growth. |
| 6 | You would like to see some infographics or 'killer facts'. | We have produced an infographic with headline statistics which will be incorporated into the final strategy. We have assigned each fact to a priority. | We will incorporate these facts and statistics into the final strategy, alongside the relevant priority. |
| 7 | The Council needs a communications plan to support the Strategy – communicating the work of the Council in relation to economic growth and building a more positive reputation. | We have recognised the need for a communications plan to accompany the action plan. The strategy acknowledges the importance of effective engagement in order to communicate our growth ambitions and how they will be achieved through the growth strategy. | We will produce a communications plan to sit alongside the strategy and action plan. The Council is fully committed to working collaboratively across the public and private sectors and with communities in order to achieve its economic ambitions. |

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| 8 | You would like to see start-ups featuring under Priority 2. | <p>We have acknowledged that a reference to start up's needs to be included under priority 2.</p> <p>In addition to the support provided through the Growth Hub, we identified that more start up support was needed for Shropshire and we now have free start up support workshops currently being provided through an ERDF funded Growth Hub Project: Building Business Confidence. This also incorporates pre start businesses.</p> <p>https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/finance-and-funding/building-business-confidence-across-the-marches/</p> <p>If you would like any more information on this programme then please contact the Shropshire Growth Hub on 01743 250525 or email: marchesgrowthhub@shropshire.gov.uk</p> | We will add start up's into the final strategy under priority 2 and will continue to provide support to pre starts, start ups and existing businesses through the Marches Growth Hub and our Shropshire Hub. We will also be open to any future external opportunities for increased support/funding. |
| 9 | You would like to see green infrastructure added to the strategy. | <p>We have acknowledged that a reference to green and blue Infrastructure needs to be included within the strategy.</p> <p>Through the development and delivery of our key employment sites we have worked closely with partners and contractors to ensure developments have integrated the main components of this approach. This has included anthropocentric functions such as increased quality of life through the provision of cycle ways and footpaths.</p> | We will continue to integrate the key principles of green and blue infrastructure in the delivery of our key employment sites. |
| 10 | You would like the Council to work more closely to examine opportunities for investing in blue infrastructure – waterways and canals. | We have supported the Canal and River Trust to secure £2.53m Heritage Lottery Fund to restore a further stretch of the Montgomery Canal, create new nature reserves and improve towpaths. We have also been a partner on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct | We will continue to support the Canal and River Trust with the plans they have to fully restore the Montgomery Canal, making it accessible so that it can be used, |

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| | You would also like Shropshire Council's support in finding investment for Shropshire's canals, including the Montgomery Canal. | and Canal World Heritage Site (WHS) Executive Board. We have recognised the importance of our rivers and canals in the county, particularly in terms of the economic, social and environmental impacts. | appreciated and protected for the benefit of local people and visitors alike. We will also continue to work with the World Heritage Site (WHS) partnership to implement the new governance arrangements to secure the site's WHS status. |
| 11 | You would like to see more on the visitor economy, inclusion of tourism statistics and the publication of a visitor economy strategy. | We are working closely with the sector to develop a coherent visitor economy strategy and define the function of the local authority in assisting the facilitation of tourism throughout the county. | We will, in conjunction with the sector, publish a visitor economy strategy and detailed information relating to the current position within Shropshire. |
| 12 | You are interested in the Skills Strategy and hope to see opportunities to be more engaged in the work under priority 4. | A skills strategy is currently under development which will seek to address how Shropshire can meet the skills needs of businesses and people's aspiration for work. It will be evidenced based and pull out key areas that need to be worked on and start to explore where the opportunities are. | Action plans will then need to be formulated, led and driven by those with the most appropriate remit and knowledge to do so, enabling full participation and ownership. This connected approach is necessary to achieve the strategy and therefore engagement will be a key element as the work progresses. |
| 13 | You would like greater clarity concerning the ageing population and how opportunities can be maximised and risks minimised. | Evidence on demographics tells us that population is ageing at a greater rate in Shropshire than it is nationally. Growth in the number of people aged 65 and over in Shropshire has risen more than four times as rapidly as the population as a whole (+41.6%) since 2001. We have begun to identify the opportunities of an older population from an economic perspective within the strategy and through the evidence that IPPR North supported us with. These include; volunteering hubs, education opportunities with UCS and other Higher Education partners, mentoring and coaching for new generation | We will expand on the opportunities and what actions the Council may take to maximise these in the detailed action plan. We will also highlight these in the emerging skills action plan. The draft Housing Strategy action plan will highlight a number of policy and practical initiatives that utilise Council resources to help deliver a range of housing in our communities that reflect our ageing demographics. |

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| | | <p>of skills, spending in the local economy and supporting key and new markets (for example digital health, social care, leisure).</p> <p>The draft Housing Strategy 2016 – 18 vision recognises the diverse housing and support needs of local communities. As such, Priority 1 is to plan and support the provision of a range of housing that helps meet the current and future need of our residents and communities. The Council has proactively utilised resources to help fund a number of recent and current older person accommodation schemes within Shropshire.</p> | |
| 14 | <p>You would like to understand opportunities for developing BIDs in the county.</p> | <p>We have been supporting the development of a BID in Oswestry and it is anticipated that a ballot will be held in early 2018. However, the BID process is dependent upon a critical mass of businesses in a particular area to contribute to a levy payment and this requires further analysis in a market town context. We are fully supportive of the Shrewsbury BID and have a Director position on the Board.</p> | <p>We will continue to support and work closely with our Business Improvement Districts and be open to future opportunities for more BIDs in our county.</p> |
| 15 | <p>You would like to better understand what could be done to encourage competitiveness among rural businesses and hope the Council can communicate the likely impact of Brexit (particularly for the farming community).</p> | <p>As a predominantly rural county we work closely with rural businesses through our outreach programme being delivered through the Growth Hub.</p> <p>There are also various grants available to rural businesses through the RDPE Growth Programme administered through DEFRA – Food Processing and Rural Tourism Infrastructure. If you would like any more information on these grants then please contact the Shropshire Growth Hub on 01743 250525 or email: marchesgrowthhub@shropshire.gov.uk</p> | <p>We will continue to address the issue of Brexit. As part of our commitment to keeping our businesses informed we will be holding events covering the likely implications of Brexit through the Growth Hub. The first one is planned for August 2017 and will be rural in focus.</p> <p>We will also continue to ensure that we continue to look at opportunities for rural funding and provision of support that meet</p> |

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| | | <p>We have acknowledged the concerns raised around the issues of Brexit, whether this has been directly from businesses and also the responses submitted as part of the consultation.</p> | <p>the requirements of our rural business to ensure a buoyant rural economy.</p> <p>Work with colleagues in the Marches to develop a summary position on key considerations arising from Brexit for our businesses and economy.</p> |
| 16 | <p>You would like the Council to carefully consider the economic needs of more remote rural communities.</p> | <p>We have recognised the economic needs of our more rural communities and have addressed this through the provision of an outreach programme of business support delivered through our Shropshire Growth Hub. Rather than confined to one geographic location we have a small Shrewsbury base with regular visits and events being held across the county. We are also in the process of developing a satellite Growth Hub office at the Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology in Bridgnorth.</p> <p>If you would like any more information on the support available to Shropshire businesses then please contact the Shropshire Growth Hub on 01743 250525 or email: marchesgrowthhub@shropshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Both the Core Strategy and the draft Housing Strategy articulates the Council's understanding and ambition that quality housing that is affordable should be delivered where it is needed and has developed a number of specific policies to help address housing delivery, whilst also actively utilising resources to help deliver rural housing schemes.</p> | <p>We will continue to look at the provision of business support across the county and we would welcome more feedback on this from rural communities.</p> <p>Feedback can be made via Shropshire Council's community officers, Shropshire Council's Customer Service Centre, Feedback Web forms or by emailing: BigConversation@shropshire.gov.uk</p> <p>We will continue to help our communities and in particular rural communities to address their housing needs through housing need surveys, community led housing schemes and other housing initiatives.</p> |

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| 17 | You would like to better understand how the Council will use its influence to support town centres and the role they play in economic prosperity. | We have actively engaged with the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID) since its inception and with the shadow Oswestry BID group as it prepares for a ballot with town centre businesses next year. We have also played a lead role in preparing a plan for Shrewsbury town centre to set an ambition and framework for the future activities and development of the town centre as a place to live, work, visit and invest in. | We will continue to reflect on national policy and market demands in town centres, particularly the wider role that town centres are increasingly playing as places to live, visit and socialise. We will work with Shrewsbury Town Council and the BID to complete and support delivery of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan and engage with the public and wider community on the key recommendations from this plan in the late summer of 2017. We will work with the other five key market towns on their economic priorities. |
| 18 | You would like Shropshire Council's support in considering opportunities for Bishop's Castle. | We work in close partnership with Enterprise South West to provide IT and business/office support to the rural South West of the County. We have identified opportunities for further promotion of the funding opportunities available to businesses and this will be addressed through our outreach programme and ongoing partnership working. | We will continue to work in partnership with Enterprise house to deliver business clinics through the Marches Growth Hub outreach programme. The first of these clinics will be held on 10 th July 2017 and will focus on funding programmes available to businesses. The outreach programme will also include face to face appointments with the opportunity to discuss individual business needs with a business advisor. We are also actively promoting Bishops Castle as an area for inward investment via our Invest in Shropshire website. |
| 19 | You would like to see engagement and partnership working concerning proposals for the Ironbridge Power Station. | We have facilitated a stakeholder meeting this year with the owners of the former Ironbridge Power Station and local stakeholders including Councillors, local trusts and interest groups. The site represents the largest single development opportunity currently | We will continue to work closely with the owners of the site as they work towards a disposal. We will provide further briefings at key milestones and will support the current |

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| | | in the County. We have been working with the owners and their planning team to develop an informal framework and guide for future development. | and new owners in time with their local engagement plans. |
| 20 | You would like to see more on retail and hospitality within the Strategy. | We welcome your comments on retail being included. The strategy highlights specific growth sectors and also those which are currently under represented. The evidence and consultation supports that these are six significant sectors for Shropshire. Hospitality is part of the visitor economy. Retail is a large sector for many economies, including Shropshire, and the strategy intention is to focus on those that are particularly unique and could give Shropshire an economic edge. | We will be undertaking significant sector based work and more information will follow on the implementation of this within the accompanying action plan. |
| 21 | You would like more emphasis on financial and professional services within the Strategy. | We welcome your comments on including more emphasis on financial and professional services. It is acknowledged within the strategy that financial and professional services are a particular sector which we can target. The six significant sectors outlined are, based on evidence and work with businesses and departments, those where Shropshire has, and could develop, a greater economic edge. | We will be undertaking significant sector based work and more information will follow on the implementation of this within the accompanying action plan. |
| 22 | You would like to see more references to the historic environment and heritage tourism within the Strategy. | We recognise the significance of heritage within both the natural and built environment as critical to the Shropshire identity and a driver for the visitor economy | We will continue to support the sector in the production of a coherent visitor economy strategy that accentuates and promotes our heritage assets to visitors |
| 23 | You have concerns over the high cost of rents for business premises and are worried that business rates will increase. | We are aware of the concerns over the high cost of rents. We provide support to businesses through the Growth Hub through conducting commercial property searches and working closely with local agents to assist them in finding suitable property. We also advertise our own Shropshire Council property for sale and rent on our Estates webpage. Whilst these | We will continue to offer flexible solutions and look for opportunities for provision of business space, whether this is grow on space or start up. We will continue to work in close partnership with the Valuation Office and |

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| | | <p>will be listed at market rates there is some degree of flexibility on terms and potential for negotiation. https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/assets-and-estates/property-for-sale-and-rent/</p> <p>Our Invest in Shropshire website also provides more information on our key employment sites. http://www.investinshropshire.co.uk/</p> <p>We are also aware of the concerns raised around business rates. As a council we have no influence over rates set as the VOA set the rateable values. The agency revalue every five years (the current revaluation this year had been postponed from 2015). Revaluations do not raise extra revenue but redistribute the rate burden. This year the threshold for small business rate relief was increased meaning that an increased number of smaller businesses in Shropshire could benefit from rate relief. Nationally 7 businesses out of 10 should see a reduction.</p> | <p>provide support to businesses through the Growth Hub. The Economic Growth team will also continue to be reactive to the demands of the local economy and explore opportunities to meet the needs and requirements of businesses in the County.</p> |
| 24 | <p>You would like the Council to explore opportunities for HS2 in the south of the county too.</p> | <p>We have engaged with HS2 as regards the dissemination of the HS2 Phase 2a - Deposit of hybrid Bill. Shropshire Council will be hosting these documents in due course within its own web portal for the information of local residents and businesses.</p> | <p>We will continue to explore optimising local existing road and rail links to the emerging new HS2 infrastructure, in order to maximise wherever possible the benefits that may accrue to the whole of Shropshire of the increased national connectivity and improved journey times.</p> |
| 25 | <p>You would like to understand how housing can be driven forward in a way that is good for Shropshire as a whole, with less emphasis on developers' ambitions.</p> | <p>We have re-introduced the design awards in 2017 to recognise good quality design solutions. The policies of the current Local Plan provides the starting point for decisions concerning new housing development, as well as signposting relevant community planning</p> | <p>We will continue to work with developers at the earliest opportunity on new schemes to articulate the ambitions of the county for housing. We will continue to explore opportunities for the Council to directly be</p> |

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| | | <p>and design guidance to help ensure appropriate outcomes in the local context.</p> <p>Both the Core Strategy and the draft Housing Strategy articulate the Council's understanding and ambition that quality housing, that is affordable, should be delivered where it is needed and we have a number of specific policies to help address housing delivery. The Council also actively utilises resources to help deliver rural housing schemes.</p> | <p>involved in delivery of housing solutions as part of our investment programme. We will continue to help our communities and in particular rural communities to address their housing needs through housing need surveys, community led housing schemes and other housing initiatives.</p> |
| 26 | Reference to community businesses and social enterprises within the final strategy document. | <p>We have acknowledged that this needs to be referenced within the final strategy. We have recently supported the application to make Shropshire a 'Social Enterprise Place' celebrating the breadth of Social Enterprises in the County and the work of Partners for Social Enterprise network. Various events have also been delivered specifically for social enterprises and community Interest companies through the Shropshire Growth Hub.</p> | <p>We will support the programme of events through the 'Social Enterprise Place,' celebrating the community businesses in the County and encouraging businesses to consider this operating model to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of Shropshire's social economy.</p> <p>We will also continue to support social enterprises and community businesses through our Growth Hub.</p> |
| 27 | You are concerned that people will not be able to take advantage of skills and employment opportunities because they can't access them (transport was a dominant issue in the comments made). | <p><i>(Please refer to the approach section of Shropshire LTP 2011-2026)</i> We have addressed the issues of transport in our Local Transport Plan. Our aim is to enhance transport provision so that all people, particularly those without access to a car, will find it easier to reach the places they need to go. However, our approach is based on the acceptance that in a rural county as sparsely populated as Shropshire, with high levels of car ownership, it will not be affordable to provide a comprehensive public transport service that would ensure excellent accessibility for all residents. Our approach</p> | <p>We will aim to provide a good level of public transport service in areas and on routes where there is sufficient demand to sustain the service at reasonable cost. Such services are likely to be within larger towns and on interurban routes. We will aim to enhance the quality of such services sufficiently that they can provide an attractive alternative to the car. We will also aim to improve accessibility for people with disabilities by removing barriers to walking, car use and the use of</p> |

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| | | <p>therefore, is to ensure that in rural areas there is at least a basic level of transport provision to enable all residents to access work and to reach essential services such as shops.</p> | <p>mainstream public transport services; as well as supporting cost effective specialist services for those with additional needs. We will make the improvements that will enable more people to choose to travel by foot or cycle for local trips; this will enhance accessibility at a local level and also make a significant contribution to improved public health.</p> <p>We will also seek innovative ways of providing transport, harbouring the support of local communities, to improve cost effectiveness and to tailor services to local needs.</p> |
| 28 | <p>You want to see a greater role for town councils in economic growth – and more support from Shropshire Council in working with town councils to enable that to develop.</p> | <p>We welcome the responses we have received from some of the town councils to the draft Strategy and the opportunities to discuss economic growth as part of the consultation and beyond. We have identified the opportunities to develop a growth strategy for each of the key market towns.</p> | <p>We will engage with the key market town councils on economic priorities to develop the growth strategy. We will be engaging with town and parish councils on the review of the Place Plans later this year.</p> |
| 29 | <p>You would like to see some aspirational projects.</p> | <p>We were pleased to receive your comments on the inclusion of aspirational projects. We currently have a robust decision making process in place in the form of a pipeline group and Capital Investment Board which meets regularly to assess and make decisions on potential projects. Whilst we are strongly aspirational in terms of the projects we would like to deliver there is a balance that needs to be achieved between being aspirational and the practicalities and risk of implementation.</p> | <p>We will continue to progress new and existing projects through this process and those that can be included will be contained within the action plan which will accompany the final strategy.</p> |

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| 30 | You would like opportunities to work with the Council through the lifetime of the strategy and beyond. | We were pleased to receive your comments on more opportunities to work with the Council. More detailed engagement activity will be included in our communications and action plan. | In order to achieve effective delivery of our strategy we will continue to work closely with all our partners and stakeholders. The consultation period really opened up the dialogue on economic issues with a number of groups such as the Local Nature Partnership, NFU and Town Councils. We are committed to ongoing communication with our partners and will always welcome your feedback and suggestions. We will also seek to reach out to wider stakeholders as and when we need too. |