



APPENDIX 15

SHREWSBURY – LOCAL CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Shropshire population was 292,800. The 2013 Shropshire mid-year population (16+) was 236,300 (Census 2011 midyear estimates), and this is set to increase to 329,600 by 2026 (Source: SC Core Strategy 2011).

Located on the River Severn, Shrewsbury is the county, and second largest, town in Shropshire, with a population of approximately 72,000 (71,715 2011 Census). This equates to 25% of the overall population of Shropshire, which is one of the most sparsely populated areas of the UK, with only 0.9 people per hectare.

SHREWSBURY - DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

POPULATION

Shropshire, in common with the majority of the UK, has an ageing population. 20% of Shropshire's population is over 65. Equally, the fact that 25% of the Shrewsbury urban population is under 25 is an important demographic, as is the fact that 57.9% of the population are of working age. The recreational needs of older and younger Shrewsbury residents will therefore be an important factor to consider in terms of future provision of swimming and fitness facilities, as well as the need to ensure facilities are available at times to suit those who work. (Sources: SE Local Sports Profile, 2013; SC Core Strategy 2011).

Two new Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE) comprising the development of 11,600 new homes on the edge of Shrewsbury town centre, will significantly increase the town's population to 2026.

Since 2001, the population of Shrewsbury has grown by 6.8%, and it will continue to do so, given the significant number of new houses that will be built to 2026. The number of older people (aged 60-69) has increased significantly in recent years; 32.8% of the households in the town are now all pensioner.

Clearly, the growing population will have an impact on the demand for all services in the locality, including sport and leisure.

A further factor in terms of demand for swimming is the opening of the new Shrewsbury University from 2015; based in the town centre, in the former Guildhall, the new University will have a minimum of 120 students from Year 1, aged 18+. Projections for the student numbers 5-10 years hence are a maximum of 2,500 students. The University has already made initial enquiries regarding access to sports facilities for its curricular courses, and for students as part of non-curriculum activity. For the curriculum courses, which includes Public Health, and for its competitive sports teams, the University has expressed an interest in accessing facilities at the Sports Village, Sundorne. It is also keen to access recreational facilities for students, and to develop a 'membership package' for their use. A town centre facility could be beneficial, given the location of the University and potentially the student accommodation being built, but the University is also clearly thinking in terms of regularly transporting students to the Sports Village, 2.5 miles from the town centre.

CAR OWNERSHIP

Given the rural nature of Shropshire, there is comparatively high car ownership in the County. Car ownership is increasing and car ownership in Shropshire is higher than the national average. 38% of Shropshire households have two or more cars. However, 18% of households, and many more individuals do not have access to a car. This means it is a challenge to access Shrewsbury town centre from outlying rural areas.

The accessibility of all services is therefore important. Congestion in Shrewsbury and the public transport system in and around the town are key challenges in considering the location of any new sport and leisure provision. It is also important to highlight, however, that Shrewsbury is one of only 18 cycling towns in the UK, and has a wide network of cycling and walking routes through the town.

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It is also worth highlighting that although the town centre can suffer from congestion, Shrewsbury has two established out of town retail parks at Sundorne (0.9 miles from Shropshire Sports Village) and Meole Brace, which are widely used, and on public transport routes. With in excess of 180,000 people within a 20 minute drive time of the town, and 11 million visitors a year, Shrewsbury is a thriving economic, employment and retail centre, serving the needs of many of Shropshire's residents.

Shrewsbury is the only town in Shropshire with more jobs than resident workers. Therefore many people travel to work in Shrewsbury on a daily basis (45% of commuters); the predominant mode of transport is the car. Only 6% of those travelling to work use public transport.

Public transport is an area that needs to be considered when planning any public services, and once a site is confirmed, it is possible to add additional routes/change existing ones, to ensure accessibility.

DEPRIVATION

Shrewsbury is a relatively affluent area, with few, but where they do exist, significant areas of deprivation. The most deprived ward in Shrewsbury, and in fact in Shropshire, is in the north of the town, in what was the Harlescott ward, adjacent to the Sundorne Sports Village. This is ranked in the top 9% most deprived areas nationally. Map 3.1 shows the lower quintile deprivation areas in Shrewsbury, The potential pool sites ie Options 1A, 1B, 2, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, and 3E are also shown on this map. Table 3.1 summarises the development options:

OPTIONS FOR POOL LOCATIONS	DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL POOL LOCATIONS
OPTION 1A	Refurbishment Of The Quarry Pool
OPTION 1B	Renovation Of The Quarry Pool
OPTION 2	New Build On The Quarry Pool Site
OPTION 3A	New Build On The Riverside Shopping Centre
OPTION 3B	New Build On Land Adjacent To Shrewsbury Town Football Club
OPTION 3C	New Build On Land At Clayton Way
OPTION 3D	New Build On Land At Ellesmere Road
OPTION 3E	New Build On Land At Shrewsbury Sports Village

Despite the fact of some deprivation, Shropshire's, and therefore Shrewsbury's, residents generally enjoy reasonably good health. Life expectancy is higher than the West Midlands and national average. However, obesity is increasing; in 2012/13 62.5% of adults were classed as overweight, and 18.1% of children were rated as obese. Although lower than the West Midlands and English average, these figures need to be addressed; the provision of high quality opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity are therefore critical.

SHREWSBURY AND ATCHAM BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Policy **EM1** schedules a number of "Allocated Employment Sites" (the list pre-dates the SUE masterplans including the strategic allocation to the South of Shrewsbury adjoining the Football Stadium), where uses within 'Class B' will be acceptable. Also permissible might be car showrooms and certain other 'sui generis' uses that "generate a significant amount of employment" (retail use is specifically excluded). Policy **EM3** "Employment Development in the Rural Area" would still relate to the land outside the Development Boundary until the 'SAMDev' is adopted. This latter policy allows for "small scale Class B" development in the rural areas subject to a number of criteria being met.

THE ADOPTED CORE STRATEGY

The Shropshire Core Strategy was adopted in 2011. This sets out the Vision for the future of the county, including the future development of Shrewsbury.

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Core Principles – Policy **CS1** headed the “*Strategic Approach*”, explains that Shrewsbury, is to be “*Shropshire’s growth point*” and “*the focus for significant retail, office and employment development*”. This is further developed under Policy **CS2** (“*Shrewsbury – Development Strategy*”) which aims to achieve growth, whilst improving infrastructure and protecting the town’s role and character.

Under this latter policy, 25% of Shrewsbury’s housing growth and 50% of its employment growth is to be contained in two sustainable urban extensions “*Shrewsbury South – land off Thieves Lane/Oteley Road/Hereford Road*” and “*Shrewsbury West – land at Bicton Heath and off Welshpool Road*” (‘Shrewsbury South’ involves the development of a “*strategic employment site*” of 22 hectares adjoining the Football Club and ‘Shrewsbury West’ will also make provision for “*new community facilities*”. Both allocations also promote new local centres).

A “*responsive and flexible supply of employment land*” is to be maintained to meet the needs of business under Policy **CS13** which is concerned with “*Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment*” and Policy **CS14** (“*Managed Release of Employment Land*”) will deliver “*a rolling 5 year strategic land supply*”. Policy **CS6** “*Sustainable Design and Development Principles*” requires proposals likely “*to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced*”. Managing travel demand is also a concern for Policy **CS7** “*Communications and Transport*”. Policy **CS20** “*Strategic Planning for Minerals*” looks to safeguard potential mineral sites from “*unnecessary sterilisation*”.

Social and community facilities - Policies CS6 & CS8 (“Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision”) both seek to improve the provision of community services such as sport and recreation and resist the loss of any existing facilities “unless provision is made for equivalent or improved provision”.

Town Centre Vitality and Viability – Policy CS15 (“Town and Rural Centres”) states that “Shrewsbury, the strategic centre, will be the preferred location for major comparison retail, large scale office and other uses attracting large numbers of people”. Development must take into account sequential and impact assessments where relevant and “priority will be given to identifying and delivering town centre and edge of centre redevelopment opportunities before less central locations are considered”. The ‘regeneration areas’ of Riverside and West End “are considered to be the main opportunities for improving the offer for retail and office uses within the town centre” (see also Policy CS2, which also considers these areas as “redevelopment priorities”). There is also support for new “Tourism, Culture and Leisure” facilities within Policy CS16.

Design, Amenity & Heritage – Policy CS17 (“Environmental Networks”) states that all development will protect and enhance the “high quality and local character of Shropshire’s natural, built and historic environment” and not adversely affect the “values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors”. Likewise, Policy CS2 also contains a provision that development must have regard to promoting enhancing the town’s heritage assets including its green spaces, and the registered battlefield.

Flood Control & Climate Change – Policy CS18 (“Sustainable Water Management”) requires measures to be integrated into new developments so as to reduce flood risk in accordance with National Policy and adapt to climate change. Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) to manage surface water should be introduced into new schemes.

Countryside & Natural Environment - For the purposes of the Core Strategy “Countryside” is defined as being any land outside “outside settlement development boundaries”. “Countryside and Green Belt” is dealt with under Policy CS5, which seeks to protect the ‘countryside’ from large scale urban development.

However, some leisure and recreation proposals will be permissible if they require a countryside location, or cannot be accommodated within settlements. Similarly, Policy CS17 (see above) seeks to protect Shropshire’s natural environment from the adverse effects of development.

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Shrewsbury will have two new SUEs in the short term, one to the West of the town, and one to the south. A total of 11,600 new homes will be built in these two areas.

In terms of the SUE South site, this is well-advanced, and a Masterplan has been prepared, which was adopted by SC in November 2012. The proposals include 900 new homes, 26 hectares of employment land, identified Community Facilities, a Local Centre and Public Open Space.

SHREWSBURY SOUTH SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTERPLAN

The eastern element of the 'Shrewsbury South' SUE (known as 'SUESS') is allocated for "a range of business industrial and distribution uses" – the land adjoining the Football Stadium being planned as part of the first phase, known as Plot E1, of the overall employment allocation.

An outline planning application (Ref: 14/04428/OUT) is currently before the Council for development of the SUESS and comprises residential and employment uses, a care home, shopping, and hotel, together with Class D1 and D2 uses (which could therefore include swimming and other sports activities). The proposed community and shopping uses are grouped together as a 'buffer' between the employment zone to the west of the overall SUESS development site and the residential elements to the east. The land under consideration for the purposes of this report, opposite the Stadium, is shown on the indicative Site Plan which accompanies the outline planning application as being developed for "commercial uses" and there are also extensive "Attenuation Basins - SuDs" proposed fronting the main access road.

SHREWSBURY WEST SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTERPLAN

Overall, this Masterplan document allocates a new local centre, health campus, residential development, as well as employment uses. The land subject of this assessment is allocated in the Masterplan for Class B1 purposes and is outside the local centre.

No land has been allocated for leisure facilities, nor any proposals made for sport/leisure facilities in the Masterplan for either of the SUEs; any variations to the agreed land allocations would need to be discussed and agreed with SC planning policy officers.