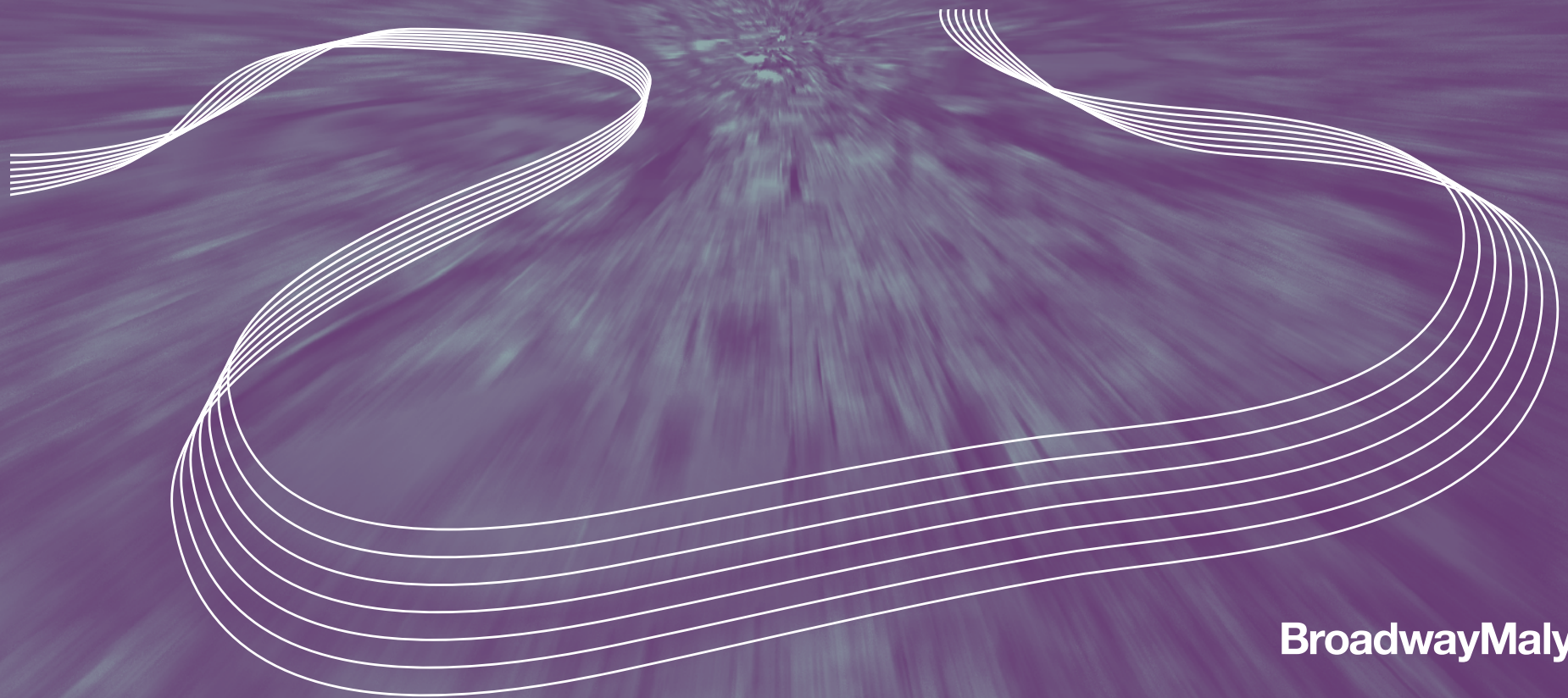


Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework

February 2011



BroadwayMalyan^{BM}



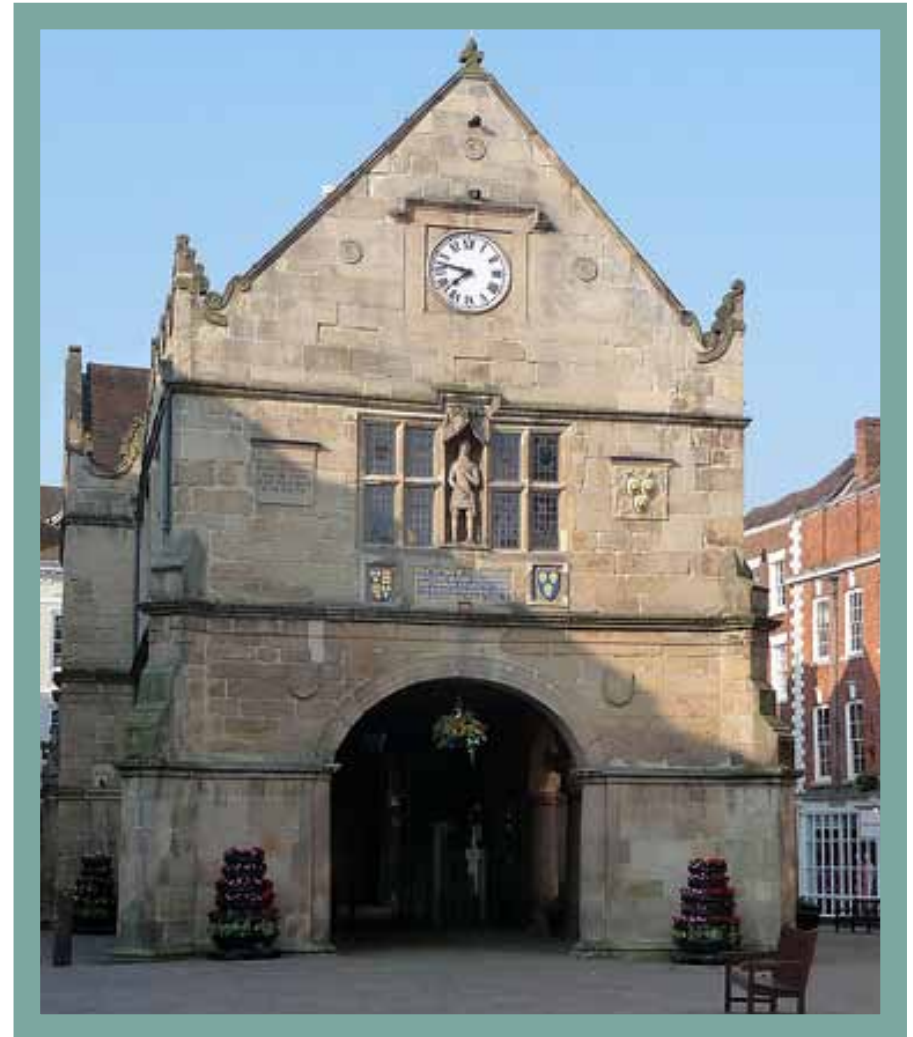
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1. Baseline Report SWOT Analysis
2. Consultation Report



Old Market Hall

Section 1: Foreword

- 1.1 Shrewsbury is Shropshire's County Town. Its walkable medieval town centre has a wealth of world class historic assets and buildings situated within the Loop of the River Severn. Independent retailing, a strong cultural and education offer and an enviable environmental setting allow many of Shrewsbury's residents to enjoy an excellent quality of life.
- 1.2 However, Shrewsbury faces a number of challenges. Accessibility and congestion are an issue, particularly in the town centre. The role of the private sector in the local economy could be expanded and more housing is needed, particularly affordable homes that, along with new jobs, will help retain and attract younger adults and families. Parts of the urban area are in need of renewal. There is a sense that the town is not making the most of its assets and fulfilling its potential.
- 1.3 The formation of the unitary Shropshire Council in 2009, along with Shrewsbury's Growth Point status, announced in 2006, presents an opportunity to revitalise Shrewsbury and enhance its role as the County Town for Shropshire. The 2010 Localism Bill also promotes local empowerment and ownership of plans for change.
- 1.4 The Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework sets out a unified vision for the town, identifies key challenges and objectives, including renewal of parts of the urban area, and formulates a strategy and delivery plan to take these forward.
- 1.5 The Regeneration Framework has been developed through engagement with the local community, with workshops and consultation including young people, business representatives, public sector partners including the Town Council, Shropshire Council and the wider resident population. The ongoing support and commitment of these parties will play an important role in taking the Framework forward.



Pride Hill

Section 2: Introduction

2.1 Broadway Malyan was appointed in March 2010 to lead a team to support Shropshire Council in preparing the Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework. The brief for the Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework sets out the scope of work:

- Vision – Build on the work already undertaken by developing the vision for Shrewsbury, identifying a clear, comprehensive strategy and priorities with deliverable activity timelines. The Vision is intended to establish a basis for strategy up to 2026.
- Strategy – Build on the work already undertaken as part of the Shropshire Regeneration Prospectus. Ensuring a joined up approach for Shrewsbury that pulls together the corporate, regulatory and community policies, the private sector and government agencies.
- Delivery - Produce options and appraisal work on a series of areas within the urban area of Shrewsbury where considerable change is needed. This work is intended to develop on the recommendations in the Growth Point Programme for Development (October 2008) and play a role in assisting the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF),

Shropshire Council's Regeneration Prospectus (Local Investment Plan) and informing the priorities for the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership. The delivery of physical development is to be complemented by action in complementary areas including transport and economic development.

Delivering the Commission

2.2 In delivering this commission Broadway Malyan has been supported by

- Kevin Murray Associates – consultation
- CB Richard Ellis – property market
- Mott MacDonald – accessibility
- Ekosgen - socio-economics

2.3 Figure 1 provides an overview of the methodology, or approach adopted in undertaking this commission. A thorough evidence base and ongoing consultation have formulated the strategic and spatial priorities of the Framework to ensure that the proposals respond to local issues.

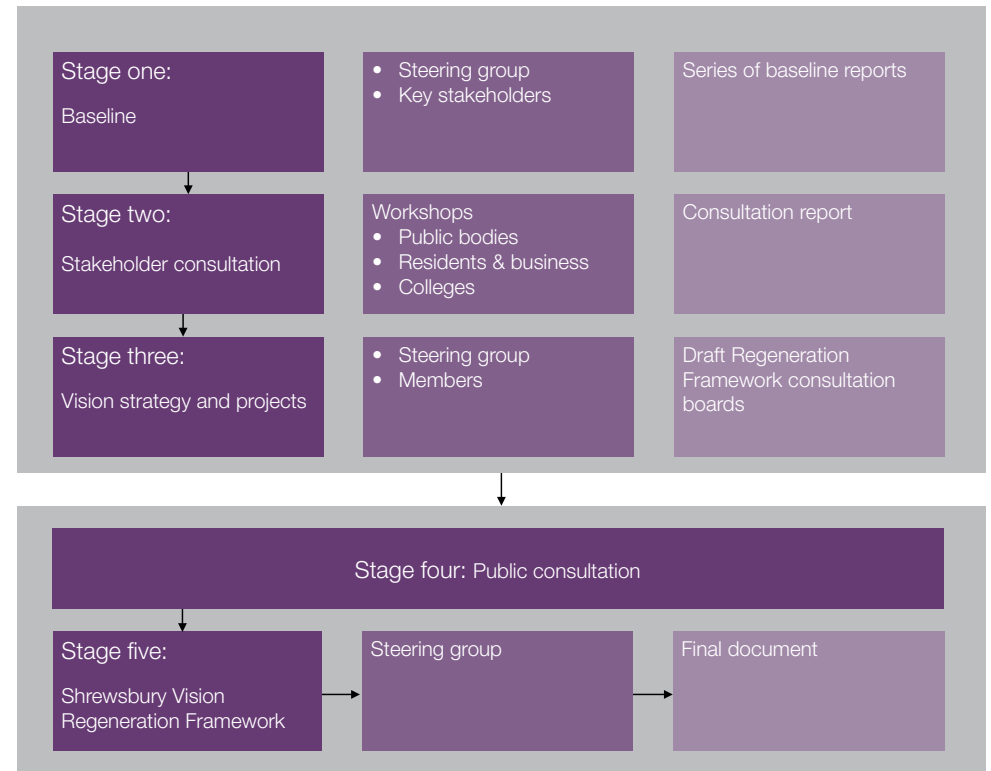


Figure 1: Methodology overview

2.4 The baseline work sought to confirm and identify the key policy, social, economic, environmental, built environment, property market and accessibility factors that will influence the development of Shrewsbury over the next 15 to 20 years. This Regeneration Framework is therefore supported by baseline findings in the following reports:

- Socio-economic
- Accessibility
- Townscape
- Planning
- Property

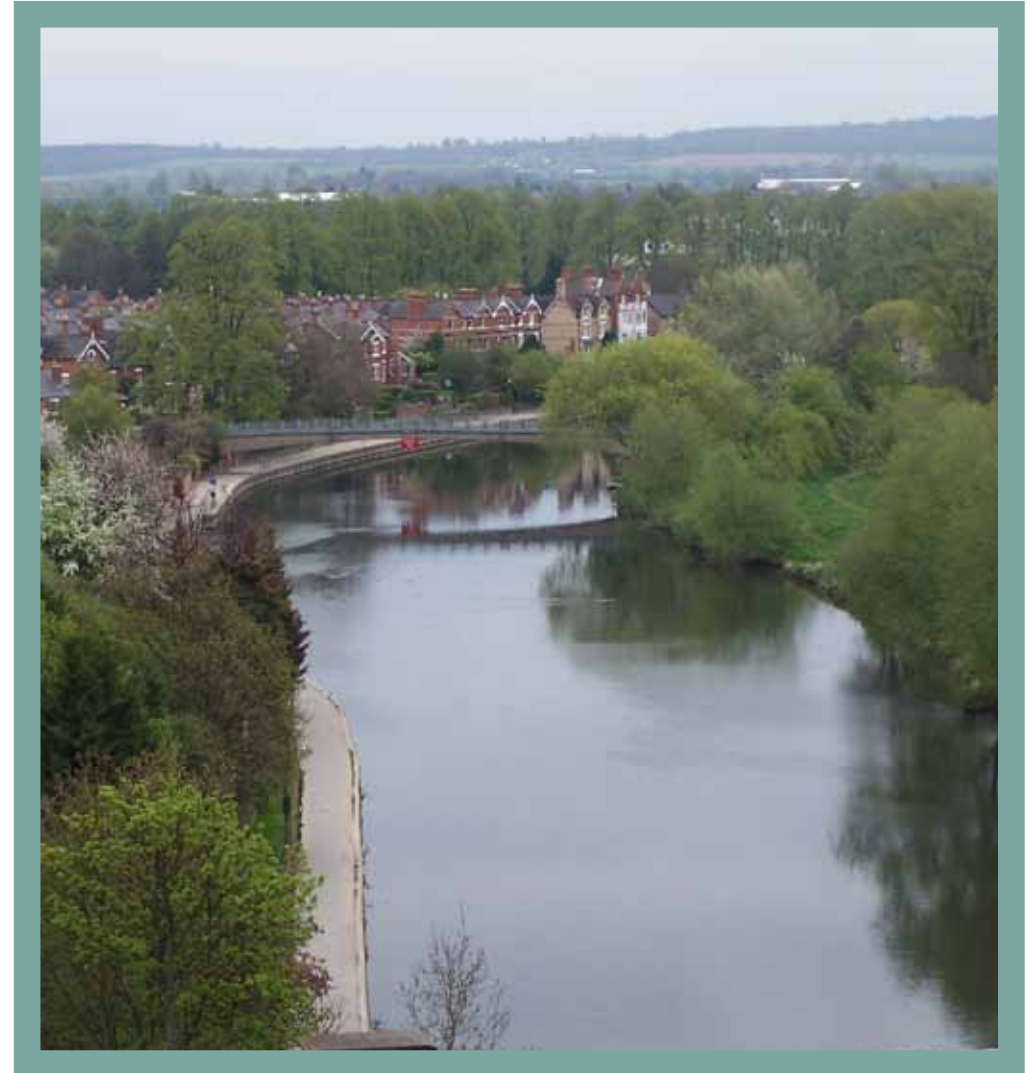
2.5 A summary of these is reflected in the context section of this report. These reports are provided in full as appendices and are an important part of the suite of documents that complete the Shrewsbury Vision, including an Executive Summary and Delivery and Action Plan.

2.6 To develop the Vision (previously established in 2009 following work by Kevin Murray Associates on behalf of Shropshire Council) a series of stakeholder workshops were held in May 2010. Further details of these are appended to this report. This consultation also served to confirm the key areas of the town that would benefit from physical regeneration.

2.7 To take the Vision forward and respond to baseline issues and opportunities a 'Strategy and Options' paper was prepared. This developed the Vision in more detail by focussing on a series of complementary themes, such as Accessibility and Enterprise and Learning. Under each theme a series of more detailed objectives were identified, such as reducing traffic congestion, or creating opportunities for new business.

2.8 These themes and objectives provide a structure in which the Framework can be developed against a clear background and where individual projects can be appraised against their contribution to the Vision.

2.9 In the light of the baseline data, stakeholder views, the emerging Vision and Themes and an understanding of the principal potential areas of physical change, notably in and around the town centre, a draft Regeneration Framework was prepared. This was the subject of widespread stakeholder and public consultation in Autumn 2010. Following this consultation the strategy was refined and developed and this is reflected in this report.



River Severn

Structure of this Report

2.10 In outlining the Regeneration Framework, the remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Shrewsbury Context** – this section provides an overview of the baseline data and in particular seeks to contribute towards the debate on the potential of the town and the challenges it faces in accommodating change and achieving its full potential. This section concludes by confirming the key issues that were considered at the initial stakeholder consultation events.
- **Consultation** – this section presents the outcomes, issues and opportunities highlighted at the consultation workshops in Spring 2010.
- **Strengths and Challenges** – this section brings together the challenges, opportunities and constraints facing Shrewsbury to establish an agenda for action.
- **Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework** – in this section we confirm the Vision for Shrewsbury over the next 15 to 20 years
- **Themes and Objectives** – This section outlines a series of themes and complementary objectives which underpin the Vision.
- **Town Wide Regeneration Framework** – this section sets out the town-wide approach to change, development and regeneration, highlighting major project opportunities.
- **Key Strategies: Economic Development** – this section provides the approach to developing the local economy and key activities to deliver this.
- **Key Strategies: Accessibility** – this section sets out the strategy for managing movement across the town and a programme of work to deliver this.
- **Heart of Shrewsbury** – Key Projects. The Heart of Shrewsbury is a key element of the Regeneration Framework. This section of the report considers a number of development and regeneration projects which will contribute to the sustainable development of the town centre and its immediate hinterland.
- **Delivery- Making it Happen** – this section considers the approach to partnership working required to deliver the Vision, the approach to key projects, funding sources and a number of complementary initiatives such as marketing and branding.



St Mary's Place

Section 3: Shrewsbury Context

3.1 This section of the report considers:

- A review of the national and regional profile of the town
- A historical overview
- Land use
- A socio-economic overview
- A planning policy review
- Environment
- Accessibility issues
- Townscape

National and regional profile

3.2 Shrewsbury is the County town of Shropshire, located in the West Midlands region and the last major urban centre west of the Birmingham / Wolverhampton conurbation after Telford.

3.3 Shrewsbury is an important sub regional centre for retail, employment, services and administration. The catchment area for Shrewsbury's services covers a number of market towns in rural Shropshire and stretches into mid Wales. To the east the town's catchment is more constrained with Telford only around 15 miles or 20 minutes drive.

Historical Overview

3.4 Shrewsbury's historical assets are an important and memorable feature of the town and form the key driver of the local visitor economy. The town has a wealth of heritage assets in and around the centre which include a great number of outstanding buildings ranging from the Jacobean period through to the Georgian. Of particular note are Shrewsbury Castle, St Chad's Church, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury Cathedral, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury Abbey, Battlefield and The Flaxmill. Shrewsbury is also the birthplace of Charles Darwin, born in 1809.

3.5 A significant area of the Town Centre within the loop of the River Severn, as well as some areas outside of the loop remain true to the original street layout. The traditional historic character is evident in numerous narrow streets, public spaces, historic buildings and traditional paving. The fine grain of the historic character can be found around Fish Street and St Alkmund's Church in the very centre of the loop, extending away to the south and east. Other areas including Abbey Foregate and Frankwell contain clusters of important historic buildings.

3.6 The preservation of the historic core is critical to the future success of the visitor economy of the town and is reflected in the Regeneration Framework. Sensitive

management of these areas and buildings, including traffic management, should remain a priority. In parts of Shrewsbury, development over the last 30 years has failed to respect the traditional form and as a consequence there are 'urban scars' in the town centre.



Grope Lane

Town assets

- 3.7 Shrewsbury has a wealth of assets, perhaps most widely known for its history, unique environmental characteristics and being host to the acclaimed Flower Show which draws over 50,000 visitors every year. Annually the town attracts significant numbers of domestic and international visitors with an estimated 2.6 million visits in 2005. Visits to the town are dominated by day visitors accounting for 89% of visits in 2005. This possibly reflects the lack of a four star hotel in the town and suggestions there is scope to enhance the offer and increase visitor accommodation.
- 3.8 The town's strengths draw heavily on its connections to the county hinterland. In particular Shropshire offers a variety of local foods which have been central to the success of other towns in the county such as Ludlow.
- 3.9 The Shrewsbury Farmer's Market takes place on the first Friday of every month in The Square. A market is also hosted in the Market Hall on the upper floors of the building 5 days a week.
- 3.10 Livestock auctions take place on Tuesdays at the Auction Centre, Battlefield and food innovation and processing is undertaken at the Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre.

- 3.11 The town benefits from a number of cultural attractions and hosts many events which help to maintain its visitor profile. In addition to the Flower Show, the new Shrewsbury Theatre Severn was opened in 2009, located on the River Sever in Frankwell. Shrewsbury hosts the International Cartoon Festival, International Street Theatre Festival and a Folk Festival. The Music Hall in The Square is currently being refurbished and will reopen as the new home for the County Museum and Art Gallery and Visitor Information in the summer of 2012. The square also hosts the Old Market Hall art house cinema.

Land use

Residential

- 3.12 Shrewsbury's residential property market is very diverse. It ranges from apartments above medieval streets in the town centre, regal town houses near Town Walls and around Shrewsbury School, to early 20th century terraces to the north-west of the town, as well as large 1930's family homes and modern developments spread to the North around Harlescott, Ditherington and Cotton Hill and to the south at Meole Brace. The town's expansion in the 1970s and 1980s also brought a range of new housing in areas such as Radbrook and Gains Park. Shrewsbury largely sustained house



Top: Shrewsbury Castle, Bottom: Strategic Context

prices and growth levels during the recession. The market in Shrewsbury has been buoyed by its relative level of affordability compared to other desirable towns across the UK, exceptional schools as well as good access to the countryside of Shropshire, good levels of employment within the town itself and employment opportunities provided by neighbouring Telford.

3.13 However, house prices in Shrewsbury are above regional averages (£198,900 compared to £132,800 in 2009: Source, Land registry). Whilst above average wages for residents help keep housing affordability ratios in line with comparable areas, the most recent Housing Needs Survey (2004) identifies the need for some 200 new affordable units per annum. Furthermore, delivering affordable units will help to make a town a more attractive place to live for young workers and families.

Retail

- 3.14 Shrewsbury's high street retail offer is concentrated along Pride Hill which is a pedestrianised high street with good levels of footfall. Pride Hill also acts as the entrance to two of the three major shopping centres in Shrewsbury; Pride Hill Centre and the Darwin Centre. These along with the Riverside Shopping Centre cover approximately 45,000 sqm, comprising of 123 shops including TK Maxx, H&M, Marks & Spencer, Next, Co-operative, Wilkinson and TJ Hughes.
- 3.15 Shrewsbury has a strong independent retailing sector located primarily to the south of Pride Hill along St Marys Street, High Street and Wyle Cop. The presence of independent retailers is an important asset to the town and differentiates it from regional competitors such as Telford.
- 3.16 Whilst the town centre retail offer has distinct strengths, it faces competition from other centres as well as Shrewsbury out of town retail parks such as those at Sundorne and Meole Brace. Whilst competing with the centre, out of town retailing plays an important role in strengthening Shrewsbury's sub regional retail offer. The Shropshire Core Strategy allows for the expansion of these retail parks, further highlighting the importance of maintaining a strong centre.



High Street

Industrial

3.17 Shrewsbury has a number of established employment locations and business parks although lacks a clear industrial activity sector, which can act as a main economic driver. Industrial land in the town is primarily located in the Northern Corridor, although in this area there has been a marked shift towards larger retail and trade counter uses. Lancaster Road along the Northern Corridor retains a number of industrial units. Battlefield Enterprise Park at the northern end of the Corridor includes a mix of trade counter and industry, including more than 300 employees at car park manufacturers 'Studio'. It also houses the Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre, providing space and support for new food businesses.

Office

3.18 In the heart of the town centre office accommodation largely comprises 1960s developments which suffer from a high rate of vacancies due to outdated facilities and a lack of parking facilities, contributing towards the move to out-of-centre office locations. However successful leases in recently developed office accommodation in edge of centre locations such as Abbey Lawns at Abbey Foregate suggest there is potential latent demand for centre and edge of centre office space dependent on appropriate provision.

3.19 Shrewsbury's office space combines town centre, established edge of centre offices and out of town business parks, the latter being located on the edge of the urban area and encompassing Oxon, Battlefield Enterprise Park, Old Potts Way, Abbey Lawns and Shrewsbury Business Park, benefitting from on-site parking and access to the A5. Shrewsbury Business Park is the town's premier out of town office location, located on the south east of the urban area. No particular cluster of office based business is evident across the various business parks with a number of examples of traditional town centre uses (dental practice, veterinary surgery and so on). Evidence suggests this move 'out of town' is a consequence of amongst other things, a perceived lack of accessibility of the town centre, the availability for parking and a requirement for good quality accommodation.



Darwin Shopping Centre

Socio- economic overview

Demographics

- 3.20 The former Shrewsbury Borough has a population of 96,100 (mid year estimate 2009) whilst Shrewsbury town has a population of 66,300 (mid year 2009). Shrewsbury's demographic profile presents a unique set of challenges for the medium and longer term economic prospects of the town. While the population is growing, albeit at only 200 persons per annum, the age profile is increasingly skewed towards the older age groups – a situation which is compounded by young people leaving to access jobs and higher education. Of the total population, just 7,100 (7% of the population) is aged between 18 and 24 years old. This is lower than the regional (9.5%) and UK (9.5%) figures (reporting for the former Shrewsbury and Atcham borough). If Shrewsbury had a comparable percentage of 18-24 year olds, this would equate to a further 2500 young people.
- 3.21 The relatively low number of young people may, in part, be in response to the relatively low (but highly variable) wage levels and the current range of job opportunities which affects the attractiveness of the town. The annual survey of Hours and Earnings (2007) reports that whilst residents earn a mean wage of £438 a week (compared

to £431 across the West Midlands), workplace analysis reveals local workers earn just £407 a week. This suggests some out-commuting to higher value jobs. However a key factor will be the lack of Higher Education establishments in the town. Retaining young adults in Shrewsbury is one of the primary challenges facing the town in the short term.

Deprivation

- 3.22 Relative to the wider region and indeed when compared to much of the UK, deprivation is not a significant problem within Shrewsbury. Yet there are pockets of deprivation. These areas include parts of the Northern Corridor - including Ditherington, Harlescott, and to a lesser extent Sundorne and Meole Brace. Nevertheless, the town generally offers a high quality of life, one of its most important assets for residents.

Economy

- 3.23 Shrewsbury's economy is dominated by the service sector which accounts for 85% of employment. Public administration, social care, community and healthcare employment – public sector led industries - account for 38% of employment, higher than the national average of 27%. The historic town centre means that employment in tourism (8%) and hotels and restaurants



Birches (Shop)

(25%) are key contributors to the local economy. Whilst Shrewsbury underperforms compared to the rest of the region in some sectors, notably in manufacturing and IT & Finance, it also displays significant strengths in a number of emerging sectors.

3.24 The food and drink, creative industries and environmental sectors are Shrewsbury's key growth sectors beyond the tourist industry and have the potential to grow into higher value activity and agglomeration. Food and drink has become increasingly established across Shropshire with identified clusters of food and drink support services just north of Shrewsbury, education centres nearby in Harper Adams University and food testing companies in Battlefield Enterprise Park. This is specifically represented in the Food Enterprise Centre in Battlefield which provides a foundation for furthering Shrewsbury's hub role in the sector.

3.25 Environmental technologies and cultural and creative industries are also important growth sectors in Shrewsbury. A range of environmental industries have been identified in the town and are represented at the Shropshire Environmental Technologies Centre (the Pump House) and the Marches Environmental Technologies Network. Creative Shropshire, the creative design and new media network, is well established to promote the creative industries sector.

3.26 Shrewsbury has a relatively high proportion of residents employed as managers and senior officials compared with the West Midlands regional profile. 17.5% of Shrewsbury's employees work in these occupations, compared to 14.7% of the regional workforce. The proportion employed in professional occupations is also higher than the regional average at 15.4%. The benefits of a skilled population however have not always been captured and reflected in the Shrewsbury economy, with many of these skilled workers travelling out of the area to access employment opportunities to areas such as Wolverhampton, Birmingham and neighbouring Telford.

3.27 The Shrewsbury economy has traditionally had a reputation for larger than average levels of enterprise. This is reflected in the presence of a number of successful small businesses, for example within creative industries, the service sector and food and drink, and higher than average self employment rates. The Central area of Shropshire (which includes Shrewsbury) had the highest business start up rate in the County in 2007 at 8.0% according to VAT registration data. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests a considerable number of small businesses and artisans who fall below the VAT threshold and are not captured in the statistics.

Education

3.28 Six secondary schools serve Shrewsbury, and the secondary education provision within the town is of a high quality, with high levels of attainment amongst pupils. In addition private schools attract pupils from across the country and abroad. There is a high degree of over capacity however, with there being over 800 surplus secondary school places in Shrewsbury. The town has two further education colleges, Shrewsbury Sixth Form and Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology (SCAT).

3.29 Shrewsbury Sixth Form College is situated in the Town Centre. SCAT is split across three campuses, one in Telford and two in Shrewsbury (London Road and Radbrook Road campuses). The Sixth Form College is keen to remodel its existing site (combined with potential expansion on to neighbouring sites), to improve their facilities.

3.30 The town does not have a dedicated Higher Education offer. SCAT offers a currently limited range of higher education courses and medical students and student nurses are undertaking degrees at the Shrewsbury Hospital. The restructuring of Shropshire's economy, with the move away from primary sectors and low skilled occupations to



Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre

higher value added service base could support an enhanced higher education offer. Given the financial constraints of the HE sector, Shrewsbury is unlikely to be able to justify the establishment of a stand alone University within the timescale of the Framework Vision. Efforts continue to accommodate a wider range of local HE courses through multiple HE providers, delivered through established FE centres.

Planning and policy review

Shropshire Core Strategy

- 3.31 Shropshire Council's Core Strategy was the subject of an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate in November 2010. Following receipt of the Inspector's Report the Council adopted the Core Strategy on 24th February 2011. This document provides an important steer in the direction of growth and change for Shrewsbury, including establishing housing (325 dwellings per annum and 90 ha of employment land to 2026) and retail growth targets (50,000 m2 gross comparison floorspace 2006 – 2021 and 30,000 m2 gross comparison floorspace 2021 – 2026). Priorities for redevelopment and regeneration in the Core Strategy include the Riverside, West End and Northern Corridor. Two sustainable urban extensions are identified to the west and south of the

town and the continued development of existing business parks are supported.

Northern Corridor Regeneration Framework

- 3.32 The Northern Corridor Regeneration Framework was produced in 2007, seeking to establish appropriate spatial design, land use and transport proposals for the area along the A5112/A5191 described as the Northern Corridor of Shrewsbury. The overall area-wide spatial strategy is described under four broad themes: dynamic economic growth; a vibrant and attractive corridor; conservation and restoration of the built and natural environment; and a well connected corridor. The corridor incorporates the Food Enterprise Centre and surrounding Food Park and the Shrewsbury Enterprise Centre Hub to the north, and to the south of the historic and internationally significant Ditherington Flax Mill.

Shrewsbury Vision

- 3.33 The Shrewsbury Vision work stream was established in a series of workshops in 2009. The aim of the Shrewsbury Vision is to provide a comprehensive plan that identifies regeneration opportunities within the town and integrates with the Local Development Framework (LDF), Local Transport Plan, Community Strategy and Cultural Strategy. This

picture of Shrewsbury fits together as a set of six themes:

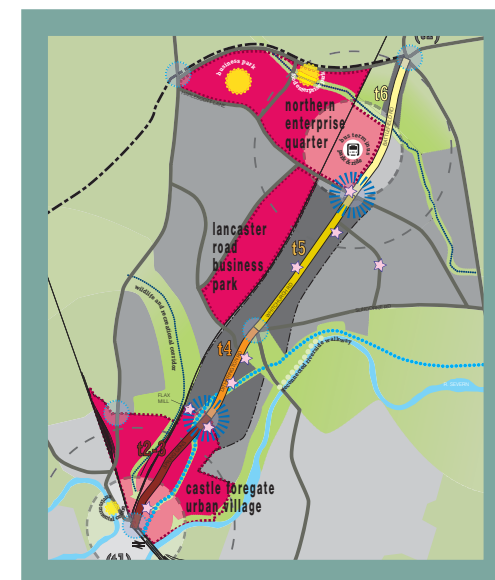
- Expanding role and relationships
- Enterprise, learning and creativity
- Connected communities
- Identity and Culture
- Distinctive quality of place
- Overall Quality of Life

Shropshire Community Strategy

- 3.34 The Shropshire Community Strategy sets high level priorities for:
- Enterprise and growth.
 - Responding to climate change and enhancing our natural and built environment.
 - Healthy, safe and confident people and communities.

Environment

- 3.35 Shrewsbury is a 'green' town with a wealth of environmental assets both within the urban area and accessible beyond the town in the Shropshire countryside. The River Severn is a key feature which runs through and around the town centre, flanked by green space in many instances. These include the Quarry, home to the Shrewsbury Flower show.

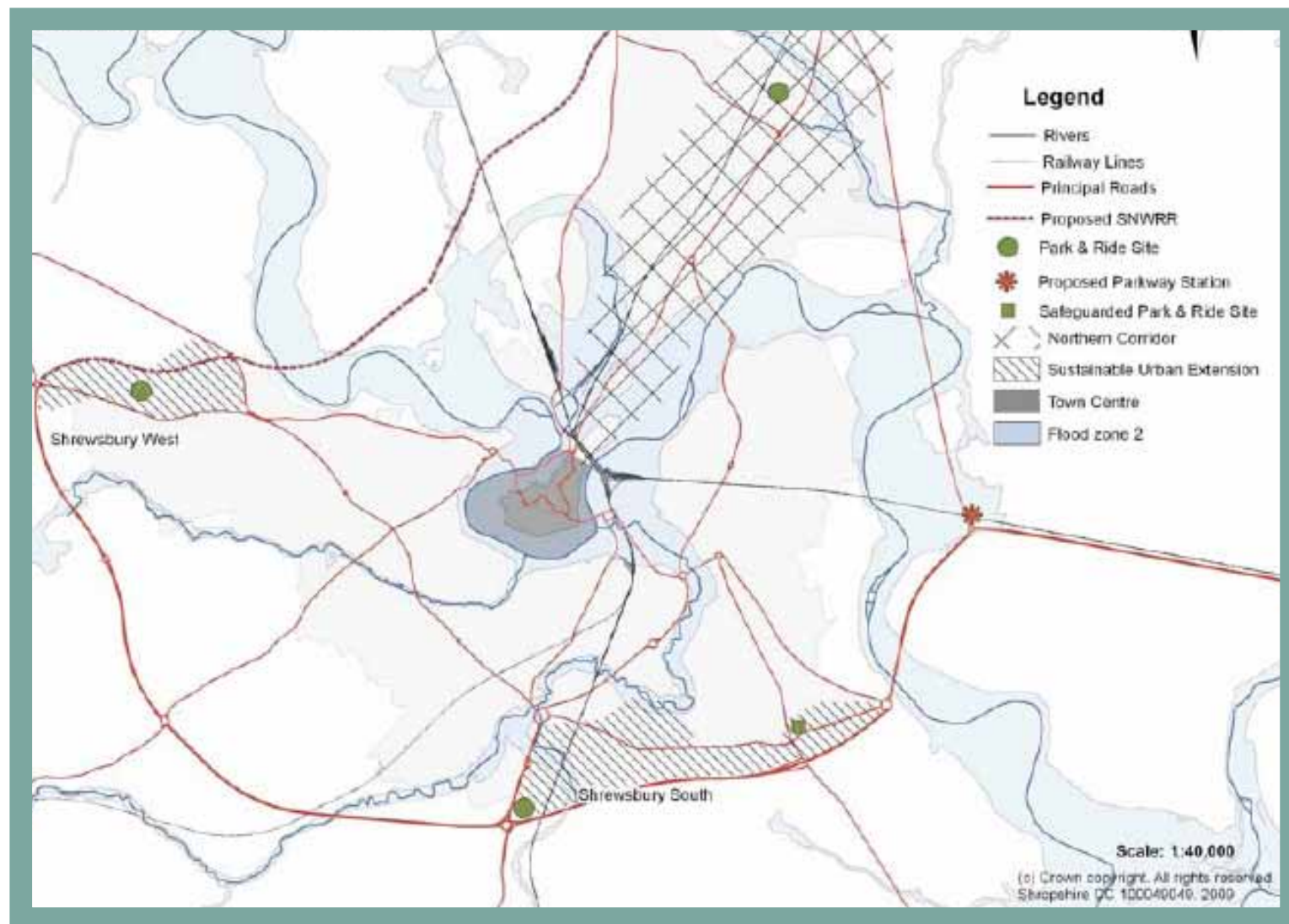


Northern Corridor Regeneration Framework (2007)

Green Infrastructure Strategy

3.36 The draft Shrewsbury and Atcham Green Infrastructure Strategy was produced in 2008 although is not an adopted document. The strategy makes the following recommendations for the Shrewsbury urban area (as displayed on the Green Infrastructure Strategy plan):

- To develop Strategic Watercourse Corridors for communities
- Intervention Zones for Multi-Functional Green Space.
- Strategic Movement Corridors: With an aim of linking communities with each other and to green infrastructure assets and so providing both recreational and everyday journeys.
- Landscape Conservation Intervention Zones: In the town centre, area between Bayston Hill and the southern edge of the town and rural north west.



Flood Risk

- 3.37 Whilst the presence of the River Severn provides an amenity and environmental asset it also creates a significant flood risk to the town centre. Whilst flood risk mitigation has recently been undertaken in Abbey Foregate, Longden Coleham and Coton Hill areas, parts of the town centre remain at risk of flooding.



Accessibility

Road

- 3.38 Strategically, Shrewsbury is relatively well connected by road. The A5 which skirts the west, south and east of the urban area connects North Wales with London; and the A49 is an important link between north west England and south Wales. Motorway access is available via the A5 which connects with the western end of the M54 at Telford.

Congestion

- 3.39 Congestion in the town centre is a relative challenge in Shrewsbury, the town centre being constrained by the River Severn loop and having only 3 vehicular access points via the English and Welsh bridges and the Northern Corridor. Congestion realities and perceptions impact on investor confidence and resident and visitor experiences, ultimately affecting the town centre economy. Within the town, there is evidence of slow moving peak hour traffic on parts of the distributor ring, and on all of the radial road approaches to the river loop. The two worst cases of congestion during the evening peak period occur on Smithfield Road at the west and eastern ends. This pattern of congestion is also experienced during the AM peak, as traffic is funnelled through Smithfield

Road to Welsh Bridge and Chester Street Gyratory. There is also a need for improvements to the A5 junctions to enhance capacity.

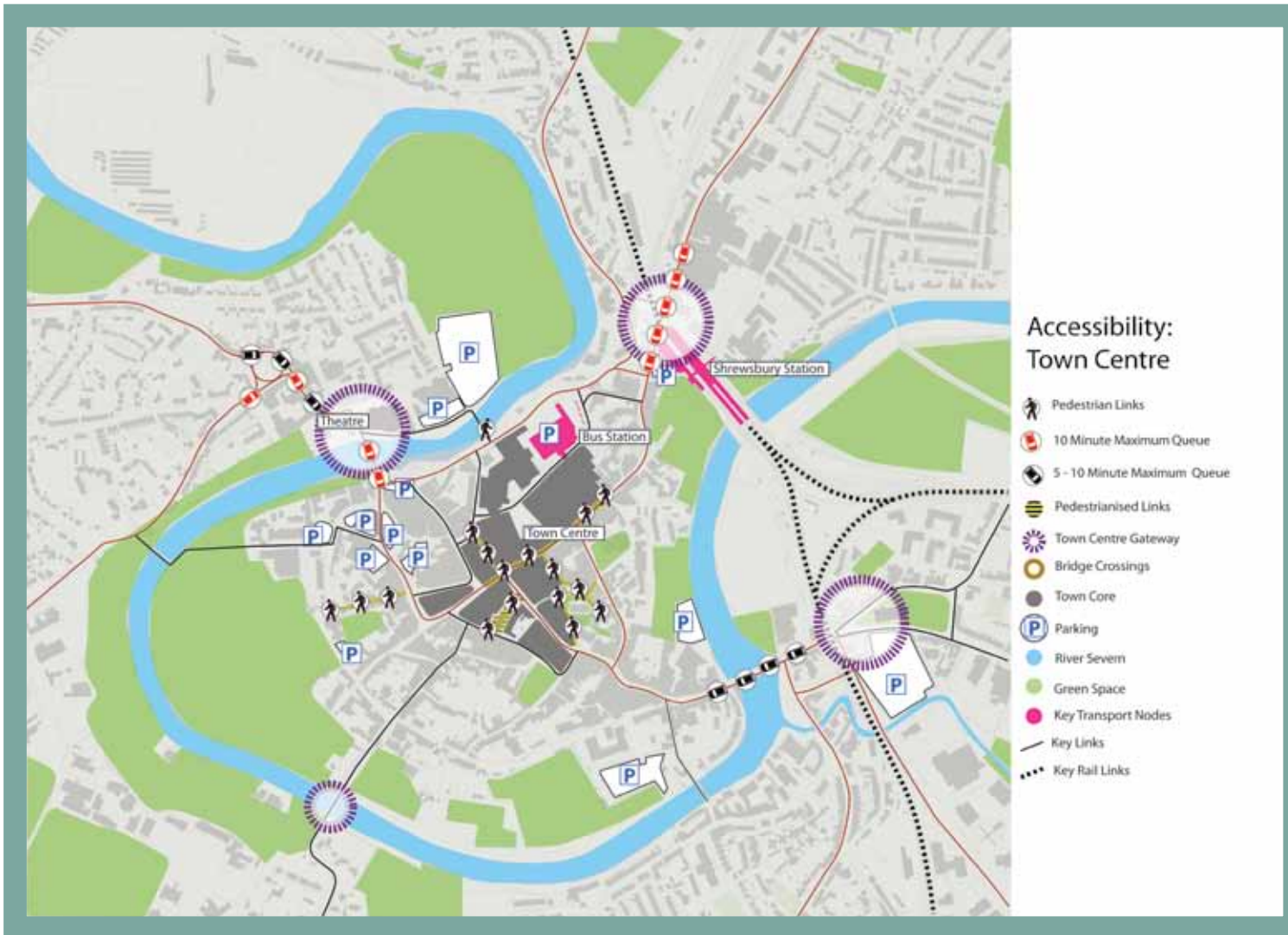
Rail

- 3.40 Shrewsbury rail station is located within the town centre. Rail access is provided due to a convergence of five lines at Shrewsbury. These connect the town with:

- Wrexham, Chester and North Wales to the north west;
- Crewe and Manchester to the north east;
- Wolverhampton and Birmingham to the south east;
- Cardiff to the south;
- West Wales to the west.

Park and Ride

- 3.41 Shrewsbury has a well developed park and ride system with sites at the north, south and west fringes of the town. Services operate on a ten minute frequency and all buses perform a full circuit of the town centre and go to the railway station. Park & Ride patronage, which grew steadily up to 2006/07, has decreased slightly from its peak of 1.291 million trips to 1.258 million in 2008/09, reflecting a general reduction in movements to the town centre.



Town Centre Accessibility Analysis

Bus Service

3.42 The majority of bus services are operated by Arriva, orientated around the town centre. Areas on the north-east, east and south side of the town, including Bayston Hill, are generally well served by frequent bus services. During 2009 Arriva instigated significant changes to the town network with the introduction of more 'cross-town services'. Bus services within the town centre are severely inhibited by existing levels of congestion during peak times, which impacts on journey time reliability.

Cycling

3.43 Shrewsbury's cycle network is relatively well developed and comprises a number of dedicated cycle tracks, including routes alongside the main distributor roads, supplemented by a number of signed advisory routes on quieter, mainly residential roads. Within the town centre, there is a riverside cycle route but very little other dedicated cycle provision due to the narrow streets, one way system and general topography. Despite this, it is possible to make quite long trips within Shrewsbury on connected cycle routes. Further development work has been undertaken as part of the "Cycle Shrewsbury" project. Overall levels of cycling in Shrewsbury are higher than in many other places in England, and cycling levels have increased by 15% over the last 3 years.

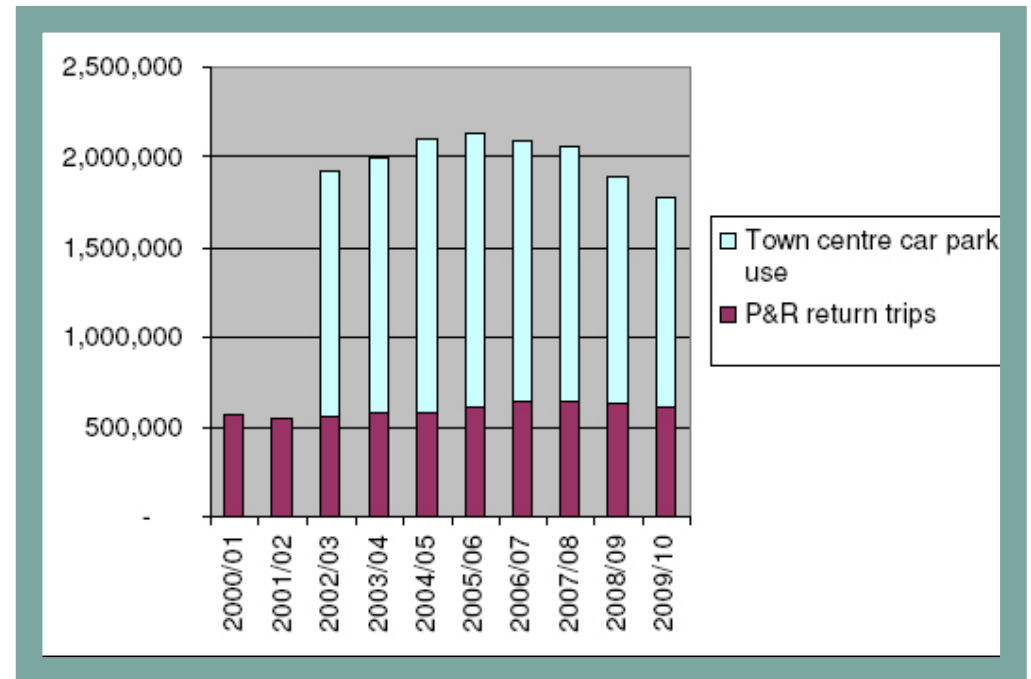
North West Relief Road

3.44 The concept of constructing a new north-west relief road (NWRR) for Shrewsbury has been under consideration for at least 20 years. The development of the NWRR has the potential to reduce the amount of traffic which passes through Shrewsbury town centre, reducing the build up of congestion and shortening journey times for both local and longer distance traffic. The proposed NWRR would complete the Shrewsbury outer ring road providing a north west route around the town. There is very little prospect of sufficient funding being available to deliver the North West Relief Road which is estimated to cost £102M in the short or medium term. The draft LTP 2011-2026 identifies the pursuit of a package of more affordable transport interventions as a short/medium term priority.

Parking

3.45 Edge of centre parking exists at Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and the Railway Station and parking is available within the river loop at the West End, St Julians Friars, Wyle Cop NCP (240 spaces) and Raven Meadows, a council owned car park that directly serves the shopping centres. These total over 2,800 spaces in and around the centre. There is an imbalance in the distribution

of parking with around 840 spaces on the east side in the centre and just under 1600 spaces on the west side. This contributes to congestion in the town centre by encouraging cross town car trips. Car park patronage has decreased since 2005 according to Shropshire council car park usage data (see chart). This suggests there is increasing spare car park capacity.



Shrewsbury Car Park Patronage
Source: Shropshire Council car park survey

Pedestrianisation

- 3.46 Parts of Shrewsbury town centre are pedestrianised, notably Pride Hill, with part pedestrianisation of Butcher Row, Fish Street and Claremont Hill. Compared to other historic centres such as Chester and York, there is a relatively low area dedicated to pedestrian use only. Further pedestrianisation is challenging due to the core town centre traffic flow being along High Street, with the alternative route along Town Walls being fronted by residential properties and along a Scheduled Ancient Monument – the walls themselves. This challenge reflects the constrained nature of the centre.

Public Transport Gateways

- 3.47 Shrewsbury bus and rail station are key access points to the town centre in terms of public access and are located within some 200m of each other. The train station is a significant historic building with modest, standard facilities. The bus station, located adjacent to the Raven Meadows car park, is of poor ambience, providing limited facilities for passengers.

Townscape

Topography

- 3.48 The topography of Shrewsbury is varied, lowest along the river and at the train station and rising up to the highest points

at the top of Pride Hill and Shrewsbury Castle. Whilst adding to the character of the town this presents difficulties in walking around the town, particularly for the elderly and mobility impaired. With surface car parking at West End and the shopping centres accessible at upper levels from Raven Meadows, there is a disincentive to use the Abbey Foregate, Wyle Cop and St Julian's Friars car parks which require the steep walk up Wyle Cop.

Green Spaces

- 3.49 Shrewsbury has a variety of well maintained public green spaces that feed into the town centre and then back out to the river edges. In particular the Quarry provides an important riverside space. A major asset for the town both in terms of green space and viewing points is the Castle.

Town Centre 'Quarters'

- 3.50 There are a number of district character areas or quarters in and on the edge of the town centre which are defined by activity, built form or a combination of both. These are described below.

Riverside

- 3.51 The Riverside area comprises the main shopping centres, the bus station, Raven Meadows and Smithfield Road river frontage. Pride Hill, the principal shopping street is also in this area. Smithfield Road in particular suffers from congestion and is not a positive river front experience. There are also opportunities to enhance the public realm along Pride Hill.

West End

- 3.52 The West End includes the historic Rowley's House, the Sixth Form College and surface car parks. There are a number of bars and restaurants in this

area has a strong night time economy. This includes restaurants along Victoria Avenue river front and extends to the Theatre Severn in Frankwell over the Welsh Bridge. Dominance of car parks in area is evident and both public and privately owned buildings are in disharmony with the historic setting. The area also contains the Market Hall, a 1960s development perceived by many as controversial in terms of its design when related to the rest of the townscape.



The Quarry

Frankwell

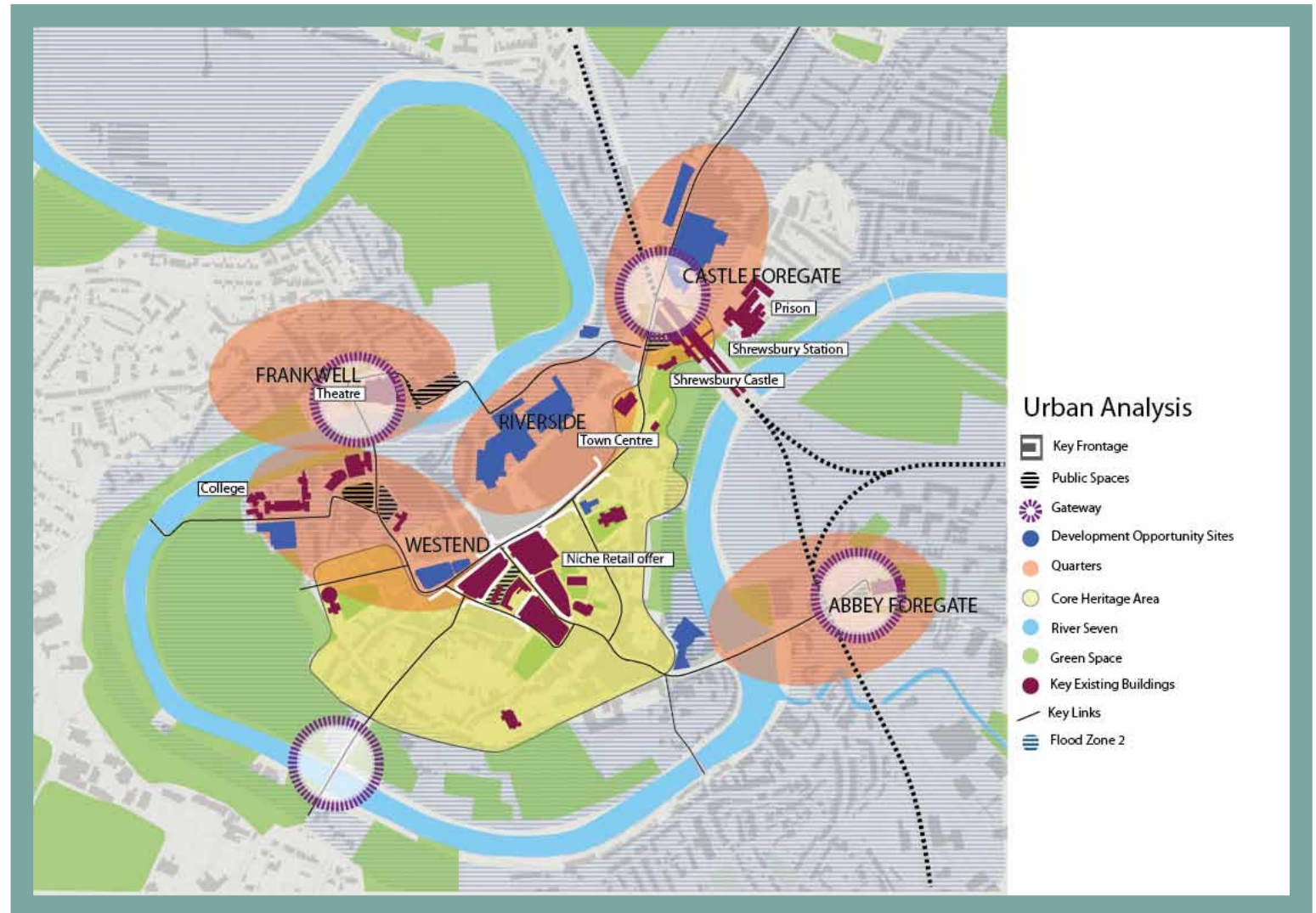
- 3.53 Frankwell winds up the hill from the Welsh Bridge with a frontage of historic buildings housing independent retailers, leading to the roundabout. The Guildhall on the riverfront now houses Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council offices, and sits adjacent to the disused Stew and Maltings warehouse buildings. The Theatre Severn, which opened in 2009, has a prominent landmark position on the north bank of the Welsh Bridge.

Castle Foregate

- 3.54 Castle Foregate is a key gateway, comprising the train station and castle. The railway arches create a poor pedestrian experience as does the Dana footbridge linking the rear car parking to the station. The urban environment in terms of frontage and crossing north of the area is also weak. South of the station is the Castle Foregate Library. The library and the castle create a historical gateway into the town centre.

Historic Core

- 3.55 The southern side of the town centre comprises the historic core and contains many important historic buildings, traditional street layout and The Square. It also is home to



Urban Design Analysis

numerous independent retailers as well as boutique hotels and restaurants. There is also a large residential component to the south of the historical core which stretches up to the Quarry and river walks. Preserving and enhancing the traditional form here is the priority.

Abbey Foregate

- 3.56 Abbey Foregate lies to the east of the English Bridge, with a number of historical buildings including the Shropshire Wildlife Trust premises and Abbey itself. There are some established restaurants and bars although the quality of the area is affected by high levels of traffic on Abbey Foregate.

Urban scars

- 3.57 Despite its traditional form, the centre suffers from a number of 1960/70's developments which are out of keeping with the historic environment and weaken the overall urban form. These are spread across the town and include a number of office developments and Raven Meadows Car Park.

Public spaces

- 3.58 Shrewsbury is renowned for being a 'series of spaces' albeit that some of these are relatively small in size. They include areas adjacent to religious and historic buildings such as The Square, St Alkmund's Place, St Mary's Place and Shrewsbury Castle, as well as more contemporary Pride Hill and the green river frontage including the Quarry. Reinforcing these spaces and the pedestrian links between them is an opportunity to enhance the overall vibrancy and attractiveness of the town.

Conclusion

Assets and opportunity

- 3.59 Shrewsbury has a wealth of historic and cultural assets in the centre to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. These range from flowers to theatre and the built environment. These suggest it has the potential to be one of Britain's most cherished towns with significant tourism potential. However there is to a degree a lack of visitor infrastructure, signified by the lack of a 4 star hotel in the centre, relatively outdated high street retail offer and a sense that the urban environment could be enhanced to improve the townscape and the connection and relationships between key assets.

Congestion

- 3.60 Vehicle accessibility is an issue, most prominent in the constrained town centre where congestion can occur. This affects both private and commercial vehicles and is distinctive to visitors and investors impacting on the quality of the town centre environment - one of Shrewsbury's most precious assets.

Economy

- 3.61 Shrewsbury has high levels of entrepreneurship and a highly skilled workforce. IT has growth potential in a number of key sectors, including environmental technologies and the food sector. However it is failing to meet its full potential in a number of areas.

Growth

- 3.62 The proposed levels of housing growth, in the Shropshire Core Strategy provide an opportunity to diversify the housing stock and attract a younger demographic subject to the provision of affordable homes. The delivery of homes needs to be aligned with investment in appropriate infrastructure, not least transport, alongside support to stimulate and diversify the economy.

Section 4: Consultation

4.1 Building on earlier vision work, the development of the Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework included two phases of consultation.

4.2 The first phase of consultation was completed as a part of the baseline work in May 2010 comprising a series of visioning and strategy workshops. These involved a range of stakeholders including public agencies, businesses, residents and young people and sought to identify key issues for the town, spatial priorities and emerging actions and opportunities. The results of this consultation are set out below. The second phase of consultation was undertaken on the draft Regeneration Framework in September 2010. The results of the second phase of consultation along with the draft Regeneration Framework are appended to this report.

Phase one consultation

4.3 The findings of the vision and strategy workshops consultation undertaken in May 2010 are summarised below. The aims of the consultation were to:

- Engage a range of key stakeholders in the vision process;
- To elicit ideas and understanding on the potential future of Shrewsbury; and

- Identify opportunities for regeneration across the town and town centre.

4.4 Five workshops were held over in May in Shrewsbury, comprising the following groups:

- Public agencies;
- Residents associations;
- Businesses;
- Shrewsbury Sixth Form College; and
- Shrewsbury College of Art and Technology.

4.5 The results of the consultation were captured in two ways, firstly by noting the discussion points raised in relation to the future, key issues and opportunities for the town, and secondly identified in more detail on the plans used during the workshops.

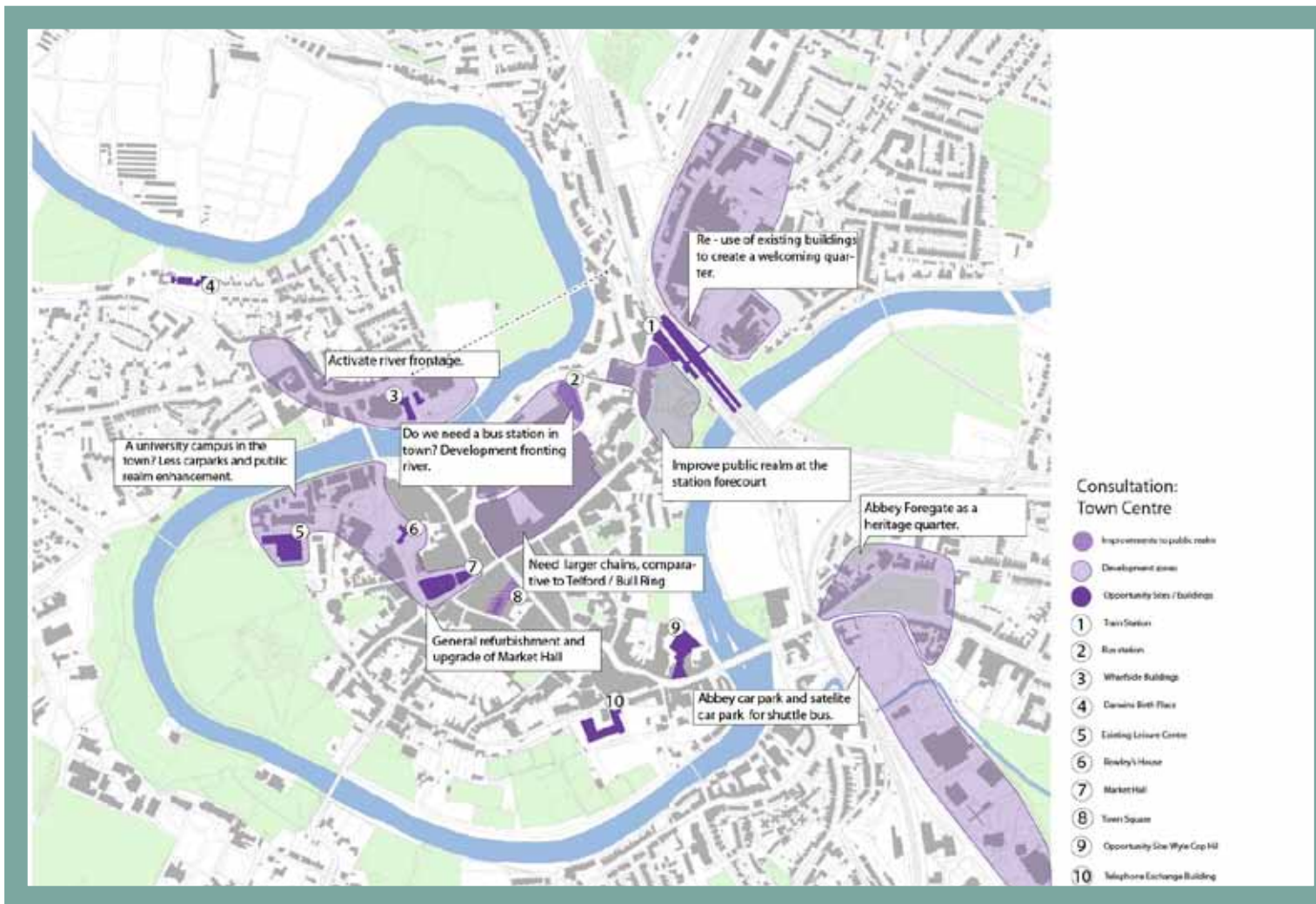
Vision

4.6 The workshops reviewed the vision for Shrewsbury agreed in 2009, this was

“A distinctive, progressive town continually growing and evolving, extending its role and growing its influence with new uses, infrastructure, activities, neighbourhoods and relationships building on its special attributes, character, history and quality of life.”



Shrewsbury Vision Consultation Event



4.7 There was overall support for this Vision but key issues underlined were the need to ensure:

- Shrewsbury as a historic riverside town balancing a sense of history with the 21st Century.
- Promote Shrewsbury as a strategic market/County town.
- Develop accessibility and connections
- Be adaptable for climate change and promote sustainability.
- Liveability – consider those who live in the town (such as affordable housing issues / town centre resident) as well as visitors.
- The need to retain and attract younger adults.
- The need for a clear direction and an agenda for managing change.

Strategic Issues

4.8 Discussion on the strategic issues for Shrewsbury raised the following points:

- The challenge of tackling congestion, particularly in the town centre, and how this can be mitigated whilst still encouraging visitors and attracting investment.
- Need to consider the balance between housing growth, economic growth and new infrastructure in light of past and future rates of development.
- A desire to bring a University to Shrewsbury balanced with the challenge of delivering the aspiration.
- The need to diversify the economy, clarify the potential growth sectors and to nurture higher value sectors to both stimulate the economy and attract and retain new workers, particularly young people. Linked to this need the importance of promoting a learning town.
- Concerns regarding office vacancies in the town centre and the need for a strategy to tackle these to improve the town centre appearance and function.
- The need to improve the retail offer in Shrewsbury.

- A desire to enhance the way the town relates to the River – particularly in terms of frontages as well activity on the River.
- Concerns about the ageing population and a desire to attract and retain more young people.

Opportunities

4.9 The main opportunities highlighted through the consultation sessions were:

- West End: potential for improved public space that celebrates Rowley's House, an improved Sixth Form College and confirming the plans for future of the Quarry Swimming Pool.
- Northern corridor / Castle Foregate: an urban village with environmental improvements delivering quick wins.
- Town gateway and walkway improvements including bus and train station.
- Abbey Foregate as a place of history and an opportunity to improve the public realm.
- Riverside as the main opportunity to improve the retail offer
- Coherent approach to branding, marketing and promotion.

- Tackling congestion through measures such as rerouting traffic, improving public transport and encouraging edge of centre parking.
- Enhancing the hotel offer and providing conference and function space.
- Consider new uses and opportunities for the Market Hall and the Stew and Maltings buildings in Frankwell.



Shrewsbury Vision Consultation Event

Phase two consultation

- 4.10 Open public consultation was undertaken on a draft Regeneration Framework for Shrewsbury in September 2010. Events were held for two days in The Square, on Shrewsbury's High Street, where boards were displayed and questionnaires made available. An online survey and further public displays were maintained for a further two weeks. Separate presentations were made to the Town Council and to stakeholders who attended the phase one consultation. The draft Regeneration Framework was refined following comments on the proposals before being developed as the proposals set out in this document. The draft Framework consultation material and consultation results can be found in appendix 2.
- 4.11 Overall there was support for the emerging framework, although this was tempered by a clear view of the need to retain the character and quality of the town centre - avoiding 'clone town' development. Concern remained over the approach to tackling congestion.



Section 5: Strengths and Challenges

5.1 Considering the baseline reporting, consultation with key stakeholders, the key strengths and challenges for Shrewsbury have been identified as:

Key Strengths

- A wealth of historic assets, buildings and a traditional urban form.
- An attractive natural environment including the river, local parks and open spaces and adjacent countryside.
- An established, well used 'Park and Ride' system.
- Good overall quality of life.
- Local employment opportunities.
- A diverse cultural offer that includes festivals, events and arts.
- Relatively well connected by road and rail.
- Niche town centre retail offer.
- Strong community spirit.
- Availability of some good quality infrastructure and local information and advice to support key growth sectors such as Food & Drink and Environmental Technologies businesses

Key Challenges

- The failure of Shrewsbury to meet its full potential across a range of areas, including town centre quality, tourism,

accessibility and “development of the local economy and role of the town as a service centre”.

- A lack of regional / national profile consistent with its existing assets and potential, impacting on, amongst other things its market profile.
- Concern over the impact of traffic congestion and particularly in the town centre and the impact this has on quality of life, air quality, business and visitor perceptions and public transport.
- The lack of a consensus about how the heart of the town centre should change and develop. The historic character and environmental quality of the town centre should be preserved, however, this need not be achieved through the unnecessary loss of development (notably retail and office) to out of centre locations. Managing congestion and being positive about change will be the key to this.
- The lack of a strong and clear connection between the key assets of the town centre, limiting the breadth of experience for the visitors, underplaying the true depth of what Shrewsbury has to offer and limiting the complementary relationship between key areas, such as the Castle, the retail core, the Quarry and Frankwell.

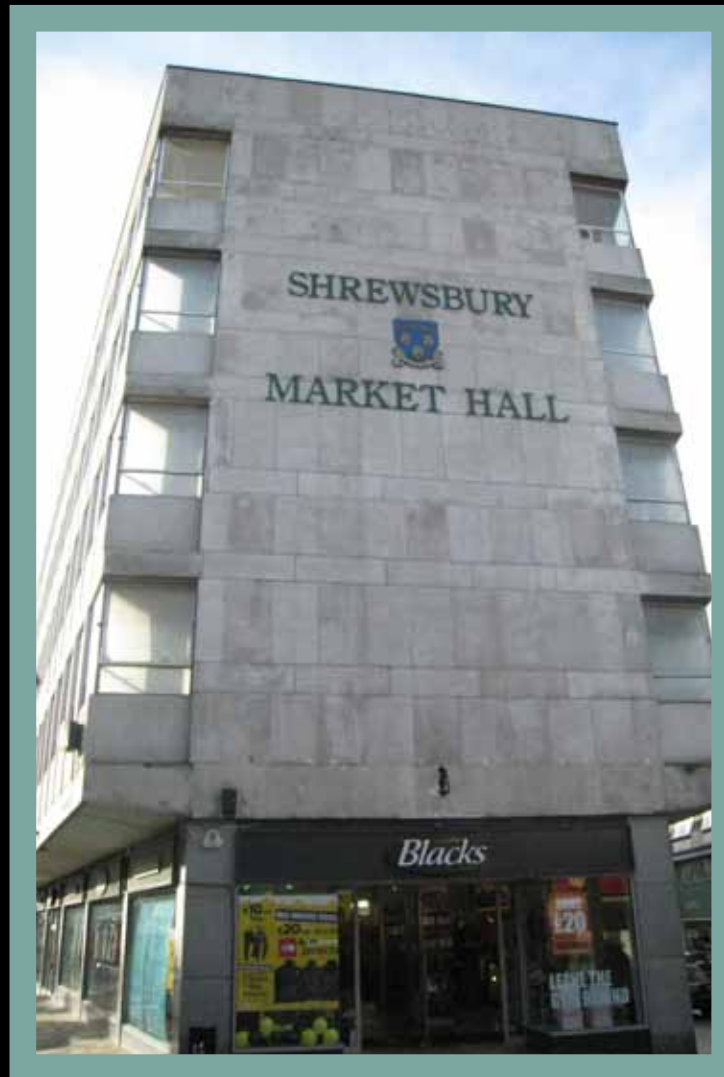


English Bridge

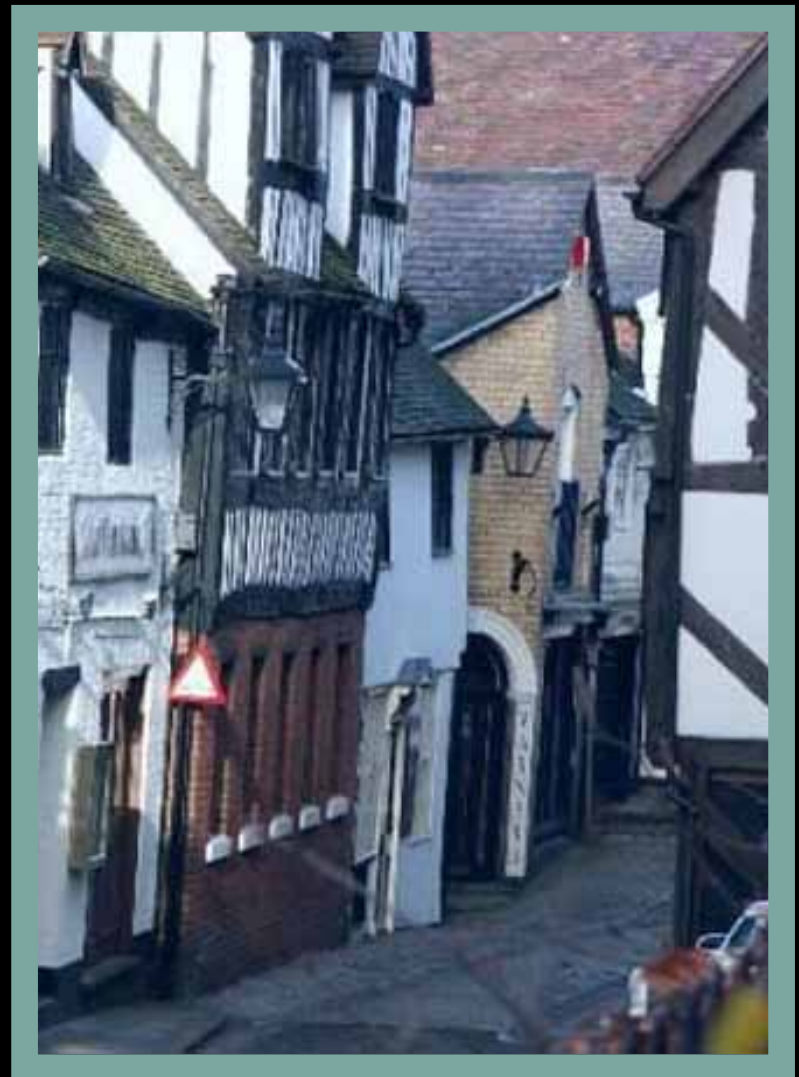


Wyle Cop

- Lack of depth of town centre retail offer, with a lack of strength in larger 'high street' names, such as fashion and the lack of a mid to higher end convenience offer. This impacts on footfall and the range of visitors/ shoppers attracted to the heart of the town on a regular basis – which in turn affects the business prospects of independent traders.
- Lack of coherent business / industrial offer.
- Constrained and tightly defined town centre constraining growth opportunities.
- Underplayed or under provision in some aspects of the visitor economy.
- Further potential to exploit the small and medium enterprise sector in both low and high value sectors including creative industries and food and drink.
- Underdeveloped relationship between town and its rural / agricultural and environmental hinterland.
- Retaining and providing for young people.
- The need to develop a strong sense of direction in order to effectively manage change and plan for the future.



Market Hall



Wyle Cop

Section 6: Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework

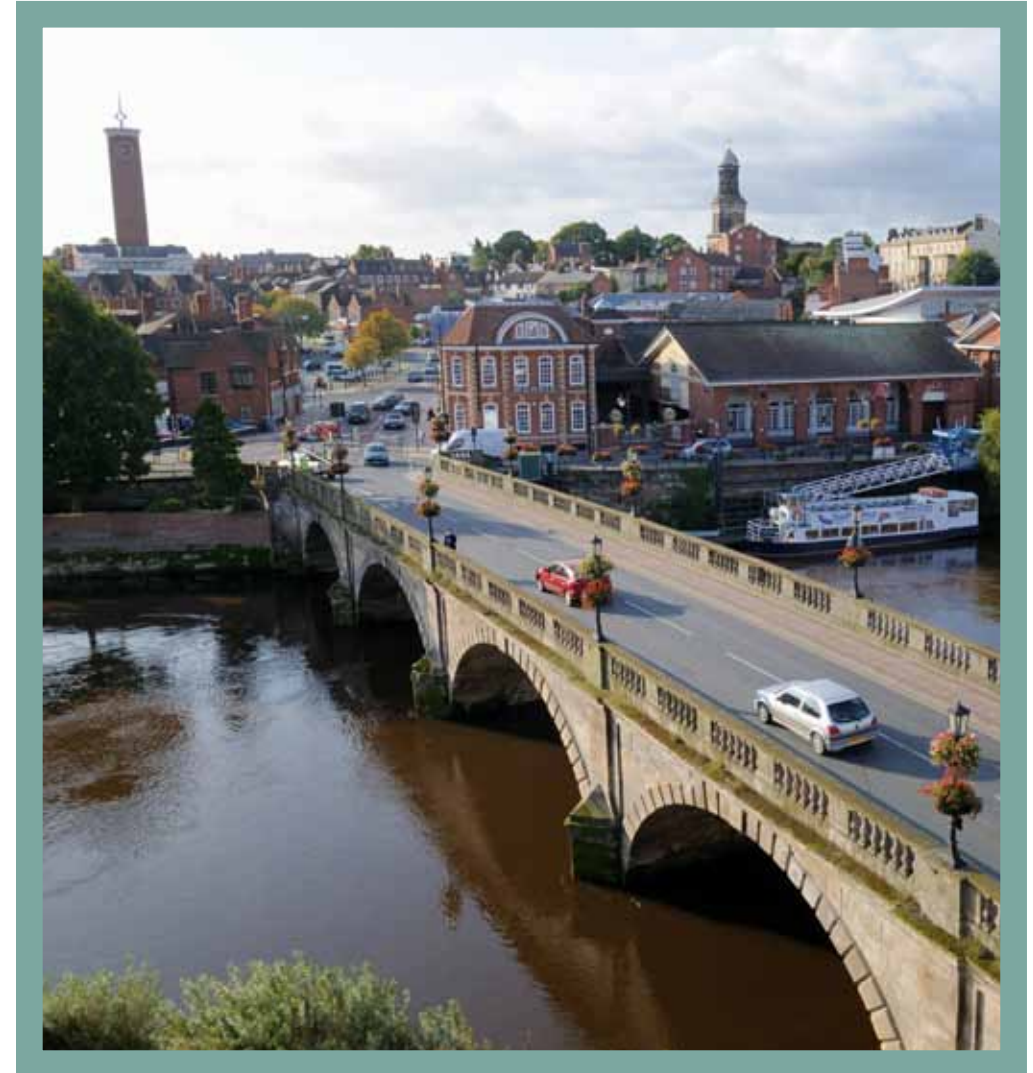
6.1 The Shrewsbury Regeneration Framework comprises the following key components.

- A strategic Vision
- Key Themes and related Objectives
- Town Wide Regeneration Framework for sustainable town wide growth
- Key strategies for the critical areas of:
 - o the economy
 - o accessibility
 - o and the Heart of Shrewsbury

6.2 The remainder of this report deals with the Themes and Objectives, the town wide framework and the key strategies. All of these are underpinned by the shared Vision for Shrewsbury. The Vision for Shrewsbury is:

“A distinctive and progressive riverside and County Town, evolving and extending its role and influence with new uses, infrastructure, activities, neighbourhoods and relationships, building on its special attributes, character, history and quality of life”

(Developed from the vision established in 2009)



Welsh Bridge and West End

Section 7: Themes and Objectives

7.1 This section of the report outlines the Themes and Objectives which underpin the Vision. The Themes are a series of priority work streams which respond to the principal challenges and can be used to focus action and projects. The objectives set out the work to be undertaken to deliver on each respective theme. Clearly there are close relationships between some themes and their related objectives.

Themes

7.2 The Shrewsbury Regeneration Framework Vision themes and strategic objectives reflect the key themes and objectives of the Shropshire Community Strategy, Core Strategy, Local Transport Plan, Shrewsbury Vision 2009 and the aspirations of stakeholders identified through the consultation workshops.

7.3 The proposed themes for the Vision are as follows:



Raising the Profile:

Fulfilling Shrewsbury's role as regional centre and a national asset by enhancing existing strengths and assets in heritage, environment and culture. Increasing the profile and understanding of the town as an investment and visitor location.



Enterprise and Learning:

Growing a balanced, diverse and sustainable economy and workforce and ensuring a high quality coherent learning offer at all ages and levels.



Sustainable Communities:

A town with balanced, safe and healthy communities supported by infrastructure and housing, delivering an excellent quality of life, an enhanced natural environment and a clear response to climate change.



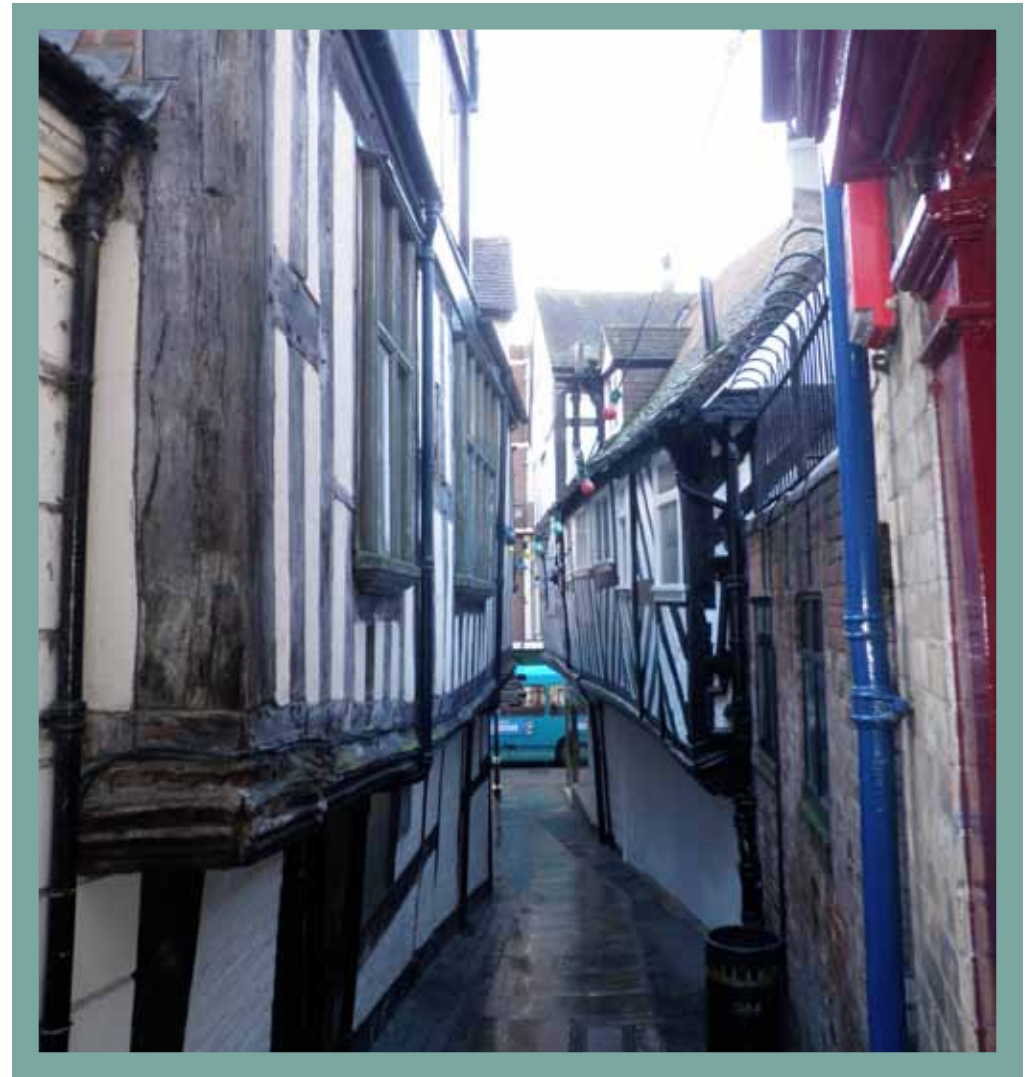
Accessibility:

Ensuring good access whilst reducing the negative impacts of traffic, tackling congestion and promoting sustainable forms of transport.



Heart of Shrewsbury:

A sustainable town with a vibrant, high quality growing town centre with a balance of uses that reflects its historic environment and is supported by edge of centre sites and a welcoming Northern Corridor.



Historic Passages

Theme Objectives

- 7.4 Theme objectives expand upon the core themes and provide a basis for focusing effort and measuring outcomes. The Theme Objectives are as follows:-



Raising the Profile:

- Establishing the town as a place for quality heritage, retailing, leisure, culture, business investment and overall quality of life.
- Developing the Shrewsbury brand concept and a supporting marketing strategy in order to increase visitor and tourism numbers to the town and extend the length of stay.
- Increasing the profile and number of national and regional events.
- Ensuring the highest quality environment throughout the town and particularly the heritage town centre by implementing visible improvements and championing the design agenda.
- Gaining recognition as a centre of excellence for learning.
- Developing and enhancing the key national and regional gateways and corridors to the town.



Enterprise and Learning:

- Supporting the identified higher value growth sectors of creative and digital technologies, energy, food and drink and environmental sectors as well as nurturing the arts and crafts, retail and tourism industries.
- Supporting businesses, SMEs and home workers through the provision of meeting and working space, business advice and broadband infrastructure and developing a business friendly town centre.
- Reinforcing learning at all ages and levels, particularly FE and HE level and for adults, including through the development of links with other HE learning centres and by providing training for skills both in low and high value enterprise.
- Growing and retaining the workforce by attracting new skilled workers, particularly the younger demographic.
- Drawing on the hinterland to support the Shrewsbury, Shropshire and sub regional economies, developing markets, supply chains and skills in local produce and arts and crafts.
- Ensuring office space and employment land are available in appropriate locations to support investment and sector growth.
- Working collaboratively to develop an offer that is distinctive but complimentary to the sub regional



Shrewsbury's in bloom



Reference Library

partners in Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire who together, with Shropshire, comprise the Local Enterprise Partnership.



Sustainable Shrewsbury:

- Protecting and enhancing and connecting Shrewsbury's green infrastructure and enhancing access to it.
- Providing a range of homes, including affordable housing, to support the workforce and attract new residents.
- Making best use of the River Severn, encouraging activity on the river and along its banks.
- Continue to prepare for climate change and mitigate Shrewsbury's contribution to it through a range of measures including exemplar low carbon projects.
- Integrating flood management positively into the character and life of the town.
- Ensuring that all sectors of the community have access to learning, social and economic opportunity.
- Fostering community and stakeholder involvement and the scope for 'selfstarting' initiatives
- Consolidating and clarifying Northern Corridor land use and enhancing the local environment.
- Ensuring employment and office

locations across the town support sustainable commuting patterns.



Accessibility:

- Encouraging behavioural change to reduce, where possible, reliance on the private car and promoting use of sustainable transport, including the creation of a more cycle and pedestrian friendly environment - particularly in the town centre and edge of centre.
- Reducing town centre congestion and slowing vehicles down.
- Encouraging a parking hierarchy with park and ride preferred, followed by edge of town centre, then town centre parking with an appropriate pricing structure.
- Ensuring public transport provision meets user requirements including a reliable bus services and high quality bus infrastructure.
- Maintaining appropriate access to the town centre for all sections of the community, including the mobility impaired.
- Improving accessibility to and from the Railway Station and improving commuter links to the major conurbations.
- Improving the reality and perception of accessibility of the town centre for businesses (and their staff).



Heart of Shrewsbury: Spatial Strategy

- Fostering and showcasing links and relationships between key assets through a coherent approach to Shrewsbury's public realm and public spaces, making much more of the sum of the parts.
- Increasing the contribution of areas outside of the Loop to the town centre as a whole.
- Enhancing the quality of the town centre as a place to visit, shop, work, live.
- Significantly enhancing the town centre retail offer, whilst retaining and developing the independent sector.
- Enhancing the vitality and viability of central Shrewsbury through a balanced mix of uses to include residential, leisure, culture, retail and employment, whilst respecting the historic environment.
- Renewing opportunity buildings and areas of weak urban form in the centre, notably Riverside, West End, Frankwell (riverside/car park area), Castle Foregate and the Northern Corridor
- Celebrating gateways and arrival points including the bus and train station.







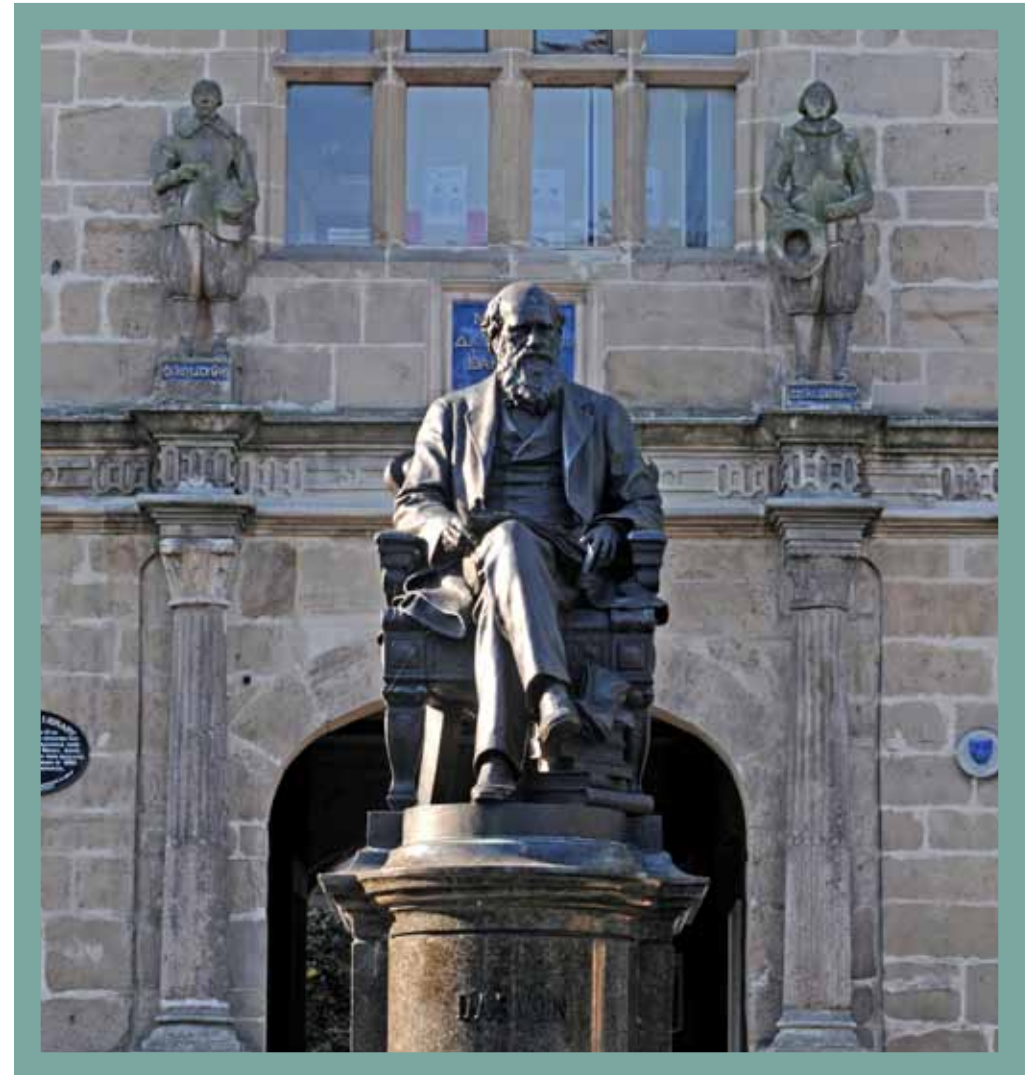
High Street

Conclusion

- 7.5 The themes and objectives are the principles to establish the Regeneration Framework and its projects, and are readily translatable into targets for monitoring progress. The themes have been reviewed to align with objectives in the Shropshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Community Strategy.
- 7.6 The remainder of the document establishes the Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework. This comprises a town wide approach and key projects; economic development and accessibility strategies and a strategy for the heart of Shrewsbury to realise change. The Regeneration Framework has been established in close alignment with the Shropshire Core Strategy, Shropshire Local Transport Plan, Shrewsbury Transport Strategy, Core Strategy Implementation Plan and its associated Place Appendices.

The projects in the Regeneration Framework are necessarily linked to the overarching themes and objectives. To demonstrate how these are connected, the following symbols are used to denote where specific projects contribute to the themes and overall strategy:

-  Raising the profile
-  Enterprise
-  Sustainability
-  Accessibility
-  Heart of Shrewsbury



Charles Darwin Statue

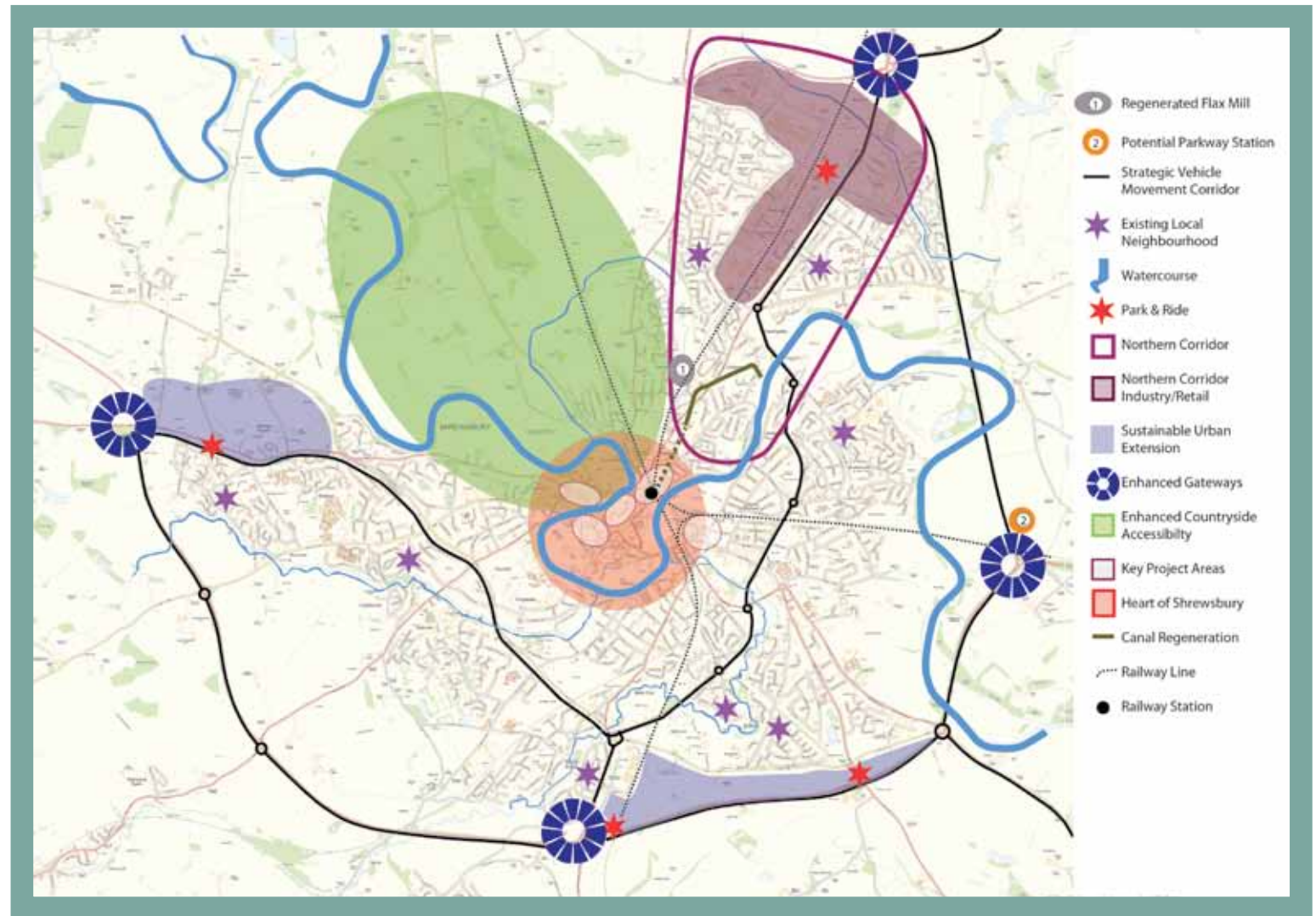
Section 8: Town Wide Regeneration Framework

8.1 This section of the report considers the Town Wide Regeneration Framework. The purpose of the Regeneration Framework is to provide for a town-wide view of development, change and regeneration at a strategic level so that the key relationships are identified and established and the priority spatial areas confirmed. The Framework establishes the first stage in delivering the vision and directly builds on the Shropshire Core Strategy.

8.2 In considering the Spatial Framework each principal project is considered in turn, with particular reference to key relationships and the projects contribution to themes and objectives. The key projects are:

Housing Growth

8.3 Two mixed use sustainable urban extensions are identified in the Core Strategy and highlighted on the Framework plan, Shrewsbury West and Shrewsbury South. These will support the Core Strategy housing targets. The extensions are intended to deliver a mix of housing, industry, employment land and new infrastructure. These sustainable urban extensions are to provide a local element of employment to support sustainable work patterns but will also contribute significantly to meeting the town's overall employment land requirements. Shrewsbury West



Town Wide Regeneration Framework

will deliver the Oxon Link Road and relocate the Oxon Park and Ride Site. Shrewsbury South can accommodate a fourth Park and Ride site if required and will enhance the Rea Brook Valley for strategic green infrastructure.

8.4 In addition to the sustainable urban extensions, homes will be delivered from other Greenfield sites to be identified in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. The Core Strategy sets a target of 60% of houses to be delivered on brownfield sites. Bringing forward Brownfield sites may require public sector intervention or mixed use developments.

Northern Corridor



8.5 The Northern Corridor runs north east of the centre and is the former industrial heart of the town. This still contains traditional industries, such as at Lancaster Business Park, and new employment at the Battlefield Enterprise Park. Large format retail and trade counters also now dominate parts of the corridor, including Sundorne Retail Park. The northern corridor suffers from higher indices of deprivation than the rest of the town and therefore requires a separate focus.

8.6 A clear land use policy is required to clarify area functions that seek to retain appropriate employment use and

collate similar functions. Walking and cycling connections as well as public transport and green links are important in supporting local communities. The Northern Corridor Regeneration Framework (2007) sets out detailed interventions for the area. These seek to:

- Reinforce the Northern Enterprise Quarter through further economic growth, and strong local transport links in terms of bus services and cycle and walking routes;
- Strengthen the Lancaster Road Business Park through a landscape and transport strategy considering traffic re-routing;
- Enhance residential areas through improved access links to the town centre, local walking and cycling routes and upgraded local service centres through new public investment (landscape and pedestrian crossings) and private investment, particularly retail;
- Establish a sustainability led 'urban village' around Castle Foregate.

Existing Local Neighbourhoods

8.7 Shrewsbury is a town of local neighbourhoods that are critical to the local residential communities outside of the centre. The quality of local services and amenities, including green

space, is important to quality of life for residents. At the local level communities should work to identify necessary improvements to their centres. Public transport, walking and cycle links both to the centre and to other neighbourhoods should be audited and enhanced as necessary.

Flax Mill



8.8 Ditherington Flax Mill is the oldest iron framed building in the world, situated in one of the most deprived wards in the Northern Corridor. The regeneration of the Flax Mill is an ongoing project that will deliver a mixed use project that will improve the quality of amenities and



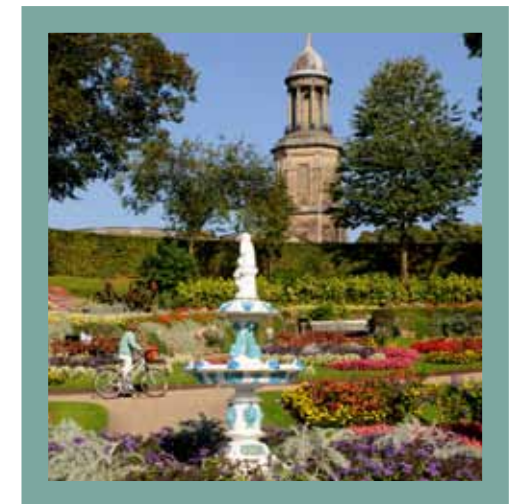
Flax Mill

employment opportunities for local communities.

Parkway Station



8.9 A possible Parkway station is highlighted in the east of the town and indicated in the Core Strategy. This would reduce pressure on town centre rail station parking for those commuting to Telford, the West Midlands and London and would also act as an additional out of town park and ride facility, reducing town centre vehicle pressures.



The Dingle

Gateways



- 8.10 The key gateways to Shrewsbury urban area, notably the road junctions as well as the rail lines, provide an opportunity to celebrate the town through public art installations and maintained flower beds.

Accessible Green Infrastructure



- 8.11 Shrewsbury's wealth of environmental assets are a key component in the overall high quality of life for the town. The green space to the north west of the town should be well connected by walking and cycling routes to deliver a significant green amenity to all residents, connecting directly into the town centre.
- 8.12 The River Severn and associated watercourses such as the Rea Brook are essential parts of the Green Network. The development of multi functional green spaces along the water courses and ensuring a walkable and cycle friendly network is important to benefit and connect communities. The Shrewsbury and Atcham Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a framework for considering green interventions.

Transport Network



- 8.13 Managing accessibility is a critical component of the Regeneration Framework. The Accessibility Strategy is set out in the following chapter, aiming to encourage a shift from the private vehicle to more sustainable forms of transport, and to encourage vehicles to use the internal and external ring roads rather than the town centre route.

Heart of Shrewsbury



- 8.14 Shrewsbury Town Centre is considered in more detail in a later section of this report, its revitalisation central to the Regeneration Framework. The approach seeks to expand the town centre beyond its loop and renew key spaces and buildings.

Green Energy and Sustainability



- 8.15 Through the Shrewsbury Vision work there is an opportunity to enhance the sustainability agenda in Shrewsbury. Shropshire Council has already made substantial steps to promote sustainability including through the Sustainable Schools framework and providing grants for sustainability projects.

- 8.16 The Shrewsbury weir and energy of the River Severn can be harnessed to generate electricity. Shropshire Council is currently working with partners to investigate how this can be feasibly developed into a deliverable project.
- 8.17 Domestic homes are a major source of energy use. New design techniques and construction standards – the Code for Sustainable Homes provide guidelines on achieving more sustainable development. As a part of achieving higher design standards, Shrewsbury should strive to deliver exemplar levels of sustainable housing including Code for Sustainable Homes level 6 standards, a zero carbon development.

The Sustainable Urban Extensions are intended to incorporate high quality design and transport provision.



Quarry Park

Section 9: Key Strategies: Economic Development

9.1 This section of the report considers in some detail the economic development initiatives that are recommended to underpin the Framework. As such the following matters are considered:

Key growth sectors

9.2 Shrewsbury's economy has a large dependence on the public sector, which is a risk to the town, particularly in the short to medium term when levels of public sector finance are being significantly reduced. The local economy would benefit from diversification, focusing on the following key sectors:

- Creative and digital industries
- Energy and environmental sectors
- Artisan industries
- Retail
- Tourism
- Food and drink industries

9.3 These represent a mix of high and low value sectors which can be organically grown, drawing on the existing skills and emerging industries of the town. Shrewsbury has a number of assets that make it the natural location of choice for certain types of business. It provides low cost land, a high quality living environment in a historic town and excellent local infrastructure which can attract office and technology

based businesses potentially relating to creative media and environmental technology. However it is recognised that Shrewsbury is unlikely to create a critical mass of media industries due to the nature of the environment and a lack of urban intensity. Continuing to balance the economic base and growing and attracting higher value industries will require sustained effort which is already evident in the town.

Emerging sectors

9.4 Of the identified sectors, food enterprise, creative and digital industries and energy and environmental technologies are the key growth sectors for the town. The food and enterprise centre is an important focus point for this sector. A network needs to be established to enable discussions between key town, county and regional employers to identify opportunities to improve supply chains, exploit locational advantages and new markets. The Pump House offers flexible office space in town supporting environmental industries, as does the Marches Environmental Technologies Network. Opportunities to link in businesses to local or regional skills providers can both support the incoming workforce and existing businesses. Growing creative and digital industries provides a longer term opportunity for younger people and can be linked with skills and training for Shrewsbury's young people.

9.5 The artisan industry sector presents an opportunity for Shrewsbury to develop an already established area of activity in arts and crafts, connecting with the traditional activities of the hinterland and promoting tourism. Flowers, wood working and craft making all represent small industries and training could be integrating into college programs to expand the artisan sector and support small businesses.

9.6 In response to consistently low levels of inward investment, Shrewsbury has fostered a culture of indigenous growth and enterprise. Many of these businesses are home based. Growing the SME sector will entail:

- Investment in high speed fibre-optic broadband – activities that particularly focus on ensuring that the town is prioritised for investment in the broadband network will be important to supporting home-based and remote working, and the development of SMEs (in particular those within the creative and digital industries sector) that are increasingly dependent on high speed and high capacity links.
- Ongoing support for existing and development of virtual business networks.
- Ongoing support for local enterprise centres (the Food Enterprise

Centre¹, the Pump House² and the Enterprise Hub at Battlefield Enterprise Park).

- Development of a network of further enterprise and managed workspace to compliment and grow the existing offer subject to levels of demand. This should include sites in or adjoining the town centre, and could particularly focus on the creative and digital and tourism sectors linked to college courses.
- Explore links to and extension of the Wolverhampton-Telford Hi-Tech corridor³ through the development of start-ups and spin out companies, capitalising on the excellent links with the University of Wolverhampton.
- Developing links between businesses and local or regional skills providers

¹ The Food Enterprise Centre offering accommodation for 12 SMES is managed by Heart of England Fine Foods

² The Pump House is an innovative office building that showcases high quality low energy sustainable design. Due to overwhelming demand for smaller office space, the design of the building was changed to incorporate an "eco-pod" offering flexible office solutions for small businesses.

³ The corridor extends from Wolverhampton to Telford along the line of the M54 motorway. The University of Wolverhampton has an excellent reputation for working effectively with businesses, and is a key asset to the corridor. Industry strengths include aerospace, advanced engineering and polymers which, along with growth areas like information technology, building technologies and creative industries, are a key focus for the development of the corridor.

Visitor Economy

9.7 Shrewsbury's greatest and most unique asset is its historic town centre which drives the visitor economy, a critical employment generator for the area. The preservation and presentation of the historic environment and activities to further the tourism offer play an important role in sustaining local employment.

9.8 A major focus of tourism and leisure related activities in the town will be stimulating private sector investment in visitor accommodation – hotels, bed and breakfast and campsites both current and new - alongside a coherent branding and marketing campaign.

9.9 Associated initiatives to improve the visitor offer and the experience that visitors have of the town could include specific customer care and tourism related training to provide the necessary skills for current and future employees working in the tourism sector. The provision of tourism related training initiatives will also help to address the small pockets of worklessness that exist in the town, offering a potential route into employment for unemployed people.

9.10 England's most famous heritage towns such as York, Canterbury, Chester and Oxford capitalise on their assets by preserving their buildings and creating heritage trails, supported by

pedestrian friendly areas and tourism facilities. Whilst larger than Shrewsbury, these towns serve as examples of best practice in visitor and facility management.

9.11 Developing Shrewsbury hotel offer is an important part of the approach through:

- Attracting new hotel development
- Promoting investment in the existing hotel offer.

9.12 The wider approach to supporting the tourism offer should include:

- Riverside development to provide better access to, and use of, this natural asset
- Enhancement & promotion of existing visitor hubs (i.e. the museum and art gallery)
- Development of the visitor offer and environment, including:
 - o Conserving, enhancing and promoting the town's heritage, including development of a heritage trail
 - o Providing a regular programme of events in the town, expanding on the existing shows and festivals
 - o Developing street art around the town, including artisan workshops and studios, arts and crafts markets and on-street performing arts



St Alkmund's Square



Welsh Bridge

Education

- 9.13 A first class education offer is critical to its economic success. Supporting Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology to develop as a leading provider of higher education within Shropshire, and ensuring that there is sufficient capacity and quality within the primary, secondary and further education sectors will help to ensure that young people and adult learners are equipped with the necessary skills to work in the knowledge economy.
- 9.14 Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology (SCAT) is mid way through a four year programme to enhance their HE offer. The college provides some 20 HE qualifications and has attracted approximately 600 HE students for the forthcoming academic year. The College intends (subject to funding) to develop an HE centre on the London Road Campus and will continue adding to the HE offer.
- 9.15 Associated with the town's growth agenda careful consideration needs to be given to the capacity of education provision in the town. There is a surplus at a wide number of primary and secondary schools and at SCAT. The growth agenda and particularly new housing development provides an opportunity for substantial investment in new and enhanced education facilities.
- 9.16 SCAT and the Sixth Form College both suffer with dated accommodation. Both institutions favour their respective campuses and co-location plans have been dropped. Supporting investment in and development of the two colleges on their respective sites will aid the learning offer.
- 9.17 A learning strategy for the town should be formulated, within which key employment sectors (food and drink, creative and digital, environmental and energy and tourism) are supported through skills development and learning. Training schemes as opportunities should be explored for all employment sectors mentioned, apprenticeships and entrepreneurial skills and opportunities should be provided in schools and colleges and through links with enterprise centres and business networks. Opportunities for apprenticeships and young entrepreneurs at the existing Food Enterprise Centre and the Shrewsbury Enterprise Centre Hub and the Pump House should be explored and promoted. Further opportunities associated with new enterprise centres and managed workspace (potentially including space at the redeveloped Flax Mill) should also be considered.

Branding and Marketing

- 9.18 Shropshire Council is working closely with Shrewsbury Town Council and a wider consortium of partners, including the Shrewsbury Chamber of Commerce, Shop in the Loop and Shrewsbury Tourism with the intention of re-launching 'Destination Shrewsbury' to develop and promote tourism in the town. The re-launch of Destination Shrewsbury should be supported to provide a key focus on development and promotion of the tourism offer.
- Creating a coherent marketing strategy to:
- Promote the existing assets and events in the town
 - Develop a clear programme of regular events
 - Attract new regional and national events to the town
 - Increase visitor and tourism numbers to the town

Retailing

- 9.19 A twofold approach to retailing in Shrewsbury is promoted, supporting independent retailers whilst encouraging investment in High Street retailing. Shrewsbury needs an enhanced and focussed retail offer. Shrewsbury's retail offer should compete with and complement other centres such as Wolverhampton and Telford, and should increase the town's ability to attract national retailers as well as maintaining its independent base
- 9.20 The recently updated Retail Capacity Study suggests that there is significant scope for future retail development through to 2016 and 2026, and investment is required to maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre in the longer term.
- 9.21 Maintaining a strong retail offer in any town centre underpins its economy and there is an evidenced need to attract investment to Shrewsbury centre to capture lost market share, increase footfall and avoid the development of further out of centre retailing. The Riverside area, through the redevelopment of the three shopping centres, is highlighted as the most obvious opportunity to enhance the town centre retail offer in the medium to long term
- 9.22 Shrewsbury has a vibrant independent retail offer. New high street retailers can support independent retailers by attracting increased footfall, particularly if the alternative offers are within walkable distance. To further aid independent retailing and arts and crafts, opportunities to develop

retail enterprise centre (REC) should be explored in the town centre. The retail enterprise centre concept brings together specialist businesses under one roof. The benefits of such an arrangement are that costs such as business rates, insurance, security, maintenance, cleaning and advertising are all shared. Tenants share the benefits of advertising and promotion activities, with all benefiting from the flow of customers.

9.23 The REC could be located within The Parade Shopping centre or a revised Market Hall arrangement, providing “easy in - easy out” facilities for new independent retail businesses. In addition to the physical space within the REC, the concept also offers scope to offer bespoke business support to independent retailers. This might include:-

- A business accelerator space where companies can get bespoke advice and support, and access flexible and affordable space;
- Access to information and advice from a range of specialist skills providers;
- State-of-the-art training facilities designed for the retail sector;
- A research and innovation centre to stimulate the development and application of new ideas;

- A place to access business support services;
- Meeting and exhibition facilities where companies can showcase their work;
- Space for informal networking.

Evening economy

9.24 Shrewsbury has a functioning evening economy focused around the West End’s bars and restaurants, supported by cultural events such as theatre performances. Developing the evening economy should focus on:

- Increase the number of people using town centres after 5.00 pm, particularly for retailing. This could involve individual retailers to opening later in the morning and staying open longer in an evening. This could also help to stagger car park use and congestion;
- Continuing to diversify evening and night time economy and improve the range of activities and entertainment that is available, by delivering appropriate development opportunities through the planning framework, particularly around West End, and working with existing partners to diversify their offer, which could extend to late night museum and historical events;

- Differentiate activity areas and target groups (i.e. younger people, bars and clubs, pubs, restaurants, leisure, culture);
- Reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour by identifying specific problem areas and increasing monitoring and surveillance and working with premise owners;
- Improve the promotion of services and entertainment as an integral part of a wider marketing campaign.



Street Entertainment in Shrewsbury



Theatre Severn

Section 10: Key Strategies: Accessibility

Introduction

- 10.1 Accessibility and ease of movement are key aspects of the Vision for Shrewsbury.
- 10.2 Accessibility, real and perceived, is central to the decision of commercial investors, visitors, shoppers and others. Shrewsbury, to develop its profile and investment potential, will continue to need to offer ready access to retail, tourism, business and transport facilities. In doing so it will need to protect and develop the quality of its environment and work within the constraints of public sector investment.
- 10.3 If the town is to respond to the challenges of growth and development, whilst enhancing the quality of the Heart of Shrewsbury and the town's investment potential there is a need to reduce congestion (real and perceived) at key points in an around the town centre. Currently issues of congestion and traffic flow in the historic core are constraining the potential of the town in a number of areas, these include:
- The quality of the environment in the town centre, notably on High Street (a key part of the retail and visitor experience), Smithfield Road (a key riverfront area), Frankwell and Abbey Foregate (both historic gateways to the town). The West End is also dominated by traffic and car parking;
 - The perception of the town as a place for business. There has been a loss of office based employment in the town centre in favour of out of town and other town locations. Whilst edge of centre and out of centre business locations will need to remain part of the economic development strategy of the town there is great value in seeking to rediscover the town centre as a location for business, taking advantage of the complementary services that business increasingly looks for, taking advantage of the rail links and underpinning the vitality of the town centre, not least the aspiration to develop a stronger creative and enterprise culture;
 - The view of the town as a visitor destination. Whilst the town does attract large numbers of visitors the visitor experience in the town centre could be significantly improved, providing new opportunities to enjoy and use the streets and spaces of the town to the benefit of residents, the visitor economy and town centre businesses.
 - The efficiency of bus services. In the fine grained heart of the town centre there are limited opportunities for segregated bus lanes and therefore congestion is, in places, impacting on the speed and punctuality of bus services. This in turn will discourage some potential users of bus services (including park and ride).
- 10.4 Notwithstanding the issues raised by traffic and congestion, there is a clearly a need to maintain accessibility to the town centre and in so doing maintain as broad as support as possible for the objectives of the Vision. There is also a need to work within the constraints of the limited public funds that will be available for infrastructure in the foreseeable future. The challenges to be addressing in balancing accessibility versus reducing congestion and the impact of traffic are numerous and varied, but include:
- Walking and cycling – a reduction in traffic would improve the quality and safety of routes for walking and cycling.
 - Current high capacity highway infrastructure on Smithfield road and open air car parking at the west end significantly detract from the quality of the built environment and the setting of key heritage and natural assets.
 - Topography.
 - Retailer trading and perceptions – their potential concerns over loss of trade due to reduced traffic.
 - The lack of a full inner or outer ring road of the town – results in cross-town movements through the town centre, particularly for those travelling from west to north and vice versa
- 10.5 The challenges of managing traffic are nothing new in Shrewsbury. The Council, along with the previous County and Borough Councils, has put significant effort into reducing traffic and improving bus, cycle and pedestrian facilities and streetscape in Shrewsbury town centre over the last 15 years - with real successes, such as the introduction of three Park and Ride facilities, pedestrian enhancements and traffic calming along key shopping streets and effective management of on-street parking.
- The need to promote and service major development opportunities in the town centre, not least Riverside.
 - The need to maintain public transport access.
 - The distribution of car parking in the town – the majority of car parking is located to the west of the town centre – this encourages cross town movement.
 - The need to maintain access to residential areas within the Loop and minimise the scope for 'rat running' through these same areas.
 - The significant income to the Council of car parking charges which facilitates the subsidy of Park and Ride.

Previous Proposals

10.6 Public and stakeholder consultation noted the proposals put forward by The Shrewsbury Transport Partnership (a locally formed group not affiliated with Shropshire Council) and these have been considered and reviewed in formulating this accessibility strategy.

10.7 The 'Three Point Plan' focused on the three main access points to Shrewsbury Town Centre (English Bridge, Welsh Bridge and Castle Foregate). The proposal aims to fulfil the ambitions of the partnership for pedestrianisation, and a pollution free, environmentally friendly town. Central to the strategy is the location of all town centre car parking in edge of centre locations, such as Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and the NCP Car Park at Wyle Cop (albeit potentially expanded). The town centre would be completely car free (apart it is assumed for residential traffic and servicing). A shuttle bus would be provided from edge of centre car parks to the town centre. Main bus services would terminate at or around the edge of centre car park areas.

10.8 Whilst the core aspirations of the 'Three Point Plan' are to a large extent shared with the Framework Vision (i.e. a significant indeed radical reduction in town centre traffic) and indeed elements are incorporated into this accessibility strategy, it is not considered that the more radical elements of the proposals

(i.e. almost complete removal of cars from the town centre in one leap) can be supported. Whilst there is little detail on the proposals it is not considered that the three point plan can be taken forward as proposed. Reasons for this include:

- The need to maintain the support of all parties in the delivery of the Vision for the town centre, not least retailers, businesses and developers – there would be significant concern over the ability of the town centre to continue to trade effectively should the Three Point Plan be implemented in 'one go' in the short term.
- The need to maintain car access (for the foreseeable future) to the town centre for some key economic assets, such as the Shopping Centre's, residential properties, to enable disabled and mobility impaired users to access central parking; and for bus access to the Bus Station.
- The proposal focuses only on the Town Centre and does not take into account the impacts or problems in the rest of Shrewsbury; of particular concern are the levels of congestion on the approach roads to the Town Centre. Focusing all parking on the edge of the Town Centre would not solve the congestion issue on the three main accesses to the Town Centre.



Shrewsbury Bus Station



Shrewsbury Train Station

- The Council's current policy is to reduce traffic flows on all Town Centre and radial routes roads by encouraging the use of the three peripheral park and ride sites (Oxon in the west, Meole Brace in the south and Harlescott in the North) and to use a charging structure to encourage use of edge of town parking, with central parking priced at a premium rate.
- The proposal would severely affect the viability of bus park and ride services as it would require all bus users to change at the proposed interchanges to take a second bus into the Town Centre.
- The termination of bus routes at these three locations would also make it impossible to operate cross town bus services which provide access to the employment sites around the edge of Shrewsbury as they would not be able to travel through the Town Centre, due to the proposed restrictions. The Three Point Plan does not recognise the current use of some towns roads, particularly Smithfield Road, for 'through traffic' and the need to provide suitable capacity on alternative routes (or significantly reduce overall traffic levels) if traffic is to be removed from the central core.

Accessibility Strategy

10.9 The Vision Framework proposes an accessibility strategy with the following objectives:

- To incrementally reduce the amount of traffic to the Town Centre and entering the Heart of the Town Centre;
- Subject to monitoring traffic patterns and footfall, to seek to reduce town centre parking and, if required, deliver additional edge of centre parking.
- To improve the quality of the town centre experience through reducing the amount of traffic and impact of highway infrastructure in key locations, extending the pedestrian priority areas and improvement key parts of the public realm.
- To maintain the economic, social and cultural vitality of the town centre by maintaining and increasing the number of visitors and the quality and length of their visit.
- To ensure that community and business support is maintained and developed for this medium to longer term strategy by basing incremental change on a robust and shared evidence base and by balancing disincentives to the drivers with incentives for those walking, cycling, and using public transport, including park and ride.

- To maintain residential amenity in the town.

10.10 To achieve these objectives it is recommended that a phased and incremental approach is taken to a year by year reduction in traffic to the town centre. In order to do this both disincentives to car use and incentives to use public transport, walking and cycling need to be put in place. This process of change needs to be evidenced in data on traffic movement, footfall, town centre vitality and so on so that stakeholders can be made aware of changing behaviour and the (intended) positive impacts on the town centre (in terms of footfall, dwell time, retail spend and so on). Subject to demand, additional car parking may be provided in edge of centre areas as town centre parking is reduced.

10.11 As traffic is reduced in the town centre (without adversely impacting on town centre vitality) measures can be put in places to take advantage of this change – such as more pedestrianisation and/or the re-use of existing car parks for other uses. Changing people's behaviour will be central to this approach. However it is achievable.

10.12 An example of this is Oxford City, where incremental changes to pedestrianisation of the High Street, along with infrastructure improvements

and the improvement of bus services and park and ride enabled the City Centre to be freed of cars. This also had implications on quality of life of users and air quality. The key to unlocking these benefits was the systematic and incremental phasing of car parking availability and charges, public transport provision, quality of the public transport experience and infrastructure provision for walking and particularly cycling.

10.13 Another example is the experience over almost 35 years in the City of Copenhagen. During a period of significant expansion, the city was dominated by the private car. Streets and squares were turned into car parks and public transport was almost non-existent. The local authority embarked on an incremental change resulting in the theme of 'cars out of our city'. Copenhagen as a City decided to apply car parking policy to drive cars out of the city but ensure that the life blood of the city in terms of economic prosperity continued. Traffic lanes were taken away and parking was reduced by 2% 3% per annum. In turn these areas were replaced by public spaces, ideally giving the city centre back to people. This has changed behaviour significantly. Cars no longer clog up the City and the public realm has been given back to the public.

10.14 Closer to home is the experience of Shrewsbury town centre when Dogpole was closed between 7th April and 23rd May 2008. To facilitate works to Dogpole, St Marys Street was closed and traffic flows reversed along Town Walls. Town Centre 'Access Only' signs were put in place at key entry points to the centre (English Bridge, Bridge Street, Kingsland Bridge and Castle Gates) and diversion routes set up to encourage the use of the inner ring road or A5 bypass.

10.15 Whilst data collected during the period of the temporary measures is necessarily only a 'snap-shot' it does make for interesting reading:

- there was a 7.9% increase in people travelling into the town centre on a day to day basis over the comparable period in 2007 with significant increases in numbers walking and cycling into the loop;
- the number of vehicles entering Shrewsbury town centre fell by around 4300 (14%) on an average day. Traffic also fell by nearly 4% on other main routes outside of the town centre.
- footfall figures suggested a 4.9% rise in the number of people entering the Shopping Centres when compared
- with the same period in 2007. Some but not all of this could be attributed to the altered park and ride arrangements which encouraged

shoppers through the Centres.

- usage of car parks in the West End fell in favour of car parks on the east side of town
- traffic counts on the A5 between Telford and Shrewsbury showed a 0.8% reduction in the number of vehicles travelling toward Telford.

10.16 This evidence confirms that it is possible to reduce traffic flow and the demand for (town centre) parking whilst maintaining footfall (which should in principle maintain town centre viability). However retailers and other business will need to be convinced of the merits of this approach if support is to be developed and maintained.

10.17 It is proposed that at the heart of the accessibility strategy for Shrewsbury is a commitment to plan for the incremental reduction of traffic entering the town centre over a period of time. This should then be aligned to a series of incentives for walking, cycling and public transport and dis-incentives to traffic (signage, traffic management, car parking, pedestrian priority and so on).

10.18 It is critical that this programme starts gently and positively and builds momentum and buy-in from stakeholders and the detail of milestones (when actions follow reductions in traffic) are agreed in partnership with key stakeholders and the community. The

positive nature of the consequences of reduced traffic, such as improved public realm, should be emphasized and used as shared 'targets'



Park and Ride

Accessibility Projects

10.19 The strategy outlined above draws in a series of accessibility projects, set out below. These would require further investigation in terms of feasibility and impact before implementation. The form and timing of these projects will need to be considered in line with development proposals (such as West End, Riverside and Abbey Foregate) and on the basis of the evidence base referred to above.

Transport Strategy

10.20 It is proposed that a Transport Strategy be developed for Shrewsbury. This will be fully consulted upon to gain community and business support and enable the projects suggested below to be clarified, tested and verified. The Strategy would be transparently monitored. Individual town developments would be expected to contribute towards the overall Transport Strategy.

Urban Traffic Management Control and Variable Message Signs

10.21 The implementation of an Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) system would improve junction efficiency, enabling traffic signal co-ordination and responding intelligently to traffic conditions such as an accident or congestion. The installation of Variable

Message Signs (VMS) would be a beneficial outcome of full implementation of a UTMC system for the town. Other benefits of a UTMC system could be improved bus priority through 'platooning' at signal junctions.

10.22 VMS could be used to discourage traffic from travelling through the town centre and re-direct traffic on to external strategic routes. The aim of this scheme is to reduce the volume of traffic travelling through the town centre, helping to improve the quality of town centre environment.

Town Centre Car Park Variable Message Signs

10.23 Vehicles travelling through the town centre to find parking spaces create significant issues within Shrewsbury largely due to its complex one-way system. The installation of VMS within the town centre would guide car parking. The VMS network would indicate car park space availability and guide vehicles to specific car parks based on their approach to the town centre. This would help to prevent vehicles travelling through the town centre to find a parking space.

Car Parking, Charging and Traffic Management Strategy

10.24 In conjunction with a number of other interventions, a car parking reduction strategy with appropriate charging policy can be introduced with parking reduced, subject to monitoring impacts on traffic and trade.

Signage Strategy

10.25 The implementation of a coherent signage network is essential in guiding tourists, visitors and cyclists around the town centre. A focused strategy should be applied to gateways into the centre such as the rail station, bus station, bridges and car parks; linking these sites with the main attractions within the town centre. Providing appropriate signage, routing and walking times will also encourage sustainable travel through the town centre.

Business Park & Ride

10.26 This would involve attracting commuter traffic to utilise Park & Ride facilities is essential in reducing overall vehicles on the roads. The 'Business Park & Ride Scheme' could offer employers a number of season tickets and associated parking spaces at Park & Ride sites. Each year the number of season tickets each company receives reduces with the aim that travel

behaviour built up throughout the year will continue without the dedicated parking space.

Smithfield Road Vehicle Restrictions

10.27 Smithfield Road is currently one of the most congested roads in Shrewsbury, experiencing average vehicle delays of 1 to 3 minutes during the peak periods. Local traffic travelling from the west of Shrewsbury utilises Smithfield Road to access the northern corridor.

10.28 Changes to Smithfield Road will need to be considered in conjunction with Riverside. In the medium term a scheme can be considered to improve the pedestrian and cycle environment on Smithfield Road creating better links to the town centre, rail station and with the River Severn. This could involve permanently reducing the number of lanes from 3 to 2 however this would need to run alongside the effective management of demand for car parking spaces at Ravens Meadow. The overall aim would be to enhance the experience for pedestrians and cyclists through enhanced public realm and reduced traffic. Bus prioritisation could also be considered.

High Street Vehicle Restrictions

- 10.29 High Street is a key route in the town centre and an important part of the town centre and heritage tourism offer. However the quality of visitor experience is adversely affected by the amount of traffic. An aim of the Vision is to increase pedestrian priority on the High Street, extending the retail core of the town centre and significantly improving the quality of environment. However in line with the incremental approach to the accessibility strategy, High Street could only be increasingly pedestrianised at the point where the vitality of the town centre and business confidence would not be adversely affected and overall, displaced traffic would not materially affect the amenity of other areas, such as Town Walls.
- 10.30 A specific, incremental approach is therefore proposed to High Street. In the short term the temporary closure of High Street (for festivals, fairs and so on) should be increased from the occasional, to perhaps monthly, to perhaps every Sunday. The effect of each step, along with other measures should be explored.
- 10.31 In due course, consideration can be given to a greater level of pedestrianisation of the High Street, restricting all vehicle movements except service vehicles, bus services and disabled parking. The implementation

of this scheme is dependent on the success of other schemes, which will restrict vehicle movement through the town centre and encourage traffic on to external routes or public transport.

Park & Ride Opening Time Extension

- 10.32 The current bus routes serving the Park & Ride sites finish at 18:30. This restricts the use of Park & Ride facilities for the night time economy within the town centre. It is proposed, subject to further feasibility testing, to extend the time services operate for during the weekday and weekend evenings.

Rail Station Access Improvements

- 10.33 The existing pedestrian environment and connectivity with the town centre from the rail station is weak. The station forecourt lacks signage, resulting in visitors entering the town with no clear indication of where to go. In addition, pedestrian access to the town centre and Smithfield Road is restricted by limited pedestrian facilities and the dominance of the environment by vehicles on Castle Gates and Smithfield Road. Once substantial reductions on town centre traffic movements have been achieved it is recommended that a shared surface scheme be put in place along Castle Gates to reduce the dominance of the car and improve pedestrian movement from the station to

the town centre.

New Park & Ride Site

- 10.34 Shrewsbury currently has 3 Park & Ride sites located to the north, south and west of the town centre. It is proposed to introduce a new Park & Ride site to the east of Shrewsbury catering for vehicles entering the town centre from the east. This would only be delivered in the long term if the Parkway station were delivered.

Pedestrian & Cycle Network Improvements

- 10.35 Shrewsbury was awarded 'Cycling Town' status in 2008 and is currently well served by a comprehensive network of pedestrian/cycle routes. This project would review the existing network, including the impact of the one-way system on cyclists and focus improvements on connecting existing networks in addition to creating and enhancing new and existing routes.

Outer Bypass (A5/A49) Junction Improvements

- 10.36 In order to restrict and alleviate traffic movements through the town centre, additional road capacity will be required on external routes. The ability of alternative routes to accommodate additional vehicle trips will be essential

in providing an effective transport network and achieve the environmental enhancements desired within the town centre.

- 10.37 Therefore, it is proposed to improve capacity at 5 junctions on the A5 bypass and at Sundorne roundabout on the A49.

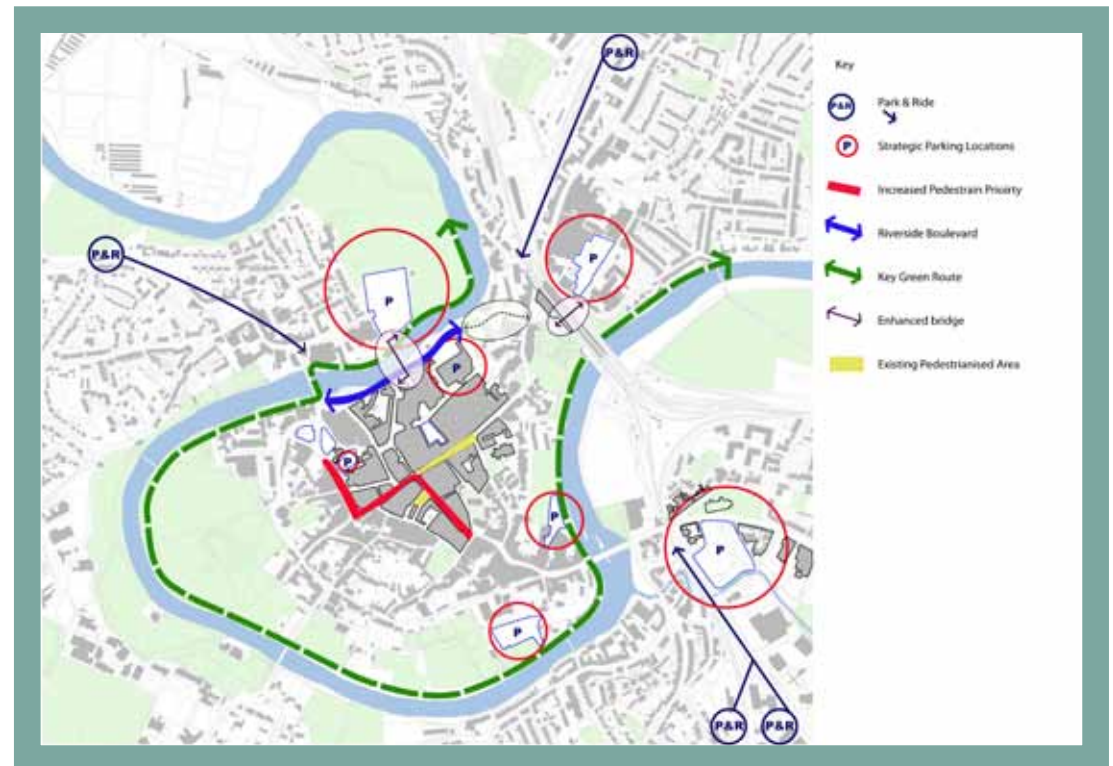
Inner Ring Road and Key Corridor Junction Improvements

- 10.38 Improving the capacity of several key junctions on the inner ring road would be necessary to allow for reduced town centre flow. Highway improvements at Telford Way (signalisation), Old Potts Way (signalisation), Meole Brace, Longdon Road and Porthill Road roundabouts. The improvements would provide bus priority and improved access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Conclusion

- 10.39 To support the planned growth of Shrewsbury, it is essential that the proposed transport schemes are feasible and affordable and supported by a robust evidence base to deliver continued support from stakeholders.
- 10.40 The sequence of delivering the projects set out here will be important, with early initiatives intended to induce behavioural change, notably implementing messaging systems and junction improvements. These are intended to reduce town centre congestion and improve the viability of delivering town centre vehicle restrictions and parking regime changes, subject to monitoring town centre vitality.
- 10.41 It is proposed that a Transport Strategy be developed for the town, to which individual developments are to contribute toward and respond to through specific travel plans. The Transport Strategy will enable an approach to maintaining and developing the consensus around the objectives for the town centre and the projects that deliver this

through transparent consultation and monitoring process. It will be important to take a step by step approach, particularly around traffic management. Evidence and data should be gathered to demonstrate the improvements that are being made whilst maintaining the viability and accessibility of the town to enable a move to the next step.



Accessibility Concept Diagram

Section 11: Heart of Shrewsbury and Key Projects

11.1 Shrewsbury Town Centre is central to the Regeneration Framework as a key driver of change and sustainable economic development in the town. It also offers a significant number of opportunities for regeneration across a number of themes. This section of the report considers the following:

- The overall approach to the Heart of Shrewsbury
- The Urban Design Framework
- Key projects

11.2 The strategy for the Heart of Shrewsbury is to

- Build on its existing assets, particularly the heritage offer, independent retailing and the River.
- Enhance areas in need of investment and renewal.
- Expand the town centre beyond the river loop to include edge of centre areas.

11.3 The priorities and objectives for the heart of Shrewsbury are:

- Renewing areas of relatively poor environment and greater potential, notably at Riverside, West End, Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and Castle Foregate.
- Reducing the impact of traffic and congestion in key areas, notably

High Street/West End, Castle Street, Smithfield Road, Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and Castle Foregate

- Ensuring strong, high quality public realm and links between spaces, particularly walking routes
- Significantly enhancing the town centre retail offer, whilst retaining and developing the independent sector
- Enhancing the role of the river and access to it
- Considering the potential of some vacant or underused buildings
- Celebrating gateways and arrival points

Connectivity and Public Realm



11.4 Connectivity between spaces in the centre and the overall quality of the environment is important in creating a positive walking and visitor experience. Improving connectivity between spaces through enhanced pedestrian priority and appropriately investing in the public realm will enhance the experience of the centre and help to connect and promote its assets

11.5 The following areas are highlighted to enhance connectivity:

- Dana Footbridge – Wheelchair access
- Wyle Cop pedestrian crossings –

Zebra or Puffin crossings

- Chester Street / Rail Station – Zebra or Puffin crossings
- Smithfield Road – treatment as part of the wider Riverside development
- Abbey Foregate – surface treatment
- Frankwell / West End link – lighting and treatments

11.6 The town centre benefits from high quality public realm and public spaces in most areas, there are also areas where investment will enhance the local character. A number of these are noted in the key project areas, in summary being:

- Railway Station forecourt enhancements – planting and benches, with reduced parking in the longer term.
- New public space as a part of Riverside development.
- Potential public space as part of Market Hall proposals
- Public realm enhancement in front of Guildhall and the wharf buildings
- Investment in Pride Hill landscape - with possible new surface materials and treatment
- Enhanced public realm around the Abbey and potentially a new public open space adjacent to the Monastery pulpit

Historic Shrewsbury



11.7 As highlighted in the Regeneration Framework, Shrewsbury's historic assets, particularly in the town centre, are central to its individual character and uniqueness. The maintenance and preservation of these is therefore paramount, as is the way in which new development respects the local environment. A formal walking trail around the town, supported by maps and information that builds on the existing visitor portfolio will help to promote and join up the town's assets. Visitor facilities such as public toilets are also important and should be maintained and well sign posted.

11.8 Shrewsbury town centre is covered by a large conservation area. This designation should be used to control the quality of built form in the area, ensuring that new developments conform and respect the traditional character of the area.

Green and Blue Shrewsbury



11.9 The heart of Shrewsbury has a number of green spaces and environmental attributes that contribute significantly to the whole, although are less visible in some parts of the town. The maintenance of flowers through much of the centre adds to the character

and represents one of the town's key themes and identities. Further greening of Shrewsbury could involve:

- Introducing green walls, such as to Raven Meadows car park.
- Introducing green space and planting, as a part of new public realm in the West End and Abbey Foregate.
- Investigation into the possibility of engineering highways around Frankwell roundabout to deliver a new green space on the roundabout and introduce a two way vehicle flow.

11.10 The River Severn also represents an essential environmental and locational asset to Shrewsbury. Opportunities exist to enhance riverfront access and encourage further sensitive river activities.

- Enhanced access along Smithfield Road, subject to traffic reduction and the Riverside scheme.
- Long term potential for a new wharf at Frankwell and enhanced public realm.
- Reinstatement of a floating restaurant at Frankwell.

Gateways



11.11 There are a number of key entry points to Shrewsbury town centre, most prominently the English and Welsh Bridges and the Chester Street / Castle

Street / Northern Corridor. In addition public transport (bus and rail station) and the edge of centre space around Abbey Foregate and Frankwell are important. Enhancing gateways should focus on:

- Appropriate public art
- Planting
- Signage
- High quality architectural design
- High quality public realm

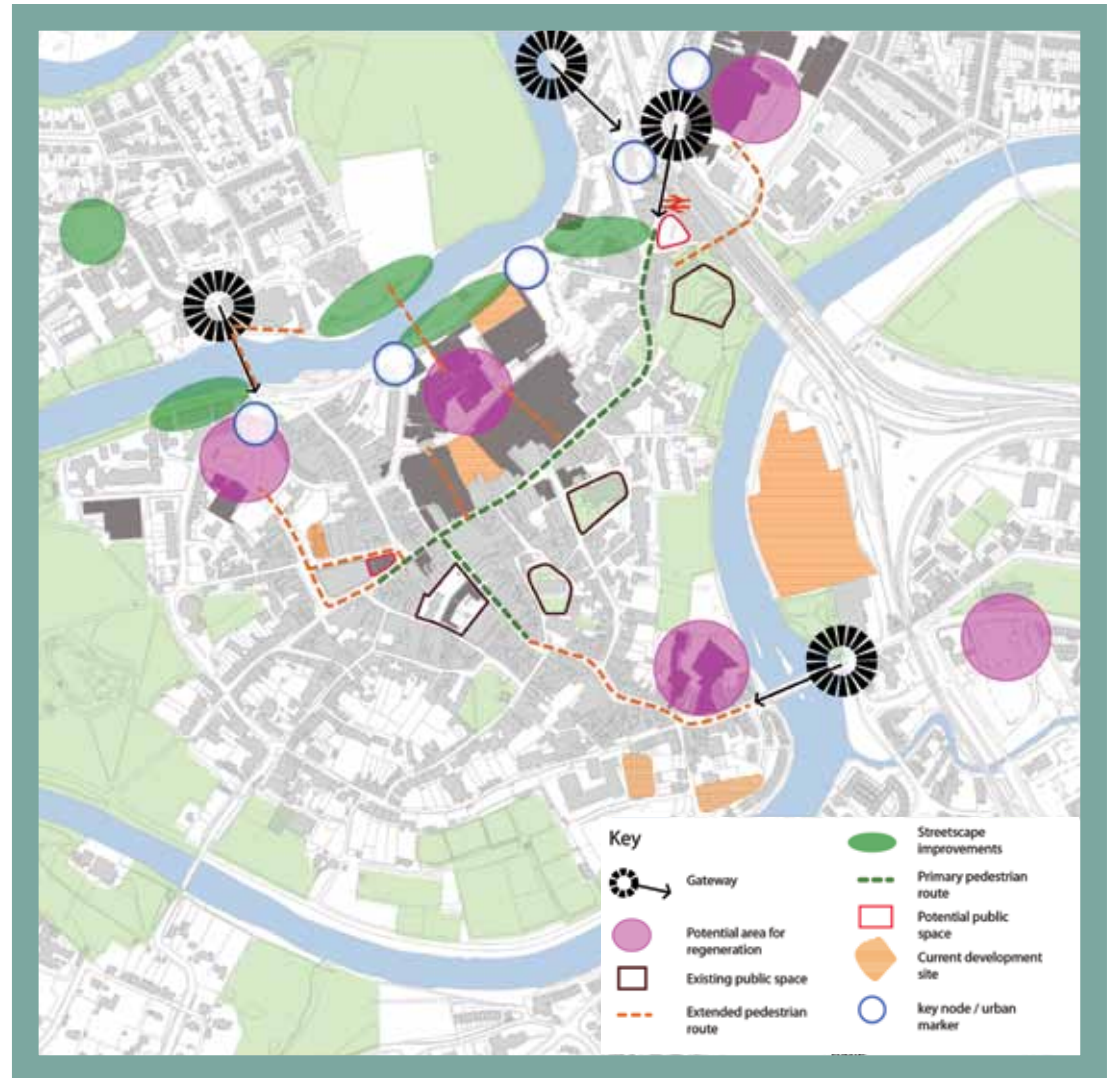
Urban Design Framework

11.12 The Urban Design Framework diagram highlights the key opportunities for intervention around the Heart of Shrewsbury which are explored in more detail within the key projects.

Key Projects

11.13 A number of key projects are set out on the following pages that are designed to renew the heart of Shrewsbury. These are:

- Riverside
- West End
- Abbey Foregate
- Frankwell
- Castle Foregate



Shrewsbury Urban Design Framework

Riverside

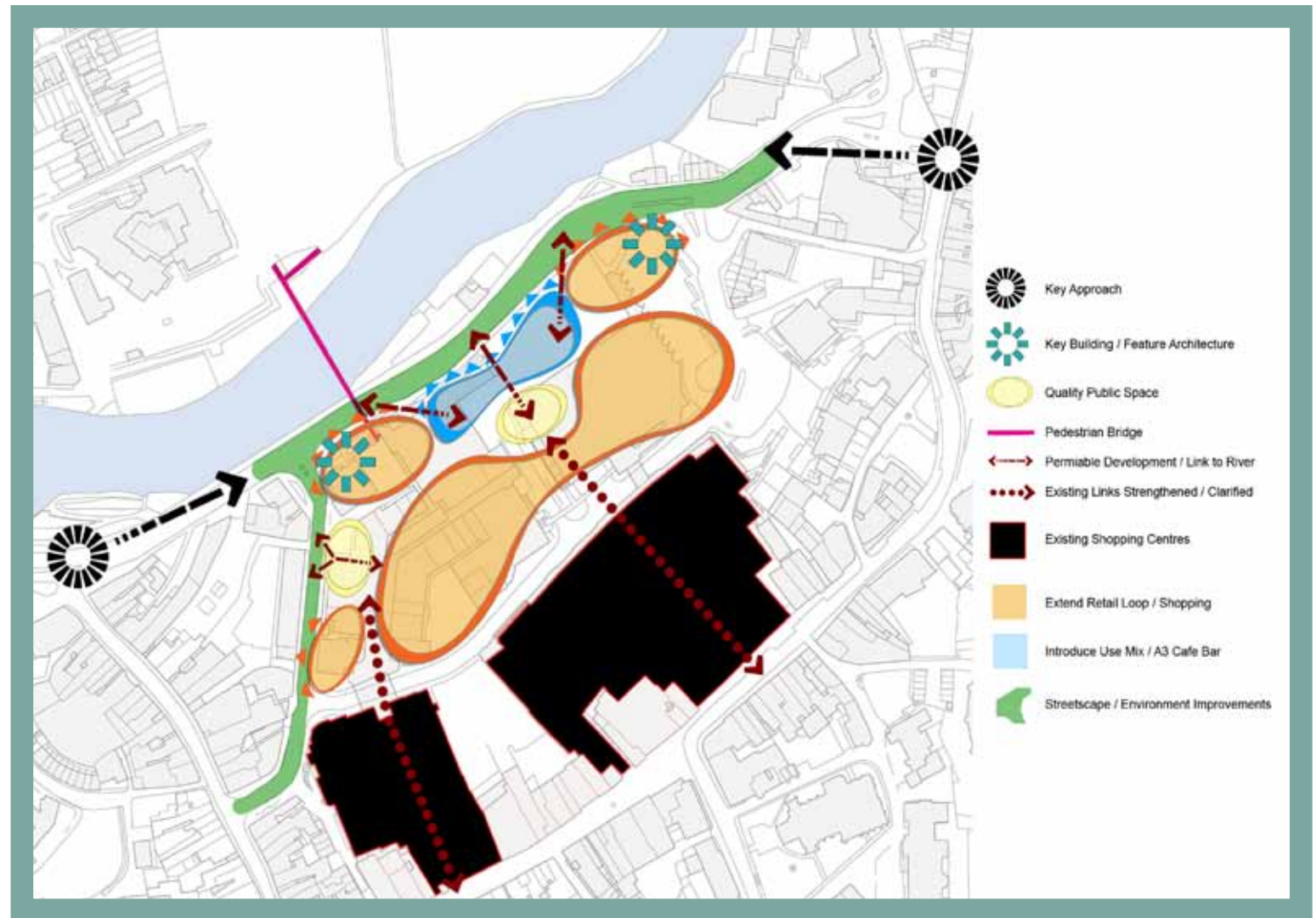


Vision

The redevelopment of the Riverside area will provide a new high quality development, increasing the vitality and viability of Shrewsbury town centre's retail offer, as well as delivering a hotel, new public spaces and cafes. This development will provide a new active frontage onto Smithfield Road and enhanced links to the River Severn

Existing Position

The Riverside area is a poor neighbour to the town centre with weak connections to the River and is visually unappealing. It includes the Riverside Mall Shopping Centre of 120,000 sqft, the bus station, Council owned Raven Meadows car park, the Telephone House site and Smithfield Road. The former Telephone House site has a permission for a 5 storey 3 star hotel of 127 rooms which has not been implemented (as of autumn 2010). The Riverside Mall Shopping Centre has a lower value offer with key occupiers including Wilkinsons and Somerfield. Smithfield Road is one of the more congested roads in town and river front access is poor. The topography of the site presents a challenge, rising steeply as it does from Smithfield Road to Pride Hill.



Riverside Vision

Opportunity

The Riverside project represents the opportunity to consolidate Shrewsbury town centre as a retail destination. As competing towns strive to improve their offer, those that do not fall behind. Research shows that the volume of investment monies into retail centres has consolidated dramatically into the top centres. Therefore it is imperative that Shrewsbury consolidates or strengthens its current ranking.

The opportunity at the Riverside can achieve a number of aims:

- An increase in the scale and quality of the retail offer
- Improving the linkages between the core town centre, Riverside and Frankwell
- Addressing the poor environment of the Riverside/Smithfield Road frontage

Strategy

- Redevelopment of the area for retail led mixed use scheme including a foodstore, department store, as well as restaurants, cafes, bars, shops and potentially a hotel
- Delivery of approximately 300,000 sqft of additional retail floorspace
- Over time, the significant reduction of traffic on Smithfield Road to improve the environment and create a link to the river
- A review of the bus station and how best to provide good quality access to bus services leading to revitalised bus facilities

- Enhancing the quality of the Riverside area through investment in new high quality public realm
- Improved links to Pride Hill and Darwin shopping centres and the historic core, the rail station, Roushill and Frankwell
- The provision and management of car parking consistent with the wider accessibility strategy
- Enhanced accessible pedestrian bridge

Planning Policy

The area is within the main town centre retail core. Redevelopment for retail led uses would in principal be in accordance with planning policy. Consideration would need to be given to flood risk issues as the area is highlighted as being in flood zone 3a and partially in zone 3b.

Design Principles

- Provide a positive frontage to Smithfield Road that helps to connect the town with the River.
- Deliver a series of nodes and quality spaces within the development to ensure legibility.
- Enhance connectivity with the Darwin and Pride Hill shopping centres, the historic townscape and towards the Railway Station through key nodes and feature buildings.
- Use any new development to help with topography
- Enhance the bus station or consider whether a site can be found for an off site layover, reducing the demand on land take.

- Reflect local character whilst creating a contemporary response to the site

Accessibility

- Introduce traffic management and improved public realm along Smithfield Road. Downgrading Smithfield Road with surface finishes and streetscape to give it a feel of pedestrian priority. This will further help connect the new proposals and town beyond to the river.
- Seek to reduce the amount of car parking from 850 spaces to around 500 spaces as a part of the Riverside redevelopment, in line with an overall reduction of traffic within the loop. A new bridge link to Frankwell car park will play an important part in achieving this.

Funding, Delivery and Phasing

The Riverside opportunity can provide a major step change to the town centre. However there are a number of issues in terms of the bringing forward of the site:

- The relationship between Council assets (notably Raven Meadows Car Park and the wider Strategy)
- Potential for the Council to use its compulsory purchase powers to complete the acquisition of the new development area
- Bus station relocation, the current multi storey car park and the 'gap' site must all be considered within both a planning and a development context

The Council, in consultation with Shrewsbury residents, local businesses and interested organisations, produce a development brief for the Riverside area to identify the capacity, design parameters, configuration of highways and parking and also to advise on the extent of the development site should be undertaken as a priority.

The interim development brief should be put together with a view to influencing the pre-planning negotiations with the developer.

In terms of phasing, it is likely that the retail development, given the topographical constraints of the site will come forward in one phase, however any effect on the bus station, either service or location, would need to be addressed in the interim as would the re-provision or consolidation of existing car parking spaces.

The Riverside development will either result in the loss of the current hotel which is consented on the adjacent site to the existing multi-storey car park or the hotel would be absorbed into the new retail scheme. The project should be considered as live with aspirations to be on site by 2014. The preferred model for delivery must be the co-operation with the new retail centre owners.

The retail and mixed use development should come forward as a holistic redevelopment of the Riverside area. If the car park and bus station are to be redeveloped then consideration will need to be given to ongoing access and parking provision to the Darwin and Pride Hill shopping centres.

Priority

This is a high priority project for Shrewsbury that will raise the overall town centre offer.

Partners

Shropshire Council
Owners of the shopping centres
Environment Agency
Arriva

Complementary projects

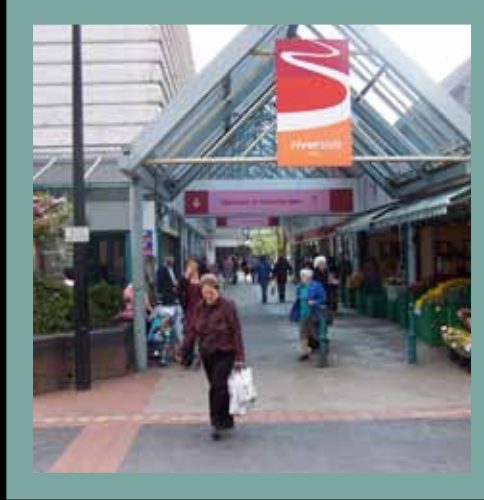
- Pedestrian enhancement to Chester Street gyratory to improve pedestrian connectivity to the Railway Station
- Reduction in town centre traffic to enhance access to the River front.



Car Park Green Wall



Shrewsbury Bus Station



Riverside Shopping Centre



Princess Hay Shopping Centre, Exeter



Princess Hay Shopping Centre, Exeter

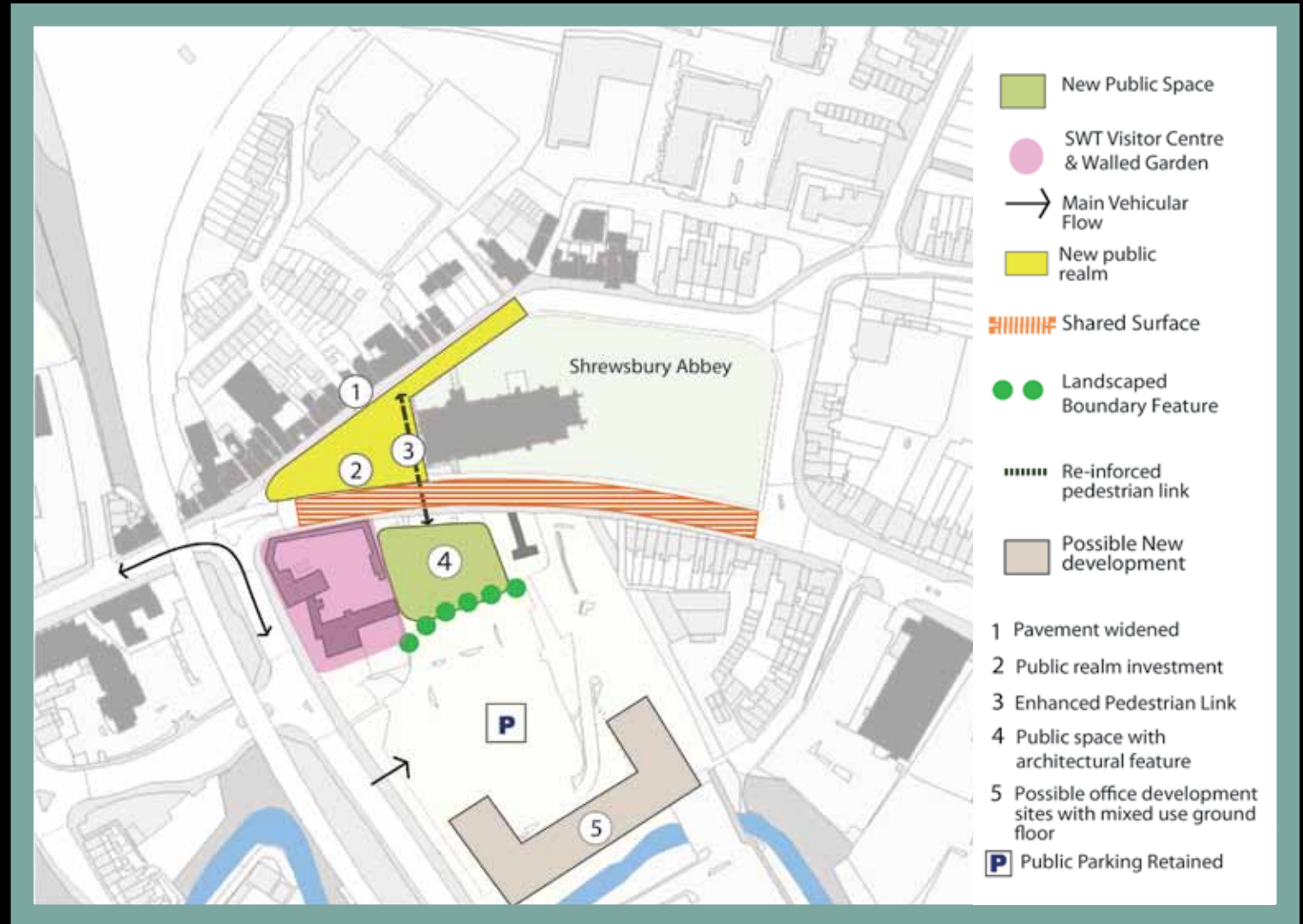
Abbey Foregate

Vision

Abbey Foregate is a historic gateway to the town. The vision is to recapture the character of the area and improve the setting of the Abbey to create a welcoming space in the Heart of Shrewsbury. Abbey Foregate has the potential to become a celebration of historic assets in a pedestrian friendly area with high quality public realm and active frontages. Abbey Foregate has already begun to establish itself as a 'chic' drinking area for the over 30's. This quality and community offer should be further encouraged as it becomes the 'place to be' and set in the improved historical / heritage context

Existing Position

Abbey Foregate is an edge of centre area containing a number of important historical assets including Shrewsbury Abbey, Shropshire Wildlife Trust Headquarters and the former Monastery site. The area houses a major car park but suffers from excessive traffic flow and poor public realm, detracting from its appeal and deterring visitors and investment. A proposed housing development at the Gay Meadow site will bring in additional footfall in the medium term.



Opportunity

The Abbey Foregate area represents a unique opportunity to consider both heritage and employment opportunities on the edge of the town centre. Enhanced space around the Abbey will attract new visitors and boost trade and activity along the active frontage and at the Wildlife Trust. A canopied area adjacent to the Pulpit represents a opportunity to expose the historic foundations of the former Abbey and a central point between the new office accommodation being proposed and the Abbey Foregate road where the down grading and pedestrian priority area is to be promoted. The additional office space in close proximity would transform the nature of this gateway into the town centre.

Strategy

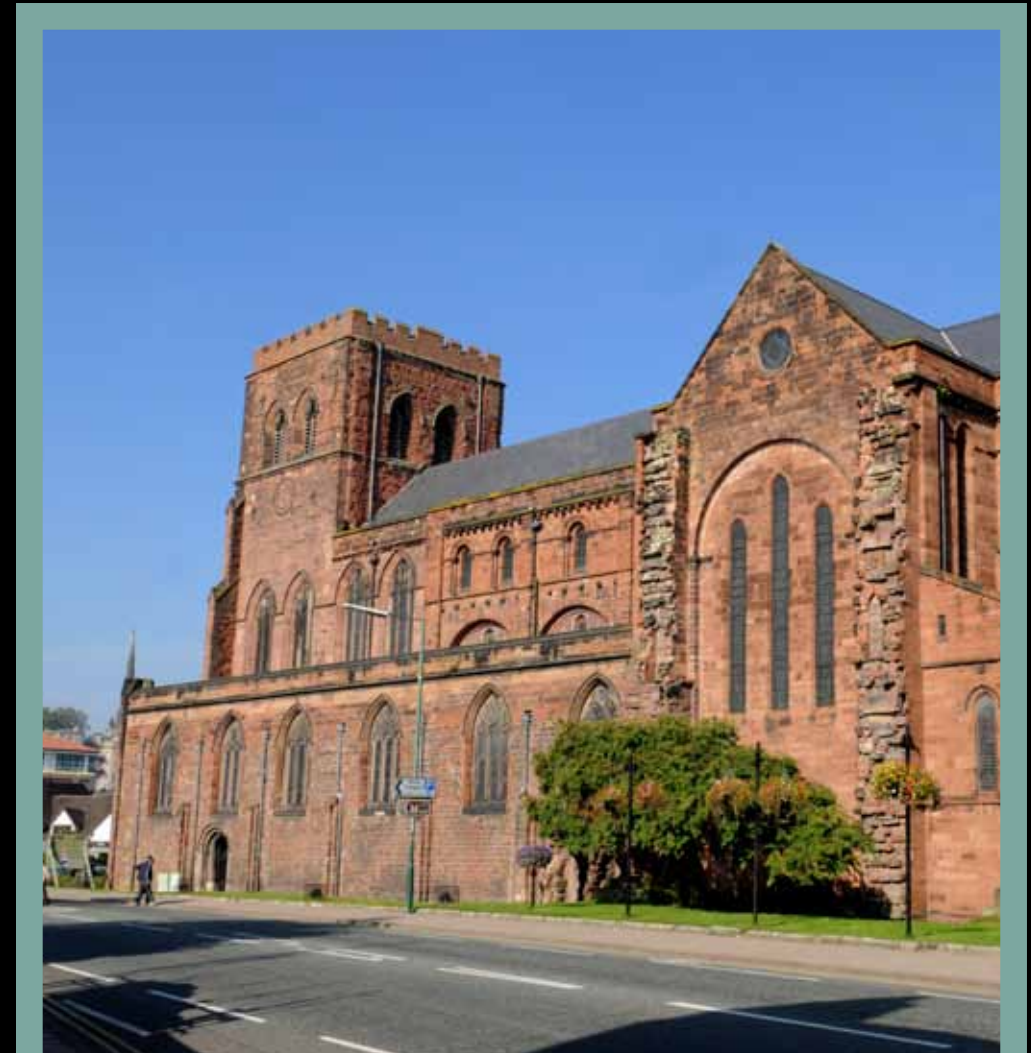
- Enhancing the setting for the Abbey by improving the public space around it
- Widening pavements in front of the existing retail and food and drink premises on Abbey Foregate to empower pedestrians
- Traffic calming measures along Abbey Foregate through surface treatment to reduce traffic flow along Abbey Foregate and therefore to encourage vehicles to enter the town centre via Old Potts Way
- Framing the space around the Abbey and former Monastery through landscaping. This might involve the loss of approximately 30 spaces of car parking through the introduction of public space adjacent to the

Monastery Pulpit

- Investigation of the partial development of the Abbey Foregate car park for office use or other development in the long term. This might include office development of approximately 60,000 sqft releasing around 30 parking spaces and be linked to investment in flood defences
- Retaining public car parking at Abbey Foregate and potentially providing decking in order to deliver an additional 100 spaces
- Making Pott's Way the primary access point to the Abbey Foregate car park
- Renewal of the Abbey Foregate Rail Station

Planning Policy

The area is within the town centre conservation area and the northern part of the car park is designated as a Scheduled Monument. Any works would need to recognise the Monastery remains located under the car park. The car park is within flood zone 3a and flood zone 3b along the edge of the Rea Brook Valley. Beneficial redevelopment of the area is also encouraged in Core Strategy Policy CS2 supporting text. Office development would not normally be permitted in the 3b zone and development must take account of these issues.



Shrewsbury Abbey

Accessibility

- Treatment of Abbey Foregate seeks to reduce local through traffic
- Loss of up to 60 spaces existing, whilst investigating how decking can be delivered in the central parking area to provide a net gain of around 100 spaces.
- If office development is delivered, determine new coach parking, potentially Frankwell, drop off only or Park and Ride.

Design Principles

- Public art and public realm design to reinforce local tradition and history, particularly surrounding the Abbey.
- New planting or design features could be used to separate the public space adjacent to the Pulpit and car park which would also mask any car park decking and retain local views of the Abbey.
- Abbey Foregate road treatment through cobble stoning.
- Office development conforming to more modern architecture creating a positive frontage to Old Potts Way.
- Potential temporary events space celebrating local history such as the Abbey, Monastery or Railway.

Funding, Delivery and Phasing

Abbey Foregate could provide the opportunity to deliver new office development in the short term. The justification behind this suggestion is that the site is located in very close proximity to the English Bridge and is considered an excellent edge of centre location from a marketing point of view. The principle concerns for Abbey Foregate will be

- The quantum of office accommodation
- The balance of car parking required to be retained as a strategic car park site for the town centre and also one of support for the office development
- The impact of any development on archaeological heritage linked to the Historic Abbey.

In terms of phasing, office accommodation could be made available as a development opportunity in the short term at this location. The feasibility testing of the archaeological area is recommended and secondly the introduction of an interim development brief along similar lines to the Riverside Area.

The preferred delivery model would be for the Council to dispose of the development to the market within the context of a development brief. The asset value achieved could be reinvested in public realm

Highways works to discourage traffic from using Abbey Foregate should be implemented as a priority in order to realise benefits to the

public realm and pedestrian experiences, potentially in advance of any office development subject to funding availability.

Priority

Medium

Partners

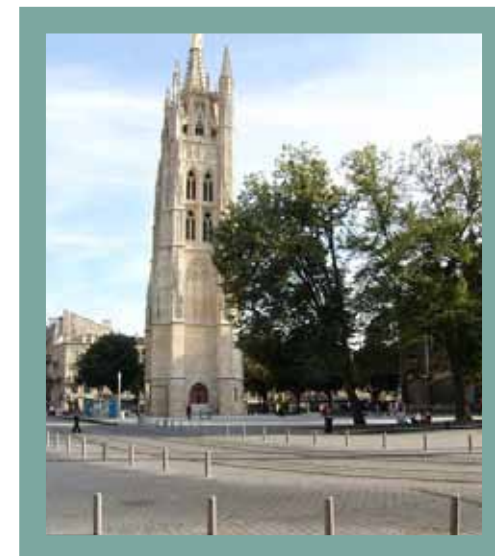
Shropshire Council
The Abbey / Diocese of Lichfield
Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust
Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Environment Agency
English Heritage

Complementary projects

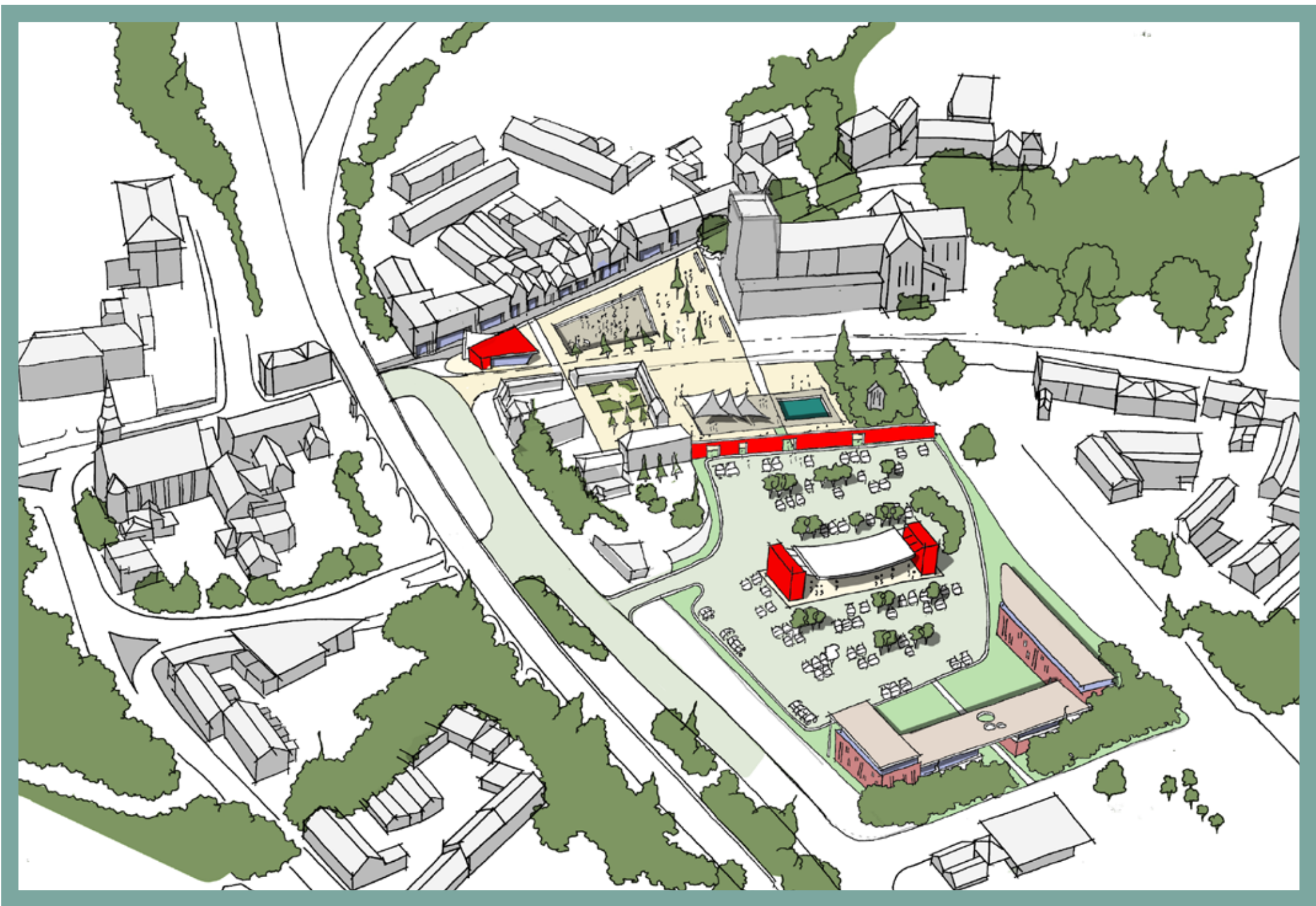
Edge-of-centre office development at Abbey Foregate will contribute to sustainable supply of new office premises for the town.



Reims Cathedral



Place Pey Berland



Abbey Foregate Sketch

Frankwell



Vision

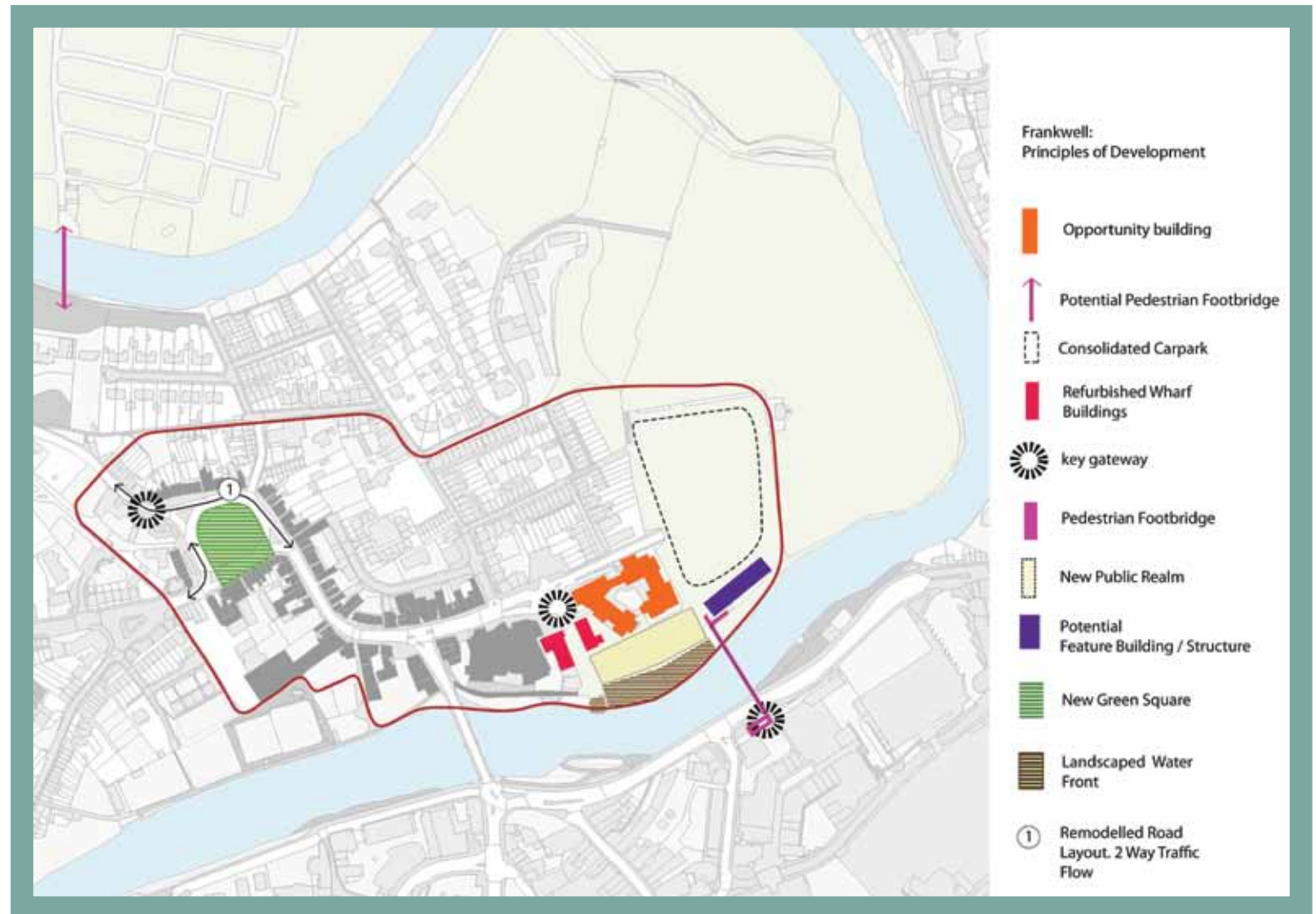
The Frankwell area is a hub of cultural activity as well as an important historic area for Shrewsbury. Frankwell has the potential to contribute further to the life of the town centre by supporting the Theatre through new riverfront investment in public realm and revitalised wharf buildings. A new greenspace at Frankwell roundabout will enhance the town's green public spaces.

Existing Position

Frankwell is an edge of centre area running along the River Seven waterfront. It contains a mix of uses, including the Theatre Seven, the Guildhall which houses Shropshire Council Shrewsbury Town Council offices, car parking and a number of small businesses on the approach to the roundabout. There is a small boat wharf in front of the Guildhall and adjacent to it two derelict wharf buildings.

Opportunity

Frankwell, beyond the Theatre, does not contribute substantially to the core of the town centre. There is an opportunity to take advantage of the waterfront, notwithstanding the flooding issues. The car park is large and relatively under used. A larger hotel in the area alongside for A3 bars and restaurants and other leisure uses would take advantage of the river views and the available on-site parking – particularly given that there are vacant local buildings.



Frankwell Vision

Linking the site to Riverside through a new high quality footbridge will bring the area forward in its activity levels.

Strategy

- Investment in the public space in front of the Guildhall to enhance the space and riverfront setting. This could reduce parking by around 15 spaces. In the long term the wharf and boatyard could be enhanced and new leisure uses
- Encouraging new leisure, cultural or bar restaurant uses in the historic Stew and Maltings buildings. These will continue the cultural activity east from the Theatre.
- Consideration for the long term disposal of Guildhall for residential or hotel uses subject to the owners property requirements.
- The creation of new green space at Frankwell roundabout, rerouting two way traffic to the north of the space. A right turn would need to be introduced at the north side of Welsh Bridge.
- An improved accessible footbridge linking Frankwell to the Riverside.
- The creation of a new architectural feature or public art at the front of Frankwell car park, enhancing the view from Riverside. Whilst this location is desirable for a new development, in particular a hotel, flood risk constraints discourage this and an educational pod may be more suited. This might result in the loss of some 10 parking spaces and re-orientate coach parking to the site rear.

Planning Policy

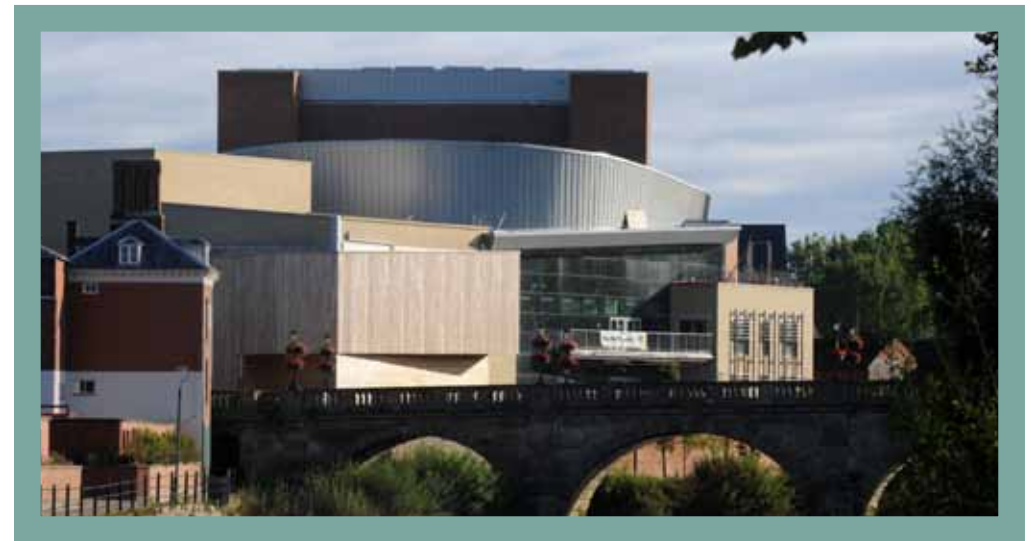
The area is within the town centre conservation area. Much of the site is designated as flood zone 3b. Access is required to the south side of the car park in front of the Guildhall to install temporary flood barriers. The Stew and Maltings are not listed buildings. Beneficial redevelopment of the area is also encouraged in Core Strategy Policy CS2 supporting text.

Design Principles

- The Stew and Maltings should retain their traditional form and original building frame.
- New public realm in front of the buildings should support outdoor activity at the Stew and Maltings and might include a water feature that compliments the river. The space could also house temporary projects or exhibitions.
- New green space at the Frankwell roundabout could incorporate the existing roundabout planting with new public realm features. Parking should be retained on the south edge of the space to support shops.
- If there is a need to replace the existing Frankwell footbridge it is recommended that the new design is sympathetic to the historic environment but also represents the Riverside development design.
- The Riverside development, upon delivery, is likely to look out to Frankwell and the car park. It is suggested a feature be installed on the Frankwell bank, or further planting encouraged to mask the car park. Ideally a



Welsh Bridge and West End



Theatre Severn

new development would come forward of innovative and exceptional quality, although flood risk constraints discourage this and an innovative approach is needed.

Accessibility

- The provision of an improved bridge linking Frankwell to Riverside plays an important role in reducing traffic impact on Smithfield Road, by promoting use of Frankwell car park, as well as enhancing footfall.
- Highway works to Frankwell roundabout may also discourage the through flow of town centre traffic.

Funding, Delivery and Phasing

Public realm interventions can be delivered upon the availability of funds and should act as a catalyst to private sector investment in the Stew and Maltings. A Compulsory Purchase Order on the buildings may be required to ensure they do not fall into significant disrepair.

Alterations to the road layout at Frankwell should be implemented after more detailed traffic investigations and following an overall reduction in town centre traffic. In particular this is necessary to facilitate the right turn at the north side of Welsh Bridge and avoid significant queuing at the Welsh Bridge south side.

The funding for the majority of interventions would be led by the public sector, notably transport and public realm investment. Alternatively, the release of the Guildhall by the Council may provide funds for the public realm interventions. The private sector should lead the introduction of new uses to the Stew and Maltings buildings subject to viability, which would be supported by an enhanced public realm.

Priority

Low

Partners

Shropshire Council
Environment Agency

Complementary projects

Riverside development should act as a trigger for improvements at Frankwell and may release funds for improvements via section 106/CIL, particularly for the footbridge



Malmö Riverside Public Realm



Copenhagen Riverside Markets



West End



Vision

The vision for West End is as a vibrant part of the town centre with a mix of activities including leisure, retail, employment and education uses, providing a respectful setting for Rowley's House and a pedestrian friendly environment.

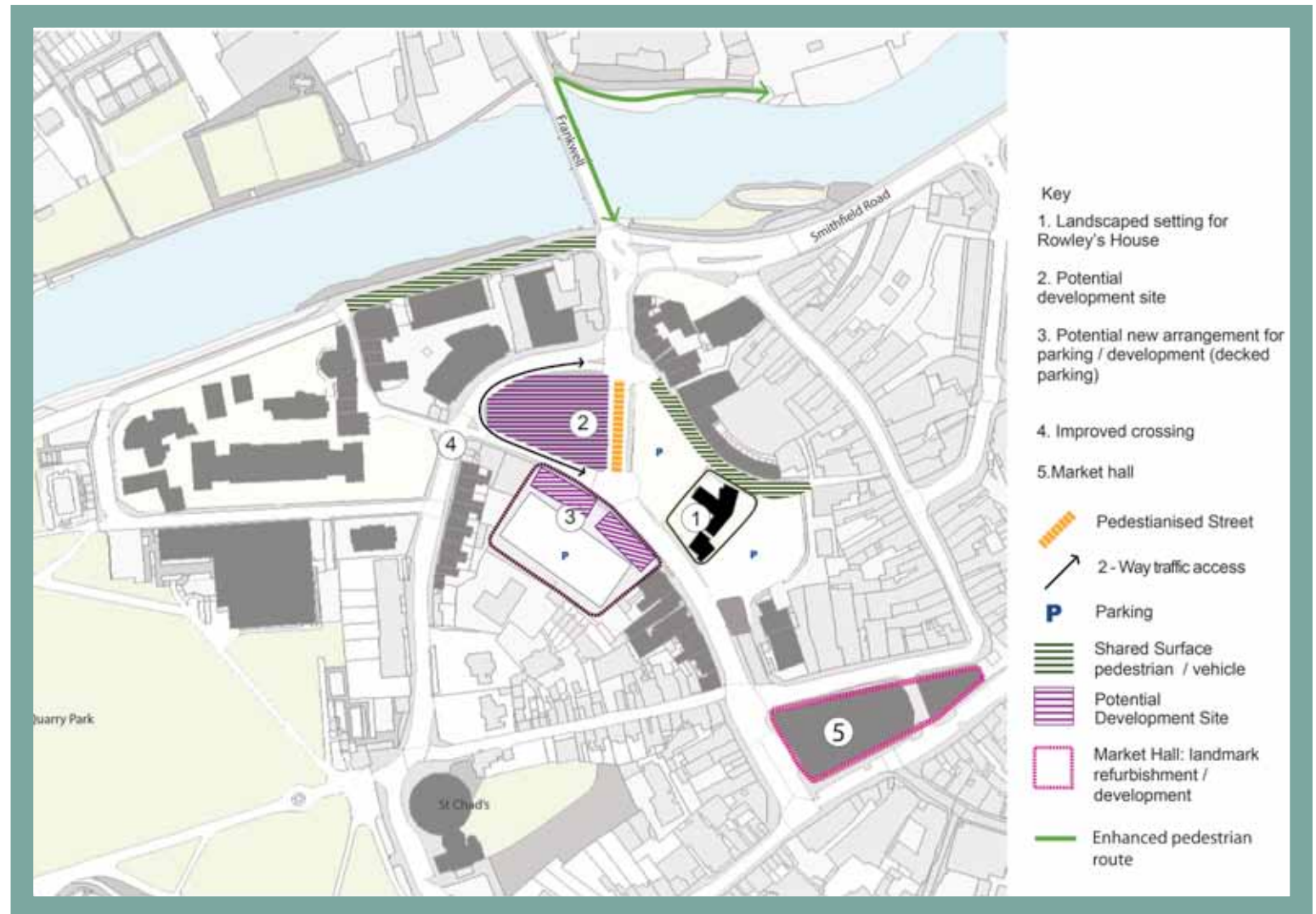
The West End will have excellent links to surrounding spaces including a revitalised Market Hall.

Existing Position

The West End is a vibrant area housing the Sixth Form College and a number of bars and restaurants that contribute to a well developed night time economy. The area suffers from heavy traffic flow as vehicles from High Street and Town Walls meet and filter towards Welsh Bridge and Smithfield Road. Four car parks are located in the area which surround Rowley's House. Parts of the area are weak in design response.

Opportunity

The West End area consists of two halves. The first half of the project consists of the market hall and the second half of the project area consists of the Council owned surface car parks adjacent to Rowley's House and part of the Sixth Form College site along St Austin's Friars. Whilst separate projects, together they provide the link to the town centre and an increased activity levels in this part of the



West End Vision

town. The market hall represents a significant opportunity to reconfigure and improve a principle landmark of the town centre. The market hall tower represents a building of debate in terms of its design contribution but functions poorly in terms of the hidden market and vacant office presence.

The opportunity exists to remove the vacant office building at the front to provide a public space or modern open market stall area. At the ground floor the opportunity for retail to open out further onto the footpath providing new and additional retail space in a reconfigured / redesigned ground floor frontage. The upper floors of the building lend themselves to potentially a residential conversion, with an extension, offering town centre living in a landmark building.

In the West End, the development of one of the local car parks will give weight to the area's footfall through new uses, potentially facilitating the College's aspirations to expand. Replacement parking could be supported through the redevelopment of the St Austin's Street frontage with parking behind if required.

Whilst the area forms part of the town centre, it is very much a secondary area from a retail perspective. The existence of the College in the area clearly represents an opportunity that could be enhanced and the area also benefits from close proximity to a number of positive factors, being the Welsh Bridge access and the Waterfront restaurant area.

Strategy

West End

- An enhanced setting for Rowley's House through public realm treatments
- Consideration of downgrading the vehicle priority along Victoria Avenue / Hill's Lane.
- Should the College buildings along St Austin's Friars find alternative premises or funding for on site redevelopment, introduce new frontage along Barker Street / St Austin's Friars for education or mixed use uses to improve the sense of enclosure and better frame Rowley's House, with decked parking hidden to the rear.
- Encourage the development of the existing St Austin's Street car park (45 spaces) to improve the character of the area and to accommodate new uses, potentially including a new hotel, leisure, retail, office or education uses.
- Remove traffic flow From Bridge Street and converting the route into a pedestrian route or public square.
- Ensure a safe pedestrian route for both day and night between West End and Frankwell.

Market Hall

- Investigating options to revitalize Market Hall including
- The demolition of the office space adjacent to the Hall to provide new public space and outdoor markets / activities

- Potential residential units above the Market Hall
- Expansion of the retail ground floor footprint through canopies
- New cladding and design of the Market Hall exterior.

Planning Policy

The area is within the town centre conservation area. Much of the site is designated as flood zone 2. Core Strategy policy CS15 considers the area as a main opportunity for improving the town centre retail and office offer. Core Strategy policy CS2 highlights the area as having major redevelopment opportunity.

Accessibility

Provision of car parking in West End is a key issue in terms of perception of impact on local footfall and has a significant bearing on development opportunity. The release of one of the car parks in the short term (45 spaces) is promoted as part of a reduction in town centre parking and congestion, with Frankwell and Ravens Meadows as local alternatives, reinforced through pedestrian linkages, as part of a wider package of sustainable transport measures. If local parking is essential for new development at West End, a reserve option for this site could be to deliver replacement parking to the rear of the existing St Austin's Street site as it comes forward for development. Similarly, depending on monitoring of the local situation, a further

reduction on local parking would be made over time.

Design Principles

- Development along St Austin's Friars should introduce traditional built form that continues the frontage and reflects local character.
- Development on St Austin's Street car park should be sensitive to local heights, views and design
- In the long term there may be scope to provide partial greened public space in front of Rowley's House that extends the existing space.
- Market Hall should be retained in its principal form. Recladding of upper floors using faux timber or traditional brick. The ground floor would be best suited as a single, well lit space, if the market were moved down.
- The pedestrianisation of Barker Street should occur, keeping the route in line with the traditional / historic street layout and preserving the local view.
- An enhanced pedestrian route between West End and Frankwell car park through additional lighting to support night journeys.

Funding, Delivery and Phasing

The sale of the St Austins Friar's car park by Shropshire Council could create finance to implement road layout alterations and public realm improvements. If a prudent approach to parking is taken then the site could come forward in the short term. In the longer term the College site on St Austins Street could be released for mixed use development and, subject to monitoring the impact of parking and footfall patterns, have decked parking to the rear. The College site would need to be released, creating the need for an alternative teaching location or a longer term College property strategy. This could consider the dated swimming pool site or other on or off site locations. It is noted that the development schedule being promoted in this area would be insufficient to create significant residual value to be used to cross fund the relocation of the College and therefore College funding is a pre-requisite to delivering the St Austin's Street site.

Further investigations into the viability of changes to Market Hall would be required and the exploration of demand for town centre residential living, given constraints on amenity space and parking. This could be used to support changes to the building exterior. The delivery of the scheme, including any intervention in the office block, will result in further discussions between Shropshire Council and tenants.

Priority

High

Partners

Shrewsbury Sixth Form College
Shropshire Council
Market Hall leaseholders and tenants



Rowleys House



West End Sketch

Castle Foregate



Vision

The vision for Castle Foregate is to develop its gateway role and particularly the sense of arrival around the station. It can realise its potential as a new urban quarter and be part of the commercial life of the town, linking the centre to the Northern Corridor.

Existing Position

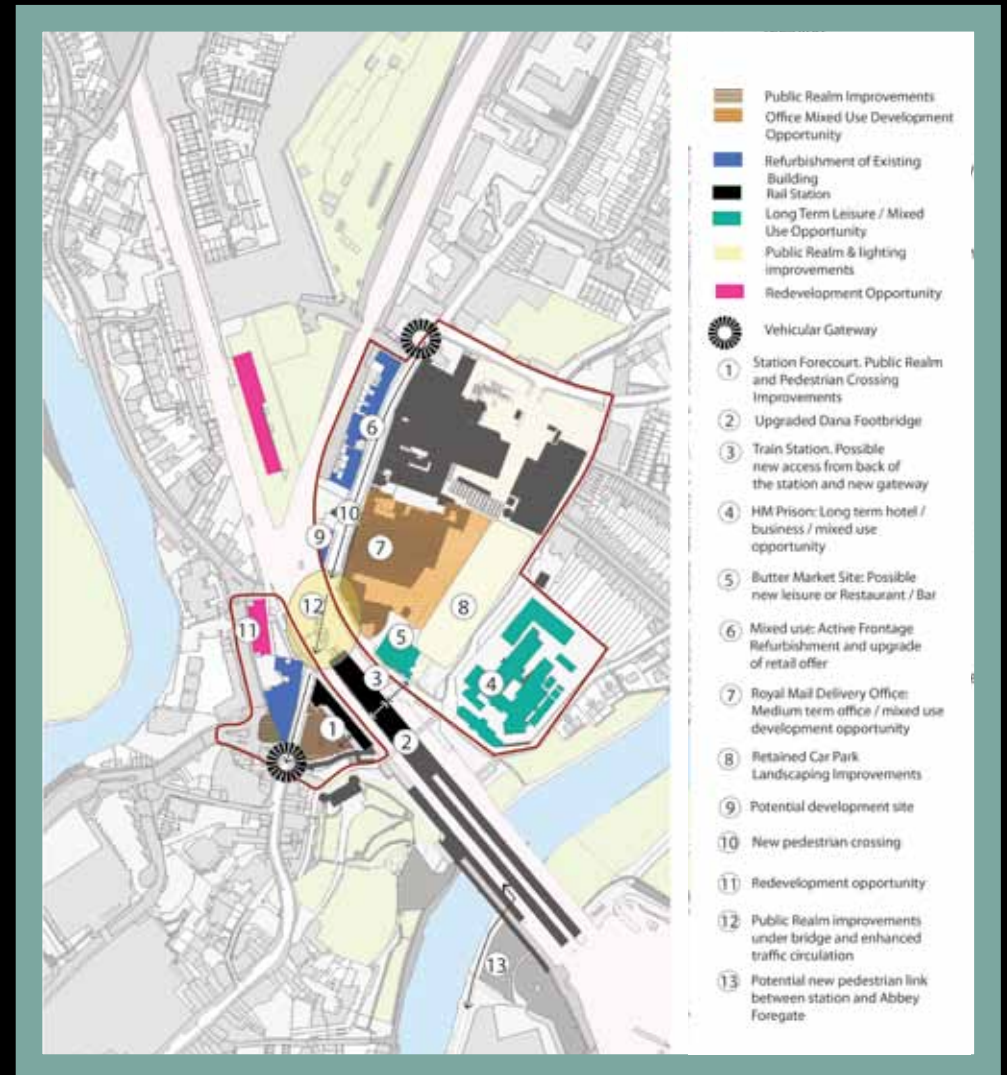
Castle Foregate covers the areas immediately to the north and south of the Railway Station. There are a number of empty properties adjacent to the station forecourt and the largely vacant Cambrian House behind. To the north lies the Royal Mail Sorting Office, station long stay car park, industrial development and Shrewsbury Prison. The pedestrian environment under the bridges and to the north is poor and the connections to the station car park are weak.

Opportunity

Castle Foregate is the principal opportunity to create an in town urban business / office park. The close proximity of the rail station and the access the site gives you to the traditional town centre and also the northern corridor gateway means that the area can operate in two markets. The alternative use of the prison, if ever available, as a hotel offers a long term quirky alternative use in an elevated position at a historical gateway near the rail station and as such may fulfil the gap in the original hotels analysis to offer high standard hotel accommodation offer for the town centre.

Strategy

- The improvement of the Railway Station forecourt to enhance the arrival to the town.
- Investigation into providing a rear exit from the station onto Howard Street.
- To improve the Dana footbridge and potentially deliver a new link from the station to Abbey Foregate
- The potential to improve the existing buildings along Castle Foregate opposite the station and Royal Mail Sorting Office
- Should the Royal Mail Sorting Office relocate, reuse the for site for a new high quality office development and seek to deck the existing station car park.
- Should the Prison be relocated, re-use for hotel, conference centre, workspace and related facilities
- Enhance the pedestrian experience outside the Royal Mail Sorting Office, under the rail bridges and between the Station forecourt and Chester Street
- Consider the relocation of Castle Business Park occupants to site on Castle Foregate premises or Northern Corridor locations, releasing the site for residential



Castle Foregate Vision

Planning Policy

The area is within the town centre conservation area. The Royal Mail Sorting Office and industrial site to the north are allocated for employment uses in the Plan. The majority of the site is in flood zone 2 with areas to the west of the station in zone 3b. The Buttermarket and Prison are Grade II listed buildings. Beneficial redevelopment is encouraged in policy CS2 of the Core Strategy supporting text.

Design Principles

- The relocation of the Royal Mail Sorting Office functions would free the site up for a top end high sustainability rating office led mixed use development (BREEAM excellent). Although this should provide a suitable setting for the historic Buttermarket, there is also an opportunity to introduce modern architecture that appropriately enhances the town gateway. A high quality entrance should therefore face onto the A5191 from the existing Royal Mail Sorting Office site. The space should be permeable and mitigate the topography.
- Enhanced public realm and seating facilities in the station forecourt car park will support greater activity in the buildings opposite. Car parking places could be displaced to the rear of the station should a new rear entrance be introduced. This would be subject to further investigation but could form an important gateway to the town in the long term between the

- station / new development quarter.
- Dana footbridge requires enhanced lighting and space as do the rail arches to improve the pedestrian experience.
- If the prison were to vacate, a hotel use should deliver at the top of end of the market, subject to viability, supported by associated business and conference facilities

Accessibility

- The delivery of more substantial parking opportunities in this location is critical to improving town centre accessibility. Single decking would deliver an extra 150 spaces whilst a 650 space car park would be delivered on the existing station long stay car park using a multi story approach of around 4 storeys.
- There is an opportunity to enhance the pedestrian experience and street scene throughout the area to raise its overall quality

Funding, Delivery and Phasing

Public realm improvements, particularly the Chester street crossings and under the railway bridges, would need to be funded by the public purse. Enhancements to station forecourt would need to be undertaken in conjunction with Network Rail.

The core project is wholly dependant on the relocation of the Royal Mail Sorting Office.

Whilst the Royal Mail Sorting Office have intimated that they are considering relocation to a more logistically better site (as they are doing nationally), they have not confirmed the likely timescale for a would be move.

The Prison Service have also intimated that they are in the process of looking to consolidate the prison outside of Shrewsbury and as with the Royal Mail Sorting Office relocation no confirmation has been made that this will actually happen or a likely timetable to come forward.

The preferred delivery model could be a developer competition to acquire the Prison and Royal Mail Sorting Office on vacation and propose a development opportunity or for the Council to acquire in discussion with the two bodies a joint venture development. The Council's lack of assets in the area limits influence other than through the planning process of acquisitions led by or supported by the Council.

There is a real possibility that the Castle Foregate area could offer as part of the accommodation schedule small business workshops in the future in order to provide a supply of small flexible lease accommodation to encourage small business formation.

Priority

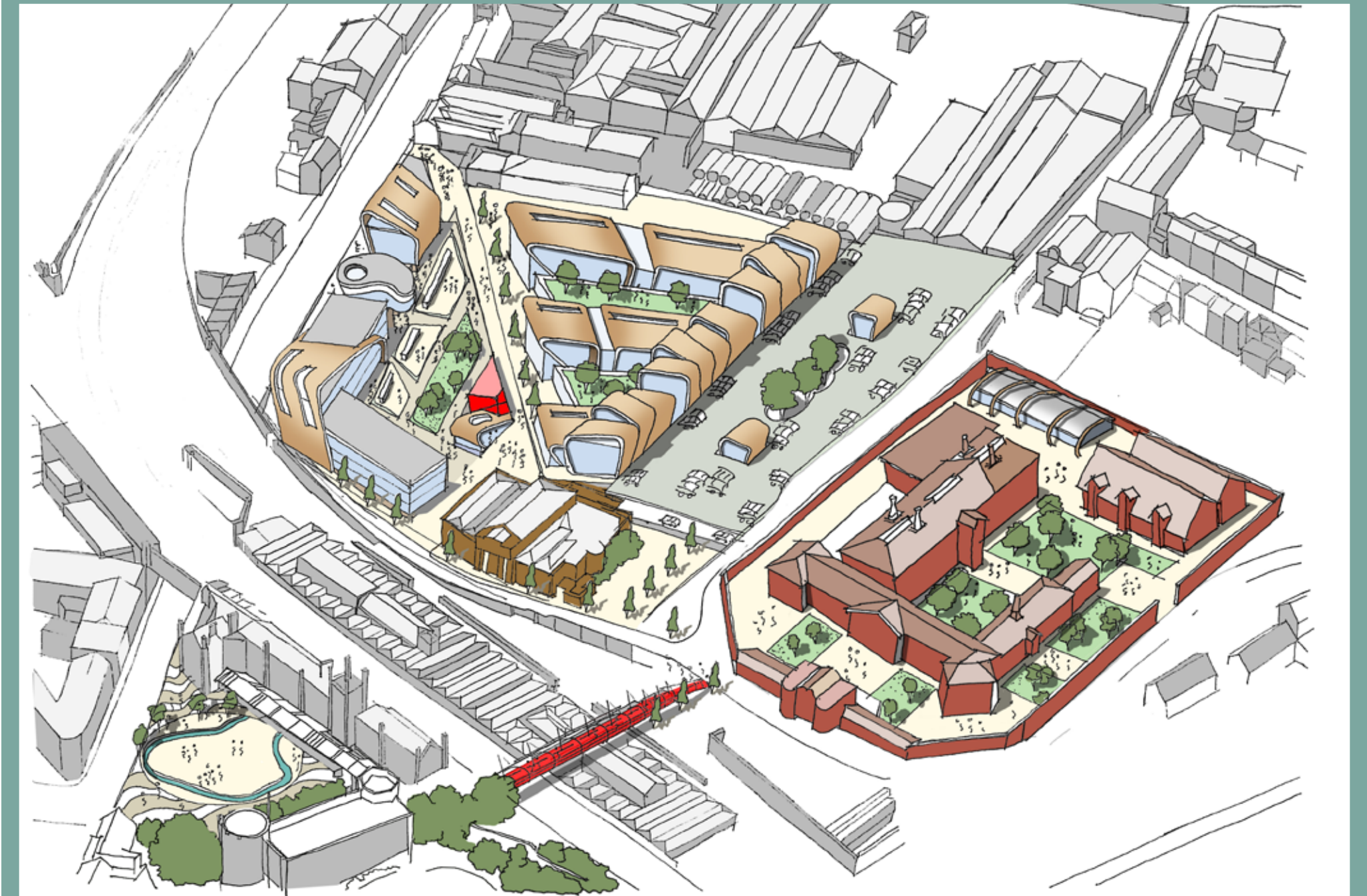
Medium

Partners

Shropshire Council
Network Rail
HM Prison
Royal Mail



Sustainable office: The Met Office



Section 12: Delivery - Making it Happen

12.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the approach to taking the Vision Framework forward. A separate Delivery report and Action Plan has been produced.

12.2 This section considers the following:

- A Vision Partnership
- Establishing a planning framework
- Maintaining Stakeholder Support
- Delivery of Key Development Projects

A Vision Delivery Partnership

12.3 The Vision and Regeneration Framework needs to be a living, continually developing strategy if it is to deliver and be of on-going relevance to Shrewsbury. It needs to change and be refined in the light of new opportunities as they emerge. Critically its needs to maintain and develop the support of key stakeholders, not least the private sector and to harness and focus activity across a number of fronts. Shropshire Council will need to consider how best to take the strategy forward in the context of existing structures, budgetary constraints and the key early priorities.

12.4 In developing the strategy the membership, focus and remit of a Vision Delivery Partnership will be important considerations, which will

change and develop over time within the context of the wider partnership and political structure. Given the substantial cross over between the Shrewsbury Vision and the Shrewsbury components of the LDF Local Investment and Implementation Plan Place Plans it is considered that the Partnership lead be held by Shropshire Council.

12.5 At the appropriate point the Council should consider the 'launch' of the Vision and the establishment of a core Vision group which oversees a number of existing groups (such as Destination Shrewsbury) and new arrangements to develop key aspects of this strategy (notably traffic management and town centre vitality). An emphasis should be placed on engaging the private sector and broadening the established stakeholder base to include new businesses, young people and so on. Key partners to engage will include:

- Local landowners, developers and larger businesses
- Retailer and small business representatives
- Shrewsbury Town Council
- Public transport providers
- Cultural and visitor industry representatives

12.6 Community and third sector representation should act as a conduit for harnessing community input.

12.7 The action plans provided with the Regeneration Framework provide an important starting point for the Vision Delivery Partnership programme. These should be treated as 'live' documents that are amended to reflect the changing circumstances of the town and the project delivery paths. Monitoring should be undertaken on a regular basis to update on progress.

12.8 The Vision group, when established, should work closely with Destination Shrewsbury which should continue to be a focal point for delivering the marketing and branding of the town. A marketing strategy, in tandem with key early development projects, notably Riverside, should reflect the Vision for the town and underline its dimensions of heritage, culture, independent retailing, quality and distinctiveness. It should be separate (but complementary to) marketing for Shropshire and should seek to emphasize the more dynamic elements of the towns offer alongside the more traditional offer.

The Role of Planning

12.09 The Regeneration Framework is to a large degree consistent with the emerging Core Strategy, specifically policy CS2 Shrewsbury Development Strategy, which refers to the importance of the Shrewsbury Vision in delivering infrastructure to support housing and

economic growth. However there are a number of areas which require specific consideration as subsequent development plan documents are prepared, notably the forthcoming Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. These are:

- A planning and design brief or similar should be prepared for Riverside to guide and inform development proposals and to assist in site assembly as appropriate. A similar document should be prepared for Castle Foregate in the medium term.
- Castle Foregate and Riverside should be defined at the earliest opportunity as comprehensive development areas, where only a holistic area wide approach to masterplanning and delivery (taking account of the necessary phasing) will be accepted.
- A development brief or ideally a planning approval should be sought for the key early elements of the West End project prior to marketing. This should complement, in particular, the Riverside. An outline approval is not normally possible in a Conservation Area, however there are examples of where this has been accepted by English Heritage – such an approval would de-risk the site for any developer (and their financiers). Detailed design

could be controlled by the Council (the landowner) through a building license.

- The consideration of an appropriate phasing mechanism to allow for a complementary approach to potential (perhaps medium term) town centre office locations at Castle Foregate and Abbey Foregate and out of centre business park locations.
- The acknowledgement that some specific now vacant office buildings are no longer viable. It is proposed to allow re-use for other development, including housing, and mixed use. This approach should be applied on a site by site basis reflecting, amongst other things, the marketability of the premises.
- The industrial/employment/food industry potential of remaining areas of the Northern Corridor should be reinforced and safeguarded through LDF definitions and the application of development management policies.

Maintaining Stakeholder Support

12.10 There is a broad stakeholder consensus over the objectives for the town centre, in terms of a high quality, vibrant town centre that is less dominated by traffic.

12.11 There remains concern particularly around congestion that progress has not been made (whilst in fact traffic has been reduced) and cannot take place.

There are those that believe a reduction in car parking in the town centre will be detrimental to the health of the centre, whilst there are those that consider only a 'big-bang' solution such as the Three Point Plan will achieve the desired objectives.

12.12 It will be important to maintain broad support for strategy to give the key decision makers confidence to move toward the next stage.

12.13 The development of a Transport Strategy for Shrewsbury which undergoes transparent consultation and monitoring will play an important role.

12.14 There is a substantial amount of community, business and stakeholder interest in Shrewsbury, and a large amount of voluntary and independent effort is put in by many groups and individuals to improve and celebrate the town. This activity should be supported and nurtured. A clear and responsive line of communication should be established to such groups as part of the Vision Partnership through appropriate representation.

Delivering Key Development Projects

12.15 The approach to delivering the key development projects has been set out in the preceding section. Riverside provides the key early opportunity and can be used as a focus point to resolve other issues including accessibility, a

Town Centre Travel Plan, car parking strategy, a public realm strategy and so on.

- West End has a close relationship to Riverside and again can come forward at an early point, with the Council promoting the development through its land ownership.
- Castle Foregate provides a significant medium to long term opportunity for Shrewsbury and should be identified as a Comprehensive Development Area through the LDF process.
- Abbey Foregate is an early opportunity to deliver improvements to a key gateway to the town and to kick-start the process of changing behaviour over the use of the car. In the medium to longer term it provides an opportunity to deliver a new office location on the edge of the town centre.
- Frankwell offers the opportunity to enhance the relationship of the town to the River and to complete a leisure and cultural circuit alongside a revitalised Riverside.

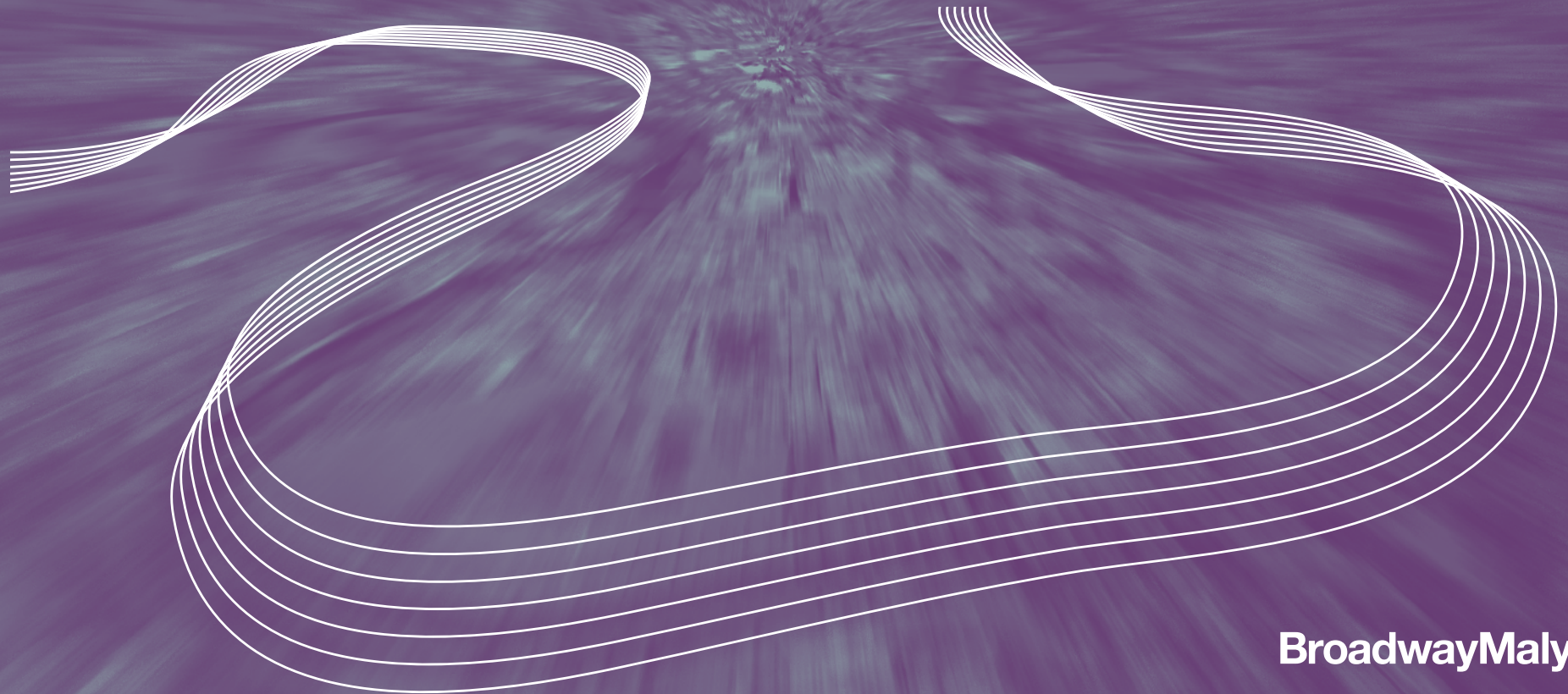
Accessibility

12.16 A Transport Strategy should be developed for the town, to which individual developments are to contribute toward and respond to through project specific travel plans. This should reflect the Shropshire Local

Transport Plan 3 and the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Strategy.

12.17 The Transport Strategy will enable an approach to maintaining and developing the consensus around the objectives for the town centre, in terms of a high quality, vibrant town centre that is less dominated by traffic. There remains a need to work with partners to create a clear agreement on the approach to tackling congestion. It will be important to take a step by step approach, particular around traffic management. Evidence and data should be gathered to demonstrate the improvements that are being made whilst maintaining the viability and accessibility of the town to enable a move to the next step.

Shrewsbury Vision Regeneration Framework Appendices



Appendix 1: Baseline SWOT

Strengths

Transport

- A compact urban form that supports sustainable transport
- Shrewsbury connects to the strategic highway network through a number of radial A roads and key B roads and by a partial outer bypass
- Motorway access is available via the A5
- Good regional rail access.
- Established park and ride facilities

Property

- A high quality of life offer.
- Shrewsbury has outperformed neighbouring town in terms of house price growth and house price levels as well as remaining resilient despite the current recession
- Industrial and out-of-town office space is mostly concentrated to the North and East of Shrewsbury to benefit from good transport links, despite a slow 2009 there are positive signs in both markets with steady demand both in and out of town.
- Activity in edge of centre and out of town employment sites
- Unique Grade II listed office buildings

Townscape

- Exceptional quality of historic environment
- High quality green spaces and infrastructure including the river
- Series of connecting spaces around the town

Planning

- Core Strategy adopted
- PPS4 town centre first policy
- Number of residential and non residential permissions in and around the centre.
- Growth point status
- Two urban extensions identified

Socioeconomic

- Relatively affluent with a, healthy and safe population
- Traditionally, relatively low unemployment
- A centre for public administration
- Strengths in the food and drink and energy and environmental sectors - employment in retail, tourism and food and drink also important.
- A strong independent retail sector
- Tourism and cultural events (flower festival / folk festival)
- The cultural sector – theatre and music hall
- High skilled population
- Relatively high proportion of residents employed as managers
- Higher than average self employment rates – 2004 West Midlands Capital of Enterprise
- Strong town council and business organizations
- Strong <18 educational offer
- A wide catchment area, particularly reaching into Wales.

Weaknesses

Transport

- Congestion (perceived and real) in the Town centre and Town Centre approaches.
- Peak hour congestion on some key junctions on the A5.
- Congestion in centre impacts on reliability of bus services.
- Bus and rail station poor gateways
- Perceived lack of town centre parking for business
- Impact of congestion on the quality of life
- Concentration of car parking on the west side of town (West End, Riverside, Frankwell) leading to potentially unnecessary cross town movement.
- Need for traffic travelling between west to north to cross the town centre.
- Perceived unsuitability of Park and Ride for business users (ie no early evening service)
- Topography – the relatively steep climb from the Wyle Cop area discourages the use of parking in this area when visiting the main shopping areas.

Property

- Riverside redevelopment opportunity
- Lack of main retailers
- Out of town retail centres
- Dated town centre office supply
- Lack of parking an issue in the centre for offices
- Poor servicing in business parks
- Hotel occupancy falling – as Telford's rises
- Vacancies in the shopping centres
- Public sector occupier of office space

Townscape

- Areas of weak urban form: West End, Riverside, Northern Corridor.
- Abbey Foregate underplayed
- Dana and Frankwell footbridges poor quality.
- Some individual weak buildings in the town.
- Station, Station Forecourt and Bus Station
- Flood risk

Planning

- Need for clarity of policy regarding Northern Corridor
- Affordable housing required

Socioeconomic

- Relatively low 18-24 population
- Pockets of deprivation, mainly in the north and east of Shrewsbury
- The economy is under-represented in manufacturing, financial and business service sectors.

Opportunities

Transport

- Integrated Transport Strategy
- North West Relief Road, albeit in the longer term
- Improvement of Smithfield Road; Dana Footbridge, Abbey Foregate to Rail Station link, Frankwell footbridge
- Improvement of the cycle network; and
- Installation of urban traffic control and bus priority
- Signage
- Cross town buses
- Car parking consolidation /relocation

Property

- Investor perception to be positive in the area especially in retail terms
- Quality office development in the centre or out of town would facilitate interest
- Budget hotel growth
- Corporate hotel demand – edge of centre
- Boutique 4 star / country club opportunity
- 3 star potential in town centre – part of retail development / rail station?
- Demand circa 50,000sqm retail by 2026
- Current Quarry Swimming Pool reaching end of lifetime

Townscape

- Public land ownership
- Potential to redevelopment weak urban areas
- Enhance public realm
- Identify development opportunities in river loop / edge of centre

Planning

- Promote town and edge of centre sites.
- Identified retail, housing and employment targets in Core Strategy
- Opportunity to feed into Site Allocations document
- Implementation of hotel / residential / retail permissions in the centre

Socioeconomic

- Target indigenous growth, encourage enterprise and knowledge-based, high value businesses
- Measures have been attempted to address the impact of the recession - Shropshire Business Enterprise Fund.
- Enhance night time economy
- Draw on strong networks

Threats

Transport

- Congestion at peak times continues to worsen detracting from quality of life and place
- Fall in sustainable transport usage adds to congestion
- Housing growth in south vs retail and employment in the north will continue to exacerbate congestion.

Property

- No new retail investment in the town centre will mean out of town / other centres become more competitive.
- Forecast economic growth in non-professional services reduces hotel demand
- 3 star demand could be sapped by budget hotel
- Telford retail competition – including proposed scheme

Townscape

- Town continues to underplay its potential due to weak urban areas
- New built form fails to enhance the town's assets / reflect quality of built form

Planning

- Growth of retail in out of town locations weakens the town centre position
- Long term lack of policy clarity for Northern Corridor leads to further fragmentation

Socioeconomic

- Public sector cuts reduce employment
- Out commuting causes dormitory town status
- Retail and tourism offers undermined by inability to capture strength of assets

An abstract graphic featuring a central point from which numerous thin, light purple lines radiate outwards, creating a starburst or sunburst effect. Overlaid on this background are several thick, white, wavy lines that form a stylized, flowing shape, possibly representing a ribbon or a path. The lines are composed of multiple parallel white strands, giving them a sense of depth and movement. The overall composition is dynamic and modern.

BroadwayMalyan^{BM}