

Shrewsbury Big Town Plan: The evolution of the market town

The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan sets out an ambitious, landscape-led 15-year vision for this popular Shropshire town. In Darwin's birthplace, the great challenge is to understand how a historic market town can best adapt to the climate emergency and to different patterns of living and working.

Developed by LDA Design in partnership with Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and business-led initiative, Shrewsbury Bid, the Big Town Plan aims to make the entire town, not just the centre, more liveable, strengthening all-year-round appeal.

Priorities included rethinking movement and place; supporting, creating and nurturing town vitality and a mix of uses; creating a place for enterprise and boosting natural Shrewsbury by enhancing the qualities that make the town special, including the river loop and medieval quarters, and its parks and green spaces.

The process behind the Plan has been refreshingly different. The councils together with Shrewsbury BID corralled organisations, individuals and key decision-makers who had never really worked together before, but were all determined to put people at the heart of things.



Client
Shrewsbury Council, Shrewsbury Business Improvement District, Shropshire County Council

Location
Shrewsbury

Partners
Phil Jones Associates

Services
Masterplanning

Schedule
2018-2019

- 1 Castle Square visualisation
- 2 Station Square visualisation
- 3 3D drawing model of Castle Street

Consulting widely, they gathered more than 2,500 responses from across the town. These revealed a real appetite for tackling thorny issues, from taking traffic out of the town centre to directing investment in new housing and start-ups from the periphery into the centre. It was evident a masterplan was needed to bring all of the ideas together, and to direct change where it was most needed.

Determined to make the process as inclusive as possible, LDA hosted an intensive week of workshops involving more than 50 individuals and organisations with a stake in the town's future. Not surprisingly, diametrically opposed views were aired and contested, and we acted as honest brokers and provocateurs. A plan emerged, worked up by LDA and transport specialists, PJA.

The Big Town Plan has moved on to delivery and one of the most significant projects to emerge from it is the improvements around Castle Street and the station, and the redevelopment of the Riverside area. This involves the demolition of a multi-storey car park, the removal of traffic from Smithfield, the demolition of the Riverside Shopping Centre, and the town's bus station in order to create a new high-intensity, mixed-use neighbourhood with its own new riverside promenade. This project also includes the re-purposing and re-shaping of the town's two remaining shopping centres, Pride Hill and Darwin.

“We are delighted to present this collective vision for our town's future. It presents a series of realistic, practical and sustainable aspirations; together with a clear plan of how we can get there. It is ambitious and bold in putting people at the heart of the town so it becomes an even better place to live, visit, work and invest.”

Alan Mosley, leader of Shrewsbury Town Council



- 1 Aerial model of the Big Town Plan
- 2 Cross section of Shrewsbury Centre to the River
- 3 The Big Masterplanning Week