



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# Commissioning case study

Team Shrewsbury: integrated community management

# Our Place programme # town council # parish council # community cohesion # community safety  
# antisocial behaviour # local economic development # business partnership

## The headlines

- The case study shows how a Town or Parish Council, by embracing the 'Our Place' philosophy, can take the lead in partnership building.
- Business is playing a central role to improve prospects for the local economy.
- Demonstrable savings in officer time have been identified across the agencies involved.

## What is the context?

Shrewsbury Town Council seized the opportunity of the Our Place programme, as they put it:

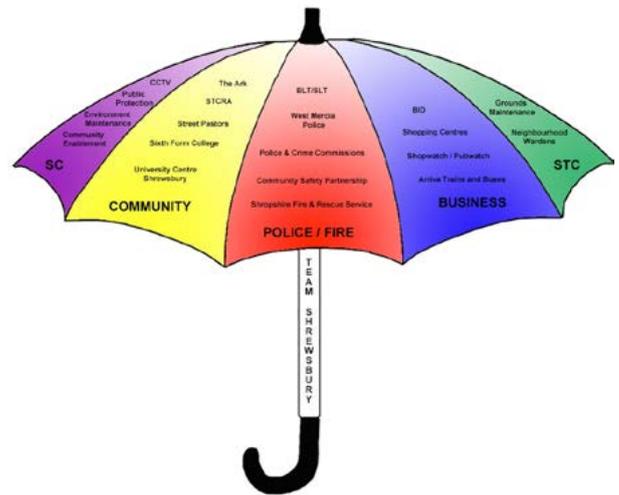
**‘To look at transformational changes to how the community at large can provide better services, take more control and become more resilient.’**

The council developed the concept of Team Shrewsbury, creating a multi-functional team drawn from different agencies that work together to tackle, in the first instance, issues of crime, antisocial behaviour and quality of life in the town centre and surrounding communities.

The big factors which demanded fresh thinking and a fresh approach were:

- the recognition by partner agencies that these issues were highly important to local people and businesses and required coordinated action;
- the financial imperative on all public sector bodies to get maximum value for each pound spent and to find ways to continue to provide service with reducing budgets; and
- the need to act to support the local economy and maximise the attractiveness of Shrewsbury to visitors

## Who are the key partners?



The Team Shrewsbury partnership is a story of recognising opportunity and creating momentum.

The opportunity was provided by a conjunction of circumstances:

- the existing good relationship between Shrewsbury and Shropshire Councils, evidenced by the delegation by Shropshire to the town council of responsibility for highways, recreation and bereavement services, as well as grounds maintenance under a service level agreement, and the transfer of the countryside unit which covers 20 sites and 250 acres;
- the success of the Town Council in getting onto the Our Place programme; and
- Shropshire Council's strategic shift to a commissioning model, which specifically envisages staff transfer to 'other delivery models such as Town Councils and staff mutuals' and 'a mixed economy approach to commissioning, working with...Town and Parish Councils...'

Although relations were good, the partners had previously operated on a one-to-one and issue-by-issue basis in the absence of a formal vehicle for cooperation around mutually agreed priorities. This vehicle is what the partnership has created.

The momentum grew when West Mercia Police saw the fit between what the local authorities were focusing on and their own strategic and operational priorities – for them, this way of collaborative working 'made sense'. The same was true of the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

And the momentum grew further when the local business community saw that, with local authorities and police talking the same language, their concerns about the negative impact of crime and antisocial behaviour on their ability to contribute to economic growth were being recognised and effectively addressed.

So now the partnership embraces the public, voluntary and private sectors: local authorities, police and fire and rescue service, the Business Improvement District, the three shopping centres in the town, Safer Shrewsbury (retailers and publicans) and Shrewsbury Street Pastors (an interdenominational voluntary organisation looking after the vulnerable on the streets at night). Also involved are the Shrewsbury Town Centre Residents Association, Shrewsbury Tourism Association, Arriva trains and buses, Churches Together, and the Shrewsbury Ark (a drop-in centre for the homeless and vulnerable).

This represents a powerful combination of, on the one hand, the things local people and businesses want to see done and, on the other, the powers and resources of the three sectors (including the community itself) to get them done. That is why it is such a successful approach for Shrewsbury.

Partnership building is seldom easy. 'You need people with a 'glass half full' mentality' says Town Clerk Helen Ball, to overcome challenges, keep the momentum going and encourage others who cannot go at the same pace. The partnership is currently trying to secure the engagement of local health trusts and the clinical commissioning group, but recognises the pressures on those organisations and hopes to benefit from the support of Shropshire Council's Director of Public Health.

**I am pleased to support Team Shrewsbury as it builds on the work Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council have been doing for the last five years. By working closely with all parties who have a vested interest in making Shrewsbury a great place to live, work or visit, without duplication of effort we can make services more efficient and more responsive to Shropshire's needs.**

Councillor Keith Barrow,  
Leader of Shropshire Council

**Team Shrewsbury provides a framework that we can all be part of in ensuring a positive difference to the quality of life of residents and visitors to the Town.**

David McWilliam, Police Superintendent

## How does it work in practice?

**This is about being transformational, permanently altering the way agencies do business and carrying out better, intelligence-driven decision making with an emphasis on problem solving and prevention.**

(Our Place operational plan)

The partners all have people close to the ground in Shrewsbury – local councillors, council staff, police officers, business people, volunteers and so on, who can gather intelligence about community concerns. The Our Place operational plan was the subject of extensive consultation and methods such as face-to-face surveys were used to confirm local people's priorities for action.

Instead of a plethora of ad-hoc, one-off meetings between two or three agencies dealing with a particular issue, staff and manager time is now closely focused on the agreed programme at three distinct levels:

- weekly operational tasking meetings of front-line officers, lasting about 20 minutes, to share information and intelligence, allocate tasks and check on progress;
- monthly tactical meetings, lasting about one hour to review and steer operations; and
- quarterly strategic meetings, lasting about two hours, where senior officers and elected members review and evaluate the programme and initiate community consultation.

# What has been the impact?

## Better use of Information

The quality of partnership depends not only on the people involved, but on the data, information and insight they are able to bring to the partnership table. Often, partnership is inhibited because different agencies hold different information about the same subject, and because there are misplaced concerns about data protection.

Team Shrewsbury has developed data sharing protocols to ensure that intelligence is shared within the legitimate constraints of the law, in order to inform efficient, coordinated decision making.

## Better use of time and resources

The rationalisation and business-like conduct of meetings described above is estimated by the partnership to save around £2500 a year in officer time. The front-line tasking meetings have enthused staff who now feel they can really do their job and see results.

Equally importantly, the partnership focus means that staff time freed up in this by more focused, targeted working is consciously devoted to building on success by marketing Shrewsbury as an excellent place to visit. The town is very close to achieving the standards necessary for 'Purple Flag' status, accrediting it as offering an evening and night-time economy that is a safe and rewarding experience.

Another illustration of financial savings through joint working is how the Team Shrewsbury partners collaborated on a campaign to persuade people not to have private bonfires but to attend formally arranged bonfires instead. Private bonfires typically result in call-outs for the fire service and the police as well as tidy-up and waste disposal costs (and presently unquantified costs to the health service). Before this campaign, the fire service had incurred thousands of pounds of expenditure attending problems at informal gatherings; as a result of the campaign, they had only one call-out in 2014.

## Impact on antisocial behaviour

An example of the success of the Team Shrewsbury approach is the recent Community Action Day to tackle significant antisocial behaviour around a skateboard park. This involved no additional cost, simply the coordination and concentration of partner resources on an identified problem – a 'blitz' which has changed public attitudes in the area and reduced antisocial behaviour. The police have found the Team Shrewsbury model so effective that they have also adopted it in Worcester, and see the potential for wider application.

“ **The great advantage of Team Shrewsbury is its simplicity in design, but also its effectiveness in delivery. Over the last year we have seen coordinated activities amongst our partners to tackle very sensitive issues that clearly concern our residents, and as the partnership matures more opportunities for collaboration are emerging. I am extremely proud that the Town Council plays such a critical role in Team Shrewsbury.** ”

Councillor Alan Mosley, Leader of Shrewsbury Town Council

“ **Stakeholders who have a mutual belief to make things happen, will make things happen, through a joint approach of action and not words.** ”

Kevin Lockwood, Centre Manager, Shrewsbury Shopping Centres

## What have been the key elements of success?

‘ Our Place gave national legitimacy to our initiative. We could say ‘look, the government is supporting this – join us and help us make it happen. ’

Helen Ball, Town Clerk,  
Shrewsbury Town Council

It was also vital that agencies perceived that the issues that most concerned local people and businesses were the same ones that each was trying to deal with using its own powers, budgets and workforce, but in an uncoordinated way. From this realisation, it simply made operational and financial sense to re-conceive working methods in order to deliver what people were calling for, and in a more efficient and effective way.

## What has been learnt?

Helen Ball is confident not only that the model is replicable elsewhere (as the police have shown by adopting it in other parts of their area), but also that Team Shrewsbury will successfully move on to other issues of local concern and other ways to improve the town, when it has had the opportunity to review and reflect on its work on antisocial behaviour and related problems.

The Business Improvement District will be monitoring levels of pedestrian footfall, car parking numbers and business perceptions of antisocial behaviour incidents to assess the impact of the Team’s programme on visitor numbers and the local economy. These observations will be supplemented by street surveys in summer 2015 to measure differences in people’s perceptions of the town centre experience against those recorded in 2014.

## Who can I contact?

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## Other useful information

<http://www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk>