



TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Thursday 21 May 2026

2:00pm- 2.47pm

Held online via Teams

Present:

Accessible Stratford represented by Elizabeth Dixon

Royal Shakespeare Company represented by Joanne Crawshaw and Sam George

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust represented by Richard Paterson

Stratford-on-Avon MP - Manuella Perteghella MP

Stratford-on-Avon District Council represented by Councillors Cowcher, Fradgley and Grocott, Ali Chafekar, Graham Nelson and Andrew Green

Stratford Society represented by John Scampion

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council represented by Councillor Vos, Caroline Nash (Vice Chair)

Stratford Town Trust represented by Matthew Poole

Warwickshire County Council represented by Councillors Albon, Grocott and Rolfe and Aoife O'Gorman

Apologies: John Stacey (Bell Court), Aaron Corsi (BID), Jacqui O'Hanlon (Royal Shakespeare Company) Darren Tosh (Shakespeare's England) Rachel North (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust) Colin Stewart (Town Transport) Catherine Marks (WCC)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Vice-Chair opened the meeting and noted apologies received. A welcome was extended to those new to the Partnership.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2026

The minutes were approved with no amendments.

3. Matters Arising and Action Points

No additional matters were raised beyond those scheduled on the agenda.

4. Footfall Counters

AG updated the Group on the installation and operation of footfall counters at five town centre locations, noting that the system used overhead counting technology with a reported 99% accuracy rate. Members were advised that the reporting portal provides both standard and bespoke data analysis, including demographic information, repeat visits and dwell time. Access potentially could be extended to additional stakeholders.

The wider smart location data system was confirmed as GDPR compliant and based on anonymised mobile application data. Responsibility for ongoing analysis and reporting has transferred to Grace Gregory, SDC's Performance and Data Officer, with further training sessions planned. The counters have already been used to support reporting on major events, including the Christmas Markets and Shakespeare Birthday Parade.

Various questions were raised regarding the future development and use of the footfall data. These included whether postcode and spending data could be incorporated into future analysis, the potential to monitor visitors arriving by train, and opportunities to share information with wider tourism stakeholders including the Shakespeare tourism group. Discussion also took place around emerging trends showing Wednesdays as the quietest day and reduced evening footfall after 7.00pm, together with the implications this may have for parking policy and the night-time economy. Interest was also expressed in using the data to better understand wider tourism patterns, including differentiating between day visitors, overnight visitors and local residents.

5. Strategic Partnership Working Group – Final Report

JS updated the meeting on progress with the restructuring of the Strategic Partnership.

The proposed restructure would replace the large main meeting with smaller operational groups focused on specific themes, while retaining full partnership meetings annually or bi-annually.

JS confirmed that following constructive meetings with both the District and County Councils, that formal approval would be required from all organisations of the Partnership. Discussions with partners and local authorities were continuing positively, with no significant issues identified at this stage. A further meeting of the working group would be held before a final proposal was presented to the next Partnership meeting.

Action CN and JS to follow up

6. Pedestrianisation of High Street

AO'G updated the group on progress with the High Street pedestrianisation project.

The specification for the commission had been finalised and tenders issued at the end of April. Tender submissions were due the following day, after which evaluations would be undertaken jointly by representatives from the Town, District and County Councils.

Members were advised that the appointed consultants would be required to produce two masterplans:

- a short-term plan identifying deliverable interventions within 12 months; and
- a longer-term plan considering larger infrastructure works including highways and repaving.

It was confirmed that potential funding opportunities were being explored including Strategic CIL (SDC) and local transport funding streams.

It was confirmed that any final commitment would depend upon detailed plans, costings and deliverability. It was noted that phased implementation and optional interventions would form part of the planning process.

AO'G agreed to circulate the scope overview and further details once tender returns had been reviewed.

7. UK Town of Culture 2028

CN advised that confirmation was awaited from DCMS on whether the submission of additional evidence has resulted in the bid being shortlisted.

It was suggested that MP could use Prime Minister's Questions and wider parliamentary advocacy to highlight the importance of investment in economically successful towns.

MP confirmed her support for the bid and agreed to:

- write to the DCMS Secretary in support of Stratford's application;
- invite Ministers to visit Stratford; and
- provide a specific supporting letter should Stratford be shortlisted.

8. Arts and Culture Strategy

JC updated the meeting on the launch of the Arts and Culture Strategy on 24 April.

The launch had coincided with Shakespeare birthday celebrations and included performances by local artists and young people together with the #Stratford Creates campaign.

It was reported that a stakeholder group had already met and a further meeting was planned for August. Work was continuing on a three-year delivery plan, expected later in the summer.

9. Stratford BID

CN provided an update on behalf of AC.

The BID were continuing with preparations for the Motor Festival, Food and Drink Festival and the Christmas Lights switch-on event.

The meeting also noted ongoing BID work with the police and other partners to address theft and antisocial behaviour, alongside wider work on town promotion, communications, public realm improvements, hostile vehicle mitigation and support for the night time economy.

10. Town Transport

ED gave an update on the last meeting which had predominantly discussed the SWLP. Minutes below for reference.

ED confirmed work on ongoing projects being overseen by the group, with it reported that progress on a number of schemes remained limited pending the release of funding from the County Council.

11. Any Other Business

South Warwickshire Local Plan

MP and Cllrs reported significant resident concern and confusion regarding the indicative western bypass route, with over many emails received from residents. GC clarified that only an initial route study had been completed for costing purposes, with no detailed alignment or planning application in place, and confirmed that the previously rejected South Western Relief Road would not return. Members noted the proposed bypass would connect to the A46, although the final route remained undecided at present.

All present were reminded that the SWLP consultation will run from 12 June to 27 July 2026 and would focus on the soundness of the Local Plan.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 16 July 2026, 2:00pm–4:00pm, MS Teams.