

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR**

# **Cabinet**

**Thursday 21 February 2013**

**2.00 pm**

**The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford**

**APPENDICES TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK/COMMUNITY  
INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**



<b>MEETING</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>21 FEBRUARY 2013</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>ANDREW ASHCROFT – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENT &amp; CULTURAL SERVICES</b>

### 1. Classification

Open

### 2. Key Decision

This is not a key decision

### 3. Wards Affected

County-wide

### 4. Purpose

To approve both the draft Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 and the Community Infrastructure Levy preliminary charging schedule for consultation, and approve the consultation programme.

### 5. Recommendation(s)

**THAT Cabinet:**

- (a) Approves the draft Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 for consultation;**
- (b) Delegates authority to the Cabinet Member Environment Housing & Planning to agree any amendments to the draft Core Strategy, prior to consultation, that may be necessary in light of the further information reported verbally to Cabinet;**
- (c) Approves the preliminary draft Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule for consultation; and**
- (d) Approves the consultation programme.**

## **6. Key Points Summary**

- This will be the first time a draft local plan, with associated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment, has been presented for consultation.
- It was reported to Cabinet (July 2012) that there were a number of issues remaining to be resolved before the Plan can be submitted to the Secretary of State. These issues included the need for continuing examination of possible impacts that the Core Strategy proposals may have upon the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC), further analysis of the package of development proposals contained within the plan and work to develop an appropriate set of rural policies in the light of the changes to the planning system.
- Consultation and engagement is a key element in the preparation of the Development Plan Documents. Since work began on the preparation of the Core Strategy in 2007 there have been six periods of consultation across the County which have helped to inform the development of the emerging Plan.
- The requirements for Development Plan Document consultation are set out in Regulations 18 and 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.
- The regulations are supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out government policy on plan preparation, including community engagement.
- The Government expects that the Council will implement a Community Infrastructure levy where its 'appropriate evidence' includes an up-to-date relevant Plan for the area in which they propose to charge.
- The requirements for consultation on a preliminary draft charging schedule are set out in Regulation 15 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

## **7. Alternative Options**

- 7.1 There is no alternative other than to prepare a Local Plan. Recent work has been undertaken on the Plan to support its soundness.
- 7.2 It is not mandatory for the Council to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy. However, the Council decided at Cabinet in July 2012 to progress with a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule in parallel with the preparation of the Core Strategy with a joint Examination in Public, to ensure development undertaken in the county contributed to improving countywide infrastructure.

## **8. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 8.1 To ensure Cabinet is fully appraised of the work undertaken to resolve the outstanding issues, to enable consultation to commence on the Core Strategy (draft) and preliminary draft charging schedule.

## 9. Introduction and Background

9.1 The remainder of this report details:

- a) The key tests of soundness;
- b) The timetable for adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy;
- c) the work that has been undertaken to resolve some key issues that were identified at Cabinet July 2012 with regards to the need for continuing examination of possible impacts that the Core Strategy proposals may have upon the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- d) further analysis of the package of development proposals contained within the plan;
- e) work to develop a Community Infrastructure Levy preliminary draft charging schedule;
- f) work to develop an appropriate set of rural policies in the light of the changes to the planning system; and
- g) the proposed programme of consultation.

## 10. Key Considerations

10.1 The Core Strategy will need to meet the key tests of soundness for adoption. The four key tests are as follows:

- **Positively prepared** - the plan should seek to meet development and infrastructure requirements, and be consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan is the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective**- the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- The plan is **consistent with national policy**.

10.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 sets out the requirements for a Local Planning Authority to enable public participation in the plan making process. The process is divided into two main elements; the first (Regulation 18) covers the plan preparation process up until the approval of a draft plan by Full Council whilst the second regulation (Regulation 19) deals with the process after a draft plan is approved.

10.3 Regulation 18 sets out the requirements for Local Planning Authorities to consult the specific and general consultation bodies. They must also consider whether or not it is appropriate to invite representations from local residents and local businesses. This is the process that will commence on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Any representations received during this consultation period may inform the strategy going forward.

- 10.4 Regulation 19 deals with the process in respect of representations upon a final draft plan. This will take place after Council approval (currently programmed for July 2013). If any representations are submitted during this period the Secretary of State will consider them before the independent examination.
- 10.5 Set out below is the proposed timetable for the various stages to the adoption of the Core Strategy:

DATE	EVENT
<b>21 February 2013</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
4 March – 22 April 2013	Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Core Strategy and preliminary draft charging schedule
April – May 2013	Analyse representations received
June 2013	Cabinet approval of Core Strategy and preliminary draft charging schedule
July 2013	Council approval of Core Strategy and preliminary draft charging schedule
August – September 2013	Regulation 19 pre-submission publication of Core Strategy and second round of consultation on draft charging schedule
Winter 2013	Examination in Public
Spring 2014	Adoption

10.6 The draft Core Strategy (Appendix B) contains the following strategic proposals:

- Provision of a total of 16,500 new dwellings in the county
- Development of 148 hectares of employment land across the County
- For Hereford an overall target of 6,500 new dwellings including the proposed urban extensions at Holmer, Lower Bullingham and Three Elms;
- Provision of a relief road to the west of Hereford;
- In the Market Towns the following table sets out the basis of the Core Strategy proposals;

	Housing Target	Other Development
Leominster	2,300 new dwellings with 1,500 on the strategic housing site	Strategic employment site

Ledbury	800 new dwellings with 700 on the strategic housing site	Strategic employment site
Ross-on-Wye	900 new dwellings with 200 on the strategic housing site	Continuing with the Model Farm employment proposal as identified in the UDP
Bromyard	500 new dwellings with 250 on the strategic housing site	Strategic employment site
Kington	200 new dwellings	Employment site planned through lower tier plan

- Accommodation of 5,300 new dwellings in rural areas over the plan period, supported by neighbourhood plans

10.7 Some additional evidence and assessments will be available for the meeting of Cabinet and any consequent impacts on the draft core strategy identified. Delegated authority for the Cabinet Member to agree any amendments to the draft core strategy prior to consultation arising from this additional information is therefore sought.

10.08 The report to Cabinet July 2012 outlined a number of areas where work was on-going in order to be able to demonstrate that the Core Strategy is soundly based. These were water quality and the impact on River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the viability of the plan and the deliverability of 5,300 houses in the rural areas. These three issues are covered in more detail below.

### ***River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC)***

10.8 A key issue which has emerged more recently during the plan preparation process has been the water quality of Herefordshire's main rivers and, in particular, current levels of nutrients within parts of the system. The River Wye along the whole of its length and the River Lugg south of Hampton Court is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It is essential that, before being submitted to the Secretary of State, the Core Strategy can be demonstrated to be fully compliant with the Habitats Regulations.

10.9 In order to tackle this issue a Water Steering Group has been established, attended by officers from the Council, the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and Welsh Water. Given the scale of the issue for Herefordshire the matter has also been raised with the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra).

10.10 NE and EA have committed to the preparation of a Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC, and which will be developed in consultation with Welsh Water and Herefordshire Council. The aims of the Nutrient Management Plan will be to control and reduce phosphates in the SAC and in doing so to facilitate the delivery of new development.

10.11 This commitment to produce the Nutrient Management Plan has been confirmed in a Statement of Intent which will be signed by NE and EA; the Statement of Intent provides sufficient assurance to enable consultation on the draft Core Strategy to commence.

- 10.12 The Nutrient Management Plan will be produced by July 2013 to allow any necessary amendments to the final Core Strategy prior to the pre-submission publication of the Core Strategy and the examination in public.
- 10.13 In addition the Water Steering Group has agreed to establish a broader strategic water steering board. This will involve neighbouring local authorities and English/Welsh environment agencies in order to co-ordinate action to manage and reduce the level of phosphates on a whole river catchment basis, as the issue is not restricted to Herefordshire. Officers have been liaising with other areas of the country facing a similar challenge to ensure best practice is followed and that cross cutting issues can be raised nationally.

### ***Viability & the Community Infrastructure Levy***

- 10.14 Demonstrating that the proposals of the plan are both viable and deliverable is an important element of soundness and was a concern raised during the Revised Preferred Option consultation. An Economic Viability Study undertaken at Preferred Option stage indicated that meeting the proposed affordable housing target and achieving developer contributions based upon initial work on an Infrastructure Delivery Plan was not possible in the short term. The Study suggested a number of possible approaches to deal with this issue.
- 10.15 Three Dragons Consultants were therefore commissioned to carry out an updated Economic Viability Assessment to examine both the whole plan viability and produce viability evidence for the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy preliminary draft charging schedule.
- 10.16 A summary of evidence which has been used by Three Dragons to support the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Herefordshire Council is set out below:
- An analysis of publicly available data to identify the range of values and costs needed for the viability assessment;
  - Discussions with planning, economic development and housing officers;
  - Analysis of information held by the authority, including the profile of land supply identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and a review of historic planning permissions;
  - Two workshops held with developers, land owners, their agents and representatives from a selection of registered providers in the area
  - Subsequent discussions with agents and providers who operate in Herefordshire to verify the assumptions used in the analysis;
  - A survey of local Registered Providers to seek their views on aspects of costs and revenue that affect affordable housing;
  - Use of the Three Dragons Toolkit, adapted for Herefordshire to analyse scheme viability for residential development and of Three Dragons bespoke model for the analysis of non-residential schemes.
- 10.17 An updated Economic Viability Assessment will be available for the meeting of Cabinet and will be available on the Council website when the consultation commences on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013. This will inform the outstanding elements of the preliminary draft charging schedule (Appendix C) which will be confirmed at the Cabinet meeting.

### ***Rural Policy***



- 10.18 The Revised Core Strategy Preferred Options (October 2011) amended the distribution of housing, increasing the level of housing provision in rural areas from 4,500 to 5,300 for the plan period 2011-2031. This change was proposed during consultation in order to provide increased affordable housing and a more flexible approach recognising the emergence of neighbourhood planning.
- 10.19 Three Rural Member engagement sessions have been held. They have been very useful as part of an on-going process to inform Members of the progress being made with local communities in the development of Neighbourhood Plans for rural areas, and to listen to and engage with Members to consider current development plan issues in relation to rural areas and to provide Members with the opportunity to comment upon and inform the emerging Core Strategy rural housing policies.
- 10.20 The member sessions considered that any new approach should put greater emphasis on social sustainability to support communities to be strong, vibrant and healthy by providing a supply of housing to meet the needs of present and future generations. This approach reflects guidance in the NPPF on sustainable development.
- 10.21 On this basis an approach has been developed which seeks to enable Herefordshire's traditional rural village communities to grow proportionally to enhance their social and economic sustainability.
- 10.22 Given the importance of providing housing to accommodate local people (and to reflect increases in home working), and the development of affordable housing policies, it was also considered that development in smaller villages should not be resisted but this should be focused on housing to meet the needs of people with local connections.

### ***Road Studies***

- 10.23 In the report presented to Cabinet in July 2012 the results of the study of possible routes for the Southern Route Corridor was summarised. The report recommended that the wider route corridor should be retained until additional work to assess a preferred route was selected by means a staged assessment in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and WebTAG guidance. This work is on-going as part of the Belmont Transport Package project. The consultation Draft Core Strategy will continue to identify a wider road corridor pending completion of this process.
- 10.24 Another area of work identified in the July 2012 Cabinet Report was in connection with assessing possible additional infrastructure requirements for the enterprise zone at Rotherwas. Studies were commissioned (by Amey and SQW) to examine the economic, wider social and traffic impacts of an eastern link road from the Zone to the A438 Ledbury Road. These reports have now been finalised and will be available on the Council website when the consultation commences on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The SQW report recommended that the Eastern Link Road only option should be dismissed as providing insufficient economic impact and poor value for money. The Amey study, highlights the traffic impact upon lower standard roads in residential areas and villages including Lugwardine and Bartestree. As such the construction of a link is not recommended. On this basis the Draft Core Strategy as presented to this meeting continues to propose a relief road to the west of Hereford.
- 10.25 In addition, an Interim Forecasting report has been completed which confirms the need for a relief road based upon the reduction in the numbers of housing allocations and

employment levels associated with the Revised Preferred Option. This will be available on the Council website when the consultation commences on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

- 10.26 At the time of the Revised Preferred Option consultation in 2011 the Highways Agency requested further supporting transport evidence. Since July 2012 positive discussions have been undertaken with the Agency to ensure that the continuing work being undertaken, including that to update the transport model for Hereford, in respect of highways matters for the Core Strategy would address its previous request. The Highways Agency has now indicated its support for the Council's general approach.

### ***Proposed Consultation***

- 10.27 The consultation period for the Draft Core Strategy and preliminary draft charging schedule is recommended in this report to commence on 4 March 2013 and to run for seven weeks, (finishing on 22 April 2013). The consultation programme is set out at Appendix A.
- 10.28 The consultation will consist of two questionnaires, one covering the 63 policies within the draft Core Strategy and the other covering the preliminary draft charging schedule.
- 10.29 The Consultation Institute Centre of Excellence is reviewing the document. In addition, work is currently taking place with the Plain English Campaign to achieve the Plain English Crystal Mark.
- 10.30 The proposed consultation programme and draft questionnaire were presented to General Overview & Scrutiny on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

## **11. Community Impact**

- 11.1 The principal aim of the Core Strategy is to set out the vision and objectives for the county and establish a policy framework necessary to deliver the vision to 2031. This will ensure that there are sufficient homes provided for all members of the community, improved employment opportunities and growth, sufficient retail provision, improved infrastructure across the county and protection of the open countryside and open spaces and provision of green infrastructure.
- 11.2 The Localism Act 2011 broadened the scope of CIL to enable a "meaningful proportion" of CIL revenues to go directly to neighbourhoods where development takes place.
- 11.3 On 10 January 2013 the government announced that local areas that have taken a proactive approach by drawing up a neighbourhood plan, and securing the consent of local people in a referendum, will receive 25% of the revenues from the Community Infrastructure Levy arising from the development that they choose to accept.
- 11.4 The funds will be paid directly to parish and town councils and can be used to back the community's priorities for infrastructure developments. Places without a neighbourhood development plan will receive a capped 15% share of the levy revenue arising from development in its area.

## **12. Equality and Human Rights**

- 12.1 In order to fulfil the requirements of S149 of the Equality Act 2010, an Equality Impact Assessment was completed in October 2010. This report shows that previous consultations have been conducted across the county and taken equality issues into consideration. The Equality Impact Assessment is being reviewed prior to the consultation commencing to ensure there is no potential for discrimination and that all appropriate opportunities will be

undertaken to advance equality and foster good relations.

### **13. Financial Implications**

- 13.1 There is £16,500 identified in the Local Development Framework budget to undertake this consultation process.
- 13.2 The CIL legislation enables 5% of the levy to be used by the Council to administer the levy. The CIL guidance states that to assist the Council with initial set up costs the 5% administration charge can be used for the first three years retrospectively to fund the work that has been done in setting up the charging schedule e.g. viability evidence, consultation costs.

### **14. Legal Implications**

- 14.1 The Plan has been prepared in full accordance with the appropriate regulations for plans of this type.
- 14.2 In a similar fashion the community infrastructure draft charging schedule has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- 14.3 As set earlier in this report the recommended consultation exercise must comply with Regulation 18 of the 2012 Regulations. All the evidence suggests that the proposed forthcoming exercise will be compliant with these regulations.

### **15. Risk Management**

- 15.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework, highlight the need for public consultation particularly where new evidence or emerging policy has significantly changed. A detailed consultation process will assist in ensuring the soundness of the Core Strategy.

### **16. Consultees**

- 16.1 There has been extensive engagement and consultation in recent months with key agencies involved in the key outstanding issues.
- 16.2 The nature of the process will involve extensive engagement with local people, interest groups and statutory agencies during the consultation period.
- 16.3 The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this matter at its meeting of 11 February 2013 and its recommendations will be circulated at the meeting. The Chairman of the Committee will formally present them.

### **17. Appendices**

- 17.1 Appendix A – The Consultation Programme
  - Appendix B - Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 (draft)
  - Appendix C - Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule

## **18. Background Papers**

18.1 None

## Appendix A: The Consultation Programme

12 July 2012	Cabinet - LDF & CIL
19 July 2012	Developer Industry briefings - CIL
26 October 2012	Rural Member briefing
31 October 2012	Ross-on-Wye members briefing
31 October	Bromyard & Winslow members briefing
2 November	Kington member briefing
2 November	Leominster members briefing
6 November	Infrastructure meeting with statutory consultees
28 November	Hereford City members briefing
30 November	Rural Member briefing
4 December	Ledbury members briefing
7 December	All member briefing
7 December	Infrastructure meeting with statutory consultees
11 January 2013	1st LDF Newsletter - Timetable
15 January 2013	Bromyard & Winslow members briefing
18 January 2013	2nd LDF Newsletter - Consultation
22 January 2013	Meeting with Communications team to confirm strategy. Agreed use of social media.
25 January	3rd LDF Newsletter - Water Quality/Phosphates
29 January	Liaised with web design & research team
1 February	4th LDF Newsletter - Highway Issues & Relief Road
8 February	5th LDF Newsletter - Community Infrastructure Levy
11 February	General Overview & Scrutiny Committee
21 February	Cabinet
25 February	Pre-notification of consultation on website home page
w/c 25 February	Brief Customer Service/Info employees
w/c 25 February	Article in newspapers
w/c 25 February	3 Member briefings - 25 Feb, 2-3pm, Town Hall Assembly Room. 28 Feb, 3-4pm, Town Hall Council Chamber. 1 March, 10-11am, Town Hall Assembly Room
28 February	Deliver documents to info/libraries
end February	Encore and Core News articles published
end February	Herefordshire Matters published
Start March	Directorate Day
1 March	BBC H&W radio interview
1 March	Despatch consultation letters to all on LDF database
1 March	Email internal consultees

<b>4 March</b>	<b>Consultation starts</b>
4 March	Consultation activated
4 March	Website - consultation activated
w/c 4 March	Developer workshop re CIL charges
6 March	A drop in session for Parish Councillors/Clerks 16.00 – 20.00pm, Hereford Town Hall, Assembly Room
11 March	Ross on Wye: promotional trailer - Market Square, 10am - 1pm
12 March	Leominster: promotional trailer - Corn Square, 10am - 1pm
14 March	Bromyard: promotional trailer - Tenbury Road car park, 10am - 1pm
16 March	Hereford: promotional trailer - Hereford, High Town, 10am - 3pm
18 March	Primary Times distributed to Primary Schools for all parents
w/c 18 March	Business briefings - Mike Ashton (Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce) will arrange with 20 top companies in Hereford
19 March	Kington: promotional trailer - Mill Street car park, 10am - 1pm
20 March	A drop in session for Parish Councillors/Clerks 16.00 – 20.00pm, Hereford Town Hall, Assembly Room
21 March	Ledbury: promotional trailer - St Katherine Street car park, 10am - 1pm
w/c 25 March	Peterchurch and Wigmore 10am - 1pm. Meetings @ Herefordshire secondary schools for pupil engagement - school council/prefects
26 March	Hereford Sixth Form/HTC promotional trailer 11am - 2pm.
<b>22 April</b>	<b>End of consultation</b>
May	General Overview & Scrutiny – Report on results of consultation process

**Local Plan – Core Strategy**

**Draft for Cabinet**

**February 2013**

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## Introduction and background

### The Local Plan

The council is preparing a number of planning documents known as the **Local Plan** to guide development and change in the county over the next 20 years. Other documents, such as a Sustainability Appraisal, which form part of the Local Plan evidence base, have also been prepared. The documents being prepared and their timetables are set out in a project planning document called a Local Development Scheme.

The title of “Local Plan”, introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework, replaces the original notation of “Local Development Framework” or LDF which was in use when we started production of a replacement development plan to the adopted Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

The Local Plan, in addition to dealing with the use of land, considers how the area functions and how different parts of the county should develop or change over the next 20 years in response to key issues, such as the need to:

- deliver more, better quality homes (especially affordable homes) to meet growing needs in this “high house price” compared to “average income” area
- deliver improved infrastructure to support economic development and a growing population
- promote a thriving local economy with successful city, town and village centres and provide sufficient employment land to meet business needs and provide higher incomes through a wider range of better quality jobs
- protect and enhance valued natural and built environments, including areas of outstanding natural beauty, special areas of conservation, open spaces as well as the county’s intrinsic attractive character
- address issues arising from an ageing population and the reducing younger age population
- meet the challenge of climate change and adapt to its impacts such as increased risk of flooding and air pollution
- create places that actively promote and enable healthy lifestyles
- achieve sustainable development and reduce reliance on the private car whilst accepting the sparsely populated nature of the area and difficulty communities have in accessing services.

Working in partnership with other agencies that operate in the county is a key element of delivering the Local Plan. The Local Plan needs to show how the strategies for various sectors such as housing, employment, transport, retail, education, health, culture, recreation and climate change interrelate and how they are likely to shape and affect different parts of the county.

### The Core Strategy

This first document in the production of the Local Plan is the Core Strategy. This is a very important part of the Local Plan because it shapes future development and sets the overall strategic planning framework for the county. The Core Strategy needs to balance environmental issues with economic and social needs and ensure that development is sustainable and does not cause irreversible harm to important

resources and features. It sets a vision, closely aligned with the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (June 2010), as to how the county should look and function and how development needs will be met up to 2031.

The Core Strategy does not allocate land directly, but proposes broad strategic directions for growth in sustainable locations. A further Hereford Area Plan and other Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans are proposed to follow the Core Strategy and will allocate large, medium and small sites to meet the identified development requirements for the county. Figure 1.1 shows how the Core Strategy forms part of the Local Plan and how it links to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

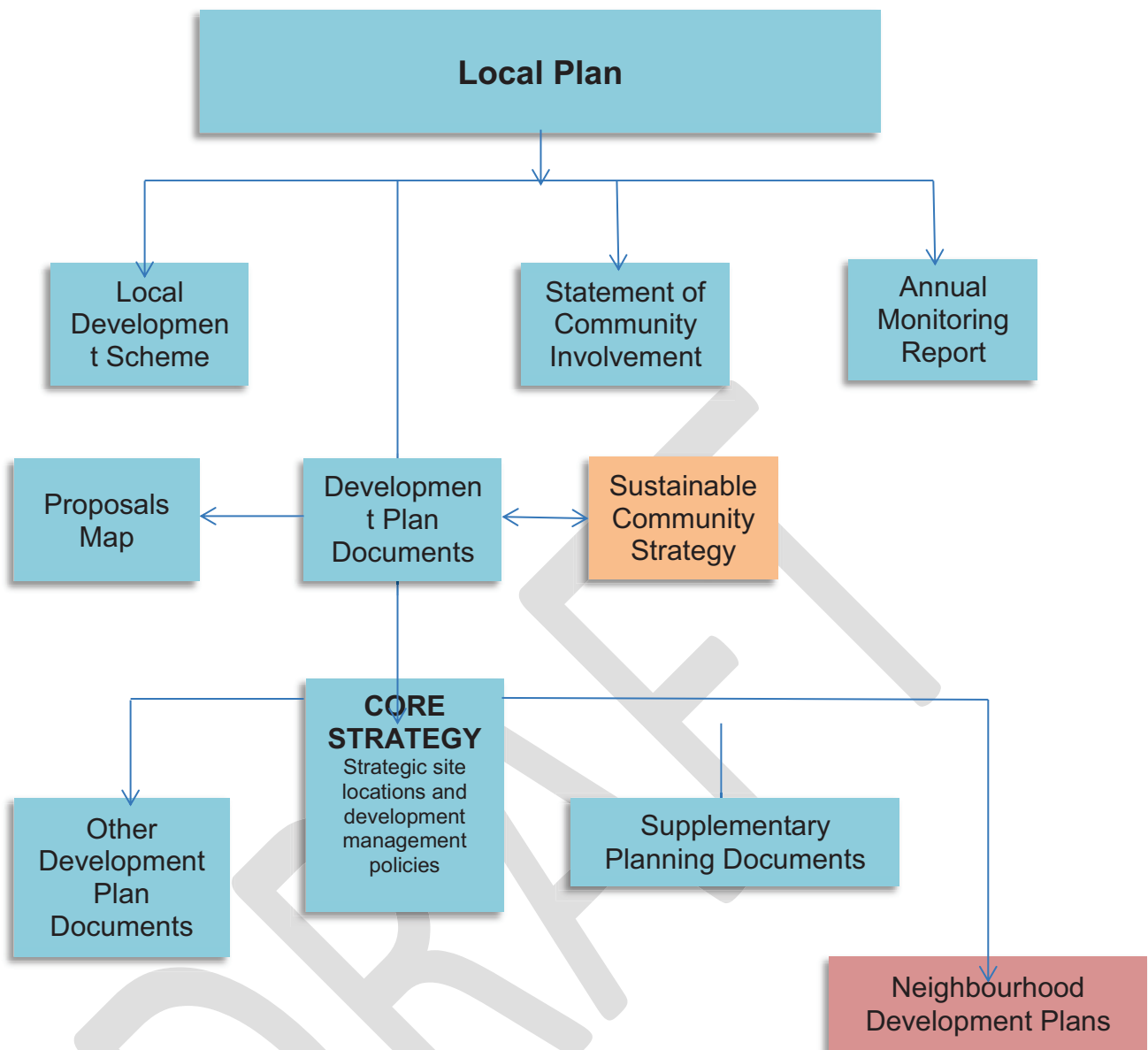
When adopted, the Core Strategy policies will replace most Unitary Development Plan 2007 (UDP) policies. However, some of the policies contained in the previous UDP have been saved (see appendix 1) and will remain in force until replaced by other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans. Together with the Hereford Area Plan, Natural Resources Development Plan Document, Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document and other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans, the Core Strategy will form the development plan for Herefordshire. A Proposals Map will set out the designations and allocations for all development plan documents, once they have been examined and adopted. In the meantime, many environmental designations continue to be shown on the adopted Unitary Development Plan 2007 Proposals Map which can be found on the council's website.

The supplementary planning documents (SPD) referred to in Figure 1.1 will be supporting documents which add to or expand upon policies e.g. the policy on infrastructure contributions, but do not include site allocations. They are subject to public consultation, but are not formally examined.

### **Changes to the plan since the last consultation**

This draft Core Strategy document includes both strategic and development management policy guidance in response to new national guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. This has meant a significantly revised set of policies from that set out in the Preferred Options (2010) and Revised Preferred Option (2011) stages of the plan, which set out to cover purely strategic issues. Other influences have also affected the policy writing, including the issues raised during consultation, the emergence of new or updated evidence and other external influences such as other bodies' plans and programmes. The Sustainability Appraisal Report accompanying this document details in an "audit trail" how the policies in this draft have emerged over the various stages of production. The section on "Consultation" below lists the stages in the production of the Draft Core Strategy.

**Figure 1.1: The structure of the Herefordshire Local Plan**



### Relationship with other strategies

Planning policies for Herefordshire need to be prepared in the context of national planning policy and guidance and with regard to other plans and strategies produced by the council and other organisations. National policies on planning matters are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Technical Guidance to the NPPF.

Herefordshire's planning policy framework currently has to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the West Midlands which was approved in 2008. This sets the vision for the region up to 2026, but does not include the housing target for the county, which was to be agreed through the Phase 2 revision to the RSS<sup>1</sup>. The phase 2 Revision, however, was never adopted because, as part of the Localism Bill which was presented to Parliament in December 2010, the Government announced an intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies. This was made law through the Localism Act in November 2011, but is still subject to ratification through European legislation. However, the council does not consider that the revocation of the RSS will undermine the Core Strategy as it has produced its own, independent

<sup>1</sup> Phase 2 Revision Preferred Option, January 2008 and Panel Report, September 2009

evidence base regarding housing requirements and still proposes, as recommended in the RSS, that the majority of housing should be directed to Hereford to support its role as the principal centre and economic hub for the county.

The principal role of the Core Strategy is to deliver the spatial planning strategy for Herefordshire based on the local characteristics of the area. The draft Core Strategy is based on the outcomes of the consultations that have taken place, other council plans, programmes and initiatives and also on the findings of the evidence base that has been prepared to support it. It is also underpinned by a Sustainability Appraisal which assessed the social, economic and environmental impacts of the Core Strategy throughout the development of the document and a Habitats Regulations Assessment which has assessed any impacts on protected European sites.

### **Natural resources**

A Herefordshire Natural Resources Development Plan Document (Natural Resources DPD) will be prepared. This will establish targets and planning policies relating to minerals and waste activities and development for Herefordshire to cover the plan period to 2031. This DPD is included in the council's Local Development Scheme.

### **Gypsies and travellers**

A Herefordshire Travellers Development Plan Document (Travellers DPD) will be prepared. This document will set out allocations and planning policies relating to the provision for gypsies and travellers in the county to cover the plan period to 2031. This DPD is included in the Local Development Scheme.

### **The Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS): The Herefordshire Plan 2010 sets out a long-term vision for the county and has been developed by the Herefordshire Partnership. The latter comprises of a range of local people and organisations, including business groups and public sector bodies. The purpose of the Herefordshire Plan is to set a clear vision and direction focusing on improving the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the area, in addition to providing an overarching framework within which other local strategies will sit. The policies and proposals within the Core Strategy will help to deliver some of the Herefordshire Plan priorities. The themes from the Herefordshire Plan have therefore helped to guide the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy.

### **Neighbourhood development plans**

With the introduction of neighbourhood development plans through the Localism Act, communities will be positively encouraged to produce their own development plans for their area taking on board the strategic objectives of the Local Plan - Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has been prepared to provide a strategic base for neighbourhood development plans, along with other development plan documents, to allocate sites for employment, housing and other uses as well as providing more locally detailed policies. Neighbourhood development plans will form part of the statutory development plan (but not the Local Plan) and be referred to within the council's Local Development Scheme.

### **Local Transport Plan**

The council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) establishes the framework for the delivery of all aspects of transport and travel for Herefordshire. The development of the LTP and the Core Strategy has been a linked process. The council's emerging LTP covers the first part of the Core Strategy period from April 2012 to 2015 and is an important local document which supports the delivery of the Core Strategy. The LTP



will be updated to include key elements of infrastructure set out in the Core Strategy following its adoption.

### **Economic Development Strategy**

The council's Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 (Nov 2011) is called Enterprising County and outlines the path and direction to foster economic vitality. Its vision is to increase the economic wealth of the county through the growth of business. It aims to improve business sustainability, increase start-up and sustain growth; increase wage levels, range and quality of jobs; have a skilled population to meet future work needs; and develop the county's built infrastructure for enterprise to flourish.

### **Local Investment Plan**

The Herefordshire Local Investment Delivery Plan, January 2011, has been developed by Herefordshire Council in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency. It provides a strategic framework within which the organisations will work and invest together alongside partners in the public and private sectors to deliver the key priorities in meeting the vision for Herefordshire.

The Local Investment Plan focuses on meeting the Government's "Total Place" agenda, which has an emphasis on a "whole area" approach to commissioning and investment by all partners and demonstrates how joint investment by organisations and the private sector will be prioritised through agreed spatial and thematic priorities for regeneration, including transport, health, housing and education. The emerging Core Strategy has fed into the projects, proposals and evidence base in the investment plan.

### **Other plans**

Feeding into the Community Strategy and the Core Strategy are various other plans, such as parish and town plans and market town health checks, produced by the local communities of the county. Broadly, these types of plans identify the economic, environmental and social issues important to a particular area and set out a vision for how the community wants to develop. These plans are very useful in informing the overall proposals in the Core Strategy and by adding local detail and support to particular policies within it.

### **Consultation**

One of the main principles of development plan preparation is that local communities are involved from the outset. This approach is set out in national policy and in Herefordshire's Statement of Community Involvement 2007, which forms part of the Local Plan. To ensure early engagement on the preparation of the Core Strategy and the opportunity to comment and help shape it, the following key stages of consultation has been undertaken:

1. Issues Paper (autumn 2007)
2. Developing Options Paper (summer 2008)
3. Place Shaping Paper (spring 2010)
4. Preferred Options (autumn 2010)
5. Revised Preferred Options (autumn 2011)

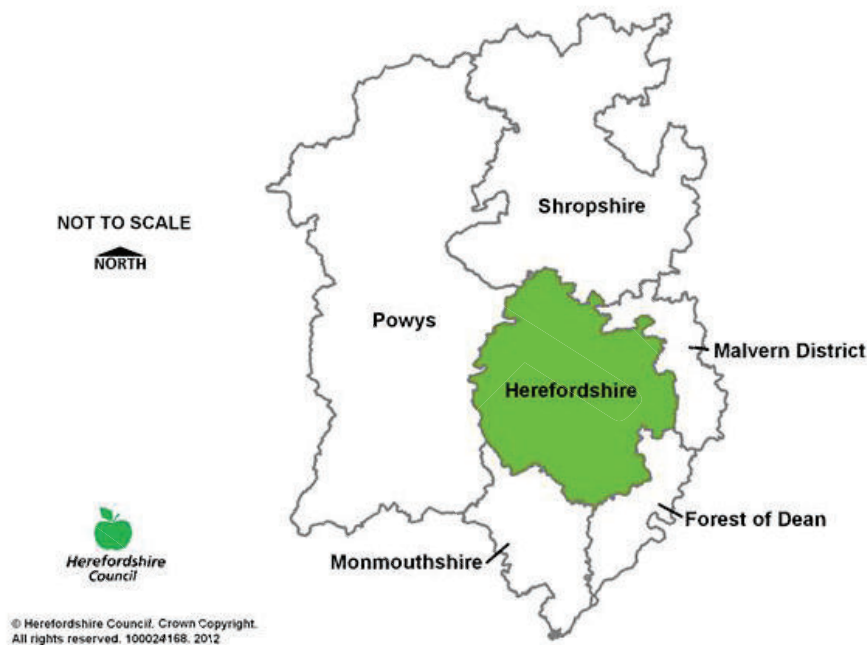
The next stage in the process of preparing the Core Strategy after this Draft Core Strategy stage will be the Pre-Submission Publication stage which it is intended to consult upon (for soundness purposes only) in autumn 2013, with submission for examination following that. Adoption of the Core Strategy is intended for spring 2014.

### **Working with other authorities and organisations**



Herefordshire is a landlocked county that does not exist in isolation from its neighbours. The Core Strategy needs to take account of wider challenges, issues and opportunities affecting neighbouring areas as well as in the wider region. Cross-boundary working has taken place during the preparation of the Core Strategy, both through on-going liaison with neighbouring authorities and at sub-regional level and through the review of proposals within adjoining local plans and other development plan documents. This will continue with the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan – the document that sits alongside the Core Strategy and sets out all the infrastructure needs, funding and developer contributions required for the Core Strategy projects and proposals to be realised. This on-going relationship with other authorities and organisations is essential to meet the legal requirement of the Localism Act 2011 (s110) – a “Duty to Co-operate”.

**Figure 1.2 – Adjoining authorities to Herefordshire**



Adjoining English strategic authorities to Herefordshire are Worcestershire County Council, Shropshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council, which deal with waste and minerals matters. There is a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2004-2034) between Herefordshire and Worcestershire and this has had great success - residents' have helped to meet its aims through reducing the amount of waste thrown away and by increasing the amount of waste recycled .

Herefordshire, alongside the Welsh county of Monmouthshire and Herefordshire, alongside Worcestershire, contains parts of two protected landscapes which are recognised as being of national importance; the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the south of the county and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the east (see the Key Diagram). The emerging Core Strategy must ensure a consistency of approach to development within both areas through its planning policies and joint working via the management boards.

Herefordshire also borders Shropshire Council. The two local authorities have worked closely together in the production of a housing evidence base including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 for the West Housing Market Area. Joint

working has also taken place with respect to gypsies and travellers assessments of need and alongside other constituent authorities in the development of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – discussed later in this section.

The Welsh authorities of Powys and Monmouthshire adjoin the county and although subject to a different national planning framework, joint working on the issue of water resources and water treatment is being carried out as all three county areas are covered by the same water company i.e. Dyr Cymru Welsh Water.

Economic influences are particularly significant in the county. The Economic Development Strategy 2011 for Herefordshire highlights a number of objectives, some of which, such as enhanced skills, increasing wage levels and better infrastructure, are reflected in similar documents across the wider sub region. Historically, the county has a low economic output level compared to other authorities in the West Midlands and the United Kingdom as a whole. This is affected by the type of businesses in the county and the relatively low wage levels – this means less money is being spent here. Herefordshire also experiences a net loss of people travelling beyond its boundaries to work. Two projects in Herefordshire linked to the Core Strategy and Economic Development Strategy objectives, that exemplify co-operation with adjoining authorities and other bodies include: 1) the Border UK Broadband Project and 2) the setting up of the Hereford Enterprise Zone.

- 1) The Broadband project involved close co-operation with Gloucestershire County Council to use government and private sector funding to provide access to faster broadband. The project area covers all homes and businesses in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire which would otherwise not have received faster broadband without government intervention.
- 2) The underlying aim of the Core Strategy in promoting regeneration in Hereford highlights a move towards creating a more sustainable county with improved employment, leisure, and cultural opportunities thereby potentially reducing some of the cross boundary movements. Herefordshire has formed a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with Shropshire and Telford because of the common issues between the areas. The Marches LEP will be used to share resources to create benefit for local businesses and raise the profile of the area. One example of this is the creation of the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas. The Enterprise Zone has a focus on the defence and security sector with additional employment hubs focused on advanced technologies, environmental technologies and food and drink technologies. It is intended that the scheme will become a catalyst for enhanced economic growth throughout the towns of the Marches through the creation of highly skilled jobs and encouragement of overseas investment into the area. The Marches LEP Board have approved “Poised for Growth” a high level planning and housing statement which sets out a pledge to work pro-actively with developers and businesses to create economic growth across the LEP area.

**Figure 1.3 – Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas, Hereford**



### **Evidence base**

The Core Strategy must be underpinned by a robust evidence base that is regularly reviewed to inform decision and plan making. The policies and proposals must be both informed by and assessed against relevant available evidence. The list of documents and sources making up this evidence base is set out in appendix 2.

### **Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment**

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a government requirement for all development plan documents. Sustainability is about ensuring the long term maintenance of wellbeing and the environment for our present and future communities. The process assesses the impact of the Core Strategy on the environment, people and economy. It incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment. Following consultation with key local regional and national organisations such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage, sustainability criteria have been agreed covering issues such as air quality, water quality and quantity, landscape, health and economic performance. This document has been assessed against these sustainability criteria to find the 'best fit' and the results made available in the Sustainability Appraisal Report to ensure that the draft proposals are those that perform most satisfactorily when evaluated against reasonable alternatives.

The Core Strategy has also been subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening to assess whether there would be likely significant effects on sites of international importance for wildlife (European sites). Where a land use plan is likely to have a significant effect on such sites, an appropriate assessment must be carried out of the implications in respect of their conservation objectives. The screening exercise has considered potential effects on European sites within and around Herefordshire. It concluded that some uncertain effects would require appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. This assessment is contained in a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment Report.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring and review are key aspects of the approach to the preparation of Local Plans. Continuous monitoring enables an assessment of the effectiveness of the Core Strategy and the policies contained within it in terms of both delivering and controlling various types of development across the county. As part of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report containing information on all the plans set out in the local planning authority's local development scheme. One of the key functions of the report is to monitor policies contained within development plan documents and to report on their performance, particularly where policies are not

being implemented and why and where policies specify a target of net additional dwellings or net additional affordable dwellings to be reached.

To assess the performance of the Core Strategy, a separate monitoring framework is set out at the end of each section which will be implemented after adoption of the plan. This includes key plan indicators as well as those to monitor the sustainability of the plan. Where policies are not performing as intended, the annual monitoring report will suggest the actions that need to be taken to address the issues. It is intended that in addition to annual monitoring a five-yearly cycle of more comprehensive review of the Core Strategy is established with dates of 2019 and 2024. Review processes would need to commence in advance of the review dates to enable any new policies to be adopted in a timely manner.

### **Flexibility**

The Core Strategy has been written to enable it to deal with changing circumstances across the county. General changes could include changes to national policy and updates to the evidence base as well as external impacts such as changes to migration trends, fuel prices, use of the internet and so on. More specifically, situations which may arise are: housing development failing to come forward as planned, infrastructure not being provided at the same time as development and market changes adversely affecting the viability of development.

The evidence base will be kept up to date and specific studies e.g. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be regularly reviewed. All of the policies are written to refer to national policy rather than repeat it and to refer to the evidence base and this allows the policies to be valid even where there are minor changes to higher level policies or the evidence base. Some policies also refer to further development plan documents or supplementary planning documents which may also update existing policies or allow for flexibility in detail without changing the policy itself.

With respect to housing developments, various measures are already in place to ensure that sites come forward as planned, and measures that can be taken if not include:

- the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2012 is made up of a large number of smaller and medium sites with over 30,000 deliverable and developable sites identified, which could be brought forward if there are unforeseen constraints to larger strategic sites coming forward as planned;
- a Hereford Area Plan, neighbourhood development plans and other development plan documents are planned to be progressed to an advanced stage by adoption of the Core Strategy and will include residential sites which will provide more certainty for sites coming forward in the middle and later part of the period;
- if monitoring shows that residential sites are coming forward more slowly than planned, the Hereford Area Plan, neighbourhood development plans and other development plan documents will provide the opportunity to review other designations/policies to bring further sites forward if necessary.

## Herefordshire context

The Core Strategy is based on an understanding of Herefordshire's unique characteristics, derived and continually evolving from the interaction between people and the environment, as well as its relationship with adjoining areas, knowledge of past trends and how things are likely to change in the future. This section provides a profile of Herefordshire, its social, economic and environmental components and identifies the key issues and challenges we face.

Many of the key facts have been obtained from the *Understanding Herefordshire Report 2012* unless otherwise stated. This can be viewed at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures).

### The place

Herefordshire is a large, predominately rural, landlocked county situated in the south western corner of the West Midlands region, on the border with Wales. It has a close relationship with neighbouring Shropshire and Worcestershire and there are a range of interactions taking place which cross Herefordshire's boundaries in all directions, including service provision, transport links and commuting patterns.

Figure 2.1 Herefordshire and surrounding counties

### Herefordshire and surrounding counties



The county area covers 217,973 hectares. High hill ranges, including the Malvern Hills and Black Mountains, encircle much of the county at its perimeter. Within, the landscape is one of gentle rolling hills, dissected by wide river valleys with lower-



lying plains in the centre. River crossing points have provided a natural focus for the development of many settlements and these intermingle in Herefordshire's rich and diverse landscape.

One of those rivers is the county's principal geographical feature, the River Wye, which enters Herefordshire near the Welsh town of Hay-on-Wye, flowing east to Hereford before leaving the county at the Wye Gorge, downstream of Ross-on-Wye. In addition to significant parts of the county being drained by the Wye river system, the River Wye, together with its valley landscape, is in part an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and integral to Herefordshire's identity.

At the county's heart is the city of Hereford which is the main centre for civil and ecclesiastical administration, health, education and leisure facilities, shopping and employment. The five market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye, surround the city with still almost medieval regularity. Outside of these urban areas, nucleated villages and smaller settlements, farms and other isolated properties characterise much of Herefordshire.

## Social Progress

Key facts	
Population:	183,600 <sup>2</sup>
Density:	0.8 persons per hectare (84 per square kilometre)
Population growth:	+4.9% in the decade since 2001 <sup>3</sup> Estimated growth of 12% by 2031 <sup>4</sup>
Age structure:	1 in 5 people (21.3%) are aged 65 or over. Since 2001 residents aged 90 or over grew by almost 40% whilst those aged 5-15 years fell by 12% <sup>5</sup>
Ethnicity:	6% of residents are from ethnic groups other than 'white British'
Deprivation:	A fifth of households (14,500) live in poverty, mostly in urban areas
Access to services:	Close to two thirds of the county are amongst the 25% most deprived areas in England with respect to geographical barriers to services. These areas are predominantly rural
Education:	57.5% of pupils achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs 'A' level results in or close to upper quartile nationally

## The people

Herefordshire's resident population is 183,600 (2011). This is the first estimate based on the 2011 Census and represented a growth of 4.9% between 2001 and

<sup>2</sup> Mid-2011 estimate based on the 2011 Census from the Office for National Statistics

<sup>3</sup> 2011 Census: population & household estimates for Herefordshire

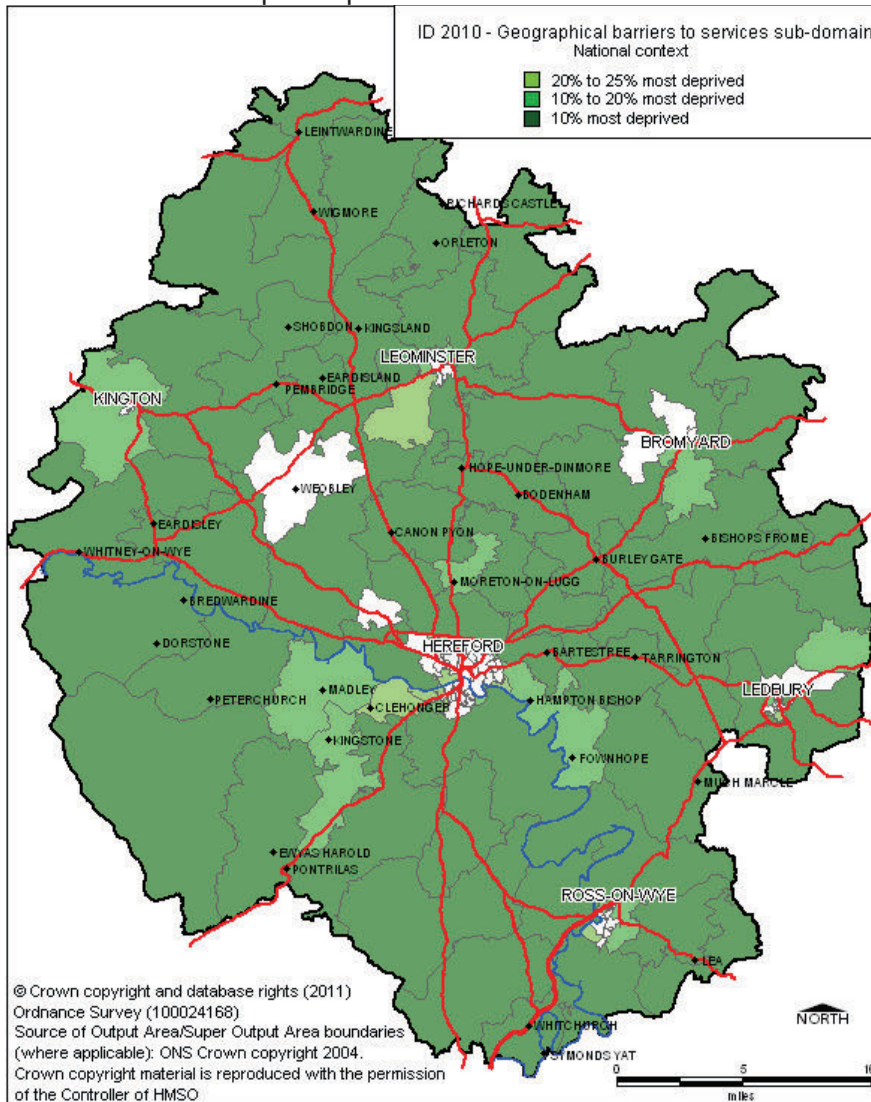
<sup>4</sup> Update to Local Housing Requirement Study – March 2012

<sup>5</sup> 2011 Census: population & household estimates for Herefordshire

2011 (slower than the previous two decades and below the national average of 7% for the same period). The population is estimated to grow by about 12% by 2031<sup>6</sup>.

Herefordshire has a sparse population with the fourth lowest overall population density in England (ninth in England and Wales). Just under a third of Herefordshire residents live in Hereford, with about a fifth in the five market towns and nearly half in the surrounding rural areas. Despite other counties having a lower overall population density, Herefordshire has the greater proportion of its population living in 'very sparse' areas (25%)<sup>7</sup>.

**Figure 2.2** Map showing the areas of Herefordshire that are amongst the most deprived in England according to the Geographical Barriers to Services sub-domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010.



Source: Department of Communities and Local Government

This scattered population presents many challenges, both for residents in terms of dependence on the private car, increased household costs, access to services, often poor or no broadband access and social isolation, as well as for the delivery of services, particularly to community members already experiencing disadvantage.

Whilst Herefordshire is widely regarded as being an affluent county this masks issues of deprivation, poverty and a continued widening of the gap between the most

<sup>6</sup> Update to Local Housing Requirement Study – March 2012

<sup>7</sup> Sparsity of Population - <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/subcounty>

and least deprived. Close to two thirds of the county are amongst the 25% most deprived in England with respect to geographical barriers to services and the average income of residents is significantly below both the regional and national averages - with pockets of severe deprivation in parts of Hereford and Leominster, as well as potentially 'hidden' deprivation in rural areas.

Like the national population structure, Herefordshire's population is ageing with one in five people aged 65 or over (compared to one in six nationally)<sup>8</sup>. Figure 2.3 shows how much older the age structure of Herefordshire is compared to England and Wales, with higher proportions of residents in all age groups from 45-49 upwards and less in the middle aged groups. Both national and local forecasts predict a further rise in the proportion of older people and thus a need to plan for the consequence of an ageing population, for example by providing for supported and extra care housing, and ensuring better access to health care and community facilities.

**Figure 2.3.** Age structure of Herefordshire (bars) and England and Wales (lines), from the 2011 Census<sup>9</sup> -



### Housing and transport

There are 79,122 households in Herefordshire (2011) and this is projected to increase by 23.3% by 2031<sup>10</sup>, contributing to the need to provide additional housing. Housing affordability is a key issue, with Herefordshire having the worst housing affordability ratio (in 2011 house prices were 8.6 times annual earnings) within the West Midlands region. High houses prices, particularly relative to earnings, brought about by demand and a current housing offer which encompasses a high proportion of high value properties, has increased the need for affordable houses as well as social housing.

Planning for Herefordshire's ageing population and strong retirement market by the development of "homes for life" to facilitate independent living and care needs is

<sup>8</sup> 2011 Census: population & household estimates for Herefordshire

<sup>9</sup> 2011 Census: population & household estimates for Herefordshire

<sup>10</sup> Update to Local Housing Requirement Study March 2011 by GL Hearn



important. At the same time, there is the opportunity to plan for more balanced and integrated communities by providing the right mix of housing and facilities to cater for people at different stages in their life cycle, and with different incomes and needs. This will require the provision of more affordable housing, more family sized and smaller homes for younger households, facilities for children and young people, and a wider range of employment opportunities for people of working age.

Herefordshire plays a strategic role in facilitating cross boundary links between England and Wales. Whilst vehicle flows along these strategic routes are considered low in a national context, when coupled with local movement, congestion, journey time delays and air pollution are problems, notably within Hereford. Car ownership and dependency is high due to the lack of public transport in rural areas and the need to access services and employment from these areas. The need for significant investment in transport infrastructure is acknowledged, although the current economic climate is likely to affect this.

### Education and training

In 2011 the portion of pupils achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs including English and Maths was marginally below the national average (57.5% compared to 58.4% nationally). The performance of young people in full time education up to 19 has been strong in Herefordshire's schools and colleges, with performance consistently in or close to the upper quartile nationally for 'A' levels. Significant redevelopment projects at Hereford's colleges have also been completed and may improve access to courses and training. However access to further and higher education sites remains a key issue for such a rural county, with many young people leaving the county altogether to undertake formal higher education.

### Community safety

Herefordshire is generally a low crime area, with a 13% reduction in total crimes over the three years to March 2011. The highest level of all types of recorded crime is in the main population centres and residents in some of these areas experience a higher fear of crime. Road safety is a key concern for Herefordshire residents.

### Social issues, problems and challenges

- Provide for all generations promoting balanced and integrated communities
- Ensure the provision of the right mix of housing, including affordable housing to maximise community benefits
- Ensure the provision of and enhanced access to services, facilities, education and broadband in a rural, sparsely populated county
- Improve transport and communication infrastructures
- Reduce opportunities for crime

### Economic Prosperity

#### Key facts

Economic output:	Low, increasing at a lower rate than the West Midlands region and England between 2001 - 2010 <sup>11</sup>
Business sizes:	Predominantly small, employing 10 or fewer staff

<sup>11</sup> Herefordshire Local Economic Assessment 2010

Business starts-up:	Low rate but businesses survive longer
Main industry sectors:	Wholesale & retail, manufacturing, health & social work
Employment:	76% of 16-64 year olds are economically active <sup>12</sup>
Self-employment rate:	15% of working age population in 2008-2009 <sup>13</sup>
Unemployment:	2.5% (October 2012) <sup>14</sup>
Average income:	Low - £20,080 (gross median annual earnings 2011)

### **The economy**

Herefordshire's economic output is low when compared regionally and nationally. The overall productivity of the county is affected by a relatively large proportion of employment being in sectors that tend to attract lower wages such as 'wholesale and retail' and 'accommodation and food services' and 'agriculture'<sup>15</sup>. There is comparatively low employment in knowledge based industries and out of county commuting for work, both of which affect output.

Herefordshire has a small business economy, with 86% of businesses employing 10 or fewer staff. Business start-up rates are lower than England as a whole, although business survival rates are better. The self-employment rate (15%) is greater than the West Midlands (8%) and England (9%) and along with home based businesses play an important role in the economy, particularly in rural areas.

The three sectors which employ the greatest proportion of workers are wholesale and retail trade (19%), manufacturing (14%) and human health and social work (12%), whilst agriculture accounts for a greater proportion of employees (8%) when compared regionally and nationally (both 1%)<sup>16</sup>. With regard to employment locations, the majority of workers are employed in Hereford (42%) and the market towns (25%, of which Leominster accounts for 8% and Ross-on-Wye 7%)<sup>17</sup>. In 2011 the county's primary employment site, the Rotherwas Estate (on the edge of Hereford) was awarded Enterprise Zone status. This is an opportunity to provide a catalyst for economic growth through inward investment and skilled job creation.

Barriers to business growth and diversification, particularly in rural Herefordshire, are poor infrastructure, including poor broadband and mobile phone coverage. The £50 million Borders Broadband project, in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, aims for all rural areas to gain access to at least 2Mbps (megabits per second) broadband speeds, with many people receiving much higher speeds.

Earnings are persistently low and the gap between Herefordshire's earnings and those of the West Midlands and England as a whole is getting wider. By contrast unemployment is lower when compared on these scales. Rates of qualification amongst Herefordshire's working age residents (16-64) have declined over the three years prior to 2011, as has the proportion of residents without any qualification when

<sup>12</sup> Economic Activity in Herefordshire - [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1253.aspx](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1253.aspx)

<sup>13</sup> Herefordshire Economic Assessment 2010

<sup>14</sup> Unemployment -- [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1563.aspx](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1563.aspx)

<sup>15</sup> Herefordshire Local Economic Assessment 2010

<sup>16</sup> Herefordshire Local Economic Assessment 2010

<sup>17</sup> Herefordshire Local Economic Assessment 2010

comparing both to national rates<sup>18</sup>. A gap in skills and hard-to-fill vacancies are problematic for businesses. There also remains a demand for migrant labour.

Herefordshire has a strong, diverse and independent third sector (voluntary, community & non-profit), with a wide range of voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises and housing associations contributing to county life.

### **Tourism**

With fine, tranquil, rural landscapes where leisure activities can be enjoyed, cultural and historic interest, together with a calendar of varied events and a strong creative offer that includes local food produce, Herefordshire has much to appeal to visitors. Tourism has become an important part of the local economy with visits and tourist expenditure growing – in 2011 there were 5.1 million visitors spending £466.8 million and 9% of employees in Herefordshire work in tourism<sup>19</sup>. There remains potential in Herefordshire tourism and further investment may provide benefits for the county.

### **Revitalising town centres**

Hereford is identified as a sub-regional centre and is the dominant centre for shopping and services for county residents. However it lacks a wide range of shopping (non-food goods) and entertainment facilities, thereby struggling to compete with neighbouring centres outside of the county (Worcester and Gloucester). The relocation of Hereford's livestock market and redevelopment of this 43 hectare site just north of the city centre will provide a range of retail, leisure and housing. The Edgar Street Grid scheme offers an opportunity to transform this under-utilised area, regenerate the local economy and widen the experiences offered by the city, strengthening its role in the county and region. Hereford and the five market towns have a good provision of independent retailers and whilst being primarily locations for food shopping for residents, their historic environments and niche shopping make them appealing to visitors also.

Revitalising the town centres and making them more attractive destinations for both residents and visitors will benefit the local economy and aid wider regeneration.

### **Economic issues, problems and challenges**

- Diversify the economy, creating more skilled jobs to reduce out of county commuting and retention of young educated residents
- Raise wage levels so reducing the earnings gap
- Overcome barriers to business growth and diversification
- Capitalise on educational achievements and improve rates of qualification
- Invest in and promote Herefordshire's tourism potential for the enjoyment of all
- Strengthen the roles of Hereford and the market towns as attractive centres for retail and leisure in the county and region

<sup>18</sup> Qualifications -

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/docs/Quarterly\\_Economic\\_Reports/Qualifications\\_2011.pdf](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/docs/Quarterly_Economic_Reports/Qualifications_2011.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Herefordshire - Steam Report 2011

## Environmental Quality

### Key facts

Natural environment:	2 Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) 4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) 77 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 3 National Nature Reserves (NNR) 773 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
Historic environment:	5899 Listed buildings <sup>20</sup> 263 Scheduled Ancient Monuments 24 Registered historic parks and gardens 64 Conservation areas
Flooding:	10% of land within Flood Zone 2 (low to medium risk) 9% within a Flood Zone 3 (high risk)

### Natural environment

Herefordshire is considered to be the West Midlands' most rural county. The countryside is rich and varied, ranging from the high hills of the border areas and the dramatic steep sloping Wye Gorge, to the gentle rolling slopes of the Golden and Teme Valleys and the low lying river meadows of central Herefordshire. Large tracts of this landscape are of high quality with the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills having national AONB designation, whilst the area along the western boundary with the Brecon Beacons National Park is of the highest quality it lacks any national designation. Many ancient local landscapes continue to survive intact in the face of development pressures and the county's remoter areas often possess a continuity and tranquillity that is increasingly scarce.

Due to its topography, geology and rivers the landscape of Herefordshire has preserved many natural features and traditional land uses resulting in a county rich in biodiversity and natural assets. Herefordshire's natural environment supports a wide range of habitats, including the ancient woodlands of the Wye Valley, the near natural River Wye, the forested ravine of the Downton Gorge and the county's treasured traditional fruit orchards. The richness of biodiversity within Herefordshire is reflected in the number of statutory (e.g. SACs, SSSIs & NNRs) and non-statutory sites (e.g. LWS) designated for nature conservation which cover 9% of the county.

The county's geology, resultant soil types and the vegetation they support have shaped a landscape which is highly fertile, particularly on low lying land, making food production an enduring primary activity. The Herefordshire landscape is a key economic asset creating not only an attractive place to live and work but also an important tourist destination.

### Historic environment

Herefordshire possesses a rich historic environment which includes numerous Iron Age hill forts, sites of Roman towns, defensive features such as Offa's Dyke and the border castles, together with some of the best preserved traditional timber framed buildings in the country. The richness of the historic environment is reflected in the number of designated heritage assets encompassing a wealth of listed buildings,

<sup>20</sup> This total is derived from the records for Herefordshire currently held in the National Heritage List. It is a dynamic figure which may fluctuate as new assets are designated and/or existing designations are reviewed.

registered historic parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments and conservations areas. These add to the special built quality and environmental character of many areas of the county and their protection and enhancement is recognised as an important ingredient for economic and neighbourhood renewal.

The county's archaeological heritage is a valuable but fragile part of our historic environment. A large part of central Hereford is one of only five cities in England to be designated an area of archaeological importance. Despite having such nationally recognised heritage at its core, the great extent of Herefordshire's archaeological resource is not well surveyed or even assessed. Opportunities associated with developments and externally funded projects will continue to be secured to gain a better understanding of our archaeological heritage.

The wider value of historic landscapes is recognised through the designation of 64 conservations areas, which vary in character and size from tiny hamlets to villages to country house estates, market towns and Hereford's historic centre. Rather than one vernacular building style, Herefordshire has a diverse range of buildings of which perhaps the most well-known and distinctive is the 'black and white' timber framed traditional buildings of the northern half of the county.

### **Climate change**

The threat of climate change means Herefordshire is likely to experience milder and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers with increased summer-time storms and intense rainfall events. Significant areas of Herefordshire are low-lying and liable to flooding. Climate change will further increase the risk and events of flooding (including flash flooding) across the county. Additionally, climate change will result in a loss of biodiversity and landscape character, together with an impact on agricultural practices leading to increased water demand.

The potential impacts of climate change need to be taken into account in planning for all new development, both in terms of location and design. Increased energy and water efficiency will have to be taken on board along with water storage measures, sustainable drainage systems, and the provision of renewable energy generation.

### **Air quality**

There are relatively low levels of air pollution within Herefordshire however two areas have been identified as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) due to levels of the pollutant nitrogen dioxide (from vehicle emissions) exceeding national standards. These two areas are the A49 road corridor through Hereford and the area of the Bargates road junction in central Leominster. Emissions of carbon dioxide whilst decreasing remain higher per head of population (8.6 tonnes per capita) when compared nationally (7.4 tonnes per capita). Herefordshire's rural nature and high car dependency has an impact on air quality locally and more widely on climate change.

### **Water environment**

Flood risk is a key issue in Herefordshire and in some areas a significant constraint to new development. 10% of land is situated within flood zone 2 (low to medium risk) and 9% is situated within flood zone 3 (high risk) as identified by the Environment Agency. In addition to river flooding, runoff has increased as agriculture has intensified and more roads and houses have been built, degrading the natural permeability of the landscape and capacity to retain water.

As already indicated, the River Wye and its tributaries are amongst the most important natural assets of Herefordshire. However, phosphate levels in small sections of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are presently exceeding the conservation objectives for the river, degrading the ecosystem. This is



the result of controlled waste water discharges associated with residential and industrial developments and agricultural practices in the catchment area. Therefore to ensure all sections of the River Wye meet the favourable condition phosphate target it is essential that future inputs are controlled. The catchment of the Wye covers a significant area of the county and a continuing programme of management and improvements is necessary to facilitate new development during the plan period.

### **Minerals and waste**

Known mineral resources in Herefordshire are relatively limited in range, primarily consisting of aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock (limestone))<sup>21</sup>. Aggregates from Herefordshire quarries supply both local markets and the wider area. The main non-aggregate mineral being worked is sandstone for use as building stone and roof tiles. In contrast to the aggregate quarries, the extraction of sandstone is a small-scale operation dependent on need and market demand. The continued extraction of aggregates and sandstone will be required to meet future growth demands, local sandstone being vital for building restoration, as well as maintaining local characteristics.

In partnership with Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire has prepared a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy up to 2034. This has been reviewed in light of legislative and fiscal changes. Waste levels have declined since 2004<sup>22</sup> and recent initiatives have been effective in increasing household recycling of waste (40% in 2010-11) and reducing the amount going to landfill. The levels of waste generated and how this is treated remain an issue, especially as populations grow.

#### **Environmental issues, problems & challenges**

- Protect and enhance the county's rich natural and historic assets
- Address climate change and flooding
- Plan for the potential impact of climate change in new developments
- Ensure new developments are of high quality design and construction reflecting Herefordshire's distinctive character
- Use resources efficiently
- Improve air and water quality
- Continue reducing waste levels, including increasing recycling and a reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill

<sup>21</sup> Herefordshire Minerals and Waste Planning Assessment 2009

<sup>22</sup> The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2004 – 2034 – First Review August 2011

### Section 3: Vision, objectives and the spatial strategy

The Core Strategy sets out a spatial strategy for Herefordshire for the period up to 2031. This is quite different to the land use planning approach of the previous development plan (Unitary Development Plan 2007). It includes:

- a definition of what sustainable development means for Herefordshire;
- a vision for Herefordshire towards the end of the plan period;
- a set of objectives to deliver the vision;
- a spatial strategy that addresses the different needs and opportunities of different parts of Herefordshire;
- details of how the Core Strategy proposals will be monitored.

The council's strategy is based on targeting future development in places where specific needs and opportunities have been identified, thereby addressing key issues raised in the Characteristics of Herefordshire section. This approach seeks to accommodate economic and population growth with new housing and supporting infrastructure, whilst protecting and enhancing the attractive and distinctive character of the different areas of the county, so achieving **sustainable development**.

#### Sustainable development

“Sustainable development” is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Government has set three aims for sustainable development:

- contributing to building a strong, competitive and responsive economy;
- supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities;
- continuing to protect and enhance our natural, historic and built environment.

At the heart of the government's policy (National Planning Policy Framework March 2012) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The council intends to achieve this presumption in accordance with the following policy:

#### **Policy SS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

When considering development proposals the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within national policy. It will always work proactively to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the social, economic and environmental conditions in Herefordshire.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant with policies in other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in national policy taken as a whole; or
- b) specific elements of national policy indicate that development should be restricted.

#### Vision and objectives

The Core Strategy has a vision and 12 objectives already aligned under the themes of promoting social progress (supporting strong communities by meeting housing, education and health, transport and infrastructure needs), economic prosperity (supporting new jobs, area regeneration, business, tourism and retail) and environmental quality (addressing climate change, protecting and enhancing the environmental assets of the county). The objectives set the framework for the spatial strategy and policy guidance that follow later. They will be monitored annually to measure how well they are working.

#### **Overall vision for the county**

***Herefordshire will be a place of distinctive environmental, historical and cultural assets and local communities, with sustainable development fostering a high quality of life for those who live, work and visit here. A sustainable future for the county will be based on the interdependence of the themes of social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality with the aim of increasing the county's self-reliance and resilience.***

#### **Vision for social progress in Herefordshire**

By 2031, decent, affordable homes, jobs, health and community facilities and other necessary infrastructure will have been provided in urban and rural areas to meet the needs of all sections of the population, creating safe, inclusive places and robust communities that promote good health and well-being, maintains independence and self-sufficiency and reduces social isolation.

The opportunities and benefits from open space, leisure, shopping, sport, art, heritage, learning, health and tourism facilities and assets will be maximised, enabling more active lifestyles and the retention of our young people, supporting older people and an improved quality of life for all.

Residents and workers in urban and rural areas will have a reduced need to travel by private car with opportunities for "active travel" i.e. walking and cycling promoted, along with improved accessibility to public transport. In Hereford, congestion will be managed and public transport improved through a balanced package of transport measures including the provision of a relief road, park and ride facilities and bus priority schemes. Residents will have the opportunity to contribute to the shape of their local area through engagement in plan making.

#### **Vision for economic prosperity in Herefordshire**

By 2031, Herefordshire will have a thriving local economy with a balanced and diversified business base incorporating more knowledge-based and high-tech businesses and a more skilled and adaptable workforce. A genuine commitment by all businesses to sustainable development will underpin a unique quality of life. New employment land will have been provided to complement new homes and support higher incomes jobs enabling existing and future businesses to grow and thrive.

Communications infrastructure will be in place to enable a similar level of broadband service everywhere in the county, with the major employment locations enjoying broadband services matching the best in the country.

Educational developments (including higher education) will bolster and support local resources and strengths, such as environmental technologies, creative industries, agriculture, food production, forestry, equestrian expertise and tourism as well as support improved skills training, development and local job opportunities.

Hereford will provide a strong, sub-regional shopping, employment, leisure and cultural focus for the county. Comprehensive proposals for regeneration in and



around the city centre will complement the historic core in providing homes, jobs, shops and leisure facilities and transport improvements. As a result the city will be a vibrant destination of choice for shoppers and visitors alike. The market towns will contribute to the economic development of the county whilst being distinctive, thriving service centres that are better linked to their hinterland villages through enterprise hubs, service provision and transport accessibility. Our village-based services will be supported through new development (including live/work units) in appropriate locations to foster sustainable communities and promote rural regeneration.

Herefordshire will be a sought after destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by more fully utilising, but respecting, the county's unique environmental assets such as the River Wye.

### **Vision for environmental quality in Herefordshire**

New development will be designed and constructed in ways to ensure that local distinctiveness is reinforced. The wider impacts of climate change will be addressed by reducing carbon emissions, minimising pollution and the risk of flooding, ensuring availability of natural resources, and by providing appropriate waste management and recycling facilities and renewable energy schemes.

Networks of connected, well managed and accessible natural green spaces will provide a range of enhanced leisure and health benefits within and between towns, villages and the countryside. Local food production and processing will be fostered whilst supporting stewardship of soils and water, biodiversity and the characteristic Herefordshire landscape.

The area's historic and environmental resource, including its natural beauty and quality of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, built environment and cultural heritage, will be protected and enhanced. It will underpin and foster growth and innovation in businesses and jobs; being accessed, appreciated and actively supported by more people, for more purposes, in all walks of life.

**Figure 3.1: Strategic objectives**

<b>Core Strategy objectives</b>		<b>Core Strategy policies</b>
<b>Social progress</b>		
<b>1</b>	To meet the housing needs of all sections of the community (especially those in need of affordable housing), by providing a range of quality, energy efficient homes in the right place at the right time	<b>SS2; SS3; Section 4 (Place Shaping Policies); H1; H2; H3; H4; SD1; SD2;SD3;SD4;</b>
<b>2</b>	To improve the health, well-being and quality of life of all residents by ensuring new developments positively contribute towards better access to, provision and use of, improved public open spaces, sport and recreation, education, cultural and health facilities	<b>OS1;SS2; OS3; SC1;</b>
<b>3</b>	To support existing education, life-long learning and the retention of our young people through the provision and/or improvement of higher education, skills development and training facilities	<b>SC1</b>
<b>4</b>	To reduce the need to travel and lessen the harmful impacts from traffic growth, promote active travel and improve quality of life by locating significant new development where access to employment, shopping, education, health, recreation, leisure and other services are, or could be made available by walking, cycling or	<b>SS1; SS4;</b>

	public transport	
5	To improve access to services in rural areas and movement and air quality within urban areas by ensuring new developments support the provision of an accessible, integrated, safe and sustainable transport network and improved traffic management schemes	MT1
<b>Economic prosperity</b>		
6	To provide more local, better paid job opportunities to limit out-commuting and strengthen the economy by attracting higher value-added, knowledge based industries and cutting-edge environmental technologies to new/existing employment land and enabling existing businesses to grow and diversify, facilitated by the universal provision of a high bandwidth broadband service	SS4; E1; E2; E3; HD6
7	To strengthen Hereford's role as a focus for the county, through city centre expansion as part of wider city regeneration and through the provision of a balanced package of transport measures including park and ride, bus priority schemes and a relief road including a second river crossing	HD1; HD2; HD3; HD4; HD5; HD6; E5; E6
8	To strengthen the economic viability of the market towns, villages and their rural hinterlands by facilitating employment generation and diversification, improving delivery and access to services through housing (including affordable housing) and improved ICT as well as realising the value of the environment as an economic asset	BY1; BY2; LO1; LO2; LB1; LB2; RW1; RW2; KG1; RA1- 6; E5; E6
9	To develop Herefordshire as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by enabling the provision of new, as well as enhancement of existing tourism infrastructure in appropriate locations	E4
<b>Environmental quality</b>		
10	To achieve sustainable communities and protect the environment by delivering well-designed places, spaces and buildings, which use land efficiently, reinforce local distinctiveness and are supported by the necessary infrastructure including green infrastructure	SD1; LD1; LD2; LD3; LD4; ID1
11	To address the causes and impacts of climate change by ensuring new development: uses sustainable design and construction methods to conserve natural resources, does not increase flood risk to new or existing property, increases the use of renewable forms of energy to reduce carbon emissions, minimises waste and pollution, manages water supply and conservation and conserves and protects biodiversity and geodiversity	SS5; SD1; SD2; SD3; SD4; LD3; MN1-6; W1-5;
12	To conserve, promote, utilise and enjoy our natural, built, historic and cultural assets for the fullest benefits to the whole community by safeguarding the county's current stock of environmental assets from loss and damage, reversing negative trends, ensuring best condition and encouraging expansion, as well as appropriately managing future assets	LD1; LD2; LD3; LD4; LD5

## The spatial strategy

## Background

The spatial strategy seeks to deliver the spatial vision and objectives for the county set out earlier in this section. The strategy has been developed through analysis of the results of the evidence base, the outcomes of several public consultations on different stages of the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the options/alternatives and policies throughout the plan production process. It provides a broad indication of the overall scale of development in the county up to 2031 and the infrastructure needed to support it. The role of the strategy is to achieve an appropriate balance between improving quality of life (social progress) and economic prosperity for all and the protection of the county's environmental assets, making sure that any necessary change and development is sustainable in the interests of future generations. The explanation of the strategy is set out under the three themes of social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality – these have been derived from considerations of approaches at the early stages of the Core Strategy. The policies set out in this and the following sections seek to deliver the entire spatial strategy and provide the context for the preparation of other development plan documents, including neighbourhood development plans.

Producing the Core Strategy has been about taking difficult decisions to achieve the long term vision for the county. During the production of the Core Strategy these decisions, along with reasonable alternatives, have been assessed against the objectives of sustainable development which are outlined in Figure 3.2 and explained further in the Final SA/SEA Report.

**Figure 3.2: Key strategic decisions that Core Strategy has taken and reasonable alternatives considered**

Key decision	Alternative/s considered	Stage of Core Strategy production	SA/SEA report reference
Focussing the majority of development to Hereford and the market towns with a combined strategy of considering social, economic and environmental goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic option</li> <li>2. Social option</li> <li>3. Environmental option</li> <li>4. New town or expanded settlement</li> </ol>	Developing Options and Place Shaping	Developing Options SA/SEA (Appendix B2-2) Place Shaping SA (Appendix B3-1 page 1)
Focussing the largest strategic allocation (after Hereford) to Leominster	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disperse growth around the town at smaller sites</li> <li>2. Limiting growth</li> </ol>	Developing Options	Developing Options SA/SEA (Appendix B3 page 41)
Promoting a western relief road route corridor as part of a new transport package for Hereford	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. No relief road</li> <li>4. Promoting an eastern route corridor option</li> <li>5. Variations to the southern part of the western route corridor</li> <li>6. Promote a</li> </ol>	Preferred Option and Revised Preferred Option	Preferred Option SA/SEA Note for Hereford (page 17) and Revised preferred Option SA Note (page 13)

	partial eastern route corridor instead of a western route corridor		
Reducing the amount of housing proposed in the strategy overall from 18,000 to 16,500 by reducing the amount at Hereford and increasing the amount proposed in the rural areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make no changes</li> <li>2. Just change time period of plan</li> <li>3. Retain 18,000, but redistribute 2000 houses from Hereford to rural areas</li> <li>4. Retain 18,000 dwellings total, but redistribute 2000 houses from Hereford to the market towns</li> <li>5. Build more than 18,000 new homes up to 2031</li> <li>6. Reduce all the strategic sites in Hereford</li> </ol>	Revised Preferred Option	Revised Preferred Options SA/SEA page11
Revising the Preferred Option Rural Areas policy to allow for a more flexible approach to housing in the rural areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintaining the rural areas policy suggested at Preferred Option</li> <li>2. Allow unrestricted development to meet the housing demand</li> </ol>	Draft Core Strategy	Draft Core Strategy SA

It has been decided that not all development can be accommodated within the county's urban areas, and indeed this would not be the best approach to meeting housing needs across Herefordshire, which has such a dispersed settlement pattern. However, it has been determined to try to focus most development to urban areas in the interests of sustainable development i.e. reducing the need to travel by private car where possible. The spatial strategy builds upon the existing settlement pattern of Herefordshire, with a focus on Hereford as the county's administrative centre and on other sustainable market towns. Almost a third of all housing will be directed to the rural areas to help to sustain local services, generate new ones and support local housing provision for local communities. In accordance with the outcomes of the Revised Preferred Options, combinations of strategic urban extensions are identified in the Core Strategy in Hereford and the market towns and smaller (non-strategic) sites will be identified in the Hereford Area Plan, other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans. The aim is to maintain a network of

sustainable settlements, meeting the needs of communities while protecting and enhancing the distinctive environmental assets of the county.

The spatial strategy reflects the existing and future role and function of all settlements in Herefordshire. A hierarchy of settlements was identified through the consultations on Developing Options and Place Shaping Paper stages of production of the Core Strategy, with the majority of growth taking place in the urban areas of Hereford and the Market Towns at the highest level of the hierarchy. Following a revised methodology of the hierarchy below the market towns level following Preferred Options stage, a more localised approach has identified villages countywide where proportional levels of development may be acceptable. These are detailed in the Place Shaping section and include villages considered sustainable in having an existing range of services, together with those where some development offers the potential to become more sustainable strengthening their role locally. The existing urban areas are regarded as the most suitable locations for future development because of their existing easy access to services and facilities, thereby providing the opportunity to reduce out-commuting to other centres for e.g. work and shopping and reduce the need to travel by private car for such trips - so increasing "self-containment". Further development in Hereford and the market towns will help to maintain their role as service centres and contribute to their regeneration through provision of additional services and facilities required to support new development. This in turn will help to sustain the rural areas that surround them.

The spatial strategy is "housing, economic and environmental led" – in order to promote growth and to tackle the following key issues in the county –

- to spearhead the regeneration of Hereford and our market towns;
- to help fund necessary new or improved infrastructure including a transport package to ease congestion in Hereford city ;
- to address issues around an increasingly ageing population structure and potential decline in the working age population;
- to address issues of housing affordability across the county but particularly in the rural areas;
- to tackle issues regarding accessibility to services in rural areas;
- to foster self-reliance, independence and resilience, and
- to address issues of water quality.

Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change are an integral part of the spatial strategy and cut across all policies. Addressing the impacts of climate change will be achieved by locating the majority of growth in places with good, sustainable transport links and jobs and services - thereby reducing the need to travel by private car. Climate change is specifically addressed in the environmental quality theme of the spatial strategy.

### **Achieving social progress**

Social progress and improved quality of life will be delivered through identifying areas for growth and the general strategic policies which will address issues of housing need and demand, improving movement around the county, work towards improving health and education, improve access to services and deliver sustainable communities with the necessary infrastructure.



## Policy SS2 - Delivering new homes

A supply of deliverable and developable land will be identified to secure the delivery of a minimum of 16,500 homes in Herefordshire between 2011 and 2031 to meet market and affordable housing need.

**Hereford** is the focus for new housing development to support its role as the main centre in the county. Outside Hereford, most additional development will take place in the **market towns** of Leominster, Ledbury, Ross on Wye, Bromyard and Kington on existing or new allocations to enhance their roles as multi-functional centres for their rural hinterlands. In the **rural areas** new housing development will be acceptable where it supports existing and/or promotes new jobs, services and facilities and is responsive to the needs of its community. Outside of villages, new development will be carefully controlled to protect the countryside for its own sake.

Priority will be given to the use of previously developed land in sustainable locations. Residential density will be determined by local character and good quality design. The target net density across the county is between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare, although this may be less in sensitive areas.

The broad distribution of new dwellings in the county will be a minimum of:

Place	Facilities	New homes
Hereford	Wide range of services and main focus for development	6,500
Other urban areas – Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross on Wye	Range of services and reasonable transport provision – opportunities to strengthen role in meeting requirements of surrounding communities	4,700
Rural Villages – see	More limited range of services and some	5,300

### Providing high quality homes

Following the abolition of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and the fact that the adopted Regional Plan's housing target only went up to 2026, the council decided to commission its own technical advice regarding housing need in the county to 2031 - to assess the evidence and to recommend an appropriate level of growth over the whole plan period of the Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy housing requirement in Policy SS2 is based on the recommendations of the independent study "*Local Housing Requirements Study Update 2012*". This study provided evidence-based guidance on the future level of housing in the light of changing economic and social trends, assessed alternative methodologies and recommended an approach based on realistic economic growth forecasts over the plan period.

Herefordshire had an estimated population in 2011 of 183,600. The population over the last 20 years has consistently grown at a faster rate than across the West Midlands (and England since 1996). However, the population structure has an above average proportion aged over 50 and a particularly low proportion aged 15-34 relative to the regional and national picture. Over the last 30 years, the proportion of the population aged over 34 has been increasing, whilst the numbers aged 15-34 has

been declining. Population growth has been driven by growth in the number of people aged over 35. Looking at the components of population change 1999-2009, the death rate has generally exceeded the birth rate by an average of 240 persons per year resulting in natural decrease. This has been countered by net in-migration which averaged over 900 per annum and which has therefore driven population growth. Household size has been generally decreasing in recent years following the national trend for increasing single person households.

The study set out principles to help guide the process of identifying an appropriate level of housing development together with possible policy options in order to test the results. Economic scenarios were then applied testing to different rates of national economic performance. This assessment and testing concluded that housing delivery for Herefordshire 2011-31 should be within a range of between 14,400 homes (720 per annum) and 18,000 (900 per annum). The council have determined that a figure of around 16,500 dwellings would meet growth aspirations for housing and growth in the local economy and is deliverable. Such a level would go towards addressing the imbalance in the population structure of the county by encouraging the building of new homes for people of working age and younger families to come to the county and support some growth in the economy of around 3%. However, this is an issue which will need to be addressed beyond 2031 in subsequent plans.

Figure 3.3 shows the age structure of the population at 2011 and what it is projected to be following the spatial strategy in 2031. The age structure of the population will still be top-heavy with the biggest increase in the over 65's, but this will not be uncommon with the rest of the region and the country as a whole.

Figure 3.3 – Age structure of the population at 2011 and 2031

To follow

The overall total number of new homes to be provided between 2011 and 2031 is 16,500, However as there are existing housing commitments (planning permissions and allocations) the actual amount required from April 2011 is less at 13,555.

Figure 3.4: Housing land supply position at April 2011

	<b>Strategic allocation</b>	<b>Commitments 2011</b>	<b>Residual homes target 2011-2031</b>
<b>Hereford</b>	6,500	<b>1,034</b>	5,424
<b>Leominster</b>	2,300	<b>619</b>	1,690
<b>Ross-on-Wye</b>	900	<b>324</b>	594
<b>Ledbury</b>	800	<b>44</b>	762
<b>Bromyard</b>	500	<b>160</b>	348
<b>Kington</b>	200	<b>14</b>	186
<b>Rural Areas</b>	5,300	<b>724</b>	4,551
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,500</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>13,555</b>

Note: figures are net dwelling commitments. Commitments are net commitments minus 5% reflecting lapsed permissions

More specific details of the strategic sites regarding house types, density and design are included in the place-shaping section and will be determined through master planning. The forthcoming Hereford Area Plan and other development plan documents and/or neighbourhood development plans will identify non-strategic sites. Since the Core Strategy is not an Ordnance Survey based document, these other planning documents will also consider the question of whether or not to define settlement boundaries in developing planning policies.

In terms of distribution of housing, Hereford is the service and economic centre of the county reflecting its higher population density (58,500 people) and as the most sustainable settlement in the county it should take the most growth. Therefore, strategic locations for new homes and employment land have been identified around the city in areas considered acceptable in environmental terms.

The decision to focus the largest single allocation of new homes to Leominster has been based on the recognition of its economic importance located on the A49 Corridor, its excellent public transport links including rail station and the fact that an urban extension will bring transport benefits in the form of a southern link road. The latter will benefit the centre of the town in terms of reducing congestion and improving air quality. Relative to the county's other market towns it is also the least constrained environmentally.

The quantity and type of development allocated to Ross on Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington reflects their respective roles and environmental development constraints. Ledbury and Ross on Wye (larger in scale and population terms) will support quantitatively more development than Bromyard and Kington. The amounts of new homes and employment land for each town are balanced by their respective needs, opportunities and constraints which are explained further in the Place Shaping section.

The decision at Revised Preferred Option to increase the level of housing development in rural areas from 4700 to 5300 was based on trying to be more locally responsive to the needs of all rural communities through seeking to encourage new developments which support and enhance access to local services and tackle issues of rural housing affordability, giving consideration to the introduction of neighbourhood planning. The location and level of development allocated to villages will be determined through the preparation of either development plan documents or neighbourhood development plans.

The National Planning Policy Framework has as one of its core principles that the planning system should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value. Given the level of growth this plan period, it will not be possible to achieve development of a high percentage of brownfield land, but this will continue to be a priority for future development proposals. The target net density in Policy SS2 has been based on a balance of issues including the encouragement of the efficient use of land and the need to protect the county's environmental assets.

### **Meeting specific housing needs**

The council has produced a *Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008* and a *Local Housing Market Assessment 2013* which indicates that there is an urgent need to increase the provision of affordable housing in the county. However, whilst there is a very high need, this has to be balanced with the outcomes of the *Affordable Housing Viability Study 2011* and the *Economic Viability Study 2013*. Whilst affordable housing is a priority for the county, the need for new infrastructure to help economic growth is another priority and levels of affordable housing percentages and thresholds required have been set to reflect the viability of achieving both priorities. In terms of delivery, a strategy focussed on growth and development of strategic



sites is considered the best approach in order to get affordable homes built in the county over the plan period. The council has been working to looking at other forms of affordable housing delivery including using public sector land assets and supporting direct delivery through Registered Providers. The place shaping policies and the general policy on affordable housing will deliver this part of the strategy.

A report on the *Housing and Support Needs of Older People 2011* in the county has highlighted a growing need for suitable homes for older people to live independently as well as a need for specialist housing with extra care to be built. These issues are addressed in place specific policies in the Place Shaping section and general policies in the Social Progress section of this Plan.

A *Gypsy and Travellers Assessment 2012* highlighted a need for further permanent pitches in the county. A separate Development Plan Document will be prepared following on from the Core Strategy to allocate pitches, but in the meantime an interim policy is set out in the general policies in the Social Progress section.

The ability for “Self- build homes” to come forward either by individuals or community groups will be facilitated through neighbourhood development plans or development plan documents which will look to allocate specific sites

### **Housing trajectory**

In respect of the housing target for Herefordshire the expectation is that the highest rate of housing completions will be towards the latter end of the plan period. This is because:

- a) The housing market in the county is depressed and completion rates are currently well below the rate required to achieve the overall target;
- b) The achievement of the revised strategy targets will be dependent upon achieving the required key elements of infrastructure for the county; and
- c) There are significant lead-in times required to bring forward major housing sites.

Overall the delivery of the housing levels and distribution proposed in the Core Strategy is dependent upon necessary infrastructure being funded and delivered. Figure 3.5 provides an initial indicative county-wide trajectory for the housing provision based upon the likely release of strategic sites in the county. This trajectory suggests that housing completions will be back-loaded, starting with around 600 dwellings per annum during the first five years of the plan period, with the highest levels of housing growth (950 per annum) taking place towards the end of the plan period. It will need further re-adjustment and added detail to reflect on-going work on delivery of the strategic housing sites and key elements of infrastructure.

### **Policy SS3 Releasing land for residential development**

Sufficient land for residential development will be released to ensure the Core Strategy housing target is achieved over the plan period.

The release of specific sites may be phased or delayed in order to ensure that necessary infrastructure is in place to support the new development or in order to ensure that there will be no significant adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

In releasing residential land priority will be given to the use of brownfield land and the identified strategic proposals..

The approach towards release of sites will be kept under review through the annual monitoring process. If rates of delivery or evidence from monitoring indicate that the number of new dwellings will exceed or fall below the target figure by 20% over a period of 3 or more years, the timescales for the release of sites will be reconsidered or Herefordshire Council will identify additional land through the preparation of other development plan documents.

The achievement of the housing target for the plan period will be challenging, however, there may be a need to phase the release of new development in specific instances in order to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided either prior to, or co-ordinated with, the development. This will be particularly the case in respect of major elements of infrastructure such as the Hereford Relief Road.

In addition, the River Wye SAC currently includes sections where the water quality exceeds phosphate level targets and this exceedance prevents sections of the river from achieving favourable condition. It is also necessary to ensure that sections currently meeting their water quality targets do not fail as a result of new development. Natural England and the Environment Agency have committed to the preparation of a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) with the aims of controlling and reducing phosphates in the SAC and in doing so to facilitate the delivery of new development. However, the requirements of the NMP may include the need to phase or delay the release of housing during the plan period. Policy SD.4 deals specifically with wastewater treatment and river water quality.

The supply of new housing will be monitored closely and if rates of development fall significantly below targets, an assessment will be made as to whether the early release of housing allocations is appropriate in order to boost delivery.

The figure of 20% variation in rates of delivery, above or below, will 'trigger' the need to explore intervention. Delivery rates are anticipated to be lower in the early years of the Plan. Therefore considerations of the need for any interventions in the case of under delivery may not be required until the middle/latter stages of the plan period. It should be noted that the supply/delivery situation will not be based on single year delivery rates, but on an assessment of the situation over at least 3-5 years.

**Figure 3.5: Indicative housing trajectory**

	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26	2026-31	Total
<b>Hereford</b>	1000	1500	2000	2000	6500
<b>Leominster</b>	300	500	700	800	2300
<b>Ross-on-Wye</b>	250	275	175	200	900
<b>Ledbury</b>	180	350	210	60	800
<b>Bromyard</b>	120	125	125	130	500
<b>Kington</b>	30	40	60	70	200
<b>Rural Areas</b>	1120	1460	1230	1490	5300
<b>Herefordshire</b>	3000	4250	4500	4750	16500

### Windfalls

The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that local planning authorities should draw on information from Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) to identify:

- sufficient specific sites to deliver housing in the first five years of the plan period with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;

- a further supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for years 6-10 and where possible, for years 11-15.

It goes on to say that sites with planning permission should only be included where there is robust evidence that the sites are developable and viable and are likely to contribute to housing delivery at the point envisaged. In respect of sites not specifically identified the NPPF advises that allowances for “windfalls”, can be included in the five year supply if there is robust evidence of consistent local circumstances and reliable future supply.

In Herefordshire there is longstanding evidence that housing on “non-allocated” sites has made a significant contribution to meeting housing needs and requirements. Such housing has not only come forward within urban parts of the county but also has been the major element of new housing in rural areas, where the conversion of agricultural buildings have contributed significant numbers of new houses.

It is therefore important to consider how windfalls, including the conversion of rural buildings should be considered in the housing land supply and targets for the county. The preparation of the SHLAA should mean that a higher proportion of sites will be identified as part of the supply figures and so only a modest windfall allowance is included within the housing targets of 2,000 dwellings, equating to 50 dwellings a year in rural areas with the same allowance for urban parts of Herefordshire.

### **Movement and transportation**

The approach of the strategy for movement and transportation is two-fold. Firstly, the spatial strategy itself aims to direct the location of significant new development proposed through the plan to the more accessible locations in the county (where at all possible), to promote the use of existing nearby services and facilitate the use of active travel (walking and cycling) as well as public transport. But this principle needs to apply to all new significant development proposals that may come forward through the plan period, and will also require policies to minimise the impact of additional highway demand generated by new development on the transport network, so that journey times, journey time reliability, public realm and highway safety in the county do not deteriorate.

Secondly, the approach is to work with developers, the Highways Agency and transport providers to improve transport infrastructure, connections and choices in our main centres and rural areas (where reliance on the private car is often the only option). This is particularly important for local journeys in Hereford where a balanced package of measures including more walking and cycling, bus transport and a western relief road is needed in order to improve connectivity and travel choice, reduce congestion, enhance public realm and foster local enterprise and tourism.

Herefordshire is a diverse county incorporating both rural and urban communities. The scale of the county alongside its historic settlement pattern places significant importance on movement and transportation. As recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework, transport and movement can play a positive role in contributing to sustainable development; whether it is through providing opportunities for greater public transport, to delivering air quality improvements by removing vehicular movements from pedestrian areas. Alongside this the following pro-active strategic policies on movement and transportation can build upon objectives and policies within Herefordshire Council’s Local Transport Plan (LTP) in improving journey time and connectivity across the county. In partnership with the LTP the strategic policies are designed to deliver Herefordshire Council’s Core Strategy objectives in improving movement and transportation across the county.

### **Policy SS4 – Movement and transportation**

New developments should be designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transport network; ensuring that journey times and the efficient and safe operation of the network are not detrimentally impacted. Furthermore, where practicable, development proposals should be accessible by, and facilitate a genuine choice of modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport.

Development proposals that will generate high journey numbers should be in sustainable locations accessible by means other than private car. Alternatively, such developments will be required to demonstrate that they can be made sustainable by reducing unsustainable transport patterns and promoting travel by walking, cycling and public transport.

Proposals to provide new and improve existing public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure will be supported; where appropriate, land and routes will be safeguarded and developer contributions sought to assist with the delivery of new sustainable transport infrastructure.

Herefordshire Council will work with the Highways Agency, national organisations, developers and local communities to bring forward improvements to the local and strategic transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and offer greater transport choices, including the provision of the following major schemes:

- ESG Link Road (Safeguarded route) and Transport Hub;
- Hereford Relief Road;
- Southern Leominster Relief Road;
- Connect 2 Cycleway in Hereford;
- Park and Ride schemes;
- other schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Proposals which enable the transfer of freight from road to rail will be encouraged. Development proposals incorporating commercial vehicular movements that could detrimentally impact on the environmental quality, amenity, safety and character of the surrounding locality will be expected to incorporate evidence demonstrating how the traffic impacts are to be mitigated.

Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan (2011-15) sets out programmes of work for achieving the council's objectives for transport, accessibility and pollution which positively contribute to addressing climate change. Development arising under the Core Strategy can play a positive role in delivering the objectives of the LTP. Accordingly development proposals will be supported where they respond to the opportunities and constraints detailed within the LTP.

By influencing the location of new development, land use can reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and minimise its impact on the environment. At the same time the planning system must respond to the need for new transport infrastructure and recognise the challenges faced by rural settlements where reliance on the private motorised transport for many people, is the only realistic option for movement. Accordingly strategic developments will be located on or have access to existing passenger transport networks so that they are convenient, accessible, safe and attractive to use. Where appropriate, development proposals should be accompanied with travel plans and transport assessments outlining alternatives to private motorised transport use.

### Pedestrians and cyclists:

The role of walking and cycling in creating liveable places, promoting health improvements and social inclusion has not always been recognised. Despite this almost all journeys include an element of walking and ensuring that there is safe and convenient access to housing, jobs, education, health care, other services; and local facilities for pedestrians and cyclists is an essential part of promoting social inclusion and delivering sustainable development. As such, Herefordshire Council will seek developments to promote pedestrian and cycle friendly access avoiding conflict with private motorised vehicles.

### Public transport:

Connecting improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities with public transport facilities provides greater transport opportunities other than reliance on private motorised transport. Herefordshire Council will work in partnership with the Highways Agency, Network Rail, bus and rail operators, developers and the community to achieve improvements to the public transport network. This may include improving both the quality and quantity of the service on offer. Where appropriate, land and routes will be safeguarded from inappropriate development and identified in site specific plans. Where appropriate, developer contributions will be sought to deliver improvements to the public transport network.

### Major transport schemes:

The strategically important schemes, including ESG Link Road, Transport Hub, Western Relief Road and Connect 2, are explained further in the Hereford section of the Place-Shaping chapter. The Leominster relief road is explained in detail in the Leominster section of the same chapter. The funding required for these schemes is detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Studies which examined the need for additional road infrastructure to serve the Hereford Enterprise Zone did not recommend inclusion of additional road links and such a proposal is not a reasonable option to include in the Core Strategy at this time. The explanation of policy HD6 includes more detail of this work.

### Freight

Road freight will continue to be the dominant mode of transport for freight distribution within Herefordshire due to its flexibility and accessibility. The county's railway network is limited and few of its key industrial networks are adjacent or in close proximity to the four passenger railway stations. The existing railhead for minerals transport at Moreton on Lugg is being protected through the minerals section of the Core Strategy. It is however, important to encourage greater movements by rail to alleviate the additional pressure that growth will place on the county's roads, and to minimise any increase in carbon emissions associated with transport.

During the plan period, advancements in technologies may bring forward alternative transport technologies. Where such developments are not covered by national legislation, Herefordshire Council will support their development as long as the proposal is in accordance with the principles of other policies of the Core Strategy and demonstrates its contribution towards delivering sustainable transport solutions.

In order to deliver the strategic objectives outlined above, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have incorporated the criteria contained within policy MT1 in the section on general policies.

Partnership working will ensure all major housing and employment sites are served by public transport and that rail services and infrastructure within Herefordshire is improved in the long term and smarter travel choices are promoted in the short term. The place-shaping policies and the general policy on traffic management alongside the *Local Transport Plan* will also work towards delivering this part of the strategy.



## **Education and Skills**

Improved and expanded higher education provision in Herefordshire is envisaged as part of the strategy to help retain our young people and improve the skills base of the county. The place shaping policies and the general policy on community facilities will deliver this part of the strategy.

## **Health and wellbeing**

Health services are being developed through an integrated approach of providing for an increased need for age appropriate services including access to community centres, keeping people independent in their own home and personalised services like provision of extra care homes and supported housing generally as well as indirectly through other objectives of this plan, such as improving provision of open space to help combat obesity and mental health problems, provision of improved broadband technology to facilitate access to services, which will all work together to provide for health and wellbeing in the future (*Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011*). The place shaping policies and the general policies on community facilities and housing will help to facilitate this approach.

## **Access to services**

Historically, Herefordshire performs poorly in national assessments measuring the accessibility to services for the population. This is because of its size and very sparsely populated nature. It is envisaged that the growth strategy of focussing most growth to urban areas, coupled with improvements in technology such as broadband availability alongside council initiatives such as Locality working will address this issue. Some nine 'natural communities' or "localities" have been identified as forming the basis for engagement and providing the opportunity to deliver joined-up customer access points for people. These are the five market towns, Hereford City, Weobley, Golden Valley and Mortimer.

## **New and/or improved infrastructure**

Necessary community infrastructure including transport, green spaces, leisure uses and health and education facilities will be delivered alongside the new homes through planning conditions and developer contributions or the Community Infrastructure Levy to ensure sustainable communities are created and maintained and health and well-being promoted. The type and phasing of infrastructure required to support the growth strategy is set out in the accompanying Core Strategy *Infrastructure Delivery Plan or IDP*. This is backed up by a separate evidence base on *Economic Viability* which reports that the infrastructure listed in the IDP to support the projects and proposals in the Core Strategy are viable at the time of writing for developers to want to build.

Significant infrastructure projects are required to deliver the strategy to ease congestion, improvements to broadband speeds and availability to foster economic growth and improvements to the county's sewerage treatment to prevent adverse effects on water quality. These projects will require joint working by a range of partners working with housing providers and the council to ensure new housing can be delivered as part of an overall approach to increased sustainability for the county. The place shaping policies and general policies as well as that on infrastructure delivery explain these projects in detail and will work towards delivering this part of the strategy.

## **Key outcomes of the strategy for social progress:**

Meeting housing need and demand, improved access to services, improving the health and well-being of residents and reducing the need to travel delivering Core Strategy objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

## Achieving economic prosperity

Economic prosperity will be delivered through addressing issues of diversifying the employment base, area regeneration, improving connectivity, promoting shopping and tourism in the right places and generally improving economic output.

### **Policy SS5 – Employment provision**

Existing higher quality employment land countywide will be safeguarded from alternative uses and a continuous supply of 37 ha of readily available employment land will be made available over a 5 year period, with an overall target of 148 ha of employment land over the plan period. New strategic employment land in tandem with housing growth and smaller scale employment sites will be delivered through the plan period. New strategic sites are identified at Hereford (15ha); Leominster (up to 10 ha), Ledbury (12 ha), Ross on Wye (10 ha) and Bromyard (5ha).

The continuing development of the more traditional employment sectors such as farming and food and drink manufacturing will be supported. The diversification of the business base through the development of knowledge intensive industries, environmental technologies and creative industries as well as business hubs, live-work schemes and the adaptive design of residential development will be facilitated where they do not have an adverse impact on the community or local environment. The provision of high speed broadband to facilitate diversification will be supported.

### **Employment provision**

The *Economic Development Strategy (Nov 2011)* is an integral part of the Local Development Framework. Its vision is to increase economic wealth through the growth of business. This will be achieved through the aims to:

- Sustain business survival and growth;
- Increased incomes, range and quality of jobs;
- Have a skilled population to meet future work needs;
- Develop the county's built infrastructure for enterprise to flourish.

Herefordshire has a relatively low value economy, with 'Gross Value Added' (GVA) per head in 2008 which was 25% below the UK average and 8.6% below the West Midlands average. With a high 85% self-containment of travel to work patterns in 2001, this is borne out in the wages of residents. Gross weekly pay in 2010 at £417.70 for full-time workers was 11% below average for the region (£469.20) and 17% below the national average (£501.80). Low wage levels are borne out in housing affordability issues.

The low value economy is partly a function of the county's economic structure. There are a high proportion of jobs in manufacturing (accounting for 14.9% of employee jobs compared to 13.8% across the West Midlands and 10.2% across the UK), but these are primarily in low and medium technology activities including food and beverage production, rather than higher value-added activities. Distribution, hotels and restaurants are also strongly represented (accounting for 26.2% of employee jobs compared to 13.8% across the West Midlands) and includes jobs in tourism-related sectors. The agricultural sector is also well represented. There is a low level of employment in finance, IT and other business activities which has been a key growth sector nationally in recent decades

A key feature of the economic structure is a low representation of higher-value private sector businesses. This is a structural economic weakness which partly reflects the county's relatively remote location in a national or regional context,

together with the size of its population and key centre (Hereford) and the strength of the road and rail links. However this needs to be set against supply-side regeneration measures, including proposals in the Core Strategy for additional employment land provision together with regeneration projects such as the regeneration of the Livestock Market in Hereford and the designation of the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas.

In overall terms, the numbers working in land-based industries accounts for a much greater proportion than regionally or nationally. However, agriculture has a track record in diversifying for example the use of polytunnels for an increasing range of fruits, quantities and quality and lengthened growing season, which has enabled many farmers to stay in business. It is seen as a strength of the county in fostering other business enterprise such as renewable energy technologies and creative industries.

Evidence of commuting patterns from 2001 suggests that there was a moderate net outflow of people to work of 4,000, although the level of self-containment of travel to work patterns was relatively high. Travel to work patterns highlight that Bromyard and Ledbury have a net outflow of workers. This issue is reflected in the allocations of employment land to these centres.

*The Employment Land Study 2012* states that the emerging Core Strategy has an overall target of 148 hectares (ha) of available employment land over the plan period, which includes a rolling five year reservoir of 37 ha of available land. Based on the output of projecting past completion rates, the overall target of 148 ha outlined in the emerging Core Strategy would provide a robust level of supply and would enable a wide range and choice of employment sites across the county to be provided throughout the plan period.

### **Area regeneration**

Hereford is the county's main economic centre and as such has the potential to influence the prosperity of the whole area. A combined approach to regeneration means investment in covering travel, housing, employment land development and job creation can make a significant difference to the county. It is an objective of the Core Strategy that the role of **Hereford** as the main business, service and visitor centre for the county will be maintained and enhanced through the expansion of the city centre as part of wider city regeneration to include new retail, leisure, tourist and commercial development and new sustainable transport infrastructure. The designated Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) at Rotherwas will further support an enhanced economic outlook with the aim of promoting a more diverse employment base. An extra 5 ha of employment land has been designated as part of a mixed use development at the Lower Bullingham urban extension to support the HEZ. This is an addition to the policy since Revised Preferred Option stage.

Each of the market towns has their own distinct qualities reflective of their position in the county and the organic growth of their industries. Ledbury and Ross both benefit from access to motorway links, whilst Leominster and Ledbury have connections to the rail infrastructure. There are clusters of industry within all the market towns providing valuable employment. Tourism opportunity is a strong feature of all the market towns, having their own unique selling point. The regeneration of the wider economy of the county's **market towns** will be prioritised in order to support their viability as key service centres for their rural hinterlands, by ensuring they remain the focus for appropriate levels of new homes and jobs. Whilst no strategic employment sites are proposed in Kington this plan period, smaller scale employment sites will be encouraged and identified through either development plan documents or neighbourhood development plans.

The **rural economy** is populated by small businesses often sole traders or the self-employed working from home. This is higher than the national average driven by



increasing opportunity to use technology to work from any location. Businesses in rural areas support the sustainability of local services and communities (The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, July 2008). Therefore, in the **rural areas**, businesses will be supported by taking into account local demand, the ability to retain, grow or diversify employment opportunities and options to reuse existing buildings and sites as well as contribute to the sustainability of the area.

### **Sustainable tourism**

Tourism to the county is worth £469m (2011) to the local economy. Over 4.7 million visitors come per year mainly short stays to take advantage of the outstanding countryside, rich heritage and cultural offer. This supports 8,480 jobs. Visit Herefordshire is the agency in the county that promotes tourism and alongside the council works to develop it as a visitor destination. The delivery of high quality tourist, cultural and leisure development will be supported in the county, where it capitalises on existing assets, develops sustainable walking, cycling or heritage routes, benefits local communities and the economy and is sensitive to Herefordshire's natural and built environmental qualities and heritage assets. The place shaping policies and the general policy on tourism will deliver and monitor this part of the strategy.

### **Connectivity**

A key principle of the Core Strategy is that intensive trip generating development should be built in the most accessible locations. The co-location of employment, shopping, leisure, transport and other facilities means that people can carry out multiple activities in a single journey and there will be a boost to the local retail economy.

New transport infrastructure countywide (to include a western relief road around the city to facilitate a package of sustainable transport measures in the city ) and faster, more accessible ICT/Broadband infrastructure will be delivered to facilitate the generation and diversification of employment opportunities and to improve accessibility to education and training opportunities.

### **Retail**

For some time, the retail economy has been losing ground to competition outside the county at other major centres like Gloucester, Cheltenham and Worcester. To try and address this, Hereford Futures and the council has promoted the development of the £90 million retail development in Hereford city centre, which includes a new department store, supermarket and smaller shops which is fully funded by the private sector.

The Core Strategy defines a network and hierarchy of centres which forms the basis for the retail strategy for the plan. This hierarchy has been confirmed in the Retail Study 2012 as follows:

**Figure 3.7: Retail hierarchy**

<b>Principal centre</b>	<b>Secondary centre</b>	<b>Local centres</b>	<b>Neighbourhood centres</b>
Hereford	Bromyard	Bartestree and Lugwardine	Belmont
	Ledbury	Barons Cross Road, Leominster	Bobblestock
	Leominster	Bodenham	Bullingham*
	Kington	Colwall	Chilton Square
	Ross-on-Wye	Cradley	College Green
		Credenhill	Folly Lane (Whittern

			Way)
		Eardisley	Grandstand Road
		Ewyas Harold	Holme Lacy Road
		Fownhope	Holmer West *
		Kingsland	Hinton Road
		Kingstone	Old Eign Hill
		Leintwardine	Oval
		Marden	Quarry Road
		Pembridge	Three Elms*
		Peterchurch	Whitecross
		Weobley	
		Withington	

\*Neighbourhood centres at Bullingham, Holmer West and Three Elms will be required as part of the urban extensions at these locations.

The Core Strategy will encourage appropriate town centre and retail investment in Hereford and the market towns of Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington and Ross-on-Wye, as well as supporting local services such as village shops, pubs and post offices throughout the rural areas. Regardless of their retail and commercial offer all these centres play a significant role in providing local services and facilities which has many benefits in social, economic and environmental terms.

This hierarchy recognises the importance of Hereford as the principal shopping centre within the county, serving an extensive rural hinterland. The city centre provides the main location for retail activity in the county as well as the focus for commercial and administrative services. In addition a range of leisure, tourism and entertainment opportunities are available in Hereford, which help to enhance footfall within the city centre. This will be further improved with the development of the Livestock Market retail-led mixed use regeneration proposal. This represents the most significant retail development in the county for many years and by improving the range of shops and leisure facilities will make Hereford better able to compete with sub regional centres outside the county helping to retain the retail spend within Herefordshire.

The scale and retail offer of the five market towns varies according to their population size and location but in broad terms they perform similar functions and play an important role in serving their own populations and rural catchments. The strategy for each market town is outlined in the place shaping section.

The extent of the town centre is defined for Hereford and each market town in the place shaping section and on the Proposals Map. Retail development will be concentrated in the town centre but will be complemented by other uses such as restaurants, cafes, appropriate leisure uses and businesses. Primary shopping areas which will include both primary and secondary frontages will be identified through neighbourhood development plans or other development plan documents.

Neighbourhood centres also play an important role in providing day to day convenience needs for nearby residential areas and generally provide small food stores, other services and community facilities. These centres also have an important role to play both as a community hub and also in helping to reduce harmful emissions by being accessible by foot and cycle. Specific place based policies identify where new neighbourhood centres are required to serve strategic developments.

In the rural areas, village shops and other facilities serve to meet both daily shopping 'top up' needs and helping to facilitate the independence of those who are not able to travel further afield. They are important to the vitality of rural communities, acting as a focus and informal meeting place, and provide a valuable service particularly to those without their own transport. The policies in place shaping section and the general retail policies will deliver and monitor this part of the strategy.

**Key outcomes of the strategy for economic prosperity:** More local and better paid employment opportunities so limiting out commuting; business diversification and growth; a more vibrant and robust Hereford City and more economically self-contained market towns and rural areas; a strengthened role and contribution to the economy for tourism, delivering Core Strategy objectives 6, 7, 8 and 9.

#### **Improving environmental quality**

The strategy for improving environmental quality will address the causes and impacts of climate change, the creation of sustainable communities, better use of resources and protection of existing built and environmental assets.

A high quality environment has a key role to play in delivering the spatial strategy. Herefordshire has an important cultural heritage and two areas of outstanding natural beauty. The high quality environment is important for the quality of life of Herefordshire residents and has a fundamental role in attracting visitors and investment. Green infrastructure, such as open space, biodiversity, geodiversity and other semi-natural features will be protected and enhanced, including networks of green wildlife corridors and spaces. Green infrastructure has an important role in our adaption to climate change and contributing to carbon neutral development.

#### **Policy SS6: Addressing climate change**

Measures will be taken to mitigate the impact of development within the district on climate change.

At a strategic level, this will include:

- focussing development to the most sustainable locations;
- delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel by private car and which encourages sustainable travel options including walking, cycling and public transport;
- designing developments to reduce carbon emissions and use resources more efficiently;
- promoting the use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy where appropriate;
- supporting affordable, local food production and farming to reduce the county's contribution to food miles\*;
- protecting the best agricultural land where possible;

Key considerations in terms of climate change adaptation include:

- Taking into account the known physical and environmental constraints when identifying locations for development;
- Considering design approaches that are resilient to climate change impacts including the use of passive solar design for heating and cooling and tree planting for shading
- Minimising the risk of flooding and making use of sustainable drainage methods;
- Reducing heat island effects (through the provision of open space and water, planting and green roofs, for example);

- Reduction, re-use and recycling of waste with particular emphasis on waste minimisation on development sites and;
- Developments should demonstrate water efficiency measures to reduce demand on water resources, including through the use of efficient appliances and exploration of the potential for rainwater recycling;

Adaptation through design approaches will be considered in more locally specific detail in a Design Code Supplementary Planning Document

\*“From field to Table” – a sustainable food and drink strategy for Herefordshire 2011

### **Addressing Climate change**

Tackling climate change in Herefordshire will be a difficult challenge. The predominantly rural character of the area often makes access to a range of services extremely difficult and increases reliance on the private motor car. This in turn can have a major impact on CO2 emissions, the main greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. These emissions can also have an impact on air quality, particularly in the urban area of Hereford city centre. As well as providing more sustainable transport choices, there is a necessity to facilitate the increased use of renewable and low carbon energy sources and encourage in appropriate cases measures such as the provision of electric car charging points. Together these can go some way towards reducing Herefordshire’s dependency on fossil fuels. Enabling the level of development in the strategy has to be balanced against the challenge of protecting the high quality of the built and natural environment, including our best agricultural land where at all possible. Ensuring that new development is resilient to the effects of climate change is also important for e.g. including measures to safeguard water quality, reduce water consumption and deal with increased flood risk and surface water flooding. The Climate Change Background Paper explains the challenges facing the county including possible effects on agriculture, flood risk, transport and so on.

### **Creating sustainable communities**

The strategic growth areas avoid areas at high risk of flooding wherever possible to protect against loss of life and recurring damage to property. Flood alleviation measures will be used where flood avoidance is not possible. New development will provide for a range of type and size of sustainably constructed and well-designed buildings to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, enhance energy efficiency and respect local distinctiveness.

Whilst this strategy will inevitable result in the loss of areas of open land, the approach has generally been to avoid land of high sensitivity in landscape terms or biodiversity interest or land of high agricultural value (although given the scale of development around Hereford this has not always been possible – an issue that is reflected in the sustainability appraisal).

New parks and green spaces in Hereford and the market towns will be delivered to provide facilities for recreation and sport, as well as promoting biodiversity and to enhance community health and well-being. Other, necessary new or enhanced community facilities including sustainable transport choices will be delivered in association with new development to improve access to services and reduce the need to travel long distances by private car.

Relevant policies in the place shaping section and the general local distinctiveness policies will deliver this part of the strategy

### **Better use of resources**

The percentage of previously developed land to be developed over the longer term of the Plan period will be much lower than experienced in recent years (which has

exceeded the national target of 60%) at around 40%. This reflects the scale of strategic land release proposed during this plan period.

The introduction of renewable energy generation into larger development schemes will be promoted where viable to reduce the use of carbon producing fuels. Water management schemes and the use of sustainable drainage measures in new developments will strive towards water neutrality despite increased demands for water usage from new development.

Where necessary to achieve the objectives of this plan, areas of lower quality agricultural land will be utilised in preference to the best and most versatile agricultural land, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (Para 112) where possible.

New waste facilities are to be integrated into sites suitable for industrial use close to the origin of such waste and proposals to minimise waste – including re-use, recycling and treatment, will need to have been considered in the design of new large scale developments. Mineral resources are safeguarded through Minerals Safeguarding Areas and targets are set for sand, gravel and crushed rock extraction to meet adopted targets. The policies in the place shaping section and the general environmental quality policies will deliver this part of the strategy.

### **Protecting the environment**

Proposals for new/improved infrastructure to protect water quality, especially of the Rivers Wye and part of the Lugg which are European protected Special Areas of Conservation, will ensure the special features of these sites are maintained despite the requirement for increased sewage treatment capacity from new development.

The location of new development proposed will deliver sites that, in almost all cases, protect and/or enhance Herefordshire's natural, built, historic and cultural assets in the county's Cathedral city, historic market towns, smaller settlements and distinctive countryside.

**Key outcomes of the strategy for environmental quality:** Protecting the environment for its own sake, respecting local distinctiveness, funding new green infrastructure and addressing the causes and impacts of climate change – Links to Core Strategy objectives 10, 11 and 12.

**Figure 3:8: KEY DIAGRAM** – to follow

### **Delivering and monitoring the spatial strategy**

To implement the spatial strategy, a delivery strategy is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which accompanies the Core Strategy and is presented into distinct areas:

- Countywide infrastructure;
- Hereford;
- The market towns;
- The rural areas.

A description of the infrastructure projects being provided in each category is set out in the supporting text to the IDP and how the level of growth for each area will be delivered, with more detailed proposals coming forward through the Hereford Area Plan, other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans.

The following indicators will be used by the council to assess the effectiveness of the strategic policies:

### **Social**

- the percentage of all new development completed on previously developed land;
- housing completions by type and tenure and location – assessed in relation to 5 year tranches in order to ensure that there remains a flexible supply of available and deliverable land for housing across the county;
- transport patronage by mode
- housing densities in urban and rural areas.

### **Economic**

- employment land floor space by type and location;
- number of live-work units granted permission;
- accessibility to Broadband;
- number of new jobs created;
- employment and income levels against regional and national averages;
- business survival rate at 3 years;
- GVA per head.

### **Environmental**

- Level of development in urban areas compared to rural;
- Agricultural land usage by quality (aspirational);
- Transport patronage by mode;
- Total CO2 emissions by capita (DECC)
- Number of decentralised energy schemes granted permission.



# Place Shaping

## Introduction

The next section of the plan sets out proposals for specific parts of Herefordshire and is broken down into parts dealing in turn with:

- Hereford;
- Bromyard;
- Kington;
- Ledbury;
- Leominster;
- Ross-on-Wye; and
- Rural Areas.

For each area a set of policies and proposals is set out including a range of locations where larger scale or strategic development is proposed.

For the purpose of the Core Strategy, a strategic location has generally been defined as around 500 homes for Hereford, around 100 homes within the market towns or around 5 hectares for employment land. It is important to reiterate that the Core Strategy will not be identifying specific development sites but will indicate the broad locations for the strategic distribution of new homes, jobs, shopping, recreation facilities and infrastructure.

## Hereford

### The vision for Hereford

By 2031, Hereford will consist of healthy, sustainable communities with a wide range of homes and employment opportunities for all, which are well serviced by a range of community facilities, green infrastructure and public transport. The imbalance of housing types and income levels across Hereford, particularly within South Hereford where there is a high concentration of affordable housing and income deprivation, will be addressed by providing a greater balance and mix of properties and employment opportunities across the city and at the urban extensions.

New communities and neighbourhoods will be successfully integrated with existing communities and the surrounding countryside. Residents will have greener environments and energy efficient homes which contribute to reducing the county's carbon footprint. Education and community facilities will be provided within walking distance of residential areas.

Congestion in Hereford will be eased by a number of measures. The inner ring road will be upgraded for pedestrians enabling a range of environmental enhancements, air quality improvements and sustainable transport measures to be implemented. The dependency on the private car will be reduced with a network of cycleways, footpaths and bus priority lanes to enable people within the city to move between home, work, school and other facilities by foot, cycle and bus. A transport hub will enable bus, train, taxi facilities to be linked. Park and ride/cycle areas will be provided to reduce reliance on private cars to access the city centre. A western relief road will be key to a congestion free city by enabling an alternative trunk route, providing additional highway capacity to implement sustainable transport measures and reducing the level of through traffic in the city centre.

Hereford will be a strong sub-regional shopping, employment, educational, leisure and cultural focus for the county. Comprehensive proposals for regeneration in and

around the city centre will complement the historic core by providing homes, jobs, education, shops and leisure facilities, urban greening and transport improvements. This will make the city a vibrant destination of choice for shoppers and visitors alike.

The high educational standards within the county will be capitalised upon by the provision of higher education facilities and additional good quality employment land to encourage higher value employers.

Hereford will be home to innovative design and sustainable construction which complements the existing historic character. Sightlines and heights of new buildings will be sensitive to the city skyline. Areas of the city, its near countryside setting and wider rural areas will be well connected by a network of high quality open areas, green spaces and green infrastructure. New residential and employment areas will be integrated into the existing urban fabric and surrounding countryside.

### **Hereford – issues and opportunities**

A number of issues have been highlighted either via Core Strategy consultations or evidence base studies. Figure 4.1 indicates how these issues can be addressed to enable the vision for Hereford 2031 to be achieved. They are listed in no order of priority.

**Figure 4.1 – issues and opportunities in Hereford**

<b>Hereford today - issues</b>	<b>Hereford 2031 – the vision</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Core Strategy Objectives met</b>
A high percentage of affordable housing in South Hereford with a lack across the rest of the city.	Better distribution of social housing, well integrated within developments.	Housing development to provide affordable housing in a balanced and distributed way Greater mix of housing types in South Hereford.	1
Natural population growth and a need to accommodate further housing growth from in migration.	A number of sustainable communities providing a range of housing to meet a variety of needs.	Urban Village and urban expansion allocations.	1
Imbalance in the housing stock across Hereford.	A wide variety of housing types available in all areas of the city.	Housing development which provides a balance of housing types and addresses deficiencies in certain areas.	1
Falling behind comparative centres in retail terms.	More retail offer in the city with a greater choice.	Additional retail floorspace allocated within the city centre.	7
Need for enhancement of the historic core.	A vibrant city centre which is a destination of choice.	Enhancement and conservation proposals, improve linkages between regeneration area and historic core.	7, 10, 12
Traffic congestion caused by single	Improved sustainable	Provide a package of sustainable transport	4, 5, 7



river crossing and trunk road through the city.	transport measures, manage congestion in the city by providing an alternative option to the A49 & dominance of car use.	measures and provide Hereford Relief Road.	
Predominately rural hinterland, reliance on car based travel.	Achieve a modal shift away from dependence on the private car.	Improve public transport provision in, through and around the city. Provision of park and ride sites and a network of cycle ways / footpaths.	4, 5, 7
Inner ring road causing a physical barrier and severance.	A pedestrian friendly city centre.	Upgrade the inner ring road for pedestrians and improve the overall environment.	4, 10
Single track rail line from the city causing restrictions on service and frequency.	Improved access to the West Midlands by rail.	Improve the line to the West Midlands with passing places along the route.	4, 5
Two bus stations and poor connectivity with the railway station making connections in public transport difficult.	Public transport will be easy to use with good connections between modes.	A transport hub will enable public transport to be linked improving access and facilities for passengers.	4, 5, 7
Increase and improve connections between existing cycle routes.	A city accessed by a network of good quality footpaths and cycle ways.	Ensure all urban expansion areas include provision of sustainable transport links and connect with existing facilities.	4, 5, 7
Area of Air Quality Management (AQMA) within the city along the A49.	Air quality will be improved within the city centre and surrounding area.	Remove the through traffic from the city, upgrade the inner ring road and improve the environment around the city centre.	5, 11
Need to protect areas of high quality landscape and rural fringe to the city.	Achieve a high level of integration into the existing urban fabric and surrounding countryside.	Include a high level of green infrastructure and landscaping within the urban expansion schemes.	10, 11, 12
Areas of low income deprivation particularly in South Hereford.	Reduce the levels of income deprivation within the city.	Provide a wider range of employment and education opportunities.	6
High education standards to 6 <sup>th</sup> form but limited offer of Higher Education.	New and expanded education opportunities.	Promote the provision of Higher Education facilities in the city.	3

Lack of higher education facilities means research and development industries not attracted to Hereford.	Provide a range of employment sites and expanded higher education offer.	New and expanded higher education facilities with additional good quality employment land to encourage higher value employers.	3, 6
Main focus for employment to the south of the city.	Provide a balance of employment opportunities north and south of the river.	Employment development in the north and south of the city.	6
Low wages and limited range of high value employment opportunities and reliance on a small number of large employers.	An economy based on a wide range of employment opportunities types.	Provide a range of good quality employment sites to attract high value business.	6

The spatial strategy for Hereford maintains and enhances its role as a strategic centre and reflects its capacity to accommodate additional development without significant harm to local communities and in sustainable locations. Concentrating the largest portion of all development in Hereford would develop and support the regeneration of the city in the long term by capitalising on existing services and other infrastructure and providing greater opportunities for improving and increasing them.

#### **The policies needed to achieve this**

These issues and opportunities will be addressed through the following policies :

- City centre proposals HD1;
  - Heritage
  - Shopping
  - Recreation and Leisure
  - City centre living
  - Jobs and enterprise
  - Movement
- Sustainable transport HD2;
  - Park and Ride
  - Strategic walking and cycling routes
  - Transport Hub
  - Rail improvements
  - Hereford Relief Road
- Urban expansion;
  - Northern expansion HD3
  - Western expansion HD4
  - Southern expansion HD5
- Employment Provision HD6;
  - Hereford Enterprise Zone

Other non-strategic policies and proposals will be required to enable the Hereford of 2031 to be realised. These will be contained within the Hereford Area Plan, master

plans and additional supplementary guidance. These documents will include consideration of:

- non-strategic housing and employment allocations;
- type and mix of energy efficient housing to be provided on non-strategic sites;
- need for additional or improvements to existing open space, play areas and sports and recreation facilities following further evidence base studies currently being prepared;
- need for further non- strategic retail floorspace;
- enhancement proposals for the historic core;
- conservation and design to enhance the city centre and surrounding areas;
- additional sustainable transport measures and car park management;
- need for any renewable energy proposals;
- need for additional waste management facilities;
- need for additional tourism facilities and accommodation in the city;
- design and density policy by character area;
- enhanced night time economy;
- Health and well-being
- need for surface water management in Hereford.

Figure 4.2 – Hereford City Centre – to follow

### **Hereford city centre**

Hereford city centre plays an important role in contributing to the economic, cultural and social performance of the wider city and the county as a whole. It has a rich heritage which makes it an attractive location for residents and visitors alike.

The strategic growth policy for Hereford's central area has been influenced by the Hereford City Centre Regeneration Strategy which sets out a ten-year ambition up to 2018 containing broad views and aspirations for the successful future of the city. The successful and sustainable future of the city relies upon maximising its current strengths and realising opportunities for the regeneration and redevelopment of the city centre. The role of Hereford as the main business, service and focal point for the county will be maintained and enhanced through the expansion of the retail, commercial, leisure and residential functions.

Policy HD1 will strengthen Hereford's role as a focus for the county and outlying areas. Hereford will become a stronger shopping, employment, leisure, education and cultural focus for the county. In addition to new retail and leisure opportunities, city expansion and regeneration proposals will also provide new homes (including affordable ones) and tackle existing movement and flooding constraints, improving the city for residents and visitors. Maintaining and enhancing the city's historic heritage and environmental assets will be high priority issues, as will the sustainability of the new development for existing and future generations.

The Core Strategy aims to improve Hereford's status as a sub-regional shopping destination by enhancing and improving existing facilities and integrating the new development into the historic centre. The Eign Gate and Edgar Street regeneration areas are the focus for achieving this aim. Development in the Edgar Street regeneration area will be developed in accordance with a masterplan to ensure the delivery of a high quality mixed use development. This will be informed by the existing masterplan and will set out an overarching vision of how the area will be

developed and along with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the required supporting infrastructure to enable the successful delivery of the project.

### **Policy HD1 – Hereford city centre**

The city centre will accommodate around 800 new homes. The majority of these will be located within a new urban village. Further residential development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, re-development of existing brownfield sites, re-use of upper floors above commercial premises, infill development and site allocations through the Hereford Area Plan. A minimum of 35% of these new homes will be mixed tenure affordable with a density that is compatible with the sustainable urban location of the site.

The urban village will be served by safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle links to other areas of the city, the new transport interchange, the Courtyard Arts Centre and nearby areas of green space. A new Link Road will also serve development parcels forming part of the urban village connecting Edgar Street to the west and Commercial Road to the east (with a spur linking Blackfriars Street to the south) as well as assisting in reducing traffic within the core of the city.

Newmarket Street, Blueschool Street and Commercial Square will be re-designed to become safe and attractive routes for pedestrian and cyclists, with improved public transport facilities and enhanced connectivity between the historic city centre and regeneration area partly facilitated by the construction of the new link road.

The urban village will be complemented by other uses and infrastructure forming part of the wider regeneration area creating a sustainable mixed use development. These include the following:

- A canal basin forming the terminus of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal will be created;
- Widemarsh Brook will be enhanced for biodiversity, to provide flood relief and sustainable surface water drainage solutions and optimised as a green infrastructure link.
- An integrated transport interchange will be developed close to the railway station to maximise opportunities for sustainable travel.
- Opportunities for large scale new commercial, tourism, education, leisure, civic and health uses will be available to meet any identified need.
- Opportunities for the mixed use re-development of parts of Hereford United Football Ground incorporating new spectator stands will be sought
- New public car parking facilities.

In order to maintain and enhance the viability and vitality of the city centre, new retail uses will be focused to the core of the city centre as defined below. Any identified need

### **Hereford HD1 cont/d**

Within Hereford city centre, new developments including changes of use will also be encouraged where they:

- provide new commercial and office space in appropriate city centre locations including above existing retail and commercial premises;
- provide residential use of upper floors of retail and commercial premises;
- maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the city centre. Proposals for town centre uses outside the defined town centre will be subject to the sequential test and applications for development over 1,250 sq.m. gross floor space will require an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre;
- improve overall accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport
- provide new, or enhanced sport, recreation and leisure facilities for local residents and visitors;
- provide new and improve existing cultural and tourism attractions and facilities which respect the city's historic character and local distinctiveness;
- enable the provision of a canal basin with associated wharfage and visitor centre;
- enable the protection, restoration and enhancement of Hereford's natural and

### **New homes**

Policy H1 promotes living in the city centre. This has many advantages, including good accessibility levels for residents to a range of services and facilities, encourages walking and cycling and makes best use of existing properties by using vacant and underused spaces above shops and offices. This approach will contribute to the vitality of the city centre as its role is broadened from mainly daytime shopping and business uses to create an inclusive 'evening' economy beyond normal working hours making it a more attractive place to live as well as boosting the local economy.

The development of the urban village will provide around 800 new homes. These will comprise a mixture of apartments and family housing at a minimum average density of 50 dwellings per hectare. One third of these homes will be affordable with different types of tenures available, to satisfy identified local needs. Housing will be delivered that meets the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. All homes will be constructed to high energy efficiency standards in accordance with other policies in this plan.

The urban village will require associated infrastructure in order to address flooding issues. A key element of this will be the production of an integrated surface water management strategy. This should inform the design and layout of development and help deliver sustainable drainage and flood risk reduction measures taking into account the development of the other strategic sites in Hereford. Access and traffic constraints will also need to be addressed. The need for good pedestrian and cycle links to other parts of the city, including the railway station and retail and leisure areas is vital to a successful urban village development.

The residents of all new homes will have access and public open space and where possible, there should be green corridors to link the site to other green areas. Opportunities exist to make an attractive feature of the canal basin and its corridor within the new residential area.

### **New jobs**

The *Employment Land Study Update (2012)* confirms the role of Hereford city as the main business centre for the county and identifies the need to promote small-scale sustainable employment opportunities in and on the edge of the Hereford city area. It also recommends that opportunities for new office development in the city centre should be enhanced.

The development of new commercial and office facilities will take place within the city centre as part of the regeneration scheme. This approach is also supported by the *Employment Land Study Update (2012)* which concludes that the regeneration as a whole will create a better environment for existing businesses and raise the rates of company formation.



Proposals for office uses outside of the city centre will be subject to the sequential approach as outlined in Policy E5. Proposals for offices which have a gross floor space of 1250sq.m or over, outside of the city centre will be required to provide an impact assessment which meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Movement**

The regeneration in the north of the city centre will be enabled by the construction of a new link road which will connect Edgar Street, Widemarsh Street and Commercial Road. This new road will create safe access through Edgar Street regeneration area unlocking development plots whilst also significantly reducing the large volumes of traffic on the inner ring road. This will improve pedestrian links between the historic city core and the old livestock market area and accessibility within and across the northern section of the Edgar Street regeneration area.

Newmarket Street, Blueschool Street and Commercial Square will be upgraded for pedestrians and cyclists in order to create a safer and more visually attractive environment.

An integrated public transport interchange will be provided in the vicinity of the railway station, which will become a central point for access to all modes of transport, providing transfer opportunities for trains, buses, taxis, private and hire cars, mobility vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

The *Local Transport Plan* aims to support growth of the city by improving traffic management and promoting walking and cycling for the majority of trips. The strategy identifies a number of strategic and non-strategic transport measures and smarter travel initiatives to encourage modal shifts from private cars to public transport, walking and cycling.

### **Green infrastructure and open space**

The *Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010* identifies an enhancement zone in the city centre at the confluence of a number of strategic green infrastructure corridors and includes the Edgar Street regeneration area. The strategy highlights a number of important biodiversity features, including the Widemarsh Brook, the 'Police Meadow' and the railway corridor where there will be numerous opportunities to enhance as well as create additional green infrastructure as part of the redevelopment of this area.

Hereford's green infrastructure assets including the River Wye and facilities for outdoor sports and nature-based education and recreation provide leisure and recreation opportunities for the local population and visitors to the city. Non-strategic sport, leisure and recreation policies and proposals will be detailed in the forthcoming Hereford Area Plan and will be informed by evidence base studies.

### **Community and education facilities**

Contributions and /or community infrastructure levy will be sought from new development for the enhancement of primary and secondary education facilities to accommodate increased demand from new residents.

### **Heritage**

Hereford's historic heritage must be treated as a valuable asset as the city expands and changes. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how these assets will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. Hereford is fortunate to have a wealth of historic buildings, archaeological remains, historic streetscapes, such as Widemarsh Street and St Owens Street and open spaces which provide valuable settings for historic buildings for example at the Cathedral Close and the plots of the adjoining Canons' houses. Additionally, opportunities exist to enhance

the setting of the existing heritage assets including the City Wall and Blackfriars Friary/Coningsby Hospital site. For example, the public realm works to Newmarket Street and Blueschool Street will provide the opportunity to improve the setting of the city wall, an important historic asset.

In addition to central and local government guidance on the protection of heritage assets, there are a number of background studies, undertaken to form part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. The findings and recommendations of the studies must be referred to as part of any masterplanning of new proposals in the city and they will be central to the appropriate future development of Hereford. These include the following:

- *Hereford Rapid Townscape Assessment 2010*– this identifies areas of local interest, sites for potential development and enhancement and factors that contribute to the loss of character.
- *Hereford Urban Archaeology Strategy* comprising the *Hereford Urban Archaeological Database* and the *Characterisation of the Historic Townscape of Central Hereford (2010)* – a form of historic landscape characterisation, undertaken in an urban context, examining the townscape from an archaeological perspective.
- *Hereford Town Centre: Streetscape Design Strategy 2009* guidance on the development, management and maintenance of new and existing streets.

The city also has a number of natural heritage assets with the River Wye flowing through it with its associated landscape, biodiversity, recreation and tourism benefits. The wider river corridor provides a special setting for the city and brings opportunities for open space and green infrastructure. Its distinctiveness helps to provide an attractive location to live and work which needs to be protected and enhanced. New development should respect this natural heritage. The importance of managed green spaces as a positive element in city living is recognised with these assets providing opportunities for recreation, leisure and tourism. These natural and managed assets make an important contribution to the Green Infrastructure of the city centre and wider area and should be protected and enhanced. Opportunities for new and enhanced green infrastructure within the city particularly associated with the River Wye corridor and the Edgar Street regeneration area should form part of any new proposals.

### **Retail**

The *Town Centres Study Update (2012)* confirms Hereford as the principal shopping centre within the county. Although the report acknowledges that Hereford has been affected by the downturn in the economy along with many other town centres in the United Kingdom, it finds that the city centre shows signs of resilience and its outlook is good with the commitment for retail development at the former livestock market. The latter will add to the existing mix of national multiples and independent traders and will strengthen its role as a principal centre, providing economic benefits and will help reduce unsustainable travel and retail expenditure leakage to other cities such as Worcester, Cheltenham, Bristol and Cardiff.

The city centre referred to as 'town centre' for purposes of Policy E5 of Hereford is defined in figure 4.3 below and includes primary and secondary frontages. Retail development will be concentrated in the town centre. Applications for proposals which have a gross floor space of 1,250 sq.m or over outside of the defined centre will be required to provide an impact assessment which meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies E5 and E6.

Primary frontages are likely to comprise predominantly of retail uses whilst secondary frontages will provide greater opportunity for a diversity of uses such as restaurants and businesses.

Most of the expanded shopping area of Hereford will take place at the old livestock market and Eign Gate area, which together have the potential for accommodating substantial growth. This approach is confirmed by the *Town Centres Study Update 2012* which indicates that in addition to the former livestock market, opportunities remain for new retail development in the city centre particularly within the Eign Street regeneration area. There is therefore no need to allocate additional development sites for retail or other uses within the city. However this situation will be reassessed when the Hereford Area Plan is produced. The Hereford Area Plan will also provide an opportunity to reconsider the extent of the city centre and primary and secondary retail frontages.

Regeneration of the former livestock market brownfield site which is currently underway will provide a mix of unit sizes, including larger units, to attract high street multiples including a department store that are not currently available in the city centre. Whilst the use of public transport will be encouraged though the provision of a public transport hub, additional car parking will be provided as part of the livestock market redevelopment. Successful integration with the existing historic retail core will be achieved through the creation of new pedestrian friendly links. Measures to further improve and enhance the existing city centre's shopping facilities will be supported.

*Figure 4.3 - insert town centre map to follow*

### **Leisure and tourism**

Construction is underway on the development of the former livestock market which will include a new multi-screen cinema, restaurants and cafes whilst opportunities will be facilitated through the Core Strategy for other leisure and tourism uses within the extended city centre to complement existing facilities. Any proposals for leisure uses outside the city centre having a gross floor space of 1,250 sq.m or over will be subject to the sequential test and be required to provide an impact assessment which meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy E5.

Tourism plays an important role in Hereford's economy and it will be promoted through the planned mixed-use regeneration of the city. Opportunities to attract more tourists, who make an important contribution to the local economy, will be supported where appropriate. The business tourism potential can be further developed through the promotion of new meeting/conferencing facilities which make better use of existing assets such as the Courtyard for example. The *Marches Hotel Study (2012)* identifies capacity for a premium style hotel and the potential for the redevelopment and/or extensions of existing hotels. This study concludes that there is no need for further budget hotels in Hereford within the plan period.

Proposals for leisure uses outside of the city centre will be subject to the sequential test. Applications for proposals which have a gross floor space of 1250sq.m or over outside of the city centre will be required to provide an impact assessment which meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Water management and flooding**

A proportion of the Edgar Street regeneration area lies within Flood Zone 3. The Yazor Brook flood alleviation scheme has now been completed which provides some flood relief to the Edgar Street regeneration area and outlying areas. Further measures will also be implemented within the city that will improve surface water



drainage and any residual flooding impacts. This may include opportunities in other parts of the city to attenuate flood flows from existing watercourses. Developers will also be required to provide surface water management plans to ensure sustainable surface water drainage solutions are adopted and risk of flooding is minimized. The restoration of the canal may also provide an opportunity to mitigate flood risk in the longer term. In flood risk terms, sequentially, the Edgar Street regeneration area is considered acceptable for re-development proposals including residential development described in policy HD.1.

## **Movement**

Facilitating access and maximising connectivity within the city by all transport modes is essential to reduce congestion, support future prosperity and enable growth within Hereford.

The *Local Transport Plan (2013/14 – 2014/15)* outlines approaches for improving transport within the city. It also identifies the requirement for a Hereford transport review during 2013 to inform the long-term transport strategy for the city.

Transport modelling undertaken to understand the extent of existing traffic issues and how the city's growth can be supported in the long-term has indicated that new highway infrastructure supported by a package of sustainable transport improvements are required. Sustainable transport measures on their own without new highway infrastructure will not accommodate the additional travel demand derived from the planned growth in the Core Strategy.

The Hereford transport review will identify the schemes to be included within this transport package and establish long-term transport strategy for Hereford including a programme of infrastructure and services to facilitate the growth proposals identified in the core strategy.

The convergence of the county's highway network in Hereford means that the city's roads must accommodate both long distance and local traffic. The city network has only one main river crossing which combined with the levels of local through traffic, results in increasingly prolonged periods of congestion. As a result the A49 between Asda and Newtown roundabouts, the inner ring road and much of Whitecross Road have been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The scale of future development proposed for Hereford and the county will place further demand on the city's constrained highway network infrastructure resulting in increased periods of congestion and consequentially greater environmental problems unless the demand for short distance car journeys can be reduced by encouraging more people to walk, cycle or use public transport within Hereford.

### **Policy HD2 Hereford movement**

Herefordshire Council will maintain and improve Hereford's connectivity to the national and local transport networks by reducing congestion and improving journey time reliability using developer contributions and/or community infrastructure levy monies to fund the following:

- Packages of transport improvements focussing on key routes into the city delivering a range of public realm improvements to improve access and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users;
- Reduced reliance on car use by incorporating walking, cycling and bus routes within new developments and connecting them with existing networks;
- Improvements to public transport infrastructure enabling improved access and integration between bus and to rail services;

- Car parking facilities which attract shoppers and visitors and deter commuter parking in the city centre through the development of Park and Ride, Park and Share and Park and Cycle sites;
- A western relief road to reduce the volume of traffic from the city centre and enable the delivery of walking, cycling and bus improvements on the existing highway network.

Herefordshire Council is continuing to develop its evidence base by undertaking a refresh of its transport forecasts and understanding of future transport conditions, including the effects of the development contained in the Core Strategy.

The *Local Transport Plan* will establish a transport strategy for Hereford and will include a systematic and in-depth review of current and future transport conditions. The outcomes of this review will be a costed, phased programme of infrastructure and services over the Core Strategy period to facilitate growth proposals. The review will identify and test a range of transport packages. In addition to the proposals outlined in Policy H2 above the packages are likely to include:

- Bus priority measures;
- Real time information on core bus network and stop upgrades;
- Active travel network;
- Extension of “Destination Hereford” project;
- Hereford transport hub;
- City centre refurbishments;
- Rail track and signal improvements between Hereford and Malvern;
- Facilities to support electric and low carbon vehicles.

Particular transport infrastructure necessary to bring forward the Core Strategy proposals are detailed in the *Infrastructure Delivery Plan*.

A key element of the long-term Hereford transport strategy is the requirement for a relief road with a second river crossing. This vital addition to the city’s transport network will enable the reallocation of existing highway for bus priorities and walking and cycling measures and the re-routing of the existing A49 Trunk Road (managed by the Highways Agency) removing longer distance traffic from the centre of the city.

The *Hereford Relief Road – Study of Options (Aug 2010)* reviewed all route options and assessed the impacts of the routes in relation to environmental, engineering and traffic impacts. The inner western corridor, as shown in the figure below, is the preferred corridor for the relief road based on the study’s overall assessment.

#### **Figure 4.4 –relief road corridor**

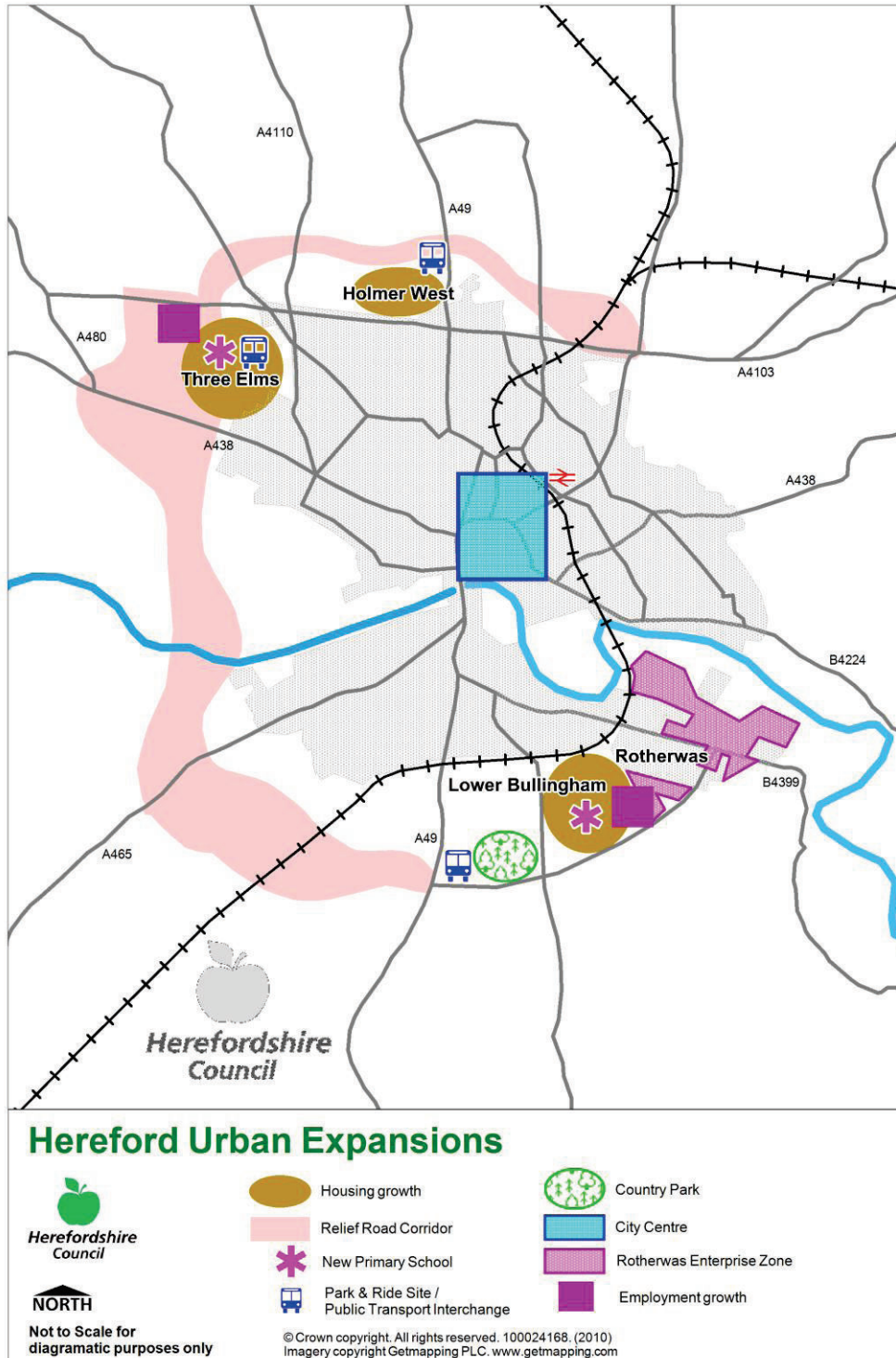
The report indicates that the impact on biodiversity at the River Wye crossing can be largely mitigated through the use of wide span structures and avoidance of direct working in the watercourse.

The first section of the relief road constructed is likely to be the section between the A49 and A465 as part of the Belmont Transport Package (as identified in the *Local Transport Plan*). The second and lengthy western inner corridor which includes a bridge crossing (A465 – A4103) would need to be co-ordinated with the development of the western urban expansion proposals. The final section would link the A4103 to the western and eastern sides of the A49 in the north of Hereford. Costs of the link sections are highlighted within the study. The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy will generate a significant part of the funding for the project. Other

sources of funding and timings of delivery are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies this document. The Economic Viability Assessment 2013 explains the viability of the project and other proposals in the plan generally.

Work on the detailed alignment of the road will be considered during the Hereford Area Plan. Close working with key statutory bodies will be needed to ensure the minimum impact on natural assets and appropriate identification of mitigation measures. In addition, it will be essential to work closely with the Highways Agency to ensure that all opportunities are realised to re-route trunk road traffic to the new relief road. This will reduce the intrusion of commercial and longer distance traffic through the city centre, reduce existing air quality problems and provide the council with greater control of the existing city transport network.

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### Northern Urban Expansion (Holmer west)

A location to the north of the city has been identified as a strategic urban expansion of the city. This expansion area is broadly located north of the A4103 and west of the A49 extending westwards towards the A4110 comprising predominantly of agricultural land.

The expansion area referred to as Holmer West will be planned on a comprehensive basis, informed by a development brief prepared through the Hereford Area Plan.

This will include variations in layout, density and design to achieve a form and character to the development that respects the landscape sensitivity and existing natural features of the area.

### **Policy HD3– Northern Urban Expansion**

Land at Holmer west will deliver a comprehensively planned sustainable urban expansion incorporated into the urban fabric of Hereford which meets high design and sustainability standards. New developments will be sensitively integrated into the existing landscape. Any potential impacts on the local environment or biodiversity should be mitigated and measures taken to conserve and enhance areas of important environmental and landscape quality. The development will be expected to provide:

- around 500 new homes comprising a mix of predominantly 2 and 3 bedrooms at an average density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare;
- a minimum of 35% of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing of a tenure to meet the requirements of Policy H1;
- a minimum of a 350 space Park and Ride site (land and infrastructure) adjacent to the western side of the A49 in close proximity to the Hereford Relief Road and land or a contribution to facilitate the construction of the adjoining phase of the Hereford Relief Road;
- walking and cycle routes and green infrastructure corridors linking to the Park and Ride site, the existing Public Right of Way Network and existing education/community facilities and employment sites in the locality;
- appropriate new green buffers and linear green routes, particularly along Ayles Brook;
- measures to mitigate flood risk both for the new homes within the expansion area and for the benefit of existing residents and businesses in other parts of the city through the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage solutions, as part of the green infrastructure network and measures to control water levels within Ayles Brook;
- appropriate provision of and contributions towards indoor and outdoor sports and play facilities, open space and allotments;
- a pre-school facility and provision of/contributions towards the enhancement of existing primary and secondary school provision in the locality and any identified need for other community infrastructure/facilities;
- a high quality design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include maximising the energy efficiency of the dwellings and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

This expansion area will be accessed primarily off the A4103 Roman Road but is also dependent on the expanded capacity of the A49 by the provision of sustainable transport measures and the construction of future phases of a Hereford Relief Road. Contributions will be required from the development for Hereford transportation improvements including new infrastructure and sustainable transport measures. A detailed master plan will be required to show the layout of development and the required infrastructure. This will be progressed and finalised within the Hereford Area Plan.

Delivers Core Strategy Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 12

#### **New homes**

Around 500 new homes will be provided within the Holmer west area. All will be built to high energy efficiency standards. 35% will be affordable with the highest proportion being intermediate tenure as required by policy H1. Housing will be



delivered that meets the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. The design and styles of the new housing will complement the built and landscape character of the locality and the scale and density will be reflective of the topography and prominence of the area. The development will need to be laid out and all homes and community buildings constructed to a high sustainability standard to ensure energy and water usage is minimised and sustainably sourced materials are used where practicable. This will include the use of renewables and other low carbon energy sources.

### **Movement**

The new area will be required to encourage sustainable modes of travel and discourage car use. It will be primarily accessed from Roman Road with the option of a further access link to the northern Hereford Relief Road corridor and park and ride. The scheme will be heavily reliant on bus priority, walking and cycling routes to access the city and existing community facilities.

A Park and Ride site is planned on part of the northern expansion area, alongside the A49, which will work in combination with the proposed western and southern park and ride facilities. These park and ride areas will also have the ability to be 'park and car share' stops and 'park and cycle' points, so that their full potential in reducing private car use within the city can be realised.

### **Landscape and heritage**

The landscape character assessment defines this broad location as being "principal settled farmland". The expansion area is of a high to medium sensitivity on the higher northern portion of the land. However, as the land falls away southwards towards Ayles Brook, the landscape is less sensitive to change. Careful consideration must be given to the impact of the development on the landscape and vistas. Landscape characteristics should be used to direct new development to the most appropriate areas which is likely to concentrate most built development to the lower, southern three quarters of the expansion area. The master plan should identify measures which will successfully integrate the new development into the landscape setting including opportunities for enhancement to restore and reinforce the landscape character.

Listed buildings and a Scheduled Ancient Monument at St Bartholomew's Church and Holmer House lie to the east of the expansion area. New development should be designed to ensure that the impacts on the setting of these assets are minimised and that opportunities for enhancement are pursued.

### **Green infrastructure and biodiversity**

The *Green Infrastructure Strategy* identifies the expansion area as predominantly arable in use. It lies within a local enhancement zone (HerLEZ3) and incorporates strategic corridor HerLSC3. The strategy identifies a number of opportunities to enhance existing green infrastructure, including establishing robust linear habitats along Ayles Brook, planting new hedgerows and traditional orchards and appropriate planting to soften the transition between settlement and open countryside. A network of green infrastructure will be required with linear green routes which can be used for biodiversity and conservation as well as sustainable transport routes, leisure and flood management. The expansion area's natural characteristics and features should form the basis for new green infrastructure and open space proposals. Opportunities exist for the retention and enhancement of field boundaries and other linear features, and for the maintenance and enhancements of connectivity between habitats.

## **Community, recreation and education facilities**

Appropriate community facilities will be provided within the area to support the identified need to support the new development. Contributions will be sought for primary and secondary education facilities in order to accommodate children living in the expansion area. There will also be a need for contribution towards expanded pre-school provision within existing primary schools or the provision of a new pre-school facility as part of the expansion area.

The *Open Space Study* highlights there is an under provision in the north of the city of natural and semi-natural green space. The *Play Facilities Strategy* identifies provision north of the city as being 'average' with particular gaps in the provision for older children. Therefore the development will be expected to incorporate acceptable levels of open space and play facilities in accordance with Policies OS 1 and OS2 and additional semi natural green space. Provision for community allotments will also be required to assist in meeting the shortfall in provision across the city.

## **Fluvial flooding, surface water management and drainage**

The expansion area is within Flood Zone 1 which has a low probability risk of flooding, with the exception of the southern eastern boundaries defined by the Ayles Brook which is identified as being in Flood Zone 3. The developer will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures, primarily through the development of sustainable urban drainage systems, are incorporated within the development to mitigate flood risk for existing residents. Ayles Brook is also an existing source of flooding to properties, community facilities and highway infrastructure south of the site and the expansion area will also need to include measures to assist in reducing the flood risk.

The area suffers from low water pressure and therefore an upgrade to the mains water supply to serve the area may be required. Improvements in the capacity of the public foul drainage network in the locality will also be required to serve the new development.

## **Western Urban Expansion (Three Elms)**

Land on the outskirts of Hereford, north west of the city centre is identified as a location for a major mixed use urban expansion of the city. The area is broadly located between the A4103 to the north and A438 to the south, immediately west of Yazor Road extending westwards towards the new livestock market. The land is currently predominantly being used for agriculture and is of low/medium landscape sensitivity. Yazor Brook runs through the land and the brook corridor is designated a flood zone. The existing residential areas of Three Elms and Kings Acre are adjacent and Huntingdon Conservation Area is within the development area.

The expansion area referred to as the western urban extension will be planned on a comprehensive basis, informed by a development brief and masterplan prepared through the Hereford Area Plan. This will include variations in layout, density and design to achieve a form and character to the development that respects the landscape sensitivity and existing natural features of the area and the setting of Huntingdon Conservation area.

In planning for urban growth to the west of the city, it will be essential that the development integrates both visually and physically with the remainder of the city and existing neighbouring communities.



#### **Policy HD4 – Western Urban Expansion (Three Elms)**

Land north west of the city centre is identified for a sustainable mixed use urban expansion to be comprehensively masterplanned to form a series of inter-related new neighbourhoods. The development will be required to deliver the following:

- Around 1000 new homes comprising a mix of predominantly two and three bedroom dwellings at an average density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare. A minimum of 35% of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing of a tenure to meet the requirements of Policy H1;
- Delivery of land and infrastructure to facilitate the construction of the adjoining phase of the Hereford Relief Road;
- A minimum of 10 hectares of employment land comprising predominantly of a mixture of use class B1, B2 and B8 located near to the new livestock market with access to the Hereford Relief Road and Roman Road;
- Land and infrastructure for a transport interchange or around 150 spaces to be delivered by the developer;
- A new linear park along the Yazor Brook corridor connecting with the existing green infrastructure links east of the expansion area, the public rights of way network within and adjoining the expansion area and informal recreation space ;
- A series of new green infrastructure connections which enhance the biodiversity value of the area and also serve as pedestrian cycle links through the development including optimising the use of the disused railway line to connect with the transport interchange, schools, community facilities, employment land and the remainder of the city;
- Provision for new bus links through the expansion area;
- Development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and contributes to the distinctiveness of the site and surrounding environment;
- The provision on site of appropriate sports and play facilities, formal and informal open space, community orchards, woodland planting and allotments;
- Integration of Huntington village into the development area whilst ensuring the setting of the Conservation Area is respected;
- A new 210 place primary school with additional pre-school accommodation on the development to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions;
- An extension of Whitecross High School to increase capacity from a 6 form entry to 7 form entry school with commensurate school playing field provision to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions;
- A neighbourhood community hub to meet any identified need for small scale convenience retail, community meeting space, health provision, indoor sports and other community infrastructure/facilities;
- Sustainable urban drainage and flood mitigation solutions to form an integral part of the green infrastructure network;
- Opportunities to mitigate flood risk arising from Yazor Brook for existing residents and businesses within the city;
- Sustainable standards of design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include maximising the energy efficiency of the dwellings and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

This location is also dependent on the expanded capacity of the A49 and local highway network by the provision of sustainable transport measures and/or the

construction of future phases of the Hereford Relief Road. Contributions will be required from this development for Hereford transportation improvements including new infrastructure and sustainable transport measures and other infrastructure improvements identified in the *Infrastructure Delivery Plan*.

Delivers Core Strategy Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12

### **New homes**

Around 1,000 new homes will be provided within the western expansion area. It is expected that 35% of these homes will be affordable. Around 35% of the total number of dwellings will be affordable housing to be distributed in small clusters across the development with most housing meeting intermediate tenure needs in accordance with policy H1. Housing will be delivered that meets the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. The housing will be predominantly be of a mix of two and three bedroom size.

This expansion area will be developed in smaller clusters to create new neighbourhoods that dovetail in with existing communities adjoining the development area. It is anticipated that the residential element of the new growth will be to the east of the Hereford Relief Road, adjacent to the existing urban fabric.

### **New employment**

The provision of additional 10 hectares of employment land will balance the existing provision to the south of the city within the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas and to the north at Moreton Business Park. Employment land should be provided close to the new livestock market with potential access on to the Hereford Relief Road and A4103 and pedestrian/cycle links to the development area and city beyond. This land is relatively flat, will have good road frontage and is sufficiently large to offer opportunities for large and small scale businesses thus adding to the diversity of employment land options around the city. The expansion area will also offer opportunities for live work units.

### **Sustainable construction and resources use**

All homes, community and employment buildings will need to be constructed to a high sustainability standard to ensure energy and water usage is minimised and sustainably sourced materials are used where practicable. This will include the use of renewables and other low carbon energy sources and the feasibility of combined heat and power systems will also be investigated.

### **Movement**

A package of transport measures in the area will assist in creating a development which is less dependent on the private car whilst providing safe and convenient access to the local and future strategic road network (Hereford Relief Road). The new urban extension will be designed to inhibit traffic and facilitate more sustainable travel choices. Key to achieving this will be the creation of new pedestrian and cycle links through the development area connecting with existing links within the city and local community facilities. Where required, the development will also be required to upgrade existing links to make them more user- friendly for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, the provision of new, or enhancement of, existing bus links to serve the new community will also be required including the introduction of bus priority measures both within the development and on the existing highway network.

Vehicular access options will need to be informed by a traffic assessment but opportunities exist to connect to Roman Road, Three Elms Road and Kings Acre Road as well as the new relief road.

The development will also deliver a transport interchange area with capacity for around 150 spaces and ancillary facilities such as secure cycle lock ups. In the short to medium term, this will be used as a park and share and park and cycle hub but longer term, the site may also be a park and ride site to complement the principal park and rides sites north and south of the city.

### **Green infrastructure**

A network of green infrastructure is planned within the western expansion area. Green corridors which can be used for biodiversity and conservation enhancement as well as leisure and sustainable transport routes will be required.

Linear green spaces will also be provided along existing footpaths to link key features within the development, including the park and ride site, to existing facilities such as schools, employment and retail areas. The old railway and Yazor Brook linear green spaces should link to existing footpaths and cycleways through Moor Park and into the city via Plough Lane.

### **Heritage**

Within the expansion area, the development will need to respect the setting of Huntingdon Conservation Area and the rural character of Huntingdon Lane. Key attributes such as the built heritage within the conservation area, the landscape setting of the village and the width, hedgerows and alignment of the lane will be safeguarded and enhanced whilst also ensuring the development fully assimilates with these features.

### **Community hub and facilities**

A community hub would address the needs of the new homes and the existing residents of Three Elms, Kings Acre, Bobblestock and Moor Park. This hub could provide a range of multi-agency use facilities, including a health centre, pre-school education, community rooms and local convenience retail. To serve as a hub, it will be situated near the new school, with safe direct pedestrian and cycle access to existing communities.

### **New education facilities**

A new 210 place primary school will be required to meet the educational needs of the new population generated by the development and a deficit in capacity within existing schools in the north west of the city. This should be centrally located close to the existing high school to create a community and education hub to the development. If pre-school provision is not delivered as part of the community hub, this will need to be provided as part of the new primary school.

Whitecross High school is the principal secondary school likely to be serving the development. This school is currently at capacity and therefore the development will also deliver an extension of the school to create capacity for an additional form (150 pupils). This is most likely to entail building on the existing school playing fields and therefore new playing fields to serve the larger school will need to be provided adjoining the school. The new primary and secondary extension will need to be either directly constructed by the developer or land and a contribution will need to be provided to enable the construction.

### **Surface water management and fluvial flooding**

The Yazor Brook corridor is designated as floodplain which also extends to a wider land area at the eastern end of the expansion area. The *Water Cycle Study* and the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* have highlighted that a strategy to address both the sustainable management of new surface water discharges from the urban extension and measures to mitigate against fluvial flood risk will be required. This is likely to encompass surface water attenuation features which will be an integral part

of the development and will provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Yazor Brook is also an existing source of flooding to properties, community facilities and highway infrastructure east of the expansion area and the development will also need to include measures to assist in reducing this existing flood risk. The area suffers from low water pressure and therefore an upgrade to the mains water supply to serve the area may be required.

### **Southern Urban Expansion (Lower Bullingham)**

A strategic location to the south of the city at Lower Bullingham has been highlighted as an expansion area for urban growth. This location is to the east of Hoarwithy Road between the railway line and the Rotherwas Access Road.

The expansion area will be planned on a comprehensive basis, informed by a masterplan prepared through the Hereford Area Plan. This will include variations in layout, density and design to achieve an organic form and character to the development that respects the landscape sensitivity and existing natural features of the area.

### **Policy HD5 - Southern Urban Expansion (Lower Bullingham)**

Land located south west of Rotherwas Enterprise Zone and north of the B4399 (Rotherwas Access Road) is identified for a sustainable mixed use urban expansion. The development will be required to deliver the following:

- around 1000 new homes comprising a mix of dwellings types and sizes at an average density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare;
- a minimum of 35% of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing meeting the tenure requirements of policy H1 ;
- around 5 hectares of employment land comprising a mixture of use class B1, B2 and B8 to complement Hereford Enterprise Zone;
- suitable vehicular access to the site principally from the B4399;
- a minimum of a 350 space park and ride site (land and infrastructure) adjacent the A49/ Rotherwas Access Road roundabout to be delivered by the developer;
- green infrastructure corridors through the area to include strategic greenways along Red Brook and Norton Brook and links with Withy Brook;
- creation of a country park to incorporate new footpaths linking with the existing public right of way network in the locality, woodland and orchard planting;
- development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and contributes to the distinctiveness of the site and surrounding environment;
- the provision on site of appropriate sports and play facilities, open space, community orchards and allotments;
- a new 210 place primary school with additional pre-school accommodation on a site to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions;
- a neighbourhood community hub including small scale convenience retail and provision of and/or contributions towards any identified need for other community infrastructure/facilities including community meeting space and health provision, indoor and outdoor sports;
- sustainable urban drainage and flood mitigation solutions to form an integral part of the green infrastructure network;
- new direct walking, cycling and bus links from the urban extension to the park and ride to the west, Hereford Enterprise Zone to the east and existing communities and the city centre to the north to be delivered directly by the

- developer;  
sustainable standards of design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include maximising the energy efficiency of the buildings and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

This location is also dependent on the expanded capacity of the A49 by the provision of sustainable transport measures and the construction of future phases of the Hereford Relief Road. Contributions will be required from this development for Hereford transportation improvements including new infrastructure and sustainable transport measures.

**Delivers Core Strategy Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12**

### **New homes**

This policy seeks to deliver around 1000 new homes of one to five bedrooms in size with the predominant requirement being for two and three bedroom dwellings. A minimum of 35% of the total number of dwellings will be affordable housing to be distributed in small clusters across the development with the highest proportion being intermediate tenure in accordance with policy H1.. Housing will also be delivered that meets the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. The housing will be predominantly two storeys in height reflecting the residential character of the locality.

### **Sustainable construction and resources use**

All homes, community and employment buildings will need to be constructed to a high sustainability standard to ensure energy and water usage is minimised and sustainably sourced materials are used where practicable. This will include the use of renewables and other low carbon energy sources and the feasibility of combined heat and power systems will also be investigated possibly in combination with the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas.



### **New employment**

Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) lies adjacent the expansion area and will provide opportunities for local employment. Part of this designation includes land within this urban extension. To assist with the delivery of future employment land on the HEZ, provision for around 5 hectares of employment land is included as part of the urban extension. This would largely relate to land west of Watery Lane and be linked to the new housing and the remainder of the employment area by new walking and cycling routes. The composition of employment uses will need to complement that to be provided on the remainder of the HEZ but the site offers the opportunity for sustainable small scale businesses with good access and road frontage.

### **Movement**

The provision of new road infrastructure along with a package of sustainable transport measures is necessary for Hereford to deliver its full housing and economic growth. Sustainable transport measures are also required to assist in creating a development which is less dependent on the private car. New growth areas will be designed to inhibit traffic and encourage more sustainable modes of travel and contribute to new and the enhancement of existing highway and sustainable transport infrastructure.

It is expected that the principal vehicular access to the development is via Rotherwas Access Road and likely to take the form of a new roundabout. Access to the north into the city and to the employment to the east will be restricted to and/or prioritised for buses, walking and cycling.

New cycle ways and footpaths will need to link the development to the existing and new employment areas, community facilities, local schools and the city centre. This will include a new link to the Connect 2 Greenway cycle route. Collectively, this will provide residents with safe and pleasant routes to walk and cycle. Key to the transportation strategy will also be the expansion of the existing bus network into the site to further encourage sustainable travel choices.

As part of the development, a southern park and ride site is required in the vicinity of the A49/Rotherwas Access Road roundabout to complement those proposed north and west of the city aside other expansion locations. These park and ride areas should also have the ability to be park and car share hubs, and park and cycle to achieve their full potential in reducing private car use within the city. Provision will also need to be included for a small parking area to serve the country park.

### **Landscape and green infrastructure**

The Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis highlights the southern section of the site is of higher landscape sensitivity and is vulnerable to change, forming part of rising land to Dinedor Hill. This will require careful design in any masterplan. The expansion area is however, largely contained to the south by the Rotherwas Access Road which effectively forms a visual barrier to the more sensitive landscape beyond.

The expansion area will need to be designed to incorporate a network of green infrastructure. This will serve as biodiversity and landscape enhancement corridors as well as sustainable transport routes. The *Green Infrastructure Strategy* has highlighted a strategic corridor along Red Brook, Norton Brook and Withy Brook as an enhancement zone. Opportunities for enhancement include reinforcing the biodiversity value of the linear features including the railway and water corridors and establishing landscape buffer areas. Further green infrastructure will need to be provided to safely connect the new homes to the country park proposed as part of the urban extension and other community facilities in the locality.



The existing rural nature of Watery Lane and Lower Bullingham Lane should be protected and will provide new opportunities for sustainable transport links to connect to wider footpaths to Dinedor Hill, the historic Hill Fort, Rotherwas Park and beyond.

### **Heritage**

Recent field investigations in the locality have revealed a number of archaeological finds of significance including the Bronze Age feature known as the Rotherwas Ribbon. Further archaeological field evaluation will be required to inform the masterplan for the expansion area.

### **Community, recreation and education facilities**

The *Sustainable Community Strategy* confirms that local communities will be more sustainable if they have access to necessary local services and facilities that meet their needs. A community hub is required to address the needs of the new homes and adjacent neighbourhoods in the South Hereford area. This hub will provide a range of facilities including community rooms for public and multi-agency use, local convenience retail, health care and pre-school education.

The development will require the provision of a new 210 place primary school within the urban extension to be delivered by the developer along with sustainable travel links to the secondary school in the locality to meet the educational needs of the increased population generated by the development.

Land to the west of the urban extension will be required to deliver a new country park. This will comprise of an area of land to be transferred to Herefordshire Council containing a series of informal paths connected to the existing public right of way network and the park and ride site beyond. The country park will include measures to restore degraded landscape to include new tree planting and biodiversity enhancement along Norton Brook which is also identified as a strategic Green Infrastructure corridor connecting with Withy Brook and the enhancement of the setting of Bullinghope village.

Open space, play and sport facilities will need to be provided on site in accordance with the requirements of policy OS.1 informed by the *Play Facilities Strategy*, *Playing Pitch Strategy*, *Sports Facilities Framework* and *Open Space Study*.

### **Surface water management and fluvial flooding**

The northern part of the urban extension adjacent the railway line and along the brook corridor is designated as flood zone 3. The *Water Cycle Study* and the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* have highlighted that a strategy to address both the sustainable management of new surface water discharges from the urban extension and measures to mitigate against fluvial flood risk will be required. This is likely to encompass surface water attenuation features which will be an integral part of the development and will provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

## **Hereford Employment Provision**

### **Policy HD6 – Hereford Employment Provision**

Hereford will continue to provide focus for employment provision in the county. Employment supply at Hereford will be delivered through:

- the expansion of the city centre as part of wider city regeneration which will include commercial uses including new office provision and creating a better environment for existing businesses. Proposals for office uses outside of the city centre will be subject to the sequential test;

- continuing development of employment land at Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas to strengthen the enterprise zone, with particular focus on defence and knowledge sectors, creating added benefit for companies who locate in the area;
- encouraging small scale environmental and knowledge based employment development opportunities; and
- provision of new areas of employment land particularly through the development of strategic urban extensions.

Hereford provides a significant focus for employment provision in the county. Proposals such as city centre regeneration and the development of employment sites as elements of strategic urban extensions will provide new opportunities for job creation during the plan period. In addition to new areas of employment land the protection and continued development of existing employment land will also be an important contributor to the economic prosperity of Hereford. The following areas provide important elements of the portfolio of employment land in and close to the City.

#### *Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ)*

The Rotherwas industrial estate is located south-east of Hereford and is over 120 hectares in size and has over 125 companies operating within it. As part of meeting the employment needs and the development of the economy in Herefordshire the Rotherwas industrial estate was awarded Enterprise Zone status in 2011. The site has a range of classes of employment land and buildings ranging from “best”, “good” and “moderate” and a number of specific sites within the estate which are allocated in the Enterprise Zone Masterplan as sites for new B1, B2 and B8 development.

The HEZ was originally nominated by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership anticipating that the scheme will become a catalyst for enhanced economic growth throughout the Marches through the creation of highly skilled jobs and encouragement of overseas investment into the area. The aspiration of the HEZ is to develop part of the site into a centre of excellence for the defence and security sector with additional employment hubs focused on advanced technologies, environmental technologies and food and drink technologies.

Following designation studies were commissioned to examine the possible benefits of additional road infrastructure to serve the Enterprise Zone. However, the reports which considered the economic, wider social and traffic impacts of an eastern link road from the Enterprise Zone to the A438 Ledbury Road recommended against the inclusion of such a link in the plan.

#### *Westfields trading estate*

The Westfields trading estate is a 25 hectare site located in the northern region of Hereford. The entire site is rated as ‘good’ and contains a number of different sized units, although would benefit from new investment in employment buildings with many older units being present. This site contains a small amount of development opportunities, as well as redevelopment opportunities.

#### *Three Elms trading estate*

Three Elms trading estate is located north of Hereford and occupies 3 hectares of land which has shown good employment land take-up, with few vacant sites. The trading estate is designated as ‘good’ and there is the opportunity to expand the estate by an additional 10Ha as part of further housing development to the north of Hereford. The additional 10 Ha of employment land is likely to cater for a range of different sizes of B1, B2 and B8 employment uses.

#### *Holmer Road*

The industrial precinct on Holmer Road is located to the north of Hereford and is approximately 16 hectares in size and contains a number of larger as well as smaller employment units. The site is designated as 'moderate' and contains land available for further B1, B2 and B8 employment development.

#### *Moreton Business Park*

Although this business park is located 7km north of Hereford, it is one of the county's largest employment sites and is sufficiently close to Hereford to assist in meeting the current and future employment needs. This site presently comprises of 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> of predominantly B1 and B8 floorspace although a planning application is currently being considered for around a further 51,000 m<sup>2</sup> of mixed B1, B2 and B8 floorspace totalling an additional 21 hectares. The site is rated as good and if the current application is approved, the site will offer a diverse range of new employment opportunities.

## **Market Towns**

### **Bromyard**

As part of the vision for Herefordshire, Bromyard will continue to fulfil a diverse range of important roles as a focus for residential, employment, recreational and cultural uses. The town will continue to act as a service centre for its rural hinterland. The strategy promotes the continued development of the town, taking into consideration its needs, opportunities and constraints. This vision is manifested in strategic objectives 1, 4, 6, 8 and 10, which for Bromyard, centre on meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification and improving delivery and access to services.

Insert Bromyard Town profile map/legend

### **Background to policies**

To achieve the vision for Bromyard, a strategic urban extension for residential development is proposed in the north-west area of the town with a new employment area to the west of Bromyard. The proposed housing at Hardwick Bank is located on mainly 'high' and 'medium-high' sensitivity landscape according to the *Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis 2010*. The proposed employment area is on 'high' sensitive landscape. However, high landscape constraints are predominant all around Bromyard and flooding issues also constrain development to the east of the town. The environmental constraints of Bromyard must be balanced with the need for new development. The spatial strategy proposes to direct some development to Bromyard to support its service centre role, meet local housing needs and provide further employment opportunities for the local community. Policies BY1 and BY2 set out how the spatial strategy for Bromyard will be delivered and managed and are illustrated in the Bromyard Key Diagram below.

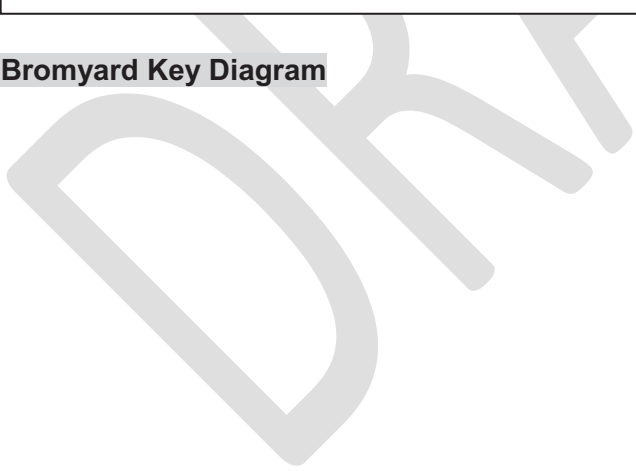
### **Policy BY.1 Development in Bromyard**

Bromyard will accommodate around 500 new homes together with around 5 hectares of new employment land during the plan period. The majority of new development will be located in the north and western areas of the town with a total of around 350 new homes and a new employment site. Further development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, windfall development and sites allocated through a neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document.

Within Bromyard, new development proposals will be encouraged where they:

- can accommodate small scale employment sites including live/work units within and around the town;
- protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 200m<sup>2</sup> in gross floor space and located outside of the defined Town Centre will need to be supported by an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre ;
- provide for the sustainable conservation and enhancement of its green infrastructure and natural environmental resources such as water, where there should be no adverse impact on water quality in the River Frome;
- facilitate a genuine choice of modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking as alternatives to the private car;
- contribute to identified needs for new or improved community facilities as a result of new development;
- take account of the ability of existing and proposed infrastructure including foul drainage, water supply and water resources, and the highway network to serve the development proposed without undue environmental impact;
- contribute to the quality of Bromyard's local environment, including its landscape and historic character.

### **Bromyard Key Diagram**



## **Policy BY2 – Land at Hardwick Bank and south of the A44 Leominster Road**

Development proposals at Land at Hardwick Bank and South of the A44 will be required to bring forward the following to achieve a sustainable urban extension of the town:

- a comprehensively planned mixed use development of around 350 new homes of a mix of predominantly 2 and 3 bedroom size dwellings at a density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare and around 5 hectares of employment land;
- a 40% target of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing meeting the tenure requirements set out in Policy H1 ;
- a new formal park to form part of the residential development complemented by new play and sports facilities and allotments ;
- the development areas should be linked by a suitable vehicular access likely to take the form of a roundabout on the A44. The development areas should also be serviced by a residential road which will allow for opportunities to extend development beyond the plan period and serve as a future link road to other parts of the local highway network;
- the residential roads leading off Winslow Road should be utilised to provide sustainable links to the town (including pedestrian and cycle links) as well as public transport links between the area and the town centre;
- the provision of and contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities. This shall include improvements to classroom provision for the local primary school which should incorporate publicly accessible youth facilities;
- a high standard of design and layout which respects the townscape, landscape and green infrastructure of the area.
- development that is sustainable in terms of its construction materials and methods, use of energy, water and other resources and contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources;
- incorporate significant landscape buffers to mitigate the impacts of the developments areas on the wider landscape;
- an evaluation of the archaeological importance of the area in order to ensure appropriate protection of heritage assets and inform the detailed development proposals.

### **New homes**

Around 350 new homes will be provided within the Hardwick Bank area and south of the A44 Leominster Road. It is important that the scheme is brought forward as a comprehensively planned development to enable the proper planning of the site and not prejudice any future development. All homes will be built to high design standards with energy efficient measures in place. The land on which the strategic site is expected to be developed is on an area of high ground which slopes steeply to the north and west, down to the River Frome. The land south of the A44 slopes from east down to the west and is open to long distance views to the west. It is anticipated that the layout of the site will incorporate the existing historic field pattern to respect the local distinctiveness of the area. It is expected that 40% of the homes will be affordable and with an appropriate mix of housing, informed by the *Local Housing Market Assessment* in order to meet the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the *Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012*.

### **New jobs**

The policy to deliver around 5 hectares of employment land to the west of Panniers Lane will help create greater and more diverse employment opportunities for Bromyard. It is a relatively flat site in agricultural use primarily adjacent to non-



residential uses and open to long distance views to the west. It will be necessary to provide significant landscaping particularly along the western boundary to mitigate the visual impact of any development. The land will be adjacent to the proposed new housing urban extension and it will be necessary to co-ordinate both developments to achieve greater economies of scale and ensure neighbouring land uses are compatible. This may include the restriction of the employment areas next to the residential to use class B1. The policy enabling small scale employment/mixed use opportunities as part of the housing site will allow for a more sustainable development reducing the need to travel. Further small scale sites for employment use will be identified through a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **Movement**

The A44 Leominster Road will provide the primary access to housing and employment areas likely to be in the form of a roundabout serving land to the north and south of the A44. The visual and landscape impact of the access will also require mitigation with significant new landscaping. The employment area could also be accessed off Panniers Lane but highways improvements will be required at the junction of the B4214 Panniers Lane and the A465 Hereford Road.

The highway infrastructure within the new development area should also facilitate a new road link on the periphery of the development which will serve the proposed new land uses over the plan period but must also be designed so as not to prejudice the delivery of additional development beyond the plan period and the eventual completion of a full road link.

The new development should have a network of cycleways and footpaths that are easily accessible and connect with the town centre, existing employment sites, community facilities and the surrounding countryside. This is particularly important given the peripheral location of the development area.

Car parking will be addressed through a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **Green infrastructure, biodiversity and open space**

In addition to new play facilities to serve the additional population created, a new park will form part of the residential development at Hardwick Bank. This will be designed for both informal recreation and biodiversity enhancement purposes. There will be a network of green infrastructure routes through the area with linkages to the park to encourage sustainable travel choices. Access to the River Frome and surrounding countryside will also form part of the enhanced linkages.

Due to the sensitive nature and landscape visibility of the housing and employment locations particularly from long distance views from the north-west and east, strong landscape mitigation measures will be required. This will include the restoration of the degraded landscape character through the conservation and enhancement of hedgerows, with new planting to include hedgerow oak trees, planting of new orchard to replace degraded orchard land to the north of the A44 and elsewhere and new landscape buffers around the western and northern boundaries.

The employment area is situated mainly within a Local Enhancement Zone as set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy and therefore tree and hedge planting should be introduced to reduce the visual impact of development along the ridge-line following the route of the B4214. Part of the employment area is a local Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat and the landscape buffer around the employment area will also compensate for any loss of biodiversity resulting from the development.



### **Community and educational facilities**

The local primary school will require additional classroom provision as well as additional contributions to pre-school, post 16, youth and Special Educational services. Additional community requirement needs include improvements to the fire service, police service and improvements to existing community buildings. Such requirements should be met by developer contributions.

### **Heritage and archaeological value**

The conservation area of Bromyard has been identified as an area at risk. It is important that new development respects the character of the area.

The proposed employment land is adjacent to an (unregistered) landscape park to the south and there will be siting and design issues that will need to be taken into account in this area.

Recent field investigations in the area have revealed moderate to high potential for the presence of currently undiscovered prehistoric remains. Further archaeological field evaluation will be required to inform the proposed development of the area.

### **Retail**

The *Retail Study Update 2012* concluded that new retail convenience (food store) and comparison retail development within the centre should be encouraged, but this is unlikely to be of scale to warrant any new retail allocation in the town for the plan period.

The town retains modest amounts of available residents for comparison expenditure and any opportunity to increase this part of the offer will be dependent upon the market having the necessary confidence in the town. New homes in Bromyard with enhanced means of access into town should strengthen support for the town centre's vitality and viability.

A town centre is defined in Figure x below and relates to policy E5. The size threshold of 200 sq.m set out in Policy E5 indicates when impact testing will be required.

### **Figure x: Bromyard town centre**

#### **Surface water management**

Whilst the east of Bromyard is prone to flooding, the urban extension area is located to the north and south-west of the town on land outside the flood risk zones. However, development in this location will need significant assessment to ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding. This must be addressed through a comprehensive surface water management plan.

#### **Alternative option not taken forward**

As part of the Revised Preferred Options Consultation, an alternative option for future development of the town was submitted to the council for consideration. The main features of this plan were as follows:

- A larger residential urban extension to the north of Bromyard for around 600 new homes.

- The urban extension would be flanked along its northern boundary by a road linking the A44 Leominster Road to the B4214 Tenbury Road. The total road length would be approximately 1.5km.
- Employment land proposed for the UDP allocated housing site at Porthouse Farm.
- The purpose of the new road would be to serve the suggested employment site at Porthouse.

The option has been discounted and not taken forward as an option to be assessed as part of the sustainability appraisal because it was considered unreasonable for the following reasons:

- The deliverability of the site within the plan period. The *Local Housing Market Assessment 2011* states that the housing market in Bromyard is currently somewhat subdued and new development should be carefully phased over time. The delivery of this alternative option alongside existing commitments and allocations would almost double the level of housing that the evidence indicates Bromyard can support over the plan period.
- The need for a relief road in terms of the level of traffic it would attract, its value for money primarily to serve an employment site with no room for expansion and level of overall benefit it would bring is questioned. The transport case for the road has not been established.
- The size of the proposed employment site is 3.7 hectares with no further potential for expansion. The site is limited to the north and east by a flood zone. The Alternative Option is proposing housing to the west with an existing employment site to the south. The deliverability of the provision of an area of employment land on an existing saved UDP housing site is also questionable.

### **Significant changes from the Revised Preferred Options stage**

#### **Employment**

The Preferred Options 2010 consultation put forward a 5 hectare site at Linton near Bromyard for employment generation to supplement the increase in population through new housing. After a review of this site and taking into account feedback from the consultation, the Linton site has been removed from the plan for the following reasons:

- it is considered that the site at Linton is not sustainable and lacks connectivity with Bromyard town;
- the viability and deliverability of the required level of employment land is questionable due to significant contamination, topographical and existing land use constraints

#### **Housing**

The Preferred Options 2010 consultation proposed a total of 500 dwellings for Bromyard during the plan period, with 250 of these dwellings to come forward as part of an urban extension to the north west of the town. Further investigations have been undertaken to understand the amount of non-strategic deliverable sites within Bromyard and it is considered that there is a deficiency of 100 dwellings. In order to deliver these 100 dwellings, it is considered that the urban extension should be expanded from 250 to 350 dwellings, in order for the overall strategy to be achieved. The extension of the town now proposed is a combination of options 2 and 3 in the Place Shaping Paper (January 2010). Following further consideration of the development requirements for the town and a review of the land use and deliverability constraints of the various place shaping options, this hybrid option is

considered to be the most appropriate and deliverable solution to achieve a sustainable urban extension of the town with development impacts that can be acceptably mitigated.

### **Kington**

The vision for Kington places significant emphasis upon the creation of employment opportunities, delivery of and access to services, including affordable housing, reducing the need to travel to other centres, and utilising the natural and historic environment as economic assets. As one of the County's five market towns it contributes to the Core Strategy's strategic objectives 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12. Consequently Kington's role in providing facilities and services to its hinterland should be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. However as the smallest of these market towns and with significant environmental and locational constraints, the challenges that the town faces are such that it will need to be flexible in terms of the way it both encourages and accommodates development. Integral to the spatial approach will be the need to support rural regeneration both specifically within the town itself and also for the area it serves.

### **Background to policy**

Although Kington will need to accommodate new housing as part of the spatial strategy, no proposals for strategic housing locations are proposed. Low building completion rates coupled with the *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment* indicate significant constraints upon the need and opportunities for any strategic locations both within and around the town. Similarly provision for employment will be on the basis of small scale proposals and a flexible approach to home-working. The role of the town centre as the location for shops, supported by service and tourism facilities should not be undermined by developments that might affect its viability. A range of other supporting facilities is also required to ensure balance between development pressures and needs in terms of infrastructure.

### **Policy KG1 – Development in Kington**

Kington will accommodate around 200 new homes during the plan period with the location of sites being identified through a neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document. In addition, provision for new employment uses should be brought forward to meet needs from within the Kington and West Herefordshire Housing Sub-Market Area. Development proposals for Kington will be encouraged where they:

- deliver affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of policy H1
- provide a mix of house types, with particular emphasis upon semi-detached and terraced housing with some flats within development sites. An overall density of up to 35 dwellings per ha will be sought;
- enable home working;
- make available small scale employment sites, brought forward in balance with housing within the Kington and West Herefordshire Housing Sub-Market Area;
- maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 200 sqm in gross floor space and located outside the defined Town Centre Area will need to be supported by an impact assessment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of the Kington Town Centre;
- make provision for green infrastructure and amenity space, including play facilities, community access to open space, and the linking of habitats into ecological networks within and surrounding the town;
- make provision for or improve walking and cycling links to the town centre, schools, shopping and employment;
- maintain the character of Kington, in particular the features that contribute to its conservation area, its important buildings, scenic views and the landscape features surrounding the town.

### **New Homes**

Approximately 200 new homes will be delivered in Kington between 2011 and 2031 with sites allocated through a Neighbourhood or Area Action Plan. Sites within the existing confines of the town are constrained in terms flooding. Developing peripheral sites will require compromise in terms of effect upon the landscape. Choice of sites should seek those with least impact and where the provision of significant landscape and townscape mitigation measures can best be achieved. Phasing may be necessary where this is required to enable time to overcome current infrastructure constraints.

The Affordable Housing Viability Study concluded that prices are relatively high in the Kington and West Herefordshire Housing Sub-Market Area and therefore a target of 35% affordable homes would be the most appropriate within the town. The current high proportion of detached housing within the Kington and West Herefordshire Housing Sub-Market Area would be addressed through seeking a mix of terraced, semi and detached housing and a limited number of 2 and 3 bedroom flats to accommodate older people (Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012).

### **New Jobs**

The policy encourages the development of small scale employment opportunities at Kington. Hatton Gardens Industrial estate was developed as a rural development initiative and is currently thriving. An additional similar facility would benefit both the town and its hinterland. It may not be possible for such provision to be located within or even immediately adjacent to the existing town, but should be within walking distance and ensure the town's setting and other environmental features are not adversely affected. Enabling working from home in accordance with Policy E3 –

Home Working may reduce the level of need although the provision for small scale employment opportunities is expected to remain.

### **Movement**

Kington is a relatively compact settlement where access can be gained relatively easily to its central area and facilities elsewhere through walking or cycling. The location of new development should seek to maintain this character. A particular characteristic of the town centre is its network of historic walled lanes which should form the core for any footpath strategy. Where possible, improvements should be made to promote sustainable modes of transport, in particular walking and cycling which can be combined with green infrastructure proposals including better access to greenspace.

### **Retail**

Herefordshire Town Centre Retail Study 2012 suggests the expenditure forecast for Kington over the Plan period is unlikely to be of a scale to require proposals for further convenience floor space. Many of the smaller units within the town could absorb more turnover within existing floor space. The town centre area for the town is reflected in Figure x and the viability and vitality of this area should be protected. The size threshold of 200 sqm indicates when impact testing will be required. The neighbourhood development plan or other development plan documents should determine the level of flexibility given to uses within the town centre area.

### **Figure x: Kington town centre – to follow**

### **Utilities, Community Facilities Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Heritage**

Utilities, the river floodplain, heritage assets, setting and landscape all pose constraints upon development within and around the town although some also add to the attractiveness of its character providing potential benefits to local people and visitors. In addition, studies have identified open space needs and green infrastructure requirements. The level of new development proposed both within and surrounding the town should support the current provision of community facilities. In addition to phasing development to address utility constraints developers may also need to assist proposals for surface water management in particular locations depending upon which sites are brought forward. All these issues need to be addressed comprehensively and in detail through the neighbourhood development plan or other development plan documents.

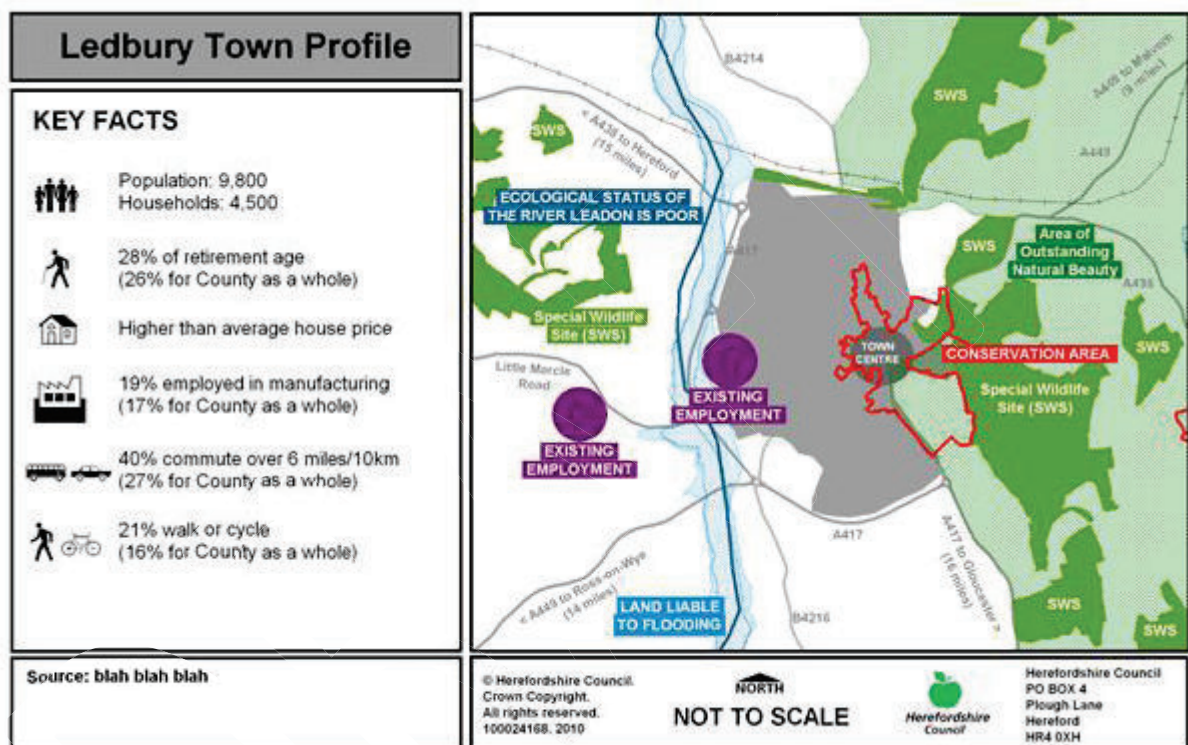
### **Sustainability Appraisal**

The Sustainability Appraisal indicates the approach for Kington .....



## Ledbury

Within the overall vision for Herefordshire, Ledbury will continue to be supported in its role as a thriving service centre to its surrounding rural area in the east of the county. This vision is manifested in strategic objectives 1, 4, 6, 8 and 10, which for Ledbury, focus on meeting housing needs including affordable housing, reducing the need to travel by private car, facilitating the provision of new jobs to stem out-commuting, improving delivery of and access to services, and realising the value of the local environment as an economic asset through promoting sustainable tourism and high quality housing. The spatial strategy which proposes sustainable development for the town (in terms of new homes and employment opportunities) is balanced against Ledbury's unique needs, opportunities and constraints as represented in the Town Profile map below.



### Background to policies

To achieve the strategy, an urban extension of new homes is proposed to the north of the town and new employment land to the west. This approach will address the specific issues and opportunities identified in the town profile for Ledbury, namely addressing high affordable housing need, high levels of commuting for jobs and the significant environmental constraints affecting the setting of the town which is enclosed on the east side by the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and floodplains of the Leadon Valley and adjoining sensitive landscapes to the west. Policies LB1 and LB2 set out how the spatial strategy for Ledbury will be delivered and managed and are explained in the Ledbury Key Diagram.

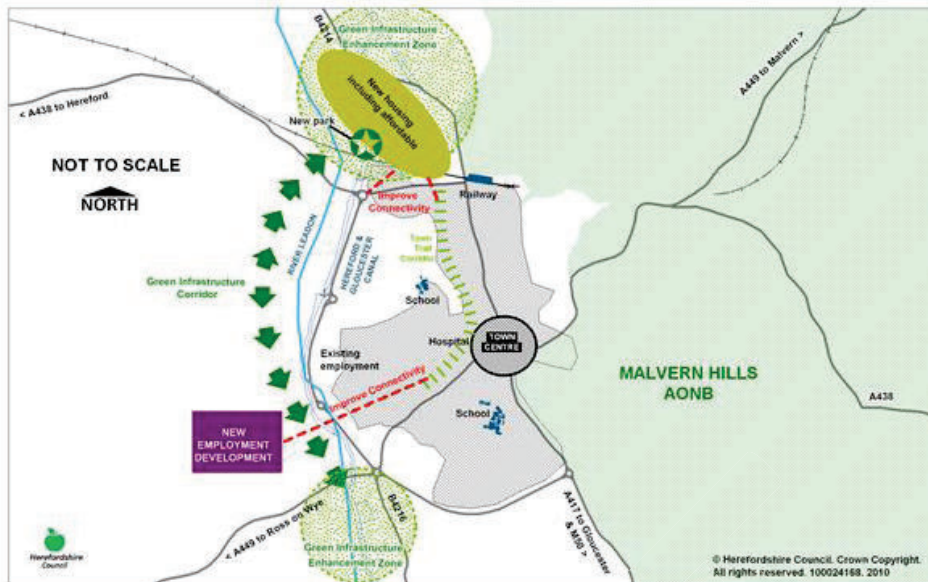


### **Policy LB1- Development in Ledbury**

Ledbury will accommodate around 800 new homes balanced with approximately 12 hectares of new employment land during the plan period in accordance with the spatial strategy. The majority of new development will be focussed to the north (housing) and west (employment) of the town. Further development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, infill development, and sites allocated through a neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document. A number of sites which have future potential for development have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Within Ledbury, new development proposals will be encouraged where they:

- allow for suitable small scale employment sites including live work opportunities within or adjoining the town;
- maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing town centre. Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 500m<sup>2</sup> in gross floor space and located outside of the Town Centre will need to be supported by an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre;
- improve accessibility within Ledbury by walking, cycling and public transport, particularly where they enhance connectivity with, for example, local facilities, new employment areas and the town centre;
- contribute to deficiencies in community facilities and/or allow for infrastructure improvements (including broadband) in the town to promote sustainable development;
- reflect and enhance the characteristic built historic elements of Ledbury such as its stone, brick and timber-framed buildings, medieval plan form, conservation areas and setting overlooking the Leadon Valley;
- enhance its green infrastructure and biodiversity, particularly the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the east and the Leadon Valley to the west
- incorporate mitigation measures to protect or enhance the setting of the town from western viewpoints.



### Policy LB2 - Land north of the Viaduct

Development proposals north of the viaduct in Ledbury will be required to bring forward the following to achieve a sustainable urban extension of the town:

- A mixed use development of around 700 new homes of a mix of predominantly 2 and 3 bedroom size at a density of up to 50 dwellings per hectare;
- a minimum of 40% of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing of a tenure to meet the requirements of Policy H1 (Affordable housing);
- land and contributions to facilitate a restored canal, to be delivered in partnership with the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust;
- a new linear informal park to link to the existing town trail, riverside walk and recreational open space and existing allotments delivered directly by the developer;
- the provision of and contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities/infrastructure improvements. This shall include a new 210 place primary school within the development and new recreational open space, play, indoor and outdoor sport facilities delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions;
- suitable vehicular access to the development from Bromyard Road to the north and/or the Hereford Road under the viaduct;
- appropriate mitigation to safeguard the amenity of future occupants from unacceptable levels of noise and to safeguard the continued operation of existing businesses adjoining the area;
- development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and that contributes to the distinctiveness of this part of Ledbury and enhances the setting of the listed viaduct and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- safeguards to ensure there is no adverse impact on water quality and quantity in the River Leadon;
- new walking, cycling and bus links from the urban extension directly to the town trail, riverside walk, railway station and town centre. These will be directly delivered by the developer to create linkage to nearby development and existing community facilities to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport to ease congestion and limit CO2 emissions;
- achieves sustainable standards of design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

market housing and affordable housing, in this high house price area. It also aims to balance new development against the environmental constraints of this historic market town. The strategy to deliver new homes mainly in a single location is not only economically viable but also limits development mainly to land of medium-low landscape sensitivity and of lesser environmental merit with regard to agricultural and biodiversity value. The listed viaduct adjoining the area also represents an opportunity to create a bespoke design solution and high quality townscape to meet the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. The remaining housing requirement for Ledbury will be delivered through existing commitments, windfalls and/or the allocation of sites through either a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **New jobs**

The policy to deliver employment land to the south of Little Marcle Road will help facilitate greater employment opportunities for Ledbury residents. This area of arable land adjoins existing employment land and is of low landscape sensitivity and biodiversity value. The area will allow for employment diversification as well as reduce the need for commuting by private car. Small-scale sites for employment use will be identified through a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **Movement**

The policy approach for movement in Ledbury is based on reducing the need to travel by private car. This will be achieved by locating new development within walking and cycling distance of existing and new facilities (including the railway station) and improving and extending sustainable transport routes. New employment land and other policies in the Core Strategy as well as the forthcoming neighbourhood development plan or other development plan documents will also promote local employment opportunities which will help address the issue of reducing the need to travel. Herefordshire Council (through *Draft Local Transport Plan 3*) proposes to work in partnership with bus operators and developers to ensure housing and employment locations are served by public transport and that service frequencies linking to Hereford are maintained. The issue of car parking at the railway station and in the town centre will be addressed through a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **Green Infrastructure and open space**

Developing land to the north of the viaduct addresses aspirations of the *Green Infrastructure Strategy* which identifies the area as an Enhancement Zone, representing a possible intersection of the riverside linear park and the town trail green infrastructure corridors. It enables the introduction of new, accessible green space through the provision of a linear park, on-site recreational open space and part of a strategic canal route all of which will address the issue of deficiencies in open space in Ledbury as identified in the *Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Strategy*, as well as promote biodiversity.

This approach realises the value of the environment as an economic asset as the urban extension will create better access to and enjoyment of new green infrastructure for residents and tourists alike. A review of open space needs and existing designations in Ledbury will be undertaken as part of a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **Community and educational facilities**

Improving the delivery of, and access to, services is addressed in this policy through requirements for new infrastructure to be either directly delivered by a developer or

through developer contributions including a new primary school, canal, riverside park, outdoor sports pitches and other community facilities.

### **Heritage & archaeological value**

A landmark feature of Ledbury is its railway viaduct which is Grade II listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Any development of the viaduct site will need to respect the setting of the viaduct yet regard it as a positive feature to be integrated with and inform the detailed master planning and design of any scheme.

### **Retail**

The policy for shopping in Ledbury based on the evidence in the *Retail Study Update 2012* is to maintain the existing, thriving centre which is based on a mixture of popular high street and independent stores. New homes and households in Ledbury will strengthen this support for the town centre and improvements to sustainable modes of transport into the town centre via the existing town trail will also support this approach. A town centre area is defined on the figure below and relates to Policy E6.

The Retail Study Update 2012 indicates a need for further convenience shopping floor space in the town up to 2031 and further comparison retail from 2026. The study also concluded that there is an opportunity to increase the specialist nature of some of the independent shops which attracts a large amount of people from the wider surrounding area. An area near to the edge of the town centre area at Bye Street/Lawnside Road is identified as a possible location for additional convenience retail floor space in any sequential search. This will be subject to re-location of the swimming pool. The need highlighted in the Retail Study will be reviewed regularly against expenditure capacity and sites will be identified through a neighbourhood development plans and/or other development plan documents.

### **Figure x: Ledbury town centre – to follow**

### **Water management and fluvial flooding**

The west of Ledbury is prone to flooding from the River Leadon. The physical development within the urban extension area will need to avoid this area and address any potential future flooding risk through a surface water management plan and flood risk assessment.

### **Leominster**

Leominster, as the main centre in the north of the county, will continue to fulfil a diverse range of important roles as a centre for residential, employment, cultural, retail and recreational uses. Leominster will continue to act as a service centre to its rural hinterland. This strategy seeks to promote the continued development of the town, taking into consideration its needs, opportunities and constraints.

This vision is manifested in strategic objectives 1, 4, 6, 8 and 10, which for Leominster, centres on meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification, improving delivery and access to services and realising the value of the environment as an economic asset.

## **INSERT TOWN PROFILE**

### **Background to policies**

Residential development is proposed to the south-west of the town. The decision to focus the largest single strategic allocation of new homes to Leominster has been based on the recognition of its economic importance located on the A49 corridor, its excellent public transport links, including the railway station, and the fact that an urban extension will bring transport benefits in the form of a southern link road. The latter will benefit the centre of the town in terms of reducing congestion and improving air quality.

The residential growth proposed for Leominster will ensure a sustainable population for the town and the Core Strategy's policies will provide opportunities for and the encouragement of appropriate economic growth as well as the provision of appropriate community facilities, environmental enhancement and protection.

**Policy LO.1 – Development in Leominster**

Leominster will accommodate a minimum of 2,300 new homes throughout the plan period, (2006- 2031) of which approximately 1,500 dwellings will be provided in a single strategic urban extension to the south-west of the town. The remaining dwellings will be provided through existing commitments, smaller scale non-strategic sites within the existing built up area; those which come forward through the Leominster neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document, or sites judged as having development potential which are identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

The Leominster enterprise park will continue to serve the employment needs of Leominster, which will include a further extension of up to 10ha to the south of the enterprise park. The release of the additional land will be phased across the plan period depending upon the availability of land within the existing Enterprise Park.

In Leominster (as shown on the key diagram), new development proposals will be encouraged where they

- continue the development of the Leominster Enterprise Park and encourage proposals for suitable small scale employment sites within the town;
- maintain and enhance the viability and vitality of the town centre. Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 500m<sup>2</sup> in gross floor space and located outside of the defined Town Centre Area will need to be supported by an impact assessment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of Leominster town centre;
- ensure that developments do not exacerbate air pollution levels within the designated air quality management area at Bargates;

**INSERT KEY DIAGRAM**



### **Policy LO.2 – Leominster urban extension**

The urban extension at Leominster will bring forward:

- Approximately 1,500 new homes at up to 35 dwellings per hectare over the plan period;
- an affordable housing target of 25% will be required as an opportunity to address the range of homes currently available in the town with a tenure that meets the requirements of policy H1 ;
- a southern direct road linking the B4361 Hereford Road to A44 Baron Cross Road to help relieve traffic congestion within the town and improve air quality in the Bargates area;
- small scale neighbourhood retail facilities;
- potential for employment opportunities (towards the end of the plan period), in the form of use class B1 and live/work units;
- provision of appropriate community and youth facilities within a community hub;
- provision of a new 420 place primary school and pre-school facilities to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions;
- appropriate provision of on-site open space, sports and recreation provision. This shall include fully accessible semi natural and natural greenspace; play provision for all age groups, indoor and outdoor sports provision (some of which may be off site); allotments and new orchard planting
- new green infrastructure walking and cycling links to the town centre, schools, the Enterprise Park and local public right of way network;
- retention of the highly sensitive landscape areas and geological features of Cockcroft Hill (which encompasses Ryelands Croft) by retaining this site as natural open space;
- development that is sustainable in terms of its construction materials and methods, use of energy, water and other resources and contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources;
- a comprehensive sustainable urban drainage system to manage ground and surface water drainage and safeguard against any increased flood risk;
- an evaluation of the archaeological importance of the area in order to ensure appropriate protection of heritage assets and inform the detailed development proposals.

The land available for development to the south-west of Leominster will also enable the housing needs of the town to be met beyond the plan period.

### **New homes**

Land to the south of Leominster provides the most appropriate location for meeting the future strategic housing requirements of the town. Around 1,500 new homes will be provided within the urban extension up to 2031 together with a range of other facilities to enable the development to meet the needs of its residents and integrate with the existing town.. The development will be comprehensively masterplanned to create a series of neighbourhoods integrated with the town. Density and design will vary across the development with all homes constructed to minimise their energy use and CO2 footprint.

It is recognised that there is a need for affordable homes across the county. It has been identified through the *Affordable Housing Viability Study* that land values are lower within Leominster, therefore a target of 25% affordable homes would be the most appropriate within the town. This target will enable the provision of housing to address the identified needs identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment which also identified a particular need for smaller dwellings. The likely tenure is to comprise a higher proportion of intermediate tenure to redress the balance of currently predominantly social rented.



The development of the urban extension provides an opportunity to create a scheme which is sensitive to the landscape of this edge of town whilst meeting the needs of all sections of the community, including those of working age who will be close to existing and new employment opportunities and also older people – a need which was highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012.

The land south of Leominster is sufficient not only to meet the housing target for the current plan period but is also likely to help meet the housing needs of the town through further development post 2031 supported by new highway infrastructure and community facilities

Detailed Planning permission has previously been granted for 425 dwellings at Barons Cross Camp, Cholstrey Road. This brownfield site was an allocation under the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and is considered appropriate to be delivered during the plan period. The remaining dwellings will be provided through smaller scale sites within the built up area in accordance with additional requirements through the neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **New jobs**

There remains a reasonable supply of employment land on Leominster Enterprise Park and at Southern Avenue but it is envisaged that vacant employment land in the Leominster Enterprise Park will be taken up during the early stages of the plan period. As a result, in order to accommodate employment needs over the plan period, Leominster will require an extension of the Leominster Enterprise Park to the south, which will provide up to 10ha of employment land. There is also the opportunity to provide additional smaller B1 class live/work units which would be integrated into the urban extension.

### **Movement**

Previous studies have indicated that the Bargates area of the town suffers from congestion and without new road infrastructure the potential growth of Leominster would be limited. In addition the Bargates area is also designated as an Air Quality Management Area as a result of poor air quality and new road infrastructure would enable much of the heavy vehicular traffic to be diverted from this area.

The urban extension provides the opportunity to provide new road infrastructure as an integral element of the development. A link road connecting the B4361 (Hereford Road) to the A44 at Baron's Cross will be constructed. This will be designed to provide an alternative direct and more convenient route for vehicles and avoid the need for through traffic to pass through the town centre, and in particular, the Bargates junction. The link road is also likely to require new roundabout junctions on the B4361 and A44 and an extension of the highway infrastructure in the south west corner of the Enterprise Park.

In addition to the provision of new road infrastructure the urban extension also provides an opportunity to encourage more sustainable modes of transport within the town through of new footpaths and cycle routes developed to ensure that good linkages and opportunities to integrate with the existing networks are provided, particularly to the primary schools, high school, the town centre and the enterprise park.

### **Green Infrastructure and open space**

The potential housing allocation located to the south-west of the town is a mixture of medium-low and medium-high sensitivity landscape areas according to the *Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis*.

However such landscape constraints are lower than sites to the north and west of Leominster. It will be necessary to provide landscape mitigation particularly along the outer edge of the residential and employment development areas adjoining open countryside Cockcroft Hill, which incorporates the Ryelands Croft RIGS site is locally important as a landscape and geological feature and will therefore be retained as semi natural open space.

Leominster has an under provision of semi-natural greenspace, play facilities, parks, gardens and outdoor sport space according to the *Open Space Study* and *Playing Pitch Strategy*, and hence there is the opportunity to provide a number of open space, sports and recreation facilities within the urban extension. The development will also generate a need for additional allotments which will be met and designed into the urban extension.

### **Community and educational facilities**

There will be a need for additional community facilities within the south-west extension to achieve a sustainable urban extension. This may include a doctor's surgery, a community hall, youth facilities and small scale retail. This will ensure that journeys that need to be made regularly can be made within the new development.

The provision of a new combined infant and junior school is currently under consideration to replace existing provision in the town. This new school will provide up to 630 places which meets the current need. However, the additional housing provided by the urban extension will place a need for a new primary school of up to 420 places. In addition, there will be a need for a children's centre for the early years which could form part of the community hub. In terms of high school places, the Earl Mortimer college has adequate capacity to cover the new growth of the town. These community facilities will be delivered by the developer and will help create a sustainable community

### **Heritage & archaeological value**

Archaeological potential has been identified (especially for land south of Barons Cross where there are earthworks). The proposed route of the southern link road needs full assessment prior to any works taking place on the south-west extension. The *Sustainability Appraisal* highlighted that any archaeological concern on the proposed site needed to be addressed, this will be done at the master planning stage through detailed field evaluation.

### **Retail**

As part of the Herefordshire Town Centres Study Update 2012 it is identified that Leominster has some convenience and comparison retail expenditure which increases over the plan period. In terms of convenience retail, this could create the opportunity for an additional food store development in the town centre, which would draw more shoppers into the centre and complement the existing independent convenience shops. It may also be appropriate to consider small scale convenience retail to be provided within the urban extension to meet the day to day needs of the residents of the new development.

The need for comparison retail proposals is more limited with a modest capacity towards the end of the plan period. The study indicated that the priority should be to steer any new floorspace to the town centre as far as this is practical, and only to permit out-of-centre facilities if they would materially enhance the retail offer of the town and assist in retaining catchment residents' expenditure.

The Study indicates that an impact assessment should be required for developments of 500 sq.m of floorspace and greater and this is reflected in policy E.5.

The Study also identifies a number of sites that provide redevelopment opportunities to accommodate retail development during the plan period and should be considered first in a sequential test in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework:

- Broad Street Car Park at Arkwright Close;
- Car park, rear of fire station, Broad Street;
- The Original Factory Shop, 52 Broad Street.

More detailed assessment of the need for future retail provision for Leominster, including the need to allocate sites will be provided through the preparation of a neighbourhood development plan.

#### **Figure x: Leominster town centre**

##### **Water management and fluvial flooding**

There are extensive areas at risk of flooding in Leominster, particularly to the north of the town. Leominster lies near the confluence of two major river systems, the Lugg and the Arrow, which further downstream becomes the River Lugg Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The *Water Cycle Study* identifies that developers would need to ensure there are no adverse impacts as a result of any new development, this could be managed to mitigate the effects on the SAC through adequate control measures and additional capacity in water treatment infrastructure and surface water management.

##### **Significant changes from the Revised Preferred Options Stage**

###### *Employment*

At the revised preferred option stage for Leominster it was stated that there was a need for 5 hectares of Employment land to cater for the needs of the population over the plan period. Since this stage, an updated *Employment Land Survey 2012* has been completed and details the need for 10 hectares of Employment land to be delivered towards the end of the plan period as a southerly extension to the existing Leominster Enterprise Park. Taking this into account, a revised figure of 10ha has been detailed within the Leominster Policy.

## Ross-on-Wye

Within the overall vision for Herefordshire, Ross-on-Wye, as the market town serving the south of the county, will be supported in continuing to fulfil a diverse range of roles as a centre for residential, employment, recreational and cultural services. The town will also continue to act as an important service centre for the surrounding rural area. The connections to the motorway network make Ross-on-Wye an important gateway into the county and it is also a tourist destination in its own right. The strategy seeks to promote the sustainable development of Ross-on-Wye, taking into consideration its needs, opportunities and constraints.

This vision is manifested in strategic objectives 1, 6, 8 and 10, which, for Ross-on-Wye, focuses on enabling some strategic growth on the town's peripheries and also some smaller scale growth in and around the town itself. The proposed development of Ross-on-Wye is planned taking account of the town's very significant environmental constraints, including the floodplain of the River Wye, and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**Insert Ross Town Profile**

### **Background to policies**

To achieve the strategy, an urban extension of new homes is proposed to the southeast of the town at Hildersley. This location has a limited capacity, in order to avoid encroachment on the wooded hillside to the south and the constraint of an active rifle range to the west. It does, however, have the potential for sustainable transport links to the town centre without creating a need for new strategic highway links, it is within walking distance of the proposed employment site at Model Farm and can be designed to minimise landscape impacts on the setting of the town.

The remainder of new homes for Ross-on-Wye will be provided on a range of smaller sites, of less than 100 dwellings, in and around the town. The location of these can be further detailed through a forthcoming neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document.

The potential for new employment development will remain at Model Farm. This combined approach to housing and employment will help to address the issues of high affordable housing need and significant levels of commuting, whilst working within the environmental constraints of Ross-on-Wye.

### **Policy RW.1 – Development in Ross-on-Wye**

Ross-on-Wye will accommodate around 900 new homes balanced with approximately 10 hectares of employment land during the plan period, in accordance with the spatial strategy. A strategic housing location will focus new residential development to the south east of the town. Further development will take place through the implementation of

Insert Ross-on-Wye Key Diagram

## **Policy RW.2 – Land at Hildersley**

The strategic residential development proposal on land to the south east of Ross-on-Wye at Hildersley will be required to bring forward the following to achieve a sustainable urban extension of the town:

- around 200 new homes of a mix of predominantly 2 and 3 bedroom size, to be built at a density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare;
- a minimum of 40% of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing of a tenure to meet the requirements of Policy H1 Affordable Housing;
- the provision of and contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities/infrastructure improvements. This shall include contributions towards the provision of: additional pre-school places; additional classrooms at John Kyrle High School for secondary, Post 16 and youth/community infrastructure; and further Special Educational Needs provision;
- the provision of a sport/recreation space either on or off site as an alternative to the existing on site John Kyrle High School playing field;
- the creation of new green infrastructure within the development area to benefit residents, local bat populations and other flora and fauna;
- new pedestrian and cycle links from the area towards the town and nearby employment sites, to ease road congestion and limit CO<sup>2</sup> emissions;
- appropriate mitigation measures to be implemented which ensure that acoustic and safety issues relating to the proximity of the adjacent firing range are satisfactorily addressed;
- adverse impacts on the Water Source Protection Zone should be avoided or mitigated, including through the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage solutions and the production by the developer of a Surface Water Management Plan/Statement;
- avoid and mitigate adverse impacts from noise pollution and vibration (during both construction and occupation of new homes) on the River Wye SAC, Wye Valley Woodlands SAC and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites;
- development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design, including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and that contributes to the distinctiveness of this part of Ross-on-Wye and enhances the setting of the adjacent Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### **New homes**

The policy for Ross-on-Wye focuses on delivering high quality, sustainably constructed new homes to meet housing need and demand, especially for smaller open market housing and affordable housing, in this high house price area. It also aims to balance new development against the environmental constraints of this historic market town. The strategy to deliver new homes in a dispersed manner between a single strategic site and other smaller sites dispersed sites within and around the town is economically viable and spreads the effect of new buildings across this sensitive town and its surroundings, which is predominantly within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The development of the strategic extension at Hildersley represents an opportunity to create a scheme which is sensitive to the landscape of this edge of town and that can provide additional biodiversity benefits to the local protected bat population, whilst meeting the needs of all sections of the community, including those of working age who will be close to existing and new employment opportunities and also older people – a need which was highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012.

The housing requirement to be met through the development of smaller non-strategic sites in and around Ross-on-Wye will be delivered through existing



commitments, windfalls and/or the allocation of sites through either a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **New Jobs**

The continuation of the Unitary Development Plan policy to deliver employment land to the north of the strategic housing location at Model Farm will help facilitate greater employment opportunities for the residents of Ross-on-Wye. This employment area is located at an important entrance to the town and consists of a farm and surrounding agricultural fields with a field buffer to the nearby residential area to the west. A high quality development for B1, B2 and B8 uses will be accommodated, which should include appropriate landscaping to form a key element of any proposal to provide an appropriate eastern edge which is open to long distance views.

The developer of the area will need to ensure that the Environment Agency is satisfied that adequate pollution prevention measures are in place to protect ground and surface waters on this site, since it is located on a source protection zone of the Alton Court aquifer.

### **Movement**

The policy approach for movement in Ross-on-Wye is based on reducing the need to travel by private car. This will be achieved by locating new development within walking and cycling distance of existing and new facilities and improving and extending sustainable transport routes. New employment land and other policies in the Core Strategy, as well as any neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document will also promote local employment opportunities which will help address the issue of commuting for jobs. The council (through Draft Local Transport Plan 3) proposes to work in partnership with bus operators and developers to ensure housing and employment locations are served by public transport and that service frequencies linking to Hereford are maintained. The issue of car parking will be addressed through a neighbourhood development plan or other development plan document.

The development at both Model Farm and the Hildersley strategic location will access directly onto the A40. The developers of both areas will be required to make a contribution to the design and geometry of the local roads to achieve acceptable traffic movements between the sites and the town centre and adjoining road networks. Developers should ensure that suitable pedestrian and cycle connections to encourage sustainable movements between the areas and the town centre are incorporated in to the schemes.

Since a significant amount of residential development will take place on other sites dispersed around the town, developers must ensure that the council and/or Highways Agency are satisfied that the necessary mitigation measures and/or contributions towards alterations and improvements to the local road networks and sustainable modes of travel are made.

### **Green Infrastructure and open space**

The urban extension is located on an area of medium-low landscape value, and is generally flat, low-lying land, of mixed landscape character, contained within the rising land and wooded Penyard Hills to the south. The Town and Country Trail acts as a green corridor along the south-eastern boundary of the town. Potential new links between such green corridors and the urban extension will be encouraged.

The urban extension falls within 10km of two SACs: the Wye Valley Woodlands and the Forest of Dean Bat Sites. A specific study of bat activity on the Hildersley area in 2010 found that development could take place without incurring adverse impacts on these SACs. However, the proposed landscaping and open space provision within

the Hildersley urban extension should be located and designed so as to provide additional and appropriate bat foraging opportunities where possible. The bats currently use the Town and Country Trail as a foraging corridor therefore links between the urban extension and this pathway would be beneficial to the protected bats.

The Hildersley location contains a sports field, under the ownership of Herefordshire Council, for use by John Kyrle High School. Any redevelopment of the recreation field at Hildersley for residential use must be in accordance with Policy OS3 – Loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities.

### **Community and educational facilities**

Improving the delivery of and access to services is addressed in this policy. The additional housing within Ross-on-Wye will create a need for additional early years, secondary school, post 16, youth/community and Special Educational Needs provision. Such requirements should be met through developer contributions towards off site facilities.

### **Heritage & archaeological value**

It is not anticipated that development at Hildersley will have a significant impact on any heritage assets. For any smaller residential sites proposed within and around the town development management considerations to protect heritage interests will apply. Ross-on-Wye's central area is contained within a Conservation Area and the majority of the town is within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### **Retail**

The policy for retail in Ross-on-Wye, based on the evidence in the Retail Study Update 2012, is to maintain its existing busy shopping centre, which is based on a mixture of popular high street chains and independent stores. New homes and households in Ross-on-Wye will strengthen and provide support for the town centre.

A Town Centre Area is defined on the below map and relates to Policy E6. This map draws a line around the main shopping streets and ensures that previously underused, often vacant retail units at the peripheries are available for alternative forms of development, such as residential, which will drive an improvement in the environmental quality of such areas.

The *Retail Study Update 2012* indicates that with the assumed implementation of existing planning permissions, there is not a need for further convenience or comparison retail capacity over the plan period. This means that any new additional retail floorspace will be dependent on changed shopping patterns or the attraction of new trade to the town. The need for retail provision will, however, be reviewed regularly against expenditure capacity and sites will be identified through a neighbourhood development plan and/or other development plan documents.

### **Figure x: Ross on Wye town centre**

### **Surface water management**

The Hildersley area has been identified by the Environment Agency as being on a Secondary Aquifer and the majority of the preferred strategic development location lies within an outer groundwater source protection zone. Consequently measures should be taken to ensure that this important source of water is not adversely affected by any future development.

Other dispersed residential development in and around Ross-on-Wye should ensure that areas prone to flooding from the River Wye are avoided and that any potential future flooding risk is appropriately addressed.

## **Rural Areas**

The council's strategy for the rural areas of the county outside of Hereford and the market towns recognises the many challenges in securing their long term future in a sustainable manner. The concept of sustainability is based upon a range of social, economic and environmental factors which includes the presence of employment, market and affordable housing, facilities and services, access to sustainable transport, as well as intangible factors such as social fabric reflecting community cohesion, interdependence and commitment.

Sustainable development is about positive growth and therefore gains in these three dimensions of sustainability are central to achieving a strong living and working rural Herefordshire and meeting objectives 1, 5, 8, 10 and 12 of the Core Strategy.

To achieve this aim, the rural policies seek to enhance the role the county's rural villages have traditionally played as accessible, sustainable centres for their rural catchments. Therefore the positive growth of existing villages through the development of appropriate rural businesses and housing, including affordable housing, that contributes toward maintaining and strengthening these centres as hives of activity both socially and economically will be supported.

### **A Strategy for Rural Areas based on Housing Market Areas (HMAs)**

Whilst acknowledging county-wide characteristics that paint a picture of a predominantly rural community, it is apparent that within its borders different areas of Herefordshire have their own identities shaped by a variety of factors and affinities that have evolved through time. A significant aspect of this geography contributing to a particular local character is the settlement pattern. As the pattern of rural settlements varies within this large county, a more localised approach to the rural areas has been developed for the Core Strategy.

This approach builds upon work undertaken on Housing Market Areas (HMAs) through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment and Local Housing Requirement Study. These assessments of the housing market in Herefordshire have identified that it varies spatially and the county can be divided in to seven areas based upon common housing market characteristics including tenure, house type profile, incomes and affordability, and house prices, as well as geographical proximity, patterns of household movement (migration) and travel to work patterns that demonstrate the functional relationship between where people live and work. The seven geographical areas identified are the Housing Market Areas of Herefordshire.

By virtue of these attributes, the rural area of each HMA has differing future housing needs and requirements, which this locally incorporated approach aims to respond to more closely. Together with neighbourhood planning, this strategy will empower more communities to benefit from meaningful development continuing to evolve as sustainable places whilst respecting the fundamental rural character of Herefordshire.

The map shows the seven HMAs which are broadly focused on Hereford and the market towns, except for the Golden Valley. HMAs utilise ward boundaries (within which parishes sit). The approach to rural areas has been undertaken on the basis of analysis of the rural element of each HMA. The term rural HMAs used in this section refers to these rural parts of the defined HMAs.



Figure 4: The Housing Market Areas of Herefordshire



## Housing Market Areas



NORTH Not to Scale

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### The Core Strategy Approach

The council is proposing that approximately 5,300 houses should be developed across all rural HMAs during the plan period. This county wide rural housing figure can be broken down by rural HMA, informing a set of indicative housing targets which relate to the future housing needs and requirements of the different areas and rural communities of the county.

The housing development will be delivered through a combination of existing commitments, windfall development and sites enabled through neighbourhood development plans. For those communities not committed to the advancement of a neighbourhood development plan by submission of the Core Strategy, the

Herefordshire Council will allocate housing through a series of other development plan documents in order to ensure the delivery of rural housing sites. The council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment indicates there is potential for this level of development in Herefordshire rural villages.

<b>Rural Housing 2011 – 2031</b>	<b>Dwelling Numbers</b>
Commitments 2011	724
Windfall allowance	1000
Sites enabled through neighbourhood developments plans or other development plan documents	3576
<b>Total 2011 – 2031</b>	<b>5300</b>

Past rates of housing completions in the rural areas suggest that this level of growth is appropriate and achievable. Historically it is evident that much rural housing has come forward on small sites, often for individual dwellings, being allowed through the application of planning policy rather than the allocation of housing sites. Additionally, significant numbers of new housing continues to be delivered through the conversion of rural buildings, many being redundant agricultural buildings on farmsteads. Paragraph 48 of NPPF indicates that an allowance may be made for windfall if there is compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source. There is clear evidence over many years that such sites have delivered an important element of the county's housing supply and as such a modest windfall allowance has been included of 1000 dwellings (50 per annum).

The set of rural HMA growth targets will inform the scale of development in the villages of each HMA. The target represents a level of growth, as a percentage, that is considered proportionate to existing HMA characteristics and reflective of future housing needs and requirements within that area. For individual villages of each HMA this is translated as a proportional percentage of the total number of dwellings in the main village. For example, the growth target for a village of 100 dwellings located within Bromyard rural HMA would be approximately 15 new dwellings over the plan period 2011 to 2031.

On this basis, all rural villages will have the opportunity for housing growth that is proportionate to their existing size, responsive to the needs of their community and the HMA. The primary focus for this housing will be those villages that in the context of the rural HMA within which they are set and function are the most locally sustainable to accommodate new development. In the remaining, often smaller villages of each HMA, proportional housing growth will be restricted to smaller market housing which meets the needs of people with local connections, whom would not otherwise be able to live in their area.

The rural HMA housing target will inform the preparation of emerging neighbourhood development plans to enable communities to identify appropriate plots/sites to accommodate growth proportionate to their village(s). The target provides individual communities with an objective which they can aim to meet or potentially exceed over the plan period depending on their particular aspirations and environmental constraints, in particular flood risk and/or landscape sensitivity.

It is envisaged that this strategy will lead to many small scale residential developments where the proposal is championed by the community with clear community and environmental benefits. It is also anticipated that this approach together with the application of affordable housing policies (AH.1, AH.2 and AH.3), will lead to an increase in the provision of affordable housing across all rural areas.

### **Policy RA1 – Rural housing strategy**

In Herefordshire's rural areas around 5,300 new dwellings will be provided up to 2031 to help meet the county's housing needs, with the development of affordable housing being a priority. The regeneration of the rural economy will be promoted and supported, and the unique local environment will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

New dwellings will be broadly distributed across the county's rural areas on the basis of 7 Housing Markets Areas (HMAs – as illustrated in Figure 4) acknowledging that different areas of Herefordshire have different future housing needs and requirements.

Proportionate to existing rural HMA characteristics and reflective of future housing needs and requirements within each area a growth target will assist to inform the level of growth within the villages of each HMA. All neighbourhood development plans shall aim to provide levels of housing which proportionally meets these targets.

<b>RURAL HMA</b>	<b>Approximate number of dwellings 2011 - 2031</b>	<b>Housing growth target for the villages (%)</b>
<b>Bromyard</b>	364	15
<b>Golden Valley</b>	304	12
<b>Hereford</b>	1870	18
<b>Kington</b>	317	12
<b>Ledbury</b>	565	14
<b>Leominster</b>	730	14
<b>Ross on Wye</b>	1150	14
	<u>5300</u>	

### **Housing in Herefordshire's villages**

National policy supports a sustainable approach to development in rural areas which is locally responsive, reflecting local housing needs with the emphasis being on supporting services, employment and facilities in villages, avoiding new isolated homes in the countryside.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

Acknowledging the county's variety of rural neighbourhoods and the different characters of the rural HMAs are seen in their village communities, a nuanced assessment of each rural HMA has been undertaken to inform how rural housing will be distributed. The process of this assessment is fully set out in the housing background paper.

Each rural HMA was considered through combining the application of a localised benchmark (median average village size by rural HMA), together with an assessment of services. This dual analysis targets development at locally significant villages which act as a focus for the wider community through the presence of existing services and facilities that can include schools, shops, public houses and businesses. It also enables those villages with a sizeable population basis (in the context of the HMA) and potential to evolve to become more sustainable to be included. Across many areas of all rural HMAs communities experience difficulty in accessing services and parishes understand not only the need to support current services and facilities, but to enhance their provision. A number of villages have a



sizeable population basis but limited services presently and by enabling some housing growth within these communities, facilities become more viable and identified needs and community aspirations are more likely to be realised.

122 villages have been identified across all HMAs to be the main focus of proportionate housing development in Herefordshire's rural areas.

**Table RA1** The villages which are the main focus of proportionate housing development

HMA			
Bromyard	Golden Valley	Kington	Ledbury
Bodenham Bodenham Moor Bredenbury Bringsty Burley Gate Hope under Dinmore Linton Pencombe Risbury Stoke Cross/Stoke Lacy Stoke Prior Whitbourne	Bredwardine Clifford Cusop Dorstone Ewyas Harold Longtown Michaelchurch Escley Moccas Peterchurch Preston on Wye Vowchurch	Almeley Brilley Eardisley Hergest Lyonshall Norton Canon Pembroke Staunton on Wye Shobdon Titley Whitney on Wye Winforton	Ashperton Bishops Frome Bosbury Colwall Cradley Eastnor Fromes Hill Lower Eggleton/ Newtown Putley Wellington Heath
Leominster	Hereford	Ross-on-Wye	
Adforton Bircher Brampton Bryan Brimfield Bush Bank Dilwyn Eardisland Kimbolton Kingsland Leintwardine Leysters Lingen Lucton Luston Monkland Orleton Richards Castle Shirlheath Weobley Wigmore Yarpole	Bartestree/Lugwardine Bishopstone Brienton Burghill Canon Pyon Clelonger Credenhill Eaton Bishop Fownhope Hampton Bishop Holme Lacy Little Dewchurch Madley Marden Mordiford Moreton on Lugg Pipe & Lyde Stretton Sugwas Sutton St Nicholas Swainshill Tarrington Tillington Wellington Westhope Withington	Bromsash Brampton Abbots Bridstow Garway Goodrich Gorsley Hoarwithy Kingstone Kingsthorpe Kings Caple Lea Linton Little Birch Llangrove Much Birch Much Dewchurch Much Marcle Orcop Hill Peterstow Pontrilas Pontshill St Weonards Upton Bishop & Crow Hill Weston-under-Penyard	Walford (Coughton) Whitchurch Wilton Winnal Woolhope Wormbridge Wormelow

Within these villages carefully considered development which is proportionate to the size of the community and its needs will be permitted only where residential proposals are locally appropriate to ensure villages retain their separate, distinctive and varied characters.

Save for schemes coming forward under the rural exceptions approach (policy H2), residential development will be located within or adjacent to the main body of the village (with priority being given to the development of brownfield sites) to guard against unnecessary linear, detached or isolated dwellings in the surrounding countryside which adversely damage the character and setting of a village and its local environment. Development of locally sensitive sites will not be acceptable.

Given the importance of the Herefordshire landscape, and particularly the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, new dwellings should make a positive contribution to their rural landscape by being built to a high standard, incorporating appropriate materials and landscaping. Residential development will be expected to contribute to the future housing needs of each HMA by providing an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes having regard to the Local Housing Market Assessment and other relevant evidence sources. Developments should be sensitively and inclusively designed to reflect the lifelong housing needs of the local community, contributing to much needed infrastructure, affordable homes and improving community cohesion.

Where a neighbourhood development plan exists, developments will have community support if the proposal is in conformity with their plan. Developers advancing proposals in the absence of a neighbourhood development plan should ensure early engagement with the local community, including the parish council, is undertaken. The results of any community consultation should be incorporated within the planning application, including evidence of how the development realises community needs and ambitions.

Affordability is an issue in rural Herefordshire due to the relationship between house prices and incomes, which is exacerbated by an existing housing mix that is heavily skewed towards higher value properties, as well as demand from people moving to rural areas, coupled with restricted scope for new house building. This situation has resulted in a need for market housing priced at a level that can be afforded by local people. The Core Strategy will help to increase the supply of affordable sector housing in Hereford, the market towns and across the rural areas. However in the remaining villages (identified in Table RA.2 below), proportional levels of housing will be focused on providing smaller more affordably priced market homes which meet the needs of people with local connections, whom would not otherwise be able to live in their local area.

Table RA.2 Villages where housing development will be restricted to market homes which meet the needs of people with local connections.

HMAs			
Bromyard	Golden Valley	Kington	Ledbury
Docklow Edwyn Ralph Hatfield Munderfield Ocle Pychard Pudleston Steensbridge Ullingswick	Abbeydore Bacton Blakemere Lower Maescoed Priory Wood Rowlestone Tyberton	Holme Marsh Kinnersley Letton Staunton on Arrow Woonton	Canon Frome Coddington Eggleton Mathon Monkhide Much Cowarne Stretton Grandison
Leominster	Hereford	Ross-on-Wye	
Ashton Aymestrey Brierley Cobnash	Burmarsh Byford Dinedor Dormington	Aconbury Allensmore Aston Ingham Bishopswood	Three Ashes Thrupton Upton Crews Welsh Newton

Combe Moor	Kings Pyon	Broad Oak	Common
Eyton	Ledgemoor	Brockhampton	
Ivington	Little Tarrington	Cobhall Common	
Kinsham	Litmarsh	Didley	
Leinthall Earls	Mansel Lacy	Glewstone	
Leinthall Starkes	Moorhampton	Harewood End	
Little Hereford	Priors Frome	Howle Hill	
Moreton	Ruckhall	Kerne Bridge	
Mortimers Cross	Shelwick	Kilpeck	
Middleton on the Hill	Shucknall	Llancloudy	
Stapleton	Stoke Edith	Llangarron	
Upper Hill	Twyford Common	Llanwarne	
Walford	Upper Lyde	Much Birch/The Axe	
Wharton	Vauld	& Cleaver	
Yatton	Westhide	Orcop	
	Weston Beggard	Rushall	
	Withington Marsh	St Owens Cross	
	Yazor	Symonds Yat (West)	

It is important that housing schemes should be needs led, the starting point being a need for a house or housing in a particular village, rather than the availability of a particular site. Proposed developments must be based on appropriate, compelling evidence of how the proposal meets the identified local housing need, all of which must be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Herefordshire Council. A planning obligation will restrict occupation of dwellings on this basis to ensure their long term availability for those with local housing needs.

Smaller houses, predominantly two and three bedroom properties, continue to be required across all rural areas. To address this need and ensure that house values remain at the lower end of the house price range in the area, the size of any new dwelling and plot size will be restricted. Dwelling size is the net internal floor area, measured from internal wall finish to internal wall finish of the unit, with no space or rooms discounted. The size of any one dwelling will be limited to a maximum net internal floor space of 80 sq m in a case of a two bedroom house, 90 sq m for a three bedroom house and 100 sq m in the case of a four bedroom house. These figures are based on the internal floorspace allowances made by registered social landlords when applying to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding utilising their Housing Quality Indicators system. In the event that medical needs necessitate the provision of specific facilities any resulting additional floor area requirements shall be justified on a case by case basis through the submission of a needs appraisal that includes evidence from a medical professional. Permitted development rights will also be removed to restrict enlargement of such developments, with a consequent increase in value and price.

**Policy RA2 – Herefordshire’s villages**

To maintain and strengthen a network of locally sustainable communities across the rural parts of Herefordshire, there will be opportunities for housing growth in those villages best able to support development, bolstering existing service provision, improving facilities and infrastructure and meeting the needs of their communities. Table RA1 provides details of those villages by HMA.

Encapsulating existing rural HMA characteristics, together with the future housing needs and requirements within that area, a HMA housing target will assist to inform the level of housing development that is proportionate to the existing village size. All neighbourhood development plans shall aim to provide levels of housing which proportionally meets these targets.

Reflecting the character of each HMA housing growth will vary between villages in a proportionate manner and will be permitted only where the residential development proposal is considered to be locally appropriate by:

1. Ensuring the proposal reflects the size, role and function of each village and is located within or adjacent to the main body of the village so as to not result in free standing, individual or groups of dwellings which are obviously detached from, or peripheral to, the main built up area;
2. Giving priority to the development of suitable brownfield sites;
3. Reflecting the character of the village and surrounding environment;
4. By contributing to the delivery of an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing, to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community; and
5. By demonstrating community support in accordance with a neighbourhood development plan OR where there is no neighbourhood development plan by undertaking community consultation.

In those villages identified in Table RA2 proportional residential growth will not be precluded but will be limited to the provision of smaller market housing, where the residential development proposal satisfies criteria 1 – 5 above; and:

1. Through the submission of appropriate evidence to demonstrate the development meets an identified local housing need. Residential developments will be considered to contribute towards meeting an identified need, where it will provide accommodation for any of the following:
  - Existing residents of the parish requiring separate accommodation;
  - Persons who have long standing family links (immediate family only e.g. parent, sibling or adult child and step relationships) with the parish;
  - Grandparents, grandchildren, aunts or uncles will be included only where the council considers it necessary for the applicant to be accommodated within the Parish in order to provide or receive medical or social support to or from a relative;
  - Persons with permanent full time or substantive employment based within the parish;
2. The dwelling size is limited to a net internal floor area of 80 sq m (2 bedroom house) or 90 sq m (3 bedroom house) or 100 sq m (4 bedroom house). Only where medical needs necessitate the provision of specific facilities will any resulting additional floor space requirements be considered;
3. The plot size is limited to a maximum area of 350 sq m unless site characteristics or configuration render this impractical.

Permission granted in these cases will be subject to planning obligations that safeguard occupation of the development for the identified local need and will continue to do so in perpetuity. To achieve this policy, planning permissions will be subject to a condition removing permitted development rights for the erection of any extension or detached buildings within the curtilage and a condition restricting the conversion of an ancillary garage in to habitable accommodation. Applications for such developments in variation of these conditions will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

### **Housing in Herefordshire's countryside**

National guidance emphasises the importance of not promoting unsustainable patterns of development in rural areas and avoiding the provision of new isolated homes.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

Outside of the villages detailed in Policy RA2, new housing will be strictly controlled to avoid locally unsustainable patterns of development. Isolated development in the countryside will not be permitted to protect the landscape and wider environment.

Residential development will therefore be limited to those proposals which meet the criteria listed below. Proposals should be sited within or adjoining a settlement and seek to make use of existing buildings through conversion and adaptation in preference to new development.

Occupancy controls will be applied to dwellings arising from the expansion of rural business enterprises, as well as to agricultural and forestry dwellings (policy RA4). To make the stock of occupational dwellings more flexible than in the past and respond to local housing needs, the occupation of such dwellings will be secured from the start by a Section 106 Agreement that also encompasses local housing needs. As such in the event that there is no longer a functional requirement either from the original rural business or from other rural enterprises in the locality, the dwelling will default to local housing needs rather than being lost from the stock of smaller affordably priced rural housing.

Replacement dwellings will only be permitted provided that the existing building has established and continuing residential use rights and has not been abandoned. Proposals should ordinarily be sited in the same position as the original dwelling. In the interests of the need to maintain a supply of smaller and less expensive properties in Herefordshire's rural areas, as well as safeguarding the character and appearance of countryside from the visual impact of large buildings, the size of any replacement dwelling will be of a comparable total cubic volume (measured externally) to the existing dwelling. To minimise the impact of the proposal on the surrounding area, the design of the dwelling should respect the local character of the area, taking account of mass, scale, height and external appearance of the resultant dwelling. Permitted development rights will generally be removed from replacement dwellings located in the countryside.

#### **Policy RA3 – Herefordshire's countryside**

In rural locations away from Herefordshire's villages, residential development will be limited to proposals which satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

1. Meets an agricultural or forestry need or other farm diversification enterprise for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work and complies with policy RA4; or
2. Accompanies and is necessary to the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise, and complies with policy RA4; or
3. Involves the replacement of an existing dwellinghouse (with a lawful residential use) that is comparable in size and scale with and in the same position as the existing dwellinghouse; or
4. Would result in the re-use of a redundant or disused buildings of architectural and/or historical merit which also leads to an enhancement of the immediate setting and complies with policy RA5; or
5. Is rural exception housing in accordance with policy H2; or
6. Is of exceptional quality and innovative design satisfying the design criteria set out in Paragraph 55 of National Planning Policy Framework, as well as demonstrating how sustainable construction standards have been utilised to achieve a zero carbon building.

#### **Rural Enterprise Dwellings in Herefordshire's Countryside**

One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development in the countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time rural workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work to provide essential supervision and management. The need to make an exception to the general policy approach to development in the countryside in order to meet agricultural requirements has long been recognised and this approach to rural workers has been endorsed by the National Planning Policy Framework.



### **The Core Strategy Approach**

Applications for planning permission for new dwellings advanced through this policy will be based on an accurate assessment of the needs of the rural enterprise. The sustainability of the business will be scrutinised to ensure any essential need established can be sustained so the concessions set out in policy RA3 are not abused, undermining the overall approach and leading to sporadic, isolated development in Herefordshire's countryside. Thus in terms of agricultural or forestry dwellings it will be essential to firstly establish that stated intentions to engage in agriculture are genuine, reasonably likely to materialise and capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time. Where proposals are advanced in association with non-agricultural rural enterprises it should also be established that the business could not exist without close and continual supervision, for example where a worker is required day and night for supervision, inspection or emergency responses. Security is not of itself sufficient to justify a dwelling but it may be a contributing factor in association with others.

All applications will be required to demonstrate that a dwelling at the business is essential by showing a functional need for the occupier to be present at the business for the majority of the time ('time' being 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Therefore full supporting information appraising the need, including a functional assessment, prepared by an appropriate and qualified person should accompany all applications. Any functional need established can only be sustained where it is an essential part of an economically sustainable enterprise. Financial information as to the economic sustainability of the business and giving further evidence of the need should also be submitted to support all applications. Businesses should have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one year, be currently financially sound and have clear prospect of remaining sustainable. The supporting information should also clearly demonstrate why existing accommodation in the locality, either on the farm or within existing settlements, is unsuitable or unavailable, and explore any other means of meeting the need.

Where the economic sustainability of the rural enterprise is not proven or where an enterprise has not been established, planning permission for a caravan or other temporary accommodation may be granted for a limited period. This is to enable the economic sustainability of the enterprise to be proven through the development of the business, including investment, planned on a sound financial basis. At the end of the temporary period a reassessment of the sustained essential functional needs of the business, together with the sustainability of the enterprise will be reviewed.

To avoid a proliferation of dwellings in the countryside, occupancy controls (encompassing local housing needs) will be secured through Section 106 Agreements attached to dwellings advanced through this policy. This is to ensure if the dwelling concerned is no longer required by the original business it is firstly kept available to meet the essential needs of rural enterprises in the locality, subsequently defaulting to local housing needs. Consideration will also be given to restricting the occupancy of other dwellings (by planning obligation) forming part of the farm unit in order to ensure that new proposals do not allow existing farm dwellings to be removed from the rural worker housing market. Similarly where appropriate planning obligations may be used to prevent the future separation of a farmhouse from any adjoining farm buildings/land.

Where the need for a dwelling is established on the basis of proven essential need, preference should be given to the use of suitable existing buildings through conversion. Where this is not possible, any new development should be sited to be well related to existing buildings. Isolated locations should be avoided and regard to



potential future occupancy on the basis of local housing needs should be considered and not compromised.

The location and siting of temporary accommodation will itself be considered on the basis of permanent accommodation being provided. Where other agricultural development is being proposed at the same time as part of an overall scheme, siting of all development will be considered on a comprehensive basis.

Taking in to account the need of many rural workers for a property that is affordable, together with the introduced default to local housing needs occupancy, proposals for rural worker dwellings should aim to be a size of no greater than a net internal floor area (measured from wall finish to wall finish of the unit) of 100 sq. m. This is for consistency with local housing needs criteria set out in policy RA2 that is based upon allowances made by registered social landlords when applying to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding. Notwithstanding this, depending upon the nature of the enterprise with which the dwelling is associated, additional floor space needs may exist, including for a wet room or farm office. An allowance of up to a further 20% (20 sq. m) may be utilised where such needs can be justified. Permitted development rights for dwelling approved under this policy will be removed.

Where applications are made to remove occupancy conditions (or obligations) on dwellings when an essential on-site worker is no longer required that pre-date the default to local needs housing introduced by the Core Strategy, applications will be required to demonstrate that the condition is no longer appropriate. Accordingly applicants should demonstrate there is no functional need and thus the dwelling is surplus to both the current and sustainable needs of the original rural enterprise, as well as other rural enterprises in the locality. Evidence should be provided that genuine attempts have been made to market the property for let or sale at a price that reflects its occupancy restriction for a period of at least 12 months. As the removal of an occupancy condition effectively creates a new market dwelling, an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing will be required in accordance with policy AH1.

For those dwellings approved under the application of this policy, first and foremost the dwelling should continue to provide accommodation on the basis it was approved so not to readily diminish the stock of lower priced accommodation available to essential rural workers, particularly the farming community. Where there is no longer a functional requirement from the original business or other rural enterprises, the same evidence will be required to be submitted to satisfy clauses set out in the Section 106 Agreement before occupation of the dwelling on a local needs basis can lawfully commence.

**Policy RA4 – Agricultural, forestry and rural enterprise dwellings**

Proposals for dwellings associated with agriculture, forestry and rural enterprises arising under policy RA3 will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is a sustained essential functional need for the dwelling and it forms an essential part of a financially sustainable business, and that such need cannot be met in existing accommodation. Such dwellings should:

1. Demonstrate that the accommodation could not be provided in an existing building(s);
2. Be sited so as to meet the identified functional need either within the unit or in relation to other dwellings;
3. Be of a scale and design which is appropriate to its surroundings and make a positive contribution to their rural location; and
4. Aim to be of a size no greater than a net internal floor area of 100 sq m, only utilising the additional 20% allowance where the nature and needs of the enterprise require and can be justified.

Where evidence of the economic sustainability of the rural enterprise is not proven or where an enterprise has not been established, planning permission for temporary accommodation may be granted for a maximum period of three years to enable the sustainability of the enterprise to be assessed. Successive extensions will not normally be granted. Temporary accommodation should be carefully sited within the unit or in relation to other dwellings.

Dwellings permitted in accordance with this policy will be subject to occupancy controls (encompassing local housing needs occupancy as a default) secured through a Section 106 Agreement. In some situations it will be appropriate to use legal agreements to tie other dwellings to the unit and/or restrict the occupancy of other dwellings within the farm/business unit.

Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions (or section 106 Agreements) which pre-date adoption of the Core Strategy will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated the dwelling is surplus to the current and sustained original business needs, as well as other rural enterprises in the locality and there has been a genuine and unsuccessful attempt to market the property at a realistic price. In these circumstances an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing will be required in accordance with policy AH1.

### **Re-use of rural buildings**

The re-use of existing rural buildings has an important role to play in promoting economic prosperity and sustainable development in rural areas through the creation of local accessible jobs, providing premises for business start-ups and/or expansions, improving business networks and supporting farming through diversification schemes. The re-use of buildings can also provide environmental benefits by making use of existing resources and at the same time conserving buildings of heritage value.

#### **Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings**

The re-use of individual and groups of redundant or disused buildings, including farmsteads in rural areas, will be permitted where:

1. Design proposals, respect the character and significance of any heritage assets affected, together with their settings and
2. The proposal will make a positive contribution to rural businesses and enterprise and support the local economy and;
3. Design proposals make adequate provision for protected and priority species and associated habitats and;
4. The proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and does not cause undue environmental impacts and;
5. The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction and;
6. The building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting.

Outside villages, proposals for the re-use of buildings solely for residential use will only be permitted where the proposal:

- a. Is in accordance with Policy RA.4 regarding rural workers: or
- b. will result in an enhancement of the building(s) and their immediate setting, where their appearance detracts from local amenity and/or quality of the local environment: or
- c. demonstrates that it represents the most viable option for the long term conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset.

Where appropriate, planning permission will be subject to a condition removing permitted development rights for future alterations, extensions and other developments.

Redundant rural buildings in Herefordshire vary greatly in terms of scale, design and materials depending on their original use. Some are situated within market towns and villages but the majority are located in the countryside. They may occasionally be single buildings but more commonly are grouped together in farmsteads or other clusters. Many are former agricultural buildings which are no longer required for their original purpose. Others may relate to different activities such as corn mills or other industrial buildings. Most of these buildings have heritage value although only a minority of these are listed and/or within a conservation area. Such buildings are referred to in the policy as 'heritage assets'. Herefordshire has some 3,000 historic farmsteads which can potentially contribute to promoting and improving a diverse rural economy. Herefordshire's historic farmsteads vary widely in scale and form and make an important contribution to the county's built heritage, landscape character and sense of local distinctiveness. Of particular significance is the high proportion of farmsteads that retain all or much of their historic character. Changing farming practices have made many traditional farm buildings redundant and finding a suitable alternative use which preserves their character and the integrity of the farmstead grouping is one way to secure their survival.

The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscape Project (2010) notes that in Herefordshire the commercial re-use of rural buildings has tended to revolve around tourism development. Whilst there may be some scope for further tourism development there is now greater potential for other types of businesses to develop. The wide range of building types are suitable for a variety of different businesses and expanding broadband availability will help to increase their potential, ultimately contributing to a diverse rural economy and increased local job opportunities. All proposals for re-use will need to consider the farmstead as a whole and be informed by an assessment of its historic character and landscape setting, significance and capacity for change, using the evidence and assessment framework provided by the Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project (2008).

The policy does not support the rebuilding of rural buildings which have fallen into a ruinous state, as their significance has usually been lost. Candidate buildings should therefore be structurally sound and capable of bona fide conversion for the proposed use without major reconstruction. A full structural survey may be required to demonstrate whether this is the case.

Many rural buildings, particularly those previously used for agricultural purposes, provide valuable wildlife habitats including for legally protected species such as bats and barn owls. Proposals for the re-use of these buildings will need to demonstrate that an appropriate wildlife survey has been carried out and will be required to make adequate provision for wildlife mitigation and enhancement measures within their design and setting. They must also demonstrate appropriate species-protection measures before, during and after the conversion process.

Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that proposed uses respect the character of the buildings, are suitable for the rural environment, are acceptable in relation to sustainable transport policies and do not have a negative impact on the amenity of local residents and environment, terms of noise, light and air pollution.

Detailed design requirements for proposals for the re-use of individual buildings and farmsteads will be set out in a supplementary planning document. However in broad terms proposals must ensure that schemes respect the historic character and interest of the buildings, its relationship with other buildings and heritage assets, and

its place in the wider landscape. Overall, schemes should keep new openings to a minimum; respect internal features and spaces; and avoid introducing 'over-domestic' features such as dormer windows, chimney stacks, porches or unsympathetic materials.

Redundant rural buildings may also provide good opportunities for the development of live/ work units and these can potentially make a positive contribution to the rural economy. Therefore these will be encouraged in accordance with Policy E1 and the criteria of Policy RA5.

In relation to proposals for conversion to residential uses only, the policies of the Core Strategy direct most of the future housing requirement to villages of a suitable size with a certain level of facilities and services. Given that the majority of the buildings in question will be outside such villages, proposals for the re-use of buildings for housing in isolated areas will be limited to the following circumstances:

- where the redundant building is a heritage asset and the applicant has demonstrated that other non-residential uses are not viable;
- where residential use is shown to be the only means of conserving the asset;
- where the proposals achieve an enhancement to the site through, for example, the removal of unsightly utilitarian buildings and the restoration or enhancement of landscape features in accordance with the Landscape Character Assessment and the Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- Where the proposal meets needs of rural workers and is in accordance with Policy RA.4

In summary this policy supports the sustainable re-use of rural buildings where it secures their future, the changes proposed do not harm their character and there are no unacceptable impacts on the local environment and local communities.

### **Rural economy**

Although planning policy for economic development in Herefordshire centres on providing economic growth for Hereford and the market towns, the rural economy of Herefordshire is much broader and takes into account the surrounding land and villages outside urban areas which have for many centuries played a strong role in local, regional and national food and drink production, particularly in areas such as agriculture and farming. Other uses within the rural economy consist of local businesses and services, village shops and public houses, tourism activities and accommodation, home working businesses, military uses, as well as farm diversification enterprises. The strengthening of the rural economy is also important for retaining a skilled labour force within the rural area, and offer opportunities for employment, particularly to young people. In order to allow the rural economy to grow into the future, there is a need for the following policy to allow flexibility for start-ups and continuation of new business enterprises, farm diversification, home working and embracing new technologies and methods to allow the rural economy of Herefordshire to prosper into the future.

#### **Policy RA6 - Rural economy**

Employment generating proposals which help diversify the rural economy in rural areas such as knowledge based creative industries, environmental technologies, farm diversification projects and home working will be supported where they are of an appropriate scale for their location, accessible by a choice of transport modes and of a form which protects and respects the environmental and landscape quality. A range of economic activities will be supported, including proposals which:

- support and strengthen local food and drink production;

- support and/or protect the vitality and viability of commercial facilities of an appropriate type and scale in rural areas, such as village shops, petrol filling stations, garden centres and public houses;
- involve the small scale expansion or extension of existing businesses in rural areas;
- promote sustainable tourism proposals of an appropriate scale in accordance with Policy E3 - Tourism;
- recognise that there are economic benefits of utilising Herefordshire's natural and historic environment as an asset to be valued, conserved and enhanced;
- where possible, involve the change of use and redevelopment of existing redundant buildings in accordance with Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings. The redevelopment of isolated brownfield sites which no longer have existing buildings will not be supported;
- support existing military sites to remain viable;
- ensure that the development is of a scale which would not threaten the vitality and viability of a nearby centre;
- are of an appropriate scale and/or use which do not adversely affect the amenity of nearby residents
- ensure that traffic generated by the proposal can be accommodated safely within the local road network, and does not result in the need to widen roads or the removal of hedgerows.

It is important to help strengthen the rural economy by providing flexibility for the new and expanding rural businesses subject to them being of an appropriate scale, location and ensuring that they do not significantly impact upon the environmental quality of the area.

A number of initiatives have demonstrated the importance of food and drink production in supporting and strengthening the rural economy. Research upon local Food Webs has been undertaken which showed that local food economies and independent retailing are under threat from supermarket expansion and centralised supply chains. The study which focused on a smaller local model used for Ledbury is a template which can be used as a model for other local communities as well as the surrounding county as a whole. A "Food Web" is defined as "*A local network of links between people who buy, sell, produce and supply food*<sup>23</sup>".

In addition to Policy E3 which promotes tourism within the county, tourism plays a large role within the rural economy with the provision of tourist centres, information points and displays, static caravans, chalets, camping and touring caravan sites. Such tourism facilities enable existing farms and rural businesses to diversify as well as accommodating the needs of visitors.

As well as tourism, the rural areas also play host to a number of wedding and corporate functions which take place within purpose built structures or buildings and larger country houses, some in isolated locations and others within rural settlements. It is important that scale is taken into account in these circumstances, as even a material change of use has the ability to affect the local amenity by way of issues such as noise, traffic and parking.

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<sup>23</sup> CPRE 2011 "From Field to Fork: Ledbury Mapping the Local Food Web"



Within Herefordshire, there are also a number of isolated and previously developed (brownfield) sites within the countryside, detached from a settlement, and which have ceased operating. Some sites may no longer contain any buildings, and seeing as they are in isolated locations, it would not be effective or sustainable to promote further development. The National Planning Policy Framework core principles encourages planning policies which outline the effective use of brownfield land, except where the site has high environmental value.

An isolated employment site may be capable of remaining viable with small extensions or redevelopment, and justification will need to be provided to demonstrate the necessity for these additions. Extensions and redevelopment of existing employment sites will be looked upon favourably, however these developments will need to take into account other relevant policies on appropriate siting and design within the open countryside.

Although a site may have had buildings on it in the past does not justify the appropriateness to redevelop the site if the buildings have since been removed. Sites without buildings will require the assessment of their environmental value and whether they can make a positive contribution to landscape, even if the site currently contains the remnants of an existing use. Dependent upon the nature and sustainability of the site, it may be more appropriate and effective to keep a site with no buildings in its current state.

### **Delivery and Monitoring of the Place Shaping Policies**

These policies will be delivered by:

- the development management process
- the Hereford Area Plan
- neighbourhood development plans and other development plan documents

In addition to the indicators listed in the Spatial Strategy and General Policies sections, the following indicators will be used to measure the effectiveness of the policies:

- utilising the AMR to develop an indicator of housing completions by HMAs and rural HMAs
- utilising the AMR to monitor the number of housing completions relating to market housing for local people

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

The Sustainability Appraisal Report produced as part of the development of this Draft Core Strategy recommended three additional criteria to the place-shaping policies on Bromyard (BR2) and Leominster (LO1 and 2), relating to issues concerning the protection of heritage assets (Bromyard and Leominster policies), particularly archaeology and contributing to zero carbon emissions (Leominster policies). These have been incorporated in this document.

The Habitat Regulations Assessment has ...(to follow)



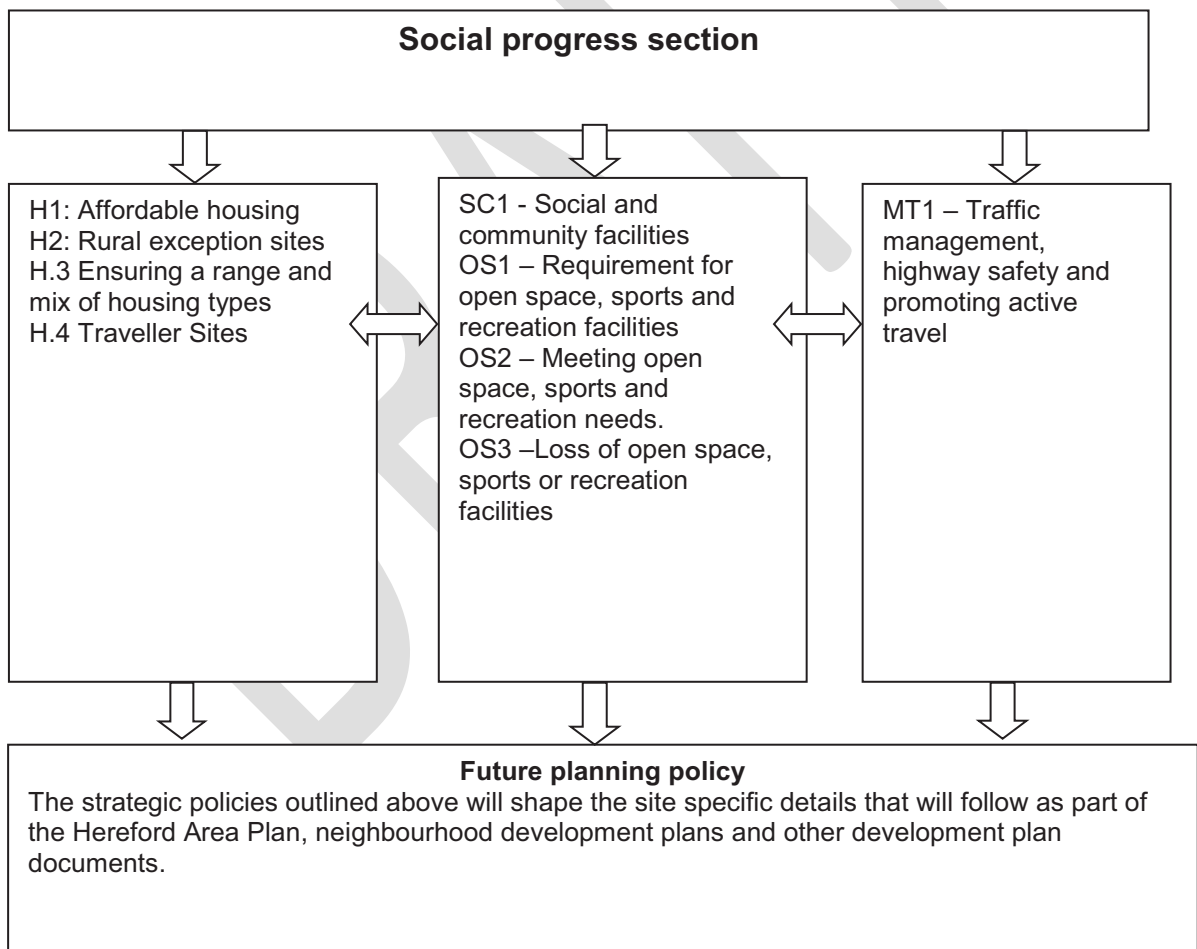
# General Policies

## Social Progress

### Introduction

Social progress is about improving the well-being of our communities.

The Core Strategy's vision for social progress is a long-term one, seeking to deliver decent affordable homes, social and community facilities and other necessary infrastructure in urban and rural areas. There are five objectives which develop this vision (strategic objectives 1-5 in the spatial strategy section) and this chapter sets out a series of policies on affordable housing, social and community infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation, and traffic management to deliver these objectives, alongside Policy SS1 to SS6.



## Affordable housing

There is a significant need for affordable housing within Herefordshire and the planning system can assist the delivery of affordable homes. Policy H1 establishes affordable housing targets whilst specific place based policies set out targets for individual strategic housing developments.

Within the county, the need for affordable housing has been investigated through the *Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008* (SHMA) which introduced the broad housing needs in seven housing market areas of the county. A *Local Housing Market Assessment* (LHMA) was completed in 2011 and updated in 2013, which draws on and develops the SHMA to provide a more local assessment of housing requirements for the seven local housing markets across Herefordshire. In addition to the LHMA, parish level housing needs surveys are undertaken to identify needs at a very local level, to support the development of affordable housing. The need for affordable homes across the county does exceed this figure, but the viability of delivering affordable homes over the Plan period has been recognised in order to provide an achievable figure.

Affordable housing is housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. It encompasses housing provided at below market prices and allocated on the basis of need, to people who are unable to purchase or rent houses available generally on the open market without financial assistance. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Affordable housing can include a range of rented and home ownership housing options which meet local housing need. By seeking to provide a range of housing options, the council can help to address the needs of those seeking to gain a first step on the property ladder, reduce the demand for social rented housing, free up existing social rented homes, provide wider choice for households and ensure that sites have a mix of tenures

The National Planning Policy Framework divides affordable housing into three categories:

- Social rented for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
- Affordable rented housing subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent.
- Intermediate homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels. They can include shared equity, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

Affordable housing under these definitions can include both individual and multiple dwellings, constructed under self-build projects funded by the registered social landlords, community housing groups and individual projects providing low cost housing that does not exceed affordable levels. In such cases planning conditions will be imposed to ensure that housing is retained in perpetuity for future local housing needs.

Housing provided under these categories whether for rent or sale must be made available at a price level that can be sustained by local people in housing need. It is important to emphasise the distinctions between the roles of the different categories of affordable housing and not to treat one as a substitute for the other. It is important to set criteria identifying what constitutes local housing need. This is in order that proposals for additional dwellings coming forward can be clearly shown to be

contributing to this requirement – and thus to the aim of sustaining urban and rural communities.

#### **Policy H1 - Affordable housing – thresholds and targets**

All new open market housing proposals on sites above the thresholds set out below will be expected to contribute towards meeting affordable housing needs.

In the urban areas of Hereford and the market towns, proposals of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares will be expected to contribute to affordable housing provision. In rural areas, all new housing developments will be expected to make a contribution, whereby:

- i) on sites of 3 or more dwellings, the affordable housing will be expected to be provided on-site unless developers can clearly demonstrate that a financial contribution would be more appropriate; and
- ii) on sites of 1 or 2 dwellings, developers will be required to provide a financial contribution to the provision of affordable housing off-site.

The amount and mix of affordable housing will vary depending on evidence of housing need, and where appropriate, an assessment of the viability of the development. The following indicative targets have been established based on evidence of need and viability in the county's housing market and housing value areas:

1. A target of 35% affordable housing provision on sites in Hereford and Kington housing value areas;
2. A target of 40% affordable housing provision on sites in Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and northern parishes housing value areas;
3. A target of 25% affordable housing provision on sites in Leominster housing value area.

Any affordable housing provided under the terms of this policy will be expected to be available in perpetuity for those in local housing need.

In order to ensure an appropriate balance of social rented and intermediate housing is provided the evidence for each housing market area and housing value area will provide the basis for determining the mix of tenure types on specific sites.

Affordable housing targets and thresholds have been informed by the economic viability assessment including the likely impact upon overall levels of housing delivery and aim of creating mixed communities. The work on viability involved the definition of housing value areas which are areas where housing values/prices were broadly similar. These can be seen in figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 - Housing value areas**



The findings of the *Local Housing Market Assessment 2013* (LHMA) have also been taken into account so that the resultant policies on affordable housing are locally relevant and viable.

The LHMA indicates that there remains a significant need for social housing across the county. However, the viability of housing schemes also has to be taken into account in determining both the required percentage and an appropriate mix of tenures of affordable housing. Overall target percentages have been established for different parts of the county and are set out in the policy. In locations where achieving high levels of social rented housing would impact upon viability of new housing schemes increasing the percentage of intermediate housing will be considered where the overall affordable housing target can be maintained.

In rural areas the majority of new housing is delivered on small sites of fewer than 5 dwellings and therefore to ensure the maximum provision of new affordable housing a threshold of one house is justified. In the context of sites which are capable of delivering 3 dwellings or more, the council will expect the affordable housing to be provided on-site unless the developer can demonstrate that the requirement for affordable housing would be better met through contributions to off-site provision - where there is a realistic prospect of that off-site provision meeting the identified local need and coming forward in a reasonable timescale.

Where rural developments of one or two dwellings are proposed it is accepted that an on-site contribution is not possible and therefore an off-site contribution will be required. Where new dwellings are provided as part of proposals for the re-use of

rural buildings an element of affordable housing should also be provided on the basis of this policy.

A Supplementary Planning Document will provide additional guidance and set out the details of how the affordable housing policies will be implemented. The guidance will include:

- advice regarding the need for affordable housing;
- affordable house prices and rents in Herefordshire Council;
- the negotiation process;
- securing affordable housing and controlling occupancy; and
- contributions to off-site provision.

There is a need to ensure that planning policy provides for a mix of affordable housing to reflect differing household needs and future demographic trends. There are a number of intermediate housing products, including shared ownership, which is likely to be particularly appealing to would-be first-time buyers who haven't the savings to buy on the open market.

#### **Policy H2 - Rural exception sites**

Proposals for small affordable housing schemes in rural areas may be permitted on land which would not normally be released for housing where:

1. the proposal could assist in meeting a proven local need for affordable housing; and
2. the affordable housing provided is made available to, and retained in perpetuity for local people in need of affordable housing; and
3. the site respects the characteristics of its surroundings, demonstrates good design and offers reasonable access to a range of services and facilities; and
4. the gross internal floor area of the dwellings are consistent with the size limits imposed by policy RA2 (rural housing).

In order to enable the delivery of affordable housing some market housing may be permitted as part of the development to subsidise a significant proportion of affordable housing provision. However, permission will be dependent upon a clear demonstration, through a financial appraisal, that the scale of the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the affordable housing.

The council recognises that the provision of affordable housing is more difficult in rural areas where often the scale and location of new development is more restricted. This policy enables the provision of affordable housing outside of villages, in areas where there is generally a restraint on open market housing, in order to help meet affordable housing needs in rural areas in perpetuity.

Rural exception schemes need to take full account of environmental considerations, including design, siting and materials and avoid sensitive locations where development would not be permitted for reasons of landscape or visual impact. Similarly a site's location should not place additional financial burdens upon households occupying the scheme such as through isolation or increased costs in gaining access to local services and facilities, for example schools and employment. Given that these schemes may be located in or around small villages, the scale of development should reflect the scale of development in the locality and should not normally exceed 15 dwellings in total.



National planning policy indicates that consideration should be given to whether allowing some market housing on exception sites would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. Where such schemes are proposed, the applicant will need to demonstrate that a mixed tenure scheme is essential to the delivery of the affordable housing and that it removes the need for public subsidy. Open market housing should be limited to an absolute minimum in such schemes in order to make the scheme viable as the provision of affordable housing is the paramount aim. The preparation of neighbourhood development plans and/or other development plan documents will also provide an opportunity to identify sites for affordable housing.

### **Policy H3 – Ensuring an appropriate range and mix of housing**

Residential developments should provide a range and mix of housing units which can contribute to the creation of balanced and inclusive communities. In particular, on larger housing sites developers will be expected to:

1. provide a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all households, including younger single people;
2. provide housing capable of being adapted for people in the community with additional needs
3. provide housing capable of meeting the specific needs of the elderly population through the provision of:
  - specialist accommodation for older people in suitable locations;
  - ensuring that non-specialist new housing is built to take account of the changing needs of an ageing population;
  - ensuring that developments contain a range of house types, including where appropriate bungalow accommodation.

There is a clear need to provide for balanced and sustainable communities in Herefordshire. Housing affordability issues in the county are compounded by the housing offer: with a high proportion of detached housing and properties in higher council tax bands. The supply of properties which younger households might be able to afford to buy is limited; only 13.5% of housing is in social sector ownership (affordable) compared to 19.5% across the West Midlands.

The Local Housing Market Assessment recommends that planning policies are not overly prescriptive with regard to requiring a specific mix of housing sites. Specific policies for the strategic sites provide an indication of the mix of housing appropriate to the relevant housing market area. The range of house types provided across the county will be monitored to ensure an appropriate mix of housing is provided.

The study of the housing and support needs of older people in Herefordshire (2012) outlined that there is an increasing requirement for new housing to cater for older people. Addressing this need will be through a combination of measures including through the provision of specialist accommodation and also by ensuring that general housing provision is designed in such a way that enables easy adaptation to meet the requirements of all households.

### **Travellers' sites**

It is important that the housing needs and requirements of all sections of the community are considered in developing planning policies. Government planning policy is increasingly favouring the identification of sites for gypsies and travellers. Herefordshire Council recognises these requirements which will be taken forward in



the preparation of a new Travellers' Development Plan Document. In the interim however, the following policy is required in order to consider the merits of planning proposals.

For the purposes of this policy the definition of "travellers" means "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople" as defined in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG 2012.

#### **Policy H4 – Travellers sites**

Herefordshire Council will provide for the site needs of travellers through the preparation of a Travellers' Development Plan Document (DPD), which will include site allocations. Herefordshire Council will aim to provide residential sites for at least 31 new pitches for gypsies and travellers by 2017 with the target for the remainder of the period up to 2031 being established in the Travellers' DPD. In the absence of an adopted DPD, or where proposals for sites are brought forward on non-allocated land supported by evidence that they meet a local need and no suitable alternative is available, proposals will be permitted where:

1. sites afford reasonable access to services and facilities, including health and schools, in particular avoiding long distance travel;
2. adequate screening and landscaping is included within the proposal in order to ensure that the proposal does not result in an adverse effect upon the character and amenity of the landscape, historic assets and/or neighbouring properties;
3. in the case of proposals for mixed business and residential accommodation providing for the live-work lifestyle of travellers, local amenity is not adversely affected;
4. the number of pitches at any location should not overload local infrastructure;
5. the size of the site should reflect surrounding population size and density so that sites do not dominate nearby communities; and
6. they are capable of accommodating on-site facilities that meet best practice for modern traveller site requirements, including play areas, storage, provision for recycling and waste management, and where necessary, work areas.

In rural areas, where there is a case of local need for an affordable traveller site, but criterion 1 above cannot be fulfilled, then an exception may be made and proposals permitted, provided such sites can be retained for that purpose in perpetuity.

The approach to planning for travellers through the preparation of a Travellers' Development Plan Document will reflect the increased involvement of communities in determining the location of development. Traveller sites include those considered necessary to meet the residential needs of gypsies and travellers who will remain in a location permanently or for substantial periods; transit sites for those moving through the area, and sites for travelling show people.

The Travellers' Development Plan Document will include the following:

- provision of residential sites for at least 31 new pitches for 'gypsies and travellers' by 2017 and establish a longer term target for the period up to 2031;
- identification of broad locations for further developable residential sites for 'gypsies and travellers' over the periods 2018- 22 and 2023–2027;
- identification of need for and approach to the provision of transit sites;
- consideration of the need for some provision for travelling show People" within the county, with the location of plots being judged against the criteria in policy H4 above.
- an indication of the process for updating need on an annual basis;

- enabling an increased provision of private sites during the plan period;
- consideration of the need for a rural exceptions policy to enable sites to be brought forward solely as affordable gypsy and traveller sites;
- supporting the authorisation of unofficial yet tolerated sites where they meet the criteria in policy H4 above;

Herefordshire Council's *Assessment of the Accommodation Needs of Gypsy and Traveller Communities across Herefordshire (November 2012)* identifies a total minimum requirement of 31 residential pitches by 2017. A pitch is defined as the 'area of land on a gypsy and traveller caravan site developed for a single family.' Studies for the preparation of the Travellers Development Plan Document should look at the possibility of estimating levels of need for pitches for the periods 2017 - 2022 and 2022 - 2027. Estimates of need beyond 2027 cannot be forecast with sufficient accuracy and will need to be identified in subsequent reviews after the development plan document has been prepared.

Currently some 101 authorised residential pitches are available within Herefordshire with a further 27 pitches on unauthorised but tolerated sites. Numbers of caravans on these sites have fluctuated over the past two years from 148 to 161 and averaging 157. Some pitches accommodate more than one caravan. A Travellers' Development Plan Document will set out the approach to identifying sites and the number of pitches at each location. This will look at matters in detail for the period 2012-2017 and it is likely that broad locations for estimates of need beyond this period will be identified. Prior to the adoption of a development plan document, policy H4 will be used as an interim policy to direct development.

In the immediate term it is considered that Herefordshire Council will provide 8 additional pitches through bringing back into use pitches at its site at Bromyard. The private sector may need to provide for further residential site needs until the development plan document is adopted, and policy H4 sets out the basis upon which planning permission will be granted during this period. The criteria in this policy may also apply when the defined need for residential gypsy and traveller sites has been met yet further need is accepted. Efforts to seek the support of a registered provider within the county have proved unsuccessful.

In assessing whether evidence of a local need exists, the categories set out in policy RA2 will be applied. In addition, and in the same way that a rural exception policy is applied to housing development, rural exception sites can also be applied to affordable traveller sites.

Although currently there is no assessment of need for transit sites or travelling show people this will be reviewed as part of the work for the Travellers' Development Plan Document. Should any need arise in the interim; proposals will need to satisfy the criteria set out in policy H4.

In bringing proposals forward it will be important to ensure that sites are appropriately landscaped in order to limit their visual impact and should provide access to local facilities and services such as shops and schools. Small sites accommodating pitches for individual or extended families are generally more unobtrusive, easier to manage and are less likely to be of a scale which would dominate local communities. It is also important to recognise that provision is included to meet the live-work nature of gypsies and travellers and adequate provision is made for play space for children.

### **Social and community facilities**

The Core Strategy aims to achieve sustainable communities across Herefordshire and improve upon the well-being of its people. This requires an effective balance

between the provision of new housing and employment and providing the social and community facilities required to support the growth. There is a need to both support and seek improvements to local services and facilities particularly in rural areas where such facilities have been in decline during the post war period. Less prosperous groups in remote rural areas are arguably in a worse position than similar income groups in towns, because their access to services, employment, leisure and shopping facilities is severely limited. Access to essential facilities and services in the rural area depends for many on ownership of a car, or on living on a public transport route.

The erosion of local services and facilities in rural areas and their increasing concentration in the towns has been identified as a key issue in Herefordshire. Included within the ambitions of the Herefordshire Community Strategy, are the retention and improvement of services and facilities and the provision of excellent training and learning opportunities - for people of all ages within the county.

Social and community facilities can be defined as physical facilities for different individuals and communities, which are provided by a range of organisations (public, private and voluntary). They provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. These facilities play an important role in the development of a vibrant community, creating a sense of place and providing a place for people to meet and interact socially. They also offer services that are essential for education, health and well-being; and support community cohesion and benefit the general quality of life of residents.

Social and community facilities include: public services, community centres and public halls, arts and cultural facilities including theatres, public art and heritage centres; policing and criminal justice facilities, fire and ambulance services, health and education facilities including GP surgeries and NHS walk-in centres; public houses, local shops, public toilets, youth centres, social care facilities including day centres and child care facilities; places of worship, and services provided by the community and voluntary sector - for example scout and guide premises.

#### **Policy SC1 – Social and community facilities**

Development proposals which protect, retain or enhance existing social and community infrastructure or ensure that new facilities are available as locally as possible will be supported. Such proposals should be in or close to settlements, have considered the potential for co-location of facilities and where possible be safely accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport.

New development that creates a need for additional social and community facilities (for example, schools, preschools, children’s centres, child minding provision, youth provision, pubs and local shops) - that cannot be met through existing social facilities - will be expected to meet the additional requirements through new provision.

Proposals involving the provision or expansion of social and community facilities will be expected to provide publicly accessible toilets (including facilities for disabled people and baby changing), and provide for their maintenance unless it can be shown that this would not be appropriate.

Existing facilities will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that an appropriate alternative facility is available, or can be provided to meet the needs of the community affected; or it can be shown that the facility is no longer required, viable or is no longer fit for purpose; and where appropriate, it has been vacant and marketed for community use without success. Viable alternative facilities must be

equivalent to those they replace, in terms of size, quality and accessibility.

The provision or improvement of a higher education facilities and the continuing enhancement of existing, or provision of new training and skills facilities will be actively promoted.

Growth will generate a range of service needs throughout Herefordshire, particularly concentrated within the major growth locations, and it is essential that these service needs are supported by appropriate levels of social and community infrastructure. This should come forward either as an integral part of the development (adaptable, mixed use and made available at an early stage), or by way of a developer contribution/community infrastructure levy.

Notwithstanding the diverse spatial requirements of local clubs and societies and faith communities the Council is moving towards the co-location of community premises such as meeting halls, places of worship and schools - for example, a mix of community uses/resources at one location, to encourage efficient use of space and integrated provision to meet the needs of all sectors of our community. The council recognises however, that whilst shared space will be a suitable way forward for some, there are many who require their own space for activities, including worship and teaching.

#### Loss of existing facilities

It is smaller retail premises, village halls, churches and public houses, particularly in the rural areas, that are often at the heart of the community and provide a place for the local community to meet, to use function rooms, to socialise and to fulfil the day to day convenience needs of the local community. In some locations it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain services, shops and public houses; however it is essential that support is given to enable businesses to continue to serve the local community. In such cases, flexibility should be given to enable local shops, services or public house to diversify into ancillary retail and tourism opportunities, which may enable the business to continue to serve the local community. Where a business is shown to be no longer viable, the first alternative should be to investigate whether an alternative community use is possible.

#### Neighbourhood planning and the “Community Right to Build”

In Herefordshire, town and parish councils - in partnership with Herefordshire Council - can undertake ‘neighbourhood planning.’ Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to have a meaningful say in decisions that affect them, and to decide the future of the places where they live and work.

Through neighbourhood planning, local communities are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built; have their say on what those new buildings should look like, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. For example, the ‘Community Right to Build’ programme allows communities to choose where and when to build homes, shops, facilities and businesses, depending entirely on what local people decide their community needs are. The community Right to Build will help communities to gain planning permission for the developments they want to see go ahead; with the benefits of development (for example profits), being managed by a community organisation, for the community.

#### “Community Right to Bid”

Furthermore, since September 2012, the ‘Community Right to Bid’ gives community groups a fairer chance to prepare and bid to buy community buildings that they feel are important. For example, this could be the village shop, public house, community

centre, children's centre, allotment or library. Where a proposal would result in the disposal of such assets, applicants will be expected to show that the relevant land or property has been marketed to the community organisation affected for a period of at least 12 months.

The council will continue to work with partners, the community and the voluntary sector to ensure that provision of services and facilities is maintained and enhanced; and expanded in areas identified for population growth, in areas of relative deprivation and in areas where a deficiency has been identified.

#### Education and skills

Some of the main socio-economic outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy are to improve educational attainment, increase the number of young people entering education or training at 16 and create a highly skilled workforce. These are also wider regeneration objectives of various agencies and important components of delivering the economic vision for Herefordshire. The Council is therefore, exploring the potential for a university gateway at Hereford in order to provide opportunities for local people to access jobs in growth sectors, including green technologies and help the city become a magnet for businesses in knowledge intensive industries. In doing so, the skills of the current labour market will be improved and the knowledge and research infrastructure aligned with particular growth sectors of the economy.

#### Culture

The Council also acknowledges the contribution that culture can make to the economy. Culture is fundamental to the character of Herefordshire, with national and local research showing that it is important to people, and has the potential to make us happier and healthier; as well as providing opportunities for social interaction and learning. However the rural nature of Herefordshire, with its dispersed communities and limited public transport, means that access to cultural facilities can be difficult. In that respect, one of the aims of Herefordshire's Cultural Strategy, is to facilitate easy and affordable access to high quality cultural activities and facilities for all.

#### Reducing the need to travel

The provision of community facilities in local areas across the county will ensure better access for people, which in turn reduces the need to travel; while the co-location of some facilities and services will help to ensure the effective use of resources, and encourage joined-up service delivery, and shared maintenance and management costs. In that respect, the council aims to support the delivery of new services and facilities, through partnership working with service providers and the local community; and through development opportunities that arise from local authority and private sector regeneration projects. Furthermore, the council is working with local communities to develop neighbourhood development plans, to ensure that community needs and priorities are matched to the services that are offered in their local areas.

#### Provision of public toilets

The quality of public toilet provision has seen decline in the United Kingdom over recent years, however public toilets are a necessary component of any successful economy, in that they help to prevent street fouling at night and create more accessible town and city centres. Research also indicates that public toilets can improve the image, and therefore increase the number of visitors to an area.

Enabling different people with different needs to make use of public toilets at different times of the day and night, can have a significant impact on issues like public health and exercise, public behaviour, and the use of public transport. For example, a lack of accessible public toilets in appropriate locations can have an



impact on street cleanliness and disease control; while toilets that are badly designed and badly maintained, generate a sense of neglect, which in turn can contribute to vandalism, anti-social behaviour and social disorder.

In particular, a lack of toilet facilities can have a great impact on the lives of older people, parents and carers with young children, disabled people and people with chronic health problems; by preventing or restricting their opportunities to take part in everyday activities like shopping and leisure pursuits. The council is developing a community toilet scheme to enable local businesses like pubs, restaurants and shops, to work together with the Council to make more clean, safe and accessible toilets available to the public.

#### Co-location of services and facilities

Co-locating public and community services in shared buildings or on shared sites provides a number of benefits for both the community, as users of the services and for the council and its partners, as providers of services.

The population of Herefordshire is forecast to continue to grow, with an ageing population structure and this will put increasing pressure on existing services. At the same time, the current economic climate and competing demands for space and resources means that a different approach towards locating services and facilities may be needed, especially if we want to ensure that infrastructure is provided in the most sustainable and accessible locations in the county. In practice, this could mean linking nurseries, schools and colleges; widening the range of health and social care services available at health centres, or by providing education, training or IT services in libraries.

#### **Open space, sports and recreation**

Open space, sports and recreation facilities are an essential part of sustainable communities. They need to stand the test of time, be where people want to live, and enable people to meet their sporting and recreational aspirations and potential. Planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering the broader objectives of:

- networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable
- an appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision, and
- clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space, sport and recreation provision.

Herefordshire is fortunate enough to have a broad range of open space, sports and recreation facilities which are both in public and private ownership. Open space, sports and recreation typology definitions are based upon PPG17 – *Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide* and include (but are not limited to) formal and informal parks and gardens; school sports grounds; public rights of way; allotments; semi-natural areas (including orchards); sports playing fields; cemeteries and churchyards; amenity areas; indoor sports halls, children’s play facilities; village halls; civic spaces; country parks; green infrastructure corridors, and canals.

Unfortunately, not all communities within Herefordshire are sufficiently catered for in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility of open space; so it is essential that new developments within the county meet the needs of new communities as well as



protecting and enhancing those existing facilities which are valued by existing communities.

**Policy OS1 - Requirement for open space, sports and recreation facilities**

The provision of appropriate open space, sports and recreation facilities will arise in the following proposals for planning applications:

1. all new residential dwellings; or
2. retail and employment proposals of greater than 1000 square metres of floor space or the equivalent of 15 or more full-time employees; or
3. residential institutions, student accommodation, assembly and leisure, hotels or hostels.

Wherever possible, open space sports and recreation facilities will need to be placed on site and be integral to the functioning of the development. Off-site contributions will be sought on an equally beneficial basis for the local community and will include provision for appropriate maintenance (as defined by the local planning authority) of the open space, sports or recreation facility.

For applicable employment and/or retail park proposals formal open space, sports and recreation facilities will not be required (see Glossary). However appropriate on-site provision of at least 5% of the site area for informal areas of amenity greenspace is required for the use of employees and visitors for breaks, and will need to be properly maintained by the owner/managing company for the site. If there is a nearby open space within safe walking distance which would cater for the needs of the employees, a contribution of the equivalent cost of providing the on-site area as identified above to improve existing off-site provision, may also be considered. Users of residential institutions e.g. care homes will also require the provision of on-site amenity greenspace, particularly where the facility hosts families and children. For residential accommodation providing for the needs of people with severe mobility impairments, a reduction of required provision will be needed to be provided on a pro-rata basis according to the needs of the residents using the accommodation.

**Policy OS2 – Meeting open space, sports and recreation needs**

In order to meet the needs of the community, provision for open space, sports and recreation facilities will be sought, taking into account the following principles:

1. any new development must be in accordance with all applicable set standards of quantity, quality and accessibility as defined in the companion guide to PPG17 or any successor document; and
2. provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities should be located on-site unless an off-site or partial off-site contribution would result in an equally beneficial enhancement to an existing open space, sports and/or recreation facility which is of benefit to the local community.

Proposals for major sports facilities, which meet an identified regional or sub-regional need, should be located within or on the edge of Hereford. Where no suitable site is available on the edge of Hereford, the urban areas of market towns may also be considered.

In order to identify shortfalls against a local standard of provision and set out of future requirements, Herefordshire Council has undertaken a local assessment of existing provision of open space, sports and recreation needs, which is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the companion guide to PPG17 and standards set by relevant organisations such as Fields in Trust, Sport

England and Natural England. This comprises an *Open Space Study (2007)*, a *Play Facilities Study (2013)* and a *Playing Pitch Strategy (2013)*. The council is updating its evidence base in order to incorporate local standards into either a supplementary planning document, other development plan documents and/or neighbourhood development plans. This evidence base will be used to secure appropriate planning contributions to aid development of open space, sports and recreation facilities throughout Herefordshire.

Wherever possible, the new provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities should help strengthen the link with green infrastructure corridors. New provision which repairs any previous fragmentation or isolation of sites as part of green infrastructure corridors will be looked upon favourably.

Proposals for major sporting facilities away from Hereford city centre and surrounding market towns will not be appropriate unless there is a demonstrable requirement for their use to be established in a particular location. Proposals for such facilities will also need to take into account other relevant policies in this plan, covering issues such as the impact upon the landscape and surrounding environment.

#### **Policy OS3 – Loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities**

In determining the appropriateness of proposals which results in the loss of an open space, sports or recreation facility, the following principles will be taken into account:

1. clear evidence that the open space, sports or recreation facility is surplus to the applicable quantitative standard; or
2. the loss of the open space, sports or recreation facility results in an equally beneficial replacement or enhanced existing facility for the local community; or
3. the loss of the open space, sports and recreation facility is for the purpose of providing an ancillary development which improves the functioning, useability or viability of the open space, sport and recreation use, e.g. changing rooms, toilets, grandstand accommodation, assembly and function uses; and
4. the loss of the open space, sports or recreation facility will not result in the fragmentation or isolation of a site which is part of a green infrastructure corridor.

Any proposals resulting in a loss of an open space, sports or recreation facility should be able to clearly demonstrate that the facility is not only surplus currently, but taking into account the population needs of the community over the plan period. Proposals which also lead to the ‘thinning out,’ isolation or fragmentation of green infrastructure networks will also be resisted.

In some cases, the loss of an open space sports and recreation facility may be appropriate where a proposal is for the purpose of providing ancillary open space, sports and recreation uses which are necessary to enable the continued viability, functionality or useability of the facility. Ancillary facilities will also need to meet applicable design policies regarding appropriateness and siting of the development.

Open space, sports and recreation facilities not only benefit the health and well-being of the community, but can also bring great benefits to existing and new species-rich habitats supporting local biodiversity. A number of open space, sports and recreation facilities are located in green infrastructure corridors and act as important green links throughout the county. It is therefore important that we keep providing a range of open space areas such as semi-natural areas alongside open

space, sports and recreation facilities to support their use and protection for future generations to enjoy.

### **Traffic management**

In order to deliver the strategic objectives outlined in Policy SS4 in the spatial strategy, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have incorporated the traffic management and safety criteria set out in Policy MT1.

<b>Policy MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel.</b>
<p>Development proposals should incorporate the following principle requirements covering movement and transportation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network or that traffic impacts can be environmentally managed to acceptable levels to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts from the development;</li><li>2. promote integrated transport connections and supporting infrastructure (depending on the nature and location of the site), including access to services by means other than private motorised transport;</li><li>3. ensure that developments are designed and laid out to achieve safe entrance and exit, have appropriate operational and manoeuvring space and accommodate provision for all modes of transport and the needs of people with disabilities;</li><li>4. protect existing local and strategic footways, cycleways and bridleways unless an alternative route of at least equal utility value can be used, and facilitate improvements to existing or provide new connections to these routes, especially where such schemes have been identified in the Local Transport Plan and/or Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and</li><li>5. comply with both the council's Highways Development Design Guide and cycle and vehicle parking standards as prescribed in the Local Transport Plan - having regard to the location of the site and need to promote sustainable travel choices.</li></ol>

Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) defines the following road hierarchy across the county;

- strategic highway network comprises the M50, A49, A465, and A40. The strategic highway links Hereford with the market towns and provides the principal routes into and throughout the county.
- main distributor roads which comprise mainly A class routes that supplement the strategic network.
- secondary distributor roads which comprise mainly B and C class roads that link movements to and from the main distributor network.
- local distributor roads that facilitate movement between rural settlements and parishes.

Development proposals should not inhibit the safe and efficient flow of the strategic network. The use of controls on access can positively contribute to the integration of sustainable modes of transport, and development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the criteria in Policy MT1 have been incorporated within the design of the scheme.

Alongside the above, development proposals should meet the requirements prescribed by the Council's LTP while promoting the principles set out in

Herefordshire Council's Highway Development Design Code and the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets 2, or subsequent documentation.

### **Delivery and monitoring of social progress policies**

These policies will be delivered by:

- the development management process
- preparation and implementation of the Hereford Area Plan, neighbourhood development plans and other development plan documents
- developer contributions and the community infrastructure levy

### **Social Progress Monitoring Indicators**

The policies will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the Annual Monitoring Report:

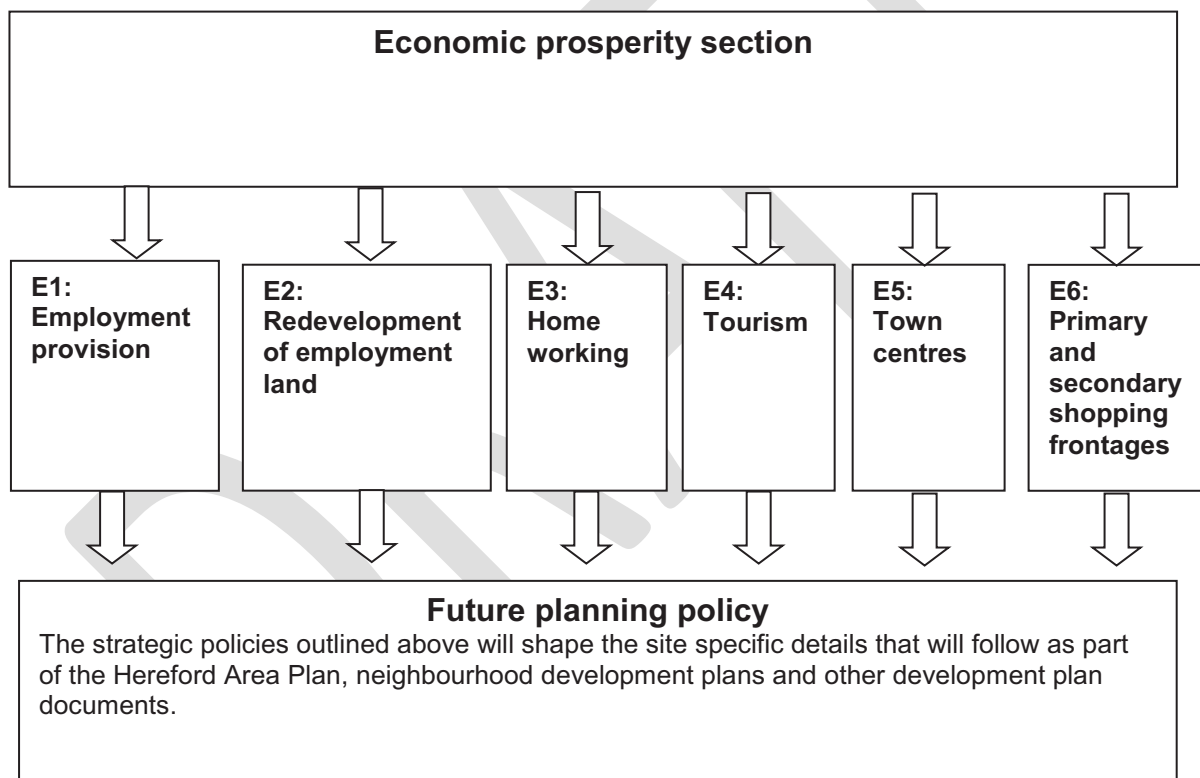
- life expectancy of residents (ONS)
- affordable housing completions split by social and intermediate occupancy
- rural exception site completion
- house type and number of bedrooms (aspirational)
- assessment of traveller site provision against the need identified in the Council's Assessment of Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- recommendations of the open space study and playing pitch assessment which includes surveys of open space sports and recreation facilities to assess useability, supply, access and maintenance
- number of planning applications proposing the loss of an open space, sports or recreation facilities
- number of planning applications proposing new open space, sports and recreation facilities

## Economic prosperity

### Introduction

Ensuring a strong and diverse economy will help give people in Herefordshire more opportunities for work within the county which could reduce the number of people needing to travel outside of it, retaining a skilled labour force particularly in rural areas, as well as helping to reduce carbon emissions. Herefordshire is currently very reliant on agricultural and manufacturing industries being a centre for food and drink production, and a home to large manufacturing operations. However, it is acknowledged that although we need to help strengthen these industries, that generally these types of industries are in decline, and that some employment uses will need to diversify, particularly to environmental technologies, knowledge, tourism and service based industries in order to address this imbalance and enable the county to grow into the future.

The following policies relate to the theme of economic prosperity and include policies for the provision of employment land; maintaining employment land; home working and tourism. They supplement the spatial strategy policy SS5. In particular, they address Core Strategy objectives 6-9 set out in the spatial strategy section.



### Provision of employment land

In line with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, building a strong and competitive economy is an objective that resonates in each of the policies concerning economic prosperity. Over the plan period, Herefordshire will continue to diversify employment opportunities, encourage the expansion of local business and reduce the need for travel. Already, many employment areas in Herefordshire utilise links with the A49 trunk road, including sites in Hereford City Centre, Ross on Wye, Leominster, Marlbrook and Moreton-on-Lugg. There will be a greater emphasis on extending and enlarging enterprise parks in Hereford City, the Market Towns and allowing more flexibility in the rural areas for employment development such as home working and live/work units.

As shown in figure 5.2 in order to cater for the needs of the plan period within Herefordshire as a whole, it is estimated that there is currently approximately 117 hectares of employment land supply either allocated (without planning permission) or committed (including allocations/other sites with planning permission where employment development has not started or is under construction).

Figure 5.2: Herefordshire supply overview (hectares)

Supply Component	Office (B1a)	Manufacturing (B1b,c & B2)	Warehousing (B8)	Total
Employment allocations	17.83	42.31	18.08	<b>78.22</b>
Commitments (n/s)	6.96	21.21	3.81	<b>31.98</b>
Commitments (u/c)	1.31	4.18	1.01	<b>6.5</b>
Owner specific sites	0	1.39	0	<b>1.39</b>
<b>Total supply (excluding Owner Specific Sites)</b>	<b>26.01</b>	<b>69.09</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>116.70</b>

Source: *Employment Land Study 2012*

#### Policy E1 - Employment provision

The focus for new employment provision in Herefordshire is to provide a range of locations, types and sizes of employment buildings, land and offices to meet the needs of the local economy. Larger employment proposals will be directed to the strategic employment sites of Hereford city, the market towns and rural industrial estates where appropriate.

Development proposals which enhance employment provision and help diversify the economy of Herefordshire will be encouraged where:

- the proposal is appropriate in terms of its connectivity, scale, design and size;
- the proposal makes better use of previously developed land or buildings;
- the proposal is an appropriate extension to strengthen or diversify the existing business operation; or
- the proposal provides for opportunities for new office development in appropriate locations.

The provision of viable live/work units as part of mixed use developments will also be encouraged.

It is important that plan policies enable new, sustainable provision of employment land in locations and of a scale that is appropriate. Whilst Herefordshire has a relatively high employment rate, it is important to make sure that adequate opportunities exist to improve the quality and range of employment available.

A major element of the strategy for generating new and better jobs will be the provision of a deliverable range of land supply in appropriate locations and in the



right amounts. 'Employment land' in this instance refers to those uses falling within the planning B use classes, that is offices (B1), manufacturing (B2) and warehousing and distribution (B8). In addition, employment land is considered an appropriate location to accommodate waste facilities.

The following is a summary of the main new and existing strategic locations which will provide for local and inward investment and contribute to the future employment provision in the county over the plan period. There is also potential for smaller sites to come forward throughout the plan period away from these strategic locations, which will also be encouraged where appropriate.

### **Hereford**

The city of Hereford will continue to provide a large proportion of the county's employment supply.

#### *Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ)*

The Rotherwas industrial estate is located south-east of Hereford and is over 120 hectares (ha) in size and has over 125 companies operating within it.

#### *Westfields Trading Estate*

The Westfields trading estate is a 25 ha site located in the northern part of Hereford.

#### *Three Elms Trading Estate*

Three Elms Trading Estate is located north of Hereford and occupies 3 ha of land.

#### *Holmer Road, Hereford*

The industrial precinct on Holmer Road is located to the north of Hereford and is approximately 16 ha in size

### **Market towns**

After Hereford, the Market towns of Leominster, Bromyard, Kington, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury will also continue to support employment development through the rest of the county at existing and/or new strategic employment sites which will be the primary location of a range of employment premises providing a series of enterprise hubs to complement the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The main strategic employment locations in the market towns are as follows:

#### *Land west of Panniers Lane, Bromyard*

This 5 ha area is located to the south western edge of Bromyard. The site is likely to support a number of small scale business enterprises.

#### *Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster*

The Leominster Enterprise Park is located to the south-east of Leominster and is designated by the *Employment Land Study 2013* as of 'best quality.' The site is 15 ha in size and caters B1, B2 and B8 uses. It is envisaged to be fully developed during the first half of the plan period. Given housing growth in Leominster, it is likely that during the second half of the plan period that an additional 5-10 ha of employment land will be required by extending the Leominster Enterprise Park.

#### *Southern Avenue, Leominster*

This site is adjacent to the Leominster Enterprise Park and is 33 ha in size and is rated by the *Employment Land Study 2013* as 'good.' The site has limited opportunities to provide additional employment opportunities, however it is a significant contributor to employment provision.

#### *Land between Little Marcle Road and Ross Road, Ledbury*

This location is to the south-west of Ledbury and will be approximately 12 ha of employment land which will come forward to support the existing population and proposed growth of Ledbury. The land adjoins existing employment land and is rated as 'moderate' and will cater for a mix of employment uses, particularly smaller based business which may help to reduce the need to travel for the local community.

#### *Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye*

This site, carried forward from the Unitary Development Plan 2007, is approximately 10 ha in size and is located to the east of Ross-on-Wye. The site is envisaged to deliver innovative knowledge based industries and a high quality mix of B1, B2 and B8 employment. The site has excellent access to the A40 and is classed as 'good.'

### **Rural areas**

The areas outside of market towns are also supported for continuing economic growth, particularly in areas which allow for the diversification of existing farm uses either through strengthening food and drink production, adding to new environmental technologies or those that allow for home based start-up businesses. The Rural Economy section of this Core Strategy contains further policies and explanatory text to guide employment development within these areas.

There is however a small number of larger employment locations outside of Hereford and the market towns which will also continue to contribute to the provision of Herefordshire's employment needs, including:

#### *Moreton Business Park, Moreton-on-Lugg*

Moreton Business Park is a large employment site of 60 ha which is located on the A49 between Hereford and Leominster. The business park includes a mineral extraction site. The site contains all employment classes, however has recently seen an increase of B1 office use and B8 storage and distribution uses. There is also possibility to enhance rail infrastructure into the site for business use. The site is rated as 'good' with potential to be rated as 'best'.

### **Safeguarding existing employment land**

'Best,' 'good' and 'moderate' quality employment land in the county, as defined in the *Employment Land Study 2013* will continue to be safeguarded for employment generating uses and general industry. In circumstances where other employment land and sites are no longer viable, sufficient justification and evidence will need to be submitted - for example structural surveys demonstrating that the building is not fit for continued employment use, and redevelopment of the site for employment use is not viable or feasible. Where possible, flexibility will be given to enable the business the opportunity to diversify to other ancillary and complementary uses to enable the business to continue. Uses such as fitness centres, child care centres, residential and retail uses are generally not appropriate to be located within an employment site, unless they serve for the day-to day convenience needs of the employment site and any residential use is part of a live/work scheme.

Where proposals are advanced to change the use of land not specifically examined by the employment land review; the methodology used in the study will be used to determine the quality of the site.

## **Policy E2 - Redevelopment of existing employment land and buildings**

Employment land and buildings rated as 'best' and 'good' in the Employment Land Study 2013 (or successor document) will be safeguarded from redevelopment to other non employment uses:

Proposals which would result in the loss of employment land rated as "moderate" will be only permitted where:

1. the release of the site for other uses would not result in an overall shortage in the quality and quantity of employment land supply in the area; or
2. there would be a net improvement in amenity through the removal of a non-conforming use from within a residential area, and where an alternative use would offer amenity benefits. For sites in existing employment use, consideration should also be given to the ability to relocate existing occupiers where this is necessary; or
3. the proposal would not result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme;
4. the viability of the development proposal has been confirmed through a comprehensive assessment;
5. there is evidence of active marketing of at least 12 months for a B Class employment use and that this marketing has been unsuccessful.

The provision of ancillary and complementary uses which help meet the day-to-day needs of employment sites and their employees and improve the sites' attractiveness to businesses will be permitted where they are of a scale which does not impact on the overall supply of employment land.

It is important that a range of employment land continues to be available within Herefordshire. Means by which this can be achieved include: safeguarding existing supply; enabling extensions to existing employment land; or the development of additional employment land where appropriate.

This policy seeks to protect the best quality employment land in Herefordshire from being lost to other uses. The 2013 undertaken as part of the evidence base classifies employment land across Herefordshire in respect of its quality. The recommendations from this study provide the basis for the development of the Policy E1 above.

### **Home working**

In addition to employment sites in predominately Class B employment areas; Herefordshire Council also encourages the development of live/work units and some material change of use in surrounding residential areas to allow for a small scale occupation to be carried out at a person's principal place of residence. Live/work units and allowing flexibility for home working enable small enterprises which are compatible with the residential environment to become established. If the business seeks to expand beyond what could be described as home working or a live/work unit, then larger facilities in surrounding areas, particularly in enterprise parks in surrounding towns should be utilised.

## **Policy E3 - Homeworking**

The value of home working will be recognised by allowing some material change of use to part of a dwelling, where the dwelling remains as the principle place of residence for the home worker; and recognising the potential to encourage and expand home working, by allowing small extensions or conversions where the proposed use and operation would be compatible with its location, and where it would not adversely affect the amenity of the neighbourhood by any of the following:

- changes to the appearance of any building;
- noise disturbance from the use or any increased traffic and parking generated;
- unsociable hours of operation; and
- the storage of hazardous materials or emissions from the site.

## **Tourism**

Herefordshire is one of the most rural counties in England, with Hereford as its main centre encircled by five historic market towns. The fine and varied landscape of the county includes two areas of outstanding natural beauty, the Malvern Hills and the Wye Valley. These assets mean that Herefordshire has a considerable potential for tourism.

Tourism in all its forms is of crucial importance to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the whole county and includes not only the annual family holiday but also a wide range of shorter visits, weekend breaks and day trips. It is essential therefore that this diversity is recognised when developing planning policy, so that the development and improvement of tourism activities can be facilitated in appropriate locations.

In general, tourism can bring many broader benefits that will contribute to the economic and social well-being of local communities as well as to individuals. In particular it can:

- be the focus of regeneration of urban and rural areas;
- provide a catalyst for growth in an area, raising its profile and stabilising outmigration;
- provide opportunities for new skills development, and help to diversify the local economy; and
- help to maintain and expand underused sports and recreation facilities.

Furthermore, the revenue generated by tourism can help to:

- support and enhance local services and facilities such as shops and pubs, particularly those in rural areas;
- secure the retention or upgrading of public services such as public transport, health centres and libraries;
- support a broader and more vibrant and active community by attracting arts, sports or cultural events;
- aid diversification within the rural economy; and
- underpin the quality of the local environment and facilitate further enjoyment of it by residents and visitors.

## Policy E4 - Tourism

Herefordshire will be promoted as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by utilising, conserving and enhancing the county's unique environmental assets. In particular, the tourist industry will be supported by:

1. recognising the unique historic character of Hereford and the market towns as key visitor attractions and as locations to focus the provision of new larger scale tourist development;
2. ensuring that cycling, walking and heritage tourism is encouraged; by facilitating the development of long distance walking and cycling routes and heritage trails, including improvements to public rights of way, whilst having special regard for the visual amenity of such routes and trails, and for the setting of heritage assets in their vicinity;
3. retaining existing and encouraging new accommodation and attractions throughout the county, to help to diversify the tourist provision, extend the tourist season and increase the number of visitors staying overnight. In particular the need for a premium hotel with business and conferencing facilities in Hereford has been identified;
4. supporting the development of sustainable tourism and recreation opportunities, capitalising on assets such as the county's landscape, rivers, other waterways and attractive rural settlements; whilst ensuring that any development does not have a detrimental impact on environmental assets and environmental designations; and the overall character and quality of the environment;
5. in particular, the historic route of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal, together with its infrastructure, buildings, towpath and features will be safeguarded. Where the original alignment cannot be re-established, a corridor allowing for deviations is safeguarded. New developments within or immediately adjoining the safeguarded corridor will be required to incorporate land for canal restoration. Development not connected with the canal that would prevent or prejudice the restoration of a continuous route will not be permitted.

### Explanation

The Herefordshire economy relies heavily on tourism as one of its largest earning sectors of the economy - with the main attractions largely characterised by small, seasonal enterprises in family ownership, and largely focussed on the county's natural and historic heritage assets. The tourist industry in Herefordshire therefore, helps to assist in maintaining the rural economy, by encouraging and supporting the development of local businesses and thus promoting rural regeneration.

In 2011 there were 5.1 million visits to Herefordshire, which was an increase of 3% from 2010. These equated to 7,521 visitor days in total (the annual number of days spent by visitors in the local area);, of which 4,282 were from day visitors.

Expenditure in 2011 increased to £466.8 million compared to £445.3 million in 2010. Those staying in accommodation in Herefordshire (65%) spent the majority of this income (£304 million), 27.7% were from day visitors (£129 million) and 7% from those staying with friends and family (£33.6 million). Of this expenditure, 28% was in the food and drink sector (£132.1 million), followed by 15% on shopping (£69.8 million) and 7% on transport (£34.1 million). Of those employed in the different sectors within tourism in 2011, food and drink activities accounted for the greatest proportion (33%), followed by accommodation (22%) and shopping (16%).

The above figures show that investment in Herefordshire's tourist economy brings significant benefits to the county; however any tourism related development must be



undertaken in a sustainable manner when considering potential impacts on the natural and historic environment, and in light of the effects of climate change. Sustainable tourism is tourism development that avoids damage to the environment, economy and cultures of the locations where it takes place. The aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development is a positive experience for local people, tourism companies, and tourists themselves.

The county faces a number of challenges and opportunities with respect to tourism. This includes high levels of competition from other destinations, along with the intrinsic rural nature of the county, with its dispersed communities and limited public transport. Much of Herefordshire's tourism is therefore dependent on the private car, and thus the promotion of tourism in rural areas in particular may come at a high carbon cost. With this in mind, significant new development for tourist accommodation should be focused in Hereford and the market towns.

#### Accommodation type

With the exception of guest houses, bed and breakfast accommodation, and pubs/restaurants with rooms, the *Marches Hotel Study 2012* indicates that the hotel supply in Herefordshire is dominated by 3-star standard hotels - which although provide almost half of the room supply in the county, tend to be small with an average size of just 25 bedrooms.

The branded budget segment (Travelodge and Premier Inn) have four hotels, but supply more than 28% of the rooms in the county - with an average of 58 rooms per hotel. The non accredited hotels have an average of just 14 rooms, and range from the 'boutique' style Aylestone Court and the recently upgraded golf hotel 'Belmont Lodge' – both of which are in Hereford. (Non accredited hotels, are those hotels that are not recognised by the Department of Tourism – as having complied with its minimum standards in the operation of the establishment).

The Warner Leisure operated 'Holme Lacy House' is the only 4-star standard hotel in the county however this is not available to day visitors. The *Marches Hotel Study 2012* has therefore identified a need for larger and premium 4-star hotels in the county – complete with a high standard of business and conferencing facilities. However a 'Hotel Needs Assessment Report' should be conducted for all new hotel development proposals, in order to ensure that the right standard of hotel is provided, with respect to market demand. This would also need to demonstrate the economic benefit of the new hotel to the area.

#### Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

This disused canal corridor is the subject of a long term restoration project with the aim of re-opening the canal link between Hereford and the Severn at Gloucester. Some sections have already been restored. Recognising the recreation, tourism and economic potential of the project the canal corridor had enjoyed planning protection for many years.

### **Town centres**

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that town centres should be the preferred location for new retail and office development and community activity, and this approach underpins the Core Strategy. This policy encourages appropriate town centre investment in Hereford and the market towns of Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington and Ross-on-Wye which will contribute and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres.

#### **Policy E5 – Town centres**



Town centres will be the focus for retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism uses. Proposals for such uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centres of Hereford and the market towns will be supported provided that they:

1. do not adversely affect the primary function of the town centres as shopping destinations and
2. are of a scale and design appropriate to the size, role, character and heritage of the centre:

Proposals for development outside the town centres will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the requirements of the sequential test have been met and that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centres.

The sequential test approach requires these uses to be located within the town centres. Where it is proven there are no available and suitable town centre sites, preference will be given to edge of centre sites before any out of centre site is considered. Where a sequential test adequately demonstrates that the only suitable and available site is an edge of centre or an out of centre location, preference will be given to sites that are well connected to the town centre and are easily accessible by sustainable transport modes.

An impact assessment for retail, leisure and commercial proposals outside of the town centres may be required depending on the scale and location of the proposal as specified in the Place Shaping section.

The use of upper floors within town centres for residential and office uses will be supported.

Within town centres, retail uses will be concentrated within the primary shopping areas.

The town centre boundaries are defined in the place shaping sections. A review of these boundaries will be undertaken as part of the neighbourhood development plans and other development plan documents.

This policy has been informed by the findings of the *Town Centres Study Update 2012*. This examines the future retail, office and leisure needs of Hereford and the five market towns over the plan period. The report identifies limited requirement for further retail and leisure development and advises that there is no need for out of centre retail allocations in Hereford or in the market towns. Where town centre uses are proposed in edge of centre or out of centre locations, a sequential approach to selecting sites will be adopted in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Evidence will be required to demonstrate that all available town centre opportunities have been thoroughly assessed, and transparent reasons provided as to why the town centre sites are not suitable and available, before land and/or buildings in edge of centre and then out of centre locations are considered. The sequential approach will also apply to large scale extensions to existing retail and town centre uses, as well as proposals to vary or remove conditions restricting the range of goods that can be sold, where the site is located in an edge of centre or out of centre location. In considering the suitability and availability of sites, applicants will be required to demonstrate how they have adopted a flexible approach to the size, design and format of the proposal.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to set thresholds to determine the requirement for an impact assessment for applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres. Individual thresholds have been set for Hereford and the market towns as follows, and are included within the individual place shaping policies:

Hereford	1,250 sq.m
Bromyard	200 sq.m
Kington	200 sq.m
Ledbury	500 sq.m
Leominster	500 sq.m
Ross-on-Wye	500 sq.m

The council will seek to agree the scope of any impact assessment with the applicant in advance to ensure that the assessment is proportionate to the proposal under consideration. However these impact assessments will be expected to broadly meet the requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 26 and will also apply to extensions and proposals to vary or remove conditions restricting the range of goods that can be sold.

The vitality and viability of town centres may also be enhanced by the use of upper floors over existing shops, for residential and office accommodation; and uses that assist in supporting the vibrancy of the town centres in the evenings such as restaurants and leisure facilities. Such uses will assist in increasing the footfall and general activity in the town centre.

### **Retail**

A successful retail function contributes to the vitality and viability of the town centre, the maintenance of its historic fabric and its role as a tourist destination. The aim of the policy is to improve vitality and viability of the centres by improving the variety, choice and quality of shops and other services, and enhancing the overall attraction, safety, convenience and ambience of a town centre. Within the town centres, retail uses will be focused in the primary shopping areas. These will be defined in the Hereford Area Plan, neighbourhood development plans or development plan documents for Hereford and the market towns.

In order to protect the vitality and viability of existing centres, conditions may be imposed where necessary to restrict the range of goods to be sold to bulky goods only and/or the net floorspace that can be devoted to non-bulky goods. Conditions may also be imposed setting a minimum size of unit and restricting the potential for further vertical or horizontal sub division. This is to prevent the proliferation of smaller shop units without further reference to the local planning authority.

Regular markets in town centres can attract additional shoppers and enhance the vibrancy to town centres bringing additional benefits for the existing retailers. Most of these are of a temporary nature and use public spaces. They generally complement the character of the town centres and their retention and enhancement will be encouraged.

### **Offices**

The *Employment Land Study Update 2012* found that the majority of demand for offices in Hereford is for small office premises (less than 100 sq. m.) and in the market towns is generally from local companies in the town centres. In all places demand was found to be low and therefore there is potential that this level of demand can be met through existing provision and the conversion of upper floors of properties.

## Leisure

The *Town Centres Study Update 2012* recommended that no further allocations for leisure facilities and other town centre uses are made in Hereford city or in the market towns. However the provision of new leisure facilities in locations within market town centres should be encouraged where they serve an identified community need or meet a shortfall in existing provision.

### **Primary shopping areas and primary and secondary shopping frontages**

Primary shopping areas are required to be defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. These will essentially be made up of primary and secondary shopping frontages and will be defined in neighbourhood development plans or other development plan documents. The primary and secondary frontages identified in the place shaping sections are carried forward from the Unitary Development Plan 2007 for development management purposes. However the precise boundaries of these will be reviewed as part of neighbourhood development plans or other development plan documents. Frontages will also need to be identified for the Edgar Street Grid retail area as part of the Hereford Area Plan. Primary and secondary frontages will not be defined for Bromyard and Kington given the size of their centres and the distribution of uses within them.

#### **Policy E6: Primary and secondary shopping frontages**

The retail trading character of the primary and secondary shopping frontages will be protected and enhanced. Primary shopping frontages will continue to be dominated by shops (Class A1) whilst secondary frontages may include greater mix of uses. Proposals for uses within Classes A2-A5 in ground floor premises will be permitted where the proposed use will not result in:

- a continuous frontage of more than two non-retail units and;
- the non-retail uses exceeding 25% in primary shopping frontages and 50% in secondary shopping frontages. Exceptions to these thresholds may be considered where:
  - In primary and secondary frontages the appropriate use of vacant or underused premises is achieved where it can be demonstrated that the premises is unlikely to be used for retailing and that a business case can be demonstrated for requiring such a location and;
  - In primary and secondary frontages, the proposal will not detract from the shopping character of the frontage concerned for reasons of location or frontage width and;
  - In secondary frontages the proposal results from an expansion of an existing non retail use.

Within secondary frontages uses within Classes D1 and D2 may be considered appropriate. Proposals for such uses must conform to the criteria of this policy listed above.

Proposals must respect the character of the frontage and be appropriate in location, unit size and frontage width.

The overall emphasis on retail trading should be retained in order to maintain character and to protect the vitality and viability of the primary shopping areas of Hereford and the market towns. An important element of the attractiveness of the primary shopping area will be the provision of a wide range of shops within a compact area, maximizing choice and fostering comparison shopping and competition. The concentration of retail trading activity within a limited area, with substantial runs of active retail frontage will contribute to the busy and vibrant character of the county's primary shopping areas. A variety of non-retail uses already exist within shopping areas and these can add to the diversity of uses in town centres. Different but complementary uses during the day and evening can

reinforce each other, making town centres more attractive to local residents, shoppers and visitors. The non-retail uses include building societies, banks, estate agents, insurance and betting offices (uses falling within Use Class A2, financial and professional services), together with restaurants and cafes (Class A3), drinking establishments (Class A4) and hot food takeaways (Class A5). Whilst one non-retail use alone may not detract from the vitality of a street, the cumulative impact of such changes will do so. A concentration of non-retail uses can have the effect of breaking up the shopping area, isolating some shop units to the detriment of the centre as a whole. The further introduction of non-retail uses in the primary shopping areas therefore, needs to be carefully balanced against the need to protect retail trading character. The Core Strategy identifies primary and secondary shopping frontages for Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye, which in conjunction with Policy E6, provide guidance about the areas where a greater mix of non-retail uses are likely to be more acceptable. However as stated above, no primary or secondary shopping frontages are included for Bromyard and Kington. The *Town Centre Study Update 2012* advises that for these two towns a defined primary shopping area should suffice for the purposes of identifying the appropriate area for retail and other town centre uses. The primary shopping areas for Bromyard and Kington will be defined in a neighbourhood development plan or development plan document.

In assessing the impact of proposed Class A2 – A5 uses within the primary shopping frontages, regard will be had to a range of criteria designed to assess the impact of the proposal on retail trading character and vitality and viability. In order to allow integration of non-retail uses in a dispersed manner and to avoid any clustering effect which could harm the retail trading character of the frontage, Class A2 - A5 uses should not become established in blocks of more than two units or cause the proportion of non-retail uses to exceed 25% of the length of the primary shopping frontage and 50% in secondary shopping frontages. Proposals for non-retail use in vacant units within the primary shopping frontages will be required to demonstrate that the unit is unlikely to be used for retailing, that there is no suitable or available unit/sites outside of the primary shopping frontage and that the requirement to be located within the primary shopping frontage can be supported by evidence with regard to business need.

In the secondary shopping frontages, retail and non-retail service uses are more mixed but retail uses remain important. In such areas, the diversity and variety of shopping area uses should be sustained and fostered in the interests of protecting vitality and viability however, with a threshold of 50%, provision is made for financial and professional services and food and drink uses (Use Classes A2 - A5) in these areas.

The introduction of non-retail uses falling outside Class A of the Use Classes Order will normally be opposed on the ground floor level of primary and secondary shopping frontages so as to protect the combination of retail and associated services which characterise these frontages in the interest of protecting vitality and viability. However secondary shopping frontages may provide an opportunity for some non-retail uses in Classes D1 and D2 in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework subject to the criteria of Policy E6.

Where non-retail uses are introduced into the primary and secondary shopping frontages, the council will seek to ensure where appropriate that effective window displays are provided in order to maximise visual attraction and minimise the effect of a break in the shopping frontage.

The relevant frontage will normally be the defined lengths as shown on the proposals map. Cases may arise however where it is appropriate to consider the proposal

within the context of only part of a defined frontage, or within a wider context such as both sides of a shopping street. Relevant considerations in such cases will be:

- location of the proposal within the defined frontage
- the significance of any breaks within defined frontages which may be created by entrances, public buildings or other features
- street width and the presence or absence of street furniture or traffic movement.

Proposals will also be considered in terms of noise, appearance, traffic generation, servicing, parking and any other factors which may have a detrimental effect on the shopping street and residential amenity.

### **Delivery and monitoring of economic prosperity policies**

These policies will be delivered by:

- an Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- preparation and implementation of other development plan documents or neighbourhood development plans;
- the development management process.

### **Economic Prosperity Monitoring Indicators**

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policies:

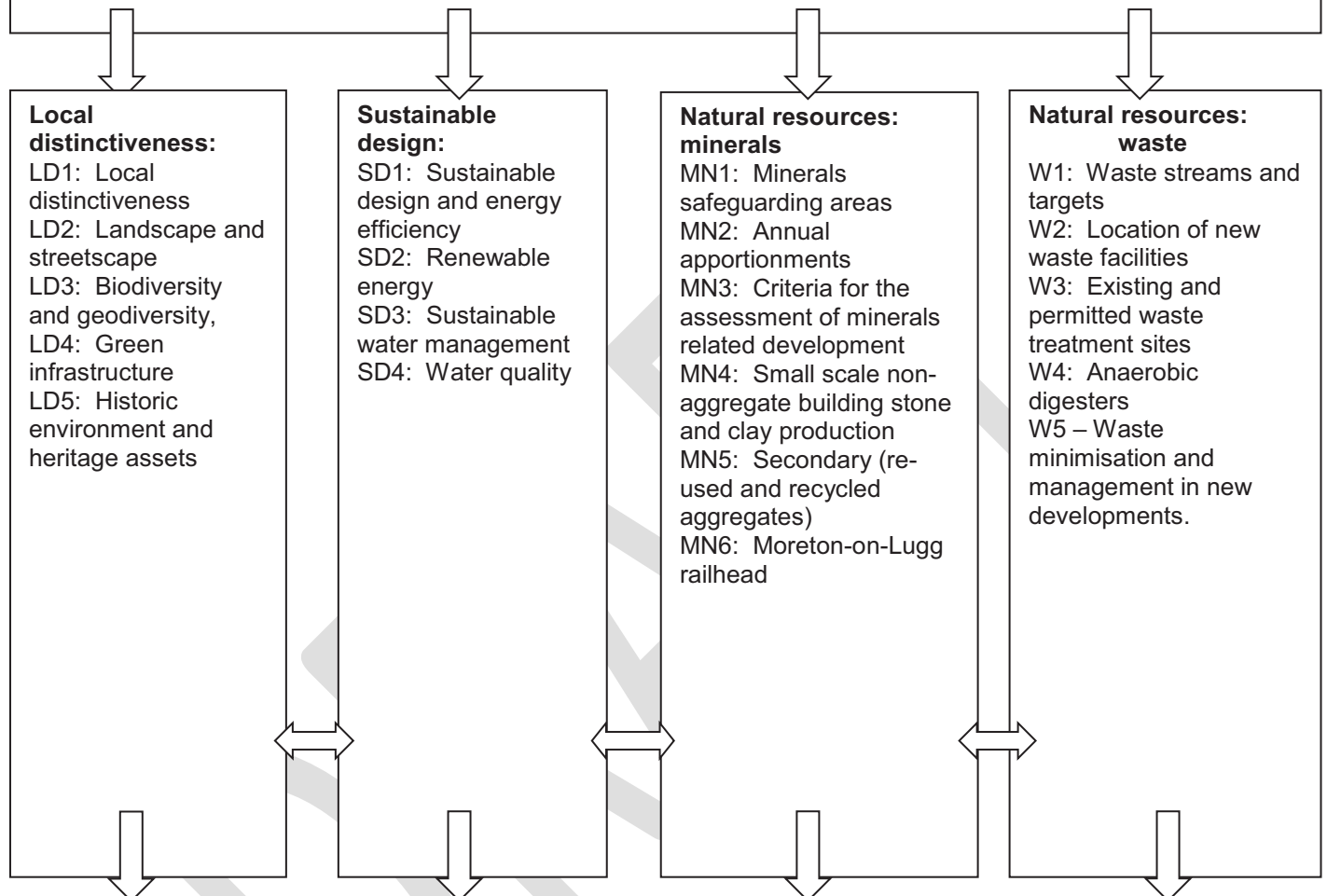
- the amount of employment land commitments, completions and reallocations, as monitored through the council's annual Employment Land Survey including expansions and relocations;
- the amount of vacant land and premises in the county;
- the amount of new employment development occurring in rural areas;
- new business registration rates;
- the amount of retail, office and leisure development completed within the monitoring period;
- the amount of retail, office and leisure floorspace permitted outside of city and town centres;
- the amount of permissions granted for change of use from A2 to residential or offices
- the number of vacant units within town centre
- the number of conversions of upper floors of retail and commercial premises converted to residential and office use
- the number and type of visits to Herefordshire, and associated expenditure
- the number of people employed in the different tourism sectors and
- events and attractions occurring across the county.



## Environmental Quality

### Environmental Quality Structure Diagram

The role of this chapter is to aid the delivery of environmental objectives 10-12 of Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy. This will be achieved through incorporating and enhancing important locally distinctive assets within future developments while combating climate change and mitigating its impacts. There are clear links as shown, between all the four elements below; for example water management, geodiversity and renewable energy are all integral 'natural resources' and each element should not be read in isolation. The way water, energy and minerals are utilised affects all developments.



### Future planning policy

The strategic policies outlined above will underpin site specific policies. Alongside Core Strategy policies, future components of Herefordshire Council's Local Plan, including other development plan documents and supplementary planning documents, will be shaped through the relevant evidence base and consultation with local communities through neighbourhood development plans.



## Local distinctiveness

To successfully deliver the Core Strategy vision in respect of local distinctiveness, this section provides a pro-active strategy for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of locally distinctive assets and the delivery of new green infrastructure.

Locally distinctive assets both natural and man-made, are finite and any detrimental impacts can carry cultural, environmental, economic and social costs. A number of assets benefit from statutory designations within national and international legislation. Statutory designations range from large areas conserved for biodiversity importance, such as the River Wye Special Area of Conservation, to individual statutory listed buildings which are protected for their architectural or historical significance.

Non-statutory designations are equally important to Herefordshire's local distinctiveness. Working with partner organisations, Herefordshire Council has identified important assets such as local wildlife sites and areas and buildings of local Interest which contribute to Herefordshire's unique character. Non-statutory locally distinctive buildings and green spaces will be identified through forthcoming development plan documents or neighbourhood development plans

### Policy LD1 – Local distinctiveness

Support will be given to development proposals that protect, restore and improve locally distinctive assets and designations while conserving and reinforcing Herefordshire's existing settlement pattern. Strategic locations and future proposals have and will be shaped by incorporating the following interconnected aspects from the outset:

- Landscape and townscape
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Historic environment and heritage assets
- Green infrastructure
- Physical resources, including minerals, water, natural energy

Development proposals are required to be accompanied with sufficient information to determine the likelihood of impact upon locally distinctive assets. The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are exemplars of local distinctiveness and their adopted management plans will be material to future development proposals.

The scale of development within the Core Strategy cannot be met solely through re-using previously developed land and buildings. As such greenfield sites will be developed during the plan period but the spatial strategy will continue to direct development to the most sustainable locations. Development proposals will be expected to avoid detrimental impact to designations and locally distinctive assets. Where evidence identifies potential impact, development proposals will be required to include mitigation measures appropriate in size, scale and effectiveness. Due to the site-specific nature of individual assets, off-site compensation will only be considered in exceptional cases.

### Landscape and townscape:

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*”. Herefordshire has a distinctive and varied landscape. Much of the area is rural in nature but varied in landscape character, including high hills, forest, commons and river meadows. Herefordshire contains a wide range of settlement patterns, different types of farmland and evidence of ancient landscape features. This diverse landscape is an integral element of local distinctiveness.

Landscape is important, not just as scenery but because it links culture with nature, and the past with the present. It has many values, not all of them tangible (such as sense of place); and it matters to people – it is people who create and value landscape. All landscapes matter, not only those with national designations. They provide a range of services such as food, water, climate regulation and aesthetic enjoyment.

#### **Policy LD2 – Landscape and townscape**

Development proposals should be in accordance with landscape management objectives and townscape assessments and achieve all the following objectives:

- demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, including protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements;
- conservation and enhancement of historic landscapes, including nationally and locally designated parks and gardens, through appropriate uses, design and management; and
- incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings.

The concepts of conservation, restoration and enhancement have been set out as a strategic approach to landscape management. The principles are relevant when considering the management of individual sites where the landscape character may be dependent upon unique landscape features. Landscape survey and analysis are pro-active tools for allowing new build developments to address the three principles. For development proposals there are often opportunities for mitigation measures to conserve landscape features such as trees, to restore features such as boundary hedges and to enhance the landscape character by other means such as woodland planting, creation of wetland areas or restoration of historic features. The preparation of landscape schemes and management plans should address these three aspects in relation to the local landscape character and the relevant landscape type.

The *Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance 2009* (SPD) will be reviewed during the plan period. The SPD will build upon the detailed evidence base documentation; including the *Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis (January 2010)*, *Rapid Townscape Assessments (various)* and *Green Infrastructure Strategy (February 2010)*. In conjunction with the above, relevant Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans also provide more place-specific guidance which should inform development proposals from the outset.

### Biodiversity and geodiversity:

Biodiversity can be defined as the variety of sites, habitats and species within a specified locality and is influenced by factors such as geology, topography and climate. Geodiversity refers to the natural processes and constituent parts that have shaped the landscape and includes minerals, soils and water.

Biodiversity and geodiversity assets provide an important contribution to the distinctiveness of an area. Herefordshire has a diverse range of geological features and wildlife habitats such as the Malvern Hills, the River Wye, ancient woodlands and traditional orchards. Wildlife is not confined to designated sites and many features serve as wildlife corridors, links and stepping stones. Ecological networks are vital to the survival and dispersal of species. Herefordshire's biodiversity and geodiversity make a major contribution to the economy, supporting the tourism sector and providing a healthy and attractive environment for its residents.

#### **Policy LD3 – Biodiversity and geodiversity**

Development proposals should conserve, restore and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire, incorporating the following objectives:

1. retention and protection of sites, habitats, networks and species of European, national and local importance and those identified within the biodiversity and geodiversity action plans;
2. restoration and enhancement of existing biodiversity and geodiversity features on site and connectivity to wider ecological networks; and
3. creation of new biodiversity features and wildlife habitats.

Where appropriate the council will work with developers to agree a management strategy to ensure the protection of, and prevention of adverse impacts on, biodiversity and geodiversity features.

Areas of biodiversity and geological importance and sensitivity should be protected and development should enhance local habitats and ecological networks. Development within close proximity to internationally, nationally and locally designated sites will need to incorporate sympathetic design components to enhance their nature conservation interests and to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts. Where harm cannot be avoided compensatory measures should be included to offset any losses or adverse effects.

Dependent upon the scale and proximity of development proposals to biodiversity or geodiversity features, Herefordshire Council will seek a management strategy to ensure the continued protection of the features of interest. Such management strategies may include monitoring information. This will provide up-to-date information which will shape future policy reviews as well as inform future site specific plans.

The Core Strategy objectives will be delivered through supporting development proposals that add to Herefordshire's biodiversity. During the plan period Herefordshire Council will advance a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document which itself will develop upon the principles, opportunities and constraints as detailed within the *Building Biodiversity into Herefordshire Council's Local Development Framework* (December 2009). Further areas of local biodiversity or geodiversity importance may be designated or extended during the plan period.

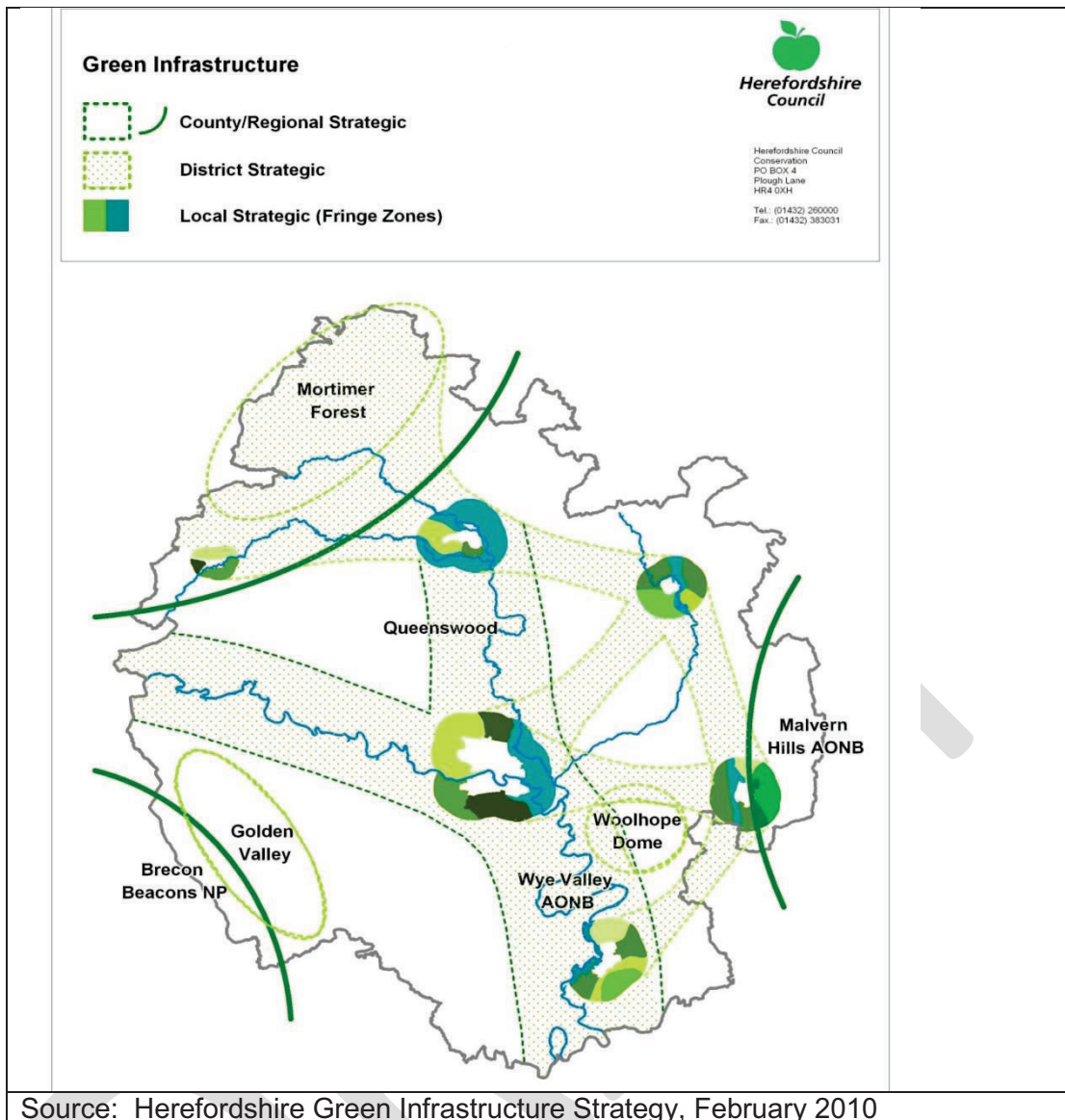
Details of the county's biodiversity and geodiversity assets and features (Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites), some of which traverse the local authority's administrative boundaries, are held at the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre. Core areas have been identified where there are clusters of biodiversity and geodiversity features of high conservation value as detailed in the Herefordshire Ecological Network Map (*October 2012*). Development within and adjacent to these core areas and associated buffer zones will need to be sympathetically designed to ensure there are no adverse impacts upon them. Alongside this Herefordshire Council will seek contributions to enhance and link such core areas.

### Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a multi-functional network of green spaces, links and assets within and surrounding the built environment, and providing connection to the wider countryside. It includes and contributes to biodiversity, culture and heritage across the county. It is not limited to urban areas and can be seen at different strategic levels as shown in the table below and the accompanying concept diagram.

Geographic tier	Example of green infrastructure asset
County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas of outstanding natural beauty.</li> <li>▪ Sites of national and international nature conservation importance (e.g. SAC, SSSI).</li> <li>▪ Verges of trunk roads, motorways and railways.</li> </ul>
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rivers and large streams and their floodplains.</li> <li>▪ Local wildlife sites. Scheduled ancient monuments.</li> </ul>
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public and private parks and gardens.</li> <li>▪ Recreational grounds, playing fields and public green spaces.</li> <li>▪ Public rights of way and cycle paths.</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.3:** Green infrastructure concept diagram



Herefordshire Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (February 2010) sets out a vision for green infrastructure across the county. It also provides a local framework around Hereford and the five market towns by defining strategic corridors, enhancement zones and fringe zones. These are areas where, through sympathetic design and planning, a functional relationship between the urban and rural environments can be created and enhanced.

The development of new green infrastructure and preservation of existing assets will provide a variety of economic, environmental and social benefits. Economic benefits can be achieved through food production and productive landscapes, diversification of farming activities and attracting tourism. Environmental benefits include habitat provision and connectivity, landscape protection and mitigation of climate change impacts. Social benefits of green infrastructure include places for leisure, recreation, sport and exercise. Development can include corridors for movement through foot and cycle paths. It provides opportunities for improving the management of and interpreting natural and heritage assets and how they contribute to local distinctiveness. Increased access to green infrastructure can promote physical and mental health and well-being.



Green infrastructure can provide energy production, flood attenuation, maintenance of water quality, water resource management, cooling effects and many other benefits encompassed under the concept of ecosystem services. The Council is committed to work with Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership to bring forward a shared vision using green infrastructure to improve ecological networks and wider economic and social benefits as part of an ecosystems approach.

**Policy LD4 – Green infrastructure**

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation and delivery of new green infrastructure and should achieve the following objectives:

1. identification and retention of existing green infrastructure corridors and linkages; including the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plain;
2. provision of on-site green infrastructure; and
3. integration with, and connection to, the surrounding green infrastructure network.

Development proposals should identify and protect existing green infrastructure. This could be based on areas mapped in the Green Infrastructure Strategy or any other features that contribute to the green infrastructure network. This should take account of features within the site, but also on adjacent sites as integration and connection with the surroundings is a key objective. Proposals should incorporate the retention and enhancement of features such as trees and hedgerows, together with long term management.

The inclusion of new planting within development proposals is an important and valuable contribution to green infrastructure. Landscaping of development sites should feature planting of appropriate native species wherever possible, ensuring there is sufficient space for plants to grow to maturity. Opportunities for new planting include establishing grasslands, wildflower meadows, wetlands, orchards or woodland. New green infrastructure features could include promoting and extending the public rights of way network, increasing public access and providing interpretive information.

Historic environment and heritage assets:

The historic environment is defined as all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of significance with statutory protection are referred to as designated heritage assets. Policy LD5 is applicable to heritage assets throughout Herefordshire whether formally designated or not, ranging from individual structures and their settings, archaeological remains, to larger neighbourhoods of historic value, parks, gardens and other green spaces of local interest.

The historic environment and heritage assets are significant contributors to sustainable development. Important local buildings have a social value and can act as focal points for local communities. The historic environment is of cultural value as it illustrates the historical development of Herefordshire. Heritage assets also bring economic benefits as Herefordshire's well preserved historic environment is a major factor in its tourism industry and the county's quality of life can also serve to attract and retain investment. The re-use of existing buildings can also help mitigate climate



change through reducing development pressures on greenfield sites, reducing demand for construction energy and materials and by minimising construction waste.

**Policy LD5 – Historic environment and heritage assets**

Development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should achieve the following objectives:

1. the conservation of heritage assets and their settings that positively contribute to the character of a site, townscape and/or wider environment, including conservation areas;
2. the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings through appropriate uses and sympathetic design; and
3. the retention of heritage assets as a focus for wider regeneration schemes.

The scope of the works required to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings should be proportionate to their significance.

Where important heritage assets are at risk or underutilised, development proposals for alternative uses which are sympathetic and contribute to the conservation of the heritage asset and its wider environment will be supported. Due to the site-specific nature of heritage assets, the Core Strategy does not seek to stipulate particular uses and each proposal will be evaluated on its individual merits.

During the Core Strategy period Herefordshire Council will seek to produce an Archaeology and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will be shaped by existing evidence base documents as well as details of known heritage assets contained within the Council's Historic Environment Record. This existing data and evidence base in particular the Rapid Townscape Assessments for the Market Towns and the Hereford Streetscape Design Strategy should be utilised to shape development proposals from the outset. The evidence base will also guide forthcoming development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans.

Large scale developments should embrace the historic environment rather than regarding it as a constraint. Utilising existing locally distinctive heritage assets within wider regeneration proposals can help create new developments that integrate positively with their surroundings, and reinforce existing cultural and social characteristics.

**Sustainable design and energy efficiency**

Good design embraces more than simply the aesthetics of new development and includes how buildings are used, accessed and constructed. Herefordshire Council will seek to ensure that future developments are designed to enhance local distinctiveness but without stifling innovation and creativity, particularly with regard to energy efficiency.

**Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency**

Development proposals should include high quality design that creates a safe, accessible, well integrated environment for all members of the community. In conjunction with this, all development proposals should incorporate the following design requirements:

- complement the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area
- safeguard residential amenity including ensuring no adverse noise, light, air and ground pollution arises;
- be designed to preserve and enhance distinctive built and natural characteristics and features of the existing building or locality - through appropriate use, layout, siting, scale, height, proportions and massing, orientation, architecture, landscaping and use of materials;
- allow easy access for all members of the community throughout the development facilitating shorter links between destinations, and allowing for a range of sustainable transport modes;
- optimise the use of previously developed land and/or buildings
- ensure that proposals make efficient use of land - taking into account the local context and site characteristics, including land stability and contamination;
- create safe environments, addressing crime prevention and community safety;
- ensuring designs can be easily adapted and accommodate new technologies to meet changing needs throughout the lifetime of the development;
- that the design of the development is resilient to climate change including minimising flood risk in accordance with policy SD3;
- utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials;
- minimise resource use and carbon dioxide emissions by maximising the energy and water efficiency of buildings. Where appropriate on-site renewable energy generation should be incorporated.

All planning applications, including material changes of use, will be expected to demonstrate how the above design and energy efficiency considerations have been factored into the proposal from the outset.

High quality design and well planned developments can enhance community cohesion through maintaining or creating a sense of place. New development should be designed to preserve and enhance locally distinctive characteristics and positively contribute to the appearance of the locality. To achieve this, it is important that new development is successfully integrated into the existing built, natural and historic environment. However, recognising that architectural styles change over time Policy SD1 does not seek to stifle architectural innovation, contemporary design or reject advances in design and technology.

High quality design can significantly enhance the environment and amenity for new residents. Equally, the amenity and quality of life for existing residents can be adversely affected by insensitive, poorly considered design. To address this, buildings and spaces must be designed having regard to the impacts of overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing. Additionally, ensuring that new development is compatible with the surrounding locality requires more than simply scale and aesthetic qualities, and includes consideration of the impacts of noise, light, air and ground pollution resulting from the development.

The efficient use of land is encouraged in the design policy; however it does not specify minimum development densities. These are referenced in Policy SS2. It is recognised that in highly accessible locations development proposals may be more

sustainable and viable if constructed to higher densities than usually found elsewhere in the county, provided there is no detrimental impact upon existing local amenity. However, in most instances, appropriate density will primarily be informed by the local context and site opportunities and constraints.

Accessibility to all members of society is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and inclusive design, and must be carefully considered in all development proposals. Development layouts should be designed to provide a high degree of permeability particularly for sustainable modes of travel within the site, and provide safe connections to adjoining land uses and local community facilities.

Sustainable design principles can also contribute to reducing crime and the fear of crime. A number of design measures such as ensuring a high level of natural surveillance, sensitive consideration of boundary treatments and clear delineation of public and private spaces, can aid the creation of a safer and more inclusive environment.

The age structure of the county is rapidly changing with an increasing elderly population. Increasing fuel prices is resulting in residents, particularly in rural areas, reviewing their home to work travel patterns and continual advances in technology means costly refurbishments of existing buildings is often required to meet modern requirements. It is therefore important that developments are flexibly designed to be able to adapt to different and future occupational and technological needs and demands. This can include measure such as meeting lifetime homes and equivalent standards in residential design, providing infrastructure to the meet the growth in demand for electric vehicles, providing adequate for internal and external plant and facilitating home working and live work opportunities.

All developments must demonstrate how they are designed and incorporate measures to make them resilient to climate change in respect of carbon reduction, water efficiency and flood risk. Good design and site planning can aid greater energy efficiency in new development, for example by seeking to maximise solar gain. Revisions to the Building Regulations are introducing progressive increases in the energy efficiency requirements for new buildings. Developments that achieve 'Passivhaus' accreditation will be encouraged, where there will be no significant adverse landscape, townscape or visual impact.

Large-scale developments (non-residential developments exceeding 1,000 square metres gross floorspace, and new residential developments comprising 10 or more units, whether new build or conversion) will need to demonstrate how opportunities for on-site renewable energy generation and sustainable waste management have been considered and addressed within the design of the scheme. Such details should include an appraisal of all suitable renewable energy technology. Alongside this, the Council supports the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies within existing developments, subject to such proposals according with other policies of the Core Strategy.

Water efficiency targets are set out in policy SD3 with the aim of both minimising water usage at source and maximising water re-use. As well as location, the design of a development and buildings can play an important role in minimising flood risk. If located in a floodplain, an integral part of the building design should be flood proofing measures and safe, flood free access arrangements. Site and building levels must also be set above the relevant flood risk threshold for the location also factoring in the impacts of climate change.

A Design Code will be prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document to provide baseline standards across Herefordshire, expanding on the above design principles and to inform the preparation of masterplans, other development plan documents, neighbourhood development plans, parish plans, village design statements and planning applications, which accord with the principles of the Core Strategy.

### **Renewable and low carbon energy generation**

An overarching principle of the planning system is to support the transition to a low carbon future. A significant means of achieving this goal is through the use of renewable energy sources. Renewable energy covers energy generated directly from natural sources, be it sun, wind or water, or indirect sources such as biomass and geothermal heat. The Climate Change Act makes the UK the first country in the world to have a long term legally binding commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The Act commits the UK to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80%, from a 1990 baseline, by 2050. The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) sets a target for 15% of the UK's energy to come from renewable resources by 2020, which represents a seven fold increase from 2008.

#### **Policy SD2 – Renewable and low carbon energy**

Development proposals that seek to deliver renewable and low carbon energy targets in line with the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (or any future national equivalent) will be supported where they meet the following criteria;

1. the proposal does not adversely impact upon the objectives of international or national designations for the conservation of the natural and historic environments;
2. the proposal does not result in any significant detrimental impact upon the quality of the landscape character and built environment; and
3. the proposal can be connected efficiently to existing national grid infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that energy generation would be used on-site to meet the needs of a specific end user.

Herefordshire is predominantly a rural county which benefits from the presence of many international and national designations, alongside highly valued local landscapes. While these designations limit the potential for strategic renewable and low carbon energy generation, opportunities are present in Herefordshire to support such measures. For example farm diversification schemes can provide opportunities for the implementation of renewable or low carbon energy projects. Neighbourhood development plans promoting community-led micro-generation schemes will be supported where they are in accordance with policy SD2 and other relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

## Sustainable water management

Sustainable water management means minimising our impact on the healthy functioning of the water cycle. Changes occurring to the climate mean that we are likely to experience an increase in the intensity, severity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods, which could dramatically impact on the way we need to manage water in the development of sustainable communities. There is a finite capacity within the environment, and it cannot simply provide more and more water as a result of increased consumption rates or overall demand. Equally there is a limit to the amount of waste water that can be safely returned to rivers without having a detrimental effect.

The issue of water management is of especially important in Herefordshire with a number of watercourses benefiting from different levels of protection. The entire lengths of the River Wye and River Lugg are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, while the Wye and the Lugg from Hampton Court Bridge to its confluence are designated as a Special Area of Conservation under European legislation. Alongside this all watercourses, and groundwater, are protected by the Water Framework Directive and are recognised as providing significant biodiversity, health and recreational benefits.

### **Policy SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources**

Measures for sustainable water management will be required to be an integral element of new development in order to reduce flood risk; to avoid an adverse impact on water quantity; to protect and enhance groundwater resources and to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

1. development proposals are located in accordance with the Sequential Test and Exception Tests (where appropriate) and have regard to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2009 for Herefordshire;
2. development is designed to be safe taking into account the lifetime of the development, and the need to adapt to climate change by setting appropriate floor levels, providing safe pedestrian and vehicular access, where appropriate, implementing a flood evacuation management plan and avoiding areas identified as being subject to Rapid Inundation from a breach of a Flood Defence;
3. where flooding is identified as an issue, new development should reduce flood risk through the inclusion of flood storage compensation measures, or provide similar betterment to enhance the local flood risk regime;
4. development will not result in the loss of open watercourse, and culverts should be opened up where possible to improve drainage and flood flows. Proposals involving the creation of new culverts (unless essential to the provision of access) will not be permitted;
5. development includes appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) to manage surface water appropriate to the hydrological setting of the site. Development should not result in an increase in runoff and should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing runoff rate and volumes, where possible;
6. water conservation and efficiency measures are included in all new developments, specifically:
  - Residential development to meet the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 for water efficiency (80 litres/person/day);



- Non-residential developments in excess of 1,000 sq.m gross floorspace to achieve the equivalent of BREEAM 3 credits for water consumption as a minimum.
7. the separation of foul and surface water on new developments is maximised;
  8. development proposals do not lead to deterioration of EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) water body status; and
  9. proposals do not impact on water quality, either directly through unacceptable pollution of surface water or groundwater, or indirectly through overloading of Wastewater Treatment Works;
- Development proposals should help to conserve and enhance watercourses and riverside habitats, where necessary, through management and mitigation measures for the improvement and/or enhancement of water quality and habitat of the aquatic environment. Innovative measures such as water harvesting, winter water storage and active land use management will be supported, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse landscape or visual impact.

Changes in rainfall patterns, land management and land use, combined with more frequent occurrence of extreme weather events will present increased flood risk. Although flooding cannot be wholly prevented, its impacts can be avoided or reduced through good planning and land management. To this end the susceptibility of land to flooding is a material consideration when assessing planning applications. Accordingly Herefordshire Council will be supportive of development proposals that accord with the principles of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 (SFRA), as well as national technical guidance on the sequential test and the exception test.

The SFRA aims to ensure that planning policies and development land allocations will not increase the risk of flooding both within the development and the surrounding area, and to identify and promote measures that will minimise flood-risk and/or enhance flood resilience. The SFRA for Herefordshire refines the county's flood risk areas by taking into account other sources of flooding and other strategies, such as the Wye and Usk Catchment Flood Management Plan and the River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan.

This policy provides criteria for developers to consider when proposing development within areas identified as being at risk of flooding within the district. The policy identifies the need for development proposed within flood risk areas to take account of a number of measures to ensure that the development is safe, and remains safe, in times of flood including:

- Setting appropriate floor levels which should be above the 1% predicted plus climate change design flood level, incorporating an allowance for freeboard. Development should also consider in the design the risk from more extreme events. Where it is not feasible or practicable to set the floor levels then other forms of flood resilience and resistance techniques may be considered as an alternative;
- Where development includes overnight accommodation including a safe pedestrian access route available during a 1% plus climate change design flood event. In considering this, regard should be given to the evidence in the SFRA and for 'defended areas' including an assessment of Flood Defence breach/overtopping scenarios. Other development should consider this as a residual risk;
- Consideration of safe vehicular access;

- Developments implement a flood evacuation management plan, where appropriate, to manage the risk to the development site itself and future users/occupiers during all flood events along with any remaining residual risks.

A key component to reducing the risk of flooding is the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all developments. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduces the mandatory inclusion of SuDS within developments alongside the ability for the setting of national standards. Development proposals are to accord with these standards and where appropriate be accompanied by surface water management plans detailing the drainage proposals. Advice is contained within the SFRA.

Government legislation sets out the statutory introduction of Sustainable Urban Drainage Advisory Bodies (SABs). SABs are designed to appraise and grant approval or refusal on proposed sustainable urban drainage systems. Herefordshire Council will work in partnership with the SAB as well as the Environment Agency, to ensure that development proposals do not have adverse flood impacts.

Policy SD3 also sets out targets for reduced consumption which in turn will result in decrease flow entering the sewer system. New residential development should be designed for water consumption of 80 litres per person per day (equivalent to Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 for water efficiency). This approach will help to manage the level of nutrients in the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (see policy SD4). The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a 'water efficiency calculator' that applicants can use to demonstrate the water efficiency of proposed developments.

For employment development a standard of BREEAM 3 credits equivalent for water consumption is required. This equates to 40% reduction in water consumption than current building regulations. The Environment Agency has stated that all new non-residential development should meet the 'Good Practice' level of the AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) Water Standards. These measures will complement the measures set out in Policy SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality.

The availability of water resources to meet demand during the plan period has been examined and Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water's Water Resource Management Plan identifies that there are sufficient water resources available to meet demand during this plan period.

While agricultural water use lies largely outside planning control, it is a significant contributor to the water cycle conditions within Herefordshire and its impacts need to be taken into account in the Core Strategy and other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans. There is considerable potential for farmers to capture and store surplus water for future use, whilst enhancing biodiversity quality in terms of both habitats and species. However, reservoirs in particular will alter landscapes and habitats on a permanent basis and care on siting and design is essential.

Land management practices can also play a vital role in managing flood risk at a local level; for example, the creation and restoration of wetlands and woodlands can reduce the level of flooding, and in some cases remove the risk of local flooding altogether. These practices also produce wider environmental benefits at a local

level, including encouraging an increase in wildlife species and habitats, reducing carbon emissions and improving water quality.

Herefordshire Water Steering Group has been established, which is attended by Herefordshire Council, Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England; and is designed to progress and identify best practice in the mitigation and improvement in water use.

### **Wastewater treatment and river water quality**

The water quality of Herefordshire's main rivers and their tributaries is of strategic importance and, in particular, current unacceptable levels of nutrients along part of the rivers need to be addressed. This is important to the overall environmental objectives of the Core Strategy.

The Rivers Wye, Lugg, Teme and Clun are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), designated under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Furthermore, the River Wye, including part of the River Lugg (downstream from Hampton Court Bridge), part of the River Clun (downstream of Marlow, Shropshire) and Downton Gorge on the River Teme are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Both levels of designation require efforts to be made to ensure the whole system, or catchment, achieves and then remains resilient in terms of supporting river habitats consistent with policy LD.3 (Biodiversity and geodiversity). The Environment Agency has responsibility for water quality and ecological objectives set by European Directive 2000/60/EC, the 'Water Framework Directive', which applies to surface waters and groundwater, and is preparing a River Basin Management Plan to deliver these. Natural England has responsibility for ensuring SSSI's and SAC's achieve 'favourable condition'. Currently all parts of the river SSSIs are in unfavourable condition although some are recovering. All public bodies have a duty to contribute towards meeting these targets.

### **Policy SD4 Wastewater treatment and river water quality**

Development should not undermine the achievement of water quality targets for protected rivers within the county, in particular through the treatment of wastewater.

In the first instance developments should seek to connect to the existing mains wastewater infrastructure network. Where this option would result in nutrient levels exceeding conservation objectives targets, then proposals will need to fully mitigate the adverse effects of wastewater discharges into rivers caused by the development. This may involve:

- incorporating measures to achieve water efficiency and/or a reduction in surface water discharge to the mains sewer network, minimising the capacity required to accommodate the proposal, in accordance with policy SD3;
- phasing or delaying development until further capacity is available;
- the use of developer contributions/community infrastructure levy funds to contribute to improvements to waste water treatment works to release capacity to accommodate new development;
- in the case of development which might lead to exceedence of the conservation objectives target within a SAC river, planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in view of the site's conservation objectives;

- Where the conservation objectives are already been exceeded, new development should not compromise the ability to reduce phosphate levels to those which are defined as favourable for the site.

Where evidence is submitted to the local planning authority to indicate connection to the wastewater infrastructure network is not practical, alternative foul drainage options should be considered in the following order:

- provision of or connection to a package sewage treatment works (discharging to watercourse or soakaway);
- septic tank (discharging to soakaway).

With either of these non-mains alternatives, proposals should be accompanied by the following:

- information to demonstrate there will be no likely significant effect on the water quality of European sites, particularly the River Wye SAC and the River Clun SAC; or
- where there will be a likely significant effect upon a SAC river, information to enable the Council, in its role as a competent authority, to ascertain that the development will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.
- Measures achieving the highest standard of water quality discharge to the natural drainage system including provision for monitoring.

The use of cesspools will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that sufficient precautionary measures will ensure no adverse effect upon natural drainage water quality objectives.

There is a duty upon Herefordshire Council, so far as it is able, to further the conservation and enhancement of the river SSSIs within its area. Each SSSI has its own 'conservation objectives', which include targets that form the baseline against which its favourable condition is judged. The decisions the Council takes can influence whether a site meets its targets or not. For the river SSSI's, this includes decisions on foul and surface water drainage from development. Developers can assist by contributing to the resilience of ecological networks through their efforts to deliver green infrastructure under policy LD4. Maintaining a high quality environment will assist marketing of homes and the attraction of employment.

Herefordshire Council is a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and there is a duty upon it to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in exercising any of its functions. Furthermore, the LPA can only permit development which would have a likely significant effect (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) upon European sites after having undertaken an Appropriate Assessment. Subject to certain derogation tests, only development which can be shown to have no adverse effect on the integrity of European sites can be permitted.

In addition, there is also a duty on the council to help deliver Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives, it is imperative that proposals for growth do not adversely affect river water quality, and this includes that within associated watercourses flowing into the rivers and other 'controlled waters' (lakes, ponds and groundwater etc). Wastewater from most new development within the county will connect to sewage treatment works although not all. Such treatment works are potentially point sources of pollution especially if they are unable to achieve acceptable standards of discharge, either directly or indirectly into rivers. Septic tanks and other activities such as agricultural practices form more diffuse sources of potential pollution.

The county's rivers have a finite capacity to accommodate growth before their water quality is impacted, and improvements to the management of waste water will be required to ensure both the achievement of the watercourses conservation objectives and the ability to deliver the scale of growth set out in the Core Strategy.

The Environment Agency and Natural England have committed, through a formal Statement of Intent, to the preparation of a Nutrient Management Plan aimed to control and reduce phosphate within the River Wye SAC and in doing so seek to identify actions to enable additional development. The plan will identify and deliver the management actions required to achieve the conservation objectives target for phosphate by 2027 such that:

- (i) Sections of the River Wye SAC where the water quality targets are already exceeded will be subject to measures to reduce nutrients in line with the targets. New development must not compromise the ability of the Nutrient Management Plan to deliver the necessary overall reductions along these stretches..
- (ii) Sections that are currently meeting their phosphate targets will be subject to measures to ensure that future inputs of nutrients will not lead to failures.

Figure 9 identifies river sub-catchment areas within Herefordshire, set by the Water Framework Directive. Development within these areas has the potential to detrimentally affect water quality standards. High levels of phosphates have been identified as particular problems with concentration levels exceeding targets.

Herefordshire Council will expect developments to connect to existing sewage infrastructure. However, when this would compromise the ability to achieve favourable condition, and potentially be contrary to the Habitats Regulations, mitigation measures would be required if the development is to proceed.

Local water companies are responsible for providing and maintaining sewage treatment works at a standard to meet permitted conditions. Their asset management programmes will set out capital works to ensure compliance with discharge licences. Should such works be required then it may be necessary to phase new development within timescales set by these programmes. However, there may be an additional requirement for developer contributions or community infrastructure levy funding to make further improvements.

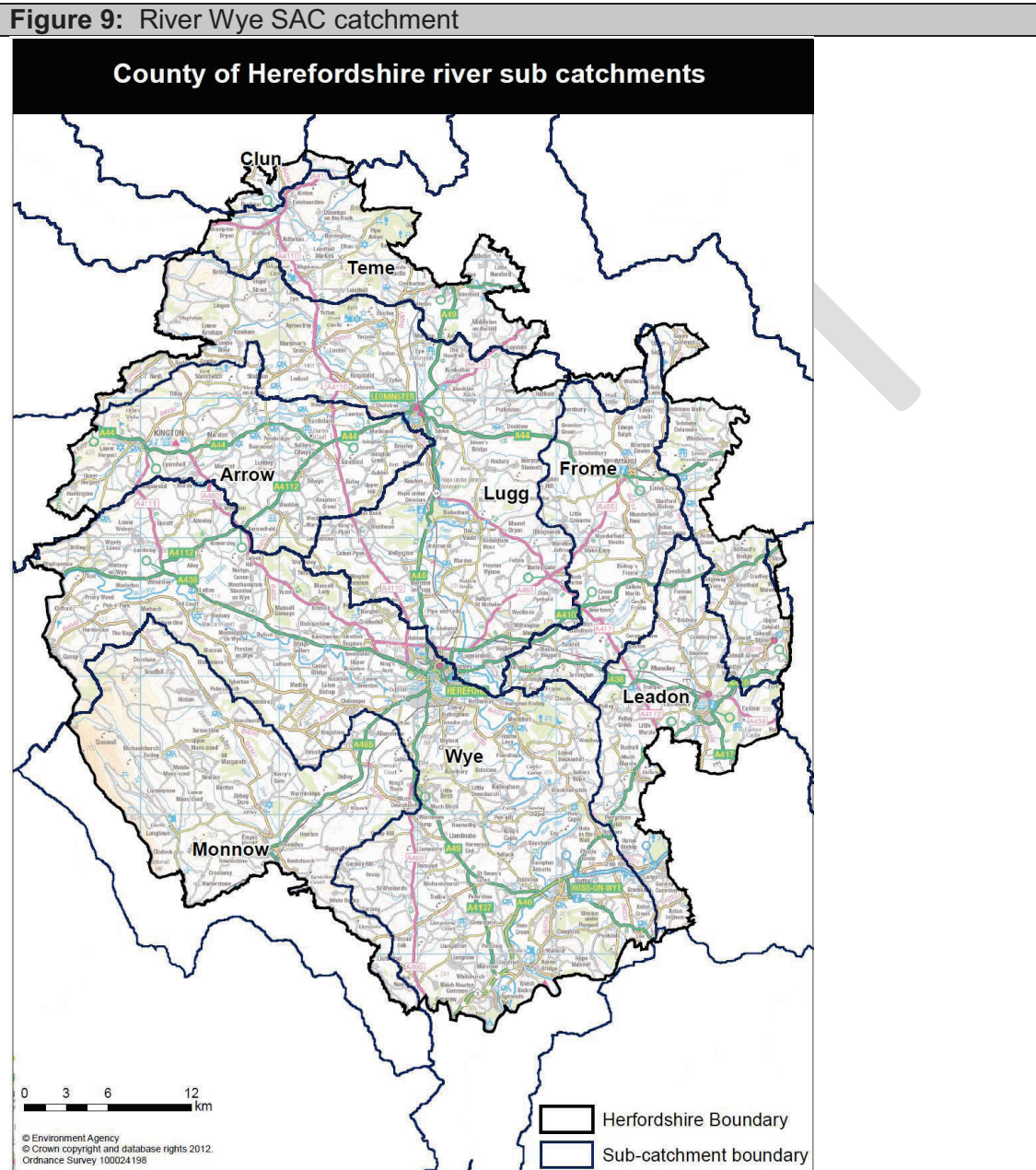
Increases in flows to sewage treatment works lead to increases in nutrients in watercourses, as discharges have set nutrient concentrations. Reducing flows to sewage treatment works through measures referred to in policy SD3 can therefore contribute to reducing nutrient levels in the receiving watercourses. The separation of foul and storm water will have similar benefits.

Development seeking to use non-mains drainage solutions will need to explain why this is necessary in the light of the Environment Agency's advice and Herefordshire Council's planning application requirements in respect of non-mains drainage (see Herefordshire Council website). Herefordshire Council will wish to be assured that such proposals will not adversely affect the quality of water within watercourses and, in particular, will have no negative effect upon SAC rivers. Measures proposed to mitigate any effect will be rigorously scrutinised; and monitoring arrangements may need to be put in place to ensure the chosen system is effective. Sustainable forms of water treatment such as reed beds may be used as alternatives to or in combination with foul water treatment and disposal. Full details should be provided to show these will achieve the required standard of discharge into the natural



drainage system. The sensitivity of Herefordshire's environment is such that the use of cesspools should be avoided, however, if this is deemed to be the only option then information will be needed to ensure a rigorous assessment of potential effects.

A number of rivers have water quality problems arising from sedimentation. Where operations requiring planning permission may cause or add to the problem then mitigation works such as trenches, wetlands, retention ponds, buffers, swales and other forms of sediment traps may need to be considered as part of sustainable water practices under policy SD3.



## Natural resources: minerals

Minerals are an essential resource upon which the built environment is reliant. However minerals can only be obtained from where they exist and are accessible in viable quantities. There is the added necessity that extracted minerals are required to meet quality specifications. The locating of such materials is an inexact science and can sometimes not be confirmed until extraction takes place. These factors distinguish minerals planning from other planning issues. The winning of minerals strengthens the presumption in favour of sustainable development subject to mitigation techniques, environmental protection and long-term restoration. In the broader context mineral extraction is a temporary activity with a finite life; albeit this can be over several decades. National policy and environmental legislation recognises all of the above.

The Core Strategy objectives place a high value on environmental protection (objective 10) and concern for the natural environment (objective 12). Minerals development can have significant impacts upon these objectives both during extraction and the after-use of sites. Through careful and sensitive planning the after-use of sites can result in the creation of new sites for biodiversity and recreation (objective 11), including lakes and rock faces. Herefordshire's mineral resources include glacial and river gravels and sand, limestone and in the west of the county there are small-scale old red sandstone resources suitable for local buildings. The use of traditional local stone-working assists the protection of the local distinctiveness of the county and, by using these local materials, helps to deliver more sustainable sources of traditional building materials (objectives 10, 11 and 12).

Historically coal mining took place south of Ross on Wye as well as extensive brick and tile works utilising local red clays across the county. While these industries are no longer prevalent in this area, the combination of new technology and dwindling resources elsewhere may result in renewed interest in the county for those purposes. Herefordshire also contains a minerals site with a rail terminal for the long distance movement of large volumes of minerals, aiding the reduction in need for long distance transport of minerals by road. Safeguarding minerals resources is in itself part of the preservation of natural resources (objective 12).

Aggregates form the majority of minerals extracted in Herefordshire. This comprises gravel/sand from river basins, and crushed limestone from uplands. Such materials are processed according to requirements and are vital for concrete production, building block materials and road workings. The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the need for mineral planning authorities to provide for its allocated contribution to sub-national requirements for aggregates (annual apportionment). Alongside this the duty to co-operate is an important requirement in mineral planning with the need for neighbouring mineral planning authorities to work together to achieve such apportionments. The Government has committed to the established national Managed Aggregated Supply System (MASS) based upon an average of the previous 10 years' reports sales/extraction/use; mineral planning authorities are expected to participate in data gathering and provision. This work is co-ordinated by the Aggregate Working Parties (AWP), which advises government, and comprises representatives from local authorities and the minerals industry. The requirement to ensure a steady and adequate supply of minerals to meet the needs of society and the economy needs to be tempered, with the significant landscape and other impacts associated with large scale mineral workings. Consequently policies need to allow for safeguarding resources and sites, while minimising and mitigating any adverse effects of minerals working. This includes consideration of the reclamation and after-use of sites. Policies also encourage the re-use and recycling of secondary

aggregates (construction and demolition materials otherwise treated as 'waste'). The key purpose of this is to improve sustainability by reducing the demand for primary aggregate extractions.

With regard to building stone, a particular feature of Herefordshire is the existence of small scale workings known as 'delves.' These produce hand-made stone products which are an important contributor to locally distinctive building styles. This industry is of prime significance to heritage restoration and the resulting streetscape in both rural and urban areas. Core Strategy policies make specific allowance for this local and important traditional rural industry.

It is recognised that quarries of all types have an educational potential to further knowledge in terms of geology, palaeontology and archaeology. Herefordshire's mineral extraction sites have made significant contributions to the county's archaeological and fossil records. Opportunities to provide new geological exposures and improved wildlife habitats are also acknowledged and policies ensure that long term benefits are maximised.

The strategy for minerals development as set out in the following policies ensures that the sustainable and efficient use and management of Herefordshire's mineral resources will be promoted by:

- defining minerals safeguarding areas, and controlling development which would adversely affect them (policy M1);
- maintaining appropriate land banks of permitted reserves for primary aggregates consistent with national and sub-national guidance in co-operation with neighbouring authorities (policy M2);
- ensuring that development for the winning, working, storage and transport of minerals takes place in accordance with appropriate criteria (policy M3);
- enabling small scale production of building stone and clay production (policy M4);
- encouraging the use of secondary aggregates and the re-use and recycling of aggregates and other minerals (policy M5); and
- protecting the continued availability of the railhead at Moreton-on-Lugg for minerals transportation purposes (policy M6).

Notwithstanding the above, Herefordshire Council has programmed the production of a Natural Resources Development Plan Document. This document will provide site specific mineral and waste detail while also re-evaluating the targets and standards set out within the Core Strategy.

#### **Policy M1 – Minerals Safeguarding Areas**

The areas of known minerals resources shown on the Proposals Map will be regarded as minerals safeguarding areas (MSAs) to which the policy considerations below apply. Detailed boundaries will be reviewed in the preparation of a Natural Resources Development Plan Document which, once adopted, will then define the boundaries of MSAs in Herefordshire.

Within and adjacent to the MSAs, development which would sterilise any known minerals resource will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the non-minerals related development is of sufficient weight and overall benefit to planning interests to outweigh the need to protect the minerals resources. Where non-minerals related development is proposed in MSAs the applicant may be required:

1. to undertake a geological assessment of the site; and/or
2. to protect the minerals in question; and/or
3. make provision for the extraction of all or part of the mineral reserves as part of or before the non-minerals related development takes place.

National Planning Policy requires Minerals Planning Authorities to define minerals safeguarding areas (MSAs) in their development plan documents. In accordance with national guidance, the definition of an MSA does not automatically mean that minerals will be extracted during the plan period; instead Policy M1 prevents unnecessary sterilisation of known minerals resources. The detailed review of boundaries, including setting out an appropriate methodology to identify them, will be undertaken in the Natural Resources Development Plan Document (DPD). Prior to the publication of a future DPD, the areas currently shown on the proposals map will be regarded as interim MSAs.

#### **Policy M2 – Annual apportionments for aggregate provision**

The annual apportionment for the production of primary land-won aggregates for the period to 2016 shall be:

1. sand and gravel: 283,000 tonnes per annum; and
2. crushed rock: 424,000 tonnes per annum.

Revised apportionments for the period beyond 2016 will be established through a Natural Resources Development Plan Document.

Apportionments are the targets for the supply of mineral aggregates. Previous statutory apportionments have been superseded by new national apportionment in 2009, and the assumed approach to the sub-regional apportionment has been interrupted by changes in the status of regional planning in 2010. It is acknowledged that there is a need for a stated apportionment for the county to contribute to UK sand and gravel and crushed rock requirements. The policy continues with the most recent adopted volumes, but acknowledges that amended figures will be required during the plan period, i.e. for the period beyond 2016 and up to at least 2031. Revised figures and relevant evidence base will be brought forward in the Natural Resources Development Plan Document in due course. Under the duty to co-operate, further opportunities for collaborative working with neighbouring authorities will be explored.

#### **Policy M3 – Criteria for the assessment of minerals related development**

Proposals for the winning and working, storage and transport of minerals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. no further permissions will be granted for the extraction of granite from the Malvern Hills;
2. new large scale minerals extraction outside MSAs will not be permitted unless further survey work is undertaken which demonstrates the existence of viable and accessible mineral deposits for which a clear need is identified, or if demand outstrips the existing landbank of permissions. (Large scale is defined as workings in excess of 1 hectare);
3. extensions to existing permitted sites will be supported in advance of the



- opening of new sites; and
4. where minerals extraction is permitted it shall be on the basis that:
    - a. The minerals resource is reasonably required to meet identified and adopted targets (where appropriate), or complies with policy M4 in respect of small scale workings;
    - b. the environmental impact of the development can be mitigated and potential benefits maximised, especially with regard to:
      - i. the impact on biodiversity interests (especially the River Wye SAC which includes the lower River Lugg);
      - ii. the impact of the development on floodplain management (which may be positive);
      - iii. the impact on geological, archaeological and other heritage interests (which may also be positive) and the potential for furthering scientific knowledge;
      - iv. the impact on landscapes especially in the AONBs;
      - v. the potential of the development to maximise the use of sustainable transport measures;
      - vi. amenity impacts on nearby residential properties;
      - vii. the inclusion of positive proposals for after-use and after-care of the site, with priority being given to habitat creation, heritage and community/leisure uses (in that order of preference); and
      - viii. the potential of the site to provide demonstrable benefits to biodiversity and wildlife habitats, both during and following minerals extraction.

During the plan period no requirements are anticipated for new large scale extraction sites to be developed in Herefordshire for a number of reasons, including the absence of known commercially workable deposits, distance from major development areas and conurbations, the need to protect the county's environment from unnecessary development pressures, and a realistic assessment of demand (see policy M2). Further extraction will not be permitted in the Malvern Hills AONB area due to its landscape importance, and legislative constraints.

Current inactive or mothballed sites may need to be re-opened, subject to demand and national policy. Furthermore towards the end of the plan period, consideration may be given to new sites for extraction of primary aggregates. The combination of Herefordshire's geographic location and constrained accessibility mean that new large scale aggregate extraction proposals continue to be unlikely due to expense of transporting aggregates over long distances. However, this will be continually reviewed within the Natural Resources Development Plan Document.

Policies M3 and M4 differentiate between large scale aggregate extraction and local, small scale extraction for dimension and other building stone, shale, brick clay and other minerals such as coal. A nominal site area limit of 1 hectare is used for this purpose. However, where significantly important sources of non-aggregate minerals are identified and their extraction fully justified, the size criterion is not absolute. Each case will be judged on its own merits, in terms of the value and nature of the resource, its accessibility, location, environmental and amenity impacts and the eventual use of the stone.

**Policy M4 – Small Scale non-aggregate building stone and clay production**

Proposals for the small scale extraction of non-aggregate minerals will be permitted where:



1. there is a demonstrated need for the material for the preservation of local distinctiveness; in particular features and/or building techniques of local historic or architectural interest, repair of listed and vernacular buildings, other structures or archaeological sites; or
2. suitable materials of a particular type have been identified as likely to exist in appropriate quantity; and
3. the anticipated timescales for quarry or mining, including any requirements for intermittent working, have been assessed and can be justified; and
4. the majority (i.e. more than 50%) of the site's output would be for non-aggregate use; and
5. any significant adverse impacts from the minerals extraction are identified and mitigated; and
6. the site is capable of reclamation to a beneficial use, including geological and/or scientific research, positive benefits to biodiversity, wildlife habitats and/or agriculture.

It is important for Herefordshire's heritage and local economic purposes that the associated works of small scale building stone quarries is not unduly restricted. The nature of the workings is such that on occasions very specific strata need to be worked for a particular project; hence the policy needs to allow for flexibility in exactly where workings are located and the timescales for minerals extraction, including intermittent working. However the policy takes into account the potential for small quarries to harm amenity, particularly where workings remain open over long periods.

#### **Policy M5 – Secondary (reused and recycled) aggregates**

The use of alternatives to naturally occurring aggregates or other minerals, especially construction, demolition and excavation wastes, will be encouraged subject to the compliance of such proposals with adopted policies. On appropriate sites, proposals for the production, import, processing, treatment and storage of such alternatives will be permitted:

1. for temporary periods where development is ancillary to principal activities at a site, including use of demolition and excavation waste arising from development, or longer periods when the development will be limited to the life of a mineral working; or
2. permanently at permitted waste transfer stations.

In all cases the proposals should provide adequate means of mitigating visual impact, minimising adverse effects on the environment and amenity, and controlling traffic, noise, vibration and pollution as part of the development. All proposals shall include detailed surveys, assessments and recommendations to avoid adverse effects on the amenity of the immediate or surrounding environment (including landscape and townscape) and human health; with particular reference to the wider catchments of the River Wye and Lugg SSSI/SAC designations.

In order to reduce dependency on primary aggregates and to encourage the use of waste materials as a resource, the re-use and re-cycling of demolition and other wastes from development sites will be encouraged. There is a close link to waste policies in this regard.

#### **Policy M6 – Moreton-on-Lugg railhead.**

The continued use of the railhead at Moreton-on-Lugg for the storage, loading and transport of minerals by rail will be encouraged. Development which would prejudice its continued use will not be permitted unless it can be shown that reasonable alternative provisions have been made for the transport of minerals by rail.

Aggregates, once won from the ground, are bulky and heavy materials to transport and for sustainability and climate change reasons, encouragement will be given to alternatives to road transport wherever possible. In the absence of canals Herefordshire Council will encourage the use of rail transport. A railhead centrally located at Moreton-on-Lugg is dedicated to minerals loading with road access available from the A49 trunk road. It is therefore appropriate to make specific provision to protect the railhead from alternative developments which would prejudice its continuing use for minerals transportation. There may also be future opportunities for other commodities to use the railhead.

### **Natural resources: waste**

The definition of 'waste' is a legal interpretation which is under government review. In early 2012 DEFRA issued a consultation document outlining its updated definitions, but the process will continue to evolve. As new technology emerges, materials previously categorised as 'waste' become 'resources' capable of recovery. The Environment Agency regulates waste transfer, treatment, recycling and recovery through the Environmental Permitting Regulations (currently 2012), and regards materials that would otherwise be disposed of as 'waste' until fully recovered. The specific control of such matters is covered by legislation separate from planning, including EU Directives. Accordingly planning policies need to concentrate on enabling the provision of appropriate sites and facilities, based on evaluated need and ensuring proposals are capable of compliance. However it is necessary to bear in mind that any particular material can be 'waste' in some circumstances and not in others, or may change its status according to the stage of treatment it has reached. For example there has been much debate as to the point at which discarded paper stops being 'waste' and starts being useful paper again during the process of recycling it.

National planning guidance nevertheless contains central government's planning policies for sustainable waste management, recognising that the planning system is pivotal to the adequate and timely provision of new waste management facilities. The national Waste Strategy 2007 (in part subject of the government's Waste Policy Review in 2011) outlines government policy in accordance with EU legislation. The National Planning Policy Framework excludes waste policies and Planning Policy Statement 10, Planning for Sustainable Waste Management, has been retained for the time being, pending an adopted update of the Waste Strategy. Revisions to the EU Waste Framework Directive (2008) have been implemented in England by the Environment Agency through the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011. There is therefore a legal requirement for all waste policies to be consistent and compatible. All minerals development and the majority of waste developments are excluded from the requirement of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The concept of the Waste Hierarchy continues to be central to the waste policy principles at all stages. This starts at the top with 'reduce', then re-use, recycling and recovery down to the last resort of 'disposal' to landfill for residual material for

which no further possible uses can be found. However, the constantly changing environmental, economic and social drivers (for waste processing), technological advancement, and contractual obligations, all play a part in which part of the waste hierarchy is applied.

The Herefordshire Minerals and Waste Planning Assessment (May 2009) signposts key areas for development of waste policies taking account of the regional planning policies and proposed revisions to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) at that time. These revisions were subject to examination and an Inspectors' Panel Report in September 2009 confirming the robust nature of the supporting evidence base. At the time of writing, the RSS is in the process of being revoked by Government. However previously approved policy recommendations relating directly to Herefordshire are carried forward in the Core Strategy including targets for diversion from landfill and the concept of balancing waste flows where possible. As the proposed abolition of regional policy proceeds there is a need for development plan documents to establish the overall context. This is strengthened by the requirement for neighbouring authorities to work together, despite the loss of regional policy to meet the requirements of the 'duty to co-operate' as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Of relevance to the above is the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for both Herefordshire and Worcestershire which deals mainly with Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste (LACMW) but also covers some Commercial and Industrial Waste. Under current contractual arrangements for the collection and disposal of LACMW until 2026, Herefordshire and Worcestershire employ a single contractor to manage all aspects of the waste disposal process. Any policy which seeks self-sufficiency, or a balance of "waste in" and "waste out" (one of the key principles of former regional policy), must therefore recognise Herefordshire and Worcestershire as one unit for this waste stream.

Core Strategy objectives explicitly require consideration of waste minimisation/prevention (objective 11). Waste policies also contribute indirectly to other objectives, such as conserving the natural and historic environment and delivering essential infrastructure. By applying the proximity principle (a feature of EU and national waste policies), reductions can be made in the need for road transport (objective 4) both to access waste facilities and to minimise the need for long-distance waste transport. Climate change is an issue which influences the whole Core Strategy and by regarding waste as a resource to be used where appropriate, especially in the case of energy-from-waste developments, reliance on fossil fuels can be decreased thereby helping to reduce the "carbon footprint" of the county.

Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county which generates large volumes of agricultural effluent, including cattle slurry and poultry litter. This may be classified as 'waste' (if disposed of), but it may be a useful fertiliser resource. This county is well-placed to encourage the use of anaerobic digestion (AD) as a technique for generating renewable energy from such effluent whilst still using the less noxious residue ('digestate') for crop and soil improvement. AD is a treatment measure which the Government supports and can be successful at a variety of scales in terms of volume throughput. Food waste (from homes, businesses and industry) has not yet been collected separately, but enabling a network of AD plants could facilitate this in the future. This approach is also compatible with the network of sewage treatment works across the county and allows the achievement of treating waste close to source.

Details of future waste installations, including site specific allocations, and the on-going review of targets, will be dealt with in a subsequent Development Plan Document for Minerals and Waste, and thus the Core Strategy policies need to distinguish between those policies appropriate at this strategic level and the detailed ones which will follow.

The strategy for the sustainable and efficient management of waste will be secured through:

- Dealing with waste (as defined) in accordance with European legislation and national policy and the waste hierarchy.
- Considering otherwise waste materials as a resource to be managed in a manner which minimises the need for disposal to landfill.
- Making provision for specific waste streams (policy W1).
- Assessing proposals for new and expansion of existing waste development (policy W2).
- Protection of existing waste sites and currently permitted waste treatment facilities (policy W3).
- Encouragement of energy-from-waste facilities, with particular regard to anaerobic digestion and other appropriate emerging technology (policy W4).
- Requiring all new development to make appropriate provision for waste minimisation, management and treatment (policy W5).

#### **Policy W1 Waste streams and targets**

The principal waste streams shall be dealt with in accordance with the following principles:

1. Local Authority Collected Municipal waste (LACMW): This shall continue to be managed through the Joint Municipal Waste Management Contract with Worcestershire County Council, with treatment (from 2014/15) potentially focussed on a single energy-from-waste installation to serve the two counties. The specific targets for diversion from landfill are set out in table W1 below (subject to review in the Natural Resources DPD).

In addition up to two hectares of land may be required for new facilities for waste transfer, treatment, recycling and recovery of LACMW; the priority for locating such sites will be based on proximity to the origin of the bulk of such waste and therefore such site(s) will be in or close to Hereford and/or the market towns, (although it is recognised that rural sites may be appropriate in some cases and such sites are not ruled out. Significant individual site(s) will be identified in the Natural Resources DPD, guided by the criteria set out in policy W2.

2. Commercial and industrial waste (C and I): This shall be dealt with as far as practicable within the county on sites suitable for industrial use. The specific targets for diversion from landfill are set out in table W2 below (subject to further review in the Natural Resources Development Plan Document). In addition up to ten hectares of land may be required for new facilities for waste transfer, treatment, recycling and recovery; the location of such sites will follow the same principles as for LACMW. Any individual site(s) will be identified in the Natural Resources DPD, guided by the criteria set out in policy W2.
3. Construction, demolition and excavation waste: This waste stream represents a significant proportion of total wastes and constitutes a low-value, high-volume commodity. The quantity of such waste will be minimised through the use of site waste management plans and in particular, the encouragement of on-site

recovery and re-use as part of development projects. Wherever possible demolition wastes will be regarded as a source of secondary aggregates (both re-used and reclaimed), although the need for specific washing, screening and quality control of such material is acknowledged. Identified strategic housing proposals will be expected to be as self-contained as possible, re-using excavation materials for landscaping within and adjacent to the development sites. However it is recognised that there will still be a significant requirement for the appropriate relocation of some of this waste to be facilitated through land raising, landscaping and agricultural land improvement, where tangible benefits can be demonstrated and where the materials are deemed fit for purpose. This process is primarily controlled through Environment Agency regulations and the planning process must work in parallel with those requirements.

4. Hazardous waste: Sites for the transfer and treatment of hazardous wastes will be dealt with in accordance with national planning policy principles.
5. Agricultural waste and organic liquid waste: Non-biodegradable agricultural waste will be dealt with as part of the commercial and industrial waste stream. The sustainable treatment of biodegradable agricultural and organic liquid wastes will be encouraged through composting, biological wetland (reed-beds) and farm-scale anaerobic digesters in accordance with policy W4.

Specific targets are set for municipal solid waste (LACMW, table W1) and for commercial and industrial waste (C & I, table W2). Further central government recognises three further waste streams which the Core Strategy seeks to diminish: construction, demolition and excavation Waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste.

With regard to LACMW, Policy W1 accords with the evidence base and acknowledges the planning application lodged in March 2010 for an energy-from-waste plant to take up to 200,000 tonnes of LACMW per annum on a site in Worcestershire which has been granted planning permission by the Secretary of State in July 2012. The project would divert the majority of LACMW from landfill into renewable energy generation based on an industrial site with suitable adjacent users. If the scheme does not progress, then energy from waste treatment remains the most likely destination for LACMW and, if not on the site that has received planning permission then an alternative site would need to be identified elsewhere (within the terms of the waste contract).

The amount of LACMW collected in Herefordshire has reduced significantly in the last 10 years with the aid of local and national waste prevention and recycling initiatives. This reduction, and conversely likely future growth in waste as a result of additional households, will need to be monitored and reflected in any targets as part of the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy. Taking this into account and the new destination for treatment in Worcestershire, there is still a need for approximately two hectares of land for collection, treatment and transfer of LACMW. This allocation will be provided on land suitable for employment uses and be in addition to the needs of employment land for economic development purposes. In accordance with the proximity principle, the most suitable locations are in or adjacent to, Hereford and the market towns. There will however be cases where rural sites will need to be considered where particular justification can be provided.



The collection, treatment and disposal of commercial and industrial waste (C and I) is largely outside the control of Herefordshire Council's waste management service provision, although the waste industry is dynamic. More flexible collaborative arrangements are not ruled out, and policies will not be over-restrictive. Provision must be made for suitable land for the transfer, treatment, recycling and recovery of waste arising in the commercial sector. The evidence base identifies a need for up to ten hectares of land, which is allowed for as part of employment land provision. This, in common with LACMW requirements, will be in addition to other employment land allocations and be located in accordance with similar criteria. Where existing waste management sites are lost due to changes in use and/or commercial interest factors, additional land may be required in compensation. Targets and specific allocations will be identified in the forthcoming Natural Resources Development Plan Document. The inclusion of C and I waste within LACMW may require further sites, and consideration within a subsequent DPD.

The principle for construction, demolition and excavation waste is for sites to prioritise self-sufficiency. This waste stream has a high potential to be seen as a resource for the production of secondary aggregates and for landscaping operations, potentially associated with another development. Herefordshire's absence of suitable landfill sites increases the importance of this principle. Policies need to take account of the problems associated with unauthorised deposits to ensure that only appropriate sites are used and only suitable materials are disposed of in this way. In terms of both planning policy and development management, the council needs to work co-operatively with the licensed waste operators and neighbouring authorities to ensure optimum management of this large-volume waste stream.

Hazardous waste volumes, including low-level radioactive wastes, are currently low in Herefordshire, and therefore there is no need for any strategic allocations. Any individual applications for sites to treat or transfer hazardous waste can be assessed by reference to the policies within national planning guidance.

Agricultural waste is largely dealt with on-farm but where non-biodegradable waste needs to be moved off-farm then it effectively becomes part of the C & I waste stream and will be dealt with accordingly.

<b>Table W1: Targets for municipal waste (tonnes)</b>					
Period	2005/6	2010/11	2015/16	2020/21	2025/26
Minimum diversion from landfill	24,000	43,000	60,000	69,000	74,000
Maximum landfill	68,000	59,000	48,000	45,000	46,000
Total	92,000	102,000	108,000	114,000	120,000

<b>Table W2: Targets for commercial and industrial waste (tonnes)</b>					
Period	2005/6	2010/11	2015/16	2020/21	2025/26
Minimum diversion from landfill	97,000	110,000	137,000	188,000	188,000
Maximum landfill	71,000	59,000	59,000	62,000	62,000
Total	168,000	196,000	198,000	250,000	250,000

<b>Policy W2 – Location of new waste management facilities</b>
Significant new waste management facilities (i.e. those which require sites of 0.5 hectares or more) shall be located in accordance with the following general principles.

Such sites should be:

1. sites with current use rights for waste management purposes; or
2. active mineral working sites or landfills where the proposal is both operationally related to the permitted use and for a temporary period commensurate with the permitted use of the site; or
3. existing or allocated industrial land; or
4. land within or adjacent to sewage treatment works.

Where it can be demonstrated that none of the above categories of site are available, the re-use of redundant agricultural buildings and their curtilage will be supported.

In all cases:

- a) the impact of the proposals for the collection, storage, handling, treatment, disposal and transport of waste shall be mitigated, with particular attention paid to potential impacts on human health, biodiversity, and the natural, cultural and historic environment;
- b) sites shall be reclaimed where appropriate, to an acceptable after-use and condition;
- c) sustainable technologies shall be used wherever possible;
- d) waste developments have the potential to impact upon the natural environment. Accordingly, development proposals are to be accompanied with a detailed environmental monitoring and mitigation strategy based on reliable surveys and assessments. In addition, permission may be granted for a trial period to ensure there is no local environmental impact.

The above criteria ensure waste proposals will be assessed in a coherent and consistent manner, based on robust evidence and existing successful practices.

### **Policy W3 – Existing and permitted waste treatment sites**

Existing and permitted waste treatment sites and facilities will be protected from development which would compromise their future operation, unless satisfactory alternative provision can be secured on equivalent or better sites; or it is demonstrated that alternative facilities are no longer required because the relevant waste stream has been minimised and/or dealt with, in a more sustainable manner elsewhere.

To ensure sufficient capacity to meet waste requirements established and permitted waste sites should be able to continue in operation unless suitable alternatives can be secured, or are demonstrably no longer required. Accordingly existing sites will be protected from development which would conflict with or displace waste uses as well as the consideration of adjoining land and sites where there is a risk that new uses may prejudice the continued operation of the waste-related use. This is particularly relevant where existing waste management sites are clustered on old-style industrial estates which are considered for redevelopment.

### **Policy W4 – Technologies for biological treatment of waste**

As a means of generating renewable energy and fertiliser, and reducing carbon emissions, the use of anaerobic digesters (AD) and other emerging technologies will be encouraged for both large and small scale waste management developments, provided that potentially adverse local environmental effects can be adequately managed and mitigated, including traffic implications. AD installations are not restricted to the broad

locations for waste facilities specified in policy W2 above but are to be situated as close as is practical to the source of waste bearing in mind other essential factors. The use of biological wetland treatment systems and reed beds will be supported for the treatment of liquid effluent where proposals can demonstrate positive effectiveness, with full pollution and nuisance prevention measures, and the coincidental creation of wildlife habitats.

Anaerobic digesters (AD) are becoming more commonplace as a means of dealing with biodegradable waste and “harvesting” energy. An advantage of AD and similar technology is that it does not necessarily require the large-scale installation that many other technologies use, as AD schemes can be successfully run at a variety of scales. It is recognised that they require a variety of input materials (‘feedstock’), which include some bio-energy crops to achieve the correct operational balance. The import of feedstock to the site may be necessary, since one agricultural enterprise may not be able to provide an adequate volume and range of feedstock. There needs to be a viable use for the end products in terms of energy (typically electricity and heat), and digestate. However, in a county like Herefordshire with the benefit of improving technology, there is potential for AD installations to become a significant means of treating waste in a sustainable manner. The increasing use of reed-beds and biological wetland treatment systems either as stand-alone effluent treatment or in conjunction with conventional systems, and/or AD plants needs to be recognised as having significant potential for liquid waste management. This provision needs to be read alongside policies for wastewater treatment (SD4) for both homes and industry, promoting a flexible, integrated and future-proof network.

#### **Policy W5 – Waste minimisation and management in new developments**

All development proposals shall include measures to deal with waste arising in accordance with the principles of the waste hierarchy. This will apply to both the construction phase (where physical development is involved) and subsequent use of the development. Proposals which could generate significant volumes of waste will be required to submit a waste management plan before development begins, detailing:

1. the types and volumes of waste which the development will generate during the course of construction, occupation, use, decommissioning and for the after-use of the site;
2. the steps to be taken to ensure that the maximum amount of waste arising is incorporated within the development or through its use;
3. the steps to be taken to manage, recycle or treat waste that cannot be so incorporated; and
4. if waste is to be disposed of elsewhere, the means of transport and distance to be travelled.
5. This policy will apply to:
  - a) Developments of more than 50 dwellings, including parts or phases of such developments;
  - b) the development, redevelopment or refurbishment of sites where the floor space of the existing or proposed development amounts to 500 square metres or more;
  - c) major transport, leisure, recreation, tourist or community facilities;
  - d) developments which would attract a significant increase in the number of people visiting the site.

Detailed policies for smaller scale developments will be brought forward in the Minerals and Waste DPD and in Supplementary Planning Documents appropriate to specific

sites, uses or developments.

All developments should include consideration of their likely waste arising, for the full range of waste streams, both during construction and afterwards once the development is brought into use. In the case of some waste development types it is also necessary to have regard to the after-use of the site. This policy includes minimum development sizes for the application of policy at the strategic level. Smaller sites will be guided with more detailed policies in the Natural Resources DPD and forthcoming Supplementary Planning Documents such as the Design Code and masterplans for specific sites/localities.

### **Delivery and Monitoring of the environmental quality policies**

These policies will be delivered by:

- an Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- preparation and implementation of other development plan documents
- preparation and implementation of a Design Code Supplementary Planning Document; and other SPDs as appropriate
- the development management process.

### **Environmental Quality Monitoring Indicators:**

- Changes in the areas of designated nature conservation sites as a consequence of planning permission;
- Proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has or is being implemented
- Number of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments on buildings at risk register (English Heritage)
- Net change in condition of SSSI's (Natural England)
- Number of applications granted planning permission contrary to the advice of statutory agencies (e.g. English Heritage, Natural England or the Environment Agency)
- Percentage of river length assessed as good biological or chemical quality (EA)
- Monitoring changes to protected habitats and impacts of species within the Herefordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Percentage of total residential applications at below 30 dwellings per hectare
- Number of residential applications at less than 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- The need for, frequency and outcomes of planning enforcement investigations/ planning appeals concerning the aspects of local loss of locally important buildings within a conservation area
- Phosphate levels within the River Wye SAC and adjoining tributaries that receive increased phosphates from Core Strategy growth
- Number of developments meeting and surpassing national design standards.
- Number of new parish, town and neighbourhood plans
- Maintaining Herefordshire Council's County Site and Monuments Register
- Comparison of production figures with national and sub-national apportionments
- Estimates of permitted and useable land banks for aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock)
- After use of sites especially wildlife habitat creation
- The production of secondary (reused and recycled) aggregates
- Data on the use of the railhead at Moreton-on-Lugg

**Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

The Sustainability Appraisal Report produced as part of the development of this Draft Core Strategy did not recommend any changes to any of the policies in this section.

The Habitat Regulations Assessment has ...to follow.

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## **Infrastructure contributions**

### **Introduction**

New development can place additional demands upon physical, social and green infrastructure such as roads and sewers, community buildings and parks. It is a well-established principle in national guidance that new development should contribute financially towards the provision of such infrastructure to ensure existing communities are not disadvantaged by any increased pressure on facilities from new development.

The last Government made provision for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be introduced in Regulations that came into force in April 2010, now amended by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2012. Local authorities will be empowered to charge a levy on new developments to help finance the infrastructure needed to support growth. However, local authorities should have clear evidence about planned infrastructure, its cost, timing and other likely sources of funding to underpin their development strategies. This will be provided through an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will sit alongside the Core Strategy.

This will need to be accompanied by a Charging Schedule for how the levy is calculated which will be independently examined by a Planning Inspector. In addition, a list of community infrastructure projects that the council has prioritised for the infrastructure levy to be spent on (a 123 list). The use of planning obligations (which Herefordshire has traditionally used) will still remain but will only relate to those infrastructure requirements required as a direct result of the development e.g. affordable housing and highway and sustainable transport improvements directly related to the development.

For the avoidance of doubt, infrastructure is defined as those physical, social and green infrastructure projects required as a result of growth in the county and includes housing, transport, sport and recreation, community facilities including education, health and emergency services, water and sewerage facilities, flood risk management, renewable energy generation, waste management, built environment and public realm improvements and green infrastructure.

### **Policy ID1- Infrastructure delivery**

Provision for new and the enhancement of existing infrastructure, services and facilities to support development and sustainable communities will be achieved through a co-ordinated approach. This will include in addition to planning conditions for essential on-site design requirements and critical infrastructure:

1. contributing towards strategic infrastructure from all new housing and retail development through a mandatory tariff (per dwelling) system;
  2. S106 contributions for specific infrastructure from all types of development directly required in order for the development to be considered acceptable in accordance with national and local planning policies and relevant legislation;
  3. utilising Government funding sources;
  4. linking with other public investment programmes e.g. health;
  5. co-ordinating with the capital investment programmes of the gas, electric, telecommunications and water industries (utilities);
  6. other new funding or innovative investment approaches.
- a) Tariff contributions will be used to service the following community infrastructure physical infrastructure including improved pedestrian, cycle and bus routes, the construction of the Hereford relief road, the inner relief road, park and ride sites and transport hub, the construction of the Leominster southern link road, strategic sewerage; strategic flood defence, renewable energy generation, broadband provision
  - b) social infrastructure including education, healthcare, emergency services, community facilities, built sports facilities, cultural facilities including improvements to the built environment and public realm
  - c) green infrastructure including play areas, parks, allotments and green spaces, sporting and recreation facilities, heritage assets and habitat creation.

S106 contributions will be used to service specific on and off site infrastructure requirements to include: affordable housing, water management including sustainable drainage, safe and sustainable access and transport links, essential utilities (including sustainable alternatives), play, sport and recreation facilities, landscaping and associated maintenance payments.

#### **Links to Core Strategy Objectives**

This policy will address objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

All new development can impact on existing services and facilities in its local area whether individually or cumulatively. This can have a direct impact on the need for new facilities either locally or on a larger, strategic scale. For example, new development on a single large site or on lots of smaller sites will have the same overall impact on the demands placed on the existing sewerage network. In this respect it is right to expect all new development to contribute to making communities safe, healthy and attractive places to live. This policy addresses this issue and will help to deliver a whole range of other policies in this Core Strategy.

The policy proposes that all new development is required to contribute to infrastructure requirements. This will be achieved through a combined approach of using a set Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from housing, retail and hotel development and planning obligations (Section 106) for all development types to bring forward affordable housing (in conjunction with Policy H1) and other site specific infrastructure necessary for the development to take place. Individual

developments will not be charged for the same items of infrastructure through both CIL and planning obligations.

The CIL has been introduced to provide a fair and consistent mechanism for pooling contributions from all eligible developments towards infrastructure. It provides certainty so that developers can calculate in advance of submitting a planning application the level of contribution required. Although the tariff will usually be a financial contribution, there is also the option of transfer of land in lieu of a financial payment.

The levy is a fixed rate charge, based on square metres of net additional built floor space. The charge is levied on 1 or more dwellings and developments of more than 100 sq m of floor space. Exemptions include affordable housing and charities. The CIL regulations allow the council to introduce charge variations by geographical zone within its area, by land use, or both. These are set out in the Charging Schedule. Some uses are set at zero in some zones as the variations reflect differences in viability.

The policy requires tariff contributions from new residential, retail and hotel development. This is because the *Economic Viability Study* states that the economic conditions for attracting new employment generating development in Herefordshire are such that “charging” a tariff on such developments would render them uneconomic to set up in the first place.

The proceeds of the CIL will be spent on strategic and local infrastructure to support the development of the county. Developer contributions on their own will not be able to meet the entire cost of a major infrastructure project. Core public funding will continue to contribute.

The type of infrastructure that the tariff will be used to service is set out in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) The IDP provides robust evidence of infrastructure requirements through to 2031 but the focus is on the measures that are needed within the first 5 years (2011 to 2016), in the context of the longer term plan set out in the Core Strategy. The IDP schedule and required infrastructure is set out on an area basis to include Strategic County-wide, The Hereford Area, the Market Towns and the Rural Areas.

It is acknowledged that the IDP schedule cannot specify the entire infrastructure that will be provided in the county to 2031. Changed requirements may become apparent as new areas of development are designed in more detail and or ways of delivering services or facilities are reviewed. The IDP schedule is not intended as a one-off document. Through the life of the Core Strategy, changes to the policies and strategies of service providers and the introduction of new technology will have implications for infrastructure requirements and their costs. Public funding levels are also likely to vary over the life time of the Plan. The information contained in the IDP schedule will be kept under review and updated. The council together with its partners will need to look for innovative ways to fund and provide the necessary infrastructure as important changes are introduced. This is why it is called a “**live**” document”.

A list of prioritised Infrastructure Projects, which the council have committed to, will be advertised on the council’s website in the form of a Regulation 123 list. This list will have been verified in terms of achievability and phasing of delivery through the *Economic Viability Study* which will ensure that a balance is struck between the

required infrastructure projects and the ability of the strategic sites to be delivered by the development industry.

Monies received in respect of the tariff and planning obligations will be monitored and reported on through the LDF Annual Monitoring Report. Joint working with internal and external delivery partners will be necessary to keep the Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Delivery Plan up to date and relevant.

A S106 Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to establish the details of contributions.

### **Delivery**

The policy will be delivered through:

- the development management process;
- the neighbourhood planning process;
- partnership working with infrastructure providers;
- an Infrastructure Delivery Group to administer project proposals and propose priorities;
- a S106 Supplementary Planning Document;
- a CIL Charging Schedule;
- a CIL 123 List.

### **Implementation and monitoring**

The continuous monitoring of the policies and proposals is essential to ensure that the Core Strategy achieves its objectives. The policies will be monitored principally through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in the manner described at the end of each section of this document. The AMR report will set out the basic achievements of the main policies and contain details about the implementation of the housing policies in particular

If it appears that the policies are not being effective, the following actions will be taken:

- review of the policy or policies concerned and of the implementation mechanisms;
- action to slow or speed up the delivery of land for development depending on the rate of development achieved;
- identification of alternative or additional land.

The policies and proposals will also be assessed against key objectives and targets included in the Sustainability Appraisal to assess their contribution towards promoting sustainable development. There will be a section in the AMR dealing with this aspect.

Clearly the Core Strategy must be able to respond to changing needs and circumstances. This will include assessing the potential impacts of new or updated national and local policy and guidance. There will also be a section in the AMR dealing with this aspect.

**Herefordshire Council**  
**Community Infrastructure Levy**  
**Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule**  
**Consultation Document**  
March 2013

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## How to comment

The Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule is published for a seven week consultation period from 4 March 2013, and comments are welcomed from everyone. The deadline for comments is **5pm on Monday 22 April 2013**.

Please complete the consultation response form with any comments you may have, this is available at the end of this document (appendix 2).

Comments can be returned either via email to [ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk) or in writing to: CIL Consultation Response, Freepost Strategic Planning, License Number – RRJX-TLSH-SCYH Herefordshire Council, PO Box 4, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0XH. You can also make telephone enquiries on 01432 383357.

The supporting documents can be viewed at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/cil](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/cil) and at the following locations during normal opening hours:

- Hereford Customer Service Centre, Hereford Customer Services, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford HR1 2BB
- Bromyard Customer Service Centre, 1 Cruxwell Street, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4EB
- Kington Customer Service Centre, 64 Bridge Street, Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3DJ
- Ledbury Customer Service Centre, The Master's House, St. Katherines, High Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1EA
- Leominster Customer Service Centre, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8YP
- Ross-on-Wye Customer Service Centre, Ross Library, Cantilupe Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7AN
- Belmont Library, Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, Belmont, Hereford, HR2 7UQ
- Colwall Library, Walwyn Road, Colwall, Herefordshire, WR13 6QT
- Hereford Library, Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AU
- Ledbury Library, Bye Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2AA
- Leintwardine Library, Leintwardine Village Hall, High Street, Leintwardine, Herefordshire, SY7 0LB
- Leominster Library, 8 Buttercross, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8BN
- Peterchurch Library, St Peter's Church, Church Road, Peterchurch, Herefordshire, HR2 0RS
- Weobley Library, Old Police Court, Back Lane, Weobley, Herefordshire, HR4 8SG

For more information on the Community Infrastructure Levy, please visit the Government's website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/giving-communities-more-power-in-planning-local-development/supporting-pages/community-infrastructure-levy>

# 1 Introduction

## What is this document?

- 1.1 This document is the public consultation document on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for Herefordshire Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It describes:
- What CIL is, and how it works;
  - The evidence supporting and justifying the implementation of CIL;
  - The proposed charge rates and how liability is calculated;
  - A consultation response form.

## What is CIL?

- 1.2 The government has published regulations<sup>1</sup> which prescribe how CIL should be implemented. These regulations came into force on 6 April 2010, and have subsequently been amended in April 2011 and November 2012.
- 1.3 The CIL is a new way for communities to benefit from built development taking place in their area. The levy is a fixed rate charge, based on square metres of net additional built floorspace. The charge may be levied on 1 or more dwellings and developments of more than 100 sq m of floorspace. Exemptions include affordable housing and charities.
- 1.4 The CIL regulations allow Herefordshire Council to introduce charge variations by geographical zone within its area, by land use, or both. These are set out in the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule. Some uses may be set at zero in some zones but variations must reflect differences in viability; they cannot be based on other matters such as policy boundaries or the local costs of infrastructure.
- 1.5 The proceeds of the CIL will be spent on strategic and local infrastructure to support the development of the area such as highways improvements, open spaces or education provision. Developer contributions on their own will not be able to meet the entire cost of a major infrastructure project. Core public funding will continue to contribute.
- 1.6 Herefordshire Council is required to have an adopted, up to date development plan before the CIL can be adopted. The development plan should be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, including the likely cost of providing that infrastructure. This plan should demonstrate the inability to provide the infrastructure through existing funding sources, hence the requirement to charge CIL.
- 1.7 The Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and CIL are therefore inextricably linked. To this end the Core Strategy and CIL consultations will be twin tracked through to Examination in Public (EiP).

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, as amended.  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/948/pdfs/ukxi\\_20100948\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/948/pdfs/ukxi_20100948_en.pdf)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/987/contents/made>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2975/contents/made>

## **What will happen to Planning Obligations?**

- 1.8 Planning obligations sought via Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) are essentially agreements between local authorities and developers to mitigate or compensate against the impact of a proposed development (such as lack of publicly accessible open space) or for a development to meet a policy objective set out in the Council's development plan (for example, affordable housing requirements).
- 1.9 Herefordshire Council currently operates a system of pooled contributions for certain types of planning obligations. Once the CIL charging schedule is adopted, the scope for pooling Section 106 contributions is restricted to contributions from no more than five developments for each infrastructure project. CIL will therefore replace S106 for pooled infrastructure contributions, apart from for affordable housing, which lies outside of the remit of CIL and will continue to be secured through Section 106.
- 1.10 Developers will still be expected to pay for the provision of site-specific infrastructure necessary for the development to take place, such as connections to the highway network. Individual developments won't be charged for the same items of infrastructure through both planning obligations and CIL.
- 1.11 S106 agreements will continue to be;
  - (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - (b) directly related to the development; and
  - (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## **What is meant by the term 'meaningful proportion'?**

- 1.12 The Localism Act 2011 broadened the scope of CIL to enable a "meaningful proportion" of CIL revenues to go directly to neighbourhoods where development takes place.
- 1.13 The Government announced on 10 January 2013 that Neighbourhoods who have taken a proactive approach by drawing up a neighbourhood development plan, and securing the consent of local people in a referendum, will receive 25% of the revenues from the Community Infrastructure Levy arising from the development that they choose to accept.
- 1.14 The proceeds will be paid directly to parish and town councils and can be used to back the community's priorities for example to re-roof a village hall, refurbish a municipal pool or take over a community pub. Neighbourhoods without a neighbourhood development plan will still receive a capped 15% share of the levy revenue arising from development in their area.
- 1.15 Neighbourhood Development Plans give local people the opportunity to decide the future of the places where they live and work. This allows the community to set out the vision for an area and the planning policies for the use and development of land, this can include choosing where new homes, shops, leisure facilities or employment opportunities to be built and what these buildings should look like, within the parish or neighbourhood area. Herefordshire Council has embraced the concept of neighbourhood development plans and is working proactively with parishes to deliver neighbourhood plans.

## 2 Evidence

### Background

2.1 Section 212 (4) of the Planning Act 2008 sets out how Herefordshire Council should approach the use of evidence in setting a charging schedule:

*“(b) that the charging authority has used appropriate available evidence to inform the draft charging schedule”*

2.2 DCLG has provided Guidance for the Community Infrastructure Levy<sup>2</sup>. The guidance reiterates that evidence is needed to inform the draft charging schedule but highlights that Herefordshire Council should apply pragmatism:

*“A charging authority’s proposed levy rate (or rates) should be reasonable given the available evidence, but there is no requirement for a proposed rate to exactly mirror the evidence, for example, if the evidence pointed to setting a charge right at the margins of viability. There is room for some pragmatism”. (para 28)*

2.3 The government has also produced non-statutory advice in the form of a CIL overview document<sup>3</sup> which states that:

*“Charging authorities should prepare evidence about the effect of the levy on economic viability in their area to demonstrate to an independent examiner that their proposed rates, for the levy, strike an appropriate balance.”*

### Viability Appraisal

2.4 Three Dragons Consultants were commissioned to carry out an updated Economic Viability Assessment to examine whole plan viability and produce viability evidence for development of a Community Infrastructure Levy preliminary draft charging schedule. Detailed below is a summary of evidence which has been used by Three Dragons to support the development of a Community Infrastructure Levy for Herefordshire Council:

- An analysis of publicly available data to identify the range of values and costs needed for the viability assessment;
- Discussions with council officers from planning, economic development and housing departments;
- Analysis of information held by the authority, including the profile of land supply identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and a review of historic planning permissions;
- Two workshops held with developers, land owners, their agents and representatives from a selection of registered providers in the area
- Subsequent discussions with agents and providers who operate in Herefordshire to verify the assumptions used in the analysis;
- A survey of local Registered Providers to seek their views on aspects of costs and revenue that affect affordable housing;

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<sup>2</sup> Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance 14 December 2012

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-infrastructure-levy-guidance>

<sup>3</sup> Community Infrastructure Overview 9 May 2011

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-infrastructure-levy-overview>



- Use of the Three Dragons Toolkit, adapted for Herefordshire to analyse scheme viability for residential development and of Three Dragons bespoke model for the analysis of non-residential schemes.
- 2.5 Their report, which sets out the methodology of the study and its findings in detail, can be downloaded from the Council's website.

## Infrastructure

- 2.6 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2013 is a detailed document that describes the main types of infrastructure that are relevant to support the development of the county, along with phasing of delivery, key partners, sources of funding, and locations of the projects.

# 3 Consultation issues

## Differential rates

- 3.1 Based on the results of the economic viability assessment, the council views that the use of differential rates, based on the different uses of development is appropriate for Herefordshire's preliminary draft Charging Schedule. Although differential rates are proposed, these have been kept as straightforward as possible.
- 3.2 The schedule identifies a charge for convenience retail and comparison retail. For clarification these are defined as:

*Convenience Retail:* Sale of Food and alcoholic beverages, tobacco, newspapers and magazines, non-durable household goods

*Comparison Retail:* Clothing materials and garments, shoes and other footwear, materials for maintenance and repair of dwellings, furniture and furnishings, major household textiles, books, audio visual equipment, hardware and DIY supplies, chemist goods, jewellery, watches and clocks, bicycles and recreation goods

## Payment by instalments

- 3.3 As per Part 8 of the CIL Regulations (as amended), Herefordshire Council can allow for the payment of CIL by instalments. If we choose to publish an instalment policy, it must be made available on the website, and have the following features:
- The number of instalment payments;
  - The amount of proportion of CIL payable in any instalment;
  - The time (to be calculated from the date the development is commenced) that the first instalment payment is due, and the time that any subsequent instalment payments are due;
  - Any minimum amount of CIL below which CIL may not be paid by instalment.
- 3.4 In order to ease the burden on developers' cash flow, a suggested instalment policy is shown below, reflecting the requirements of the regulations. The proposed instalments policy applies to all types of development.
- 3.5 Although the instalments policy is not subject to independent examination, comments are welcomed on this suggested payment policy, particularly regarding the amounts and proportions payable, and the proposed time periods for each instalment.

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# APPENDIX1: Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule

## Introduction

This is Herefordshire Council's Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, and has been prepared in accordance with Part 11 of the Planning Act 2008 and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. It has been informed by evidence regarding the impact of a Levy on the economic viability of development and local infrastructure requirements.

## Proposed CIL rates

**INSERT OUTSTANDING CIL RATES**

Proposed Use	CIL Charge per square metre
Residential (C3)	
Residential Institutions (C2)	£0
Town Centre Comparison retail (A1)	£90
Out of Centre Comparison retail (A1)	£125
Small convenience retail (up to 280 sqm) (A1)	£80
Large convenience retail (over 280 sqm) (A1)	£120
Hotel (C1)	£25
Light Industrial (B1)	£0
Office (B1)	£0
General Industrial (B2)	£0
Storage and Distribution (B8)	£0
Leisure	£0

**INSERT MAP OF CHARGES**

