

APPENDIX A:

SHROPSHIRE CORE STRATEGY DRAFT FINAL PLAN

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Contents	page number
1. Introduction	3
2. Spatial Portrait	9
Shropshire in 2010	9
Communities	11
Economy	13
Environment	15
Spatial Zones in Shropshire	17
3. The Challenges We Face	24
Spatial Vision	26
Strategic Objectives	28
4. Creating Sustainable Places	32
Policy CS1: Strategic Approach	33
Policy CS2: Shrewsbury Development Strategy	39
Policy CS3: Market Towns and Other Key Centres	47
Policy CS4: Community Hubs and Community Clusters	58
Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt	63
Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles	68
Policy CS7: Communication and Transport	72
Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision	77
Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions	80
5. Meeting Housing Needs	83
Policy CS10: Managed Release of Housing Land	83
Policy CS11: Type and Affordability of Housing	87
Policy CS12: Gypsies and Traveller Provision	92
6. A Prosperous Economy	94
Policy CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment	94
Policy CS14: Managed Release of Employment Land	99
Policy CS15: Town and Rural Centres	104
Policy CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure	104
7. Environment	113
Policy CS17: Environmental Networks	113
Policy CS18: Sustainable Water Management	117
Policy CS19: Waste Management Infrastructure	121
Policy CS20: Strategic Planning for Minerals	126
8. Appendix 1: Saved Local and Structure Plan Policies replaced by the Core Strategy	131
9. Glossary	140

List of figures	page number
Figure 1: The Shropshire Local Development Framework	3
Figure 2: Spatial Planning and Delivery Framework for Shropshire	7
Figure 3: Sub-regional Context	10
Figure 4: Spatial Zones	18
Figure 5: Shropshire Core Strategy Key Diagram	38
Figure 6: Shrewsbury Key Diagram	41
Figure 7: Oswestry Key Diagram	49
Figure 8: Housing Trajectory	85
Figure 9: Broad Locations for Waste management Sites	122
Figure 10: Mineral Safeguarding Areas	127
Figure 11: Broad Locations for Sand and Gravel Working	128
 List of Tables	
Table 1: Settlement Strategy	37
Table 2: Policy CS3 and Indicative Scale of development	49
Table 3: Development in market Towns and Key Centres 1998-2008	51
Table 4: Employment Land requirement	100

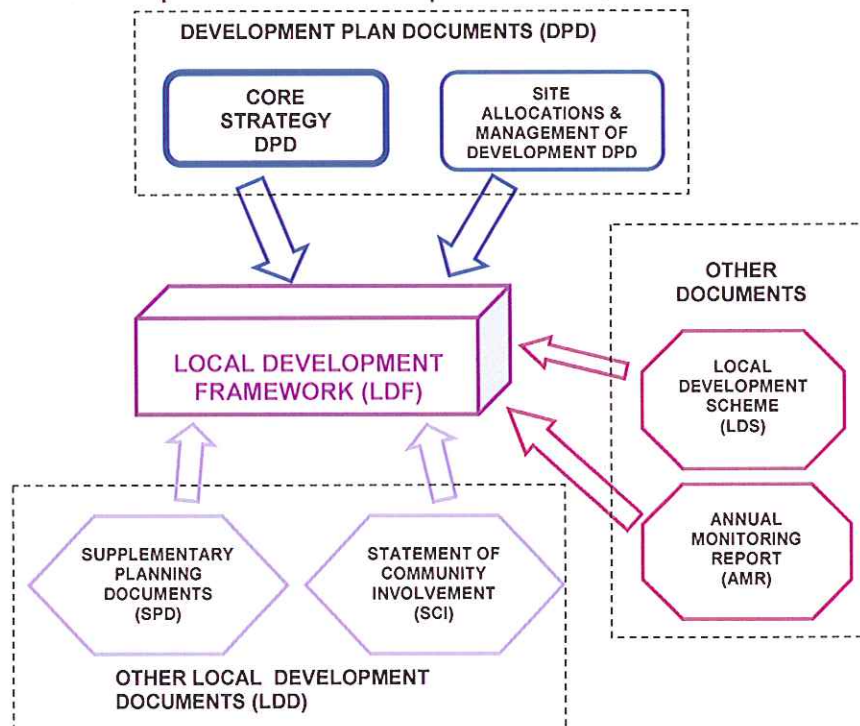
1. INTRODUCTION

THE CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) will be the principal document of the Shropshire Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a set of documents (shown in figure 1) setting out policies relating to the use and development of land in Shropshire. The Core Strategy is the first of these documents that the Council has prepared, and the most important, setting out how Shropshire is expected to evolve over the period to 2026.

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision, strategic objectives and the broad spatial strategy to guide future development and growth in Shropshire during the period to 2026. It will be the starting point for the determination of planning applications and will be supported in due course by other documents relating to the allocation of land and more detailed development management policies. It will guide the aspirations of not only Shropshire Council but also other key service providers and stakeholders, whose input will be essential to the successful implementation of the Strategy.

Figure 1: The Shropshire Local Development Framework



THE SHROPSHIRE APPROACH

The Core Strategy embodies an innovative approach to development in Shropshire and aims to deliver more sustainable places at all levels and in both urban and rural settings. A sustainable place has sufficient social, economic and environmental infrastructure to meet the needs of its current population, but it is also resilient and capable of adapting to a range of economic, social and environmental challenges in the future.

It is especially important to ensure that Shropshire's market towns and rural settlements become more sustainable places and develop the resilience needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Living Working Countryside Report (The Taylor Review 2008) and the Government's response to it raise a clear expectation that the planning system will respond more positively to rural sustainability. It will support rural businesses and affordable housing development and use these as a catalyst to maintain sustainable places which have facilities and services such as shops, pubs, schools and local businesses. The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy emphasises the importance of understanding local needs both for affordable housing and promoting local regeneration and support for retaining or achieving new services designed to meet those needs. In Shropshire many of the changes necessary to help achieve this will be small scale, incremental, locationally specific and founded upon community engagement.

Proactive community engagement is an important tool to identify community needs, particularly where it is used alongside other community led documents such as Parish Plans. Such documents and tools can be used to support Local Planning Authorities in place making and help to ensure that the Sustainable Community Strategy is delivered through the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy provides the framework for the Council to undertake a process of community engagement with communities within Shropshire's rural areas. The approach, carried out in 2010, used a process pioneered in the South West known as the 'Devon Toolkit' to establish communities own views of the level of sustainability in their own settlements. It is a community-led, bottom-up approach that is responsive to communities' own priorities and recognises that sustainability is based on many factors, including the presence of employment, affordable housing, facilities and services, but also intangible assets such as social fabric. This has identified what makes rural communities sustainable places and has set out communities' own aspirations for change or growth to help them become more resilient and sustainable.

Developing the Core Strategy has involved making important, and sometimes difficult, decisions and choices about how and where the need for new development in Shropshire can best be met. Having prepared and published this Final Plan version of the Core Strategy the Council is now inviting representations on the 'soundness' of the Plan for a period of 6 weeks until 26th March 2010.

PREPARATION AND EVIDENCE BASE

The Shropshire Core Strategy has been prepared following considerable community consultation, the collection of evidence and working with key partners including the Local Strategic Partnership; town and parish councils; community groups; businesses; national and government organisations; utility companies and developers/agents.

Consultation has taken place at the following stages in the Core Strategy preparation:

Topic Papers: July - Sept 2008

Issues and Options: Jan – Feb 2009

Policy Directions: Aug – Sept 2009

Whilst it is important that the Core Strategy reflects the views and aspirations of local communities, it should also be remembered that there are other factors and established priorities that must be taken into account, if the Core Strategy is to be found sound. These are:

- national planning policy statements and guidance prepared by Government;
- regional planning policy - the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) prepared by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, which sets the higher level planning policy framework including a range of targets for housing, employment land, minerals and waste;
- the decisions reached on strategies, policies and programmes prepared by the Council and other agencies, which will have implications for future development in Shropshire.

The development of the Core Strategy has also been informed by a comprehensive evidence base. This includes but is not limited to, the following key elements;

- Consultation responses
- Shropshire Annual Monitoring Report
- Shropshire 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Housing Market Area Assessment
- Affordable Housing Viability Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (level 1)
- Shropshire Water Cycle Study
- AONB Management Plan
- Parish Plans

These documents, alongside a range of other evidence and background documents relating to issues such as housing needs, review of employment land, retail studies, minerals provision, and others are available on request or via the Shropshire Council web site: www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning

Sustainability Appraisal

The policies in the Core Strategy have also been the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal. The Council prepared and then consulted on objectives against which to measure the sustainability of the various policy options and approaches at previous stages. At this stage the policies themselves have been subject to a full sustainability appraisal. The outcome of this work is set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Report, available by request or via the Shropshire Council website.

Habitat Regulation Assessment

Habitat Regulation Assessment also plays an important role in plan making by assessing the potential impacts of planning policies on the conservation objectives of designated sites of European importance. In Shropshire this means Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites within Shropshire and Special Protection Areas (SPA's) outside Shropshire. The Council prepared and consulted on a HRA Screening Report in March 2009.

A further Habitat Regulation Assessment Report for the Core Strategy Final Plan will be available for consultation on the Shropshire Council website.

Consultation Responses

A statement has been produced setting out those bodies and persons invited to make representations at the various consultation stages, how they were engaged, a summary of the main issues raised and how these have been addressed in the preparation of the Core Strategy.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND OTHER STRATEGIES

The Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy provides a strategic context which the planning system needs to reflect and interact with. It is produced by the Shropshire Partnership (acting as the Local Strategic Partnership), and comprises representatives from regional, public and local agencies and the voluntary and community sector. The Shropshire Partnership has produced a new Sustainable Community Strategy, in tandem with the Core Strategy, which will help guide the new unitary authority during the period 2010 - 2020.

The LDF will provide a spatial expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy and show how spatial planning can help deliver its social, economic and environment based priorities and agreed outcomes. In turn, as it is updated, the Community Strategy will identify and address issues that arise and ensure that partner organisations have their plans in place to support the delivery of development to meet Shropshire's needs.

Developing a clear and effective relationship between the policies and proposals of the LDF and other Council documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Corporate Plan, Housing Strategy, the Business Board Plan and the Local Transport Plan is a key Council objective. Similarly, alignment with other drivers for delivery such as the Homes and Communities Agency 'Single Conversation' is particularly important. The LDF will deliver or help to deliver the objectives of these and other strategies.

DELIVERY

The Core Strategy has the principle of sustainable development at its heart and goes beyond just land use planning to bring together other policies and programmes that influence the nature of Shropshire and how it functions. Key pieces of evidence, policies and partners are identified throughout this document. A key objective is to ensure that planned development is delivered and that mechanisms are in place to ensure this happens. Therefore, the means of delivering each policy is also set out and the Core Strategy Implementation Plan outlines the key infrastructure requirements needed to support the development of sustainable places and the scale of growth outlined in the Core Strategy.

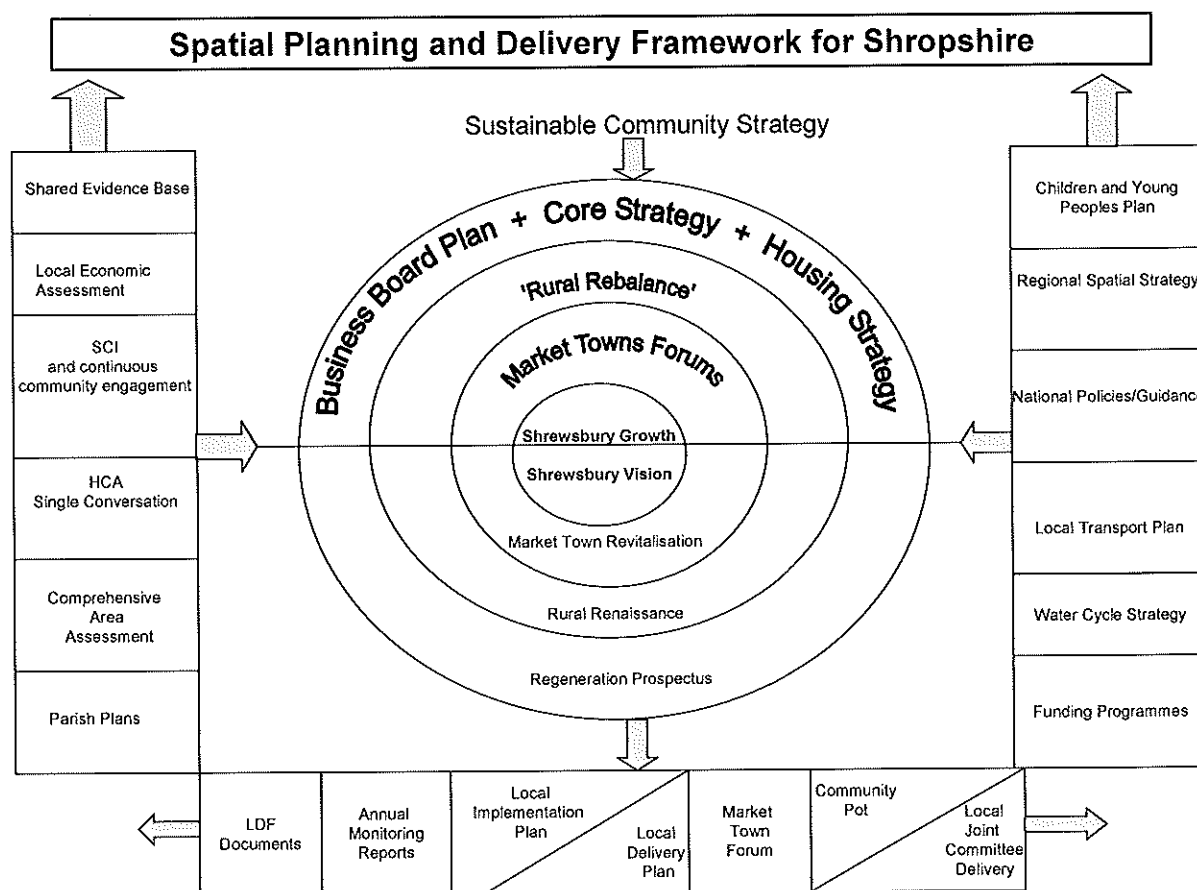
It is important that the LDF maintains a focus on delivery and successful outcomes 'on the ground'. To this end, links with other non-statutory Council documents and initiatives are critical, in particular the Shrewsbury Growth Point/Shrewsbury Vision, Market Towns Revitalisation and other plans seeking to develop increased self reliance in the rural area. Although not all within the formal LDF framework they are part of the overall package to bring

sustainable growth to Shropshire and will be closely linked to the Implementation Plan of the Core Strategy.

Similarly the HCA's Single Conversation will make connections between housing and regeneration need, market opportunity, planning policy, land supply, and development viability. The aim is to produce a Local Investment Plan (LIP) bringing together priorities of key agencies. The LIP will be very closely allied to the Implementation Plan of the Core Strategy covering aspects such as economy, education, skills, health, transport, climate change and the environment. This combined plan will be called the Regeneration Prospectus.

The relationship between the various Plans and delivery/implementation strategies is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2:



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

On completion of the period for representations, the Council has to consider all of the representations made and determine whether any are so significant as to warrant further changes to the Core Strategy. Government guidance suggests that this should only take place in exceptional circumstances. The remaining stages in the Core Strategy process are:

- Submission of the Core Strategy and all other supporting material, including the representations made on this document, to the Secretary of State in July 2010, for Public Examination by a Planning Inspector.
- Public Examination in autumn 2010 to consider soundness of the Core Strategy.
- Receipt and publication of the Inspector's Binding Report (early 2011)
- Adoption of the Core Strategy by the Council (March 2011)

Saved Policies

The Shropshire LDF will eventually replace the saved policies contained in the Local Plans prepared by the six former authorities and the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Structure Plan, prepared jointly by Shropshire County and Telford & Wrekin Councils. Those policies replaced by the Core Strategy are set out in Appendix 1.

2. SPATIAL PORTRAIT

The Core Strategy is based on an understanding of Shropshire's unique characteristics, its relationship with adjoining areas, knowledge of past trends and how things are likely to change in the future. This spatial portrait provides an overview of Shropshire, its people and places in 2010 and identifies the key issues and challenges we face.

Further detailed information, analysis and mapping of data can be found in Shropshire 2008 – Sustainable Community Strategy Evidence Base, which provides a common evidence base for both the Community Strategy and the LDF. *(Insert web link)*

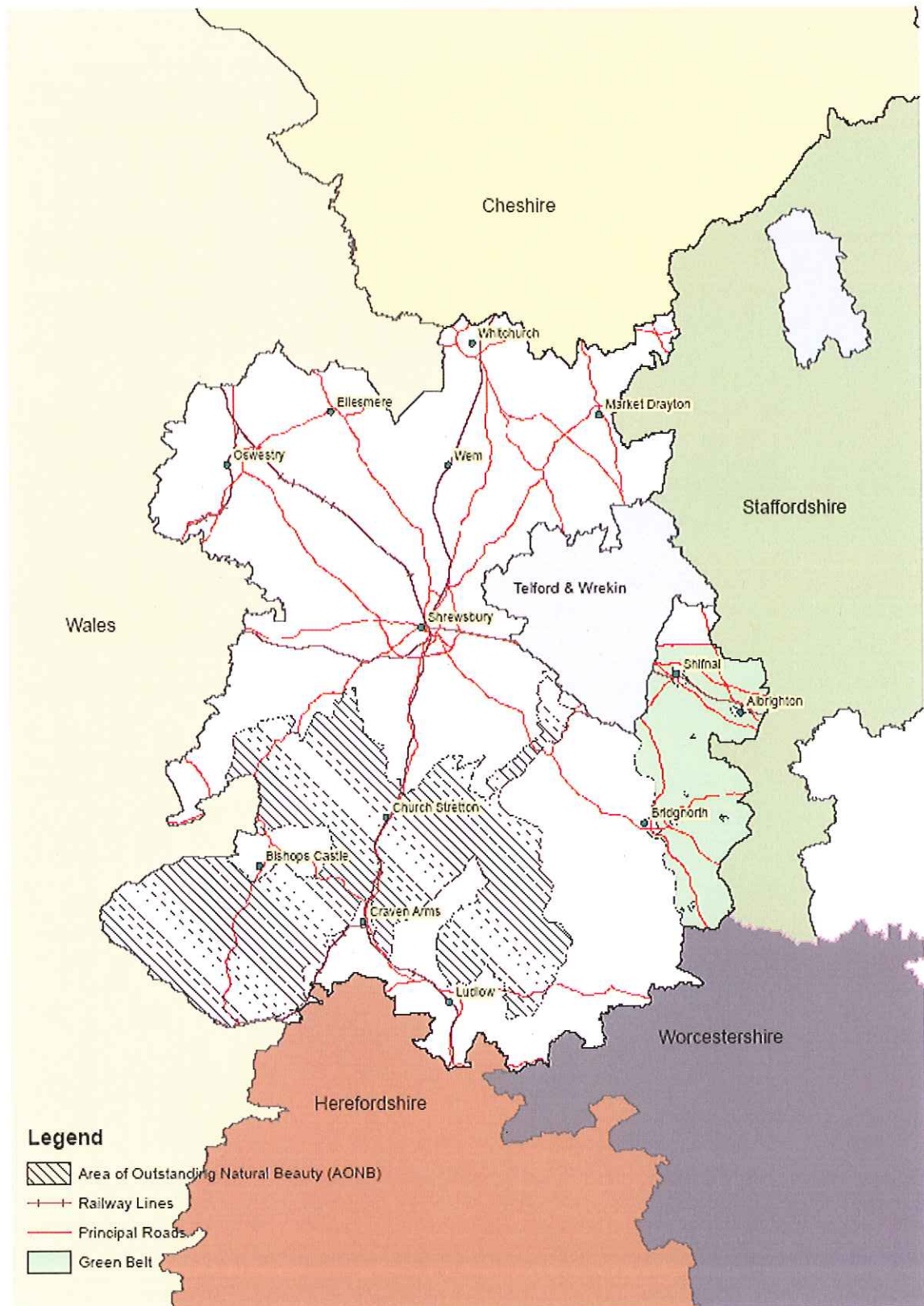
Shropshire in 2010

Sub- regional context

Shropshire is a large, diverse, predominantly rural inland county, situated in the far western corner of the West Midlands Region, on the border with Wales. It has a close relationship and strong sub-regional ties with neighbouring Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire. The eastern part of Shropshire has strong links with the West Midlands conurbation. Parts of north east Shropshire have connections with the Potteries and towns within south Cheshire. Western and southern parts of Shropshire have strong links with adjacent areas in Wales, but are more self contained and are remote from the influence of the major urban areas of the West Midlands. There are a range of interactions taking place which cross Shropshire's boundaries, including service provision, transport links and commuting patterns, and interdependencies in housing markets.

The Plan area covers approximately 320,000 hectares, 94% of which is classed as rural and 6% urban. Around one third of the County is upland, mostly to the south and west and almost 81,000 hectares are designated as the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). To the south east, land between the River Severn and the Shropshire border forms part of the West Midlands Green Belt. Different parts of the plan area have different characteristics which are drawn out further through the description of five spatial zones at the end of this section.

Figure 3: Sub-regional context



Communities

People and Places

- With a total population of 292,800 (2008) and only 0.9 persons per hectare, Shropshire is one of the most sparsely populated counties in England.
- Shrewsbury is the county town and the largest settlement and contains about a quarter of the total population. It is the main commercial, cultural and administrative centre for Shropshire, with a catchment that extends into mid Wales.
- The main market towns of Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Ludlow and Whitchurch are much smaller and together contain about 20% of the total population. They provide a range of facilities and services for their resident communities and surrounding rural hinterlands. There are a further 13 smaller market towns and key centres.
- Outside the market towns and key centres, the population is spread widely and sparsely with many small settlements, hamlets and dispersed dwellings within the countryside. Overall, around 36% of the population live in rural areas. Rural communities have been affected by the loss of local services such as village shops, post offices, garages and pubs.
- Between 1991 and 2008 the population grew by 8.2% (24,100 people) due to in-migration, mainly from neighbouring areas. The population is projected to grow to 329,600 by 2026.
- Almost a fifth of residents are aged 65 or over. The demographic shift of an ageing population has been more rapid in Shropshire, with the number of people of retirement age increasing by 26.6% since 1991. This is attributable to the in-migration of people wishing to retire to the area and higher than average out-migration of young people. Each year, the County gains additional 200-400 migrants of retirement age.
- Overall, Shropshire is considered to be a relatively affluent area, ranked 106th most deprived out of 149 county and unitary authorities. The highest concentrations of deprivation are visible mainly within the urban areas. However pockets of hidden rural deprivation also exist throughout Shropshire related to issues of isolation and access to services.
- In 2001, 1.2% of the population identified themselves as being from black, mixed or other minority groups, significantly lower than the national figure of 9% and the regional figure of 11%.
- Car ownership levels are relatively high as many people need a car out of necessity due to lack of public transport and the need to access services and employment. In 2001, only 17.7% of Shropshire households did not own a car. In rural areas, only 8.3% of households have no car.

Housing

- There are 122,800 households in Shropshire (2006). The number of households is projected to increase to 152,300 by 2026, contributing to the need to provide additional housing.
- Housing affordability is a key issue. Some 70-80% of earning households have annual earnings below the level required to purchase 'entry level' properties and the mortgage multiplier is 10 times the average local wage.

Current waiting lists for social housing illustrate that supply fails to meet demand. The occupation of mobile homes and caravans in Shropshire is significantly higher than the regional and national average.

- The predominant housing types in Shropshire are semi-detached and detached housing, reflecting its rural nature. Higher proportions of terraced housing and flats exist in Shrewsbury reflecting its role as the major urban settlement. Recent trends in housing completions suggest that the need for smaller properties is not being met.
- The area has a significant and diverse Gypsy and Traveller population, with varying needs and a large number of small, long term unauthorised sites.

Health

- Life expectancy for males and females in Shropshire is significantly higher than the national figure and all age all cause mortality for males and females is significantly lower.
- People living in the most deprived areas are significantly more likely to suffer poor health outcomes compared to those in the least deprived areas. They are more likely to have long term conditions, to smoke, to be physically inactive and to be obese. They are also less likely to have a healthy diet.

Education and Training

- Educational attainment in Shropshire is high and consistently above the national average. SAT results show a strong upward trend over recent years. Approximately 64% of pupils attain 5 or more GCSE passes at grade A*-C (date?)
- Demographic changes have resulted in falling roll numbers in many schools, especially in rural areas. This has prompted a review of primary school provision. Numbers in the primary sector are predicted to fall by 3.2% to 2013 and in the secondary sector by 12.7% to 2016. However, the drop is not uniform across the County. New housing and in-migration will offset some of the reduction.
- Accessibility to further and higher education sites is a key issue in such a rural County. Currently, many young people leave Shropshire to undertake formal higher education courses and their out-migration is a serious problem for local economic development.
- Within the West Midlands, Shropshire has the highest proportion of its workforce with skills gaps along with Birmingham and Solihull at 7%.

Community Safety

- Shropshire is generally a low crime area. All types of recorded crime are greatest in the main centres of population. Fear of crime is low, with the vast majority of Shropshire residents feeling very safe within their neighbourhood.
- Road accidents are the most significant cause of accidental death in Shropshire, accounting for 56% of all accidental deaths. Shropshire residents consider road safety to be the biggest community safety concern

in their local neighbourhood. The speed of traffic through villages and in urban areas has seen residents calling for lower speed limits and better speed enforcement.

Economy

- The characteristics of Shropshire's labour force and economy, in part, reflect the rural nature of the County, with a traditional dependence on agriculture and related sectors and comparatively low employment in knowledge based industries.
- In 2007, 136,200 residents aged 16+ were in employment in Shropshire or elsewhere.
- Shropshire has a predominantly small business economy, with 87% of businesses employing 10 or fewer staff.
- The service sector accounts for over three quarters (77.9%) of all jobs. Employment in agriculture (3.6%) and construction (6.3%) is higher than national and regional averages.
- There are a small number of major employers in manufacturing and food processing, whilst the public sector is a large employer through the health service and local government.
- In 2006, 34,000 people were employed in technology and knowledge intensive sectors, representing 30.8% of all employees. This is lower than the national and regional average.
- Shropshire has a lower business start up rate than the regional and national average, although business survival rates are better.
- Self employment in Shropshire is 10% above the national average. Many are home-based enterprises. Shropshire ranks second in the UK for home-based enterprise.
- In many parts of Shropshire, broadband services are slow and unreliable, and in some places, access is not available at all. Many businesses most affected by poor broadband services are in rural locations, where mobile telecom network connection is also a problem.
- Wage levels are low. Median gross weekly earnings in 2008 were £410, 85.5% of the national and 91.4% of the regional average.
- Unemployment rates are traditionally low, but are now rising (3.0% August 2009).
- There are significant levels of out-commuting, especially in highly skilled/managerial occupations. Over 30,000 residents commute out of the area to work each day, offset by just over 20,000 in commuters.
- Identified business growth sectors include: environmental technologies; creative and cultural industries; tourism; and the land based sector, particularly food and drink production and processing.
- The main employment areas are located within Shrewsbury and the larger market towns. A significant proportion of Shropshire is part of the Rural Regeneration Zone, an initiative led by the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands, to target regeneration funding and activity in the most vulnerable rural areas.
- In 2009, large parts of the County were included within the European Leader+ programme areas for the Northern Marches (south Cheshire and northern Shropshire) and the Shropshire Hills, with funding through the

Rural Development Programme for England to stimulate economic, social and community development.

Town Centres

- Shrewsbury is an important sub-regional centre and is ranked as one of the top ten retail centres in the West Midlands. It serves a catchment of around 180,000 people within a 20 minute drive time. In addition to the town centre, it has two established out of centre retail destinations – Sundorne Retail Park to the north and Meole Brace Retail Park to the south.
- Oswestry is Shropshire's second largest centre and the largest market town, with a retail turnover significantly greater than that of the other market towns.
- Beyond the boundaries of Shropshire there are neighbouring competing centres at Wrexham, Chester, Stoke, Telford, Wolverhampton, Kidderminster and Hereford.

Tourism

- Tourism is an important part of the local economy, with approaching 11 million people visiting each year. Overall, tourism directly supports over 8,000 full time equivalent and more than 6% of all Shropshire-based jobs are tourism related.
- Much of Shropshire's appeal is due to it being a tranquil rural area with attractive countryside and high quality local food products, where a range of leisure activities such as walking and cycling can be enjoyed.
- Key day visitor attractions include Ironbridge Gorge and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal (both UNESCO World Heritage Sites) Stokesay and Ludlow Castles, Severn Valley Railway, RAF Cosford Museum, the Country Parks of Attingham, Weston and Hawkstone and the countryside of the Shropshire Hills AONB. Shropshire's country houses, estates and gardens, canals, farm attractions and golf courses are also a feature. The Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal is one of the busiest leisure waterways in the country.

Transport and Accessibility

- Shropshire is linked to the national motorway system by the M54/A5 which runs east-west between Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Telford and the M6. This route, continuing to North Wales and Holyhead, is part of the Trans European Network. Whilst the condition of the main road network and levels of congestion are generally satisfactory, there are specific concerns with respect to strategic routes such as the A49 and the A5 and around Shrewsbury, where there are also air quality issues. A North-West Relief Road has been proposed to help relieve congestion in Shrewsbury town centre.
- A number of rail lines provide links with the West Midlands, mid and south Wales, Cheshire, Merseyside, Manchester and Herefordshire. Shrewsbury is a key rail hub and now benefits from a new direct service from Wrexham to London. There are 16 rail stations in the County.

- For a rural county, Shropshire has a fairly extensive bus network. However, a dispersed population and long distances combined with high levels of car ownership in rural areas makes it difficult to provide bus services that are economical and convenient.
- Improving accessibility, the ease by which people can get to key services and destinations, is a key challenge in Shropshire. The destinations to which accessibility (by public transport, walking or cycling) is poorest are hospitals and major towns, such as Shrewsbury and Telford. 35% of households cannot get to a major town within an hour by public transport and 54% of households cannot reach an acute hospital within an hour by public transport. Access to post 16 education establishments and to public libraries is also poor.
- There are currently no commercial navigable waterways in the area, although the River Severn, the Shropshire Union Canal and the Montgomery Canal are navigable in parts and are used for recreational boating.
- A number of National Cycle Network routes cross Shropshire. Shrewsbury is one of 18 cycling towns and cities in the UK.
- Shropshire benefits from approximately 5500km of public rights of way which together form a network of routes which run between villages and towns, and provide access to the countryside.
- Transport is the single biggest contributor to Shropshire's carbon footprint, with 50% of all CO2 emissions being attributable to the transport sector. Local air quality is also significantly affected by emissions from vehicles. There are five areas in the County declared as Air Quality Management areas, the most significant being an area covering Shrewsbury town centre.

Environment

Natural Environment

- The great diversity of underlying rock types means that Shropshire possesses one of the richest and most varied landscapes in England. The countryside ranges from the gently undulating landscape in the north through the low lying fertile valleys of the meandering River Severn and its tributaries to the distinct hills and open, windswept moorlands of the south;
- The nationally designated landscape of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 23% of the county in the south;
- Shropshire has high levels of geodiversity. There 300 regionally important geological sites and rock representing all but two of the recognised divisions of geological time;
- The varied physical landscape has influenced the county's agricultural, industrial and cultural development. The Shropshire landscape is a key economic asset creating not only an attractive place to live and work but also an important tourist destination;
- Shropshire's natural environment supports a wide range of habitats, including the ancient woodlands along Wenlock Edge, the upland heathlands on the Stiperstones and the Long Mynd and the lowland raised peat bog at Whixall Moss;

- The richness of biodiversity within Shropshire is reflected in the number of non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation. National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and non-statutory Wildlife Sites together cover approximately 6% of the land area. Approximately 7% of the land area of Shropshire is covered by woodland which includes a higher than average proportion of ancient woodland;
- Under the European Habitats Directive, six areas have been identified as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Sixteen sites in northern Shropshire fall under two RAMSAR designations, recognising their international status under the International Convention on Wetlands. Many biodiversity designations continue across administrative boundaries and benefit from a cross boundary approach;

Historic Environment

- Shropshire possess a rich and important historic environment.. Heritage assets range from Bronze Age ring ditches and Iron Age hill forts, to a major Roman city at Wroxeter, Offa's Dyke and important areas of industrial and archaeological interest, including part of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site
- The richness of Shropshire's historic environment is reflected in the number of designated heritage assets. There are 6,849 listed buildings, 437 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 34 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens (including 3 which are cross-border) and a Registered Historic Battlefield. The wider value of historic landscapes and townscapes is recognised through the designation of 120 Conservation Areas in Shropshire (including the centres of many of the market towns), together with the wealth of non-statutory designated heritage assets recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Climate Change

- Climate change is recognised as possibly the greatest threat facing the world today. Impacts that have been identified for Shropshire include, higher temperatures, with potentially a 4⁰c increase by 2080, increased winter rainfall of up to 20% by 2080 and decreased summer rainfall of up to 30% by 2050.
- These changes are expected to result in building and infrastructure damage from extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity and landscape character, and impact on agricultural practices leading to increased water demand and increased health risks from higher summer temperatures.

Water Environment

- Flood risk is a key issue in Shropshire and in some areas is a significant constraint to new development. In addition to the River Severn and its tributaries, runoff has increased as agriculture has intensified and we have built more roads and houses, which has degraded the natural permeability of the landscape and reduced its capacity to retain water.

- The area contains significant quantities of groundwater which is used extensively to provide water for agriculture, industry and local domestic supply. Heavy abstraction has resulted in falling groundwater levels and had an adverse impact on watercourses and wetlands. Groundwater contamination by nitrates from agriculture is also a significant issue and a large part of north eastern Shropshire has been designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

Minerals and Waste

- Shropshire is an important area for mineral resources and has a significant mining heritage. Shropshire's mineral resources are supplied to both local markets and the wider area, particularly in the case of crushed rock and fire clay, where materials supply both regional and national markets. The aggregates industry is the most active sector and Shropshire currently supplies sand and gravel resources sufficient to meet the entire target for the sub-region, which includes Telford and Wrekin.
- Whilst recycling levels for household waste have increased rapidly, the majority of Shropshire's waste is still being landfilled. However, there is now only one small landfill site operating in Shropshire and most waste is sent for disposal in adjacent local authorities, particularly Telford and Wrekin. Legislative and fiscal changes over the next few years will force waste producers, local authorities and the waste industry to divert more waste away from landfill, which will require a different and more industrial network of waste management sites.

Spatial Zones in Shropshire

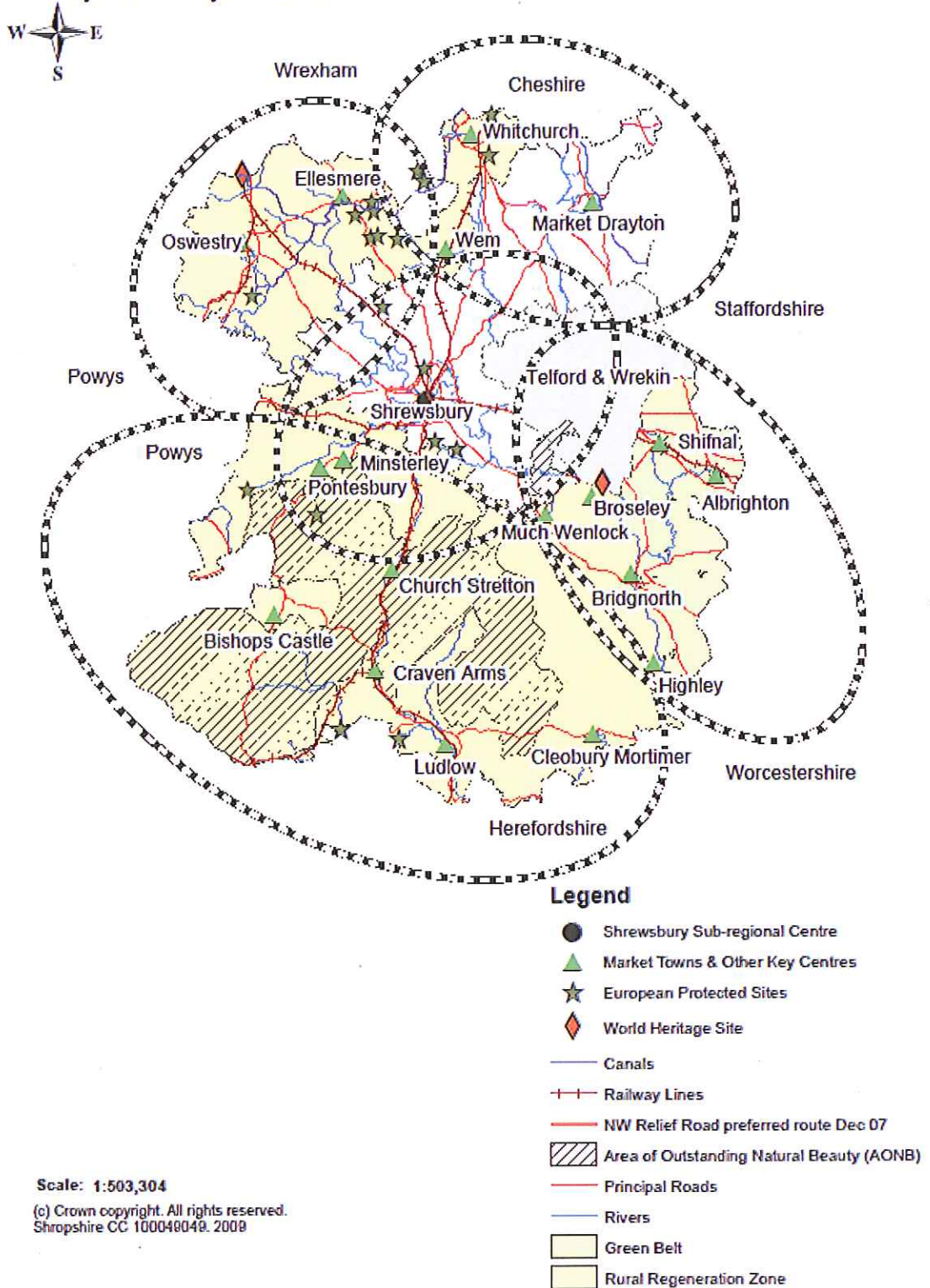
To assist the development of the Core Strategy for such a large county, five spatial zones have been identified to help draw out the varied characteristics, functions and needs of different parts of the Plan area. This approach to local distinctiveness is informed by:

- Demography
- Topography
- Environmental quality
- The local economy
- Transport and accessibility
- Cross boundary linkages

The spatial zones are shown in Figure xx and have a role to play in the application of policy, in particular the proposed spatial strategy for the distribution of development through policies CS1 - CS4.

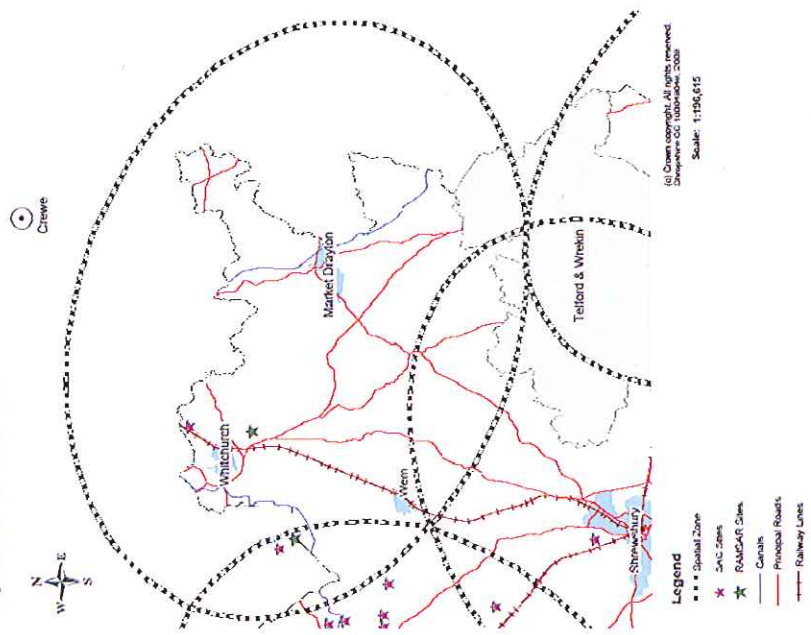
Figure 4: Spatial Zones

Shropshire Spatial Zones



North East Zone

Spatial Zone : North East



Key characteristics and issues: Communities

- **Key settlements/service centres:** Market Drayton, Whitechurch and Wem
- **Housing:** Significant housing affordability issues. High proportion of existing housing is 4-5 bed or larger, smaller properties are in short supply.
- **Health:** Whitechurch Community Hospital
- **Education:** 3 secondary schools. Post 16 education at Sir John Talbot's School, Whitechurch; Thomas Adams School, Wem; Grove School, Market Drayton
- **Accessibility:** Good transport accessibility by road (A41, A49, A53) and rail (Crewe-Cardiff line -stations at Whitechurch, Prees, Yorton and Wem). Cross border public transport is an issue, particularly from Market Drayton

Economy

- **Economy:** Weighted towards industrial sector. Office market is small. Rural economy important. Inward investment limited. Key focus for dairy production and associated food processing. Low wage levels associated with local employment, an ageing workforce and a significant part of the workforce that is unskilled or poorly qualified. High levels of out commuting. Significant home-working.
- **Key Employment sites:** Tern Valley Business Park, Sych Farm, Market Drayton; Whitechurch Business Park/Waymills Industrial Estate/Civic Business Park, Whitechurch; Wem Industrial Estate, Wem Business Park. Shortage of serviced readily available land. Economics of development are marginal
- **Tourism:** Visitor attractions include the market towns and cultural events, Shropshire Union Canal, Hawkstone Park, Hodnet Hall Gardens
- Operational MOD base at Tern Hill.

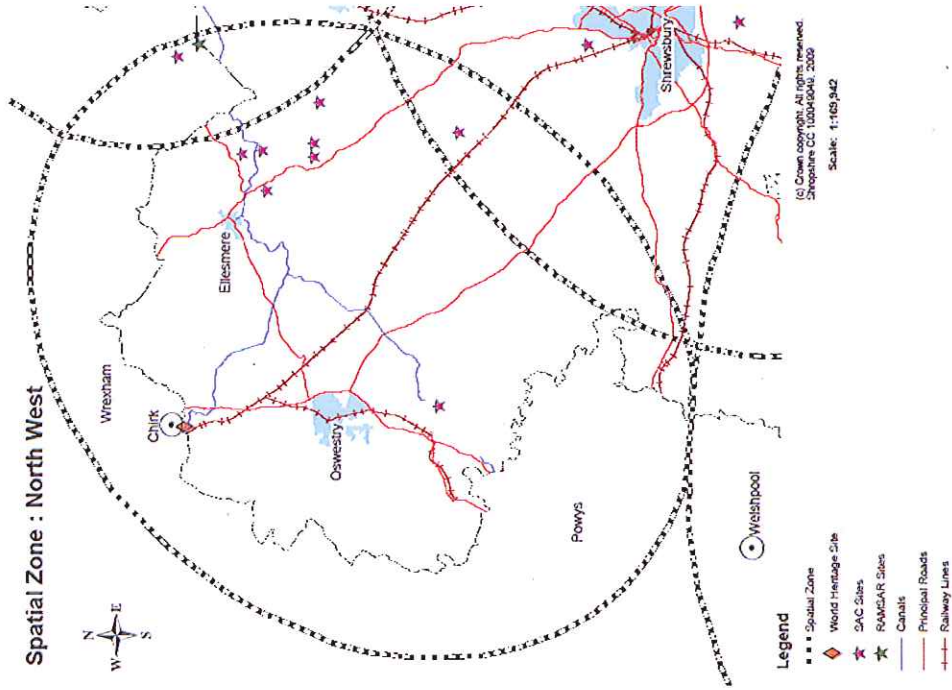
Environment

- **Landscape Character-** Gently rolling plain with low sandstone hills and ridges and scattered meres and mosses
- **Environmental Assets:** Shropshire Union Canal provides a significant environmental corridor. A number of Registered parklands, including Hawkstone Park and Hodnet Hall. Internationally recognised wetland and wildlife sites (Meres and Mosses), which also constitute important historic environment assets;
- **Water Environment:** Whole area designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone whereby nitrate pollution has been identified as a problem for the water environment and certain farming practices must be followed. Southern part of area includes Source Protection Zones, indicating groundwater sources which are used for public drinking water supply and may be at risk of pollution.

Cross boundary issues

- **Adjacent urban centres:** In proximity to the Potteries, Crewe, Chester, Telford and in commuter zone for Manchester

North West Zone



Key characteristics and issues:

Communities

- **Key settlements/service centres:** Oswestry and Ellesmere.
- **Housing:** Significant housing affordability issues.
- **Health:** Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital
- **Education:** 4 secondary schools. Post 16 education and training at Walford and North Shropshire College (Oswestry & Baschurch Campuses) and Derwen College, Gobowen.
- **Accessibility:** Good transport accessibility by road (A5, A483, A495) and rail (Shrewsbury-Chester, station at Gobowen)

Economy

- **Economy:** Weighted towards industrial sector. Office market small and needs encouragement. Inward investment limited. Significant degree of economic containment. Oswestry dominates but rural economy important. Above average numbers employed in routine, low skilled, low paid jobs. Low levels of employment in high value sectors.
- **Key Employment sites:** Oswestry Industrial Estates, Ellesmere Business Park. Current shortage of suitable and available employment land in Oswestry. Economics of development are marginal. Public sector support required.
- **Tourism:** Visitor attractions include market towns, cultural events, Shropshire Union Canal, Montgomery Canal, Oswestry Hillfort, Offa's Dyke, Oswestry Showground, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Cambrian Railway, Meres, and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site

Environment

- **Landscape Character-** Gently rolling plain gives way to steeper limestone hills and valleys to the north and west.
- **Environmental Assets:** One of the areas of greatest biodiversity in Shropshire. Wide range of habitats and internationally protected meres and mosses. Nationally and internationally important heritage assets including Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Site, Offa's Dyke, Old Oswestry Hillfort and the Llanyrnoch Limestone Heritage Area.
- **Water Environment:** Flooding issues at the Severn-Vyrnwy confluence. Parts of area designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones whereby nitrate pollution has been identified as a problem for the water environment and certain farming practices must be followed. Eastern part of area includes Source Protection Zones, indicating groundwater sources which are used for public drinking water supply and may be at risk of pollution.
- **Minerals and Waste:** Important centre for high quality crushed rock production for local use and export regionally and nationally.

Cross boundary issues

- **Cross border links:** Strong cross border links to mid and north Wales and the north-west

Central Zone

Key characteristics and issues:

Communities

- **Key settlements/service centres:** Shrewsbury and Minsterley/Pontesbury. Shrewsbury acts as a sub-regional service centre for a large area including Wales. much of mid
- **Housing:** Significant housing affordability issues
- **Education:** 6 secondary schools. Post 16 education at Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology, Shrewsbury Sixth Form College, Walford and North Shropshire College (Baschurch Campus)
- **Community facilities:** major community facilities include: Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury Sports Village, county library, museums, and the headquarters of the police, fire and ambulance services. Key infrastructure includes Ironbridge Power Station;
- **Accessibility:** Centre of Shropshire road and rail transport networks, A5/M54 key east-west corridor to West Midlands conurbation and north-west to Wales and Ireland (Trans-European network route). A49 key north-south route. Growing traffic management issues in and around Shrewsbury.

Economy

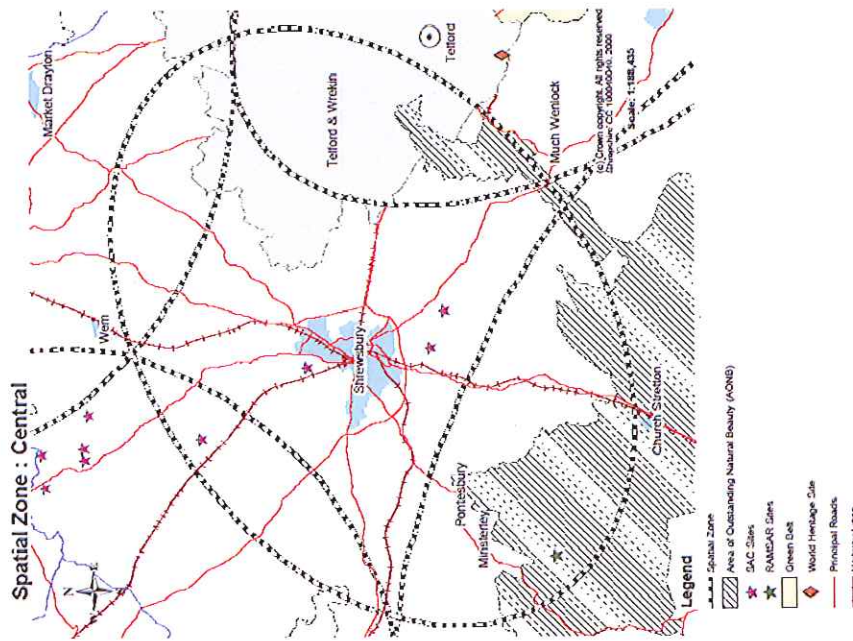
- **Economy:** Strong service sector with concentration in public administration, education and health. Below average employment in manufacturing. Workforce has a high skill level employed in higher value jobs. Growing entrepreneurial culture.
- **Key Employment sites:** Battlefield Enterprise Park, including Shropshire Food Enterprise Park, Shrewsbury Business Park, Oxon Business Park. Development activity based mainly on local expanding companies relocating to new premises. Pressure for quasi-retail development such as trade counter operations and car dealerships. Need to raise profile to attract inward investment.
- **Tourism-** Visitor attractions include: historic town centre and cultural events, Theatre Severn, Battlefield, Attingham Park, Shropshire Hills AONB.
- MOD helicopter training centre at Shawbury

Environment

- **Landscapes Character-** Low lying landscape with small wooded hills, divided by the River Severn.
- **Environmental Assets-** Major green infrastructure assets include the River Severn, Attingham Park, Haughmond Hill, former Shrewsbury and Newport canal. Heritage assets comprise Wroxeter Roman City, Shrewsbury Battlefield,
- **Water Environment -** Shrewsbury flood risk from the River Severn and Reabrook. Northern part of the area contains Source Protection Zones, indicating groundwater sources which are used for public drinking water supply and may be at risk of pollution
- **Minerals and Waste:** Important centre for high quality crushed rock production for local use and export regionally and nationally

Cross boundary issues

- **Cross border links-** Links with Telford and Powys (retail provision, journeys to work)



South Zone

Key characteristics and issues:

Communities

- **Key settlements/service centres:** Ludlow, Craven Arms, Church Stretton, Bishops Castle and Cleobury Mortimer
- **Demographics:** High and growing proportion of older people
- **Housing:** Significant housing affordability issues with highest house price to earnings ratio.
- **Health:** Ludlow Community Hospital, Bishops Castle Community Hospital
- **Education:** 4 secondary schools. Post 16 education at Ludlow College and Bishops Castle Community College
- **Community facilities:** Pockets of rural deprivation and restricted access to community services.
- **Accessibility:** Major north-south road (A49) and rail transport corridor (stations at Church Stretton, Craven Arms & Ludlow), but poor east-west accessibility. High levels of car ownership and commuting to work. Cross border public transport is an issue.

Economy

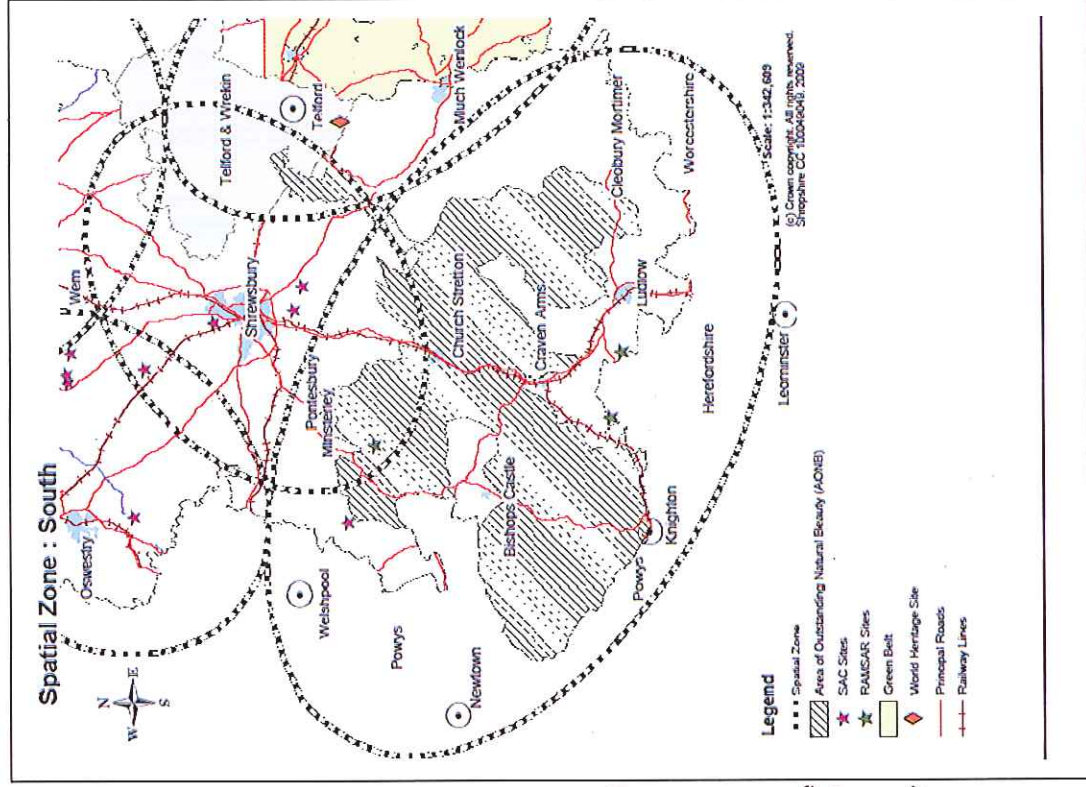
- **Economy:** The most rural part of Shropshire, with a localised economy reliant on small businesses as well as agriculture and tourism. Relatively high level of self containment. High levels of entrepreneurship and home working.
- **Key Employment sites:** Ludlow Eco Business Park, Ludlow Business Park, Craven Arms Business Park, Bishops Castle Business Park, Upper/Lower Teme Business Park, Burford. Existing employment sites have limited capacity for future expansion.
- **Tourism:** Visitor attractions include: Shropshire Hills, Ludlow, other historic market towns, such as Bishops Castle, cultural events, Craven Arms Discovery Centre, Stokesay Castle, Acton Scott Historic Working Farm

Environment

- **Landscape Character:** Distinguished by a series of ridges and valleys running south-east to north west and iconic hills such as the Long Mynd, Stretton and Cleve Hills
- **Environmental Assets:** Internationally recognised biodiversity value (Stiperstones) and nationally recognised landscape character (Shropshire Hills AONB). Nationally important heritage assets include Iron Age hillforts, Ludlow, Clun and Stokesay castles and industrial landscapes on the Stiperstones and Cleve Hills.
- **Water Environment:** Ludlow flood risk from the River Teme. Area contains a few Source Protection Zones, indicating groundwater sources which are used for public drinking water supply and may be at risk of pollution

Cross boundary issues

- **Cross border links:** Strong links with mid Wales (Welshpool, Newtown) Herefordshire (Leominster, Hereford, Tenbury) and Worcestershire (Kidderminster)



East Zone

Key characteristics and issues:

communities

- **Key settlements/service centres:** Bridgnorth, Shifnal, Albrighton, Broseley, Much Wenlock and Highley
- **Housing:** Significant housing affordability issues
- **Health:** Bridgnorth Community Hospital
- **Education:** 4 secondary schools. Post 16 education at William Brookes School, Much Wenlock; Bridgnorth Endowed School; Idsall School, Shifnal and Oldbury Wells School, Bridgnorth.
- **Accessibility:** Major east-west (M54) and north-south (A41, A442) road transport corridor and east-west rail route to Wolverhampton and Birmingham (stations at Shifnal, Cosford & Albrighton). River Severn is a natural barrier to accessibility limiting east west travel to crossing points.

economy

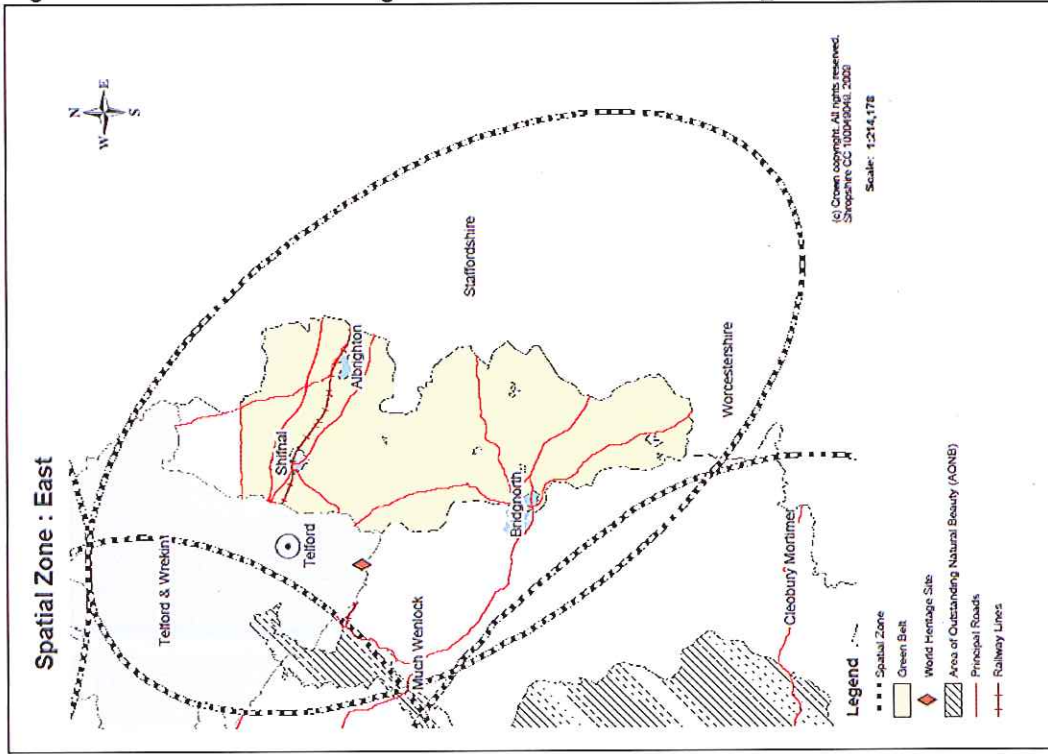
- **Economy:** Most businesses are small or micro enterprises providing predominantly low waged, low value added employment. High level of out-commuting. Traditional reliance on agriculture and manufacturing. Tourism sector important and well established. Growth in 'lifestyle business'
- **Key Employment sites:** Faraday Drive, Stourbridge Road, Bridgnorth, Stanmore, Alverley and Ditton Priors Industrial Estates, Stretton Road, Much Wenlock Availability of employment land seen as a long standing barrier to growth, particularly in Bridgnorth.
- **Tourism:** Visitor attractions include: Bridgnorth town centre, Shropshire Hills, Severn Valley, Severn Valley Railway, RAF Museum Cosford, Jackfield Tile Museum, as part of Ironbridge Gorge, Wenlock Priory, Dudmaston Hall. Olympic heritage at Much Wenlock RAF Training Centre at Cosford, which may become a major army garrison.
- Coal-fired power station at Ironbridge will come to the end of its current life in 2016

environment

- **Landscape Character-** River Severn flows through an open, rolling landscape before it reaches the steep sided gorge of Ironbridge to the east
- **Environmental Assets:** The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, Severn Valley, Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve
- **Water Environment:** Flood Risk from the River Severn.
- **Green Belt:** Green Belt designation in this zone.

cross boundary issues

- **Cross border links-** Located between Telford (growth point) and the West Midlands conurbation (regional urban development focus). High levels of out-commuting to Telford, Kidderminster and the West Midlands conurbation. Influenced by Wolverhampton High Technology Corridor.



3. THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

Shropshire's new Community Strategy 2010-2020 and the LDF Core Strategy have been prepared in the context of continued social, economic and environmental change. Looking ahead to 2026, and in planning for a "flourishing Shropshire", the key issues and challenges we need to respond to and address through the Core Strategy and the Local Development Framework as a whole, are set out below:

In Shropshire, we need to plan for:

- *The needs of a growing but ageing population, and encourage more young people to remain in, or move to, the area*
- *Sustainable communities – a thriving county town performing strongly as a sub-regional centre, revitalised market towns and more resilient, self reliant rural communities*
- *A strong, diverse and prosperous economy, promoting Shropshire as a business location with a growing enterprise culture*
- *A mix and type of housing to meets the needs and aspirations of local people, particularly affordable housing*
- *A lower carbon footprint, ensuring development mitigates and adapts to the effects of climate change*
- *A transport facilities and services which offer improved accessibility and help people reduce their car dependency*
- *The protection and enhancement of our natural and historic environment, its character, quality and diversity*
- *Access to new and improved facilities and services – education and training, health, cultural, leisure and sport*
- *Opportunities for local people of all ages to enjoy active, healthy lives*

Spatial vision and objectives

The spatial vision for Shropshire carefully reflects the Sustainable Community Strategy by providing a framework for delivering its spatial aspects, mapping out how Shropshire and the places within it should develop and change in the future. The spatial vision informs all of the priorities, policies and proposals that make up this Core Strategy and the Local Development Framework.

A vision for Shropshire:

The vision for Shropshire is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020, which is currently being prepared by the Shropshire Partnership. The vision is of:

“A flourishing Shropshire”

To reflect and deliver the vision the Sustainable Community Strategy sets out three priorities:

1. Enterprise and growth, with strong market towns and rebalanced rural settlements

- A dynamic and modern economy, with an enterprise culture that attracts investors and skilled workers.
- Shrewsbury and Shropshire's market towns will have a distinct identity, be vibrant and accessible.
- Rural settlements will be strengthened as hubs of activity and development either individually or as networked clusters, providing community benefit leading to more sustainable places and a rebalancing of the countryside.

2. Responding to climate change and enhancing our natural and built environment

- Shropshire will be recognised as a leader in responding to climate change.
- Working with communities to prepare for and adapt to the issues that climate change may bring and ensure the rich varied environment is valued, protected and enhanced.
- Natural resources, waste and water will be managed efficiently and we will adapt our needs to meet the changing demands of the climate.

3. Healthy, safe and confident people and communities

- Ensuring our communities are strong, healthy, safe and inclusive,
- Encouraging cultural diversity, voluntary effort and participation in community life.

Shropshire Partnership Community Strategy Final Draft (2010-2020)

The Core Strategy must provide a comprehensive framework intended to deliver the spatial aspects of 'A flourishing Shropshire'.

The Spatial Vision – Shropshire in 2026:

By 2026, quality of life for Shropshire people will have been significantly improved and Shropshire will have become a better place in which to live and work.

A sustainable pattern of development and positive change will have been promoted and successfully delivered to help communities become more resilient, confident and sustainable, meeting the challenges posed by climate change and an uncertain economy. This will have been achieved by a carefully focussed spatial strategy which recognises the distinctive roles of Shrewsbury, Shropshire's main market towns and key centres, and by promoting rural rebalance.

Shrewsbury will continue to be recognised as a County Town of the highest quality, enabled to develop as a strong sub-regional centre within the West Midlands and as the main commercial, cultural and administrative centre for Shropshire. As a Growth Point, it will have provided the strategic focus for a planned level of housing and economic growth, inward investment and regeneration, and the development of quality town centre facilities, public services, and sustainable transport infrastructure. The town's intrinsic character, unique qualities of its historic and natural environment and the setting of the town centre within the loop of the River Severn will have been protected and enhanced.

Outside Shrewsbury, a network of vibrant and prosperous market towns will be evident, having maintained and developed their role and function as main service centres, providing employment and a range of shopping, education, healthcare, cultural, leisure, and other services and facilities accessible to their wider rural hinterlands. Oswestry in the north-west, Whitchurch and Market Drayton in the north-east, Bridgnorth in the east and Ludlow in the south will have pre-eminent roles. An appropriate balance of new housing and employment development will have taken place in each market town in sustainable locations. Smaller market towns and key centres will have continued to play a vital role in meeting local need and providing services for areas not easily served by the five main market towns.

In rural areas new development of a scale and location appropriate to the size, role and function of each settlement will have delivered significant community benefit, helping places to be more sustainable. Rural areas will stay rural and villages will retain their separate, distinctive and varied character. Village based services will have become more economically resilient and strengthened.

Public and private sector investment and partnership working will have helped deliver initiatives and projects providing Shropshire residents, young and old, with access to new and improved cultural, leisure, sport, health, education, training and other facilities and services and an enhanced local environment.

New development which has taken place within Shropshire will be acknowledged by others as being of high quality sustainable design and construction that promotes safer communities, is respectful of local character, and planned to mitigate, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change.

The infrastructure required to support the scale of development and growth proposed will have been provided in a timely and co-ordinated manner by working in partnership with enabling organisations and providers.

Throughout Shropshire, high priority will have been given to the provision of housing to meet the local needs and aspirations of all households, including the elderly. Affordable housing for both rent and sale will have been provided where it is needed. Shropshire will have developed a national reputation for the provision and delivery of affordable housing.

Shropshire will have a thriving, diversified local economy, with a growing enterprise culture. It will have raised its profile as a recognised location for business development and as a tourism destination, capitalising on its unique landscape and heritage assets without damaging their value for residents and visitors.

Inward investment, local enterprise and indigenous business growth, with a focus on high technology, service and knowledge based growth sectors, will have helped generate new, improved and better paid employment opportunities for a well-educated and skilled Shropshire workforce. This will have helped retain young people, enabling them to live and work in Shropshire and reduce levels of out commuting. Shrewsbury and the market towns will be key locations for sustainable economic development. In rural areas Shropshire's economy will have continued to diversify, with home working, supported by improved broadband infrastructure, becoming increasingly important. Farm diversification, food and drink processing, the environmental economy, green tourism and leisure will be expanding areas of economic activity. Agriculture and farming will also still be prominent and successful economic sectors.

Targeted improvements to the County's transport infrastructure will have taken place to widen transport choices and help reduce car dependency, improving accessibility and connectivity both within and beyond Shropshire. This will include the A5, A41, A49 and A53, improved bus and rail facilities and services, including the strategic road and rail links to Wales and the West Midlands, and the proposed construction of a Shrewsbury North West Relief Road and a Shrewsbury Parkway Station. Shrewsbury will continue to develop as a 'cycling town'. Elsewhere opportunities for walking and cycling will have been developed across Shropshire, with a particular focus on market towns and the links to their respective rural hinterlands.

The character, quality and diversity of Shropshire's natural and historic environment, the County's greatest asset, will have been protected, restored and enhanced. The quality of the landscape, geodiversity and core

areas of biodiversity such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, Meres and Mosses, and Severn Valley corridor will have been maintained and managed. Both designated and non-designated historic buildings, sites and landscapes will be recognised for their importance to Shropshire's character, communities, economy and sense of place. Shropshire's biodiversity network will connect with similar networks across its borders, maximising potential for wildlife to adapt to climate change. Green infrastructure and areas of recognised environmental quality within towns and villages, with links to the surrounding countryside, will provide enhanced opportunities for recreation, with associated benefits for health and well-being of residents, flood management and improved biodiversity.

Strategic objectives

Our objectives, derived from the spatial vision, provide the broad direction for our spatial approach and the individual policies that make up the Core Strategy. They will be used to help measure the success of its implementation and delivery.

Included below each objective are the key policies for its delivery, and the final draft Sustainable Community Strategy priorities and particular priority outcome (in brackets) the objective seeks to achieve.

1	Support the development of sustainable communities which are thriving, inclusive and safe, ensuring that people in all areas of Shropshire have access to decent affordable homes, jobs, education and training, multifunctional open space and the countryside, healthcare, leisure, cultural, shopping and other facilities and services, and the provision of infrastructure, to meet their needs.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS14, CS15, CS16, CS17, CS18, CS19, CS20
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (2, 3, 4) 2 (3) 3 (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7)
2	Develop the roles of Shrewsbury as a sub-regional centre, and Shropshire's market towns and key centres as self contained settlements, providing the main focus for new housing, employment and infrastructure development and the preferred location for a range of services and facilities to serve the wider needs of their respective hinterlands.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS2, CS3, CS7, CS8, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS14, CS15
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) 3 (2, 3, 4)

3	Rebalance rural communities through the delivery of local housing and employment needs appropriate with the role, size and function of each settlement, or group of settlements, ensuring that development delivers community benefit.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS4, CS5, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS14, CS15, CS16
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) 3 (2, 3, 4, 6)
4	Provide and maintain a sufficient and appropriate supply of housing land in sustainable locations, prioritising the use of brownfield sites, where available, and taking into account the availability and capacity of existing and proposed infrastructure.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS4, CS5, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS12
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (4, 5) 2 (2, 4) 3 (1, 3)
5	Provide for a mix of good quality, sustainable housing development of the right size, type, tenure and affordability to meet the housing needs and aspirations of all sections of the community, including provision for specialist needs and the elderly.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS4, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS12
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (4, 5) 3 (1, 3, 5, 7)
6	Promote sustainable economic development and growth by providing a flexible and responsive supply of employment land and premises, and the development of further/higher education and training opportunities, to support business development, satisfy the changing needs and demands of the Shropshire economy, promote inward investment, and help generate skilled, well paid employment opportunities.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS7, CS8, CS13, CS14, CS15
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (1, 2, 5) 3 (3, 5)
7	Support the development of sustainable tourism, rural enterprise, broadband connectivity, diversification of the rural economy, and the continued importance of farming and agriculture, ensuring that development proposals are appropriate in their scale and nature with the character and quality of their location.
Key policies for	CS1, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS7, CS8, CS13, CS14, CS15,

delivery:	CS16, CS17, CS20
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (1, 2, 3, 5) 2 (2, 4) 3 (3)

8	Support the improvement of Shropshire's transport system in a sustainable and integrated way and locate development to improve accessibility by quality public transport, cycling and walking, help reduce car dependency and the impact of traffic on local communities and the environment.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS13
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (3) 2 (1, 3)

9	Promote a low carbon Shropshire, delivering development which mitigates, and adapts to, the effects of climate change, including flood risk, by promoting more responsible transport and travel choices, more efficient use of energy and resources, the generation of energy from renewable sources, and effective and sustainable waste management.
Key policies for delivery:	CS1, CS2, CS3, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS14, CS18, CS19, CS20
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	2 (1, 4)

10	Promote high quality sustainable design and construction in all new development, ensuring that developments respond to their local context and create safe, accessible and attractive places which contribute to local distinctiveness.
Key policies for delivery:	CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS16
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (5) 2 (1, 2, 4) 3 (3, 6)

11	Ensure that the character, quality and diversity of Shropshire's built, natural and historic environment is protected, enhanced and, where possible, restored, in a way that respects landscape character, biodiversity, heritage values, and local distinctiveness, and contributes to wider environmental networks.
Key policies for delivery:	CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS8, CS9, CS16, CS17
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (5) 2 (1, 2, 3, 4) 3 (3, 4, 5)

12	Improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of multifunctional open space, rights of way, and sport, recreation and cultural facilities to provide varied opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy physical activity, cultural activities and lifetime learning, helping to improve health and well-being.
Key policies for delivery:	CS2, CS3, CS4, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS9, CS15, CS16, CS17, CS20
Community Strategy priorities (with outcomes):	1 (5) 2 (3) 3 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

4. CREATING SUSTAINABLE PLACES

Sustainable places are not only environmentally friendly, but also socially inclusive and economically vibrant for both their current inhabitants and for future generations. They meet the needs of all members of their community, whether young or old; whether well-off or hard-up; whether fit and healthy or needing support, with good access to employment opportunities, education, support, health, a range of services and homes of various prices and tenures that meet the needs of the whole population. Sustainable places are resilient, being sufficiently adaptable to provide for all their inhabitants against a backdrop of changing environmental, social and economic challenges.

In seeking to create places that are sustainable both now and into the future, we have to acknowledge that some places have more potential than others to be fully sustainable. Nevertheless, all places can improve their sustainability. The Core Strategy reflects Shropshire's dispersed pattern of historic settlement, and seeks to achieve more sustainable places through a variety of means. Consequently in this chapter the Core Strategy:

- Directs the majority of development to places that already have good infrastructure, services and facilities, in particular through policies:

CS1 Strategic Approach
CS2 Shrewsbury Development Strategy
CS3 The Market Towns and other Key Centres

- Redresses imbalances by ensuring that development in smaller settlements and in the countryside improves the sustainability of those places by helping to meet environmental, social and economic needs, in particular through policies:

CS4 Community Hubs and Community Clusters
CS5 Countryside and Green Belt

- Ensures that all development is well designed and helps deliver more sustainable places, in particular through policies:

CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles
CS7 Communications and Transport
CS8 Facilities, Services and Infrastructure
CS9 Infrastructure Contributions

These policies will help deliver all of the strategic objectives, with most policies cross-cutting in their delivery of many of the strategic objectives.

CS1 STRATEGIC APPROACH

Shropshire will flourish, accommodating investment and new development to contribute to meeting its needs and to make its settlements more sustainable, delivering around 27,500 new homes, of which 9,000 will be “affordable housing”, up to 290 hectares of employment land, and accompanying infrastructure across Shropshire in the following places:

- **Shrewsbury**, as a sub-regional centre and Shropshire’s growth point, will be the focus for significant retail, office and employment development, and accommodate up to 25% of Shropshire’s residential development over the plan period.
- **The market towns and other key centres** will maintain and enhance their traditional roles in providing services and employment, accommodating around 40% of Shropshire’s residential development over the plan period.
- **The rural areas** will become more sustainable through a “rural rebalance” approach, accommodating around 35% of Shropshire’s residential development over the plan period. Development and investment will be located predominantly in community hubs and community clusters, and will contribute to social and economic vitality. Outside these settlements, development will primarily be for economic diversification and to meet the needs of the local communities for affordable housing.

The Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD will make provision for housing and employment needs in the spatial zones having regard to their differing pressures, opportunities and constraints, in the following ranges:

- In Central Shropshire, 8,250 – 8,800 dwellings and 95 - 105 hectares employment land, of which 85 – 95 hectares will be in Shrewsbury
- In North West Shropshire, 5,775 – 6,325 dwellings and 55 - 65 hectares employment land
- In North East Shropshire, 5,500 – 6,050 dwellings and 50 - 60 hectares employment land
- In South Shropshire, 3,575 – 4,125 dwellings and 35 - 45 hectares employment land
- In East Shropshire, 3,025 – 3,850 dwellings and 30 - 40 hectares employment land, together with additional housing provision of up to 1,000 dwellings, if required, for returning military personnel.

EXPLANATION

Shropshire's population is projected to grow by 40,300 people over the next 20 years, from 289,300 in 2006 to 329,600 in 2026. Although deaths outnumber births, Shropshire does not suffer from depopulation. On the contrary, Shropshire is an attractive destination that attracts a net in-migration from other parts of Britain. The high quality of life that Shropshire offers, in historic towns set in attractive landscape, acts as a magnet, particularly for older age groups. The strategic approach is to accommodate this growth in such a way that it helps make more sustainable, balanced, vibrant and self-reliant places in which to live and work.

The strategy reflects the distinctive, rural nature of Shropshire and the connection between the county town of Shrewsbury, the market towns, smaller settlements and the rural areas they serve. It is an approach that seeks to nurture, protect and develop the social and physical fabric of communities, supporting new economic potential within their environmental setting.

Transport is a particularly big issue for a rural county, particularly in the context of seeking to reduce carbon emissions and the economics of the declining supply of oil, now that international oil production is past its peak. Climate change and rising oil costs are also likely to increase the importance of local food production. These pressures are likely to drive an increasing need for self-reliance amongst Shropshire's communities. Consequently the strategic approach is to enhance the role that Shropshire's settlements have traditionally played, as accessible, sustainable centres for their rural catchments. The approach to rural areas supports local responses to meeting these challenges.

The role for Shrewsbury reflects the Shrewsbury Vision, and the aspirations of the community in Shrewsbury to continue to thrive as a centre for employment and services, whilst maintaining its outstanding natural, built and historic environment.

The aspirations of the communities in the market towns and key centres is reflected in policy CS3, and carried forward through the market town revitalisation programme. A key objective of this programme is to encourage greater self-containment in terms of employment, retail expenditure and local services. The market towns revitalisation programme also seeks to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Shropshire's market towns whilst encouraging increased employment in growth sectors of the economy.

In the rural areas, Shropshire Council is working with local communities to identify community hubs and community clusters that aspire to be stronger social, economic and environmentally sustainable communities. The approach recognises that sustainability is based on many factors, including the presence of employment, affordable housing, facilities and services, but also intangible assets such as social fabric. In community hubs and clusters,

development that improves their sustainability will be welcomed, for example where it provides employment opportunities, affordable housing or services and facilities for local needs. In this way, the sporadic speculative development that has occurred in Shropshire's villages, smallest settlements and open countryside over recent decades can be managed in a more positive way, targeted instead at helping deliver rural regeneration.

The proportionate split of residential development between Shrewsbury (25%), the market towns and key centres (40%), and the rural area (35%) is the total over the plan period 2006-2026. It is expected that the proportions may be skewed towards the urban areas in the early plan period, reflecting market continuity and new land allocations. It is expected that the proportion in rural areas may initially be depressed, reflecting the change in approach to a community-led and community-benefit focus. As rural communities and developers become more familiar with the new approach, and understand how it can benefit the sustainability of local communities, the proportion of development that occurs in the rural areas is expected to rise accordingly.

The phasing of development over the plan period is managed by policies CS10 in relation to residential development and CS14 in relation to employment development.

The five spatial zones in Shropshire have different characteristics, pressures, travel-to-work patterns, environmental and policy constraints (such as the metropolitan Green Belt and the special character of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). This distinctiveness is reflected in the proportionate split of development across Shropshire, and in the balance between residential and employment development in different areas. More detailed policies relating to each spatial zone, the settlements within them and the balance of development in each spatial zone between larger and smaller settlements, will be contained in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

In East Shropshire, up to 1,000 additional homes may be required in the Albrighton, Shifnal and Telford areas for military personnel returning from Germany. These will be integrated with existing civilian communities, but will only be brought forward to meet the specific Ministry of Defence need.

Key Evidence

1. LAA Evidence Base
2. The Local Transport Plan and its associated evidence base
3. Shropshire Rural Toolkit engagement – working with communities in assessing their sustainability
4. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
5. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment
6. Economic Assessments
7. Landscape Assessments
8. Five year land supply
9. Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands and its associated evidence base (including the SQW reports on rural community sustainability).
10. Shropshire Housing Strategy and its associated evidence base
11. Annual Monitoring Reports and analysis of development trends 1998-2008

Delivery and Monitoring of Policy:

This policy will be delivered by:

- the provision of facilities and services by the Council and public and private sector partners;
- the development management process
- the LDF Implementation Plan
- the Rural Renaissance Programme
- the Market Town Revitalisation Programme
- the Shrewsbury growth point delivery programme

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

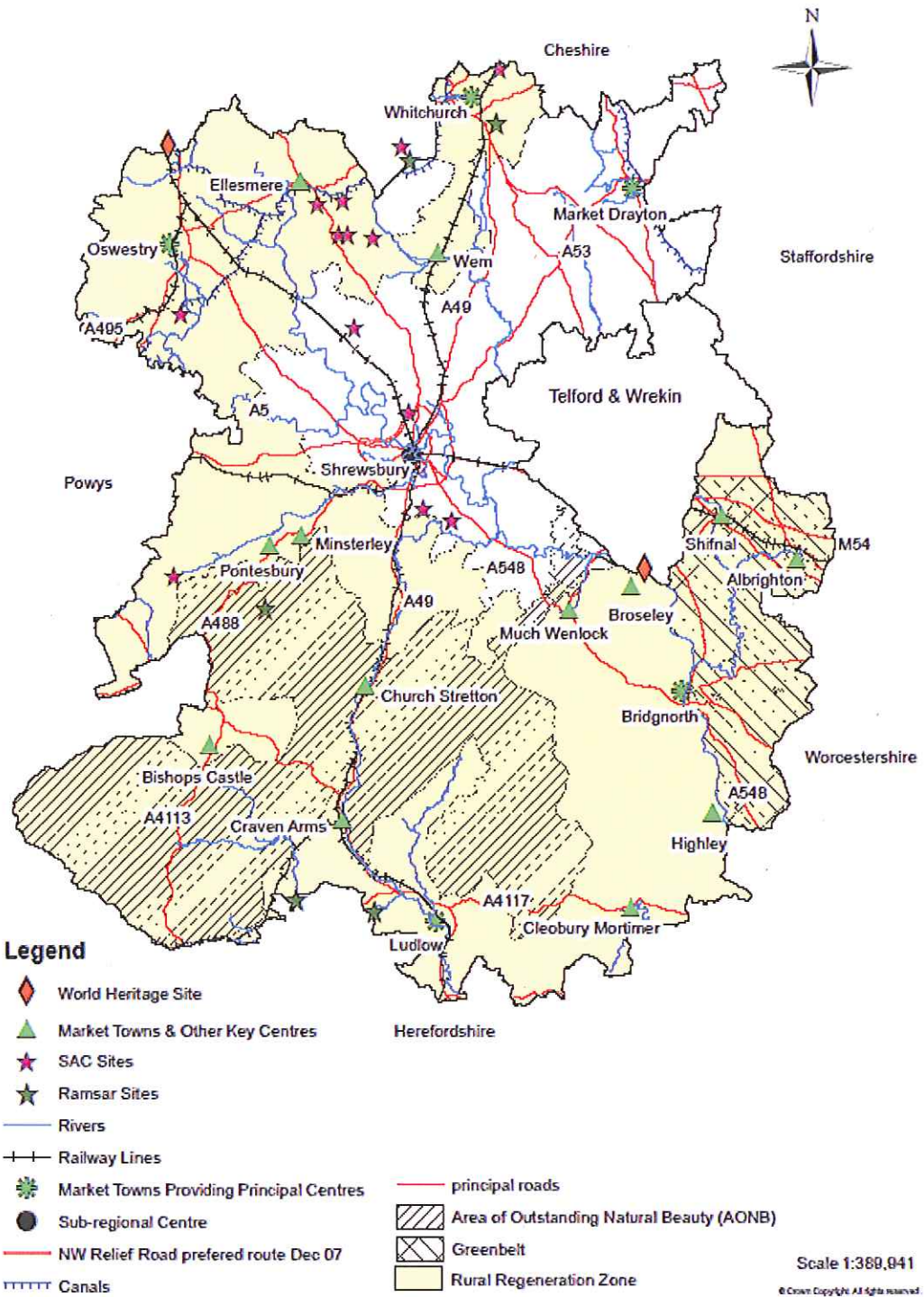
- Number of new homes provided (National Indicator NI 154), by location
- Hectarage of new employment land developed, by location
- Infrastructure provision through the Implementation Plan Monitoring process

Table 1: Settlement Strategy

	Shrewsbury	Market towns and other key centres	Community hubs and community clusters	No. new homes	Employment land
Role & sphere of influence	Sub-regional influence	Centre which also serves other settlements and rural hinterland	Serves the local community and surrounding countryside		
Strategic approach	Fulfil sub-regional role and act as a growth point.	Centres for service provision, economic development & regeneration. Accommodates local needs and inward migration.	Rural rebalance to meet local needs and improve the sustainability of local communities.		
North West Shropshire		Oswestry Ellesmere		5,775 – 6,325 homes	55 - 65 ha
North East Shropshire		Market Drayton Whitchurch Wem	Community hubs and community clusters as identified in the Site	5,500 – 6,050 homes	50 - 60 ha
Central Shropshire	Shrewsbury	Minsterley / Pontesbury	Allocations and Development Management	8,250 – 8,800 homes	95 - 105 ha
South Shropshire		Ludlow Bishops Castle Church Stretton Cleobury Mortimer Craven Arms	DPD	3,575 – 4,125 homes	35 - 45 ha
East Shropshire		Bridgnorth Albrighton Broseley Highley Much Wenlock Shifnal		3,025 – 3,850 homes Plus military needs	30 - 40 ha

Figure 5: Core Strategy Key Diagram

Core Strategy Key Diagram



CS2: SHREWSBURY - DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

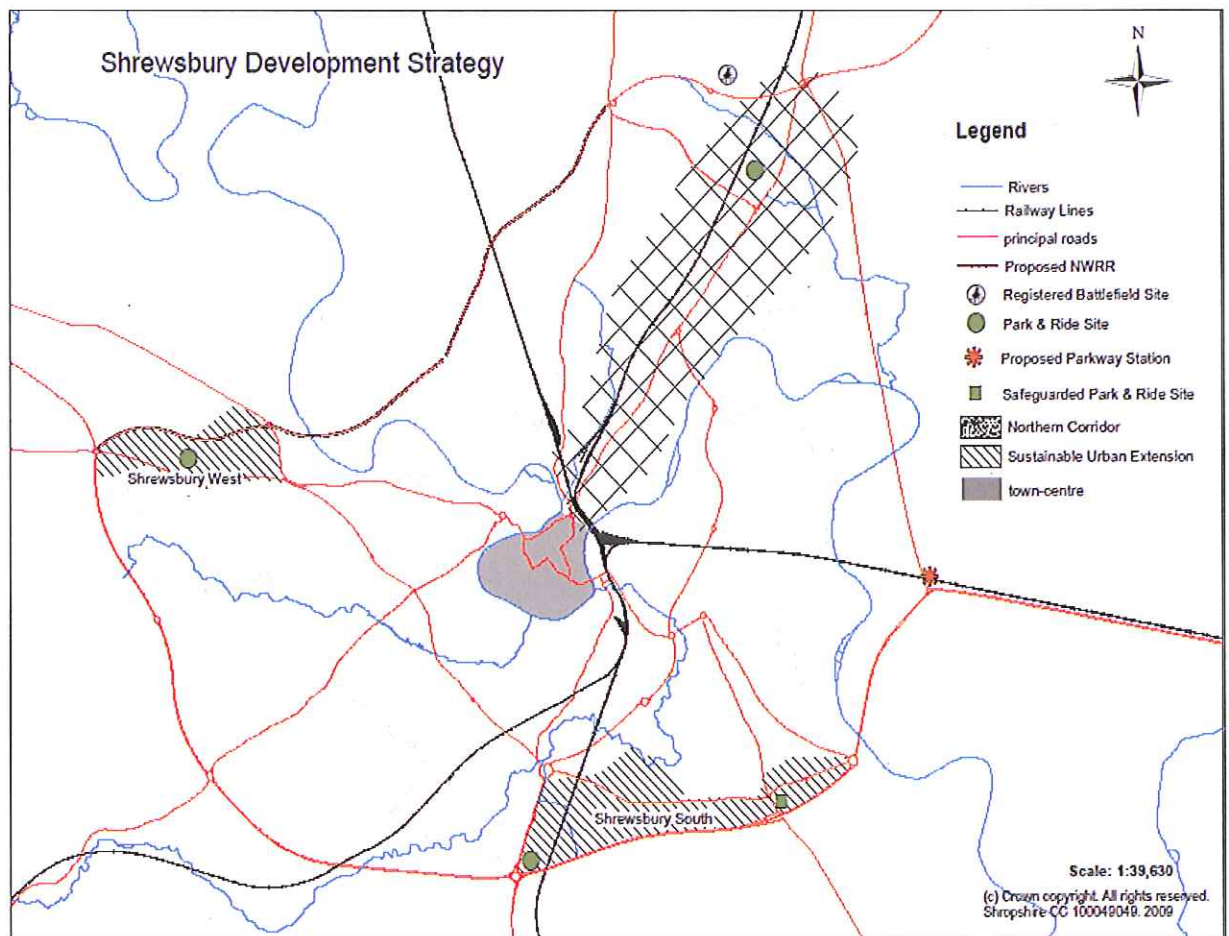
A comprehensive and co-ordinated approach will be pursued to the planning and development of Shrewsbury. The approach, encapsulated by the Shrewsbury Vision, integrates elements of housing, economic, transport, community and environmental policy, and will enable the town to achieve a significant level of housing and economic growth linked with infrastructure improvements, whilst protecting and enhancing the town's role, character and the unique qualities of its historic built and natural environment.

- Shrewsbury will provide the primary focus for development for Shropshire, providing up to 25% of its additional housing for the period 2006-2026 (approximately 6,500 dwellings - 325 dwellings per annum), and 90 hectares of employment land;
- Shrewsbury will develop its role as Shropshire's primary retail, office and commercial centre, and the vitality and viability of the town centre will be promoted, protected and enhanced. The Riverside and West End areas of the town centre will be redevelopment priorities;
- The Shrewsbury Northern Corridor will be improved in accordance with the aims of the Northern Corridor Regeneration Framework, with the restoration and redevelopment of the Ditherington Flaxmill site and the enhancement of major existing commercial, employment and mixed use areas, a priority;
- Shrewsbury's strategy will recognise the need for the continuing development of high quality business parks on the edge of the town centre and the periphery of the town, including the Battlefield Enterprise Park and Shrewsbury and Oxon Business Parks, and the importance of the Meole Brace and Sundorne retail parks, both of which have scope for enhancement and expansion, if required;
- Shrewsbury will be a major focus within Shropshire for the provision of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the town and its wider catchment area, with current priorities set out in the LDF Implementation Plan;
- Shrewsbury's priorities for the allocation/release of land for development will be:
 - Making best use of previously developed land and buildings for housing and other uses within the built up area, especially sites contributing to the enhancement of the town centre, the redevelopment of edge-of-centre areas, and the regeneration of the Shrewsbury Northern Corridor;
 - Bringing forward, on a phased and planned basis, two sustainable urban extensions providing 25% of Shrewsbury's housing growth and 50% of its employment growth:
 - Shrewsbury South – land off Thieves Lane/Oteley

Road/Hereford Road as illustrated on the Key Diagram, to incorporate the expansion of Shrewsbury Business Park, the development of a new strategic employment site on land adjoining the Shrewsbury Town Football Club, scope for the expansion of Meole Brace Retail Park, if required, and other commercial uses, A5 junction and sustainable transport improvements, major housing development to the north and south of Oteley Road and green infrastructure improvements (including the Rea Brook Valley).

- Shrewsbury West – land at Bicton Heath and off Welshpool Road as illustrated on the Key Diagram, to incorporate major housing development north of Welshpool Road, additional employment land, the provision of a new link road from Churncote Island to Holyhead Road, enhancement of Park and Ride facilities and other sustainable transport improvements, scope for additional health and care facility development, and the provision of new community facilities.
- Smaller-scale sustainable housing land releases on the edges of Shrewsbury, identified in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, to provide the balance of housing land required;
- In recognition of the special character of the town and its particular environmental challenges, the development of the town will have regard to:
 - the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Strategy as advanced through the Shropshire Local Transport Plan, and the proposed Shrewsbury North West Relief Road;
 - flood risk management, based on the Shropshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, that protects and enhances the corridor of the River Severn and its tributaries and enables development appropriate to the flood risk;
 - the promotion, conservation and enhancement of the town's natural and historic features, heritage assets, green corridors and spaces, and environmental quality, including the corridors of the River Severn and its tributaries, the town centre and the registered battlefield.

Figure 6: Shrewsbury Key Diagram



EXPLANATION

Vision

Shrewsbury provides a strategic focus for development in Shropshire, enabling the town to fulfil its roles as both the County Town and a sub-regional centre. However, equally important is the development of the town as a place and a community in a balanced and sustainable way and to achieve its potential, developing the role of the town centre, addressing regeneration needs and infrastructure requirements, and maintaining the unique qualities and character of the town. The need for this balanced development is fundamental to the strategy for Shrewsbury and this is being driven forward through the 'Shrewsbury Vision'. This is a process led by the Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council which follows up the naming of Shrewsbury as a Growth Point in 2006 and the approval of a wide ranging 'Programme of Development' supported by Government funding. Policy CS2 draws together key policy elements as part of the integrated approach and to ensure the balance and co-ordination required.

Housing Development

The rationale for the target for new housing for Shrewsbury, reflecting its role in the Shropshire context and the requirements of the Regional Spatial

Strategy, is set out under Policy CS1, with Policy CS10 providing an overview of the managed release of housing land. The housing trajectory for Shrewsbury is shown within the overall trajectory for Shropshire under Policy CS10.

Sufficient quantity and flexibility of housing land supply are key given uncertainty over the final housing requirements, historically slow brownfield site development in Shrewsbury, variability in the strength of the housing market, and the potential for the progress of individual developments to be delayed. Policy CS2 therefore makes provision for delivery from greenfield as well as previously developed land, and for the identification of reserve housing land to enable management of land supply. The 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identified capacity for some 3,900 dwellings within the existing town development boundaries, but also extensive greenfield areas within the Shrewsbury bypasses with scope to provide the balance required.

Shrewsbury's release of housing land will be managed to deliver the housing target, aiming to achieve:

- A minimum of 60% on previously developed land over the plan period;
- Approximately 25% in the Shrewsbury South and Shrewsbury West strategic locations;
- The balance required (15%), approximately 1,000 dwellings, plus a further reserve pool of land for up to a further 15%, provided through the smaller-scale sustainable land releases. The reserve land areas will be released, if required to maintain a 10 year supply of identified sites, on a phased basis;

Sites will be identified in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD for phased release linked to maintaining the availability of land ready for development and the timely provision of infrastructure. Certainty is needed in the release of the sustainable urban extensions at Shrewsbury South and Shrewsbury West in order to ensure the delivery of their strategic benefits. These areas will, therefore, be prioritised over the smaller scale greenfield housing land releases adjoining the town which will provide the balancing pool of sites to ensure delivery of the overall housing target in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS10. A more detailed housing trajectory for Shrewsbury will be developed alongside the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, for inclusion in subsequent Annual Monitoring Reports.

The type and affordability of housing to be provided is addressed under Policy CS11.

Shrewsbury South and Shrewsbury West sustainable urban extensions

The two proposed sustainable extensions address the requirement for the use of greenfield sites to meet both the housing and employment needs of the town. The two strategic locations have been selected following consideration of the various options because they provide the best opportunities for

sustainable and balanced development. Key evidence has included the Shropshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Shrewsbury Employment Areas Assessment, the Shrewsbury Transport and Land Use Development Options Assessment, and the Landscape Character, Capacity and Sensitivity Study. Indicative masterplanning has been used to ascertain yields and deliverability of the proposed development. The masterplans will be developed alongside the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, engaging with key stakeholders and infrastructure providers in the process, to give more detailed guidance on the phased development of the two areas.

The Shrewsbury South area will deliver, in particular, significant employment land, including a major new business park, green infrastructure linked to housing development, and a potential expansion of the Meole Brace Retail Park, if required (see Policy CS15). The Shrewsbury West area delivers a leg of the proposed Shrewsbury North West Relief Road between Churncote Island on the A5 and Holyhead Road alongside a mix of housing, employment and community facilities provision. There is also scope for additional health and care facility provision to complement the existing facilities in the locality at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shelton, and Bicton Heath.

Economic Development and Regeneration

The importance of economic development and employment growth in Shrewsbury is integral to the strategy for the town. This will support the prosperity of Shropshire and ensure the sustainable and balanced development of the town. As well as the major employment land provisions made, Policy CS2, linked to Policies CS13, CS14 and CS15, also allows Shrewsbury to fulfil its strategic retail and commercial role and, as part of that, the safeguarding and enhancement of the role of the town centre. It is accepted that the town centre is constrained by the loop of the River Severn, which means that some of the commercial development requirements may need to be accommodated outside of the centre, but there are major town centre redevelopment opportunities, particularly in the West End and the Riverside areas, which need to be prioritised in order to achieve the Shrewsbury Vision.

A further priority is the regeneration of the Shrewsbury Northern Corridor, with the aims of the Regeneration Framework for that area, including the site of the Ditherington Flaxmill, being taken forward through the Shrewsbury Vision. The Corridor area also includes areas of major commercial and employment uses which have been undergoing pressures for change, including in the Lancaster Road, Whitchurch Road, Battlefield Road, Harlescott Lane and Featherbed Lane/Arlington Way areas. In these areas some re-focussing of land uses and development would be beneficial to meet new needs and to enable enhancements, whilst still safeguarding the town's portfolio of employment land. Small scale provision of further good quality employment land may also be beneficial in northern Shrewsbury.

Areas on the edge of the town centre are also subject to pressures for change and provide opportunities for beneficial redevelopment, including particularly the Castle Foregate, Frankwell and Abbey Foregate areas.

Policies to address these issues and areas will be set out in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. The Council will work with private sector partners to deliver these economic development and regeneration priorities over the plan period.

Integrated Transport

The implementation of the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Strategy, with a combination of sustainable transport promotion measures including the Park and Ride facilities, quality bus routes and enhanced walking and cycling facilities provision, is key to the sustainable development of the town given the challenges of the constrained access to and through the town centre and the demand for cross-town traffic. The provision of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road has been identified as an opportunity to tackle some of these issues in the Local Transport Plan for Shropshire, which the Core Strategy has regard to and seeks to enable. The North West Relief Road has received provisional funding approval from the Government and, subject to approval of the business case, planning permission and necessary land acquisitions, is programmed for construction between 2014 and 2017. In terms of the strategic road network, limitations on the capacities of the junctions on the Shrewsbury bypasses are a further consideration, with the scope for improvements linked to the planned new developments. Improvements to the Shrewsbury Bus and Railway Stations and the possible development of the Shrewsbury Parkway Station at the A5/A49 Preston Boats Island on the eastern side of the town all form part of the multi-modal approach to transport planning for the town. The strong transport connections between, and complementary roles of, Shrewsbury and Telford form part of the challenge being addressed.

Infrastructure and Services

Other major infrastructure requirements in Shrewsbury, including for improving health and education facilities, are identified in the LDF Implementation Plan. Policies CS8 and CS9 set out the approach to infrastructure provision, including the role of developer contributions. Facilities in Shrewsbury meet the needs of both the town and a wider catchment area, with the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology, Sixth Form College, and major recreational facilities prominent. Service providers responsible for these facilities and others in the town, including primary and secondary school provision, will be responding to the challenges and pressures of a changing population during the plan period, and this will lead to developments to be addressed in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, informed by the LDF Implementation Plan.

The Environment

The protection and enhancement of the town's historic character and heritage assets, notably the extensive Shrewsbury conservation area focussed on the

town centre, the historic battlefield on the northern edge of the town and the town's green infrastructure, including green corridors associated with the River Severn and its tributaries, will also be a priority issue to be addressed. The development of Shrewsbury as a sustainable place, maintaining its high quality of life and environment, are key themes of the Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the Shrewsbury Vision.

Key Evidence:

1. Shropshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – Shropshire Council (2009)
2. Borough Economic Assessment and Employment Land Study – BE Group (2004/05)
3. Borough Employment Areas Assessment - BE Group/Faber Maunsell (2008)
4. Shrewsbury Offices Study - BE Group (2007)
5. Shrewsbury Retail Capacity Study Update - White Young Green (2006)
6. Shrewsbury Hotels Study – Tourism Solutions (2007)
7. Shrewsbury Transport and Land Use Development Options Assessment - Faber Maunsell (2008)
8. Shrewsbury Northern Corridor Regeneration Framework – Ove Arup and Partners (2007)
9. Borough Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity – White Consultants (2007)
10. Shrewsbury New Growth Point Historic Environment Assessment – Shropshire Council (2008)
11. Shrewsbury Vision – Shropshire Council (2009 and ongoing)
12. Shropshire Recreation and Open Space Needs Assessment – PMP (2009)
13. Borough Green Infrastructure Strategy (Draft) – TEP (2008)
14. Borough Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Shrewsbury) – Halcrow (2007 and 2009)
15. Borough Water Cycle Strategy – Scoping Report – Halcrow (2008) and Shropshire Water Cycle Study – Halcrow (in progress 2009)

Delivery & Monitoring

This policy will be delivered by:

- the development management process;
- Preparation of the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD;
- Preparation of masterplans for the phased development of the two

sustainable urban extensions

- Shrewsbury town centre strategy and action plans
- Shropshire economic development, culture and regeneration strategies and action plans
- Local Transport Plan for Shropshire 2006-2011 and Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Strategy
- Shrewsbury Growth Point Programme of Development, the Shrewsbury Vision and the Northern Corridor Regeneration Strategy Implementation Framework
- Shrewsbury Cycling Town programme
- Shrewsbury Green Infrastructure Strategy

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- Housing completions, employment land take-up, retail floorspace development set out in Annual/other Monitoring Reports
- Annual Statements of Five Year Land Supply
- Annual SHLAA updates

CS3: THE MARKET TOWNS AND OTHER KEY CENTRES

The market towns and other key centres will maintain and enhance their roles in providing facilities and services to their rural hinterlands, and providing foci for economic development and regeneration. Balanced housing and employment development, of an appropriate scale and design that respects each town's distinctive character and is supported by improvements in infrastructure, will take place within the towns' development boundaries and on sites allocated for development.

North West Shropshire

Oswestry will provide a focus for major development. To accommodate growth, land allocations will include a comprehensively planned, integrated and sustainable urban extension to the south east of Oswestry, on land between Shrewsbury Road, Middleton Road and the A5/A483 Oswestry bypass, as illustrated on the Key Diagram. This strategic location will accommodate a mix of new housing (750+ dwellings), employment land (4-6 hectare Business Park), a local centre, a network of open space and green infrastructure, and a new link Road between Shrewsbury Road and Middleton Road, together with sustainable transport improvements.

Ellesmere will have development to support local business development, recognising its high quality landscape particularly the environmental and historic assets of the meres and the canal.

North East Shropshire

Market Drayton will have substantial development that balances business development with housing development and enhances the town's infrastructure and facilities and its role as a centre for food production.

Whitchurch will have substantial development, recognising its accessible location on the highway and rail network, maintaining and enhancing its vibrant town centre and balancing business and housing development.

Wem will have development to strengthen its economic role and support and enhance its important community assets and to maintain its role as a sustainable place.

Central Shropshire

Minsterley and Pontesbury as a combined key centre will accommodate

development to enhance their linked roles providing employment and services in the local area, whilst retaining their distinctive and separate identities.

Southern Shropshire

Ludlow will provide a focus for development, whilst respecting its historic character.

Craven Arms will have development as a local growth point in the A49 corridor, growing its role in providing services and employment opportunities for the local area.

Church Stretton, Bishops Castle and Cleobury Mortimer will have development that balances environmental constraints with meeting local needs.

Eastern Shropshire

Bridgnorth will provide a focus for development within the constraints of its location on the edge of the Green Belt and on the River Severn.

Shifnal and Albrighton will have development to meet local needs, respecting their location in the Green Belt. No changes will be made to Green Belt boundaries. Some of the development to meet the needs of returning military personnel will be accommodated in Shifnal and Albrighton, if required.

Broseley and Highley will have development that balances environmental constraints with meeting local needs.

Much Wenlock will have limited development that reflects its important service and employment centre role whilst retaining its historic character.

Cross-boundary proposals

Shropshire will work with adjoining local authorities where settlements adjoining Shropshire require cross-boundary opportunities to meet their needs for sustainable development, including, but not limited to, sites around Burford in relation to the growth of Tenbury Wells, sites in Shropshire in relation to growth in adjoining Knighton and the Ironbridge power station site in relation to proposals for Ironbridge and Telford.

Figure 7: Oswestry Key Diagram

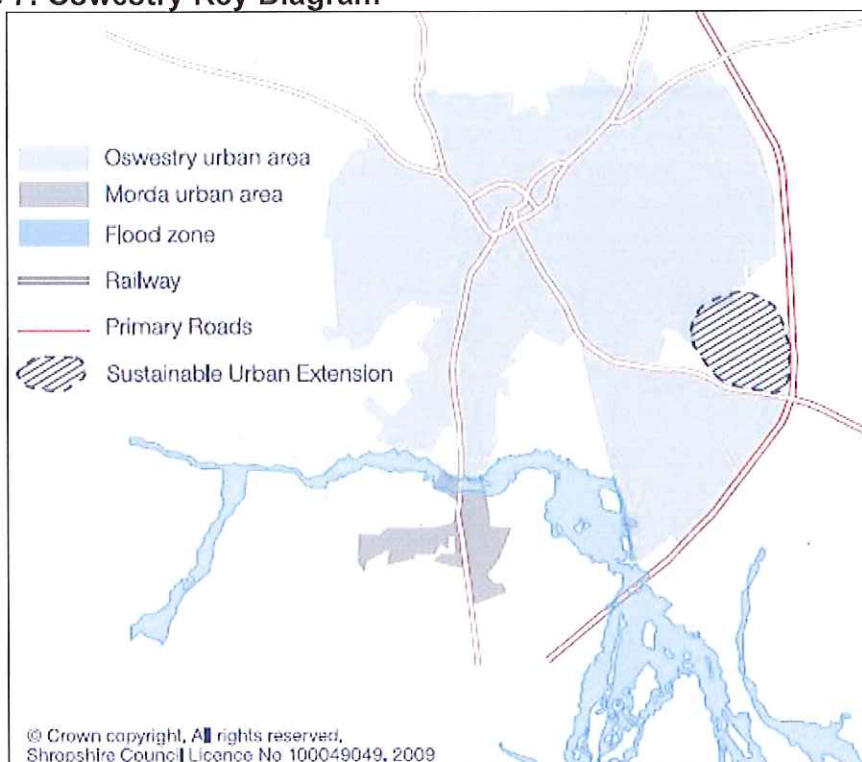


Table 2: Policy CS3 and indicative scale of development

Market Towns and Other Key Centres	Policy CS15 Centres		Indicative relative levels of housing development 2006-2026		
	Principal centre	District centre	>1,000 homes	500-1,000 homes	200-500 homes
North West Shropshire					
Oswestry	✓		✓		
Ellesmere		✓		✓	
North East Shropshire					
Whitchurch	✓		✓		
Market Drayton	✓		✓		
Wem		✓		✓	
Central Shropshire					
Minsterley / Pontesbury		✓			✓
Southern Shropshire					
Ludlow	✓			✓	
Craven Arms		✓			✓
Church Stretton		✓			✓
Bishops Castle		✓			✓
Clebury Mortimer		✓			✓
Eastern Shropshire					
Bridgnorth	✓			✓	
Shifnal		✓		✓	

Much Wenlock		✓			✓
Broseley		✓			✓
Highley		✓			✓
Albrighton		✓			✓

EXPLANATION

The market towns and other key centres are identified by their role and sphere of influence, both existing and potential, not simply by their size and their scope for future development. They are, and could be stronger, focal points for local transport networks, employment opportunities and services. They provide sustainable places in which development can contribute to a “virtuous circle” of greater self-sufficiency within the towns, reducing the need to travel, maximising the potential for sustainable transport and strengthening local markets, thereby helping reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and strengthening local resilience in a changing world. Declining oil reserves mean that fuel is likely to increase dramatically in price over the plan period, requiring closer local economic and community relationships, and market towns and key centres are well placed to respond to these global forces.

Development in market towns and key centres provides a robust basis for meeting the future needs of Shropshire. The ageing population is a particular issue in Shropshire, where 28.4% of the population is expected to be over the age of 65 by 2026. This represents a rise from 50,100 persons in Shropshire over the age of 65 in 2006 to 93,600 persons by 2026. The elderly are more dependent on local services and public transport than the population as a whole, giving an added impetus to the achievement of accessible centres that can provide a good range of services.

The proposed approach builds on the investment already placed in Shropshire’s market towns and key centres over many years, typified by the Market Towns Revitalisation Programme and the Local Transport Plan programme. Retail, leisure, services, health facilities, secondary education, police and fire services, amongst others, are all focused in these places. Shropshire’s spatial plan continues the confidence placed in the future of these settlements, and recognises the need for continuing investment and renewal.

The detailed scale of development in each market town and key centre has not been the subject of consultation during the Core Strategy process, as it will be determined through the process of preparing the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. As appropriate to a Core Strategy, Policy CS3 provides an overview of the relative role of each town. An indication of the likely scale of development, based on policy CS3 and the evidence base, is provided in table 2.

To inform representations on the Core Strategy, extracts from the evidence base are given in table 3 below. These show the quantity of residential development that has already occurred since 2006 plus the number of dwellings with outstanding planning consent (commitments). An indication of

the capacity of towns to deliver more residential development on existing Local Plan allocated sites, and on potential windfall sites within the existing development boundaries, provides further information regarding the amount of development that may occur. The two columns added together give an indication of the scale of development that is likely regardless of any additional allocations of land for development. For comparison purposes, the quantity of residential and employment development that has occurred over the past ten years is also shown. The latter figures should be treated with care as past development is not necessarily a guide to future development.

Table 3: Development in market towns and key centres 1998-2008

Market towns and key centres	Completions 2006-2009 + commitments at April 2009 (no. dwellings)	Existing allocations & potential sites within existing settlement boundary* (no. dwellings)	Past employment development 1998-2008 (hectares)	Past residential development 1998-2008 (no. dwellings)
North West Shropshire				
Oswestry	710	495	6.02 ha	1,146
Ellesmere	480	188	1.6 ha	193
North East Shropshire				
Whitchurch	301	406	11.3 ha	766
Market Drayton	431	119	4.7 ha	551
Wem	328	66	0.4 ha	210
Central Shropshire				
Minsterley / Pontesbury	67	32	0.4 ha	101
Southern Shropshire				
Ludlow	381	84	2.4 ha	714
Craven Arms	104	115	1.8 ha	215
Church Stretton	72	37	0.1 ha	204
Bishops Castle	48	37	3.9 ha	130
Cleobury Mortimer	166	26	0.04 ha	150
Eastern Shropshire				
Bridgnorth	639	0	3.5 ha	350
Shifnal	214	241	0.06 ha	190
Much Wenlock	42	77	0.2 ha	103
Broseley	79	96	0.3 ha	72
Highley	90	58	0.01 ha	89
Albrighton	36	120	0.06 ha	91

* Based on the results of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009

Policy CS3 recognises the role of key centres adjoining Shropshire, including Tenbury/Burford, Knighton and Ironbridge. It may be appropriate, in consultation with neighbouring authorities, to allocate (within Shropshire) land for development adjoining these key centres.

Shropshire's market towns and key centres all have distinctive identities, which new development is expected to reinforce. Local distinctiveness is reflected in historic features and the towns' functions (past and present).

Policy CS6 elaborates the requirements for new development to meet high standards and reflect local character.

Market towns and key centres

The market towns and key centres, in descending order by population size (2007 population estimates) are:

Oswestry

Oswestry (population 18,300) is the second largest town in Shropshire after Shrewsbury, on the border between the lowlands of north-west Shropshire and the foothills of the Berwyns in Wales. It acts as the principal employment, commercial and administrative centre in the north west of the County. The town is a service centre for a wide rural hinterland, including parts of Wales, and this is reflected in the busyness of the centre. Oswestry has good road links to Shrewsbury, Wrexham and Chester via the A5/A483. Rail links are available at the nearby village of Gobowen. Oswestry has a relatively high level of self-containment for employment and the town provides more jobs than it has resident workers. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 68.1% owner occupied, 13.6% private rented and 18.3% social rented.

A sustainable urban extension to the south east of Oswestry to help meet the development needs of the area was the subject of extensive public consultation as part of the Oswestry Borough Local Development Framework process. In light of this legacy, and to provide for the lengthy lead-in required by large scale development, it is appropriate to identify this strategic allocation in the Core Strategy rather in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

Land to the south east of the town is distant from the more sensitive landscapes on the other edges of the town. As such, it is considered to represent the optimum location for accommodating major growth. Key assessments in reaching this judgement include the Shropshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Oswestry Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study, Oswestry Employment Land Study and Oswestry Phase 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Bridgnorth

Bridgnorth (population 11,400) acts as a key service centre not just for the town, but for a sizeable hinterland as well. The town itself is an historic one, comprising a Low Town straddling the River Severn and a High Town perched on cliffs 100 ft above. The combination of medieval street pattern and many fine old buildings, combine with old paths and flights of steps to create a unique town of considerable charm. There are strong environmental constraints in Bridgnorth, mainly due to the river and its floodplain. It is bounded on its eastern side by the metropolitan Green Belt. Located at the junction of the A458 and the A442, it is within relatively easy commuting distance of Telford, Shrewsbury, Kidderminster, Wolverhampton and the Black Country. A significant proportion of Bridgnorth residents commute out

of the town to work. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 73.6% owner occupied, 15.0% private rented and 11.4% social rented.

Market Drayton

Market Drayton (population 11,100) sits on the northern side of the River Tern, on the A53 and within easy access of the Potteries, Stafford and Telford. Like the other main towns in Shropshire, it serves a sizeable hinterland as well as its own resident population. Market Drayton's economy has traditionally been based on agriculture and related industries, and the town remains reliant on food processing via the presence of two major employers – Mullers and Palethorpes. Overall, Market Drayton supports a similar number of jobs as its resident workforce but there are significant levels of commuting both into and out of the town. The town is on the Shropshire Union Canal. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 72.2% owner occupied, 12.9% private rented and 14.9% social rented.

Ludlow

Ludlow (population 9,900) is situated midway between Shrewsbury and Hereford. The town benefits from a railway station on the Crewe-Cardiff line and, other than Shrewsbury, is the only town in Shropshire to operate a Park and Ride bus service. The historic town centre is set largely on a ridge above the River Teme, with fine streets of historic buildings running down this central spine. Ludlow is an important tourist destination and has achieved international renown as a centre for quality local food and drink and Michelin starred restaurants. The town has recently started to grow beyond the A49 bypass, with employment development at the Ludlow eco-park and affordable housing at Rocks Green. Ludlow acts as a major local employment centre and has a very high level of employment self-containment. Shrewsbury, Leominster and Hereford are important sources and destinations of labour for Ludlow and the A49 is a crucial transport route. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 70.5% owner occupied, 14.6% private rented and 15.0% social rented.

Whitchurch

Whitchurch (population 8,700) is close to the Cheshire and Wrexham County Borough boundaries, and in particular the towns of Wrexham, Nantwich and Crewe. Whitchurch benefits from a railway station on the Shrewsbury-Crewe line. The town has a thriving town centre and has the benefit of A49 and A525 bypasses around the town. The Whitchurch arm of the Llangollen branch of the Shropshire Union Canal is an important tourist facility bringing visitors to the town. The town had significant employment development over the period 1998-2008. Shrewsbury and Market Drayton to the south and Chester to the north are key employment destinations. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 72.2% owner occupied, 14.3% private rented and 13.5% social rented.

Shifnal

Shifnal (population 5,600) lies less than five miles from Telford town centre, on the Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton railway line and with easy access to the M54. The metropolitan Green Belt abuts the town's western edge. Shifnal lies in the Wolverhampton to Telford high technology corridor as defined by the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. Its geographic location undoubtedly influences Shifnal's status as a commuter town serving the West Midlands conurbation, with employment self-containment lower than in almost all other Shropshire market towns. Almost three times as many workers commute out of Shifnal as commute in. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 70.9% owner occupied, 10.4% private rented and 18.9% social rented.

Wem

Wem (population 5,400) is located between Whitchurch and Shrewsbury on the B5476 and on the Crewe – Shrewsbury railway line. A high proportion of its population, 24.9%, are aged 65 and over. The town is not a main shopping or employment centre, with Shrewsbury the main beneficiary of leaked retail expenditure and also the destination to which a significant proportion of resident workers commute. Around twice as many people commute out of Wem to work than commute in. More than 90% of employees who work in Wem are in the service sector, with public administration, education and health accounting for a substantial 43.1% of all jobs. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 73.9% owner occupied, 14.0% private rented and 11.1% social rented.

Albrighton

Albrighton (population 5,100) is less than 10 miles away from both Telford and Wolverhampton. The town is also within very easy reach of the M54 and the A41 and has a railway station on the Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury line. The town is surrounded, except on its far eastern edge, by the metropolitan Green Belt. The demographic profile of Albrighton/Cosford is very different to most market towns in Shropshire, and is heavily influenced by the presence of RAF Cosford. The town has a much higher than average 18-24 population and a lower than average population aged over 45. Employment self-containment is higher than in any other Shropshire town at 67.2%, with the air force base again contributing to this high figure. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 66.2% owner occupied, 20.3% private rented and 13.5% social rented.

Broseley

Broseley (population 4,500) extends along a broad ridge for about a mile on the southern side of the Ironbridge Gorge (now a World Heritage Site), between Bridgnorth town and Telford. It has poor road access and is bounded by areas of unstable land. The town was prominent in the early Industrial Revolution and its unplanned growth during that period has given rise to a distinctive and somewhat haphazard character. In the past, Broseley had a significant mining and smelting industry, but nowadays primarily acts as a dormitory town for larger settlements nearby, especially Telford and

Wolverhampton. As such, employment self-containment is very low, and there are few major employers. Almost three times as many Broseley employees work in manufacturing than is the case county wide. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 69.5% owner occupied, 12.6% private rented and 17.9% social rented.

Ellesmere

Ellesmere (population 3,700) lies on the A495 between Oswestry, Wrexham and Whitchurch. The adjacent Mere and the Llangollen branch of the Shropshire Union Canal attract significant numbers of visitors. A major mixed-use redevelopment on the site of the canalside wharf is underway, and offers prospects for continued regeneration. There are fewer jobs in the town than there are resident workers and most workplaces in Ellesmere are small. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 71.2% owner occupied, 17.3% private rented and 11.5% social rented.

Church Stretton

Church Stretton (population 3,700) is located in a narrow valley in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, midway between Shrewsbury and Ludlow on the A49. Originally a medieval settlement, it became important as a spa resort in the late 19th century. It benefits from good transport links, including a railway station on the Crewe – Cardiff line. Church Stretton is a popular retirement destination, with 31.5% of Church Stretton residents age 65 or over (compared with 19.7% for Shropshire). Tourism is very important within the town, and is a key employer. Similar numbers commute in and out of the town to work and employment self-containment in Church Stretton is high given the size of the town. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 81.6% owner occupied, 9.4% private rented and 9.0% social rented.

Highley

Highley (population 3,400) is seven miles south of Bridgnorth town and within commuting distance of Kidderminster. It is a linear settlement, spread over a mile on the B4555 on a ridge above the River Severn. Highley is isolated to its east by the river, apart from a footbridge that provides pedestrian access to Alveley. The settlement expanded significantly in the early twentieth century in conjunction with the Highley / Alveley colliery. The closure of the mines in the 1960s has left a legacy of regeneration needs. Highley is not a main employment centre and although most local jobs are filled by local residents, the majority of resident workers are employed elsewhere. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 70.4% owner occupied, 17.0% private rented and 12.6% social rented.

Cleobury Mortimer

Cleobury Mortimer (population 2,400) lies on the Worcestershire border, between Ludlow to the west and Kidderminster to the east. The centre has retained its attractive historic character. Cleobury Mortimer supports a reasonably high level of employment self-containment given its size, and although the number of workplaces is limited, there are a number of important

employers. Manufacturing absorbs a higher than average proportion of the Cleobury Mortimer workforce, although the majority of employees work in the service sector. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 77.0% owner occupied, 14.4% private rented and 8.6% social rented.

Craven Arms

Craven Arms (population 2,300) is located on the A49 between Shrewsbury and Ludlow, with a railway station on the junction of the Cardiff - Crewe and Heart of Wales lines. It lies in the valley of the River Onny, on the edge of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town has experienced growth in recent years, with significant developments near its centre and along the A49, and the provision of new services such as the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre. The number of resident workers exceed the number of available jobs. Most workplaces in Craven Arms are small in size, with the majority of the workforce being employed in the service sector. However, manufacturing and construction are both more important providers of employment in Craven Arms than in Shropshire at a whole. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 67.8% owner occupied, 21.4% private rented and 10.8% social rented.

Much Wenlock

Much Wenlock (population 2,200) is within easy driving distance of Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Telford. It is an historic market town lying in a narrow valley close to Wenlock Edge, and is known for being the birth place of the Modern Olympic Games. It is particularly noted for its medieval streets and fine historic buildings, and tourism is an important industry for the town. For a small settlement, Much Wenlock supports a relatively high number of service jobs, with the number of resident workers only just exceeding the number of jobs available. The town is subject to inward development pressure and to avoid becoming a commuting settlement, the priority is for local employment opportunities balanced with housing and infrastructure to meet local needs. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 70.4% owner occupied, 17.0% private rented and 12.6% social rented.

Bishop's Castle

Bishop's Castle (population 1,800) is a medieval settlement with a large number of historic buildings, located close to the Welsh border. Its remote location means that it is an important service centre both for its own residents and for its rural hinterland despite being one of the smallest of Shropshire's market towns. It is an important employment town, with the number of jobs it supports exceeding the number of resident workers and for a settlement of its size, employment self-containment is high. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 70.7% owner occupied, 20.2% private rented and 9.1% social rented.

Pontesbury

Pontesbury (population 1,500) is an attractive small settlement in the Rea Valley approximately seven miles south west of Shrewsbury. The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies just to its south. Pontesbury is not a main employment centre, and supports less than 500 jobs. Most people of working age who reside in Pontesbury commute out. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 78.2% owner occupied, 17.0% private rented and 12.6% social rented.

Minsterley

Minsterley (population 1,400) lies within very close proximity to Pontesbury to its north, with Snailbeach and the Stiperstones to its south. For a settlement of its size, Minsterley is a relatively important centre of employment, primarily due to the presence of food producer St Ivel. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 78.2% owner occupied, 17.0% private rented and 12.6% social rented.

Key Evidence

1. The market towns programme social and economic assessment 2009
2. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
3. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment
4. Landscape Assessments
5. Shropshire Water Cycle Study
6. Shropshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
7. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands and associated evidence base (including the SQW reports into rural community sustainability 2008)

Delivery & Monitoring

This policy will be delivered by:

- the development management process
- the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD
- the LDF Implementation Plan

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- The amount of residential, employment, and retail development, by town
- The proportion of affordable homes in relation to market homes in each town
- Delivery of infrastructure, facilities and services in each town
- Standards of open space, sport and recreation provision in each town

CS4 COMMUNITY HUBS AND COMMUNITY CLUSTERS

In the rural area, communities will become more sustainable by:

- **Focusing private and public investment in the rural area into Community Hubs and Community Clusters, and not allowing development outside these settlements unless it meets policy CS5;**
- **Allowing development within Community Hubs and Community Clusters that helps rebalance rural communities by providing facilities, economic development or housing for local needs, and is of a scale that is appropriate to the settlement;**
- **Ensuring that market housing development makes sufficient contribution to improving local sustainability through a suitable mix of housing that caters for local needs and by delivering community benefits in the form of contributions to affordable housing for local people and contributions to identified requirements for facilities, services and infrastructure. The priorities for community benefit will be identified in partnership with the community;**
- **Ensuring that all development within Community Hubs and Community Clusters is of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the character of the settlement and its environs, and satisfies policy CS6.**

Community Hubs and Community Clusters are identified in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

EXPLANATION

Market forces have led to very high house prices in rural areas in relation to the local economy, and lifestyles that depend on services that are not provided locally. While planning cannot fully overcome market forces and personal behaviour, it can have a powerful effect. It can help protect the special character of Shropshire's rural settlements, and influence the type of development. It can seek to ensure that rural settlements do not stagnate and decline, but instead meet the needs of their communities, particularly the needs of younger households and those on lower local wages. It assist in improving the provision of services, facilities and infrastructure available in smaller settlements. These are important elements of the "rural rebalance" referred to in policy CS1 Strategic Approach.

Enabling rural communities to become more sustainable and thrive as living and working communities requires investment from both public and private sources. Sensitively designed development that reflects the needs of the local community, and contributes towards much needed infrastructure and affordable homes for local people, has an important role to play in

reinvigorating rural communities, and in reducing carbon emissions by maintaining local services and reducing the need to travel. Development that contributes to economic vitality includes development referred to in policy CS13, including home-based enterprises.

Locally identified detail on what is of most community benefit in each Community Hub or Community Cluster will be community led as far as possible, within the framework of the formal planning system. Community benefit includes:

- Affordable housing (policy CS11), which will normally be allocated to people who have a strong local connection;
- ICT and transport (policy CS7), including broadband infrastructure, provision for pedestrians and cyclists, bridleways and public footpaths, improved bus services, rail services where appropriate, safer roads;
- Facilities, services and infrastructure (policy CS8), including but not limited to, youth activities and meeting venues, libraries, health and social care facilities, education, police and emergency services, village halls and community centres;
- Environmental networks (policy CS17), including open space, accessible countryside and woodlands, areas of biodiversity, play areas, playing fields, sports pitches and recreational facilities;
- Water and flood management (policy CS18);
- Waste recycling facilities (policy CS19).

Each community's priorities for community benefit will be fed into the LDF Implementation Plan, through Parish Plans and local engagement exercises.

The majority of identified community needs will be in the settlement or cluster concerned, but there may be cases where they are met further afield, for example, where a community facility lies in the countryside between settlements, or is a facility that is shared with another settlement such as a primary school.

Smaller settlements generally have fewer facilities, services and infrastructure, and less choice of housing, than larger settlements. As they generally start from a lower base in sustainability terms, it takes greater effort to raise their sustainability. In recognition of this fact, development in Community Hubs and Community Clusters will generally have to work harder to improve sustainability. The detailed requirements for contributions will be contained either in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD or in a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, within the framework provided by policy CS9. Development proposals that do not make sufficient contribution to improving the sustainability of the community will be refused as unsustainable development.

Where a development is unviable at the level of contribution required, the local authority will use open book accounting (namely full financial disclosure of the development scheme with independent verification) to determine a financially viable contribution. This will assume that the price paid for land realistically reflected the requirements of policy CS4. If the development, considered holistically and including its benefits to the local mix of housing,

meeting local needs, and contribution to economic vitality, makes sufficient net contribution to the sustainability of the Community Hub or Community Cluster, then it may meet the requirements of policy CS4 without fully meeting all the requirements of policy CS9.

The approach in policy CS4 supports the approach proposed towards Critical Rural Services in Phase Three of the Review of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. It reflects the need for an enterprising response to the challenges of climate change, and for new models of living based on greater local self-sufficiency and self reliance. Shropshire Council will work with communities that wish to achieve this vision.

Shropshire Council is adopting a “bottom up” approach, whereby it works with communities at the parish and village level in together undertaking an intelligent analysis of the nature of their local community and how their village functions, and how it can be improved. This is done through an interactive toolkit that starts with the Parish Plan where available; secondly adds statistics compiled by Shropshire Council, such as Census data, to provide a quantitative basis for discussion; and thirdly engages with the local community in a Community Testing Event to arrive at an agreed view of how the community regards its current sustainability. This methodology will provide quality evidence to help the planning authority make robust decisions on the designation of Community Hubs and Community Clusters. Undertaking the assessment does not commit a community to seek Community Hub or Community Cluster status. The approach is detailed further in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

A key consideration in identifying Community Hubs and Community Clusters is the views of the local community regarding whether they wish to put themselves forward for this status, whether singly or as a part of a networked group of settlements. The Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD includes a schedule of settlements that are designated as Community Hubs and Community Clusters. In recognition of the fact that the needs of communities change over time, the approach will leave the door open for communities who may want to be considered as “Community Hubs” or “Community Clusters” at a later date, in response to their changing circumstances, potentially through more frequent partial reviews of the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

Community Clusters are comprised of two or more small settlements, where the combined settlements offer a range of services contributing to a sustainable community. Development will only be allowed *within* (and not between) settlements. For planning purposes, the countryside between the settlements is not part of the cluster.

Development in Community Hubs and Community Clusters will be *within* the village. To prevent ribbon development, development *adjoining* the village is not acceptable, unless on a site that has been allocated for development, or as an exception site for affordable housing or other development allowed under policy CS5 Countryside and Green Belt.

Allocations of land for development adjoining Community Hubs and Community Clusters are made in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. Where it is appropriate for Community Hubs and Community Clusters to have development boundaries, for example where they are already inset villages within the Green Belt, the extent of those development boundaries are defined in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. However, in most cases Community Hubs and Community Clusters will not have defined development boundaries, even within the Green Belt¹.

Key Evidence

1. Parish Plans
2. The LDF Implementation Plan includes infrastructure requirements. This is updated regularly, and reflects up-to-date inputs from the community, for instance through their parish plan process.
3. The Local Housing Market Assessment (updated annually) identifies needs for affordable housing (both social rented and intermediate tenures).
4. The survey of services and facilities in Shropshire's settlements provides an evidence base that underpins the identification of local centres.
5. Community Intelligence obtained through the Community Testing Event.
6. Analysis of development trends over 1998-2008 for the rural area
7. Analysis of demographic and economic trends over 1998-2008 for the rural area
8. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands and associated evidence base (including the SQW reports into rural community sustainability 2008)
9. Circular 05/05: Planning Obligations, and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (awaited)

Delivery and Monitoring of Policy:

This policy will be delivered by:

- the development management process
- the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD
- the LDF Implementation Plan

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- Number of new affordable homes provided in local centres, Community Hubs

¹ National planning policy in PPG2 allows small scale infill in villages within the Green Belt, and consequently it is not necessary for them to be taken out of the Green Belt, .

and Community Clusters (subset of NI 155)

- Proportion of affordable homes in relation to market homes
- area of new employment land developed
- Commuted sums and payments in kind towards local infrastructure (LDF Implementation Plan Monitoring)

POLICY CS5 COUNTRYSIDE AND GREEN BELT

In the open countryside, new development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Subject to the further controls over development that apply to the Green Belt, development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to:

- **Small-scale new economic development diversifying the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes;**
- **dwellings to house agricultural, forestry or other essential countryside workers and other affordable housing or accommodation to meet a local need in accordance with national planning policies and Policies CS11 and CS12;**

With regard to the above two types of development, applicants will be required to demonstrate the need and benefit for the development proposed. Development will be expected to take place primarily in recognisable named settlements² or be linked to other existing development and business activity.

- **agricultural/horticultural/forestry/mineral related development, although proposals for large scale new development will be required to demonstrate that there are no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts;**
- **the retention and appropriate expansion of an existing established business, unless relocation to a suitable site within a settlement would be more appropriate;**
- **the conversion or replacement of suitably located buildings for small scale economic development / employment generating use;**
- **sustainable rural tourism and countryside recreation proposals in accordance with Policies CS16 and CS17;**
- **required community uses and infrastructure which cannot be accommodated within settlements;**

² The definition of the term "recognisable named settlements" is given in the Glossary

- conversion of rural buildings which take account of and make a positive contribution to the character of the buildings and the countryside. Proposals for conversions will be considered with regard to the principles of PPS7, giving equal priority to the following uses:

- small scale economic development/employment generating use, including live-work proposals and tourism uses;
- affordable housing to meet local need (including agricultural workers dwellings);
- other uses appropriate to a countryside location.

Open market residential conversions will only be considered where high standards of sustainability are achieved and, except where the buildings are listed, a financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing to be delivered off site is provided in accordance with Policy CS11.

In all cases, development proposals should be consistent with the requirements of Policies CS6 and CS17.

Green Belt

Within the designated Green Belt in south-eastern Shropshire, there will be additional control of new development in line with government guidance in PPG2. Land within development boundaries in the town of Shifnal, the villages of Albrighton, Alveley, Beckbury, Claverley, and Worfield, and at the Alveley and Stanmore Industrial Estates is excluded from the Green Belt. In addition to appropriate development in these areas, limited infilling will be permitted in any other Community Hubs and Community Clusters listed in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, subject to the requirements of Policies CS4, CS6 and CS11. Also, limited local needs affordable housing on exceptions sites which accords with the requirements of Policy CS11 will be permitted in the Green Belt. Areas of safeguarded land are reserved for potential future development at Albrighton and Shifnal, while the military base and Royal Air Force Museum at Cosford is recognised as a major existing developed site within the Green Belt where limited defence related development will be permitted.

The Green Belt boundary and all relevant policy areas are identified on the Proposals Map for the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, which sets out the detailed approach to development in the Green Belt and any new site allocations required within the safeguarded land.

EXPLANATION

The emphasis of this policy is on sustainability and rural rebalance, supporting Policy CS1 Strategic Approach, linking with the Sustainable Community Strategy vision for 'Our Communities' and the Regional Spatial Strategy objectives for rural renaissance, and following the principles of national planning policy, particularly PPS7. The policy seeks to enhance the broader social and economic well-being of rural communities, facilitating development that supports appropriate land and resource based uses and economic diversification and that provides for local needs, including affordable housing, community facilities and infrastructure. It provides recognition that the countryside is a 'living-working' environment which requires support to maintain or enhance sustainability, together with the ability to adapt to the changing needs and circumstances.

However, whilst this policy seeks to facilitate a wide range of beneficial rural development, the operation of this policy, in conjunction with Policy CS6 and more detailed policies in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, recognises the need to consider the scale and design of proposals, where development is most appropriately sited, environmental and other impacts. There will be a significant emphasis on achieving quality and sustainability of design, particularly locally appropriate design and use of materials. Thus, proposals which would result in isolated, sporadic, out of scale, badly designed or otherwise unacceptable development, or which may either individually or cumulatively erode the character of the countryside, will not be acceptable. Whilst these considerations will apply generally, there will be areas where development will need to pay particular regard to landscape character, biodiversity or other environmental considerations including in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

These considerations also apply to conversions of existing buildings. Having regard to PPS7, proposals for conversions in the open countryside will be required to demonstrate that the uses are appropriate for, and take account of, the character of both the buildings themselves and their wider landscape setting (as required by Policy CS6), with uses which support the aims of rural rebalance prioritised. For conversions to open market housing to contribute to this rebalance, it will be necessary for the schemes to make significant contributions to affordable housing provision in the locality, as set out in Policy CS11. High standards of sustainable design and construction will also be required in order to mitigate the impact of development and maximise resource efficiency in such rural locations.

Whilst the Core Strategy aims to provide general support for the land based sector, larger scale agricultural/horticultural/forestry/mineral related development, including livestock production units, poultry units, greenhouses/poly tunnels and mineral extraction, can have significant impacts and will not be appropriate in all rural locations.

Green Belt

The designated Green Belt in the south eastern part of Shropshire (which forms part of the larger expanse of the West Midlands Green Belt) is shown on the key diagram, with the Green Belt boundary, inset maps for areas excluded from the Green Belt and areas of 'safeguarded land' at Albrighton and Shifnal, identified on the Proposals Map for the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. Within the Green Belt, there are further restrictions on development in addition to the general policies controlling development in the countryside. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development, particularly development which impacts on the openness of the Green Belt, and this will limit the ability to support proposals which are not identified as acceptable development types in PPG2. Very special circumstances are required to justify otherwise inappropriate development which would harm the Green Belt.

However, as set out in PPG2, limited infilling may be permitted in settlements which have inset maps or are listed in the Development Plan, while limited affordable housing for local community needs in accordance with PPS3 may also be permitted (see Policy CS11). The Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD will set out further guidance on the policy approach to development in the Green Belt.

Once defined in a development plan, Green Belt boundaries are expected to remain in position for a long time, and no changes have been proposed to the boundaries identified in Bridgnorth District Local Plan 1996-2011. The Local Plan also identifies development boundaries for a number of settlements and other locations within the Green Belt, and 'safeguarded land' at Albrighton and Shifnal. The safeguarded land makes long term provision for the future expansion of these settlements whilst retaining the normal strict controls over development until land is released, if required, by allocation in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD. Any changes required to development boundaries in the future will be determined through the preparation and subsequent reviews of this DPD.

Key Evidence

1. Bridgnorth Local Plan 1996-2011
2. West HMA Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment 2008 and subsequent local housing market area assessments
3. Shropshire Affordable Housing Site Viability Study (Fordham Research 2009).
4. Shropshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studies (BDC 2008, SABC 2006, OBC 2008, NSDC 2008, SSDC 2008)
5. Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment (Shropshire County Council 2006 and as updated)
6. Shropshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment (Shropshire County Council 2004)
7. Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 - Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership (May 2009)
8. Shropshire Historic Farmsteads Study (Shropshire Council March 2010)
9. Analysis of demographic, development and economic trends over 1998-2008 for the rural area

Delivery & Monitoring

This policy will be delivered by:

- the development management process;
- Preparation of the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD;
- Work with organisations, other Council services and local communities to identify requirements for and to facilitate appropriate community infrastructure provision.
- Preparation of further guidance on farm diversification and traditional farmsteads to promote the positive management of change to historic rural buildings, including historic farmsteads.

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy, drawing from the monitoring of development trends and set out in the Annual Monitoring Report:

- Numbers of affordable houses built in the rural areas;
- Rural buildings conversions - part of Core Output indicator H3 - percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land;
- New employment floorspace in the rural areas;
- Number and type of planning application decisions which are significant departures from Development Plan relating to development in the countryside, including the Green Belt.

CS6: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

To create sustainable places, development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles, to achieve an inclusive and accessible environment which respects and enhances local distinctiveness and which mitigates and adapts to climate change. This will be achieved by:

- Requiring all development proposals, including changes to existing buildings, to achieve criteria set out in the sustainability checklist. This will ensure that sustainable design and construction principles are incorporated within new development, and that resource and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation are adequately addressed and improved where possible. The checklist will be developed as part of a Sustainable Design SPD;
- Requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced;

And ensuring that all development:

- Is designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11
- Protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character including scale, pattern and density, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate;
- Contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities, including safeguarding residential and local amenity and the achievement of local standards for the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- Is designed to a high quality, consistent with national good practice standards, including appropriate landscaping and car parking provision and taking account of site characteristics such as land stability and ground contamination;
- Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water;
- Ensures that there is capacity and availability of infrastructure to serve

any new development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS8.

Proposals resulting in the loss of existing facilities, services or amenities will be resisted unless provision is made for equivalent or improved provision, or it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing facility, service or amenity is not viable over the long term.

EXPLANATION

To mitigate climate change through sustainable construction, all proposals, including changes to the existing building stock, will be required to complete a sustainability checklist to accompany planning applications. Developed as part of a Sustainable Design SPD this will require proposals to demonstrate that appropriate sustainable design measures have been incorporated to minimise natural resource consumption such as renewable energy and low carbon technology, grey water harvesting and the provision of storage facilities for waste recycling. Sustainability standards will comply with those set out in national and regional policy and be tailored according to the scale and nature of the proposed development. Innovative design of new developments will be encouraged. Any application failing to contain a checklist will not be validated.

It is crucial that all new developments are designed in order to adapt to the effects of climate change, so that they remain safe throughout their lifetime despite changing conditions. Consideration should therefore be given to appropriate siting, orientation, landscaping and design of development, to account for flood levels, surface water run off, dispersal or migration routes for wildlife, passive heating, natural shade and cooling and maximising energy efficiency. All proposals are expected to be designed to reduce opportunities for criminal activity and anti social behaviour, and pay regard to Secured by Design.

Sustainable design also reflects peoples changing needs over time and requires the consideration of different needs within the local community. Development should take into account changing needs over the lifetime of the development, incorporating specific accessibility and design features, such as Homes for Life and Lifetime Home Standards to ensure the needs of Shropshire's ageing and disabled population are addressed, as outlined in Policy CS11.

The quality and local distinctiveness of Shropshire's townscapes and landscapes are important assets. They have a direct impact on quality of life and are an important influence on the local economy in terms of attracting investment and boosting Shropshire's image as a tourist destination. The Council will ensure new development complements and relates to its surroundings, not only in terms of how it looks, but the way it functions, to maintain and enhance the quality of Shropshire's environment as an attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable place in which to live and work.

There are a substantial number of designated heritage assets in Shropshire. This reflects the special architectural and historical interest of the county and

means that such assets require careful consideration and management where change is proposed.

Trees and woodlands are important landscape, wildlife and cultural assets and there are approximately 900 Tree Preservation Orders covering all sizes of woodlands and many individual trees in Shropshire. In addition, designated or important wildlife sites or species are often found within or around urban areas as well as in the wider countryside. Development should be sensitive to these valued features and make a positive contribution to the overall appearance and environmental quality of the area through the use of appropriate good quality locally sourced materials; the support and encouragement of traditional skills; the protection of heritage assets and the protection of important buildings, trees and environmental networks. Particular regard should be paid to Village and Town Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals.

Open spaces can provide a number of functions such as formal and informal recreation or amenity space, they can also have a number of benefits; for example allotments which can improve health and well being, combat obesity and increase opportunities for social inclusion. They also provide a function for food security, reducing air miles, helping to combat climate change and providing habitats for wildlife.

New developments can make a positive contribution to the level of open spaces in our towns and villages and the connecting links between open spaces. Standards for the provision of open space are set out in the Shropshire Open Space, Sport and Recreation study and new development will be expected to achieve at least a minimum level of this standard, but exploring opportunities for additional provision where appropriate and making provision for future maintenance. Where it can be shown that on-site provision is not appropriate the developer will be expected to make a contribution to provision off-site. Further details of the contributions required are set out under Policy CS9. All new developments will be required to make provision for footpaths and cyclepaths which should be, where possible linked to the existing network of cyclepaths and footpaths.

High quality design will be expected in all new developments to ensure that the development is appropriate to its setting and surroundings and to ensure that local character is reflected. Appropriate landscaping and tree planting will form an integral part of any proposal to ensure that development is better assimilated into its surroundings. Developments should also include room for appropriate vehicular access (including for waste and emergency vehicles), suitable provision of car and cycle parking as well as footpaths and cyclepaths (where appropriate) and linked where possible, to the existing network.

The Spatial Strategy of concentrating development in Shrewsbury, the market towns and key settlements and the allocation of sites for development in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD will have regard to the quality of soil, water and air quality, including particularly the designated Air Quality Management Areas within the County.

Key Evidence

1. PPG17, Open Space Sport and Recreation Study - PMP (November 2009)
2. Shropshire Historic Environment Record
3. Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment (SCC 2006 and as updated)
4. Shropshire Historic Landscape Character assessment (SCC 2004)
5. Shropshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studies (BDC 2008, SABC 2006, OBC 2008, NSDC 2008, SSDC 2008)
6. Shropshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project – SC, March 2010 Shrewsbury Green Infrastructure Strategy – TEP (November 2008)
7. Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 - Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership (May 2009)

Delivery and Monitoring of Policy:

This policy will be delivered by:

- Preparation of a Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document
- Preparation of a Natural Environment Supplementary Planning Document
- Preparation of an Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document
- Design and Access Statements to support planning applications
- Preparation of the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD
- The development management process;
- Promote and encourage communities to undertake Town and Village Design Statements.
- The Implementation Plan

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- Number of developments incorporating sustainable design measures in line with the sustainability checklist
- Number of new Village and Town Design Statements completed
- Number of new dwellings built to Lifetime Homes standard
- Amount of recreational/open space in new developments
- Number of completed developments incorporating renewable energy capacity
- Capacity of renewable energy generation facilities installed annually
- Number of developments built to national standards
- Number of conversions, adaptations, renovations and extensions incorporating energy efficiency measures for the whole building

CS7: COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT

A sustainable pattern of development requires the maintenance and improvement of integrated, accessible, attractive, safe and reliable communication and transport infrastructure and services. These need to provide a range of opportunities for communication and transport which meet social, economic and environmental objectives by improving accessibility, managing the need to travel, offering options for different travel needs and reducing the impacts of transport. This will be achieved by:

- promoting greater awareness of travel behaviour to encourage more informed choices about communication, the need to travel and alternative travel options;**
- promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to reduce the impacts of individual travel decisions at work, at home and for leisure;**
- facilitating enterprise and improved access to services and information using ICT/broadband technologies especially by managing the development of fixed and mobile ICT infrastructure and enabling local access to ICT facilities;**
- protecting and enhancing strategic and local cycling, footpath, bridleway and canal networks as local transport routes and for recreation and leisure use;**
- enabling the provision of accessible, affordable and demand responsive passenger transport services including bus, Park & Ride, rail, coach, taxi, community transport services and car sharing initiatives;**
- promoting rail related developments to support the sub-regional role of Shrewsbury and the role of Market Towns and other rail linked centres and increasing choice of destinations and service frequency and travel times. This will require rail infrastructure and service improvements especially along the A5/M54 rail corridor including a Parkway Station for Shrewsbury;**
- promoting and enabling improvements to the strategic and local highway network including improvements to the A5 Shrewsbury and Oswestry by-passes and promotion of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road;**
- facilitating freight movements through the County road and rail networks especially along the A5 and the A49 and to encourage greater freight movements by rail.**

EXPLANATION

Sustainable economic growth which supports vibrant communities living within a sustainable pattern of development is affected not only by decisions on the location of investment and development but also by good communication infrastructure and services and by the range of accessible and affordable opportunities for travel and transport.

These objectives are currently being promoted through the Local Transport Plan (2006 – 2011). The Core Strategy will deliver these requirements principally through the next generation of Local Transport Plans being prepared for the period from 2011 to 2016. It will be essential to support the transport needs of the national, regional and local economy to serve a rapidly changing society affected by increasing future economic uncertainty. It will also be important to provide integrated transport infrastructure and services to meet local needs whilst minimising the impacts of transport and traffic on communities and the environment. This will primarily be achieved by influencing the location of development that generates significant volumes of traffic and will emphasise the importance of transport assessments in the development management process. These assessments will help to evaluate the suitability of the location of proposed developments in relation to their transport demands.

Key to the process of managing change is the need to influence travel behaviour both in the workplace through a commitment to travel planning, car sharing and flexible / home working and also through choices in our daily lives by offering a range of safe, convenient and attractive travel options using well designed and effective transport networks.

A key element is also to facilitate, where possible, ICT/ broadband technologies which remove the need to travel and to facilitate local access to these technologies. It is also important to manage the development of the infrastructure required to support ICT/ broadband technologies without adversely affecting the important natural and historic environment within Shropshire.

A flexible approach to the emergence and uptake of new technologies may also be required where these offer attractive and affordable communication or transport solutions.. It will be necessary to facilitate such changes where new technologies have significant or even disruptive impacts rendering existing technologies obsolete.

To effectively influence the individual's choice about their mode of travel a range of options must be available which provide accessible, attractive, safe and reliable alternative options. The corollary effect will be to manage the growth in traffic, to reduce the adverse impacts on our towns especially through the emission of air pollutants and to reduce the contribution to global warming.

In Shropshire, local travel options will be promoted through the cycle, footpath, bridleway and canal networks including the National Cycle Network routes especially within key settlements. It is important to protect and enhance these strategic and local networks which provide important routeways through Shropshire. These routeways also contribute to the natural and historic environment of Shropshire and its key settlements and provide alternative modes of travel for local communities as well as providing important tourism and leisure opportunities. It is important to recognise that the quality of opportunities for walking and cycling will encourage physical activity and this would help to improve the health and quality of life of individuals within local communities.

The range of travel options will also include a broad range of passenger transport services. These meet travel needs as an alternative to private transport and can help to tackle rural isolation and assist groups with accessibility issues especially through community transport schemes (including Dial a Ride and link bus services) and car sharing initiatives.

Passenger transport services also reduce the impacts of individual travel choices by relieving congestion, improving air quality and reducing other traffic impacts. These services need to be supported by improvements to the networks including the establishment of a core bus network with bus priority measures in Shrewsbury and other key settlements. It will also be important to seek sustainable fiscal measures through the Local Transport Plan especially to support less accessible rural and urban communities. In addition, the extension of community transport options, the development of the Park & Ride network and local improvements to the network of rural rail stations are also needed.

Further improvements to the destinations, frequency and travel times of rail services in Shropshire is expected to further improve demand for rail passenger services including links to London, Manchester, Crewe, Chester, Cardiff and Aberystwyth.

This objective recognises the importance of the A5/M54 rail corridor link to Telford, Wolverhampton and Birmingham International which will be a key location for investment as the principal link into the national rail network. This line would benefit from further service improvements including increased line speeds potentially through the electrification of the route along with the provision of a Parkway Station with strategic Park & Ride service to Shrewsbury to encourage rail usage and manage user demand at Shrewsbury Station.

This objective also recognises that Shrewsbury is the key hub for rail services to the North-West region and also for Welsh rail routes along the Cambrian Line (Central Wales), the Heart of Wales Line (South West) and the Marches Line (between North and South Wales). Shropshire recognises the proposals for further investment in rail management and services improvements identified in the Wales Rail Planning Assessment. It is recognised that

investments along these lines will bring consequent improvements to rail services from Shrewsbury.

Shropshire and its key centres require good accessibility for goods and services to promote investment in the local economy and to address issues affecting its future growth and prosperity. This will require further improvements to the strategic and local highway network to manage transport demands and to support sustainable economic growth.

Highway improvements will include the further development of key by-passes and improvements on key road routes through Shropshire. These will include investment for the A49 serving the Rural Regeneration Zone and for the A5 especially on the Shrewsbury and Oswestry by-passes requiring highway improvements along the route and junction improvements on accesses to the towns. Shropshire also recognises Transport Wales' proposed cross boundary investment to improve the A458 from Buttington at Welshpool to Wollaston Cross on the Shropshire border in the Welsh Trunk Road Forward Programme. The sub-regional role of Shrewsbury will also be enhanced through the promotion of the North West Relief Road as the final stage of the Shrewsbury by-passes.

Shropshire recognises its role within the West Midlands in accommodating freight movements through the region especially along the A49 and A5 to facilitate national and European freight movements especially from southern and eastern sea-ports into Wales and Ireland. Improvements to freight movements will be facilitated where possible and measures to increase the transfer of freight from road to rail will be supported to reduce the impacts of road freight movements within the County. This would be facilitated by the geography of the rail network and Shrewsbury's historical situation in the national rail system which provide opportunities to encourage greater freight movements by rail especially for mineral and waste operations.

Key Evidence

1. Local Transport Plan for Shropshire 2006 - 2011
2. Local Transport Plan for Shropshire 2011 - 2016
3. NICE Public Health Guidance – promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity (January 2008)
4. Broadband in Shropshire – Business Survey Results (November 2009)

Delivery & Monitoring

This policy will be delivered by:

- Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2016 and related action plans;
- LTP Implementation Plan
- Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD;

- Development management process;
- Implementation Plan

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- LTP performance indicators;
- Policy CS6 development requirements.

CS8: FACILITIES, SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

The development of sustainable places in Shropshire with safe and healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life will be assisted by:

- **Protecting and enhancing existing facilities, services and amenities that contribute to the quality of life of residents and visitors;**
- **Preserving and improving access to facilities and services wherever possible, including access to information and communication technologies (ICT), throughout Shropshire;**
- **Facilitating the timely provision of additional facilities, services and infrastructure to meet identified needs, whether arising from new developments or existing community need, in locations that are appropriate and accessible;**
- **Positively encouraging environmentally sensitive infrastructure that mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and working closely with network providers to ensure provision of necessary energy distribution networks.**

EXPLANATION

As a predominantly rural area, Shropshire is familiar with threats of closure to, and loss of, its post offices, schools, pubs, village shops and phone boxes, to name but a few. We recognise that facilities, services and infrastructure have a direct effect on the quality of life of Shropshire's residents. This is reflected in the Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy and throughout the Core Strategy's approach.

The above strategies also place an emphasis on promoting a low carbon Shropshire. The coal fired power station at Ironbridge is expected to come to the end of its life by 2016. National energy policy emphasises the need to maintain energy supplies in Shropshire and the wider region in the interests of energy security. The redevelopment of the Ironbridge power station site may provide opportunities for renewable energy generation as part of a mixed use scheme, and will be considered in the light of policy CS8.

A high proportion of Shropshire properties do not have access to mains heating fuels, which leaves them vulnerable to increases in fuel costs and exacerbates fuel poverty. A positive approach to alternative energy sources using decentralised, renewable or low carbon technologies recognises that this is a problem that particularly affects rural Shropshire, but is also an issue that Shropshire has the natural resources to help address and should do so wherever possible.

The policy adopts a proactive approach towards new facilities, services and infrastructure, as well seeking to defend the loss of existing provision. We recognise that alternative delivery methods are being developed, and that facilities and services are constantly adapting to changing expectations and technologies. Innovative methods of delivery will be supported. A rolling programme of improvement of facilities and services by many partners is reflected in the Implementation Plan, which is updated regularly.

Facilities, services and infrastructure include schools, pubs, village shops, post offices, village halls, community centres, police and emergency services, health care, open space and other green infrastructure, sport and recreational provision, decentralised renewable or low carbon energy installations, highways, pedestrian and cycling facilities, public transport, waste management, utilities, surface water drainage, flood alleviation, and other shared provision. Policies CS17 and CS18 should be read in relation to green infrastructure and water-related infrastructure, and policy CS7 in relation to transport infrastructure. Affordable housing is included in the national definition of "infrastructure", and is referred to in more detail in policies CS9 and CS11. Further policy guidance on infrastructure, including that for large scale renewable energy generation and distribution, will be provided in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

Delivery of policy CS8 will be reflected in the LDF Implementation Plan. The design of development (policy CS6) and developer contributions (policy CS9) will ensure that new development helps achieve policy CS8. For example, policy CS6 requires new development to contribute to meeting local standards for open space, sport and recreational facilities, and to utilise renewable energy generation where possible.

In identifying needs, particular attention will be given to addressing areas with current disadvantage or deprivation. The needs of the elderly, the young and vulnerable groups will be prioritised in accordance with the Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

Key Evidence

1. The LDF Implementation Plan, which sets out identified infrastructure needs. It is updated regularly.
2. PPG17, Open Space Sport and Recreation Study - PMP (November 2009)
3. Shrewsbury Green Infrastructure Strategy – TEP (November 2008)
4. Asset Management Plans and Business Plans of utility companies
5. Shropshire Schools Planning
6. Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy evidence base

Delivery & Monitoring

This policy will be delivered by:

- The direct provision of facilities and services by the Council and its public and private sector partners, reflected in the LDF Implementation Plan;
- the development management process;
- utilising developer contributions to provide enhancements to facilities and services;
- The Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD;
- Liaison with Parish Councils and reference to Parish Plans to identify community infrastructure requirements and help establish local connections;
- Work with organisations and other council services to identify requirements for and to facilitate appropriate community infrastructure development.

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- NI5 – overall / general satisfaction with the local area
- Core Output Indicator E3 Renewable Energy Capacity Installed by Type

CS9: INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Development that provides additional dwellings or employment premises will help deliver more sustainable communities by making contributions to local infrastructure in proportion to its scale and the sustainability of its location, in the following order of priority:

1. Critical infrastructure that is necessary to ensure adequate provision of essential utilities, water management and safe access for the development
2. Priority infrastructure, as identified in the LDF Implementation Plan, including contributions from residential developments towards affordable housing as required to meet policy CS11 *Type and affordability of housing*
3. Key infrastructure as identified in the LDF Implementation Plan

EXPLANATION

It is fair that the burden of new infrastructure is shared by all development, in proportion to its scale. This is particularly important in a rural area such as Shropshire, where a high proportion of development is individually of a small scale but collectively has a significant impact on infrastructure. For example, over the period 1998-2008 around 60% of new dwellings were on sites of less than 5 dwellings, and made negligible contribution to infrastructure. By requiring all development to contribute, the cumulative impact of many small and medium sized developments will be better matched by infrastructure provision than has been the case in the past.

There will be geographical variation in the level of contributions sought, in reflection of the fact that some places have a higher level of requirement than others if they are to be sustainable places. For example, development in Community Hubs and Community Clusters and in the countryside may have to work harder, through greater developer contributions, to ensure that its net effect on sustainability is positive.

The policy refers to development that involves the creation of new dwellings or employment premises. "Development" in this context includes change of use / conversions and subdivisions. It does not apply to householder applications, listed building and conservation area applications, extensions of existing dwellings or existing employment premises (unless the extension is then subdivided into separate units), except to meet their own critical infrastructure requirements and to comply with policy CS6 *Sustainable Design and Development Principles*.

Critical infrastructure refers to water, electricity, access, and other essentials without which the development simply would not take place. On-site works

and the design of the development will often be sufficient to ensure adequate provision, but on occasion it may be necessary for developers to contribute to off-site works either directly or through pooled financial contributions. The standard of provision required in relation to water management is set out in policy CS18 *Sustainable Water Management*. Safe access refers not only to vehicular access and adequate sightlines, but also access to the building by pedestrians and cyclists where relevant. It does not include access within the building, which is the subject of building regulations rather than development management. The definition of "essential" utilities is likely to change over time, reflecting for example the changing importance of digital networks, renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) and other essentials for the normal operation of business or family life.

After critical infrastructure, the priority for infrastructure contributions from development includes the delivery of affordable housing, reflecting the Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the requirements of Core Strategy policy CS11. Other priorities are identified in the LDF Implementation Plan, which details the partnership approach towards delivery of new infrastructure. The LDF Implementation Plan is updated regularly, and provides the mechanism by which infrastructure requirements and their relative priority are identified by Shropshire Council in association with local communities and delivery partners.

Key infrastructure requirements are also detailed in the LDF Implementation Plan. Identified infrastructure will help deliver policies CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS6, CS7, CS8, CS10, CS14, CS15, CS17, CS18 and CS19, for example through the provision of transport infrastructure, public open space and sports facilities, etc.

The appropriate level of contributions for infrastructure other than affordable housing will be set either in the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD, or in a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. The Government is due to publish final Regulations regarding the operation of CIL shortly, which will inform the decision of whether to charge a Community Infrastructure Levy in Shropshire, or whether to rely on other methods of obtaining contributions from developers, such as section 106 planning agreements. This will be one of the key decisions to be made in the process of preparing the Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD.

Contributions will be secured through a variety of ways, including by planning conditions, section 106 legal agreements, and the Community Infrastructure Levy. Where appropriate, contributions from a number of developments may be pooled to address a cumulative impact.

Key Evidence

1. The LDF Implementation Plan
2. Parish Plans, Village Design Statements and other locally identified infrastructure aspirations, are reflected in the Implementation Plan.
3. Affordable Housing Viability Study - Fordham Research (November 2009)
4. Analysis of development 1998-2008

Delivery and Monitoring of Policy

This policy will be delivered by:

- The Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD
- the development management process
- partnership working with infrastructure providers
- developer contributions on-site and by commuted sums through section 106 legal agreements and, possibly, through the Community Infrastructure Levy

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy:

- NI155: number of affordable homes delivered
- Reporting back on the delivery of the Implementation Plan