

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the
Regulation 14 version of
the Neighbourhood Development Plan

Bishop's Castle
Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering
Group

August 2021

Quality information

| Prepared by | Checked by | Verified by | Approved by |
|--|--|--|--|
| Ryan Putt Environmental Consultant | Nick Chisholm-Batten Associate Director | Alastair Peattie Associate Director | Alastair Peattie Associate Director |
| Lauren Egan Graduate Consultant | | | |

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| Revision | Revision date | Details | Authorized | Name | Position |
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Prepared for:

Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
Portwall Place
Portwall Lane
Bristol BS1 6NA
United Kingdom

aecom.com

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan (BCNDP). This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the BCNDP?

The BCNDP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the adopted Shropshire Core Strategy (2011) and the Strategic Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015), as well as the emerging replacement Shropshire Local Plan.

It is currently anticipated that the BCNDP will be submitted to Shropshire Council in early 2022 for subsequent independent examination.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 consultation version of the BCNDP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The initial document was the SEA Scoping Report (June 2021), which includes information about the Neighbourhood Plan area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the BCNDP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative development strategies for the Neighbourhood Plan;

- The likely significant environmental effects of the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- The next steps for the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA process.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the BCNDP

Housing numbers to deliver through the BCNDP

The BCNDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework and the emerging Shropshire Local Plan Review, which underwent consultation in early 2021.

Bishop's Castle is proposed to be retained as a Key Centre in Policy SP2 and Policy S2: Bishop's Castle Place Plan Area in the emerging Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan indicates a need for around 150 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment development to meet local needs.

Policy S2 indicates that the majority of the housing need will be delivered through saved SAMDev allocations, including a small amount of windfall development within the development boundary. No additional employment land is identified as necessary.

To meet the residual requirement, 40 dwellings need to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst the emerging Local Plan states that that will be delivered through windfall development, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recognise that there is only limited scope for such development in Bishop's Castle, particularly with regards to sites' ability to deliver affordable housing. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to allocate land for the remaining requirement to provide certainty that the requisite number of homes is delivered during the plan period, and of a type and tenure appropriate for local needs.

Neighbourhood Plan site assessment and initial shortlisting of sites

In April 2020, the Shropshire Council offered the BCNDP Steering Group the opportunity to undertake a site allocation exercise as part of the NDP process.

With a view to delivering the housing target provided by Shropshire Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought to explore different options for locating new housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In light of this, an independent and objective assessment of the various sites available for development in the vicinity of the town was undertaken on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group during 2020.¹ This considered sites which had been previously considered through the Shropshire Council Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

To support the consideration of the suitability of the sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan site assessment process appraised sites against a range of criteria relating to suitability,

¹ Andrea Pellegram on behalf of Bishop's Castle Town Council (January 2021) Bishop' Castle Site Assessments

availability and achievability. This engaged a process which built on the Local Plan review's site consideration process. Therefore, and with a view to providing a Neighbourhood Plan perspective to inform site selection, this applied a further stage of neighbourhood level assessment on top of that undertaken at the Local Plan level.

The outcome of this process was the shortlisting of two sites, as highlighted in the map below:



Figure NTS1: sites shortlisted for the purposes of the BCNDP (in blue)

The process for the shortlisting of the sites is set out in detail in Appendix 5 of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA process

To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each of the two sites.

In this context, the sites have been considered as options in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA. This SEA site assessment was undertaken separately to the site assessment undertaken on behalf of the BCNDP Steering Group.

The findings of the assessment of these two options are presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 in the main body of the Environmental Report.

Assessment of the Regulation 14 version of the BCNDP

The current Regulation 14 version of the BCNDP presents eight planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Chapter 5 in the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan. Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Climate Change
- Landscape
- Historic Environment
- Land, Soil and Water Resources
- Population and community
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transportation

The assessment has concluded that the current version of the BCNDP is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on delivering housing which meets local needs, by supporting accessibility and active travel, and securing enhancements to the quality of the public realm and living environment.

The BCNDP also has the potential to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the Historic Environment theme. This is due to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment being placed as the central pillar of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, and the development policies being closely informed by a series of detailed characterisation studies undertaken for the BCNDP.

In terms of the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme, the allocation taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan will lead to negative effects on soils resources. This is due to the required landtake on land potentially classified as the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. This loss should however be seen in the context of the lack of available previously developed land in Bishop's Castle, and the Local Plan's requirement for the town with regards to housing delivery.

In terms of the 'Landscape' theme, whilst the allocation of the preferred site has the potential to lead to impacts on landscape character locally, the Neighbourhood Plan has a close focus on conserving key views, protecting townscape character, and on green infrastructure provision. This provides an appropriate means of protecting and reinforcing local character in association with the delivery of the Local Plan's development requirement for the town.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate a range of beneficial approaches regarding the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity', 'Transportation' and 'Climate Change' SEA themes. However, these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

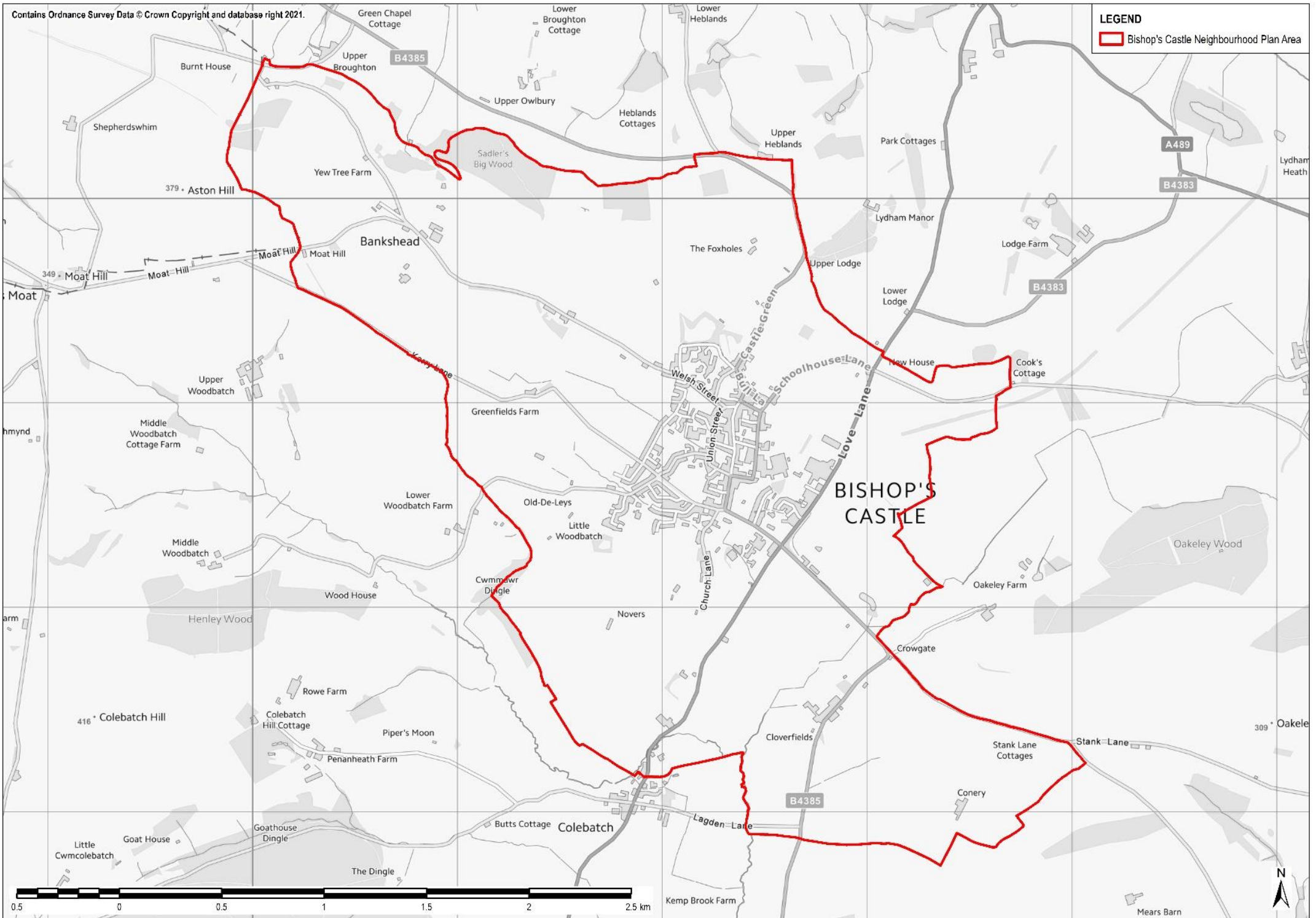
Next steps

This Environmental Report accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the BCNDP for consultation.

Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Shropshire Council, for subsequent independent examination.

At independent examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Shropshire Local Plan.

If independent examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Shropshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, BCNDP will become part of the development plan for Bishop's Castle.



1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan (BCNDP).
- 1.2 The BCNDP is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the adopted Shropshire Core Strategy (2011) and the Strategic Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015), as well as the emerging replacement Shropshire Local Plan.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan area, highlighted in the figure above, was designated in September 2019, and the key information relating to the emerging BCNDP is presented below in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the BCNDP

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Name of Responsible Authority | Bishop's Castle Town Council |
| Title of Plan | Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan |
| Subject | Neighbourhood planning |
| Purpose | <p>The BCNDP is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy (2011) and the Strategic Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015), and the emerging replacement Shropshire Local Plan.</p> <p>The BCNDP will be used to guide and shape development within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> |
| Timescale | To 2038 |
| Area covered by the plan | The BCNDP area covers the parish of Bishop's Castle, in Shropshire. |
| Summary of content | The BCNDP will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area. |
| Plan contact point | Jane Carroll, Chair of the BCNDP Steering Group Email: jane.carrol@gmail.com |

SEA Screening for the BCNDP

1.4 The BCNDP has been screened in by Shropshire Council as requiring SEA. In this regard, SEA is required given the presence of significant environmental constraints locally, including heritage constraints, the Shropshire Hills AONB and the location of the town upstream from the River Clun Special Area of Conservation.

SEA explained

1.5 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.6 SEA is undertaken to meet specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

1.7 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:

- When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
- A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e. the draft BCNDP) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

Structure of this SEA Environmental Report

1.8 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the BCNDP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory² requirements

| Environmental Report question | In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ³ | |
|--|---|---|
| What's the scope of the SEA? | What is the plan seeking to achieve? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan. |
| | What is the sustainability 'context'? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance. |
| | What is the sustainability 'baseline'? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance. |
| | What are the key issues and objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment. |
| What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with alternatives. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan. | |
| What are the assessment findings at this stage? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the Regulation 14 version of the plan. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Regulation 14 version of the plan. | |
| What happens next? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for the plan making / SEA process. | |

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

³ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the BCNDP

Local Plan context for the BCNDP

- 2.1 The BCNDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework and the emerging Shropshire Local Plan Review. The adopted Local Development Framework comprises the following key documents:
- Shropshire Core Strategy (2011); and the
 - Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015).
- 2.2 The emerging Local Plan Review will provide a framework for development to 2038 and will replace the policies of the adopted Core Strategy and the adopted SAMDev Plan.
- 2.3 The BCNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan, as per footnote 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019). Additionally, the NPPF states that *“local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans”* according to set criteria which includes its stage of preparation. The emerging Local Plan is at a later plan stage, having recently concluded Regulation 19 consultation on a ‘Pre-Submission’ version of the Plan.
- 2.4 As part of the Local Plan Review, Shropshire County Council have sub-divided the county into 18 ‘place plan’ areas, in order to help understand how best to distribute housing delivery. In this regard, Bishop’s Castle is identified as a ‘Key Centre’ within the ‘Bishop’s Castle Place Plan Area’, supported by the Community Hubs of Bucknell, Chirbury, Clun and Worthen and Brockton and many smaller ‘Community Clusters’.⁴
- 2.5 Bishop’s Castle is identified in the Pre-submission version of the Local Plan as being a ‘Key Centre’, whereby it *“will accommodate significant well-designed new housing and employment development, supported by necessary infrastructure. Growth within these diverse settlements will maintain and enhance their roles, support key services and facilities and maximise their economic potential”* (page 13).
- 2.6 As specified in Local Plan Policy S2, 150 dwellings and approximately 3 hectares of employment development will be delivered in Bishop’s Castle, in order to respond to local needs in the period up to 2038. With an element of the housing target having already been met through existing commitments and completions, the BCNDP is anticipated to identify land for an additional 40 dwellings to meet the residual housing needs.

⁴ Shropshire Local Council (2018): ‘Shropshire Local Plan Review’ [online] available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/11271/03-preferred-sites-consultation-bishops-castle-place-plan-area.pdf>

Vision, aims, and objectives for the BCNDP

2.7 The vision for the BCNDP captures the community's views and aspirations for the town as expressed through the consultation process. It therefore forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.



By 2038, Bishop's Castle will be a place where:

- *All public services have been protected.*
 - *Young people have been able to remain because there is available affordable housing and thriving businesses that provide satisfying employment opportunities.*
 - *New buildings will be well designed to reflect the local character and will be of high energy performance standards.*
 - *The character of the medieval town will have been preserved and enhanced and it will be complemented by new development.*
 - *Strategic development will not have added to traffic impact in the Conservation Area and town centre and have good access to the A488.*
 - *Access by foot has been preserved and enhanced both in town and in the countryside.*
 - *The town centre will be a people friendly place for small businesses and tourist activities to thrive and where traffic and parking will not be perceived as a problem.*
 - *All parts of the town have good wastewater services and broadband.*
-

Vision Statement for the BCNDP



3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Summary of SEA Scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.⁵ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the BCNDP SEA in June 2021.
- 3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the BCNDP;
 - Baseline data against which the BCNDP can be assessed;
 - The key sustainability issues for the BCNDP; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the BCNDP can be assessed.
- 3.4 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|--|--|
| Natural England <i>No response received</i> | |
| Historic England <i>Historic Places Adviser (email response received on 8th July 2021)</i> | |
| Historic England have no substantive concerns as to the contents of the document and consider the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues, and the proposed SEA framework to be well thought out and fit for purpose. | Comment noted |
| Environment Agency <i>Sustainable Places Team (email response received on 13th July 2021)</i> | |
| Key issues We have previously sent Shropshire Council a copy of our Neighbourhood Plan pro-forma guidance for distribution to Parish Councils (as attached, for completeness). | Comment noted. The guidance has provided a useful source of reference during the subsequent stages of the SEA process. |

⁵ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme*’.

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|--|---|
| <p>The purpose of the guidance is to assist the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans, including an appropriate evidence base. This includes consideration of some of the relevant environmental issues that should be considered, including flood risk, water quality, water resources and includes latest Climate Change recommendations for flood risk (note - fluvial allowances are due to be updated later this month). These are key issues you appear to cover in your scoping report.</p> | <p>Comment noted.</p> |
| <p>We welcome reference to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and recognition of the embedding 'net gain' principles as key to environmental considerations.</p> | <p>Comment noted.</p> |
| <p>Evidence</p> | |
| <p>The emerging local plan states that "Bishop's Castle will act as a Key Centre and contribute towards strategic growth objectives in the south of the County, delivering around 150 dwellings and around 3 hectares of employment development". It is unclear, in the absence of a draft plan, whether/where any additional sites will be included. The draft emerging local plan states that "New residential development will primarily be delivered through the saved SAMDev residential allocation and any residential development allocated within the Bishops Castle Neighbourhood Plan. This will be complemented by appropriate small-scale windfall residential development within the Bishop's Castle development boundary shown on the Policies Map, where it is consistent with relevant policies of this Local Plan and the Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Plan".</p> <p>Evidence should be provided as part of this NP. We would advise utilising the pro-forma to check the environmental constraints. This will help collect evidence, identify challenges, inform policy and assist delivery of sustainable solutions.</p> | |
| <p>River Clun SAC catchment</p> <p>For your information, we have raised soundness concerns on the emerging Shropshire Local Plan (most recently at regulation 19 stage) and advised that sites within the River Clun Catchment SAC, including Bishops Castle, are removed from the plan. This is on the basis of a lack of evidence (including the Shropshire Council Water Cycle Study report and subsequent addendum/erratum, March 2021) and uncertainty around deliverability associated with development growth, likely impacts from wastewater, water quality and achieving nutrient neutrality.</p> | <p>Comment noted. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is being undertaken for the BCNDP, in addition to this SEA.</p> |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| <p>We have advised Shropshire Council, in relation to their growth proposals, to confirm mitigation with sufficient certainty that shows the plan is effective and deliverable without prejudicing the restoration of the Clun SAC. The HRA submitted as part of the local plan identifies that development in Bishop's Castle is likely to have an adverse effect on the River Clun SAC.</p> | |
| <p>With regard to flood risk, we would only normally make substantive further comments if the Plan was seeking to allocate sites for development in Flood Zones 3 and/or 2 (the latter being used as the 1% climate change extent). Shropshire Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment may be of assistance in this regard.</p> | <p>Comment noted.</p> |
| <p>Furthermore, we do not offer detailed bespoke advice on policy but advise you ensure conformity with the Shropshire local plan and refer to our guidance. This might assist with your consideration of a local environmental enhancements or improvement policies that may be necessary.</p> | <p>Comment noted. The guidance has provided a useful source of reference during the subsequent stages of the SEA process.</p> |

3.5 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**. The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

Key Sustainability Issues

Air Quality

- There are no AQMAs declared within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

3.6 Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues raised in relation to the draft Neighbourhood Plan, **the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- The Plan area falls within the catchment of the river Clun SAC, which is noted for its presence of freshwater mussels. Any future development brought forward through the Neighbourhood Plan must be nutrient-neutral or better in terms of its impact on the SAC.
- There is one LWS within the Plan area, Sadler's Little Wood, as well as several BAP habitats, including two ancient woodlands, various other woodland areas (conifer, young tree and deciduous), and grassland. Furthermore, the Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) identifies green 'buffers' within the Plan area, which are sensitive to the effects of future development brought forward through the Plan. The Plan should seek to enhance habitats and their connectivity in these areas.

Climate Change

- CO₂ emissions for Shropshire have steadily declined over the period of 2005- 2018, in line with regional and national statistics, but at a slightly slower rate. Given that the transport sector is the largest contributor to emissions in Shropshire, any development in the Neighbourhood Plan area should consider the need to provide access to sustainable or low carbon travel options, that meet the needs of consumers and improves mobility, whilst also reducing emissions.
- There are no EV charging points within the Plan area, and the closest charging point is situated over 7km from the main settlement. The development plan has the potential to support EV infrastructure proposals to improve the proximity of charging points in the settlement for new and existing residents.
- Shropshire Council has recently declared a climate emergency and has resolved to support local authorities (and, by extension, Neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to maximise opportunities to support Council actions in tackling climate change. This could include measures to encourage renewable energy technologies in small-scale developments in the Parish. This could focus on solar PV given that PV energy generation is by far the greatest source of renewable energy in Shropshire.
- Although fluvial flood risk is low in the Plan area, surface water flood risk is highest in some parts of the main settlement, namely: the B4335 intersection, and concentrated areas on the A488/Brampton road intersection. Development should be diverted from areas of highest flood risk where possible. However, development also provides an opportunity to improve surface water drainage and attenuation through good application of SuDS, which could be implemented and supported through the planning process.

Landscape

- The Plan area lies adjacent to and is heavily influenced by the character of the Shropshire Hills AONB. The Plan-making process should seek to engage with the AONB management aims to enhance and protect the character and quality of the AONB.
- The Plan area falls within the Clun and North West Herefordshire NCA is noted for a number of unique qualities that add to the landform of the area. A number of issues with regards to the quality of the NCAs have been noted by Natural England. The Plan-making process should seek to engage with the SEOs for the NCAs to enhance and protect the character and quality of the NCAs. Additionally, the Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment notes a number of county-level characteristics that should seek to be preserved during development.
- The Landscape & Visual Sensitivity Assessment for Bishop's Castle identifies two 'parcels' with specific features that are susceptible to the effects of future housing and employment development. In particular, development on sites within Parcel A (which exhibits medium-to-high) risk requires attending to the key susceptibilities.

Historic Environment

- The Bishop's Castle Conservation Area is situated in the centre of the town. Development within or surrounding this area will need to sensitively respond to the wealth of unique buildings and bespoke vernacular within the Plan area.
- There are 86 listed buildings within the Plan area. Listed buildings are protected under Historic England and require safeguarding throughout the planning process to ensure their historic and architectural value is retained for future generations.
- The Shropshire (HER) identifies a large number of designated and non-designated assets within Bishop's Castle. Sensitive design, massing and layout during the development process is required to mitigate against the potential impacts.
- The Shropshire AONB is noted for its' rural landscape and historic ridge field features which contribute to the historic character of the town. It will be important to conserve and where possible, enhance these features/ qualities.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- The southernmost part of the Plan area has a high likelihood (>60%) of being underlain by BMV land, indicated by the ALC assessment to be 'very good' quality land. The majority of the Plan area also has the potential to be underlain by Grade 3a land. Wherever possible, development should seek to prioritise previously developed land, followed by lower quality agricultural land for development to avoid the loss of the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.
- There are two main waterbodies within this catchment: the Snakescroft Brook and the River Kemp. Both fail to meet chemical standards set by the EA according to the most recent water cycle assessment (2019). As such, planning should seek to divert development away from these water bodies wherever possible and seek appropriate draining systems for new infrastructure. Plan making should seek to ensure the nutrient-neutrality of future development and its effects on the water bodies of the area.
- Data for the Bishop's Castle WRZ indicates that the supply and demand ratio for households in the area is likely to worsen significantly by 2034. This is an issue for the wider area which the WRMP has outlined actions to address.
- Sand and gravel 'safeguarded mineral resources' and principal freight routes intersect the Plan area and will need consideration in development. Development should seek to avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hinderance of future access to mineral resources.

Population and Community

- The usual resident population of Bishop's Castle has increased at a slower rate over the period of 2011 to 2019 in comparison to figures for Shropshire, the West Midlands and England as a whole. As such, the town has a growing and slightly ageing population. New development should

acknowledge the specialist needs of older residents with regards to accessibility to key community services, such as recreational areas and shops.

- Household deprivation in the Plan area is comparably higher than figures for Shropshire, the West Midlands and the country as a whole. Additionally, the IMD 2019 assessment indicates that the Plan area lies within high deprivation areas in relation to the indices of barriers to housing and services (made harder by the rural location of the Plan area) and living environment. Development could seek to enhance access to services and play a supportive role in reducing overall deprivation within the Plan area.
- The economy of Bishop's Castle has suffered in more recent years, as the number of jobs in Bishop's Castle have fallen substantially. Service centres are situated a considerable distance from the plan area. Future development could seek to improve opportunities to enhance the role of Bishop's Castle Town Centre.
- The proportion of residents in the Plan area with qualifications is lower than comparative figures for Shropshire and England as a whole. The Plan could seek opportunities to enhance connectivity to other centres in Shropshire to encourage employment and educational opportunities. Future development could seek to enhance access to services by strengthening connections to local communities to support a thriving economy.

Health and Wellbeing

- Though general health in the county and Plan area are generally good, residents with long-term health conditions in Bishop's Castle are limited more in their day-to-day activities in comparison to figures at the county, regional and national level. Plan making could seek to improve connections within the settlement in order to improve accessibility for these residents to vital services.
- There are a number of health concerns at the county-level which have been presented in the Shropshire Annual Report, as well as certain disease prevalence, such as hypertension. Attention should be given to this data during the development process.
- Open space provision in the Plan area is moderate in comparison to figures for other parishes in South Shropshire. Additionally, there are a number of recreational facilities in the Plan area which are likely to benefit residents' physical and mental health. Future development should seek to enable residents with good accessibility to these services in order to preserve good general health overall.

Transportation

- The relative remoteness of the Plan area currently creates barriers to services further afield, worsened by a low level of public transport services. Improvement to public transport services could be supported by the Plan, and development could seek to strategically place services in areas that enable good access to future bus and transport routes.

- The Plan group have noted that the historic street scene creates accessibility issues and has worsened issues with regards to parking availability. Encouraging more sustainable modes of transport through the Plan will contribute to the lower uptake in private vehicle use and benefit congestion in the town as a whole.

SEA Framework

- 3.7 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard 'tests'.
- 3.8 Each proposal within the current version of the BCNDP will be assessed consistently using the framework.

Table 3.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions

| SEA Objective | Assessment questions to consider for the allocations / proposals within the BCNDP |
|---|--|
| Biodiversity and Geodiversity | |
| Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geodiversity | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the protection of the water quality and integrity of the River Clun SAC catchment area? • Protect and enhance nationally and locally designated sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species and the areas that support them, such as ancient woodland? • Ensure development within SEN buffer zones protects and enhances ecological connectivity? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity? |
| Climate Change | |
| Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made? • Reduce the need to travel? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area? |
| <p>Landscape</p> | |
| <p>Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the setting of the AONB? • Preserve the integrity of the local landscape character areas covering the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and character? • Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to the sense of place and the visual amenity of the Neighbourhood Plan area and its surroundings? • Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the rural setting, including areas of forest, trees and hedgerows? |
| <p>Historic Environment</p> | |
| <p>Protect, conserve, and enhance heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? • Protect the integrity of the unique historic landscapes of the Shropshire Hills AONB and wider historic landscape setting? • Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? • Guide development proposals to secure remediation of issues identified as affecting the conservation areas and prevent cumulative impacts? • Support the integrity and the historic setting of sites of archaeological or historic interest recorded on the Shropshire HER? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the area? |

| Land, Soil, and Water Resources | |
|--|--|
| Ensure the efficient and effective use of land. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area? • Promote the use of previously developed land, vacant & derelict brownfield land opportunities? |
| Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvements to water quality? • Ensure the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? • Protect groundwater and surface water resources from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling? • Consider the nutrient neutral premises for development in the Plan area? |
| Population and Community | |
| Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents? |
| Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Support the provision of land for allotments and cemeteries? |
| Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types, and tenures. | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs? • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? |

| Health and Wellbeing | |
|---|--|
| <p>Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths? |
| Transportation | |
| <p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</p> | <p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the key objectives within the Shropshire Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities? |

4. What has plan making / SEA involved up to this point?

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Plan has been informed by an assessment of alternative locations for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.3 The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan area and potential locations for development.

Overview of plan making / SEA work undertaken to date

- 4.4 The Neighbourhood Plan area was formally designated by Shropshire Council in September 2019.
- 4.5 Significant public consultation has been carried out since then to support the preparation of the BCNDP. This has gathered local views and opinions, with a view to engaging local people throughout the Neighbourhood Plan's development process. This has included events, household questionnaires, meetings, open days, community surveys, and engagement through the BCNDP website.

Housing numbers to deliver through the BCNDP

- 4.6 As discussed in **Chapter 2**, the BCNDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework and the emerging Shropshire Local Plan Review, which underwent Regulation 19 consultation in early 2021.
- 4.7 Bishop's Castle is proposed to be retained as a Key Centre in Policy SP2 and Policy S2: Bishop's Castle Place Plan Area in the emerging Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan indicates a need for around 150 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment development to meet local needs.
- 4.8 Policy S2 indicates that the majority of the housing need will be delivered through saved SAMDev allocations, including a small amount of windfall

development within the development boundary. No additional employment land is identified as necessary.

- 4.9 To meet the residual requirement, 40 dwellings need to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst the emerging Local Plan states that that will be delivered through windfall development, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recognise that there is only limited scope for such development in Bishop's Castle, particularly with regards to sites' ability to deliver affordable housing. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to allocate land for the remaining requirement to provide certainty that the requisite number of homes is delivered during the plan period, and of a type and tenure appropriate for local needs.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for site allocations

Neighbourhood Plan site assessment and initial shortlisting of sites

- 4.10 In April 2020, the LPA offered the BCNDP Steering Group the opportunity to undertake a site allocation exercise as part of the NDP process.
- 4.11 With a view to delivering the housing target provided by Shropshire Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought to explore different options for locating new housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In light of this, an independent and objective assessment of the various sites available for development in the vicinity of the town was undertaken on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group during 2020.⁶ This considered sites which had been previously considered through the Shropshire Council Strategic Land Availability Assessment.
- 4.12 To support the consideration of the suitability of the sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan site assessment process appraised sites against a range of criteria relating to suitability, availability and achievability. This engaged a process which built on the Local Plan review's site consideration process. Therefore, and with a view to providing a Neighbourhood Plan perspective to inform site selection, this applied a further stage of neighbourhood level assessment on top of that undertaken at the Local Plan level.

- 4.13 The outcome of this process was the shortlisting of two sites, as follows:

Table 4.1: Shortlisted sites for the BCNDP

| Site reference | Location | Residential capacity |
|----------------|--|----------------------|
| BIS012 | Castle Green, Bishop's Castle | 62 |
| BIS013 | Land north-west side of School House Lane, Bishop's Castle | 74 |

⁶ Andrea Pellegram on behalf of Bishop's Castle Town Council (January 2021) Bishop' Castle Site Assessments

4.14 The process for the shortlisting of the sites is set out in detail in Appendix 5 of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan.



Figure 4.1: sites shortlisted for the purposes of the BCNDP (in blue)

Assessment of shortlisted sites through the SEA process

4.15 To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each of the two sites.

4.16 In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping (**Chapter 3**) and the baseline information. This SEA site assessment was undertaken separately to the site assessment undertaken on behalf of the BCNDP Steering Group.

4.17 Sources of information to support the site appraisal process has included (amongst others): OS Maps, MAGIC Interactive Map, Flood Risk Maps for England, Regional Agricultural Land Classification maps, reports and interactive mapping layers available on Shropshire Council's webpages and the Shropshire Historic Environment Record. These sources are referenced within the baseline information presented in **Appendix A** of this Environmental Report.

4.18 The locations of the two sites assessed through the SEA process are presented in **Figure 4.1** above. **Tables 4.2** and **4.3** which follow present the findings of the assessment and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SEA themes.

Appraisal findings

Table 4.2: Assessment findings, BIS012, Castle Green, Bishop's Castle



| SEA theme | Commentary: BIS012 Castle Green, Bishop's Castle |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Biodiversity and Geodiversity | <p>The site, like all other locations in the vicinity of the town, is within the River Clun catchment area. The River Clun SAC/SSSI has been assessed as being in an unfavourable condition for a number of reasons including high levels of silt and nutrients, which affect the health of the pearl mussel population, for which the SAC has been designated for. As such, development at this location, like for other locations within the catchment area, has the potential to have adverse effects on the River Clun without appropriate mitigation measures. These issues have been explored in more detail through the HRA undertaken for the BCNDP. At the local level, there no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within the site. However, there are trees and hedgerows located along the site boundaries. These features would need to be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) within new development areas.</p> <p>In terms of the potential for net gains, the north eastern corner of the site is within a 'Network Enhancement Zone' (which is land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat). Half of the site is within a 'Network Expansion Zone', which comprises land beyond Network Enhancement Zones with potential for expanding, linking/joining networks across the landscape. These have been identified as areas where improved connections between existing habitat networks can be targeted.</p> |
| Climate Change | <p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the town and an intensification of uses at this location. The site has however good proximity to the services and facilities in Bishop's Castle town centre, which is approximately 400m distant (although it should be noted that there are issues with safe access for pedestrians along Bull Lane). This will help to limit the need to travel to local facilities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions). Supporting the use of lower carbon modes of transport, the site is also accessible to the (relatively infrequent) bus services available from the bus stop at Salop Street Junction, which is located 400m to the southeast along Bull Lane.</p> <p>With reference to flood risk issues, the site is within Flood Zone 1 and has a very low surface water flood risk.</p> |
| Landscape | <p>The site is not within or in the direct setting of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is located 1.3km to the east. Some longer distance views to and from the AONB are possible, although these are likely to be very limited, and should be seen in the context of the existing developed part of the town.</p> <p>An allocation at this location would result in the loss of undeveloped greenfield land. The SLAA highlights the site as having 'medium' landscape sensitivity and</p> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | <p>the Shropshire Typology Assessment identifies the site as being part of Wooded Hills and Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. Although the site is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary, it slopes downwards from the flatter north west corner of the site to the east and to the south, increasing its visibility from the east.</p> | |
| <p>Historic Environment</p> | <p>The site is located approximately 85m to the north east of the Motte and Bailey Castle and Bishops' Palace scheduled monument. The monument includes the known surviving extent of the earthwork, buried and upstanding structural remains of a motte and bailey castle and bishops' palace, which lie within two separate areas of protection at the northern end of the town. To the south of this lies a smaller second area of protection which includes remains of the southern part of the castle and palace. The area of land covered by the potential allocation is not located in a location which directly contributes to the historic significance of the castle/palace. In its terms of wider setting, the potential allocation is also screened from the scheduled monument by intermediate development on Castle Green and Bull Lane and is not visible from the scheduled monument.</p> <p>The site is located within and adjacent to the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area, which is situated to the south west. The section of the conservation area adjoining the site comprises 'Zone 1' considered in detail by the Conservation Area Character Assessment undertaken to support the development of the BCNDP. A key negative factor identified by the character assessment for the conservation area in this location is the impact of road traffic, particularly in the vicinity of the Castle Green/Castle Street/Bull Lane junction. In this respect there are significant noise impacts from traffic, issues linked closely to the topography of the area and street layout. Visual impacts also relate to significant traffic flows, relatively fast flowing traffic, and obstructions caused by parked cars. In terms of the potential positive impacts of development, the character assessment highlights that the south western part of the allocation site, which comprises a yard, provides a negative contribution to the character of the conservation area. However, the loss of a significant area of greenfield land directly adjacent to the conservation area would impact on the historically open setting of the conservation area to the north, and have implications for traffic flows at the sensitive Castle Green/Castle Street/Bull Lane junction. No nationally listed buildings are present on the site and the site is not within the setting of any listed buildings. There are three non-designated heritage assets identified adjacent to the site: 6 and 8 Bull Lane (located to the south east of the site) and 12 Bull Lane, which is located directly to the south of the site adjacent to the yard. According to the Historic Environment Record, the site is also located adjacent to the site of a windmill of 19th century date, now demolished. Development on the site is however unlikely to affect the archaeological potential of this feature</p> | |
| <p>Land, Soil and Water Resources</p> | <p>The site will lead to the loss of greenfield land comprising grazing land. A recent detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment has not been completed for the undeveloped areas of land surrounding Bishop's Castle. However, based on the Predictive Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV) Assessment, the site is underlain by land with a 'moderate' likelihood of BMV land (20-60% area BMV).⁷</p> <p>In terms of the water environment, there are no watercourses passing through the site boundaries. The site does not overlap with a nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ) or a groundwater source protection zone (SPZ). The site is not within a Minerals Safeguarding Area.</p> | |
| <p>Population and Community</p> | <p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including through the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>The site is located in good proximity to services and facilities in Bishop's Castle town centre (c.400m walk) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the</p> | |

⁷ Natural England (2017) Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale map West Midlands Region (ALC016) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5199101915824128?category=5208993007403008>

| | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|--|
| | amenities provided here. However, there are issues relating to the safety of pedestrian routes along Bull Lane. | | |
| Health and Wellbeing | The site is accessible to Bishop's Castle Medical Practice, which is located 400m away on Schoolhouse Lane. The site is accessible to the Public Rights of Way network and the town's wider green infrastructure network via the footpath which passes through the site. Traffic issues and the layout of the Castle Green/Castle Street/Bull Lane junction however have resulted in some pedestrian safety issues at this location. | | |
| Transport | With reference to local public transport networks, the site is accessible to the bus stop at Salop Street Junction located 300m to the southeast along Bull Lane. Regarding the local public rights of way (PRoW) network, there is a footpath passing through the western section of the site. It is anticipated that the footpath could be retained in a new development area. The site is located approximately 400m to the north of Bishop's Castle town centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for many day-to-day services and facilities. There is however a lack of a safe footway linking with the town centre, which leads to issues relating to road safety for pedestrians. | | |
| Key | | | |
| Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures) | | Likely positive effect | |
| Neutral/no effect | | Uncertain effect | |

Table 4.3: Assessment findings, BIS013, Land North West of School House Lane, Bishop's Castle



| SEA theme | Commentary: BIS013 Land North West of School House Lane |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Biodiversity and Geodiversity | <p>The site, like all other locations in the vicinity of the town, is within the River Clun catchment area. The River Clun SAC/SSSI has been assessed as being in an unfavourable condition for a number of reasons including high levels of silt and nutrients, which affect the health of the pearl mussel population, for which the SAC has been designated for. As such, development at this location, like for other locations within the catchment area, has the potential to have adverse effects on the River Clun without appropriate mitigation measures. These issues have been explored in more detail through the HRA for the BCNDP. At the local level, there no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within the site. However, there is an area of woodland located to the north of the site and trees and hedgerows located along the site boundaries. These features would need to be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) within new development areas.</p> <p>In terms of the potential for net gains, the site is within a 'Network Enhancement Zone' (which is land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat). This has been identified as a type of area where improved connections between existing habitat networks can be targeted.</p> |
| Climate Change | <p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the town and an intensification of uses at this location. The site however is in good proximity to the services and facilities in Bishop's Castle town centre, which is approximately 700m distant. This will help to limit the need to travel to local facilities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions). Supporting the use of lower carbon modes of transport, the site is also accessible to the (relatively infrequent) bus services available from the bus stop at Salop Street Junction, which is located 300m to the south along Schoolhouse Lane.</p> <p>With reference to flood risk issues, the site is within Flood Zone 1 and has a very low surface water flood risk.</p> |
| Landscape | <p>The site is not within or in the direct setting of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is located 1.2km to the east. Some longer distance views to and from the AONB are possible, although these are likely to be very limited, and should be seen in the context of the existing developed part of the town (including with regards to the existing housing site allocation to the south at BISH013).</p> <p>An allocation at this location would result in the loss of undeveloped greenfield land. The SLAA highlights the site as having 'medium' landscape sensitivity and the Shropshire Typology Assessment identifies the site as being part of Wooded Hills and Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. The site slopes</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|------------------------|
| | downwards from the north west to the south east, increasing its visibility from the east. | |
| Historic Environment | <p>The site is located approximately 270m to the north east of the Motte and Bailey Castle and Bishops' Palace scheduled monument. The area of land covered by the potential allocation is not located in a location which directly contributes to the historic significance of the castle/palace. In terms of its wider setting, the potential allocation is also screened from the scheduled monument by intermediate development on Bull Lane and the existing housing site BISH013, and is not visible from the scheduled monument.</p> <p>The site is located 175m north east of the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area. Whilst the loss of a significant area of greenfield land relatively close to the conservation area may impact on the historically open setting of the conservation area to the north, development should be seen in the context of the existing allocated site at BISH013, which, when fully built out, will comprise intermediate development between BISH013 and the conservation area.</p> <p>No nationally listed buildings are present on the site and the site is not within the setting of any listed buildings. There are also no non-designated heritage assets identified within or adjacent to the site, and no features listed on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record.</p> | |
| Land, Soil and Water Resources | <p>The site will lead to the loss of greenfield land comprising grazing land. A recent detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment has not been completed for the undeveloped areas of land surrounding Bishop's Castle. However, based on the Predictive Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV) Assessment, the site is underlain by land with a 'moderate' likelihood of BMV land (20-60% area BMV).⁸</p> <p>In terms of the water environment, there are no watercourses passing through the site boundaries. The site does not overlap with a nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ) or a groundwater source protection zone (SPZ).</p> <p>The site is not within a Minerals Safeguarding Area.</p> | |
| Population and Community | <p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs, including through the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>The site is located in proximity to the services and facilities available in Bishop's Castle town centre (c.700m walk) which will limit the need for residents to travel for the amenities provided here.</p> | |
| Health and Wellbeing | <p>The site is very accessible to Bishop's Castle Medical Practice, which is located 250m away on Schoolhouse Lane.</p> <p>The site is accessible to the Public Rights of Way network and the town's wider green infrastructure network.</p> | |
| Transport | <p>The site is located approximately 700m to the north of Bishop's Castle town centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for many day-to-day services and facilities. There is a footpath which links the town centre located on the opposite side of Schoolhouse Lane.</p> <p>With reference to local public transport networks, the site is accessible to the bus stop at Salop Street Junction located 400m to the south along Schoolhouse Lane.</p> | |
| Key | | |
| Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures) | | Likely positive effect |
| Neutral/no effect | | Uncertain effect |

⁸ Natural England (2017) Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land - Strategic scale map West Midlands Region (ALC016) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5199101915824128?category=5208993007403008>

Current approach in the BCNDP and the development of policies

- 4.19 To support the implementation of the vision and aims for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in **section 2.7**, the current version of the BCNDP puts forward eight policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.
- 4.20 The site also allocates the site at School House Lane for 40 dwellings.
- 4.21 The current Neighbourhood Plan policies are as follows.

Table 4.4: Policies presented in the Regulation 14 version of the BCNDP

| Reference | Policy Name |
|-----------|--|
| BC1 | Housing allocation and change to the development boundary |
| BC2 | Development affecting the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area |
| BC3 | Development outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area |
| BC4 | Non-designated heritage assets and non-traditional design features |
| BC5 | Local Green Spaces |
| BC6 | Sustainable Transport |
| BC7 | Housing Mix |
| BC8 | Sustainable Construction |

5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the Regulation 14 consultation version of the BCNDP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the BCNDP under the eight SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

Approach to this appraisal

5.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA.

5.3 For each theme, 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.5 The Neighbourhood Plan allocates 40 homes at the School House Lane site. The site, like all other locations in the vicinity of the town, is within the River Clun catchment area. The River Clun SAC/SSSI has been assessed as being in an unfavourable condition for a number of reasons including high levels of silt and nutrients, which affect the health of the pearl mussel population, for which the SAC has been designated for. As such, development at this location, like for other locations within the catchment area, has the potential to have adverse effects on the River Clun without appropriate mitigation measures. These issues have been explored in more detail through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.6 Whilst there are no Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats within or in the vicinity of the allocated site, there is an area of woodland located to the north of the site and trees and hedgerows located along the site boundaries. These features would need to be retained and enhanced (where appropriate)

within new development areas. In terms of the potential for net gains, the site is within a 'Network Enhancement Zone' (which is land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat). This has been identified as a type of area where improved connections between existing habitat networks can be targeted. In this respect one of the key initiatives within the UK Government's Environment Bill (2020) is to develop a Nature Recovery Network, providing 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife habitat, more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green and blue infrastructure⁹. An environmental net gain principle for development is also embedded within the goals and policies of the UK Government's 25-Year Environment Plan¹⁰ (which was published in January 2018) and the Planning White Paper (published in August 2020)¹¹. As such, the provisions of national policy will support the provision of net gain within the site. The provisions of Policies BC2 and BC3, which seek to integrate soft landscaping, planting and other natural features within development areas, will also support the delivery of new habitats and enhanced ecological connections.

- 5.7 In addition, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not itself present a dedicated biodiversity policy, it is also envisaged the provisions of the emerging Local Plan, including relating to Policy DP12 'The Natural Environment', will help support the conservation, enhancement and restoration of habitats and ecological networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Climate Change

- 5.8 In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.9 Whilst the delivery of in the region of 40 homes through the BCNDP will increase greenhouse gas emissions either directly through construction, or indirectly through an increase in population, the built footprint of the area and associated travel and consumption behaviours, this level of housing would likely be mirrored by the approval of planning applications. As such, the level of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan will be unlikely to lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions over and above that would be seen otherwise.
- 5.10 More broadly, the proposed site allocation, which is located approximately 800m from the town centre, is in a location which is relatively accessible by non-car modes to key services and facilities located in the town centre. This will support the use of low carbon modes of transport, helping to limit emissions from transportation. A limitation of emissions from transport will be further supported by Policy BC6 (Sustainable Transport), which highlights the

⁹ GOV.UK (2020): 'Environment Bill – Policy Statement', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environment-bill-2020-policy-statement>

¹⁰ DEFRA (2018): 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

¹¹ MHCLG (2020): 'Planning for the Future', [online] available to access via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

pedestrian and cycle routes which should be prioritised for enhancement in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and sets out provisions for high quality cycle parking within new development areas.

- 5.11 Policy BC8 (Sustainable Construction) sets out a range of provisions which will help limit the carbon footprint of new development taken forward in the Neighbourhood Plan period. This includes relating to the optimising of solar passive gain, thermal and energy efficiency, and a stipulation for non-residential development to meet 'excellent' BREEAM standards. The policy also encourages the incorporation of on-site renewable energy provision. Policy BC8 also seeks to support reductions to the carbon footprint of the current building stock, including through the retrofit of existing properties, and the integration of energy efficiency measures when alterations to buildings are made.
- 5.12 In terms of climate change adaptation, the proposed Neighbourhood Plan allocation is not within an area at risk of fluvial, surface water or groundwater flooding. More broadly (and as highlighted by the NPPF), well planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to and manage the risks of climate change (including flood risk). Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area is therefore a key way in which the Neighbourhood Plan can help to promote climate change adaptation measures. In this respect, the Neighbourhood Plan policies which support green infrastructure provision and the protection and enhancement of natural features within the townscape will support climate change adaptation in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes Policies BC2 and BC3, which seek to integrate soft landscaping, planting and other natural features within new development areas, and Policy BC5, which identifies 16 open spaces that will be designated as Local Green Space.

Landscape

- 5.13 In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan allocation at School House Lane for 40 dwellings, the allocation would result in the loss of undeveloped greenfield land. The SLAA highlights the site as having 'medium' landscape sensitivity and the Shropshire Typology Assessment identifies the site as being part of Wooded Hills and Farmlands Landscape Description Unit. The site slopes downwards from the north west to the south east, increasing its visibility from the east. The site is not however within or in the direct setting of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is located 1.2km to the east. Some longer distance views to and from the AONB are possible, though these are likely to be very limited, and should be seen in the context of the existing developed part of the town (including at the existing housing site allocation being taken forward to the south at BISH013).
- 5.14 In terms of impacts on landscape character from new development, Policy BC3 (Development outside of Bishop's Castle Conservation Area) seeks to ensure that development areas incorporate high quality design and layout which reflect local character. This includes through retaining views of the open countryside, sensitive design which supports local distinctiveness, the use of high quality and sensitive materials, and the incorporation of amenity green spaces. Townscape and landscape character will also be reinforced by Policy BC5 (Local Green Spaces), which designates 16 open spaces as Local Green

Space, and Policy BC2 (Development affecting the Bishop's Castle Conservation), discussed in more detail under the Historic Environment SEA theme below.

Historic Environment

- 5.15 Bishop's Castle has a rich and diverse historic environment, as highlighted by the presence of 86 listed buildings (including five Grade II* listed buildings), the coverage of the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area over much of the town and the presence of the Motte and Bailey Castle and Bishops' Palace scheduled monument (located in the north of the town). There are also a range of non-designated features of historic interest which comprise a central part of the historic environment of the town.
- 5.16 The allocated site is located in one of the less sensitive locations in the town. The site is located approximately 270m to the north east of the Motte and Bailey Castle and Bishops' Palace scheduled monument. The allocation is not in a location which directly contributes to the historic significance of the castle/palace, and in terms of its wider setting, it is screened from the scheduled monument by intermediate development on Bull Lane and the existing housing site BISH013, and is not visible from the scheduled monument.
- 5.17 The allocated site is located 175m north east of the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area. Whilst the loss of a significant area of greenfield land relatively close to the conservation area may impact on the historically open setting of the conservation area to the north, development should be seen in the context of the existing allocated site at BISH013, which, when fully built out, will comprise intermediate development between BISH013 and the conservation area. As such there are likely to be limited impacts on the historic significance of the conservation area from development at this location. Otherwise, no nationally listed buildings are present on the site and the site is not within the setting of any listed buildings. There are also no non-designated heritage assets identified within or adjacent to the site, or features listed on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record.
- 5.18 More broadly, the Neighbourhood Plan has a close focus on the conservation and enhancement of the town's rich historic environment. To inform the development of the BCNDP, detailed historic character assessments have been undertaken of the town, both within and outside the conservation area.
- 5.19 The Conservation Area Character Assessment divided the conservation area into seven zones, and for each zone identified the key features and sensitivities which contribute to the conservation area's significance, highlighted the elements which detract from its character, and identified opportunities for its enhancement. It also highlighted the areas particularly sensitive to change. This then underpinned the key Neighbourhood Plan policy which addresses the conservation area: Policy BC2 (Development affecting the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area). This policy sets out a range of provisions which seek to ensure that all applications for development within the conservation area reflect the relevant characteristic features of the conservation area in general and the zone in which the site is located. This includes relating to the positive characteristics identified in the appraisal, key views, footprints of development and the use of soft landscaping. It also sets out specific provisions for the Old

Market Place and surrounding area, and identifies provisions for a number of other sensitive sites in the conservation area. The policy also sets out a requirement that major developments proposals demonstrate how they will avoid further harmful traffic-related impacts in the conservation area, and highlights the key routes that should not be adversely affected by increased traffic. This is an important inclusion given the existing negative influence of traffic and congestion on the significance of the conservation area.

- 5.20 Outside of the conservation area, Policy BC3 (Development outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area) sets out a number of provisions which will help conserve and enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment, including designated and non-designated features. These provisions are designed to reinforce the distinctive character of the town through appropriate design, layout, use of materials and the integration of amenity green space. The character of the town will also be reinforced by the protections afforded by the designation of 16 open spaces as Local Green Space.
- 5.21 The BCNDP also recognises the contribution non-designated heritage features have on the significance of the town's historic environment. In this respect Policy BC4 (Non-designated heritage assets and non-traditional design features) has identified a range of non-designated features and structures of importance to the local community that do not appear on Shropshire Council's Schedule of Non-Designated Heritage assets. The policy goes on to set out provisions for conserving these features, whilst also more broadly supporting innovative design in the town where appropriate.
- 5.22 In this respect the BCNDP policies place the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment at the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan. Given the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on these elements, and the detailed characterisation which has informed its development policies, the BCNDP has the potential for significant positive effects for the historic environment.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- 5.23 The BCNDP allocation at the School House Lane site will lead to the loss of greenfield land comprising grazing land. A recent detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) assessment has not been completed for the location. However, based on the Predictive Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV) Assessment, the site is underlain by land with a 'moderate' likelihood of BMV land (20-60% area BMV).
- 5.24 A number of the policies seek to protect key areas of open space and promote high quality landscaping and green infrastructure enhancements. While these policies do not specifically seek to address land, soil and water resources, the policies will indirectly help promote and protect these resources, including through the promotion of high-quality green networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the protection and enhancement of key townscape and landscape features. This will help support the capacity of the townscape and landscape to regulate soil and water quality.
- 5.25 With regards to minerals resources, the site allocations do not fall within the Minerals Safeguarding Areas highlighted in the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Minerals Local Plan.

Population and Community

- 5.26 The latest version of the BCNDP contains several policies which seek to support and enhance residents' quality of life in Bishop's Castle.
- 5.27 Policy BC1 (Housing Allocation and change to the development boundary) seeks to allocate 40 homes at the School House Lane site. This meets the residual housing requirement set by Shropshire Council of 40 dwellings. The allocated site will also be in addition to other sites brought forward as windfall sites during the plan period. In this respect it is assumed that this quantum of dwellings to be delivered in the town will help meet objectively assessed housing needs in Bishop's Castle.
- 5.28 More broadly in relation to housing provision, Policy BC7 (Housing Mix) indicates that for residential developments over 5 dwellings, at least 50% of open market housing should deliver the housing types identified as being most required in the Neighbourhood Plan area in line with the findings of the Bishop's Castle Right Homes in the Right Place Survey¹². Additionally, the policy states for sites exceeding 10 dwellings, 33% are to be affordable. This indicates that, as per Policy BC1, at least 13 homes of the BCNDP's allocation will be affordable. Policy BC7 also gives priority for affordable sites to those residents with '*a local connection*', namely, those who are living outside of the area but would like to move to the town where they have a family connection. Policy BC7 also indicates that greater weight will be given to meeting the need for affordable housing rather than dwelling size, including associated with dwellings which support local needs (including semi-detached, and terraced housing with 2-3 bedrooms). In this context, Policy BC7 will help meet the demand for affordable and appropriate housing for the specific needs of the community in Bishop's Castle.
- 5.29 Accessibility to services and facilities is a key contributor to the quality of life of residents. In this respect the allocated site is well located to provide access to services. For example, the site is a 10-15 walk from local shops, eateries/takeaways, library and primary school and is located close to Bishop's Castle Medical Practice. Bus stops are situated at School House Lane (Salop Street bus stop), a short walk from the site (~ 5 minutes). There is also a footpath along School House Lane. As such, the site is well served by public and active travel networks and is likely to help residents access the key services and facilities in Bishop's Castle. Accessibility will be further supported by Policy BC6 (Sustainable Transport), which seeks to improve existing walking and cycle networks within and around Bishop's Castle.
- 5.30 As discussed under the Landscape and Historic Environment SEA themes, the Neighbourhood Plan has a strong focus on conserving and enhancing the quality of the public realm and supporting local distinctiveness. This will help reinforce the quality of neighbourhoods as places to live and work.
- 5.31 Overall, therefore, the BCNDP has the potential to have significant positive effects in relation to the Population and Communities SEA theme through delivering housing which meets local needs, by supporting accessibility, and

¹² Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Plan Group (2020): 'RHRP Survey Analysis' [online] available at: https://www.righthomerrightplace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/BishopsCastle_January2020.pdf

securing enhancements to the quality of the public realm and living environment.

Health and Wellbeing

- 5.32 The BCNDP allocation at the School House Lane is very accessible to Bishop's Castle Medical Practice, which is located 250m away on School House Lane. This will enable future residents to have good access to medical services. Additionally, the site is located within close proximity (~5-10 minute walk) to a number of designated Local Green Spaces (specified in Table 3 of the BCNDP), including Old Castle land at Castle Street and Wintles Woods at Wintles Lane. Good access to these areas will encourage leisure and recreational activities, contributing to residents' physical and mental health.
- 5.33 A further positive effect on health and wellbeing from the Neighbourhood Plan's policies will be from their focus on protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Plan area's high-quality environment and green spaces. Green open spaces provide space for recreation and relaxation, and access to nature has been evidenced to improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing, through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. In this respect, the BCNDP policies which support enhancements to green space and the natural environment will bring benefits for health and wellbeing. For example, the design principles referenced in Policy BC3 encourage the long-term provision of amenity green spaces within major developments and along the street, and Policy BC5 (Local Green Spaces) designates 16 open spaces Local Green Space.
- 5.34 Supporting health and wellbeing further, the Neighbourhood Plan has a close focus on enhancing pedestrian and cycle networks in and around Bishop's Castle. In this respect Policy BC3 (Development outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area) refers to Bishop's Castle Design Principles (Table 2), which seeks to retain and enhance footways in the town by using a range of building materials and ensuring that footpaths are '*designed to be easy to maintain and manage*'. Policy BC6 (Sustainable Transport) also sets out provisions for enhancing town-wide walking and cycling networks, and enhancing cycle parking. This will support health and wellbeing through promoting active travel modes and healthier lifestyles.
- 5.35 In summary, the BCNDP sets out a number of policy provisions which will support residents' physical and mental health and wellbeing, including promoting active travel modes, protecting and enhancing town-wide green infrastructure networks and supporting accessibility to medical facilities in the town.

Transportation

- 5.36 The allocated site at School House Lane is well located to provide access to services and public transport networks in the town. For example, the site is a 10-15 walk from local shops, eateries/takeaways, library and primary school and is located close to Bishop's Castle Medical Practice. Bus stops are situated at School House Lane (Salop Street bus stop), a short walk from the site (~ 5 minutes). There is also a footpath along School House Lane. As such, the location of the site will help limit the need to travel by private car to key amenities.

- 5.37 A number of the policies seek to improve residents' access via active travel networks. Policy BC6 (Sustainable Transport) highlights that '*major development*' should provide alternative modes of transport in the Plan area, including walking and cycling provision. In particular, the policy seeks to encourage the use of footpaths and cycle routes for short journeys within Bishop's Castle. This will be reinforced by Figure 15 (referenced in Policy BC6 of the BCNDP), which details a number of proposed improvements to the current public rights of way and cycle network in the town, including at School House Lane, which links the allocated site to the town and the wider countryside area in the north and south. These provisions are further supported by Policy BC3 (Development outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area), which seeks to ensure the long-term preservation of footpaths in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 5.38 Finally, in terms of private vehicle use, it is noted that Bishop's Castle suffers from significant parking issues, as detailed in the Parking and Occupants' Surveys informing the BCNDP. In recognition of this, Policy BC3 (Development outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area) highlights that residential development should provide parking on-site, with a view to limiting the impact of new development on parking provision in the town.
- 5.39 Overall, the BCNDP policies will support enhancements to the active travel network in Bishop's Castle and facilitate development in accessible locations. This will encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, particularly over the medium-to-long-term.

Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.40 The assessment has concluded that the current version of the BCNDP is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on delivering housing which meets local needs, by supporting accessibility and active travel, and securing enhancements to the quality of the public realm and living environment.
- 5.41 The BCNDP also has the potential to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the Historic Environment theme. This is due to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment being placed as the central pillar of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, and the development policies being closely informed by a series of detailed characterisation studies undertaken for the BCNDP.
- 5.42 In terms of the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme, the allocation taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan will lead to negative effects on soils resources. This is due to the required landtake on land potentially classified as the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. This loss should however be seen in the context of the lack of available previously developed land in Bishop's Castle, and the Local Plan's requirement for the town with regards to housing delivery.
- 5.43 In terms of the 'Landscape' theme, whilst the allocation of the preferred site has the potential to lead to impacts on landscape character locally, the Neighbourhood Plan has a close focus on conserving key views, protecting townscape character, and on green infrastructure provision. This provides an

appropriate means of protecting and reinforcing local character in association with the delivery of the Local Plan's development requirement for the town.

- 5.44 The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate a range of beneficial approaches regarding the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity', 'Transportation' and 'Climate Change' SEA themes. However, these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the Regulation 14 version of the BCNDP for consultation.
- 6.2 Following consultation, any representations made will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Environmental Report will be updated as necessary. The updated Environmental Report will then accompany the Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, Shropshire Council, for subsequent independent examination.
- 6.3 At independent examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Shropshire Local Plan.
- 6.4 If independent examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Shropshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, BCNDP will become part of the development plan for Bishop's Castle.

Appendix A Context Review and Baseline

A.1 Air Quality

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹³ (NPPF) include:

- Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas.
- Opportunities to improve air quality of mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.
- Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.
- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 transpose into UK law the Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) which sets legally binding limits for outdoor concentrations of major air pollutants which impact public health.

Local

Local Planning Authorities are required to monitor air quality across their administrative area under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), report regularly to Defra and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area.

The Shropshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) Provisional LTP Strategy (2011) is a 25 year plan which highlights the Council's long-term ambitions for the transport network and is supported by a four-year implementation plan.¹⁴ The LTP recognises

¹³ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

¹⁴ Shropshire Council (2011) Shropshire Local Transport Plan Provisional LTP Strategy 2011- 2026 [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/4132/provisional-ltp-strategy.pdf>

that *“Traffic is the main source of air pollution in Shropshire, and in some locations levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are at levels that can impact on human health.”*

The following objective is therefore identified:

- Reduce the air and noise pollution from vehicles with a particular focus on pollution that can damage human health.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy indirectly relate to the air quality theme, including:

- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS7: Communications and Transport
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions; and
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks.

The emerging Local Plan proposes the following policies which provide further support for improved air quality across the authority area:

- Policy SP2: Strategic Approach
- Policy SP3: Climate Change
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High Quality Design
- Policy DP26: Strategic, Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

Summary of Current Baseline

In line with the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995), Shropshire Council is required to assess Air Quality standards within the region on an annual basis.

There are no AQMAs located within the parish. There are two AQMAs within Shropshire, located in Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth. The latest Air Quality Annual Status Report (AQSR) for Shropshire (2020) states that overall a slight downward trend has been noted in the two AQMAs which is promising however significant further reductions are still necessary in both locations.¹⁵

New housing and employment provision within the parish has the potential for adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows within the town and associated levels of pollutants such as NO₂. It is also recognised that as a higher order settlement nearby, Shrewsbury may attract new residents and is susceptible to increased traffic and congestion in this respect.

Summary of Future Baseline

Given the distance from declared AQMAs, it is unlikely that new small-scale development would lead to significant effects on air quality. Further, it is recognised that the BCNDP policy framework itself will likely provide an opportunity to improve

¹⁵ Shropshire Council (2020) Air Quality Annual Status Report 2020 [online] available at: https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/16870/sc_asr2020_final_v2.pdf

public realm and the movement of pedestrians and cyclists, thus encouraging more local journeys and sustainable connections.

A.2 Biodiversity

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹⁶ (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' including by 'helping to improve biodiversity.'
- Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value [...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape across local authority boundaries.
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity.
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)¹⁷ sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to

¹⁶ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

¹⁷ HM Gov (2011) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf

halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity by 2010, and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other, and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halve biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services¹⁸ aims to 'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

The 25 Year Environment Plan¹⁹ sets out the Government's environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation, improving social justice through tackling pollution and promoting the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:

- Using and managing land sustainably;
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- Protecting and improving the global environment

In this context, Goal 3 'Thriving plants and wildlife' and the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Chapter 5 'Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans' directly relate to the Biodiversity SEA theme.

Local

Launched in 2002, the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP) provided a detailed outline of the work necessary for the conservation of 34 species and 15

¹⁸ DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf

¹⁹ HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

habitats.²⁰ The plan was updated in 2005/6 and was updated regularly until about 2009. The plans for species and habitats are now considerably out of date but are available for reference purposes.

The following policies within the Core Strategy directly relate to the biodiversity theme:

- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

The emerging Local Plan proposes the following policies which provide further support for biodiversity across the authority area:

- Policy SP2: The Strategic Approach
- Policy SP3: Climate Change
- Policy SP5: High Quality Design
- Policy SP15: Whole Estate Plans
- Policy DP12: The Natural Environment
- Policy DP14: Green Infrastructure

Summary of Current Baseline

Internationally designated sites

There are no internationally designated sites within the Plan area, or close to the Neighbourhood Plan area. The closest internationally designated site is the Stiperstones & Hollies Special Area of Conservation (SAC), situated approximately 5.2km from the north-easternmost plan border.

Bishop's Castle is located within the catchment of the River Clun. Part of the River Clun is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) notified solely for the presence of Freshwater Pearl Mussels (*Margaritifera margaritifera*). The Kemp River, which runs along the westernmost border of the Plan area provides an ecological link to the River Clun, therefore development that affects this waterbody has the potential to create changes to the Mussel species within the catchment through upstream and downstream effects. The River Clun catchment area is shown in **Figure A2.1** below.

Margaritifera margaritifera was formerly widespread throughout western and northern parts of Great Britain. However, England and Wales are each now believed to support only a single recruiting population. Population declines have been caused by factors such as pearl-fishing, pollution, acidification, organic enrichment, siltation, river engineering, and declining salmonid stocks²¹.

The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) for the Local Plan shows that development in the River Clun catchment is likely to have an adverse effect on the River Clun SAC.

²⁰ Shropshire Council (2009) Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity-ecology-and-planning/biodiversity-action-plan/>

²¹ JNCC (

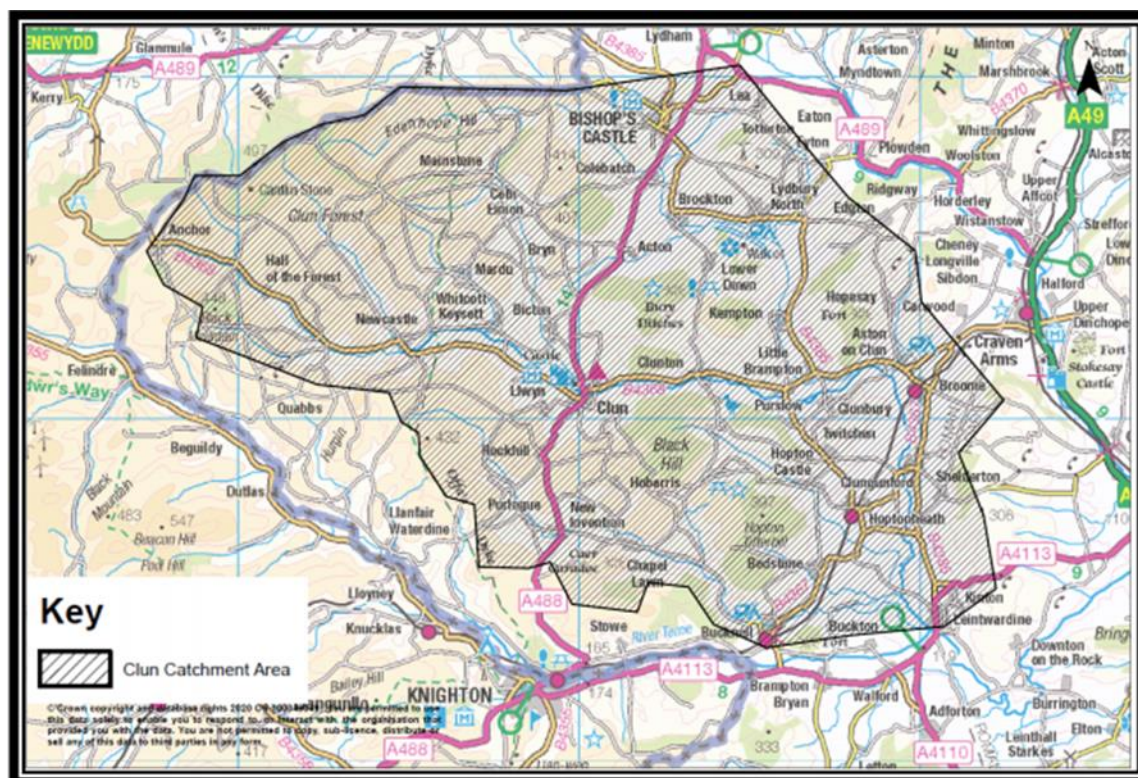


Figure A2.1: River Clun catchment area

Nationally designated sites

There are no nationally designated sites in the Plan area, (SSSIs) within the Plan area. The closest designated site is Coed Pentre (welsh) Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI), situated approximately 1.6km from the southeasternmost Plan border.

Locally designated sites

There is one locally designated site within the area: **Sadler's Little Wood**, an area of ancient woodland situated in the north east of the Plan area. Sadler's Little Wood is designated as a Local Wildlife Site and is an area of ancient woodland. Ancient woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees, are likely to have biodiversity interest, as well as cultural and historical significance.

Priority habitats

There are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including:

- Good quality semi-improved grassland (north east)
- Ancient woodland: Sadler's Little Wood and Sadlers Big Wood (north west), an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Conifer Woodland (a handful of small parcels in the north)
- Young Tree Woodland (just north of the settlement)
- Assumed Woodland (a few clusters at the north of the Plan area)
- Traditional Orchard (a few small clusters at the south of the Plan area)

- Deciduous Woodland (in the east of the Plan area)

Habitat corridors

Important linear habitat corridors in the Plan area include the ditches and brooks south of the settlement and the dismantled railway to the east of the settlement. The land between the A488 and the B4385 around Upper Lodge and Lydham Manor is identified in Shropshire Council's Environmental Network as a habitat corridor surrounding a core area²².

Network Enhancement Zones

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan includes provision for a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and states that it will deliver on the recommendations of the Lawton Report and that recovering wildlife will require more habitat; in better condition; in bigger patches that are more closely connected. In this respect, a series of habitat network maps have been collated by Natural England to provide a baseline for habitat creation, enhancement and restoration²³. In this regard, a number of 'Network Enhancement Zones' have been identified and the following parts of the Plan area fall within Network Enhancement Zone 1 (*'land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat'*):

- The area adjacent to Lydham Manor, in the north east;
- The area surrounding Star Farm and Pines Barn;
- The area adjacent to Blundell in the south east; and
- The area surrounding and adjacent to Bankhead in the north west.

This is supplemented by the Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) maps which identify areas of high biodiversity value and the areas that act as connective 'corridors and stepping-stones' between them.²⁴

In this respect, the SEN identifies green 'buffers' within the Plan area.²⁵ The guidance note prepared for SEN users states that "Buffer zones' surround core areas, restoration areas, "stepping stones' and ecological corridors and protect them from adverse impacts from the wider environment. Buffer zones vary in width depending on the type of site and the habitats it contains." **Figure A2.2** (below) shows that a portion of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the north of the main settlement falls within this 'buffer zone'.

²² Shropshire District Council (n.d.): 'Green Infrastructure Study' [online] available at:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15644/green-infrastructure-strategy-key-centre-bishops-castle.pdf>

²³ Natural England (2020): 'National Habitat Network Maps' [online] available at:

https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/Habitat%20Network%20Mapping%20Guidance.pdf

²⁴ Shropshire Council (2018) Shropshire Environment Network [online] available at:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity-ecology-and-planning/shropshire-environmental-network/>

²⁵ Shropshire Council (2016) Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) [online] available at:

<https://shropshire.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e9283bcf9c4146d3a3c0a9cc0aee37ef>



Figure A2.2: Shropshire Environmental Network – Buffer Zones

Summary of Future Baseline

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Plan area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, with the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

The Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance priority habitats but maintain and improve the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised, both within the Plan area and in the surrounding areas.

To comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations and in accordance with Policy DP14 of the Local Plan, development in Bishop's Castle is restricted to that which is either nutrient-neutral in terms of its effect on the River Clun SAC or results in a betterment, in anticipation of measures to achieve either of these criteria being found in the future.

A.3 Climate Change

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework²⁶ (NPPF) include:

- Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
- Inappropriate development in areas at high risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk (whether existing or future).
- Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources.
- Plans should take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, considering a range of factors including flooding. Plans should adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- Plans should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbate the impacts of physical changes to the coast.

One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' including by 'mitigating and adapting to climate change' and 'moving to a low carbon economy.' 'The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

The Flood and Water Management Act (2010)²⁷ sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding, not just rivers and seas, are managed more effectively. This includes: incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

²⁶ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

²⁷ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

The UK Climate Change Act²⁸ was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- Commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. This includes reducing emissions from the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), which currently account for about 20% of the UK's emissions. The 100% target was based on advice from the CCC's 2019 report, 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming' and introduced into law through the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.
- The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Act requires the Government to assess the risks and opportunities from climate change for the UK, and to prepare for them. The Committee on Climate Change's Adaptation Sub-Committee advises on these climate change risks and assesses progress towards tackling them. The associated National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report²⁹ containing six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;

²⁸ HM Government (2008): 'Climate Change Act 2008' [online] available at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

²⁹ DEFRA (2017) 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017' [online] available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017>

- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals.

Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)³⁰ sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

In February 2020, the government announced a new £5 billion 5-year funding package to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.³¹ This builds on the Government's determination to make buses work better for their passengers. The details of these programmes have been announced in the National Bus Strategy³² and follows the allocation of £170 million to support more electric buses, increase rural mobility and trial new 'Superbus' services. The strategy sets the central aim of increasing the uptake of bus use in the UK through focusing on increasing the frequency, reliability and accessible.

Cycle routes will also see a major boost across the country with over 250 miles of new, high-quality separated cycle routes and safe junctions in towns and cities to be constructed across England, as part of the multibillion package announced.

Local

Shropshire's Climate Change Strategy 'Towards Zero Carbon' (2019)³³ assembles policies and actions to help mitigate and adapt to climate change, ensuring a sustainable future for the county. The strategy has three main objectives as a route map to zero carbon:

- Mitigate the causes of climate change through carbon reduction of our services
- Adapt services and their delivery to respond to changes in the climate
- Promote sustainable practices via all services

The Core Strategy outlines policies aimed at mitigating carbon emissions, including:

- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS7: Communications and Transport
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment

³⁰ Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876251/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf

³¹ Department for Transport (2020) Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-bus-services-as-pm-outlines-new-vision-for-local-transport>

³² UK GOV (2021): 'Bus Back Better' [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/980227/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

³³ Shropshire Climate Change Task Force (2019) Shropshire Climate Change Strategy Framework [online] available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s23757/Climate%20Change%20Strategy%20Framework%20Final%20sent%202.pdf>

The emerging Local Plan proposes the following policies which provide further support for addressing climate change across the authority area:

- Policy SP3: Climate Change
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy SP13: Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth and Enterprise
- Policy DP11: Minimising Carbon Emissions
- Policy DP26: Strategic, Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

Summary of Current Baseline

Contribution to climate change

As shown in **Figure A3.1** (below) the largest contributing sector of CO₂ emissions in Shropshire in 2018 was the Transport sector (41.6% of total). This has only been the case since 2016, as in previous years industry and commercial has been the largest contributing sector.

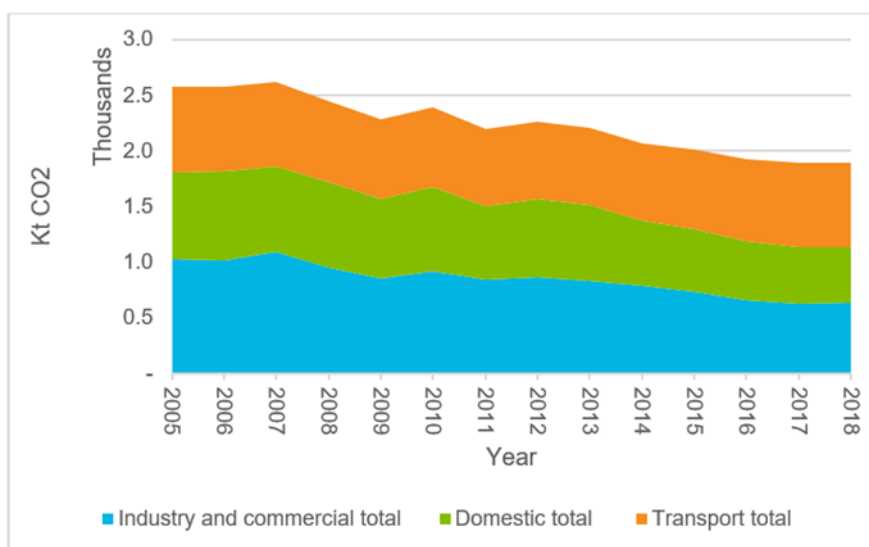


Figure A3.1: CO₂ emissions (kt) per sector (2005-2018) in Shropshire

Figure A3.2 (below) presents data over the period 2005- 2018 relating to per capita CO₂ emissions.³⁴ In this regard, CO₂ emissions in Shropshire are higher than comparative figures for the West Midlands and England as a whole. Additionally, CO₂ levels have decreased at a slower rate between 2015- 2018 in Shropshire (- 8.1%) in comparison to regional (-11.9%) and national figures (-12.3%).

³⁴ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2019) '2005 to 2017 UK local and regional CO₂ emissions – data tables' [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>

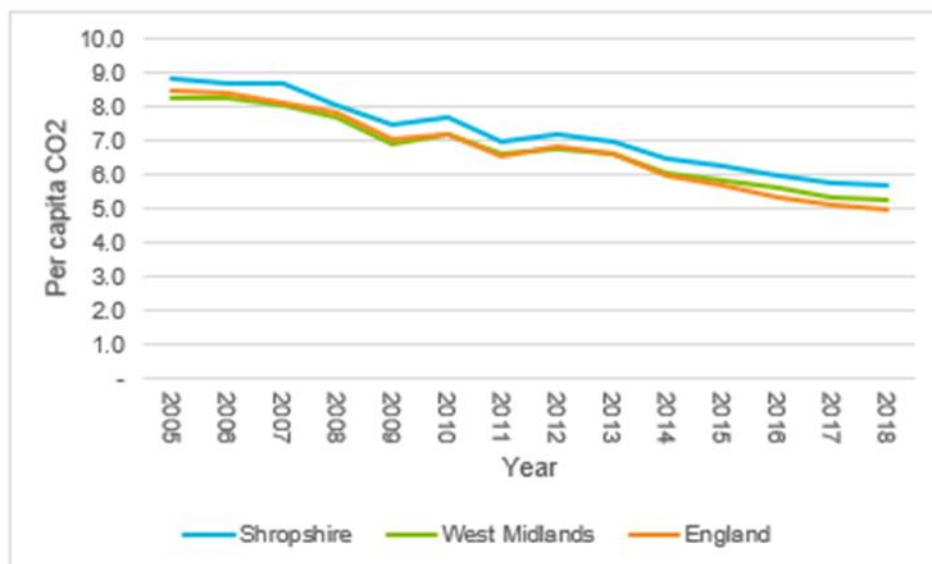


Figure A3.2: Per capita CO₂ emissions (t) 2005-2018

Low emission vehicles

With regards to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport’s ‘Road to Zero’ report (2018), it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and therefore aside from HGVs, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

Electric vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be ‘zero-emission vehicles’ (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. The government’s Rapid Charging Fund was announced in the March 2020 Budget as part of a £500 million commitment for EV charging infrastructure.³⁵ The purpose of this fund, alongside the ‘Government vision for the rapid charge point network in England’ 2020 paper, will be to ensure that there is a rapid-charging network ready to meet the long-term consumer demand for electric vehicle charge points ahead of need.³⁶

In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan area, there are no charging points within the Plan area. The closest charging point situated at Churchstoke, approximately 7.3 km from the centre of the settlement (as the crow flies)³⁷.

Reducing greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions is widely acknowledged as a key element of climate change mitigation. CO₂ emissions in particular are associated with a changing climate and will become an area of even greater focus for mitigating climate change following Shropshire Council’s declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, and ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. Five key actions have been

³⁵ Department for Transport and Office for Low Emission Vehicles (2020) Consulting on ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consulting-on-ending-the-sale-of-new-petrol-diesel-and-hybrid-cars-and-vans>

³⁶ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Department for Transport, Office for Low Emission Vehicles, and Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (2020) Government vision for the rapid chargepoint network in England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-vision-for-the-rapid-chargepoint-network-in-england/government-vision-for-the-rapid-chargepoint-network-in-england>

³⁷ Zap map (2021): ‘EV charging points’ [online] available at: <https://www.zap-map.com/live/>

identified by the Council in their Climate Change Strategy³⁸ to meet zero carbon goals, detailed below:

- Energy- make a rapid transition from natural gas, oil and other fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, including electricity (from wind, solar or hydro-sources), methane from anaerobic digestion, 'green' hydrogen, carbon-neutral synthetic fuels or biomass.
- Buildings- make all of buildings much more energy efficient and heat them with low-carbon electricity.
- Transport- encouraging local travel, and public transport use for long-distance travel within Shropshire.
- Waste reduction- support local businesses, circular economies and plant-based diets.
- Biodiversity and land use- encourage wider community engagement in food production and more consumption of locally sourced produce as well as enhancing and protecting ecosystem services.

Climate projections

Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50th percentile and RCP6) for the West Midlands during the period 2020-2039 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows:³⁹

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 0°C and 1°C; and
- A central estimate of change in mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and 0 to -20% in summer.

During the period 2040-2059 this is estimated further as:⁴⁰

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 1°C and 2°C; and
- A central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and -10% to -20% in summer.

Due to these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area, including:⁴¹

³⁸ Shropshire Climate Change Task Force (2019) Shropshire Climate Change Strategy Framework [online] available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s23757/Climate%20Change%20Strategy%20Framework%20Final%20sent%202.pdf>

³⁹ Met Office (2019) Land Projection Maps: Probabilistic Projections [online] available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/land-projection-maps>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100-year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

Flood Risk

Fluvial flood risk in the Plan area is presented in **Figure A3.3**, below. Areas of highest risk are situated outside of the main settlement, at Colebatch. Fluvial flood risk is subsequently low in general.

Figure A3.4 below shows surface water flood risk in the Plan area. Areas of highest risk within the settlement are at the B4335 intersection, and concentrated areas on the A488/Brampton road intersection.

The Environment Agency have released data to estimate increases in peak river flow due to the effects of climate change over the next few decades. In this regard, the Environment Agency expect a change of 10% in the central estimate (50th percentile) of peak river flow allowances for the River Severn catchment over the period of 2015-2039.



Figure A3.3: Fluvial flood risk within the Neighbourhood Plan area⁴²



Figure A3.4: Surface water flood risk within the Neighbourhood Plan area⁴³

⁴² GOV.UK (2021): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] accessible via: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

⁴³ GOV.UK (2021): 'Long term flood risk map', [online] accessible via: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk>

Summary of Future Baseline

In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted. Notably, the Government has consulted on changes to England's Building Regulations introducing a 'Future Homes Standard' and the Department for Transport recently published 'Decarbonising Transport; setting the challenge' a first step towards publishing a full transport decarbonisation plan.

In the future, new development could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events such as enhanced precipitation, which can increase surface water runoff, for example from the River Clun. This has the potential to put residents, property and development at a high risk of flood exposure.

However, in line with the NPPF (2019) sequential testing is likely to ensure that development within areas at highest risk of flooding is largely avoided, and development is likely to deliver mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

A.4 Landscape

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁴⁴ (NPPF) include:

- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for 'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;

⁴⁴ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
 - remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, whose fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The general extent of Green Belts is established and can only be altered in exceptional circumstances through preparation or review of a Local Plan.

The National Design Guide (2019)⁴⁵ sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set out at the local level.

National Character Area (NCA) profiles are published by Natural England and divide England in 159 distinct natural areas based on their landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic, cultural and economic characteristics.⁴⁶ NCAs follow natural features in the landscape and are not aligned with administrative boundaries. NCA profiles describe the features which shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character.

The nationally designated landscape of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 23% of the county in the south and falls partially within the Plan area. The 2019-24 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan sets out policies of the local authorities, and proposed actions for a wide variety of partners.⁴⁷ Based on local partnership and consensus, the Plan seeks to guide and inspire action to meet the purposes of designation and apply local solutions to local challenges. It was approved by Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council in June 2019. The Plan is prepared by the AONB Partnership on behalf of Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council and is reviewed every five years.

Local

A number of policies within the Core Strategy relate to the landscape theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

The following policies in the emerging Joint Local Plan are also relevant here:

- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development

⁴⁵ MHCLG (2019) National Design Guide [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

⁴⁶ Natural England (2012) 'National Character Area profiles' [online] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁴⁷ Shropshire AONB Partnership (2019) Shropshire AONB Management Plan [online] available at: <https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/our-work/management-plan>

- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy DP12: The Natural Environment
- Policy DP14: Green Infrastructure
- Policy DP15: Open Space and Recreation
- Policy DP16: Landscaping of New Development
- Policy DP17: Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Policy DP24: Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Summary of Current Baseline

Location

Bishop's Castle is 1.5 miles (2.4 km) east of the Wales-England border, about 20 miles (30 km) north-west of Ludlow and about 20 miles (30 km) south-west of Shrewsbury. To the south is Clun and to the east is Church Stretton.

Shropshire Hills AONB

The Plan area falls partially within Shropshire Hills AONB. The Shropshire Hills provide a dramatic link between the Midlands and the Welsh mountains. Centuries of farming have shaped the landscape. 70% of the AONB is grazing land, and below the moorland and rough grass hilltops and commons lies a patchwork of fields rich in hedgerows and veteran trees⁴⁸. Best known for the Long Mynd, Stiperstones, The Wrekin and Wenlock Edge, the AONB also includes the Clee Hills and Clun Forest. With a diverse geology giving rise to craggy ridges, moorland plateaux and wooded scarps, the landscape of hills, farmland, woods, rivers and villages is rich in wildlife and heritage, along with scenic quality and views, tranquillity, culture and opportunities for enjoyment. The Shropshire Hills AONB was designated in 1958 and covers 804km² (23% of Shropshire).

National Character Areas

The Plan area falls within the Clun and North West Herefordshire National Character Area (NCA)⁴⁹. The Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills NCA is an undulating, tranquil, rural and sparsely populated area, divided by the river valleys of the Clun and Teme. The higher land is typically wind-swept heath and grassland bordered by areas of small-scale, irregular enclosure and slopes down to the Herefordshire Lowlands NCA to the south-east, typically with plantation and native woodland on the hill tops and upper valley slopes.

Other key characteristics of the NCA include:

- The Plan area is formed of an undulating, tranquil, rural area, divided by the narrow valleys of the River Clun and River Teme. The steep-sided, shallow-domed hills of Clun Forest are similar in character to the Welsh hills. Small, wooded, enclosed upper valleys broaden to flat-bottomed, farmed lower valleys.
- The area is composed of two distinctive geological regions as a result of earth movements along the Church Stretton Fault, which runs diagonally south-

⁴⁸ Natural England (n.d.): 'Shropshire Hills AONB' [online] available at: <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/aonbs/shropshire-hills>

⁴⁹ Natural England (n.d.): 'Clun and North West Herefordshire NCA' [online] available at: <file:///C:/Users/lauren.egan/Downloads/98%20Clun%20and%20North%20West%20Herefordshire%20Hills.pdf>

westwards through the NCA. To the north-west, the deep-water deposits of the Silurian Period give rise to a dissected plateau with glacially deepened valleys running eastwards out of Wales. To the southeast, the shallow water deposits are characterised by a continuation of the dip-and-scarp topography of the adjacent Shropshire Hills NCA. The landscape expression of these geological differences epitomises the transition eastwards from upland to lowland Britain.

- A cool climate, high rainfall and acidic brown earth soils give rise to moorland vegetation in the uplands, while arable cultivation is carried out on lower slopes, where the soils are silty but free draining.

In addition, Natural England has specified a number of Statements of Environmental Opportunities (SEOs) for the Clun and North West Herefordshire NCA, detailed below:

SEO 1: Protect, manage and enhance the open, expansive upland habitats of the Clun to ensure that they are healthy and contiguous, contributing to landscape character, protecting the important species, improving the soil and water resources that they support, and contributing to the tranquillity and recreation opportunities in the area.

SEO 2: Protect, manage and enhance the valleys, to improve the habitat mosaic of semi-natural grasslands, meadows, woodlands, hedgerows and riparian habitats within the mosaic of improved pasture to enhance ecological networks, strengthen the distinctive landscape character and contribute to the delivery of ecosystem services such as food provision, wood supply, soil protection and improving water quality.

SEO 3: Protect and manage the rivers Teme, Clun and Lugg and associated watercourses, along with their flood plains, wetlands and woodlands, to maintain high water quality and enhance their nature conservation interest, to strengthen their contribution to landscape character, to help reduce the potential risk of flooding both within the NCA and downstream, and to increase the recreational opportunities they provide for public enjoyment.

SEO 4: Conserve and enhance the area's distinctive historic environment, cultural heritage and nationally important geological sites, demonstrating how the interaction of natural and historic factors has influenced the distinctive character of its landscape and settlement patterns, and use as a framework for sustainable development and habitat restoration and to maintain and promote the enjoyment of its high levels of tranquillity and landscape.

Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment⁵⁰

The Shropshire Landscape Assessment was published in 2006 and has not been updated since.⁵¹ The assessment includes information about the six components that define landscape character: geology, landform and soils relate to physical character; whilst settlement pattern, tree cover and land use set out the cultural dimensions of landscape. The assessment sets out 27 different landscape types within the County. A description is set out for each landscape type which sets out the key characteristics and the broad character of the type, defines its distribution within

⁵⁰ Shropshire County Council (2006): 'Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment' [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/1803/the-shropshire-landscape-typology.pdf>

⁵¹ Shropshire Council (2006) Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/landscape/shropshire-landscape-assessment/>

the county, and provides a visual example of what they look like 'on the ground'. An interactive version of the map accompanying the Shropshire Landscape Assessment is also available.⁵²

As detailed in the Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment, Shropshire's landscape forms an integral part of the county's unique environment. The Shropshire Typology Assessment and the Historic Landscape Assessment constitute the Shropshire Character Framework. It is vital to the county's economy, not only because of the farming industries it sustains but also because of the tourists and investors it attracts. In addition, the landscape forms part of the surroundings in which residents live and work, and therefore makes an important contribution to our quality of life and sense of place.

In this regard, the assessment specifies a number of 'landscape types' for the county. Bishop's Castle contains the following landscape types (shown in **Figure A4.1**, below):

- **Wooded Hills and Farmlands**, describing the landscape in the westernmost part of the Plan area.
 - This landscape type is most prevalent in the hills of the lower Clun valley, with two significant outliers on Haughmond Hill, near Shrewsbury, and around the fringes of the Wrekin, in the centre of the county. They are broadly similar to the Principal Wooded Hills, although the slopes in the Clun valley are more rounded due to the softer underlying Silurian sandstones, mudstones and siltstones. As a result, farmland tends to be more extensive, with large, discrete blocks of woodland of ancient semi-natural character on the steepest slopes. Some of these woods have been significantly enlarged through the planting of conifers, particularly on the eastern side of the Clun Forest.
 - Other features include prominent, sloping topography, hedged fields with predominantly ancient origins, large discrete woodlands with ancient character, mixed farming land use, a dispersed settlement pattern, and medium scale landscapes with framed views.
- **Estate Farmlands**, describing the landscape in the majority of the central and eastern part of the Plan area.
 - Estate farmlands are gently rolling lowland and valley floor landscapes that occur across large areas of Shropshire. The lower ground is usually underlain by softer, more easily eroded rocks such as shales, sometimes in sharp contrast to nearby ridges of harder rocks. Glacial drift deposits form the basis of most soils and these landscapes include some of the best agricultural land in the county, which have traditionally been associated with mixed farming. Landscape character is largely determined by an ordered pattern of fields and woods, although the prevailing pattern of medium to large subregular fields means that they lack their strong, planned aspect.
 - Other features include mixed farming land use, clustered settlement pattern, large country houses with associated parklands, planned woodland character, and medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.
- **Pasture Hills**, describing the easternmost part of the Plan area.

⁵² Shropshire County Council (2006): 'Shropshire Interactive Map' [online] available at:

- The Pasture Hills are prominent, sloping landscapes that occur around the fringes of higher ground in parts of the Oswestry Hills, on Long Mountain, the northern and western flanks of The Long Mynd, along Yell Bank north-east of Church Stretton, on the north slopes of the Kerry Ridgeway, and on the Clee Hills. The mixed but generally impoverished soils are used for pastoral production. Some hillsides retain areas of unenclosed moorland and rough pasture, which often support good populations of ground nesting birds. Relict ancient woodland is found throughout most of these landscapes, particularly along watercourses and on the steeper slopes.
- Other features include prominent, sloping topography, hedge fields with mainly ancient origins, pastoral land use, dispersed settlement pattern, and medium to large scale landscape with filtered views.

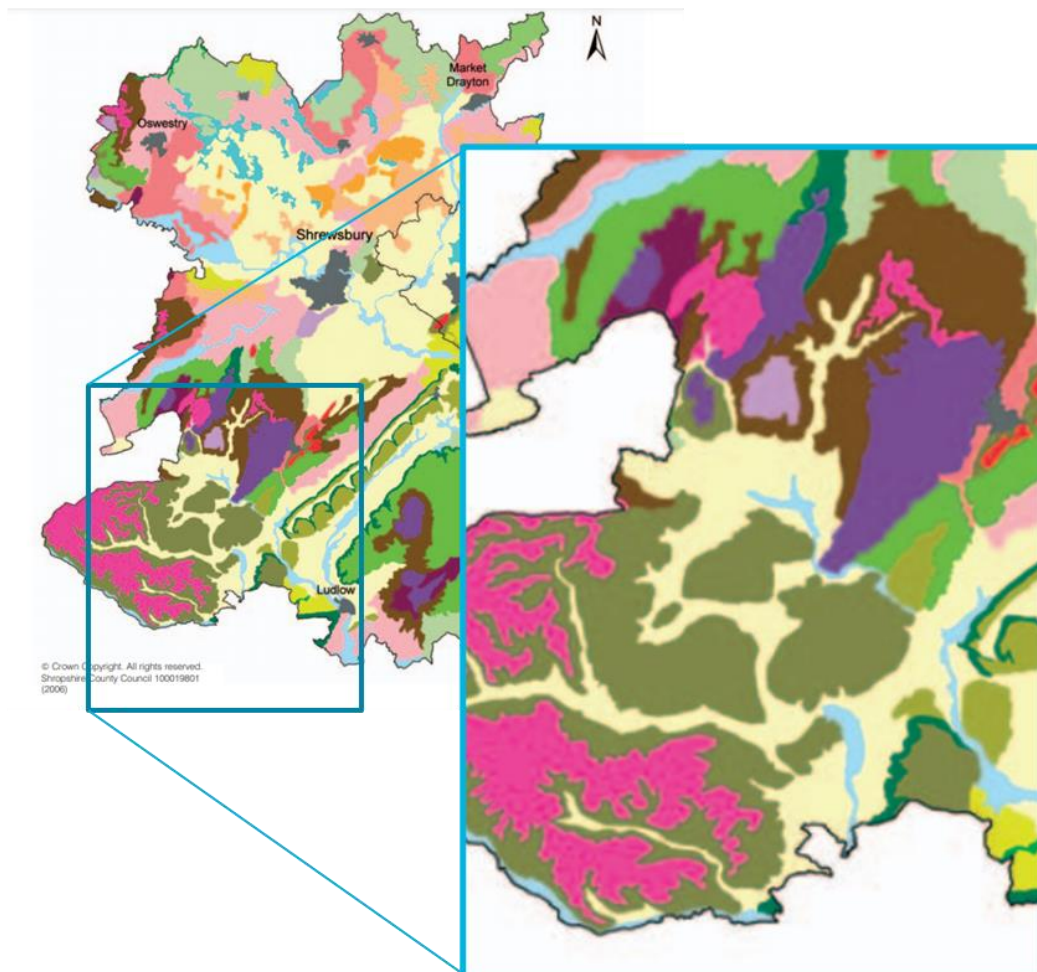


Figure A4.1: Shropshire Landscape Types

Shropshire Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment (Bishop's Castle) ⁵³

There are two parish-level character areas identified in the Landscape & Visual Sensitivity Assessment for Bishop's Castle: **Parcel A and Parcel B**.

Parcel A (shown in **Figure A4.2**, below) is located to the west of Bishop's Castle and lies within 1km of the Shropshire Hills AONB that wraps around the settlement edge to the east, south and west. The parcel consists of undulating hills which are overlain by a small regular field pattern of fairly strong rural character. Dense linear tree coverage is common along roadsides and field boundaries, with further scattered field and hedgerow trees throughout the parcel. Nucleated hamlets and small properties are sparse and primarily associated with Bishop's Castle.

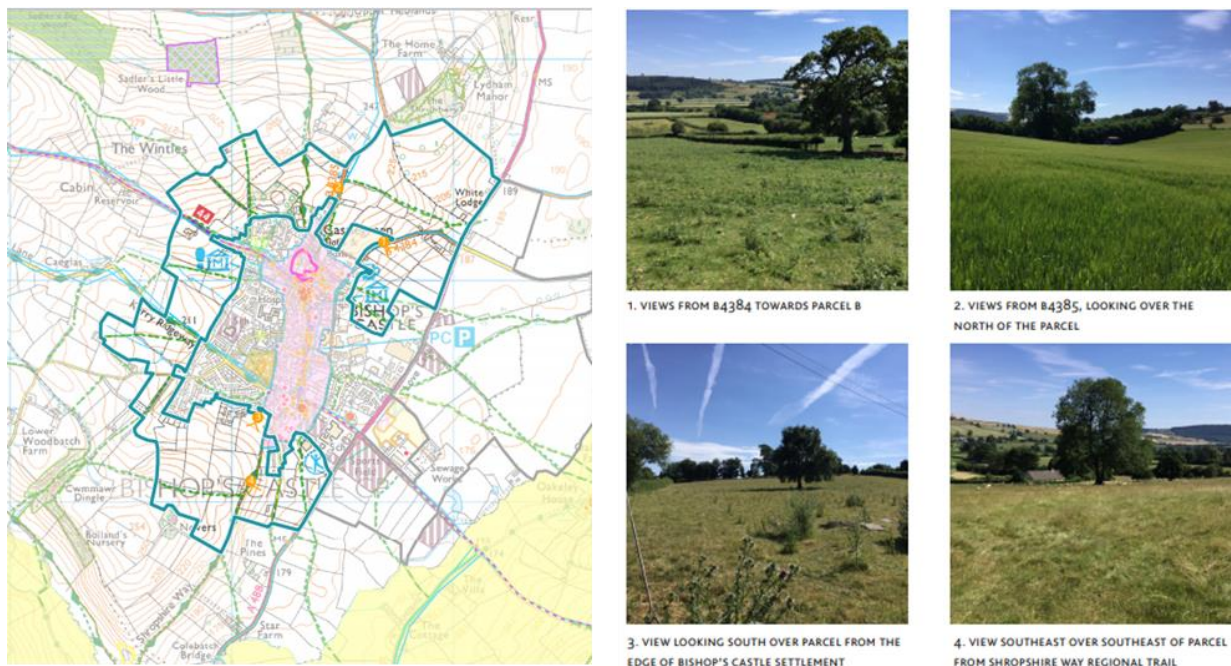


Figure A4.2: Parcel A (extent and features)

Parcel B (shown in **Figure A4.3**, below) is located to the east of Bishop's Castle and lies within 1km of the Shropshire Hills AONB that wraps around the settlement edge to the east, south and west. The A488 forms the west parcel boundary with the remainder following field boundaries and local roads. The mixed agricultural system of intensive arable and pasture, exploits the flatter ground of the floodplain that forms the character of the parcel with land distinctly rising to the west and east beyond the parcel boundaries. Agricultural expansion has caused hedgerow loss in the parcel, and tree cover is sparse.

⁵³ Shropshire Landscape & Visual Sensitivity Assessment. Ibid.



Figure A4.3: Parcel B (extent and features)

Table A4.1 below indicates the landscape susceptibility, visual susceptibility and visual amenity of these parcels. The overall landscape sensitivity of **Parcel A** to new housing development is deemed to be **medium** and to new employment is **medium-high**, whilst views experienced are of **medium** sensitivity to new housing development and **medium-high** sensitivity to new employment.

The overall landscape sensitivity of Parcel B to new housing development is deemed to be **medium-low** and to employment is **medium**, whilst views experienced are of **medium-low** sensitivity to new housing and **medium** sensitivity to new employment.

Summary of Future Baseline



New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and effects on areas with an important visual amenity value.

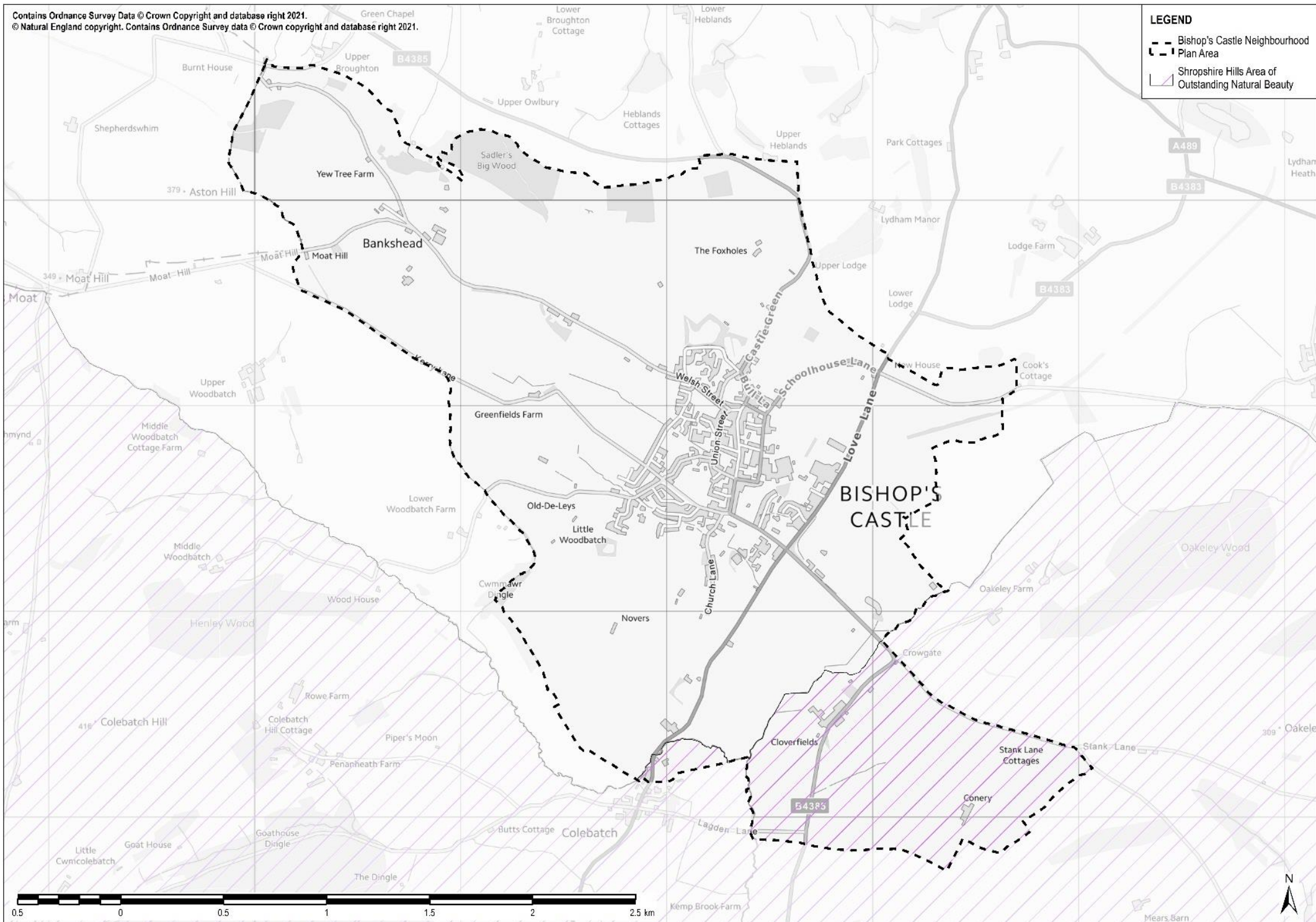
In particular, the character and quality of the Shropshire Hills landscape continue to be of high importance. This character and quality are under increasing pressure, and the condition of some of the special qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change.

Table A4.1: Key susceptibilities (Parcel A and Parcel B)

| Character Area | Landscape Susceptibility | Visual Susceptibility | Visual Amenity |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| Parcel A | The landform of the parcel is undulating over a wider southeast facing slope and would be particularly susceptible to changes in ground profile as a result of development. The medium scale field pattern of typically enclosed farmland has a medium level of tree cover at field boundaries, and some areas of broadleaved woodland. The scale becomes more intimate at the partially integrated south settlement edge but is at risk of further fragmentation as a result of development. Hedgerows are generally intact but gappy in places and such features would be susceptible to loss or erosion being irreplaceable in the short to medium term. There is a fairly strong sense of tranquillity that contributes to sense of place that could be eroded by noise or visual disturbance. Development is sparse within the parcel, with isolated properties and dispersed farmsteads forming the main settlement type and employment land use not characteristic of the area. | The parcel is within 1km of the Shropshire Hills AONB, and takes in the scenic qualities with medium range and long-distance views. There is a small portion of Bishop Castle Conservation Area within the parcel however views are confined to short length of the settlement edge. The border with Wales is 1.8km northwest of the parcel and elevated views from high points at Aston Hill towards the settlement tend to be limited by intervening landform and vegetation. | General visibility in the parcel varies from visually contained at lower levels to elevated and open as the ground rises and falls. Views from such undulating landform are particularly susceptible to noticeable changes or interruptions within the view as a result of development, with localised skylines formed. Dense overgrown hedgerows contain views along roads within the parcel, however, along PRow views open up and are framed by landform. The sloping landform affords clear views to and from parcel B and elevated long-distance views from PRow in the parcel. Scenic quality increases away from the settlement edge as more of the AONB forms part of the view. Sensitive residential receptors at settlement edge and recreational receptors using the extensive PRow network and National Cycle Route are typically highly susceptible to changes to their surroundings. There is a constant level of access by road users along the A488 parcel boundary. |
| Parcel B | The variation in field size and scale of landscape pattern throughout the parcel indicates intensification of farming practices, with smaller historic field patterns and robust hedgerows to the south west particularly susceptible to loss or erosion as a result of development. Overall there is a low level of tree cover apart from linear features along field boundaries and these are not common in the parcel. There is some sense of place derived from the typical rural quality and tranquillity in the parcel however these are limited by the presence of agricultural sheds and employment uses at the settlement edge. The relationship between the parcel and the settlement is slightly disjointed and abrupt due to the A488 forming a distinct corridor to the edge of Bishop's Castle. | The parcel is within 1km of the Shropshire Hills AONB, and takes in some of the scenic qualities with medium range and long-distance views. However, the parcel expresses few of the scenic qualities of the AONB being of typical rural quality | Views to and from the parcel are open, with a high level of intervisibility between Bishops Castle and Parcel A. Views within the parcel are not particularly high quality or scenic value. Despite there being a PRow within the parcel that offer views out to the AONB these do not appear to be in frequent recreational use. The views from rising land of parcel A are prominent and would be susceptible to noticeable changes as a result of development. The parcel does not form part of a skyline or contain any visual foci. Typical receptors in parcel are those of constant access along the main and minor roads and recreational receptors to the south west and using PRow, however numbers of sensitive residential receptors are low. |

LEGEND

-  Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



A.5 Historic Environment

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for 'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss of, or less than substantial harm to its significance.

These messages are supported by the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁵⁴ which itself includes the key message that local authorities should set out in their Local Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment which recognises that conservation is not a passive exercise and that identifies specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

The National Design Guide (2019)⁵⁵ sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set out at the local level.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'⁵⁶ directly relates to the Historic Environment.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2016), Planning Practice Guidance [online], available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

⁵⁵ MHCLG (2019) National Design Guide [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

⁵⁶ HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Historic England is the statutory body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. Guidance and advice notes provide essential information for local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other interested parties on historic environment considerations, and are regularly reviewed and updated in light of legislative changes. The following guidance and advice notes are particularly relevant and should be read in conjunction with the others.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2019)⁵⁷ outlines ways to manage change that conserves and enhances historic areas in order to positively contribute to sustainable development and provides information on the relationship with local and neighbourhood plans and policies. Principally, the advice note emphasises the importance of:

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin the designations; and
- Recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plan which positively contribute to the significance and value of Conservation Areas.
- Clearly identifying those issues that threaten the area's character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): Historic England Advice Note 8 (December 2016)⁵⁸ provides support to all stakeholders involved in assessing the effects of certain plans and programmes on the historic environment. It offers advice on heritage considerations during each stage of the SA/SEA process and helps to establish the basis for robust and comprehensive assessments.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) (December 2017)⁵⁹ provides general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views can contribute to setting. Specifically, Part 2 of the advice note outlines a five stepped approach to conducting a broad assessment of setting:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings contribute to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

⁵⁷ Historic England (2019): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Advice Note 1' [online] available from: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>

⁵⁸ Historic England (2016): 'SA and SEA: Advice Note 8' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

⁵⁹ Historic England (2017): 'Setting of Heritage Assets: 2nd Edition' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>

Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 11 (October 2018)⁶⁰ outlines the importance of considering the historic environment whilst preparing the plan (section 1), which culminates in a checklist of relevant issues to consider, followed by an overview of what this means in terms of evidence gathering (section 2). Sections 3 to 5 of the advice note focus on how to translate evidence into policy, understand the SEA process and Historic England's role in neighbourhood planning.

Local

A number of policies within the Core Strategy indirectly relate to the historic environment theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

The following policies in the emerging Joint Local Plan are also relevant here:

- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy DP12: The Natural Environment
- Policy DP14: Green Infrastructure
- Policy DP23: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Summary of Current Baseline

The evolution of Bishop's Castle

Bishop's Castle formed around the castle which it is thought started as a motte and bailey in 1087, before being re-built in stone in 1167. The narrow streets and fine period buildings are a legacy of its development as a market town⁶¹.

Settlement in the area dates back to the Neolithic age, and some ancient monuments from early history remain in the area including Bury Ditches in the Clun Valley. From the Saxon period through to the 1660's, the area was subject to territorial battles between England and Wales, which Offa's Dyke remains to this time from. Fortified buildings to defend settlements started to be built. Over time these developed into settlements, and trade routes for sheep and produce started to be developed with Wales and England, and markets were established in Bishop's Castle and Clun⁶².

Agriculture became the established industry in the area. Mining took place in the Snailbeach and Stiperstones areas from Roman times, but mining became a major industry in the 18th and 19th century with large numbers of people employed in the lead mining industry. Breweries catering for the agricultural and mine workers were established and many still exist today, and timber industries also emerged in the area. The Railways came to the area during the industrial revolution, taking the

⁶⁰ Historic England (2018): 'Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>

⁶¹ Shropshire County Council (2018): 'Shropshire Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites' [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/11271/03-preferred-sites-consultation-bishops-castle-place-plan-area.pdf>

⁶² Consultation on Preferred Sites. Ibid. p.27.

sheep and mining resources of the area to the new emerging black country markets. These proved to be short lived though, and as cheaper imports from abroad reached Britain the areas industry started to decline, and the rail links were lost by the 1900's.

The historic environment covers a wide range of heritage assets including buildings and features with statutory protection and those which are locally valued. The rural landscape of the area is dominated by the Long Mynd and Stiperstones ridges to the east of the Plan area; the hill ranges along the Clun Valley and Black Mountains near Llanfairwaterdine.

The character of the landscape more generally, such as the small fields around squatter settlements and different enclosure patterns, has important cultural influences⁶³. Much of the wider landscape is in the Shropshire Hills AONB which makes the area popular with tourists, particularly walkers using the Offa's Dyke, Shropshire Way and Kerry Ridgeway paths in the area. Festivals such as Clun's Green Man Festival and Bishop's Castles Michaelmas Fair are important events in the tourism calendar⁶⁴.

The Shropshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLA) provides technical details of the methodology and results of a three-year study of the historic landscape character of Shropshire (including the Borough of Telford and Wrekin). This work formed part of English Heritage's national programme of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) and was carried out in partnership between Shropshire County Council and English Heritage. Although difficult to precisely ascertain at this time which character areas are present within the Neighbourhood Plan area due to the graduality of maps provided in the HLA, planned enclosure, small irregular fields and large irregular fields appear to intersect the Plan area. These are detailed below.

- **Planned enclosures**- in most cases these field patterns result from a process of general enclosure by formal agreement during the late 17th and 19th centuries.
- **Small irregular fields**- usually represent encroachments onto commons, established between the 16th and beginning of the 19th century (Edwards 1989).
- **Large irregular fields**- including some field patterns that have been created through the amalgamation of fields.

However, the sensitivity of the county reinforces the importance of the landscape and landform of Bishop's Castle with regards to its' heritage contribution.

Designated and non-designated heritage assets

Listed buildings

Historic England (HE) is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. In this regard, the National Heritage List notes 86 listed buildings within the Plan area, specifically:

- 5 Grade II* listed buildings
 - The Town Hall (circa 1765 with mid- to late-C19 remodelling).

⁶³ AONB Management Plan. Ibid. p. 24.

⁶⁴ AONB Management Plan. Ibid. p. 42.

- Blunden Hall And Old Hall Cottage (Mid-C16 and C17 with early-C19 alterations, and mid- to late-C19 and C20 additions).
 - Church of St John The Baptist (Medieval tower mostly rebuilt in C17, rest of 1860 by T Nicholson of Hereford).
 - The Porch House (C17 with C18 and early-C19 alterations and additions, and mid- to late-C20 partial 'restoration')
 - The House on Crutches and No. 41 (C16 with mid to late C19 alterations and additions).
- 81 Grade II listed buildings

The majority of buildings are clustered around the core settlement of the Plan area, in the notional town centre.

Heritage at risk

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register which highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. It is noted that there are currently no buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area identified on the Heritage at Risk list.⁶⁵

Scheduled Monuments

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)⁶⁶ allows the investigation, presentation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest and makes provision for the regulation of operations or activities which may affect ancient monuments and archaeological areas. Scheduled monuments are nationally designated sites which are protected under the Act.

There is one scheduled monument within the Plan area: Motte and Bailey Castle and Bishops' Palace, situated at Castle Green in the centre of the settlement. Motte and bailey castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. The monument includes the known surviving extent of the earthwork, buried and upstanding structural remains of a motte and bailey castle and Bishops' Palace, which lie within two separate areas of protection at the northern end of the town of Bishop's Castle⁶⁷.

Bishop's Castle Conservation Area

Conservation areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest. The Bishop's Castle Conservation Area as designated on May 2015 (shown in **Figure A5.1**, below). The Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Appraisal has been requested from Shropshire Council and will be used to inform the assessments undertaken through the SEA.

⁶⁵ Historic England (2021) Heritage at Risk – Explore the Register [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

⁶⁶ Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Act (1979) [online] available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46>

⁶⁷ HE (2021): 'Motte and Bailey Castle and Bishop's Palace' [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1020552>

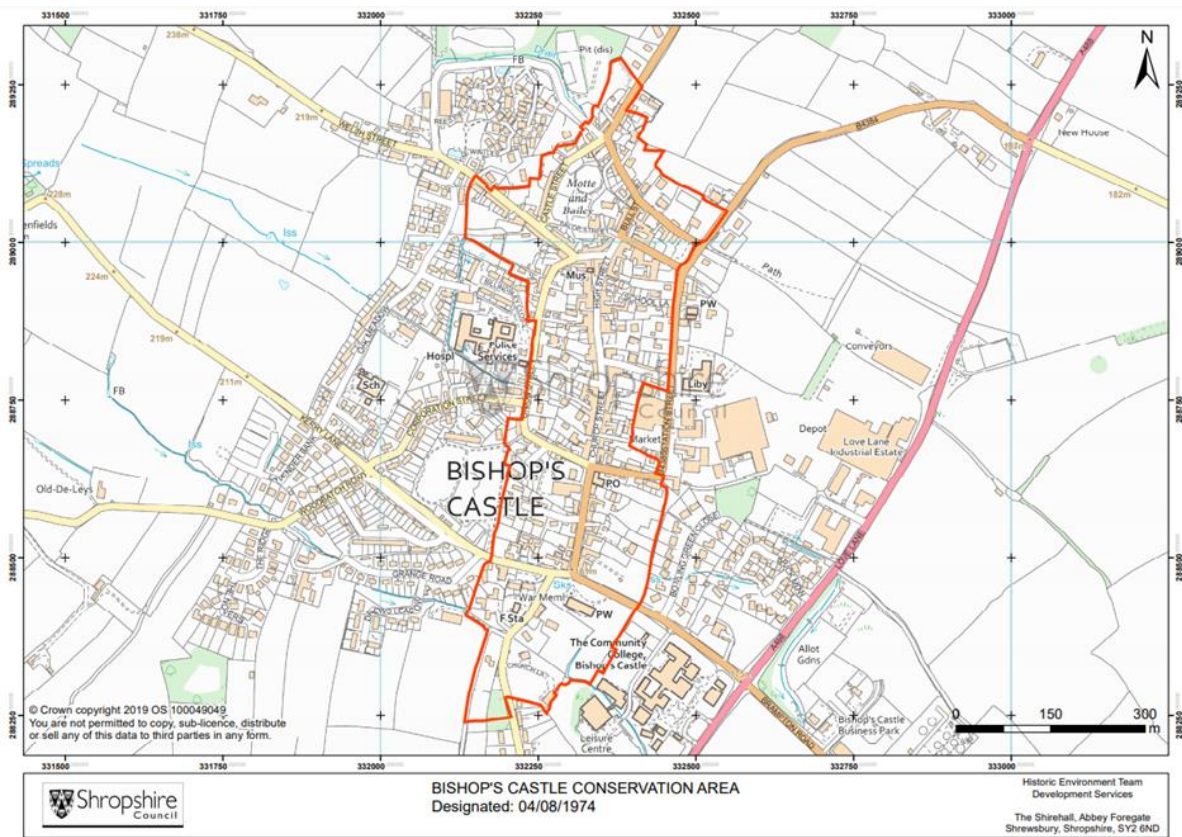


Figure A5.1: Bishop's Castle Conservation Area

The Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) ⁶⁸

The Shropshire (HER) identifies a large number of records within Bishop's Castle, shown in **Figure A5.2** below. These include monuments, stone walls, old halls, ridge and furrow and farmsteads.

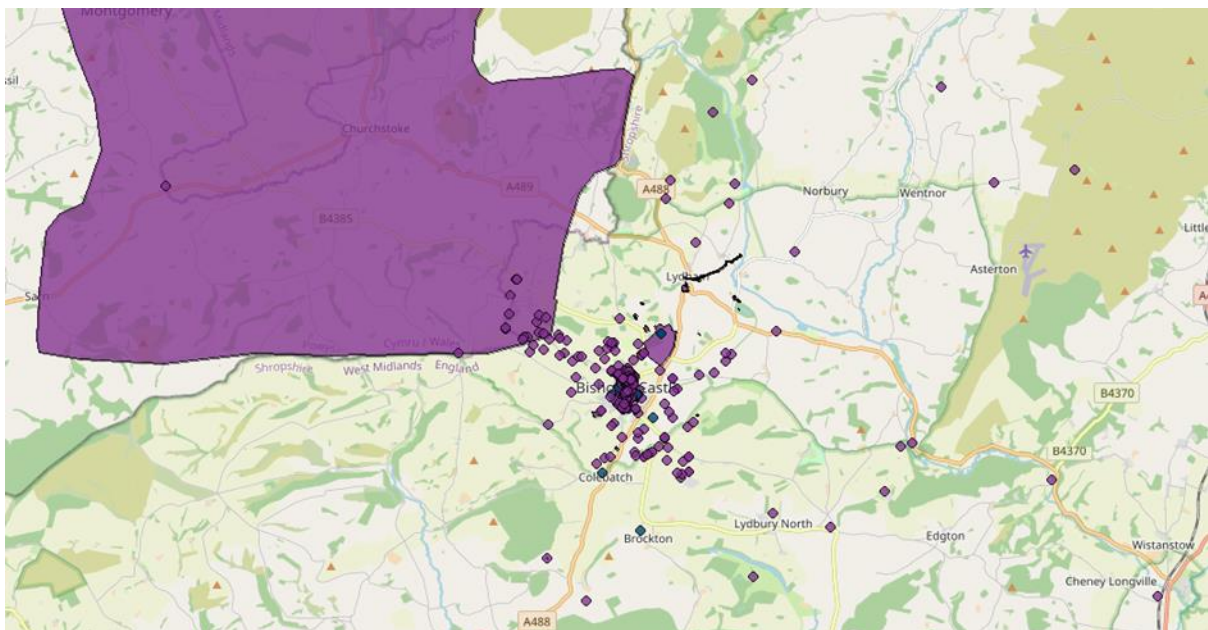


Figure A5.2: HER features and assets in Bishop's Castle

⁶⁸ Shropshire County Council (n.d.): 'Shropshire HER' [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/historic-environment-record/>

Local heritage assets

Bishop's Castle displays a wealth of buildings which chart the course of vernacular architecture (buildings of purpose) over several centuries. The castle, from which the town takes its name, has for the most part disappeared, although what remains is cared for by the Old Castle Land Trust which is also responsible for the House on Crutches building situated close to the present Town Hall. Other fine buildings in the town have been carefully restored, but several buildings have been lost over the decades⁶⁹. Those buildings noted by the Town Council are detailed below.

- **The Town Hall:** which dominates the High Street, stands 'castle-like' at the top of the town surrounded by smaller buildings of stone, timber and brick, which together create a characterful townscape. Whilst it is known that earlier civic buildings have existed in the adjacent area, this mid-eighteenth-century building is the only surviving civic structure. A small selection of documents from different sources has been examined with the purpose of providing preliminary documentary evidence that the present Town Hall building is a valuable and important part of local community heritage.
- **The Markets and Old Market Hall:** there has been a market in Bishop's Castle for centuries and one early market hall (since demolished), considered to be medieval in form, though shrouded by later buildings and in part badly damaged by fire, 'exists' in the High Street also close to the present Town Hall. The timbers of this building were dated to the year 1618 in 2007. Town Council Minutes cover this period, but the market probably belonged to the Howards, Lords of the Manor at that time and not the Borough. The market hall and town hall were frequently combined in the function of a covered market and council chamber. Local examples are: Much Wenlock 1577; Church Stretton 1619 and Bridgnorth 1650, all having an open ground floor of stone and first floor of timber. Regular farmer's markets (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) are still held at the market centre⁷⁰.

Summary of Future Baseline

New development in the Neighbourhood Plan area has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets; for example, through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, the policy provisions of the NPPF and Local Plan offer a degree of protection to these assets and their settings.

Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the parish's settlements, support historic landscape character and better reveal assets' heritage significance.

It is important to ensure that the conservation area continues to be a vibrant, living entity into the future, and in this respect, the BCNDP provides opportunities to identify and protect key/ important views, non-designated features that contribute to the setting and sense of place, and important areas of open space which are integral to the setting.

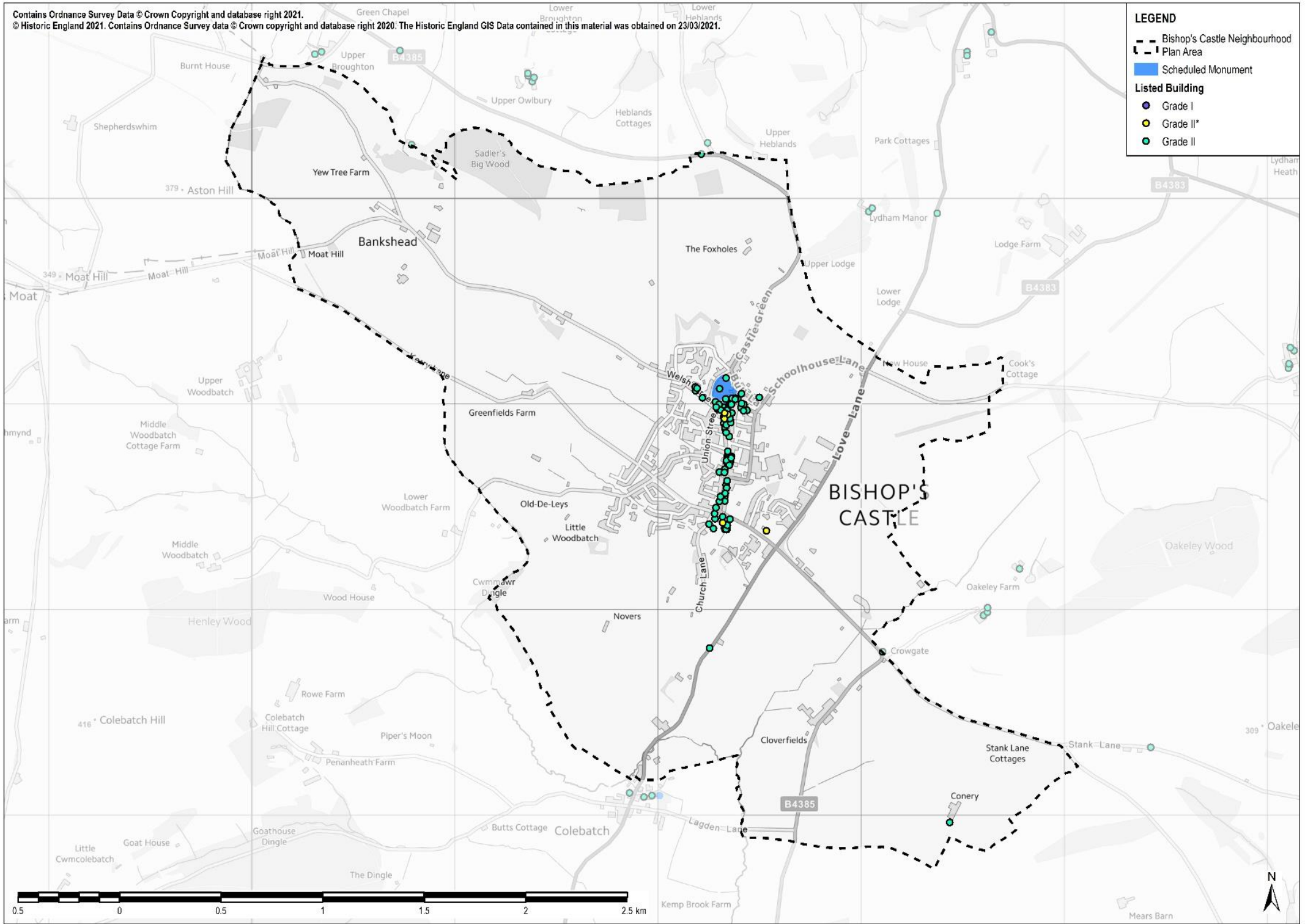
⁶⁹ Bishop's Castle Town Council (n.d.): 'History & Regalia' [online] available at: <https://bishopscaletowncouncil.gov.uk/history-regalia/>

⁷⁰ Shropshire Star (2020): 'Market ready to return' [online] available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/south-shropshire/bishops-castle/2020/07/15/popular-bishops-castle-market-ready-to-return/>

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LEGEND

- Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed Building**
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II



A.6 Land, Soil, and Water Resources

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁷¹ (NPPF) include:

- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils.
 - Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
 - Prevent new or existing development from being ‘adversely affected’ by the presence of ‘unacceptable levels’ of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate ‘despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate’.
 - Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land.
 - Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains.
 - Planning policies and decisions should ‘give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs’, and ‘promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.’
 - Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply.
 - Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.
 - Ensure that, wherever possible, development helps to improve local environmental conditions including water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

Since July 2017 the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requires Local Planning Authorities to publish a Brownfield Land Register, and review it at least once a year, in order to identify all previously developed sites with potential for delivering new development. This is to help achieve maximum planning value and efficiency from available land, whilst avoiding unnecessary land take at greenfield

⁷¹ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

sites.⁷² Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.⁷³

Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England⁷⁴ sets out a vision for soil use in England which includes better protection for agricultural soils, protecting stores of soil carbon, improving the resilience of soils to climate change and preventing soil pollution. The essential message in relation to development is that pressure on soils is likely to increase in line with development pressure and the planning system should seek to mitigate this.

The Water Framework Directive⁷⁵ (2000) requires a management plan to be prepared for water catchment areas to inform planning and help meet objectives and obligations in areas such as water efficiency and sustainable drainage.

The Government's Water Strategy for England⁷⁶ (2020) provides a strategy for the water sector which aims to sustainably deliver secure water supplies and an improved and protected water environment. It sets out actions within the following areas:

- Water demand;
- Water supply;
- Water quality;
- Surface water drainage;
- River and coastal flooding;
- Greenhouse gas emissions;
- Charging for water; and
- Regulatory framework, competition and innovation.

Water for life⁷⁷ (2011) sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

The National Waste Management Plan⁷⁸ provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England and evaluates how it will support the implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised Waste Framework Directive⁷⁹. This includes an assessment of the need for new collection schemes,

⁷² MHCLG (2017) Guidance: Brownfield Land Registers [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/brownfield-land-registers>

⁷³ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

⁷⁴ DEFRA (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england>

⁷⁵ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy.

⁷⁶ Defra (2020) Future Water: the Government's Water Strategy for England [online] available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meeting-our-future-water-needs-a-national-framework-for-water-resources/meeting-our-future-water-needs-a-national-framework-for-water-resources-accessible-summary>

⁷⁷ Defra (2011) Water for life [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

⁷⁸ DEFRA (2013) Waste Management Plan for England [online] available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf

⁷⁹ Directive 2008/98/EC

additional waste infrastructure and investment channels, as well as providing general or strategic waste management policies.

The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires member states to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. These areas are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and as such are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member states are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. There are currently no NVZs within the Plan area.

Local

The Shropshire Council Water Cycle Study (2020) assesses the potential issues relating to future development within Shropshire and the impacts on water supply, wastewater collection, treatment and water quality.⁸⁰ The Water Cycle Study assesses the constraints and requirements that will arise from potential growth on the water infrastructure. The Water Cycle Study has been carried out in co-operation with Severn Trent Water (STW), United Utilities (UU), Welsh Water (WW), the Environment Agency and the neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).

The Severn River Basin Management Plan (2015)⁸¹ sets out the current state and pressures on the environment, environmental objectives, programmes of measures and progress since 2009 plan.

The Severn Trent Water (STW) Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) (2019)⁸² is a technical document written primarily for regulators, as well as other technical stakeholders, following principles set out in the Water Resources Planning Guideline. The 2019 WRMP sets out STW's long term strategy:

"We will use demand management measures to reduce the amount of water we need to put into supply by:

- *Reducing leakage on our network;*
- *Helping customers to use less water through water efficiency activities and education; and*
- *Increasing the coverage of water meters across our network to further reduce consumption and to improve our understanding of water demand patterns."*

While making the best use of our sustainable sources of supply by:

- *Reducing abstraction from those water sources that have a detrimental impact on the environment;*
- *Making sure our future water abstractions do not pose a risk of environmental deterioration, as required by the Water Framework Directive;*
- *Increasing the flexibility and resilience of our supply system;*

⁸⁰ JBA Consulting (2020) Shropshire Council Water Cycle Study [online] available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15581/shropshire-water-cycle-study.pdf>

⁸¹ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Welsh Government, Natural Resource Wales, and the Environment Agency (2015) Part 1: Severn river basin district River basin management plan [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718336/Severn_RBD_Part_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf

⁸² Severn Trent Water (2019) Water Resource Management Plan 2019 [online] available at: <https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/our-plans/>

- *Increasing or optimising deployable output from existing, sustainable sources where possible;*
- *Using catchment restoration techniques to improve habitats and ecological resilience to low flows;*
- *Using catchment management measures to protect our sources of drinking water supply from pollution risks; and*
- *Exploring trades in and out of our region to optimise national use of resources.”*

A number of policies within the Core Strategy indirectly relate to the land, soil and water resources theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS10: Managed Release of Housing Land
- Policy CS14: Managed Release of Employment Land
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks
- Policy CS18: Sustainable Water Management
- Policy CS19: Waste Management Infrastructure
- Policy CS20: Strategic Planning for Minerals

Further, the emerging Local Plan provides a number of policies which directly relates to this theme:

- Policy SP2. Strategic Approach
- Policy SP3. Climate Change
- Policy SP4. Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High Quality Design
- Policy DP19. Water Resources and Water Quality
- Policy DP20. Water Efficiency
- Policy DP29. Mineral Safeguarding
- Policy DP30. Sites for Sand and Gravel Working
- Policy DP31. Managing Development and Operation of Mineral Sites
- Policy DP32. Waste Management Facilities
- Policy DP33. Landfill and Landraising Sites

Summary of Current Baseline

Soil resources

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land (BMV) and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been carried out for the parish. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset is therefore relied upon, which shows the parish to be covered by a range of grade classifications. It is however important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Indicatively, the dataset shows that small parts of the southernmost part of the Plan area is underlain by Grade 2 agricultural land ('Very good quality'). The easternmost and central part of the Plan area (including the main town area) is underlain by Grade 3 land. It is not possible to ascertain whether this is Grade 3a or 3b quality land. The remainder of the Plan area is underlain by Grade 4 ('Poor quality') land.

The results of the 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the West Midlands⁸³ indicates that some of the southern parts of the Plan area have a 'high likelihood' of being underlain by BMV land (>60% chance). However, the majority of the Plan area demonstrates 'moderate' likelihood of being underlain by this land (20-60% chance).

Mineral resources

Shropshire is an important area for mineral resources. Minerals are finite resources and so their conservation and waste minimisation are important planning considerations. In order to conserve mineral resources, every effort will be made to ensure that, where practicable, known mineral resources are not sterilised by other forms of development.⁸⁴

In this regard, **Figure A6.1** identifies that there are sand and gravel 'safeguarded mineral resources' intersecting the Plan area.

⁸³ Natural England

⁸⁴ Shropshire Council (2011) Shropshire Core Strategy [online] available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/8534/core-strategy.pdf>

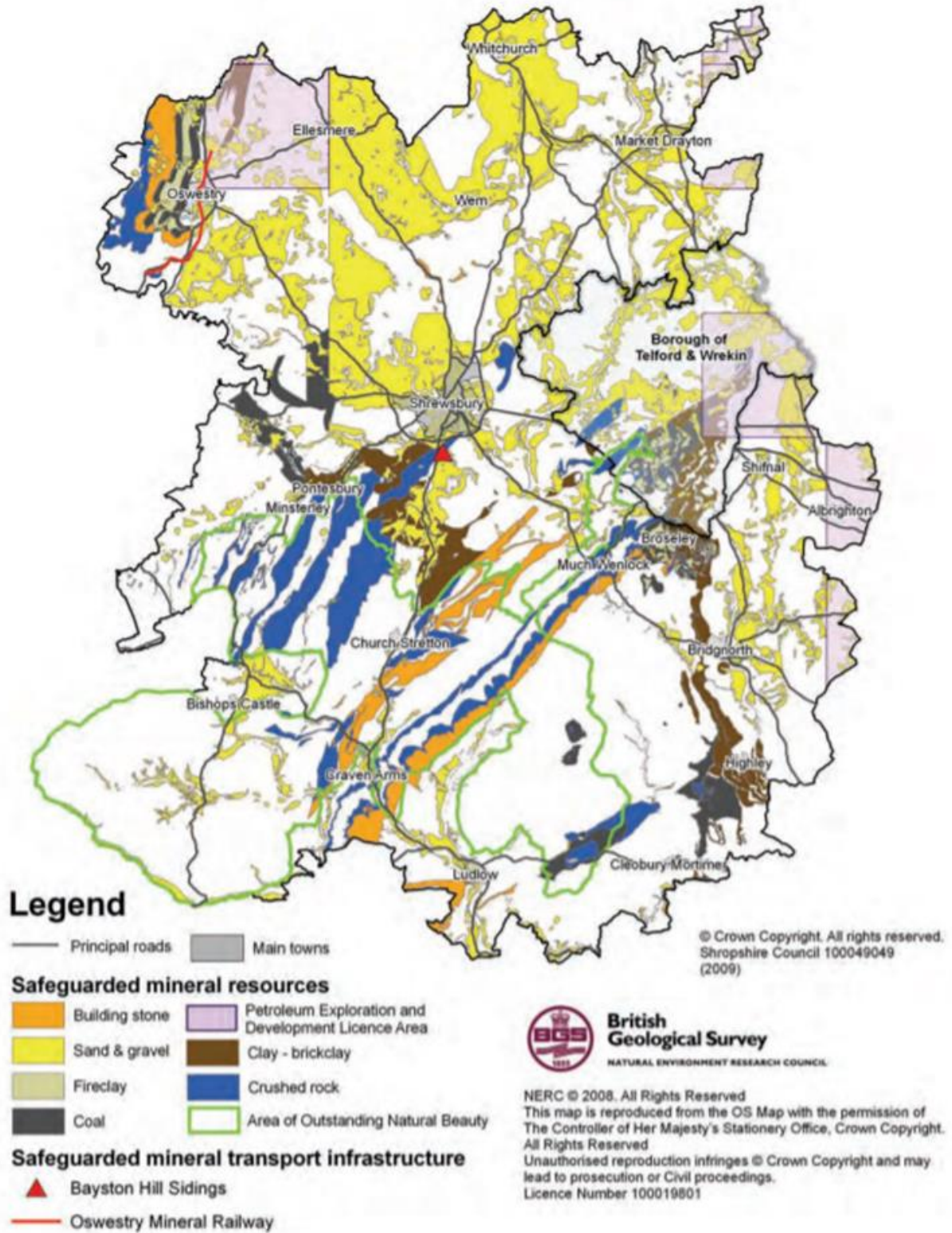


Figure A6.1: Mineral Safeguarding Areas in Shropshire

Water resources and quality

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) drives a catchment-based approach to water management with a view to improving the overall water quality of watercourses in any given catchment. The Plan area falls within two water management catchments, the Severn Uplands Management Catchment and the Terne Management Catchment.

Within the Severn Uplands Management Catchment Bishop's Castle falls within the Camlad Operational Catchment.

Within the Terne Management Catchment, Bishop's Castle falls within the Clun River Operational Catchment. There are two main waterbodies within this catchment, detailed below.

Snakescroft Brook runs through the southeasternmost part of the Plan area. The most recent ecological and chemical quality assessment conducted by the Environment Agency (2019)⁸⁵ indicated the brook failed to meet minimum requirements for chemical quality (as shown in **Table A6.1** below).

Table A6.1: Snakescroft Brook Environmental Quality

| Overall Water Body | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2019 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| Ecological quality | Good | Poor | Poor | Poor | Moderate |
| Chemical status | Good | Good | Good | Good | Fail |
| Overall | Good | Poor | Poor | Poor | Moderate |

Source: <Environment Agency, 2019>

The Kemp River (source to the confluence of the River Clun) runs along the westernmost border of the Plan area. Environmental quality assessment results indicated that the River did not meet minimum requirements for chemical quality in 2019 (as shown in **Table A6.2** below).

Table A6.2: Kemp River Environmental Quality

| Overall Water Body | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2019 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| Ecological quality | Good | Poor | Poor | Poor | Moderate |
| Chemical status | Good | Good | Good | Good | Fail |
| Overall | Good | Poor | Poor | Poor | Moderate |

Source: <Environment Agency, 2019>

The status of both waterbodies has deteriorated in recent years. The reasons for not achieving good status at Snakescroft Brook are:

- Sewage discharge (continuous)
- Poor nutrient management
- Farm/site infrastructure
- Poor Livestock Management

⁸⁵ Environment Agency (2019): 'Cycle 2 results' [online] available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB109054044060>

The reasons for not achieving good status at the Kemp River include:

- Poor Livestock Management
- Barriers - ecological discontinuity
- Sewage discharge (continuous)

Severn Trent Water (STW) serves South Shropshire, including Bishop's Castle. The Environment Agency have published a document entitled 'Areas of Water Stress: final classification' which included a map of England, identifying areas of relative water stress. The whole of STW's supply area is shown as an area of 'Moderate' water stress, based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future.⁸⁶

Within their Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs)⁸⁷ water companies refer to their Water Resource Zones (WRZs). A WRZ is the largest possible zone in which all resources, including external transfers, can be shared and hence the zone in which all customers experience the same risk of supply failure from a resource failure. In this regard, the Plan area falls within the 'Bishop's Castle' WRZ. Total household consumption within the Bishop Castle WRZ is expected to increase, whilst total water supply is anticipated to decrease over the period of 2034-2045.

Summary of Future Baseline

Future development has the potential to affect resources and water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. It is considered that STW will seek to address any water supply and wastewater management issues over the plan period in line with the WRMP 2019; and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the Plan area and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and to contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

In accordance with Policy DP14 of the Local Plan, development in Bishop's Castle is restricted to that which is either nutrient-neutral in terms of its effect on the River Clun SAC or results in a betterment, in anticipation of measures to achieve either of these criteria being found in the future. In this respect, protection of the ecological quality and chemical status of the Kemp River and Snakescroft Brook will be important.

Areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential to be BMV agricultural land, including areas of Grade 2 and Grade 3 land. Future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area could therefore lead to the loss of high-quality soil resource.

⁸⁶ Environment Agency (date unknown) Areas of water stress: final classification [online] available at: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/2782-FE1-Areas-of-Water-Stress.pdf>

⁸⁷ Severn Trent (2019): 'Our Plans' [online] available at: <https://www.severntrent.com/about-us/our-plans/>

A.7 Population and Community

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁸⁸ (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, whilst guarding against the unnecessary loss of community facilities and services.
- Retain and develop accessible local services and community facilities in rural areas.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' and taking a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)⁸⁹ identifies that:

- Local Planning Authorities should assess their development needs working with the other local authorities in the relevant housing market area or functional economic market area in line with the duty to cooperate. This is because such needs are rarely constrained precisely by local authority administrative boundaries.
- Local planning authorities should secure design quality through the policies adopted in their local plans. Good design is indivisible from good planning and should be at the heart of the plan making process.
- A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old in. It is one which supports healthy behaviors and supports reductions in health inequalities. It should enhance the physical and mental health of the community.
- Green infrastructure is a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Local Plans should identify the strategic location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks. Where appropriate, supplementary planning documents can set out how the planning, design and

⁸⁸ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

⁸⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

management components of the green infrastructure strategy for the area will be delivered.

The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report *Ready for Ageing?* (2013)⁹⁰ warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that *“longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”*. The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.

Local

The Strategic Economic Plan for the West Midlands⁹¹, compiled by the West Midlands Combined Authority, provides the scale and capacity to respond to the opportunity of devolution and go further and faster in enabling economic growth for the wider region. It also enables the area to contribute to, and benefit from, the ambitious Midlands Engine programme with its focus on skills, innovation, transport and inward investment.

Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan (2019-2022)⁹² outlines a holistic approach to economic development in the County, prioritising *‘visibly demonstrating that (the council) understand that economic growth is unlikely to be achieved without support for (Shropshire’s) communities, including the right homes and schools and healthcare’*.

The Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire (2017- 2021)⁹³ aims to facilitate sustainable economic growth through 6 key objectives:

- Target actions and resources where there are economic opportunities
- Enable businesses to start, grow and succeed
- Deliver infrastructure to support growth
- Meet skills needs of businesses and people’s aspirations for work
- Promote Shropshire to investors
- Build the Council’s reputation as ‘good to do business with’

Policies within the Core Strategy which directly relate to the population and communities’ theme include:

- Policy CS4: Community Hubs and Community Clusters
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision

⁹⁰ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) *Ready for Ageing?* [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

⁹¹ West Midlands Combined Authority (n.d.): ‘Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)’ [online] available at: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/strategy/>

⁹² Shropshire County Council (2019): ‘Shropshire Council Corporate Plan’ [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-council/corporate-plan/>

⁹³ Shropshire County Council (2017): ‘The Economic Growth Strategy for Shropshire’ [online] <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/6087/economic-growth-strategy-for-shropshire-2017-2021.pdf>

- Policy CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment
- Policy CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure

Further, the emerging Local Plan provides policies which directly relate to this theme, including:

- Policy SP12: Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy
- Policy SP13: Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth and Enterprise
- Policy DP1: Residential Mix
- Policy DP8: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Policy DP10: Tourism, Culture and Leisure

Summary of Current Baseline

Population

As shown in **Table A7.1** below, the population of Bishop's Castle has increased over the period of 2011- 2019 (according to mid-year estimates), but at a comparatively slower rate than figures for Shropshire, the West Midlands and England as a whole.

Table A7.1: Population Change (2011- 2019)⁹⁴

| Population | Bishop's Castle | Shropshire | West Midlands | England |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| 2011 | 1,893 | 306,129 | 5,601,847 | 53,012,456 |
| Mid-year population estimate (2019) | 1,905 | 323,136 | 5,934,037 | 55,977,178 |
| <i>Population change</i> | +0.6% | +5.6% | +5.6% | +5.6% |

Age distribution

As shown in **Table A7.2** below, approximately one third of residents in the Plan area are aged 60+, higher than comparative statistics for Shropshire, the West Midlands and England as a whole. There are a lower proportion of residents under the age of 44 within Bishop's Castle in comparison to figures at the County, Regional and National level also.

Table A7.2 Age Bands⁹⁵

| Age | Bishop's Castle | Shropshire | West Midlands | England |
|------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| 0-15 | 14.4% | 17.4% | 19.5% | 18.9% |
| 16-24 | 9.7% | 10.3% | 12.1% | 11.9% |
| 25-44 | 22.6% | 23.2% | 26.3% | 27.5% |
| 45-59 | 20.0% | 21.2% | 19.2% | 19.4% |
| 60+ | 33.3% | 27.9% | 22.8% | 22.3% |
| Total population | 1893 | 306,129 | 5,601,847 | 53,012,456 |

⁹⁴ UK Gov (2019/2011): Census [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

⁹⁵Census 2011.

Household tenure

Household tenure for the Plan area, County, Region and the Country is presented in **Figure A7.1**, below. A lower proportion of residents in the Plan area own their own homes (62.1%) in comparison to residents at the county-level (69.2%), the West Midlands (64.8%) and England as a whole (63.3%). A greater proportion of residents live in rented accommodation (social or privately rented) (34.9%) in comparison to figures for Shropshire (28.4%), the West Midlands (32.9%) and England (34.5%).

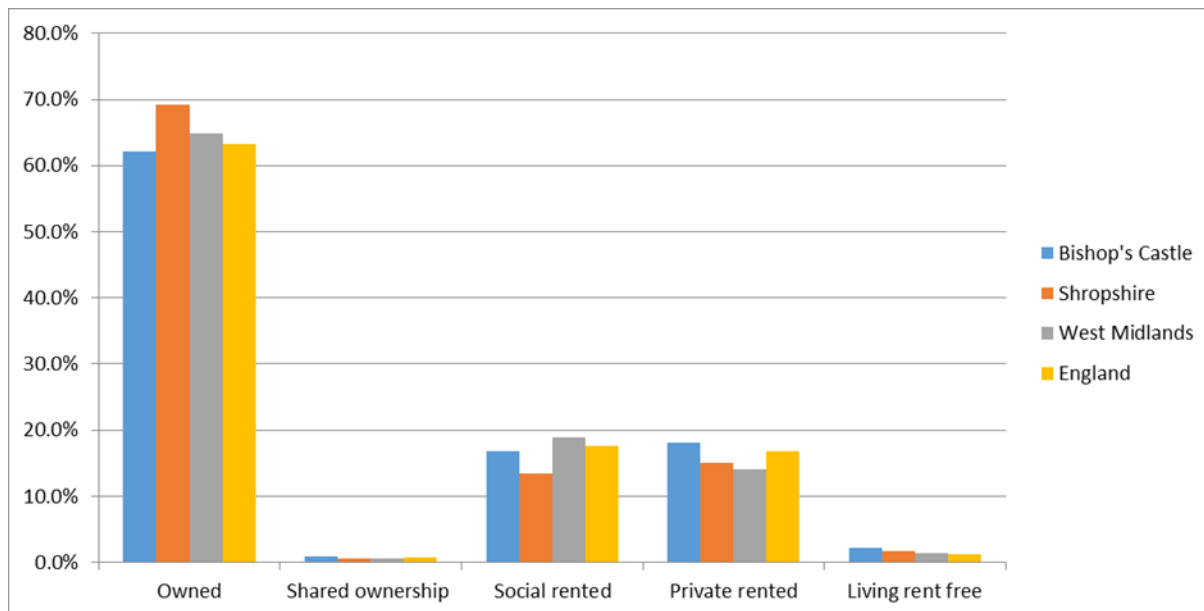


Figure A7.1: Household tenure

Household deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health or has a long-term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

Based on Census information presented in **Table A7.3**, overall deprivation levels in the Plan Area are shown to be higher than comparative figures for Shropshire, the West Midlands and England as a whole. Of those areas which are deprived, the majority are deprived in 1 dimension.

Table A7.3: Household deprivation⁹⁶

| Deprivation | Bishop's Castle | Shropshire | West Midlands | England |
|---|-----------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Household not deprived in any dimension | 43.7% | 69.2% | 39.9% | 42.5% |
| Deprived in 1 dimension | 34.3% | 0.7% | 32.5% | 32.7% |
| Deprived in 2 dimensions | 17.8% | 13.5% | 21.4% | 19.1% |
| Deprived in 3 dimensions | 4.1% | 14.9% | 5.7% | 5.1% |
| Deprived in 4 dimensions | 0.1% | 1.8% | 0.5% | 0.5% |
| Total deprivation | 43.7% | 69.2% | 39.9% | 57.4% |

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD)⁹⁷ is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 - 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
 - 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 - 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
 - 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.

Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:

⁹⁶ Census 2011.

⁹⁷ Gov UK (2019): 'English indices of deprivation' [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

In this regard, the Plan area falls within the Shropshire 030A and Shropshire 030B LSOAs. The Shropshire 030A LSOA falls within the 40% least deprived areas in England, whilst the Shropshire 030B is one of the 50% least deprived areas in England.

However, with regards to index deprivation, the Shropshire 030A is amongst the 10% most deprived areas with regards to barriers to housing and services, as well as living environment deprivation. Additionally, the Shropshire 030B LSOA is amongst the 40% most deprived areas in the country for income deprivation, employment deprivation and education, skills and training. Further, the 030B LSOA is amongst the 50% most deprived areas for health deprivation, and 40% most deprived areas for income deprivation affecting older people. **Table A7.4** shows this (below).

Table A7.4 LSOA Deprivation Indices

| Deprivation Index | Shropshire 030A | Shropshire 030B |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Income Deprivation | 40% least deprived | 40% most deprived |
| Employment Deprivation Domain | 30% least deprived | 40% most deprived |
| Education, Skills and Training Domain | 50% least deprived | 40% most deprived |
| Health Deprivation Domain | 10% least deprived | 50% most deprived |
| Crime Domain | 10% least deprived | 20% least deprived |
| Barriers to Housing and Services Domain | 10% most deprived | 20% least deprived |
| Living Environment Deprivation Domain | 10% most deprived | 10% most deprived |
| Income Deprivation affecting Children Index | 20% least deprived | 50% least deprived |
| Income Deprivation affecting Older People | 30% least deprived | 40% most deprived |

Town services and facilities

The largely rural geography of the area, together with the sparse population has been noted by the Plan group to make delivery of services and facilities more difficult, with Bishop's Castle being the main settlement in the area where a Secondary School, Leisure Centre and small hospital are located. The main A488 road travels north to south through the area and provides the main link from Plan

area into Shrewsbury in the north, and south to Knighton for higher tier services⁹⁸. However, these service centres are a considerable distance from the Plan area.

Broadband services

Digital connectivity is viewed as an increasingly important factor for business success, and broadband speed is a vital consideration when businesses are looking to relocate. Superfast broadband is being rolled out across Shropshire, and nearly all premises in Bishop's Castle have access, or will have access within the next two years, to infrastructure that allows download speeds of at least 30 Mbps. Only 1 premise (0.1% of the total) are expected to have speeds that fall below this threshold. Most premises in Shropshire are supplied by just one infrastructure provider; in Bishop's Castle, however, 93.2% of residents have a choice of two or more suppliers⁹⁹.

Employment

The three largest employment sectors for Bishop's Castle are the health, manufacturing and retail sectors, which account for 62.9% of employment within the town. Health represents 26.5% of the employment, compared to 14.7% in Shropshire, while manufacturing comprises 22.0% of employee jobs (10.0% in Shropshire). Retail accounts for 14.4% of Bishop's Castle employment compared with 10.4% in Shropshire. A large proportion (88%) of businesses in Bishop's Castle employ less than 5 people. An additional 5.8% employ between 5 and 9 people. Less than 5% have a workforce of 20 or more¹⁰⁰.

Over the last five years, the number of jobs in Bishop's Castle has fallen substantially, by 35.9%, or by some 250 jobs, which is the equivalent of a decrease of 50 jobs per annum. In comparison, the number of jobs in Shropshire rose by 2.9% over the same period¹⁰¹. This is likely to increase the number of residents commuting to work outside the Plan area.

Figure A7.2 below presents organisations identified by the business directory MINT as being the largest employers in Bishop's Castle¹⁰². This suggests that there are only six employers with a workforce of 20 or more within the town centre boundary. The largest employers are The Community College and Charles Ransford & Son Ltd.

Additionally, household income in Bishop's Castle is low compared with other parts of the County. 30% or 214 households in Bishop's Castle earn less than £15,000 per year. Other than Craven Arms, where 30% of households also earn below the £15,000 threshold, no other Shropshire market town has a higher proportion of households in this income bracket. 33% of households earned between £15,000 and £30,000. At the other end of the spectrum, just 3% of households had an income exceeding £80,000 per annum—this is a similar proportion to Craven Arms, Highly and Wem. 11% of households have an income between £50,000 and £80,000¹⁰³.

⁹⁸ Consultation on preferred sites. Ibid. p. 22

⁹⁹ Bishop's Castle Market Town Plan. <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/9681/bishops-castle.pdf> Ibid. p.44.

¹⁰⁰ Consultation on preferred sites. Ibid. p. 22

¹⁰¹ ONS (2017) Business Register and Employment Survey.

¹⁰² Bishop's Castle Market Town Plan. Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁰³ Bishop's Castle Market Town Plan. Ibid. p. 28.

| Employers | Number of Employees | Turnover (£'000s) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| The Community College | 67 | 4,089 |
| Charles Ransford & Son Ltd | 59 | 12,912 |
| Stone House Care Home | 50 | 1,599 |
| Bishop's Castle Community Hospital | 30 | 4,238 |
| The SPARC Centre | 20 | 1,471 |
| A. Evans & Sons (EGG Packing) | 20 | 3,006 |

Figure A7.2: Key employer's in Bishop's Castle

Figure A7.3 (below) shows occupations of usual residents in the Plan area. The following occupations represent 47.6% of working residents in Bishop's Castle:

- Skilled trades occupations (19.1%)
- Caring, leisure & other service occupations (14.9%)
- Elementary occupations (13.6%)

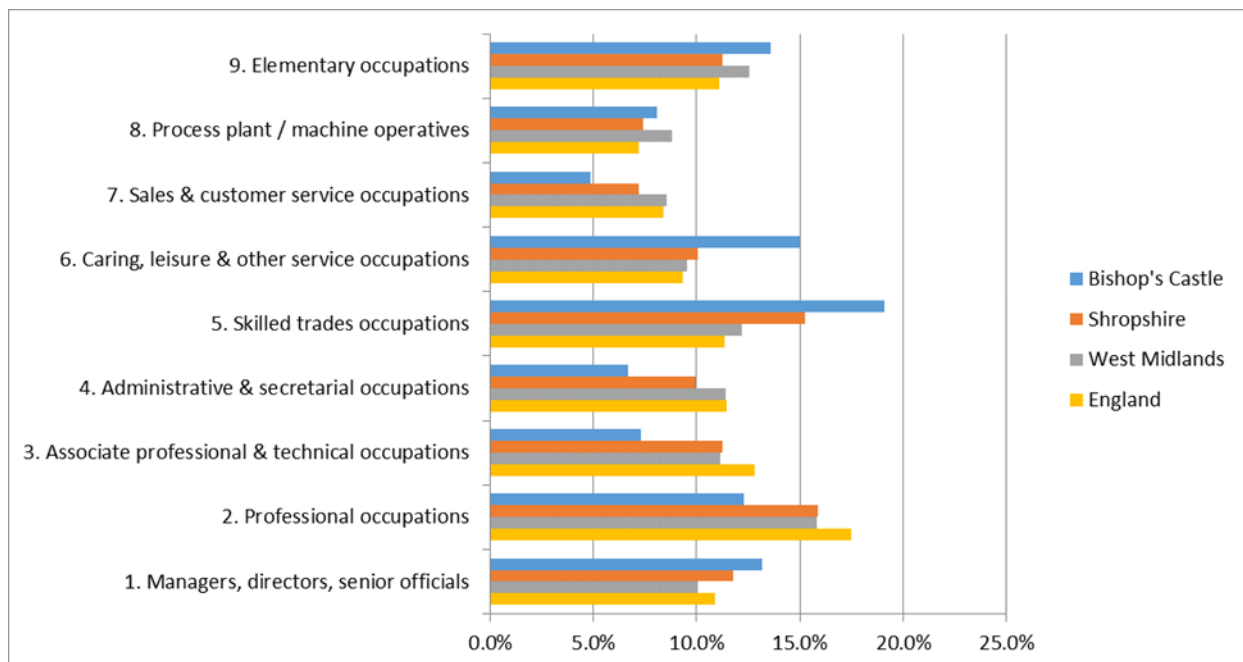


Figure A7.3: Occupational categories

Tourism

Bishop's Castle is a historic town and offers a range of visitor attractions along with many pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops. There are frequent events in the town for residents and visitors to enjoy. As well as the expansive views to the Shropshire Hills AONB, there are a number of tourism centres, such as Bishop's Castle Heritage Centre, The House of Crutches Museum and The Three Tuns Brewery¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ Bishop's Castle Market Town Profile. Ibid. p.3.

Bishop's Castle hosts a number of events throughout the year. Key annual events include Bishop's Castle Arts Festival, Bishop's Castle Carnival, Bishop's Castle Walking Festival, Mojo Festival, and Michaelmas Fair.

Education

Bishop's Castle is a key educational centre for the town and surrounding areas. Pupils are mainly drawn from the Bishop's Castle Town area, but schools also attract pupils from the surrounding hinterland areas. The town council area has one primary school (Bishop's Castle Primary School) and one secondary school (Bishop's Castle Community College). There are no college facilities in Bishop's Castle, and the nearest sixth form colleges are in Ludlow and Shrewsbury.

The percentage of children living in the town parish area who are eligible for free school meals is 14.8%. This is higher than the rate for Shropshire which is 10.74%.

Figure A7.4 below shows educational attainment levels in the Plan area. A high proportion of residents in Bishop's Castle do not have any qualifications (25.9%) in comparison to Shropshire (22.5%) and England as a whole (20.7%), but not in comparison to figures for the West Midlands (26.5%). Of those with qualifications, most have Level 4 qualifications or higher.

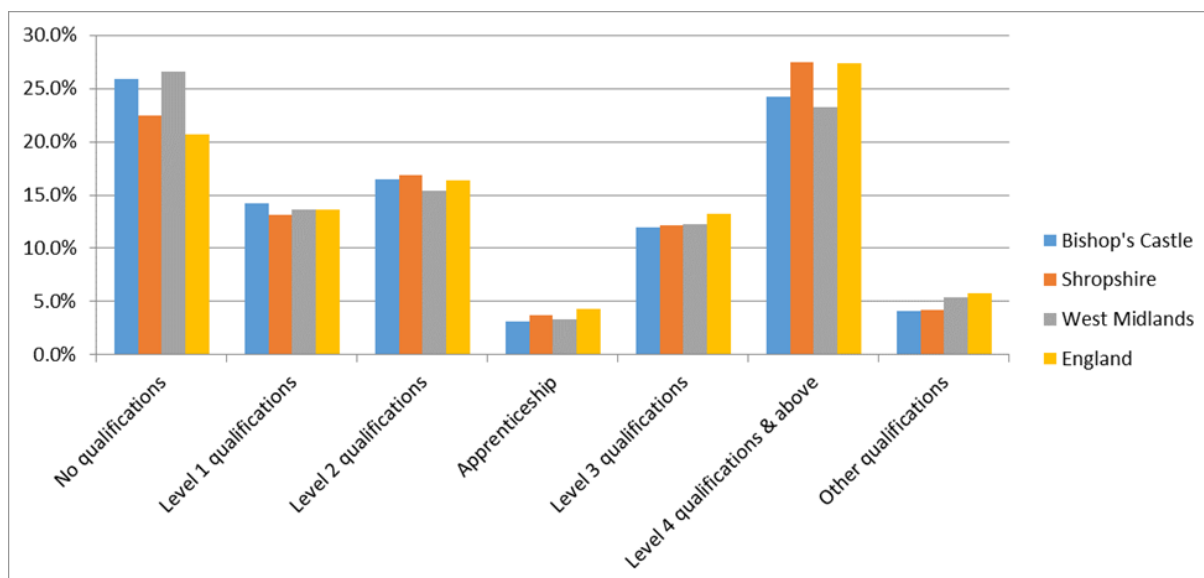


Figure A7.4: Level of qualifications

Summary of Future Baseline

The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment. This is particularly notable for Bishop's Castle, which performs poorly with regards to accessibility to the 'housing and services' measure used in the IMD 2019 assessment.

As the requirements of the working population continue to change, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is likely to be a requirement for adaptable dwellings which can accommodate more flexible working practices. This is echoed within the place making principles outlined in the UK Government's recent Planning White Paper which was released in August 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic also has important implications for the BCNDP, and the community. More people have been working from home and the indications are that many will continue to do so. There have been full closures elsewhere of some shops, cafes and pubs and there are serious concerns for the future businesses in towns such as Bishop's Castle. As the public emerges from the coronavirus lockdown, it is hoped that many of these will resurface successfully and the increased number of people working from home will strengthen businesses.

A.8 Health and Wellbeing

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹⁰⁵ (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Help deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity to contribute to the health and well-being of communities.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹⁰⁶ identifies that local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in improving health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

The Fair Society, Healthy Lives ('The Marmot Review')¹⁰⁷ investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: "*overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities*".

Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On (2020) has been produced by the Institute of Health Equity and commissioned by the Health

¹⁰⁵ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

¹⁰⁷ The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf>

Foundation to mark 10 years on from the landmark study Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review).¹⁰⁸ The report highlights that:

- people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health;
- improvements to life expectancy have stalled, and declined for the poorest 10% of women;
- the health gap has grown between wealthy and deprived areas; and
- place matters – for example living in a deprived area of the North East is worse for your health than living in a similarly deprived area in London, to the extent that life expectancy is nearly five years less.

Local

Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021 describes the key local health and care issues and explains what the Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Board is going to do to make improvements to these issues.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy indirectly relate to the health and wellbeing theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS4: Community Hubs and Community Clusters
- Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS15: Town and Rural Centres
- Policy CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

Further, the emerging Local Plan provides a number of relevant policies:

- Policy SP2: Strategic Approach
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy SP6: Health and Wellbeing
- Policy DP9: Managing and Supporting Town Centres
- Policy DP10: Tourism, Culture and Leisure

Summary of Current Baseline

Health indicators

Life expectancy in Shropshire is higher than the national average. Life expectancy for births in Shropshire between 2013-15 are 80.3 for males and 83.8 for females. This compares to an average of 79.5 and 83.1 for England.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on (2020) <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

¹⁰⁹ Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Department of Communities and Local Government, Crown Copyright 2017.

As shown in **Figure A8.1** (below), general health in the Plan area is predominantly good or very good (80.1%), in line with figures for Shropshire (81.4%), the West Midlands (79.9%), and England (81.4%).

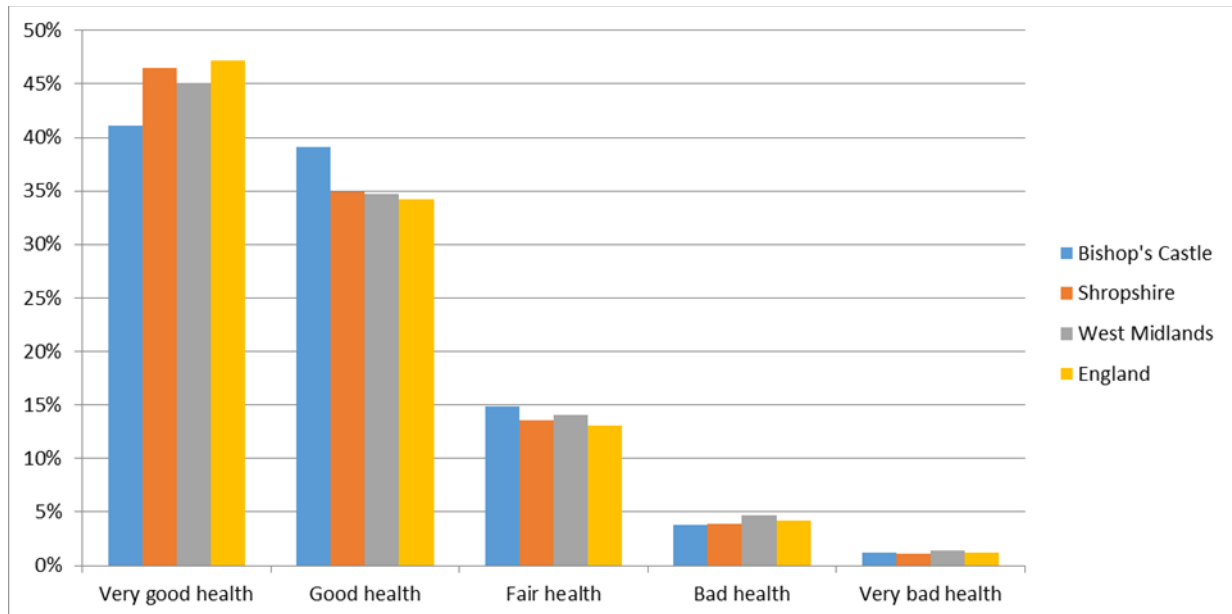


Figure A8.1: General Health

The day-to-day activities of residents with long-term health conditions is mostly not limited (78.6%), however, this is lower than comparative figures for Shropshire (81.4%), the West Midlands (81.0%) and England as a whole (82.4%). Notably, the proportion of residents whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot (9.8%) is higher than figures for the county (8.3%), the region (9.1%) and England as a whole (8.3%).

The latest Shropshire Annual Report (2020) sets out wider patterns of health and wellbeing in the County. Compared to England, Shropshire is doing better for:

- Male and female life expectancy at birth
- Teenage Pregnancy under 18 and under 18 conception rate
- Levels of obesity and overweight children combined for children in year 6
- Emergency readmissions within 30 days of discharge from hospital

However, Shropshire is doing worse for:

- People killed and seriously injured on Shropshire's roads
- Statutory homelessness – eligible homeless people not in priority need
- Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese
- Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate for people aged 17+

The Quality and Outcome Framework (QOF) 2017/18 provides a snapshot of disease prevalence across Shropshire. **Figure A8.2** below shows that South Shropshire has the highest rates for a range of diseases, including stroke, chronic kidney disease, dementia, and depression. Notably across Shropshire, hypertension is the disease which has the biggest prevalence in all ages at 16.5%. GP Practices in South Shropshire report a much higher prevalence of 20%.

| Disease Prevalence on QOF 2018/19 | Population | Bridgnorth | North Shropshire | Oswestry | Shrewsbury & Atcham | South Shropshire | Shropshire |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------------|----------|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| Cancer | All Ages | 4.6% | 3.7% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 4.9% | 4.0% |
| Hypertension | All Ages | 16.5% | 16.5% | 16.7% | 14.8% | 20.0% | 16.5% |
| Stroke | All Ages | 2.8% | 2.6% | 2.5% | 2.3% | 3.0% | 2.6% |
| CHD | All Ages | 4.1% | 3.6% | 3.5% | 3.3% | 4.3% | 3.7% |
| CVD-PP | Age 30-74 | 1.0% | 1.2% | 1.6% | 1.0% | 1.3% | 1.2% |
| LVSD | All Ages | 0.6% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.6% | 0.4% |
| Obesity | Age 18+ | 10.3% | 12.2% | 12.3% | 11.3% | 12.1% | 11.5% |
| Depression | Age 18+ | 10.3% | 10.2% | 13.8% | 12.5% | 12.7% | 11.8% |
| Osteoporosis | Age 50+ | 0.8% | 0.3% | 1.7% | 0.8% | 1.7% | 1.0% |
| Diabetes | Age 17+ | 7.2% | 7.2% | 7.0% | 6.5% | 7.0% | 6.9% |
| Palliative Care | All Ages | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.4% |
| Atrial Fibrillation | All Ages | 4.1% | 3.6% | 3.5% | 3.3% | 4.3% | 3.7% |
| Heart Failure | All Ages | 1.2% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 1.2% | 1.0% |
| Peripheraal Arterial Disease | All Ages | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 0.9% |
| Asthma | All Ages | 6.5% | 6.8% | 6.7% | 7.4% | 7.2% | 7.0% |
| Chronic Kidney Disease | Age 18+ | 5.5% | 5.8% | 5.3% | 5.9% | 7.9% | 6.0% |
| Dementia | All Ages | 1.3% | 1.0% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.4% | 1.2% |
| Epilepsy | Age 18+ | 0.8% | 0.9% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.0% | 0.9% |
| Learning Disabilities | All Ages | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 0.5% |
| COPD | All Ages | 1.9% | 1.9% | 2.0% | 1.7% | 1.9% | 1.9% |
| Rheumatoid Arthritis | All Ages | 0.9% | 0.9% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 0.9% |
| Mental Health | All Ages | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.8% |
| Significance to Shropshire Avg | | | | | Higher | Similar | Lower |

Figure A8.2: Disease prevalence in South Shropshire

Open green space

16.5% of Shropshire residents utilise outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons, compared to 17.9% of England overall.¹¹⁰ The Shropshire Wild Team initiative uses Shropshire’s free and abundant natural environment to promote physical activity and wellbeing, and is underpinned by the growing research evidence suggesting positive health benefits for people engaging with the natural environment.¹¹¹

In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the Shropshire Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment (2018) shows the quantity of Open Space is low compared with other settlements within Shropshire. Bishop’s Castle has a moderate provision of green spaces in comparison to other areas within the South of Shropshire (46.7 ha overall, 4.4 ha per 1000 population).

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Shropshire Council (2020) Shropshire Annual Report 2020 [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/16479/sc-ph-an-rep-feb20-final.pdf>

Active facilities

Bishop's Castle has an active range of sporting, leisure and social clubs¹¹² which provide opportunities for residents to maintain their physical and mental health. These include:

- Bishop's Castle Cricket Club
- Bishop's Castle & Onny Valley Rugby Club
- Bishop's Castle Bowling Club
- Bishop's Castle Lawn Tennis Club
- Teme Spark Sports and Leisure Centre for Bishop's Castle (with 20m Swimming Pool, air conditioned 20 Station Fitness Suite, 3 Badminton Court Sports Hall, 2 Squash Courts, Sauna & Sunbed, Fully Equipped Studio Theatre, Vending Area, Art Gallery and Floodlit Artificial Pitches).

Healthcare provision

There are two Care Providers in Bishop's Castle, High Trees Residential Home and Stone House.

Bishop's Castle Community Hospital is situated on Union Street. The hospital is a small 16-bed hospital providing care for local patients who do not need to be admitted to an acute hospital or have been transferred from an acute hospital for rehabilitation or recovery following an operation, or who need palliative care. Outpatient services include Audiology, Falls, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Speech and language therapy.

There is one medical practice in the Plan area: Bishop's Castle Medical Practice, on Schoolhouse Lane, which has approximately 5,000 registered patients.

There is one dental practice within the area (Butler and Finnigan) and one pharmacy (Bishops Castle Pharmacy).

Summary of Future Baseline

The presence of accessible healthcare services, and potential for provision to increase within the Plan area, is likely to support sustainable growth of the town. It is vital that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support the retention and improvement of wider community facilities within the Plan area. The importance of local accessibility has been highlighted during the course of the ongoing pandemic and can support healthy lifestyles in future years.

With ongoing advances in technology, healthcare and lifestyles, people are tending to live longer than before. Life expectancy in Shropshire is higher than the national average and it is likely that more housing aimed at older people will be required in the future. The overall health of residents in the Plan area is likely to remain positive if new development is sustainably located and supports the growth of the community. It will be important for proposals to recognise that people's health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors; and address any deficits where they exist.

¹¹² Bishop's Castle Market Town Profile. Ibid.

A.9 Transportation

Context Review

National

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹¹³ (NPPF) include:

- Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
 - The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
 - Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised;
 - Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
 - The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account; and
 - Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
 - Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be considered in both plan-making and decision-making.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹¹⁴ identifies that it is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan.

The Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead (2017)¹¹⁵ sets out the Department for Transport's approach for future investment decisions and priorities. At the local level, the strategy relies on devolved decision-making where local communities have the power and will be backed by funding. Investment aims to achieve a transport network that is reliable, well-managed, safe, and works for everyone. The transport system should also provide smooth, fast and comfortable journeys, and have the right connections in the right places.

¹¹³ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_w eb.pdf

¹¹⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

¹¹⁵ Department for Transport (2017) Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-investment-strategy>

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2016)¹¹⁶ sets out the objectives that the DfT are working towards to meet the following walking and cycling ambition for England:

"We want to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey"

The objectives and target set to measure progress towards the 2040 ambition are to:

- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of bicycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025;
- Reverse the decline in walking activity;
- Reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled, each year; and
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school.

Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)¹¹⁷ sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

In February 2020, the government announced a new £5 billion 5-year funding package to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.¹¹⁸ This builds on the Government's determination to make buses work better for their passengers. The details of these programmes have been announced in the National Bus Strategy¹¹⁹ and follows the allocation of £170 million to support more electric buses, increase rural mobility and trial new 'Superbus' services. The strategy sets the central aim of increasing the uptake of bus use in the UK through focusing on increasing the frequency, reliability and accessible.

Cycle routes will also see a major boost across the country with over 250 miles of new, high-quality separated cycle routes and safe junctions in towns and cities to be constructed across England, as part of the multibillion package announced.

Local

Each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. The Shropshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 sets out proposed transport solutions for the County up to 2036, with a focus on enabling sustainable growth.¹²⁰ The Council's strategic approach seeks to maintain

¹¹⁶ Department for Transport (2016) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512895/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

¹¹⁷ Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876251/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf

¹¹⁸ Department for Transport (2020) Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-bus-services-as-pm-outlines-new-vision-for-local-transport>

¹¹⁹ UK GOV (2021): 'Bus Back Better' [online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/980227/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

¹²⁰ <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/4132/provisional-ltp-strategy.pdf>

good access and improve reliability of journey times by car for commuting, shopping, tourism and business use; and good access for freight and deliveries; but to focus particularly on increasing the comparative advantage of more sustainable transport modes in locations and for journeys where these can become feasible alternatives.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy indirectly relate to the transportation theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS7: Communications and Transport
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS15: Town and Rural Centres
- Further, the emerging Local Plan provides a number of relevant policies:
- Policy SP2: Strategic Approach
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy DP25: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy DP26: Strategic, Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

Summary of Current Baseline

Car ownership

As shown in **Figure A9.1** below, car ownership in the Plan area is high, with 83.8% of residents owning at least one car/van in their household, however this is not atypical for Shropshire, where 84.2% of residents own a car/van.

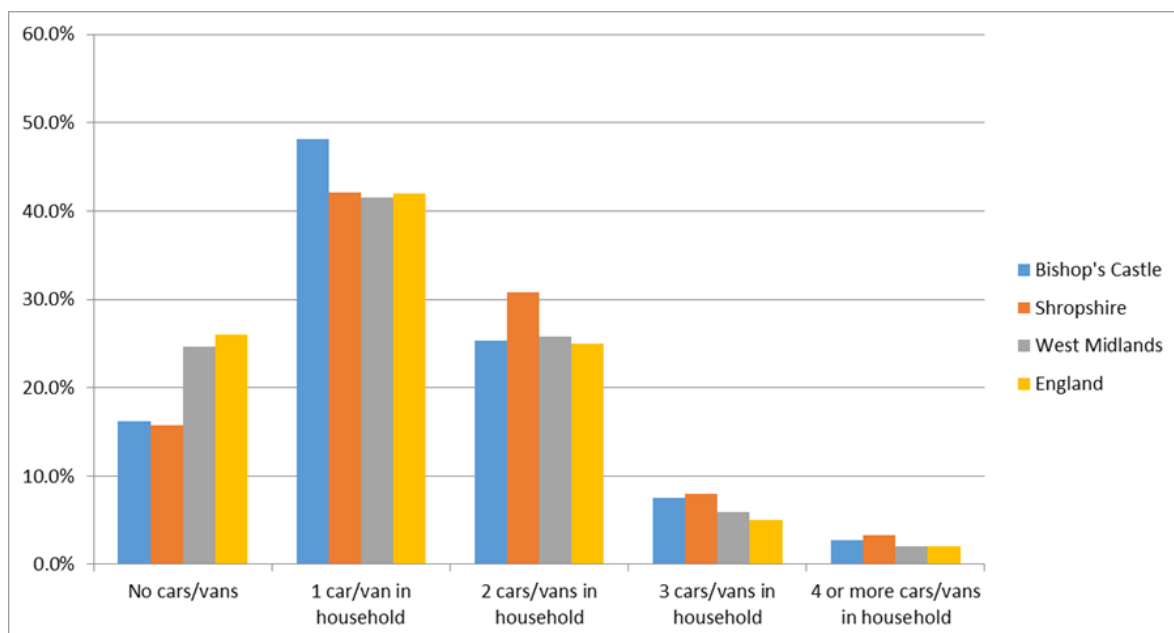


Figure A9.1: Car ownership

Accessibility

The town of Bishop's Castle is in south Shropshire. This area is relatively remote and self-contained, Constraints to development in Bishop's Castle include the medieval

street pattern, with parts of the town, particularly to the south of the town having more difficult access to the A488 than the north of the town¹²¹.

Bishop's Castle is located in a rural area and lacks direct access to key arterial roads. The A49 is 10 miles east of the town and is accessed via local A and B roads. The A488 is the main transport route in and out of the town heading north to Minsterley (~13 miles) and on to Shrewsbury (A488 south) to Clun (~6 miles) and Knighton (~13 miles)¹²².

Travel to work

As shown in **Figure A9.2** below, the most common method of travel to work in the Plan area is driving a car or van (39.4%), however this is comparably lower than figures for the county (43.9%), and the region (40.5%), though not nationally (37.0%). Conversely, a comparably large proportion of residents' travel to work on foot (16.2%) than figures for Shropshire (8.9%), the West Midlands (6.2%) and England as a whole (7.0%).

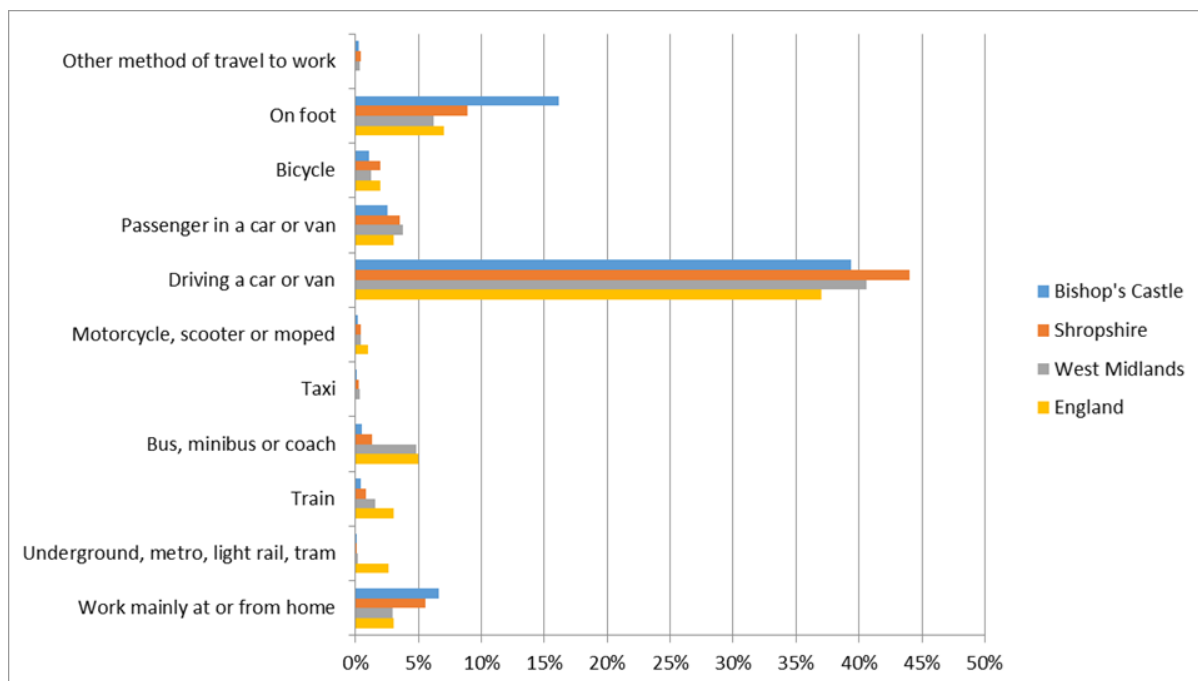


Figure A9.2: Travel to work

Traffic and parking

Traffic and parking issues were major concerns in the Community Survey conducted during the Plan making process by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. Notably, the medieval environment of the town centre does not easily accommodate 21st century vehicular movement or patterns of behaviour¹²³.

As Bishop's Castle serves a large hinterland with extremely limited public transport, a considerable proportion of town centre users arrive by car. The perception expressed in the Community Survey that *'there is nowhere to park in Bishop's Castle'*, appears at least in part to stem from the fact that the ability to park on the

¹²¹Consultation on Preferred Sites. Ibid.
¹²² Bishop's Castle Market Town Plan. Ibid.
¹²³ Bishop's Castle MarketTown Plan. Ibid.

four main streets of the centre, close to the particular shops and services is extremely challenging¹²⁴.

Subsequently, a parking survey was undertaken by the Plan group. The results from both the Parking and Occupants' Surveys demonstrated the following key issues:

- There is commonly spare parking capacity somewhere in the town but some key front streets experience problems.
- Parking on yellow lines is not enforceable by law and frequently they are being ignored (e.g. in Market Square) so, regardless of their visual impact on the historic environment, their efficacy is questionable.
- Parking on pavements is an increasing problem for pedestrians, prams and wheelchair users especially on streets that are important pedestrian routes to significant destinations (e.g. in Salop Street which is a key route to the doctors' surgery and the bus stop).
- There is an absence of parking for residents in certain areas (e.g. Welsh Street) which inevitably leads to parking on pavements.
- Inconsiderate parking, including in passing places on the High St. and close to the junction of Market Square and Salop St. frequently causes traffic congestion and/or incidents.
- The desire to be able to park immediately adjacent to a chosen destination whether because of mobility issues or conditioning to the modern retail experience is unlikely to be assuaged.
- The demand for on street parking space by occupants of the front street's premises suggests that, at least in the centre of the town, there is minimal space available for use by shoppers and visitors.
- On the basis of the responses to the Occupants' Survey there is no overwhelming preference either for or against the possible signage, speed bumps or one way system 'solutions', even from the zone that would be most affected by them.

Key Transport Services

There is no longer a direct railway line to Bishop's Castle. The nearest station is in Craven Arms (~10 miles from the Plan area)¹²⁵.

There are two main bus services¹²⁶ that run through the Plan area:

- Service 553 – which provides services to Shrewsbury regularly (every two hours); and
- Service 745 – not currently active during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bishop's Castle has excellent access to a number of cycle routes¹²⁷. Though there are no national cycle routes, Shropshire County Council note a number of local

¹²⁴ Town Plan. Ibid.

¹²⁵ Bishop's Castle Market Town Plan. Ibid.

¹²⁶ Moovit (n.d.): 'Bus routes' [online available at: https://moovitapp.com/index/en-gb/public-transportation-Bishop_s_Castle-West_Midlands-site_8345112-2108

¹²⁷ Visit Shropshire (n.d.): 'Bishop's Castle Cycle Rides' [online] available at: <http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/bishop-castle-cycle-rides-2014.pdf>

routes for day trips. It should be noted that the quality of cycle routes for access to basic services within the Plan area have not been assessed.

As shown in **Figure A9.3** below, the Plan area is relatively well served by public footpaths, especially in the centre of the settlement.

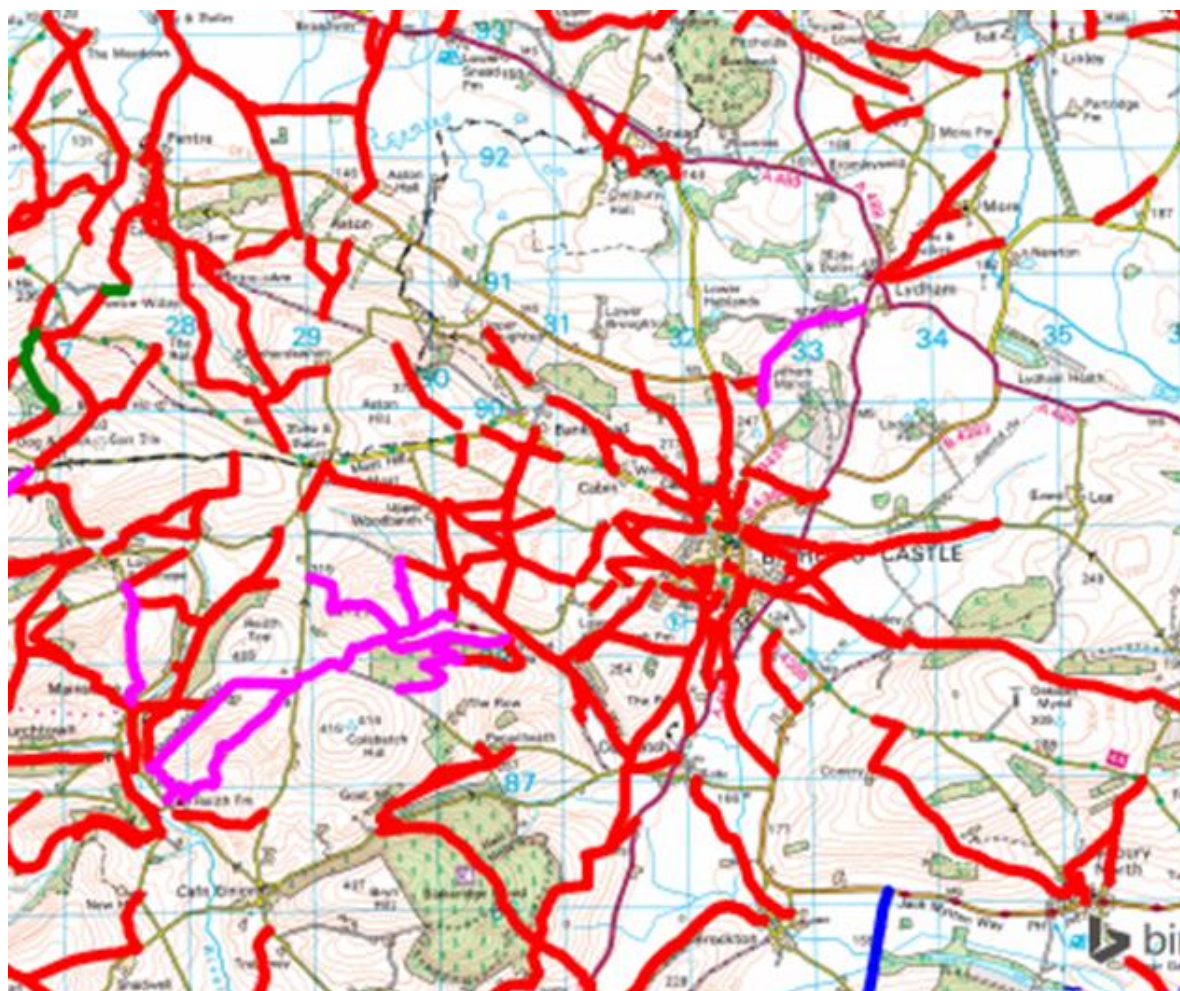


Figure A9.3: Public Footpaths (shown in red)¹²⁸

Summary of Future Baseline

In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the Neighbourhood Plan area is likely to continue trends which favour the private vehicle as the primary mode of transport. New development therefore has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional localised congestion issues which in turn may reduce road safety. A key concern in this respect is the A488, and the exacerbation of existing peak time congestion within the centre of the settlement. Further to this, it is considered that public transport use is likely to remain low compared with private car use given the lack of accessible public transport options.

The Neighbourhood Plan can support small-scale infrastructure improvements and active travel opportunities that seeks to maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist movements. This is particularly relevant given the tendency for residents to access services by foot.

¹²⁸ Bing (n.d): 'ONS maps' [online] available at:
<https://www.rowmaps.com/showmap.php?place=Bishop%27s%20Castle&map=BingOS&lat=52.493&lon=2.99781&lonew=W>

