

BISHOP'S CASTLE NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019- 2038

Plan for Referendum

March 2024

## FOREWORD BY CHAIRMAN

The Localism Act of 2011 gave communities more control over development in their areas through Neighbourhood Development Plans which add depth and detail to Government and County Councils' policies & plans.

The NPD must be welcomed by local people who can accept or reject it in a referendum.

Bishop's Castle Town Council decided in 2018 that a NDP would give residents greater control over the future of the town, protecting its heritage, amenities and unique character and giving us a much greater say in development.

The NPD enables us to decide where houses are built, to what standard and to make sure they meet local need. It can make sure that new housing areas connect with our footpaths enabling people to gain easy access to the countryside and walk into town.

So we hope you will support this plan and help us to ensure a bright future for Bishop's Castle.

*Cllr. Jane Carroll, Chairman,  
Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group*

This draft was prepared by Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group Working with Andrea Pellegram, MRTPI



Andrea Pellegram Ltd.

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# PART 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## Introduction

1. The Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan (the NDP) has been developed by volunteers alongside members of the Town Council and has been informed by consultation with those that reside and work in Bishop's Castle.
2. The Bishop's Castle NDP covers the period 2019-2038 to be aligned to the plan period for the emerging Shropshire Local Plan. It has been prepared to be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Development Plan and with the agreement of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) also addresses policies in the emerging Local Plan which is being prepared contemporaneously with the NDP.

## Purpose

3. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory Development Plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.
4. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a Local Plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict, unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

## Document structure

5. This NDP is in two parts: Part 1 provides an introduction and background to the NDP; Part 2 contains the policies to form part of the Development Plan for the parish once the NDP has been made in a successful public referendum.
6. The NDP is supported by appendixes which should be read in conjunction with the policies.
  - Appendix 1: Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Character Assessment
    - Folder containing zonal surveys
  - Appendix 2: Character Assessment outside the Conservation Area
  - Appendix 3: Non-Designated Heritage Assets
  - Appendix 4: Bishop's Castle Right Homes in the Right Place Survey
  - Appendix 5: Bishop's Castle Site Assessments
  - Appendix 6: Climate Emergency Extracts for use in Bishop's Castle's NDP

7. In addition, there is supporting evidence that is either relevant for the examination or would otherwise be of interest to planning applicants.
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (2021, AECOM)
    - Appendix A: International Designated Sites and Site Allocation
    - Appendix B: Technical Note on River Clun Catchment
  - Habitats Regulation Assessment (2022, Shropshire Council)
  - Strategic Environmental Assessment (2021, AECOM)
  - Basic Conditions Statement
  - Consultation Statement

## Submitting Body

8. Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and Part 2 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Bishop's Castle Town Council was recognised as the qualifying body for the designated area with regards to the provisions of the Regulations.<sup>1</sup>
9. Professional support has been provided by Andrea Pellegram MRTPI, AECOM and Locality.

## The Plan Period

10. The Neighbourhood Plan Period starts in 2019 when the NDP was begun and finishes in 2038 to accord with the plan period for the emerging Shropshire Local Plan 2016 - 2038.

## Neighbourhood Area

11. Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and Part 2 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the parish of Bishop's Castle in Shropshire was designated as a Neighbourhood Area. The extent of the designation is shown in **Figure 1**.

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<sup>1</sup> Effective date 04/09/2019 following Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting 04/09/2019.

FIGURE 1: BISHOP'S CASTLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



## Sustainable Development

12. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social, and environmental.
13. The Bishop's Castle NDP has been prepared to deliver sustainable development as part of the Development Plan for the area. The policies in this NDP contribute to meeting these objectives individually and in combination:

<b>NDP policy</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
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 Design and Construction			

## Consultation with the community

14. The emerging NDP has been subject to wide consultation.
15. The Bishops Castle Town Plan Steering Group prepared the Bishop's Castle Community-led Plan (CLP) which was published in October 2016. The Community-led plan has gathered extensive evidence that will be used to support policies in the NDP. The CLP contained extensive recommendations in an Action Plan some of which were material to town planning, and which will be taken forward in the NDP as aspirations and, where appropriate, policy proposals.
16. On 14 February 2019, Andrea Pellegram met with local community representatives at an open public meeting in the Town Hall from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm. Approximately 30 local people attended and gave their views.
17. The meeting began with an introduction into Neighbourhood Planning for those who were unfamiliar with the process or the powers available to the community. There was then a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of the town followed by a discussion of what the NDP's Vision might be. It concluded with a review

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<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework para. 7.

of potential policies for the NDP. Members of the audience were invited to become members of the NDP Steering Group.

18. Since the community event, the Steering Group formed, with support from the Town Council and Chaired by the Mayor. The Steering Group formed a number of special topic groups who individually worked with community volunteers to prepare the evidence in support of the NDP.
19. In 2021, the community provided additional evidence in support of fighting climate change including considerations of how to improve the performance of the built environment and the introduction of a community heat and power scheme. This was considered extensively by the Town Council and was included in the Regulation 14 draft NDP.
20. A community "Regulation 14" consultation ran from January 2022 to February 2023 and a number of reminders were sent to statutory consultees requesting their comments. Full consideration of the Regulation 14 consultation are set out in the Consultation Statement. All documents were available to view and comment upon via the town council's website and other channels.

## The Vision for Bishop's Castle in 2038

The Community agreed a working "Vision" for the NDP to seek to deliver at the 14 February 2019 event. It has been the basis for the evidence gathering and draft policies in the NDP.



## *VISION 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.

21. As the broad objectives of the Vision for 2038 were refined in evidence gathering, the Steering Group agreed that some Vision objectives were better dealt with through the review of the Local Plan. As a result, this NDP focuses on specific policies that require local consideration:

- Design and the built environment
- Sustainable Transport and its importance to and impact on tourism
- Sustainable Construction

22. Areas that the NDP Steering Group felt were beyond the NDP's remit were public services, utility provision (including superfast broadband) and economic development. These matters will be progressed by the Town Council in partnership with Shropshire Council and do not lend themselves well to Neighbourhood Planning policies.

### **Environmental and social baseline for the neighbourhood plan.**

23. The Town Council commissioned AECOM to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan and its policies. This contains as Appendix A a comprehensive baseline of all relevant land use and social matters that should be considered in scheme design and applicants are advised to consult this Appendix when devising their proposals. These documents can be found in the supporting documents (not the NDP appendices).

## A pen picture of Bishop's Castle

24. Bishop's Castle is a very small town frequently referred to as a village by visitors. It lies in a remote rural area with a population of less than 2,000 and has not expanded much beyond the footprint of the original 'planted town' of Norman times. Nevertheless, the town boasts a theatre, swimming pool, hospital, sports facilities, library and Town Council.

Picture of Bishop's Castle



25. It has numerous and varied active community groups providing support and opportunities over a variety of fields from social care to the environment, the arts and cultural issues. Since the 1960s, it has been a destination for internationally famous actors of stage and screen, writers and musicians some of whom still perform locally from time to time.
26. Precisely because of its quirky, vibrant nature and its interesting history, including its time as a rotten borough, the town remains a centre of opportunity for both its residents and visitors despite its remote location at the foot of the Welsh hills.
27. All of the above characteristics are visibly reflected in the topography today. Bishop's Castle in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a continuum of its history since the 1100s. The Conservation Area illustrates that the challenge is to accommodate change in such a way as to both celebrate its history and dynamism and ensure that in a non-manicured way, new vibrant opportunities can be realised within the historical context.
28. Bishop's Castle's history is reflected in its built form. The stone Castle was built by the Bishop of Hereford between 1085 and 1100 to defend against the Welsh. The town itself was established in 1127 and by 1285 there were 46 burgage plots on either side of a line between the castle at the top and the church at the bottom of the hill. This subsequently became High Street and Church Street and the land at the rear, the area that is now at the heart of the Conservation Area.

Picture town centre



29. For 800 years, Welsh drovers brought cattle and sheep to market in Bishop's Castle and in 1203 King John granted the town a charter to hold markets. This brought people and livestock into the town from both England and Wales. The wool economy thrived resulting in a merchant class that built properties to reflect their wealth. The cattle market remains at the edge of the Conservation Area and regular auctions of sheep and cattle still bring people into the town.
30. In 1573, Elizabeth I granted a second charter which enabled Bishop's Castle to become a self-governing borough with a commercial and social centre that would serve the surrounding rural area. This was the start of the town's significance as both an economic and political power base and was strengthened even further by another charter in 1617 bestowed by King James I.
31. Records indicate that a Town Hall existed from at least 1615 but the current Town Hall was constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, complete with a jail and stocks in front. Recently renovated it now provides a focal point on the High Street. The window tax was introduced in 1696 and lasted until 1851. It was a graded levy on premises containing glazed windows, a sign of wealth. It led to owners bricking up window apertures to reduce the amount of tax for which they would be liable. Some buildings still retain the evidence today.
32. The significance of the wealth and importance of the merchant classes, politicians and landowners cannot be underestimated. From the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century until the early 1900s, Clive of India and his descendants owned land and property in and around the town and in the early 1800s Bishop's Castle became a 'rotten borough' returning 2 MPs and thus carrying an unlikely level of influence for a small town of this size.

Picture of Clive's Coat of Arms



33. In the Victorian era, further investment took place and in 1866 a railway brought added commercial benefits. Records show that agricultural merchants travelling by rail from Craven Arms to the markets in Bishop's Castle would return with large quantities of produce bought from Bishop's Castle retailers for supply to hotels in Craven Arms. The railway also brought direct investment in the town's fabric with nine railway cottages built by the railway company in Welsh Street to house their employees. The railway closed in 1935 and the row of cottages was taken over by a local business E. Beddoes & Sons in lieu of none-payment by the railway company for repairs undertaken to buildings and rolling stock. Thus, their future was secured, and the cottages remain today and are Grade II Listed buildings.
34. The town's history has determined its basic infrastructure and created within its Conservation Area core many significant properties and edifices. Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Record lists 267 heritage assets most of which are located on either side of the main spine road in the centre of town. Just as previous eras have imparted unique styles, so 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century adaptations have done the same. Yet, whilst many properties have been modified and/or renovated, they are still recognisable from these earlier times and continue to reflect the town's heritage.
35. The infrastructure however presents a more difficult problem. The medieval layout that resulted in the current street pattern is not conducive to the demands placed on it by motorised traffic. Growing levels of car ownership and the exponential growth of commercial deliveries to both private homes and business premises has increased traffic movements in recent years. In this respect, there has been a negative impact on the character of the town centre.
36. Bishop's Castle sits in a bowl on the side of a valley with hills close around it on three sides and on the fourth, across the valley is Oakley Mynd and beyond it the ancient Long Mynd, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB currently being rebranded as

National Landscape). Views of this landscape are striking from many vantage points and wherever one walks, both within and at the edge of the town, the hills are an immediate presence. They are criss-crossed with footpaths that are used on a daily basis by residents of the town.

37. Bishop's Castle is located in a very rural part of Shropshire. Trees are visible almost everywhere either above the roofline or in spaces or glimpsed views through gaps in the building line, softening the townscape even where it is primarily urban in nature. It constantly provides a subliminal reminder of the rural surroundings. Stone walls are prevalent and often feature hedges and shrubs immediately above or plants creeping in their crevices. Pockets of vegetation, both planted and wild, on or at the edge of paved surfaces, provide opportunities for insects, small mammals and nesting birds. Properties both old and new include safe nesting for swifts and other birds either in crevices or nesting boxes that have been placed on the walls and under the eaves of buildings.
38. The historic links with agriculture and animals also remain with the functioning cattle market abutting the Conservation Area on Station Street. As this also provides a large car park for use whenever the market is not taking place: it too reinforces the underlying nature of the town's relationship to its rural surroundings.
39. Tourism is a vital part of the economy, especially walking tourism. An annual Walking Festival held over several days in early summer provides guided walks for both day and long stay visitors. The 200 mile plus long-distance footpath, the Shropshire Way, bisects the heart of the town.
40. This footpath attracts many walkers throughout the year including individuals, families and organised groups, both large and small. It is a focus of fundraising events such as the 'Shropshire Way 80K', a spring walk for around 100 people who amble along Castle Green, Bull Street, High Street, Church Street and Church Lane. An information panel at the Church Lane junction describes the Kerry ridgeway and other footpaths that link with and are accessible from the Shropshire Way.
41. The area covered by the NDP as shown in Figure 1 on page 9, constitutes the Parish of Bishop's Castle. However, the town's influence is much wider, not least because of its medical services; its educational establishments; its cultural and sports facilities; and its continuing significance within the agricultural sector as evidenced by the weekly cattle markets. The Bishop's Castle catchment area stretches for several miles beyond the development boundary, incorporating a number of the surrounding villages and service users from as far afield as Minsterley, Church Stretton, Knighton and Newtown.
42. Whilst this is beneficial there are repercussions. The 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge will be to protect Bishop's Castle's historical infrastructure and cultural dynamism; maintain its industrial, agricultural and tourism economy; and at the same time adapt to and accommodate the physical challenge presented by the ever-increasing demands of access by vehicular traffic.

## PART 2: PLANNING POLICIES

### Introduction to the Bishop's Castle NDP policies

43. This NDP focuses on specific policies that require local consideration:

- Housing provision to meet identified need
- Design and the built environment
  - Within the Conservation Area
  - Outside the Conservation
  - Non-Designated Heritage Assets
- Local Green Spaces
- Sustainable Transport and its importance to and impact on tourism
- Housing mix
- Sustainable Construction.

### Strategic Development Plan context

44. Neighbourhood Plans must meet certain 'basic conditions' and other legal requirements (As set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended) before they can come into force. These are tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum.

45. Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as applied to NDPs by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, outlines the basic conditions that an NDP must adhere to in order to proceed to a referendum and be 'made'.

46. "A draft plan meets the basic conditions if:

- It has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- The making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- The making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained EU obligations;
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan."

47. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans that have been approved at referendum.
48. The **Development Plan** for the NDP is:
- Shropshire Local Development Framework, Adopted Core Strategy, March 2011;
  - the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan, Adopted 17/12/2015;
49. The Local Plan is currently under review. The most recent version of the emerging Local Plan is the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan 2016 to 2038 (December 2020). The Emerging Local Plan is at Examination and it is anticipated that adoption could occur late in 2024. The emerging local plan was the main driver for the policies in this NDP.

### Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (March 2011)

50. Bishop's Castle lies within the South Spatial Zone, defined in the Core Strategy. The South Spatial Zone is characterised by a growing elderly population having significant housing affordability issues with highest house price to earnings ratio in Shropshire. The Core Strategy identifies a need for 3575-4125 dwellings and 35-45 ha of employment land in South Shropshire<sup>3</sup>. Bishops Castle will have development that balances environmental constraints with meeting local needs and it is identified as a District Centre.<sup>4</sup>
51. According to the Core Strategy,
- Bishop's Castle (population 1,800) is a medieval settlement with a large number of historic buildings, located close to the Welsh border. Its remote location means that it is an important service centre both for its own residents and for its rural hinterland despite being one of the smallest of Shropshire's Market Towns. It is an important employment town, with the number of jobs it supports exceeding the number of resident workers and for a settlement of its size, employment self-containment is high. Housing tenures in the local joint committee area at the time of the 2001 Census were 70.7% owner occupied, 20.2% private rented and 9.1% social rented.<sup>5</sup>*
52. Bishop's Castle, as a district centre for the southern spatial zone, will serve the needs of its immediate rural hinterland.<sup>6</sup> The Core Strategy para. 40 encourages development in Bishop's Castle to:

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<sup>3</sup> Core Strategy policy CS1.

<sup>4</sup> Core Strategy policy CS3.

<sup>5</sup> Core Strategy, para. 4.55

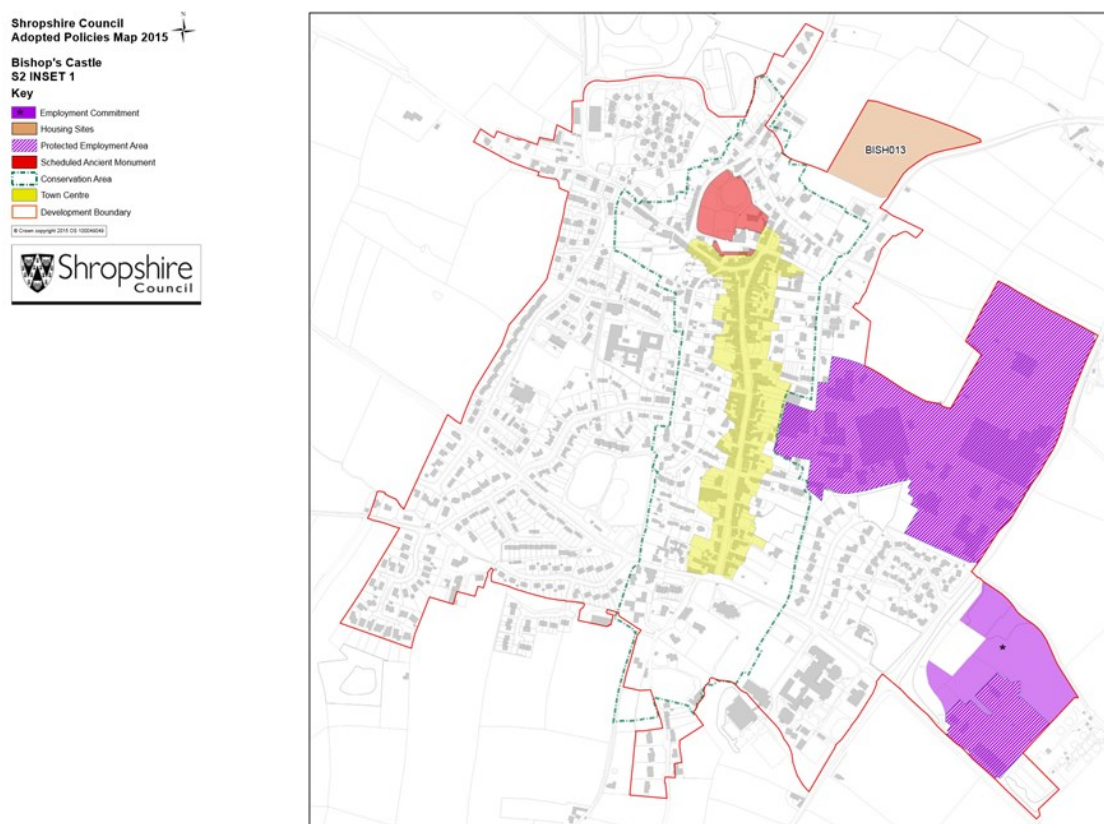
<sup>6</sup> Core Strategy policy CS15.

- Support a balanced approach to the planned level of housing and employment growth;
- Support improvements to the accessibility of the town centre, including from surrounding rural areas;
- Positively contribute to the delivery of wider investment, regeneration and town centre management strategies;
- Positively contribute to the mix and diversity of uses within the town centre, without undermining its primary retail function;
- Support the appropriate re-use or regeneration of land and premises<sup>7</sup>

### Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (December 2015)

53. SAMDev policy S2 identifies a need for 150 dwellings in the Bishop's Castle area to 2026 which will be achieved via a site allocation for 40 dwellings and windfall allowance. An allocation of an additional 2.8 ha. of employment provision is made at Bishop's Castle Business Park. The town centre is supported for retail purposes. The SAMDev allocation is shown in **Figure 2**.

**FIGURE 2: SAMDEV DESIGNATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS IN BISHOP'S CASTLE**



<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



Source: SAMDev policies map for Bishop's Castle

## Shropshire Local Plan Review to 2038

54. The Local Plan is currently under review and the Regulation 19 Draft of the Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in September 2021.
55. Bishop's Castle is proposed to be retained as a Key Centre in Policy SP2 and Policy S2. Bishop's Castle Place Plan Area. It will be expected to deliver around 150 dwellings and 3 hectares of employment development to meet local needs between 2016 and 2038. The policy acknowledges that the Bishop's Castle NDP will include a strategy for achieving the housing and employment needs for this Key Centre.
56. The policies for Bishop's Castle are deemed to be likely to have an adverse effect on the River Clun Special Area of Conservation (SAC), according to the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) supporting the emerging Local Plan. This triggers policy DP14 because of the presence of freshwater pearl mussels in the River Clun. Pressure will also be put on the Stiperstones and Hollies SACs, triggering policies DP13, DP15 and DP16. The explanatory text states that *"There are currently no mitigation measures which would remove this effect, but this is not to say that they will not come forward during the Local Plan period."*<sup>8</sup>
57. 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.
58. Policy DP12 The Natural Environment requires HRA for all proposal where the LPA identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site which has been done under Policy S2 in this instance. It requires 10% biodiversity net gain and the retention of trees and a significant increase in the extent and distribution of trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
59. Policy DP13 specifically addresses development in the River Clun Catchment, where Bishop's Castle lies, and requires new development to deliver nutrient neutrality or nutrient betterment.
60. Policy DP14 Green Infrastructure overall seeks to avoid harm to existing green infrastructure and enhance it with good quality new green infrastructure.
61. Appendix 2 of the emerging plan indicates which land allocations from SAMDev will be saved. In Bishop's Castle, all the allocations will be saved:
  - a. Schoolhouse Lane East (BISH013)
  - b. Land at Bishop's Castle Business Park, Phase 2

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<sup>8</sup> Para. 5.25.

62. Appendix 5: Residential Development Guidelines and Residential Supply summarises the residential development guidelines for the Bishop's Castle Key Centres. It also identifies the completions achieved in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 and the various forms of commitments available to achieve the identified residential development guidelines. For Bishop's Castle, it identifies the following:

Residential Development Guideline	150
Total Residential Completions (2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19)	8
Sites with Planning Permission or Prior Approval (as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019)	62
Saved SAMDev Plan Allocations without Planning Permission (as at 31st March 2019)	40
Local Plan Allocations	0
Windfall Allowance	40

63. Other emerging policies are particularly relevant to the NDP such as:
- a. SP5: High Quality Design which is relevant to Bishop's Castle because it requires new development to maintain and enhance the character, appearance and historic interests of settlements.
  - b. DP3: Affordable Housing Provision: a 20% affordable housing provision will be required in Bishop's Castle (of which 70% will be social or affordable rental, and 30% will be intermediate or other affordable housing).
  - c. DP9: Managing and Supporting Town Centres requires main town centre uses to be accommodated within the defined town centre in Bishop's Castle.
  - d. DP10: Tourism, Culture and Leisure seeks to deliver high quality sustainable tourism, cultural and leisure development which benefits local communities and visitors. This will be done in part by promoting and preserving the distinctive historic, heritage brand and values of Market Towns such as Bishop's Castle.
  - e. DP16: Landscaping of New Development sets out the requirements for attractive and well designed landscaping for natural, semi-natural and formal landscape features.
  - f. DP17: Landscape and Visual amenity protects important landscapes including the Shropshire Hills AONB in whose area of influence Bishop's Castle lies. Significant adverse landscape and visual effects, either individually or cumulatively with other relevant proposed developments, will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.
  - g. DP23: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment protects, conserves and sympathetically enhances Bishop's Castle's designated and non-designated heritage assets.

- h. DP24: Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be protected by limiting the scale and extent of development and planning proposals. Development in Bishop's Castle is in the setting of the AONB identified in the AONB Management Plan<sup>9</sup>.
- i. DP25: Infrastructure Provision requires new development to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure.
- j. DP28: Communications and Transport requires the protection, extension or improvements of footways, cycleways, public rights of way routes to home, work, services and leisure.

## Housing Land Supply

- 64. In 2022, Shropshire identified that there was a 5.64 year supply of deliverable housing land against the housing requirement within the adopted Core Strategy and 7.20 years supply of deliverable housing land against the housing need identified using the Government's standard methodology.<sup>10</sup>

## Residential Land Allocation

- 65. The emerging Local Plan proposes that 40 dwellings will be delivered over the plan period to 2038 in Bishop's Castle and that this will be forthcoming as windfall development. An analysis of available land within the development boundary, discussed in **Appendix 5**, indicates that there is only limited capacity for additional windfall development. There is therefore some uncertainty that the full 40 dwellings can be delivered as windfall, or that such an approach will lead to the desired level of affordable housing.
- 66. The full justification for the allocation is set out in **Appendix 5: Bishop's Castle Site Assessments**.
- 67. The site assessment considered evidence prepared by the Local Planning Authority alongside local evidence gathered in support of the NDP. The primary consideration in the selection process was the impact of new development on the Conservation Area resulting from increased traffic. A key feature of the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area, discussed in **Appendix 1: Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Character Assessment**, is the small and winding street pattern. However, this key positive feature has resulted in a negative impact as new development has encouraged growth in motorised traffic and parking. Congestion is now a regular feature in the Conservation Area which detracts significantly from its character, aesthetics and important heritage features. This impacts upon the shopping experience with a consequential impact on the economic viability of the town.

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<sup>9</sup> AONB Zone of Influence, Page 50, Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 Final approved version, July 2019.

<sup>10</sup> [Shropshire Council Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement \(2022\)](#), published March 2023.

68. Therefore, a key criterion on the selection of land for new housing development was a consideration of the impact that the development would have on traffic in the Conservation Area, though other considerations were also brought to bear.
69. SamDev allocation under policy S2 (BISH013) is not yet built out and it is necessary therefore to ensure that this development precedes development allocated in this NDP, particularly since the earlier allocation sits against the town's built edge and to built out the NDP allocation before it would leave an unsatisfactory gap between the built up area and the development.
70. Bishop's Castle lies in the River Clun Special Area of Conservation. To protect the integrity of the river Clun Special Area of Conservation and to comply with the Habitats Regulations and policy all development within the catchment of the river Clun will only be permitted if it can demonstrate either nutrient neutrality or nutrient betterment. At the time that this site assessment was prepared, the Local Planning Authority had not agreed with Natural England how to mitigate impacts upon the River Clun Catchment. As a result, it may be necessary to delay delivery of the allocation until such time as an agreement is made.
71. A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) was prepared in support of the BCNDP<sup>11</sup> by AECOM. This was done because the planning authority did not respond to a request for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening. The Town Council therefore commissioned both HRA and SEA to accompany the BCNDP.
72. Both HRAs of the Bishops Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan has identified potential for Likely Significant Effects on two internationally designated sites as a result of Policy BC1 for 40 new dwellings within the NDP area through the following impact pathways:
- Potential recreational pressure impacts on The Stiperstones SAC and The Hollies SAC; and
  - Potential water quality impacts on River Clun SAC.
73. However, the HRA concluded that the policies in the NDP alongside those in the Development Plan are sufficient to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of The Stiperstones SAC and The Hollies SAC. The LPA's HRA identified policies in the emerging local plan that would address impacts on the River Clun SAC which had not been adopted at that time (June 2022).
74. In a letter to Chief Planner Officers dated 21 July 2022 from the Chief Planner, the government makes it clear that new legislation will require water companies to upgrade waste water treatment facilities in catchments such as the River Clun. Until 2030, it is envisaged that high levels of mitigation will be required which will reduce thereafter once the new waste water infrastructure has been put into place. The government's proposals "will contribute to the evidence base for plans; helping to show they are

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<sup>11</sup> Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment, AECOM, April 2021.

deliverable with the NE<sup>12</sup> mitigation scheme being in place until 2030 and with a reduced mitigation burden.”

75. Importantly, the letter goes on to say:

*Where authorities are not entirely covered by nutrient neutrality advice, it may be appropriate to consider how phasing of development through the plan period can reflect the timing of upgrades to WWTW<sup>13</sup>, to further reduce mitigation burden on new developments, and therefore potentially ensuring more development contributions are available for other important infrastructure.*

76. In this case, Shropshire Council has not yet agreed how to manage nutrient neutrality in the River Clun catchment area and this has affected the timetable of the Local Plan inquiry. SC and NE are actively seeking to resolve the issue and it is anticipated that it will be resolved during the NDP period.

77. The box below highlights policies in the emerging Shropshire Local Plan that must be considered in proposals for both BISH013 and the allocation in BC1.

In conjunction with specifically protective policy DP13, other policies included within the emerging Shropshire Local Plan which will contribute to the protection of the River Clun SAC are:

- DP12, paragraph 1 which requires a project-level Habitats Regulation Assessment for all proposals where the Local Planning Authority identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site. Permission will be refused where such an HRA indicates an adverse effect on the integrity of a designated site which cannot be avoided or fully mitigated.
- DP19 Water Resources and Water Quality, which requires development not to adversely affect the quality, quantity and flow of both ground and surface water and must ensure that there is adequate water infrastructure in place to meet its own needs. Details of foul-water drainage must be provided to avoid any adverse impacts on the existing foul drainage network and proposals must help to conserve and enhance existing watercourses and riverside habitats.
- DP20. Water Efficiency expects new housing to meet the Building Regulations 110 litres per person per day standard which will help to prevent overloading WwTW and pollution events during times of high flow.
- DP21. Flood Risk covers measures to reduce flood risk and enhance as far as possible the natural capacity of soils, vegetation, river floodplains, wetland and upland habitats to help with this.

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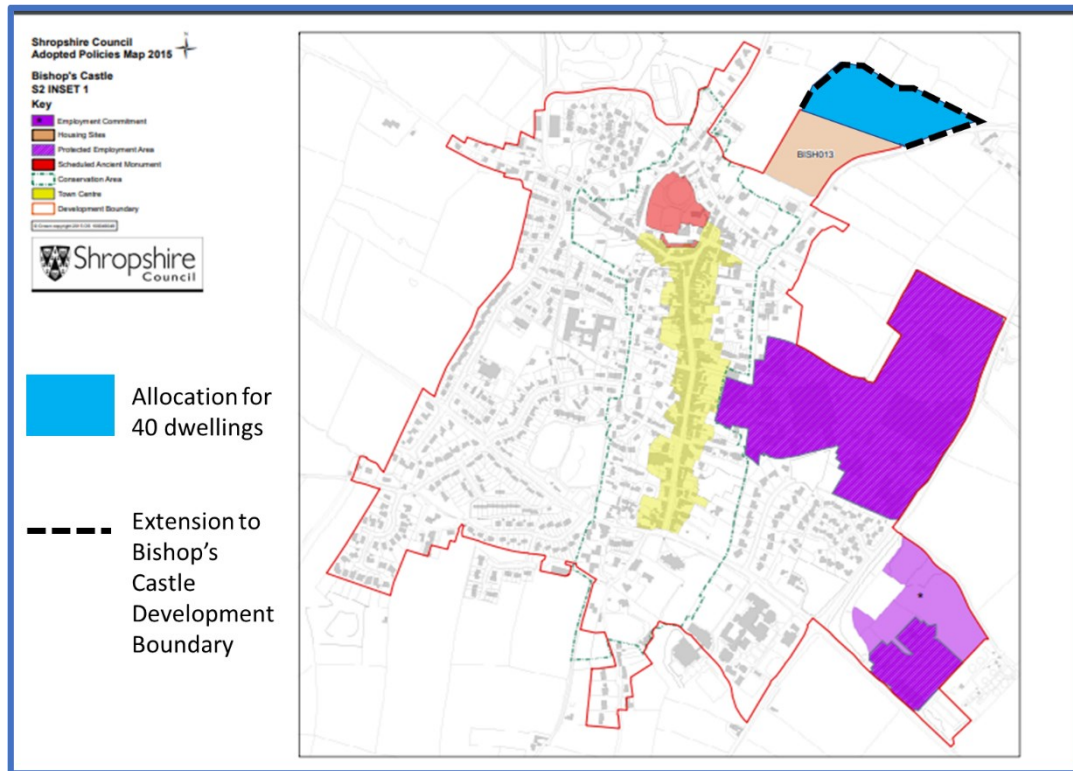
<sup>12</sup> Natural England.

<sup>13</sup> Waste Water Treatment Works.

- DP22. Sustainable Drainage Systems requires development to incorporate SuDS to reduce flood risk, avoid adverse impacts on water quality and quantity and prevent contamination. Proposals will also be expected to have no adverse effect on the receiving water bodies, both during construction and when operational,
- DP25. Infrastructure Provision requires new development to only take place where there is sufficient existing infrastructure capacity available. Where a new development would lead to a shortfall in infrastructure provision, the development will be required to fund necessary improvements through a suitable developer contribution, unless the identified shortfall is being addressed by other means.
- S2.1 states that 'The Plan HRA identifies that development in Bishop's Castle is likely to have an adverse effect on the River Clun SAC so policy DP13 applies.'
- In addition, with regard to impacts on the Stiperstones and Hollies SAC, proposals should address emerging Shropshire Local Plan policies DP12, DP14, DP15 and DP25 and Settlement Policy S2.1 with regards mitigation for any identified recreational effects due to increased recreational pressure stemming from the new housing to be delivered under BCNDP Policy BC1 in combination with other housing to be delivered within the emerging Local Plan and neighbouring plans and projects.

78. Severn Trent have not identified any existing issues with the downstream sewerage network, however due to the size of the proposed developments, it is recommended that the developer contact Severn Trent at the earliest opportunity to allow for time to complete hydraulic modelling and to plan for any network reinforcements should they be required.
79. The inclusion of the site allocation will make it necessary to bring it inside the Development Boundary which will require a change to the Policies Map. This is anticipated in emerging Local Plan policy S2. The proposed allocation site and the proposed change to the Development Boundary are shown in **Figure 3**.

**FIGURE 3: PROPOSED LAND ALLOCATION FOR 40 DWELLINGS AND PROPOSED CHANGE TO BISHOP'S CASTLE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY**



### **BC1: Housing allocation and change to the development boundary**

Land is allocated at School House Lane for 40 houses shown in the Figure 3 subject to policies in the Development Plan and the following provisions:

- a) To protect the River Clun SAC, applicants may be required to undertake a site-specific nutrient neutrality calculation in accordance with Natural England Guidance, depending on the long-term solution identified by Shropshire Council. Where a mitigation/avoidance strategy is required, this must be tested to be technically sound and agreed with Shropshire Council.
- b) The layout, height and other aspects of design, and landscaping shall be such as to avoid significant harm to views from the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Any application for development shall be supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment that address views from the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- c) The scheme's design will accord with all policies in this NDP.
- d) Access to the site will be from School House Lane.
- e) Surface water discharges will be carried out in accordance with the drainage hierarchy whereby any discharge to the public sewerage system is avoided where possible.

- f) Planning proposals should pay regard to the baseline data provided in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report which accompanies this plan when addressing Development Plan policies.
- g) Development of the site may not proceed until the completion of the development at BISH013 allocated in the SamDev plan unless other phasing is agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
- h) The Bishop's Castle Development Boundary will be modified to include the allocated land shown in Figure 3.

## Design in the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area

- 80. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group undertook a full review of the Conservation Area and prepared the **Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Character Assessment** (attached as **Appendix 1**).
- 81. This Character Assessment was undertaken as part of the continuous updating of the Bishop's Castle Town Plan (BCTP), a Community Led Plan which was adopted by the Town Council in 2016. Its intention is also to inform policies of the NDP.

## Common architectural features within the built environment of the Conservation Area

- 82. The Conservation Area is characterised throughout by a mix of building styles and periods within any one area.
- 83. The materials that are common to most zones are: stone (some of which is believed to have originated from the original castle constructions); timber frame; red brick; painted render; painted brick; mixed materials in a single facia including red brick mixed with stone, timber or painted render; or timber with stone or painted render.
- 84. Building facades are commonly decorated with cast or wrought iron details along windows or even at roof level. Pilasters and pediments adorn doorways with decorative lintels above windows or sharp finials and scalloped tiles. Decorative iron fencing is also prevalent as are stone boundary walls. Rendered buildings are painted mostly in muted colours or variations of off-white but are interspersed with bright, strong, bold colour. Some include murals that provide a story in themselves.
- 85. Variations in height and alignment of both buildings and roofs is common, giving an intricate feel to most areas, sometimes enhanced by gabled dormer windows. Staggered facias, footprints, angles and corners prevail, sometimes with narrow passages between. Intricate spaces combine with the buildings to provide hints of what might lie behind.



## Elements that impact the environment

Vitality and adaption to change

86. The Character Assessment was based upon nine surveys, all of which give testament to the vitality of the economic, social, cultural and civic life of the town throughout its history. They illustrate its ability to adapt its buildings and spaces to accommodate change and to conserve its historic heart without over-manicuring it. In the process, the town maintains its friendly, inviting and informal atmosphere. Records contained in the Heritage Resource Centre on Chapel Yard provide further documentation of both its vibrant character and the changes that have occurred over time within the town and its community.
87. Both vitality and change are reflected in the town today. The commercial centre of Market Square, High Street and the northern end of Church Street remains despite the current demise of the retail sector nationally as a result of trends in internet shopping even for groceries. The buildings retain much of the historic shop frontages revealing its past even where premises have been adapted to residential or other uses.
88. Elsewhere, historic functions are less evident but the grandeur of the converted property remains and is enhanced. For example, the former Black Lion public house in Welsh Street was converted to a residential property and was combined with an adjoining property. The grand, porticoed entrance and elegant railings of the pub remain but, save for the pub trail plaque on the wall, there is now little to suggest that part of the extended residence was a public house from 1762 until the 1990s.
89. The vibrancy and uniqueness of the town are also reflected in those properties on which murals have been painted. These have become an iconic feature of the town, much commented on by both residents and visitors alike. They provide an interpretation of modern styles and decorative embellishments on a par with the wrought iron ornamentation of the Victorian era.
90. Another example of the town's vitality is in the number of public houses that are currently operating. This also reflects a continuum throughout the town's history. Records show that since 1642 there have been 46 pubs in the town, 40 of them located either along the main spine road or on Market Square, Salop Street and Bull Street. All are celebrated in a book and a Pub Trail that includes a plaque on all properties that are or once were pubs.
91. The national decline of the pub trade in recent years is well documented yet five pubs remain in Bishop's Castle today and one of them operates real ale brewery on site. All have been continuously licenced, two since 1642; two since the 1700s; and, more recently, two since 1832. The Three Tuns is a nationally renowned pub and brewery (now separately owned and managed) which has been brewing beer since receiving its licence in 1642. All five pubs participate in a longstanding annual Beer Festival that brings visitors to the town from all over the country, many of whom return year after year.

92. Festivals represent another element of the town's vibrant character. They continue the long history of social, economic and civic gatherings experienced through the markets, fairs, processions and celebrations down the years. Spring and summer are the festival seasons, some of which cover several days. They include the Real Ale and Michaelmas Festivals which attract visitors from across the country. The latter comprises street theatre, steam engines, a lantern procession and local produce and craft stalls. The Arts Festival exhibits and promotes the work of numerous local artists, and Party in the Park is a day-long music festival organised by the About Music Project which aims to promote and encourage local, mainly young, musicians. These are just a few. All bring visitors to the town, many of whom return and some of whom settle permanently. All help to raise the profile of the town far and wide, helping to sustain it for the future.
93. The dynamic nature of the town across all aspects of life continues to be reflected in its physical surroundings. Also evidenced in the surveys is the way the environment has been and continues to be adapted to meet the needs and demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century living whilst at the same time, respecting and acknowledging the history that has made the town what it is.

#### Traffic impacts

94. Accommodating moving and parked commercial and private vehicles is a requirement in a centre that combines both commercial and residential properties. This is accepted as a 'necessary evil' to be managed. Whilst both moving and parked cars impact both the ambience and the visual experience of streets in almost all zones, there are significant traffic/pedestrian conflict issues in six of the character zones. These relate to:
- The Conservation Area streets, out of necessity, being used by all commercial and residential traffic, travelling to and from the A488 and B4385 both to gain access to commercial and residential properties within the Conservation Area and to properties to the south, west and north of it. There are no other main roads providing access to the town.
  - The carriageway frequently being used as a shared space between large commercial vehicles, cars, both parked and moving and pedestrians.
  - The narrowness of the carriageway being exacerbated by building frontages immediately abutting the carriageway itself or, where they exist, a narrow roadside pavement. Large commercial lorries have little room to manoeuvre.
  - Potentially dangerous situations at junctions with poor sightlines and/or restricted space to manoeuvre either because of the adjoining building profile or vehicular occupation of the carriageway by other road users.
  - The combined conflicts when a two-way traffic flow becomes restricted to one way by a string of parked vehicles on the edge of the narrow carriageway and/or on the pavement. Traffic enters from both ends of the street with no place to pass and pedestrians are forced to also use the carriageway.

## Heritage Assessments

95. SAMDev Policy MD13 (2) requires all proposals which are likely to affect the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, including its setting, to be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
96. Emerging Local Plan policy DP23 seeks to ensure that wherever possible, proposals avoid harm or loss of significance to designated or non-designated heritage assets, including their settings. Where proposals are likely to affect the significance of heritage assets, a Heritage Assessment will be required.

## Sensitive Sites

97. The Character Assessment has demonstrated that locations identified in **Table 1, below and Figure 4**, must be formally recognised as sensitive to change as well as providing opportunities to enhance the development of the town. The Zonal Assessments can be found in **Appendix 1**. As such, any future changes must comply with MD13 and DP23 and its application in Bishop's Castle and/or evidence positive ways in which they would impact the character of the Conservation Area as expressed in the zonal character surveys, together with actions that would be taken to mitigate against detrimental effects on it.

**Table 1: Sensitive sites in and adjoining the Conservation Area**

**Sensitive sites within the Conservation Area**

- A. Market Place and the confluence of Bull Street, Salop Street and Market Square: Zone 2
- B. The undeveloped land on the northern side of School Lane, opposite the Heritage Resource Centre. These are believed to comprise the 'Tenement plots east of High Street' which are recorded as a non-designated heritage asset on page 8 of Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Record<sup>14</sup>: Zones 4 & 5
- C. The Shropshire Council owned Church Street carpark accessed under the flying freehold between nos. 64 and 66 Church Street: Zone 6
- D. Undeveloped land along the north side of Laburnum Alley. This comprises private gardens and cultivated plots which are clearly visible from the pathway and are integral to maintaining the sense of nature and tranquility along this 'hidden' route. Although unconfirmed, these undeveloped plots may in fact constitute the 'Tenement plots south of Welsh Street' that are

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<sup>14</sup> Conservation Area Appraisal – Bishop's Castle, updated 2012

listed as a non-designated heritage asset on page 6 of Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Record: Zone 7.

- E. The undeveloped land abutting field Lane, to the south of the property Hollenbough. Field Lane which is the Shropshire Way defines the change from the urban to the rural environment, providing access to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Welsh Hills and other long-distance footpaths to the south and west. At this point the traveller is beyond the urban landscape: Zone 8

**Sensitive sites adjoining the Conservation Area**

- F. The former garage site at the eastern end of Salop Street. This site abuts the eastern pavement of Station Street and the Conservation Area boundary runs down the western pavement. The site currently provides a clear view from the Castle Hotel forecourt, down Salop Street, across Station Street to Oakeley Mynd and the rural area immediately bordering the town: It is very prominent and, for many years has had a very neglected appearance: Zones 2 and 4.
- G. The vacant site opposite the Cattle Market/Auction Yard on the eastern side of Station Street. This site lies just outside the Conservation Area as its boundary runs down the western pavement of Station Street and around the western boundary of the Auction Yard. As it is a significant space that is immediately visible from the opposite side of the street that lies in the Conservation Area its impact on the character of the Conservation Area is considerable: Zone 4.
- H. The undeveloped land abutting Field Lane to the west. Field Lane, which is the Shropshire Way, forms the boundary of the Conservation Area. It also defines the change from the urban to the rural environment, providing access to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Welsh Hills and the other long-distance footpaths to the south and west. At this point the traveller is beyond the urban landscape: Zone 8.
- I. The Playing Fields accessed from Union Street and Kerry Lane. The site provides a significant contribution to the character of the town as an events venue; a location of both historical and modern artefacts and a landscaped area within the built environment: Zones 7 and 8.

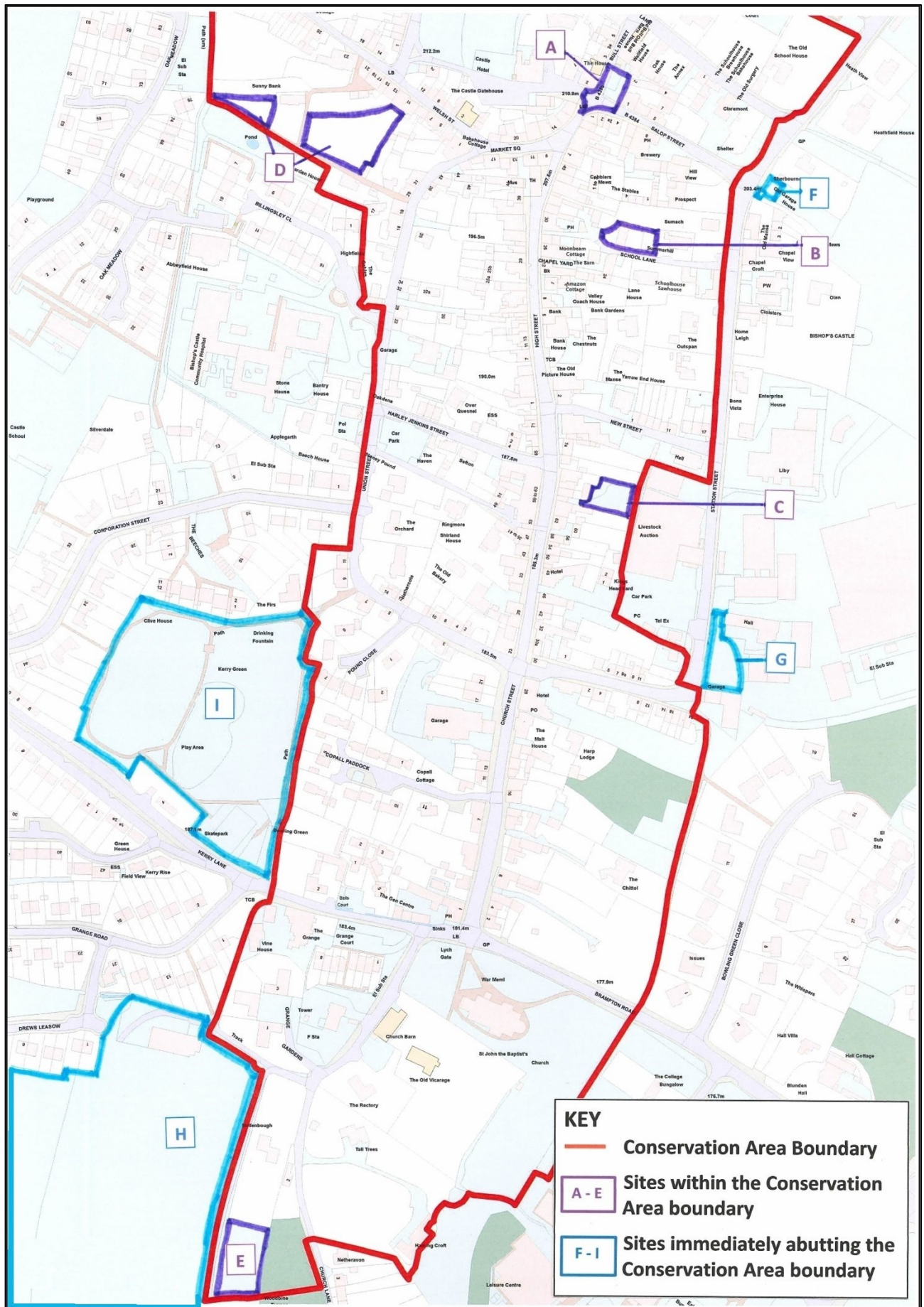
98. The sensitive sites are shown in **Figure 4**.

99. Consideration should be given to identifying opportunities to enhance the appearance and/or usage of the following visually prominent areas identified in the survey:

- a) The access from Bull Lane to the Bowling Green and footpath: Zone 1
- b) The Chapel Yard access from High Street to the Heritage Resource Centre: Zone 5
- c) The neglected landscaped area on the corner of Castle Street and Welsh Street in which stands a mature copper beech: Zones 1 and 3.

Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan  
Plan for Referendum March 2024

FIGURE 4: SITES SENSITIVE TO CHANGE



## Traffic Impacts on the Conservation Area

100. The Conservation Area Appraisal, last updated and published by Shropshire council in 2012, refers several times to the historic street pattern that characterises the town. Paragraph 4.5, page 9 states *“The gridiron layout of the small narrow streets provides the basis for the way the buildings are grouped together and the space that is created.”* On the following two pages it continues to emphasise the narrowness and constriction of the streets – *“The way the buildings are built hard up against the road and the almost uninterrupted street facades are very much part of the identity of the town”* (para. 4.7); *“The narrowness of the streets in this part of Bishop’s Castle area (sic) is a particular feature.”* The area referred to is Market Square, Bull Street and Salop Street.
101. Paragraph 4.16, page 13 states *“The main negative factor has been the movement of traffic along the main streets and the chaotic on street parking along the main streets.”* Whilst it goes on to state that *“traffic management measures have been introduced which have eased the conflict between pedestrians and vehicular traffic”*, it must be recognised that those measures were introduced before the publication of the document. In the years since publication, growth in activity, new housing developments, and increased internet shopping, are just some of the reasons why increases in the volume of traffic servicing and using the town centre streets has outweighed the traffic management measures that were put in place pre-2012.
102. The Emerging Local Plan recognises the impact that traffic has on Bishop’s Castle where it states: *The town’s medieval settlement pattern with its narrow roads means that vehicular access is often difficult. Much of the town centre lies within a Conservation Area, there are a large number of listed buildings and the castle site is a Scheduled Monument.*
103. Priority must be given therefore to exploring potential actions that are innovative and holistic to ameliorate the problems caused by the competition between moving traffic, parked cars and pedestrians in the historic core. This is an issue that impacts on the local population on a daily basis. It also impacts upon the town’s tourism economy, particularly as the Shropshire Way, an important and well used long distance footpath, bisects the town through some of the locations where the problem is highly significant.
104. The first stage of the process is to identify public space infrastructure requirements and enhancements that would be necessary to effect an improvement in the current traffic/pedestrian conflicts, most notably on High Street, Welsh Street, Market Square and Salop Street, without adversely affecting adjacent sensitive streets of Bull Street, Bull Lane, Castle Street and Castle Green.
105. As part of the holistic examination of ways in which to address the traffic related issues highlighted above, priority will be given by the community and the Town Council working with the Local Planning Authority to investigate the funding, production and implementation of a **master plan** for the Market Square and the adjoining space, the Old Market Place, which covers the confluence of Bull Street/Salop Street/ Market Square.

Any development proposals that might affect the setting or function of this area will be expected to make a contribution to the landscape plan.

106. This locality at the heart of the historic town centre is made up almost entirely of Listed Buildings and non-designated heritage assets, many of which have been beautifully restored. The space itself however has lost much of its vibrant character and now appears somewhat dilapidated and uncared for with significant traffic and parking problems.
107. The town centre currently experiences harmful traffic impacts that should not be made worse. Other than to destinations in the rural area of the Welsh hills immediately west of the town, the A488 to the east and, to a lesser extent the B4385 to the north, provide the only means of access to the whole of the United Kingdom. **All traffic** to and from properties on the western side of the Conservation area **must** go through the Conservation Area streets to reach either the A488 or the B4385.
108. To access properties in the north western part of the town, by far the majority of this traffic uses the Conservation Area streets of Salop Street/Market Square/Welsh Street (Zones 2 and 3 which are described so accurately in the above-mentioned Conservation Area Appraisal). To access properties in the south western part of the town the Conservation Area streets of Brampton Road/Kerry Lane (Zones 6 and 8) must be used.
109. All three of the streets at the northern end of the town are already severely affected by traffic related problems as indicated in the character assessment surveys of Zones 2 and 3. At the southern end, the problems particularly occur at the junction of Brampton Road/Church Street/Kerry Lane (also described in the character assessments). The Junction of Kerry Lane, Corporation Street and Woodbatch can also be dangerous. This location is a key attraction for visitors. It is part of the Shropshire Way, with an information board on the route ahead, encouraging walkers to stop and learn of interlinking routes with the footpath. It also provides access to the churchyard which contains 12 Grade II Listed memorials alongside the church which, with its Norman tower and historic one-handed clock is a Grade II\* Listed Building. Yet, because of the traffic issues, the junction with its information board is far from an amenable place to stop and is described in the Zone 8 survey as "a place to pass through".
110. To safeguard the Conservation Area for the future and mitigate against increasingly unwelcome levels of traffic and parking, no further development should take place on the western side of the development boundary until consideration is given to how access can be directed onto the A488 and the B4385 without causing new negative traffic-related harm to any of the Conservation Area streets.
111. The reasons why the Brampton Road/Church Street/Kerry Lane junction is currently heavily trafficked and should not be subject to further increases in traffic flow are:
- There are currently 340 houses, a Primary School; a children's nursery school; 2 sheltered accommodation facilities, an Abbeyfield residential house for the elderly, a Community Hospital, a Fire Station, a Church Hall, a Bowls club, a pub and a Brewery,

all of whose only means of vehicular access to both the town and hinterland is via Kerry Lane and whose direct access to the town centre and hinterland is via the Brampton Road/Church Street/Kerry Lane junction.

- Pedestrian access to the Primary School, the nursery school facility and one of the sheltered accommodation facilities from properties to the south and south east of the town is also via Kerry Lane and this junction.
- There are currently two outstanding housing applications totalling 10 dwellings that will further increase the traffic flow through the Brampton Road/Church Street/Kerry Lane junction.
- The junction forms part of a staggered configuration within a 440-meter stretch which contains two further entry points of Church Lane (the Shropshire Way) and a small housing development, together with a vehicular access to a pub yard. The complexity of this junction, together with the inappropriate parking referenced in the survey increases the conflict situations.

112.A survey taken in spring 2014 at a Kerry Lane junction just beyond the survey area, recorded 129 cars and 76 pedestrians in a 15-minute period. Kerry Lane is only one vehicle width in places and 58% of its length has no pavements at all.

113.Any additional increase in traffic generated from the western side of the town that could travel either the route through Welsh Street/Market Square/Salop Street or along Kerry Lane would make an already problematic situation intolerable.

114.In order to manage future traffic impacts upon the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they will avoid further harmful traffic-related impacts. The streets that will require special attention are set out in **Figure 5** which show the areas currently identified in the Conservation Area Character Assessment as being particularly problematic.

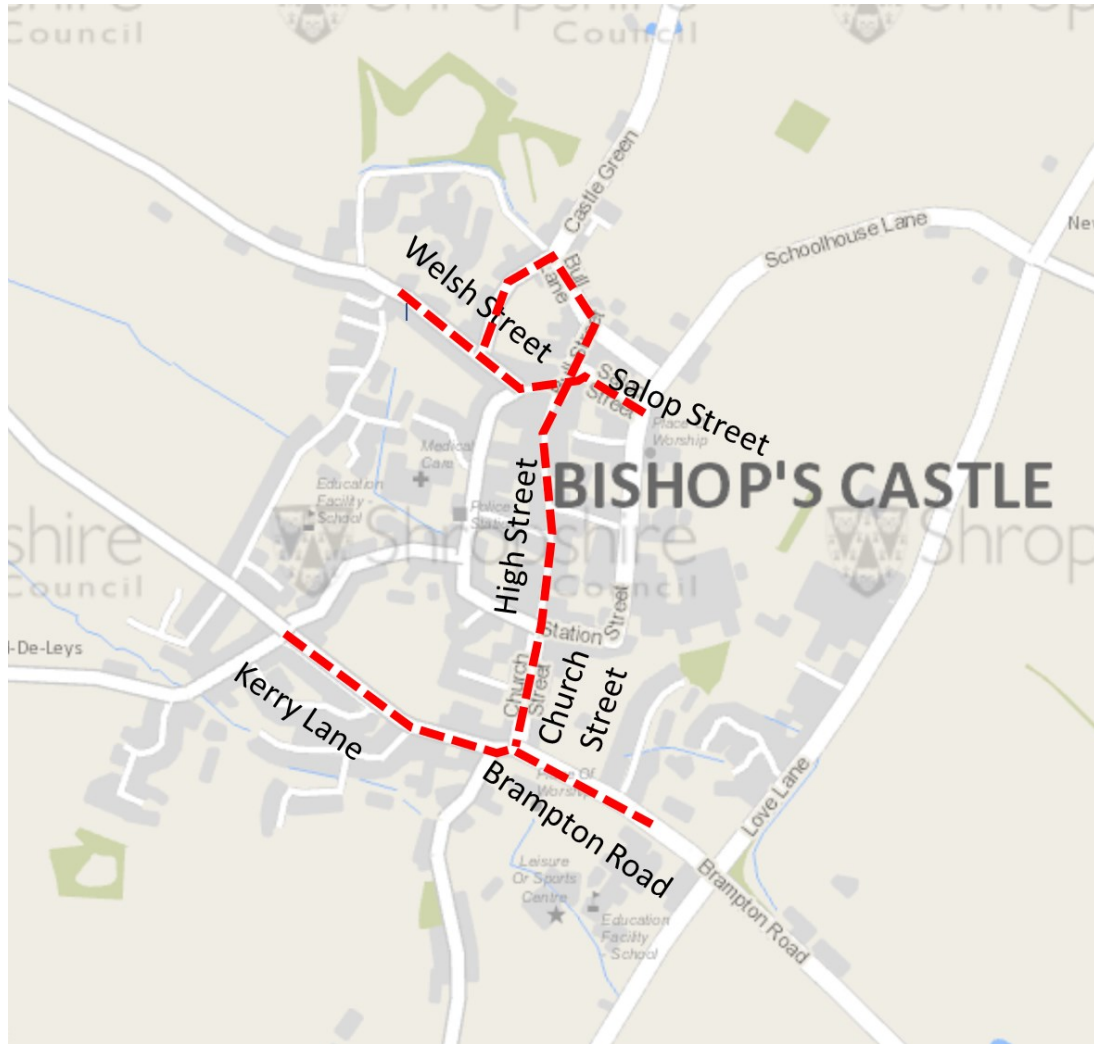
115.Major development proposals<sup>15</sup> will be expected to demonstrate that from the baseline when the application is submitted to the time that it is fully occupied, increase in traffic on these sensitive streets will be avoided, or that the harm to the amenity and character of the Conservation Area is at an acceptable level. Proposals will be expected to explore such management measures as preferred routing agreements, traffic regulation orders, and the creation of new access that avoids additional traffic generation in the Conservation Area.

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<sup>15</sup> For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 ha or more. For non-residential development it means additional floor space of 1,000 square metres or more or a site of 1 ha or more.



**FIGURE 5: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AREAS IN THE BISHOP'S CASTLE CONSERVATION AREA**



## BC2: Development affecting the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area

### Heritage Assessments

All applications for development within the Conservation Area must have regard to the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Character Assessment and recognize relevant characteristic features of the Conservation Area in general and the zone in which the site is located. New development must address the following:

- a) How it will contribute to local character by including features such as local materials, footprints, intricate building lines, and decorative facias etc. as referenced in the section 'Common architectural features' and within the list of 'the most commonly cited positive characteristics' which references zones in which they are described.
- b) How its massing and scale and access reflect neighbouring development.
- c) How it will maximize opportunities to include soft landscaping to enhance the ambience of the site, reflect Bishop's Castle's connection to the surrounding landscape and provide opportunities for wildlife.
- d) How it will promote and protect views to the surrounding rural landscape.

### The Old Market Place

Development proposals with potential to affect the setting or function of the Old Market Place, and the adjoining space which covers the confluence of Bull Street/Salop Street/ Market Square, will be expected to make a contribution (financial or in kind) to the emerging master plan that will be prepared by the Town Council and Local Planning Authority.

### Sensitive Sites

Proposals for sites listed in **Table 1 and Figure 4** should aim to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area in line with current policies and legislation both local and national using the **Bishop's Castle Conservation Area Character Assessment** as the basis of design decisions.

### Motorised Traffic

Major development<sup>16</sup> proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they will avoid harmful traffic-related impacts in the Conservation Area as defined in the supporting text. All major applications will be required to incorporate measures to minimize traffic generation and effectively manage traffic to avoid an increase of traffic on the routes identified in **Figure 5**.

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<sup>16</sup> For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 ha or more. For non-residential development it means additional gross floor space of 1,000 square metres or more or a site of 1 ha or more.

## Design outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area

116. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group undertook a full review of the town outside the Conservation Area and prepared the **Character Assessment outside the Conservation Area** (set out in **Appendix 2**). The assessment considered six development zones which did not comprehensively cover the entire settlement outside the Conservation Area, but were chosen because of their interest, special character or general representativeness of Bishop's Castle. The team used its judgement and local knowledge to decide which areas to assess. The zones were assessed for their positive and negative features

117. Design is a key aspect of sustainable development. SAMDev policies MD2, MD3 and CS6 and emerging Local Plan Policies SP5 and DP23 set out how design decisions should be made with regard to new development in Bishop's Castle. The Character Assessment provides local detail how this might be achieved.

118. The positive and negative features can be translated into basic design principles set out in **Table 2** for Bishop's Castle. These principles should be applied to all development, but particularly to major development.

### **Table 2: Bishop's Castle Design Principles**

New development, including modifications of existing buildings, should be designed to reflect the character of Bishop's Castle by adopting the following principles:

1. Wherever possible, views of the settlement from public vantage points in the open countryside should give the appearance of a compact urban form. New buildings and extensions should seek to respect neighbouring form and massing.
2. Housing in residential areas should be set back from the roadway to create a sense of openness and to allow variety in garden landscaping to create interest in the street scene. Set-backs within developments may benefit from being irregular.
3. Whilst it is desirable for new development to reflect the local character, it is also important that new development is not overly uniform. Bishop's Castle is characterised by variety of height, materials, form and set-back, and this should be reflected in new development, particularly major development. Generic design will not be appropriate.
4. A range of materials such as pavements, gravel, wood and stone should be considered when designing footways, parking areas, and boundary treatments. Iron railing fences also reflect local character and can make a positive contribution to the street scene. All features should be designed to be easy to maintain and manage so that they remain attractive in the long term.

5. Residential development should provide parking on-site and should ensure that metres, waste and recycling bins, footways and garages/car ports and vehicle charging points are considered in the wider design which seeks to avoid clutter.
6. Materials on walls, rooves, fences, garage doors, pavements, enclosures and other built elements should be durable, robust and not require maintenance so that they remain attractive in the long term.
7. Amenity green spaces are encouraged to be provided within major developments and along the street. Where they are provided, long-term maintenance must be secured as part of the development or through a developer contribution.

### **BC3: Development outside the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area**

Development Proposals should demonstrate that they will deliver the design principles set out in **Table 2: Bishop's Castle Design Principles**.

## **Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Non-traditional Design Features**

119. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has assessed local non-designated features and structures of importance to the local community, which are set out in **Appendix 3: Non-Designated Heritage Assets**. The sites in Appendix 3 constitute the Bishop's Castle list of non-designated assets.

120. Proposals must ensure that any adverse impact on non-designated heritage assets is minimised in accordance with MD13 (3) and emerging Local Plan policy DP23.

121. For the purposes of the neighbourhood plan, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of non-designated assets.

- Assets that are subject to planning control
- Assets that are not subject to planning control.

122. The non-designated assets help create the unique character of Bishop's Castle and they should be preserved where possible. However, removal of some assets would not be development and would not be subject to listed building or conservation area control.

123. Works to other assets would be development and would not be subject to listed building or conservation area control.

124. Many of the buildings in the Conservation Area have been painted in non-traditional ways, using bold colours and inventive murals. These innovate and modern twists on

external finishes and public art enhance the Conservation Area by creating a very locally distinct interpretation of the historic environment. Such decorative approaches, when exercised with care and produced to high standards, should be treated as a definitive part of the local character. New mural paintings and external colouring should be allowed in the Conservation Area where it enhances Bishop's Castle local character.

125. Non-designated Heritage Assets shown in Appendix 3, and other features that add to Bishop's Castle's local character that are subject to planning control under SAMDev MD13 and DP 23 include vintage street signs, post boxes, architectural features that reveal Bishop Castle's history such as blocked windows which illustrate the Window Tax, and older buildings and commercial elements such as painted murals, external finishes, hanging signs, lamp posts and holders, fountains, memorials, buildings and historic architectural features.

126. Assets that are not subject to planning control such as severable/non-permanent sculptures can add significant interest to the built environment and may add to the local character of Bishop's Castle. Public art though modern now, can become historically important in time. It is therefore beneficial to identify particularly good examples of public art (whether this is privately owned) and to seek to protect it where practicable.

127. New public art that is sympathetic to its surroundings, even where this may be a designated Heritage Asset such as a listed building or the Conservation Area, should not be discouraged where it enhances the local character.

128. Appendix 3 identifies those premises not currently included in the Shropshire Council Local List of non-designated heritage assets but which provide a significant contribution to the unique character of Bishop's Castle. **It is hoped that the five assets listed under Sections 1 and 2 of Appendix 3 will be added to the Shropshire Council Local List.**

## BC4: Non-designated heritage assets and non-traditional design features

Development should seek to contribute to Bishop's Castle's local character by incorporating innovative approaches to design and public art, including in the Conservation Area where this does not cause harm.

Proposals that incorporate public art will be supported.

Development proposals should avoid negative impacts on non-designated heritage assets and features that have been identified in **Appendix 3: Non-designated Heritage Assets**.

## Local Green Spaces

129. The NPPF allows Neighbourhood Plans to designate land as Local Green Spaces so that communities can identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.<sup>17</sup>

130. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has used local volunteers to assess local green spaces and to prepare a schedule for their designation. The methodology used was based upon the Locality toolkit "Neighbourhood Planning: Local Green Spaces".

131. Assessment of the importance of the sites was carried out in two ways. Firstly on visiting each area on at least two separate occasions anyone there was asked how often they used the green space and what they valued it for. Secondly, members of the community were asked for their views at different times and at different events to get a cross section of people.

132. Potential sites were assessed against the following criteria:

- Landownership – the land owners were consulted on the designation as explained below.
- Description of the site
- Purpose of land use of the site
- Whether there is a Statutory Designation on the site
- Accessibility (how close it is to the community to use)
- Why it is special to the community

133. Local Green Spaces are mapped in **Figure 6**. The justification for their designation as Local Green Spaces is set out in **Table 3**.

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<sup>17</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, paras. 105-107.

134. Each of the Local Green Space designations meets the tests set out in NPPF 2023 para. 102:

- They are all within walking distance of the town centre and are therefore accessible and in close proximity to the community;
- They can all be demonstrated to be important to the Bishop's Castle community
- They are local in character and not extensive tracts of land.

### **BC5: Local Green Spaces**

The sites identified in **Figure 6** and **Table 3** are designated as Local Green Spaces where development will be managed in a way that is consistent with Shropshire's Green Belts.

FIGURE 6: LOCAL GREEN SPACES IN BISHOP'S CASTLE





<b>Table 3: Description of individual Local Green Spaces</b>									
<b>Map No.</b>		<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Owned By</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Statutory Designation</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>Demonstrably special to community</b>
No.1		Wintles Woods	on the north edge of The Wintles housing estate	Wintles Residence Association	Area of grass, and woods with benches. Includes private allotments	Recreational, including dog walking.	none	on the opposite side of the Wintles road	"A great place for a tranquil walk or to just sit and think" "Somewhere to be surrounded by nature but a short distance from the centre of town" A habitat for wildlife
No.2		Wintles Green	on the south west edge of the Wintles housing estate	Wintles Residence Association	Area of mowed grass and a pond	An area of green amongst the housing estate.	none	on the south edge of the Wintles development	An attractive open green within housing
No.3		Oak Meadow Play Area	on the east edge, at the north end of Oak Meadow	B.C. Town Council	An enclosed area of mowed grass with covered seating	Children's play area	none	towards the west side of Bishop's Castle surrounded by housing	A safe place for children to play within town
No.4		Oak Meadow Playground	on the west edge, in the middle of Oak Meadow	B.C. Town Council	An enclosed area of mowed grass with play equipment	Children's play area	none	towards the west side of Bishop's Castle surrounded by housing	A safe place for children to play within town

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No.5		B.C. Recreation Ground	on the north edge of Kerry Lane between Corporation Street and Church Street	B.C. Town Council	A very large area of mowed grass with an enclosed area with play equipment and a skateboard park	Multi recreational uses for the residents of Bishop's Castle and visitors	none	in the centre of Bishop's Castle surrounded by housing	Well used by the town for the festivals - Party in the Park, Michaelmas, Carnival. Also used every day by locals & visitors, for dog walking or to use the play equipment, the skateboard park, to use the picnic area or just relax
No.6		Grange Road Green	on the west side of Grange Road	B.C. Town Council	A small are of mowed grass with seating	An area of green amongst the housing estate.	none	In the centre of Bishop's Castle surrounded by housing	An attractive open green within housing
No.7		Civil Defence Bowling Green	Behind the Six Bells off Kerry Lane	Civil Defence	A bowling green with clubhouse	Bowling Club	*	in the centre of Bishop's Castle surrounded by housing	Weekly bowls games
No.8		Old Castle Land	on the east edge of Castle Street	Old Castle Land Trust	Area of mowed grass surrounded by trees and bushes.	Recreational, including dog walking	Scheduled Monument	towards the north side of Bishop's Castle housing on the west side, the Castle Hotel to the east.	An attractive open green within housing, often used by dog walkers or people just wanting to sit peacefully. A habitat for wildlife.
No.9		Bishop's Castle Bowling Club	to the east of Castle Street and the south of bull Lane	B.C. Bowling Club	Crown Green Bowling on site of historic castle keep	Bowling Club	*	towards the north side of Bishop's Castle surrounded by housing	A very popular bowls club with an historic clubhouse.

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No. 10		Brick Meadow Green	on the south edge of Brick Lane	B.C. Town Council	An area of mowed grass with a brook running east to west	An area of green amongst the housing estate.	none	within the Brick Meadow estate	An attractive open green within housing
No.11		B.C. Lawn Tennis Club	on the east side of A488 level with Ransfords Saw Mill	B.C. Tennis Club	Tennis courts with landscaped surrounds		*	on the east side of Bishop's Castle	A very popular tennis club used by Bishop's Castle residents of all ages.
No.12		Allotments	on the east side of the A488 at the junction with and to the north of Brampton Road	B.C. Town Council	An enclosed area divided up into approx. 50 Plots	Residents can rent plots to grow their own vegetables	none	towards the east side of Bishop's Castle adjacent to housing	A very popular and well run allotment with a waiting list with award winning plots. A habitat for wildlife

\* The two bowling greens and tennis courts don't have a specific designation, but should a change of use for these ever be considered, that would require the approval of Sport England. Generally, Sport England opposes the loss of any sports pitches unless a new facility of equal or better quality is provided elsewhere in the settlement.

## Sustainable Transport

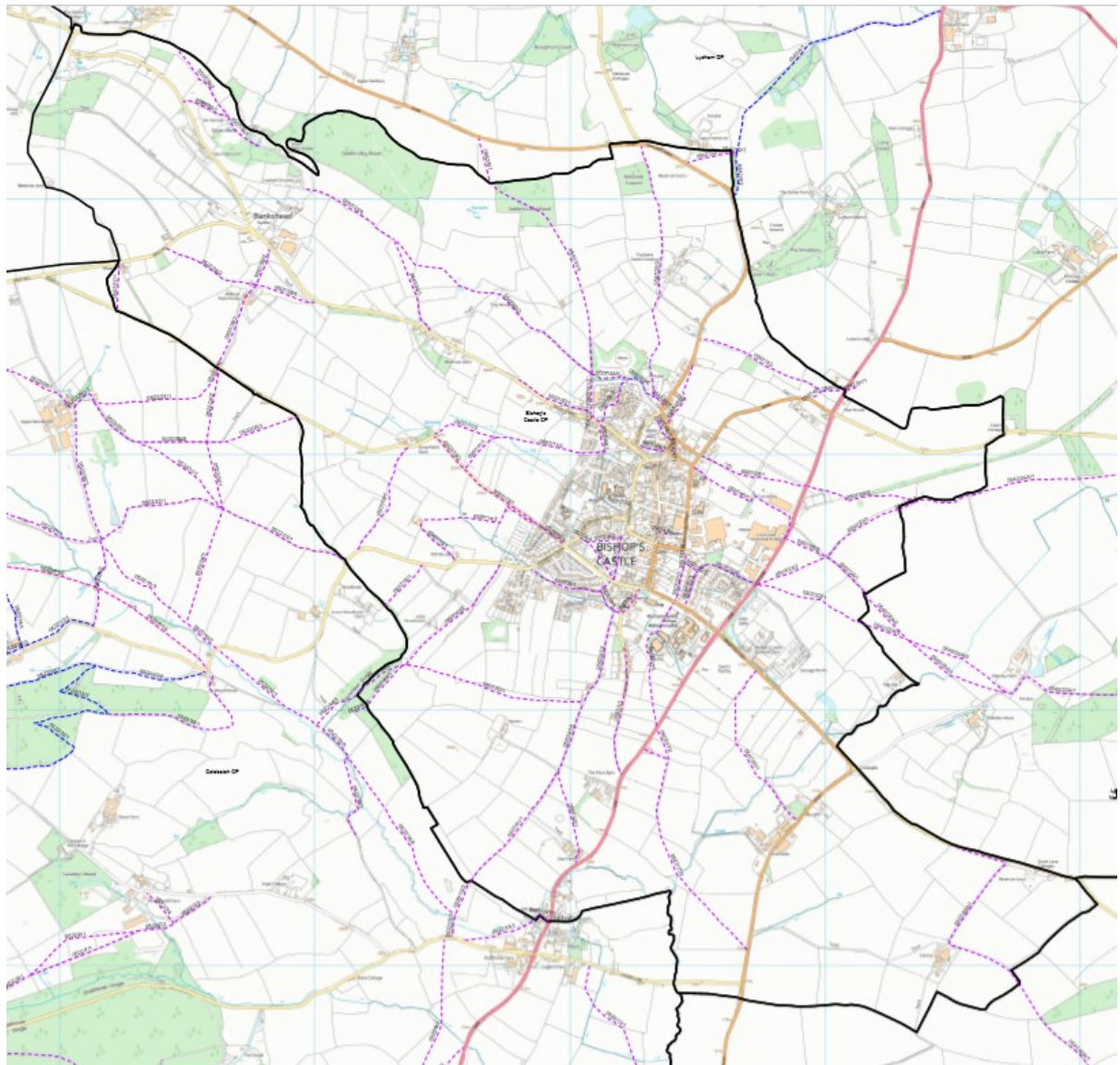
135. Bishop's Castle is fortunate to have an extensive public rights of way network (shown in **Figure 7**) on its doorstep, linking the town to the countryside, and acting as a draw for tourists and visitors who wish to enjoy the town and its beautiful surroundings. It is a "Walkers are Welcome Town".



136. Many of the footpaths around the parish are maintained by volunteers who concentrate their efforts on the nine circular walks described in pamphlets that are available from the tourist Information desk at the Town Hall, available to download from the town hall website: [www.bishopscastle.co.uk/tourism/walking/](http://www.bishopscastle.co.uk/tourism/walking/). Most of these walks have yellow, numbered discs on every stile/ gate & way marking post:

- Wintles & Woodbatch
- Lydbury North & Oakley
- Hell Hole & Acton
- Bury Ditches, Stepple & Merry Hill (outside the parish)
- Clunton Coppice & Sowdley (outside the parish)
- Short walks leaflets 6,7,8 & 9

137. On walks covered in pamphlets and on other popular routes, where landlords have agreed, the two-step wooden stiles that were the normal access method through field boundaries have now been or are being replaced with metal kissing gates. Shropshire Council access team are funding the gates – as they do the stiles and bridges – and the work is being done by the volunteers of Bishop's Castle Parish Paths Partnership (P3 Group). The group was set up as part of the Shropshire Council strategy to upgrade the footpaths network using local volunteers. There is now a pool of 25 volunteers who are organised by a local person and supported by a Shropshire Council access officer who often helps on work days. The rest of the funding for equipment and material comes from donations walkers make for the leaflets. This also pays for the updating and photocopying of the leaflets.

**FIGURE 7: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK IN BISHOP'S CASTLE**



<p><b>Legend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: purple;">---</span> Footpath</li> <li><span style="color: pink;">---</span> Permissive Footpath</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">---</span> Bridleway</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">---</span> Permissive Bridleway</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">---</span> Res Byway</li> <li><span style="color: red;">---</span> BOAT</li> </ul>	<p>The public rights of way information shown on this map is a working copy and has been taken from the Shropshire Council's Definitive Map. It is not the Definitive Map and cannot be regarded as the legal record of public rights of way. It is guidance provided for indicative purposes only. This is particularly important when there are legal consequences arising from information obtained from the Map. The Definitive Map may be viewed at the Shirehall.</p>
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Shropshire Council</b></p> <p>The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6ND</p> </div>	<p>© Crown copyright (2019) Ordnance Survey 100049049 You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.</p>
	<p><b>Scale: 1:7,500</b></p>
<p>Map produced by HB 04/19</p>	

138. There is an annual week-long walking festival centred on Bishop's Castle which brings many visitors to the town. And also a May charity walk, an August challenge walk and a shorter autumn walk. Many of the local hostels, campsites, bed and breakfasts, guest houses and businesses rely on the trade this type of event brings to the town.

139. The long distance Shropshire Way runs through the town.

140. Offa's Dyke passes about 2 miles west of the town and Bishop's Castle is often used as a stopover by long distance walkers.

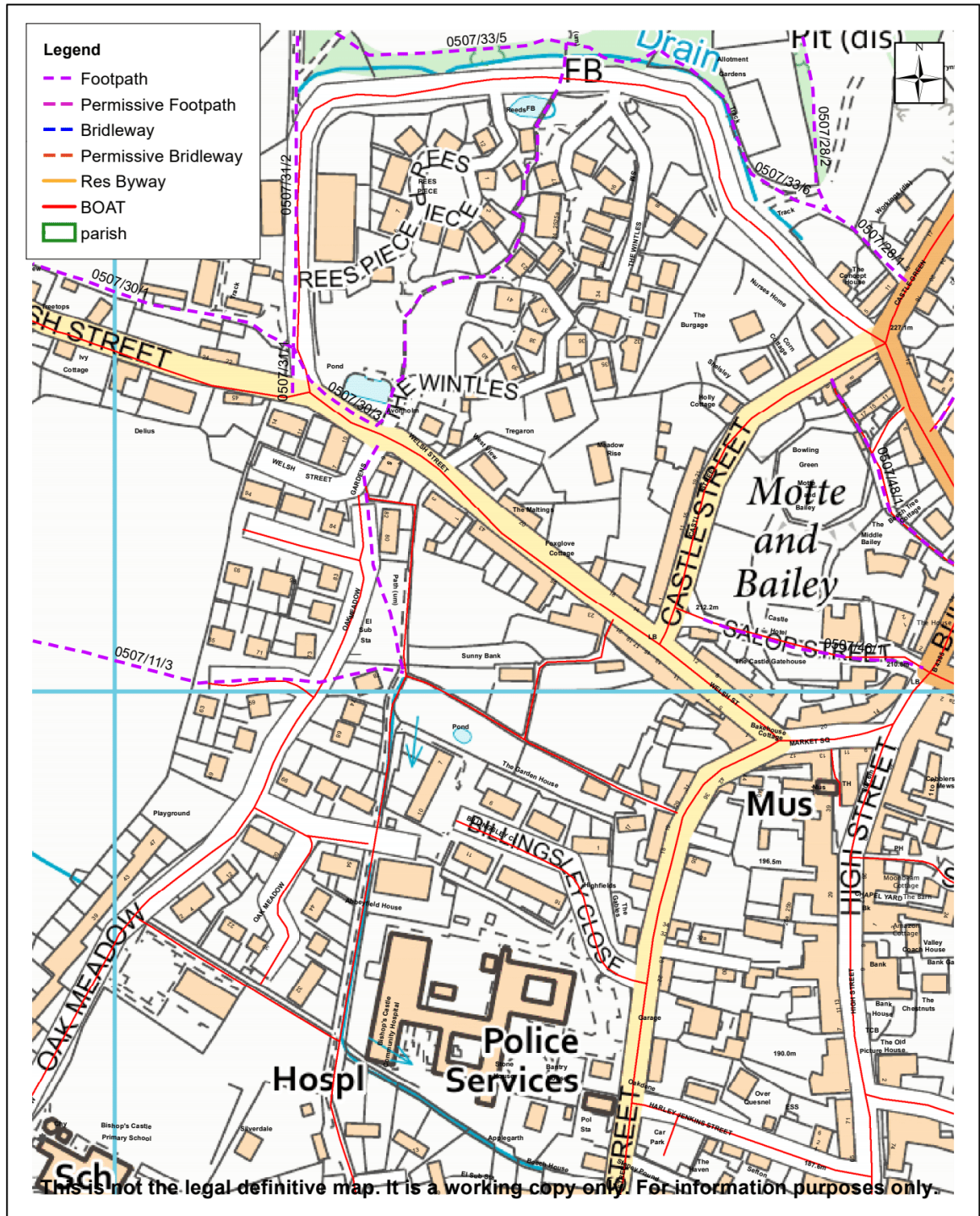
141. There is one permissive footpath through the Wintles Estate hillside amenity land, coloured blue in **Figure 8**. It is required to be kept up by the 106 agreement. In other parishes such as Lydbury North these are included in the definitive map. The orange one is a woodland walk made by residents. Public use is permitted but it has no legal standing.

**FIGURE 8 : PERMISSIVE PATH ON THE WINTLES.**



142. There are a number of Byways open to all vehicles (too narrow or not surfaced and therefore unusable by normal motorised vehicles) in the conservation area. These are shown in **Figures 9-12**.

FIGURE 9 : PATH CLASSIFICATIONS IN BISHOP'S CASTLE (NW SECTOR)



The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Scale: 1:2,262

(c) Crown copyright (2019) 100049049.

Roads shown in red

map produced by on /08 K:user groups.countryside/private/projects/ .mxd

FIGURE 10: PATH CLASSIFICATIONS IN BISHOP'S CASTLE (NE SECTOR)

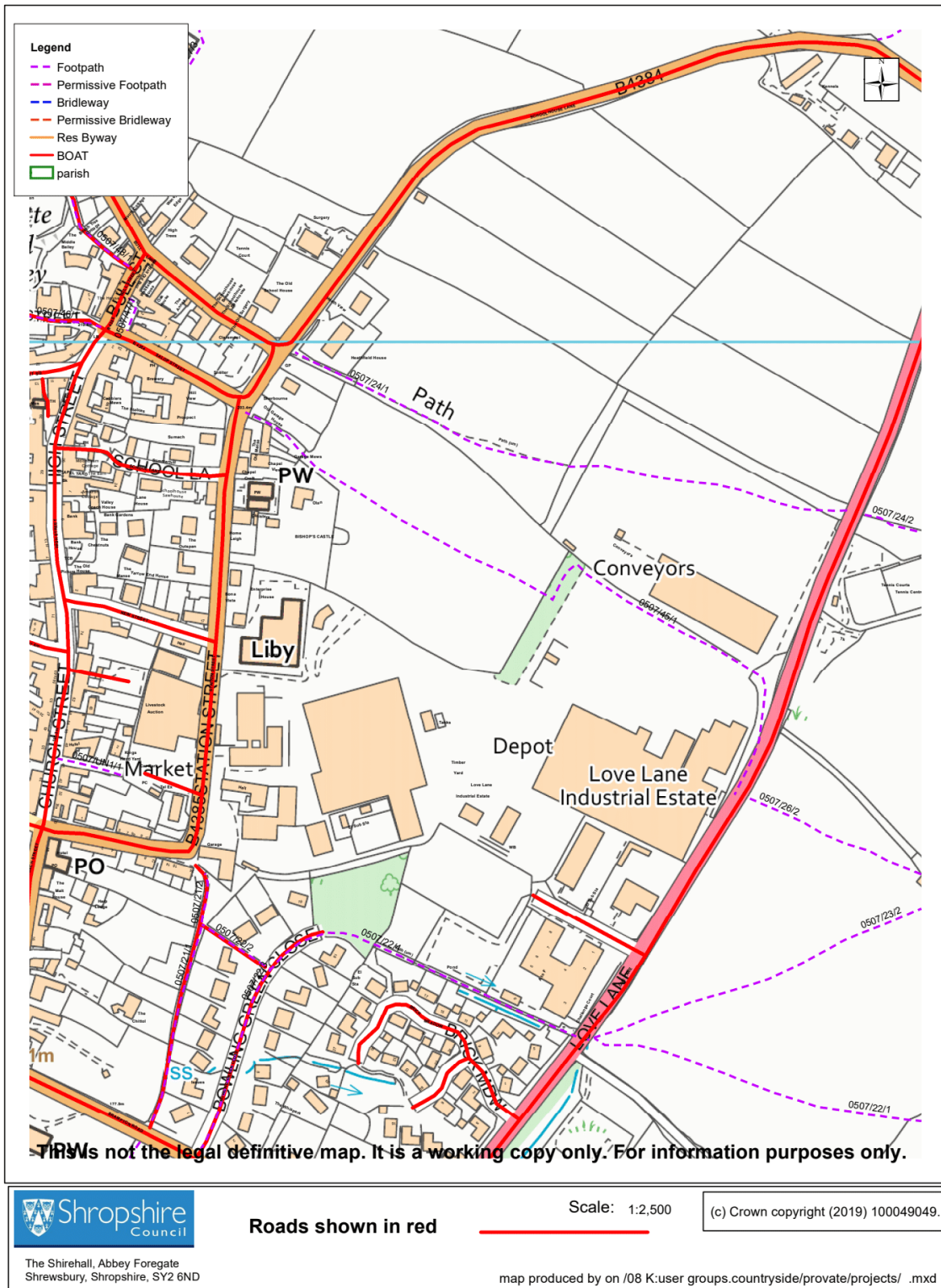




FIGURE 11 : PATH CLASSIFICATIONS IN BISHOP'S CASTLE (TOWN CENTRE)

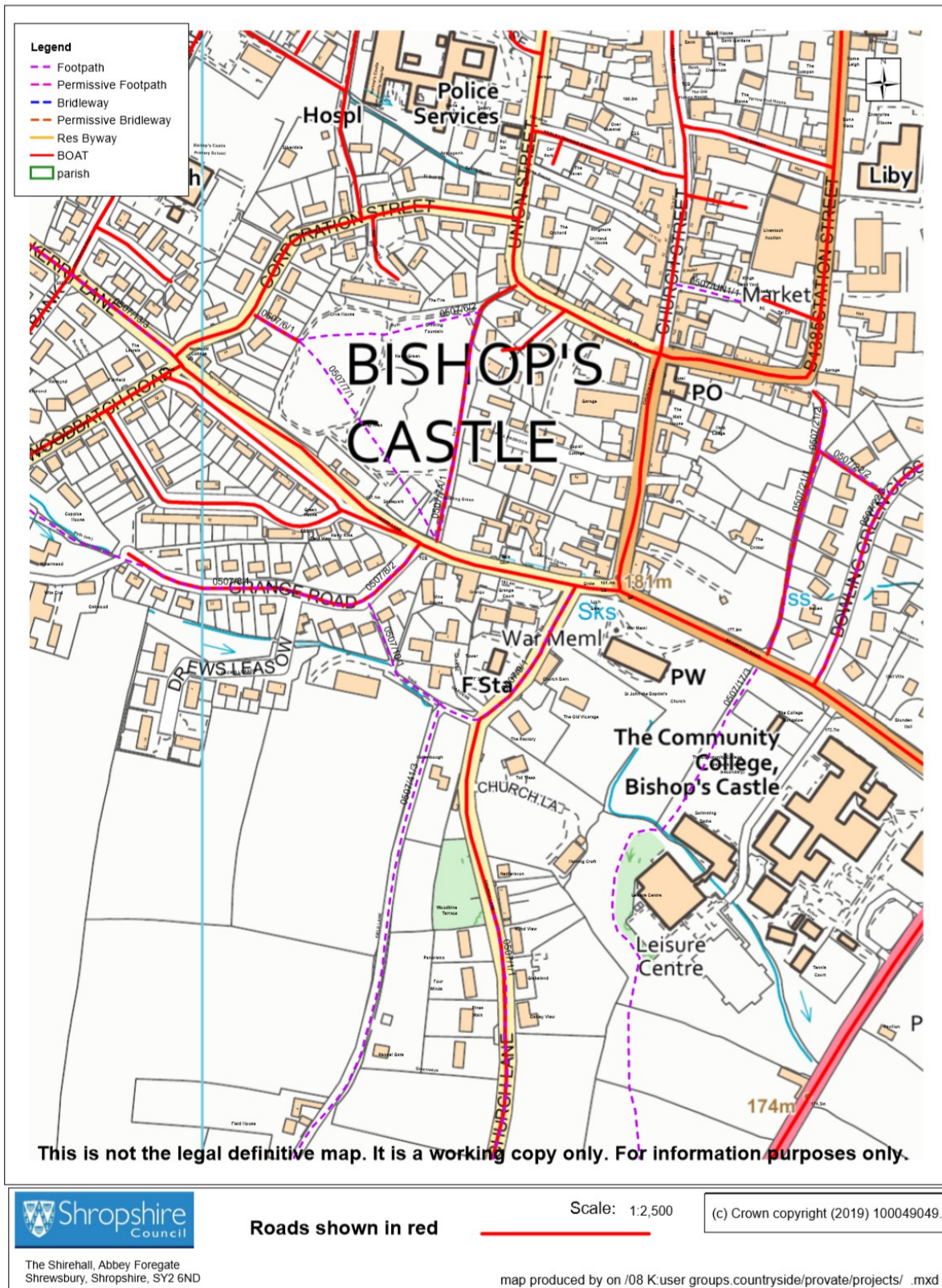
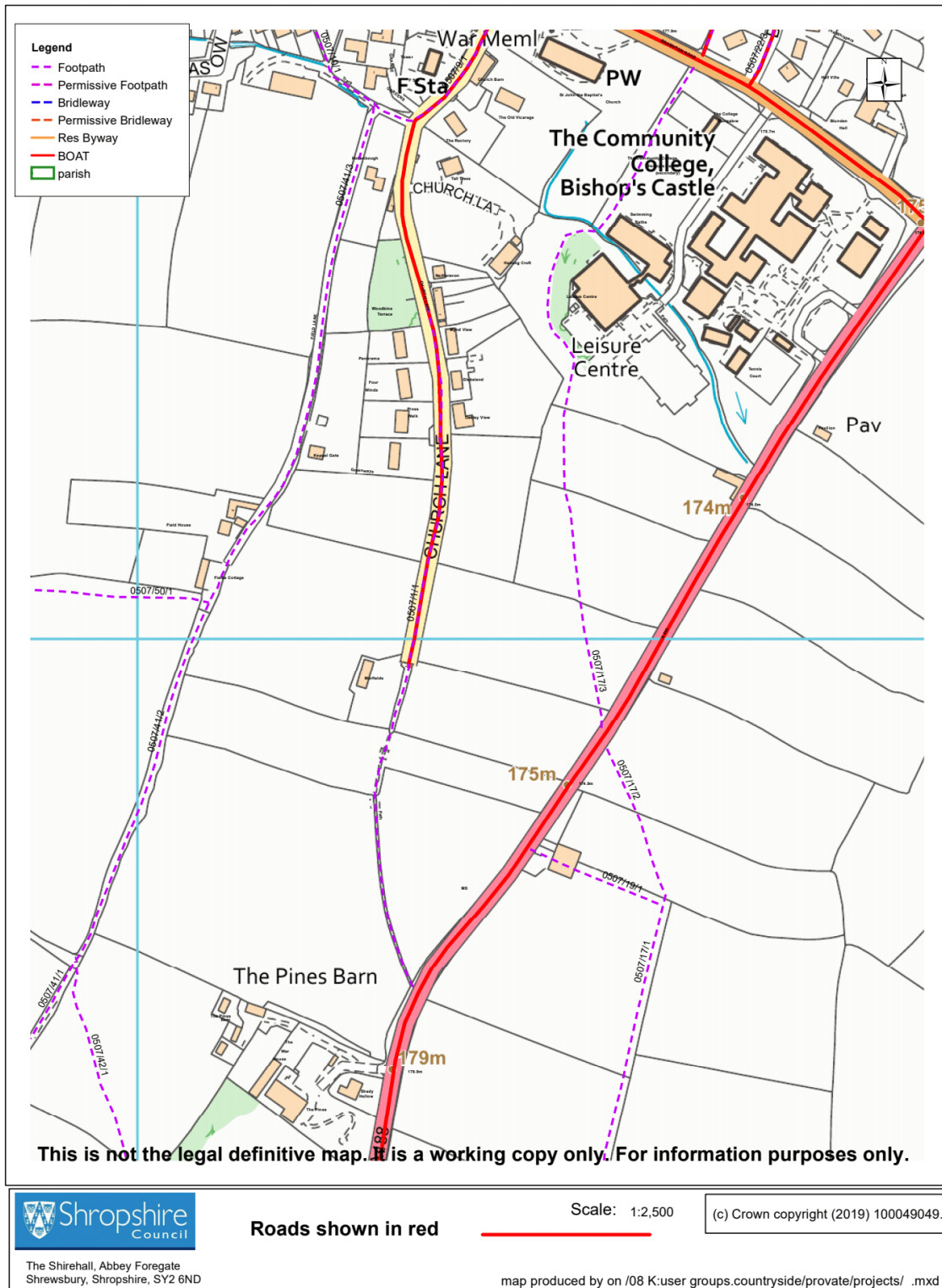


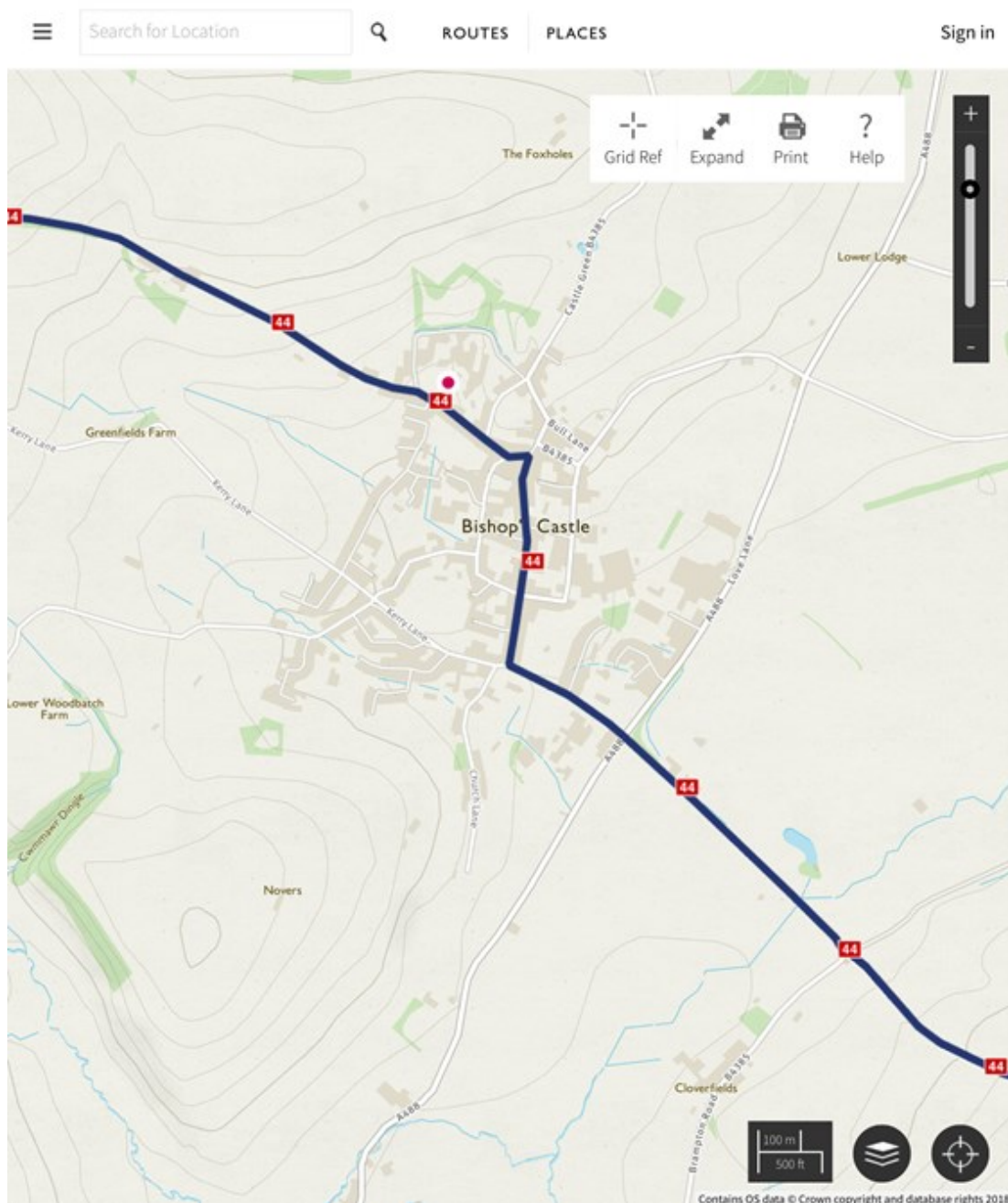
FIGURE 12 : PATH CLASSIFICATIONS IN BISHOP'S CASTLE (SE SECTOR)



143. There are no bridleways within the parish boundary. There is one starting just at the boundary edge from the north eastern boundary in the direction of Lydham (see **Figure 7**).

144. The Sustrans National Route 44 (shown in **Figure 13**) between Shrewsbury and Craven Arms enters the town from Bishop's Moat and down Bankshead on the north-western side of town. It then follows Welsh Street, the High Street and Church Street and takes the Stank Lane route out of town towards Craven Arms. It was chosen as one of the least trafficked routes into and out of town.

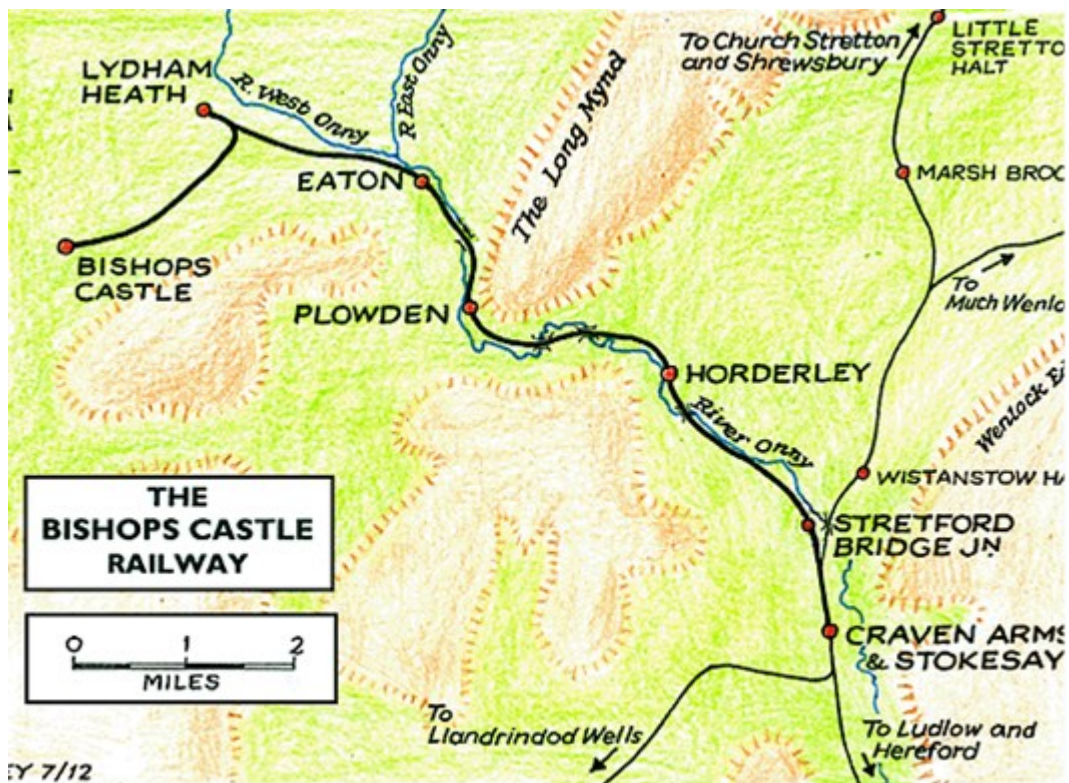
**FIGURE 13: SUSTRANS ROUTE 44 IN BISHOP'S CASTLE**



145. The town is also on a well-used route that runs through the border counties as part of the John O'Groats to Land's End cycling route and many participants stay over in Bishop's Castle.

146. In the late 1990s and early part of the 2000s, there was an attempt to get the old railway line from Craven Arms to Bishop's Castle opened as a cycle way, giving flat and non-trafficked access between them. This would have been a useful link to the railway at Craven Arms for both the Cardiff - Manchester Line and the Heart of Wales line through mid-Wales to Swansea. Much of the track bed of the line still survives but the project failed because it couldn't get support from all the landowners involved. If this could ever be revived, it would help the tourist trade in the town. It would be desirable to ensure that the route stays undeveloped; however, most of it lies outside the parish boundaries, illustrated in **Figure 14**.

**FIGURE 14: PROPOSED BISHOP'S CASTLE TO CRAVEN ARMS CYCLE ROUTE FOLLOWING THE TRACK OF THE OLD RAILWAY LINE**



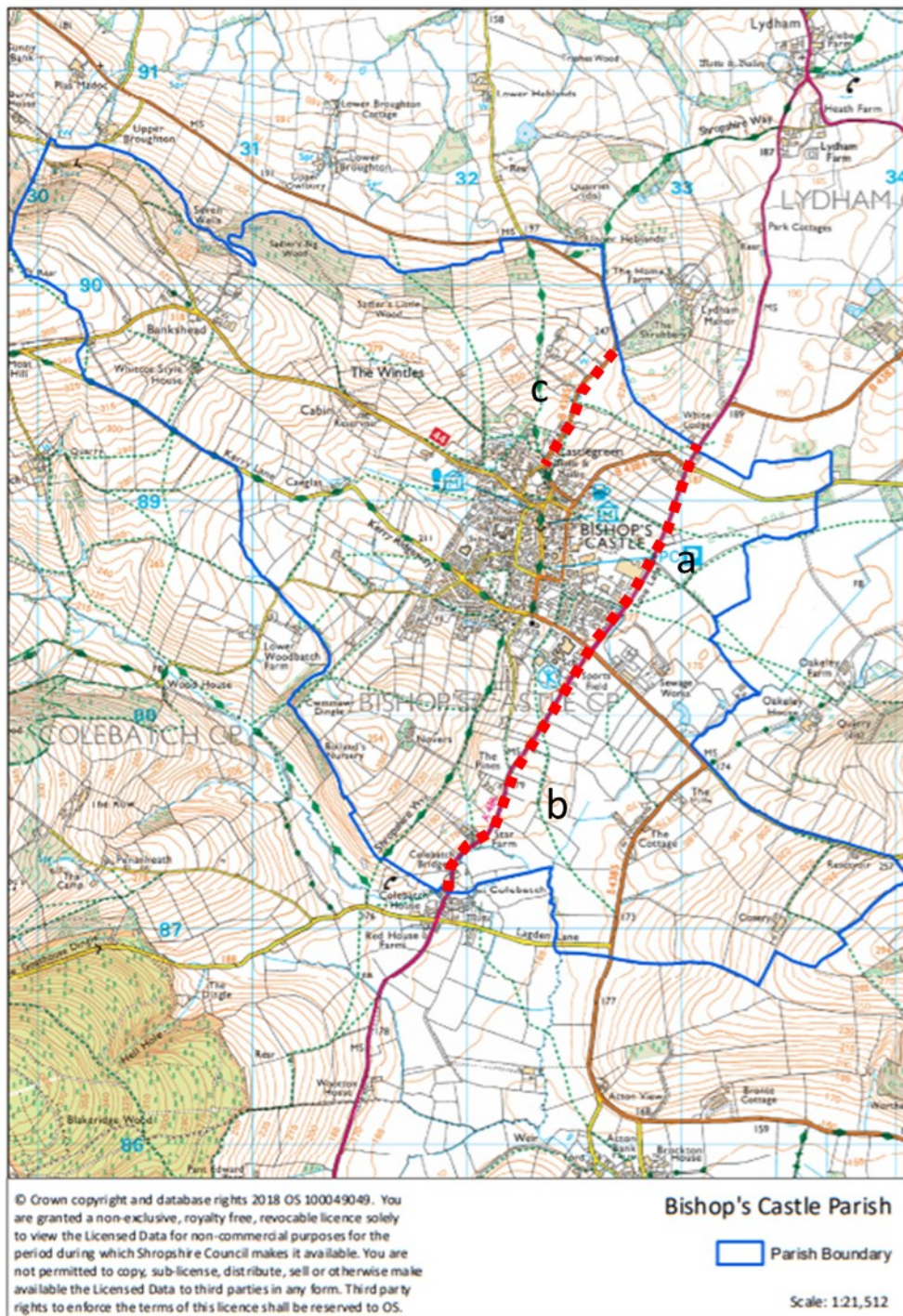
**POSSIBLE CYCLE ROUTE FROM CRAVEN ARMS TO BISHOP'S CASTLE**

Source: Bishop's Castle Railway Museum archives

147. Bishop's Castle Town Council agreed in its June 2020 meeting aspects of its Freedom to Move Strategy 2019-2024 with the following sustainable transport measures that would improve walking and cycling and also link into the Climate Action Plan and the Bishop's Castle Sustainability Group:

- a. Improvements to the A488 to include a footpath/cycle route between the two entrances to the town on Love Lane. This would be beneficial to the tennis club and the allotment users. This will contribute to the creation of a walking /cycle route from Lydham to the Community College to encourage young people to walk/cycle to school safely. This would also benefit Lydham market customers and customers of the wholefood shop in Lydham. A mandatory speed limit of 30mph in Lydham will be encouraged.
  - b. A walking /cycle route between Colebatch and the Community College to encourage young people to cycle/walk to school safely. The Town Council will encourage that a 40 mph speed limit is in place in Colebatch and a 30mph limit on the Brampton Road crossroads at the Community College.
  - c. A pavement and or cycle route on Montgomery Road. Residents living on this road have no pavement and visitors to the popular campsite at Foxholes also have to walk on the road. It is also unsafe for walkers or cyclists visiting the cricket ground.
148. **Figure 15** shows the two main sustainable transport improvements that will be sought. The labels on the map correspond to the improvements sought in para. 120 above.

FIGURE 15: WALKING AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS



149. Core Strategy policy CS7 seeks to protect and enhance strategic and local cycling, footpath, bridleway and canal networks as local transport routes and for recreation and leisure use. Para. 7.8 states that new development of one or more dwellings, or any development for employment use, should contribute to extending and improving linkages, between these individual sites and provide connections between urban areas and the adjoining countryside. Linkages can be provided through footpaths and cycle paths.
150. Core Strategy policy CS6 requires proposals that are likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking and cycling can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced. Core Strategy para 4.86 insists on high quality design where cycle parking, footpaths and cycle paths are linked where possible to the existing network. Para. 4.98 states that local travel options will be promoted through the cycle, footpath, bridleway and the National Cycle Network routes especially within key settlements. It is important to protect and enhance these strategic and local networks which provide important routeways through Shropshire. These routeways also contribute to the natural and historic environment of Shropshire and its key settlements and provide alternative modes of travel for local communities as well as providing important tourism and leisure opportunities. It is important to recognise that the quality of opportunities for walking and cycling will encourage physical activity and this would help to improve the health and quality of life of individuals within local communities.
151. Emerging Local Plan policy DP28 3b seeks the protection, extension or improvement of footways, cycleways, public rights of way and bridleways for active travel and canals to provide local transport routes to home, work, services and leisure.

### **BC6: Sustainable Transport**

Major development should provide an attractive alternative to private motorised vehicles for short journeys, particularly to the town centre and schools, by providing linking routes to the existing network and upgrading routes where this is necessary to encourage more walking and cycling. The routes identified in Figure 15 will be prioritised.

New employment and commercial uses should make provision for cycle parking such as cycle stands or sheds in accordance with the demand they generate.

## Housing Mix

152. In January 2020, Shropshire Council reported on its **Right Homes in the Right Place (RHRP) survey**, which is attached as **Appendix 4**.
153. The Survey indicated that over half the respondents were renters and only 41% were home owners. Out of 162 responders who lived in Bishop's Castle, 63 (39%) said they were thinking of moving. Of these, 29% wanted to downsize and 25% said that their current home was too costly. Of those wishing to move, 42% sought affordable housing to rent or buy. The most popular forms of housing wanted were bungalows, semi-detached and detached properties. Smaller properties of 2-3 bedrooms were most wanted.
154. Core Strategy policy CS11 has an overall target of achieving 33% local needs affordable housing for the first 5 years of the plan (which has elapsed). Para 5.18 indicates that the bottom target of 20% affordable housing on open market sites will be sought. The final assessment for each site will be considered using the open book approach to viability (para 5.19).
155. SamDev policy MD3 requires that for residential proposals of five or more dwellings, housing mix and type should have regard to local evidence. Therefore, the NDP will contain a policy based on the RHRP survey.
156. Emerging Local Plan policy DP1 sets out the expected development mix. On sites of 5 or more dwellings, the policy requires at least 50% of open market dwellings will reflect the profile of housing need established within the survey where a Local Housing Need survey was undertaken, as was done in Bishop's Castle.
157. In accordance with these provisions in CS11 and MD3 and DP1, the NDP sets out requirements for a mix of housing that seeks to reflect local evidence on the need for affordable housing which will be higher than the 20% minimum. Local evidence showed that over 33% of people wishing to move required affordable housing. Therefore, in Bishop's Castle, the higher limit of 33% will be supported. Given the questions about viability that this higher limit may raise, smaller properties will be supported from the affordable portion which can be semi-detached or terraced under emerging Local Plan policy DP1.
158. In 2019, there were 52 households on the waiting list that had expressed a first preference to live in Bishop's Castle<sup>18</sup>. CS11 seeks to provide housing for local needs. There is no mechanism to determine how this should be done for new development in either the Core Strategy or the SamDev. Therefore, for the purposes of policies in the NDP, new housing schemes over 5 units will be expected to be advertised to local people first, before the houses (market or affordable) are marketed to people who do not have a local connection.

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<sup>18</sup> RHRP survey, page 2.



159. For the purposes of BC6, housing opportunities should be made known to the community in Bishops Castle through local estate agents, publications and via the Town Council at least 6 months before the dwellings are expected to be available for occupation. A special marketing period will be required for local people who can prove a connection to Bishop's Castle. This will be at least three months where local people will have the first opportunity to purchase or rent any new housing before the properties are marketed outside the area.

### **BC7: Housing Mix**

For all residential developments over 5 dwellings, at least 50% of open market dwellings will reflect the profile indicated in Appendix 4: Bishop's Castle Right Homes in the Right Place Survey.

On sites of more than 10 dwellings, a 33% affordable housing contribution reflecting local needs will be supported.

When considering viability, greater weight will be given to meeting the need for affordable housing rather than dwelling size and proposals for semi-detached and terraced affordable housing that are 2-3 bedrooms will be supported.

The provision of 2-3 bedroom bungalows will be supported.

Affordable housing should be made available first to people who can prove a local connection to Bishop's Castle. Planning applications should specify how this provision has been met in individual proposals.

## **Sustainable Construction**

160. The community Vision for the NDP was that new buildings would be of high energy performance standards.

161. Shropshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, but the emerging Local Plan will be unable to reflect the urgency of the Climate crisis before its adoption which is expected to be in late 2024. The Bishop's Castle NDP will be adopted before that date. The Steering Group determined that to meet the needs of the community, a sustainable construction policy would be required.

162. The Steering Group considered evidence prepared by the Centre for Sustainable Energy, and adapted model policies from "Low Carbon Neighbourhood Planning" (January 2018) in support of a policy that would ensure that new development would be as energy efficient as possible.

163. The Bishop's Castle Community Partnership's Sustainable Working Group reviewed existing and emerging planning policies with a view to identifying appropriate policy

responses which is set out in **Appendix 6**. The recommendations from this review are included in Policy BC8.

164. Work is being carried out by Lightfoot and the Bishop's Castle Climate Action group on a possible heat network and linked wind turbine for the town. A wind constraints study and public consultation on the scheme have been carried out. The survey results show over 80% support for the heat network and nearly 80% support for the wind turbine. The proposals were also given unanimous support by the Town Council at their meeting of 19th October 2021. However, it is felt that, unfortunately, there is as yet insufficient evidence about the scheme for the proposals to be included in the neighbourhood plan at this stage. Once further details have been delivered, Bishop's Castle Town Council has promised to carry out a review of the BCNDP with a view to including a policy or policies in regard to this proposal at the earliest opportunity.

165. Core Strategy CM6 and SamDev MD2 require new development to be designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change in accordance with the Sustainable Design SPD.

166. Emerging Local Plan Policy SP3 provides strategic guidance on new development and Policy SP5 gives detailed consideration of scheme design.

167. Planning Practice Guidance para. 80 (Reference 7-080-20150323) states:

*Generally the aim should be to discharge surface water run off as high up the following hierarchy of drainage options as reasonably practicable:*

1. *Into the ground (infiltration);*
2. *to a surface water body;*
3. *to a surface water sewer, highway drain or another drainage system;*
4. *to a combined sewer.*

## **BC8: Sustainable Design and Construction**

### **Design and Construction**

All new development including changes to existing buildings, including extensions and alterations, should aim to maximize opportunities to increase fabric energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and integrate on-site renewable energy technologies. This includes:

- a) Siting and orientation to optimize passive solar gain.
- b) The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials leading to durable buildings that will remain functional for around 100 years.
- c) Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.
- d) Non-residential developments should aim to meet the Buildings Research Establishment BREEAM building standard 'excellent'.

- e) The retrofit of heritage properties/assets is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics and development is done with engagement and permissions of relevant stakeholders.
- f) Conformity with the Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard.

### **Sustainable urban drainage, water management and wetland creation**

Development should manage flooding according to development plan policies so that:

- g) Scheme design provides rain water capture for activities that do not require potable water, and permeable surfaces are prioritised in outdoor areas
- h) The inclusion of green roofs and walls will generally be supported where they do not give rise to other unacceptable impacts;
- i) Creation of new ponds, swales or wetland areas should lead to biodiversity improvements wherever possible.
- j) Larger mitigation schemes such as the creation of Sustainable Urban Drainage, wetland creation or other flood management infrastructure will create net improvements to the water quality in the River Clun catchment.
- k) Surface water discharges must be carried out in accordance with the principles laid out within the drainage hierarchy, whereby a discharge to the public sewerage system is avoided where possible.

### **Water efficiency**

- l) New development should demonstrate that it is water efficient, incorporating water efficiency and re-use measures and that the estimated consumption of wholesome water per dwelling is calculated in accordance with the methodology in the water efficiency calculator, not exceeding 100 litres/person/day.

### **Renewable Energy**

- m) All new development and large extensions of one room or more should incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, or ground/air source heating where possible.

### **Trees and hedgerows**

- n) Major development will provide tree planting and management that will result in 20% canopy coverage of the development site 15 years after completion.
- o) Proposals should seek to retain ancient, veteran and mature trees or trees or hedgerows of ecological, arboricultural or amenity value.

- p) Development proposals must not result in unacceptable loss of – or damage to – existing trees or woodlands or hedges or significant landscaping during or because of development.
- q) Where trees must be lost as a result of development, these must be replaced at a ratio of at least 2:1 within the site to contribute to 20% canopy cover, with a preference for native trees and for fruit and nut trees.
- r) The responsible planting of additional trees that reduce or absorb air pollution from traffic will be supported throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

**Base line data for planning applications**

- s) Planning proposals should pay regard to the baseline data provided in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report which accompanies this plan when addressing Development Plan policies.