

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 - 2031



Adopted October 2015

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Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031

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The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted at the Herefordshire Council meeting on 16 October 2015. It represents the vision for the County to 2031 and provides the context for future work on the preparation of the Hereford Area Plan, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Travellers' Sites Development Plan Document.

CLlr Philip Price
Cabinet Member Infrastructure

Herefordshire Council
October 2015



- 3.1 The Core Strategy sets out a spatial strategy for Herefordshire for the period up to 2031. This is quite different to the land use planning approach of the previous development plan (Unitary Development Plan 2007). It includes:
- a definition of what sustainable development means for Herefordshire;
 - a vision for Herefordshire towards the end of the plan period;
 - a set of objectives to deliver the vision;
 - a spatial strategy that addresses the different needs and opportunities of different parts of Herefordshire; and
 - details of how the Core Strategy proposals will be monitored.
- 3.2 The council's strategy is based on targeting future development in places where specific needs and opportunities have been identified, thereby addressing key issues raised in the Herefordshire Context section. This approach seeks to accommodate economic and population growth with new housing and supporting infrastructure, whilst protecting and enhancing the attractive and distinctive character of the different areas of the county, so that sustainable development is achieved.

Sustainable development

- 3.3 Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Government has set three aims for sustainable development:
- contributing to building a strong, competitive and responsive economy;
 - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
 - continuing to protect and enhance our natural, historic and built environment.
- 3.4 At the heart of the Government's policy in the National Planning Policy Framework March, 2012 is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The council intends to achieve this presumption in accordance with the following policy:

Policy SS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

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

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant with policies in other Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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

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

- 3.46 In Herefordshire there is longstanding evidence that housing on 'non-allocated' sites has made a significant contribution to meeting housing needs and requirements. Such housing has not only come forward within urban parts of the county but also has been the major element of new housing in rural areas, where the conversion of agricultural buildings have contributed significant numbers of new homes.
- 3.47 It is therefore important to consider how windfalls, including the conversion of rural buildings, should be reflected in the housing land supply and residential targets for the county. The preparation of the SHLAA should mean that a higher proportion of sites will be identified as part of the supply figures and so only a modest windfall allowance is included within the housing targets of 2,000 dwellings, equating to 50 dwellings a year in rural areas with the same allowance for urban parts of Herefordshire.

Movement and transportation

- 3.48 The approach of the strategy for movement and transportation is two-fold. Firstly, the spatial strategy itself aims to direct the location of significant new development proposed through the plan to the more accessible locations in the county to promote the use of existing nearby services and facilitate the use of active travel (walking and cycling) as well as public transport. However, this principle needs to apply to all new significant development proposals that may come forward through the plan period. It will also require policies to minimise the impact of additional highway demand generated by new development on the transport network, so that journey times, journey time reliability, public realm and highway safety in the county do not deteriorate.
- 3.49 Secondly, the approach is to work with developers, the Highways Agency and transport providers to improve transport infrastructure, connections and choices in our main centres and rural areas (where reliance on the private car is often the only option). This is particularly important for local journeys in Hereford where a balanced package of measures including more walking and cycling, bus transport and a Relief Road would improve connectivity and travel choice, reduce congestion, enhance the public realm and foster local enterprise and tourism.
- 3.50 Herefordshire is a diverse county incorporating both rural and urban communities. The scale of the county, alongside its historic settlement pattern, places significant importance on movement and transportation. As recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework, transport and movement can play a positive role in contributing to sustainable development; whether through providing opportunities for greater public transport, or delivering air quality improvements by removing vehicular movements from pedestrian areas. Alongside this, the following pro-active strategic policies on movement and transportation can build upon objectives and policies within Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) to improve journey time and connectivity across the county. In partnership with the LTP the strategic policies are designed to deliver Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy objectives of improving movement and transportation across the county.

Policy SS4 - Movement and transportation

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

Policy SS4 - Movement and transportation continued

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

Proposals to provide new and improved existing public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure will be supported. Where appropriate, land and routes will be safeguarded as required in future local or Neighbourhood Development Plans and developer contributions, which meet the statutory tests, sought to assist with the delivery of new sustainable transport infrastructure, including that required for alternative energy cars.

Herefordshire Council will work with the Highways Agency, Network Rail, bus and train operators, developers and local communities to bring forward improvements to the local and strategic transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety and offer greater transport choices, including the provision of the following major schemes:

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

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

- 3.51 Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan sets out programmes of work for achieving the council's objectives for transport, accessibility and pollution control which positively contribute to addressing climate change. Development arising under the Core Strategy can play a positive role in delivering the objectives of the LTP; developers should provide evidence showing how their proposed developments will deliver against those objectives. Accordingly, development proposals will be supported where they respond to the opportunities and constraints detailed within the LTP.
- 3.52 By influencing the location of new development, land use can reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and minimise its impact on the environment. At the same time the planning system must respond to the need for new transport infrastructure and recognise the challenges faced by rural settlements, where reliance on private motorised transport, for many people, is the only realistic option for travel. Accordingly, strategic developments will be located on or have access to existing passenger transport networks so that they are convenient, accessible, safe and attractive to use. Where appropriate, development proposals should be accompanied by travel plans and transport assessments outlining alternatives to private motorised transport use.

Pedestrians and cyclists

- 3.53 The role of walking and cycling in creating liveable places, promoting health improvements and social inclusion has not always been recognised. Despite this, almost all journeys include an element of walking. Ensuring that there is safe and convenient access to housing, jobs, education, health care, other services and local facilities for pedestrians and cyclists is an essential part of promoting social inclusion and the delivery of sustainable development. Consequently, Herefordshire Council will advocate developments which promote pedestrian and cycle friendly access, avoiding conflict with private motorised vehicles, and provide appropriate links to the green infrastructure network where possible.

Public transport

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

Major transport schemes

- 3.55 The strategically important schemes, including ESG Link Road, Transport Hub, Hereford Relief Road and Connect 2, are explained further in the Hereford part of the Place-Shaping section. The Leominster Relief Road is explained in detail in the Leominster part of the same section. The funding required for these schemes is detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Freight

- 3.56 Road freight will continue to be the dominant mode of transport for freight distribution within Herefordshire due to its flexibility and accessibility. The county's railway network is limited and few of its key industrial networks are adjacent, or in close proximity to, the four passenger railway stations. The existing railhead for minerals transport at Moreton-on-Lugg will continue to be protected. It is however, important to encourage increased movements by rail to alleviate the additional pressure that growth will place on the county's roads, and to minimise any increase in carbon emissions associated with transport.
- 3.57 During the plan period, advancements in technologies may bring forward alternative transport technologies. Where such developments are not covered by national legislation, Herefordshire Council will support their development. Such proposals must be in accordance with the principles of other policies of the Core Strategy and demonstrate their contribution towards delivering sustainable transport solutions.
- 3.58 In order to deliver the strategic objectives outlined above, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have incorporated the criteria contained within policy MT1 in the section on general policies.
- 3.59 Partnership working will ensure all major housing and employment sites are served by public transport and that rail services and infrastructure within Herefordshire is improved over the long term and that smarter travel choices are promoted in the short term. The place shaping policies and the general policy

on traffic management, alongside the Local Transport Plan, will also work towards delivering this part of the strategy.

Education and Skills

- 3.60 Improved and expanded higher education provision in Herefordshire is envisaged as part of the strategy to help retain our young people and improve the skills base of the county. The place shaping policies and the general policy on community facilities will deliver this part of the strategy. Significant recent work has been undertaken to bring about the establishment of a university in Herefordshire. This proposal has widespread support in the Council, the wider community and with local businesses. The emerging proposal will do much to consolidate the role of Hereford as a traditional county town and which provides a vibrant and diverse range of services. Depending on the state of the project at that time there will be an opportunity for it to be included in greater detail in the Hereford Area Plan.

Health and wellbeing

- 3.61 Health services are being developed through an integrated approach of providing for an increased need for age appropriate services (Understanding Herefordshire). This includes; access to community centres, keeping people independent in their own home and personalised services such as the provision of extra care homes and supported housing generally. Other objectives of this plan, such as improving the provision of open space to help combat obesity and mental health problems, and the provision of improved broadband technology to facilitate access to services, will all work together to provide for improved health and wellbeing in the future. The place shaping policies and the general policies on community facilities and housing will help to facilitate this approach.

Access to services

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

New and/or improved infrastructure

- 3.63 Necessary community infrastructure including transport, green spaces, leisure uses, health, emergency services and education facilities will be delivered alongside new homes through planning conditions and developer contributions or the Community Infrastructure Levy. This will ensure that sustainable communities are created and maintained and that health and well-being is promoted. The type and phasing of infrastructure required to support the growth strategy is set out in the accompanying Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan or IDP. This is backed up by a separate evidence base on Economic Viability, which reports that the infrastructure listed in the IDP to support the projects and proposals in the Core Strategy, are viable at the time of writing for developers to want to build.
- 3.64 Significant infrastructure projects are required to: deliver the strategy; ease congestion, improve broadband speeds and availability to foster economic growth; and improve the county's sewerage treatment to prevent adverse effects on water quality. These projects will require joint working by a range

- 3.84 The scale and retail offer of the five market towns varies according to their population size and location, but in broad terms they perform similar functions and play an important role in serving their own populations and rural catchments. The strategy for each market town is outlined in the place shaping section.
- 3.85 Retail development will be concentrated in the town centre but will be complemented by other uses such as restaurants, cafes, appropriate leisure uses and businesses. Primary shopping areas, which will include both primary and secondary frontages, will be identified through Neighbourhood Development Plans or other Development Plan Documents.
- 3.86 Neighbourhood centres also play an important role in providing day to day convenience needs for nearby residential areas and generally provide small food stores, other services and community facilities. These centres also have an important role to play both as community hubs and also in helping to reduce harmful emissions by being accessible by foot and bicycle. Specific place-based policies identify where new neighbourhood centres are required to serve strategic developments.
- 3.87 In the rural areas, village shops and other facilities meet both daily shopping 'top up' needs and help to facilitate the independence of those who are not able to travel farther afield. They are important to the vitality of rural communities, acting as a focus and informal meeting place, and provide a valuable service, particularly to those without their own transport. The policies in the place shaping section and the general retail policies will deliver this part of the strategy.

Key outcomes of the strategy for economic prosperity

- 3.88 These comprise: more local and better paid employment opportunities, so limiting out commuting; business diversification and growth; a more vibrant and robust Hereford City and more economically self-contained market towns and rural areas; and a strengthened role and contribution to the economy for tourism. These deliver Core Strategy objectives 6, 7, 8, 8a and 9.

Improving environmental quality

- 3.89 The strategy for improving environmental quality will support the creation of sustainable communities through protecting existing built, heritage and natural environment assets, the better use of resources and addressing the causes and effects of climate change.
- 3.90 A high quality environment has a key role to play in delivering the spatial strategy. Herefordshire has an important cultural heritage, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a river of international ecological importance. The high quality environment is important to the quality of life of Herefordshire residents and has a fundamental role in attracting visitors and investment. Green infrastructure, such as open space, biodiversity, geodiversity and other semi-natural features will be protected and enhanced, including networks of green wildlife corridors and spaces. Green infrastructure has an important role in our adaption to climate change and contributing to carbon neutral development.
- 3.91 The maintenance of the county's environmental quality and its improvement, where necessary, will be through the preservation, management and enhancement of its environmental assets and safeguarding the natural and cultural environment in an integrated way that supports the health and wellbeing of its inhabitants. Although the approach will be based upon addressing issues at a landscape scale, there will be instances where detailed features and assets should be conserved when they contribute to local distinctiveness.

- 3.92 The range of environmental factors is considerable and high quality assets extend throughout the county. Balancing the provision of necessary development requirements within such circumstances often requires a rigorous approach to determining the most appropriate option in terms of minimising adverse environmental effects. As a consequence, developers need to work with the council and local communities to assess environmental factors in an integrated manner, with appropriate information informing decisions from the outset and with mitigation and compensatory measures being advanced where necessary. In addition, where opportunities exist to improve environmental quality, these should be pursued.
- 3.93 In undertaking assessments, the values attached to local distinctiveness by communities can include social and economic perceptions as well as environmental characteristics. Where produced, local guidance should inform the design process. A series of documents exist that provide planning guidance and advice on biodiversity, archaeology and landscape character. Management plans have been prepared for both Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty within the county and conservation objectives set for sites of international and national biodiversity interest.
- 3.94 The scale of development within the Core Strategy cannot be met solely through re-using previously developed land and buildings. Accordingly, greenfield sites will be developed during the plan period but the spatial strategy will continue to direct development to the most sustainable locations. Development proposals will be expected to avoid detrimental impact to designations and locally distinctive assets. Where evidence identifies potential impact, development proposals will be required to include mitigation measures appropriate in size, scale and effectiveness. Where the nature of individual assets is site specific, off-site compensation will only be considered in exceptional cases.

Policy SS6 - Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

Development proposals should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county's distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations. In addition, proposals should maintain and improve the effectiveness of those ecosystems essential to the health and wellbeing of the county's residents and its economy. Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach to planning the following environmental components from the outset, and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon each where they are relevant:

- landscape, townscape and local distinctiveness, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- biodiversity and geodiversity especially Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- historic environment and heritage assets, especially Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings;
- the network of green infrastructure;
- local amenity, including light pollution, air quality and tranquillity;
- agricultural and food productivity;
- physical resources, including minerals, soils, management of waste, the water environment, renewable energy and energy conservation.

The management plans and conservation objectives of the county's international and nationally important features and areas will be material to the determination of future development proposals. Furthermore assessments of local features, areas and sites, defining local distinctiveness in other development plan documents, Neighbourhood Development Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents should inform decisions upon proposals.

Creating sustainable communities

- 3.95 The strategic growth areas avoid locations at high risk of flooding wherever possible, to protect against loss of life and recurring damage to property. Flood alleviation measures will be used where flood avoidance is not possible. New development will provide for a range of type and size of sustainably constructed and well-designed buildings to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, contribute to climate change adaptation, enhance energy efficiency and respect local distinctiveness.
- 3.96 The protection of residential and local amenity is essential to ensuring local communities are and remain sustainable. Amenity considerations include such issues as noise, air quality and lighting amongst others. Within the wider context, the issues of tranquillity and intrinsically dark landscapes may also be material considerations.
- 3.97 Whilst this strategy will inevitably result in the loss of areas of open land, the approach has generally been to avoid land of high sensitivity in landscape terms or biodiversity interest or land of high agricultural value (although given the scale of development around Hereford this has not always been possible – an issue that is reflected in the Sustainability Appraisal).
- 3.98 New parks and green spaces in Hereford and the market towns will be delivered to provide facilities for recreation and sport, as well as contributing to the local green infrastructure network, promoting biodiversity and to enhance community health and well-being. Other, necessary new or enhanced community facilities including sustainable transport choices will be delivered in association with new development to improve access to services and reduce the need to travel long distances by private car. Relevant policies in the place shaping section and the general local distinctiveness policies will deliver this part of the strategy.

Protecting the environment

- 3.99 The location of new development proposed should deliver sites that, protect and/or enhance Herefordshire's natural, built, heritage and cultural assets in the county's cathedral city, historic market towns, smaller settlements and distinctive countryside. In addition Natural England has prepared conservation objectives for each Special Area of Conservation within the county; it is also consulted upon proposals that might affect Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and will be aware of management principles that may be relevant to the maintenance and achievement of their favourable conservation status. Management Plans have been prepared for both the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These documents will be relevant to the assessment of effects of development upon these important assets. The most rigorous approaches to assessing the effect of development should be taken for those areas with international and national designations, including proposals in areas outside but having an effect upon them, in accordance with the protection afforded to such areas in the National Planning Policy Framework. Sites and features of local importance should also receive an appropriate level of protection when determining the effects of proposals upon the environment and local distinctiveness. Subsequent policies set out the approach that should be applied in relation to these and a number of supplementary planning documents are also referred in their supporting statement which will also be relevant. Appendix 8 provides lists of those which have been identified at the time of drafting this Core Strategy.
- 3.100 Proposals for new/improved infrastructure to protect water quality, especially of the Rivers Wye and part of the Lugg which are European protected Special Areas of Conservation, will need to ensure the special features of these sites are maintained, despite the requirement for increased sewage treatment capacity from new development.

Better use of resources

- 3.101 The percentage of previously developed land to be developed over the longer term of the plan period will be much lower than experienced in recent years (which exceeded the national target of 60%) at around 40%. This reflects the scale of strategic land release proposed during this plan period.
- 3.102 The introduction of renewable energy generation into larger development schemes will be promoted, where viable, to reduce the use of carbon producing fuels. Water management schemes and the use of sustainable drainage measures in new developments will strive towards water neutrality despite increased demands for water usage from new development.
- 3.103 Where necessary to achieve the objectives of this plan, areas of lower quality agricultural land will be utilised in preference to the best and most versatile agricultural land, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (Para 112), where possible. Changes in agricultural practices and food supply need to be recognised in terms of supporting resilience. In addition, the utility of providing gardens and allotments to support green infrastructure, food productivity and a low carbon economy will also contribute to the vision for the county.
- 3.104 New waste facilities are to be integrated into sites suitable for industrial use close to the origin of such waste. Proposals to minimise waste, including re-use, recycling and treatment, will need to have been considered in the design of new large scale developments. The strategy of promoting better use of resources is dealt with in policies of the Place Shaping and general environmental policies sections. In addition, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will provide guidance relating to the safeguarding of mineral resources.

Addressing climate change

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

Policy RA1 – Rural housing distribution continued

Rural HMA	Approximate number of dwellings 2011 - 2031	Indicative housing growth target (%)
Bromyard	364	15
Golden Valley	304	12
Hereford	1870	18
Kington	317	12
Ledbury	565	14
Leominster	730	14
Ross-on-Wye	1150	14
Total	5300	

Housing in Herefordshire's settlements

- 4.8.13 National policy supports a sustainable approach to development in rural areas which is locally responsive, reflecting local housing needs with an emphasis on supporting services, employment and facilities in villages, avoiding new isolated homes in the countryside.
- 4.8.14 As set out earlier in this section, each rural HMA was evaluated through combining the application of a localised benchmark (median settlement size in each rural HMA), together with an assessment of services. This approach will enable settlements in the rural areas to accommodate appropriate and environmentally sensitive sustainable housing development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.8.15 One hundred and nineteen settlements have been identified across the county to be the main focus of proportionate housing development in the rural areas. These are listed in Figure 4.14. Within these settlements carefully considered development which is proportionate to the size of the community and its needs will be permitted.
- 4.8.16 Residential development will be located within or adjacent to the main built up area(s) of the settlement. This will ensure that unnecessary isolated, non-characteristic and discordant dwellings do not arise which would adversely affect the character and setting of a settlement and its local environment.
- 4.8.17 Given the importance of the Herefordshire landscape, and particularly the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty¹, new dwellings should make a positive contribution to their rural landscape by being built to a high standard, incorporating appropriate materials and landscaping. High

¹ Malvern Hills AONB Guidance on Building Design

quality design that is sustainable and reinforces the locally distinctive vernacular will be particularly encouraged. Innovative and/or contemporary design will also be supported where it is appropriate to its context, it makes a positive contribution to the architectural character of the locality and achieves high levels of sustainability in terms of energy and water efficiency, as set out in Policy SD1. All residential development proposals will need to consider the capacity of the drainage network in the area and the impact of future development on water quality in accordance with Policy SD4.

- 4.8.18 Residential development will be expected to contribute to the future housing needs of each HMA by providing an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes having regard to the *Local Housing Market Assessment* and other relevant evidence sources. Developments should be sensitively and inclusively designed to reflect the lifelong housing needs of the local community. They should also contribute, where appropriate, to the provision of infrastructure, affordable homes and improving community cohesion.
- 4.8.19 Housing affordability is a significant issue in rural Herefordshire. This situation is exacerbated by an existing housing mix that is heavily skewed towards higher value properties, together with demand from people moving to rural areas and restricted scope for new house building. As a result there is a need for market housing priced at a level that can be afforded by local people.
- 4.8.20 On this basis, housing proposals will be expected to reflect the range that is required for the settlement concerned. In relation to proposals that seek specifically to meet identified local housing needs, those proposed developments must be based on appropriate, compelling evidence of how the proposal meets that need. A planning obligation will restrict the occupation of dwellings on this basis to ensure their long term availability for those with local housing needs.
- 4.8.21 A proactive approach has been taken to neighbourhood planning within the county. At February 2015, there were 88 designated neighbourhood areas in the county and significant progress is being made in the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans. These plans will be the principal mechanism by which new rural housing will be allocated. The proportional growth target within policy RA1 will provide the basis for the minimum level of new housing that will be accommodated in each Neighbourhood Development Plan. The target represents a level of growth for parishes, as a percentage, that is proportionate to existing HMA characteristics. The main focus for development will be within or adjacent to existing settlements indicated within fig 4.14 and 4.15. In parishes which have more than one settlement listed in Figure 4.14 and 4.15 the relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan will have appropriate flexibility to apportion the minimum housing requirement between the settlements concerned. This will allow for a locally flexible approach that will respect settlement characteristics, the distribution of local facilities and other local factors. This approach will accord with paragraph 55 of the NPPF which indicates that where there are groups of smaller settlements in rural areas, the development in one location may support services in a location nearby. The adoption of this approach will allow distinctive solutions which reflect the varied geographies in the county.

Policy RA2 – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns.

To maintain and strengthen locally sustainable communities across the rural parts of Herefordshire, sustainable housing growth will be supported in or adjacent to those settlements identified in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. This will enable development that has the ability to bolster existing service provision, improve facilities and infrastructure and meet the needs of the communities concerned.

The minimum growth target in each rural Housing Market Area will be used to inform the level of housing development to be delivered in the various settlements set out in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. Neighbourhood Development Plans will allocate land for new housing or otherwise demonstrate delivery to provide levels of housing to meet the various targets, by indicating levels of suitable and available capacity.

Housing proposals will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

1. Their design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area. In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.15 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned;
2. Their locations make best and full use of suitable brownfield sites wherever possible;
3. They result in the development of high quality, sustainable schemes which are appropriate to their context and make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and its landscape setting; and
4. They result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand.

Specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be particularly supported where they meet an identified need and their long-term retention as local needs housing is secured as such.

Figure 4.14: The settlements which will be the main focus of proportionate housing development

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

Figure 4.15: Other settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate.

HMA			
Bromyard	Golden Valley	Kington	Ledbury
Docklow Edwyn Ralph Hatfield Munderfield Ocle Pychard Pudleston Steensbridge Ullingswick	Abbeydore Bacton Blakemere Lower Maes-coed Priory Wood Rowlestone Tyberton	Hergest Holme Marsh Kinnersley Letton Staunton on Arrow Woonton	Canon Frome Coddington Eggleton Mathon Monkhide Much Cowarne Stretton Grandison
Leominster	Hereford	Ross-on-Wye	
Ashton Aymestrey Brierley Cobnash Combe Moor Eyton Ivington Kinsham Leinthall Earls Leinthall Starks Little Hereford Moreton Mortimers Cross Middleton on the Hill Stapleton Upper Hill Walford Wharton Yatton	Burmarsh Breinton Byford Dinedor Dormington Grafton Kings Pyon Ledgemoor Little Tarrington Litmarsh Mansel Lacy Moorhampton Munstone Pipe and Lyde Preston Wynne Priors Frome Ruckhall Shelwick Shucknall Stoke Edith Twyford Common Vauld Westhide Weston Beggard Withington Marsh Yazor	Aconbury Allensmore Aston Ingham Bishopswood Broad Oak Brockhampton Cobhall Common Didley Glewstone Harewood End Howle Hill Kilpeck Llancloudy Llangarron Llanwarne Much Birch/The Axe and Cleaver Orcop Rushall St Owens Cross Symonds Yat (West)	Three Ashes Thrupton Upton Crews Welsh Newton Common

Traffic management

- 5.1.52 In order to deliver the strategic objectives outlined in Policy SS4 in the Spatial Strategy, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have incorporated the traffic management and safety criteria set out in Policy MT1.
- 5.1.53 Herefordshire Council's *Local Transport Plan 2013-2015* (LTP) defines the following road hierarchy across the county:
- the strategic highway network - comprising the M50, A49, A465, and A40. The strategic highway links Hereford with the market towns and provides the principal routes into and throughout the county;
 - main distributor roads which comprise mainly A class routes that supplement the strategic network;
 - secondary distributor roads which comprise mainly B and C class roads that link movements to and from the main distributor network; and
 - local distributor roads that facilitate movement between rural settlements and parishes.

Policy MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel

Development proposals should incorporate the following principle requirements covering movement and transportation:

1. demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network or that traffic impacts can be managed to acceptable levels to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts from the development;
2. promote and, where possible, incorporate integrated transport connections and supporting infrastructure (depending on the nature and location of the site), including access to services by means other than private motorised transport;
3. encourage active travel behaviour to reduce numbers of short distance car journeys through the use of travel plans and other promotional and awareness raising activities;
4. ensure that developments are designed and laid out to achieve safe entrance and exit, have appropriate operational and manoeuvring space, accommodate provision for all modes of transport, the needs of people with disabilities and provide safe access for the emergency services;
5. protect existing local and long distance footways, cycleways and bridleways unless an alternative route of at least equal utility value can be used, and facilitate improvements to existing or provide new connections to these routes, especially where such schemes have been identified in the Local Transport Plan and/or Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
6. have regard to with both the council's Highways Development Design Guide and cycle and vehicle parking standards as prescribed in the Local Transport Plan - having regard to the location of the site and need to promote sustainable travel choices.

Where traffic management measures are introduced they should be designed in a way which respects the character of the surrounding area including its landscape character. Where appropriate, the principle of shared spaces will be encouraged.

- 5.1.54 Development proposals should not inhibit the safe and efficient flow of the strategic network. The use of controls on access can positively contribute to the integration of sustainable modes of transport (walking,

cycling and public transport), and development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the criteria in Policy MT1 have been incorporated within the design of the scheme in order to increase active travel across the county.

- 5.1.55 Alongside the above, development proposals should have regard to the council's LTP while promoting the principles set out in Herefordshire Council's Highway Development Design Guide for New Developments and the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 – Wider Application of the Principles (2010) or subsequent documentation. Consideration will also be given to the Department of Transport Circular 02/2013 and Design Manual for roads and bridges or subsequent documentation.
- 5.1.56 Traffic management schemes should respect the local area including landscape character by providing an appropriate design solution, siting of infrastructure and use of materials as well as taking opportunities to improve the quality of the public realm as part of an integrated approach. This may include opportunities for rationalising the existing infrastructure and 'de-cluttering' the streetscape to the benefit of its appearance as well as functioning.
- 5.1.57 In appropriate locations, the use of shared space can provide an approach which can reduce delays and allow pedestrians to move more freely within the space. Shared space is a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

Delivery and monitoring of social progress policies

5.1.58 These policies will be delivered by:

- the development management process;
- preparation and implementation of the Hereford Area Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plans and other Development Plan Documents; and
- developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure levy.

Social Progress Monitoring Indicators

5.1.59 The following indicators (in addition to those set out at the end of the spatial strategy) will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policies through the Annual Monitoring Report:

- life expectancy of residents – Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- affordable housing completions split by social and intermediate occupancy;
- rural exception site completion;
- house type and number of bedrooms (aspirational);
- assessment of traveller site provision against the need identified in the council's Assessment of Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers;
- recommendations of the Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Assessment which includes surveys of open space, sports and recreation facilities to assess useability, supply, access and maintenance;
- number of planning applications proposing the loss of an open space, sports or recreation facilities; and
- number of planning applications proposing new open space, sports and recreation facilities.

Local distinctiveness

- 5.3.2 To successfully deliver the Core Strategy vision in respect of environmental quality and local distinctiveness, this section provides a proactive strategy for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of environmental assets and the delivery of new green infrastructure to support policies SS6 and SS7.
- 5.3.3 Locally distinctive assets both natural and man-made, are finite and irreplaceable and any detrimental impacts can carry cultural, environmental, economic and social costs. A number of assets benefit from statutory designations within national and international legislation. Statutory designations range from large areas conserved for landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity importance, such as the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and River Wye Special Area of Conservation, to individual statutory listed buildings which are protected for their architectural or historical significance. Appendix 8 lists the designated sites in Herefordshire at the time of adoption.
- 5.3.4 Non-statutory designations and locally determined features are equally important to Herefordshire's local distinctiveness. Working with partner organisations, Herefordshire Council has identified important assets such as local wildlife sites, local geological sites and areas and buildings of local interest which contribute to Herefordshire's unique character. Non-statutory locally distinctive buildings and green spaces will be identified through forthcoming Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 5.3.5 Conserving local distinctiveness is central to the purposes of designations at all levels and achieved substantially through the production and implementation of management plans, conservation strategies and objectives and guidance resulting from best practice and local assessments.

Landscape and townscape

- 5.3.6 The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as *"an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"*. Herefordshire has a distinctive and varied landscape. Much of the area is rural in nature but varied in landscape character, including high hills, forest, commons and river meadows. Herefordshire contains a wide range of settlement patterns, different types of farmland and evidence of ancient landscape features. This diverse landscape is an integral element of Herefordshire's local distinctiveness.
- 5.3.7 Landscape is important, not just as scenery but because it links culture with nature, and the past with the present. It has many values, not all of them tangible (such as sense of place); and it matters to people – it is people who create and value landscape. All landscapes matter, not only those with national designations. They provide a range of services such as food, water, climate regulation and aesthetic enjoyment.
- 5.3.8 The concepts of conservation, restoration and enhancement have been set out as a strategic approach to landscape and townscape management. The principles are relevant when considering the management of individual sites where the landscape character may be dependent upon unique landscape features. Landscape survey and analysis are proactive tools for allowing new build developments to address the three principles. For development proposals there are often opportunities for measures to conserve landscape features such as trees, to restore features such as boundary hedges and to enhance the landscape character by other means such as woodland planting, creation of wetland areas or restoration of historic features. The preparation of landscape schemes and management plans

should address these three aspects in relation to the local landscape character and the relevant landscape type. Designated areas are detailed on the Policies Map. Specific conservation area boundaries can be found on the council's website at the planning/conservation pages.

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Development proposals should:

- demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;
- conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management;
- incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings; and
- maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.

5.3.9 A number of landscape and townscape character assessments have been prepared supported by a Historic Landscape Characterisation and completed conservation areas appraisals. The *Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance 2009* (SPD) will be reviewed during the plan period. The SPD will build upon the detailed evidence base documentation; including Natural England's Character Areas as well as more recently produced *Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis January 2010*, *Rapid Townscape Assessments (various)*, *Green Infrastructure Strategy February 2010* and other local studies covering the architectural and historic environment. In conjunction with the above, relevant Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans and associated guidance also provide more place-specific guidance which should inform development proposals from the outset.

5.3.10 The particular importance of trees is recognised within the planning system and the extent of tree cover is important to the county's landscape and townscape. Tree surveys and arboricultural impact assessments may be necessary where it is important to assess and protect existing trees on or adjacent to sites where development proposals are being advanced.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

5.3.11 Biodiversity can be defined as the variety of sites, habitats and species within a specified locality and is influenced by factors such as geology, topography and climate. Geodiversity refers to the natural processes and constituent parts that have shaped the landscape and includes minerals, soils and water. Geodiversity is the variety of rock, minerals, fossils, soils, landforms and natural processes that have shaped the landscape.

5.3.12 Biodiversity and geodiversity assets provide an important contribution to the distinctiveness of an area. Herefordshire has a diverse range of geological features and wildlife habitats such as the Malvern Hills, the River Wye, ancient woodlands and traditional orchards. Wildlife is not confined to designated sites and many features serve as wildlife corridors, links and stepping stones. Ecological networks are vital to

- 5.3.27 Large scale developments should embrace the historic environment rather than regard it as a constraint. Utilising existing locally distinctive heritage assets within wider regeneration proposals can help create new developments that integrate positively with their surroundings, and can reinforce existing cultural and social characteristics. Where the loss of or substantial harm to a heritage asset or its significance is outweighed by the public benefits of a development proposal which is allowed to proceed, developers shall, in a manner proportionate to its importance, record and advance understanding of the heritage asset. This evidence shall be made publicly accessible normally through Herefordshire Historic Environment Record, a museum or other local archive as appropriate.

Sustainable design

- 5.3.28 Good design embraces more than simply the aesthetics of new development and includes how buildings are used, accessed and constructed. Equally, for development to be considered sustainable, it must embrace the move to a low carbon future through designing buildings that are more energy and water efficient and increase the use and supply of renewables. Herefordshire Council will seek to ensure that future developments are designed to enhance local distinctiveness but without stifling innovation and creativity, particularly with regard to energy efficiency.
- 5.3.29 High quality design and well planned developments can enhance community cohesion through maintaining or creating a sense of place. New development should be designed to preserve and enhance locally distinctive characteristics and positively contribute to the appearance of the locality. To achieve this, it is important that new development is successfully integrated into the existing built, natural and historic environment; however recognising that architectural styles change over time. Policy SD1 does not seek to stifle architectural innovation, contemporary design or reject advances in design and technology.

Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency

Development proposals should create safe, sustainable, well integrated environments for all members of the community. In conjunction with this, all development proposals should incorporate the following requirements:

- ensure that proposals make efficient use of land - taking into account the local context and site characteristics;
- new buildings should be designed to maintain local distinctiveness through incorporating local architectural detailing and materials and respecting scale, height, proportions and massing of surrounding development, while making a positive contribution to the architectural diversity and character of the area including, where appropriate, through innovative design;
- safeguard residential amenity for existing and proposed residents;
- ensure new development does not contribute to, or suffer from, adverse impacts arising from noise, light or air contamination, land instability or cause ground water pollution;
- where contaminated land is present, undertake appropriate remediation where it can be demonstrated that this will be effective;
- ensure that distinctive features of existing buildings and their setting are safeguarded and where appropriate, restored;
- utilise physical sustainability measures that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and waste including provision for recycling, and enabling renewable energy and energy conservation infrastructure;
- where possible, on-site renewable energy generation should also be incorporated;

Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency continued

- create safe and accessible environments, and that minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by incorporating Secured by Design principles, and consider the incorporation of fire safety measures;
- ensuring designs can be easily adapted and accommodate new technologies to meet changing needs throughout the lifetime of the development; and
- utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials;

All planning applications including material changes of use, will be expected to demonstrate how the above design and energy efficiency considerations have been factored into the proposal from the outset.

- 5.3.30 High quality design can significantly enhance the environment and amenity for new residents. Equally, the amenity and quality of life for existing residents can be adversely affected by insensitive, poorly considered design. To address this, buildings, extensions and spaces must be designed with regard to overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impacts. Additionally, ensuring that new development is compatible with the surrounding locality requires more than simply scale and aesthetic qualities, and includes consideration of the impacts of noise and artificial light, ground conditions and air quality.
- 5.3.31 All developments must demonstrate how they have been designed and how they have incorporated measures to make them resilient to climate change in respect of carbon reduction, water efficiency and flood risk. Carbon reduction should influence design from the outset by ensuring the fabric of the building is as energy efficient as possible, for example, attaining thermal efficiencies through construction that achieves low U values and fuel efficiencies through the use of services such as efficient boilers. Good site planning can also aid greater energy efficiency in new development, for example, by seeking to maximise solar gain.
- 5.3.32 Revisions to the Building Regulations are introducing progressive increases in the energy efficiency requirements for new buildings. In terms of energy conservation, developments in sustainable locations that achieve accredited standards of energy conservation which cover a range of sustainability criteria will be supported, particularly where the level achieved materially exceeds the relevant Building Regulations and other relevant standards in place at the time.
- 5.3.33 Large-scale developments should demonstrate how opportunities for on-site renewable energy generation and sustainable waste management have also been considered and addressed within the design of the scheme. Such details should include an appraisal of all suitable renewable energy technology. Other developments will also be encouraged to consider whether on-site renewable energy opportunities might be available. Alongside this, the council supports the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies within existing developments, subject to such proposals according with other policies of the Core Strategy.
- 5.3.34 The efficient use of land is encouraged in the design policy; however it does not specify minimum development densities; these are referenced in Policy SS2. It is recognised that in highly accessible locations development proposals may be more sustainable and viable if constructed to higher densities than usually found elsewhere in the county, provided there is no detrimental impact upon existing local amenity. However in most instances, appropriate density will primarily be informed by the local context as well as site opportunities and constraints.

- 5.3.35 Accessibility for all members of society is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and inclusive design, and must be carefully considered in all development proposals. Development layouts should be designed to provide a high degree of permeability particularly for sustainable modes of travel within the site, and provide safe connections to adjoining land uses and local community facilities.
- 5.3.36 Sustainable design principles can also contribute to reducing crime and the fear of crime. Developers should consider whether the location and form of their development should adopt the principles set out in the document 'Secured by Design 2010 (Association of Chief Police Officers)' incorporating design measures such as ensuring a high level of natural surveillance, sensitive consideration of boundary treatments and clear delineation of public and private spaces, in order to aid the creation of a safer and more inclusive environment. In addition, provision should be made to allow ease of access for emergency services.
- 5.3.37 Council Directive 96/82/EC (the Seveso II Directive) requires that the objectives of the prevention of major accidents involving hazardous substances and limiting their consequences for man and the environment are taken into account in land use planning. Within the county, certain industrial sites and associated infrastructure fall within the scope of hazardous substances controls by virtue of the nature and quantity of substances used or stored; in considering applications for development in the vicinity of such sites regard will also be had to the risks arising. It is important that the presence of hazardous substances is compatible with the existing and proposed uses of the site and of land in the vicinity. In particular, appropriate distances should be maintained between establishments where hazardous substances are present or proposed and existing or proposed residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest. Full account will be taken of advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency in dealing with applications for both hazardous substances consent and for development at or in the vicinity of land where such substances are present.
- 5.3.38 The age structure of the county is rapidly changing with an increasing elderly population. Increasing fuel prices is resulting in residents, particularly in rural areas, reviewing their home to work travel patterns, furthermore continual advances in technology means costly refurbishments of existing buildings is often required to meet modern requirements. It is therefore important that developments are flexibly designed to be adaptable to different and future occupational and technological needs and demands. This can include measures such as meeting lifetime homes and equivalent standards in residential design, providing infrastructure to meet the growth in demand for electric vehicles, providing adequate space for internal and external plant and facilitating home working and live/work opportunities.
- 5.3.39 Design guidance will be prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document to provide baseline standards across Herefordshire; expanding on the above design principles and to inform the preparation of masterplans, other Development Plan Documents, Neighbourhood Development Plans, parish plans, village design statements and planning applications.

Renewable and low carbon energy generation

- 5.3.40 An overarching principle of the planning system is to support the transition to a low carbon future. A significant means of achieving this goal is through the use of renewable energy sources. Renewable energy covers energy generated directly from natural sources, be it sun, wind or water, or indirect sources such as biomass and geothermal heat. The Climate Change Act makes the UK the first country in the world to have a long term legally binding commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The Act commits the UK to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80%, from a 1990 baseline, by 2050. The UK

