

Herefordshire Local Plan

# Core Strategy 2011 - 2031



## Shaping our place

DRAFT ♦ March 2013



## Introduction and background

### The Local Plan

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

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

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

- deliver more, better quality homes (especially affordable homes) to meet growing needs in this "high house price" compared to "average income" area
- deliver improved infrastructure to support economic development and a growing population





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

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



## The Core Strategy

This first document in the production of the Local Plan is the Core Strategy. This is a very important part of the Local Plan because it shapes future development and sets the overall strategic planning framework for the county. The Core Strategy needs to balance environmental issues with economic and social needs and ensure that development is sustainable and does not cause irreversible harm to important resources and features. It sets a vision, closely aligned with the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (June 2010), as to how the county should look and function and how development needs will be met up to 2031.

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

When adopted, the Core Strategy policies will replace most Unitary Development Plan 2007 (UDP) policies. However, some of the policies contained in the previous UDP have been saved (see appendix 1) and will remain in force until replaced by other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans. Together with the Hereford Area Plan, Natural Resources Development Plan Document, Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document and other





development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans, the Core Strategy will form the development plan for Herefordshire. A Proposals Map will set out the designations and allocations for all development plan documents, once they have been examined and adopted. In the meantime, many environmental designations continue to be shown on the adopted Unitary Development Plan 2007 Proposals Map which can be found on the council's website.

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

### Changes to the plan since the last consultation

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

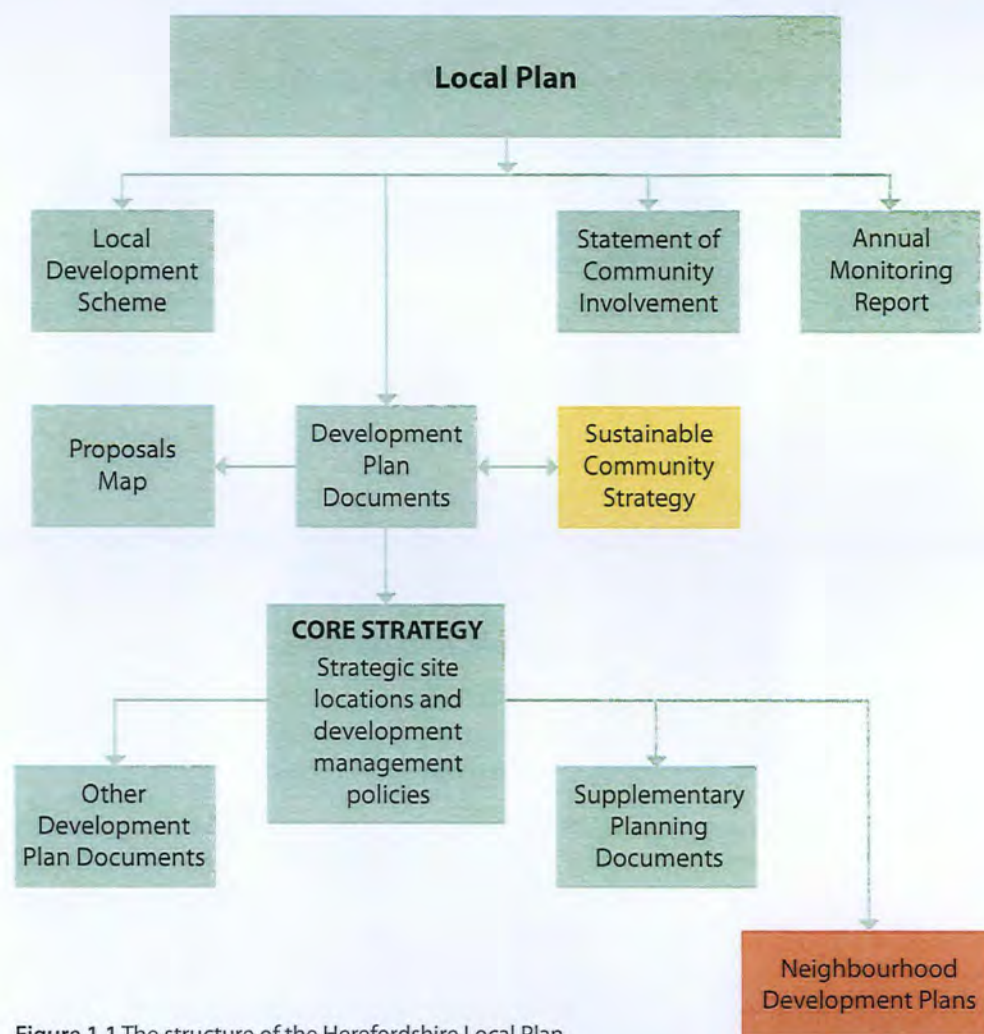


Figure 1.1 The structure of the Herefordshire Local Plan





## Relationship with other strategies

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

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

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





## **Natural resources**

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

## **Gypsies and travellers**

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## **The Sustainable Community Strategy**

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

of the Herefordshire Plan priorities. The themes from the Herefordshire Plan have therefore helped to guide the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy.

## **Neighbourhood development plans**

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

## **Local Transport Plan**

The council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) establishes the framework for the delivery of all aspects of transport and travel for Herefordshire. The development of the LTP and the Core Strategy has been a linked process. The council's emerging LTP covers the first part of the Core Strategy period from April 2012 to 2015 and is an important local document which supports the delivery of the Core Strategy. The LTP will be updated to include key elements of infrastructure set out in the Core Strategy following its adoption.





## Economic Development Strategy

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

## Local Investment Plan

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

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

## Other plans

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

## Consultation

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

1. Issues Paper (autumn 2007)
2. Developing Options Paper (summer 2008)
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Figure 1.2 Adjoining authorities to Herefordshire

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

### Working with other authorities and organisations

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

Adjoining English strategic authorities to Herefordshire are Worcestershire County Council, Shropshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council, which deal with waste and minerals matters. There is a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2004-2034) between Herefordshire and Worcestershire and this has had great success -





residents' have helped to meet its aims through reducing the amount of waste thrown away and by increasing the amount of waste recycled .

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

Herefordshire also borders Shropshire Council. The two local authorities have worked closely together in the production of a housing evidence base including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 for the West Housing Market Area. Joint working has also taken place with respect to gypsies and travellers assessments of need and alongside other constituent authorities in the development of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – discussed later in this section.

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

Economic influences are particularly significant in the county. The Economic Development Strategy 2011 for Herefordshire highlights a





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

1. The Broadband project involved close co-operation with Gloucestershire County Council to use government and private sector funding to provide access to faster broadband. The project area covers all homes and businesses in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire which would otherwise not have received faster broadband without government intervention.
2. The underlying aim of the Core Strategy in promoting regeneration in Hereford highlights a move towards creating a more sustainable county with improved employment, leisure, and cultural opportunities thereby potentially reducing some of the cross boundary movements. Herefordshire has formed a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with Shropshire and Telford because of the common issues between the areas. The Marches LEP will be used to share resources to create benefit for local

businesses and raise the profile of the area. One example of this is the creation of the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas. The Enterprise Zone has a focus on the defence and security sector with additional employment hubs focused on advanced technologies, environmental technologies and food and drink technologies. It is intended that the scheme will become a catalyst for enhanced economic growth throughout the towns of the Marches through the creation of highly skilled jobs and encouragement of overseas investment into the area. The Marches LEP Board have approved "Poised for Growth" a high level planning and housing statement which sets out a pledge to work pro-actively with developers and businesses to create economic growth across the LEP area.



Figure 1.3 Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas, Hereford





## Evidence base

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

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

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

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

## Monitoring and Review

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

3694 The Core Strategy has also been subject to Habitats Regulations





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

### Flexibility

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

The evidence base will be kept up to date and specific studies e.g. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be regularly reviewed. All of the policies are written to refer to national policy rather than repeat it and

to refer to the evidence base and this allows the policies to be valid even where there are minor changes to higher level policies or the evidence base. Some policies also refer to further development plan documents or supplementary planning documents which may also update existing policies or allow for flexibility in detail without changing the policy itself.

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

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





## Introduction and background

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

- Economic influences are particularly significant in the county. The Economic Development Strategy 2011 for Herefordshire highlights a





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

1. The Broadband project involved close co-operation with Gloucestershire County Council to use government and private sector funding to provide access to faster broadband. The project area covers all homes and businesses in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire which would otherwise not have received faster broadband without government intervention.
2. The underlying aim of the Core Strategy in promoting regeneration in Hereford highlights a move towards creating a more sustainable county with improved employment, leisure, and cultural opportunities thereby potentially reducing some of the cross boundary movements. Herefordshire has formed a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with Shropshire and Telford because of the common issues between the areas. The Marches LEP will be used to share resources to create benefit for local

businesses and raise the profile of the area. One example of this is the creation of the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas. The Enterprise Zone has a focus on the defence and security sector with additional employment hubs focused on advanced technologies, environmental technologies and food and drink technologies. It is intended that the scheme will become a catalyst for enhanced economic growth throughout the towns of the Marches through the creation of highly skilled jobs and encouragement of overseas investment into the area. The Marches LEP Board have approved "Poised for Growth" a high level planning and housing statement which sets out a pledge to work pro-actively with developers and businesses to create economic growth across the LEP area.



Figure 1.3 Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas, Hereford





## Evidence base

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

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

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

The Core Strategy has also been subject to Habitats Regulations

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

## Monitoring and Review

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





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

### Flexibility

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

The evidence base will be kept up to date and specific studies e.g. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be regularly reviewed. All of the policies are written to refer to national policy rather than repeat it and

to refer to the evidence base and this allows the policies to be valid even where there are minor changes to higher level policies or the evidence base. Some policies also refer to further development plan documents or supplementary planning documents which may also update existing policies or allow for flexibility in detail without changing the policy itself.

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

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





## Vision, objectives and the spatial strategy

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

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

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

### Sustainable development

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

### **Vision and objectives**

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

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

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





## Vision for social progress in Herefordshire

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

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

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

## Vision for economic prosperity in Herefordshire

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

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

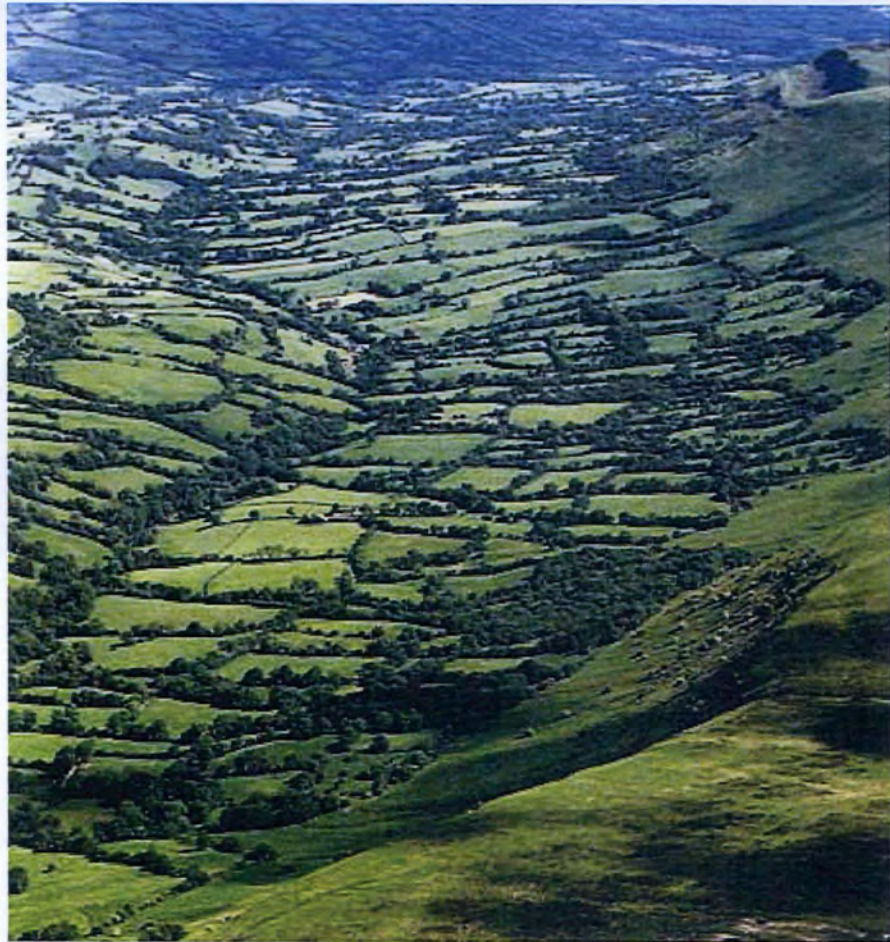
Educational developments (including higher education) will bolster and support local resources and strengths, such as environmental technologies, creative industries, agriculture, food production, forestry, equestrian expertise and tourism as well as support improved skills training, development and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

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

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







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

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

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

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





**Figure 3.1: Strategic objectives**

Core Strategy objectives		Core Strategy policies
<b>Social progress</b>		
1	To meet the housing needs of all sections of the community (especially those in need of affordable housing), by providing a range of quality, energy efficient homes in the right place at the right time	SS2; SS3; Section 4 (Place Shaping Policies); H1; H2; H3; H4; SD1; SD2; SD3; SD4;
2	To improve the health, well-being and quality of life of all residents by ensuring new developments positively contribute towards better access to, provision and use of, improved public open spaces, sport and recreation, education, cultural and health facilities	OS1; SS2; OS3; SC1;
3	To support existing education, life-long learning and the retention of our young people through the provision and/or improvement of higher education, skills development and training facilities	SC1
4	To reduce the need to travel and lessen the harmful impacts from traffic growth, promote active travel and improve quality of life by locating significant new development where access to employment, shopping, education, health, recreation, leisure and other services are, or could be made available by walking, cycling or public transport	SS1; SS4;
5	To improve access to services in rural areas and movement and air quality within urban areas by ensuring new developments support the provision of an accessible, integrated, safe and sustainable transport network and improved traffic management schemes	MT1





Core Strategy objectives		Core Strategy policies
<b>Economic prosperity</b>		
6	To provide more local, better paid job opportunities to limit out-commuting and strengthen the economy by attracting higher value-added, knowledge based industries and cutting-edge environmental technologies to new/existing employment land and enabling existing businesses to grow and diversify, facilitated by the universal provision of a high bandwidth broadband service	SS4; E1; E2; E3; HD6
7	To strengthen Hereford's role as a focus for the county, through city centre expansion as part of wider city regeneration and through the provision of a balanced package of transport measures including park and ride, bus priority schemes and a relief road including a second river crossing	HD1; HD2; HD3; HD4; HD5; HD6; E5; E6
8	To strengthen the economic viability of the market towns, villages and their rural hinterlands by facilitating employment generation and diversification, improving delivery and access to services through housing (including affordable housing) and improved ICT as well as realising the value of the environment as an economic asset	BY1; BY2; LO1; LO2; LB1; LB2; RW1; RW2; KG1; RA1- 6; E5; E6
9	To develop Herefordshire as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by enabling the provision of new, as well as enhancement of existing tourism infrastructure in appropriate locations	E4





## Core Strategy objectives

## Core Strategy policies

### Environmental quality

10	To achieve sustainable communities and protect the environment by delivering well-designed places, spaces and buildings, which use land efficiently, reinforce local distinctiveness and are supported by the necessary infrastructure including green infrastructure	SD1; LD1; LD2; LD3; LD4; ID1
11	To address the causes and impacts of climate change by ensuring new development: uses sustainable design and construction methods to conserve natural resources, does not increase flood risk to new or existing property, increases the use of renewable forms of energy to reduce carbon emissions, minimises waste and pollution, manages water supply and conservation and conserves and protects biodiversity and geodiversity	SS5; SD1; SD2; SD3; SD4; LD3; MN1-6; W1-5;
12	To conserve, promote, utilise and enjoy our natural, built, historic and cultural assets for the fullest benefits to the whole community by safeguarding the county's current stock of environmental assets from loss and damage, reversing negative trends, ensuring best condition and encouraging expansion, as well as appropriately managing future assets	LD1; LD2; LD3; LD4; LD5





## The spatial strategy

### Background

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

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





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

Key decision	Alternative/s considered	Stage of Core Strategy production	SA/SEA report reference
Focussing the majority of development to Hereford and the market towns with a combined strategy of considering social, economic and environmental goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Economic option</li> <li>2 Social option</li> <li>3 Environmental option</li> <li>4 New town or expanded settlement</li> </ol>	Developing Options and Place Shaping	Developing Options SA/SEA (Appendix B2-2) Place Shaping SA (Appendix B3-1 page 1)
Focussing the largest strategic allocation (after Hereford) to Leominster	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Disperse growth around the town at smaller sites</li> <li>2 Limiting growth</li> </ol>	Developing Options	Developing Options SA/SEA (Appendix B3 page 41)
Promoting a western relief road route corridor as part of a new transport package for Hereford	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 No relief road</li> <li>2 Promoting an eastern route corridor option</li> <li>3 Variations to the southern part of the western route corridor</li> <li>4 Promote a partial eastern route corridor instead of a western route corridor</li> </ol>	Preferred Option and Revised Preferred Option	Preferred Option SA/SEA Note for Hereford (page 17) and Revised preferred Option SA Note (page 13)
Reducing the amount of housing proposed in the strategy overall from 18,000 to 16,500 by reducing the amount at Hereford and increasing the amount proposed in the rural areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Make no changes</li> <li>2 Just change time period of plan</li> <li>3 Retain 18,000, but redistribute 2000 houses from Hereford to rural areas</li> <li>4 Retain 18,000 dwellings total, but redistribute 2000 houses from Hereford to the market towns</li> <li>5 Build more than 18,000 new homes up to 2031</li> <li>6 Reduce all the strategic sites in Hereford</li> </ol>	Revised Preferred Option	Revised Preferred Options SA/SEA page11
Revising the Preferred Option Rural Areas policy to allow for a more flexible approach to housing in the rural areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Maintaining the rural areas policy suggested at Preferred Option</li> <li>2 Allow unrestricted development to meet the housing demand</li> </ol>	Draft Core Strategy	Draft Core Strategy SA







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





The spatial strategy reflects the existing and future role and function of all settlements in Herefordshire. A hierarchy of settlements was identified through the consultations on Developing Options and Place Shaping Paper stages of production of the Core Strategy, with the majority of growth taking place in the urban areas of Hereford and the Market Towns at the highest level of the hierarchy. Following a revised methodology of the hierarchy below the market towns level following Preferred Options stage, a more localised approach has identified villages countywide where proportional levels of development may be acceptable. These are detailed in the Place Shaping section and include villages considered sustainable in having an existing range of services, together with those where some development offers the potential to become more sustainable strengthening their role locally.

The existing urban areas are regarded as the most suitable locations for future development because of their existing easy access to services and facilities, thereby providing the opportunity to reduce out-commuting to other centres for e.g. work and shopping and reduce the need to travel by private car for such trips - so increasing "self-containment". Further development in Hereford and the market towns will help to maintain their role as service centres and contribute to their regeneration through provision of additional services and facilities required to support new development. This in turn will help to sustain the rural areas that surround them.





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

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

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

### Achieving social progress

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

### Policy SS2 - Delivering new homes

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

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

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

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

Place	Facilities	New homes
Hereford	Wide range of services and main focus for development	6,500
Other urban areas – Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross on Wye	Range of services and reasonable transport provision – opportunities to strengthen role in meeting requirements of surrounding communities	4,700
Rural Villages – see list in place- shaping section	More limited range of services and some limited development potential but numerous locations	5,300
<b>Total</b>		<b>16,500</b>





## Providing high quality homes

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

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

Herefordshire had an estimated population in 2011 of 183,600. The population over the last 20 years has consistently grown at a faster rate than across the West Midlands (and England since 1996). However, the population structure has an above average proportion aged over 50 and a particularly low proportion aged 15-34 relative to the regional and national picture. Over the last 30 years, the proportion of the population aged over 34 has been increasing, whilst the numbers aged 15-34 has been declining. Population growth has been driven by growth in the number of people aged over 35. Looking at the components of population change 1999-2009, the death rate has generally exceeded the birth rate by an average of 240 persons per year resulting in natural decrease. This has been countered by net in-migration which averaged over 900 per annum and which has therefore driven population growth. Household size has been generally decreasing in recent years following the national trend for increasing single person households.

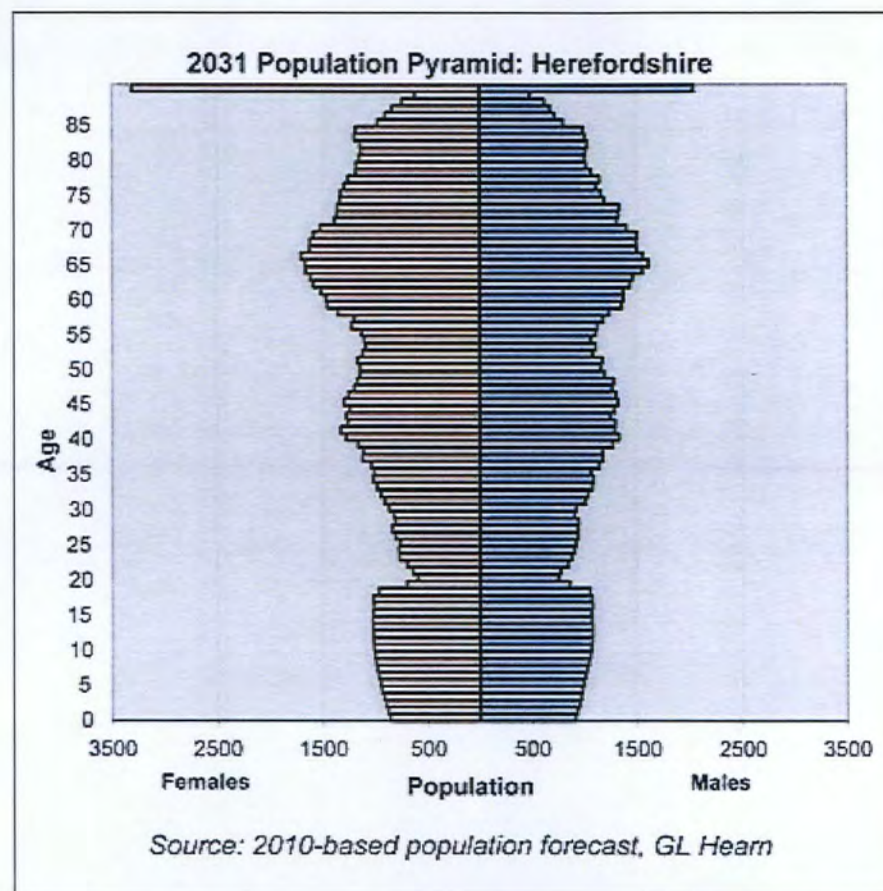
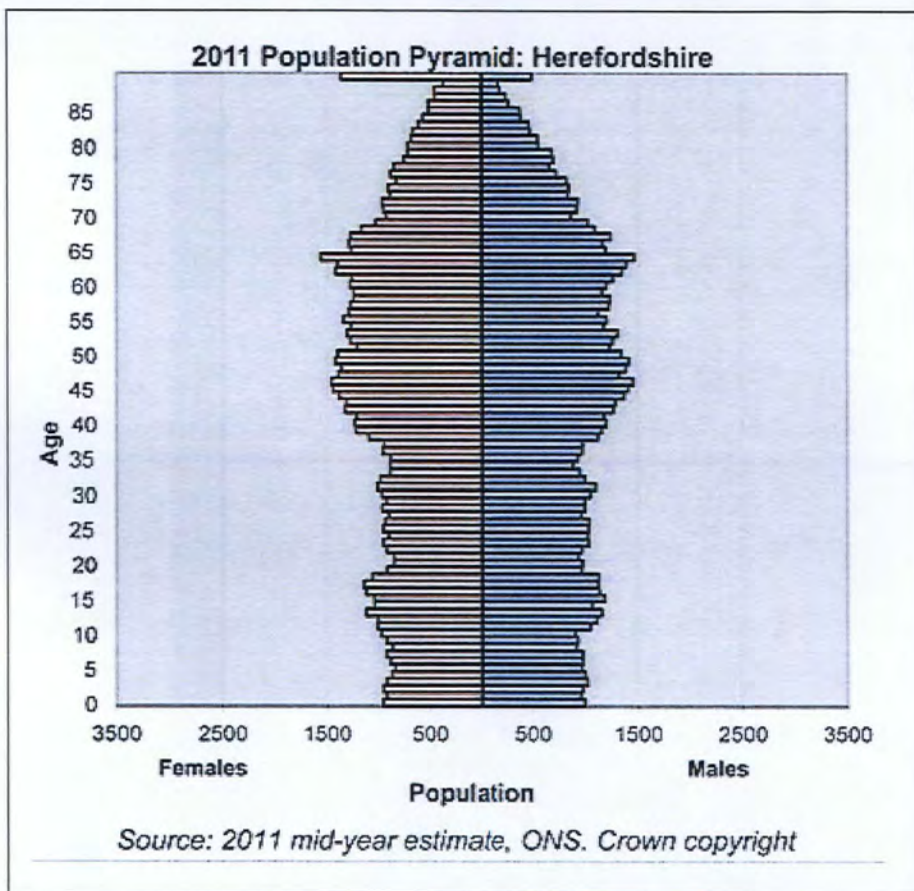
The study set out principles to help guide the process of identifying an appropriate level of housing development together with possible policy options in order to test the results. Economic scenarios were then applied testing to different rates of national economic performance. This assessment and testing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

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





Figure 3.3: Age Structure of the population 2011-31





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

**Figure 3.4: Housing land supply position at April 2011**

	Strategic allocation	Commitments 2011	Residual homes target 2011-2031
Hereford	6,500	6,500	5,466
Leominster	2,300	2,300	1,681
Ross-on-Wye	900	900	576
Ledbury	800	800	756
Bromyard	500	500	340
Kington	200	200	186
Rural Areas	5,300	5,300	4,576
Total	16,500	16,500	13,581

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

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

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

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

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







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

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







### Meeting specific housing needs

The council has produced a Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 and a Local Housing Market Assessment 2013 which indicates that there is an urgent need to increase the provision of affordable housing in the county. However, whilst there is a very high need, this has to be balanced with the outcomes of the Affordable Housing Viability Study 2011 and the Economic Viability Study 2013. Whilst affordable housing is a priority for the county, the need for new infrastructure to help economic growth is another priority and levels of affordable housing percentages and thresholds required have been set to reflect the viability of achieving both priorities. In terms of delivery, a strategy focussed on growth and development of strategic sites is considered the best approach in order to get affordable homes built in the county over the plan period. The council has been working to looking at other forms of affordable housing delivery including using public sector land assets and supporting direct delivery through Registered Providers. The place shaping policies and the general policy on affordable housing will deliver this part of the strategy.

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

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

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





## Housing trajectory

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

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

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

## Policy SS3 Releasing land for residential development

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

**Figure 3.5: Indicative housing trajectory**

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

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





## Windfalls

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

- sufficient specific sites to deliver housing in the first five years of the plan period with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;
- a further supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for years 6-10 and where possible, for years 11-15.

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

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

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





## Movement and transportation

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

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

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





## Policy SS4 – Movement and transportation

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

#### *Pedestrians and cyclists:*

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

#### *Public transport:*

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

#### *Major transport schemes:*

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







### *Freight*

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

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

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

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





## Education and Skills

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

## Health and wellbeing

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

## Access to services

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

## New and/or improved infrastructure

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





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

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

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

### **Achieving economic prosperity**

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

### **Policy SS5 - Employment provision**

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

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





## Policy HD2 - Hereford movement

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

- Packages of transport improvements focussing on key routes into the city delivering a range of public realm improvements to improve access and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users;
- Reduced reliance on car use by incorporating walking, cycling and bus routes within new developments and connecting them with existing networks;
- Improvements to public transport infrastructure enabling improved access and integration between bus and to rail services;
- Car parking facilities which attract shoppers and visitors and deter commuter parking in the city centre through the development of Park and Ride, Park and Share and Park and Cycle sites;
- A western relief road to reduce the volume of traffic from the city centre and enable the delivery of walking, cycling and bus improvements on the existing highway network. The road developed in such a way which avoids and mitigates adverse impacts from physical damage/loss of habitat, noise pollution and vibration, light pollution, air pollution and water quality on the River Wye SAC.

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

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

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

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

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





The Hereford Relief Road – Study of Options (Aug 2010) reviewed all route options and assessed the impacts of the routes in relation to environmental, engineering and traffic impacts. The inner western corridor, as shown in the figure 4.4, is the preferred corridor for the relief road based on the study's overall assessment.

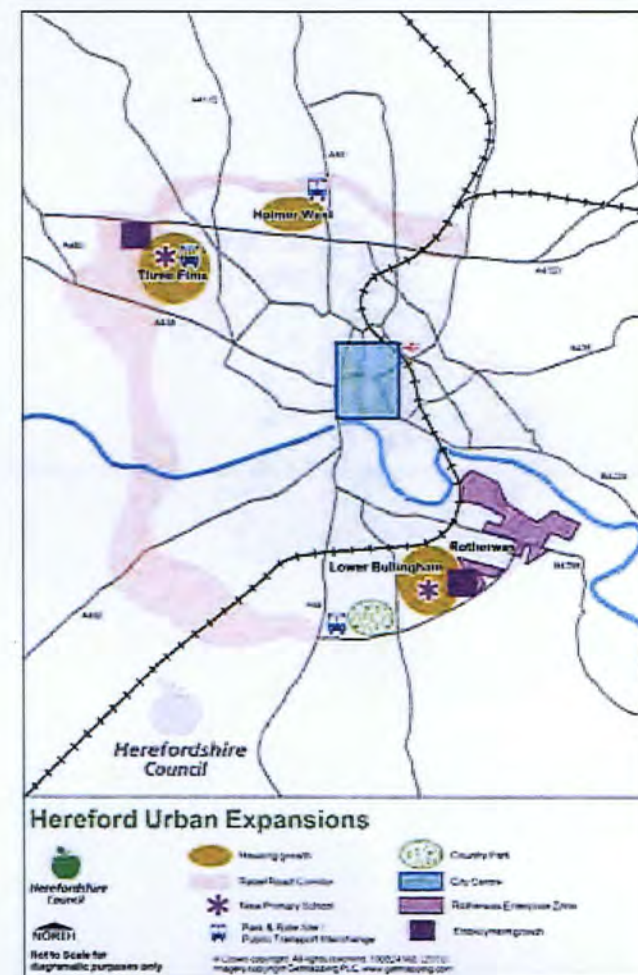
The report indicates that the impact on biodiversity at the River Wye crossing can be largely mitigated through the use of wide span structures and avoidance of direct working in the watercourse.

The first section of the relief road constructed is likely to be the section between the A49 and A465 as part of the Belmont Transport Package (as identified in the Local Transport Plan). The second and lengthy western inner corridor which includes a bridge crossing (A465 – A4103) would need to be co-ordinated with the development of the western urban expansion proposals. The final section would link the A4103 to the western and eastern sides of the A49 in the north of Hereford. Costs of the link sections are highlighted within the study. The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy will generate a significant part of the funding for the project. Other sources of funding and timings of delivery are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies this document. The Economic Viability Assessment 2013 explains the viability of the project and other proposals in the plan generally.

Work on the detailed alignment of the road will be considered during the Hereford Area Plan. Close working with key statutory bodies will be needed to ensure the avoidance of impact on natural assets and appropriate identification of mitigation measures, particularly in relation to impacts from physical damage/loss of habitat, noise pollution and vibration, light pollution, air pollution and water quality on the River Wye SAC. In addition, it will be essential to work closely with the Highways Agency to ensure that all opportunities are realised to re-route trunk road traffic to the new relief road. This will reduce the intrusion of commercial and longer distance traffic through the city centre, reduce existing air quality problems and provide the council with greater control of the existing city transport network.

### Hereford urban expansion areas

Three expansion areas and associated infrastructure, services and facilities are proposed. The broad location of these is shown in figure 4.4 and the proposals are described in the following paragraphs.



**Figure 4.4 Hereford urban expansion areas and relief road corridor.**



### Northern Urban Expansion (Holmer west)

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

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

### Policy HD3 - Northern Urban Expansion

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

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





- a pre-school facility and provision of/contributions towards the enhancement of existing primary and secondary school provision in the locality and any identified need for other community infrastructure/facilities;
- a high quality design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include maximising the energy efficiency of the dwellings and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

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

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

## New homes

Around 500 new homes will be provided within the Holmer west area. All will be built to high energy efficiency standards. 35% will be affordable with the highest proportion being intermediate tenure as required by policy H1. Housing will be delivered that meets the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. The design and styles of the new housing will complement the built and landscape character of the locality and the scale and density will be reflective of the topography and prominence of the area. The development will need to be laid out and all homes and community buildings constructed to a high sustainability standard to ensure energy and water usage is minimised and sustainably sourced materials are used where practicable. This will include the use of renewables and other low carbon energy sources.

## Movement

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

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





## Landscape and heritage

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

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

## Green infrastructure and biodiversity

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





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

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

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

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

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

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





## Western Urban Expansion (Three Elms)

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

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

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

## Policy HD4 - Western Urban Expansion (Three Elms)

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

- Around 1000 new homes comprising a mix of predominantly two and three bedroom dwellings at an average density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare. A minimum of 35% of the total number of dwellings shall be affordable housing of a tenure to meet the requirements of Policy H1
- Delivery of land and infrastructure to facilitate the construction of the adjoining phase of the Hereford Relief Road
- A minimum of 10 hectares of employment land comprising predominantly of a mixture of use class B1, B2 and B8 located near to the new livestock market with access to the Hereford Relief Road and Roman Road
- Land and infrastructure for a transport interchange or around 150 spaces to be delivered by the developer
- A new linear park along the Yazor Brook corridor connecting with the existing green infrastructure links east of the expansion area, the public rights of way network within and adjoining the expansion area and informal recreation space
- A series of new green infrastructure connections which enhance the biodiversity value of the area and also serve as pedestrian cycle links through the development including optimising the use of the disused railway line to connect with the transport interchange, schools, community facilities, employment land and the remainder of the city
- Provision for new bus links through the expansion area.
- Development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and contributes to the distinctiveness of the site and surrounding environment.





- The provision on site of appropriate sports and play facilities, formal and informal open space, community orchards, woodland planting and allotments.
- Integration of Huntington village into the development area whilst ensuring the setting of the Conservation Area is respected
- A new 210 place primary school with additional pre-school accommodation on the development to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions
- An extension of Whitecross High School to increase capacity from a 6 form entry to 7 form entry school with commensurate school playing field provision to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions
- A neighbourhood community hub to meet any identified need for small scale convenience retail, community meeting space, health provision, indoor sports and other community infrastructure/facilities.
- Sustainable urban drainage and flood mitigation solutions to form an integral part of the green infrastructure network.
- Opportunities to mitigate flood risk arising from Yazor Brook for existing residents and businesses within the city
- Sustainable standards of design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include maximising the energy efficiency of the dwellings and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources

This location is also dependent on the expanded capacity of the A49 and local highway network by the provision of sustainable transport measures and/or the construction of future phases of the Hereford Relief Road. Contributions will be required from this development for Hereford transportation improvements including new infrastructure and sustainable transport measures and other infrastructure improvements identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

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

## New homes

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

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





## **New employment**

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

## **Sustainable construction and resources use**

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

## **Movement**

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

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

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





## Green infrastructure

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

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

## Heritage

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

## Community hub and facilities

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

## New education facilities

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

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





## Surface water management and fluvial flooding

The Yazor Brook corridor is designated as floodplain which also extends to a wider land area at the eastern end of the expansion area. The Water Cycle Study and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment have highlighted that a strategy to address both the sustainable management of new surface water discharges from the urban extension and measures to mitigate against fluvial flood risk will be required. This is likely to encompass surface water attenuation features which will be an integral part of the development and will provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Yazor Brook is also an existing source of flooding to properties, community facilities and highway infrastructure east of the expansion area and the development will also need to include measures to assist in reducing this existing flood risk. The area suffers from low water pressure and therefore an upgrade to the mains water supply to serve the area may be required.

## Southern Urban Expansion (Lower Bullingham)

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

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

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

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

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





- a neighbourhood community hub including small scale convenience retail and provision of and/or contributions towards any identified need for other community infrastructure/facilities including community meeting space and health provision, indoor and outdoor sports;
- sustainable urban drainage and flood mitigation solutions to form an integral part of the green infrastructure network;
- new direct walking, cycling and bus links from the urban extension to the park and ride to the west, Hereford Enterprise Zone to the east and existing communities and the city centre to the north to be delivered directly by the developer;
- avoidance and mitigation of adverse impacts from noise pollution and vibration(during both construction and occupation of new homes) on the River Wye SAC;
- sustainable standards of design and construction that contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include maximising the energy efficiency of the buildings and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

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

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

## New homes

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

## Sustainable construction and resources use

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





## New employment

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

## Movement

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

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

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

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





## Landscape and green infrastructure

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

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

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

## Heritage

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





## Community, recreation and education facilities

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

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

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

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

## Surface water management and fluvial flooding

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





## Hereford Employment Provision

### Policy HD6 - Hereford Employment Provision

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

- the expansion of the city centre as part of wider city regeneration which will include commercial uses including new office provision and creating a better environment for existing businesses. Proposals for office uses outside of the city centre will be subject to the sequential test
- continuing development of employment land at Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas to strengthen the enterprise zone, with particular focus on defence and knowledge sectors, creating added benefit for companies who locate in the area
- encouraging small scale environmental and knowledge based employment development opportunities; and
- provision of new areas of employment land particularly through the development of strategic urban extensions.

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

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

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

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

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





## General policies

### Social Progress

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

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



### Social progress section

H1: Affordable housing

H2: Rural exception sites

H.3 Ensuring a range and mix of housing types

H.4 Traveller Sites

SC1 - Social and community facilities

OS1 - Requirement for open space, sports and recreation facilities

OS2 - Meeting open space, sports and recreation needs.

OS3 - Loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities

MT1 - Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel

### Future planning policy

The strategic policies outlined above will shape the site specific details that will follow as part of the Hereford Area Plan, neighbourhood development plans and other development plan documents.





## Affordable housing

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

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

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

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

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

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





Affordable housing under these definitions can include both individual and multiple dwellings, constructed under self-build projects funded by the registered social landlords, community housing groups and individual projects providing low cost housing that does not exceed affordable levels. In such cases planning conditions will be imposed to ensure that housing is retained in perpetuity for future local housing needs.

Housing provided under these categories whether for rent or sale must be made available at a price level that can be sustained by local people in housing need. It is important to emphasise the distinctions between the roles of the different categories of affordable housing and not to treat one as a substitute for the other. It is important to set criteria identifying what constitutes local housing need. This is in order that proposals for additional dwellings coming forward can be clearly shown to be contributing to this requirement – and thus to the aim of sustaining urban and rural communities.

Affordable housing targets and thresholds have been informed by the economic viability assessment including the likely impact upon overall levels of housing delivery and aim of creating mixed communities. The work on viability involved the definition of housing value areas which are areas where housing values/prices were broadly similar. These can be seen in figure 5.1.

### **Policy H1 - Affordable housing – thresholds and targets**

All new open market housing proposals on sites above the thresholds set out below will be expected to contribute towards meeting affordable housing needs.

In the urban areas of Hereford and the market towns, proposals of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares will be expected to contribute to affordable housing provision. In rural areas, all new housing developments will be expected to make a contribution, whereby:

- i) on sites of 3 or more dwellings, the affordable housing will be expected to be provided on-site unless developers can clearly demonstrate that a financial contribution would be more appropriate, and
- ii) on sites of 1 or 2 dwellings, developers will be required to provide a financial contribution to the provision of affordable housing off-site.

The amount and mix of affordable housing will vary depending on evidence of housing need, and where appropriate, an assessment of the viability of the development. The following indicative targets have been established based on evidence of need and viability in the county's housing market and housing value areas:

- 1. A target of 35% affordable housing provision on sites in Hereford and Kington housing value areas
- 2. A target of 40% affordable housing provision on sites in Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and northern parishes housing value areas
- 3. A target of 25% affordable housing provision on sites in Leominster housing value area

Any affordable housing provided under the terms of this policy will be expected to be available in perpetuity for those in local housing need.

In order to ensure an appropriate balance of social rented and intermediate housing is provided the evidence for each housing market area and housing value area will provide the basis for determining the mix of tenure types on specific sites.







## Market Value Areas

Herefordshire Council  
Scale 1:209,000  
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Figure 5.1 Housing value areas

The findings of the *Local Housing Market Assessment 2013* (LHMA) have also been taken into account so that the resultant policies on affordable housing are locally relevant and viable.

The LHMA indicates that there remains a significant need for social housing across the county. However, the viability of housing schemes also has to be taken into account in determining both the required percentage and an appropriate mix of tenures of affordable housing. Overall target percentages have been established for different parts of the county and are set out in the policy. In locations where achieving high levels of social rented housing would impact upon viability of new housing schemes increasing the percentage of intermediate housing will be considered where the overall affordable housing target can be maintained.

In rural areas the majority of new housing is delivered on small sites of fewer than 5 dwellings and therefore to ensure the maximum provision of new affordable housing a threshold of one house is justified. In the context of sites which are capable of delivering 3 dwellings or more, the council will expect the affordable housing to be provided on-site unless the developer can demonstrate that the requirement for affordable housing would be better met through contributions to off-site provision - where there is a realistic prospect of that off-site provision meeting the identified local need and coming forward in a reasonable timescale.

Where rural developments of one or two dwellings are proposed it is accepted that an on-site contribution is not possible and therefore an





off-site contribution will be required. Where new dwellings are provided as part of proposals for the re-use of rural buildings an element of affordable housing should also be provided on the basis of this policy.

A Supplementary Planning Document will provide additional guidance and set out the details of how the affordable housing policies will be implemented. The guidance will include:

- advice regarding the need for affordable housing
- affordable house prices and rents in Herefordshire Council
- the negotiation process
- securing affordable housing and controlling occupancy
- contributions to off-site provision

There is a need to ensure that planning policy provides for a mix of affordable housing to reflect differing household needs and future demographic trends. There are a number of intermediate housing products, including shared ownership, which is likely to be particularly appealing to would-be first-time buyers who haven't the savings to buy on the open market.

The council recognises that the provision of affordable housing is more difficult in rural areas where often the scale and location of new development is more restricted. This policy enables the provision of affordable housing outside of villages, in areas where there is generally a restraint on open market housing, in order to help meet affordable housing needs in rural areas in perpetuity.

## **Policy H2 - Rural exception sites**

Proposals for small affordable housing schemes in rural areas may be permitted on land which would not normally be released for housing where:

1. the proposal could assist in meeting a proven local need for affordable housing; and
2. the affordable housing provided is made available to, and retained in perpetuity for local people in need of affordable housing; and
3. the site respects the characteristics of its surroundings, demonstrates good design and offers reasonable access to a range of services and facilities; and
4. the gross internal floor area of the dwellings are consistent with the size limits imposed by policy RA2 (rural housing).

In order to enable the delivery of affordable housing some market housing may be permitted as part of the development to subsidise a significant proportion of affordable housing provision. However, permission will be dependent upon a clear demonstration, through a financial appraisal, that the scale of the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the affordable housing.





Rural exception schemes need to take full account of environmental considerations, including design, siting and materials and avoid sensitive locations where development would not be permitted for reasons of landscape or visual impact. Similarly a site's location should not place additional financial burdens upon households occupying the scheme such as through isolation or increased costs in gaining access to local services and facilities, for example schools and employment. Given that these schemes may be located in or around small villages, the scale of development should reflect the scale of development in the locality and should not normally exceed 15 dwellings in total.

National planning policy indicates that consideration should be given to whether allowing some market housing on exception sites would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. Where such schemes are proposed, the applicant will need to demonstrate that a mixed tenure scheme is essential to the delivery of the affordable housing and that it removes the need for public subsidy. Open market housing should be limited to an absolute minimum in such schemes in order to make the scheme viable as the provision of affordable housing is the paramount aim. The preparation of neighbourhood development plans and/or other development plan documents will also provide an opportunity to identify sites for affordable housing.

There is a clear need to provide for balanced and sustainable communities in Herefordshire. Housing affordability issues in the county are compounded by the housing offer: with a high proportion of

### **Policy H3 – Ensuring an appropriate range and mix of housing**

Residential developments should provide a range and mix of housing units which can contribute to the creation of balanced and inclusive communities. In particular, on larger housing sites developers will be expected to:

1. provide a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all households, including younger single people;
2. provide housing capable of being adapted for people in the community with additional needs
3. provide housing capable of meeting the specific needs of the elderly population through the provision of:
  - specialist accommodation for older people in suitable locations;
  - ensuring that non-specialist new housing is built to take account of the changing needs of an ageing population;
  - ensuring that developments contain a range of house types, including where appropriate bungalow accommodation.

detached housing and properties in higher council tax bands. The supply of properties which younger households might be able to afford to buy is limited; only 13.5% of housing is in social sector ownership (affordable) compared to 19.5% across the West Midlands.





The Local Housing Market Assessment recommends that planning policies are not overly prescriptive with regard to requiring a specific mix of housing sites. Specific policies for the strategic sites provide an indication of the mix of housing appropriate to the relevant housing market area. The range of house types provided across the county will be monitored to ensure an appropriate mix of housing is provided.

The study of the housing and support needs of older people in Herefordshire (2012) outlined that there is an increasing requirement for new housing to cater for older people. Addressing this need will be through a combination of measures including through the provision of specialist accommodation and also by ensuring that general housing provision is designed in such a way that enables easy adaptation to meet the requirements of all households.

### **Travellers' sites**

It is important that the housing needs and requirements of all sections of the community are considered in developing planning policies. Government planning policy is increasingly favouring the identification of sites for gypsies and travellers. Herefordshire Council recognises these requirements which will be taken forward in the preparation of a new Travellers' Development Plan Document. In the interim however, the following policy is required in order to consider the merits of planning proposals.

### **Policy H4 – Travellers sites**

Herefordshire Council will provide for the site needs of travellers through the preparation of a Travellers' Development Plan Document (DPD), which will include site allocations. Herefordshire Council will aim to provide residential sites for at least 31 new pitches for gypsies and travellers by 2017 with the target for the remainder of the period up to 2031 being established in the Travellers' DPD.

In the absence of an adopted DPD, or where proposals for sites are brought forward on non-allocated land supported by evidence that they meet a local need and no suitable alternative is available, proposals will be permitted where:

1. sites afford reasonable access to services and facilities, including health and schools, in particular avoiding long distance travel
2. adequate screening and landscaping is included within the proposal in order to ensure that the proposal does not result in an adverse effect upon the character and amenity of the landscape, historic assets and/or neighbouring properties
3. in the case of proposals for mixed business and residential accommodation providing for the live-work lifestyle of travellers, local amenity is not adversely affected
4. the number of pitches at any location should not overload local infrastructure;
5. the size of the site should reflect surrounding population size and density so that sites do not dominate nearby communities and
6. they are capable of accommodating on-site facilities that meet best practice for modern traveller site requirements, including play areas, storage, provision for recycling and waste management, and where necessary, work areas

In rural areas, where there is a case of local need for an affordable traveller site, but criterion 1 above cannot be fulfilled, then an exception may be made and proposals permitted, provided such sites can be retained for that purpose in perpetuity.

