

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 - 2031



Adopted October 2015

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Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031

Please note: The Appendices to the Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy are contained within a separate document.

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(including policies to be replaced by the Local Plan – Core Strategy)

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

Cllr Philip Price
Cabinet Member Infrastructure

Herefordshire Council
October 2015



Provision of employment land

- 5.2.3 In line with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, building a strong and competitive economy is an objective that resonates in each of the policies concerning economic prosperity. Over the plan period, Herefordshire will continue to diversify employment opportunities, encourage the expansion of local business and reduce the need for travel. Already many employment areas in Herefordshire utilise links with the A49 trunk road, including sites in Hereford city centre, Ross on Wye, Leominster, Marlbrook and Moreton-on-Lugg. There will be a greater emphasis on extending and enlarging enterprise parks in Hereford and the market towns and allowing more flexibility in the rural areas for employment development such as home working and live/work units.

Policy E1 - Employment provision

The focus for new employment provision in Herefordshire is to provide a range of locations, types and sizes of employment buildings, land and offices to meet the needs of the local economy. Larger employment proposals will be directed to the strategic employment sites of Hereford, the market towns and rural industrial estates where appropriate.

Development proposals which enhance employment provision and help diversify the economy of Herefordshire will be encouraged where:

- the proposal is appropriate in terms of its connectivity, scale, design and size;
- the proposal makes better use of previously developed land or buildings;
- the proposal is an appropriate extension to strengthen or diversify an existing business operation;
- the proposal provides for opportunities for new office development in appropriate locations.

The provision of viable live/work units as part of mixed use developments will also be encouraged.

- 5.2.4 It is important that plan policies enable new, sustainable provision of employment land in locations and of a scale that is appropriate. Whilst Herefordshire has a relatively high employment rate, it is important to make sure that adequate opportunities exist to improve the quality and range of employment available, so addressing the issue of low wages in the county.
- 5.2.5 A major element of the strategy for generating new and better paid jobs will be the provision of a deliverable range of land supply in appropriate locations and in the right amounts. 'Employment land' in this instance refers to those uses falling within the planning B use classes, that is, offices (B1), manufacturing (B2) and warehousing and distribution (B8). In addition, employment land is considered an appropriate location to accommodate waste facilities and similar sui-generis employment uses.
- 5.2.6 The following is a summary of the main new and existing strategic locations which will provide for local and inward investment and contribute to the future employment provision in the county over the plan period. There is also potential for smaller sites to come forward throughout the plan period away from these strategic locations, which will also be encouraged where appropriate.

Hereford

- 5.2.7 The city of Hereford will continue to provide a large proportion of the county's employment supply.

Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ)

The Rotherwas industrial estate is located south-east of Hereford and is over 120 hectares (ha) in size and has over 125 companies operating within it.

Westfields Trading Estate

The Westfields trading estate is a 25 ha site located in the northern part of Hereford.

Three Elms Trading Estate

Three Elms Trading Estate is located north of Hereford and occupies 3 ha of land.

Holmer Road, Hereford

The industrial precinct on Holmer Road is located to the north of Hereford and is approximately 16 ha in size.

Market towns

- 5.2.8 The market towns of Leominster, Bromyard, Kington, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury will also continue to support employment development through the rest of the county at existing and/or new strategic employment sites, which will be the primary location of a range of employment premises providing a series of enterprise hubs to complement the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The main strategic employment locations in the market towns are as follows:

Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster

- 5.2.9 The Leominster Enterprise Park is located to the south-east of Leominster and is designated by the *Employment Land Study 2012* as of 'best quality.' The site is 15 ha in size and caters for B1, B2 and B8 uses. It is envisaged to be fully developed during the first half of the plan period. Given housing growth in Leominster, it is likely that during the second half of the plan period, an additional 5-10 ha of employment land will be required by extending the Leominster Enterprise Park to the south.

Southern Avenue, Leominster

- 5.2.10 This site is adjacent to the Leominster Enterprise Park and is 33 ha in size and is rated by the *Employment Land Study 2012* as 'good.' The site has limited opportunities to provide additional employment opportunities, however it is a significant contributor to existing employment provision.

Land between Little Marcle Road and Ross Road, Ledbury

- 5.2.11 This location is to the south-west of Ledbury and will comprise approximately 12 ha of employment land which will come forward to support the existing population and proposed growth of Ledbury. The land adjoins existing employment land and is rated as 'moderate' and will cater for a mix of employment uses, particularly smaller based business which may help to reduce the need to travel for the local community.

Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye

- 5.2.12 This site, carried forward from the Unitary Development Plan 2007, is approximately 10 ha in size and is located to the east of Ross-on-Wye. The site is envisaged to deliver innovative knowledge based

industries and a high quality mix of B1, B2 and B8 employment. The site has excellent access to the A40/A49 and is classed as 'good.'

Rural areas

- 5.2.13 The areas outside of market towns are also supported for continuing economic growth, particularly in areas which allow for the diversification of uses either through strengthening food and drink production, adding to new environmental technologies or those that allow for home based start-up businesses. Policy RA6 and its explanatory text guide employment development within these areas.
- 5.2.14 There is however a small number of larger employment locations outside of Hereford and the market towns which will also continue to contribute to the provision of Herefordshire's employment needs, including:

Moreton Business Park, Moreton-on-Lugg

- 5.2.15 Moreton Business Park is a large employment site of 60 ha which is located on the A49 between Hereford and Leominster. The business park includes a mineral extraction site and other employment units which contain all employment classes. However it has recently seen an increase of B1 office use and B8 storage and distribution uses. There is also possibility to enhance rail infrastructure into the site for business use. The site is rated as 'good' with potential to be rated as 'best.'

Safeguarding existing employment land

- 5.2.16 'Best and Good' quality employment land in the county, as defined in the *Employment Land Study 2012* will continue to be safeguarded for employment generating uses and general industry. In circumstances where other employment land and sites are no longer viable, sufficient justification and evidence will need to be submitted - for example structural surveys demonstrating that the building is not fit for continued employment use, and redevelopment of the site for employment use is not viable or feasible. Where possible, flexibility will be given to enable the business the opportunity to diversify to other ancillary and complementary uses to enable the business to continue. Uses such as fitness centres, child care centres, residential and retail uses are generally not appropriate to be located within an employment site, unless they serve for the day-to day convenience needs of the site's employees and any residential use is part of a live/work scheme.
- 5.2.17 It is important that a range of employment land continues to be available within Herefordshire. Means by which this can be achieved include: safeguarding existing supply, enabling extensions to existing employment land and the development of additional employment land where appropriate.

Policy E2 – Redevelopment of existing employment land and buildings

Employment land and buildings rated as 'best' and 'good' using the methodology in the *Employment Land Study 2012* (or successor document) will be safeguarded from redevelopment to other non-employment uses.

Proposals which would result in the loss of employment land rated as 'moderate' will be permitted where:

1. the development of the site for other uses would not result in an overall shortage in the quality and quantity of employment land supply in the area; or

Local distinctiveness

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

Landscape and townscape

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

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

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Development proposals should:

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

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

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

Biodiversity and geodiversity

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

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

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the survival and dispersal of species. Herefordshire's biodiversity and geodiversity make a major contribution to the economy, supporting the tourism sector and providing a healthy and attractive environment for its residents.

Policy LD2 – Biodiversity and geodiversity

Development proposals should conserve, restore and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire, through the:

1. retention and protection of nature conservation sites and habitats, and important species in accordance with their status as follows:
 - a) Development that is likely to harm sites and species of European Importance will not be permitted;
 - b) Development that would be liable to harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest or nationally protected species will only be permitted if the conservation status of their habitat or important physical features can be protected by conditions or other material considerations are sufficient to outweigh nature conservation considerations;
 - c) Development that would be liable to harm the nature conservation value of a site or species of local nature conservation interest will only be permitted if the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site, habitat or physical feature that supports important species.
 - d) Development that will potentially reduce the coherence and effectiveness of the ecological network of sites will only be permitted where adequate compensatory measures are brought forward.
2. restoration and enhancement of existing biodiversity and geodiversity features on site and connectivity to wider ecological networks; and
3. creation of new biodiversity features and wildlife habitats.

Where appropriate the council will work with developers to agree a management strategy to ensure the protection of, and prevention of adverse impacts on, biodiversity and geodiversity features.

- 5.3.13 Areas of biodiversity and geological importance and sensitivity should be protected and development should enhance local habitats and ecological networks. Development within close proximity to internationally, nationally and locally designated sites will need to incorporate sympathetic design components to enhance their nature conservation interests and to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts. Internationally important sites present within the county include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); nationally important sites include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and locally important sites include Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites.
- 5.3.14 Dependent upon the scale and proximity of development proposals affecting biodiversity or geodiversity features, Herefordshire Council may require developers to produce a management strategy to ensure the continued protection of the features of interest. Such management strategies may include monitoring information. This will provide up-to-date information which will shape future policy reviews as well as inform future site specific plans.
- 5.3.15 The Core Strategy objectives will be delivered through supporting development proposals that add to Herefordshire's biodiversity. During the plan period Herefordshire Council will review its Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance utilising in particular the principles, opportunities and constraints detailed within the *Building Biodiversity into Herefordshire Council's Local Development Framework 2009*. Further areas of local biodiversity or geodiversity importance may be designated or extended during the plan period.

- 5.3.16 Details of the county's biodiversity and geodiversity assets and features, some of which traverse the local authority's administrative boundaries, are listed in Appendices 8e-k and further information is held at the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre. Core areas have been identified where there are clusters of biodiversity and geodiversity features of high conservation value as detailed in the *Herefordshire Ecological Network Map 2012*. Development within and adjacent to these core areas and associated buffer zones will need to be sympathetically designed to ensure there are no adverse impacts upon them. Alongside this, Herefordshire Council will seek contributions to enhance and link such core areas.

Green infrastructure

- 5.3.17 Green infrastructure is a multi-functional network of green spaces, links and assets within and surrounding the built environment, and providing connection to the wider countryside. As a major component of sustainable design it includes and contributes to health and wellbeing as well as biodiversity, culture and heritage across the county. It is not limited to urban areas and can be seen at different strategic levels as shown in the table below and the accompanying concept diagram, Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.2: Hierarchy of Green Infrastructure Assets

Geographic tier	Example of green infrastructure asset
County/Regional Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Sites of national and international nature conservation importance (e.g. SAC, SSSI) • Verges of trunk roads, motorways and railways
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers and large streams and their floodplains • Local wildlife sites. Scheduled ancient monuments • Designed landscapes
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private parks and gardens • Recreational grounds, cemeteries, playing fields and public green spaces • Public rights of way and cycle paths

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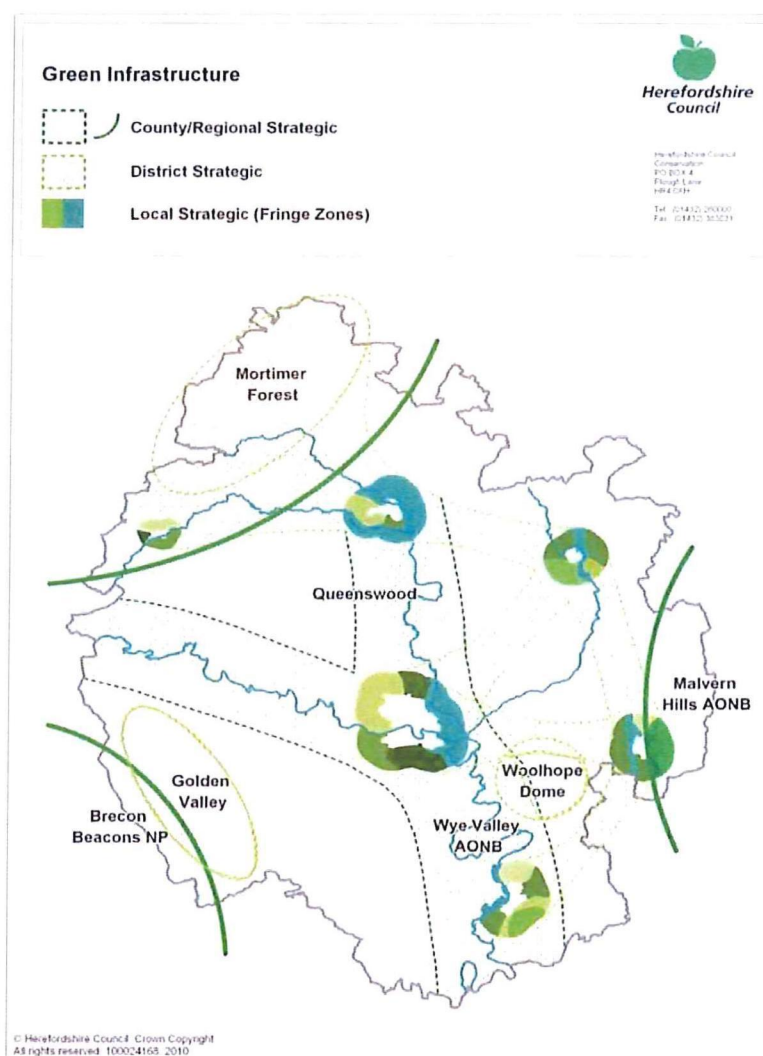
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Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private parks and gardens • Recreational grounds, cemeteries, playing fields and public green spaces • Public rights of way and cycle paths

Figure 5.3: Green infrastructure concept diagram



Source: Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, February 2010

- 5.3.18 Herefordshire Council's *Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010* sets out a vision for green infrastructure across the county. It also provides a local framework around Hereford and the five market towns by defining strategic corridors, enhancement zones and fringe zones. These are areas where through sympathetic design and planning, a functional relationship between the urban and rural environments can be created and enhanced.
- 5.3.19 The development of new green infrastructure and preservation of existing assets will provide a variety of economic, environmental and social benefits. Economic benefits can be achieved through food production and productive landscapes, diversification of farming activities and attracting tourism.

Environmental benefits include habitat provision and connectivity, landscape protection, energy conservation and mitigation of climate change impacts. Social benefits of green infrastructure include places for leisure, garden food production, recreation, sport and exercise, all of which make a major contribution to health and wellbeing. Development can include corridors for movement through foot and cycle paths. It provides opportunities for improving the management of and interpreting natural and heritage assets and how they contribute to local distinctiveness. Increased access to green infrastructure can promote physical and mental health and well-being.

- 5.3.20 Green infrastructure can provide energy production, flood attenuation, maintenance of water quality, water resource management, cooling effects and many other benefits encompassed under the concept of ecosystem services. The council is committed to working with Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership to bring forward a shared vision using green infrastructure to improve ecological networks and wider economic and social benefits as part of an “ecosystems approach”.

Policy LD3 – Green infrastructure

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure, and should achieve the following objectives:

1. identification and retention of existing green infrastructure corridors and linkages; including the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plain;
2. provision of on-site green infrastructure; in particular proposals will be supported where this enhances the network; and
3. integration with, and connection to, the surrounding green infrastructure network.

- 5.3.21 Development proposals should identify and protect existing green infrastructure. The Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 and associated Study identify those features that contribute to the green infrastructure network. Proposals should take account of features within the site and also on adjacent sites as integration and connection with the surroundings is a key objective. Proposals should incorporate the retention and enhancement of features such as trees and hedgerows, together with long term management.
- 5.3.22 The inclusion of new planting, wildlife enhancement, creation and links, links to the countryside and river ways, green transport corridors, open spaces and recreational facilities and sustainable drainage systems within or associated with development proposals are important and valuable contributions to green infrastructure. Landscaping of development sites should feature planting of appropriate native species wherever possible, ensuring there is sufficient space for plants to grow to maturity. Opportunities for new elements include establishing grasslands, wildflower meadows, wetlands, orchards or woodland. New green infrastructure features could include promoting and extending the public rights of way network, increasing public access and providing interpretive information.

Historic environment and heritage assets

- 5.3.23 The historic environment is defined as all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of significance with statutory protection are referred to as designated heritage assets. Policy LD4 is applicable to heritage assets throughout Herefordshire whether formally designated e.g. listed buildings

Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) sets a target for 15% of the UK's energy to come from renewable resources by 2020, which represents a seven fold increase from 2008. In respect of wind energy, National Planning Policy Guidance indicates that in order to gain planning permission suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, Herefordshire Council will consider whether to identify suitable areas for wind energy through the preparation of the Rural Areas Site Allocation Development Plan Document or other appropriate development plan document. Neighbourhood Development Plans also have the ability to consider identifying suitable sites for wind energy development.

- 5.3.41 Herefordshire is predominantly a rural county which benefits from the presence of many international and national designations, alongside highly valued local landscapes. While these designations limit the potential for strategic renewable and low carbon energy generation, opportunities are present in Herefordshire to support such measures and the exceptional circumstance for such provision needs to be recognised. For example, farm diversification schemes can provide opportunities for the implementation of renewable or low carbon energy projects. Neighbourhood Development Plans promoting community-led micro-generation schemes will be supported where they are in accordance with policy SD2 and other relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

Policy SD2 – Renewable and low carbon energy generation

Development proposals that seek to deliver renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

1. the proposal does not adversely impact upon international or national designated natural and heritage assets;
2. the proposal does not adversely affect residential amenity;
3. the proposal does not result in any significant detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape and the built or historic environment and
4. the proposal can be connected efficiently to existing national grid infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that energy generation would be used on-site to meet the needs of a specific end user.

In the case of energy generation through wind power developments, permission will only be granted for such proposals where:

- the proposed site is identified in a Neighbourhood Development Plan or other Development Plan Document as a suitable site for wind energy generation; and
- following consultation with local residents, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified can be fully addressed, and therefore the proposal has the backing of the local community.

Sustainable water management

- 5.3.42 Sustainable water management means minimising our impact on the healthy functioning of the water cycle. Changes occurring to the climate mean that we are likely to experience an increase in the intensity, severity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods, which could dramatically impact on the way we need to manage water in the development of sustainable communities. There is a finite capacity within the environment, and it cannot simply provide more and more water as a result of increased consumption rates or overall demand. Equally there is a limit to the amount of waste water that can be safely returned to rivers without having a detrimental effect.

- 5.3.43 The issue of water management is especially important in Herefordshire with a number of watercourses benefiting from different levels of protection. The entire lengths of the River Wye and River Lugg are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, while the Wye and the Lugg from Hampton Court Bridge to its confluence are designated as a Special Area of Conservation under European legislation. Alongside this, all watercourses and groundwater, are covered by the European Water Framework Directive and are recognised as providing significant biodiversity, health and recreational benefits. Delivery of the Water Framework Directive is proposed through a "Catchment Based Approach" and the Local Plan should play a part in achieving its objectives.
- 5.3.44 Changes in rainfall patterns, land management and land use, combined with more frequent occurrence of extreme weather events will present increased flood risk. Although flooding cannot be wholly prevented, its impacts can be avoided or reduced through good planning and land management. To this end the susceptibility of land to flooding and surface water management are material considerations when assessing planning applications. Accordingly Herefordshire Council will support development proposals that accord with the principles of the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009* (SFRA), as well as national technical guidance on the sequential test and the exception test, and ensure that surface water drainage is also properly managed. Where flood risk assessments are undertaken they should include all sources of flooding, including fluvial flooding from ditches and water courses across the site.
- 5.3.45 The SFRA aims to ensure that planning policies and development land allocations will not increase the risk of flooding both within the development and the surrounding area, and to identify and promote measures that will minimise flood-risk and/or enhance flood resilience. The SFRA for Herefordshire refines the county's flood risk areas by taking into account other sources of flooding and other strategies, such as the Wye and Usk Catchment Flood Management Plan and the River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan.

Policy SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources

Measures for sustainable water management will be required to be an integral element of new development in order to reduce flood risk; to avoid an adverse impact on water quantity; to protect and enhance groundwater resources and to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

1. development proposals are located in accordance with the Sequential Test and Exception Tests (where appropriate) and have regard to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2009 for Herefordshire;
2. development is designed to be safe, taking into account the lifetime of the development and the need to adapt to climate change by setting appropriate floor levels, providing safe pedestrian and vehicular access, where appropriate, implementing a flood evacuation management plan and avoiding areas identified as being subject to Rapid Inundation from a breach of a Flood Defence;
3. where flooding is identified as an issue, new development should reduce flood risk through the inclusion of flood storage compensation measures, or provide similar betterment to enhance the local flood risk regime;
4. development will not result in the loss of open watercourse and culverts should be opened up where possible to improve drainage and flood flows. Proposals involving the creation of new culverts (unless essential to the provision of access) will not be permitted;
5. development includes appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water appropriate to the hydrological setting of the site. Development should not result in an increase in runoff and should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing runoff rate and volumes, where possible;

Policy SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources continued

6. water conservation and efficiency measures are included in all new developments, specifically:
 - residential development should achieve Housing - Optional Technical Standards - Water efficiency standards. At the time of adoption the published water efficiency standards were 110 litres/person/day; or
 - non-residential developments in excess of 1,000 m² gross floorspace to achieve the equivalent of BREEAM 3 credits for water consumption as a minimum;
7. the separation of foul and surface water on new developments is maximised;
8. development proposals do not lead to deterioration of EU Water Framework Directive water body status;
9. development should not cause an unacceptable risk to the availability or quality of water resources; and
10. in particular, proposals do not adversely affect water quality, either directly through unacceptable pollution of surface water or groundwater, or indirectly through overloading of Wastewater Treatment Works.

Development proposals should help to conserve and enhance watercourses and riverside habitats, where necessary through management and mitigation measures for the improvement and/or enhancement of water quality and habitat of the aquatic environment. Proposals which are specifically aimed at the sustainable management of the water environment will in particular be encouraged, including where they are required to support business needs such as for agriculture. Innovative measures such as water harvesting, winter water storage and active land use management will also be supported. In all instances it should be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse landscape, biodiversity or visual impact.

- 5.3.46 The 'Sequential Test' is set out in paragraphs 100-104 of the NPPF. This aims to ensure inappropriate development does not take place in areas at high risk of flooding by directing it away from areas at highest risk. Areas at risk of flooding are those falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as defined on the Environment Agency's website. Flood Zone 1 is the area of low probability of flooding and should generally be used in preference to land in other zones. However land in Flood Zone 1 may also have critical land drainage problems which can be ascertained through Herefordshire Council's Land Drainage team. Where no reasonable sites are available within Flood Zone 1 the 'Exception Test' may be applied. Where this test needs to be applied certain forms of development may be permitted in Flood Zones 2 and 3 depending upon their level of vulnerability. These are identified in Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.3.47 Policy SD3 also provides criteria for developers to consider when proposing development within areas identified as being at risk of flooding within the district. The policy identifies the need for development proposed within flood risk areas to take account of a number of measures to ensure that the development is safe and remains safe, in times of flood including:
- setting appropriate floor levels which should be above the 1% predicted plus climate change design flood level, incorporating an allowance for freeboard. Development should also consider in the design the risk from more extreme events. Where it is not feasible or practicable to set the floor levels, then other forms of flood resilience and resistance techniques may be considered as an alternative;
 - where overnight accommodation is included, the development should include a safe pedestrian access route which would be available during a 1% plus climate change design flood event. In considering this, regard should be given to the evidence in the SFRA and for 'defended areas' including an assessment of Flood Defence breach/overtopping scenarios. Other development should consider this as a residual risk;

- consideration of safe vehicular access; and
- for developments implementing a flood evacuation management plan, where appropriate, to manage the risk to the development site itself and future users/occupiers during all flood events along with any remaining residual risks.

- 5.3.48 A key component to reducing the risk of flooding is the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all developments. Such systems can also assist in improving water quality. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduces the mandatory inclusion of SuDS within developments alongside the ability for the setting of national standards. Development proposals are to accord with these standards and where appropriate be accompanied by surface water management plans detailing the drainage proposals. Advice is contained within the SFRA.
- 5.3.49 Government legislation sets out the statutory introduction of Sustainable Drainage Advisory Bodies (SABs). SABs are designed to appraise and grant approval or refusal on proposed Sustainable Drainage Systems. Herefordshire Council will work in partnership with the SAB as well as the Environment Agency, to ensure that development proposals do not have adverse flood impacts.
- 5.3.50 With respect to water conservation and efficiency of use, Policy SD3 sets out targets for reduced consumption in association with new development, which in turn will result in decrease flow entering the sewer system. This approach will also help to reduce flows entering waste water treatment infrastructure, thereby assisting to manage the level of nutrients in the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (see Policy SD4). The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a 'water efficiency calculator' that applicants can use to demonstrate the water efficiency of proposed developments.
- 5.3.51 For employment development a standard of BREEAM 3 credits equivalent for water consumption is required. This equates to 40% reduction in water consumption over current building regulations. The Environment Agency has stated that all new non-residential development should meet the 'Good Practice' level of the AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) Water Standards. These measures will complement the measures set out in Policy SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality.
- 5.3.52 The availability of water resources to meet demand during the plan period has been examined and Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water's Water Resource Management Plan identifies that there are sufficient water resources available to meet demand during this plan period.
- 5.3.53 While agricultural water use lies largely outside planning control, it is a significant contributor to the water cycle conditions within Herefordshire and its impacts need to be taken into account in the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans. There is considerable potential for farmers to capture and store surplus water for future use thereby reducing the need to abstract water from other sources, while enhancing biodiversity. However, reservoirs in particular will alter landscapes and habitats on a permanent basis and care on siting and design is essential.
- 5.3.54 Land management practices can also play a vital role in managing flood risk and water quality at a local level; for example, the creation and restoration of wetlands and woodlands can reduce the level of flooding, and in some cases remove the risk of local flooding altogether. These practices also improve water quality in addition to producing wider environmental benefits, including encouraging an increase in wildlife species and habitats and reducing carbon.

- 5.3.55 A Herefordshire Water Steering Group was established and attended by Herefordshire Council, Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England, in order to investigate how development might be accommodated within the limits set by the Habitats Regulations. It is expected that this group will be expanded in order to address issues arising from the preparation of a Nutrient Management Plan. One of the areas that it might consider is identifying best practice in the reduction of water use.

Wastewater treatment and river water quality

- 5.3.56 The water quality of Herefordshire's main rivers and their tributaries is of strategic importance and in particular, current unacceptable levels of nutrients along part of the rivers need to be addressed. This is important to the overall environmental objectives of the Core Strategy.
- 5.3.57 The Rivers Wye, Lugg, Teme and Clun are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), designated under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Furthermore, the River Wye, including part of the River Lugg (downstream from Hampton Court Bridge), part of the River Clun (downstream of Marlow, Shropshire) and Downton Gorge on the River Teme are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- 5.3.58 Both levels of designation require efforts to be made to ensure the whole system, or catchment, achieves and then remains resilient in terms of supporting river habitats consistent with policy LD2 (Biodiversity and geodiversity). The Environment Agency has responsibility for water quality and ecological objectives set by European Directive 2000/60/EC, the 'Water Framework Directive,' which applies to surface waters and groundwater, and is preparing a River Basin Management Plan to deliver these. Natural England has responsibility for ensuring SSSIs and SACs achieve 'favourable condition.' Currently all parts of the river SSSIs are in unfavourable condition although some are recovering. All public bodies have a duty to contribute towards meeting these targets.

Policy SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality

Development should not undermine the achievement of water quality targets for rivers within the county, in particular through the treatment of wastewater.

In the first instance developments should seek to connect to the existing mains wastewater infrastructure network. Where this option would result in nutrient levels exceeding conservation objectives targets, in particular additional phosphate loading within a SAC designated river, then proposals will need to fully mitigate the adverse effects of wastewater discharges into rivers caused by the development. This may involve:

- incorporating measures to achieve water efficiency and/or a reduction in surface water discharge to the mains sewer network, minimising the capacity required to accommodate the proposal, in accordance with policy SD3;
- phasing or delaying development until further capacity is available;
- the use of developer contributions/community infrastructure levy funds to contribute to improvements to waste water treatment works or other appropriate measures to release capacity to accommodate new development;
- in the case of development which might lead to nutrient levels exceeding the limits for the target conservation objectives within a SAC river, planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in view of the site's conservation objectives; and

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

Sustainable development

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

Policy SS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

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

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

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

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

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

Movement and transportation

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

Policy SS4 - Movement and transportation

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

Policy SS4 - Movement and transportation continued

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pedestrians and cyclists

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

Public transport

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

Major transport schemes

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

Freight

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

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

Education and Skills

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

Health and wellbeing

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

Access to services

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

New and/or improved infrastructure

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

of partners who will work 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

- 3.65 These are: 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

- 3.66 The elements needed for stimulating economic prosperity will be delivered through: encouraging the diversification of the county's employment base; area regeneration; improving connectivity; promoting shopping and tourism in the right places; and improving economic output.

Employment provision

- 3.67 The *Economic Development Strategy (Nov 2011)* is an integral part of the Local Development Framework. Its vision is to increase economic wealth through the growth of business. This will be achieved through the following:
- Sustain business survival and growth;
 - Increase incomes and the range and quality of jobs;
 - Have a skilled population to meet future work needs;
 - Develop the county's built infrastructure for enterprise to flourish.
- 3.68 Herefordshire's economic output is low compared to regionally and nationally; in 2012 GVA per head in Herefordshire was £15,300 compared to £17,400 in the West Midlands and £21,900 across England. This is partly a result of persistently lower wages in the county with median weekly earnings for people who work in Herefordshire of £385, significantly lower than those in the West Midlands region (£470) and England (£512). Low wage levels are borne out in housing affordability issues.
- 3.69 The low value economy is partly a function of the county's economic structure. There are a high proportion of employees in manufacturing (accounting for 16% of employee jobs compared to 8% across England), but these are primarily in low and medium technology activities, including food and beverage production, rather than higher value-added activities. The wholesale and retail trade are also strongly represented (accounting for 19% of employee jobs compared to 16% across England) and this includes jobs in tourism-related sectors. The agricultural sector is also well represented. There is a low level of employment in finance, IT and other business activities, which has been a key growth sector nationally in recent decades. The county has a high proportion of small and medium sized enterprises and the council will offer continuing support for such businesses in future.
- 3.70 A keynote feature of the economic structure is a low representation of higher-value private sector businesses. This is a structural economic weakness, which partly reflects the county's relatively remote location in a national or regional context, together with the size of its population and key centre (Hereford) and the nature of the area's road and rail links. However this needs to be set against supply-side regeneration measures, including proposals in the Core Strategy for additional employment

land provision, together with regeneration projects, such as the regeneration of the Livestock Market in Hereford, the designation of the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas and the future development of existing committed sites such as Model Farm in Ross-on-Wye.

- 3.71 In overall terms, the numbers working in land-based industries accounts for a much greater proportion than regionally or nationally. However, agriculture has a track record in diversification. For example; the use of polytunnels for a greater range of fruits, increased quantities of produce, improved quality and a lengthened growing season, which has enabled many farmers to stay in business. Land-based industries are seen as a strength of the county since they foster other business enterprises such as renewable energy technologies and creative industries.
- 3.72 Evidence of commuting patterns suggests that there is a moderate net outflow of people to work, although the level of self-containment of travel to work patterns was relatively high. Travel to work patterns highlight that Bromyard and Ledbury have a net outflow of workers. This issue is reflected in the allocations of employment land to these centres.
- 3.73 The Employment Land Study 2012 states that the emerging Core Strategy has an overall target of 148 hectares (ha) of available employment land over the plan period, which includes a rolling five year reservoir of 37 ha. Based on the output of projecting past completion rates, the overall target of 148 ha outlined in the emerging Core Strategy would provide a robust level of supply and would enable a wide range and choice of employment sites across the county to be provided throughout the plan period. Higher quality land referred to in this policy is that defined as "best" and "good" in the 2012 Study and is subject to more detailed discussion in policy E2. Appendix 6 sets out details regarding the provision of strategic employment land and its delivery and monitoring and review.

Policy SS5 - Employment provision

Existing higher quality employment land countywide will be safeguarded from alternative uses. A continuous supply of 37ha of readily available employment land will be made available over a 5 year period, with an overall target of 148ha 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 employment land locations are identified at Hereford (15ha); Leominster (up to 10ha), Ledbury (15ha), and Ross-on-Wye (10ha). The Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas will continue to provide the largest focus for new employment provision in the county. Proposals for employment land provision at Bromyard and Kington will be brought forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans or other Development Plan Documents.

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.

Area regeneration

- 3.74 Hereford is the county's main economic centre and as such has the potential to influence the prosperity of the whole area. A combined approach to regeneration means investment in covering travel, housing, employment land development and job creation can make a significant difference to the county. It is an

objective of the Core Strategy that the role of Hereford as the main business, service and visitor centre for the county will be maintained and enhanced through the expansion of the city centre as part of wider city regeneration. This will include new retail, leisure, tourist and commercial development and new sustainable transport infrastructure. The designated Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) at Rotherwas will further support an enhanced economic outlook with the aim of promoting a more diverse employment base. An extra 5 ha of employment land has been designated as part of a mixed use development at the Lower Bullingham urban extension to support the HEZ. This is an addition to the policy since Revised Preferred Option stage.

- 3.75 Each of the market towns has their own distinct qualities, reflective of their position in the county and the organic growth of their industries. Ledbury and Ross both benefit from access to motorway links, whilst Leominster and Ledbury have connections to the rail infrastructure. There are clusters of industry within all the market towns, providing valuable employment. Tourism opportunity is a strong feature of all the market towns, which have their own unique selling points. The regeneration of the wider economy of the county's market towns will be prioritised in order to support their viability as key service centres for their rural hinterlands, by ensuring they remain the focus for appropriate levels of new homes and jobs. Whilst no strategic employment sites are proposed in Kington over this plan period, smaller scale employment sites will be encouraged and identified through either Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 3.76 The rural economy is populated by small businesses, often sole traders or the self-employed working from home. This is higher than the national average and is driven by increasing opportunities to use technology to work from any location. Businesses in rural areas support the sustainability of local services and communities (Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, July 2008). Therefore in the rural areas, businesses will be supported by taking into account local demand, the ability to retain, grow or diversify employment opportunities and options to reuse existing buildings and sites, as well as contribution to the sustainability of the area.

Sustainable tourism

- 3.77 Tourism is worth £469m to the county's local economy (2011). Over 4.7 million visitors come per year mainly for short stays to take advantage of the outstanding countryside, rich heritage and cultural offer. This supports 8,480 jobs. "Visit Herefordshire" is the agency in the county that promotes tourism and alongside the council works to develop it as a visitor destination. The delivery of high quality tourist, cultural and leisure development will be supported in the county where it capitalises on existing assets, develops sustainable walking, cycling or heritage routes, benefits local communities and the economy and is sensitive to Herefordshire's natural and built environmental qualities and heritage assets. The place shaping policies and the general policy on tourism will deliver this part of the strategy.

Connectivity

- 3.78 A key principle of the Core Strategy is that intensive trip generating development should be built in the most accessible locations. The co-location of employment, shopping, leisure, transport and other facilities means that people can carry out multiple activities in a single journey and there will be a boost to the local retail economy.
- 3.79 New transport infrastructure countywide (to include a western relief road around the city to facilitate a package of sustainable transport measures within the city) and faster, more accessible ICT/Broadband infrastructure will be delivered to facilitate the generation and diversification of employment opportunities and to improve accessibility to education and training opportunities.

Retail

- 3.80 For some time, the retail economy has been losing ground to competition from outside the county from other major centres like Gloucester, Cheltenham and Worcester. To try and address this, Hereford Futures and the council has promoted the development of the £90 million retail scheme in Hereford city centre. This includes a new department store, supermarket and smaller shops, which is fully funded by the private sector.
- 3.81 The Core Strategy defines a network and hierarchy of centres which forms the basis for the retail strategy for the plan. This hierarchy has been confirmed in the Town Centres Study update 2012 as follows:

Figure 3.4 - Retail hierarchy

Principal centre	Secondary centre	Local centres	Neighbourhood centres
Hereford	Bromyard Ledbury Leominster Kington Ross-on-Wye	Bartestree/Lugwardine Barons Cross Rd, Leominster Bodenham Colwall Cradley Credenhill Eardisley Ewyas Harold Fownhope Kingsland Kingstone Leintwardine Marden Pembridge Peterchurch Weobley Withington	Belmont Bobblesstock Bullingham* Chilton Square College Green Folly Lane (Whitern Way) Grandstand Road Holme Lacy Road Holmer West* Hinton Road Old Eign Hill Oval Quarry Road Three Elms* Whitecross

*Neighbourhood centres at Bullingham, Holmer West and Three Elms will be required as part of the urban extensions at these locations

- 3.82 The Core Strategy will encourage appropriate town centre and retail investment in Hereford and the market towns of Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington and Ross-on-Wye, as well as supporting local services such as village shops, pubs and post offices throughout the rural areas. Regardless of their retail and commercial offer all these centres play a significant role in providing local services and facilities which has many benefits in social, economic and environmental terms.
- 3.83 This hierarchy recognises the importance of Hereford as the principal shopping centre within the county, serving an extensive rural hinterland. The city centre provides the main location for retail activity in the county, as well as the focus for commercial and administrative services. In addition, a range of leisure, tourism and entertainment opportunities are available in Hereford, which help to enhance footfall within the city centre and will consolidate the recent improvements in vitality following the opening of the Old Livestock Market retail/leisure scheme.

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

Key outcomes of the strategy for economic prosperity

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

Improving environmental quality

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

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

Policy SS6 - Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

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

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

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

Creating sustainable communities

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

Protecting the environment

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

Better use of resources

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

Addressing climate change

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