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# **Herefordshire Core Strategy**

## **Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment**

### **Non-Technical Summary**

Prepared by LUC  
March 2013

**Project Title:** Sustainability Appraisal of the Herefordshire Core Strategy

**Client:** Herefordshire Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by Principal
1	01/03/13	Non-Technical Summary of the SA Report for the Draft Herefordshire Core Strategy	Kate Nicholls	Jeremy Owen	Jeremy Owen

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## Introduction

- 1.1 This Sustainability Appraisal Report (Non-Technical Summary) relates to the Draft Herefordshire Core Strategy, which is being produced by Herefordshire Council. The Core Strategy sets out the long-term spatial vision and objectives for the County as well as the policies that are required to deliver that vision over the period up to 2031.
- 1.2 Plans and strategies such as the Herefordshire Core Strategy are subject to a process called Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which assesses the potential impacts of a plan on social, economic, and environmental issues. Herefordshire Council has commissioned independent consultants (LUC) to carry out SA of the emerging Core Strategy on its behalf. This Non-Technical Summary relates to the full SA Report for the Draft Core Strategy (March 2013), and should be read alongside those two documents.

## The Herefordshire Core Strategy

- 1.3 The Herefordshire Core Strategy will form part of the Local Plan for Herefordshire along with the Hereford Area Plan, other development plan documents and neighbourhood development plans. The Herefordshire Core Strategy proposes to help deliver 16,500 homes over the plan period (2011-31), a figure which the Council believes would meet growth aspirations while also being realistic and deliverable. This level of new housing development would help to address the current imbalance in the population structure of the county by encouraging new homes to be built for people of working age and younger families to come to the county.
- 1.4 Strategic housing allocation sites have been identified around Hereford and the five market towns (Bromyard, Leominster, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and Kington) and almost a third of all housing will be directed to the rural areas to help to sustain local services, generate new ones and support housing provision for local communities. As well as the housing allocations, the Herefordshire Core Strategy provides for 37 hectares (ha) of employment land to be made available over a five year period, with an overall target of 148ha over the plan period (up to 2031). New strategic employment sites are identified at Hereford (15ha), Leominster (up to 10ha), Ledbury (12ha) and Bromyard (5ha).
- 1.5 The Herefordshire Core Strategy has been through a number of stages in its development, and these are described in detail in the full SA report and further ahead in this Non-Technical Summary. The current version of the Herefordshire Core Strategy (March 2013) is a draft plan published for public consultation, before the formal 'consultation on the 'soundness' of the Pre-submission version of the plan.
- 1.6 The Core Strategy includes a **Vision** for social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality in Herefordshire and 12 strategic objectives under those same three themes, which set the framework for the spatial strategy and policies in the rest of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy document is then divided into chapters, as follows:
  - **Spatial Strategy**, including policies for:
    - Sustainable development
    - Housing distribution
    - Release of housing
    - Movement and transportation
    - Employment provision
    - Climate change
  - **Place-shaping Policies**, including policies with housing and employment allocations for:
    - Hereford

- Bromyard
- Leominster
- Ledbury
- Ross on Wye
- Kington
- Rural Areas
- **General Policies**, including development management policies for:
  - Housing
  - Social and community facilities
  - Open space, sport and recreation
  - Traffic management
  - Employment
  - Tourism
  - Retail
  - Local distinctiveness
  - Sustainable design
  - Minerals
  - Waste
- **Delivery, implementation and monitoring**, covering:
  - Infrastructure delivery policy
  - Implementation of the Core Strategy
  - Monitoring of Core Strategy policies

## Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.7 Herefordshire Council is required by law to carry out Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Core Strategy, and has appointed LUC to do this on its behalf. The Government recommends that these two requirements are met through one integrated process, referred to as Sustainability Appraisal (or SA).
- 1.8 The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through the better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. It should be viewed as an integral part of good plan making, involving ongoing iterations to identify and report on the potential social, economic and environmental effects of the plan and the extent to which sustainable development is expected to be achieved.
- 1.9 This Non-Technical Summary relates to the SA Report for the Draft version of the Herefordshire Core Strategy (March 2013). The SA Report has been produced alongside the emerging Core Strategy in order to provide sustainability guidance during its development.
- 1.10 SA should be conducted in accordance with Government guidance, and must meet the requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive<sup>1</sup>. A description of the method used in carrying out the SA of the Herefordshire Core Strategy is set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> European Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.

## **Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on scope**

- 1.11 The SA process started in 2007 with Herefordshire Council producing a Scoping Report for its Local Development Framework, which includes the Core Strategy. The Scoping Report decided what the SA should cover by reviewing a wide range of relevant policy documents (including international, national and local policies), and by examining data and information to help identify what the key sustainability issues are in Herefordshire and likely future trends. It also presented the SA 'framework' – a set of 20 SA objectives which would be used to structure the later stages of the appraisal (the SA framework is presented further ahead in this Non-Technical Summary).
- 1.12 The Scoping Report was issued in June 2007 for consultation with various stakeholders including the three statutory consultees for SEA - Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage.
- 1.13 The tasks that were originally undertaken in relation to the SA Scoping Report have been updated where necessary throughout the SA process for the Herefordshire Core Strategy, in order to make sure that the policy context and baseline information remain up-to-date.

## **Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing their effects**

- 1.14 Developing options for a plan is an iterative process usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. The SA process can help to identify where there may be other 'reasonable alternatives' to the options that are being considered for a plan. The options/reasonable alternatives for Herefordshire's Core Strategy included potential strategic areas for new housing and employment development as well as alternative policy approaches. There have been a number of stages in developing and refining the plan options, as described below. Further detailed information about the work undertaken at each stage can be found in Chapter 2 of the full SA report.

### *Developing Options Paper (June 2008), accompanied by SA Report (June 2008) and SA Addendum (March 2009)*

- 1.15 The Developing Options Paper consultation took place between June and August 2008. The paper set out options for dealing with the issues that had been identified through the earlier Issues Consultation which took place in Autumn 2007. The Developing Options Paper included a proposed Vision and ten Strategic Objectives for the Core Strategy, and consultees were asked to comment on whether they considered them to be appropriate. Following the Vision and Strategic Objectives, the Developing Options Paper then set out a series of options to help achieve this level of growth for Herefordshire, covering the spatial strategy, options for Hereford, the market towns and rural areas and policy options for a range of topics such as renewable energy, waste, design, water management and employment land provision. Finally, a list of actions was also presented for how Herefordshire Council proposed to deliver the land required to meet the Core Strategy policies.
- 1.16 The audit trail table in Appendix 2 of the full SA Report lists the individual options that were considered within the Developing Options Paper, and explains how they were appraised as part of the SA process. It also explains why certain options were taken forward as preferred policy approaches in the Place Shaping Paper (see below) and gives reasons for discounting the other options considered.

### *Place Shaping Paper (January 2010), accompanied by SA and HRA Report (January 2010)*

- 1.17 The consultation on the Place Shaping Paper took place between January and March 2010. The Place Shaping Paper included a preferred strategy and further options for Hereford, the market towns and rural areas and a number of general policy directions. Since the Developing Options stage in 2008, the Council had decided to increase the overall housing target for the County from 16,600 to 18,000 homes to reflect the latest research. The increase was addressed in the Place Shaping Paper by considering an increase in the number of houses to be delivered in the rural areas.
- 1.18 The Place Shaping Paper included an expanded Vision and 12 (rather than ten) Strategic Objectives. It then set out refined options from the Developing Options Paper (and some

additional alternatives) for the spatial strategy, the place-shaping options (for Hereford, the market towns and rural areas) and the general core policies.

- 1.19 The audit trail table in Appendix 2 of the full SA Report shows how and why the options considered within the Developing Options Paper for the relevant topics were refined and taken forward (or discounted) in the Place Shaping Paper, and explains how they were appraised as part of the SA process in the SA Report for the Place Shaping Paper (January 2010). The Place Shaping Paper itself also includes a summary of the reasons for discounting particular options and a summary of the SA findings.

*Preferred Options (Summer-Autumn 2010), accompanied by six SA Notes (August, September and November 2010)*

- 1.20 Following independent advice, Herefordshire Council decided to carry out a 'portfolio approach' to consulting on Preferred Options that had not been considered and consulted upon previously at the Place Shaping stage (i.e. those elements of the Place Shaping Paper where options were still being considered, rather than a single preferred policy approach having been identified already). The Council was not proposing to change the overall level of growth for Herefordshire that had been set out in the Place Shaping Paper. Over the summer and autumn 2010, the Council published the following separate Preferred Options Papers for the Core Strategy:

- Preferred Options: Hereford.
- Preferred Options: Market Towns (Bromyard, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye).
- Preferred Options: Rural Areas.
- Preferred Options: General Policies.
- Preferred Options: General Policies 2nd Tranche.

- 1.21 Herefordshire Council commissioned LUC in May 2010 to continue the SA work for the Core Strategy that the Council had started. As the Preferred Options stage was considering separate elements of the Core Strategy, and not the whole Core Strategy, LUC prepared 'SA Notes' to accompany each of the Preferred Options papers, rather than a full SA Report at this stage. It was agreed with the Council that the full SA Report would be prepared at the following stage of plan preparation when all the policies in the Core Strategy were published as one full draft plan. SA Notes for each of the above sets of Preferred Options were therefore prepared by LUC and were published alongside the Preferred Options Papers along with an overarching SA note addressing the cumulative impacts of the Preferred Options.

- 1.22 The SA process involved assessing each of the preferred policy approaches in the Preferred Options Papers against the 20 SA objectives (the 'SA framework') that were developed and set out in the SA Scoping Report (see above). However, LUC grouped the SA objectives into the following six themes for the appraisal, in order to enable related sustainability issues to be considered together:

- 1 Education and Employment.
- 2 Healthy and Prosperous Communities.
- 3 Transport and Access.
- 4 Built Environment.
- 5 Resource Consumption and Climate Change.
- 6 Natural Environment.

- 1.23 Appendix 2 in the full SA Report shows how the preferred policy approaches set out in the Preferred Options Papers evolved from the options considered at the Developing Options and Place Shaping Paper stages, and why certain options were discounted.

*Revised Preferred Options for Herefordshire (September 2011), accompanied by the Revised Preferred Options SA Note (July 2011)*

- 1.24 The outcomes of the Preferred Options consultation that was undertaken during summer and autumn 2010 indicated that there was considerable public opposition to the scale of housing development proposed in Herefordshire. As a result of this opposition, as well as new evidence



and various other factors such as the impact of the recession, the Council revised certain aspects of the preferred options for the Core Strategy, and published a leaflet setting out the revised preferred options. 'Help Plan the Future of Herefordshire' (September 2011) was published for consultation between October and November 2011. These revisions were subject to SA as they were prepared, and the SA work was presented in a further SA note for the Revised Preferred Options (July 2011), which was again prepared by LUC. Note that the consultation comments relating specifically to the SA Notes for the Preferred Options were taken into consideration - see Appendix 3 of the full SA report.

- 1.25 The changes that were made to the Core Strategy preferred options are listed in detail in the full SA report and included a change to the plan period, a reduced overall housing target for the County and amended housing targets for Hereford, the rural areas, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury.
- 1.26 In deciding the revisions to individual elements of the Core Strategy preferred options, the Council also considered and discounted a number of alternative approaches to the revisions and the overall spatial strategy. These are described in detail in the full SA report and were also subject to SA with the findings being summarised in the Revised Preferred Options SA Note (July 2011) along with the findings of the SA of the Revised Preferred Options. The amendments that were proposed in the 2011 Revised Preferred Options generally only affected one or two elements of each policy, therefore a lot of the SA findings remained unchanged from the 2010 Preferred Options SA Notes.

***Draft Core Strategy (March 2013), accompanied by the full SA Report and this Non-Technical Summary (March 2013)***

- 1.27 The consultation on the Revised Preferred Options for Herefordshire generated a significant response, particularly in relation to the proposals for Hereford. Since the Revised Preferred Options consultation in 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework had been published by the Government and the Localism Act had set out the Government's intention to revoke the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy as well as introducing the Neighbourhood Planning agenda. All of these changes had implications for the Herefordshire Core Strategy by changing the prevailing policy context for the plan. In addition, further technical studies to inform the Local Plan evidence base had been undertaken. As a result of all these factors, Herefordshire Council decided to update the proposals for the Herefordshire Core Strategy and present a full Draft Core Strategy for a further round of consultation prior to the formal Pre-submission consultation on the 'soundness' of the plan. The full SA report and this Non-Technical Summary relate to that Draft Core Strategy (March 2013).
- 1.28 The Draft Core Strategy still contains a Vision and 12 Strategic Objectives, and still makes provision for 16,500 homes in the plan period to 2031. The policies in the Draft Core Strategy include an overarching spatial strategy, place-shaping options for Hereford, the market towns and the rural areas and general policies relating to social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality.
- 1.29 Appendix 2 in the full SA Report describes the evolution of the policies set out in the Draft Core Strategy from the options considered at the Developing Options, Place Shaping Paper, Preferred Options and Revised Preferred Options stages, and explains why the various options were taken forward or discounted at each stage.

**SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal report**

- 1.30 The full SA Report and this Non-Technical Summary describe the process undertaken to date in carrying out the SA of the Herefordshire Core Strategy. They set out the findings of the appraisal, highlighting any likely significant effects (both positive and negative), make recommendations for improvements and clarifications that may help to reduce the potential negative effects and maximise the potential benefits of the Core Strategy, and outline proposed monitoring measures.
- 1.31 Each policy in the Draft Core Strategy was assessed against each SA objective, and a judgement was made regarding the likely effect that the policy would have on that objective. The sustainability effects are presented in a matrix for each policy, in Appendices 4, 5 and 6 of the full SA report, along with a brief justification of the judgement made.
- 1.32 The SA findings for the Draft Core Strategy are summarised in Chapter 4 of the full SA report and further ahead in this Non-Technical Summary.

## SA Stage D: Consultation on the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the SA Report

- 1.33 Herefordshire Council is now inviting comments on the Draft Core Strategy and the SA Report. Those two documents and this Non-Technical Summary are being published on Herefordshire Council's website during the consultation period.

## Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Core Strategy

- 1.34 Proposals for monitoring the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy are set out Chapter 5 of the full SA Report and are summarised further ahead in this Non-Technical Summary.

## Policy Context

- 1.35 The Core Strategy should reflect the contents of other plans and programmes where relevant, to assist in their implementation. It must also conform to environmental protection legislation and the sustainability objectives established at the international, national and regional levels. It is a requirement of the SEA process that relevant international, national, regional, sub-regional and local plans are reviewed in relation to their objectives, targets and indicators and their implications for the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal. The full review of plans, policies and programmes can be seen in Appendix 1 of the full SA Report.
- 1.36 There are a large number of plans and programmes that are potentially relevant to the preparation of the Herefordshire Core Strategy. In particular, the Core Strategy must adhere to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which has replaced the suite of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance. The NPPF is intended to streamline national planning policy, having reduced over a thousand pages of policy down to around 50 pages. The Herefordshire Core Strategy must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which sets out information about the purposes of local plan-making. It states that:
- "Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*
- 1.37 The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be *'aspirational but realistic'*. This means that opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of those areas should not be allowed to occur.
- 1.38 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan (in this case the Core Strategy). This should include strategic policies to deliver:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
  - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 1.39 In addition, Local Plans should:
- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
  - be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
  - be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;

- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
  - allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
  - identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
  - identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
  - contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified.
- 1.40 Other policy documents that are relevant to the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the SA process include The Natural Environment White Paper which sets out the Government's approach to protecting and enhancing the environment in the UK, the European Birds and Habitats Directives which seek to protect internationally important wildlife sites and species, and the Water Framework Directive, which aims to improve water quality in rivers. There are many other similar environmental protection strategies and documents, plus others that are more concerned with social and economic objectives that have been taken into account in the SA.

## Baseline Information

- 1.41 It is a further requirement of the SEA process that consideration should be given to the current state of the environment in Herefordshire, and for the SA process, social and economic information should also be taken into account. A short summary of the environmental, social and economic characteristics of Herefordshire is provided below, but detailed baseline information for the County is provided in Chapter 4 of the full SA Report, and has been regularly updated throughout the SA process in order to ensure that it remains up-to-date. That information enabled the key sustainability issues for Herefordshire to be identified, in order to develop a locally appropriate SA framework for appraising the emerging Core Strategy policies (see below).
- 1.42 Herefordshire County covers approximately 217,973 ha, and borders Gloucestershire to the south, Worcestershire to the east, Shropshire to the north and Wales to the west (see Figure 1.1 overleaf). It is a predominantly rural county with a landscape of rolling hills and wide river valleys interspersed with small villages. The eastern edge of the county runs along the line of the Malvern Hills, which rise to over 400 metres above sea level. The Black Mountains in the south west of the county form another elevated area. The River Wye runs through the county and Hereford City from the west down to the south, and is designated at European and national level for its nature conservation value.
- 1.43 The most recent estimate of the population of Herefordshire is 183,477<sup>2</sup>; with the City of Hereford accommodating just under a third of the population and the major centre for administration, health, education and leisure facilities, shopping and employment. Just over a fifth of Herefordshire's population live in the five market towns surrounding Hereford at about 10-15 miles distance: Leominster to the north, Bromyard to the north east, Ledbury to the east, Ross-on-Wye to the south east and Kington to the west. The remaining half of the population lives in the rural areas of the county. Herefordshire has become a popular destination for the retired, for holiday homes and second homes and, in some areas, for out-of-county commuting. The county's population has a considerably older age profile than that for England and Wales.
- 1.44 The county's rural areas and countryside and high quality of life have contributed to its housing demand, reflected in high house prices, particularly relative to earnings. The county's economy is relatively low value and this contributes to affordability problems for housing. There is a high proportion of detached housing and lower levels of social housing than in the rest of the West

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>

Midlands, and the supply of properties which younger households might be able to afford to buy is limited<sup>3</sup>.

## Key Sustainability Issues and Evolution without the Plan

- 1.45 The key sustainability issues that have been identified from the baseline information are presented in **Table 1** below. It is a requirement of the SEA process that consideration is given to the likely evolution of the environment in the Plan area if the Core Strategy were not to be implemented. This information is also set out in **Table 1** below, in relation to each of the key sustainability issues.

**Table 1: The likely evolution of Herefordshire’s environment without implementation of the Core Strategy**

Key Issue	Likely Evolution without the Plan
<b>Population Change</b>	
Age profile increasing	The ageing population trend is likely to continue with or without implementation of the Core Strategy. However, if Core Strategy policies were to result in the provision of more jobs in market towns it is possible that this could encourage a higher proportion of working age residents within the county and help to change the population characteristics. Without the availability of employment opportunities and affordable housing in the more rural parts of Herefordshire, the small towns are likely to see a continuation of this trend.
Half population living in rural areas	High levels of commuting may lead to smaller towns and villages increasingly becoming ‘dormitories’ and becoming less viable, whilst road traffic would remain high with the associated impacts on air pollution etc. This may also exacerbate the ageing population profile of the County as young people move outside the County to find work. A number of saved policies in the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan aim to address the issue of access to services in rural communities, therefore improvements to the trend on this issue are likely to occur even without implementation of the Core Strategy.
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	
High ratio of property price to household earnings Shortfall of provision of affordable dwellings / increase in number of people accepted as homeless	An ongoing lack of affordable housing would lead to many people (e.g. first time buyers and lower paid workers) increasingly being priced out of the market and the population profile of the County may become distorted (potentially even more dominated by richer/elderly people). This may have secondary effects on the economy reducing the County’s ability to attract key workers in particular.
<b>Economic activity / employment</b>	
GVA remains lower than regional and national figure per head. Reduce and manage reliance on traditional employment sectors and ensure Herefordshire can attract business in technology and knowledge intensive	If Core Strategy policies were to result in the provision of more jobs in the County it is possible that this could encourage more employment and economic activity and attract technology and knowledge intensive sectors. Without the plan, it is likely that current trends will continue and that employment will rely on traditional employment sectors.

<sup>3</sup> GL Hearn (January 2013) Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment 2012 Update: Draft Report

Key Issue	Likely Evolution without the Plan
sectors.	
<b>Transport and Accessibility</b>	
High reliance on the private car Traffic congestion in Hereford and strain on existing infrastructure	Ongoing poor provision and use of public transport may cause the more rural parts of the County to become increasingly isolated in terms of access to employment opportunities and community services and facilities, whilst high car use will increase levels of air pollution and noise disturbance.
<b>Climate Change and Flood Risk</b>	
Significant areas of the County are at risk of flooding.	A predicted increase in the number of intense rainfall days in winter could lead to increased frequency of winter flash flooding events in the future. Development already situated in areas of high flood risk, e.g. around the river Wye and its tributaries, would be likely to experience increasing problems with flooding and the associated social and economic problems. Existing developments in such areas may reduce in value due to these issues.
<b>Biodiversity and Stewardship</b>	
Habitats and species of national, regional and local importance are under pressure from the adaptation and diversification of farming and forestry employment.	Much of the County's existing biodiversity assets remain dependent on continued sensitive agricultural management. The Unitary Development Plan requires applications for agricultural development to avoid adverse impact on the environment, but does not reference the impact of agricultural management practices on environmental quality, nor the value of implementing agri-environmental schemes. However, the planning system is limited in the extent to which it can regulate agricultural management; at best, local development documents can draw attention to the impact of agricultural practice on environmental quality, and encourage the use of sustainable management practices (such as by supporting a high uptake of agri-environmental schemes). Therefore, these trends may continue with or without the Core Strategy.
<b>Waste and Recycling</b>	
Increase in amount of waste production over recent years, with too much still going to landfill.	There is an existing drive to increase levels of recycling and composting within the County and shift in general public opinion towards recycling, should help levels to increase over the coming years, with or without the Core Strategy. However, the infrastructure to support this change may come under strain, and the Core Strategy should help to ensure sufficient provision of new waste facilities.

### Method and Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 1.46 The review of other policies, plans and programmes and baseline data helped to identify key sustainability issues for Herefordshire, as described above. These key sustainability issues, and input from stakeholders, provided the basis for developing a set of SA objectives. The SA objectives, which have been the main tool used at each stage of the SA for assessing the likely effects of the options and draft policies in the Core Strategy, are set out in **Table 2** below.

**Table 2: SA Framework for the Herefordshire Core Strategy**

<b>SA Objectives</b>	
1.	Support, maintain or enhance the provision of high quality, local or easily accessible employment opportunities, suited to the changing needs of the local workforce.
2.	Secure a more adaptable and higher skilled workforce.
3.	Maintain or enhance conditions that enable a sustainable economy and continued investment.
4.	Reduce road traffic and congestion, pollution and accidents and improve health through physical activity by increasing the proportion of journeys made by public transport, cycling and walking.
5.	Improve the health of the people of Herefordshire, reduce disparities in health geographically and demographically and encourage healthy living for all.
6.	Improve equality of access to and engagement in quality cultural, educational, leisure, sporting, recreational and community activities for all.
7.	Sustainable Regeneration
8.	Raise Educational achievements throughout the County
9.	Reduce and prevent crime/fear of crime and antisocial behaviour in the county.
10.	Reduce poverty and promote equality, social inclusion by closing the gap between the most deprived areas in the county and the rest of the county.
11.	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing of the right type and tenure, in clear, safe and pleasant local environments.
12.	Reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal and minimise the use of non-reusable materials and encourage recycling.
13.	Value, maintain, restore and expand county biodiversity.
14.	Use natural resources and energy more efficiently.
15.	Value, protect, enhance and restore the landscape quality of Herefordshire, including its rural areas and open spaces.
16.	Reduce Herefordshire's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change as well as its contribution to the problem.
17.	Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment.
18.	Minimise local and global pollution and protect or enhance environmental resources.
19.	Ensure integrated, efficient and balanced land use.
20.	Value, protect and enhance the character and built quality of settlements and neighbourhoods and the county's historic environment and cultural heritage.

1.47 Note that for the purpose of being able to consider related sustainability issues together during the appraisal, the SA objectives were grouped into six themes (although some objectives fitted under more than one theme). The six themes are as follows:

- Education and employment (SA objectives 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8).
- Healthy and prosperous communities (SA objectives 5, 7, 9 and 10).
- Transport and access (SA objectives 4, 6 and 7).
- Built environment (SA objectives 11, 19 and 20).
- Resource consumption and climate change (SA objectives 12, 14, 16 and 18).
- Natural environment (SA objectives 13, 15, 17 and 18).

### **Use of the SA Framework**

1.48 Within the assessment matrices which set out the likely sustainability effects of the Core Strategy policies, symbols and colour-coding have been used against each SA objective to show whether an effect is likely to be significant, positive or negative, or uncertain, as shown in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3 Key to SA scores**

Symbol	Likely Effect
++	Significant positive effect
+	Minor positive effect
0	Negligible effect
-	Minor negative effect
--	Significant negative effect
?	Uncertain effect

- 1.49 The potential effects of the Core Strategy need to be determined and their significance assessed, which requires a series of judgments to be made. Attempts have been made to differentiate between the most significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of the symbols shown above. The dividing line in making a decision about the significance of an effect is often quite small. Where either ++ or -- has been used to distinguish significant effects from more minor effects (+ or -), this is because the effect of the policy in question on an SA objective is considered to be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect taking into account other factors that may influence the achievement of that SA objective.
- 1.50 It is a requirement to consider whether the potential effects predicted are likely to be secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium or long-term, permanent or temporary. Where relevant, reference has been made to effects being either direct or indirect, the latter is taken to cover 'secondary' effects. Cumulative effects refer to the potential to increase overall effects due to adding one effect onto another. The cumulative effects of the Core Strategy policies have been considered in Chapter 4 of the full SA Report and are described further ahead in this Non-Technical Summary. Consideration is also given to the timescales over which effects are likely to occur.

## Potential Effects of the Policies in the Draft Core Strategy

### What are the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy likely to be?

- 1.51 There is much to welcome in the Draft Core Strategy and implementation of its policies is likely to have a largely positive effect on sustainability issues in Herefordshire. The potential effects of each of the policies in the Core Strategy on each of the SA Objectives are summarised in **Table 4** overleaf (using the symbols and colour coding referred to in **Table 3** above). A description of the key findings of the SA for the Vision and Strategic Objectives, the Spatial Strategy policies and the Place-Shaping policies follows Table 4, and finally a summary of the SA findings for the whole Draft Core Strategy is set out in relation to each SA theme.

**Table 4: Summary of SA Scores for the Draft Core Strategy policies**

SA Theme	Education and Employment					Healthy and prosperous communities			Transport and Access		The Built Environment			Resource consumption and climate change			The Natural Environment			
	1	2	3	7	8	5	9	10	4	6	11	19	20	12	14	16	13	15	17	18
The Vision	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Objective 1	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	++	+	0	-?	+	+	0	0	0	0
Objective 2	0	+	0	+	+	++	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Objective 3	0	++	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Objective 4	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+
Objective 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	0	+	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+
Objective 6	++	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Objective 7	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	-?	-?	+/-	0	0	0	0
Objective 8	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+/-	+	+	+/-	0	-?	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+/-
Objective 9	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	+	0	0	+	-?	0	-?	+/-	+/-	0	0
Objective 10	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	++	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+
Objective 11	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	+	0	++	++	
Objective 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	
Policy SS1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy SS2	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	+/-	0	++	+	+	-?	-?	-?	0	0	0	0
Policy SS3	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	+	0	+/-	+/-	-?	++	+	+	++/-
Policy SS4	+	0	+	+	0	+/-	0	+	+/-	+	0	+	+	0	-	-	-	-	0	-?
Policy SS5	++	++	++	+	0	0	0	+	+/-	0	0	0	0	-?	-?	-?	+	+	0	+
Policy SS6	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	++	+	+	++	+	++	++	++	+	+	++	++
Policy HD1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++/-	++	++	++	++	0	+	+/-	+	+	+	+/-
Policy HD2	+	0	+	+	0	+	0	+	++/-	+	+	+/-	+	0	+/-	+/-	?	+/-	?	+/-
Policy HD3	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	+	++	+/-	+/-	0	+	+	+/-	-?	+/-	+/-
Policy HD4	++	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	+	++	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-	+/-	-?	-?	+/-
Policy HD5	++?	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	+	++	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-	+/-	-?	+/-	+/-
Policy HD6	++	+	++	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy BY1	++	+	++	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	++	+	++	0	?	+	+/-	+	+	+
Policy BY2	++	+	++	+	+	+	?	0	+/-	+	++	+	+	0	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-
Policy LO1	++	+	++	+	?	+	0	?	+/-	?	++	-?	?	0	?	?	+/-	?	+	+/-
Policy LO2	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+/-	+	++	+/-	0?	0	?	+/-	+/-	-?	+	+/-
Policy LB1	++	+	++	+	+	+	0	+/-	+	+	++	+	++	0	?	+	+/-	+/-	?	+
Policy LB2	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	++	++	+/-	+	0	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+
Policy RW1	++	+	++	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	++	+/-	++	0	?	+	+/-	+	?	+/-
Policy RW2	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	++	+/-	+	0	+	+	+/-	+	+	+
Policy KG1	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	+	++?	+	++	0	?	+	+	+	+	0
Policy RA1	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	++	-?	+	0	-?	-?	+/-	+/-	?	?
Policy RA2	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+/-	+	++	+	+	0	?	-?	+/-	+/-	?	?
Policy RA3	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+/-	+/-	+	0	+	+/-	+/-	+	+	+/-
Policy RA4	+/-	+/-	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	+/-	0	+/-	+	+	0	+	+/-	+	+	0	0
Policy RA5	+/-	0	+	+/-	0	0	+	0	+	+	+/-	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
Policy RA6	++	+	++	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	+/-	+	+	+
Policy H1	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	++	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



SA Theme	Education and Employment					Healthy and prosperous communities			Transport and Access		The Built Environment			Resource consumption and climate change			The Natural Environment			
	1	2	3	7	8	5	9	10	4	6	11	19	20	12	14	16	13	15	17	18
Policy H2	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	++	-	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy H3	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy H4	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0
Policy SC1	+	0	+	++	++	+	+	++	+	++	0	0	0	0	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0
Policy OS1	0	0	0	++	0	+	0	0	++?	++	0	+	++	0	+	+	++	++	0	++
Policy OS2	0	0	0	++	0	+	0	0	+/-?	++	0	++?	++	0	+	+	++	++	0	++
Policy OS3	0	0	0	++	0	+	0	0	+	++	0	+	++	0	+	+	++	++	+	++
Policy MT1	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	++	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	+
Policy E1	++	+	++	++	0	0	0	+	+/-	0	0	0	0	-?	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	+
Policy E2	++	+	++	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0
Policy E3	+	0	+	0	0	+/-	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0
Policy E4	+	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	+/-	+	0	+	+	0	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	0
Policy E5	+	0	+	++	0	0	0	0	+/-	+	+	++	+	0	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	0
Policy E6	+/-	0	+/-	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy LD1	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	0	0	0	++	++	+	+
Policy LD2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	++	0	0	0	0	++	0	0
Policy LD3	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	++	0	0	0
Policy LD4	0	0	0	++	0	+	+	0	++	++	0	+	++	0	0	0	++	++	++	++
Policy LD5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	++	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
Policy SD1	0	0	0	++	0	++	++	+	+	+	++	++	++	+	++	+	+	+	++	++
Policy SD2	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+/-	+	-?	+	++	++	+	-?	0	++
Policy SD3	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	0	++	++
Policy SD4	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	++	+	0	++	0	+	++
Policy MN1	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	-	0	-?	-?	0	0
Policy MN2	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-?	0	0	0	0	0
Policy MN3	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	-	-	+/-?	+/-	0	0
Policy MN4	+	0	+	0	0	+/-?	0	0	0	0	++	++	++	0	+/-	+	+/-?	+/-?	0	0
Policy MN5	0	0	+	0	0	+/-?	0	0	+	0	++	+	0	++	++	+	+/-?	+/-?	0	0
Policy MN6	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	0	0	0	0
Policy W1	0	0	0	0	0	-?	0	0	0	0	0	0	-?	++	++	++	-?	-?	0	-?
Policy W2	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	+
Policy W3	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Policy W4	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	++	0	++	0	0	0	0
Policy W5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	++/-	+	0	++	++	+	0	0	0	0
Policy ID1	+	+	+	++	+	+/-	+	+	+/-	++	+	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+/-

## Vision and Strategic Objectives

- 1.52 The Vision consists of an overall aim for Herefordshire, which sets a general aspiration to become a sustainable and distinctive county, and is supported by more detailed visions for social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality. Taken together, the Core Strategy Vision is likely to have a positive effect on all of the SA objectives as shown in Table 4.
- 1.53 The Core Strategy strategic objectives are generally unlikely to have an effect or are compatible with a number of the SA objectives (as shown in Table 4). They are likely to have a number of minor positive effects on each of the themes (education and employment, healthy and prosperous communities, transport and access, the built environment, resource consumption and climate change, and the natural environment) and some of the strategic objectives are likely to lead to significant positive effects, where they directly address SA objectives.

## Spatial Strategy

- 1.54 The six spatial strategy policies are likely to have a significant positive effect on the built environment theme by delivering 16,500 homes in Herefordshire during the plan period. Policy SS6 (Climate Change) is also likely to have significant positive effects on reducing travel, reducing waste, natural resources, climate change, flood risk and pollution. However, some negative effects are expected from residential developments (Policy SS2), major transport schemes (Policy SS4) and employment land provision (Policy SS5) as they could contribute to increased car travel, waste generation, natural resource consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and pollution. Policy SS5 (Employment provision) is likely to have a significant positive effect on employment, skills and the sustainable economy by supporting the provision of employment land. However, Policy SS4 (Movement and transportation) is likely to have negative effects on sustainable transport patterns by developing a new relief road that is likely to encourage car use. Policy SS1 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and is therefore likely to have positive effects on all SA objectives.

## Place-Shaping Policies

### Hereford

- 1.55 The effects of the six Hereford policies on education and employment are mainly minor or significantly positive, because of the provision that the policies make for education and employment development in Hereford, all of which will be well-linked by sustainable modes of transport. Effects on access to services are generally positive, due to the provision the policies make for new community services and facilities to support the growing population, as well as sustainable transport links to make those facilities more accessible. However the construction of the Hereford relief road (under policy HD2) will potentially encourage car use for longer journeys and could negatively affect the aspiration for a modal shift towards increased bus and rail travel, although it will have significant benefits in relation to reducing congestion and journey times.
- 1.56 Potential minor negative effects have been identified in relation to policies HD3, HD4 and HD5 as there are sensitive landscapes around the three urban extensions. However, it is likely that the potential impacts can be adequately mitigated. The Hereford Relief Road (Policy HD2) could also affect the landscape and biodiversity as it represents a major infrastructure development to the west of the city and will cross the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is a European designation indicating that the River Wye is of international importance for nature conservation. However these impacts may again be able to be mitigated e.g. through the use of wide span structures and avoidance of direct working in the watercourse.
- 1.57 Mixed effects are predicted in relation to reducing the risk and impacts of flooding, as there are some areas at higher risk of flooding within or in proximity to some of the housing and employment land allocations. In addition, the Hereford Relief Road crosses the River Wye and passes through the flood plain for a short distance. However, policies HD1, HD3, HD4 and HD5 all require new development to deliver sustainable urban drainage and flood mitigation solutions. In addition, new development will need to comply with policy SD3: Sustainable Water Management and Water Resources, which requires development proposals to be located in accordance with the Sequential and Exception Tests in the NPPF (where appropriate) and the inclusion of flood storage compensation measures where flooding is an issue.

- 1.58 Air pollution may be reduced due to the measures in the Hereford policies to improve levels of sustainable transport use, but the development of the western relief road and the provision of additional car parking for shoppers and visitors could have an adverse effect by encouraging ongoing car use, making it a more convenient and attractive option. Water quality, particularly in the River Wye SAC, could be affected by increased discharges from water treatment works, however, this is addressed in policy SS3 and SD4.

#### *Bromyard*

- 1.59 The Bromyard policies make provision for new classrooms at the local primary school and the development of 5 hectares of employment land, which will help to meet the identified need for employment land in Bromyard, particularly as the employment and residential development is proposed in close proximity. Both policies will have a positive effect on health, due to the provision they make for improved healthcare facilities as well as open space, walking and cycle routes which will encourage more active lifestyles. Policy BY2 could potentially have a positive effect on crime as the supporting text makes reference to developer contributions being used to fund improvements to local police services. Policy BY2 makes provision for public transport links and walking and cycle routes between the urban extension and the town centre; however it also requires there to be suitable vehicular access to the urban extension, with associated highway improvements which could mean that car use is indirectly encouraged as it will be more convenient.
- 1.60 The policies will have positive effects on meeting housing need as they provide for the development of around 500 new homes at Bromyard, and aim to ensure that the new development coming forward is of high quality and respects existing local character and heritage features. While large-scale new development could result in habitat loss or disturbance to species, it is recognised that mitigation measures are built into both policies in relation to impacts on biodiversity, which could also result in enhancements.

#### *Leominster*

- 1.61 The Leominster policies make provision for the development of a new 420-place primary school and 10 hectares of employment land and the incorporation of sustainable transport links into the new urban extension should mean that new residents there will be easily able to access job opportunities in the town centre and at the existing Enterprise Park.
- 1.62 Although policy LO2 includes measures to encourage sustainable transport provision (such as walking and cycling links to the town centre and Enterprise Park), it also allows for the creation of a southern link road which may encourage car use. Both of the policies for Leominster will have a significant positive effect on housing due to the provision that they make for a total of 2,300 new homes in the town, of which 25% will be affordable. However, policy LO1 may have a negative effect on the efficient use of land as it directs much of the development for Leominster to an urban extension outside of the existing built up area.
- 1.63 The two policies for Leominster will have broadly mixed effects on the natural environment, many of which are currently uncertain due to a lack of detailed information about the detailed development proposals that are likely to come forward at Leominster. However, it is assumed that the development will conform to other Draft Core Strategy policies such as LDS3: Biodiversity and SD3: Sustainable Water Management which should provide some mitigation against the potential negative effects of large-scale new development such as that proposed at Leominster. In particular, the potential landscape impacts of the large new urban extension detailed under policy LO2 are of concern.

#### *Ledbury*

- 1.64 Both Ledbury policies are likely to have a range of minor and significant positive effects on education and employment, due to the provision that they make for a new 210-place primary school and the development of 12 hectares of employment land which will help to meet the identified need for employment land in Ledbury. Both policies will have a positive effect on health, due to the provision they make for improved healthcare facilities as well as open space and walking and cycle routes which should encourage more active lifestyles. However, policy LB1 could potentially have mixed effects on reducing poverty and promoting equality as it allocates much of the development for Ledbury (including the 12ha of employment land) to the edges of

the town. This could mean that it is not easily accessible for residents within Ledbury (although the policy also encourages the provision of new sustainable transport links).

- 1.65 The policies for Ledbury provide for approximately 800 new homes, and both policies also aim to ensure that the new development coming forward at the town is of high quality and respects existing local character and heritage features. However, the effects of policy LB2 on the efficient use of land are mixed because although it makes provision for development to be well-linked by sustainable transport, it also allocates development to an urban extension which is understood to be largely greenfield land.
- 1.66 Impacts on landscape are potentially of particular concern at Ledbury, as the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies to the east of the town. However, the development proposed through these policies is focused to the north of Ledbury, and therefore away from the AONB.

#### *Ross-on-Wye*

- 1.67 The likely effects of the Ross-on-Wye policies on education and employment are broadly very positive, due to the provision that they make for new pre-school places and improved infrastructure at the local high school and the continuing promotion of 10 hectares of employment land at Model Farm, which the new housing will be in close proximity to. This will have further positive effects for addressing climate change and both policies provide for new green infrastructure and walking and cycle links, which should encourage more active lifestyles and the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 1.68 Both policies will have significant positive effects on housing due to the provision that they make for a total of 900 new homes at Ross-on-Wye and the requirement for development to reflect and enhance the characteristic built historic elements of the town. However, both policies allocate much of the new development for Ross-on-Wye to strategic sites on the edge of the existing built up area, some of which is on agricultural land which could result in a range of negative effects, including on efficient use of land and soils. The effects of these two policies on the natural environment are again generally positive, although it is recognised that new development at Ross-on-Wye is very constrained by environmental issues such as areas of high flood risk around the River Wye, biodiversity designations including the River Wye SAC and the presence of the Wye Valley AONB, the policies do provide for significant mitigation against potential impacts on those assets.

#### *Kington*

- 1.69 Broadly positive effects are likely in relation to education and employment, as existing education facilities are assumed to be adequate for the scale of growth proposed. Minor positive effects are likely in relation to employment development and the local economy as the policy encourages development proposals to make available small-scale employment sites. Positive effects are also likely to result from the fact that the policy makes provision for green infrastructure and amenity space as well as walking and cycling links to the town centre, employment areas and other facilities, which should encourage healthier and more active lifestyles and will reduce the need to travel by car. The fact that development is to take place within and around the existing urban area and not on a large peripheral urban extension should have further positive effects in terms of ensuring equal access to jobs and opportunities for local residents.
- 1.70 The effects of the Kington policy on the built environment are likely to be positive, due to the provision that it makes for the development of 200 new high quality homes. Because the housing and employment development will take place in and around the existing urban area, this will constitute more efficient use of land than a large strategic urban extension on a greenfield site. The policy also includes measures to mitigate the potential environmental impacts (e.g. requiring development to link habitats into ecological networks and to maintain the character of Kington in particular scenic views and landscape features surrounding the town).

#### *Rural Areas*

- 1.71 The effects of the six rural areas policies on education and employment are broadly positive due to the provision they make for employment provision in rural areas and the stimulation of the rural economy, in particular policy RA6. In many cases, the rural areas policies are not expected to affect the provision of healthy and prosperous communities, although RA2 could have positive

effects on health as it allows for extended family to be considered in applications for rural housing development where it enables the applicant to receive medical support. The effects of the rural areas policies on transport and access are broadly positive, as they make good provision for increased job opportunities in Herefordshire's rural areas, thereby reducing the need for people to commute into Hereford and the market towns for work.

- 1.72 Significant positive effects may result from policies RA1 and RA2 in relation to housing; however a number of potential negative effects have been identified in relation to resource consumption and climate change as the rural areas policies focus new development outside of Hereford and the market towns, which could mean that the option to re-use brownfield sites will be less commonly available and that levels of car use are likely to be generally higher amongst residents of the new housing proposed. While development in rural areas can be considered more likely to have an adverse impact on issues such as the landscape and biodiversity, most of the policies include strong criteria requiring development to avoid or mitigate these sorts of potential impacts.

### **Summary of findings by SA theme**

- 1.73 A summary of the SA findings for the Draft Core Strategy policies is set out below in relation to each SA theme.

#### **Transport and Access**

- 1.74 Over half of the Draft Core Strategy objectives and around a third of the policies are unlikely to have any effect on the transport and access theme. Another third or so of the Draft Core Strategy policies are likely to have a positive or mixed effect on the transport and access theme; in particular on SA Objective 4 (reducing road traffic and increasing the use of sustainable modes of transport). The negative effects associated with this objective mainly relate to the fact that a number of the policies have the potential to encourage car use by increasing the attractiveness of this option, for example through focusing developments in Hereford and the market towns (which would encourage residents from rural areas to travel by car), the provision of car parking facilities in new developments or by proposing improvements to the road network. However, the policies also include a number of measures which aim to increase the use of sustainable transport and reduce congestion caused by car traffic, particularly in the centre of Hereford; therefore the overall likely cumulative effect on SA Objective 4 is mixed.
- 1.75 The cumulative impact of the policies on SA Objective 6 (access to facilities), when considered separately from SA Objective 4, is likely to be positive as the majority of policies likely to have an effect on this objective will have positive effects, for example due to the spatial policies which generally focus development within or adjacent to existing urban areas where facilities will be more easily accessible. However, the overall cumulative impact for this SA theme remains mixed due to the large number of potentially negative and mixed effects that have been identified in relation to SA Objective 4.

#### **Built Environment**

- 1.76 Although some of the Draft Core Strategy policies are unlikely to affect the SA objectives in the Built Environment theme, the majority of policies are likely to have either a positive or significant positive effect on this SA objective. Several specifically aim to improve the quality of the built environment, such as the policies for sustainable design and energy efficiency (SD1) and local building stone (MN4). Most of the positive and significant positive effects associated with this theme relate to SA Objective 11 (housing provision), due to the extensive provision made for both market value and affordable housing through the policies, and therefore a cumulative positive effect is expected in relation to this SA objective.
- 1.77 However, a number of mixed effects have also been identified, including some minor negative effects, particularly in relation to SA Objectives 19 and 20 (efficient land use and the quality of the built/historic environment). Most of these mixed effects relate to the policies for development in Hereford and the policies relating to the proposed Hereford relief road, as well as the Leominster policies and RA1 (rural areas). Despite the fact that positive effects should arise from the overall level of housing development proposed in Hereford and the market towns, much of the development at Hereford, Leominster and the rural areas, including the relief road around

Hereford, will be on greenfield land. As such, a cumulative mixed effect is likely in relation to these two SA objectives and for the SA theme as a whole.

### Resource Consumption and Climate Change

- 1.78 A relatively large number of potential negative effects (all of which are classed as minor) have been identified in relation to the resource consumption and climate change theme – more than for any of the other five SA themes. Most of these negative impacts relate to the policies for focusing development at Hereford and transport schemes such as the proposed Hereford relief road, although a large number are also associated with the rural areas policies due to the fact that development in rural areas may encourage ongoing car use and would therefore maintain levels of carbon emissions and pollution from road traffic. In relation to SA Objective 12 (reducing waste production), while it is recognised that the large-scale new development proposed in the Core Strategy could result in increased waste generation locally, it is not expected to result in an overall increase in waste generation per head of population. As such, the majority of the policies will have negligible effects on this objective. However, there are a number of policies that could have a positive effect on reducing waste production; therefore a cumulative minor positive effect is likely in relation to this SA objective in isolation.
- 1.79 A number of potential positive and significant positive effects have also been identified for SA objectives in this theme, particularly in relation to general policies such as SS6 (Climate Change), SD3 and SD4 (water management), and W1 (waste streams and targets), which seek to protect water resources, encourage use of renewable energy and reduce waste thus reducing contributions to climate change. Therefore, despite the larger number of potential negative effects identified for this theme the likely cumulative effect of the Core Strategy policies on resource consumption and climate change is mixed.

### Natural Environment

- 1.80 While there are a large number of minor and some significant positive effects identified for the Draft Core Strategy policies on the SA objectives in the natural environment theme, there are also quite a large number of mixed or minor negative effects identified. Most of the mixed or minor negative effects are associated with the policies relating to development at Hereford and the market towns, the construction of the Hereford relief road, and the minerals policies, due to the potential for negative effects on biodiversity (e.g. within the River Wye) and/or landscape as a result of development proposed nearby.
- 1.81 However, a number of the potential negative effects identified may be able to be mitigated through implementation of the safeguards within other policies in the Draft Core Strategy. For example, in recognition of the potential impact on water quality in the River Wye associated with waste water treatment capacity to support the growing population, policy SS3 states that release of specific sites for housing may be phased or delayed in order to ensure that necessary infrastructure is in place to support the new development in order to ensure that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 1.82 The significant positive effects on the natural environment theme are identified in relation to policies that specifically aim to conserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment, such as policies LD2 (landscape), LD3 (biodiversity), and LD4 (green infrastructure), SS3 (with respect to the River Wye), or they relate directly to reducing the risk of flooding (SA objective 17) and/or minimising pollution (SA objective 18), such as the Sustainable Design policies (SD1-4) and open space policies (OS1-3). As such, the likely cumulative effect of the policies on the natural environment is mixed.

### Monitoring

- 1.83 The SEA Regulations require that monitoring is undertaken in relation to the significant effects of implementing the Plan in question. **Table 5** below sets out a number of suggested indicators for monitoring the potential significant sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy. Note that the indicators proposed are included as suggestions and have been drawn from the indicators proposed in the Draft Core Strategy in relation to monitoring implementation of the policies

themselves as part of the Annual Monitoring Framework that must be undertaken by Herefordshire Council. Therefore, the indicators included in **Table 5** may change at subsequent stages of the Core Strategy preparation as Herefordshire finalises its monitoring framework. Only a few indicators have been suggested where the data used for monitoring in many cases will be provided by outside bodies.

**Table 5 Suggested framework for monitoring potential negative sustainability effects arising from implementation of the Herefordshire Draft Core Strategy**

SA objectives for which potential significant effects have been identified	Policies that are likely to lead to minor negative effects	Proposed indicators
<b>Education and Employment</b>		
1. Support, maintain or enhance the provision of high quality, local or easily accessible employment opportunities, suited to the changing needs of the local workforce.	<u>Place-shaping policies</u> RA4, RA5 <u>General Policies</u> E6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment land floor space by type and location</li> <li>• number of new jobs created</li> <li>• employment and income levels against regional and national averages</li> <li>• the amount of employment land commitments, completions and reallocations, as monitored through the council’s annual Employment Land Survey including expansions and relocations</li> <li>• the number of people employed in the different tourism sectors;</li> </ul>
2. Secure a more adaptable and higher skilled workforce.	<u>Place-shaping policies</u> RA4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment land floor space by type and location</li> </ul>
3. Maintain or enhance conditions that enable a sustainable economy and continued investment.	<u>General Policies</u> E6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment land floor space by type and location</li> <li>• number. of live-work units granted permission</li> <li>• accessibility to Broadband</li> <li>• business survival rate at 3 years</li> <li>• new business registration rates;</li> </ul>
7. Sustainable Regeneration	<u>Place-shaping policies</u> RA4, RA5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the amount of vacant land and premises in the county;</li> <li>• the amount of completed retail, office and leisure development completed within the monitoring period;</li> <li>• the amount of permissions granted for change of use from A2 to residential or offices</li> <li>• the number of vacant units within town centre</li> <li>• the number and type of visits to Herefordshire, and associated expenditure</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy and Prosperous Communities</b>		
5. Improve the health of the people of Herefordshire, reduce disparities in health geographically and demographically and encourage healthy living for all.	<u>The Spatial Strategy</u> SS4 <u>General Policies</u> E3, MN4, MN5, W1, ID1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life expectancy of residents (<b>ONS</b>)</li> <li>• Number of planning applications proposing the loss of an open space, sports or recreation facilities</li> <li>• Number of planning applications proposing new open space, sports and recreation facilities</li> </ul>

SA objectives for which potential significant effects have been identified	Policies that are likely to lead to minor negative effects	Proposed indicators
10. Reduce poverty and promote equality, social inclusion by closing the gap between the most deprived areas in the county and the rest of the county.	<u>Place-shaping policies</u> LB1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessibility to Broadband</li> <li>• employment and income levels against regional and national averages</li> </ul>
<b>Transport and Access</b>		
4. Reduce road traffic and congestion, pollution and accidents and improve health through physical activity by increasing the proportion of journeys made by public transport, cycling and walking.	<u>The Spatial Strategy</u> Objectives 7, 8 and 9; SS2, SS4, SS5 <u>Place-shaping policies</u> HD1, HD2, HD3, HD4, HD5, BY2, LO1, LO2, LB2, RA2, RA4 <u>General Policies</u> H2, OS2, E1, E4, E5, ID1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of development in urban areas compared to rural</li> <li>• Transport patronage by mode</li> <li>• Data on the use of the railhead at Moreton-on-Lugg</li> </ul>
<b>Built Environment</b>		
11. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing of the right type and tenure, in clear, safe and pleasant local environments.	<u>Place-shaping policies</u> RA3, RA4, RA5 <u>General Policies</u> SD2, W5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• housing completions by type and tenure and location – assessed in relation to 5 year tranches in order to ensure that there remains a flexible supply of available and deliverable land for housing across the county;</li> <li>• housing densities in urban and rural areas</li> <li>• affordable housing completions split by social and intermediate occupancy</li> <li>• Assessment of traveller site provision against the need identified in the Council’s Assessment of Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers</li> </ul>
19. Ensure integrated, efficient and balanced land use.	<u>The Spatial Strategy</u> Objectives 7 and 8 <u>Place-shaping policies</u> HD2, HD3, HD4, HD5, LO1, LO2, LB2, RW1, RW2, RA1, RA3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the percentage of all new development completed on previously developed land</li> <li>• housing densities in urban and rural areas</li> <li>• Level of development in urban areas compared to rural</li> <li>• Number of new parish, town and neighbourhood plans</li> </ul>
20. Value, protect and enhance the character and built quality of settlements and neighbourhoods and the county’s historic environment and cultural heritage.	<u>Place-shaping policies</u> HD3, HD4, HD5, LO2 <u>General Policies</u> SD2, W1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and percentage of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments on Buildings at Risk Register (<b>English Heritage</b>)</li> <li>• The need for, frequency and outcomes of planning enforcement investigations/ planning appeals concerning the aspects of local loss of locally important buildings within a conservation area</li> </ul>
<b>Resource Consumption and Climate Change</b>		
12. Reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal and minimise the use of non-reusable materials and	<u>The Spatial Strategy</u> Objectives 1, 7, 8 and 9; SS2, SS3, SS5 <u>General Policies</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Local Authority Collected waste arisings per annum</li> </ul>



SA objectives for which potential significant effects have been identified	Policies that are likely to lead to minor negative effects	Proposed indicators
encourage recycling.	E1	
14. Use natural resources and energy more efficiently.	<p><i>The Spatial Strategy</i> Objectives 7 and 8; SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5 <i>Place-shaping policies</i> HD2, RA1 <i>General Policies</i> SC1, E1, E4, E5, MN1, MN2, MN3, MN4, ID1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The production of secondary (reused and recycled) aggregates</li> <li>• after use of mineral sites especially wildlife habitat creation</li> <li>• Estimates of permitted and useable land banks for aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock)</li> <li>• Comparison of production figures with national and sub-national apportionments</li> <li>• Maintaining Herefordshire Council's County Site and Monuments Register.</li> <li>• Monitoring changes to historic landscapes</li> </ul>
16. Reduce Herefordshire's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change as well as its contribution to the problem.	<p><i>The Spatial Strategy</i> Objectives 7, 8 and 9; SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5 <i>Place-shaping policies</i> HD1, HD2, HD4, HD5, BY2, LO2, RA1, RA2, RA3, RA4 <i>General Policies</i> SC1, E1, E4, E5, MN3, ID1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport patronage by mode</li> <li>• Number of decentralised energy schemes granted permission</li> <li>• Total CO2 emissions per capita (<b>DECC</b>)</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Environment</b>		
13. Value, maintain, restore and expand county biodiversity.	<p><i>The Spatial Strategy</i> Objective 9, SS4 <i>Place-shaping policies</i> BY1, LO2 <i>General Policies</i> MN1, MN3, MN4, MN5, W1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net change in condition of SSSIs (<b>Natural England</b>)</li> <li>• after use of mineral sites especially wildlife habitat creation</li> <li>• Phosphate levels within the River Wye SAC and adjoining tributaries that receive increased phosphates from Core Strategy growth</li> <li>• Monitoring changes to protected habitats and impacts of species within the Herefordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan</li> <li>• Changes in the areas of designated nature conservation sites as a consequence of planning permission;</li> <li>• Proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has or is being implemented</li> </ul>
15. Value, protect, enhance and restore the landscape quality of Herefordshire, including its rural areas and open spaces.	<p><i>The Spatial Strategy</i> Objective 9; SS4 <i>Place-shaping policies</i> HD2, HD3, HD4, HD5, BY2, LO2, LB1, RA1, RA2 <i>General Policies</i> SD2, MN1, MN3, MN4, MN5, W1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of developments meeting and surpassing national design standards.</li> <li>• The need for, frequency and outcomes of planning enforcement investigations/ planning appeals concerning the aspects of local loss of locally important buildings within a conservation area</li> </ul>
17. Reduce the risk of	<i>Place-shaping policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of planning permissions</li> </ul>

SA objectives for which potential significant effects have been identified	Policies that are likely to lead to minor negative effects	Proposed indicators
flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment.	HD3, HD4, HD5, LB2	granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence grounds. ( <b>EA and HC</b> )
18. Minimise local and global pollution and protect or enhance environmental resources.	<i>The Spatial Strategy</i> Objective 8, SS3, SS4 <i>Place-shaping policies</i> HD1, HD2, HD3, HD4, HD5, BY2, LO1, LO2, RW1, RA3 <i>General Policies</i> W1, ID1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural land usage by quality</li> <li>• Percentage of river length assessed as good or chemical quality (<b>EA</b>)</li> </ul>

## Conclusions

- 1.84 The Draft Herefordshire Core Strategy is likely to have generally positive effects on the SA objectives, although a number of potentially minor negative impacts are also associated with the scale and location of development required in the County. No significant negative effects are identified. Due to the rural nature of Herefordshire, there are tensions between the need to guide development to key locations (Hereford and the market towns), taking advantage of economic efficiencies and more sustainable transport options that this provides, and the need to provide access to services and facilities in smaller rural communities. Recommendations made in previous SA work have generally been addressed, which has gone a long way towards providing mitigation for potential adverse effects.
- 1.85 Some caution is needed as there are still a number of policies with mixed or as yet uncertain effects and so the way in which the policies are implemented will ultimately determine their eventual impacts.

### What are the next steps in the preparation of the Core Strategy and its Sustainability Appraisal?

- 1.86 The full SA Report and this Non-Technical Summary will be available for consultation alongside the Draft Core Strategy. Following the consultation, the Core Strategy and the SA Report will be revised as appropriate, taking into account the responses received.

### Where can I find out more about the Sustainability Appraisal?

- 1.87 More detailed information about the SA process and its findings can be found in the full SA Report which is available from Herefordshire Council, and on its website.

LUC  
March 2013