

Place Shaping Options Consultation - Bromyard

Local Plan 2021-2041

June 2022



Bromyard Place Shaping Options

Background

Bromyard is one of Herefordshire smaller market towns, located in the north east of the county. The town itself has a population of about 4,700 and serves a wider rural hinterland between Leominster and Worcester. Traditionally Bromyard was a centre for hop growing but employment is now largely concentrated in manufacturing, distribution, and public administration. Bromyard is also well known for its historic half-timbered buildings and numerous festivals that are held in the area.

Current and emerging policy background

Core Strategy

Within the current [Core Strategy](#) Bromyard had a sustainable urban extension at Land at Hardwick Bank identified as the main area for housing growth within the town. This was to deliver:

- A minimum of 250 homes, of which 40% to be affordable housing,
- A new formal park, play and sports facilities, and allotments.
- As of April 2022 this application is currently is still undetermined.

The Core Strategy indicated a requirement for 5 hectares of employment land for Bromyard. Due to the small market size of Bromyard this has been a challenge to deliver this since the adoption of the Core Strategy.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Bromyard Town is not producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Therefore there are currently no other place shaping proposals to consider.

Market Town Investment Plan

The [Bromyard Investment Plan](#) was published in 2021. The overall vision of the plan is to encourage inward investment and new talent, to make Bromyard recognised for its artisan food and drink culture and experiential tourism, a diverse and exciting retail offer which engages with and supports all parts of the community, and to be a more accessible place by improving green transport connection links and active travel options.

From this the plan identified a number of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to achieve the vision. The proposed Bromyard Eastern Enhancement Project is to acquire over 16ha of farmland to create a permanent festival site, including a community building. This will include market square improvements to encourage a sustainable street culture and evening economy and to utilise empty independent retail units.

The investment plan also proposes the Bromyard Eco-Hub. This will develop employment land adjacent to Linton Trading Estate to create manufacturing capacity focusing on green technology. A health and wellbeing centre is proposed on Bromyard High Street. This will be a new health space for friendly, up to date exercise options. Finally a greenway is proposed. This is to be a permissive foot and cycle path along the disused railway lane from Bromyard adjacent to the proposed festival site.

Other local documents

The [Bromyard Employment Land Study](#) (2019) is to guide Herefordshire Council's planning policy within future development plan documents with regard to employment land in and around Bromyard. The study recommended an employment land demand of 2 ha, with a significant degree of flexibility within the forecast. The updated Employment Land Study, which has recently been commissioned, will give an up to date employment land requirement for Bromyard.

The [Bromyard Traffic Management Study](#) (2018) has identified that parking and Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) access are the most visible problems along with the historic constrained network of roads within the town. A series of schemes have been recommended for implementation. The Local Transport Plan for all of the county will be updated as part of the emerging evidence base for the local plan update.

Issues from the Spatial Options Consultation

The Strategic Spatial Options Consultation was held from the 17 January to the 28 February 2022. The main issues gathered from the comments in regards to Bromyard are shown below.

- Bromyard scored reasonably well in terms of a preference for growth considering its small size. By only focusing growth in the larger towns this may hinder development in the smaller towns and rural areas.
- Due to Bromyard's relative proximity to other town and cities in the Midlands, this could make it a more suitable location for development.
- However that very fact could hinder sustained economic development with residents relying upon Hereford and Worcester for employment opportunities.
- Despite this, others also remark that the town is too remote and has no demand for housing. For these above reasons, this would add to carbon emissions.
- Overall, Bromyard received support for some additional growth.

Spatial option growth for Bromyard

The preferred spatial option suggests an indicative strategic growth target of approximately 650 units within Bromyard for the period 2021-41. In addition there were approximately 100 existing commitments (planning permissions in April 2022).

Capacity for development

Built April 2021- April 2022	Commitments at April 2022
3	approx. 100

Opportunities and constraints

Key constraints to development in Bromyard are:

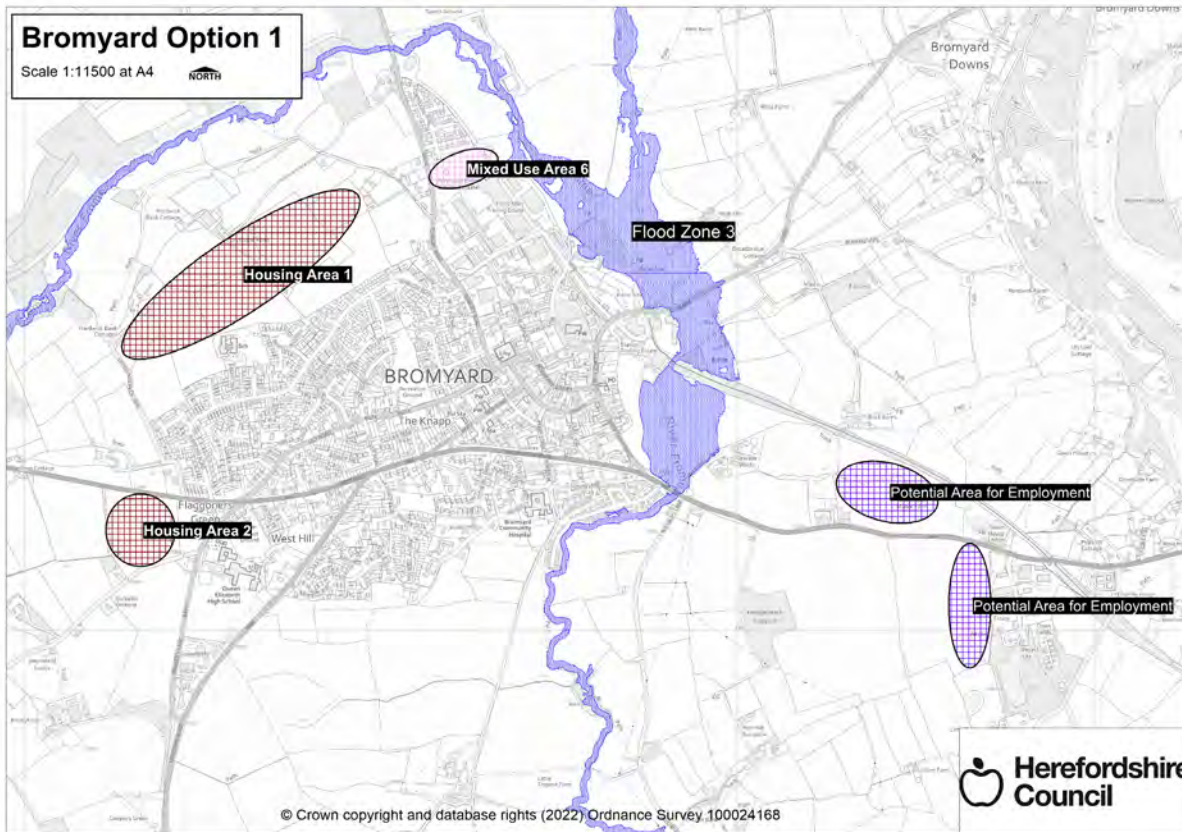
- Bromyard is approximately a 90 minutes' drive from Birmingham, Bristol, and Cardiff. However the town has a limited bus services and no railway station. The nearest railway station would be Malvern Link, approximately nine miles away.
- Bromyard is situated on steep, east facing slopes of the valley of the River Frome. The spread of development in Bromyard has been constrained by the natural feature of the valley. The topography of the town is dramatic, due to the variation in the form of the Frome valley.
- To the east of the town is the flood zone by the River Frome, and Bromyard is also constrained by the Bromyard Downs topography. The Stockings Meadow Nature Reserve is also located to the east of the town adjacent to the A44 Worcester Road.
- Bromyard is within an area where new development is currently restricted due to the phosphate levels, as the River Frome is within the catchment of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- There could be some opportunities for some small brownfield development within Bromyard, however these would not fully meet the housing requirement within the plan period on their own.
- The town centre of Bromyard is also within a [conservation area](#) and its narrow roads would not be suitable for any large scale developments.
- Development opportunities would be more suitable to the north/west or to the south of Bromyard.

Options

Strategic housing growth options

There are two main options for future strategic growth in Bromyard which are made up of different broad locations as shown on the map below. This section describes which broad locations are included as part of the options.

Option 1- To the north and west of Bromyard



- Option 1 would locate development broadly to the north and west of Bromyard. This would include the Core Strategy urban extension of Land at Hardwick Bank (Housing Area 1). An access road would be required. This could deliver approximately 620 dwellings.

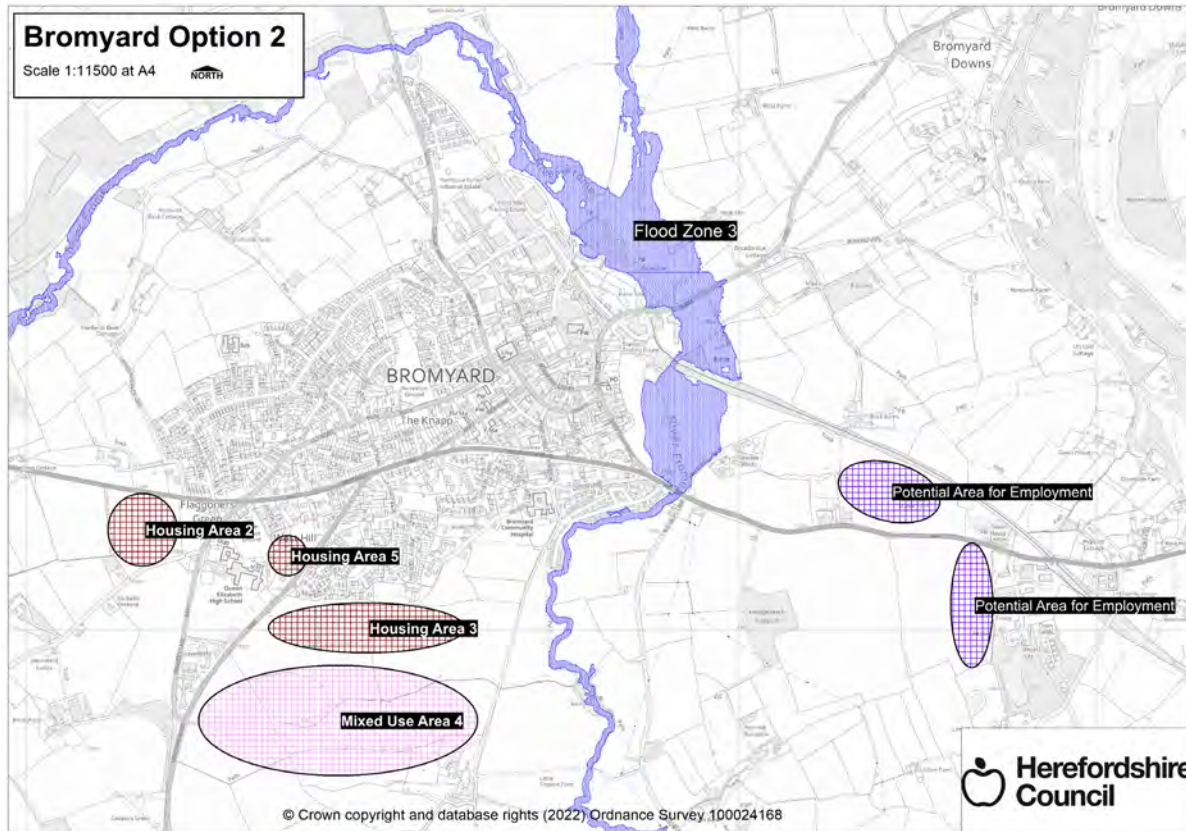
Opportunities

- Encourage connectivity to the town through walking and cycle paths, and access to bus stops.
- This would follow the historic expansion of Bromyard from the historic town centre.
- This option also has potential mixed use land adjacent to Porthouse Industrial Estate to the north of Bromyard (Mixed Use Area 6).

Constraints

- This option effectively extends the current approach in the Core Strategy and would be dependent upon issues around the planning application at Hardwick Bank being resolved.
- As well as the area at Land at Flaggoners Green south of the A44 (Housing Area 2) also obtaining planning permission.

Option 2- To the south of Bromyard



- Option 2 would focus development more to the south of Bromyard.
- With additional brownfield sites this option could also provide approximately 580 dwellings, and would potentially require additional smaller sites to deliver the full indicative target.

- Potentially larger areas for development than option 1
- Includes land at Flaggoners Green South of the A44 (Housing Area 2) which is also considered for option 1. Includes further land identified through the HELAA process (Mixed Use Area 4), land off Ashfield Way (Housing Area 3), and the Highways Depot (Housing Area 5).
- Additional housing requirement could be found through smaller brownfield or windfall sites.

Opportunities

- Green infrastructure facilities could also be provided such as landscaping, open space and recreation.
- The larger mixed HELAA development area has the opportunity to provide 40% affordable housing.
- This option could offer more employment land opportunities than option 1.
- Located adjacent to the main strategic roads of the town for access to Bromyard town centre and Hereford.

Constraints

- This option could have constraints within the local road network. Further capacity analysis will be required if this option is to go forward.
- There are also possible landscape limitations to consider. The topography of the area contains steeply sloping land. Further landscape assessment would be required to access how visually intrusive this could be for the surrounding area.

Environment:

- The north/west option could have the potential to supply a formal park along with new play sports facilities and allotments. This option could help to achieve the environmental objective to 'achieve biodiversity net gain from all developments and significantly increase the tree cover in the market towns' as outlined within the recent Spatial Options Consultation.
- The southern option could also offer opportunities for public open space and a children play area, with additional options for further large scale green infrastructure. The proposed showground within the Bromyard Market Town Investment plan could also offer further open space for Bromyard.

Community:

- Within the proposed Eastern Enhancement Project in the Market Town Investment Plan there is a proposed community building within the festival site. This could meet the community objective to 'Ensure that all residents have easy access to an appropriate range of nearby services, with community hubs thriving in market town and rural settings, thereby reducing the need to travel and enhancing quality of life' as outlined within the recent [Spatial Options Consultation](#).
- The current Core Strategy has an existing policy for a target of 40% affordable housing for Bromyard on sites of more than 10 dwellings. The Herefordshire Local Plan 2021-2041 affordable housing level will be determined from the emerging evidence base such as the Economic Viability Assessment. Dependent on viability it is expected that any proposed large scale development is to include approximately 40% affordable housing.
- Bromyard has one primary school within the town at St Peter's Primary School. This is at present over capacity at 220 pupils. Bromyard has one high school - Queen Elizabeth High School. The high school has a capacity of 400 pupils, with 342 currently enrolled. Bromyard currently has one GP practice at Nunwell Surgery. Bromyard has an ageing population with 29% over 65 years. This could further increase during the plan period which could put further demand on health services. The capacity of these services will all have to be considered in regards to the future housing requirements of Bromyard as part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will form part of the emerging evidence base of the local plan.

Economy

- Both the southern and north/west options have some options for the allocation of employment land. There is also the proposed Bromyard Eco-Hub as outlined within the market town investment plan which has employment opportunities. Linton Trading Estate also has some small plots of land available. By allocating employment this will help achieve the economic objective 'To recognise the importance of the small business sector, help independent businesses to thrive, boost job opportunities and encourage the creation of hyper-local business identities' as outlined within the recent Spatial Options Consultation.
- Additionally the proposed greenway within the town investment plan could support the transition to a zero carbon and circular economy by promoting sustainable travel. This also meets an additional economic objective as previously outlined in the Spatial Options Consultation
- The council is currently updating the Herefordshire Employment Land requirements. When this has been completed later this year this will show the updated requirements for Bromyard within the plan period. Additionally the council is also currently updating the Town Centre and Retail Assessment, which will cover Hereford and the market towns. This is expected to be completed later this year and will give an up to date retail space requirement for Bromyard.