

Local Plan 2021-2041

**Rural Areas
Background Paper**

March 2024

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1. Introduction

A key part of the Local Plan 2021-2041 is to identify an overarching spatial strategy, which will set out the overall direction of growth of development in Herefordshire.

Herefordshire is a large predominantly rural county covering 217,973 hectares of land and it has the fourth lowest population density in England with over half (88,136 people) the population live in rural areas (Census 2021). The population of Herefordshire is spread across the county in a variety of settlement types and sizes that need to be considered as part of future plans.

Creating a settlement hierarchy is a way of assessing settlements and categorising them based on a set of defined criteria. As a result, settlements are put in an order and classified based on their size and/or the range of services that they provide. The higher up the hierarchy the larger the population and the number of services provided.

One of the primary aims of establishing a settlement hierarchy is to promote sustainable communities by bringing housing, jobs and services closer together in an attempt to maintain and promote the viability of local facilities and reduce the need to travel to services and facilities elsewhere. It helps to determine what role settlements can play in addressing the future development needs of the county and this information will in part, inform decisions on locations of development.

2. Purpose of this document

This document provides a summary and presents the conclusions reached in the settlement hierarchy assessment of Herefordshire. It sets out the background and provides detail to the different stages in the development of the Rural Settlement Hierarchy following feedback from Herefordshire Council service providers, general public and ward members and parish councils.

This paper also reflects on the reasoning underpinning the approaches taken informed by the spatial vision and options as set out in the Regulation 18 Local Plan and by the Herefordshire County Plan which are explained below. The Rural strategy exemplified in this paper provides the rationale for the policies relating to housing distribution and economic growth for rural areas.

3. National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF) requires housing development to promote sustainable development in rural areas by focusing development where it will maintain, upgrade or create local services and facilities in rural communities.

Also to promote a prosperous rural economy, Paragraph 88 of the NPPF requires planning policies to assist in the retention or the development of *local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF has set out a need for developments to offer sustainable modes of transport such as footpaths, cycling paths or public transport and by concentrating development on locations which can be made sustainable by reducing the need to travel.

National Guidance (NPPG) recognises the particular challenges rural communities face in regards to rural housing. NPPG acknowledges that a wide range of settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas and therefore strategic local policy on rural housing which restricts development in some particular settlements must be informed by a robust evidence base which reflects the needs and opportunities of rural communities.

4. The Core Strategy (2011 – 2031) rural settlement hierarchy

The Herefordshire Development Plan consists of the adopted Core Strategy (2015). This plan sets out the Council's vision, strategic objectives, and broad spatial strategy to guide future development and growth in Herefordshire to 2031. The current Core Strategy sought to distribute around 5,300 dwellings proportionately between 217 settlements across seven housing market areas (HMAs). These HMAs are based upon common housing market characteristics including tenure, house type profile, incomes and affordability, and house prices. It also reflects geographical proximity, patterns of household movement (migration), and travel to work patterns. Each HMA has different needs and requirements, and this approach aims to respond to these needs and requirements in a flexible and responsive way. Together with Neighbourhood Development Plans, the strategy was intended to empower communities to evolve as sustainable places whilst respecting their fundamental rural character.

Settlements listed in Figures 4.14 and 4.15 of the Core Strategy were selected based on their size and level of services. Settlements within 4.15 were originally intended for local needs housing only but following the Examination in Public, Policy RA2 applied to both lists of settlements.

The Rural Settlement Hierarchy background paper (2010 and updated 2013) underpins the settlement selection made in 2013. This was subject to a number of public consultations and the Examination in Public in 2015.

Since 2013, there have been several factors that require the current selection process to be reviewed;

- Feedback and concern from local parish councils and communities regarding the data used in 2013
- The impact of the amalgamation of the smaller settlements in para 4.14 with those of 4.15 under Policy RA2
- The unsustainable locations of some current settlements defined within the Core Strategy
- No environmental factors being taken into account in the selection of settlements

- Changes in the levels of services and facilities within settlements due to modernisation, changes in shopping habits, an increase in online shopping
- Population/demographical changes in the settlements
- Changes in National Planning Policy Framework and National Guidance

5. The local strategic approach

Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county with pristine countryside, remote valleys, rivers and distinctive heritage. The west of the county is bordered by the Black Mountains and the east is bordered by the Malvern Hills. The east of the county falls within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) now National Landscape and the south features the Wye Valley National Landscape. Herefordshire's main population centre is Hereford city followed by the five market towns: Leominster, Ledbury, Ross on Wye, Kington and Bromyard which are located around the county.

Rural Herefordshire is peppered with settlements, hamlets, and farmsteads that vary in character and size. Each of these is locally distinctive in size, form, character, placement with various environmental constraints. The Settlement pattern within the rural area of Herefordshire shows the majority of rural inhabitants living in villages and a smaller amount dispersed in rural areas. The rural aspect of the county therefore forms a major aspect to the future plans and this has been taken into account in the following ways through the drafting of the Local Plan.

County Plan 2020

The Council's County plan, published in January 2020, sets out how the Council intends to fulfil its environmental, social and economic ambitions over four years. The County Plan seeks to ensure the rural communities are sustainable, well-connected, and resilient which will help to retain and enhance rural communities, along with services and businesses within them. A new County Plan is being prepared, once this has been finalised the plan will be updated to align with these key themes. The current County Plan's themes are Environment, Community and Economy and accord with good planning principals and promote sustainable development.

Spatial Vision and Objectives

The Vision for the Local Plan sets out how the county will look like 2041. It is separated into the themes of Environment, Community and Economy in line with the County Plan. The Vision provides the framework for the objectives, from which all the Local Plan policies derive. With a focus on the rural areas, the following sets out how the vision and objectives for rural areas will work.

The Vision for Herefordshire in 2041 is that settlements in the rural areas will be high-quality attractive and inclusive places to live and work, provide jobs and cultural opportunities for all and appeal also to the young to balance the county's demographic profile.

Rural areas will support the transition to a carbon neutral economy supporting a diverse and sustainable economy through the creation of green jobs. Development in the rural areas will be located and designed in a way that is resilient to changing climate, requires less energy use and allow more energy generated from renewable sources.

The natural and historic built environment will be conserved and enhanced through carefully managed change and appreciation of the role heritage assets play in providing a sense of place and local distinctiveness and character.

Herefordshire will have a vibrant network of economic centres with a diverse range of shops that will support the renewal of the county's market centres and create good quality attractive places to work as well as visit. Creation of local business identities, helping the independent business to thrive and creating job opportunities in the rural areas

Agriculture plays an important role in the local rural economy, modernisation and diversification of this will be supported to strengthen this sector. It is clear that housing distributions will have an emphasis on sustainable development in rural areas and therefore they need to be well connected and accessible.

6. Developing a new rural settlement hierarchy for 2021 - 2041

Work on data gathering for the rural areas commenced in 2020, moving forward to a number of public consultation events beginning in June 2022. The first public consultation was on the [Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper \(2022\)](#).

Following on from that, consultation feedback was clear that another approach to the settlement hierarchy was necessary as there was no clear option that could be determined.

Following parish council feedback and responses from internal council departments, the settlement hierarchy now takes into account:

- Existing infrastructure such as road infrastructure,
- Environmental Constraints; Flooding, National Landscape (AONBs), Conservations areas, Environmental designations, and historic assets.

These were not necessarily included during the selection of the previous Core Strategy settlement hierarchy and this has addressed some of the concerns raised to the previous selection of settlements. The above has been used to identify settlements according to the number of services, location, and connectivity to existing public transport networks.

This paper reviews and outlines the current services in rural areas, where they are, and how they are used. The following sets out the path taken with the consultations and amendments that followed.

7. Rural Settlement Hierarchy - Local Plan 2021-2041 consultations to date

The **Spatial Options Consultation** was the first consultation on the Local Plan. This ran from 17 January to 28 February 2022. There were four rural options presented which are:

- Rural areas Option 4: Focus growth within settlements outside National Landscape and conservation areas – This was the most favoured option with 30% of respondents opting for this option.
- Rural Areas Option 2: ‘Focus on larger settlements – This option was the next most favoured option, with 25% of those that participated in the consultation voting for this.
- Rural Areas Option 1: Current Strategy. A dispersed approach across settlements – This received 23%, coming forward as the third most favoured.
- Rural Areas Option 3: Focus growth on rural hubs - This option received 22%.

It should be noted that Option 1 and 2 were very close in terms of preference from the respondents.

A number of key themes came forward through this consultation and were mainly focused on travel, the environment and housing and design. Among others, the need for investment and transport links, the drive for renewable energy sources, the protection of habitats, addressing climate change and emphasis on delivery of good quality, sustainable and affordable housing were recurring themes.

The **Policy Options Consultation** was the second formal consultation and ran from 4 April to 16 May 2022. Rural Areas options specifically included policy options relating to:

- The existing approach to housing in the country side, of which 38% said yes, they would like to see the current approach continue, 37% said no and 25% said not sure.
- An adaptable living policy, with 41% choosing RPH2a - Additional Policy recognising changeable needs for adaptable living and 59% said RPH2b - devolve policy area to Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- Agricultural forestry and occupational dwellings, with the highest percentage being split between policy AFOD2 - Consider the inclusion of space standards, design and carbon reduction criteria and AFOD4 - Develop a policy for local distinctiveness, both receiving 29%.
- The re-use of rural buildings, with RRB2 - Additional criteria to demonstrate the buildings are genuinely redundant being the preferred option with 54%.
- The role of Neighbourhood Plans going forward was a clear winner, with 67% choosing NP1 - Continue with the current approach.
- In terms of Rural Economy options, the policies that came out as preferred were RE1, to update the rural economy policy to reflect changes to national policy, with 36% wanted. 53% wanted SJ1a, an updated policy to reflect new evidence base would be the best option for supporting jobs, and in terms of protecting economic opportunities. 67% said SJ2a and also wanted to update policy to reflect new evidence base. 56% want to integrate home working into other plan policies when it came to home-based employment options, with 51% voting yes with regard to wanting to see a specific policy regarding home working, recognising the increased popularity of remote working.

The **Place Shaping** event was the third public consultation to be undertaken in 2022, this ran from 13 June - 29 July 2022. Here, the consultation set out possible options and/or potential strategic development areas for Hereford, each of the County's market towns together with a range of alternative settlement hierarchies for rural parts of Herefordshire. The consultation did not set out firm proposals, but in terms of the rural areas proposals, looked at options for the structure of settlements to deliver development over the plan period.

As part of this consultation, a number of roadshows with officers were held in the rural and market town areas, to ensure the public without access to internet or unable to travel to Hereford City could access the consultation in their local area printed on larger displays and discuss in person in addition to digital copies and being able to leave comments via Commonplace.

List of *Summer 2022 Roadshows*:

- Tuesday 28 June: Ledbury, Bishops Cleeve
- Wednesday 29 June: Hereford, Fownhope
- Thursday 30 June: Ross-on-Wye, Lea
- Friday 1 July: Leominster, Wigmore
- Monday 4 July: Ewyas Harold
- Thursday 7 July: Bromyard, Bartestree
- Friday 8 July: Kington, Weobley

Respondents that completed the questionnaire were asked how housing should be distributed to the settlements within the county and gave the following feedback:

- Distribution of settlements: Respondents were asked how housing should be distributed to the settlements within the county. 59% of respondents preferred option 1a – The most sustainable across the whole county rather than Option 1b – The most sustainable across each Housing Market Area.
- Settlements in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas: 40% of respondents did not think that settlements within Option 2a should be removed from the settlement hierarchy and 39% thought that they should be removed. 28% thought there should not be reduced growth target for these settlements, allowing for some scale growth (Option 2b) and 53% thought there should be.
- Affordable housing, self-build and custom built Housing: 30% did not think there should be a second tier of settlements, with new development limited to specific circumstances e.g. for affordable housing, self-build or custom built housing and 53% thought there should be. 15% felt a policy should not be included within the Local Plan to support Neighbourhood Development Plans allocating sites for affordable housing, self-build, custom build and community-led housing where robust evidence can be provided and 74% felt that there should be one.
- Proportional growth: housing number distribution: 79% of respondents thought that proportional growth (option 1) was the most suitable way to distribute rural growth to settlements and 21% thought that enhanced growth (option 2) would be best.
- Rural Employment: 40% didn't think that any new larger scale employment provision should be directed towards those settlements named within the option 1 or 2 and 32% thought that there should be. When asked 'Are there instances where large scale employment will be situated within the 'open countryside'', the majority of respondents said no (62%).

- Rural Transport Options: 44% said that they knew of a long distance route which could be safeguarded in the Local plan. 46% did not know and 10% said no.

There were some general comments made regarding the Rural Areas, these included:

- Concerns over the settlement hierarchy scoring system i.e. concerns inaccurate information may have been used to create a scoring system.
- That growth in rural communities must try to protect existing key services and upgrade these and that 'Enhanced' and 'Proportionate' growth options does not respond to local needs,
- Support was given to the inclusion of a policy that would support Community Land Trusts (CLTs).
- Some felt that Option 2 was contrary to NPPF as would lead to an unbalanced and unsustainable rural Herefordshire (provides a number of reasons) and also that papers should take into account the possibility of the allocation of a new National Landscape (AONB) in the county.
- It was also commented that effective and affordable bus service in rural areas key to modal shift needed to be taken into account.

All details of the consultations and consultation material can be found on the Herefordshire Council website [Local Plan 2021 - 2041 – Herefordshire Council](#) and a summary of consultation feedback so far can be found here [Have Your Say Today - Consultation feedback so far - Herefordshire Local Plan 2021-2041 \(commonplace.is\)](#)

A **Fact Check** exercise with parishes took place in October 2022. Following the Place Shaping Option consultation, a comprehensive and consistent review of all data was undertaken based on the responses received. The purpose of this was to ascertain with the town and parish councils that the base data being used was correct, prior to any further review or ranking selection work. This stage focused on the services and facilities of 150 settlements. The following data set themes were included in the October 2022 Fact Check Survey:

- Services and facilities
- Environmental assets and constraints
- Road infrastructure
- Public transport
- Employment sites

An earlier meeting with the two statutory consultees, Welsh Water and Severn Trent operating in the county took place. Due to the complexity and variability of drainage, a decision was made to remove drainage from this strategic assessment. This is set out further in the Rural Settlements Services and Environmental Survey October 2022 document (Appendix 1).

Responses were received from 28 parishes which mostly helped to clarify certain data at that moment in time. Each parish was sent a list of services relevant to their parish to ensure they had the opportunity to tell us if there were any additional services etc. relevant to each of the settlements in their parish. There were updates regarding certain settlements as well as queries on certain services, facilities, road access, or public transport services.

Member and Parish Council Workshops were held to ensure that accuracy of the data was achieved. It was also an important engagement exercise, ensuring that members of Parish Councils were able to meet in person and discuss important matters in their community.

Three workshop events were held on three separate dates to engage with:

- Members (County Councillors)
- Parish Councillors in person
- Parish Councillors (online)

On the 9 November, the event for Members was held at the Kindle Centre, Hereford. This was specifically a rural place-shaping event, where members could discuss the options that have been proposed for rural areas and discuss any ideas or concerns as well as feedback from the Place Shaping consultation in June/July 2022. On the 10 November, this workshop was repeated with Parish Councillors at Saxon Hall, Hereford. On the 15 November an online session was held for those who were not able or did not want to attend in person.

The event included a presentation and a set of 5 workshops looking at:-

- What is sustainable in rural Herefordshire terms?
- What is a key rural service or facility? How would you rank these services in order of importance for a sustainable 21 st Century village/settlement?
- Options for creating a settlement hierarchy and what should be the focus for growth
- Creating a settlement hierarchy and looking at a tiered option or a flat option.
- Looking at a New Settlement and what is important to make it sustainable?

There was a breakout session for each workshop with time to put ideas down and openly discuss on each table. All information was photographed, and amalgamated into text for further analysis. Appendix 2 is a summary of all comments from these three the events. The next section explores how this was used to establish a settlement hierarchy.

8. Establishing a revised rural settlement hierarchy - Second stage filtering

The first filtering of settlements took place in the Rural Settlements Services and Environmental Survey (RSSES) Oct 2022 when approximately 300 settlements were filtered down to 152 settlements. It was then necessary to analyse further to see what is a suitable list of settlements where varying levels of growth can be directed.

Services and facilities assessment

Following all the above consultations and workshops, the scoring devised in June 2022 was reviewed. The way the Rural Settlement Hierarchy was scored and ranked was amended to take a more nuanced approach to identifying an appropriate rural settlement hierarchy. Using the list of services set out in previous consultations, parishes and ward members were asked in theory, to prioritise their top list of services for any settlement. Defibrillator was frequently mentioned but as it is service only requiring to be placed on a building or public space it was not included.

The 10 most frequently cited services identified by parish and ward members are listed as follows:

- Primary School
- Nursery/ Pre school
- Play area / sports pitch
- Community/Village Hall

- Public House
- EV Charging Point (public)
- Doctors Surgery
- Local/Village Shop with / without Post office
- Public transport
- Employment Estate up to 5km

Each of these services would attribute 1 point in terms of scoring.

This was considered to be a suitable basis for the sustainability of a settlement. The assessment was done per **settlement** and not per parish. There was some confusion from parishes about where the facilities were identified during previous consultations but the rural settlement hierarchy is focused on the services of a settlement only. The 152 settlements from the Rural Settlements Services and Environmental Survey (RSSES) October 2022 were included in the assessment.

Facilities were identified as being at the most a 1km distance from the settlement edge. This is considered a reasonable walking distance to access a service locally and fits in with the concept of well-connected places and the aims of sustainability. In some settlements, amenities are shared between settlements that meet the needs of the wider community. The well-connected communities concept will be more difficult to achieve in most rural settlements because of distances and limitations of public transport options however these settlements are unlikely to be on the list.

Some settlements may have had more than one facility such as a play area and a sports pitch for football, cricket or rugby. In this case, each facility is counted for individually. Some had more than one public house and if it was two, then that would be identified as two dots in the table.

Public Transport

Based on the Public Transport table of the RSSES October 2022, only the following services were considered and included further:

- Bus route with at least six return journeys a day (Monday - Saturday) including am/pm commuter journeys
- Bus route with five return journeys a day or fewer (Monday - Saturday) including am/pm commuter journeys

The other bus services were not considered enough to be used by commuters. Therefore if a settlement had one of the above services it was counted. Where they did not, then it was left blank.

Employment Land

Similarly, with Employment sites identified in the RSSES October 2022, only those settlements within a reasonable distance to a large employment site have been identified. The list is derived from the [Employment Land Study 2012 and set out in Appendix 3](#). These sites are still operating today and can be included as a useful determinant in this assessment. The distance is based on 'as the crow flies' approach for up to 5km distance of a settlement.

This is considered to be an appropriate distance when travelling by walking, cycling or in a vehicle. Therefore if a settlement was within a 5km distance of an employment site then it was counted.

Appendix 4a sets out all 152 settlements and their service provision. With all of the above considerations taken into account, only those settlements scoring **4 and above** were taken forward for further analysis. Following this 2nd filtering process, **79 settlements** remain, see Appendix 4b for all the settlements to be taken forward. The following table identifies these by Housing Market Area (HMA);

Table 1 - Number of Settlements following 2nd filtering process

HMA	Settlements for further assessment	Removed as part of second filter*
Bromyard	8	7
Golden Valley	7	11
Hereford	18	8
Kington	7	8
Ledbury	5	8
Leominster	13	10
Ross-on Wye	21	21
Total	79	73

Environment assessment

The RSSSES October 2022 also identified where environmental constraints are for the 150 settlements. However, as these settlements are now whittled down to 79, the environmental assessment will be applied to these settlements.

The environmental table identifies three high level elements:

- Fluvial flood risk (flooding from rivers)
- National Landscape (AONB)
- Conservation Area

The tables show areas of the highest fluvial flood risk, this is known as flood zone 3 where [Flood risk assessments](#) are concerned. It applies to land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding. It also includes areas where the functional floodplain exists. This zone comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

Where a settlement is mainly affected by flood zone 3 or the main access into the settlement is at risk then this has been identified as a dot in Appendix 4b.

All settlements in the [National Landscapes Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(AONB\)](#) are identified in the following way by either:

- P = Partial coverage
- F = Full coverage

Therefore only those fully covered by the National Landscape (AONB) designation will be later added to the environmentally constrained category. Those with partial coverage have not been included in this list.

All settlements identified as having a [Conservation Area](#) are identified in the following way by either:

- P = Partial coverage
- M= Majority coverage

Therefore only those which have majority coverage by a Conservation Area will be later added to the environmentally constrained category. Those with partial coverage have not been included in this list.

Road Infrastructure

In the RSEEH Oct 2022, the assessment set out the class of roads servicing a settlement. Those were identified as A, B, C, and U roads.

The assessment columns have now been split into 2 main categories. These are:

- 'the class of road servicing the settlement' with supporting columns of A, B, C, and U roads and
- the 'proximity of the settlement (up to 1km by road) to an A or B road' - This gives a useful indicator of general accessibility and connectivity of the settlement to its wider hinterland.

This has been based on the following:

- Roads that run directly through the settlements as defined by the settlement boundary with an NDP or by the built form where an NDP is not in existence.
- Proximity of A and B roads have been based on settlements within 1 Km of the above
- Major roads running adjacent to the built form or settlement boundary are considered as in 'proximity to the settlement'

As accessibility varies for each settlement, it was necessary to distinguish which settlements are more constrained than others with the roads servicing them. Therefore, those settlements with only C and U road access and no proximity to an A or B road are more constrained. They have been identified in Appendix 4b

Stage three analysis

The following is a list of the various tables relating to the settlements and how they are categorised. These tables are set out in Appendix 5.

Option A- Environmental designations and services baseline

Option B- With a focus on schools

Option C- With a focus on employment sites

Option D- With a focus on public transport

Option E- Combined list

Option A Environmental designations and services baseline

The settlements were split into two categories:

- Environmentally Constrained settlements
- Unconstrained environmental settlements

Those settlements that are constrained, relate to specific issues with flooding and/or a conservation area and/or a National Landscape designation covering the majority of the settlement. Those settlements with limited road infrastructure are served only by C and U roads are also identified here. This initial list is classed as the baseline list before further analysis continues and is set out in Appendix 5a.

Option B- With a focus on schools

There was heavy emphasis on schools and their importance in rural communities during the workshop sessions. Parishes and members discussed the advantages of having growth close to schools as this enables easier walking journeys and reduces the use of vehicles travelling longer distances.

Using the baseline Option A table, this table is split into 3 categories:

- Settlements with no schools
- Environmentally constrained settlements with Schools
- Unconstrained settlements with Schools

See Appendix 5b for all of these settlements. This approach is considered to be a reasonable way to approach growth in rural settlements as it takes into account the environmental constraints of settlements and identifies a more suitable growth target.

Option C- With a focus on employment sites

The benefits of locating growth close to employment are an important area for assessment. It allows a reasonable distance to a place of employment for some residents. All the relevant employment sites relating to settlements across the county were identified within a 5km distance 'as the crow flies'. Using the baseline Option A table, this table is split into 3 categories

- Settlements with no employment sites within 5km proximity
- Environmentally constrained settlements with employment sites within 5km proximity
- Unconstrained settlements with employment sites within 5km proximity

Appendix 5c sets out these settlements.

Option D- With a focus on public transport

Public transport was considered an important service for rural areas during the workshop sessions. Some settlements are better served than others. Similar to the above assessments, public transport services were identified as follows:

- Settlements with no or very limited public transport
- Environmentally constrained settlements with a public transport service
- Unconstrained settlements with Schools

Appendix 5d sets out all the settlements in relation to their public transport accessibility.

Option E- Combined list

With all of the above key services and facilities (Option B-D) identified within each settlement, They were then re categorised in the following way:

- **Settlements with none** of the key services (school, employment or public transport)
- **Environmentally constrained settlements** with a school, employment or public transport
- **Unconstrained settlements** with a school, employment or public transport

Appendix 5e sets out how all services, schools, proximity to employment and access to public transport have been combined into one. The table also shows which of these settlements is environmentally constrained as set out in Option A above.

Settlements for 3rd stage filtering

Although certain settlements made it to this stage of the process with a consistent analysis applied; there are known issues that prevent the levels of growth being sought in certain settlements listed:

- Aymestrey: There is no capacity within or adjacent to the settlement for a housing site. No existing sites in the Neighbourhood Development Plan either.
- Bishopswood (incl Kerne Bridge) As the nearby settlement of Walford /Coughton is listed in the list of second tier hubs it was decided to not identify a second hub in the parish. The growth is therefore directed to the location of the school.
- Brampton Bryan: There is a lack of available land.
- Brockhampton (North - near Bromyard): this is a very dispersed settlement with no nucleated form therefore locating growth here would be difficult due to the lack of a built form.
- Eardisland is wholly affected by flood zone 3 risk coverage and can progress no further in the process for this reason.
- Hampton Bishop is wholly affected by flood zone 3 risk coverage and can progress no further in the process for this reason.
- Hardwicke: this settlement is similar to Brockhampton in that its services are quite dispersed.
- Hope under Dinmore has issues with access from the A49. This will predicate the potential for locating suitable levels of growth within this settlement. The main road leading into the settlement is also at high risk of flooding.
- Mordiford: The settlement is constrained by flood risk, a conservation area, registered park and garden, and a National Landscape (AONB) designation. This means that most of the land adjacent to the settlement is unsuitable for potential growth.
- Tillington: As the nearby settlement of Burghill is listed in the list of service hubs it was decided to not identify a second hub in the parish. The growth is therefore directed to the location of the school.
- Woolhope is the only settlement without a school, employment site proximity or good public transport. The 3rd stage filtering meant it was necessary to also remove Woolhope as it lacks the key services identified in the above lists.

Therefore these 10 settlements have been removed from further assessment:

- Aymestrey
- Bishopswood
- Brampton Bryan
- Brockhampton (North)
- Eardisland
- Hampton Bishop
- Hardwicke
- Hope under Dinmore
- Mordiford
- Woolhope
-

As result of this filtering the remaining list of 68 individual settlements will be taken forward for further consideration. 30 of these are situated in settlements with environmental constraints (as defined above). 37 are situated in unconstrained settlements.

Table 2 - Settlements for further assessment

Legend S = Schools E = Employment T = Transport - public) * = U/C road only access	No school, employment or public transport	Environmentally constrained Settlements with schools, employment or public transport	Unconstrained settlements with schools, employment or public transport
Bromyard		Stoke Prior* (S, E, T)	Bodenham (incl Moor) (S, E, T)
Bromyard			Bredenbury (S, E)
Bromyard			Burley Gate (S, T)
Bromyard			Stoke Cross (E, T)
Bromyard			Whitbourne (T)
Bromyard			
Golden Valley	Dorstone (E, T)	Longtown* (S)	Cusop (E, T)
Golden Valley		Michaelchurch Escley* (S, T)	Ewyas Harold (S, E)
Golden Valley			Peterchurch (S, E, T)
Hereford		Fownhope (S, T)	Bartestree (S, E, T)
Hereford		Marden* (S, E, T)	Burghill (S, E, T)
Hereford		Sutton St Nicholas* (S, E, T)	Canon Pyon (S, E, T)
Hereford		Tillington* (E, T)	Clehonger (S, E, T)
Hereford		Wellington (S, E, T)	Credenhill (S, E, T)
Hereford			Holme Lacy (E)
Hereford			Madley (S, E, T)
Hereford			Moreton on Lugg (E, T)
Hereford			Stretton Sugwas (S, E, T)
Hereford		Almeley* (S, E, T)	Tarrington (S, T)
Hereford		Eardisley (S, E, T)	Withington (S, E, T)
Kington		Pembridge (S, E)	Lyonshall (E, T)
Kington		Whitney on Wye (E)	Shobdon (S, E)
Kington		Colwall (S, E, T)	Staunton on Wye (S, T)
Kington		Wellington Heath (E, T)	

Ledbury			Bishops Frome (E)
Ledbury			Bosbury (S, E)
Ledbury		Dilwyn (S, E)	Cradley (S)
Ledbury		Kingsland (S, E, T)	
Leominster		Luston (S, E, T)	Brimfield (E)
Leominster		Orleton (S, E, T)	Kimbolton (S, E)
Leominster		Weobley (S, E, T)	Leintwardine (S, T)
Leominster		Yarpole* (T)	Wigmore (S, E)
Leominster		Bridstow (S, E, T)	
Leominster		Coughton (S, E, T)	
Ross on Wye		Garway* (S)	Crow Hill (E)/Upton Bishop
Ross on Wye		Goodrich (S, E, T)	Gorsley (S)
Ross on Wye		Little Dewchurch* (S)	Kingstone (S, E, T)
Ross on Wye		Llangrove* (S, E)	Lea (S, T)
Ross on Wye		Much Marcle (S)	Much Birch (S, T)
Ross on Wye		Peterstow (E, T)	Much Dewchurch (E)
Ross on Wye		Walford (E, T)	Weston under Penyard (S, E, T)
Ross on Wye		Whitchurch (S, E, T)	Wormbridge (E, T)

Developing a Rural Settlement Hierarchy

In the Core Strategy adopted plan there are over 200 settlements listed where proportionate growth can occur. However this list does not take into account any of the existing environmental issues within these locations. The aim of this new Local Plan is to address this and take such issues into consideration before assigning any growth to any settlements. The [Rural Areas Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper June 2022](#) sets out the reasons for revising the current rural settlement hierarchy in sections 4 and 5.

Looking towards developing a new settlement hierarchy the identification of constraints through Table 2 above makes it clearer as to which settlements may have more capacity for growth than others as they vary in terms of key service provision. Therefore a hierarchy approach has been taken across rural settlements.

The Rural Settlement Hierarchy is made up of

- o Rural Hubs
- o Rural Hubs with environmental constraints
- o Service Settlements
- o Service Settlements with environmental constraints

Rural Hubs

Settlements listed here are unconstrained environmentally. They are:

- not at risk of flood
- not fully restricted by a conservation area or
- not fully covered by an National Landscape (AONB) designation.

They are also accessed mainly by an A or B road. They are well served with services and facilities and all 12 settlements have a school, proximity to an employment site and are well served by public transport. Therefore some of these settlements will be suitable for accommodating strategic allocations.

Table 3 – List of Rural Hub settlements

HMA	Parish	Hub Settlement
Bromyard	Bodenham	Bodenham (incl Moor)
Golden Valley	Peterchurch	Peterchurch
Hereford	Bartestree with Lugwardine Group	Bartestree
Hereford	Burghill	Burghill
Hereford	Pyons Group	Canon Pyon
Hereford	Clehonger	Clehonger
Hereford	Credenhill	Credenhill
Hereford	Madley	Madley
Hereford	Stretton Sugwas	Stretton Sugwas
Hereford	Withington Group	Withington
Ross on Wye	Kingstone and Thruxton Group	Kingstone
Ross on Wye	Weston under Penyard	Weston under Penyard

Rural Hubs with environmental constraints

In a similar way to the Hubs, the settlements listed below have access to all three of the essential make up for a settlement which includes a school, proximity to an employment site and access to public transport. However they do have environmental constraints which restricts how much development they can accommodate. Bridstow and Wilton have been grouped together because of their proximity to each other and they complement each other with a good balance of services. Similarly, Walford and Coughton have been grouped together for the same reasons.

Table 4 - List of Rural Hubs with environmental constraints

HMA	Parish	Second Tier Hub Settlement
Hereford	Wellington	Wellington
Kington	Eardisley Group	Eardisley
Ledbury	Colwall	Colwall
Leominster	Kingsland	Kingsland

Leominster	Luston Group	Luston
Leominster	Orelton	Orleton
Leominster	Weobley	Weobley
Ross on Wye	Bridstow	Bridstow/ Wilton
Ross on Wye	Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor Group	Goodrich
Ross on Wye	Bishopswood (incl Kerne Bridge)	Walford / Coughton
Ross on Wye	Whitchurch & Ganarew Group	Whitchurch

Service Settlements

The next tier of settlements set out in the table 5 below identified for growth will be known as Service Settlements. These settlements are the remaining settlements identified as having fewer services than those identified in the Hubs or Second Tier Hub settlements. They are also unconstrained in terms of environmental designations.

Table 5- List of Service Settlements

HMA	Parish	Service Settlement
Bromyard	Bredenbury & District Group	Bredenbury
Bromyard	Ocle Pychard Group	Burley Gate
Bromyard	Stoke Lacy	Stoke Cross
Bromyard	Whitbourne	Whitbourne
Golden Valley	Cusop	Cusop
Golden Valley	Ewyas Harold Group	Ewyas Harold
Hereford	Holme Lacy	Holme Lacy
Hereford	Moreton on Lugg	Moreton on Lugg
Hereford	Tarrington	Tarrington

Kington	Lyonshall	Lyonshall
Kington	Shobdon	Shobdon
Kington	Staunton on Wye & District Group	Staunton on Wye
Ledbury	Bishops Frome	Bishops Frome
Ledbury	Bosbury and Coddington Group	Bosbury
Ledbury	Cradley	Cradley
Leominster	Brimfield and Little Hereford Group	Brimfield
Leominster	Kimbolton	Kimbolton
Leominster	Leintwardine Group	Leintwardine
Leominster	Wigmore Group	Wigmore
Ross on Wye	Upton Bishop	Crow Hill/ Upton Bishop
Ross on Wye	Linton	Gorsley
Ross on Wye	Lea	Lea
Ross on Wye	Much Birch	Much Birch
Ross on Wye	Much Dewchurch	Much Dewchurch
Ross on Wye	Kilpeck	Wormbridge

The following table lists the Second Tier Service Settlements known as Service Settlements with Environmental Constraints. They have the added issue of the identified environmental constraints but they will have a reasonable level of service for their location and will be supporting rural communities with local provision.

Table 6 - Service Settlements with Environmental Constraints

HMA	Parish	2 nd Tier Service Settlement
Bromyard	Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group	Stoke Prior
Golden Valley	Dorstone	Dorstone
Golden Valley	Longtown Group	Longtown
Golden Valley	Vowchurch and District Group	Michaelchurch Escley
Hereford	Fownhope	Fownhope
Hereford	Marden	Marden
Hereford	Sutton St Nicholas	Sutton St Nicholas
Kington	Almeley	Almeley
Kington	Pembridge	Pembridge

Ledbury	Wellington Heath	Wellington Heath
Leominster	Dilwyn	Dilwyn
Leominster	Yarpole Group	Yarpole
Ross on Wye	Garway	Garway
Ross on Wye	Little Dewchurch	Little Dewchurch
Ross on Wye	Llangarron	Llangrove
Ross on Wye	Much Marcle	Much Marcle
Ross on Wye	Peterstow	Peterstow

9. Rural Strategic Sites Allocations

In the rural areas in Herefordshire, the Local Plan sets out to find approximately 2,300 dwellings, in order to meet this number a strategy has been developed to identify where housing in the rural areas could be located. The remaining amount of approximately 3000 dwellings has already been identified through current permissions or built since the start of the Plan period in 2021.

In line with the settlement hierarchy approach, settlements must move towards a more sustainable way of growth. The settlements that have scored higher on services, public transport, and employment have been identified as rural hubs. In order to support these as hubs, a critical mass is required to retain and enhance these services in the highest-scoring settlements.

In order to establish the most appropriate settlements to accommodate new housing allocations for growth. There was an assessment of previous levels of housing growth carried out on the revised list of Hubs and Service settlements. The settlements are in order of those that have exceeded their growth target. The majority of settlements have exceeded their proportional target. Just 14 settlements have currently not met their target to date as at April 2023.

Settlements in New Hierarchy
Legend:
Rural Hubs
Rural Hubs with environmental constraints
Service Settlements
Service Settlements with environmental constraints

Table 7 - Levels of Growth in settlements

HMA	List of current NDPs	Settlements in New Hierarchy	Completions 2011-2023	Commitments as at 1 April 2023	Site allocations without PP in NDPs at April 2023	Residual (minus (red) is still to find)	Exceed target over 30
ROSS ON WYE	Kingstone & Thruxton	Kingstone	224	24		181	
ROSS ON WYE	Lea	Lea	136	9		102	
HEREFORD	Clehonger	Clehonger	106	95		92	
KINGTON	Lyonshall	Lyonshall	57	19	45	85	
LEOMINSTER	Weobley	Weobley	72	69		59	
HEREFORD	Marden	Marden	66	96		58	
ROSS ON WYE	Linton	Gorsley	80	32		51	
GOLDEN VALLEY	Peterchurch	Peterchurch	7	104		50	
HEREFORD	Withington	Withington	167	4	6	50	
HEREFORD	Credenhill	Credenhill	21	173		45	
HEREFORD	Moreton on Lugg	Moreton on Lugg	101	4		42	
ROSS ON WYE	Weston under Penyard	Weston Under Penyard	58	8	37	38	
ROSS ON WYE	Llangarron	Llangarron	54	47		37	
LEOMINSTER	Leintwardine Group	Leintwardine	40	56		34	
GOLDEN VALLEY	Longtown Group	Longtown	17	14	30	29	
HEREFORD	Pyons Group	Canon Pyon	75	21		28	
ROSS ON WYE	Garway	Garway	37	11	5	28	
ROSS ON WYE	Goodrich and Welsh Bicknor	Goodrich	41	3	19	28	
HEREFORD	Bartestree with Lugwardine	Bartestree	165	4		26	
KINGTON	Eardisley Group	Eardisley	52	28	9	26	
ROSS ON WYE	Whitchurch and Ganaraw	Whitchurch	66	15	10	26	
HEREFORD	Stretton Sugwas	Stetton Sugwas	31	25		25	
BROMYARD	Stoke Lacy	Stoke Cross	33	13	2	24	
HEREFORD	Sutton St Nicholas	Sutton St Nicolas	53	3	38	22	
KINGTON	Shobdon	Shobdon	41	12	12	21	
LEOMINSTER	Kingsland	Kingsland	83	3		21	
LEDBURY	Colwall	Colwall	73	55	51	19	
BROMYARD	Bredenbury and District	Bredenbury	4	0	23	18	
HEREFORD	Burghill	Burghill	114	18	10	18	
KINGTON	Staunton on Wye Group	Staunton on Wye	34	7		18	

HEREFORD	Madley	Madley	25	59	22	17	
LEOMINSTER	Orleton and Richards Castle	Orelton	28	42		17	
GOLDEN VALLEY	Cusop	Cusop	30	8		16	
KINGTON	Pembridge	Pembridge	25	12	39	15	
LEDBURY	Bosbury	Bosbury	24	42	0	15	
ROSS ON WYE	Upton Bishop	Crow Hill/ Upton Bishop	15	22	15	14	
GOLDEN VALLEY	Eywas Harold, Abbeydore and Kentchurch	Ewyas Harold	9	61		12	
LEOMINSTER	Wigmore Group	Wigmore	23	13	28	12	
ROSS ON WYE	Peterstow	Peterstow	24	2	12	11	
HEREFORD	Wellington	Wellington	57	1	27	8	
LEOMINSTER	Brimfield and Little Hereford	Brimfield	28	30	20	8	
KINGTON	Almeley	Almeley	7	26	5	5	
BROMYARD	Bodenham	Bodenham inc Moor	57	19		4	
ROSS ON WYE	Much Birch	Much Birch	28	33		4	
LEDBURY	Bishops Frome	Bishops Frome	28	23		3	
LEDBURY	Cradley	Cradley	100	6		3	
GOLDEN VALLEY	Dorstone	Dorstone	11	12		2	
HEREFORD	Tarrington	Tarrington	11	28	6	2	
GOLDEN VALLEY	Vowchurch Group	Michealchurch Escley	17	12		1	
ROSS ON WYE	Much Marcle	Much Marcle	24	2	16	1	
LEOMINSTER	Yarpole Group	Yarpole	39	6	3	0	
HEREFORD	Little Dewchurch	Little Dewchurch	14	0	20	-1	
BROMYARD	Whitbourne	Whitbourne	39	8		-3	
LEOMINSTER	Luston Group	Luston	29	3	20	-3	
ROSS ON WYE	Much Dewchurch	Much Dewchurch	27	9		-4	
LEDBURY	Wellington Heath	Wellington Heath	19	5		-5	
BROMYARD	Humber, Stoke Prior and Ford Group	Stoke Prior	29	8		-6	
BROMYARD	Ocle Pychard	Burley Gate	6	8	15	-7	
LEOMINSTER	Kimbolton	Kimbolton	17	1		-12	
ROSS ON WYE	Walford	Walford/Coughton	24	37	18	-12	

ROSS ON WYE	Kilpeck Group	Wormbridge	7	3		-13	
HEREFORD	Holme Lacy	Holme Lacy	16	1		-21	
LEOMINSTER	Dilwyn	Dilwyn	13	7		-26	
HEREFORD	Fownhope	Fownhope	15	31	10	-29	
ROSS ON WYE	Bridstow	Bridstow/Wilton	16	9		-32	

These identified settlements will accommodate around 45 -60 dwellings.

There are several benefits of allocating larger sites as opposed to several smaller sites which include:

- affordable housing provision
- additions to existing services
- higher proportions of section 106 financial contributions for infrastructure improvements and community projects
- sites are masterplanned improving siting, function and design. Improved public realm, concentrated area of construction,
- All rural strategic sites will have a site-specific design code to ensure the development is in keeping with each of their distinctive character, form and landscape setting.

The following settlements which have all these key elements such as a school, public transport and proximity for employment were assessed for their potential to accommodate a strategic rural site. The Hub settlements listed below, were considered in the first filter of site allocations but did not progress further. The search for areas to accommodate a strategic site across the settlements involved a desktop assessment as well as site visits. A strategic rural site is defined as an area large enough to accommodate at least 45 dwellings or at least 2 hectares.

Hub settlements

Burghill

The parish already has a high number of completions in the current Plan period. In the interests of distribution, settlements which had lower commitments were considered to be more suitable. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Clehonger

The parish already has a high number of current commitments. It also has a high number of completions in the current Plan period. In the interests of distribution, settlements which had lower commitments were considered to be more suitable.

Credenhill

The parish already has a high number of current commitments. In the interests of distribution, settlements which had lower commitments were considered to be more suitable.

Kingstone

The parish already has a high number of current completions in the current Plan period. In the interests of distribution, settlements which had lower commitments were considered to be more suitable.

Leintwardine

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Madley

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but has still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Peterchurch

The parish already has a high number of current commitments. However, the current large site with a long term permission has not come forward. In the interests of distribution, settlements which had lower commitments were considered to be more suitable.

Stretton Sugwas

Stretton Sugwas is close to the built form of Hereford city. Therefore to add more housing in this location puts the settlement at risk of coalescence with Hereford and loss of a rural feel which is so close to a city.

Withington

The parish already has a high number of completions in the current Plan period. Several sites were visited in Withington, however, there were no suitable sites found. Many sites were not able to accommodate 50 dwellings. There was also an issue with access and road capacity to accommodate safe public footpaths as well as vehicle access.

Hubs with environmental constraints

Bridstow/Wilton

The parish already has a high number of current commitments. It also has a high number of completions in the current Plan period. In the interests of distribution, settlements that had lower commitments were considered to be more suitable. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Eardisley

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Goodrich

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Kingsland

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Luston

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Orleton

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Walford/Coughton

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs but have still exceeded their growth target. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Wellington

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs and still have a residual growth target to meet. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Weobley

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs and still have a residual growth target to meet. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Whitchurch

The parish has experienced less growth than the other hubs and still have a residual growth target to meet. A suitable site could not be identified to accommodate a strategic rural site.

Additional considerations for a potential Rural Hub settlement**Holme Lacy**

The nearby settlement of Mordiford with all three key services was not considered a suitable place to locate development due to its high environmental constraints. Therefore Holme Lacy being the closest settlement was considered a reasonable close alternative. It has already been identified as a Service Settlement. Several sites were visited in Holme Lacy. However, the majority of the sites were not of a suitable strategic size. In addition, the settlement wasn't on par with other settlements in terms of connectivity to the locality, services or facilities.

Rural Strategic Housing Allocations Sites

Bartestree

As identified as one of the rural hubs, Bartestree was chosen for a strategic site allocation due to the range and amount of services, public transport connections, proximity to Hereford, lack of constraints, and land availability to cater to development potential. It has experienced high levels of growth in the Core Strategy but it has not exceeded its target as much as others.

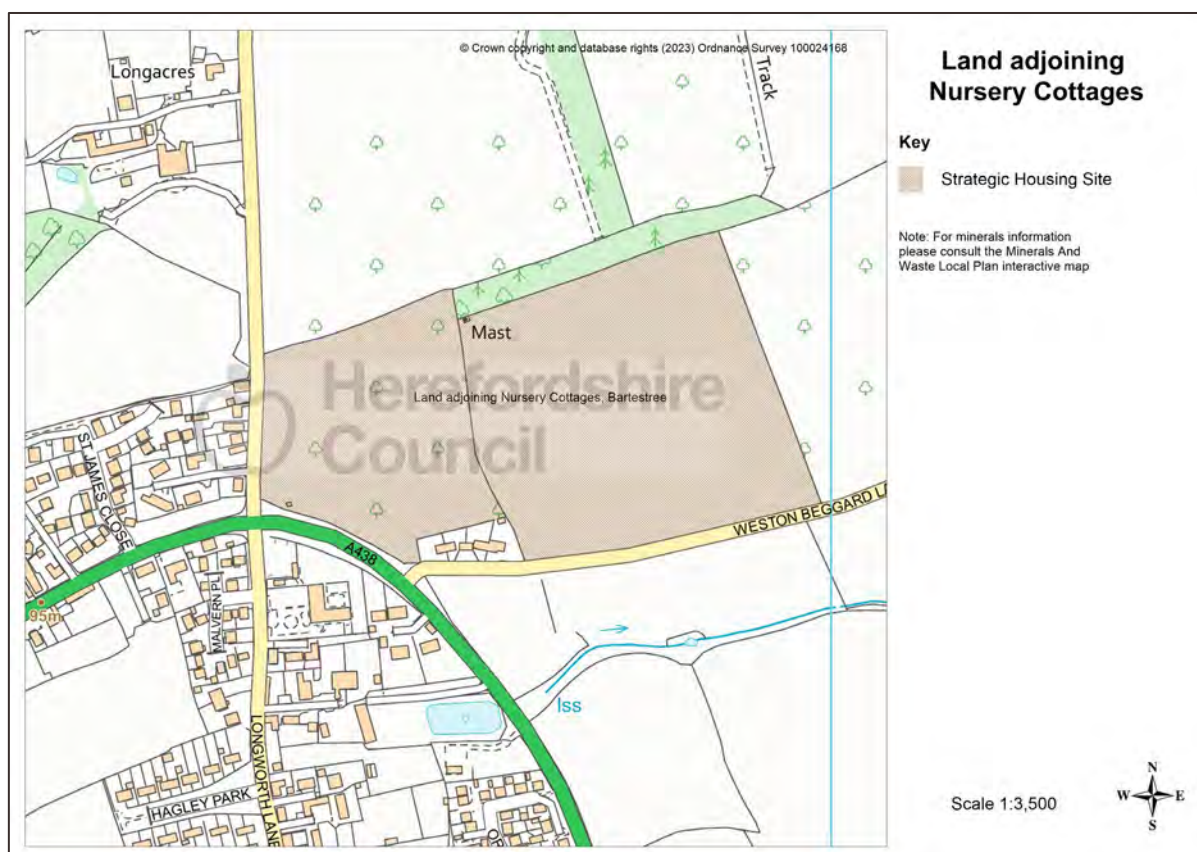


Figure 1 – Site allocation for Bartestree

Around 60 new dwellings with a range and mix of housing types and sizes have been allocated for the land adjoining Nursery Cottages, with allowances made for open space and routeways on 5.2 ha although not all of this land will be required to accommodate the development. A roundabout at the junction of the A438 with Longworth Lane would be required to allow the site to come forward. The site has been identified as an edge of settlement location where a good level of services are already in place. The site continues the built form eastwards and fits within the existing setting. Its close proximity to Hereford with strong public transport links to Hereford and Ledbury. It is within walking distance to Lugwardine Primary School in the west of the settlement. This makes Bartestree a suitable location for further growth.

Site history

The site has no applications in the history of the site.

Reasonable Alternative Sites considered

HAA Reference: HAA/196/003- [Bartestree SHLAA Map](#) . The site is in close proximity to the Grade II listed building of Wilcroft Estate which may yield less than 50 dwellings. This site was ruled out due to the impact on the landscape setting of the Grade II building as well as uncertain direct access from the site.

Bodenham (Bodenham Moor and Bodenham collectively assessed)

As identified as one of the rural hubs, Bodenham was chosen as a strategic site allocation due to the high level and range of services and access to public transport in its housing market area. The parish has only just exceeded its growth target, therefore allocating a strategic site in this settlement with a good supply of key services up to 2041 would be an optimal choice.

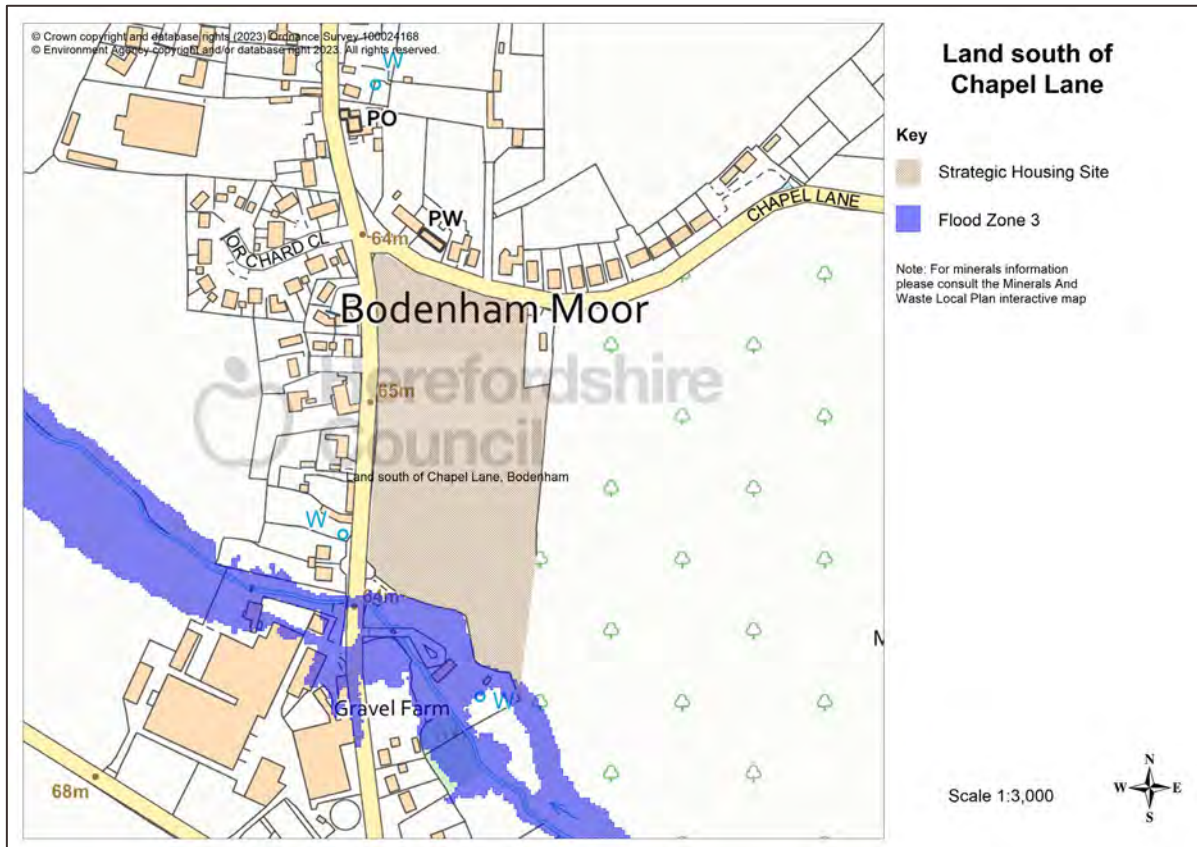


Figure 2 - Site allocation for Bodenham

Around 50 dwellings with a range and mix of housing types and sizes have been allocated for the Land south of Chapel Lane, with allowances made for open space and routeways on 3 ha. The site is adjoining the current settlement boundary and is in keeping with the settlement pattern. Rural environments speeds are generally higher so a presence and a frontage to the road will help to control and calm speeds through the central area of the settlement. The site has good access to public transport routes via Hereford and Leominster, the site is within a settlement with a good range and mix of services for this county's rural settlement hierarchy.

Site history

An application for planning permission for 49 dwellings was submitted in 2015, reference 150437. This was refused on the basis that the application is contrary to Core Strategy policy being the area already received significant growth within the plan period.

Reasonable Alternative sites considered

HLAA Reference: HLAA/149/003/4/5 [Bodenham SHLAA Map](#) . Has a capacity for over 50 dwellings, on a 470 Ha area collectively. Large tracts of farmland adjacent to built form. Very open in nature with no natural containment. A small part of the land would be required, and risk of flooding to the site is present.

Canon Pyon

Identified as one of the Rural Hubs, Canon Pyon was chosen as a strategic site allocation due to the higher level and range of services and access to public transport in its housing market area. The settlement has exceeded its growth target over the Core Strategy period but it is less than many of the other parishes where growth has been high.

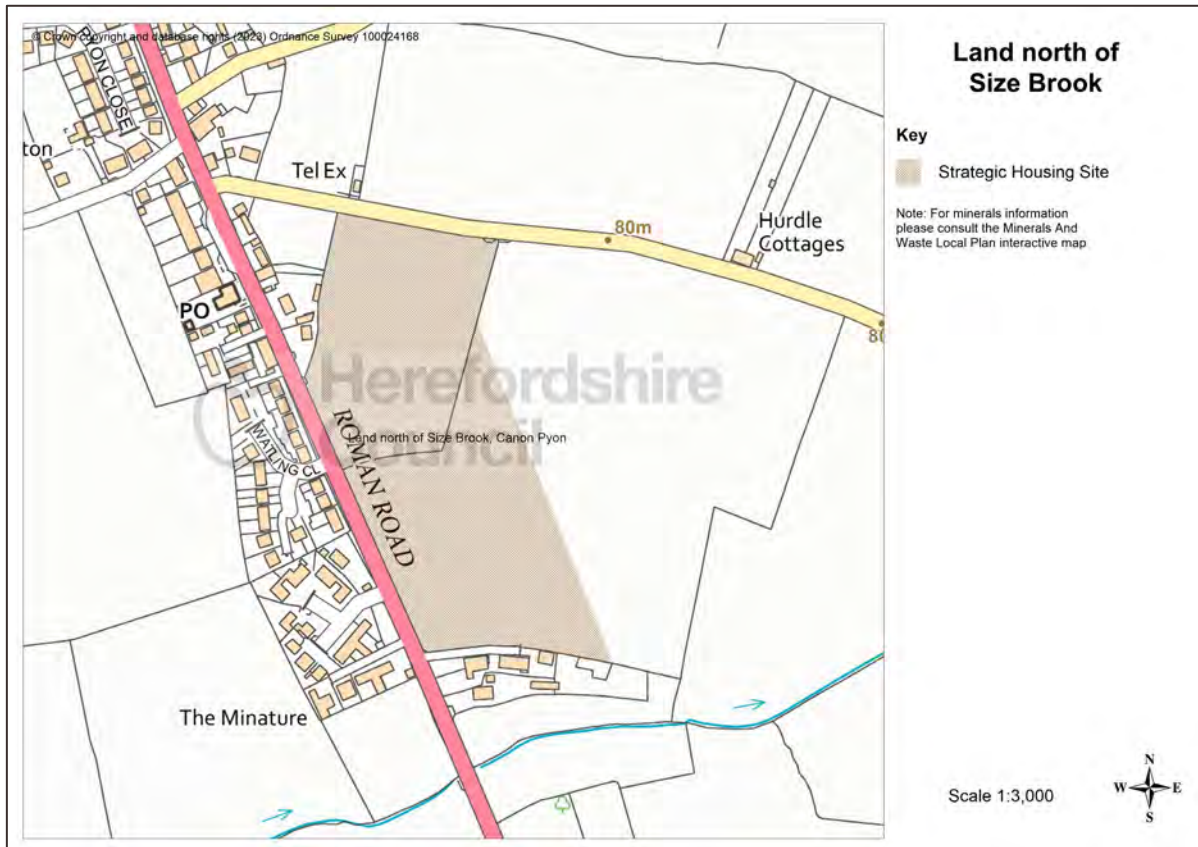


Figure 3 – Site allocation for Canon Pyon

Around 60 dwellings with a range and mix of housing types have been allocated for the Land north of Size brook, with allowances made for open space and routeways on 4.2 ha. The site has been selected as it is close to a range and mix of services and sits well within the built form. The site access is achievable and has a good level of public transport routes via Hereford and Leominster. Areas of attenuation may be required on part of the site and this could be incorporated well with blue and green infrastructure.

Site history

A submission for 10 dwellings was refused on the basis that the proposal didn't conform to the current settlement boundary Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) policy, and the site identified under the current Core Strategy policy is classified as open countryside, planning reference 201913.

Reasonable Alternative sites considered

HCAA Reference: P842/2 [Canon Pyon SHLAA Map](#). This site has been considered to have potential but will require a large area of attenuation. Therefore the yield will be less than optimal for rural sites and too small to accommodate the growth identified.

Colwall

Identified as one of the Rural Hubs with environmental constraints, Colwall was chosen as it is a settlement with one of the highest levels of services out of all of the rural settlements with a train station and strong bus network, although the area is within the Malvern Hills National Landscape (AONB) and has environmental constraints there are still areas where sites that can be developed with mitigation measures in place.

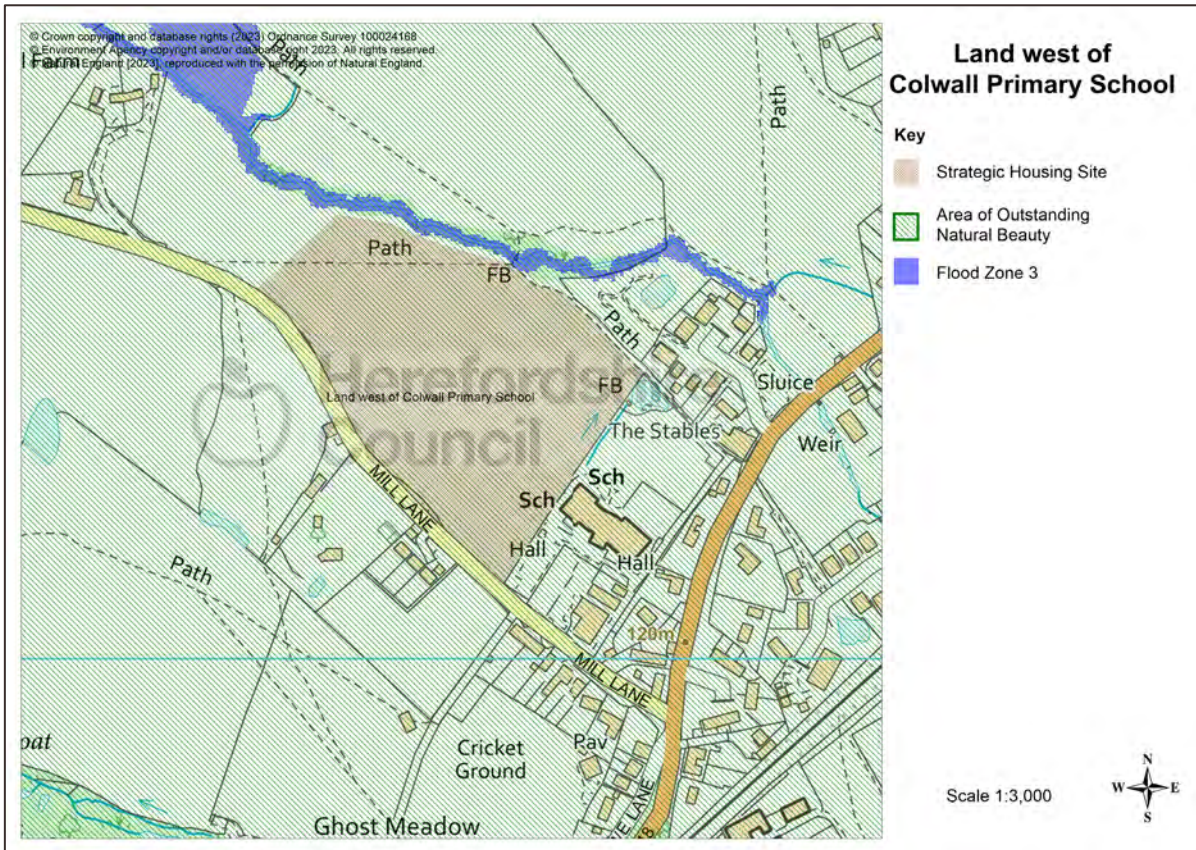


Figure 4 - Site allocation for Colwall

Around 45 dwellings with a range and mix of housing types have been allocated for the land west of Colwall Primary School, with allowances made for open space and routeways on 3.85 ha. The site was selected as it was in close proximity to the built form, close to key services adjacent to the primary school, the site is an appropriate size and access is achievable. The site has good access to public transport links in the east of the county with train links to Great Malvern and bus routes via Ledbury.

Site history

There is previous planning history on the site, application P200156/O sought outline planning permission for a residential development with all matters reserved except for access for up to 37 dwellings. The officer recommended refusal, on the basis of impact to the National Landscape (AONB) on the character, setting and appearance and that the proposal was contrary to the current Core Strategy.

The proposed scheme dismissed at appeal due to the impact on character and appearance of the area, including the landscape and scenic beauty of the Malvern Hills Area National Landscape (AONB), if the proposal would be in the public interest and whether exceptional circumstances exist to support it; and whether the proposal makes appropriate provision for affordable housing, infrastructure and community facilities to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Alternative sites considered

There were two alternative sites in the [Colwall SHLAA Map](#) reviewed in the process that was discounted early on in the process. They were HLAA reference: O/Col/003 and W499. Both of the sites yield will be less than optimal for rural sites.

Weston under Penyard

Identified as one of the Rural Hubs, Weston under Penyard was chosen as it helps to provide an even distribution in the south of the county's rural areas. It has strong transport links to nearby Ross on Wye and Gloucester due to its location next to the A40. The parish has exceeded its growth target but this has not been as excessive as other places where a period of consolidation is required.



Figure 5 - Site allocation for Weston under Penyard

Around 50 dwellings with a range and mix of housing types have been allocated for the land opposite the Playing Fields with allowances made for open space and route ways on 5.5 ha. The site has been selected due to its close proximity to the settlement, close proximity to Weston under Penyard Primary School and nearby services. The site size can achieve the required amount of growth and access is achievable.

Site history

There is no previous planning history on the site.

Alternative sites considered

The [Weston under Penyard SHLAA Map](#) shows the sites assessed to date. HLAA/105/001 was considered but availability and potential uncertain due to a lapsed permission as well as being an NDP allocated site.

10. Conclusion

The Rural Settlement Hierarchy is a key piece of evidence that will be used to inform and prepare the emerging Local Plan, helping to define the most sustainable settlements within Herefordshire. The study is based on a methodology with updated data from the survey work undertaken through consultations with the public, ward members and with parish councils over the past few years. The purpose of this Background Paper has been to help set out how our rural settlements currently work as we start to shape the future and set a strategy for determining the scale and nature of future development through the Draft Local Plan. The settlement hierarchy purpose is not only to identify the current role of settlements through the facilities and services they provide, but also to help define a sustainable settlement hierarchy to facilitate decisions through the Herefordshire Local Plan on which settlements are best placed to accommodate future development.

There is a distinction between those settlements that have all key facilities and a good level of public transport, and those that do not. The county has over 300 rural settlements but a high proportion of these are hamlets with little in the way of service provision. The settlements with higher levels of provision all offer a variety of services and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of the community. Therefore the settlements range from the most sustainable to the least sustainable hamlets when considering future growth.

The Draft Local Plan policies relating to the rural settlement hierarchy are:

- Policy RURA1: Housing growth within Rural Hubs
- Policy RURA2: Rural housing growth in Service Settlements
- Policy RURA3: Strategic site allocations in the rural areas
- Policy AG4: Rural settlement exceptions for affordable housing, entry-level homes, self and custom build housing and community led housing

Draft Local Plan Tables 14 to 17 list the settlements where certain levels of growth will be able to come forward during the Local Plan period. It should also be noted that the position of a settlement within the hierarchy does not inevitably mean that significant growth should be accommodated there because other factors will need to be considered, such as environmental constraints.

Those settlements not listed in these Tables 14 to 17 will be considered to be open countryside and be expected to comply with: Policy AG5: Open countryside.