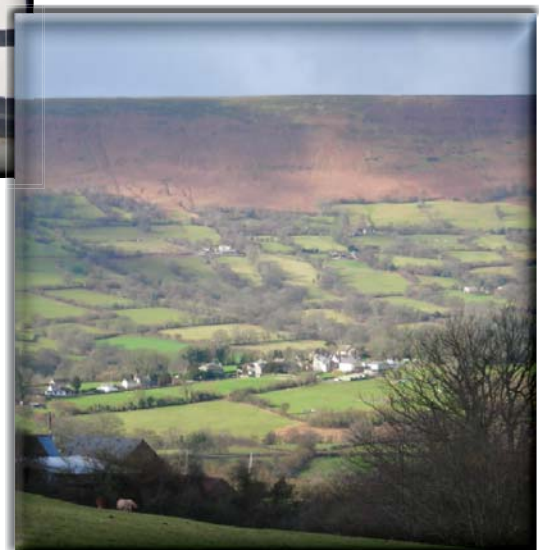


Shaping our Place 2026
Local Development Framework

Preferred Options: Rural Areas

August 2010



Rural Areas

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Spatial Strategy of the Local Development Framework identifies that around 4,500 houses will be developed in the rural parts of the County (i.e. outside Hereford and the Market Towns) over the twenty year period from 2006 to 2026. However, in order to distribute these in a manner which meets the needs of rural communities (including affordability issues) it will be necessary to focus development into the more appropriate villages. The Rural Settlement Hierarchy does this by looking at the functions of the various villages to identify those most suitable for new development. This hierarchy, therefore, sets out the overall strategy for new development in the rural areas. What it does not do is to identify specific sites - that will come in the subsequent Development Plan Document for the Market Towns and Rural Areas.

2.0 Strategy for the Rural Areas

2.1 The policy starts with the top tier of villages, Rural Service Centres, (i.e. those with the highest concentration of services and opportunities and which are best able to absorb new development). The scale of development for these villages could be as high as 100 new dwellings over the twenty year period which, as an average, equates to around 5 per year. (There is no intention of developing a single site of 100 houses anywhere in the rural area). Appendix 1 shows a map of the locations of the Rural Service Centres and Hubs.

2.2 The criteria for RSC status are:

- Have an employment site (as identified in the Employment Land Study); or lie within 5km of an employment site; and
- Have good or very good public transport accessibility; (*i.e. minimum of return journeys in peak time hours*), and
- Have all five of the following key day-to-day services: pub; village hall; primary school; shop and post office.

2.3 Within this top tier there are also further defined settlements called 'Hubs,' these settlements are seen as having a functional relationship with a defined RSC that is within 5km. This is based on the concept that a settlement can be deemed to share certain key services with another settlement.

2.4 The criteria for a Hub are:

- Must be within 5km of an RSC; and
- Must have three or more key services, (including employment site, pub, village hall, shop, post office and primary school); and
- Must have very good or good public transport accessibility. (*i.e. minimum of return journeys in peak time hours*)

2.5 The second tier is based on criteria which would allow a more limited scale of development, say up to 30 dwellings in some cases over the twenty year period. Once again, there is no intention to identify single sites of 30 dwellings in one go. The gradual (or "organic") development of villages in this way should allow for balanced, but carefully limited, growth.

2.6 Elsewhere in the rural areas "traditional" open countryside policies will prevail as explained below.

- 2.7 The term ‘development’ discussed below could mean not only residential but also employment or any other form that could help support and sustain rural communities. Detailed policies for the assessment of individual development proposals will be set out in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.
- 2.8 Reference should also be made to the Affordable Housing Policy (Policy AH.1) which sets out the affordable housing targets for rural areas, these targets will help to be met through a range of implementation measures including working closely with Housing Associations and local communities, and this will be detailed further in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Policy RA.1

To help meet the housing needs of Herefordshire and in accordance with the Spatial Strategy around 4,500 new dwellings, with the development of affordable housing being a priority, will be provided in rural areas over the period 2006-2026. The regeneration of the rural economy will be encouraged while the unique local environment will be protected and where possibly enhanced.

Policy RA.2 - Rural Service Centres / Hubs

Rural Service Centres and Hubs, as listed below, will be the main focus for development in rural areas. Detailed policies and proposals for these locations will be developed in the Market Town and Rural Areas Plan.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| • Canon Pyon | • Madley |
| • Clehonger | • Marden |
| • Colwall | • Orleton |
| • Credenhill | • Pembridge |
| • Eardisley | • Peterchurch |
| • Ewyas Harold | • Shobdon |
| • Fownhope* | • Wellington |
| • Goodrich | • Weobley |
| • Kingsland | • Whitchurch |
| • Kingstone | |
| • Lea | |
| • Leintwardine | |

The following settlements have been identified as Hubs in relation to a RSC:

- **Almeley (Hub with Eardisley)**
- **Dorstone (Hub with Peterchurch)**
- **Eardisland (Hub with Pembridge)**
- **Moreton-on-Lugg (Hub with Wellington)**
- **Pontrilas (Hub with Ewyas Harold)**
- **Stretton Sugwas (Hub with Credenhill)**
- **Sutton St Nicholas (Hub with Marden)**
- **Weston under Penyard (Hub with Lea)**
- **Wigmore (Hub with Leintwardine)**
- **Winnal (Hub with Kingstone)**

**Note: Fownhope has been defined as a RSC as although it does not have an employment site identified through the Employment Land Study, it does currently stand as one of the largest villages with the most services and facilities, and therefore currently acts as a RSC in the locality as there are no other villages similar within the triangle of Ross, Ledbury and Hereford, in order to protect these services Fownhope will be a focus for development.*

Consultation responses indicated that Fownhope should be considered as a RSC due to its location and current role as a main settlement serving a large rural hinterland. However, there are existing constraints of flooding and location within the AONB which will determine the level, scale and location of any new development, this will be detailed within the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Policy RA.3 - Other settlements outside of the RSCs and Hubs:

Outside of RSCs and Hubs there may be other settlements capable of supporting limited development. This limited development will need to be of a scale appropriate for the locality, and will be permitted where the following criteria can be met:

- 1. Must have the provision of good public transport (*i.e. return journeys in peak time hours*)**
- 2. Ensure there is a minimum of 4 key day-to-day services (*i.e. employment site, post office, primary school, pub, shop, village hall*)**
- 3. Ensure that any defined community benefit, in scale to the proposal, is provided by the development (*the community need being identified and supported by the parish council and local community*)**
- 4. The development will be of a small-scale that is appropriate to the settlement and locality**
- 5. Ensure the development is in accordance with national and local planning policy, including design, affordable housing and impact upon the environment and local distinctiveness.**

- 2.9 This option would possibly negate the need for settlement boundaries. Any proposal would be considered on its merits in relation to the environmental capacity of the area to accommodate development.
- 2.10 To remain flexible no set parameters regarding development size have been set, however it is expected that each settlement would not exceed a total of around 30 dwellings developed over the twenty year plan period. This is to ensure that the character and nature of the settlement would not be altered whilst allowing limited growth appropriate to sustain the role of the settlement. It is anticipated that any development will be of a small-scale that is appropriate to the settlement.
- 2.11 Detailed policies for the assessment of individual development proposals will be set out in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Policy RA.4 - Open Countryside

In other locations residential development will be limited to that which meets an agricultural, forestry or other farm diversification requirement, or accompanies the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise. The replacement of an existing dwelling or the conversion of an existing rural building will also be permitted in appropriate circumstances. Affordable housing may also be permitted where the criteria of the Policy AH.1 are met.

Policy RA.5 - Rural Economy

Proposals which will help to support the rural economy by creating or safeguarding jobs and businesses will be permitted where they are of an appropriate scale for their location and of a form which respects the environmental quality of the area, in particular:

- 1. RSCs and Hubs will be the focus for new, or extensions to existing, employment land and the provision of enterprise centres;**
- 2. A wide range of farm diversification projects including equine enterprises, renewable energy, employment uses in rural buildings will be supported;**
- 3. Tourism proposals of an appropriate scale will be promoted and encouraged;**
- 4. Recognise the economic benefits of utilising Herefordshire's natural and historic environment as an asset to be valued, conserved and enhanced;**
- 5. Protect existing facilities and services in Rural Service Centres and smaller settlements to meet the day-to-day needs of local communities;**
- 6. Encourage a range of business types, particularly knowledge based and creative industries and environmental technologies to improve the economic viability of all rural settlements and their rural hinterlands;**
- 7. The development of live/work schemes will be encouraged in suitable locations (i.e. Rural Service Centres, Local Centres or through suitable conversions);**
- 8. Promote an integrated and sustainable transport provision.**

3.0 Monitoring

- 3.1 Annual monitoring of numbers and spatial distribution of new development would be required, to ensure local and regional requirements for new homes are being met and not overreached. This will be done formally through the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 3.2 The matrix, (within the Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper, June 2010) used to define the services and facilities will also be updated at regular intervals, and the defined list of RSCs and Hubs will be altered accordingly if needed.

4.0 Unitary Development Plan Policies that will be replaced

- 4.1 The following Unitary Development Plan policies will continue in effect for the purposes of defining unimplemented allocations, settlement boundaries and infill criteria until they are replaced by detailed allocations in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.
- Policy H4 Main Villages: Settlement Boundaries
 - Policy H5 Main Villages: housing land allocations
 - Policy H6 Housing in smaller settlements
 - Policy H7 Housing in the countryside outside settlements

5.0 Links to Core Strategy objectives

- 5.1 This policy for the rural areas would help to achieve a number of the social, economic and environmental objectives including objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 12. (Identified in Section 4 of the Place Shaping Paper, 2010).

6.0 What the Place shaping consultation has told us

6.1 The majority of respondents agreed with the overall approach to the rural areas, that the defining of the RSCs and Hubs was the correct one, and that the level of proposed housing within RSCs and Hubs was also about right.

6.2 In the free write text a number of key themes appeared including:

- A need for increased affordable housing;
- The need for flexibility in the plan;
- The level of rural housing proposed should be increased to meet the objectives;
- RSCs could be overdeveloped and lose character.

6.3 A summary of key stakeholder responses are as follows:

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Supports the policy direction of the Place Shaping Paper as it is in accordance with the rural regeneration policies of the RSS.

Herefordshire Nature Trust

Supports the rural strategy and the policy direction of RSCs and Hubs.

Welsh Water

We are aware of the Authority's initial growth aspirations for the rural villages. However, we await confirmation of exact growth in order to determine whether improved capacity will be required.

English Heritage

Supports the policies but it needs to include specific design and heritage issues.

CPRE

Supports the overall idea of focusing development to a number of RSCs, but felt there were a few further issues that need addressing. CPRE however does not support the level of housing as they feel that the policy does not take into account non-strategic windfall developments. CPRE didn't support either option for Tier 2, they advocates that service shortages in settlements should be addressed. Combining this with a criteria base to RSCs/Hub designations would then allow more settlements to be able to accommodate development sustainably.

Natural England

Supports the rural strategy and the policy direction of RSCs and Hubs, however they would like to see what the percentage increase 100 dwellings would be for each settlement.

CLA

Feels that the policy is restricting development in certain areas to promote other settlements.

Sport England

Supports the rural strategy and the policy direction of RSCs and Hubs.

Parish and Town Councils

Most of the Parish and Town Councils had a high level of support for the preferred strategy; the key importance to the Councils coming through the responses is the development of affordable housing and the viability of existing centres. Of those who did not have full support for the strategy, the key reason was the need for flexibility during the plan period. Parish Councils had strong support for the criteria based option for Tier 2.

7.0 What national and other relevant strategies are telling us

7.1 See Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper for full details, available on the website.

8.0 What is the evidence base telling us

8.1 The main evidence base for this policy is the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper, 2010, from which the options for policy developed.

8.2 It has also been identified within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment there are some settlements that have been highlighted in the above policy for growth which could be at risk from either fluvial or catchment flood hazard or risk. This will need to be taken into account for the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the MTRAP.

9.0 How the SA/HRA have influenced the preferred option

9.1 The recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Appraisal have been taken into account and adjustments to the text have been made to ensure that the preferred options for the Rural Areas are consistent with the aims of sustainable development.

10.0 Alternative options not taken forward and why

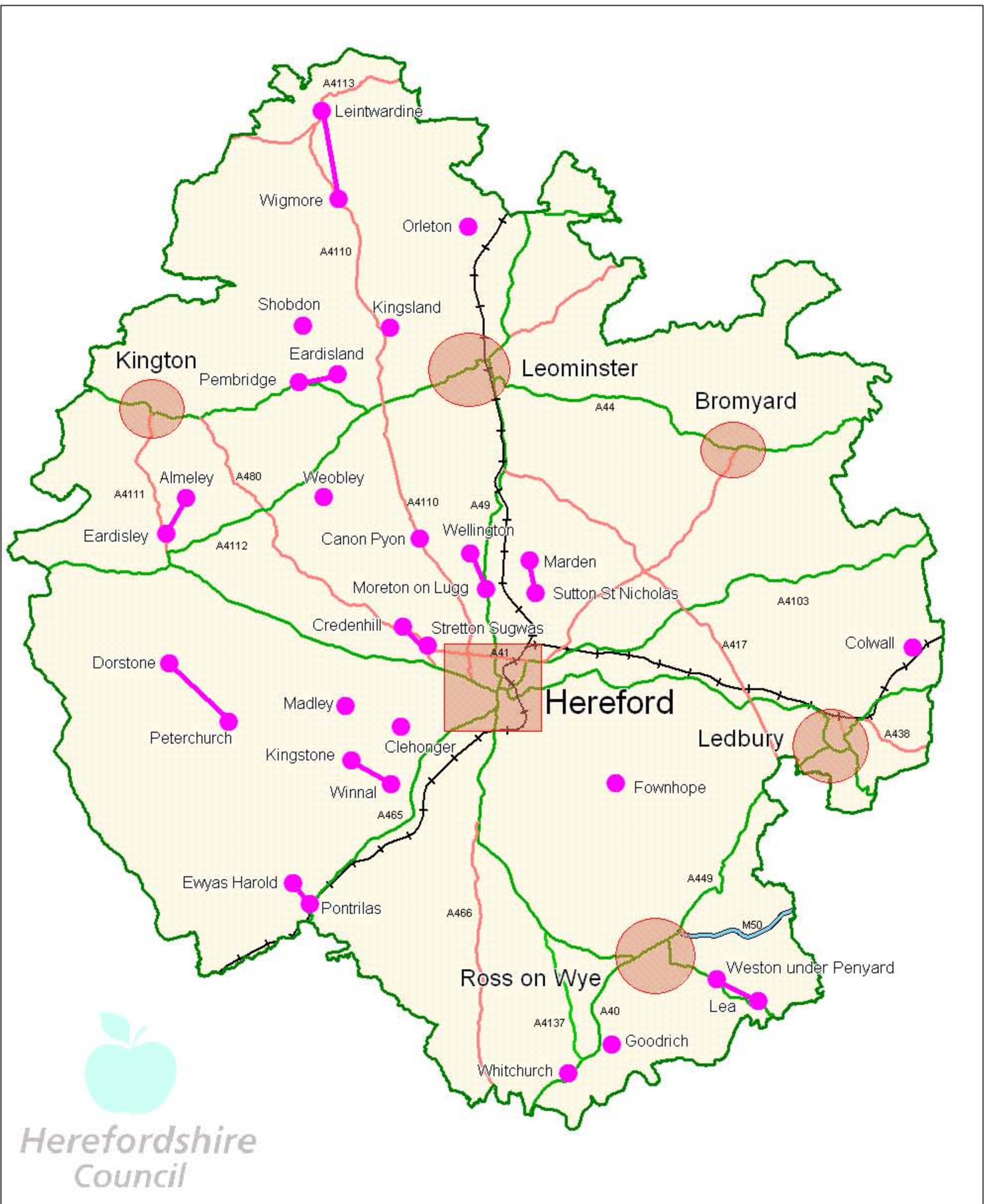
10.1 Tier 2, Option 1 was not taken forward as this was not the preferred option identified in the Place Shaping Paper consultation.

Your Views:

Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for the Rural Areas?

Y/N

If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?



Herefordshire Council

Tier 1 RSC & Hubs



Not to Scale

- Main Urban Area
- Market Towns
- Rural Service Centre
- Rural Service Hubs

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