

# Shaping Our Place 2026



## Local Development Framework

# Place Shaping Paper Consultation

January 2010





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A place to Work

A place to Move

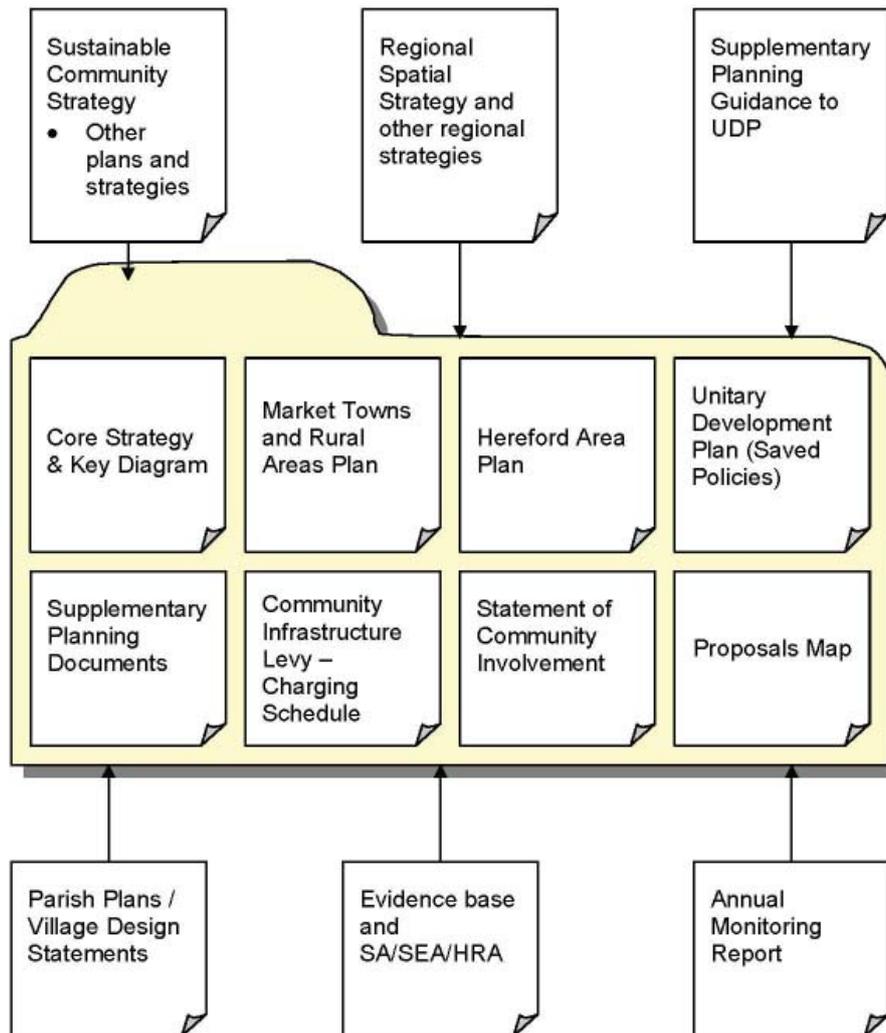
A place to Improve



**Section 1: Introduction**

1.1 This ‘Place Shaping Paper’ considers a preferred strategy and further options for the emerging **Core Strategy**. It also forms the first stage (the main **Issues**) of two, more area-specific plans that Herefordshire Council are producing – the **Hereford Area Plan** and the **Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan**. All three documents will ultimately form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

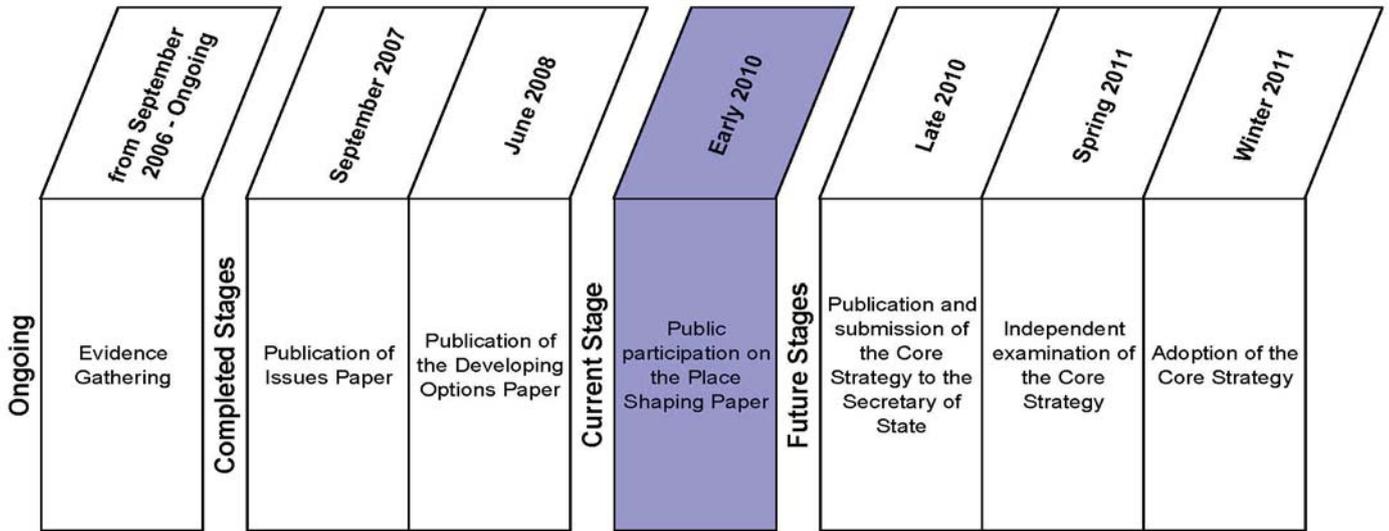
**Figure1 - The relationship between plans within the LDF**



1.2 The **Core Strategy** is a long-term strategic planning document, which sets out the vision and objectives for the county and establishes the policy framework and the broad locations for development necessary to deliver them. Once adopted in 2010/11, the Core Strategy will set the guidelines for development of new homes, businesses, open space and other facilities across the county to 2026. This document is the third of four stages in preparing the Core Strategy for Herefordshire as Figure 2 (overleaf) demonstrates. More information on the progress of the Core Strategy so far can be found on [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/corestrategy).



Figure 2 - Where we are in the Core Strategy process



- 1.3 Hereford is a Settlement of Significant Development within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and has New Growth Point status. As a result the **Hereford Area Plan** will set out proposals for the delivery of sustainable growth in the historic city of Hereford including housing, employment and urban area regeneration proposals. The plan will set out the detailed policies and non-strategic allocations for Hereford and will be accompanied by a proposals map. It is anticipated that this plan will be adopted in 2012/3.
- 1.4 The **Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan** is the second area specific plan that Herefordshire Council will be producing. Outside Hereford, the key theme is “Rural Regeneration” and it is very important that the role of the market towns and their relationship with the surrounding rural area is developed alongside the growth of Hereford. The plan will contain more detailed planning policy and non-strategic allocations for the market towns and the wider rural area and will be accompanied by a proposals map. It is anticipated that this plan will be adopted in 2013.

**Structure of this document**

- 1.5 This Place Shaping Paper has been prepared to combine the consultation on all three plans, to progress the development of the Core Strategy and to develop the area specific options for Hereford, the market towns and rural areas. Therefore, the paper has been structured as follows;



### Structure of the Document:

- Section 2:** Background - outlines the documents and processes which have happened to date.
- Section 3:** Characteristics of the county: Key Facts - this provides a set of key statistics/facts and a map which will form the spatial portrait for the Core Strategy. A more detailed draft spatial portrait can be viewed on Herefordshire Council's website.
- Section 4:** Vision and Objectives - this section sets out the vision for the Core Strategy and the objectives to achieve that vision.
- Section 5:** Spatial Strategy - this section sets out how much development there will be and broadly where it will go.
- Section 6:** Place Shaping policies - this section is split into places (Hereford, each of the market towns and the rural areas) and will highlight the issues for each of these places and identify possible options for the implementation of the spatial strategy.
- Section 7:** General core policies - This section is intended to convey the preferred approach for each of the core policy areas, where they have been established. The final wording of the policies will be contained within the Submission Core Strategy.
- Section 8:** Delivery and Monitoring - Provides information on delivery and how proposals and policies intend to be monitored.
- Section 9:** Next Steps - Explains the remaining progress for preparing the Core Strategy and the Hereford Area Plan and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

In Sections 5, 6 and 7, a reasoned justification is provided to explain why a particular preferred approach has been proposed and why, having been considered, other alternative approaches have been rejected.

### How to comment:

- 1.6 Your views are important to us to help further develop a planning strategy for the county. Each section of this paper has a number of questions and a questionnaire is available on the website to tell us your views. Please answer the questionnaire, preferably online, as it helps us use the information more efficiently and effectively.

Please complete and return the questionnaire by **12 March 2010**.

If you require more information, please contact us:

**by e-mail:** [ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk)

**on the web:** [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/corestrategy)

**by phone:** 01432 260386

**by fax:** 01432 383031

**In writing:** Local Development Framework  
Licence No. - RRJX-TLSH-SCYH  
Freepost, Forward Planning  
Herefordshire Council  
PO Box 4  
Plough Lane  
Hereford  
HR4 0XH



## Section 2: Background

- 2.1 In order to keep this paper relatively concise and focused, the intention is not to repeat information that was contained within previous stages of the Core Strategy.

### National and Regional Planning Guidance

- 2.2 The Core Strategy must be in general conformity with higher level national and regional policies but not repeat them. National planning policy and guidance is prepared by the government and issued in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPS), which are gradually replacing previously issued Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) or regional plan for the West Midlands was adopted in 2004 and is currently being reviewed. In September 2009, the Panel Report on the Phase 2 Revision to the RSS was published. This makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on the development requirements for Herefordshire. Together, national and regional policies provide the broader context for the county's Core Strategy.

### Sustainable Community Strategy

- 2.3 The Community Strategy 2006 provided the starting point for the Core Strategy. This sets out a vision for the county, which was developed by listening to residents, organisations and businesses with a local interest and by identifying local needs and aspirations. The Community Strategy outlines priorities and outcomes for achieving its vision and it is the job of the Local Development Framework to support the spatial delivery of its objectives. The Community Strategy has been refreshed and renamed as the Sustainable Community Strategy and will be available to view on the Herefordshire Partnership website ([www.herefordshirepartnership.com](http://www.herefordshirepartnership.com)) in February 2010. The links between the Core Strategy objectives and those of the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy can be found in Appendix 1.

### Evidence Base

- 2.4 A number of studies have been undertaken to ensure that the decisions taken in the Core Strategy are based on sound evidence of the county's development needs. These are listed in Appendix 2 and most are available on Herefordshire Council's website.

### Core Strategy Issues and Options

- 2.5 The first stage of the Core Strategy was the Issues Paper (September 2007). The results of this consultation, together with information from Parish Plans and the issues identified within the spatial portrait redefined the original 14 key issues and grouped them under sustainable development themes. These can be seen in Appendix 3. These issues have helped shape the vision and objectives for the Core Strategy (see Section 4).
- 2.6 The second stage was the Developing Options Paper (June 2008), which sought early views about the best way to address specific challenges facing the county. It proposed four spatial options for the physical location of development across the county that would meet the challenges in different ways.



- 2.7 This Place Shaping Paper builds upon the Developing Options Paper, the feedback received during the consultation and the emerging evidence base. Further details on the Developing Options Stage can be found on Herefordshire Council's website.

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 2.8 To ensure that consideration of sustainable development is built into the Core Strategy, a process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is undertaken throughout the preparation process. In addition, as the county has a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), any development which may affect these designated sites will be subject to rigorous examination through a process of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This process of assessment has been carried out for this Place Shaping Paper as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. A summary of these results can be found with each option within this paper, the full report is available on Herefordshire Council's website. The coloured boxes provide a visual indication of the results of the assessment with RED showing a move away from sustainability, AMBER indicating a neutral result and GREEN indicating the option is moving towards sustainability.

### **Climate Change**

- 2.9 One of the key issues and an objective within the Core Strategy is to address the impacts of climate change. The Local Development Framework can influence this by reducing the need to travel, tackling traffic congestion, reducing flood risk and improving air quality. The design and location of new housing and other development, the management of waste and the development of renewable energy can also contribute to reducing the impacts of climate change. In addition, there is a need to adapt to the changing environment, including possible changes in agricultural practices and any knock on effects on the rural economy. This aspect may present opportunities for addressing the impacts of climate change head on, for example using areas for biomass production or wind energy. Ever growing demands for water to supply new homes, business and agriculture will also be affected by climate change. A Climate Change Background Paper has been prepared to address these issues and assist in policy formulation. This can be found on Herefordshire Council's website.



## Section 3: Characteristics of the county – Key Facts

- 3.1 Outlined on the following two pages are the characteristics of Herefordshire which have helped to identify a set of key issues that the Core Strategy will seek to address. These may be issues that have been apparent for some time, are existing trends or new issues. All may present challenges and opportunities for the future. These characteristics have formed part of the spatial portrait which is available separately on Herefordshire Council's website and will be updated within the Submission Core Strategy.

### Key characteristics

- 3.2 Herefordshire is predominately a rural county situated in the south west corner of the West Midlands region bordering Wales. The city of Hereford is the county's centre for employment, administration, health, education facilities and shopping. The other principal locations are the five market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. The rural area is comprised of numerous large and small villages, hamlets and individual dwellings.

### Key facts:

#### Social

Population:	178,400 (mid 2007 estimates)
Area:	2,180km <sup>2</sup> /842 miles <sup>2</sup>
Density / Sparsity:	0.9 persons per hectare, the 4th lowest population in England.
Population growth:	Growth of 2% between 2001–2007. With fewer births than deaths each year since 2004, population growth due to net in-migration.
Population Structure:	24% of Herefordshire's population is of state retirement age and is expected to rise. 18% are under 16 and expected to decline until 2016.
Ethnicity:	4% of Herefordshire's resident population are from ethnic groups other than 'white British' – 1.9% white other, 0.7% Asian/Asian British, 0.6% mixed, 0.4% Black/Black British.
Access to services:	Most parts of the county fall within the 10% most deprived nationally in terms of geographical access to services and barriers to housing.
Education:	63% of schools leavers achieve 5 GCSEs A* -C.

#### Environment

Environment:	Two Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (parts of) – Wye Valley and Malvern Hills, 4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) including River Wye, 65 Conservation Areas, 73 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 773 Local Wildlife Sites, 5918 Listed Buildings, 262 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Flooding:	18.5% of county is situated in a flood zone



**Economic**

Numbers of homes:	78,105 (March 2006)
Average house price:	£194,500 (2008)
Average income:	£20,304 (2008 median annualised earnings)
Employment:	78% of working aged population are employed, higher than regional average (72%). 15% of working population are self-employed, higher than regional average (8%)
Car ownership:	1.3 per household. 18% of households have no car/van

Other facts and issues for the county are contained within the full version of the Spatial Portrait, which can be found on Herefordshire Council's website.

**Figure 3 - Map of Herefordshire**



## Section 4: Vision and Objectives

### Background

- 4.1 Developing a vision and objectives for the Core Strategy is a very important stage in the process of plan production as it sets the direction of travel for the spatial strategy and policies that follow. The vision and objectives for the Core Strategy have been developed from extensive internal and external consultation since 2007 including specific workshops on the vision. In this respect, the vision and objectives are considered to be in a form that can be taken straight through to submission stage. Please also see the Vision and Objectives Background Paper (August 2009) on Herefordshire Council's website for further information.

### Vision

***Herefordshire will be a place of distinctive environmental, historical and cultural assets and local communities, with sustainable development fostering a high quality of life for those who live, work and visit here. A sustainable future for the county will be based on the interdependence of the themes of social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality with the aim of increasing the county's self-reliance and resilience.***

### 1. Social Progress

By 2026, decent, affordable homes, jobs, health and community facilities and other necessary infrastructure will have been provided in urban and rural areas to meet the needs of all sections of the population creating safe, inclusive places and robust communities that promote good health and well-being. The opportunities and benefits from open space, leisure, shopping, sport, art, heritage, learning, health and tourism facilities and assets will be maximised, enabling more active lifestyles and the retention of our young people, and an improved quality of life. Residents and workers in urban and rural areas will have a reduced need to travel by car with opportunities for "active travel" i.e. walking and cycling promoted, along with improved accessibility to public transport. In Hereford, congestion will be managed and public transport improved through a balanced package of transport measures including the provision of a relief road, park and ride facilities and bus priority schemes. Residents will have the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of their place through continuous engagement in plan making.



## 2. Economic Prosperity

By 2026, Herefordshire will have a thriving local economy, with a balanced and diversified business base incorporating more knowledge-based and high-tech businesses and a more adaptable and skilled workforce. A genuine commitment by all businesses to sustainable development will underpin a unique quality of life. New employment land will have been provided to complement new homes and support higher-waged jobs enabling existing and future businesses to grow and thrive. A communications infrastructure based on fibre optics will be in place to allow a similar level of broadband service everywhere in the county, with the major employment locations enjoying broadband services matching the best in the country. Educational developments (including higher education) will bolster and support local resources and strengths, such as environmental technologies, creative industries, agriculture, food production, forestry, equestrian expertise and tourism as well as support improved skills training, development and local job opportunities. Hereford will be a strong, sub-regional shopping, employment, leisure and cultural focus for the county. Comprehensive proposals for regeneration in and around the city centre will complement the historic core in providing homes, jobs, shops and leisure facilities and transport improvements. As a result the city will be a vibrant destination of choice for shoppers and visitors alike. The market towns will be distinctive, thriving service centres that are better linked to their hinterland villages through enterprise hubs, service provision and transport accessibility. Our village-based services will be supported through new development (including live/work units) in appropriate locations to foster sustainable communities and promote rural regeneration. Herefordshire will be a sought after destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by more fully utilising, but respecting, the county's unique environmental assets such as the River Wye.

## 3. Environmental Quality

New development will be designed and constructed in ways to ensure that local distinctiveness is reinforced. The wider impacts of climate change will be addressed by reducing carbon emissions, minimising pollution and the risk of flooding, ensuring availability of natural resources, and by providing appropriate waste management facilities and renewable energy schemes. Networks of connected, well managed and accessible natural green spaces will provide a range of enhanced leisure and health benefits within and between towns, villages and the countryside. Local food production and processing will be fostered whilst supporting stewardship of soils and water, biodiversity and the characteristic Herefordshire landscape. The area's historic and environmental resource, including its natural beauty and quality of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, built environment and cultural heritage, will be protected and enhanced. It will underpin and foster growth and innovation in businesses and jobs; being accessed, appreciated and actively supported by more people, for more purposes, in all walks of life.



## Objectives

- 4.2 The objectives have been substantially reworded since the Developing Options Paper in June 2008. The numbering is for reference only and is not meant to convey any order of importance.

### Social Progress

- 1 To meet the housing needs of all sections of the community (especially those in need of affordable housing), by providing a range of quality, energy efficient homes in the right place at the right time.
- 2 To improve the health, well-being and quality of life of all residents by ensuring new developments positively contribute towards better access to, provision and use of, improved public open spaces, sport and recreation, education, cultural and health facilities.
- 3 To support existing education, life-long learning and the retention of our young people through the provision and/or improvement of higher education, skills development and training facilities.
- 4 To reduce the need to travel and lessen the harmful impacts from traffic growth, promote active travel and improve quality of life by locating significant new development where access to employment, shopping, education, health, recreation, leisure and other services are, or could be made available by walking, cycling or public transport.
- 5 To improve access to services in rural areas and movement and air quality within urban areas by ensuring new developments support the provision of an accessible, integrated, safe and sustainable transport network and improved traffic management schemes.

### Economic Prosperity

- 6 To provide more local, better paid job opportunities to limit out-commuting and strengthen the economy by attracting higher value-added, knowledge based industries and cutting-edge environmental technologies to new/existing employment land and enabling existing businesses to grow and diversify, facilitated by the universal provision of a high bandwidth broadband service.
- 7 To strengthen Hereford's role as a sub-regional focus for the county, through city centre expansion as part of wider city regeneration and through the provision of a balanced package of transport measures including park and ride, bus priority schemes and a relief road including a second river crossing.
- 8 To improve the economic viability of the market towns, villages and their rural hinterlands by facilitating employment generation and diversification, improving delivery and access to services (including affordable housing and improved ICT) and realising the value of the environment as an economic asset.
- 9 To develop Herefordshire as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by enabling the provision of new, as well as enhancement of existing tourism infrastructure in appropriate locations.



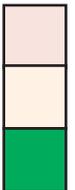
## Environment Quality

- 10 To achieve sustainable communities and protect the environment by delivering well-designed places, spaces and buildings, which use land efficiently, reinforce local distinctiveness and are supported by the necessary infrastructure including green infrastructure.
- 11 To address the causes and impacts of climate change by ensuring new development: uses sustainable design and construction methods to conserve natural resources, does not increase flood risk to new or existing property, increases the use of renewable forms of energy to reduce carbon emissions, minimises waste and pollution, manages water supply and conservation and conserves and protects biodiversity and geodiversity.
- 12 To conserve, promote, utilise and enjoy our natural, built, historic and cultural assets for the fullest benefits to the whole community by safeguarding the county's current stock of environmental assets from loss and damage, reversing negative trends, ensuring best condition and encouraging expansion, as well as appropriately managing future assets.

## Results from the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

**Sustainability Appraisal** - The main differences in this version of the objectives compared to Developing Options stage relate to the creation of two further objectives in total. These have resulted from the splitting of original objectives numbers 7 and 9, to create separate objectives on Hereford, the Market Towns and Rural Areas as well as on the issue of climate change. The appraisal of the additional objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives identified in the LDF General Scoping Report (SA objectives), identified the need to have a reference to "affordable housing" in Objective 8. The compatibility of the Core Strategy objectives against each other has highlighted potential conflicts between objective 12 and those objectives regarding new development i.e. 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7. Allowing any new development is often a balance between assessing social, economic and environmental impacts, but objective 12 does aim to promote environmental assets for the benefit of the whole community. The SA process has highlighted the need for further references to be added to objectives 8 and 9 regarding "access to ICT" and "appropriate locations" respectively.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment** - The high-level vision and objectives have not been assessed, but the strategy and place shaping options that stem from them have been. The results can be seen in the relevant sections that follow.



## Section 5: Spatial Strategy

### The Preferred Strategy

- 5.1 The spatial strategy is central to the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework for Herefordshire. It explains what the spatial vision and strategic objectives outlined in the previous section will mean for the future development of Hereford, the market towns and the rural areas. It forms the backbone of the Core Strategy from which the eventual policies and proposals will follow.
- 5.2 Herefordshire Council proposes a preferred strategy based on a combination of elements from Options A, B and C as set out in the Developing Options Paper (June 2008). Option D has not been taken forward. The strategy will meet the regional requirements for 18,000 new homes and a balanced, rolling portfolio of 37 hectares of employment land which is readily available as well as an overall total of 148 hectares of employment land. This approach will address a balance of social, economic and environmental key issues (Appendix 3) and allows for the development of the county that delivers the Core Strategy Vision and all twelve Objectives set out in Section 4.
- 5.3 The preferred strategy, outlined below, sets out a settlement hierarchy for the county, which in itself determines the broad location and distribution of development for Herefordshire to 2026.

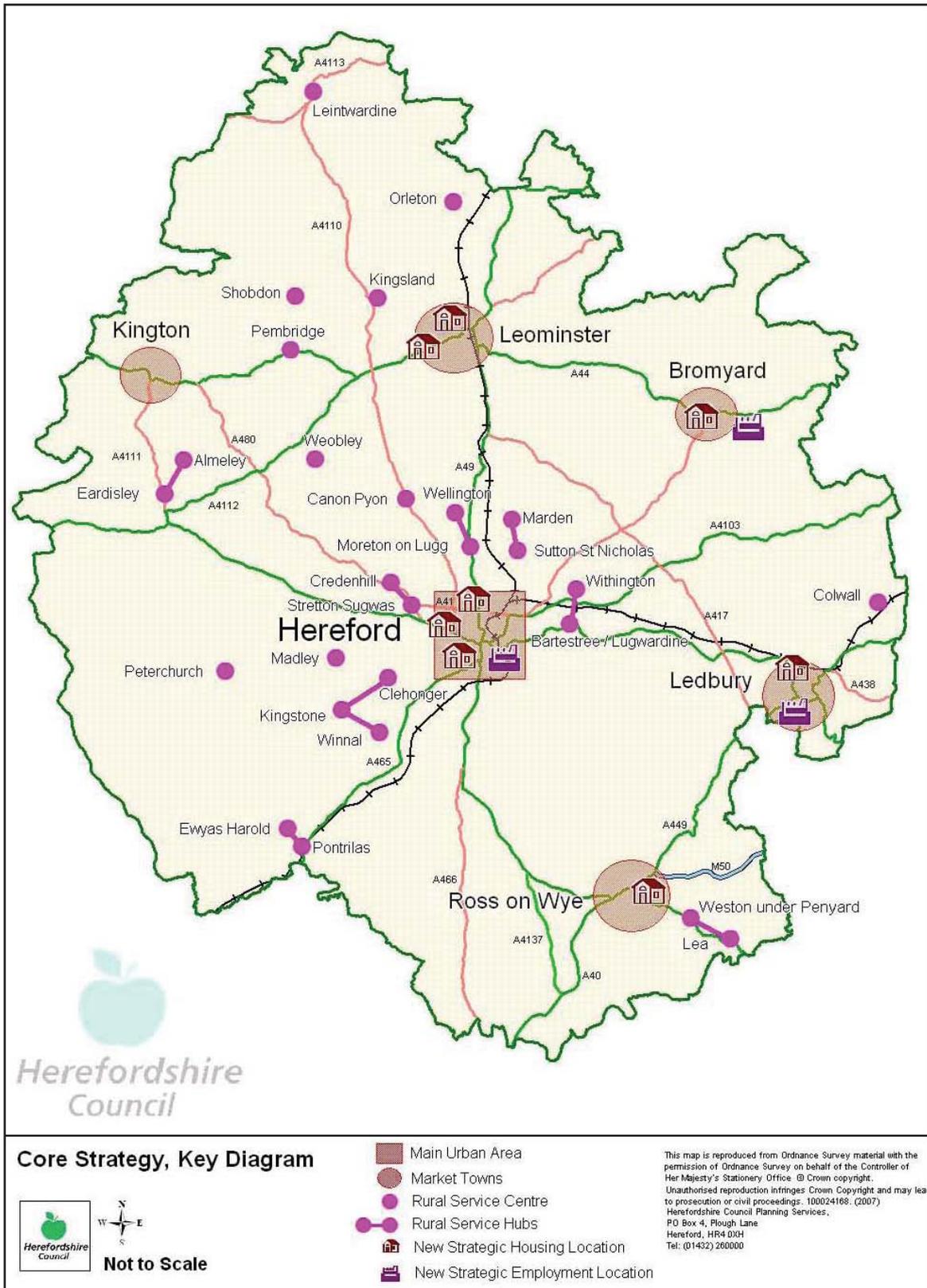
### The Preferred Strategy

- To focus approximately half of all new homes (including affordable) with associated employment, retail, leisure, education and cultural development as well as new transport and green infrastructure in and around the main urban area of **Hereford** to support its regeneration and status as a Growth Point.
- To focus the majority of remaining development at the market towns of **Leominster, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and Kington** (with Leominster taking the greatest amount) to support their status as service centres to their rural hinterlands and to support rural regeneration including employment creation/diversification, delivery of and access to services (including affordable housing), realising the environment as an economic asset and reducing the need to travel.
- To pursue targeted regeneration and possible modest extensions (including homes and jobs) at **Rural Service Centres and Hubs** to meet rural housing needs (including affordable), employment and community needs and to reduce the need to travel.
- At **Local Centres** (yet to be defined see paragraphs 6.8.5 to 6.8.9) to allow small scale development to meet rural housing (including affordable) and employment needs and support local community services.
- Elsewhere, development will be limited to rural exception housing needs (agricultural, forestry, farm diversification, replacements, conversions or rural affordable housing only) and diversification of farms or rural businesses of an appropriate scale to protect the countryside for its own sake and address climate change.
- Where possible, to pursue a sequential approach to development utilising brownfield land and buildings before greenfield land.
- To manage the release of housing and employment land to ensure delivery to meet targets and co-ordination with infrastructure provision.

- 5.4 The spatial representation of this strategy is indicated in Figure 4: Key Diagram.



Figure 4 - Key Diagram



Symbols are indicative of scale of development not locations. See options maps in Section 6 for locations.



- 5.5 In order to develop the preferred strategy, Options A-D of the Developing Options Paper were assessed against the following:
- 1 The extent to which each option would satisfy national and regional policy requirements,
  - 2 The outcome of community consultation;
  - 3 The findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (required under European law for all development plans);
  - 4 The findings of the emerging evidence base - the list of all the studies undertaken is detailed in Appendix 2; and
  - 5 Cross boundary issues.
- 5.6 There are sound reasons for choosing a strategy that combines Options A-C which take on board the above 5 criteria. These include the following but more detail is provided in the Spatial Strategy Background Paper which supports this Place Shaping Paper and can be found on Herefordshire Council's website:
- Meeting the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives;
  - Addressing the social and economic needs of the whole county;
  - Considering the environment as a social and economic asset to be protected and enhanced;
  - Achieving sustainable communities;
  - Reinforcing Hereford's role as the main focus for development;
  - Addressing key issues of affordable housing, rural regeneration and climate change.
- 5.7 The preferred spatial strategy directly addresses the cross cutting theme of **climate change** by:

- 1 Allocating about half of all new homes to Hereford, which as the sub-regional focus for the county is where the main services to which people travel on a daily basis (including jobs, shops and leisure uses) are located. This follows from the requirements of the regional plan. The remaining new homes are dispersed to the market towns and certain villages that already support a wide range of day-to-day services or are capable of doing so, with an approach of limiting development elsewhere. This approach is based on the principle of reducing the need to travel by private car in order to lessen the harmful impacts of carbon dioxide emissions. In a rural county like Herefordshire where car travel is used by over 50% of the population, reducing the need for people to travel in the first place is going to be the best long term strategy for tackling climate change.
- 2 Directing new development to areas of the county's towns and villages at no significant risk of flooding using the evidence in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the sequential approach set out in government policy. In addition, new development will be required not to exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere by the use of sustainable drainage techniques through the use of a core policy on this issue.

## New Homes

- 5.8 The **housing** element of the strategy is reflected in Figure 5, which details the broad distribution of new homes across the county. The fourth column details the actual amounts of new homes required for the 17 years to 2026 from 1 April 2009 when taking into account homes that have already been built, are under construction or have been granted planning permission but have not started since 2006 (the start date of the regional plan requirements). The final column details the amount of new homes to be built at 'strategic locations' in each settlement. The calculations supporting this distribution are shown in Appendix 4.



Figure 5 – Housing Distribution

Hierarchy	Settlement	No. of new homes as per Preferred Strategy (see Page 12)	No. of all new homes required as at 1.4.09 *	Estimate of new homes needed on strategic sites **
Main urban area	Hereford	8,500	6,250	5,300
Market towns	Leominster	2,500	1,800	1,700
	Ledbury	1000	950	900
	Ross on Wye	1000	500	400
	Bromyard	500	300	250
	Kington	200	50	0
	<b>Total - Market Towns</b>		<b>5,200</b>	<b>3,600</b>
Rural Areas	Rural Service centres	4,400	2,700	0
	Local centres			
<b>Total</b>		<b>18,100</b>	<b>12,550</b>	<b>8,550</b>

\* Takes into account completions, planning permissions and UDP allocations adjusted for lapses of planning permissions (figures are rounded)

\*\* Strategic locations comprise sites of around 500 new homes in Hereford and around 100 in the market towns

5.9 The strategic allocations for the 8,500 new homes shown in the last total column of Figure 5 are explained further in the Place Shaping sections of this document. All non-strategic allocations will be addressed as part of a general review of settlement boundaries, and the need for them, in the Hereford Area Plan and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan, which will follow the Core Strategy. The Submission Core Strategy will include a target for affordable homes to meet the requirements of the regional plan.

**Phasing**

5.10 The Submission Core Strategy will include a policy on phasing of housing development which will need to reflect the regional plan panel report’s recommendations regarding ‘back-loading’ of development towards the end of the plan period to reflect current economic circumstances and this will be reflected in the housing trajectory set out in that document. Sufficient land will be identified to meet the five and ten year housing supply in line with national policy. However, windfall sites developed will count towards meeting targets and this may require future adjustments to the housing trajectory. Also included will be an indication of the split between the level of housing to be built on greenfield land and brownfield land. The level of greenfield land required is likely to be higher than levels achieved in recent years due to the regional requirement for the county. This will have a knock on effect in terms of loss of high quality agricultural land in the county.



## New Jobs

- 5.11 The regional plan panel report recommends that there is a need to have a rolling reservoir of 37ha of readily available employment land for a 5 year period. The panel also recommend that a 10 year supply of land should also be identified (i.e. 74ha) and that the indicative requirement for Herefordshire for the Plan period (2006-2026) should be 148ha (37x4).
- 5.12 The Employment Land Study reports that overall there is good quantity of existing employment land supply within Herefordshire as a whole (112ha) when compared against forecast minimum requirements using small area forecasting techniques. However, projecting past completion rates forward provides a different picture of requirements with a modest surplus in employment land supply for Herefordshire. This forecast was undertaken prior to the panel report increasing the indicative target to 148ha. The Study stresses the need to apply the small area forecasting model as an absolute minimum land requirement and that in reality, a much larger amount of land will be required to ensure continuing economic development and an adequate portfolio of sites.
- 5.13 Therefore, in county-wide terms and taking into account employment land completions over the past 3 years since 2006 (45.5ha), the indicative requirement for the remaining period would drop to 102.5ha. As there is around 112ha of employment land currently with planning permission or allocated in the county there could be an argument for no further additional strategic allocations. However, the policy directions as set out in Section 7 may result in a loss of some poor/moderate employment land and as there is need for an adequate and balanced portfolio of sites, and the total regional plan figure remains indicative only, it is felt prudent to make specific strategic allocations in Hereford and some of the market towns. Those at Ledbury and Bromyard are broadly replacements for existing sites and again follow recommendations of the Employment Land Study.
- 5.14 The above employment requirements will be achieved by using strategic allocations in the Core Strategy and other policies to:
- Safeguard existing better quality employment land,
  - Focus most new provision in Hereford (in association with urban extensions) and market towns in tandem with housing growth,
  - Promote live/work units,
  - Promote employment uses in rural areas, including enabling appropriate economic diversification proposals in recognition of the county's designation as a Rural Regeneration Zone in the regional plan, and
  - Monitor and review supply through the Annual Monitoring Report.

## New Shops

- 5.15 Hereford is identified in the regional plan panel report as a Strategic Sub-Regional Centre providing the main focus for higher level retail, commercial, cultural and service activities. Below this level the market towns of Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Bromyard form the “non-strategic centres” meeting local needs referred to in regional planning policy PA12B. There are no strategic level retail developments proposed in the market towns during this plan period, but this situation will be reviewed as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.



## New Infrastructure

### Transport infrastructure

5.16 The A49 in central Hereford is subject to increasing congestion and has been formally declared an Air Quality Management Area due to the extent of vehicle pollution derived from the level of congestion. It is envisaged that the scale of new homes will need to be supported by a package of balanced transport measures to include improved public transport provision, walking and cycling, park and ride facilities and a new relief road. These measures are considered necessary to enable Hereford to fulfil its role as a Settlement of Significant Development in accordance with the regional plan panel report. The precise extent and detailed route of a relief road will need to be further examined in the light of landscape impact, noise and air pollution and impact on European protected sites as well as against and/or alongside other sustainable transport options and overall cost. This issue is dealt with in greater detail in Section 6.2 on Hereford. Other necessary transport infrastructure required as a result of development in the county will be consulted upon and delivered through the Local Transport Plan and the relevant Area Plans.

### Water supply

5.17 The Water Cycle Strategy states that there is sufficient capacity in the current system for the proposed level of growth in the county for this plan period, although there are issues in specific locations.

### Sewerage capacity

5.18 Full information upon sewerage capacity is not yet available with regards to the feasibility and cost of upgrading that would be needed to support housing development. There are specific issues which will need addressing in Hereford and Bromyard, in particular, given the proposed level of growth for these locations. Continuing dialogue will be required with the water companies to ensure that these infrastructure requirements are taken into account and programmed into the implementation strategy accompanying the Submission Core Strategy.

### Surface Water Management

5.19 This needs to be addressed through the production of specific plans in Hereford and Leominster with respect to fluvial and non-fluvial flooding given the significant levels of growth proposed in these areas. These will be addressed as part of the production of the Area Plans.



## Green Infrastructure

5.20 Green Infrastructure is a component of spatial planning that is applicable at all scales to create attractive and functional places to live and work. At a broad, strategic county level the following infrastructure has been identified in the developing Green Infrastructure Strategy (see Appendix 5):

- Reinforcing the integrity and significance of the principal river corridors in the county and particularly the Rivers Wye and Lugg.
- Making landscape scale linkages and corridors of green infrastructure between existing assets and centres of population, for example, between Hereford and Leominster, between the Malvern Hills AONB and Hereford or between Bromyard and Ledbury, utilising the Frome and Leadon catchments.
- Providing new country parks that best serve existing and expanding centres of population.
- Maintaining, expanding and linking urban parklands.
- Effectively utilising existing environmental assets to create dynamic landscapes capable of adapting to climate change and providing water management systems, for example, utilising the Lugg and the Arrow river valleys to the north and west of Leominster to control river levels.

## Education

5.21 The provision of a higher education facility in the county is referred to in strategic objective 3. This issue is addressed in the Hereford Place Shaping section.

## Health Facilities

5.22 No strategic need has been identified for new health provision as a result of the growth in the county.

## Communications Infrastructure

5.23 Much of Herefordshire is limited in terms of the speed of broadband coverage that is currently provided. New universal, high speed broadband infrastructure is essential for business effectiveness, public sector service delivery, social networking, education and so on. The delivery of universal high speed broadband infrastructure will be promoted alongside the delivery of new development in this plan period funded, where possible, by developer contributions.



#### 5.24 The strategy for Hereford (See also Section 6 on Hereford)

- The strategy for Hereford maintains and enhances its role as a Settlement of Significant Development and a Strategic Sub-regional Centre (as identified in the regional plan) i.e. as a major centre for employment, health, education, leisure and other services and reflects its capacity to accommodate additional development without significant harm to local communities and in sustainable locations. Concentrating around half of all development here would develop and support the regeneration of the city in the long term by capitalising on existing services and other infrastructure and provide greater opportunities for improving and increasing them. This role was preferred at Developing Options consultation stage.
- New large-scale retail and office development will continue to be directed to Hereford as the central shopping and employment focus for the county as whole.
- There is a need highlighted by the Retail Study for a larger cinema in Hereford, as there is considerable leakage from the market towns to other centres such as Worcester, Gloucester and Cheltenham for this facility. This issue is addressed in Section 6.2 on Hereford.

#### 5.25 The strategy for the market towns (See also Section 6 on market towns)

- The strategy for the market towns is to maintain and promote their existing roles as multi-functioning centres for their rural hinterlands, but also to improve linkages between the market towns and Hereford in terms of location of services and links between them. These were the preferred options at the Developing Options consultation stage. There are two outstanding issues for the market towns to be determined as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan. These are to assess whether there is scope for greater food (convenience) and non-food goods (comparison) non-food floorspace, as certain market towns have leakage to other centres for these types of shopping.
- The decision to focus the largest single allocation of new homes to Leominster has been based on the recognition of its economic importance located on the A49 Corridor, its excellent public transport links, including rail station, and the fact that an urban extension will bring transport benefits in the form of a southern link road. The latter will benefit the centre of the town in terms of reducing congestion and improving air quality. Relative to the county's other market towns it is also the least constrained environmentally. There was considerable support for growth to the south west of Leominster at the Developing Options stage consultation.
- The quantity and type of development allocated to Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington reflects their respective roles and environmental constraints. Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye (larger in scale and population terms) will support quantitatively more development than Bromyard and Kington. The amounts of new homes and employment land for each town are balanced by their respective needs, opportunities and constraints. Travel to work patterns highlight that Bromyard and Ledbury have a net outflow of workers. This issue is reflected in the allocations of employment land to these centres. At Developing Options stage, respondents felt that a dispersed approach to development of smaller sites around the town was preferred, but limiting further growth to existing brownfield sites within the towns was also strongly favoured. This approach however has subsequently proved unrealistic given the lack of suitable sites available for development as identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.



### 5.26 The strategy for the rural areas (See also Section 6 on rural areas)

- Development is directed to what are called “Rural Service Centres” (RSCs) and Hubs – see Key Diagram - Figure 4. These are villages or groups of villages that have a range of services where development will support the need to meet local market and affordable housing requirements as well as promote rural regeneration through small-scale retail or employment development. New development will also help to support the retention, or creation of, local services. The location and level of development allocated to each RSC will be determined through engagement in the development of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan following on from the Core Strategy – some settlements may accommodate modest extensions through a master planning approach.
- Of the remaining settlements, “local centres” may be defined specifically or through criteria based policy. These options are discussed in Section 6.8. These villages will be capable of accommodating limited housing (including affordable) or employment which must contribute directly towards rural regeneration or other community benefits i.e. through meeting proven housing needs and/or providing for the retention/provision of a community facility/service. Elsewhere, development will be limited to “exception” housing needs such as agricultural, forestry or other farm diversification, replacements, conversions or small scale affordable housing only where a local need is proven.
- At Developing Options stage, many respondents stated that they wanted the Local Development Framework to protect the countryside and local distinctiveness by preventing large scale development in unsustainable rural locations whilst still aiming to protect and promote local rural facilities and support rural communities. The above strategy seeks to address this.

### 5.27 Alternative Strategy Options not taken forward

#### 1) A new or expanded settlement (Option D)

This option is not being carried forward because:

- It received little support at the Developing Options stage with only 4% of respondents preferring it to the other options;
- The regional planning body stated that this option would not be in conformity with the existing regional plan in respect of Hereford's status as a Settlement of Significant Development where the majority of development should be directed;
- Such an option could seriously undermine the vitality and viability of the existing market towns in the county; and
- In addition, no developer has come forward with a proposal for a new or expanded settlement anywhere in the county and without this backing, delivery of such an option would be unrealistic.

### 5.28 Further alternative options not taken forward (received through consultation)

#### 1) Allocate all new housing to villages rather than to Hereford or the Market towns

This option is not being carried forward because:

- It would be contrary to policies CF2, RR2 and RR3 of the regional plan; and
- It would be unsustainable in terms of increasing general travel from dispersed villages to places of work and centres for other services/facilities and would thereby be contrary to the objective of addressing the impacts of climate change.



2) **Developing only those settlements with existing railway stations or capacity for new stations.**

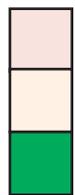
This option has been rejected because:

- To ignore the market towns of Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and Kington completely in terms of new development would not meet regional plan policies CF2 and RR3 with regards to promoting rural regeneration for those towns or their rural hinterlands; and
- In a county like Herefordshire, which is very poorly provided for in terms of rail connections, basing a strategy purely on rail would not result in a sustainable pattern of development to meet the social and economic needs of the **whole** county, particularly with respect to accessibility to services.

**How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the Spatial Strategy**

**Sustainability Appraisal** - Overall the spatial strategy is considered to be moving towards sustainability when assessed against SA objectives.

The option of directing the additional housing (1200 dwellings) allocated by the regional plan report to rural areas was assessed as moving marginally away from sustainability objectives. However, the Panel Report makes clear in paragraph 8.149 that the additional housing is to secure rural affordability and rural renaissance. Overall, the strategy is still considered to be moving towards sustainability with respect to the distribution of housing and employment development. Unclear effects remain concerning issues regarding the impact of the strategy on water quality of the Rivers Wye and Lugg, protected bat species at Ross-on-Wye, the transport implications for Hereford and impacts of certain strategic allocations on landscape quality. This is due to a lack of information/evidence base in order to fully assess these issues. They will need further clarification before Core Strategy submission.



**Habitats Regulations Assessment** - The most critical European protected sites likely to be affected by the strategy are the Rivers Wye and Lugg, the Wye Valley Woodlands and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites. Due to a lack of information/evidence base at this stage it is concluded that the spatial strategy could have a potential effect on the European protected sites from the amount and location of development proposed. At this stage however, it is considered that mitigation measures, including improvements to sewage treatment works, inclusion of sustainable drainage systems and specific site design requirements are likely to negate these adverse effects. However, any potential cumulative impacts of the whole strategy on any of the following European sites would need to be fully assessed before Core Strategy submission: Rivers Wye and Lugg, Severn Estuary, Llangorse Lake, Wye Valley Woodlands and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat sites. If adverse effects on any of the sites cannot be mitigated against then a reasonable alternative would be to reconsider the housing requirements of the county as set out in policy SR4 of the regional plan panel report.

**Your views**

- Do you agree with the preferred strategy for new homes, jobs, shops and infrastructure?
- If not, please explain which elements you do not agree with and why?
- Do you agree with the overall strategy for Hereford, the Market Towns and Rural Areas?
- Do you agree with the proposals for phasing of housing development?

