

Section 6: Place Shaping Issues and Core Strategy Options

Section 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This 'Place Shaping' section of the document has been broken down to reflect the main places within the county;

Hereford	Leominster
Bromyard	Ross-on-Wye
Kington	Rural Areas
Ledbury	

6.1.2 Each section seeks to draw together the issues identified for the different areas of the county. These issues have been raised by the spatial portrait, extensive evidence base, Market Towns and Parish Plans, the widespread consultation undertaken so far and other area specific strategies/plans.

6.1.3 These issues are presented within the Paper not only to guide the Core Strategy Options but also to form the **Issues Stage** of the two area-specific plans, which are being produced after the Core Strategy – the **Hereford Area Plan** and the **Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan**.

How will these issues be addressed?

6.1.4 The Core Strategy has addressed many of the issues raised through consultation so far for each of the market towns and rural areas at a strategic level, by reflecting these in the spatial vision, strategic objectives and spatial options in this document. More specific and non-strategic area issues will be addressed at a later date by the two Area Plans referred to above. At this stage, this paper is asking if there are any additional non-strategic issues which need to be addressed by the area specific plans and which have not been raised so far. There will be a question at the end of each place shaping section seeking your views on the issues raised.

Core Strategy Options

6.1.5 The section will then identify what the preferred spatial strategy (outlined in Section 4) will mean for each of these places and highlights further options to be considered whilst producing the Core Strategy.

6.1.6 In some places the emerging evidence has resulted in a preferred option/way forward and the basis for a place specific policy within the Submission Core Strategy. These preferred options are in areas where it is considered there are no reasonable alternatives. Alternative options which have been suggested and not taken forward are also addressed.

6.1.7 For the purpose of the Core Strategy, a strategic location has generally been defined as around 500 homes in Hereford, around 100 homes within the market towns or around 5 hectares of employment land. It is important to reiterate that the Core Strategy *will not be identifying development sites but will indicate the broad locations* for the **strategic** distribution of new homes, jobs, shopping, recreation facilities and infrastructure.

6.1.8 There are still areas for discussion and your comments on suggested further options are invited.



Section 6.2: Hereford

- 6.2.1 Hereford is a cathedral city, which provides the focus for employment, retail, education, health and other services for much of the county and beyond. It is situated near to the geographical centre of the county and is the administrative centre for Herefordshire.
- 6.2.2 Hereford has a number of strengths, which include food and drinks manufacturing, engineering, tourism, culture and heritage. Hereford's current role is as a traditional market and county town with a population of 54,842 and approximately 24,000 households. 76% of respondents to the Developing Options consultation indicated that they would like to see Hereford's multi-functional role continue. However, limits on its transport and other infrastructure capacity currently restrict the extent to which Hereford can accommodate new development.

Key issues

- 6.2.3 As indicated within the spatial strategy, Hereford is identified within the regional plan as a Settlement of Significant Development and the city has been designated as a Growth Point. This will see Hereford being a focus for growth during this plan period. Since 1996, Hereford has accounted for just over a quarter of the county's new housing provision averaging around 210 dwellings per year. The delivery of 8,500 new homes by 2026 almost doubles previous build rates and this will be challenging.
- 6.2.4 A number of proposals identified in the Herefordshire UDP have not yet been commenced. These include the Eign Gate regeneration area and housing proposals at Holmer and the former Whitecross High School. Although not part of the Core Strategy strategic options, these sites are expected to be developed in the plan period.
- 6.2.5 The importance of Hereford as the county town, its Growth Point status and the current transport constraints raises a number of issues for Hereford which not only affects its residents but the future prosperity of the county as a whole.
- 6.2.6 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing Hereford, however the more detailed implementation and any specific area issues identified will be addressed by the Hereford Area Plan.

Social Issues

- Need to increase the historic build rates to meet housing requirements
- Need to upgrade sewerage capacity and electricity supply (Water Cycle Study and SHLAA)
- Current housing stock made up of smaller units rather than larger detached properties (SHMA)
- Need to balance housing stock and shortage of social rented and shared ownership housing (SHMA)
- Need to improve transport network in order to accommodate the required housing growth (Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report)
- Need to provide/improve recreation and leisure facilities (Open Space Study)



Economic Issues

- Need to balance the required new housing growth with new employment opportunities
- Overcoming flooding constraints at Rotherwas (Employment Land Study)
- Need to identify new employment land north of the city
- Need for more office space in Hereford (Employment Land Study)
- Need to maintain Hereford's role as a sub-regional shopping centre (Retail Study)
- Areas of income deprivation to the south of the city
- Seven areas of skills deprivation to the south of the city and two in the north.
- Need to provide for additional floorspace for convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) shopping between 2021 and 2026 (Retail Study)
- Need to integrate new retail facility and the historic city centre shopping areas (Developing Options consultation)
- Need to promote environmental and historic assets to attract business and tourism (Developing Options consultation)
- Need for a second river crossing (Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report)
- Improvements to public transport and public parking (Developing Options consultation)
- Need to enhance education and training opportunities especially at Higher Education level (Regeneration Strategy)

Environmental issues

- Protect and enhance high quality environmental assets including historic town centre which is a Conservation Area
- Integrate new development into the countryside and surrounding landscape
- Manage new development to reflect historic and urban qualities (HEDIDS)
- Address flooding issues (SFRA)
- Reduce traffic congestion (Local Transport Plan 2)
- Improve air quality along the A49 (Local Transport Plan 2)
- Improve appearance and areas of the city (Regeneration Strategy)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment issues regarding the Rivers Wye and Lugg and the other SACs
- Enhance and create green infrastructure links across the city and to the wider countryside (Green Infrastructure Strategy)



What the preferred strategy means for Hereford

New homes

The spatial strategy highlights that about half of the county's new homes (8,500) will be built in Hereford in recognition of the city's status as a Growth Point and its sub-regional importance.

Hereford has seen major growth historically however the historic build rate would need to increase significantly to achieve the required new housing totals by the end of the plan period.

The Core Strategy needs to identify strategic locations to accommodate around 5,300 new homes by 2026 (Appendix 4). This level of growth will mean building on greenfield sites on the edge of the city. These growth areas will take the form of well designed urban extensions which will include provision of affordable housing and a range of additional facilities.

With the required 5,300 new homes, the provision of the 800 new homes within the Urban Village will be on brownfield land within the current built up area, about a third of the homes within the Urban Village will be affordable.

New jobs

Hereford is the main employment centre for the county. At present, the largest employment area is situated to the south of the city at Rotherwas. With the provision of 8,500 new homes in Hereford, there will be a need for further employment land to provide new jobs.

Rotherwas will remain the principal focus for employment in Hereford. However, in order to fully release the potential of Rotherwas there is a need to deliver key infrastructure and to continue to find solutions to the estates current constraints, notably the risk of flooding which currently affects the availability of a large proportion of the vacant development land at the estate.

An additional 15 hectares to the north of the city would be suitable for B1 and office requirements which cannot be met within the city itself or on edge of centre locations.

New infrastructure

The proposed new development for Hereford will require further supplies of water and electricity and provision for drainage.

The Water Cycle Study indicates there is likely to be a need for an increased sewerage capacity to support the level of growth in the city.

The Transport Study (2003), confirmed by the Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report (2009), indicated that a balanced package of transport improvements including a relief road, park and ride, walking and cycling links and bus priority schemes would be required to accommodate growth in the city.

The Local Transport Plan's Accessibility Strategy refers to the need to improve transport links between rural and urban areas.



City centre redevelopment

Hereford remains an important retail centre and is the sole sub-regional centre within the county. However, the city, like many others is suffering from the current economic downturn and is likely to continue to experience further competition from other retail centres outside the county.

The regional plan highlights a need for 40,000m² of non food floorspace in Hereford by 2021 with a possible further 20,000m² between 2021 and 2026. The retail study highlights the need for additional food store floorspace between 2021 and 2026, this is primarily due to the planned population growth.

Central Hereford is subject to a large brownfield regeneration programme. It is anticipated that a significant proportion of the required retail growth will take place within this regeneration area. The key to its success will be retaining the historic and distinct character of the existing retail core and linking the expanded retail quarter to it.

This will be a key issue for the Hereford Area Plan to address but the Core Strategy will reflect the proposals of the city centre regeneration strategy.

New community facilities

Additional housing will enable new communities to be created in the form of sustainable urban extensions. These communities need essential services and facilities such as healthcare, education, shopping, sport, cultural and recreation.

Developers will be expected to contribute to any required improvements in health, sport, culture and education facilities arising from any urban extensions.

Objective 3 of the Core Strategy also indicates the provision and or improvement of a higher education centre within Hereford during the plan period.

New green space

It is important to integrate the growth of Hereford within the surrounding countryside. The Green Infrastructure Study highlights the need for an additional country park to the north or east of the city, green corridors through and around the city and the creation of a new edge to the built form.

The Open Space Study indicates a need for natural and semi-natural greenspace and outdoor sport space to be provided within the north and south of the city.



What are the options for Hereford?

6.2.7 The following section contains the possible options for Hereford in order to deliver the spatial strategy. A number of these options, particularly within the urban area, will be preferred however there still remains some difficult decisions to be made regarding the future growth of Hereford.

The section is broken down into the following;

- Urban Area preferred options including housing, retail, office, higher education facilities
- Hereford transport options including sustainable transport measures and relief road
- Urban expansion options indicating ways to deliver the required greenfield housing and employment growth

Urban Area preferred options

6.2.8 As previously highlighted, central Hereford is subject to a major regeneration scheme which comprises of 43 hectares of land bounded by Edgar Street to the west, Newmarket Street and Blueschool Street to the south, Commercial Road to the east and the railway line to the north.

6.2.9 The regeneration of this area immediately to the north of the city centre, provides a unique opportunity to develop under utilised areas of land, strengthening the role of Hereford as a sub regional shopping centre and ensuring that the city plays a full role in the wider rural economy.

6.2.10 Many of the strategic allocations for Hereford will take place within this regeneration area. As such the Core Strategy will draw upon existing commitments within the adopted Unitary Development Plan and the Edgar Street Grid Masterplan. The following are presented here as preferred options for the urban area of Hereford.

Urban Village

6.2.11 In the northern section of the regeneration area, around 800 new homes are to be provided together with social and community facilities and a canal basin. A minimum of one third of these new homes will be affordable. Walking and cycling routes will link the development to the city centre and the railway station. A number of flood alleviation measures are proposed to reduce the risk of flooding within the area and which will be of wider benefit. The development will be served by a new link road which will also improve east-west movement generally across the city. Wherever possible, sustainable design and technology will be incorporated into the scheme. As the Urban Village is the only identified strategic brownfield location, this will be a preferred option within the Core Strategy and form part of all the housing growth options for Hereford.

Transport improvements

6.2.12 A transport hub is planned for the area around Hereford Railway Station as part of the regeneration project. This will provide more integrated facilities for rail and bus passengers, pedestrians and cyclists as well as taxis, pedi-cabs and car parking. The hub is of strategic importance as it will improve sustainable access to the city and surrounding areas and is therefore a preferred proposal within the Core Strategy.



Office provision

6.2.13 The regional plan highlights the need to provide an additional 45,000m² of new office development in or on the edge of Hereford city centre. Approximately half of this requirement is expected to be provided within the regeneration proposals. This will cater for the short to medium term office demand for the city. Therefore, the Core Strategy will reflect this office provision within its Hereford Place Shaping Policy. Demand after 2016 will either be allocated within the Hereford Area Plan or via a criteria based sequential policy within the Core Strategy.

Retail provision

6.2.14 The regional plan highlights the need for 40,000m² of retail floorspace by 2021. It is anticipated that a significant proportion of this requirement will be provided within the regeneration area. This provision will be as part of the planned extension of the city centre and one of the keys to its success will be integration with the existing town centre. 59% of respondents to the Developing Options consultation wished to see Hereford town centre and retail growth to be planned as a whole. The Hereford Area Plan will contain detailed proposals to support this.

6.2.15 This new shopping provision will be reflected within the Hereford Place Shaping Policy and is expected to cater for the early to medium term retail need. More uncertainty exists later in the plan period and any additional retail requirements will be allocated within the Hereford Area Plan.

Higher Education

6.2.16 The schools in Hereford continue to attract people to the area but the ability to capitalise on those with higher skills in terms of employment opportunities within the county remains a challenge. The Hereford City Centre Regeneration Strategy includes proposals for additional higher education facilities highlighting Blackfriars Street as a University centre in conjunction with other facilities at Holme Lacy College, the Learning Village at Folly Lane and other locations within the market towns to improve higher education facilities in the county.

Country Park

6.2.17 The Green Infrastructure Study has highlighted a need for an additional country park and open space facilities within and around the city. To the south of the existing urban area, a new country park is proposed at Belmont and is a 'saved policy' within the adopted Unitary Development Plan. The possibility of an additional country park to the east of the city is being investigated.

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

6.2.18 The Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal has been subject to a long term restoration project with the aim to re-opening the canal link between Hereford and the Severn at Gloucester. Some sections have already been restored. The Core Strategy will recognise the tourism, leisure and economic potential of the project.

Core Strategy Objectives

The set of preferred options will assist in achieving all of the Core Strategy objectives (see Section 4)



Hereford Transport Options

6.2.19 Improving a number of the existing transport constraints within the city will be key to facilitating the growth of Hereford. The consultation responses to the transport options highlighted below will not only help to inform the Core Strategy but will also be used to help develop the Local Transport Plan 3 and the Hereford Area Plan.

Sustainable transport improvements

6.2.20 The need for a second highway crossing over the River Wye, to reduce congestion and air pollution in the centre of Hereford. This has been established through several studies and has been supported through public consultations. In order for the crossing to have full effect it would need to link up with key radial routes converging on the city, enabling the distribution of traffic outside the city centre and surrounding residential areas. The proposed housing growth for the county has been assessed in terms of transport infrastructure requirements and this work has reconfirmed the need for a second river crossing, forming part of a relief road. However, a relief road, on its own will not provide a complete solution to Hereford's transport problems.

6.2.21 Whilst the provision of the new road would initially reduce levels of through traffic and provide significant relief for congested parts of the network, the level of proposed housing and employment land development will generate an overall increase in traffic levels. In addition, there is evidence that the provision of new roads results in 'induced traffic'. This is new traffic generated in response to the capacity released by the new infrastructure. Consequently, we need to develop a complementary package of measures which ensure best use of new infrastructure and restrict the tendency for induced traffic. Without this package, it is likely that levels of congestion currently experienced during peak periods will continue even with the relief road in place.

6.2.22 A range of sustainable transport options have been identified to support the relief road and ensure that the level of housing growth proposed can be accommodated. The three options identified a varying range of sustainable transport improvements and introduce the link between increased motoring costs to improved public transport and sustainable transport improvements. The term demand is used to describe this relationship within the three options.

6.2.23 The Core Strategy will need to reflect any strategic requirements for sustainable transport measures across the city or county. Although the level of detail shown within these options may not be appropriate within the Core Strategy, the consultation responses on the options will be used to inform the Local Transport Plan 3 and the Hereford Area Plan.



Option 1 – Sustainable transport improvements

6.2.24 Option 1 will continue with the current levels of provision of sustainable transport facilities and will not include any additional demand management measures. The relief road will provide some relief for the additional traffic generated by the proposed development for Hereford. However, it is unlikely that this will address traffic growth and it is anticipated the current levels of congestion will continue and worsen, particularly if car based travel within and into Hereford is not addressed through increased demand management measures.

Promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing level of investment in promoting alternatives to car use
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in pedestrian facilities
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of cycle routes and infrastructure
Buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of smart ticketing on buses North and south (A49) Park & Ride sites Minimal increase of bus priorities
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of rail service improvements
Car Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing highway network for car users
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase car park pricing in line with inflation
Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with ongoing programme of improvements and education

Option 2 – Sustainable transport improvements linked to measures for ‘demand management’ of car use.

6.2.25 Option 2 seeks an acceleration in the provision of sustainable transport facilities (above current levels) and these will be supported by an increase in measures to manage demand for car use. Demand management measures can be designed to increase use of the relief road, providing greater relief from traffic in the central area. Demand management can also favour sustainable travel use in Hereford. Funding for sustainable transport infrastructure could be increased through increased charging at car parks and introducing on-street charges.

Promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing level of investment in promoting alternatives to car use
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in pedestrian facilities
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerated expansion of cycle routes and infrastructure City wide hire scheme
Buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of smart ticketing on buses Expansion of Park & Ride sites other than those identified along A49 Introduction of bus priorities on some key corridors
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of rail service improvements
Car Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in highway capacity for car users on some routes and within the central area
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase car park charging to a level comparable with similar retail centres elsewhere Expanded residential parking schemes and introduce on-street parking charges
Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue with ongoing programme of improvements and education Introduction of 20mph zones within residential zones and at schools



Option 3 – Significant sustainable transport improvements linked to measures for ‘demand management’ of car use.

6.2.26 Option 3 seeks to increase the levels of investment in Hereford’s sustainable transport network and introduce a substantial increase in measures to manage demand for car use. The relief road will provide relief from the additional traffic generated by the proposed developments in Hereford with considerably less road traffic within central Hereford. Major improvements to sustainable transport infrastructure will be funded through substantial increase in charges associated with car use.

Promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in investment, promoting alternatives to car use
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant improvements in pedestrian facilities and extension of city centre pedestrianisation, reducing road space for car use
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant expansion of cycle routes and infrastructure – reallocating road space from car users • City wide cycle hire scheme
Buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of smart ticketing on buses • Expansion of Park & Ride sites other than those identified along A49 • Introduction of bus priorities at all key junctions in the central area
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of rail service improvements
Car Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant reduction in highway capacity for car users in central Hereford • Road user charging within historic core
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in car park charges, above inflation and above rates charged in similar centres • Introduction on on-street charging • Expanded residential parking schemes • Introduction of Work Place Parking Levy
Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of 20mph zones within residential zones and at schools • Car free zones at schools

Need for a Hereford relief road

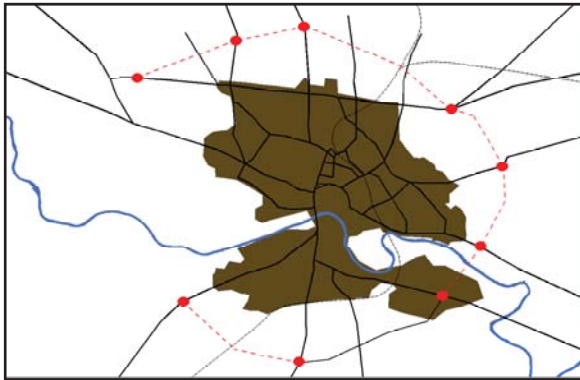
6.2.27 The Developing Options consultation highlighted that 79% of respondents felt that the blended package of transport measures including public transport improvements and the provision of a relief road would be the preferred solution to traffic constraints in Hereford. There was no clear preferred east or west route at that stage with 48% preferring the eastern route and 52% preferring the western route.

6.2.28 The Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report (MMM) examines the potential impacts on the existing road network of future housing and employment development in Hereford up to 2026. A copy of the full Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report is available to view on Herefordshire Council's website.

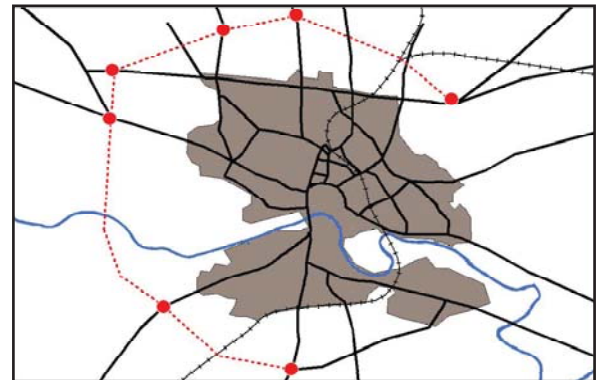
6.2.29 For the purposes of this stage of the Core Strategy, a strategic transport model (SATURN) of Hereford was constructed and used to test the impact of the proposed development options during peak travel times (08:00 to 09:00 and 17:00 to 18:00). The housing and employment options were tested with potential sites being identified from housing and employment land assessments. The development options were considered using three strategic highway scenarios: No road, an eastern relief road and a western relief road.



6.2.30 The maps below show the indicative route alignments only which were used within the Hereford Multi Modal Model to test the development options.



Indicative alignment of the eastern relief road as tested within the MMM



Indicative alignment of the western relief road tested within the MMM

6.2.31 The scale of development proposed for Hereford will cause significant additional traffic congestion if there are no substantial improvements to the city's transport infrastructure. Analysis of the impacts of the no-road scenario against the proposed development options indicates a significant detrimental effect on the operation of Hereford's highway network. Many junctions are forecast to be operating beyond their capacities, journey speeds will be significantly reduced and delays will become commonplace. For this reason the 'no-road' option has been discounted in consideration of the housing options outlined in the next section.

6.2.32 The transport modelling undertaken indicates that the new road will provide relief to this additional increase in demand. The eastern and western relief road options perform differently according to which development (housing and employment land) is being assessed. Data on the estimated change in peak flows and the number of junctions operating over capacity have been used to indicate which directional route would work best with each of the development options. This data can be seen within the Movement Policy Development Paper available on Herefordshire Council's website.

6.2.33 Whilst the modelling work has indicated the need for an relief road to enable the level of development identified in the spatial strategy, a wide range of further technical work needs to be undertaken to fully assess a preferred route corridor. This work is ongoing. In the interim, a high level assessment of the environmental issues which are likely to be encountered for either option has been undertaken and is summarised on pages 33 and 34.



Environmental statements on relief road corridors

6.2.34 The provision of a relief road will have significant impacts whichever route is chosen. These impacts need to be clearly identified and mitigated. Detailed work has commenced (as of January 2010) which will identify the impacts and help determine a preferred route. Initial assessment of the areas to the east and west of the city which would be affected by the relief road have been carried out to help inform this Place Shaping Paper. The following summary provides an overview of the key environmental characteristics of the western and eastern corridors through which route options will need to be assessed.

Western corridor route

6.2.35 Some 80% of the corridor route is considered to fall within the highest or high-medium categories of landscape sensitivity defined around the city. Currently, part of the corridor could be said to be relatively tranquil with low to medium levels of light pollution despite lying adjacent to edges of Hereford.

6.2.36 Biodiversity potential is high with significant areas of woodland, watercourses and hedgerow patterns. In particular, the River Wye is both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A number of priority habitats are present together with a range of priority species. Route options would need to take into account and mitigate the potential for fragmentation and isolation of habitats. However, it is considered that the western corridor has less ecological constraints than that to the east.

6.2.37 The potential for buried archaeology is considered to be high and with a number of listed buildings nearby some of which are associated with designated landscapes. Settlement throughout this corridor is widely dispersed but frequent and the scale of enclosure suggests continuous and prolonged agricultural activity.

Eastern corridor route

6.2.38 As with the west, much of the corridor to the east of Hereford is of the highest or high-medium landscape sensitivity. A large part is low-lying within a floodplain and this may influence the form of construction and hence effect upon the landscape. Generally a flatter course would be possible. The eastern approaches of the city are relatively tranquil whilst levels of light pollution vary reflecting both the topography and greater mix of development types around this particular part of Hereford's approaches.

6.2.39 Not only will an eastern route have to cross the River Wye, which is an SSSI and SAC, but it would need to traverse the River Lugg floodplain, an area of extremely high biodiversity value. The River Lugg is similarly a SSSI and a SAC with the Lugg Meadows also designated a SSSI. This route corridor has a greater area of designated ecological sites and sensitivities than a route to the west.



6.2.40 The potential for buried archaeology is also high and a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments are present. Conservation areas exist just beyond the western and eastern fringes of the route corridor. The corridor contains a limited number of designated landscapes.

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the transport options:

Sustainability Appraisal - At this stage the sustainability workshop did not fully appraise the options for a western or eastern relief road. An appraisal was undertaken on the directional options during the Developing Options stage and the western route was found to be neutral with the eastern route moving away from sustainability. Although, further information is included within this Place Shaping Paper it is considered that the most appropriate stage to appraise a potential direction for a road would be following the result of the 'Study of Options for the Hereford Relief Road' which is anticipated in summer 2010.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - The HRA would favour the western alignment of the relief road because that would avoid the additional bridge(s) over the River Lugg needed for an eastern alignment. However, whichever route is chosen, once it is completed and suitable run-off drainage measures are in place, there should be no long term, direct adverse impacts on the quality and quantity of the water in the rivers concerned.

Urban expansion options

6.2.41 Five strategic locations have been highlighted within SHLAA as having potential to accommodate some of the growth required for Hereford in the form of an urban expansion.

- Bullinghope
- Holmer East
- Holmer West
- Three Elms/Kings Acre
- Whitecross

6.2.42 The development of new homes at the Urban Village has been established through the city centre regeneration proposals and as such has been highlighted within the previous section. Any expansion options will include 800 new homes at the Urban Village as a constant due to the site being within the current built form and brownfield land. In addition, Rotherwas Industrial Estate will remain the main focus for employment development in Hereford in all expansion options as highlighted on page 25.

6.2.43 In order to accommodate the required 5,300 new homes indicated within the strategy (see Figure 5), there will be a need to develop on greenfield sites on the edge of Hereford, some of which have been highlighted within SHLAA as having significant constraints. Growth will take the form of well planned urban extensions incorporating a number of associated uses and facilities and necessary infrastructure.



6.2.44 The five strategic sites fall to the north, south and west of the city. There have been no strategic sites highlighted by SHLAA to the east of the city. This is due to landscape, ecological designations and flooding constraints making the identification of any site over 500 new homes difficult. The main question for this section is in which directions should Hereford expand.

Western expansion (Three Elms/Kings Acre and Whitecross)

6.2.45 Two locations have been highlighted in the west, Three Elms/Kings Acre and Whitecross.

6.2.46 The Three Elms/Kings Acre location is situated to the north of the A438 in an area of low/medium landscape sensitivity. Some parts are currently constrained by flooding which it is anticipated will be alleviated by the works being planned as part of the flood alleviation scheme on the Yazor Brook. Huntingdon Conservation Area is also nearby and any future development will need to take the protection and enhancement of its setting into account.

6.2.47 The Whitecross location is situated to the south of the A438. The majority of this area is situated within high/medium landscape sensitivity. Any development would need to take into account the need to mitigate these landscape issues.

6.2.48 Some development will need to take place to the west of Hereford, in order to meet the required number of new homes for Hereford. It is considered that planning for urban growth to the west of the city could combine the sites at Whitecross and Three Elms within one master plan. This would enable the western edge of Hereford to be designed comprehensively to integrate any new development into the surrounding landscape and existing urban areas as well as creating a well planned and designed urban extension to the city. These locations feature in Options 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Opportunities for western expansion

6.2.49 This western extension would include;

- Between 1500 and 4000 new homes on two strategic locations
- % of affordable housing
- 10 hectares of employment land linked to the new livestock market
- Green infrastructure including green buffers, strategic greenways, woodlands and orchards
- Neighbourhood retail centre
- Community facilities
- Improvements to sewerage capacity
- Walking and cycling routes (greenways) to local schools and employment areas
- Developer contributions to the transport improvements
- Contributions to education/extra school capacity at local schools/possible additional school places
- Retention of the setting of Huntingdon Conservation Area
- Protection of Yazor Brook
- Provision of open play space
- Zero carbon scheme



Southern expansion (Bullinghope)

6.2.50 Bullinghope has been highlighted as a possible area for expansion to the south of the city. This location is to the east of Lower Bullingham Lane between the railway line and the Rotherwas Access Road. This location is not that which was formally identified within the Unitary Development Plan. Some areas adjacent to this location are constrained by flooding and some development will need to take place within areas of high/medium sensitivity landscape which might require mitigation. This location features in Options 2, 3 and 4.

Opportunities for the southern expansion

6.2.51 Any southern expansion would include;

- Up to 1000 new homes at one strategic location
- % of affordable housing
- Walking and cycling links (greenways) to Rotherwas and south of city
- Improvements to the sewerage capacity
- Green infrastructure including meadows, orchards, strategic greenways, green buffers and local green corridors
- Open play space provision
- Community facilities
- Neighbourhood retail facilities
- Contributions to the transport improvements
- Contributions to education to ensure longevity of schools to provide for future pupil numbers

6.2.52 Rotherwas Industrial Estate would continue to be the main focus for employment development within the city.

Northern expansion (Holmer)

6.2.53 Two possible locations have been highlighted within the north of the city for expansion. Holmer West is to the west of the A49 within an area of medium landscape sensitivity. Some flood areas exist to the south and east of the location which any development of this land would need to take into account. Holmer East is situated on the Roman Road near to the railway line. This location is within landscape of low-medium sensitivity and adjacent to an existing outstanding planning permission for residential development.

6.2.54 The Holmer East location has the potential for either new homes or new employment land. The major focus for new employment land will continue to be at Rotherwas, however in order to improve the portfolio of sites and provide some available land in the north, this location has the best potential being close to existing employment areas to the south of the Roman Road. These locations feature in Options 1, 2, 3 and 4.



Opportunities for northern expansion

6.2.55 A smaller urban extension taking place in the north at Holmer West would include the following;

- Up to 500 new homes
- % of affordable housing
- Green infrastructure including orchards, meadows, strategic greenways, green buffers and local corridors
- Improvements to the sewerage capacity
- Walking and cycling links (greenways) to local schools and employment sites
- Developer contributions to the transport measures
- Provision of open play space
- Contributions to education to ensure longevity of schools to provide for future pupil numbers

6.2.56 A smaller urban expansion taking place at Holmer East would include;

- Up to 500 new homes or 5 hectares of employment land near railway line
- % of affordable housing (if housing site)
- Green infrastructure including orchards, meadows, strategic greenways, green buffers and local corridors
- Improvements to the sewerage capacity
- Walking and cycling links (greenways) to local schools and employment sites
- Developer contributions to transport measures
- Provision of open play space (if housing site)
- Contributions to education to ensure longevity of schools to provide for future pupil numbers

Details of the four options

6.2.57 The above five locations have been combined into four options for urban expansion in order to accommodate the required 5300 new homes as set out in the spatial strategy. As stated previously, all options will include 800 new homes at the Urban Village and some development to the west of Hereford. The combination of sites shown within the options represents a directional focus. There will also be an indication within each option of which route of the relief road would give the most benefit in terms of reducing traffic movements.

6.2.58 The four options are as follows:

- Option 1 - North west focus
- Option 2 - South west focus
- Option 3 - South north focus
- Option 4 - Dispersed

6.2.59 None of the options highlighted on the following pages were tested through the Developing Options consultation in the format they are now presented. However, directions of growth to the south and west and dispersing growth around the city were included. The responses to the Developing Options consultation highlighted that dispersed growth to a number of smaller areas around the city was preferred.



Option 1: North-western focus

6.2.60 This option seeks to accommodate the growth of Hereford in a north-western focus. This would see urban extensions at Whitecross, Three Elms/Kings Acre and Holmer West together with the Urban Village within the city. Employment growth would be seen at Rotherwas in the south, with additional land at Three Elms/Kings Acre and Holmer East to the north.

Brownfield Development

As highlighted within para 6.2.11, 800 new homes would be provided within the Urban Village and employment on Rotherwas Industrial Estate.

Holmer

This would see a smaller expansion of 500 homes in Holmer West and a 5 hectare employment site in Holmer East. The list of possible additional facilities can be seen in para 6.2.55 and 6.2.56

Whitecross and Three Elms/Kings Acre

This would see the largest growth in the west of Hereford with up to 4000 new homes on two locations and 10 hectares of employment land. The list of possible additional facilities can be seen within para 6.2.49. This option would require a masterplan for the western expansion of Hereford with both locations to be planned in combination.

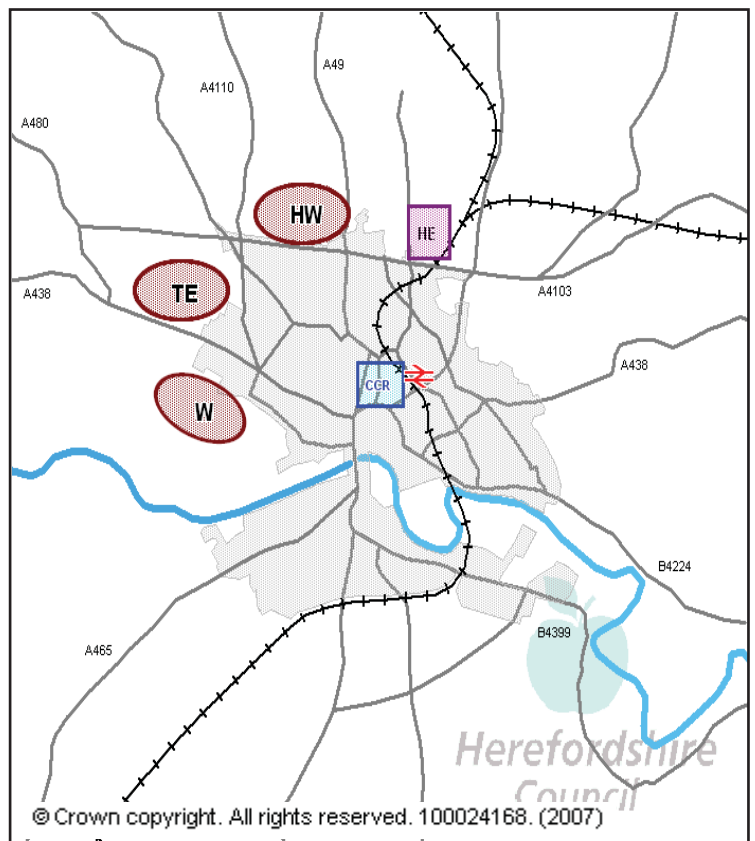
Relief Road

An eastern relief road would work best with this option in highways terms as tested in the Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report.

Core Strategy Objectives

The development of Hereford with housing growth, employment land provision together with associated developer requirements will help achieve a range of social, economic and environmental objectives in particular the option will address objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.

Hereford Option 1 map



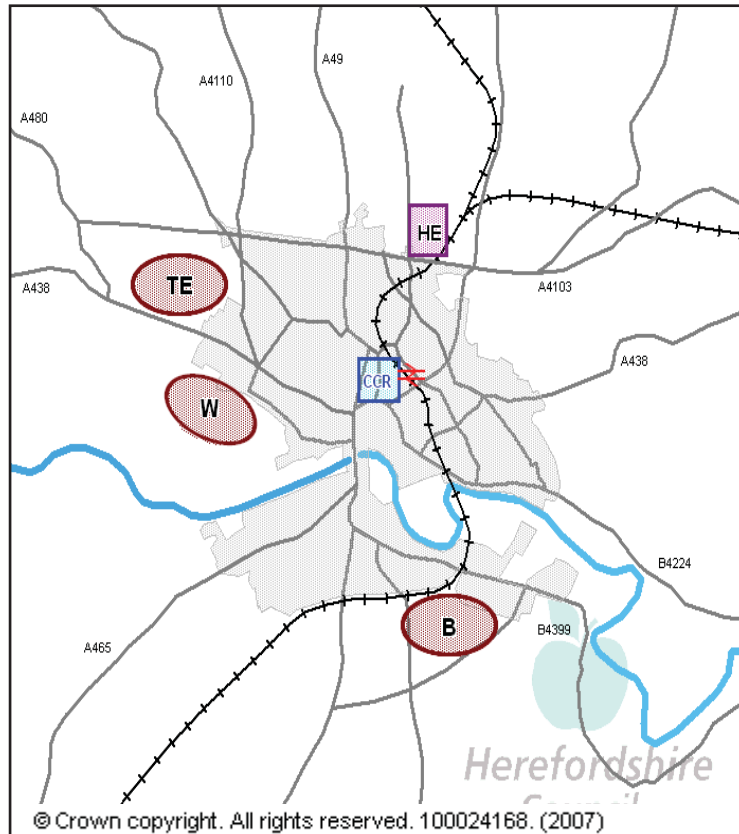
- Key**
- HW Options for housing growth
HW - Holmer West, TE - Three Elms, W - Whitecross
 - HE Options for employment growth
 - W River Wye
 - CCR City Centre Redevelopment



Option 2: South-western focus.

6.2.61 This option seeks to accommodate the growth of Hereford with a south-west focus. This would see urban extensions at Whitecross, Three Elms/Kings Acre, Bullinghope together with the Urban Village in the city. New employment growth would continue to be focused at Rotherwas with additional land at Three Elms/Kings Acre and Holmer East to the north.

Hereford Option 2 map



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Key

- TE Option for housing growth
TE - Three Elms, W - Whitecross, B - Bullinghope
- HE Option for employment growth
- CCR City Centre Redevelopment
- River Wye

Whitecross and Three Elms/Kings Acre
 This would see 500 new homes less to the west of Hereford than Option 1 with up to 2000 new homes at Whitecross and 1500 new homes and 10 hectares of employment land at Three Elms/Kings Acre. Again, this option would require both locations to be planned in combination. Additional requirements can be seen in para 6.2.49. An additional 5 hectares of employment land would be provided at Holmer East.

Bullinghope
 This would see a 1000 home expansion at Bullinghope together with the continuing focus on employment development at Rotherwas. See para 6.2.51 for additional development requirements. Expansion to the south would provide good links to the existing principal employment area in Hereford.

Brownfield Development
 As highlighted within para 6.2.11, 800 new homes would be provided within the Urban Village.

Relief Road
 Either route of the relief road would work with this option in highways terms as tested in the Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report.

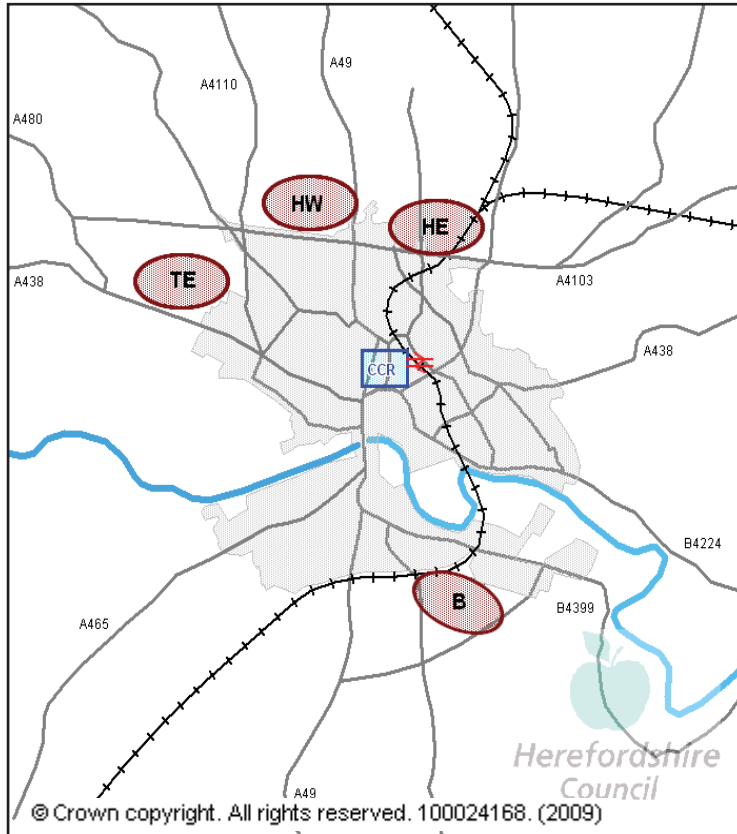
Core Strategy Objectives
 The development of Hereford with housing growth, employment land provision together with associated developer requirements will help achieve a range of social, economic and environmental objectives in particular the option will address objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.



Option 3: North-south focus

6.2.62 This option seeks to accommodate growth for Hereford in a north-south focus. This would see urban extensions at Three Elms/Kings Acre, Bullinghope, Holmer East and Holmer West together with the Urban Village in the city. New employment growth would continue to be accommodated at Rotherwas with additional land at Three Elms/Kings Acre.

Hereford Option 3 map



Key

- HW Options for housing growth
- TE TE - Three Elms, HW - Holmer West, HE - Holmer East, B - Bullinghope
- CCR City Centre Redevelopment
- River Wye

Three Elms/Kings Acre
 This Option would see the smallest expansion to the west of 2,500 at Three Elms/Kings Acre together with 15 hectares of employment land. This smaller expansion may not be able to provide all the facilities highlighted within para 6.2.49.

Bullinghope
 Similar to Option 2, this option would see a 1000 home expansion in Bullinghope. Again additional requirements can be seen in para 6.2.51.

Holmer East and West
 This Option would see two areas for expansion in Holmer, each of 500 new homes. The additional facilities required can be seen in para 6.2.55 and 6.2.56.

Core Strategy Objectives
 The development of Hereford with housing growth, employment land provision together with associated developer requirements will help achieve a range of social, economic and environmental objectives in particular the option will address objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.

Brownfield Development
 As highlighted within para 6.2.11, 800 new homes would be provided within the Urban Village and employment on Rotherwas Industrial Estate.

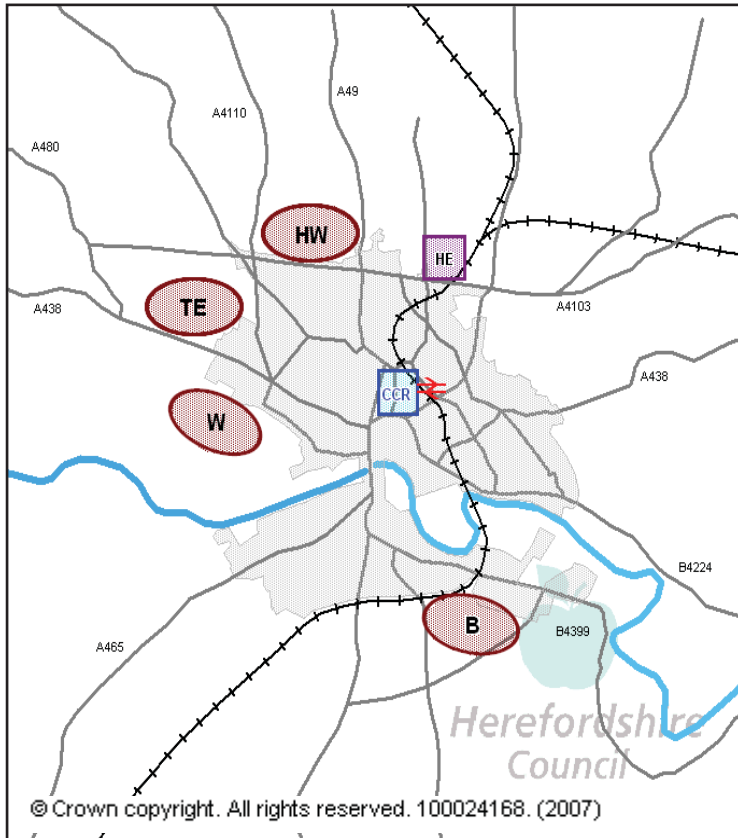
Relief Road
 An eastern relief road would work best with this option in highways terms as tested in the Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report.



Option 4: Dispersed Option.

6.2.63 This option seeks to disperse development around the city. This would include some development on all the highlighted possible strategic sites including Whitecross, Three Elms/ Kings Acre, Bullinghope and Holmer West as well as the Urban Village. Employment land would continue to be focused at Rotherwas and some additional land at Three Elms and Holmer East.

Hereford Option 4 map



Key

- TE Options for housing growth
TE - Three Elms, HW - Holmer West,
W - Whitecross, B - Bullinghope
- HE Option for employment growth
- CCR City Centre Redevelopment
- River Wye

Bullinghope
Similar to options 2 and 3, this option would see 1000 home expansion in Bullinghope. The additional requirements can be seen in para 6.2.51.

Whitecross and Three Elms/Kings Acre
This would see the expansion in the west of 1,500 new homes both on the Whitecross and Three Elms locations at total of 3,000 new homes to the west and 10 hectares of employment land. Additional facilities required are highlighted with para 6.2.49.

Holmer East and West
This would see a 500 home expansion at Holmer West and a 5 hectare employment expansion to Holmer East. Additional requirements can be seen in para 6.2.55 and 6.2.56.

Core Strategy Objectives
The development of Hereford with housing growth, employment land provision together with associated developer requirements will help achieve a range of social, economic and environmental objectives in particular the option will address objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.

Brownfield Development
As highlighted within para 6.2.11, 800 new homes would be provided within the Urban Village and employment on Rotherwas Industrial Estate.

Relief Road
A western relief road would work best with this option in highways terms as tested in the Hereford Multi Modal Model Forecasting Report.



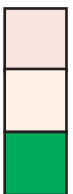
How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the urban expansion Options:

The workshops highlighted that there were very little difference between the options in SA terms. Many of the concerns raised during the workshops will be addressed by the general core policies within the Core Strategy, therefore it should be made clearer that the plan should be read as a whole.

A list of development requirements has been included for each potential strategic locations which include reference to walking and cycling links to employment areas and local schools to address issues raised at the workshop. Outstanding issues including design, level of affordable housing and the landscape quality will be addressed within the Core Strategy submission policy and subsequent masterplan of each of the urban extension areas.

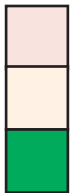
Option 1:

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall Option 1 with mitigation, is considered to be marginally moving towards sustainability when assessed against SA objectives. Within the workshops, Option 1 was highlighted as being the least sustainable when compared to the other options in terms of providing employment near to available workforce as no homes are proposed in the south of the city for this Option.



Option 2:

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall Option 2 with mitigation, is considered to be marginally moving towards sustainability when assessed against SA objectives. Within the workshops, Option 2 was highlighted as being the least sustainable when compared to the other options on historic landscape grounds as there are potentially more homes within sensitive landscapes.



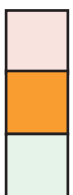
Option 3:

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall Option 3 with mitigation, is considered to be marginally moving towards sustainability when assessed against SA objectives. Within the workshops, Option 3 was highlighted as being the least sustainable when compared to the other options on landscaping grounds as there are potentially more homes within sensitive landscapes.



Option 4:

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall Option 4 is considered to be neutral when assessed against SA objectives. Within the workshop, Option 4 was highlighted as being the least sustainable as development would be dispersed around the city thus potentially impacting on more areas in terms of landscape, historic environment and transport.



Habitats Regulations Assessment for all Options - The HRA identified risks to the water quality and quantity in the Rivers Wye and Lugg if full advantage is not taken of sustainable urban drainage techniques, surface water management plans, and working towards water neutrality generally. Some additional capacity in water treatment will be required during the plan period. The construction of a second river crossing (as part of the Hereford relief road) may have short term adverse effects on the water environment of the Rivers Wye and Lugg unless carefully managed, and road drainage will also need to be carefully managed. The HRA did not suggest that development of the scale proposed is not possible.



Summary of Urban Expansion Options

6.2.64 The table below summaries the four urban expansion options outlined on pages 38 to 41.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Bullinghope		1000 new homes	1000 new homes	1000 new homes
Holmer East	5 hectares of employment land	5 hectares of employment land	500 new homes	5 hectares of employment land
Holmer West	500 new homes		500 new homes	500 new homes
Three Elms / Kings Acre	2000 new homes and 10 hectares of employment land	1500 new homes and 10 hectares of employment land	2500 new homes and 15 hectares of employment land	1500 new homes and 10 hectares of employment land
Urban Village	800 new homes	800 new homes	800 new homes	800 new homes
Whitecross	2000 new homes	2000 new homes		1500 new homes
Best relief road route	East	Either	East	West
SA	Green	Green	Green	Neutral

Alternative site not yet included with the options.

6.2.65 The Hereford Racecourse is identified as a potential site but with significant constraints for around 600 homes within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) but has not been included within any of the options highlighted above. This is due to questions outstanding regarding;

- The deliverability of the site within the plan period,
- The loss of public open space and recreation facilities,
- The potential for some of the site for a Park and Ride facility and
- The need to find alternative sites for the Racecourse and recreation facilities.

6.2.66 To date Herefordshire Council, as landowner, has not carried out any feasibility study as to its potential for redevelopment.

6.2.67 If the site is deemed suitable, it could form part of any of the options highlighted above. The Core Strategy would need to address the issue of a relocated Racecourse/recreation facility and the loss of open space and amenity area.



Alternative urban expansion options not taken forward.

6.2.68 The Developing Option Paper suggested three options for Hereford's direction of growth. These options have been incorporated within the refined options highlighted above.

1 Land to the south.

This direction of growth has been included in the south-west focus (Option 2) and north-south focus (Option 3).

2 Land to the west

This direction of growth has been included in all three options either as Whitecross or Three Elms/Kings Acre.

3 Combination of site to the south and west

This option has also been included in the south-west (Option 2) and the north-south focus (Option 3).

6.2.69 In addition land to the north was suggested through the Developing Options consultation and has been included within all four options either as employment or housing land. In respect of land to the east of Hereford no strategic site (over 500) was identified through its SHLAA process, any appropriate smaller sites would be brought forward through the Hereford Plan.

Your views

Are there any additional issues in Hereford that the Hereford Area Plan could address?

Do you agree with the preferred options for the urban area of Hereford?

Which of the options for sustainable transport measures options do you prefer – Option 1, 2 or 3?

Which route of the relief road would you prefer – eastern or western?

Which urban expansion option do you prefer – Option 1, 2, 3 or 4?

Should the Racecourse be included in the options?

Is there another combination of locations to form an alternative option?



Section 6.3: Bromyard

6.3.1 Bromyard is located on the A44 midway between Hereford and Worcester. Its main role is as service centre to its rural hinterland. It has a population of around 4,600 and approximately 1,930 households. A number of housing proposals in the existing Unitary Development Plan have not been completed. These include Porthouse Farm, the Highways Depot and land attached to Ashfields. Although not part of the Core Strategy strategic options, these sites are expected to be developed in the plan period.

Key issues

6.3.2 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing Bromyard, however, the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan, which will follow the Core Strategy, will address some of the more detailed area specific issues identified below.

Social Issues:

- Average house prices above sub-regional average (£250,695) – affects affordability of housing (SHMA)
- Dominated by detached housing (55.9%) – need for greater range of house types (SHMA)
- Insufficient capacity in the sewerage network (Welsh Water)
- Poor access to certain services i.e. leisure
- Higher than county average number of people travelling more than 10km to work (38% compared to 27%) - lack of access to jobs
- Under provision of formal parks/gardens (Open Space Study)
- Need relief road to industrial estate (Developing Options consultation)

Environmental issues:

- Flooding from the River Frome to the east of the town (SFRA)
- Bromyard is located on the side of a valley and is highly visible in the landscape and bounded by the Bromyard Downs to the east
- Under-investment and neglect of the built and natural environment (Parish Plan Analysis)
- The ecological status of the River Frome is poor (Water Cycle Strategy)

Economic Issues:

- Higher than county average employed in manufacturing (21.5% compared to 17.4%) – need to diversify business base
- Higher than average working age population with no qualifications (28.2% compared to 23.1%) – lack of skilled workforce
- Failure to capitalise on tourism (Market Towns and Parish Plan Issues)
- Vulnerable retail sector with above national average number of vacant shops (Retail Study)
- Poor broadband coverage to north west of town
- Theoretical potential for expanding the non-food retail offer in the town centre (Retail study)
- Lack of central car parking and improved signage needed (Developing Options consultation)

NB: Unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Herefordshire Partnership website (www.herefordshirepartnership.com).



What the preferred strategy means for Bromyard

- 6.3.3 Bromyard is highly constrained in environmental terms but the spatial strategy proposes to direct some development there to support its service centre role and meet local housing needs. Considerable mitigation will be required to offset any adverse impacts on the environment.

New homes

The spatial strategy indicates that in the region of 250 new homes on strategic sites need to be allocated in Bromyard over a 20 year period from 2006. The amount of housing reflects the spatial strategy outlined in Section 5 and the fact that Bromayrd is constrained to the east of the town by land liable to flood and picturesque, rising land to both east and west. These factors limit the amount of developable land available. Three possible options for the location of new housing are shown in Bromyard Option maps 1, 2 and 3.

New infrastructure

Improvements to the Petty Bridge sewerage treatment works would be needed as a result of developing new homes. This may need to be part-funded by developer contributions. A relief road was considered through the UDP but was concluded not to be feasible. The limited scale of growth in Bromyard this plan period does not alter this conclusion.

New community facilities

The Open Space Study has identified a need for a new formal park or garden in Bromyard. Further community facilities may be required, these will be addressed by the Market Towns and Rural Areas plan.

New jobs

The employment land survey indicates that around 5 hectares of the existing protected employment land at Linton Trading Estate needs to be replaced, as the existing site is considered to be of poor quality and unlikely to be delivered in the plan period. For this reason an alternative site immediately to the east of the existing site is proposed as a replacement employment allocation. In addition, as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan, the allocation of additional small scale employment sites will be considered to boost the economic viability of the town given the net outflow of workers highlighted by the Census. Equally, the use of live/work opportunities could be considered as part of the strategic housing extensions to the town.

New shops

The Retail Study recognises that Bromyard has very limited potential for new convenience (food) or comparison goods (non-food) floor space up to 2016, although it does identify potential on the land to the south of the town centre boundary to the north of the A44. New development in this location could assist the vitality and viability of the Broad Street area of the town centre. The preparation of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will need to address these retail issues.

What are the Options for Bromyard?

- 6.3.4 There are three options for developing the role of Bromyard as a key service centre to its rural hinterland which involve distributing around 250 houses and 5ha of employment land as well as new community facilities and infrastructure where needed.



Common to all options

- Restrictions to existing sewerage capacity at Petty Bridge, developer contributions would be required to remedy this situation
- The ecological status of the River Frome is poor and new homes in the sub-catchment may need mitigation to address this issue
- Opportunity to address issues of affordability and better range of house types as Bromyard has an over predominance of detached dwellings (SHMA)
- All options involve using greenfield land considered to be of medium to high or high sensitivity in landscape terms as identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- All options are located in areas at low risk of flooding
- All options could include live/work units to address economic diversification issues
- All options would require improvements to walking and cycling links to the town centre
- Contributions to education to ensure longevity of schools and to meet increased demand for school places

Option 1:– A northern focus

6.3.5 This option will include:

- Around 250 new homes to the north of the town (TR)
- Redevelopment and extension of employment land at Linton Trading Estate to provide 5ha

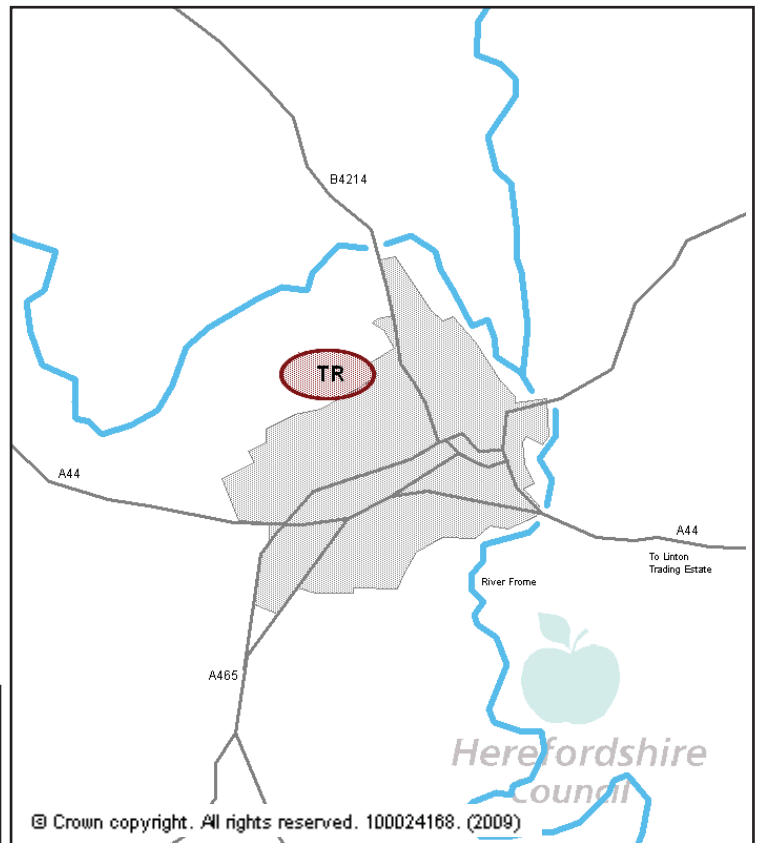
Constraints


- Land to north of Bromyard is identified as having high sensitivity in landscape terms – this will need significant mitigation to be considered acceptable in visual terms and to link to the existing form of the town.
- The land in this option is considered sensitive in historical environment terms (HEDIDS Study) which may affect site layout and design.

Core Strategy Objectives

This option will help meet housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. The option will therefore address a range of objectives including 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 (see Section 4).

Bromyard Option 1 map



Key  Options for housing growth
TR - Tenbury Road



How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 1.

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall this option is considered to have a neutral effect . Positive impacts relate to links with the town, contribution to community facilities and housing need. Significant mitigation would be required to alleviate the landscape impact of this option. The SA has highlighted a need to refer in the document to a requirement for improved walking and cycling links to the town centre which would be common to all options.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - The key HRA issue is to prevent any reduction in quality of the water in the River Frome below Bromyard (which ultimately flows into the Lugg and Wye SAC). Development in Bromyard is therefore dependent on ensuring adequate capacity in sewerage infrastructure combined with surface water management plans and measures to move towards water neutrality. These mitigation measures will need to be sufficient to prevent any adverse impacts on any European sites.



Option 2:- A western Focus

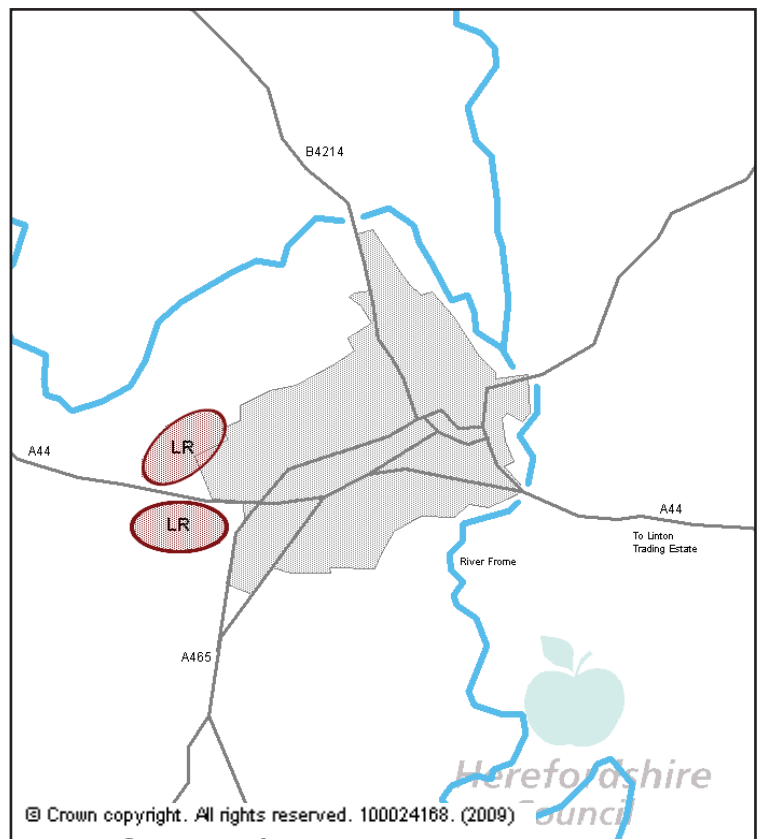
6.3.6 This option will include:


- Around 250 new homes to the west of the town split equally between two sites north and south of the A44 (LR).
- Redevelopment and extension of employment land at Linton Trading Estate to provide 5ha.

Constraints

- Land to west of Bromyard is identified as having medium to high and high sensitivity in landscape terms – this will need significant mitigation to be considered acceptable in visual terms and to satisfactorily link to the existing form of the town.
- The site is considered as sensitive in historical landscape terms (HEDIDS Study), which might affect site layout and design.
- Part of the site is identified as being Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat of local biodiversity importance.

Bromyard Option 2 map



Key  Options for housing growth
LR - Leominster Road

Core Strategy Objectives

This option will help meet housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. The option will therefore address a range of objectives including 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 (see Section 4).



How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 2.

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall this option is considered to have a neutral impact. Significant mitigation would be required to alleviate the landscape impact of this option. The SA has highlighted a need to refer in the document to a requirement for improved walking and cycling links to the town centre which would be common to all options.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - The key HRA issue is to prevent any reduction in quality of the water in the River Frome below Bromyard (which ultimately flows into the Lugg and Wye SAC). Development in Bromyard is therefore dependent on ensuring adequate capacity in sewerage infrastructure combined with surface water management plans and measures to move towards water neutrality and that these mitigation measures will be sufficient to prevent any adverse impacts on any European sites.



Option 3:– A northern and western focus

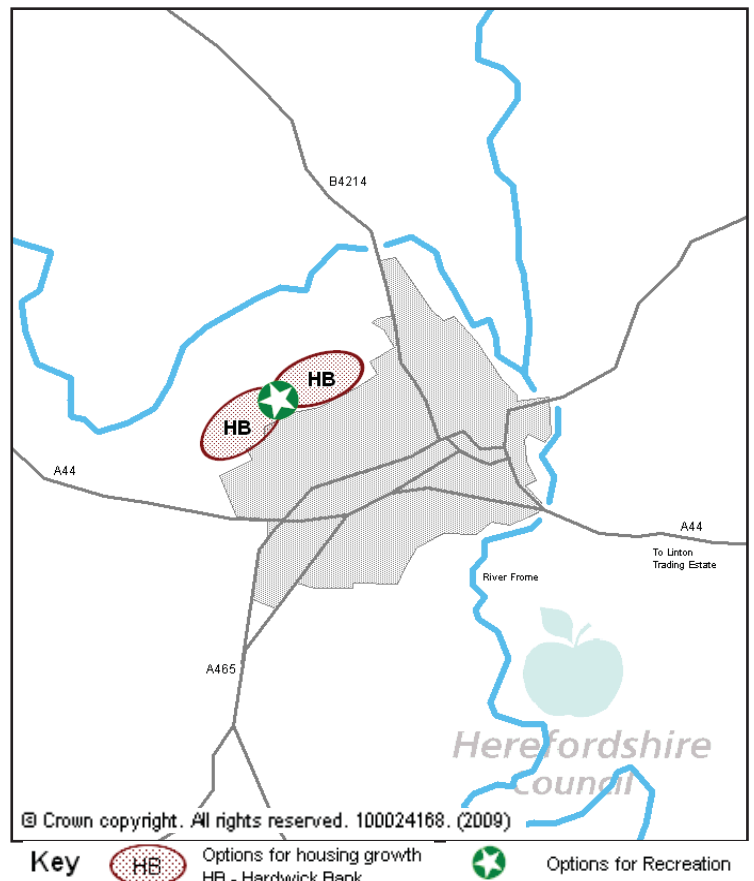
6.3.7 This option will include:

- Around 250 new homes to the north-west of the town utilising some of the lesser constrained land in landscape terms (HB).
- Redevelopment and extension of employment land at Linton Trading Estate to provide 5ha.
- A new formal park may be included with this option as sufficient land would be available, unlike options 1 and 2.

Constraints

- Land to north-west of Bromyard is identified as having medium to high sensitivity in landscape terms, land to the north of the town is of high sensitivity – this will need significant mitigation to be considered acceptable in visual terms and to link to the existing form of the town.
- The northern part of the option is considered as sensitive in historical environment terms (HEDIDS Study) which may affect site layout and design.

Bromyard Option 3 map



Core Strategy Objectives

This option will help meet housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. The option will therefore address a range of objectives including 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 (see Section 4).



How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 3.

Sustainability Appraisal - This option arose from the SA workshop as a further option to consider. Overall this option is considered to have a neutral effect. Positive effects relate to links with the town, contribution to community facilities and housing need. Significant mitigation would be required to alleviate the landscape impact of this option. The SA has highlighted a need to refer in the document to a requirement for improved walking and cycling links to the town centre which would be common to all options.



Habitats Regulations Assessment - Development in Bromyard is dependent on ensuring adequate capacity in sewerage infrastructure combined with surface water management plans and measures to move towards water neutrality and that these mitigation measures will be sufficient to prevent any adverse impacts on any European sites i.e the River Wye SAC downstream.

What did the Developing Options Consultation tell us?

6.3.8 The options of developing land to the north and south of Bromyard were considered at Developing Options consultation. Developing to the north was not favoured at Developing Options stage with only 38% of respondents preferring this option. Allocating growth to the south was favoured by 43% of respondents. The most favoured option, however, was to disperse growth to a number of smaller sites in various locations around the town (78% of respondents liked this option).

Alternative options not taken forward

6.3.9 The Developing Options Paper suggested five possible options for the growth of Bromyard:

1. The option to allocate significant growth to the north of the town is retained in Option 1 and 3.
2. The option to allocate growth to the north east of the town has not been taken forward because of concerns regarding flood risk as well as highly sensitive landscape adjoining the River Frome.
3. The option to allocate growth to the south is not taken forward in the above options because not only is the land considered to be significantly constrained in landscaping terms but it falls away dramatically to the south and in this respect, development here would not relate satisfactorily to the existing built form of the town.
4. The option to disperse growth to a number of smaller sites around the town is retained in part in Option 3 with the proposal to split new housing to the west and north of the town.
5. The option of limiting growth to sites within the built up parts of the town is not taken forward due to a lack of suitable sites. The spatial strategy for Bromyard aims to support the status of the market town as a service centres to its rural hinterland and to support rural regeneration, including the delivery of and access to services, through the promotion of new development there.

Your views

Are there any additional issues in Bromyard which the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan could address?

Which option for Bromyard do you prefer? 1, 2 or 3?



Section 6.4: Kington

- 6.4.1 Kington is situated in the north west of the county appropriately 20 miles/32 kilometres from Hereford and 15 miles/23 kilometres from Leominster near the Welsh border. Kington is the smallest market town with a population of around 3,260 and comprising of 1,465 households. As with other market towns in the county, Kington provides a service centre for an extensive rural hinterland.
- 6.4.2 A number of proposals identified in the Herefordshire UDP have not yet been completed. These include the housing proposals on Old Eardisley Road. Although not part of the Core Strategy strategic options these sites are expected to be developed in the plan period.

Key issues

- 6.4.3 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing Kington however the more detailed implementation and specific area issues currently identified, will be addressed by the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Social Issues:

- Area dominated by detached dwellings (56%) (SHMA)
- Average house prices are above regional average at £248,034 (SHMA)
- Greater number of retirement age people than the county average.
- More activities for young people (Market Town Issues Report)

Economic Issues:

- Lack of employment opportunities causes need to travel (Developing Options comment)
- Finding employment land has proved difficult in the UDP
- Current employment site to the north of the town is constrained
- Improve tourism opportunities (Market Towns Issues Report)

Environmental issues:

- Areas of the town prone to flooding from the River Arrow and its tributaries(SFRA)
- Rising land to the west – Hergest Ridge
- Concern regarding town's environmental suitability for growth (Developing Options comment)
- Need to protect Historic Park and Garden (Hergest Croft) to the west
- Car parking issues in the town need addressing (Developing Options comment)
- Improvements to public realm (Market Town Issues Report)

NB: Unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles from Herefordshire Council website.



What the preferred strategy means for Kington

New homes

No strategic housing locations are proposed for Kington within the Core Strategy due to the town being considered physically unsuitable for major development sites of over 100 dwellings. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment indicated limited potential around the town to accommodate growth to a level which would be considered strategic. The completion rate in the town over the last plan period has been 12 dwellings per annum, thus indicating historically low demand for housing in the town. The Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will identify sites in Kington to enable development of 50 additional homes highlighted within the spatial strategy.

New jobs

The Employment Land Study has indicated that small scale employment opportunities should be sought in Kington. There is limited available employment land supply within the town as it proved difficult to identify an appropriate site within the UDP. However, no strategic locations are proposed for Kington within the Core Strategy. Any further employment land opportunities will be identified within the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

New shops

The retail study has indicated only a limited requirement for retail floorspace within Kington, not at a scale which is considered to be strategic. Therefore, the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will look at the issue of any additional retail floorspace required at a later date.

What are the Options for Kington?

6.4.4 The Core Strategy will not contain any strategic locations for Kington. Any further development will be identified within the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Alternative Options not taken forward in the Core Strategy

6.4.5 The Developing Options Paper considered two options for directions of growth within Kington;

1. Limited growth within the existing part of the town
2. Allocate limited employment and housing growth to a number of smaller sites in various locations around the town

6.4.6 Neither of these options have been rejected as directions for growth for Kington as the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will distribute the required growth. The Developing Options consultation showed that 63% of respondents preferred the dispersed option. The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted both options as moving towards sustainability. These principles will be followed within the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan. In respect of the HRA, although additional work maybe necessary it is considered unlikely that this limited level of growth proposed will impact on any European sites.

Your views

Are there any additional issues in Kington which the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan could address?



Section 6.5: Ledbury

6.5.1 Ledbury is located in the eastern side of the county close to the M50 and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its main role is as a service centre to its rural hinterland. It has a population of around 9,800 and approximately 4,211 households. The land north of the railway viaduct site allocated for employment use in the adopted Unitary Development Plan is carried forward for mixed use in the options for Ledbury that follow.

Key issues

6.5.2 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing Ledbury, however, the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan, which will follow the Core Strategy, will address some of the more detailed area specific issues identified below.

Social Issues:

- Average house prices above sub-regional average (£248,759) – affects affordability of housing (SHMA)
- Dominated by detached housing (48%) – need for greater range of house types (SHMA)
- Higher than county average number of people travelling >10km to work (40% compared to 27%) - lack of access to jobs
- Under provision of formal parks/gardens (Open Space Study)

Economic Issues:

- Potential for expanding the non-food shops provision in the town centre to bolster trade (Retail study)
- Recent housing growth has not been matched by new employment provision – need for new employment land (Employment Land Study)
- Provide additional tourist accommodation (Parish Plan)
- Promote live/work units (Parish Plan)

Environmental issues:

- Land along the Leadon River to the west is subject to flooding (SFRA)
- Malvern Hills AONB lies to the east with sharply rising land and areas of local and national biodiversity importance
- Existing bypass forms a strong physical barrier in defining the form of the town
- Generally high quality and historic town centre (Conservation Area)

NB: Unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Herefordshire Partnership website.



What the preferred strategy means for Ledbury

New homes

The spatial strategy indicates that in the region of 900 new homes on strategic sites need to be allocated in Ledbury over a 20 year period from 2006. The amount of housing reflects the spatial strategy outlined in Section 5 and the fact that it is constrained to the west of the town by land liable to flood and also by picturesque, rising land to the east – protected as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These factors limit the amount of developable land available. Three possible options for the location of new housing are shown in Ledbury Option maps 1 and 2.

New infrastructure

Possible bypass link to Bromyard Road as part of development of viaduct site.
Possible contributions to canal development from all developments.
Possible new pedestrian and cycling circular route with links to the existing town trail to include the riverside.

New community facilities

The Open Space Study has identified the need for a new formal park in Ledbury. This could be integrated into the site at the existing cricket ground/football club which may be relocated under certain options.

New jobs

The Employment Land Survey indicates that up to 12ha of employment land needs to be provided in Ledbury to replace existing protected employment land at the viaduct site in the north of the town. The land at the viaduct site has not been developed to date because of infrastructure constraints. Given housing land is also being directed to the south and west of the town, the employment allocation is identified near to the housing in both options. These areas also relate well to the strategic highway network.

New shops

The Retail Study recognises that Ledbury has a limited potential for new convenience goods (food) floor space by 2016, some 237-645m² (gross). There is limited theoretical capacity for new comparison goods (non-food) floor space due to the town's popularity and attractiveness as a 'niche' centre it could draw new retailers into the town. It has potential for 2,650m² (gross) floor space by the year 2026. Any retail allocations will be addressed in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

What are the Options for Ledbury?

6.5.3 There are two options for developing the role of Ledbury as a key service centre to its rural hinterland which involve distributing around 900 houses and up to 12ha of employment land as well as new community facilities and infrastructure where needed.



Common to options

- Around 500 new homes to replace most of the existing employment land to north of viaduct which has been considered as of poor employment land quality in the Employment Land Review (this site was considered to be moving towards sustainability at Developing Options stage) (VS).
- Around 100 new homes to replace the existing private cricket ground and football club which would be relocated, possibly to land near the rugby ground on the Ross Road. Scheme to include retention of existing amenity space adjoining cricket ground and introduction of new formal park (need highlighted in Open Space Study) (CC) (But, see sub-options which refer to keeping existing cricket/football ground)
- New walking and cycling links to existing old railway line and riverside to create circular green network
- Provision for better range and mix of housing types/tenures (highlighted as a need in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment)
- A percentage of affordable housing – required by regional plan
- Contributions to education/extra school capacity at local schools/additional site for and provision of primary school places

Option 1 – A southern focus

6.5.4 This option will include:

- Around a further 300 new homes to the south of the bypass on greenfield land adjoining the Dymock Road (DR)
- Up to 12ha of replacement employment land for the viaduct site adjoining existing Countrywide store (avoiding flood zone)

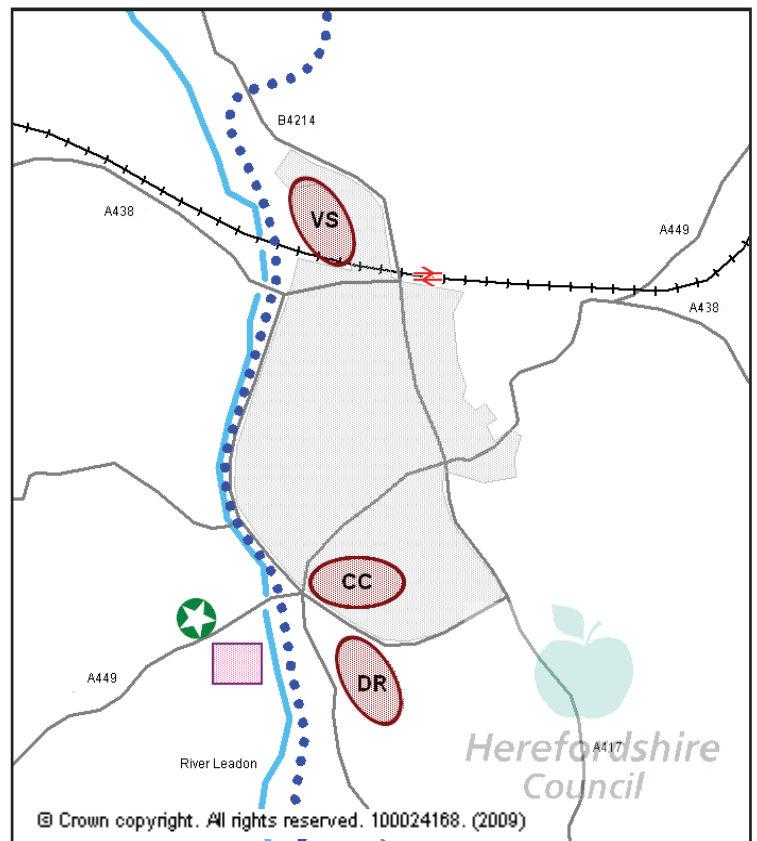
Constraints

- Land to south of the bypass is identified as having medium/high sensitivity in landscape terms – this will need significant mitigation to be considered acceptable in visual terms.
- There is a risk of creating a separate community from the rest of Ledbury because of the physical barrier of the bypass. There will need to be improved pedestrian and cycling links into the town centre.

Core Strategy Objectives

This option will help meet housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. The option will therefore address a range of objectives including 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 (see Section 4).

Ledbury Option 1 map



- Key**
- DR Options for housing growth
 - VS - Viaduct Site, CC - Cricket Club, DR - Dymock Road
 - Employment growth
 - Options for Recreation
 - Hereford & Gloucester Canal Route



6.5.5 A **sub-option** of this approach would be to direct more housing to the land south of the by-pass and retain the existing cricket ground and football club within the existing development boundary of the town. An alternative site would need to be considered for the formal park as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 1

Sustainability Appraisal - Option 1 is considered to have a neutral effect. Significant mitigation will be required to address any adverse impacts on the landscape. Sub-option 1 being only marginally different, had very similar overall impacts to the main option. The SA has highlighted the need for the reference to finding an alternative location for a new formal park if this sub-option were favoured.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - No HRA issues have been identified which would favour any one option for the growth of Ledbury over any other. Whilst water supply is sufficient for new housing in Ledbury there may be issues over supply for new employment uses. It will need to be established before submission stage that there will be no adverse impact on the River Wye from further extraction for this purpose.



Option 2:- A Western Focus

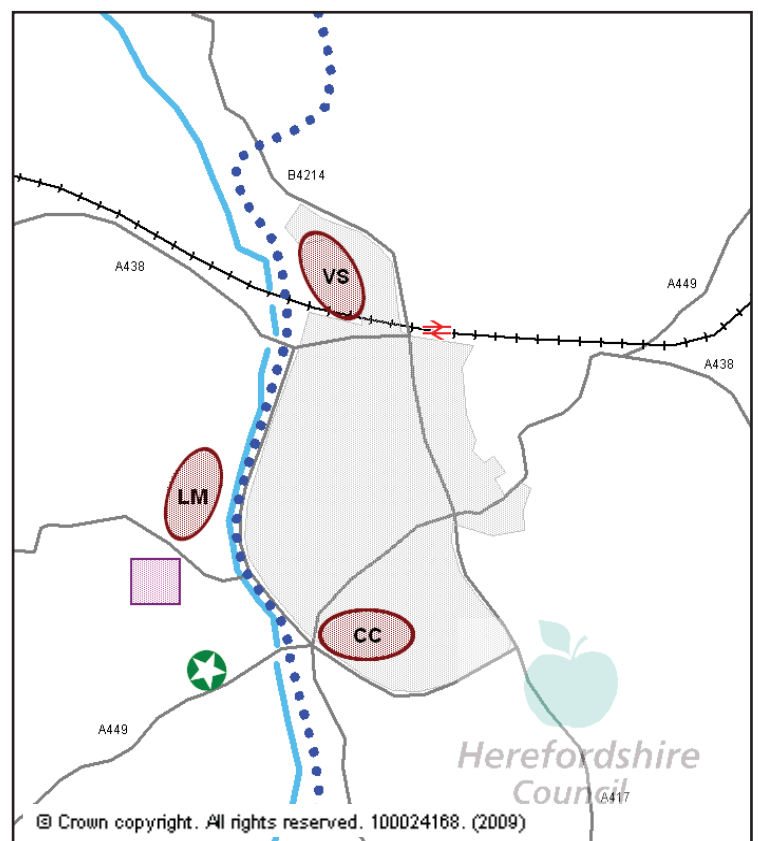
6.5.6 This option will include:

- Around a further 300 new homes to the west of the by-pass on greenfield land north of Little Marcle Road (LM)
- Up to 12ha of replacement employment land for the viaduct site along Little Marcle Rd (avoiding flood zone 3)

Constraints

- Part of site is identified as having a higher risk of flooding than Option 1. (This site was seen as moving away from sustainability at Developing Options stage).
- Part of site is identified as being of semi natural habitat of local biodiversity importance
- Land to the west of the bypass is identified as having medium/high sensitivity in landscape terms – this will need significant mitigation to be considered acceptable in visual terms.
- There is a risk of creating a separate community from the rest of Ledbury because of the physical barrier of the bypass. There will need to be improved pedestrian and cycling links into the town centre.

Ledbury Option 2 map



Key

- VS Preferred options for housing growth
- VS - Viaduct Site, LM - Little Marcle Road, CC - Cricket Club
- Employment growth
- Options for Recreation
- Hereford & Gloucester Canal Route



Core Strategy Objectives

This option will help meet housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. The option will therefore address a range of objectives including 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 (see Section 4).

6.5.7 A **sub-option** of this approach would be to direct more housing to the land west of the bypass and retain the cricket ground and football club within the existing development boundary of the town. An alternative site would need to be considered for a formal park as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 2

Sustainability Appraisal - Option 2 is considered to be neutral with concerns raised over flood risk and impact on biodiversity. Significant mitigation will be required to address these issues and any adverse impact on the landscape. Sub-option 2 being only marginally different, had very similar overall impacts to the main option. The SA has highlighted the need for the reference to finding an alternative location for a new formal park if this sub-option were favoured.



Habitats Regulations Assessment - No HRA issues have been identified which would favour any one option for the growth of Ledbury over any other. Whilst water supply is sufficient for new housing in Ledbury there may be issues over supply for new employment uses. It will need to be established before submission stage that there will be no adverse impact on the River Wye from further extraction for this purpose.

What did the Developing Options Consultation tell us?

6.5.8 The options of developing land to the north and west of Ledbury were considered at Developing Options consultation. Developing to the north was considered favourably by half of respondents, but allocating growth to the west was only favoured by 38% of respondents. The most favoured option was to disperse growth to a number of smaller sites in various locations around the town (71% of respondents liked this option).

Alternative options not taken forward

6.5.9 The Developing Options Paper suggested four possible options for the growth of Ledbury:

1. The option to allocate significant growth to the north west of the town on land currently proposed for employment use is retained in both refined Options 1 and 2.
2. The option to allocate growth to the west remains as Option 1 albeit refined
3. The option to disperse growth to a number of smaller sites around the town has been rejected due to the absence of sufficient and appropriate smaller sites close to the town to achieve the housing target set out in the preferred strategy. The option to develop land to the south or west in one larger development is favoured because both areas are significantly constrained in landscape or other terms and it may be advantageous to master plan any one particular development and achieve greater economies of scale, rather than splitting the development to both sites.



4. The option of limiting growth to sites within the built up parts of the town has not been taken forward as, due to a lack of suitable sites, this would not be consistent with the spatial strategy which aims to support the status of market towns as service centres to their rural hinterlands and to support rural regeneration, including the delivery of and access to services, by promoting new development there.

Your views

Are there any additional issues in Ledbury which the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan could address?

Which option for growth at Ledbury do you prefer? Option 1 or 2?

Should the cricket ground/football club relocation be part of any proposals?

Section 6.6: Leominster

6.6.1 Leominster is located to the north of the county along the A49 approximately 12 miles/19 kilometres north of Hereford and is the largest market town. It has a population of about 11,100 and appropriately 4,874 households. As with other market towns in the county, Leominster provides a service centre for an extensive rural hinterland.

6.6.2 A number of proposals identified in the Herefordshire UDP have not yet been completed. These include the housing proposals for Barons Cross camp. Although not part of the Core Strategy strategic options these sites are expected to be developed in the plan period.

Key issues

6.6.3 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing Leominster however the more detailed implementation and specific area issues currently identified, will be addressed by the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Social Issues:

- Average house price above regional average (£248,034) (SHMA)
- Infant and junior schools occupy same constrained site
- Need to improve public transport (Developing Options comment)
- Lack of youth and community facilities (Market Towns Issues Report)

Environmental issues:

- A44 at Bargates has been designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
- Areas of the town prone to surface water flooding (SFRA/Water Cycle Study)
- Cockcroft Hill is locally important as a landscape feature.
- Under provision of amenity greenspace and parks and gardens (Open Space Study)
- River Lugg (to the north and east) is nationally designated for its ecological importance



Economic Issues:

- 41% of the population of the Ridgemoor area live in income deprived households
- 62% of children within Ridgemoor are income deprived.
- Transport constraints identified in UDP and LTP2
- Local wish for a southern link road
- Comparison goods (non-food) requirement by 2026 is 3,250m² (gross) (Retail Study)
- Convenience goods (food) new floorspace requirement is circa 7,500m² (gross) by 2026 (Retail study)
- Development opportunities on the south west fringes of the town (Retail Study)
- Some sites within the town may be suitable for redevelopment (Retail Study)

NB: Unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Herefordshire Partnership website.

What the preferred strategy means for Leominster

New homes

The spatial strategy indicated that Leominster is required to find in the region of 1700 new homes on strategic sites. The decision to focus the larger proportion of rural growth to Leominster is in recognition that new growth will support the provision of a southern relief road which will benefit the town in terms of reducing congestion particularly on Barons Cross Road and improving air quality around the designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

New infrastructure

Transport constraints in the town have been identified within the UDP and Local Transport Plan. Any significant growth would require the construction of a new road from the B4361 (Hereford Road) to the A44 in the Barons Cross Area. Leominster has been highlighted within the Water Cycle Study as being prone to flooding from surface water. A Surface Water Management Plan is required for the town.

New community facilities

Any growth of this scale would need to include additional community facilities. This could include doctor's surgery, community hall and possible relocated infant and junior school. Additional information is needed from Primary Care Trust and Children's Services to determine the possible requirements. Leominster is in need of additional green open amenity space, an urban extension would need to consider this additional requirement.

New jobs

There remains a good supply of employment land on Leominster Enterprise Park and Southern Avenue. Despite the level of housing growth to the town, any new provision is likely only to be required at the end of the plan period to compliment this existing provision. This additional provision would be most appropriately integrated into the urban extension in the form of developments within use class B1 such as office along with live/work units.



New shops

Leominster contains a good variety of retail provision within the town centre and unlike some of the other market towns has a vibrant town centre to offer. The Retail Study has indicated some additional retail floorspace would be required in Leominster, however it is considered that this is not at a strategic level and should be dealt with in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan. Notwithstanding this, given the level of housing growth in Leominster, some local neighbourhood retail facilities should be required as part of the master planning for the urban extension.

What are the Options for Leominster?

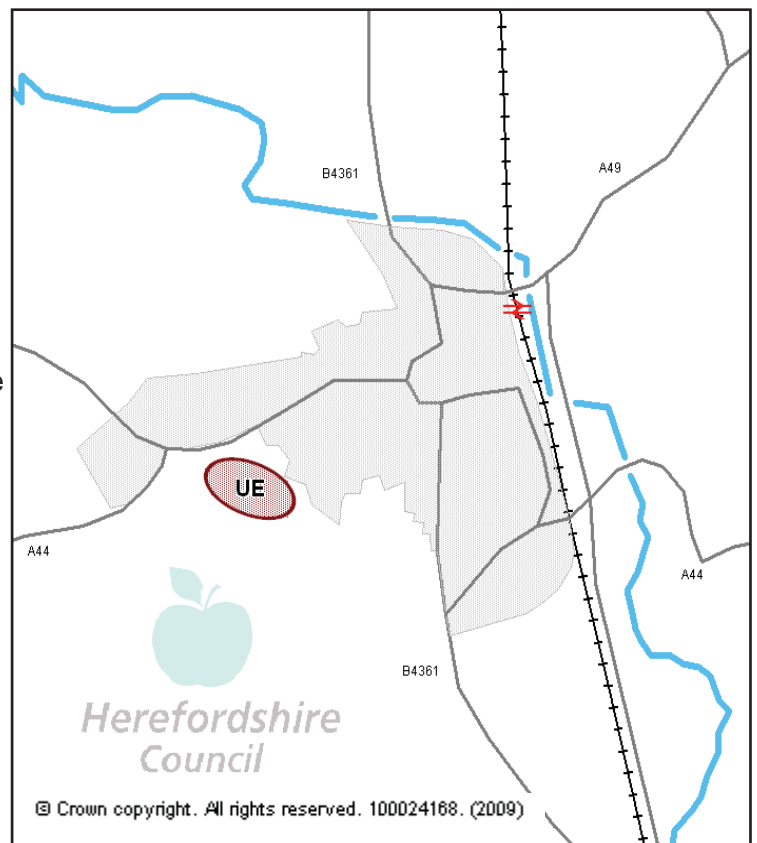
Preferred Option - Urban extension and southern relief road

6.6.4 As indicated above the spatial strategy indicates that Leominster is required to find in the region of 1,700 new homes. The decision to focus the larger proportion of growth to Leominster is in recognition that new growth will support the provision of a southern relief road, which will benefit the town in terms of reducing congestion and improving air quality. However, it is acknowledged that the urban extension would impact on some areas of sensitive landscape and semi-natural habitats which could be mitigated through the overall design of the scheme.

The urban extension will include:

- Up to 1,700 new homes (within the plan period)
- A % of affordable housing and opportunity to address the range of homes currently available in the town
- Southern link road (B4361 Hereford Road to A44 Baron Cross)
- Neighbourhood retail facilities
- Employment opportunities (towards end of the plan period)
- Community facilities
- Contribution to educational/extra school capacity/possible provision of a new school
- Green infrastructure and open space provision
- Improved walking and cycling links to town, schools and Enterprise Park.
- Retention of highly sensitive landscape areas around Cockcroft Hill as natural open space.

Leominster Preferred Option map



Key	
	Option for housing growth UE - Urban Growth
	River
	Roads
	Railway
	Railway Station



Beyond the plan period

6.6.5 The combination of sites to the south of the town are highlighted within the SHLAA as having potential capacity to accommodate over 2,600 new homes. Therefore, it is considered that, if this area is pursued as the preferred location of growth, it could accommodate the growth Leominster requires for this plan period and beyond 2026 into the next plan period.

Master Planning

6.6.6 Any urban extension, including the area beyond this plan period, would require master planning to include the necessary infrastructure and additional facilities required to support this level of housing.

6.6.7 The Water Cycle Study has indicated that surface water issues are important in Leominster and careful consideration should be given to this as part of the master planning for the urban extension.

What did the Developing Options Consultation tell us?

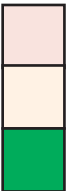
6.6.8 This option was considered within the Developing Options consultation. There was a preference within the responses for the south and south west in conjunction with a relief road as the preferred direction of growth for the town.

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the Preferred Option

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall the preferred option for Leominster is considered to be moving towards sustainability when assessed against SA objectives. The option has been amended following the sustainability workshops to address some issues of concern regarding walking and cycling links to the Leominster Enterprise Park.

Further concerns regarding site specific issues concerning design, landscaping and archaeological information will be addressed at the masterplan stage.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - The Rivers Lugg and Arrow, although not SACs, join and subsequently, downstream, become the Lugg SAC. Consequently any adverse impact on the water environment in Leominster is likely to have adverse impacts of significance for HRA purposes. For this reason, a Surface Water Management Plan is essential for any development site which drains into the Arrow and/or the Lugg. Development could be managed to mitigate the effects on the SAC given adequate control measures and additional capacity in water treatment infrastructure.



Core Strategy Objectives

The option for Leominster promotes the town for growth which will help meet housing needs, provide job opportunities and maintain the viability to the town. The option will therefore help to achieve a range of social, economic and environmental objectives including 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12.



Alternative Options not taken forward

6.6.9 The Developing Options Paper highlighted two additional options which have been rejected as options to pursue within this Place Shaping Paper.

1. Dispersed Option.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has highlighted two sites to the north and west of the town, each of which have capacity for appropriately 300 homes. However, due to the transport and air quality constraints within the town, any further development without the link road would exacerbate the current problems. For this reason, the strategy has sought to focus a greater proportion of growth to the town in order to facilitate a southern link road. In addition, a combination of sites around the town would not bring the added community benefits that an urban extension to the south would have the possibility to do. For these reasons the dispersed option has not been taken forward.

2. Limited growth option

The option of limiting growth to sites within the built up parts of the town has not been taken forward because the capacity of such sites is limited to an extent which would not achieve the housing numbers required. Consequently limiting growth in this way would not be consistent with the spatial strategy, which aims to support the status of market towns as service centres to their rural hinterlands, to support rural regeneration and the delivery of and access to services.

Your views

Are there any additional issues in Leominster which the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan could address?

Do you agree that the southern urban extension is the preferred option for Leominster?

Section 6.7: Ross-on-Wye

6.7.1 Ross-on-Wye lies on the southern edge of Herefordshire and is the only one of the market towns to have direct links to the motorway network. The town is located approximately 15 miles south east of Hereford and has good accessibility being at the junction of the A40 and Junction 1 of the M50 which connects the town to the wider national motorway network. It has an estimated population of around 10,000 (mid-year estimate 2006) living in about 4,500 households. As with other market towns in the county, Ross-on-Wye provides a service centre for an extensive rural hinterland. Its connections to the motorway network make the town an important gateway into the county and it continues to attract tourists in its own right. A number of proposals identified in the Herefordshire UDP have not yet been completed. These include the housing proposals for Tanyard Lane and the employment land at Model Farm. Although not part of the Core Strategy strategic options these sites are expected to be developed in the plan period.



Key issues

6.7.2 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing Ross-on-Wye however the more detailed implementation and specific area issues currently identified, will be addressed through the preparation of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Social Issues:

- Locally, house prices in 2006/7 were significantly above the sub-regional average (Shropshire and Herefordshire) at over £244,000 (SHMA).
- The SHMA indicates that there is a general shortage of social rented housing and intermediate housing (affordable).
- There are parts of Ross-on-Wye which suffer from income deprivation.

Economic Issues:

- Model Farm provides 10ha of land as a strategic site for employment purposes during plan period.
- In addition to Model Farm there is a need to ensure opportunities for smaller-scale employment requirements can be met (Employment Land Study).
- Tourism continues to play an important role in the town centre economy (Retail Study).
- Wider economic situation, with reduction in national multiple chains, has impacted upon town centre. Higher than average levels of retail vacancies (Retail Study).
- Need for additional retail floorspace likely for the end of the plan period.

Environmental issues:

- Impact of development on internationally designated sites of ecological importance i.e. River Wye, Wye Valley Woodlands and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SACs.
- Areas within and adjacent to the town prone to flooding (SFRA).
- Presence of adjacent nationally-designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In addition the town sits within areas of landscapes sensitive to new development.
- Generally high quality and historic town centre (Conservation Area).
- Water supply likely to be adequate for Core Strategy development targets to be achieved but difficulties are likely to exist if greater quantities of development are proposed beyond the plan period.

NB: Unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Herefordshire Partnership website.



What the preferred strategy means for Ross-on-Wye?

New homes

The Spatial Strategy suggests the development of around 1,000 new homes should be provided in Ross-on-Wye by 2026. It is acknowledged that there are significant environmental constraints to the release of land around Ross-on-Wye, not least related to the areas of flood risk and the presence of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, in order to achieve the strategic housing target for Ross-on-Wye the release of greenfield land beyond the current limits of the town will be required. Therefore, two strategic options for new housing development have been identified which would enable (in combination with the development of smaller housing sites in and around the town) the housing target for Ross-on-Wye to be achieved. The options are shown in Ross-on-Wye Option maps 1 and 2.

New infrastructure

No new road infrastructure in Ross-on-Wye is proposed as part of the Options but it will be necessary to ensure that any peripheral development integrates properly with the existing highway network and also provides sustainable transport links into the town. The sewage treatment works is considered to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed level of development.

New community facilities

Detailed proposals of the scale proposed will include additional community facilities. Option 2 with its single larger housing release is likely to enable more on-site provision to meet the needs of the development. Additional information is needed to determine the possible requirements.

New jobs

The 10ha employment site at Model Farm now has the benefit of planning permission but has not yet commenced. The development of this land will be safeguarded through the LDF. In respect of the need for additional land providing for employment this should be kept under review (Employment Land Study) but given the level of current proposals Ross-on-Wye is unlikely to require any additional strategic releases at least until late in the plan period.

New shops

The Retail Study recognises that Ross-on-Wye is historically an important town centre for the local community and the tourist economy. There are clear strengths with a Conservation Area and variety of architectural styles and a good mix of retail services with a selection of niche retailers. There are, however, some weaknesses in the centre with higher than average levels of vacancies and a proliferation of discount stores and charity shops. The weaknesses need to be addressed so as to retain the standing of Ross-on-Wye in the local retail hierarchy and tourism market. There is limited expenditure capacity for new convenience (food) goods floorspace in the town. This will be absorbed in the early years of the plan period by implementation of the ALDI food store in Brookend Street. The study indicates that surplus expenditure is likely to be available for some 3,500m² (gross) floorspace, for comparison (non-food) floorspace, at the end of the plan period.



What are the Options for Ross-on-Wye?

6.7.3 There are two options which are being progressed for Ross-on-Wye which aim to deliver around 1000 dwellings to the town over a 20 year period from 2006 and bring forward the existing UDP proposal for employment land at Model Farm.

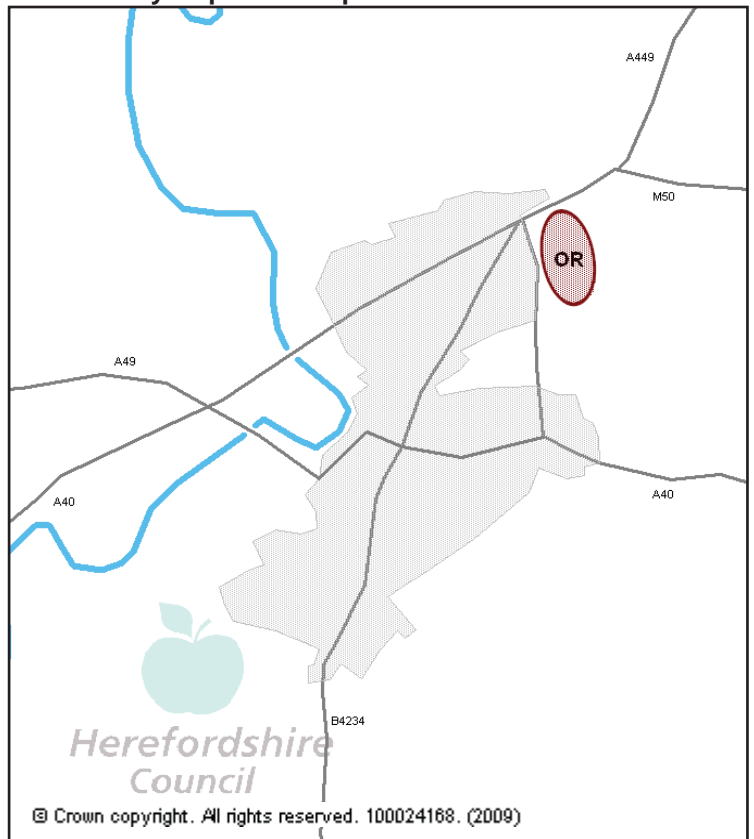
Common to both options:

- The release of greenfield land on the edge of the town as strategic housing sites to accommodate some 350 new homes;
- Provision for better range and mix of housing types/tenures (highlighted as a need in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment);
- An element of affordable housing to help meet local needs;
- The development of Model Farm for employment use (as recommended by the employment study). In respect of the need for additional land providing for employment this should be kept under review. However, given the level of current proposals it is unlikely to require any additional strategic releases at least until late in the plan period, but the plan will also ensure that opportunities for appropriate smaller-scale developments would be enabled;
- No new strategic retail proposals are suggested but the need for additional retail floorspace kept under review with possible requirement late in plan period (post-2021);
- Acceptance of the need to integrate and link any new strategic sites into the existing settlements pattern of the town through the development of sustainable transport routes enabling walking and cycling links.
- Contributions to education to ensure longevity of schools to provide for future pupil numbers

Option 1: North-east focus

- This option would release a single strategic location to accommodate around 350 new dwellings at Overross to the south of the A449 and to the east of the A40. The release of such a significant area of land would enable the provision of open space and community facilities within the development and the area would also be capable of accommodating other uses such as employment provision if required later in the Plan period.

Ross-on-Wye Option 1 map



Constraints

6.7.4 The area is clearly separated from the built up part of Ross-on-Wye to the west. Detailed work would be required through other Development Plan Documents, development briefs and/or master plans to ensure that proposals include provision of good links by sustainable modes of travel into the town. Given the site’s location on the strategic highway network, provision of vehicular access will also require consideration at an early stage. In addition, the area sits within a sensitive landscape and proposals will be required to mitigate any landscape impact of development in this location.

What did the Developing Options Consultation tell us?

6.7.5 This was not an option that was considered within the Developing Options consultation. At that stage, the option suggesting a dispersed distribution of development had most support. This option has not been taken forward for the reasons set out on page 68.

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 1

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall the options for Ross-on-Wye are considered to be neutral when assessed against SA objectives. The options were amended following the sustainability workshops to address some issues of concern. Effects remain concerning issues related to biodiversity, particularly protected bat species near Ross-on-Wye, and impacts of strategic allocations on landscape quality. These will need further clarification to identify specific mitigation measures before Core Strategy submission.



Habitats Regulation Assessment - Water supply is jointly provided by Welsh Water and Severn Trent. There is capacity for limited growth, although some new water infrastructure may be needed for both water supply and water treatment. Development sites in near or Ross-on-Wye will need site specific assessment because they are within 10kms of the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Woodland Bat Sites to ensure that there is no significant impact upon the SACs. The HRA demonstrated a preference for sites to the north east because these would be least likely to impact on Bat foraging areas.

Core Strategy Objectives

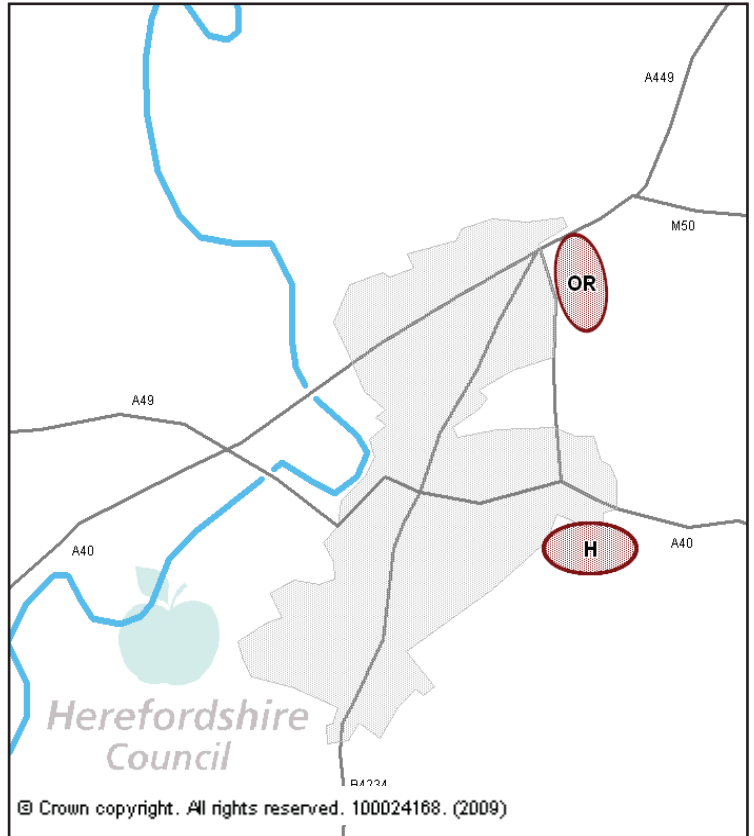
This option for Ross-on-Wye will help meet housing needs, provide job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. Therefore, although the Core Strategy, as a whole, will address all objectives, the options for Ross-on-Wye will in particular address objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 (see Section 4).



Option 2: North/south focus

- The second option suggests splitting the allocation between part of the Overross land identified in option 1 and land at Hildersley with around 180 dwellings being proposed on each of the sites. The land at Hildersley is located within a less sensitive landscape (although still a highly sensitive historic landscape). As with option 1 additional work would be required through the preparation of other Development Plan Documents, development briefs and/or masterplans to ensure that proposals include provision of good links by sustainable modes of travel into the town and appropriate levels of open space provided within the development. However, given the smaller scale of the proposals in this option the potential for achieving community facilities on-site is reduced.

Ross-on-Wye Option 2 map



Key Options for housing growth
 OR - Overross, H - Hildersley
 River
 Roads

Constraints

- 6.7.6 In respect of the Overross land the constraints as set out in paragraph 6.7.4 will also apply to this option. Although the overall scale of development is reduced, the option would still result in development to the east of the A40 and the town encroaching into the countryside beyond.
- 6.7.7 At Hildersley the landscape constraints are lower than for option 1 with the area falling within an area of medium to low sensitivity. However, the land to the south of Ross-on-Wye is recognised as supporting the presence of internationally protected species of bats. Further work under the Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required in order to demonstrate that the proposals can be delivered without any significant impact upon the Wye Valley Woodland SAC and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. In addition, land ownership constraints in the Hildersley area also provide a limit to the extent of the proposed development area.

What did the Developing Options Consultation tell us?

- 6.7.8 This option was not considered at the Developing Options stage. At that stage most support was given to the option suggesting a dispersed distribution of development. However, the dispersed option has not been taken forward for the reasons set out below.



How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced Option 2

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall the options for Ross-on-Wye are considered to be neutral when assessed against SA objectives. The options were amended following the sustainability workshops to address some issues of concern. Effects remain concerning issues related to biodiversity, particularly protected bat species near Ross-on-Wye, and impacts of strategic allocations on landscape quality. These will need further clarification to identify specific mitigation measures before Core Strategy submission.



Habitats Regulation Assessment - Water supply is jointly provided by Welsh Water and Severn Trent. There is capacity for limited growth, although some new water infrastructure may be needed for both water supply and water treatment. Development sites in near Ross-on-Wye will need site specific assessment because they are within 10kms of the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Woodland Bat Sites to ensure that there is no significant impact upon the SACs. The HRA demonstrated a preference for sites to the north east because these would be least likely to impact on Bat foraging areas.

Core Strategy Objectives

This option for Ross-on-Wye will help meet housing needs, provide job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. Therefore, although the Core Strategy, as a whole, will address all objectives, the options for Ross-on-Wye will in particular address objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 (see Section 4).

Alternative Options not taken forward:

6.7.9 The Developing Options Paper highlighted five additional options which have not been taken forward at this stage as options to pursue within this Place Shaping Paper.

1. The option to allocate significant growth to the north of the town has not been taken forward due to the impact of a significant expansion into the AONB and to potential access constraints.
2. The option to allocate growth to the south-east remains an option albeit refined as set out in option 2.
3. The option to allocate significant growth to the south-west has not been taken forward due again to the impact of a strategic allocation (above 100 homes) upon the AONB and areas liable to flood.
4. The option to disperse growth to a number of smaller sites around the town has not been taken forward due to the absence of sufficient and appropriate smaller sites close to the town to achieve the housing target in the spatial strategy. An element of this option would remain if option 2 (above) were chosen as the preferred way forward in Ross and other appropriate non-strategic sites will be identified through the preparation of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.
5. The option of limiting growth to sites within the built-up parts of the town has not been taken forward such an approach would not be consistent with the spatial strategy which aims to support the status of market towns as service centres to their rural hinterlands and to support rural regeneration, delivery of and access to services.



Your views

Are there any additional issues in Ross-on-Wye which the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan could address?

Which option do you consider should be the preferred option for Ross-on-Wye, Option 1 or Option 2?

Section 6.8: Rural areas

6.8.1 The rural areas comprise those parts of the county outside Hereford and the market towns. Around 76,300 people live in the rural areas in around 30,360 households. More than 50% of employees in rural wards work in agriculture, hunting, forestry and construction, but considerable proportions of manufacturing employees (43%) are also in rural wards. The high environmental quality of the rural areas plays a considerable part in the county's tourism industry.

Key issues

6.8.2 The key issues outlined below have emerged from our evidence base studies, consultations undertaken so far and existing research. The Core Strategy will address many of the issues facing the rural areas, however, the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan, which will follow the Core Strategy, will address some of the more detailed area specific issues identified below.

Social Issues:

- Average house prices above sub-regional average – affects affordability of housing (SHMA)
- Dominated by higher council tax band properties (80% compared to 47% in urban areas) – need for greater range of house types
- Over half the county's residents live in areas defined as rural (54%) with 25% of population living in "very sparse" areas – this directly affects accessibility to services
- Protecting existing services/facilities (Developing Options consultation)
- Higher than county average number of people travelling >10km to work (34% compared to 27%)
- lack of access to local jobs
- Improve public transport (Developing Options consultation)

Environmental issues:

- 69% of working population in rural areas travel to work by car – this affects CO₂ emissions
- Protecting the countryside and maintaining local distinctiveness (Developing Options consultation)



Economic Issues:

- Rural areas are less likely to receive a decent level of broadband service (minimum 2mb, and ideally 8mb) compared to urban areas but statistics for home working are high compared to urban areas (22.6% compared to 8.8%)
- A significantly higher percentage of working population are employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing (11.6% compared to 2.6% in urban areas)
- Promoting rural diversification and new businesses whilst supporting traditional practices (Developing Options consultation/Employment Land Review)
- Limiting the conversion of rural buildings to employment uses rather than housing to aid rural diversification (Developing Options Consultation).

NB: Unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Rural Area Profile from the Herefordshire Partnership website.

What the preferred strategy means for the rural areas?

New homes

The spatial strategy indicates that in the region of around 2,700 new homes need to be found in the rural areas between 2009 and 2026. The amount of housing allocated to the rural areas reflects the spatial strategy outlined in Section 5, and is a lesser amount than has historically been allocated to the rural areas through the UDP. This has necessitated a review of the settlement hierarchy. No strategic allocations are proposed as part of the Core Strategy, but allocations for new homes in the Rural Service Centres/Hubs and a tier of settlements below these will be defined as part of the development of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan which will follow the Core Strategy. The preferred approach of defining Rural Service Centres and Hubs is explained in paragraphs 6.8.3 and 6.8.4 of this section and in more detail in the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper which can be found on Herefordshire Council's website. However, there are two possible options for the distribution of new housing to centres below the tier of Rural Service Centres/Hubs - these are outlined in paragraphs 6.8.5 to 6.8.9. Elsewhere, development will be limited to rural exception housing needs i.e. agricultural, forestry or other farm diversification, replacement dwellings, conversions or rural affordable housing only (see paragraphs 6.8.10 and 6.8.11). The need for, and extent of, any settlement boundaries is an issue which will be addressed within the Hereford Area, and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plans.

New infrastructure

Rural transport - The scale of transport improvements will be in relation to the scale of proposed growth and linked to developer contributions. Improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and other initiatives to promote alternatives to solo car use will be addressed in the Local Transport Plan and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

New sewerage capacity - Will be required in some villages given their growth. This may need to be funded by developer contributions.

New community facilities

There are no strategic allocations relating to new community facilities in the Core Strategy. Any possible future allocations will be addressed through the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan. New facilities, alongside new housing, for e.g. for open space, will be required through developer contributions. Existing facilities will be protected in the rural areas.



New jobs

To support the designation of the majority of Herefordshire as a Rural Regeneration Zone in the regional plan, the preferred approach is to develop a criteria based policy promoting rural regeneration of appropriate scale and form which respects the environmental quality of the area, this will:

- Promote new or extensions to existing employment land in or adjoining settlements and the provision of enterprise centres in the Rural Service Centres (where possible utilising brownfield land before greenfield land);
- Promote a wide range of farm diversification projects including equine enterprises, renewable energy, employment uses in rural buildings and tourism;
- Recognise the economic benefits of utilising Herefordshire’s natural and historic environment as an asset to be valued, conserved and enhanced;
- Protect existing facilities and services in Rural Service Centres/Hubs and smaller settlements to meet the day-to-day needs of local communities;
- Promote a range of business types, particularly knowledge based and creative industries and environmental technologies to improve the economic viability of villages and their rural hinterlands;
- Promote the development of live/work schemes;
- Promote integrated and sustainable transport provision.

New shops

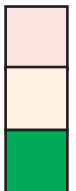
New shops in villages will be encouraged where they are of appropriate scale and would not threaten the viability of nearby centres. Existing facilities will be protected with a criteria based policy.

Farm shops will be encouraged where they utilise existing buildings, are small in scale and cause no unacceptable impact on nearby village shops or the character of the area.

The above policies will be detailed in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the new jobs/new shops preferred Option

Sustainability Appraisal - Overall this preferred Option was considered to be moving towards sustainability with positive impacts on the economic viability of the rural areas.



Habitats Regulations Assessment - The HRA raised no new issues in respect of water supply or water treatment. Local improvements in water treatment capacity may be required whichever option is chosen. Significant development sites in the south of the county (i.e. within 10 kms of the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Woodland Bat Sites) may require detailed assessment on a site-by-site basis and as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan to ensure that no known bat foraging sites are compromised.



What are the Options for the rural areas?

Settlement Hierarchy

Tier 1 - Rural Service Centres and Hubs

6.8.3 As stated above the preferred approach for the rural areas is to define a top tier of settlements below the level of the market towns that act as Rural Service Centres (RSCs) or Hubs. These are places that can fulfil the day to day needs of local residents and others in surrounding rural areas and which may accommodate modest but balanced growth in a sustainable way where there is capacity to do so. However, the designation as a Rural Service Centre or Hub is intended to cover the functional role of these settlements as service centres for their rural hinterlands involving other policy applications as well. The following Rural Service Centres and Hubs have been identified through consultation and are explained in detail in the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper which can be found on Herefordshire Council's website.

Rural Service Centres

Bartestree/Lugwardine	Kingsland	Orleton
Canon Pyon	Kingstone	Pembridge
Colwall	Lea	Peterchurch
Credenhill	Leintwardine	Shobdon
Eardisley	Madley	Wellington
Ewyas Harold	Marden	Weobley

Hubs

Almeley (Hub with Eardisley)	Sutton St. Nicholas (Hub with Marden)
Clelonger (Hub with Kingstone)	Weston under Penyard (Hub with Lea)
Moreton-on-Lugg (Hub with Wellington)	Winnal (Hub with Kingstone)
Pontrilas (Hub with Ewyas Harold)	Withington (Hub with Bartestree/Lugwardine)
Stretton Sugwas (Hub with Credenhill)	

The criteria for a Rural Service Centre include:

- A point score of 30 or more on the Settlement Hierarchy matrix; and
- 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; and
- All five of the following key services: pub, village hall, primary school; shop and post office.

The criteria for the Hubs include:

- Must be within 5km of a Rural Service Centre; and
- Must have 3 or more key services, (i.e. employment site, primary school, village hall, post office, shop and public house); and
- Must have very good or good public transport accessibility.



6.8.4 It is proposed that modest extensions could be developed at Rural Service Centres or Hubs over the plan period to 2026. Such extensions may comprise a number of smaller sites or a single development but will need to be identified and consulted upon through the development of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan. This will involve a holistic, master planning approach for each settlement taking on board its environmental capacity for new development (including infrastructure) and the benefits of the proposals to the local community. At this stage the level of development each Rural Service Centre or Hub will receive is not defined, but it is possible that up to 100 new homes may be accommodated in RSCs or Hubs over the plan period. It should be noted that the level of development proposed is not dissimilar to that that has historically taken place in many of the listed settlements (since 1996) and capacity for such amounts has been highlighted in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This approach would involve the identification of sites for new homes and the review of the need for, and extent of, settlement boundaries through the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

Tier 2 - Local centres

6.8.5 There are two options, however, for the tier below that of Rural Service Centres and Hubs for accommodating new development. Option 1 suggests that further allocations could be identified in “Local Centres” or, alternatively, a criteria based policy approach (Option 2) could be used. Either of these options could be developed and set out in the Core Strategy Submission document.

Option 1 - Defining “Local Centres”

6.8.6 Local Centres are defined as those settlements having good public transport and four or more key services (shop, post office, primary school, village hall, pub and employment site) where the aim would be to protect existing services where possible. As a result of the study carried out for the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper, the following Local Centres have been identified and could be set out in the Submission Core Strategy:

Bishops Frome	Garway	St Weonards
Burley Gate	Goodrich	Whitbourne
Cusop	Gorsley	Whitchurch
Dorstone	Peterstow	Wigmore
Fownhope		

6.8.7 This option would involve the identification of sites for new homes (up to around 30) and the review of the need for, and extent of, settlement boundaries through the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan. In all cases, development will need to bring forward with it some community benefit (see Community Facilities, Appendix 10 in the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper).

Advantages/Disadvantages of Option 1

- Provides clarity of where development will be considered acceptable
- Character and local distinctiveness would be considered in site definition at outset
- Resource intensive to define sites and review settlement boundaries
- Historically considered rigid and inflexible
- Amounts of development needed taken on board at outset, therefore easily monitored



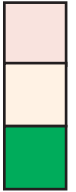
Core Strategy Objectives

This option 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 (see Section 4).

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the Option 1

Sustainability Appraisal - Option 1 is considered to be moving towards sustainability as the Local Centres are defined as settlements with good public transport and a good level of existing services.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - The HRA raised no new issues in respect of water supply or water treatment. Local improvements in water treatment capacity may be required whichever option is chosen. The northernmost village, Leintwardine, is approximately three kilometres from the Downton Gorge SAC where the key issue is to prevent any reduction in air quality. However, the level of growth likely to take place at Leintwardine and its location (which will not require any access or other disturbance in the Gorge) are such that no adverse effect on the air quality in the Gorge is anticipated. Significant development sites in the south of the county (i.e. within 10 kms of the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Woodland Bat Sites) may require detailed assessment on a site-by-site basis and as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan to ensure that no known bat foraging sites are compromised.



Option 2 - General criteria-based policy approach

6.8.8 This option would involve having a criteria- based policy to consider all applications for new homes in settlements not determined as Rural Service Centre or Hubs, but not defining a specific list of settlements at any one time. The aim of this approach would be to allow small-scale development of around 30 homes where a specific community need could be addressed by development. This approach acknowledges the fact that sustainability for a settlement is a process not an end state.

The criteria to be considered would include reference to:

- Existing sustainability of settlement relating to reasonable level of existing services (to be defined), public transport availability and/or potential to provide new services/facilities – major driver would be to reduce the need to travel, especially by the private car, to day to day services;
- The community need being addressed by the proposal (see Community Facilities Appendix 10 as set out in the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper);
- Impact on character of settlement and local distinctiveness of area (including cumulative impacts of development);
- Normal requirements of any new development including affordable housing as well as that for developer contributions to open space, education, transport etc.
- Utilising brownfield land prior to greenfield land in or adjoining settlements where possible.



6.8.9 This option would possibly negate the need for development boundaries with each proposal being considered on its merits in relation to the environmental capacity of the area to accommodate development. It would require annual monitoring of numbers and spatial distribution of new development to ensure regional targets for new homes were being met and not overreached. It must be emphasised that the level of housing proposed for the rural areas in the spatial strategy this plan period is less than has previously been the case.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Option 2

- Flexibility of approach which moves away from a rigid list of settlements acknowledging that sustainability is a process, not an end state (takes on board the finding of the regional plan phase 3 studies;
- Cost-effective in staff time and resources in not needing to define settlement boundaries and sites which may not come forward in the life of the plan;
- More complicated to monitor, less certainty with regard to the impact on housing supply, and may require early review of plan;
- More difficult to assess by Development Management team – would need specific criteria set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Core Strategy Objectives

This option 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 (see Section 4).

How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the Option 2

Sustainability Appraisal - The sustainability appraisal whilst generally concluding that dispersed development to the rural areas is generally moving towards sustainability did not specifically address the Option as it evolved late on in the process. It will need to be appraised prior to submission.

Habitats Regulations Assessment - The HRA raised no new issues in respect of water supply or water treatment. Local improvements in water treatment capacity may be required whichever option is chosen. The northernmost village, Leintwardine, is approximately three kilometres from the Downton Gorge SAC where the key issue is to prevent any reduction in air quality. However, the level of growth likely to take place at Leintwardine and its location (which will not require any access or other disturbance in the Gorge) are such that no adverse effect on the air quality in the Gorge is anticipated. Significant development sites in the south of the county (i.e. within 10 kms of the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Woodland Bat Sites) may require detailed assessment on a site-by-site basis and as part of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan to ensure that no known bat foraging sites are compromised.

Below Tier 2

6.8.10 The preferred approach for areas outside of Tier 1 and 2 would be to restrict housing development to that which is required to meet rural exception needs only. This would be for agriculture, forestry or other farm diversification (including dwellings associated with other rural based enterprises), replacement dwellings, conversions or rural affordable housing only. This is because to allow market housing development in areas outside of those defined in Tier 1 would be contrary to the policy objectives set out on Page 76.



- Government policy which states that development should be strictly controlled in the open countryside to protect it for its own sake (many settlements in Herefordshire are considered so small and sporadic in nature as to constitute “open countryside”);
- Government policy which states that the location of development should:
 - o Contribute to cutting carbon emissions (allowing even small scale development in the large numbers of smaller settlements in Herefordshire would only serve to promote travel by the private car to jobs and services)
 - o Be accessible to existing local facilities and public transport
- Regional planning policies which focus the majority of housing development in rural areas to the market towns and larger rural settlements; and
- The Core Strategy vision and objectives (see Section 4) which promote accessibility to services

6.8.11 Option 2 would allow some flexibility in this regard, where it can be shown that development would meet proven housing needs or regenerate the rural economy.

What did the Developing Options Consultation tell us?

6.8.12 The Developing Options Paper suggested four possible options for the development of the rural areas ranging from very limited to significant growth in villages outside the market towns. The majority of respondents (35%) favoured growth in Hereford, the market towns and a limited number of sustainable settlements with the rest of the rural areas limited to exception housing only.

6.8.13 The option of having very limited housing in the rural areas was considered at Developing Options stage through Option 1. This option has not been taken forward on the basis that some growth in the rural areas can support rural regeneration through the provision of affordable housing and support for the retention of existing services.

6.8.14 Option 3 of planning for equal growth between the market towns and sustainable rural settlements (similar to the UDP approach) was less popular and is not taken forward as a realistic option because of the intentions of the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives and the limited level of growth suggested by the Spatial Strategy necessitated a review of the Settlement Hierarchy.

6.8.15 The option of focussing growth outside of Hereford to sustainable rural settlements was also considered unreasonable because it would be contrary to the policies concerning rural regeneration of the market towns within the regional plan.

6.8.16 With regards to other issues in the rural areas, the majority of respondents (64%) wanted growth in rural areas to be limited to brownfield land. In terms of diversifying the rural economy, the majority of respondents (66%) wanted to limit economic growth in the rural areas to farm diversification and small employment sites. With respect to protecting rural facilities, 95% of respondents wanted to protect and/or increase the provision of services and facilities in or adjoining settlements and 69% of respondents wanted to identify settlements outside of the market towns as service centres where services could be protected and promoted. This is addressed in paragraph 6.8.3 through the settlement hierarchy.



Alternative Options not taken forward

6.8.17 As part of the Draft Options Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper, four options of distributing new homes to a second tier below that of Rural Service Centres were presented for consultation with Parish Councils, councillors and targeted consultees.

- Option 1 - Looked at limiting new homes to Rural Service Centres (RSCs) with exception housing only elsewhere. This option is not taken forward because the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has revealed that there is insufficient capacity in RSCs alone for the amount of housing to be allocated as a result of the increase set out in the regional plan following the Phase 2 Panel Report (i.e. the increase from 16,600 to 18,000 new homes).
- Option 2 - Looked at identifying a second tier of settlements below that of RSCs that were within 5km of an RSC, regardless of their level of services. This option was not favoured as a result of the consultation and is not taken forward on this basis and the fact that it would only marginally help in reducing the need to travel by private car, is a main requirement of government policy.
- Option 3 - Looked at a second tier of settlements below that of RSCs with good public transport and four or more key services. This option is taken forward in Option 1 in paragraph 6.8.6
- Option 4 - Looked at a second tier of settlements with 5 or more key services regardless of good public transport availability. Again, this option was not favoured through the consultation and is not taken forward on this basis and the fact that that this approach would not help in trying to reduce the need to travel by private car which is a main requirement of government guidance.

6.8.18 In addition, a further option of a criteria-based policy for areas outside the defined settlement hierarchy was suggested to allow for flexibility in the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper. This option received considerable support and is refined and included in Option 2 Paragraph 6.8.8 as an alternative to having a defined list of second tier settlements below RSC level.

Your views

Are there any additional issues in the rural areas that the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan could address?

Is the preferred approach for new jobs in the rural areas the right one?

Is the preferred approach for defining Rural Service Centres and Hubs (Tier 1) the right one?

Is the level of housing proposed in the Rural Service Centres and Hubs about right?

Which option for the approach to new housing in settlements in the tier below that of the Rural Service Centres (Tier 2) do you prefer, Option 1 or 2?

For Option 2, what do you consider to be a 'reasonable' level of services?

Do you agree with the preferred approach of restricting development in areas outside Tier 1 and 2?

