

# 3 STRATEGY

## 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter sets out the overall strategy of the Plan, comprising:

- a vision statement
- a set of guiding principles
- a set of strategic (Part I) policies for the development and use of land.

3.1.2 In devising the strategy the aim has been to interpret national and regional guidance so as to formulate a response to the issues facing Herefordshire which is relevant to the County's needs.

### *Links to other strategies*

3.1.3 Whilst the UDP has been prepared within an overall framework of national and regional planning policy guidance, it has also been informed by the work of a range of partner organisations in the County who collectively form the Herefordshire Partnership. The Partnership has agreed an overall vision for the future development of Herefordshire, embracing social, economic and environmental aspects, which has been published as the Herefordshire Community Strategy. The vision is to be achieved by partner organisations working together through a number of thematic groups. The Herefordshire Community Strategy's vision is reflected in that of the UDP, while relevant thematic groups have contributed to the development of UDP policy.

3.1.4 Other relevant strategies for Herefordshire include area-based examples (Objective 2, AONB Management Plans) and topic-based examples (economic development, transport including the statutory Local Transport Plan, landscape, biodiversity, tourism, leisure, countryside access). While these often include 'management' policies and proposals which are inappropriate to a development plan, their strategic policies and development proposals often have a direct bearing on the UDP strategy, and have been taken into consideration.

## 3.2 Regional Planning Guidance

### *Regional Spatial Strategy*

3.2.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy was published in June 2004 as RPG11, acquiring statutory status in September 2004 with the commencement of Part 1 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Strategy guides the preparation of local authority development plans and transport plans in the region; informs the work of other public agencies and service providers, and sets a planning framework for the Regional Economic Strategy prepared by Advantage West Midlands.

3.2.2 Sustainable development objectives lie at the heart of the Spatial Strategy. The key challenge is seen as the continued outward movement of people and jobs away from the Major Urban Areas (MUA's) of Birmingham / Solihull, the Black Country, Coventry and the North Staffordshire conurbation. This trend is seen as increasing pressures on the environment, encouraging the development of greenfield sites, increasing the need for car-based travel and creating dangers of abandonment and social polarisation within the region. The Strategy seeks to address these pressures in order to create balanced and stable communities across the region.

3.2.3 In doing so, the Strategy identifies four major challenges for the region:

- urban renaissance – developing the MUA's in such a way that they can increasingly meet their own economic and social needs in order to counter the unsustainable outward movement of people and jobs

- rural renaissance – addressing more effectively the major changes which are challenging the traditional roles of rural areas and the countryside
  - diversifying and modernising the region’s economy – ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and that they help to reduce social exclusion
  - modernising the transport infrastructure to support the sustainable development of the region.
- 3.2.4 The Strategy promotes development opportunities in the MUA’s, designed to retain and attract people and investment through such measures as housing market renewal, support for vital and vibrant town centres and improvements to the quality of transport and the environment.
- 3.2.5 Away from the MUA’s, new development is to be focused on other large settlements, and in particular five sub-regional foci, of which Hereford is one (the others are Rugby, Shrewsbury, Telford and Worcester). New development should primarily meet locally generated needs to support balanced, sustainable communities. The strategy envisages a significant reduction in the proportion of housing development to meet demand arising from the MUA’s. Housing needs should be satisfied in the sub-regional foci rather than the peripheral expansion of other large settlements. Such growth is to be supported by a balanced network of vital and vibrant town and city centres, acting as service centres for their rural hinterlands, and by improvements to transport networks to reduce social exclusion and improve access to services and opportunities.
- 3.2.6 The ultimate aim of the Strategy is a region made up of a dynamic network of places, important in their own right and with distinct characteristics but reinforcing functions. An important part of this is the development of a balanced network of town and city centres. Shire towns such as Hereford should continue to act as a focus for new investment to support wider regeneration and meet the economic, social and cultural needs of the surrounding rural areas, building upon traditional strengths of heritage and high quality environment. Elsewhere, other towns and villages have acknowledged roles in delivering improved local services and developing their own distinctive roles and character.
- 3.2.7 The Strategy provides for rural renaissance initiatives to be concentrated in the Rural Regeneration Zone in the west of the region – designated by Advantage West Midlands and including much of Herefordshire. Actions in the Zone embrace a wide variety of measures, including traffic management/public transport improvements in the A49 corridor; encouragement of new economic activity; strengthening the range and quality of services through rural service centres based wherever possible on market towns and large villages; improving accessibility to jobs and services; provision of affordable housing to meet local needs; promoting rural diversification and maintaining and enhancing environmental character and quality.
- 3.2.8 More generally, market towns of all sizes are seen by the Strategy as having a key role in rural renaissance, as a focus for sustainable economic and housing development, with this role to be defined in development plans. Villages are also acknowledged as performing an essential role in the rural way of life, and the Strategy provides for consideration to be given to the extent to which sustainable development, appropriate in scale and nature, would enable villages to remain viable.
- 3.2.9 In accordance with the overall approach, the Strategy sets out a significant redistribution of housing provision. The aim is to move from a situation where the ratio of new housing development between the MUA’s and other areas is 1:2 to a position at 2011 where the ratio is in favour of the MUA’s. To help achieve this, outside the MUA’s progressively lower levels of housing growth are proposed, so that such areas ultimately meet local needs and do not provide for continued out-migration. As one of the sub-regional foci, Hereford is identified as a location for longer term strategic housing development beyond the MUA’s, with this function to be the subject of further study. Overall, the annual average rate of housing provision in Herefordshire, expressed as maxima, is as follows: 2001-2007, 800 dwellings; 2007-2011, 600; and 2011-2021,600. The Strategy sets a target that 68% of this development should be on previously developed land (regional target 76%).

3.2.10 The Regional Spatial Strategy forms part of the statutory development plan. Regard has been had to the Strategy in preparing the UDP. The Strategy may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

### 3.3 A Vision for Herefordshire

3.3.1 The Plan's Vision for Herefordshire has been developed jointly with the Council's partner organisations in the Herefordshire Partnership.

3.3.2 The Vision comprises three interlocking elements:

- create **fair and thriving communities**, which will be inclusive for all, allowing equal and full access to opportunities and services
- properly **protect and enhance the environment** through sustainable development
- build a **strong, competitive and innovative economy** with a balanced mix of businesses, jobs and homes.

#### *Sustainable development principles*

3.3.3 Central to the UDP vision is progression towards more sustainable forms of development appropriate to Herefordshire. Sustainable development principles can be expressed in general terms (i.e. to cover not only land use matters), but can also be tuned to the particular remit of the land use planning system. Some general principles are set out here as part of the overall vision, together with interpretations in terms of the particular characteristics, needs and issues in Herefordshire, as outlined in Chapter 2. In the supporting text for policy S1, the principles are further geared to the locational strategy for development in Herefordshire, being interpreted as sustainability criteria to inform all other policies in the Plan, and guide the sustainability appraisal.

3.3.4 The commonly-accepted basic definition of sustainable development from the 1987 Brundtland Report states that: "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Since "sustainability" and "sustainable development" are used throughout the Plan in various contexts, it is important to state the key principles underlying that definition.

3.3.5 The Brundtland report recognises:

- the inseparability of the social and economic aspects of sustainable development from the environmental aspects, in particular stressing that environmental sustainability goes hand in hand with fairer access to resources to meet basic human needs and aspirations
- limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organisation on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities, i.e. the need to live and develop within environmental capacity
- the need for reduced consumption of resources amongst the more affluent sectors of society
- the relationship between high population growth, rising living standards and pressure on resources
- the need for effective citizen participation in decision-making at all levels.

3.3.6 These factors are all relevant to the planning system, but the system alone can only make a partial, albeit significant contribution towards improving sustainability. It must work in tandem

with other systems for regulating, managing and enabling appropriate development, to progressively align development in the County with its environmental capacity. Land is obviously a finite resource and the natural and man-made resources on, under and above it may only be replaceable to a degree. Working within environmental capacity should involve moving towards conditions where:

- rates of use of renewable resources do not exceed their rates of regeneration
- rates of use of non-renewable resources do not exceed rates at which sustainable renewable substitutes are developed
- rates of pollution emission do not exceed the capacity of the environment to assimilate them.

3.3.7 A final principle is that development should address the sustainability principles set out in the Maastricht Treaty, which aim at a high level of environmental protection, taking into account the regional diversity in the European Community:

- the integration principle – that environmental protection should be integrated with other policies to ensure that one policy or set of policies does not undermine another
- the polluter pays principle – that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source, with the ‘polluter’ paying
- the preventative principle – that preventative action should be taken to avoid environmental damage in preference to remedial action when the damage has occurred
- the precautionary principle – that there is full evaluation of potentially damaging activities to avoid or minimise risks and, where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason to delay cost-effective action to prevent or minimise such damage.

3.3.8 These principles are usually capable of being expressed in planning policy form - as criteria that development should meet where they are relevant to the form of development in question. Planning policies in the UDP are generally positively-framed towards development, but also precautionary or preventative, in that they specify environmental criteria that should prevent unacceptable impacts and put the burden of proof on the proposer of development to assess the risk of such impacts. This may often be required through environmental statements or environmental impact assessments accompanying a planning application, with the planning authority providing another ‘safety net’ by examining the robustness of the environmental information supplied. Planning obligations are often used to compensate for anticipated adverse environmental impacts.

#### *Sustainable development in Herefordshire*

3.3.9 The above principles are universal to any location but the characteristics and issues particular to Herefordshire warrant a special emphasis. Of recognised importance are the County’s predominantly rural and relatively isolated nature, high-quality environmental assets, a low level of industrialisation, a focus on indigenous land-based activities, and tourism linked strongly to landscape quality. Aspects of these are viewed by some as assets justifying a strongly protective stance and by others as inhibitors to growth and modernity. The UDP seeks a balance that can both allow and promote appropriate kinds of sustainable activity and development in the places that are best suited. An important function of the Plan is to provide a framework for residential and economic development to meet social needs in a manner that is properly balanced with environmental factors.

3.3.10 The vision also needs to identify the role of Hereford, the market towns, various types of rural settlement and the wider countryside. Given its relative isolation and its identification in the Regional Spatial Strategy as a sub-regional centre, Hereford will continue to serve the administrative and commercial hinterland extending beyond the County. Its sub-regional role

will be further strengthened with additional central area retail development, guided in style by the Edgar Street Grid masterplan. It will be important for the market towns to retain their roles in their catchment areas and to continue to act as local service centres for the wider rural area. In terms of development, the Plan seeks to maintain the balance between Hereford and the market towns without compromising their character or failing to deliver local needs-based development.

- 3.3.11 In local planning terms, the more intensive and larger-scale developments that are considered necessary would tend to be better located in or adjoining the principal settlements, where sustainability gains such as improved accessibility can be more easily provided. Lower-impact, smaller-scale development can be accommodated in both urban and rural areas throughout the County, provided that it can be demonstrated to minimise adverse impacts such as generation of private car trips. Consequently, some flexibility is needed in the Plan for varying scales and types of development to meet differing needs in different parts of the County. While the development strategy sets this out in broad terms, the policies to permit or enable particular kinds of sustainable development are distributed throughout the Plan. Chapter 4 sets out the sustainability criteria that need to be considered by all development proposals.

### **3.4 Guiding principles**

- 3.4.1 To translate the broad vision into practical policies and proposals, and to ensure consistency and compatibility between various parts of the vision, requires the development of 'guiding principles'. Future development in Herefordshire should be guided by the principles set out below.
- 3.4.2 The central principle which emerges from the Vision recognises the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development together with the role of the Plan as a land use planning document. All four objectives in P1 need to be considered in unison.

#### **P1**

**The UDP will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by developing land use policies and proposals which help ensure:**

- **recognition of the legitimate needs of everyone in the community, and progress towards greater social equity**
- **sustainable economic activity and development, together with high and stable levels of employment**
- **effective protection, restoration and enhancement of the environment and of Herefordshire's environmental capacity**
- **sustainable use of natural resources.**

- 3.4.3 Other principles can be grouped under the three themes of the vision:

*Fair and thriving communities*

#### **P2**

**The UDP will work towards an improved balance between housing, work, community, educational and cultural facilities throughout the County, enhancing the role of settlements as service centres, and consolidating the identity, character, function and vitality of existing settlements.**

#### **P3**

**The UDP will protect and improve opportunities for access to services and facilities in town and country, giving priority to those which are appropriate to the location and**

character of the area in question, including health, welfare and education, transport, utilities, leisure and amenity. It will aim to provide new development, facilities and services as close to the point of need as is consistent with the overall strategy of the Plan.

**P4**

The UDP will provide an appropriate range of housing which is energy efficient in terms of design and use, location and transport requirements. Housing will respect the environmental capacity of the locality and provide the most effective support for existing settlements.

*Protect and enhance the environment*

**P5**

The UDP will promote forms of environmental management which minimise the depletion of scarce and non-renewable resources, reduce energy consumption and waste, and encourage use of recycled and renewable resources.

**P6**

The UDP will favour those forms of land use and development which work within environmental capacity, which demonstrate beneficial environmental impacts or minimise adverse impacts on key resources such as air, water, land, biodiversity, accessibility, or demonstrate successful mitigation or compensatory measures for environmental damage.

**P7**

The UDP will protect, restore and enhance environmental assets, giving special attention to irreplaceable resources and to the distinctive character of local environments. It will give high priority to conserving and enhancing the characteristic Herefordshire landscape, designated areas, historic buildings, archaeology, features of geological interest and biodiversity and the processes which support them, and ensuring sympathetic integration of new land use and development.

**P8**

The UDP will promote sustainable land use and management, especially through the restoration, re-use and enhancement of degraded environmental assets, including the recycling of previously developed land and buildings for appropriate new uses.

**P9**

The UDP will promote better accessibility to work, services and facilities in ways which reduce the overall need to travel and promote the use of non-car based transport. It will guide new development to locations which offer a choice of transport modes for movement of people and freight. In promoting accessibility, guiding the location of new development and evaluating proposals, the UDP will have regard to the hierarchy set out in the Local Transport Plan, which prioritises modes according to their inherent sustainability.

**P10**

The UDP will promote high design standards in the location, setting, layout and construction of both new development and improvements to existing developments. High priority will be given to energy efficiency in terms of design form and use, location and transport requirements.

**P11**

**The UDP will promote access to opportunities for social and economic betterment, and seek to reduce disparities between different areas of the County. It will promote urban and rural regeneration, which encourages greater self-sufficiency and balance in communities, and consolidates the function of existing settlements.**

**P12**

**The UDP will seek to strengthen and diversify the County's employment base by the identification of opportunities for new economic development which are energy efficient in terms of their overall location and transport requirements. It will give priority to the development of economic activities appropriate to the County's character, geographical orientation and indigenous resources.**

### **3.5 Development strategy**

- 3.5.1 In the light of the above, an overall approach to the location of development within the County has been formulated. To take forward the overall thrust of the Regional Spatial Strategy that development should be concentrated within existing settlements, the Plan adopts a sequential approach to the selection of locations for development.
- 3.5.2 The strategy identifies locations where development will be focussed. However, in all cases development proposals will be subject to an overall appraisal of their sustainability. This appraisal will have particular, though not exclusive regard to such factors as the availability of previously developed land and buildings; infrastructure capacity; the ability to build communities and the range of services provided; the location and accessibility of potential development sites by modes other than the car, the physical suitability of sites to accommodate the development proposed and a wide range of environmental factors. The appraisal also includes a sequential approach in recognition of flooding and flood risk.
- 3.5.3 With reference to flooding and flood risk, the Plan adopts a risk-based strategic approach to proposals for development in or affecting flood risk areas. Risk assessments of Plan proposals are outlined in chapter 4 Development Requirements and detailed in accompanying background papers.
- 3.5.4 In selecting locations for development, land within the urban areas which can be developed without adverse environmental impact has been selected as a first priority. Maximum use has been made of previously developed land, including making the most effective use of existing buildings through conversion and bringing vacant property back into use.
- 3.5.5 Where peripheral growth is needed to meet development requirements, locations have been selected in accordance with the guidance in the Regional Spatial Strategy and the need to create stable and balanced communities. Such urban extensions are seen as the next most sustainable option following the preference given above to previously developed land and buildings within the urban areas. Development is allocated with regard to the need to ensure a better balance between homes and jobs.

*Hereford*

- 3.5.6 Hereford forms the natural focus for the County, centrally located and at the hub of existing road and public transport networks. It offers a wide range of employment, leisure, educational and community services and opportunities. It is identified as a focus for development in the sub-region within the Regional Spatial Strategy. Hereford has accordingly been taken as the most sustainable location for the majority of new development, in line with the Spatial Strategy and the 'Planning for the New Millennium' public consultation.
- 3.5.7 Recognising limits on transport capacity in Hereford, the Plan's proposals emphasise the re-

use of previously developed land with only limited use of greenfield land. The Regional Spatial Strategy acknowledges that the A49 in Hereford is subject to increasing congestion and that this has implications for the fulfilment of the city's identified role as a sub-regional focus for development and regeneration. Further work on identifying the role of the foci is proposed as part of the partial review of the Strategy.

#### *Market Towns*

- 3.5.8 Away from Hereford, the amount of development being directed to the market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington varies according to local factors:

**Leominster:** Leominster enjoys relatively good road and public transport links including rail. The proposals in the Plan include confirmation of a significant existing Local Plan proposal for employment development, and this is to be balanced by providing for additional housing to the west of the town, utilising previously developed land. Recent house building rates will broadly be maintained.

**Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury:** physical constraints, committed developments and the need to protect valued landscapes limit the potential for significant new development in both settlements. Nonetheless the proposals in the Plan for Ross-on-Wye will allow recent housebuilding rates to be maintained. The needs of the economy and the accessibility of this part of the County are acknowledged by allocating additional employment land at Ross-on-Wye. Housing development in Ledbury is largely limited to existing commitments and windfall sites.

**Bromyard and Kington:** the relatively small size of these settlements limits their potential to accept significant new development although they are expected to continue to grow at similar levels to that experienced in the recent past.

#### *Main villages*

- 3.5.9 Away from the County's principal urban areas, development - mainly for a limited amount of housing - will be directed to selected rural settlements. Such main villages have been identified on the basis of a range of criteria including population size, level of existing facilities and public transport availability.
- 3.5.10 It is important that such growth is sustainable. The selected settlements offer a range of community services and facilities, including shops, post offices, village halls and schools, and are considered to be capable of accommodating further growth without detriment to their infrastructure or overall character. The public transport criterion takes into account both journeys to work and trips for other purposes, and includes journeys to service centres both within and without Herefordshire. Trips are mainly by bus but also by rail.
- 3.5.11 Directing growth within the rural areas of the County on this basis facilitates a choice of means of transport to the employment and service opportunities available in Hereford and the market towns in the County. At the same time the role of public transport will be supported and strengthened. Development will comprise both infill and planned expansion, and will be provided for by both allocation and windfall allowance with attention given to the need to balance homes and jobs.
- 3.5.12 Not all main villages have been selected to accommodate further planned growth. This reflects factors such as constraints on further growth through infrastructure and environmental limitations, or where further significant development would harm the character of the settlement concerned. However windfall development will continue.

#### *Settlement boundaries*

- 3.5.13 Where development is to be encouraged it is important to ensure that it can be properly controlled. To do this, settlement boundaries have been defined around Hereford, the market



towns and the main villages. Development will be contained within the defined boundaries, other than in exceptional cases.

### *Rural areas*

- 3.5.14 It is important that provision is made to allow existing rural communities across the County to be sustained, with adequate provision made for instance for affordable housing to meet local needs. This has to be balanced with the need to ensure that a sustainable pattern of development is achieved. The over-provision of homes in the rural areas can conflict with the aim of reducing the need to travel, particularly where local services and public transport opportunities are limited. It can also lead to the unnecessary loss of greenfield sites, pressure on small-scale infrastructure, and an imbalance between houses and jobs. In short, in the rural areas of the County development in excess of that required to meet local needs cannot be seen as sustainable.
- 3.5.15 Accordingly, it is an essential part of the strategy of the Plan that growth in settlements away from the urban areas or the main villages should be directed to the provision of lower cost market housing and offer the opportunity for affordable housing in smaller settlements.
- 3.5.16 New development in the open countryside, away from established settlements, will be strictly controlled and directed to supporting existing local employment opportunities and with those arising from diversification. Where development is to be permitted it will be required to be sustainable in overall terms.

## **3.6 Rural regeneration**

- 3.6.1 In the rural areas of the County the development strategy of the Plan has a wider dimension – the needs of the countryside. The issues of agricultural change and decline in employment opportunities highlighted in chapter 2 of the Plan point to the need for a co-ordinated response which will necessarily go beyond the scope of the planning system. This is confirmed by the resources that have been forthcoming for the rural areas of Herefordshire from European Structural Funds in the 1990s and which have been delivered by agencies working in partnership. This is set to continue with the establishment of the Herefordshire Community Strategy and funds available under Objective 2. While land use measures alone will not arrest rural decline, they are an important part of any rural regeneration strategy.
- 3.6.2 The Plan contributes to the task of maintaining the countryside as an attractive living and working environment in the following ways:
- ensuring through the Plan's development strategy that patterns of development are consistent with reducing the need to travel and supporting the use of public transport
  - confirming and protecting the established roles of villages and market towns as service centres, and ensuring that development is of high design quality, commensurate with local needs and consistent with settlement character
  - seeking the adequate provision of rural housing to meet local needs, including affordable housing
  - maintaining a healthy rural economy by facilitating small scale employment growth in existing settlements, by supporting the revival of agriculture and rural land management, and through encouraging the conversion of rural buildings for employment uses
  - continuing to protect the countryside for its landscape, biodiversity, agricultural, forestry, recreational and ecological value
  - encouraging leisure, tourism and recreation access and projects in the countryside.

## **3.7 General policies**

- 3.7.1 The following constitute the Plan's general policies for the development and use of land within the County for the period up to 2011. The policies have been developed in the light of:

- the Regional Spatial Strategy and national planning policy guidance
- the characteristics and key issues facing Herefordshire
- the priorities of the Council and the Herefordshire Partnership
- the Plan's vision and guiding principles
- the results of public consultation on the Project report, the 'Planning for the New Millennium' consultation, and views expressed through the UDP focus groups and the Herefordshire Community Strategy.

3.7.2 The policies embody the Plan's development strategy and constitute Part I of the Unitary Development Plan. The policies are repeated and justified within subsequent chapters. The order in which criteria are listed in the policies does not indicate any priority ranking.

*Sustainable development*

3.7.3 Policy S1 focuses the general sustainable development principles and criteria identified earlier on the UDP's remit for spatial strategy, land use and development in Herefordshire, grouping the principles and criteria around the following themes:

- protection, enhancement, management and re-use of natural and man-made resources
- planning, regulating and enabling necessary new development
- enabling people to meet their basic needs by more equitable access to resources and facilities.

It sets out the general means by which the UDP will promote sustainable development around these themes, each of the objectives, where relevant, being carried over to the other Part I policies and all the Part II policies, then elaborated as necessary. Chapter 4, Development Requirements, deals with specific sustainability considerations that all development will need to address.

*Resource management*

3.7.4 Herefordshire is particularly rich in natural and man-made resources that need protection from adverse development. Planning deals primarily with the physical environment and how it can meet social and economic needs. Essentially, this means managing physical resources, be they natural (land, water, air, biodiversity, energy) or man-made (landscapes, buildings, archaeology, infrastructure). Sustainability requires firstly the protection of existing resources to prevent their future loss or damage, so that they remain available for future use. Protection may range from preventing any change to the resource through to using the resource intensively but in a way that sustains it or regenerates it for future use. Special protection will be needed for non-renewable or irreplaceable resources, i.e. those that cannot be naturally regenerated or artificially recreated.

3.7.5 Normally, protection is not simply prevention of change but will involve some degree of planning and management of the resource to meet appropriate objectives. New development may involve some loss of resource (e.g. land no longer available for wildlife or growing food), but this change can be evaluated and, if acceptable, may be mitigated or compensated by alternative provision elsewhere. There may also be environmental gain, in that a development may create opportunities for enhancing resources (e.g. new habitat on previously urbanised land). Most development will involve compromise, but the UDP can set the framework for dealing as sustainably as possible with the physical resources involved in development at any location or on any specific site.

3.7.6 Re-use or recycling of previously-used resources is a case where planning can make a significant difference. National and regional guidance gives preference to re-use of previously-developed land, buildings and infrastructure ahead of developing on greenfield sites. The recycling approach can also extend to re-using buildings that are still serviceable or fit for purpose.

- 3.7.7 Complementary to direct protection and enhancement of resources is action to minimise waste arisings, maximise recycling of waste residues and prevent pollution of resources, and to treat their adverse effects in a sustainable way. The UDP can control land uses and development that directly or indirectly generate waste and cause pollution. It can also enable better design of development that prevents or minimises future waste and pollution.

*Planning of development*

- 3.7.8 The central, traditional role of development plans lies in setting the policy framework for regulating land use and development, but it can also be more positive and create the conditions that enable communities and individuals to contribute to more sustainable forms of development. Most of the Plan is based on quantitative assessments of needs - for housing, employment, open space, etc. – and the strategy for accommodating necessary development to meet those needs. The supply of development to meet Herefordshire's needs is partly encapsulated in the Regional Spatial Strategy. Within these parameters, the UDP has discretion to determine how much development will go where, and therefore to direct it to the more sustainable locations and sites, in line with sustainability criteria.
- 3.7.9 At the more detailed levels of planning – sites, buildings and infrastructure – the Plan can promote sustainable design, including specifications for location, siting, orientation, layout, scale, construction techniques, materials, access and circulation, energy generation and conservation, environmental gain, amenity, lighting and noise controls, safety and crime prevention, etc. With regard to movement, sustainable development emphasises convenience and accessibility over mobility, the latter having connotations of increasing opportunities for movement without necessarily considering the full environmental implications. Planning to locate related land uses (e.g. home/work) in closer proximity within balanced communities is one means of reducing the need to travel. Encouraging use of travel modes other than the private motor vehicle is one means of reducing congestion and pollution, and providing opportunities to enhance the environment of settlements. Many of these aspects of sustainability are dealt with in detail in chapter 4, Development Requirements, and in the Design and Development Requirements SPG, and will be the subject of development briefs prepared for the principal allocated development sites.

*Meeting social needs*

- 3.7.10 On the social side, sustainability criteria include opportunities for creating more self-sufficient communities - with homes, work and facilities in better balance and closer together, with production and distribution of basic living requirements more localised, and with reduced need to travel. The UDP can also influence greater social inclusion by helping to equalise access for all sectors of the community to the essentials of life, and to various services and facilities.
- 3.7.11 The scale of economic activity, development and associated infrastructure will depend on location and environmental conditions, and what constitutes sustainable economic development will not be uniform across the County. There is scope for medium to large industrial enterprises and other business developments to set up or expand in the towns or on specialised sites where access by all modes of transport is realistic. Much of the County is rural; and some rural areas are remote from towns. The issues here, such as high quality landscape, tranquillity and low accessibility, militate against larger-scale economic development, but there is considerable scope for smaller-scale, highly-sustainable economic activity, particularly local production and distribution of products and services derived from indigenous resources. Sustainable economic development here will often be linked to more sustainable approaches to rural land management. The UDP can help facilitate both urban and rural regeneration through its development policies.
- 3.7.12 An underlying sustainability principle for all development is to avoid or minimise adverse environmental impacts, or mitigate them or compensate for them where appropriate. Through its policy framework, the UDP can ensure that potential sustainability impacts of development are taken into account before development decisions are determined.

- 3.7.13 Policy S1 therefore encapsulates the general sustainability considerations to be applied to the development strategy and to the subsequent policies for determining planning applications. Proposers of development will need to follow through the individual considerations to the more detailed levels found in chapter 4 and the topic policies in subsequent chapters.

### **S1 Sustainable development**

**The Plan will promote development and land use change which in terms of its level, location, form and design contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. This means avoiding or minimising adverse impacts on the environment whilst providing necessary dwellings and employment together with appropriate infrastructure, services, transport and amenities.**

**Sustainable development will be promoted by:**

- 1. protecting and enhancing the natural environment and historic heritage, especially irreplaceable assets;**
- 2. respecting patterns of local distinctiveness and landscape character in both town and country, and safeguarding landscape quality and visual amenity;**
- 3. conserving and minimising use of natural resources - particularly non-renewables - and encouraging resource enhancement and alternatives to the use of non-renewable resources;**
- 4. regenerating or recycling previously-used resources – including previously-developed land, buildings and infrastructure – and perpetuating the use of existing infrastructure and facilities wherever possible;**
- 5. increasing energy conservation, energy-efficiency, and energy generation from renewable sources;**
- 6. minimising waste and pollution and adopting sustainable treatment systems;**
- 7. directing necessary new development to locations, settlements and sites that best meet the appropriate sustainable development criteria;**
- 8. requiring more sustainable design in all aspects of new development, redevelopment and regeneration;**
- 9. ensuring that development respects the needs of local communities and encouraging greater self-sufficiency within local communities;**
- 10. seeking more equitable access for all sectors of the community to opportunities for homes and livelihoods, natural and historic resources, health, recreation, amenity, education, and facilities and services;**
- 11. supporting sustainable economic activity and high and stable levels of employment;**
- 12. supporting more sustainable approaches to land use and land management in rural areas;**
- 13. reducing the need to travel, securing safe and convenient accessibility between different land uses and maintaining, improving and integrating opportunities to move safely and conveniently by modes other than personal motor transport;**
- 14. improving health and safety through reduced pollution and safer design of the built environment and landscaping;**

15. **avoiding or minimising adverse impacts of human activities, land uses and development on the physical environment.**

*Guiding principles P1-P12*

## **S2 Development requirements**

The contribution that developments can make to a sustainable pattern of land use and development which respects the County's environmental resources will be secured by:

1. **ensuring that new development achieves a high standard of design and layout which respects the townscape, landscape, ecological and historic character of the area; is sustainable in terms of its construction materials and methods, use of energy, water and other resources; and includes positive environmental benefits including landscaping schemes and provision of wildlife habitats;**
2. **promoting land use patterns and developments which favour mixed uses subject to amenity considerations, which respect the development potential of adjoining land, and which wherever possible secure the reclamation and beneficial use of degraded or contaminated land, environmental improvements and the reduction or removal of environmental conflicts;**
3. **ensuring that developments include suitable provision for public transport, cycling and walking, and that their likely effect in relation to the capacity and safety of both the trunk road and local highway network is taken fully into account;**
4. **ensuring that development is designed having full regard to and within environmental constraints, including groundwater protection, land stability, contamination, and the location of hazardous uses;**
5. **taking a risk-based precautionary approach to flood risk and the effects of flooding elsewhere, having regard to indicative flood risk in the major flood plains of the Rivers Wye and Lugg and their tributaries. Where development is proposed in locations at risk of flooding, it should be demonstrated that there are no reasonable options available in a lower risk category, consistent with other sustainable development objectives;**
6. **ensuring that development does not lead to an unacceptable risk to human health and safety, and that risks of pollution of water, air, or land, or in terms of noise or lighting, are minimised;**
7. **ensuring that development which would result in significant negative effects is avoided, but where environmental impact is unavoidable, requiring mitigation or compensation measures which provide benefits at least equal to any environmental loss;**
8. **taking proper account of the ability of existing and proposed infrastructure including foul drainage, water supply and water resources, and the highway network to serve the development proposed without undue environmental impact; and**
9. **making use of planning conditions and planning obligations to further the strategy of the Plan.**

*Guiding principles P6, P7, P8, P9 and P10*

### S3 Housing

Provision will be made for additional dwellings to be built at an annual rate of 800 dwellings a year for the period 2001-2007 and for 600 dwellings a year beyond 2007. Having regard to existing commitments and the likely supply of dwellings arising from windfall sites, a maximum of about 12,200 dwellings would thereby be built over the period 1996-2011. Priority will be given to the use of previously developed land, ahead of urban extensions, including making the most effective use of existing buildings through conversion and bringing vacant property back into use. The target is for 68% of housing completions in the period 2001-2011 to be on previously developed land.

#### Dwelling completions

1996-2001	approximately 5,000 dwellings
2001-2007	approximately 4,800 dwellings at 800 dwellings a year
2007-2011	approximately 2,400 dwellings at 600 dwellings a year

A four tier housing location strategy has been adopted. Most provision will be concentrated in Hereford (the first tier) and the market towns (the second tier) principally from a combination of allocated sites, urban capacity sites and some urban extensions. The third tier locates housing on allocation sites in the more sustainable main villages. In addition, there will be some windfall development mainly on capacity sites in these villages. The fourth tier of the strategy caters for other rural housing needs essentially through windfall developments on infill plots in named smaller settlements.

The distribution of housing is as follows:

Hereford	3,781 dwellings
Leominster	1,037 dwellings
Ross-on-Wye	693 dwellings
Ledbury	956 dwellings
Bromyard	480 dwellings
Kington	275 dwellings
Main villages	3,044 dwellings
Wider rural area	1,918 dwellings

In addition, it is anticipated that approximately 274 dwellings (253 in Hereford and 21 in Ross-on-Wye) will be built on other sites not allocated at this stage.

Housing will be provided to meet the needs of communities throughout the County, including the need for affordable housing (about 2,300 dwellings in the Plan period) and for the provision of a range of dwelling types and sizes, and taking advantage of opportunities to create and maintain sustainable and integrated communities. In selecting and appraising locations for housing development, consideration will be given to:

1. accessibility to employment and local services by transport modes other than the car; and
2. the capacity of existing infrastructure including public transport, utilities and social and educational facilities to absorb and serve the development proposed.

*Guiding principle P4*

## **S4 Employment**

The diversification and regeneration of the County's economic base will be provided for by:

- 1. making provision for 100 hectares of land for Part B employment development in the County. This provision includes land allocations in a range of locations throughout the County and existing planning permissions. In addition to the larger scale allocations, policies will permit suitable employment development in the rural areas which are consistent in scale with their location, in order to help ensure balanced communities and to secure rural regeneration;**
- 2. ensuring that a suitable portfolio of land is identified in terms of choice of sites, size, quality, location and Use Class to meet differing needs, and that sufficient land is available which is readily capable of development and well served by existing infrastructure or capable of being served; and**
- 3. building a strong, competitive and innovative economy with a balanced mix of businesses, jobs and homes through which the local economy can flourish.**

*Guiding principles P9 and P12*

## **S5 Town centres and retail**

The range of shopping, employment, entertainment, social and other community services that are available in existing centres should continue to be available to all in locations accessible by a choice of means of transport. This will be achieved by:

- 1. protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of Hereford city centre, market town centres and local, neighbourhood and village centres throughout the County, with particular reference to maintaining the County's retail hierarchy and the role of Hereford city centre as a sub-regional shopping centre;**
- 2. supporting continued investment in existing centres, maintaining an attractive environment, and encouraging high quality design and mixed uses including housing, particularly above shops;**
- 3. locating key town centre uses that generate and attract many trips, including retail, entertainment and leisure, commercial and public offices, in or adjacent to existing centres where there is convenient access by a choice of means of transport; and**
- 4. in edge of centre or out of centre locations, applying first a test of need and then, if need can be demonstrated, a sequential approach to retail and other proposals that generate and attract many trips. The likely impact of proposals on the Plan's strategy and on the vitality and viability of existing centres will also be considered, as will the accessibility of the site by a choice of means of transport, the likely effect of development on overall travel patterns and car use and the scope to encourage investment to regenerate deprived areas.**

*Guiding principles P2, P3, P9 and P11*

## **S6 Transport**

The safe, efficient and sustainable movement of people and goods will be promoted within the context of reducing the need to travel by:

1. locating developments wherever possible within the County's existing urban areas or at locations reasonably accessible by means other than the private car, in order to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys and reliance on the motor vehicle, and promote modal choice according to a hierarchy of modes and solutions to demand for travel in order of their sustainability;
2. encouraging alternatives to the motor vehicle which through reducing energy consumption and pollution have less environmental impact;
3. promoting integration between transport modes so that the network is used to best effect;
4. assessing development and transport infrastructure proposals in terms of their traffic and transportation, economic development and environmental impacts and benefits, including implications for the whole road network including trunk roads, road safety, access to development areas, and assistance given to non-motorised modes of travel and to reducing the need to travel; and
5. safeguarding appropriate opportunities for rail transport and the routes of new walking, cycling and highway schemes from development that would prejudice their implementation.

*Guiding principle P9*

## **S7 Natural and historic heritage**

The following assets comprising the County's historic and natural heritage will be protected, restored or enhanced:

1. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
2. sites and features of international, national and local nature conservation interest, species of biodiversity interest and areas of geodiversity;
3. the historic heritage including archaeology, buildings and areas of historic or architectural importance, and natural landscapes; and
4. landscape features that contribute positively to local distinctiveness and quality of the local environment.

*Guiding principles P5, P6, P7 and P10*

## **S8 Recreation, sport and tourism**

The provision of appropriate new or improved facilities for recreation, sport and tourism will be supported to meet the needs of local communities and visitors and to contribute to local economic development, employment and community regeneration.

Existing recreational and sports facilities will be protected, fully utilised wherever possible, or enhanced to provide better and improved facilities. The re-use of existing buildings should also be considered, if appropriate, for the development of new facilities.



**New facilities in both town and country should address recognised shortages of formal and informal provision, be close to the point of need, take into account environmental impacts, and be readily accessible by a choice of means of transport. Priority will be given to:**

- 1. addressing deficiencies in recreational provision in or close to main areas of population;**
- 2. meeting recreational and open space needs arising from new residential development;**
- 3. reducing land take and duplication of provision by ensuring shared use of facilities by different user groups;**
- 4. developing networks of open space and especially linking open spaces in settlements to the wider countryside; and**
- 5. the development of facilities in locations that can cater for a wide range of users.**

**In rural areas, new recreational provision will generally be sought in or close to existing settlements, particularly where it can accompany new development to promote balanced communities. Exceptions may be made in open countryside, where the recreational resource, such as common land, woodland, lakes, is unavoidably remote from settlement, where linear recreational routes are proposed, or where the activity is normally associated with open countryside, such as equestrian centres.**

**Tourism developments should respect the character of the County and the locality, provide for the sustainable use of indigenous features and resources, offer improvements to visitor management in pressure areas and sensitive environments, and avoid or minimise intrusion on local communities.**

*Guiding principles P1, P2 and P3*

## **S9 Minerals**

**The sustainable and efficient use and management of minerals will be promoted by:**

- 1. conserving minerals as far as possible, whilst ensuring an adequate supply to meet identified needs;**
- 2. aiming to maintain the County's share of the regional production of aggregates and a landbank of permitted reserves, subject to environmental considerations;**
- 3. ensuring that the impact of proposals for the winning, working, storage and transportation of minerals are kept to an acceptable minimum and can be mitigated to an acceptable extent;**
- 4. ensuring the sensitive working, reclamation and after care of sites so as to protect or enhance the quality of the environment;**
- 5. protecting areas of landscape or nature conservation value from minerals development, other than in exceptional circumstances;**
- 6. preventing the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources; and**
- 7. minimising the production of waste and encouraging the efficient use of minerals by promoting design solutions and construction methods which minimise mineral**

use, including the appropriate use of high quality materials and recycling of waste materials.

*Guiding principles P5 and P9*

## **S10 Waste**

The sustainable and efficient management of waste will be sought by:

1. basing waste management decisions on the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) Assessment results, the principles of the waste hierarchy (including reduction and minimisation, re-use, recovery, recycling and landfill), the proximity principle, and regional local self-sufficiency. The BPEO for the three controlled waste streams is as follows:

**Municipal Solid Waste:** based on a minimum 33% recycling/composting and a maximum of 22% landfilling with any balance required being managed through a form of thermal treatment;

**Commercial and Industrial Waste:** based on reducing landfill to 23%, increasing recycling to 73% and 4% dealt with by existing thermal treatment;

**Construction and Demolition Wastes:** based on reducing landfill to 24% and recycling increased to 76%.

An element of flexibility will be retained when considering applications for waste management facilities. Processes or technologies put forward as an alternative to those which comprise the BPEO for a particular waste stream will have to clearly demonstrate how the impact of that process or technology will be equal to or not significantly greater than those which have been modelled for the agreed BPEO;

2. ensuring that the impact of proposals for the collection, storage, handling, treatment, disposal and transportation of waste can be mitigated to an acceptable extent, with particular attention paid to the impact on human health and the environment;
3. ensuring that sites can be reclaimed to a state that meets the required standard for their proposed after use;
4. making use of sustainable technologies wherever possible; and
5. ensuring that all development proposals give due consideration to the waste they will generate, in accordance with the above principles.

*Guiding principles P5 and P9*

## **S11 Community facilities and services**

The needs of the community for services and facilities will be addressed by:

1. ensuring that the provision of necessary infrastructure minimises environmental consequences;
2. supporting the use of renewable energy resources where they are economically and environmentally sustainable; and

- 3. making provision for the retention of existing community facilities, particularly where there is under provision, and for the further development of social, health, education and community care facilities which are located close to the community they serve.**

*Guiding principles P2, P3, P5, P6 and P7*