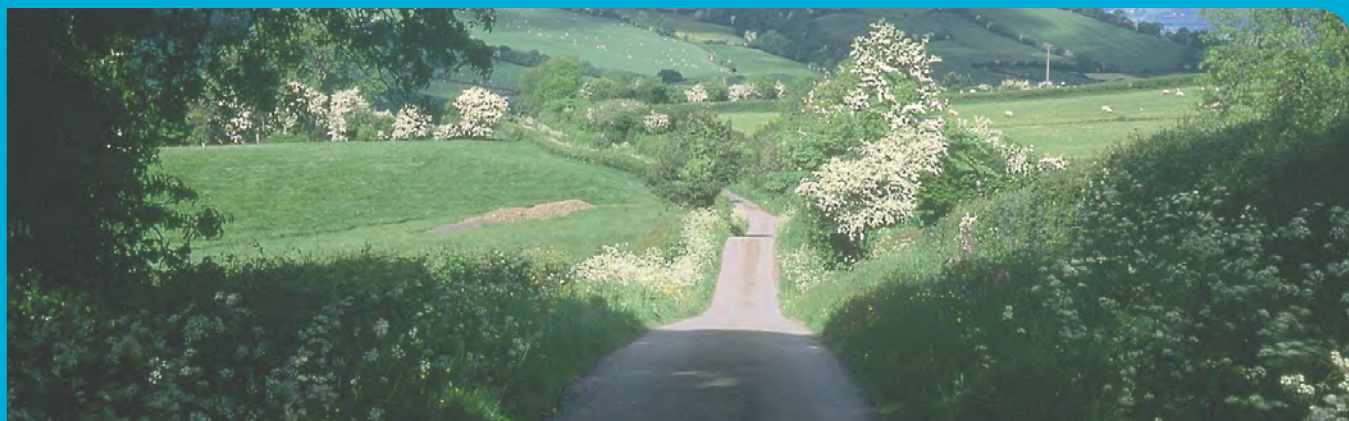


Rural Areas Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Issues and Options Paper

June 2017



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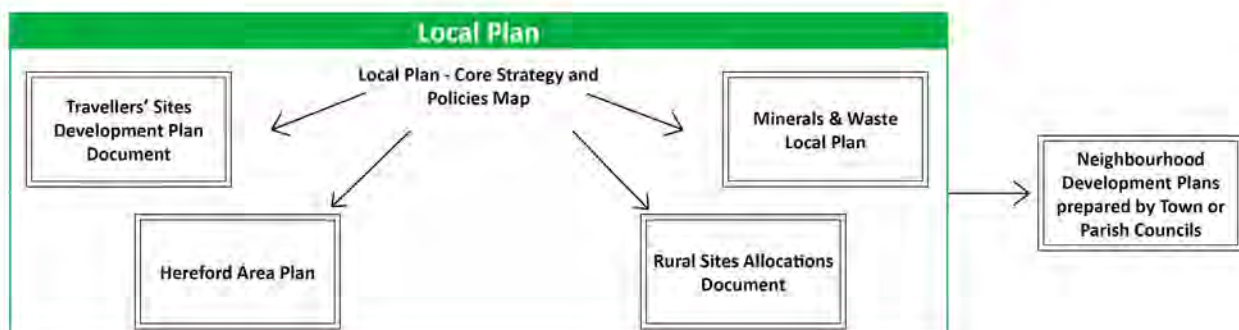
Introduction

- 1.1 It is recognised that there are many challenges in securing the long term sustainable future for rural areas. This includes the presence of employment, market and affordable housing, facilities and services, access to transport and well as social factors of community cohesion and interdependence. Therefore the aim of this document is to help achieve a strong living and working rural Herefordshire and enabling the government objective to identify opportunities for villages to thrive. The council's land use planning strategy for the rural areas is outlined within the adopted Core Strategy and this reflects the council's priority to support the growth of our economy.
- 1.2 The rural policies within the Core Strategy seek to enhance the role that the county's rural areas have traditionally played as accessible and sustainable centres for their rural catchment. The positive proportional growth of settlements through appropriate additional rural housing and employment opportunities is encouraged within the Core Strategy.
- 1.3 However, these strategic policies need to be supported by detailed local policy and guidance to enable a delivery mechanism over the next fifteen years and beyond. With this in mind, the Local Development Scheme indicates that an additional development plan document will be produced.

What is the Rural Area Site Allocation development plan document (RASA DPD)?

- 1.4 Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy was adopted in October 2015 and sets out the overall vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the county. It is intended that the RASA DPD will contain the more detailed proposals to ensure the full delivery of the rural growth targets within the Core Strategy.
- 1.5 It is not intended to replace any Neighbourhood Development Plan which is adopted/made or making significant progress towards adoption. However, the plan will include policies and proposals for growth in any market towns or Core Strategy Policy RA2 settlement which is not included within a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.6 This DPD does not give an opportunity to revisit the rural housing strategy within the Core Strategy, this includes the principle of proportional growth, its method of calculation or the list of settlements highlighted within the strategy (figure 4.14 and 4.15). These were subject to the Core Strategy examination in February 2015.
- 1.7 The RASA DPD will be a statutory element of the county's Local Plan, and will be one of a number of DPDs which will provide detailed planning policies for specific locations or issues. Figure 1 sets out the relationship of the documents within the Local Plan.

Figure 1 – The relationship between the plans within the Local Plan



Relationship with other strategies and emerging projects

Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 1.8 A proactive approach has been taken to neighbourhood planning within the county and these plans form the principal documents to support the Core Strategy within the market towns and rural areas.
- 1.9 As at May 2017, 108 neighbourhood areas have been designated. The role of the Neighbourhood Development Plans is to make provision of rural housing and/or employment allocations to meet the proportional growth targets set out within the Core Strategy. This has been reiterated by the White Paper 'Fixing the broken housing market' issued in February 2017. This highlights the opportunities neighbourhood planning presents for identifying and allocating sites that are suitable for housing, drawing on the knowledge of the local community. Neighbourhood Development Plans will cover a plan period until 2031 and form part of the statutory development plan for Herefordshire.
- 1.10 The RASA DPD is not intended to replace any Neighbourhood Development Plan which has been adopted or currently being actively produced. However, it will provide additional policies within those areas where plans are not being provided locally by the parish/town council and the local community.

Economic vision

- 1.11 Herefordshire's economic vision will provide a key context to regeneration and investment work in the county. The vision identifies priority projects that will support economic growth or generate a higher value economy. The RASA DPD provides an opportunity to provide a land use policy framework to enable the projects in the economic vision to be delivered within the wider rural area.

Local Transport Plan and Hereford Transport Package

- 1.12 Herefordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) covers the period 2016-2031. It was adopted by the council in May 2016. The LTP includes a range of policies and proposals for all transport modes. The LTP sets out the council's strategy for supporting economic growth, improving health and wellbeing and reducing the environmental impacts of transport.

Travellers' Sites DPD

- 1.13 A Herefordshire Travellers' Sites DPD is currently being produced, this will set out allocations and planning policy relating to the provision of sites for travellers in the county to cover the plan period to 2031. This may contain some parish areas included within the RASA DPD.

Minerals and Waste DPD

- 1.14 Minerals and waste policies will be dealt with through a separate Minerals and Waste Local Plan DPD. It will establish targets and planning policy relating to minerals and waste activities and associated development in Herefordshire and cover the plan period to 2031. This may contain some parish areas included within the RASA DPD.

Hereford Area Plan

- 1.15 The Hereford Area Plan is currently being produced to provide additional planning policies to support the strategic growth in Hereford. The RASA DPD will not cover those areas within the Hereford Area Plan boundary. Together with the RASA DPD and Neighbourhood Development Plans, the Hereford Area Plan will ensure full coverage of more detailed policies to support the delivery of the Core Strategy.

How will the RASA DPD be prepared?

- 1.16 Unlike Neighbourhood Development Plans which are produced by the local community, the RASA DPD will be produced by Herefordshire Council.

- 1.17 The process of preparing and adopting the RASA DPD is anticipated to take around two years. During this time a number of consultation events will be undertaken and engagement with statutory bodies, stakeholders, the local community and parish councils will be in line with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was adopted in 2016.
- 1.18 This Issues and Options Paper is the first opportunity to comment upon the emerging options and areas to be included within the plan. Further consultation will be undertaken as preferred options and, also, the draft plan policies and proposals are prepared. There will also be an opportunity to comment upon the plan prior to its final submission to the Secretary of State.
- 1.19 Following submission to the Secretary of State, the Plan will be subject to an Examination in Public by an independent inspector before it can be adopted as part of the Local Plan by Herefordshire Council.
- 1.20 For clarity, the RASA DPD will not be subject to a referendum, unlike the Neighbourhood Development Plans being prepared within the county.

Where are we in the process?

- 1.21 This document forms the Issues and Options Consultation stage. However in addition to this, work is being undertaken on the update of the rural Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This will help to inform later stages of the plan.
- 1.22 Continuing support is being given to any parish who wishes to produce their own planning policy within a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the progress of those plans will be monitored. It is anticipated that the coverage of parishes producing their own plans and that of the RASA DPD will evolve between the Issues and Options Stage and the final preferred options. Therefore, those parishes highlighted in the options within this paper reflect the position as at April 2017.
- 1.23 Following the initial consultation, comments received will be considered and further evidence gathered to help provide a draft plan or series of preferred options which will also be subject to consultation before the publication of the final plan. These will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination into the soundness of the plan. The process will take in the order of two years from this Issues and Options stage to final plan adoption.

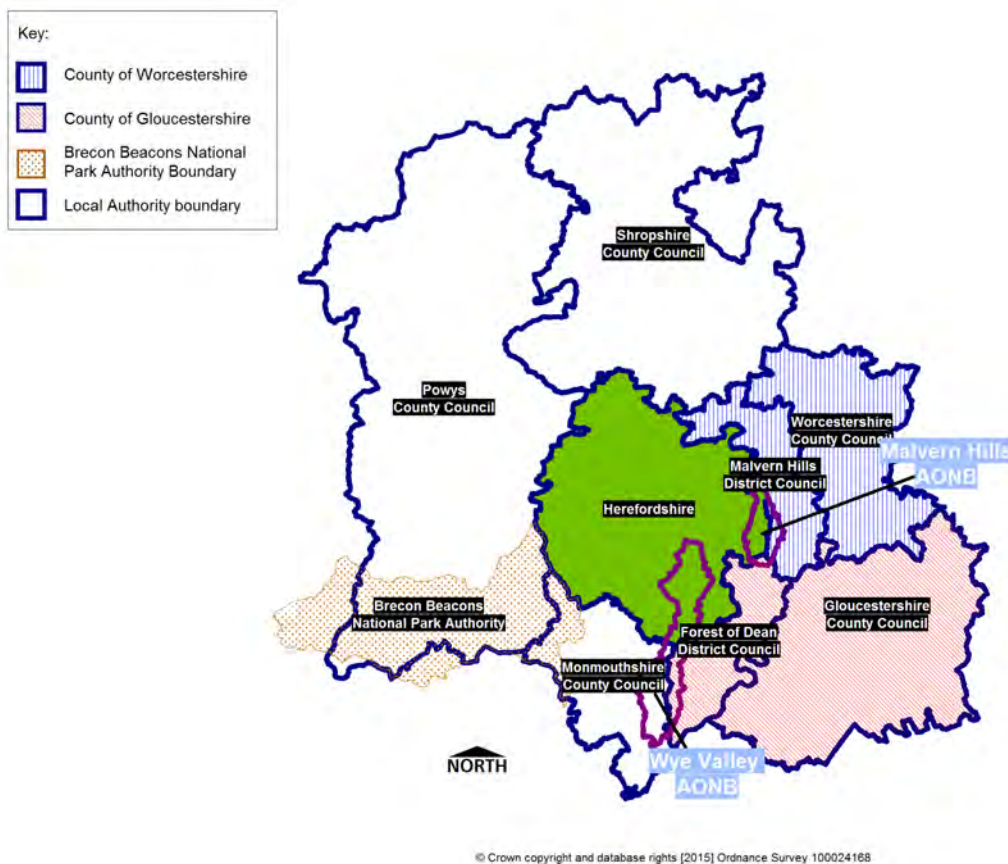
Figure 2 – Stages of a development plan document



The Rural Area of Herefordshire

- 2.1 Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county covering an area of 217,973 hectares situated in the south-west corner of the West Midlands region bordering Wales. The River Wye and its valley landscape is the county's principal geographical feature with the Malvern Hills and Black Mountains surrounding the county on the borders of Worcestershire and Wales respectively.
- 2.2 Herefordshire has a population of 183,600 (Mid 2011 estimate based on 2011 Census) and a density of 0.8 persons per hectare. There has only been a 5% growth in the decade since 2001 however it is estimated that the population will increase by 12% during the period up to 2031. Herefordshire has an ageing population with 1 in 5 of its inhabitants being aged 65 or over. 94% are white British and only 6% are of an ethnic group.

Figure 3 – Map showing Herefordshire in its wider context



- 2.3 With a sparse population, Herefordshire has the fourth lowest overall population density in England, and under a third of Herefordshire residents live in Hereford. Around a fifth live in the surrounding five market towns (Leominster, Bromyard, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and Kington) and nearly half live in the surrounding rural areas. Almost two thirds of the county living in rural locations are amongst the 25% most deprived areas in England in terms of access to services and geographical barriers to services. There are areas of severe deprivation in areas of Hereford and Leominster most notably.
- 2.4 Rural Herefordshire, although beautiful and idyllic, presents many challenges for the residents who live there. Access to public transport is extremely limited, meaning a heavy reliance on the private car, coupled with an ageing population, this can lead to substantial social isolation. The county also suffers from a wider limited

strategic highway network, which is a major issue as Herefordshire plays a strategic role in facilitating cross boundary links between England and Wales.

- 2.5 The rural economy relies mainly on self-employment and home based business. However there are current infrastructure issues including limited broadband, poor mobile signal and restricted access to services. The county's rural assets are however advantageous, with Hereford boasting a nationally acclaimed landscape. This includes two landscape areas of national significance; the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the south and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the east. In addition to this, there are many sites of archaeological importance and a rich historic environment. All of these assets mean that tourism has become an important part of Herefordshire's local economy, with 5.1 million visitors in 2011.

Figure 4 – Hereford and the market towns



- 2.6 Access to further and higher education remains a key issue for such a rural county, with many young people leaving the county altogether to undertake formal higher education.
- 2.7 In terms of housing, increased household costs for residents and limited provision of affordable housing are also key issues within the rural hinterlands of Herefordshire. With house prices being above the national average compared to England and Wales, (mainly due to higher volume of sales of detached homes, and house prices rising higher than earnings over the last decade), there is a legacy of affordability issues.

Key strategic issues

3.1 The Core Strategy sets out an overall vision for the rural area together with a set of strategic proposals to help deliver the vision.

3.2 The strategy for the rural area in terms of social issues include:

- Promotion of balanced and integrated communities;
- Ensuring the provision of the right mix of housing, including affordable housing to maximise community benefits;
- Improving transport infrastructure;
- Ensuring the provision of and enhanced access to services, facilities, education and broadband in a rural, sparsely populated county.

Economic challenges include:

- Diversification of the economy, creating more skilled jobs;
- Raising wage levels;
- Promoting Herefordshire's tourism potential.

Identified environmental issues include:

- Protection, conservation and where possible enhancement of natural and historic assets;
- The need to plan for the potential impact of climate change in new developments;
- Ensuring new developments are of high quality design and construction;
- Efficient use of resources;
- Improving air and water quality.

Strategic policies for the rural area

3.3 The strategic policies specific to the rural areas are set out within the place shaping section of the Core Strategy.

Housing

3.4 The housing strategy for the rural area is based upon the delivery of proportionate housing growth within seven housing market areas. Each market area has different housing needs and requirements. Para 4.8.12 of the Core Strategy indicates that housing development within the rural area will be delivered through housing allocations within Neighbourhood Development Plans and the RASA DPD and a combination of existing commitments and windfall development.

Figure 5 – Herefordshire Housing Market Areas (HMA)



3.5 A minimum of 5,300 new dwellings are expected to be provided within the rural areas between 2011 and 2031 to meet the county’s housing need. Minimum rural HMA housing targets are included within Policy RA1, highlighted below.

Figure 6 - Policy RA1 – Rural housing distribution table

Rural HMA	Approx number of dwellings 2011-2031	Indicative housing growth target (%)
Bromyard	364	15
Golden Valley	304	12
Hereford	1870	18
Kington	317	12
Ledbury	565	14
Leominster	730	14
Ross on Wye	1150	14
Total	5300	

- 3.6 One hundred and nineteen rural settlements have been identified within Policy RA2 fig 4.14 and 4.15 as the main focus for proportionate housing growth within the rural area (full list can be seen in Appendix 1). Residential development is directed 'within and adjacent to the built up areas' of these settlements, however no settlement boundaries or mapping is provided within the Core Strategy to define these settlements or indicate where future development should be located. Figure 7 shows the distribution of these settlements across the rural area.
- 3.7 Para 4.8.23 of the Core Strategy highlights that settlement boundaries (where appropriate) will be defined within Neighbourhood Development Plans or the RASA DPD. Areas outside those highlighted within Policy RA2 are considered to be within open countryside where only specific limited growth (in line within Policies RA3, RA4 and RA5) will be supported.

Figure 7 - map showing locations of RA2 villages



Rural Enterprise

3.8 There are no specific employment allocations or targets indicated within the Core Strategy outside of Hereford and the market towns. However Policy RA6 recognises the important role the rural areas have in providing a sustainable economy for the county. This supports a range of rural diversification, environmental technologies, home working and rural services and facilities.

Town centres

3.9 Policy E5 of the Core Strategy seeks to encourage appropriate investment within Herefordshire's five market towns. The town centre boundaries for each town have been defined within the place shaping section of the Core Strategy, however these were 'saved' from the previous Unitary Development Plan and are highlighted for review as part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan or the RASA DPD.

3.10 Similarly primary and secondary shop frontages are contained within Policy E6 of the Core Strategy. These too were 'saved' from the Unitary Development Plan and para 5.2.35 indicates that primary and secondary frontages for the towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury will be reviewed as part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan or the RASA DPD. It was not proposed to define frontages for the towns of Bromyard and Kington given their size. Here the primary focus for retail will be within the primary shopping areas.

3.11 The full strategic policies related to the rural area in the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy are included in appendix 2.

Role of Neighbourhood Development Plans in the rural area

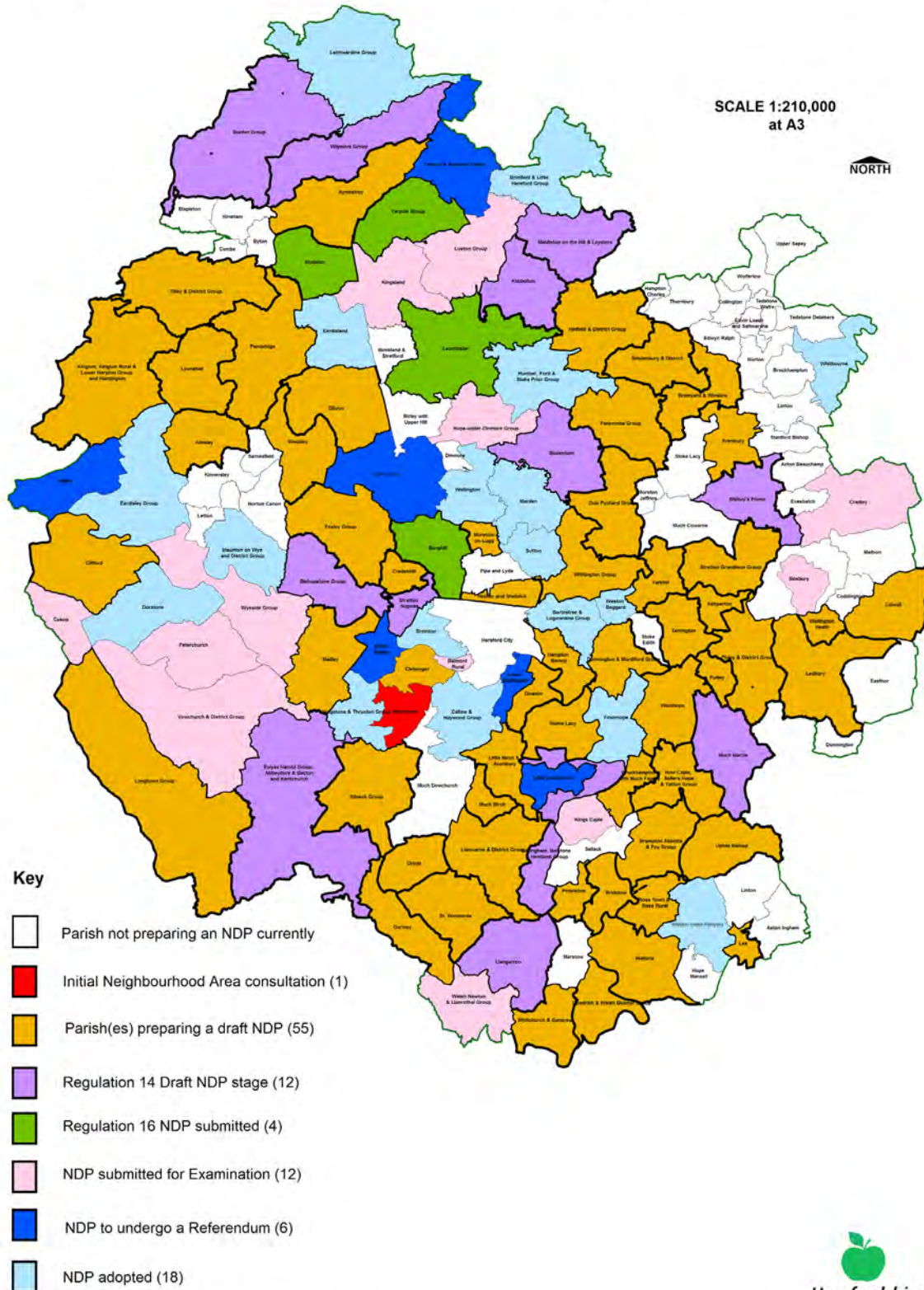
3.12 There are references within the Core Strategy to a variety of issues being addressed and further policy being provided in either a Neighbourhood Development Plan or the RASA DPD.

3.13 There are currently 108 individual neighbourhood areas designated across the rural area where Neighbourhood Development Plans could be produced. This could equate to 88% of the communities within the rural area, which are anticipated to provide locally produced policies within their own Neighbourhood Development Plans.

3.14 As at end of April 2017, 18 Neighbourhood Development Plans have been adopted/made, 6 are awaiting referendum and 12 are at examination. A total of 52 plans had progressed to at least draft plan stage under Regulation 14. Figure 8 shows the progress being made across the county.

Figure 8 – Neighbourhood Development Plans in Herefordshire (at 27 April 2017)

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) in Herefordshire



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3.15 However, there will be parishes and settlements highlighted for growth within the Core Strategy which are not proposed to be included within a neighbourhood area and these will need to be covered within the RASA DPD.

3.16 The Core Strategy indicates a number of issues within market towns which should be addressed in either a Neighbourhood Development Plan or the RASA DPD. All five market towns have designated a neighbourhood area and are at various stages of production of their NDPs.

Figure 9 - Status of market town NDPs as of April 2017

Market Town	Current Status	Date of next stage
Bromyard	no progress - request withdrawal	Not applicable
Kington	Progressing to draft plan (Reg 14)	May 2017
Ledbury	Progressing to draft plan (Reg 14)	June 2017
Leominster	progressing towards a revised submission plan (Reg16)	September 2017
Ross on Wye	Progressing to draft plan (Reg 14)	September 2017

3.17 Therefore, with the exception of Bromyard, all additional policies requirements for the market towns are anticipated to be covered by their Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3.18 Positive promotion has been given to neighbourhood planning within the county, and the RASA DPD is not intended to undermine the work of those who have committed to preparing their own locally distinctive policies.

3.19 With this in mind, the RASA DPD is not seeking to provide policies in those parishes with Neighbourhood Development Plans or those positively working toward producing one. It is also not intended to be a development management policy document containing a wide range of criteria policies. Instead the document will only concentrate on the key requirements to deliver the Core Strategy.

3.20 The emphasis for providing a wide range of criteria based policies remains with the individual Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Question:

Is the approach toward the scope of the DPD appropriate given the positive support for neighbourhood planning within the county?

Which issues could be addressed within the RASA DPD?

3.21 The Core Strategy has indicated that the following issues should be addressed by more detailed planning policy document either within the RASA DPD or individual Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Rural area

- Settlement boundaries;
- Housing allocations;
- Employment allocations.

Market towns

- The boundaries of the primary shopping areas and the primary and secondary frontages;
- Need for further retail floorspace.

Question:

Are there any other issues which the RASA DPD could look to address?

What are the range of alternative options for the RASA DPD?

- 4.1 The Rural Areas Site Allocation DPD is not an opportunity for reopening the debate regarding the inclusion of settlements within fig 4.14 and 4.15 of the Core Strategy or the proportional growth figures within the Core Strategy itself. These were the subject of the Core Strategy examination in February 2015 and the Core Strategy is adopted planning policy.
- 4.2 The principal aim of the RASA DPD is to support the delivery of Policies RA1 and RA2 in those areas listed within fig 4.14 and 4.15 that are not producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. There may also be a requirement to update the designated areas for Policy E5 and E6 in those market towns not producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 4.3 Therefore, the options presented below highlight the alternatives for the scope of those settlements to be included within the document. These have been based on the progress of a Neighbourhood Development Plan within that specific parish at April 2017. It is acknowledged that the status of NDPs will evolve during the consultation on this report and this will be taken into account when the final preferred option is chosen. Inclusion within an option at this stage does not preclude a parish from producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. As highlighted earlier within this document, a Neighbourhood Development Plan is the principal mechanism for the provision of local policies within the rural area.

Options for the scope of the DPD

- 4.4 There are a range of options being considered for the scope of the Development Plan Document. Each of these is outlined below.

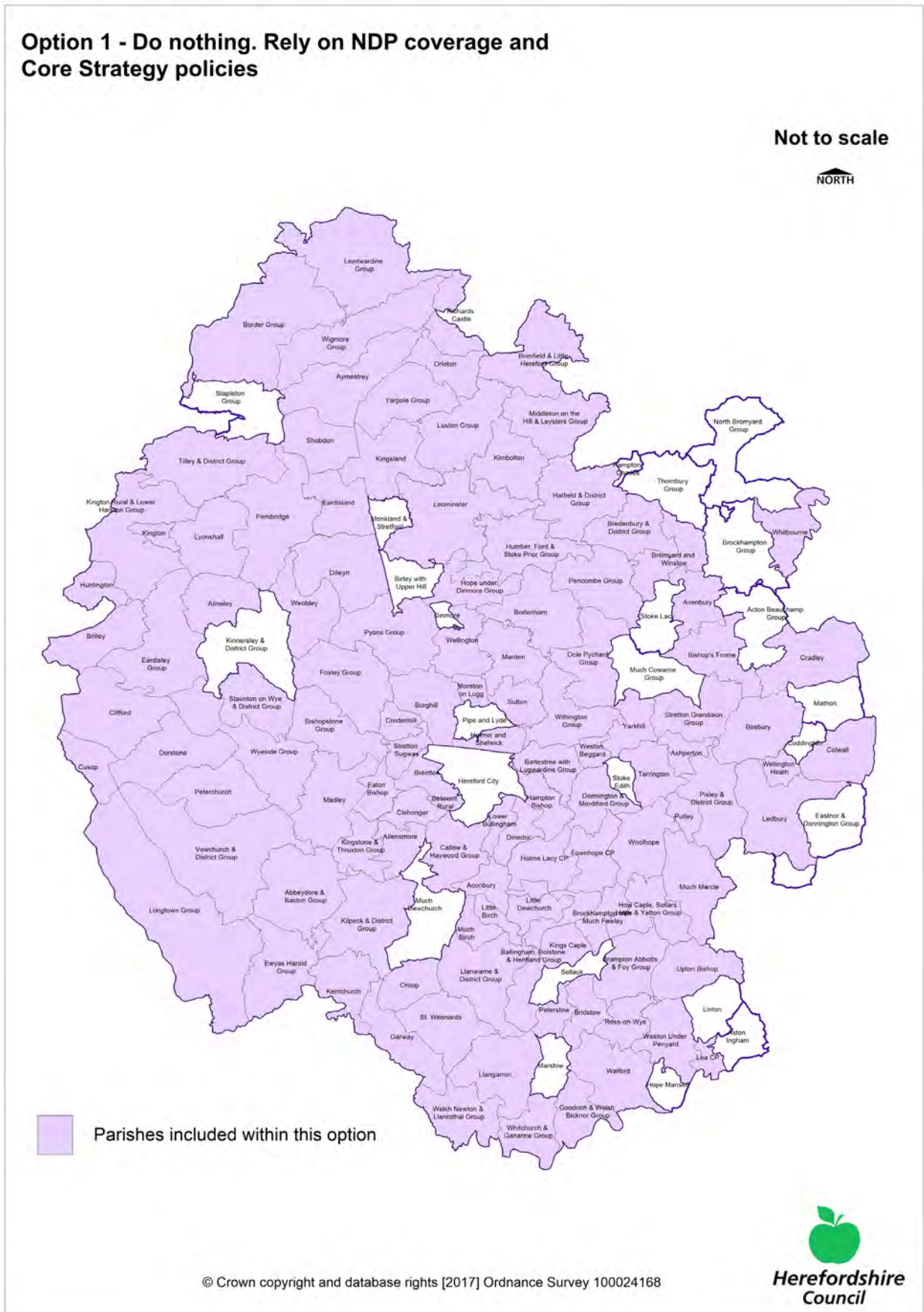
Option 1 - Do nothing and rely on NDPs and policy RA2

- 4.5 This option is essentially to remain with the status quo. The policies covering growth within the rural areas of Herefordshire are contained within the place shaping section of the Core Strategy and are mainly policies RA1 to RA6.
- 4.6 Para 4.8.21 of the Core Strategy states that Neighbourhood Development Plans and/or Development Plan Documents will be the main delivery mechanism for rural growth within the county. Therefore with option 1, any additional locally detailed policies will only be contained within the Neighbourhood Development Plans being produced across the rural area. There are currently 108 designated neighbourhood areas, this means that 90% of all RA2 listed settlements are within a designated neighbourhood area. The table below shows their distribution by Housing Market Area.

Table 1 - % of RA2 settlements covered by a Neighbourhood Development Plan per Housing Market Area (April 2017)

HMA	No. of RA2 Settlements	No. within a neighbourhood area	Percentage coverage
Bromyard	20	17	85%
Golden Valley	18	18	100%
Hereford	49	47	96%
Kington	17	14	82%
Ledbury	17	13	76%
Leominster	40	34	85%
Ross on Wye	55	49	89%

Figure 10 – Map showing current neighbourhood area coverage



4.7 Therefore the majority of rural settlements will be covered by locally produced policies which may include a defined settlement boundary, allocation of housing, employment, open space and local green spaces together with a number of development management style criteria policies. The progression to adoption of Neighbourhood Development Plans is currently high and the trend appears to be continuing with over half of all NDPs being produced already reaching at least draft plan stage. Individual parishes and local communities have invested significant time and effort producing their Neighbourhood Development Plan. This option would see additional policy guidance only being provided in those areas who have made this investment. All other areas would rely on the existing rural policies contained within the Core Strategy.

Impacts of this option

4.8 This option will allow for continuing support to those parishes who have invested resources in producing their own Neighbourhood Development Plan. Only Core Strategy policies will apply in the remaining parts of the county. This however will result in no further clarification provided for at least 25 settlements identified within the Core Strategy. The implementation of Policy RA2 is often concerned within the extent of the built form in some of the more dispersed settlements, this option will not assist in resolving this issue. The provision of future proportionate growth will also be reactionary to planning applications rather than plan led in these locations which could result in uncertainty in housing provision in these areas.

Question:

Should Neighbourhood Development Plans be the sole mechanism for more local planning policy in the rural area or should a Rural Areas Site Allocation DPD be produced for those areas not covered by a NDP?

- 1) Only Neighbourhood Development Plans or;
- 2) Neighbourhood Development Plans and Rural Area Site Allocation DPD

Option 2 - DPD coverage to include all parishes with an RA2 settlement but not within a designated neighbourhood area.

4.9 All parishes within Herefordshire have been given the opportunity over the past five years to produce their own Neighbourhood Development Plan. However, for a variety of reasons, some parishes have decided not to take up this option.

4.10 As at April 2017, there are a total of 17 parish areas containing an RA2 listed settlement which are not within a designated neighbourhood area and have not shown any indication of doing so in the future. This is a total of 25 settlements.

4.11 The production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan has always been optional and not compulsory for parish councils and communities. In addition, there has been an understanding that a Development Plan Document would be produced to cover those who are not producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan so there would be no pressure to produce a plan if the parish did not feel it was appropriate.

4.12 Table 2 indicates those parishes who would be considered for inclusion within this option. The concentration on these parishes would have the potential to result in 100% coverage of all RA2 listed settlements (when combined with those with a designated neighbourhood area). Figure 11 shows the geographical distribution of the settlements/parishes considered for inclusion under option 2.

Table 2 – Parishes to be included within the DPD under option 2

Aston Ingham	Birley with Upper Hill	Brockhampton Group	Coddington	Eastnor and Donnington	Kinnersley and District
Linton	Marstow	Mathon	Monkland and Stretford	Much Cowarne Group	Much Dewchurch
Pipe and Lyde	Stapleton Group	Stoke Edith	Stoke Lacy	Thornbury Group	

Figure 11 – Map showing the parishes to be included within option 2



4.13 Policy RA2 specifies that proportional housing growth should be delivered within these settlements. Table 3 shows the indicative proportional growth figures for these parishes to assist in achieving the growth requirements for their respective Housing Market Areas. Figures are given to each Parish Council when preparing their Neighbourhood Development Plan and are used to determine the housing allocations and proportion of windfalls (sites not allocated but supported by policy criteria). These figures will be used as a base to determine potential allocations within the RASA DPD. Figures shown in this table represent the position as at April 2016, these will be updated as the RASA DPD preferred options are developed.

Table 3 – indicative proportional growth within option 2 parishes

Parish	Settlement	CS figure no	Indicative Proportional Growth	Built 2011-2016	Commitments at April 2016	Residual Growth April 2016
Bromyard Housing Market Area						
Brockhampton Group	Brockhampton	4.14	30	3	0	27
	Bringsty	4.14				
Stoke Lacy	Stoke Cross/Stoke Lacy	4.14	24	1	4	19
Thornbury Group	Edwyn Ralph	4.15	13	1	0	12
Kington Housing Market Area						
Kinnersley & District Group	Norton Canon	4.14	27	2	7	18
	Kinnersley	4.15				
	Letton	4.15				
Ledbury Housing Market Area						
Eastnor & Donnington Group	Eastnor	4.14	15	0	0	15
Bosbury & Coddington Group	Coddington only	4.15	9	3	0	6
Mathon	Mathon	4.15	19	4	1	14
Much Cowarne Group	Much Cowarne	4.15	27	0	3	24
Leominster Housing Market Area						
Birley with Upper Hill	Bush Bank	4.14	20	2	1	17
	Upper Hill	4.15				
Monkland & Stretford	Monkland	4.14	12	3	6	13
Stapleton Group	Combe Moor	4.15	16	2	1	13
	Kinsham	4.15				
	Stapleton	4.15				
Hereford Housing Market Area						
Pipe and Lyde	Pipe and Lyde	4.15	25	1	1	23
Stoke Edith	Stoke Edith	4.15	8	0	0	8

Parish	Settlement	CS figure no	Indicative Proportional Growth	Built 2011-2016	Commitments at April 2016	Residual Growth April 2016
Ross on Wye Housing Market Area						
Linton	Bromsash	4.14	61	28	15	18
	Gorsley	4.14				
	Linton	4.14				
Much Dewchurch	Much Dewchurch	4.14	40	8	6	26
Aston Ingham	Aston Ingham	4.15	25	2	1	22
Marstow	Glewstone	4.15	24	7	0	17

Impacts of this option

4.14 This option would ensure that all settlements highlighted within the Core Strategy will be covered by additional planning policy either in the form of the RASA DPD or a Neighbourhood Development Plan. These parishes have shown no indication over the past four years of expecting to prepare their own Neighbourhood Development Plan, therefore there would be no issues of undermining any future locally produced document. Full development plan coverage of all RA2 settlements would enable additional site allocations to deliver the Core Strategy growth and help maintain a 5 year land supply within the County.

Option 3 - DPD coverage to include all parishes without a designated neighbourhood area (as option 2) and parishes who have formally requested to withdraw from the NDP process.

4.15 There are a few parishes who originally were keen to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan and as a result designated a neighbourhood area. However, over time it has become apparent that those parishes are unlikely to proceed and have expressed an interest in withdrawing from the neighbourhood planning process and to be included within the RASA DPD.

4.16 Below highlights those parishes who have expressed an interest in withdrawing their neighbourhood area.

- **Avenbury**

Neighbourhood area designated on 21 March 2014, however little progress has been made since. The Parish expressed a wish to withdraw their neighbourhood area on 22 February 2017.

- **Bredenbury and District Group**

Neighbourhood area was designated on 5 November 2013 and to date no progress has been made on producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The parish council indicated at their meeting on the 16 January 2017, that they would not be continuing with the neighbourhood plan and wished to withdraw.

- **Bromyard and Winslow**

Bromyard and Winslow Town Council designated a neighbourhood area on 23 November 2015, however a decision was taken in their March 2017 meeting that they wish to withdraw from the neighbourhood planning process.

- **Dormington and Mordiford Group**

Neighbourhood area designated on 13 May 2014. However little if any progress has been made since. The parish council indicated within their minutes of the 16 November 2016 that they were unlikely to continue with their plan and would prefer to be included within the DPD.

- **Foxley Group**

Neighbourhood area designated on 7 January 2014 and again little if any progress has been made on this plan. The parish council expressed within their minutes of the 19 October 2016 that they were unlikely to continue and would prefer to be included within the DPD.

- **Hatfield and District Group**

Neighbourhood area designated on 17 September 2013, however after initial questionnaires and scoping work, the parish council ceased work on their neighbourhood plan. On the 10 January 2017 they expressed an interest to withdraw and become part of the DPD.

- **Llanwarne and District Group**

Neighbourhood area designated on 23 October 2013. Again after initial questionnaires and scoping work, the parish council ceased work on their neighbourhood plan. On the 3 October 2016 they expressed an interest to withdraw and become part of the DPD.

- **Moreton on Lugg**

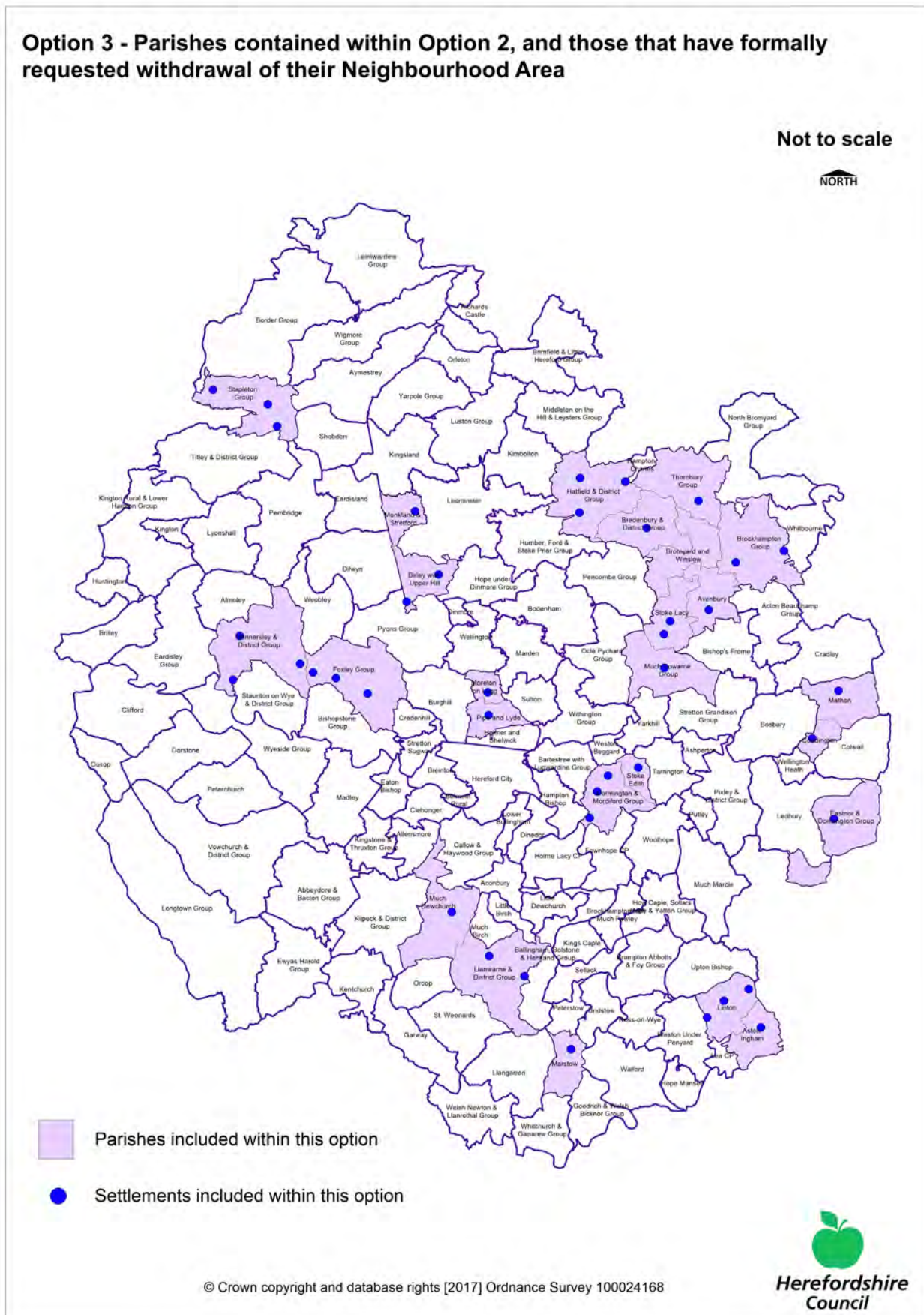
Neighbourhood area designated on 14 October 2013, however have made little if any progress since. The parish council expressed within their minutes of the 7 February 2017 that they were unlikely to continue and would prefer to be included within the DPD.

4.17 Table 4 indicates the full list of parishes which would be considered to be included within option 3 and Figure 12 shows their geographical distribution. Any designated neighbourhood areas within these parishes will be formally withdrawn if they are included within the RASA DPD.

Table 4 – Parishes to be included within the DPD under option 2

Aston Ingham	Avenbury	Birley with Upper Hill	Bredenbury and District Group	Brockhampton Group	Bromyard and Winslow
Coddington	Dormington and Mordiford Group	Eastnor and Donnington	Foxley Group	Hatfield and District Group	Kinnersley and District Group
Linton	Llanwarne and District Group	Marstow	Mathon	Monkland and Streford	Moreton on Lugg
Much Cowarne Group	Much Dewchurch	Pipe and Lyde	Stapleton Group	Stoke Edith	Stoke Lacy
Thornbury Group					

Figure 12 – map to show the parishes to be included within option 3



4.18 Policy RA2 specifies that proportional housing growth should be delivered within these settlements. The table below highlights the indicative proportional growth figures for the additional parishes within this option. This is to assist in achieving the growth requirements for their respective housing market areas. These figures are given to each parish council when preparing their Neighbourhood Development Plan and are used to determine the housing allocations and proportion of windfalls (sites not allocated but supported by policy criteria). These will be used as a base to determine potential allocations within the RASA DPD. Figures within this table represent the position as at April 2016. These will be updated when the revised position is published prior to the preferred options being formulated.

4.19 As well as the provision of settlement boundaries and housing allocations within the rural settlements, this option would need to address the outstanding Core Strategy issues within Bromyard, mainly the allocation of 5 hectares of employment land and policies regarding the town centre and primary shopping areas. It is not proposed within this option to include additional criteria based development management style policies for the town.

Table 5 - indicative proportional growth within option 3 parishes

Parish	Settlement	CS figure no	Indicative Proportional Growth	Built 2011-2016	Commitments at April 2016	Residual Growth April 2016
Bromyard Housing Market Area						
Avenbury	Munderfield	4.15	15	1	0	14
Bredenbury & District Group	Bredenbury	4.14	24	1	1	22
Bromyard & Winslow	Bromyard	BY1	500	34	344	122
Hatfield & District Group	Hatfield	4.15	33	4	2	27
	Docklow	4.15				
	Pudleston	4.15				
Hereford Housing Market Area						
Dormington and Mordiford Group	Dormington	4.15	57	21	5	31
	Mordiford	4.14				
	Priors Frome	4.15				
Moreton on Lugg	Moreton on Lugg	4.14	63	2	2	59
Foxley Group	Mansell Lacy	4.15	22	0	0	22
	Moorhampton	4.15				
	Yazor	4.15				
Ross on Wye Housing Market Area						
Llanwarne & District Group	Llanwarne	4.15	22	1	2	19
	Harewood End	4.15				

Impacts of this option

4.20 Similar to the previous option, this would enable all settlements highlighted within the Core Strategy to be covered by additional planning policy either in the form of the RASA DPD or a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The eight additional parishes included within this option have explored the opportunity to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan, however for a variety of reasons this was not successful within their parish. As previously highlighted, the full coverage of RA2 settlements provided in this option would enable additional site allocations to deliver the Core Strategy growth and help maintain a 5 year land supply within the County.

4.21 In the case of Bromyard, this option would only provide the additional policy requirements indicated within the Core Strategy. Opportunities for a wider range of policies and proposals exist in the drafting of a locally produced Neighbourhood Development Plan or in later options outlined within this report. The inclusion of Bromyard within this option would result in a different level of policy than the other four market towns (all of whom are producing Neighbourhood Development Plans). However, this option does respect that within the other four market towns significant input has been provided by both the town councils and the local communities to produce their own wider range of locally distinctive policies and to ensure proportional growth is met whilst respecting local characteristics.

4.22 The inclusion of Bromyard and Winslow within this option would not preclude the Town Council from producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan to cover the additional development management criteria policy areas not covered within the RASA DPD.

Option 4 - DPD coverage of those parishes within option 3 plus those who have made no progress since the neighbourhood area designation

4.23 There are a number of parishes who have made little or no progress on producing their Neighbourhood Development Plan but have yet to formally express an interest in withdrawing from the process. There is a risk that these areas will have no additional planning policy as their inclusion within neither the Neighbourhood Development Plan or the RASA DPD could result.

4.24 The table below indicates the full list of parishes which could be included within this option and figure 13 indicates the geographical distribution of these parishes.

Table 6 – parishes to be included within option 4

Aston Ingram	Avenbury	Birley with Upper Hill	Bredenbury and District Group	Brockhampton Group	Bromyard and Winslow
Coddington	Dormington and Mordiford	Eastnor and Donnington	Foxley Group	Hatfield and District Group	Kinnersley and District Group
Linton	Llanwarne and District Group	Marstow	Mathon	Monkland and Stretford	Moreton on Lugg
Much Cowarne Group	Much Dewchurch	Orcop	Pipe and Lyde	St Weonards	Stapleton Group
Stoke Edith	Stoke Lacy	Thornbury Group			

4.25 Below outlines the progress made to date within the additional parishes included within this option and given an indication of why consideration is being given to their inclusion within the RASA DPD.

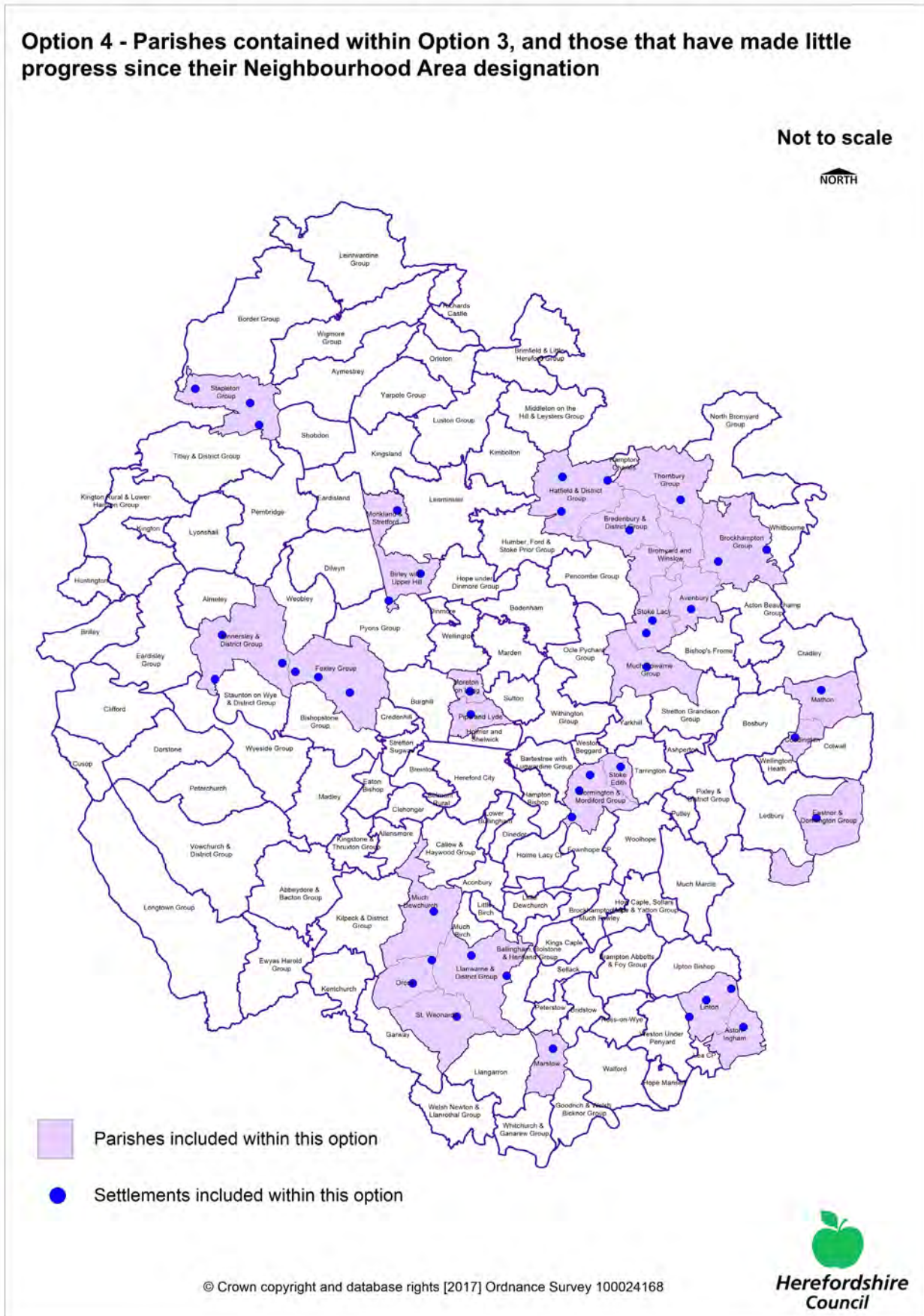
- **Orcop**

Neighbourhood area was designated on 18 July 2013. No progress on the plan has been made since this designation. Despite indicating they are unlikely to produce their Neighbourhood Development Plan, the parish council have not formally requested to withdraw their neighbourhood area.

- **St Weonards**

The neighbourhood area was designated on 1 June 2014. No progress has been made on developing a plan since this designation. A parish meeting was undertaken in February 2017 to outline the process of producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the parish intended to discuss this at their meeting on the 13 March 2017. However to date no confirmation has been given by the parish council as to their future intention.

Figure 13 – map to show the parishes to be included within option 4



4.26 The table below highlights the indicative proportional growth figures for these parishes to assist in achieving the growth requirements for their respective housing market areas in line with the strategic rural policies within the Core Strategy. These figures have been supplied to the parish councils undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan and will be used to determine the potential level of allocations within the RASA DPD. These figures are as at April 2016 and will be updated to the latest position prior to the preferred options.

Table 7 – indicative proportional growth within option 4 parishes

Parish	Settlement	CS figure no	Indicative Proportional Growth	Built 2011-2016	Commitments at April 2016	Residual Growth April 2016
Ross on Wye Housing Market Area						
Orcop	Orcop	4.15	26	0	1	25
	Orcop Hill	4.14				
St Weonards	St Weonards	4.15	22	5	3	14

Impacts of this option

4.27 The two additional rural parishes included within this option had initially indicated that they would be producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, however there remains uncertainty as to whether any work on plans will commence. As these parishes have yet to withdraw from the process, the option has the potential to undermine any future work being produced locally. Herefordshire Council remains committed to supporting local communities producing their own plans. However, equally the Council do not wish to see those areas who are finding it difficult to complete their neighbourhood plan, without sufficient local planning policy.

4.28 As with the previous option, this will allow for full coverage of RA2 settlements to be provided, enabling additional site allocations to deliver the Core Strategy growth and help maintain a 5 year land supply within the County.

Option 5 - DPD coverage to include all within Option 4 plus those parishes who have made little progress or little activity during the past 12 months

4.29 This option includes an additional 5 parishes who are currently undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan. These are parishes which have not communicated their progress or there is little evidence of activity during the last 12 months.

4.30 It is appreciated that there are times when the production of the Neighbourhood Development Plan may slow down either due to capacity of the parish council or the availability of funds. Therefore, this option is not seeking to remove the ability of these parishes to pursue their Neighbourhood Development Plan but presents an alternative route if the parish/community consider that continuing their plan is not advantageous.

4.31 Below outlines the progress been made to date within the five additional parishes proposed for inclusion within this option

- **Credenhill**

The neighbourhood area was designated on 30 July 2014 following a vote within the parish. However, there is no standing item on the parish council agenda regarding the neighbourhood plan and no further update has been provided.

- **Clehonger**

The neighbourhood area was designated on 21 November 2014. The neighbourhood area not only includes the parish of Clehonger but also a small portion of the neighbouring parish of Allensmore. A recent update has been received regarding the progression of this neighbourhood plan indicating that a residents' survey has been circulated. However, this is the only indication of activity within the past 12 months.

- **Holme Lacy**

This neighbourhood area was designated on 23 October 2013, however little progress has been made to date. The Neighbourhood Development Plan remains as a regular discussion item on the parish council meeting agenda however there has been not resolution to withdraw from the process. Requests have been recently made to provide additional presentations regarding the NDP process to the parish council and local community.

- **Garway**

The neighbourhood area was designated on 22 November 2012. The latest parish council minutes available (October 2016) are indicating that an initial inception meeting was being arranged. However no further updates have been received regarding progress.

- **Stretton Sugwas**

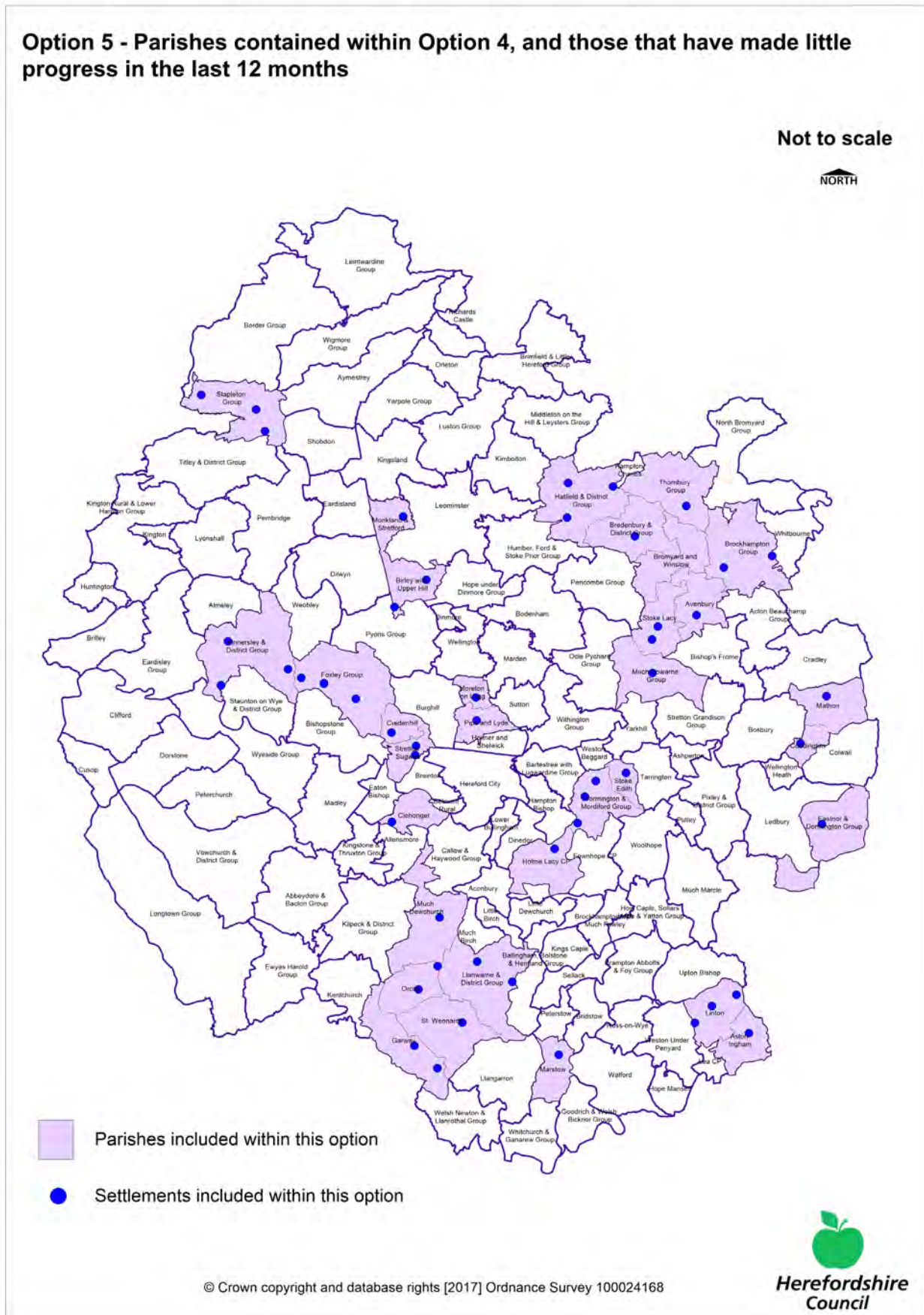
This neighbourhood area was designated on 25 November 2013. The parish have produced a draft neighbourhood plan which was consulted upon under regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations between 14 September and 26 October 2015. However little progress has been made to move this plan to submission. As draft NDPs carry no material weight in terms of planning policy, there is concern that if this plan is not progressed past the draft plan stage, this parish will not have additional planning policy.

4.32 The table below indicates the full list of parishes which could be included within this option and figure 14 highlights the geographical distribution of these parishes across the county.

Table 8 – parishes to be included within option 5.

Aston Ingram	Avenbury	Birley with Upper Hill	Bredenbury and District Group	Bromyard and Winslow	Brockhampton Group
Clehonger	Coddington	Credenhill	Dormington and Mordiford	Eastnor and Donnington	Foxley Group
Garway	Hatfield and District Group	Holme Lacy	Kinnersley and District Group	Linton	Llanwarne and District Group
Marstow	Mathon	Monkland and Stretford	Moreton on Lugg	Much Cowarne Group	Much Dewchurch
Orcop	Pipe and Lyde	St Weonards	Stapleton Group	Stoke Edith	Stoke Lacy
Stretton Sugwas	Thornbury Group				

Figure 14 – map to show the parishes to be included within option 4



4.33 The table 9 below highlights the indicative proportional growth figures for these parishes to assist in achieving the growth requirements for their respective housing market areas. These figures have been supplied to the parish councils undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan and will be used to determine the potential level of allocations within the RASA DPD. Figures are as at April 2016, these will be updated prior to the preferred options to the April 2017 position.

Table 9 - Indicative proportional growth within the option 5 parishes

Parish	Settlement	CS figure no	Indicative Proportional Growth	Built 2011-2016	Commitments at April 2016	Residual Growth April 2016
Hereford Housing Market Area						
Credenhill	Credenhill	4.14	149	8	11	130
Clehonger	Clehonger	4.14	109	2	89	18
Holme Lacy	Holme Lacy	4.14	38	0	10	28
Stretton Sugwas	Stretton Sugwas	4.14	31	0	5	26
	Swainshill	4.14				
Ross on Wye Housing Market Area						
Garway	Garway	4.14	25	3	6	16
	Broad Oak	4.15				

Impacts of this option

4.34 The five additional rural parishes included within this option had initially indicated that they would be producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, however there remains uncertainty as to whether any work on plans will commence. As these parishes have yet to withdraw from the process, the option has the potential to undermine any future work being produced locally. Herefordshire Council remains committed to supporting local communities producing their own plans, however do not wish to see those who are finding it difficult to complete their plan without sufficient enabling planning policy.

4.35 As with the previous option, this will allow for full coverage of RA2 settlements to be provided, enabling additional site allocations to deliver the Core Strategy growth and help maintain a 5 year land supply within the County.

Option 6 - DPD coverage to include all within option 5 plus those who have not reached draft plan (Reg14) stage by the preferred options stage of the RASA DPD

4.36 There was concern expressed during the Core Strategy examination that the reliance on neighbourhood planning to provide further local planning policy was insecure and there was no guarantee that individual Neighbourhood Development Plans would progress to adoption.

4.37 With this in mind, this option has been included to ensure that all potential scenarios have been investigated.

4.38 The progress of Neighbourhood Development Plans is regularly monitored by the Neighbourhood Planning team at Herefordshire Council and continuing support is targeted to ensure that all parishes seeking to produce their own plans have the advice and technical support to do so in a timely fashion.

4.39 Significant progress on Neighbourhood Development Plans have been made since the Core Strategy examination. This has not only resulted in Herefordshire having the most designated neighbourhood areas in

the country but also the most adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans. This trend looks likely to continue with over half of the Neighbourhood Development Plans in production already reaching at least draft plan stage (Reg14).

- 4.40 This option is considering the inclusion of those parishes who have not reached draft plan stage by the RASA DPD reaching its preferred options. This stage is likely to be reached the beginning of 2018.
- 4.41 At this stage it is not possible to indicate a potential full list of those parishes who would be included within this option given the progress of individual active Neighbourhood Development Plans. Previous options have highlighted where progress is relatively slow, however this option would include any parish who have not reached draft plan stage by the end of 2017 despite having a designed neighbourhood area for over 2 years. Those actively demonstrating that they are working towards draft plan stage in a timely fashion would not be included if they were nearing draft plan stage. The intention is not to undermine any parish or community that are actively seeking to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The emphasis remains on NDPs being the primary delivery mechanism for rural policies within the county.
- 4.42 The following two options (7 and 8) outline specific options of the north-east part of the county. As there is concern regarding the likely progress of the Bromyard Neighbourhood Development Plan, there is the potential to contemplate alternatives for these parishes.

Option 7 - Produce a separate Bromyard Development Plan Document

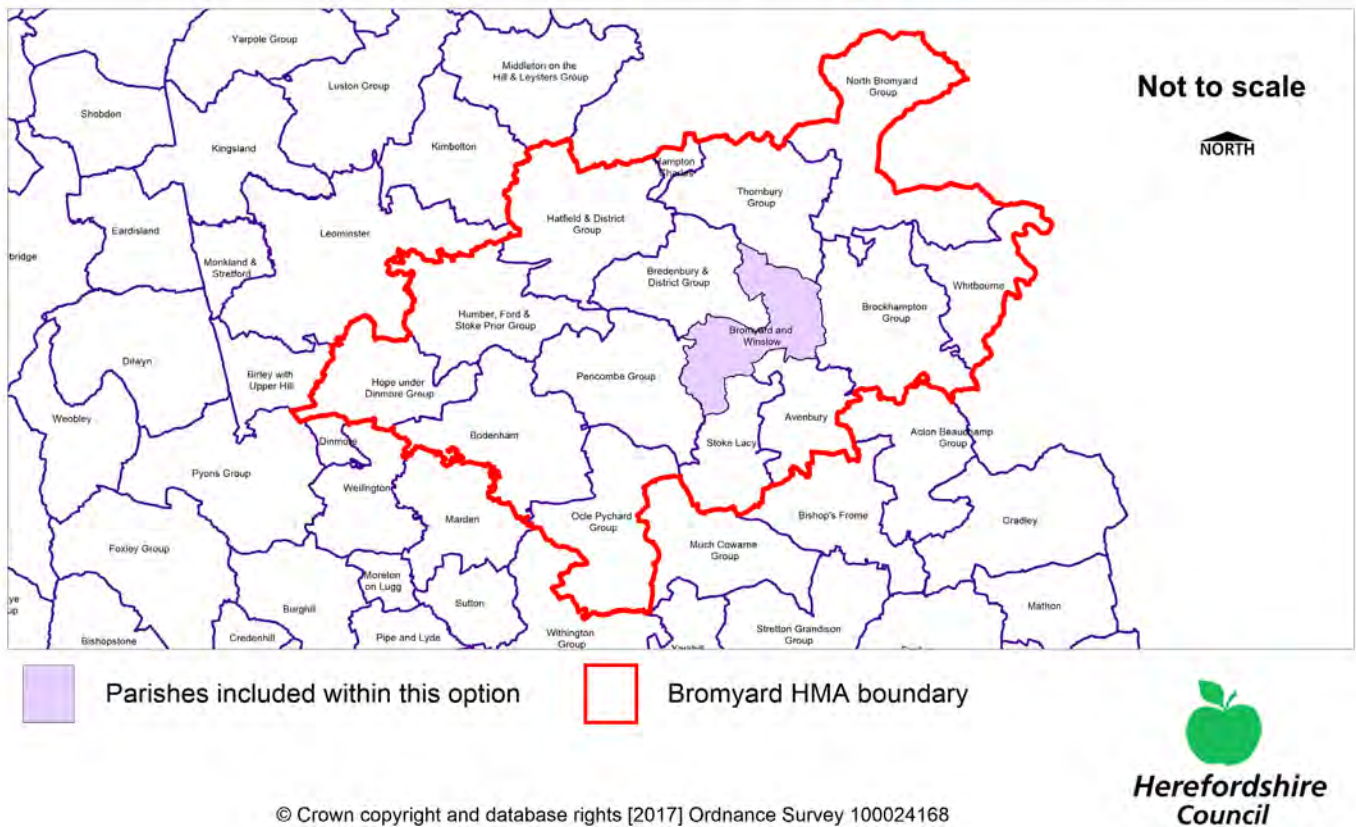
- 4.43 The RASA DPD is intended to provide additional policy to ensure the delivery of the rural place shaping section of the Core Strategy and not to include a wider range of development management criteria policies.
- 4.44 However, it is acknowledged that if Bromyard town is not producing its own Neighbourhood Development Plan then there may be some issues wider than those intended to be covered in this DPD that it would be desirable to address.
- 4.45 Bromyard and Winslow Town Council designated a neighbourhood area on 25 November 2015, however a decision was taken at the Town Council meeting in April 2017 to withdraw from the neighbourhood planning process. This is due to concerns that the required 5 hectares of employment land highlighted within the Core Strategy cannot be found within the neighbourhood area thus at risk of the NDP being not in conformity with the strategic policies.
- 4.46 This option is giving consideration to producing a specific Bromyard Town DPD. Such a DPD could cover the administrative area of Bromyard and Winslow and be produced by Herefordshire Council. This would enable more detailed policies to be prepared for Bromyard Town.
- 4.47 The production of a separate Development Plan Document for this area is currently not within the Local Development Scheme and no timetable has been set at the present time for its production. However, it is anticipated that any additional document would be produced after the completion of the RASA DPD.
- 4.48 As highlighted previously, this option would result in Bromyard and Winslow being the only market town to not have a locally produced Neighbourhood Development Plan and given the current resource implications a potential delay in the provision of additional policy framework within the area. The continuation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (with or without the employment allocation) or the inclusion of the town within the RASA DPD would address this issue.
- 4.49 Table 10 indicates the indicative proportional growth figures for Bromyard and Winslow to assist in achieving the growth requirements in line with the strategic policies within the Core Strategy.

Table 10 - indicative proportional growth for Bromyard within option 7

Parish	Settlement	CS figure no	Indicative Proportional Growth	Built 2011-2016	Commitments at April 2016	Residual Growth April 2016
Bromyard Housing Market Area						
Bromyard and Winslow	Bromyard	BY1	500	34	344	122

Fig 15 – map to show Bromyard Parish within option 7

Option 7 - Separate Bromyard and Winslow Parish Development Plan Document



Option 8 - Produce a separate Bromyard HMA DPD to cover the town of Bromyard and those parishes within the HMA highlighted within option 5

4.50 Given that there are also 6 other parishes surrounding Bromyard town who are also not producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, there is the option of the provision of a separate Development Plan Document which covers this specific part of the rural area.

4.51 Such a DPD would be a specific policy document for the Bromyard Housing Market Area but only covering those parishes not producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Table 11 indicates the potential list of parishes to be included.

Table 11 – list of parishes who could be included within Option 8

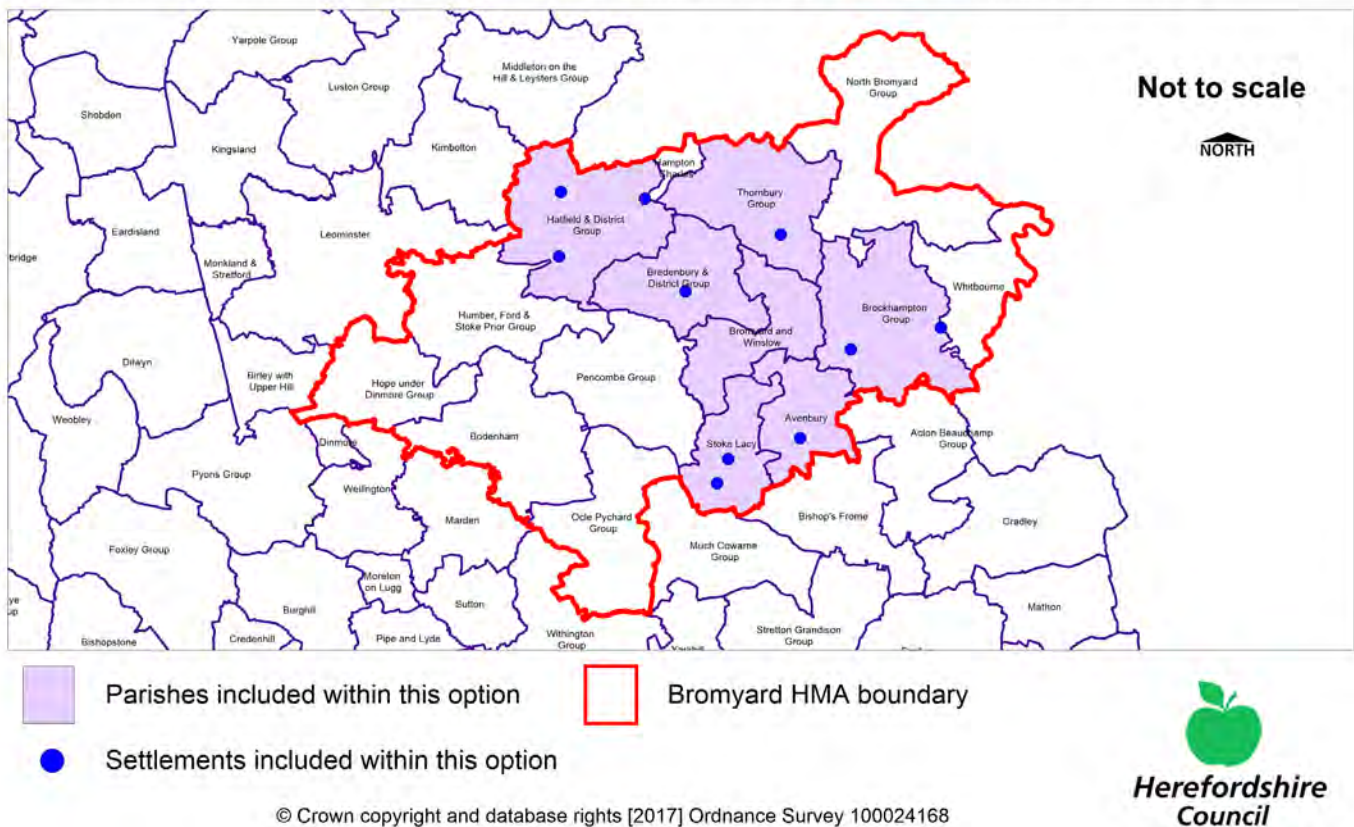
Avenbury	Bredenbury and District Group	Brockhampton Group	Bromyard and Winslow
Hatfield and District Group	Stoke Lacy	Thornbury Group	

4.52 This separate DPD would enable more detailed policies to be provided for Bromyard town and the issues of the surrounding parishes to be review holistically. This would also provide an opportunity to look at the employment land provision beyond the administrative boundary of Bromyard town.

4.53 The production of any additional Development Plan Document for this area is currently not within the Local Development Scheme and no timetable has been set at the present time, however it is likely that any additional document would be produced after the completion of the RASA DPD.

Figure 16 – map to show the parishes to be included within option 8

Option 8 - Separate Bromyard Housing Market Area (HMA) Development Plan Document to include those parishes within Bromyard HMA within Option 5



Impact of this option

4.54 For the parishes within the Bromyard HMA highlighted in table 11 and figure 16 above, there are three or four options to consider:

- Produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Be included within the RASA DPD
- Be included within the Bromyard HMA DPD
- For Bromyard town only to be included within a Bromyard DPD

4.55 The option chosen will have different implications of the timing and scope of planning policy for that area which are outlined below:

Document and related option	Produced by	Scope	Anticipated timing
Individual Neighbourhood Development Plans Option 1	Parish/town councils with the local community	Site allocations (housing/employment) Settlement boundaries Open space /local green space Design Community facilities Development management criteria policies	Dependent on individual parish councils. Funding is available until 2020 Advice and support available
Rural Area Site Allocation DPD Option 3	Herefordshire Council in accordance within the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Site allocations (housing/employment) Settlement boundaries Primary shopping area (Bromyard)	Commenced – adoption three years
Bromyard HMA DPD Option 8 Or Bromyard DPD Option 7	Herefordshire Council in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Site allocations (housing/employment) Settlement boundaries Open space/local green space Design Community facilities Development management criteria policies	Timescale not determined but not commenced until after the RASA DPD

Questions regarding the options for the scope of the RASA DPD

4.56 Below are a set of questions relating to the potential options outlined above. These form the basis of the consultation responses that we are interested in hearing during this Issues and Options consultation period.

Question:

Which of the options 1 to 6 is the most appropriate for the rural areas whilst maintaining support for Neighbourhood Development Plans?

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Option 4
- Option 5
- Option 6

Question:

Which is the most appropriate option for Bromyard town?

Option 1 – produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan

Option 3 – be included within the RASA DPD

Option 7 – be included within a Bromyard DPD

Option 8 – be included within a Bromyard HMA DPD

Question:

Which is the most appropriate for the settlements within the Bromyard HMA?

Option 1 – produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan

Option 3 – be included within the RASA DPD

Option 8 – be included within the Bromyard HMA DPD

Question:

Are there any alternative options not outlined in this document which should be considered?

Question:

Should any of the parishes be removed from any of the options outlined because they are activity progressing a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Options regarding the range of policies

- 5.1 Once the scope of the settlements to be included within the RASA DPD has been established, there are a number of options regarding the potential policies areas and site allocations to be considered.
- 5.2 The policy areas which are considered to be relevant are discussed below:
- Settlement boundary;
 - Housing allocations;
 - Employment allocations;
 - Local Green Space;
 - other.

Settlement boundaries and/or settlement definition

- 5.3 The Unitary Development Plan identified settlements with designated settlement boundaries, however the Core Strategy only named settlements for proportional growth but does not include any maps or boundaries for those highlighted within figure 4.14 and 4.15. Para 4.8.23 of the Core Strategy highlights that settlement boundaries (where appropriate) will be defined within either a Neighbourhood Development Plan or the RASA DPD.
- 5.4 There is also the argument that additional clarity is required regarding the location of some settlements listed within RA2 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.5 A settlement boundary is a line that is drawn on a map around a village, which reflects the built form. These have also historically been referred to as 'village envelopes'. It should be noted that the boundary does not necessarily have to cover the full extent of the area the local community consider to be 'the village'. They are used as a policy tool reflecting the area where a set of plan policies are to be applied.
- 5.6 In general, there is a presumption in favour of development within a settlement boundary. Any land or building outside of the boundary line is usually considered to be open countryside where development would be regulated with stricter planning policy. However, it should be noted that not all land included within a settlement boundary is guaranteed to be granted planning permission, as there may be other planning policies which will need to be adhered to also.
- 5.7 Some settlements, particularly those within figure 4.15 of the Core Strategy are of a character and form which may make the designation of a settlement boundary more problematic. Judgements will need to be made in these cases to assess whether a more appropriate alternative should be suggested in order to define the settlement and indicate the appropriate area for growth.
- 5.8 Encouragement has also been given within the White Paper (February 2017) to include policies within development plans to support the development of small windfall sites (ie sites not allocated but enabled by a criteria policy). The defining of settlement boundaries will allow for windfall sites to be made available.

Advantages of settlement boundaries

- 5.9 The advantages of defining a settlement boundary will invariably differ between communities and individuals, however these are the potential advantages:
- Certainty – defines the settlement from the open countryside in planning terms.
 - Clarity – settlement boundaries are accepted and recognised planning tool, used for many years in Herefordshire plan making.
 - Plan-led – ensures a more plan-led and controlled approach to future development, allowing allocated sites within the boundary rather than reacting to a criteria based policy.
 - Protects open countryside – prevent ribbon development and defines areas considered as open countryside. This is relevant to the Core Strategy policy particularly in area where the settlement name and parish name are similar.
 - Consistent approach – provides a firm basis for decision making.

- Acceptable windfall development – a boundary provides the opportunity to provide small scale windfall development within the settlement which have not been allocated.

Disadvantages of settlement boundaries

5.10 Below are a list of some of the disadvantages of settlement boundaries:

- Land values – these increase for land inside of a settlement boundary.
- Hope value – similar to above, this will increase for those areas within and adjacent to the settlement boundary.
- Cramming – seeking to provide growth within the settlement boundary can have an impact on the characteristics of the area, particularly if the character is open or large plots /gardens.
- Inflexible – boundaries are fixed for the plan period.

Criteria used to define the extent of the settlement boundaries

5.11 A set of criteria is proposed to be used to define any settlement boundaries within the RASA DPD and this is outlined below:

- Lines of communication – the boundaries will trace the edge of the built form, therefore exclude road, paths, railways and other lines of communications.
- Physical features – wherever possible the boundaries will follow physical features such as field boundaries or curtilage of properties. However they could exclude large gardens, orchards or other large areas in order to preserve the character of the settlement.
- Planning history – boundaries will include recently built or planning commitments if they are seen as contributing to the proportional growth requirements of the settlement. Regard will also be had to historic settlement boundaries from previous local plans, planning refusals, any appeal decisions and examiners reports.
- Important amenity areas – consideration will be given to the inclusion of important amenity space which contribute to the character of the area.
- New site allocations – any site allocations proposed within the RASA DPD will be included within the settlement boundary.
- Proportional growth requirements – boundaries will be drawn to facilitate an appropriate level of proportionate growth in the absence of a specific site allocation.

Question:

In line with the Core Strategy, is the defining of settlement boundaries within the RASA DPD appropriate?

Are there any additional criteria which should be used to define settlement boundaries, where appropriate?

Is there an alternative to settlement boundaries which would define the settlement within the RA2 list for the purposes of development management?

Housing

Size of site allocations

5.12 The primary purpose of the RASA DPD is to enable the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy, essentially the proportional growth requirements.

5.13 Proportional growth figures have been provided early in this document for all the potential areas to be included within the RASA DPD. This growth consists of dwellings that have been built since 2011, planning commitments, site allocations and windfalls. Therefore, later stages of the RASA DPD will include potential site allocations to support the delivery of housing within the rural area.

5.14 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates that local planning authorities should identify sufficient deliverable sites to support a five year land supply (para 47). Consequently, the option here is not

whether the RASA DPD should include site allocations but the range and mix of the sites considered.

- 5.15 The White Paper specifies that consideration should be given to using smaller undeveloped sites within settlements and that around 10% of sites allocated within development plans should be for sites of half a hectare or less. This is to widen the range of available sites to meet the housing demand and requirements and enable smaller developers and individuals to build.
- 5.16 Evidence from the Neighbourhood Development Plans across the County demonstrate that communities often seek a wide range of site allocation sizes, this can be from larger sites for over 30 to sites of 1 to 2 dwellings. An increasing number of Neighbourhood Development Plans are including site allocations within their document in order to plan positively and demonstrate their ability to meet the proportional growth requirement. Therefore, there is no particular concern that the requirement to allocate around 10% of sites under half a hectare cannot be met in Herefordshire. However, the RASA DPD also provides an opportunity to give consideration to this requirement.
- 5.17 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is an evidence based document which identifies and assesses sites with potential for housing throughout the county. The SHLAA has evolved since 2009 with additional sites being added following a number of 'call for sites' being undertaken. This document is currently being reviewed as part of the evidence base for the RASA DPD. The 2016 SHLAA includes areas which have been surveyed in previous years and settlements which have the potential to be included within the RASA DPD. This assessment contains a wide variety of sites across the county. Figure 16 indicates the range of sites within the SHLAA and any sites of over 0.25 hectares has the ability to be included within the SHLAA.

Figure 17 – SHLAA Sites summary

Potential dwellings	Number of sites	% of sites
5-9	58	19%
10-24	119	40%
25-49	70	23%
50-74	23	8%
75-99	17	6%
100+	13	4%

- 5.18 The RASA DPD will consist of a variety of settlements in terms of size and characteristics and this may ultimately determine the appropriateness of site allocations. Sites will be required to be responsive to the individual environments of the settlement concerned as indicated within the criteria of Policy RA2. However, in some circumstances there may be choices between a number of smaller sites or one larger site.
- 5.19 The provision of a range of sites within the RASA DPD will assist in ensuring that the provision of both the NPPF and the White Paper are met. Larger sites will have added benefits of being able to provide affordable housing, open space and other community benefits either on site, via Section 106 or potentially as part of any future Community Infrastructure Levy (or its replacement).

Self and custom build housing

- 5.20 The recent White Paper showed that support should be given to promote self and custom build homes as an opportunity to meet housing requirements and encourage smaller developers. The 'Right to Build' requires local authorities to find land for those seeking a custom built home. Therefore a range of sites will provide support for custom or self-build homes and smaller developers and provide a wider choice within the community.

5.21 Self-build projects are where an individual or group of people directly organise the design and construction of their new homes either by building it themselves or commissioning others to do so. Custom build is when an individual or group of people work closely with a developer to build new homes. This could include fully commissioned homes or fitting out a previously constructed shell.

5.22 A self and custom build register is held by Herefordshire Council where interests can be registered. Between 1st April and 31st October 2016 approximately 150 individuals and 1 association have entered their details on the register as being interested in self and custom build in the county. Although some of these have expressed an interest in self-build in more than one county, there is nevertheless a demand to be met for self-build in Herefordshire. The Core Strategy recognises that self-build will contribute to housing supply over the plan period and the RASA DPD provides an opportunity to encourage this type of development in different ways.

Affordable housing

5.23 It is acknowledged that there is significant need for affordable housing in Herefordshire. The recent White Paper is seeking to provide new ways of supporting the provision of the right kind of affordable housing. It is also recognised that the provision of affordable housing is more difficult in rural areas where often the scale and location of new development is more restrictive.

5.24 Affordable housing falls into three main categories:

- Social rented, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime;
- Affordable rented housing subject to rent controls that require no more than 80% of the local market rent; and
- Intermediate homes for sale and rent, provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels.

5.25 Policy H1 of the Core Strategy highlights the targets for affordable housing within the rural area on sites of more than 10 dwellings which has a maximum combined gross floor space of more than 1000m². These have been informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008), the Local Housing Market Assessment (updated 2013) and the Economic Viability Assessment (2014).

5.26 Figure 18 shows the affordable housing target across the rural area by housing value area (HVA).

Figure 18 – Affordable housing targets across the county

Housing Value Area	Affordable housing target
Hereford Northern and Southern Hinterland	35%
Kington and West Herefordshire	35%
Ledbury, Ross and Rural Hinterland	40%
Northern Rural	40%

- 5.27 National Planning Policy Framework indicates that consideration should be given to whether allowing some market housing on exception sites would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. The Core Strategy highlights that the preparation of a development plan also provides the opportunity to identify sites for affordable housing.
- 5.28 It is proposed within the Core Strategy (para 5.1.12) that a supplementary planning document will provide additional guidance and set out how the affordable housing policies will be implemented across the county.
- 5.29 This will provide additional guidance to assist both developers and the public in understanding how Policy H1 will be implemented. It will cover topics such as:
- advice on the need for affordable housing;
 - affordable house prices;
 - the negotiation process;
 - securing affordable housing and controlling occupancy; and
 - contributions to off-site provisions.
- 5.30 However, there is an opportunity within the RASA DPD to identify specific rural exception sites for affordable housing. This is land that would not normally be allocated for market housing but could assist in meeting a proven local need for affordable housing. It should be noted that this potential opportunity will only be applicable within the parishes included within the RASA DPD. Continuing encouragement will be given to neighbourhood planning groups to consider a range and mix of housing within their plans.
- 5.31 Rural exception sites will need to take full account of the environmental consideration of the locations and not place additional financial burden upon the households occupying the schemes due to isolated locations. Work will be undertaken with the Strategic Housing team at Herefordshire Council to identify any potential sites for affordable housing if appropriate.

Starter Homes

- 5.32 Starter homes are targeted at first time buyers who are otherwise priced out of the housing market. Government are seeking local authorities to deliver starter homes as part of a mixed package of affordable housing to respond to local needs and markets.
- 5.33 There is an indication that brownfield land could be released for developments with a higher proportion of starter homes. This would include vacant, unviable and underused employment land which has been so for a period of 5 years and is not considered a strategic employment site. The White Paper also clarifies that starter homes can be acceptable on rural exception sites.
- 5.34 There is the potential for the RASA DPD to identify such opportunities if considered appropriate.

Preferred site allocation options

- 5.35 For clarity, there are no site allocations being proposed within this Issues and Options Paper, however later consultations will consist of options regarding potential site allocations for those areas included within the RASA DPD.

Question:

Should the RASA DPD contain a range of site sizes for housing allocations?

Should only small sites be allocated to contribute to the government objectives of providing housing under half a hectare (around 10 to 15 dwellings)?

Should larger sites be allocated to contribute to providing a range and mix of housing including affordable housing?

Should the RASA DPD include allocated sites specifically for affordable housing and/or starter homes?

Employment

- 5.36 The rural areas have consistently played a strong role in local, regional and national food and drink production, particularly in the areas such as agricultural and farming. Other uses within the rural economy consist of local businesses and services, village shops, public houses, tourism activity, home working and farm diversification enterprises. The strengthening of the rural economy is also important in retaining a skilled labour force. Policy RA6 of the Core Strategy seeks to provide a flexible framework for start-up and the continuation of rural businesses, diversification and working from home.
- 5.37 The Herefordshire Economic Vision (2016) is seeking to build on a number of current strengths including Herefordshire becoming nationally known for its outdoor sporting and leisure opportunities and experiences, a tourism destination and enabling market towns and rural communities to maximise their role in building thriving service centres. The RASA DPD provides an opportunity to support these objectives in land use terms.
- 5.38 The RASA DPD Sustainable Appraisal Scoping Report (2016) highlighted that the RASA DPD also provides an opportunity to allocate employment land within the rural area if appropriate. Consideration should therefore be given to the potential for the RASA DPD to allocate land for workspace business centres and employment opportunities.
- 5.39 It should be noted that the scope of this opportunity will only be within the parishes/settlements included within the RASA DPD. Continuing encouragement will be given to neighbourhood planning groups to include these elements within their individual Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Question:

Should the RASA DPD include allocated sites specifically for employment growth?

Are there elements of the Economic Vision which could be included in land use terms within the RASA DPD?

Local Green Space/amenity space

- 5.40 The National Planning Policy Framework (para 76/77) highlights that Development Plan Documents should identify green areas for special protection which are of particular importance. As a consequence of the designation of settlement boundaries, the land within any boundary may be suitable for either allocation or windfall development. However, new development may be ruled out in very special circumstances if the land has been designated as a Local Green Space.
- 5.41 Local Green Spaces should only be designated if they are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. They must also be a complement to investment in sufficient land for development.
- 5.42 For an area to be designated it must be:
- A green space in reasonably close proximity to the community;
 - A green space which is demonstrably special to the local community and hold a local significance, recreation value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - A green space which is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 5.43 Therefore, there would be the opportunity within the RASA DPD to designate Local Green Space where appropriate.

Question:

Should the RASA DPD designate Local Green Space where appropriate?

If so, are there any settlements where Local Green Space could be designated?

Other areas

5.44 As indicated earlier, the RASA DPD is not intended to be a development management policy document containing a wide range of criteria policies. Instead the document is only concentrating on the key requirements to deliver the Core Strategy. These have been outlined within this paper.

5.45 At this stage, it is proposed that supplementary planning documents will be prepared to cover the whole rural area on the following issues:

- Design Code;
- Open Spaces standard requirements.

5.46 With this in mind, it is not proposed to include any additional policies with regards to these issues within the RASA DPD.

5.47 It should also be borne in mind that the policies contained within the RASA DPD will only apply to those parishes covered and not the wider rural area.

Question:

Are there any other policy areas which should be included within the RASA DPD?

Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

- 6.1 Sustainability Appraisal is a requirement for all Development Plan Documents. Sustainability is about ensuring the long term maintenance of well-being and the environment for our present and future communities. The process will assess the impact of the RASA DPD on the environment, people and the economy. It will incorporate the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 6.2 A Scoping Report was prepared and consulted upon in November 2016 and this Issues and Options Paper is accompanied by a draft SA.
- 6.3 The RASA will also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment which will screen whether there will be any likely significant effects on sites of International importance for wildlife (European designated sites). Where a land use plan is likely to have a significant effect on such sites, an appropriate assessment must be undertaken. This Issues and Options Report is accompanied by a screening exercise to consider that the impacts of the options on the conservation objectives.

Next Steps

- 7.1 The next stage of the RASA DPD will be to consider all of the representations which are received during the Issues and Options consultation period to assist in formulating the final scope of the plan and the level of policies to be included.
- 7.2 This will include:
 - Working with parish and town councils to determine the predicted progress of any Neighbourhood Development Plans currently in production.
 - Continuing support and technical advice will be provided to any parish council and community preparing their own plans.
 - Listing those parishes to be included within the RASA DPD, based on consultation responses and the progress of individual Neighbourhood Development Plans.
 - Confirming inclusion to those parish councils where their administrative area is proposed to be within the preferred options document.
- 7.3 For those settlements included within the RASA DPD, work will be undertaken to assess and define the settlements for the purposes of RA2 and suggested delineation of any settlement boundaries. In tandem, work will continue to update the SHLAA to provide evidence to select potential sites for housing allocations.
- 7.3 An update to the Herefordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is being undertaken and this will also assist to inform potential allocations.
- 7.4 A set of preferred options and potential site allocations will be consulted upon as part of the next stage of the plan's development.

How to comment:

Your views are important to us to help to shape the future of the rural areas. Each section of this paper has a number of questions and a questionnaire is available online.

The comments you provide will help inform the next stage of the RASA DPD, which is the preferred options stage.

Please complete and return the questionnaire by **28 July 2017** to one of the following addresses:

by email neighbourhoodplanning@herefordshire.gov.uk

in writing: Rural Areas Site Allocation DPD
Neighbourhood Planning Team
Herefordshire Council
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

If you need more information, or require this document in a different format or language, please contact us at the addresses above or by phoning 01432 260386.

Summary of questions

Section 3 Questions:

1. Is the approach toward the scope of the DPD appropriate given the positive support for neighbourhood planning within the county?
2. Are there any other issues which the RASA DPD could look to address?

Section 4 Questions:

3. Should Neighbourhood Development Plans be the sole mechanism for more local planning policy in the rural area or should a RASA DPD be produced for those areas not covered by an NDP?
 - Only Neighbourhood Development Plans
 - Neighbourhood Development Plans and RASA DPD
4. Which of the options 1 to 6 is the most appropriate for the rural areas whilst maintaining support for neighbourhood plans?
 - Option 1
 - Option 2
 - Option 3
 - Option 4
 - Option 5
 - Option 6
5. Which is the most appropriate option for Bromyard town?
 - Option 1
 - Option 3
 - Option 7
 - Option 8
6. Which is the most appropriate for the settlements within the Bromyard HMA?
 - Option 1
 - Option 3
 - Option 8
7. Are there any alternative options not outlined above which should be considered?
8. Should any of the parishes be removed from any of the options outlined because they are actively progressing a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Section 5 Questions:

9. In line with the Core Strategy, is the defining of settlement boundaries within the RASA DPD appropriate?
10. Are there any additional criteria which should be used to define settlement boundaries, where appropriate?
11. Is there an alternative to settlement boundaries which would define the settlement within the RA2 list for the purposes of development management?
12. Should the RASA DPD contain a range of site sizes for housing allocations?
13. Should only small sites be allocated to contribute to the government objectives of providing housing under half an hectare? (around 10-15 dwellings)

Section 5 Questions continued:

14. Should larger sites be allocated to contribute to providing a range and mix of housing including affordable housing?
15. Should the RASA DPD include allocated sites specifically for affordable housing and/or starter homes?
16. Should the RASA DPD include allocated sites specifically for employment growth?
17. Are there elements of the Economic Vision which could be included in land use terms within the RASA DPD?
18. Should the RASA DPD designate Local Green Space where appropriate?
19. If so, are there any settlements where Local Green Space could be designated?
20. Are there any other policy areas which should be included within the RASA DPD?
21. Are there any additional comments you have upon the content of the document?

Appendix 1

List of Core Strategy figure 4.14 and 4.15 settlements

Figure 4.14: The settlements which will be the main focus of proportionate housing development

HMA			
Bromyard	Golden Valley	Kington	Ledbury
Bodenham Bodenham Moor Bredenbury Bringsty Burley Gate Hope under Dinmore Linton Pencombe Risbury Stoke Cross/Stoke Lacy Stoke Prior Whitbourne	Bredwardine Clifford Cusop Dorstone Ewyas Harold Longtown Michaelchurch Escley Moccas Peterchurch Preston on Wye Vowchurch	Almeley Brilley Eardisley Lyonsall Norton Canon Pembridge Staunton on Wye Shobdon Tittley Whitney on Wye Winforton	Ashperton Bishops Frome Bosbury Colwall Cradley Eastnor Fromes Hill Lower Eggleton/Newtown Putley Wellington Heath
Leominster	Hereford	Ross-on-Wye	
Adforton Bircher Brampton Bryan Brimfield Bush Bank Dilwyn Eardisland Kimbolton Kingsland Leintwardine Leysters Lingen Lucton Luston Monkland Orleton Richards Castle Shirlheath Weobley Wigmore Yarpole	Bartestree/Lugwardine Bishopstone Burghill Canon Pyon Clehonger Credenhill Eaton Bishop Fownhope Hampton Bishop Holme Lacy Little Dewchurch Madley Marden Mordiford Moreton on Lugg Stretton Sugwas Sutton St Nicholas Swainshill Tarrington Tillington Wellington Westhope Withington	Bromsash Brampton Abbots Bridstow Crow Hill Garway Goodrich Gorsley Hoarwithy Kingstone Kingsthorpe Kings Caple Lea Linton Little Birch Llangrove Much Birch Much Dewchurch Much Marcle Orcop Hill Peterstow Pontrilas Pontshill St Weonards Weston-under-Penyard	Walford (Coughton) Whitchurch Wilton Winnal Woolhope Wormbridge Wormelow

Figure 4.15: Other settlements where proportionate housing is appropriate.

HMA			
Bromyard	Golden Valley	Kington	Ledbury
Docklow Edwyn Ralph Hatfield Munderfield Ocle Pychard Pudleston Steensbridge Ullingswick	Abbeydore Bacton Blakemere Lower Maes-coed Priory Wood Rowlestone Tyberton	Hergest Holme Marsh Kinnersley Letton Staunton on Arrow Woonton	Canon Frome Coddington Eggleton Mathon Monkhide Much Cowarne Stretton Grandison
Leominster	Hereford	Ross-on-Wye	
Ashton Aymestrey Brierley Cobnash Combe Moor Eyton Ivington Kinsham Leinthall Earls Leinthall Starkses Little Hereford Moreton Mortimers Cross Middleton on the Hill Stapleton Upper Hill Walford Wharton Yatton	Burmarsh Breinton Byford Dinedor Dormington Grafton Kings Pyon Ledgemoor Little Tarrington Litmarsh Mansel Lacy Moorhampton Munstone Pipe and Lyde Preston Wynne Priors Frome Ruckhall Shelwick Shucknall Stoke Edith Twyford Common Vauld Westhide Weston Beggard Withington Marsh Yazor	Aconbury Allensmore Aston Ingham Bishopswood Broad Oak Brockhampton Cobhall Common Didley Glewstone Harewood End Howle Hill Kilpeck Llancloudy Llangarron Llanwarne Much Birch/The Axe and Cleaver Orcop Rushall St Owens Cross Symonds Yat (West)	Three Ashes Thruyton Upton Crews Welsh Newton Common

Appendix 2

Rural strategic Core Strategy Policies

Policy RA1 – Rural housing distribution

In Herefordshire’s rural areas a minimum of 5,300 new dwellings will be provided between 2011 and 2031 to contribute to the county’s housing needs. The development of rural housing will contribute towards the wider regeneration of the rural economy.

New dwellings will be broadly distributed across the county’s rural areas on the basis of seven Housing Markets Areas (HMA) as illustrated in Figure 4.13. This acknowledges that different areas of Herefordshire have different housing needs and requirements.

The 5,300 dwellings will be delivered throughout the rural HMAs as set out in the table below. The indicative housing growth targets in each of the rural HMAs will be used as a basis for the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans in the county. Local evidence and environmental factors will determine the appropriate scale of development.

Rural HMA	Approximate number of dwellings 2011 - 2031	Indicative housing growth target (%)
Bromyard	364	15
Golden Valley	304	12
Hereford	1870	18
Kington	317	12
Ledbury	565	14
Leominster	730	14
Ross-on-Wye	1150	14
Total	5300	

Policy RA2 – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns.

To maintain and strengthen locally sustainable communities across the rural parts of Herefordshire, sustainable housing growth will be supported in or adjacent to those settlements identified in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. This will enable development that has the ability to bolster existing service provision, improve facilities and infrastructure and meet the needs of the communities concerned.

The minimum growth target in each rural Housing Market Area will be used to inform the level of housing development to be delivered in the various settlements set out in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. Neighbourhood Development Plans will allocate land for new housing or otherwise demonstrate delivery to provide levels of housing to meet the various targets, by indicating levels of suitable and available capacity.

Housing proposals will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

1. Their design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area. In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.15 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned;
2. Their locations make best and full use of suitable brownfield sites wherever possible;
3. They result in the development of high quality, sustainable schemes which are appropriate to their context and make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and its landscape setting; and
4. They result in the delivery of schemes that generate the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular settlements, reflecting local demand.

Specific proposals for the delivery of local need housing will be particularly supported where they meet an identified need and their long-term retention as local needs housing is secured as such.

Policy RA3 – Herefordshire's countryside

In rural locations outside of settlements, as to be defined in either Neighbourhood Development Plans or the Rural Areas Sites Allocations DPD, residential development will be limited to proposals which satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

1. meets an agricultural or forestry need or other farm diversification enterprise for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work and complies with Policy RA4; or
2. accompanies and is necessary to the establishment or growth of a rural enterprise, and complies with Policy RA4; or
3. involves the replacement of an existing dwelling (with a lawful residential use) that is comparable in size and scale with, and is located in the lawful domestic curtilage, of the existing dwelling; or
4. would result in the sustainable re-use of a redundant or disused building(s) where it complies with Policy RA5 and leads to an enhancement of its immediate setting; or
5. is rural exception housing in accordance with Policy H2; or
6. is of exceptional quality and innovative design satisfying the design criteria set out in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework and achieves sustainable standards of design and construction; or
7. is a site providing for the needs of gypsies or other travellers in accordance with Policy H4.

Policy RA4 – Agricultural, forestry and rural enterprise dwellings

Proposals for dwellings associated with agriculture, forestry and rural enterprises will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is a sustained essential functional need for the dwelling and it forms an essential part of a financially sustainable business, and that such need cannot be met in existing accommodation. Such dwellings should:

1. demonstrate that the accommodation could not be provided in an existing building(s);
2. be sited so as to meet the identified functional need within the unit or in relation to other dwellings; and
3. be of a high quality, sustainable design which is appropriate to the context and makes a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and rural landscape.

Where evidence of the economic sustainability of the rural enterprise is not proven or where an enterprise is not yet established, planning permission for temporary accommodation may be granted for a maximum period of three years to enable the sustainability of the enterprise to be assessed. Successive extensions will not normally be granted. Temporary accommodation should be carefully sited within the unit or in relation to other dwellings.

Dwellings permitted in accordance with this policy will be subject to occupancy controls secured through a Section 106 Agreement. In some situations it will be appropriate to use legal agreements to tie other dwellings to the unit and/or restrict the occupancy of other dwellings within the farm/business unit.

Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions (or section 106 Agreements) will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated the dwelling is surplus to the current and sustained original business needs, as well as other rural enterprises in the locality and there has been a genuine and unsuccessful attempt to market the property at a realistic price (for rent or sale) which has been independently verified.

Policy RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings

The sustainable re-use of individual and groups of redundant or disused buildings, including farmsteads in rural areas, which will make a positive contribution to rural businesses and enterprise and support the local economy (including live work units) or which otherwise contributes to residential development, or is essential to the social well-being of the countryside, will be permitted where:

1. design proposals respect the character and significance of any redundant or disused building and demonstrate that it represents the most viable option for the long term conservation and enhancement of any heritage asset affected, together with its setting;
2. design proposals make adequate provision for protected and priority species and associated habitats;
3. the proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and does not cause undue environmental impacts and;
4. the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and
5. the building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting.

Any planning permissions granted pursuant to this policy will be subject to a condition removing permitted development rights for future alterations, extensions and other developments.

Policy RA6 - Rural economy

Employment generating proposals which help diversify the rural economy such as knowledge based creative industries, environmental technologies, business diversification projects and home working will be supported. A range of economic activities will be supported, including proposals which:

- support and strengthen local food and drink production;
- support and/or protect the vitality and viability of commercial facilities of an appropriate type and scale in rural areas, such as village shops, petrol filling stations, garden centres and public houses;
- involve the small scale extension of existing businesses;
- promote sustainable tourism proposals of an appropriate scale in accordance with Policy E4 - Tourism;
- promote the sustainable use of the natural and historic environment as an asset which is valued, conserved and enhanced;
- support the retention of existing military sites;
- support the retention and/ or diversification of existing agricultural businesses;

Planning applications which are submitted in order to diversify the rural economy will be permitted where they:

- ensure that the development is of a scale which would be commensurate with its location and setting;
- do not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to the amenity of nearby residents by virtue of design and mass, noise, dust, lighting and smell;
- do not generate traffic movements that cannot safely be accommodated within the local road network; and
- do not undermine the achievement of water quality targets in accordance with Policies SD3 and SD4.

Policy E5 – Town centres

Town centres will be the focus for retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism uses. Proposals for such uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centres of Hereford and the market towns will be supported provided that they:

1. do not adversely affect the primary function of the town centres as shopping destinations; and
2. are of a scale and design appropriate to the size, role, character and heritage of the centre.

Proposals for development outside the town centres will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the requirements of the sequential test, as set out in paragraph 24 of the NPPF, have been met and that the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centres. An application will be refused if it fails the sequential test or an impact assessment.

The sequential test requires the above mentioned uses to be located within town centres. Where it is proven there are no available and suitable town centre sites, preference will be given to edge of centre sites before any out of centre site is considered. Where a sequential test adequately demonstrates that the only suitable and available site is an edge of centre or an out of centre location, preference will be given to sites that are well connected to the town centre and are easily accessible by sustainable transport modes.

An impact assessment for retail, leisure and commercial proposals outside of the town centres to assess their impact on investment in the area and on vitality and viability of the town centre may be required depending on the scale and location of the proposal, as specified in the policies in the Place Shaping section.

The use of upper floors within town centres for residential and office uses will be supported.

Within town centres, retail uses will be concentrated within the primary shopping areas (Policy E6).

Policy E6 - Primary shopping areas and primary and secondary shopping frontages

The retail trading character of the primary shopping areas and primary and secondary shopping frontages will be protected and enhanced. Primary shopping frontages will continue to be dominated by retail shops (Class A1) whilst secondary frontages may include a greater mix of uses.

Proposals for uses within Classes A2- A5 (non-retail) in ground floor premises in primary and secondary shopping frontages will be permitted where the proposed use will not result in:

1. a continuous frontage of more than two non-retail units; and the overall proportion of non-retail uses exceeding 25% in primary shopping frontages and 50% in secondary shopping frontages.

Exceptions to the above thresholds may be considered where:

- in primary and secondary frontages the proposal would lead to the appropriate use of vacant or underused premises where it can be demonstrated that the premises are unlikely to be used for retailing and that a business case can be demonstrated for requiring such a location; or
 - in secondary frontages, the proposal results from an expansion of an existing non-retail use or would fall within Class D1-D2; or
 - it is demonstrated in the Hereford Area Plan and/or Neighbourhood Development Plans that an alternative threshold would be appropriate.
2. detraction from the character of the shopping frontage concerned, for reasons of location, unit size or frontage width. The reinstatement of historic frontages will be encouraged.