

that general housing provision is designed in such a way that enables easy adaptation to meet the requirements of all households.

Traveller sites

5.1.20 It is important that the accommodation needs and requirements of all sections of the community are considered in developing planning policies. Government planning policy is increasingly favouring the identification of sites for travellers. Herefordshire Council recognises these requirements which will be taken forward in the preparation of a new Travellers' Sites Document. In the interim however, the following policy is required in order to consider the merits of planning proposals.

5.1.21 For the purposes of this policy the definition of "travellers" means "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling show people" as defined in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG 2015.

Policy H4 – Traveller sites

The accommodation needs of travellers will be provided for through the preparation of a Travellers' Sites Document (DPD) which will include site specific allocations.

In the absence of an adopted DPD, or where proposals for sites are brought forward on non-allocated land, proposals will be supported where:

1. sites afford reasonable access to services and facilities, including health and schools
2. appropriate screening and landscaping is included within the proposal to protect local amenity and the environment
3. they promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community
4. they enable mixed business and residential accommodation (providing for the live-work lifestyle of travellers)
5. they avoid undue pressure on local infrastructure and services
6. in rural areas, the size of the site does not dominate nearby settled communities and
7. they are capable of accommodating on-site facilities that meet best practice for modern traveller site requirements, including play areas, storage, provision for recycling and waste management.

In rural areas, where there is a case of local need for an affordable traveller site, but criterion 1 above cannot be fulfilled, then an exception may be made and proposals permitted, provided such sites can be retained for that purpose in perpetuity.

5.1.22 The approach to planning for travellers through the preparation of a Travellers' Sites Document will reflect the increased involvement of traveller and settled communities in determining the location of development. Traveller sites include those considered necessary to meet the residential needs of gypsies and travellers who will remain in a location permanently or for substantial periods, transit sites for those moving through the area as well as plots for travelling show people.

5.1.23 The Travellers' Sites Document, which is programmed in the Council's Local Development scheme (2015), for adoption in spring 2016, will include the following:

- an assessment of current need for permanent residential pitches with an indication of the process for updating need on a regular basis;

- pitch targets for travellers;
- deliverable sites for residential pitches for the period 2014-19 to set against targets;
- identification of broad locations for further developable residential sites for travellers over the period 2019-2031;
- identification of need for, and approach to, the provision of transit sites for the plan period;
- consideration of the need for, and approach to, provision for travelling showpersons within the county for the plan period;
- consideration of the need for a rural exceptions policy to enable sites to be brought forward solely as affordable gypsy and traveller sites and
- consideration of support for the authorisation of long-term unofficial sites where they meet the criteria in policy H4 above or the making available of alternative provision where they are lost for whatever reason.

5.1.24 A pitch is defined as the 'area of land on a gypsy and traveller caravan site developed for a single family.' A plot means a pitch on a "travelling showpeople" site (often called a "yard"). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for "gypsies and travellers" and mixed-use plots for "travelling showpeople", which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

5.1.25 As at January 2015*, there are 114 authorised residential pitches within Herefordshire with a further 21 pitches on unauthorised, but tolerated sites. Numbers of caravans on these sites have fluctuated over the past two years from 148 to 161 and averaging 157. Some pitches accommodate more than one caravan.

5.1.26 The private sector may need to provide for further residential site needs until the Travellers' Sites Document is adopted in 2016 and policy H4 sets out the basis upon which planning permission will be granted during this period. The criteria in this policy may also apply when the defined need for residential gypsy and traveller sites has been met, yet further need is accepted.

5.1.27 In the same way that a rural exception policy is applied to housing development, rural exception sites can also be applied to affordable traveller sites and the Travellers' Sites Document will consider this issue. A rural exception site policy enables small sites to be used, specifically for affordable traveller sites in perpetuity, in small rural communities, that would not normally be used for traveller sites.

5.1.28 The assessment of need for transit sites or plots for travelling show people will be reviewed as part of the work for the Travellers' Sites Document. Should any need arise in the interim; proposals will need to satisfy the criteria set out in Policy H4.

5.1.29 In bringing proposals forward it will be important to ensure that sites are appropriately landscaped in order to limit their visual impact and should provide access to local facilities and services such as shops, schools and healthcare. It is also important to recognise that provision is included to meet the live-work nature of gypsies and travellers and adequate provision is made for play space for children.

*Caravan count conducted by Herefordshire Council (January 2015)

Social and community facilities

5.1.30 The Core Strategy aims to achieve sustainable communities across Herefordshire and improve the well-being of its people. This requires an effective balance between the provision of new housing and employment and providing the social and community facilities required to support growth. There is a need to support and seek improvements to local services and facilities; particularly in rural areas where facilities have been in decline since the post-war period. Less prosperous groups in remote rural areas are arguably in a worse position than similar income groups in towns, because their access to services, employment, leisure and shopping facilities is severely limited. For people living in the rural areas, access to essential facilities and services depends on access to a car or living close to a public transport route.

5.1.31 The lack of local services and facilities in rural areas and their increasing concentration in the towns has been identified as a key issue in Herefordshire. Included within the ambitions of the Herefordshire Community Strategy, are the retention and improvement of services and facilities and the provision of excellent training and learning opportunities - for people of all ages within the county.

5.1.32 Social and community facilities can be defined as physical facilities for different individuals and communities, which are provided by a range of organisations (public, private and voluntary). They provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. These facilities play an important role in the development of a vibrant community by creating a sense of place and providing a place for people to meet and interact socially. They also offer services that are essential for education, health and well-being; and support community cohesion and benefit the general quality of life of residents.

5.1.33 Social and community facilities can include: public services, community centres and public halls, arts and cultural facilities including theatres, public art and heritage centres; policing and criminal justice facilities, fire and ambulance services, health and education facilities including GP surgeries and NHS walk-in centres; public houses, local shops, public toilets, youth centres, social care facilities including day centres and child care facilities; places of worship, and services provided by the community and voluntary sector - for example scout and guide premises.

Policy SC1 – Social and community facilities

Development proposals which protect, retain or enhance existing social and community infrastructure or ensure that new facilities are available as locally as possible will be supported. Such proposals should be in or close to settlements, have considered the potential for co-location of facilities and where possible be safely accessible by foot, by cycle and public transport.

New development that creates a need for additional social and community facilities that cannot be met through existing social facilities - will be expected to meet the additional requirements through new, or extension of existing, provision or by developer contributions which meet the relevant tests of paragraph 204 of the NPPF .

Proposals involving the provision or expansion of social and community facilities will be expected to provide publicly accessible toilets (including facilities for disabled people and baby changing).

Existing facilities will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that an appropriate alternative facility is available, or can be provided to meet the needs of the community affected; or it can be shown that the facility is no longer required, viable or is no longer fit for purpose; and where appropriate, it has been vacant and marketed for community use without success. Viable alternative facilities must be equivalent to those they

replace, in terms of size, quality and accessibility.

The provision or improvement of higher education facilities and the continuing enhancement of existing, or provision of new, training and skills facilities will be actively promoted.

5.1.34 Population growth will generate a range of service needs throughout Herefordshire, particularly concentrated within the major growth locations, and it is essential that these service needs are supported by appropriate levels of social and community infrastructure. This should come forward either as an integral part of the development (adaptable, mixed use and made available at an early stage), or by way of a developer contribution/community infrastructure levy monies which meet the relevant tests of paragraph 204 of the NPPF.

5.1.35 Notwithstanding the diverse spatial requirements of local clubs, societies and faith communities, the council is moving towards the co-location of community premises such as meeting halls, places of worship and schools - for example, a mix of community uses/resources at one location to encourage efficient use of space and integrated provision to meet the needs of all sectors of our community. The council recognises however, that whilst shared space will be a suitable way forward for some, there are many who require their own space for activities, including worship and teaching.

Loss of existing facilities

5.1.36 Local retail premises, village halls, churches and public houses, particularly in the rural areas are often at the heart of the community and provide a place for the local community to meet, to use function rooms, to socialise and to fulfil the day to day convenience needs of the local community. In some locations it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain services, shops and public houses; however it is essential that support is given to enable businesses to continue to serve the local community. In such cases, flexibility should be given to enable local shops, services or public houses to diversify into ancillary retail and tourism opportunities or community ownership through the 'Community Right to Bid' process. This flexibility may enable the business to continue to serve the local community. Where a business is shown to be no longer viable, the first alternative should be to investigate whether an alternative community use is possible. In order to demonstrate that alternative community uses have been considered, evidence of marketing for a period of at least 12 months should be provided with any proposals involving the loss of community facilities.

Education and skills

5.1.37 Some of the main socio-economic outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy are to improve educational attainment, increase the number of young people entering education or training at 16 and create a highly skilled workforce. These are also wider regeneration objectives of various agencies and important components of delivering the economic vision for Herefordshire. The council is therefore exploring the potential for a university gateway at Hereford in order to provide opportunities for local people to access jobs in growth sectors, including green technologies and help the city become a magnet for businesses in knowledge intensive industries. In doing so, the skills of the current labour market will be improved and the knowledge and research infrastructure aligned with particular growth sectors of the economy.

Culture

5.1.38 The council also acknowledges the contribution that culture can make to the economy. Culture is fundamental to the character of Herefordshire, with national and local research showing that it is important to people, and has the potential to make us happier and healthier; as well as providing opportunities for social interaction and learning. However, the rural nature of Herefordshire, with its dispersed communities and

limited public transport, means that access to cultural facilities can be difficult. One of the aims of Herefordshire's Cultural Strategy 2008-18 is to facilitate easy and affordable access to high quality cultural activities and facilities for all.

Reducing the need to travel

5.1.39 The provision of community facilities in local areas across the county will ensure better access for people, which in turn reduces the need to travel; while the co-location of some facilities and services will help to ensure the effective use of resources, and encourage joined-up service delivery and shared maintenance and management costs. In this respect, the council aims to support the delivery of new services and facilities, through partnership working with service providers and the local community; and through development opportunities that arise from local authority and private sector regeneration projects. Furthermore, the council is working with local communities to develop Neighbourhood Development Plans, to ensure that community needs and priorities are matched to the services that are offered in their local areas.

Provision of public toilets

5.1.40 A lack of toilet facilities can have an impact on the lives of older people, parents and carers with young children, disabled people and people with chronic health problems; by preventing or restricting their opportunities to take part in everyday activities like shopping and leisure pursuits. The council is developing a community toilet scheme to enable local businesses like pubs, restaurants and shops, to work together with the council to make more clean, safe and accessible toilets available to the public.

Co-location of services and facilities

5.1.41 Co-locating public and community services in shared buildings or on shared sites provides a number of benefits for both the community, as users of the services and for the council and its partners, as providers of services. The population of Herefordshire is forecast to continue to grow, with an ageing population structure and this will put increasing pressure on existing services. At the same time, the current economic climate and competing demands for space and resources means that a different approach towards locating services and facilities may be needed, especially if we want to ensure that infrastructure is provided in the most sustainable and accessible locations in the county. In practice this could mean linking nurseries, schools and colleges; widening the range of health and social care services available at health centres, or by providing education, training or IT services in libraries.

Open space, sports and recreation

5.1.42 Open space, sports and recreation facilities are an essential part of sustainable communities. They need to stand the test of time, be where people want to live, and enable people to meet their sporting and recreational aspirations and potential. Planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering the broader objectives of achieving:

- networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable;
- an appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision; and
- reasonable certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space, sport and recreation provision.

5.1.43 Herefordshire is fortunate to have a broad range of open space, sports and recreation facilities which are both in public and private ownership. Open space, sports

and recreation typology definitions include (but are not limited to) formal and informal parks and gardens, school sports grounds, public rights of way, allotments, semi-natural areas (including orchards), sports playing fields, cemeteries and churchyards, amenity areas, indoor sports halls, children’s play facilities, village halls, civic spaces, country parks, green infrastructure corridors and canals.

5.1.44 Unfortunately, not all communities within Herefordshire are sufficiently catered for in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility of open space; so it is essential that new developments within the county meet the needs of new communities as well as protect and enhance existing facilities which are valued by existing communities.

Policy OS1 - Requirement for open space, sports and recreation facilities

The provision of appropriate open space, sports and recreation facilities will arise in the following proposals for planning applications:

1. all new residential dwellings; or
2. retail and employment proposals where there is need to provide informal areas of amenity greenspace for the use of employees and visitors; and
3. residential institutions, student accommodation, assembly and leisure, hotels or hostels.

5.1.45 The need for open space, sports and recreational facilities will be considered on a site by site basis. Open space sports and recreation facilities will need to be placed on site and be integral to the functioning of the development. Off-site contributions will be sought, where appropriate, on an equally beneficial basis for the local community and will include provision for appropriate maintenance (as defined by the local planning authority) of the open space, sports or recreation facility.

5.1.46 For employment and/or retail proposals, formal open space, sports and recreation facilities (see Glossary) will not be required. However appropriate informal areas of amenity greenspace may be required for the use of employees and visitors for breaks, and will be assessed on a site by site basis. If there is a nearby open space within safe walking distance which would cater for the needs of the employees, a contribution of the equivalent cost of providing the on-site area as identified above to improve existing off-site provision, may also be considered. Users of residential institutions e.g. care homes will also require the provision of on-site amenity greenspace, particularly where the facility hosts families and children. For residential accommodation providing for the needs of people with severe mobility impairments, a reduction of required provision will need to be provided (on a pro-rata basis) according to the needs of the residents using the accommodation.

Policy OS2 – Meeting open space, sports and recreation needs

In order to meet the needs of the community, provision for open space, sports and recreation facilities will be sought, where appropriate, taking into account the following principles:

1. any new development must be in accordance with all applicable set standards of quantity, quality and accessibility as defined; and
2. provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities should be located on-site unless an off-site or partial off-site contribution would result in an equally beneficial enhancement to an existing open space, sports and/or recreation facility which is of benefit to the local community.

5.1.47 In order to identify shortfalls against a local standard of provision and set out future requirements, Herefordshire Council has undertaken a local assessment of existing provision of open space, sports and recreation needs which is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and standards set by relevant organisations such as Fields in Trust, Sport England and Natural England. The council is updating its evidence base in order to incorporate local standards into either a supplementary planning document, other Development Plan Document and/or Neighbourhood Development Plans. This evidence base will be used to secure appropriate planning contributions to aid development of open space, sports and recreation facilities throughout Herefordshire.

5.1.48 Wherever possible, the new provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities should help strengthen the link with green infrastructure corridors. New provision which repairs any previous fragmentation or isolation of sites as part of green infrastructure corridors will be looked upon favourably.

Policy OS3 – Loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities

In determining the appropriateness of proposals which results in the loss of an open space, sports or recreation facility, the following principles will be taken into account:

1. clear evidence that the open space, sports or recreation facility is surplus to the applicable quantitative standard;
2. the loss of the open space, sports or recreation facility results in an equally beneficial replacement or enhanced existing facility for the local community;
3. the loss of the open space, sports and recreation facility is for the purpose of providing an ancillary development which improves the functioning, useability or viability of the open space, sport and recreation use, e.g. changing rooms, toilets, grandstand accommodation, assembly and function uses;
4. the loss of the open space, sports or recreation facility will not result in the fragmentation or isolation of a site which is part of a green infrastructure corridor.

5.1.49 Any proposals resulting in a loss of an open space, sports or recreation facility should be able to clearly demonstrate that the facility is not only surplus currently, but taking into account the population needs of the community over the plan period. Proposals which also lead to the ‘thinning out,’ isolation or fragmentation of green infrastructure networks will also be resisted. “Equally beneficial replacements” of open space refers to quantity and quality in a suitable location.

5.1.50 In some cases, the loss of an open space sports and recreation facility may be appropriate where a proposal is for the purpose of providing ancillary open space, sports and recreation uses which are necessary to enable the continued viability, functionality or useability of the facility. Ancillary facilities will also need to meet applicable policies regarding appropriateness and siting of the development.

5.1.51 Open space, sports and recreation facilities not only benefit the health and well-being of the community, but can also bring great benefits to existing and new species-rich habitats supporting local biodiversity. A number of open space, sports and recreation facilities are located in green infrastructure corridors and act as important green links throughout the county. It is therefore important that we keep providing a range of open space areas such as semi-natural areas alongside open space, sports and recreation

facilities to support their use and protection for future generations to enjoy.

Traffic management

5.1.52 In order to deliver the strategic objectives outlined in Policy SS4 in the spatial strategy, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have incorporated the traffic management and safety criteria set out in Policy MT1.

5.1.53 Herefordshire Council's *Local Transport Plan 2013-2015 (LTP)* defines the following road hierarchy across the county:

- the strategic highway network - comprising the M50, A49, A465, and A40. The strategic highway links Hereford with the market towns and provides the principal routes into and throughout the county;
- main distributor roads which comprise mainly A class routes that supplement the strategic network;
- secondary distributor roads which comprise mainly B and C class roads that link movements to and from the main distributor network; and
- local distributor roads that facilitate movement between rural settlements and parishes.

Policy MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel

Development proposals should incorporate the following principle requirements covering movement and transportation:

1. demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network or that traffic impacts can be managed to acceptable levels to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts from the development;
2. promote and, where possible, incorporate integrated transport connections and supporting infrastructure (depending on the nature and location of the site), including access to services by means other than private motorised transport;
3. encourage active travel behaviour to reduce numbers of short distance car journeys through the use of travel plans and other promotional and awareness raising activities;
4. ensure that developments are designed and laid out to achieve safe entrance and exit, have appropriate operational and manoeuvring space, accommodate provision for all modes of transport, the needs of people with disabilities and provide safe access for the emergency services;
5. protect existing local and long distance footways, cycleways and bridleways unless an alternative route of at least equal utility value can be used, and facilitate improvements to existing or provide new connections to these routes, especially where such schemes have been identified in the Local Transport Plan and/or Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
6. have regard to with both the council's Highways Development Design Guide and cycle and vehicle parking standards as prescribed in the Local Transport Plan - having regard to the location of the site and need to promote sustainable travel choices.

Where traffic management measures are introduced they should be designed in a way which respects the character of the surrounding area including its landscape character. Where appropriate, the principle of shared spaces will be encouraged.

5.1.54 Development proposals should not inhibit the safe and efficient flow of the strategic network. The use of controls on access can positively contribute to the integration of sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport), and development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the criteria in Policy MT1 have been incorporated within the design of the scheme in order to increase active travel across the county.

5.1.55 Alongside the above, development proposals should have regard to the council's LTP while promoting the principles set out in Herefordshire Council's Highway Development Design Guide for New Developments and the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 – Wider Application of the Principles (2010) or subsequent documentation. Consideration will also be given to the Department of Transport Circular 02/2013 and Design Manual for roads and bridges or subsequent documentation.

5.1.56 Traffic management schemes should respect the local area including landscape character by providing an appropriate design solution, siting of infrastructure and use of materials as well as taking opportunities to improve the quality of the public realm as part of an integrated approach. This may include opportunities for rationalising the existing infrastructure and 'de-cluttering' the streetscape to the benefit of its appearance as well as functioning.

5.1.57 In appropriate locations, the use of shared space can provide an approach which can reduce delays and allow pedestrians to move more freely within the space. Shared space is a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

Delivery and monitoring of social progress policies

5.1.58 These policies will be delivered by:

- the development management process;
- preparation and implementation of the Hereford Area Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plans and other Development Plan Documents; and
- developer contributions and the community infrastructure levy.

Social Progress Monitoring Indicators

5.1.59 The following indicators (in addition to those set out at the end of the spatial strategy) will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policies through the Annual Monitoring Report:

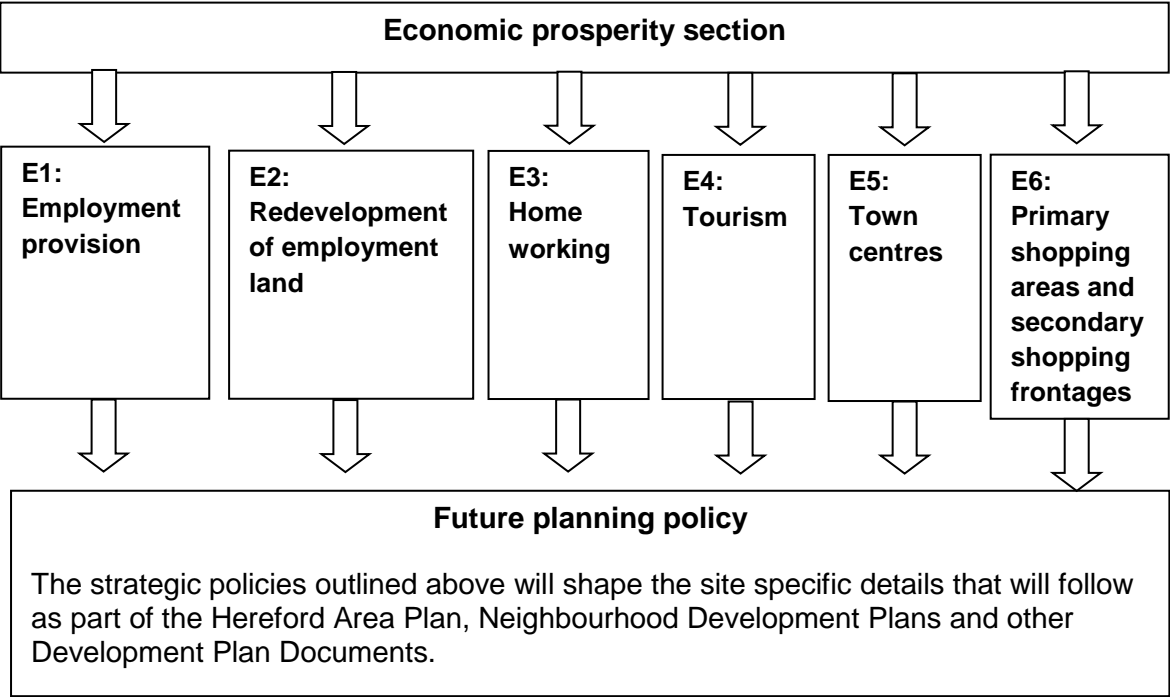
- life expectancy of residents – Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- affordable housing completions split by social and intermediate occupancy;
- rural exception site completion;
- house type and number of bedrooms (aspirational);
- assessment of traveller site provision against the need identified in the council's Assessment of Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers;
- recommendations of the Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Assessment which includes surveys of open space, sports and recreation facilities to assess useability, supply, access and maintenance;
- number of planning applications proposing the loss of an open space, sports or recreation facilities; and
- number of planning applications proposing new open space, sports and recreation facilities.

5.2 Economic prosperity

Introduction

5.2.1 Ensuring a strong and diverse economy will help give people in Herefordshire more opportunities for work within the county (which could reduce the number of people needing to travel outside of it), retain a skilled labour force, particularly in rural areas, as well as help to reduce carbon emissions. Herefordshire is currently very reliant on agricultural and manufacturing industries being a centre for food and drink production and a home to large manufacturing operations. However, it is acknowledged that although we need to help strengthen these industries, that generally these types of industries are in decline and that some employment uses will need to diversify, particularly to environmental technologies, knowledge, tourism and service based industries in order to address this economic imbalance and enable the county to grow into the future.

5.2.2 The following policies relate to the theme of economic prosperity and include policies for the provision of employment land; safeguarding existing employment land; home working, tourism, town centres and primary shopping areas and frontages. They supplement the spatial strategy policy SS5 and the Place-Shaping policies. In particular, they address relevant Core Strategy objectives set out in the spatial strategy section.



Provision of employment land

5.2.3 In line with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, building a strong and competitive economy is an objective that resonates in each of the policies concerning economic prosperity. Over the plan period, Herefordshire will continue to diversify employment opportunities, encourage the expansion of local business and reduce the need for travel. Already many employment areas in Herefordshire utilise links with the A49 trunk road, including sites in Hereford city centre, Ross on Wye, Leominster, Marlbrook and Moreton-on-Lugg. There will be a greater emphasis on extending and enlarging enterprise parks in Hereford and the market towns and allowing more flexibility in the rural areas for employment development such as home working and live/work units.

Policy E1 - Employment provision

The focus for new employment provision in Herefordshire is to provide a range of locations, types and sizes of employment buildings, land and offices to meet the needs of the local economy. Larger employment proposals will be directed to the strategic employment sites of Hereford, the market towns and rural industrial estates where appropriate.

Development proposals which enhance employment provision and help diversify the economy of Herefordshire will be encouraged where:

- the proposal is appropriate in terms of its connectivity, scale, design and size;
- the proposal makes better use of previously developed land or buildings;
- the proposal is an appropriate extension to strengthen or diversify an existing business operation;
- the proposal provides for opportunities for new office development in appropriate locations.

The provision of viable live/work units as part of mixed use developments will also be encouraged.

5.2.4 It is important that plan policies enable new, sustainable provision of employment land in locations and of a scale that is appropriate. Whilst Herefordshire has a relatively high employment rate, it is important to make sure that adequate opportunities exist to improve the quality and range of employment available, so addressing the issue of low wages in the county.

5.2.5 A major element of the strategy for generating new and better paid jobs will be the provision of a deliverable range of land supply in appropriate locations and in the right amounts. 'Employment land' in this instance refers to those uses falling within the planning B use classes, that is, offices (B1), manufacturing (B2) and warehousing and distribution (B8). In addition, employment land is considered an appropriate location to accommodate waste facilities and similar sui-generis employment uses.

5.2.6 The following is a summary of the main new and existing strategic locations which will provide for local and inward investment and contribute to the future employment provision in the county over the plan period. There is also potential for smaller sites to come forward throughout the plan period away from these strategic locations, which will also be encouraged where appropriate.

Hereford

5.2.7 The city of Hereford will continue to provide a large proportion of the county's employment supply.

Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ)

The Rotherwas industrial estate is located south-east of Hereford and is over 120 hectares (ha) in size and has over 125 companies operating within it.

Westfields Trading Estate

The Westfields trading estate is a 25 ha site located in the northern part of Hereford.

Three Elms Trading Estate

Three Elms Trading Estate is located north of Hereford and occupies 3 ha of land.

Holmer Road, Hereford

The industrial precinct on Holmer Road is located to the north of Hereford and is approximately 16 ha in size.

Market towns

5.2.8 The market towns of Leominster, Bromyard, Kington, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury will also continue to support employment development through the rest of the county at existing and/or new strategic employment sites, which will be the primary location of a range of employment premises providing a series of enterprise hubs to complement the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The main strategic employment locations in the market towns are as follows:

Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster

5.2.9 The Leominster Enterprise Park is located to the south-east of Leominster and is designated by the *Employment Land Study 2012* as of 'best quality.' The site is 15 ha in size and caters for B1, B2 and B8 uses. It is envisaged to be fully developed during the first half of the plan period. Given housing growth in Leominster, it is likely that during the second half of the plan period, an additional 5-10 ha of employment land will be required by extending the Leominster Enterprise Park to the south.

Southern Avenue, Leominster

5.2.10 This site is adjacent to the Leominster Enterprise Park and is 33 ha in size and is rated by the *Employment Land Study 2012* as 'good.' The site has limited opportunities to provide additional employment opportunities, however it is a significant contributor to existing employment provision.

Land between Little Marcle Road and Ross Road, Ledbury

5.2.11 This location is to the south-west of Ledbury and will comprise approximately 12 ha of employment land which will come forward to support the existing population and proposed growth of Ledbury. The land adjoins existing employment land and is rated as 'moderate' and will cater for a mix of employment uses, particularly smaller based business which may help to reduce the need to travel for the local community.

Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye

5.2.12 This site, carried forward from the Unitary Development Plan 2007, is approximately 10 ha in size and is located to the east of Ross-on-Wye. The site is envisaged to deliver innovative knowledge based industries and a high quality mix of B1, B2 and B8 employment. The site has excellent access to the A40/A49 and is classed as 'good.'

Rural areas

5.2.13 The areas outside of market towns are also supported for continuing economic growth, particularly in areas which allow for the diversification of uses either through strengthening food and drink production, adding to new environmental technologies or those that allow for home based start-up businesses. Policy RA6 and its explanatory text guide employment development within these areas.

5.2.14 There is however a small number of larger employment locations outside of Hereford and the market towns which will also continue to contribute to the provision of Herefordshire's employment needs, including:

Moreton Business Park, Moreton-on-Lugg

5.2.15 Moreton Business Park is a large employment site of 60 ha which is located on the A49 between Hereford and Leominster. The business park includes a mineral extraction site and other employment units which contain all employment classes. However it has recently seen an increase of B1 office use and B8 storage and

distribution uses. There is also possibility to enhance rail infrastructure into the site for business use. The site is rated as 'good' with potential to be rated as 'best.'

Safeguarding existing employment land

5.2.16 'Best and Good' quality employment land in the county, as defined in the *Employment Land Study 2012* will continue to be safeguarded for employment generating uses and general industry. In circumstances where other employment land and sites are no longer viable, sufficient justification and evidence will need to be submitted - for example structural surveys demonstrating that the building is not fit for continued employment use, and redevelopment of the site for employment use is not viable or feasible. Where possible, flexibility will be given to enable the business the opportunity to diversify to other ancillary and complementary uses to enable the business to continue. Uses such as fitness centres, child care centres, residential and retail uses are generally not appropriate to be located within an employment site, unless they serve for the day-to day convenience needs of the site's employees and any residential use is part of a live/work scheme.

5.2.17 It is important that a range of employment land continues to be available within Herefordshire. Means by which this can be achieved include: safeguarding existing supply, enabling extensions to existing employment land and the development of additional employment land where appropriate.

Policy E2 – Redevelopment of existing employment land and buildings

Employment land and buildings rated as 'best' and 'good' using the methodology in the *Employment Land Study 2012* (or successor document) will be safeguarded from redevelopment to other non-employment uses.

Proposals which would result in the loss of employment land rated as 'moderate' will be permitted where:

1. the development of the site for other uses would not result in an overall shortage in the quality and quantity of employment land supply in the area; or
2. there would be a net improvement in amenity through the removal of a non-conforming use from within a residential area, and where an alternative use would offer amenity benefits. For sites in existing employment use, consideration should also be given to the ability to relocate existing occupiers where this is necessary; or
3. the proposal would not result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme;

In all cases:

- the viability of the development proposal must be confirmed through a comprehensive assessment; and
- there must be evidence of appropriate and active marketing of at least 12 months for a change of use of a B Class employment use and it can be shown that this marketing has been unsuccessful.

The provision of ancillary and complementary uses which help meet the day-to-day needs of employment sites and their employees and improve the sites' attractiveness to businesses, will be permitted where they are of a scale which does not impact on the overall supply of employment land.

5.2.18 Policy E2 seeks to protect the best quality employment land in Herefordshire from being lost to other uses. The *Employment Land Study 2012* undertaken as part of the evidence base classifies employment land across Herefordshire in respect of its quality. The recommendations from this study provide the basis for the development of Policy E1 on Employment provision. Applications for the change of use of existing employment land and buildings not currently included in the *Employment Land Study 2012* will be assessed using the same methodology as if they were included.

Home working

5.2.19 In addition to employment sites in predominately Class B employment areas; Herefordshire Council also encourages the development of live/work units and some material change of use in surrounding residential areas to allow for a small scale occupation to be carried out at a person's principal place of residence. Live/work units and allowing flexibility for home working enable small enterprises which are compatible with the residential environment to become established. If the business seeks to expand beyond what could be described as home working or a live/work unit, then larger facilities in surrounding areas, particularly in enterprise parks in surrounding towns should be utilised.

Policy E3 – Homeworking

The value of home working will be recognised by allowing some material change of use to part of a dwelling, where the dwelling remains as the principle place of residence for the home worker; and recognising the potential to encourage and expand home working, by allowing small extensions or conversions where the proposed use and operation would be compatible with its location and heritage value, and where it would not adversely affect the amenity of the neighbourhood by **any** of the following:

- changes to the appearance of any building;
- noise disturbance from the use or any increased traffic and parking generated;
- unsociable hours of operation; and
- the storage of hazardous materials or emissions from the site.

Tourism

5.2.20 The *Herefordshire STEAM Report 2011* shows that tourism makes an important contribution to the county's economy. Herefordshire has many historic and natural assets which are of national interest for example the Mappa Mundi and the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Hereford, the market towns and rural areas are popular destinations for a range of different types of visits and activities. Tourism in Herefordshire can help to strengthen the economy through diversification and new business development in both urban and rural areas.

Policy E4 – Tourism

Herefordshire will be promoted as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by utilising, conserving and enhancing the county's unique environmental and heritage assets and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In particular, the tourist industry will be supported by a number of measures including:

1. recognising the unique historic character of Hereford and the market towns as key visitor attractions and as locations to focus the provision of new larger scale tourist development;
2. the development of sustainable tourism opportunities, capitalising on assets such as the county's landscape, rivers, other waterways and attractive rural settlements, where there is no detrimental impact on the county's varied natural and heritage assets or on the overall character and quality of the environment. Particular regard will be had to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
3. retaining and enhancing existing, and encouraging new, accommodation and attractions throughout the county, which will help to diversify the tourist provision, extend the tourist season and increase the number of visitors staying overnight. In particular proposals for new hotels in Hereford will be encouraged. Applicants will be encouraged to provide a 'Hotel Needs Assessment' for any applications for new hotels;
4. ensuring that cycling, walking and heritage tourism is encouraged by facilitating the development of long distance walking and cycling routes, food and drink trails and heritage trails, including improvements to public rights of way, whilst having special regard for the visual amenity of such routes and trails, and for the setting of heritage assets in their vicinity; and
5. the safeguarding of the historic route of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal (shown on the Policies Map), together with its infrastructure, buildings, towpath and features. Where the original alignment cannot be re-established, a corridor allowing for deviations will be safeguarded. New developments within or immediately adjoining the safeguarded corridor will be required to incorporate land for canal restoration. Development not connected with the canal that would prevent or prejudice the restoration of a continuous route will not be permitted.

5.2.21 By encouraging more overnight stays and associated increased expenditure, there is potential for revenue from tourism to make a greater contribution to the county's economic well-being. The provision of new accommodation and the enhancement of existing accommodation will help achieve this goal. Many visitors to the county come to enjoy the beautiful countryside and there is likely to be a demand for new facilities and accommodations associated with this. Whilst some small scale tourism associated development may be appropriate in rural areas, any significant new development for accommodation and facilities should be focused in Hereford and the market towns to maximise sustainable transport opportunities and to protect environmental amenity. Applicants will be encouraged to provide a 'Hotel Needs Assessment Report' to support their proposals. This assessment will inform whether the right standard of hotel is proposed with respect to market demand and need, so demonstrating its economic benefit to the area.

5.2.22 The disused Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal corridor is the subject of a long term restoration project with the aim of re-opening the canal link between Hereford and the Severn at Gloucester, terminating in a canal basin in Hereford. Some sections

have already been restored. The recreation, tourism and economic potential of the project are recognised and the canal corridor will continue to receive protection from development through Policy E4.

5.2.23 Policy E4 recognises the contribution that tourism makes to the Herefordshire economy and seeks to ensure that this continues and is enhanced through new developments which are of an appropriate scale, type and location.

Town centres

5.2.24 Policy E5 encourages appropriate town centre investment in Hereford and the market towns of Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington and Ross-on-Wye which will contribute to and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres.

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).

5.2.25 The town centre boundaries are defined in the Place Shaping sections of this document. A review of these boundaries will be undertaken as part of Neighbourhood Development Plans and the Hereford Area Plan.

5.2.26 Policy E5 has been informed by the findings of the *Town Centres Study Update 2012* which outlines the retail, office and leisure needs of Hereford and the five market

towns to 2031. The report identifies limited requirement for further retail and leisure development and advises that there is no need for out of centre retail allocations in Hereford or in the market towns. Where town centre uses are proposed in edge of centre or out of centre locations, a sequential approach to selecting sites will be adopted in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Evidence will be required to demonstrate that all available town centre opportunities have been thoroughly assessed, and transparent reasons provided as to why the town centre sites are not suitable and available, before land and/or buildings in edge of centre and then out of centre locations are considered. The sequential approach will also apply to large scale extensions to existing retail and town centre uses, as well as proposals to vary or remove conditions restricting the range of goods that can be sold, where the site is located in an edge of centre or out of centre location. In considering the suitability and availability of sites, applicants will be required to demonstrate how they have adopted a flexible approach to the size, design and format of the proposal.

5.2.27 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to set thresholds to determine the requirement for an impact assessment for applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres. Individual thresholds have been set for Hereford and the market towns as follows, and are included within the individual Place Shaping policies:

Hereford	700 sq m
Bromyard	200 sq m
Kington	200 sq m
Ledbury	400 sq m
Leominster	400 sq m
Ross-on-Wye	400 sq m

5.2.28 The council will seek to agree the scope of any impact assessment with the applicant in advance to ensure that the assessment is proportionate to the proposal under consideration. Impact assessments will be expected to meet the requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 26 and will also apply to extensions and proposals to vary or remove conditions restricting the range of goods that can be sold. Impact assessments should balance any identified benefits in terms of job creation, highways and accessibility improvements and so on against likely counter effects that may occur in the town centre as a result of the proposal.

5.2.29 The vitality and viability of town centres may also be enhanced by the use of upper floors over existing shops, for residential and office accommodation; and uses that assist in supporting the vibrancy of the town centres in the evenings such as restaurants and leisure facilities. Such uses will assist in increasing the footfall and general activity in the town centre.

Retail

5.2.30 A successful retail function contributes to the vitality and viability of the town centre, the maintenance of its historic fabric and its role as a tourist destination. The aim of the policy is to improve vitality and viability of the centres by improving the variety, choice and quality of shops and other services, and enhancing the overall attraction, safety, convenience and ambience of a town centre. Within the town centres, retail uses will be focused in the “primary shopping areas”. These will be defined in the Hereford Area Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plans or Development Plan Documents.

5.2.31 For edge of centre and out of centre retail locations that have satisfied the sequential test and impact assessments, conditions may be imposed where necessary to restrict the range of goods to be sold to bulky goods only and/or restrict the net floorspace that can be devoted to non-bulky goods. Conditions may also be imposed setting a minimum size of unit and restricting the potential for further vertical or horizontal

sub division. This is to prevent the proliferation of smaller shop units outside of the town centre without seeking permission from the local planning authority and will protect the vitality and viability of existing centres.

5.2.32 Regular markets in town centres can attract additional shoppers and enhance the vibrancy to town centres bringing additional benefits for the existing retailers. Most of these are of a temporary nature and use public spaces. They generally complement the character of the town centres and their retention and enhancement will be encouraged.

Offices

5.2.33 The *Employment Land Study Update 2012* found that the majority of demand for offices in Hereford is for small office premises (less than 100 sq.m) and in the market towns is generally from local companies in the town centres. In all places demand was found to be low and therefore it is expected that this can be met through existing provision and the conversion of upper floors of properties.

Leisure

5.2.34 The *Town Centres Study Update 2012* recommended that no further allocations for leisure facilities and other town centre uses are made in Hereford or in the market towns. However the provision of new leisure facilities in locations within town centres will be encouraged where they serve an identified community need or meet a shortfall in existing provision.

Primary shopping areas and primary and secondary shopping frontages

5.2.35 Primary shopping areas will be made up of primary and secondary shopping frontages (except in Bromyard and Kington) and will be reviewed in the Hereford Area Plan (including the Old Market Area) or Neighbourhood Development Plans/ Development Plan Documents. Until their review, the primary and secondary frontages as shown in the Place Shaping policies are carried forward from the Unitary Development Plan 2007 for development management purposes. Primary and secondary frontages will not be defined for Bromyard and Kington given the size of their centres and the distribution of uses within them. In these towns retail uses will be focused in the primary shopping areas when defined.

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.

5.2.36 The overall emphasis on retail trading should be retained in order to maintain character and to protect the vitality and viability of the primary shopping areas of Hereford and the market towns. The concentration of retail trading activity within a limited area, with substantial runs of active retail frontage will contribute to the busy and vibrant character of the county's primary shopping areas. A variety of non-retail uses already exist within shopping areas and these can add to the diversity of uses in town centres. Different but complementary uses during the day and evening can reinforce each other, making town centres more attractive to local residents, shoppers and visitors. Non-retail uses include building societies, banks, estate agents, insurance and betting offices (uses falling within Use Class A2, financial and professional services), together with restaurants and cafes (Class A3), drinking establishments (Class A4) and hot food takeaways (Class A5). However whilst one non-retail use alone may not detract from the vitality of a street, the cumulative impact of such changes will do so. A concentration of non-retail uses can have the effect of breaking up the shopping area, isolating some shop units to the detriment of the centre as a whole. The further introduction of non-retail uses in the primary shopping areas therefore needs to be carefully balanced against the need to protect retail trading character.

5.2.37 The Hereford Area Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans or Development Plan Document for Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye will review the boundaries of the primary and secondary shopping frontages. However as stated above, only a primary shopping area will be defined in the Neighbourhood Plans/Development Plan Document for Bromyard and Kington as recommended in the *Town Centre Study Update 2012*.

5.2.38 The introduction of non-retail uses falling outside Class A of the Use Classes Order will normally be opposed on the ground floor level of primary shopping areas so as to protect the combination of retail and associated services which characterise these frontages in the interest of protecting vitality and viability. However, secondary shopping frontages may provide an opportunity for some non-retail uses in Classes D1 and D2 in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, subject to the criteria of Policy E6.

5.2.39 Proposals will also be considered in terms of noise, appearance, traffic generation, servicing, parking and any other factors which may have a detrimental effect on the shopping street and residential amenity. Reference should be made to the Herefordshire Shop Front Design Guide 2011. Where historic frontages have been lost or degraded their repair and/or reinstatement will be encouraged. This can help to improve the quality and attractiveness of the centre and this contributes to its vitality and viability.

Delivery and monitoring of economic prosperity policies

5.2.40 These policies will be delivered by:

- the development management process
- the Hereford Area Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plans and other Development Plan Documents and
- developer contributions and the community infrastructure levy.

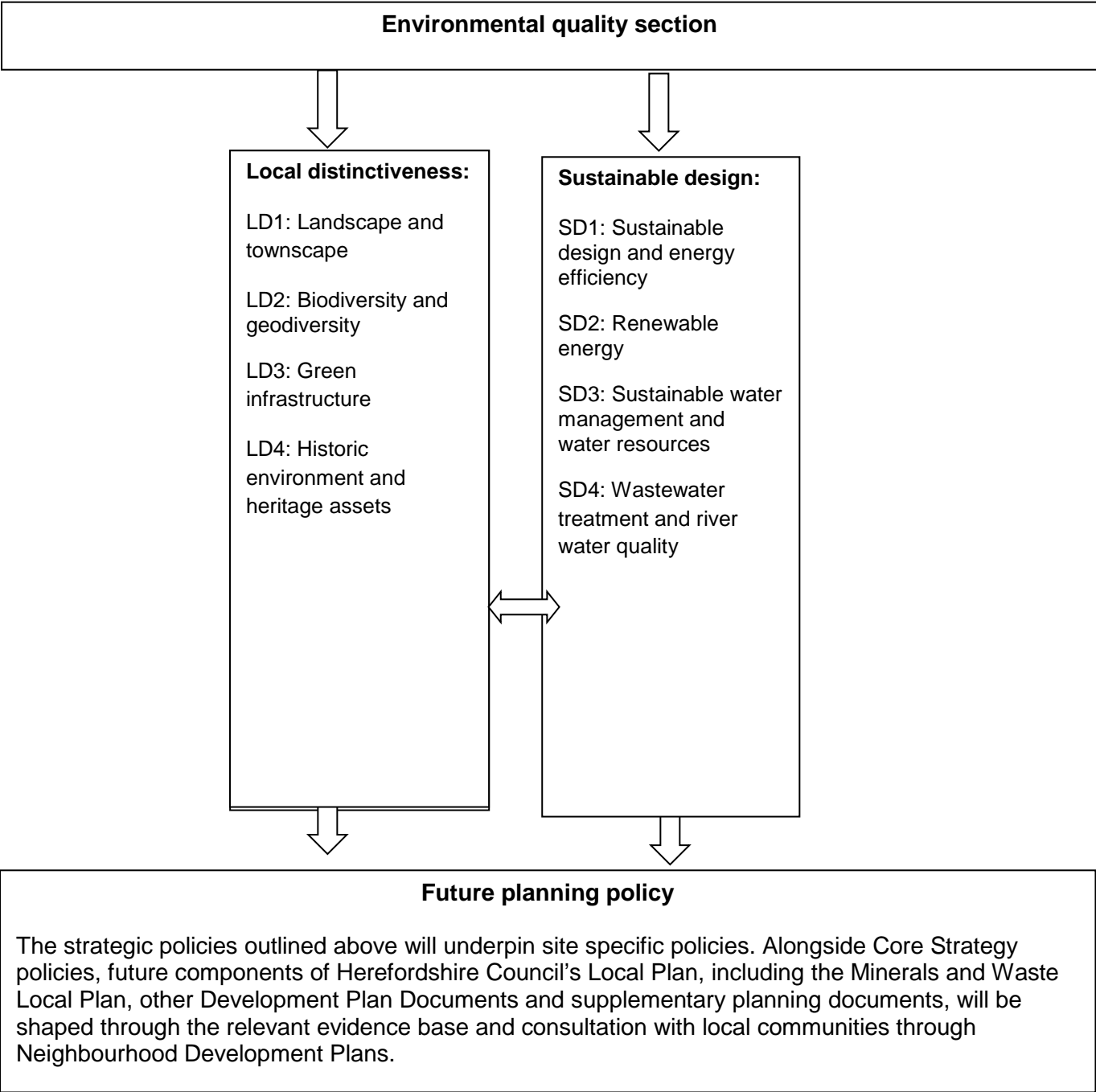
Economic Prosperity Monitoring Indicators

5.2.41 The following indicators (in addition to those set out at the end of the Spatial Strategy section) will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policies through the Annual Monitoring Report:

- the amount of employment land commitments, completions and reallocations, as monitored through the council's annual Employment Land Survey including expansions and relocations;
- the amount of vacant land and premises for employment use in the county;
- the amount of new employment development occurring in rural areas;
- new business registration rates;
- the amount of retail, office and leisure development completed within the monitoring period;
- the amount of retail, office and leisure floorspace permitted outside of city and town centres;
- the amount of permissions granted for change of use from A2 to residential or offices;
- the number of vacant units within town centres;
- the number of conversions of upper floors of retail and commercial premises to residential and office use;
- the number and type of visits to Herefordshire, and associated expenditure; and
- the number of people employed in the different tourism sectors.

5.3 Environmental quality

5.3.1 The role of this section is to aid the delivery of environmental objectives 10-12 of Herefordshire Council’s Core Strategy and supplement spatial strategy policies SS6 and SS7 and the place-shaping policies. This will be achieved through incorporating and enhancing important locally distinctive assets within future developments while combating climate change and mitigating its impacts. There are clear links as shown, between all the four elements below; for example water management, geodiversity and renewable energy are all integral ‘natural resources’ and each policy should not be read in isolation. The way water, energy and minerals are utilised affects all developments.



Local distinctiveness

5.3.2 To successfully deliver the Core Strategy vision in respect of environmental quality and local distinctiveness, this section provides a proactive strategy for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of environmental assets and the delivery of new green infrastructure to support policies SS6 and SS7.

5.3.3 Locally distinctive assets both natural and man-made, are finite and irreplaceable and any detrimental impacts can carry cultural, environmental, economic and social costs. A number of assets benefit from statutory designations within national and international legislation. Statutory designations range from large areas conserved for landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity importance, such as the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and River Wye Special Area of Conservation, to individual statutory listed buildings which are protected for their architectural or historical significance. Appendix 8 lists the designated sites in Herefordshire at the time of adoption.

5.3.4 Non-statutory designations and locally determined features are equally important to Herefordshire's local distinctiveness. Working with partner organisations, Herefordshire Council has identified important assets such as local wildlife sites, local geological sites and areas and buildings of local interest which contribute to Herefordshire's unique character. Non-statutory locally distinctive buildings and green spaces will be identified through forthcoming Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Development Plans.

5.3.5 Conserving local distinctiveness is central to the purposes of designations at all levels and achieved substantially through the production and implementation of management plans, conservation strategies and objectives and guidance resulting from best practice and local assessments.

Landscape and townscape

5.3.6 The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as "*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*". Herefordshire has a distinctive and varied landscape. Much of the area is rural in nature but varied in landscape character, including high hills, forest, commons and river meadows. Herefordshire contains a wide range of settlement patterns, different types of farmland and evidence of ancient landscape features. This diverse landscape is an integral element of local Herefordshire's distinctiveness.

5.3.7 Landscape is important, not just as scenery but because it links culture with nature, and the past with the present. It has many values, not all of them tangible (such as sense of place); and it matters to people – it is people who create and value landscape. All landscapes matter, not only those with national designations. They provide a range of services such as food, water, climate regulation and aesthetic enjoyment.

5.3.8 The concepts of conservation, restoration and enhancement have been set out as a strategic approach to landscape and townscape management. The principles are relevant when considering the management of individual sites where the landscape character may be dependent upon unique landscape features. Landscape survey and analysis are proactive tools for allowing new build developments to address the three principles. For development proposals there are often opportunities for measures to conserve landscape features such as trees, to restore features such as boundary hedges and to enhance the landscape character by other means such as woodland planting, creation of wetland areas or restoration of historic features. The preparation of landscape schemes and management plans should address these three aspects in relation to the local landscape character and the relevant landscape type. Designated areas are detailed on the Policies Map. Specific conservation area boundaries can be found on the council's website at the planning/conservation pages.

Policy LD1 – Landscape and townscape

Development proposals should:

- demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;
- conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management;
- incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings; and
- maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.

5.3.9 A number of landscape and townscape character assessments have been prepared supported by a Historic Landscape Characterisation and completed conservation areas appraisals. The *Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance 2009* (SPD) will be reviewed during the plan period. The SPD will build upon the detailed evidence base documentation; including Natural England's Character Areas as well as more recently produced *Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis January 2010*, *Rapid Townscape Assessments (various)*, *Green Infrastructure Strategy February 2010* and other local studies covering the architectural and historic environment. In conjunction with the above, relevant Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans and associated guidance also provide more place-specific guidance which should inform development proposals from the outset.

5.3.10 The particular importance of trees is recognised within the planning system and the extent of tree cover is important to the county's landscape and townscape. Tree surveys and arboricultural impact assessments may be necessary where it is important to assess and protect existing trees on or adjacent to sites where development proposals are being advanced.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

5.3.11 Biodiversity can be defined as the variety of sites, habitats and species within a specified locality and is influenced by factors such as geology, topography and climate. Geodiversity refers to the natural processes and constituent parts that have shaped the landscape and includes minerals, soils and water. Geodiversity is the variety of rock, minerals, fossils, soils, landforms and natural processes that have shaped the landscape.

5.3.12 Biodiversity and geodiversity assets provide an important contribution to the distinctiveness of an area. Herefordshire has a diverse range of geological features and wildlife habitats such as the Malvern Hills, the River Wye, ancient woodlands and traditional orchards. Wildlife is not confined to designated sites and many features serve as wildlife corridors, links and stepping stones. Ecological networks are vital to the survival and dispersal of species. Herefordshire's biodiversity and geodiversity make a major contribution to the economy, supporting the tourism sector and providing a healthy and attractive environment for its residents.

Policy LD2 – Biodiversity and geodiversity

Development proposals should conserve, restore and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire, through the:

1. retention and protection of nature conservation sites and habitats, and important species in accordance with their status as follows :
 - a) Development that is likely to harm sites and species of European Importance will not be permitted;
 - b) Development that would be liable to harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest or nationally protected species will only be permitted if the conservation status of their habitat or important physical features can be protected by conditions or other material considerations are sufficient to outweigh nature conservation considerations;
 - c) Development that would be liable to harm the nature conservation value of a site or species of local nature conservation interest will only be permitted if the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site, habitat or physical feature that supports important species.
 - d) Development that will potentially reduce the coherence and effectiveness of the ecological network of sites will only be permitted where adequate compensatory measures are brought forward.
2. restoration and enhancement of existing biodiversity and geodiversity features on site and connectivity to wider ecological networks; and
3. creation of new biodiversity features and wildlife habitats.

Where appropriate the council will work with developers to agree a management strategy to ensure the protection of, and prevention of adverse impacts on, biodiversity and geodiversity features.

5.3.13 Areas of biodiversity and geological importance and sensitivity should be protected and development should enhance local habitats and ecological networks. Development within close proximity to internationally, nationally and locally designated sites will need to incorporate sympathetic design components to enhance their nature conservation interests and to avoid or mitigate any adverse impacts. Internationally important sites present within the county include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); nationally important sites include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and locally important sites include Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites.

5.3.14 Dependent upon the scale and proximity of development proposals affecting biodiversity or geodiversity features, Herefordshire Council may require developers to produce a management strategy to ensure the continued protection of the features of interest. Such management strategies may include monitoring information. This will provide up-to-date information which will shape future policy reviews as well as inform future site specific plans.

5.3.15 The Core Strategy objectives will be delivered through supporting development proposals that add to Herefordshire's biodiversity. During the plan period Herefordshire Council will review its Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance utilising in particular the principles, opportunities and constraints detailed within the *Building Biodiversity into Herefordshire Council's Local Development Framework 2009*. Further areas of local

biodiversity or geodiversity importance may be designated or extended during the plan period.

5.3.16 Details of the county’s biodiversity and geodiversity assets and features, some of which traverse the local authority’s administrative boundaries, are listed in Appendices 8e-k and further information is held at the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre. Core areas have been identified where there are clusters of biodiversity and geodiversity features of high conservation value as detailed in the Herefordshire *Ecological Network Map 2012*. Development within and adjacent to these core areas and associated buffer zones will need to be sympathetically designed to ensure there are no adverse impacts upon them. Alongside this, Herefordshire Council will seek contributions to enhance and link such core areas.

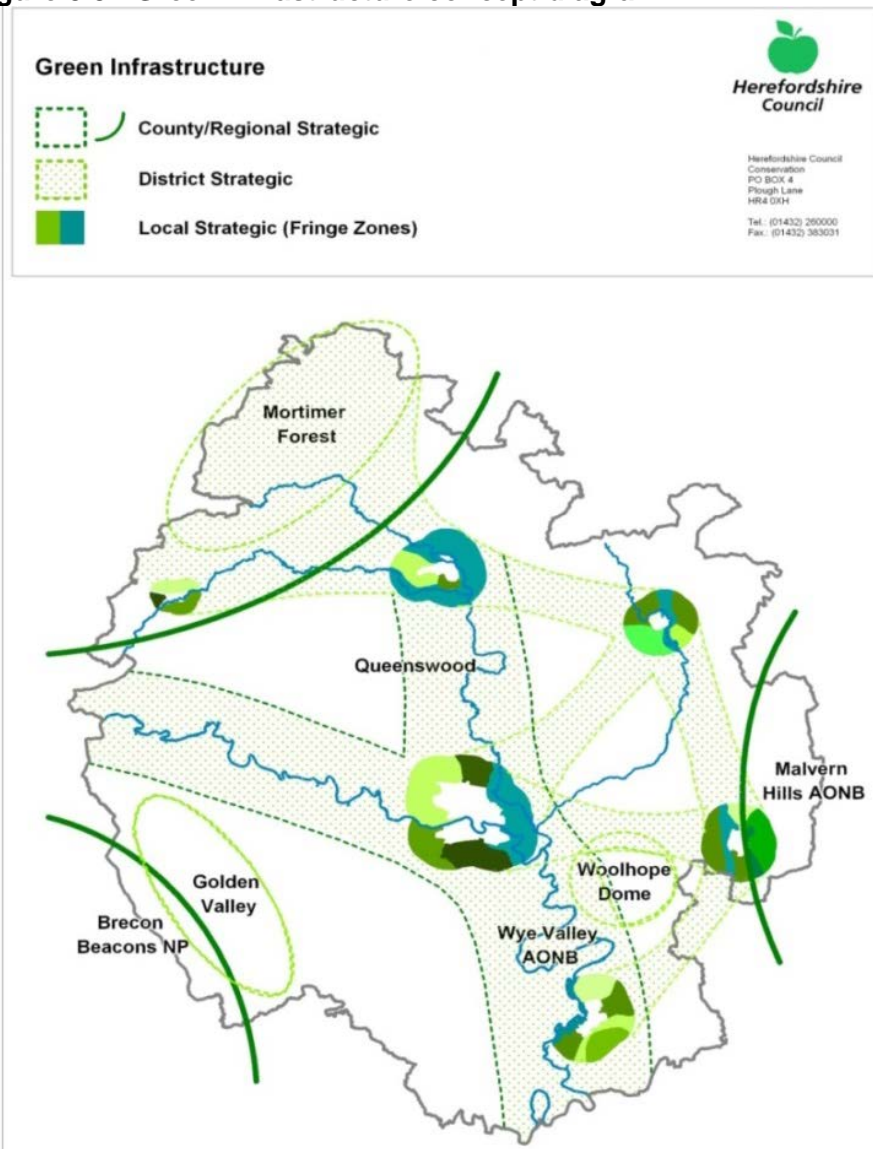
Green infrastructure

5.3.17 Green infrastructure is a multi-functional network of green spaces, links and assets within and surrounding the built environment, and providing connection to the wider countryside. As a major component of sustainable design it includes and contributes to health and wellbeing as well as biodiversity, culture and heritage across the county. It is not limited to urban areas and can be seen at different strategic levels as shown in the table below and the accompanying concept diagram, Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.2: Hierarchy of Green Infrastructure Assets

Geographic tier	Example of green infrastructure asset
County/Regional Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty ▪ Sites of national and international nature conservation importance (e.g. SAC, SSSI) ▪ Verges of trunk roads, motorways and railways
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rivers and large streams and their floodplains ▪ Local wildlife sites. Scheduled ancient monuments ▪ Designed landscapes
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public and private parks and gardens ▪ Recreational grounds, cemeteries, playing fields and public green spaces ▪ Public rights of way and cycle paths

Figure 5.3: Green infrastructure concept diagram



Source: Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, February 2010

5.3.18 Herefordshire Council's *Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010* sets out a vision for green infrastructure across the county. It also provides a local framework around Hereford and the five market towns by defining strategic corridors, enhancement zones and fringe zones. These are areas where through sympathetic design and planning, a functional relationship between the urban and rural environments can be created and enhanced.

5.3.19 The development of new green infrastructure and preservation of existing assets will provide a variety of economic, environmental and social benefits. Economic benefits can be achieved through food production and productive landscapes, diversification of farming activities and attracting tourism. Environmental benefits include habitat provision and connectivity, landscape protection, energy conservation and mitigation of climate change impacts. Social benefits of green infrastructure include places for leisure, garden food production, recreation, sport and exercise, all of which make a major contribution to health and wellbeing. Development can include corridors for movement through foot and cycle paths. It provides opportunities for improving the management of and interpreting natural and heritage assets and how they contribute to local distinctiveness. Increased access to green infrastructure can promote physical and mental health and well-being.

5.3.20 Green infrastructure can provide energy production, flood attenuation, maintenance of water quality, water resource management, cooling effects and many other benefits encompassed under the concept of ecosystem services. The council is committed to working with Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership to bring forward a shared vision using green infrastructure to improve ecological networks and wider economic and social benefits as part of an “ecosystems approach”.

Policy LD3 – Green infrastructure

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure, and should achieve the following objectives:

1. identification and retention of existing green infrastructure corridors and linkages; including the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plain;
2. provision of on-site green infrastructure; in particular proposals will be supported where this enhances the network; and
3. integration with, and connection to, the surrounding green infrastructure network.

5.3.21 Development proposals should identify and protect existing green infrastructure. The Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 and associated Study identify those features that contribute to the green infrastructure network. Proposals should take account of features within the site and also on adjacent sites as integration and connection with the surroundings is a key objective. Proposals should incorporate the retention and enhancement of features such as trees and hedgerows, together with long term management.

5.3.22 The inclusion of new planting, wildlife enhancement, creation and links, links to the countryside and river ways, green transport corridors, open spaces and recreational facilities and sustainable drainage systems within or associated with development proposals are important and valuable contributions to green infrastructure. Landscaping of development sites should feature planting of appropriate native species wherever possible, ensuring there is sufficient space for plants to grow to maturity. Opportunities for new elements include establishing grasslands, wildflower meadows, wetlands, orchards or woodland. New green infrastructure features could include promoting and extending the public rights of way network, increasing public access and providing interpretive information.

Historic environment and heritage assets

5.3.23 The historic environment is defined as all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of significance with statutory protection are referred to as designated heritage assets. Policy LD4 is applicable to heritage assets throughout Herefordshire whether formally designated e.g. listed buildings and conservation areas, or not, ranging from individual structures and their settings, archaeological remains, to larger neighbourhoods of historic value, parks, gardens and other green spaces of local interest.

5.3.24 The historic environment and heritage assets are significant contributors to sustainable development. Important local buildings have a social value and can act as focal points for local communities. The historic environment is of cultural value as it illustrates the

historical development of Herefordshire. Heritage assets also bring economic benefits as Herefordshire's well preserved historic environment is a major factor in its tourism industry and the county's quality of life can also serve to attract and retain investment. The sustainable re-use of existing buildings can also help mitigate climate change through reducing development pressures on greenfield sites, reducing demand for construction energy and materials and by minimising construction waste.

Policy LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets

Development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should:

1. Protect, conserve, and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance through appropriate management, uses and sympathetic design, in particular emphasising the original form and function where possible;
2. where opportunities exist, contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the townscape or wider environment, especially within conservation areas;
3. use the retention, repair and sustainable use of heritage assets to provide a focus for wider regeneration schemes;
4. record and advance the understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence or archive generated publicly accessible and
5. where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to the heritage asset.

The scope of the works required to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings should be proportionate to their significance. Development schemes should emphasise the original form and function of any asset and, where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to them.

5.3.25 Where important heritage assets are at risk or underutilised, development proposals for alternative uses which are sympathetic and contribute to the conservation of the heritage asset and its wider environment will be supported. Due to the site-specific nature of heritage assets, the Core Strategy does not seek to stipulate particular uses and each proposal will be evaluated on its individual merits.

5.3.26 During the Core Strategy plan period, Herefordshire Council will review the Archaeology and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in particular in the light of any changes to the existing evidence base, the Historic Landscape Characterisation, emerging farmstead assessment guidance and growing knowledge of heritage assets contained within the council's historic environment record. This existing data and evidence base together with the *Rapid Townscape Assessments 2010* for the market towns and the *Hereford Streetscape Design Strategy 2009* should be used to shape development proposals from the outset. The evidence base will also guide forthcoming Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans which should be supported where necessary, with careful appraisal of sites within or adjacent to those villages where development may be proposed - in terms of effect on archaeological remains and the setting of historic assets.

5.3.27 Large scale developments should embrace the historic environment rather than regard it as a constraint. Utilising existing locally distinctive heritage assets within wider regeneration proposals can help create new developments that integrate positively with their surroundings, and can reinforce existing cultural and social characteristics. Where the loss of

or substantial harm to a heritage asset or its significance is outweighed by the public benefits of a development proposal which is allowed to proceed, developers shall, in a manner proportionate to its importance, record and advance understanding of the heritage asset. This evidence shall be made publicly accessible normally through Herefordshire Historic Environment Record, a museum or other local archive as appropriate.

Sustainable design

5.3.28 Good design embraces more than simply the aesthetics of new development and includes how buildings are used, accessed and constructed. Equally, for development to be considered sustainable, it must embrace the move to a low carbon future through designing buildings that are more energy and water efficient and increase the use and supply of renewables. Herefordshire Council will seek to ensure that future developments are designed to enhance local distinctiveness but without stifling innovation and creativity, particularly with regard to energy efficiency.

5.3.29 High quality design and well planned developments can enhance community cohesion through maintaining or creating a sense of place. New development should be designed to preserve and enhance locally distinctive characteristics and positively contribute to the appearance of the locality. To achieve this, it is important that new development is successfully integrated into the existing built, natural and historic environment; however recognising that architectural styles change over time. Policy SD1 does not seek to stifle architectural innovation, contemporary design or reject advances in design and technology.

Policy SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency

Development proposals should create safe, sustainable, well integrated environments for all members of the community. In conjunction with this, all development proposals should incorporate the following requirements:

- ensure that proposals make efficient use of land - taking into account the local context and site characteristics,
- new buildings should be designed to maintain local distinctiveness through incorporating local architectural detailing and materials and respecting scale, height, proportions and massing of surrounding development. while making a positive contribution to the architectural diversity and character of the area including, where appropriate, through innovative design;
- safeguard residential amenity for existing and proposed residents;
- ensure new development does not contribute to, or suffer from, adverse impacts arising from noise, light or air contamination, land instability or cause ground water pollution;
- where contaminated land is present, undertake appropriate remediation where it can be demonstrated that this will be effective;
- ensure that distinctive features of existing buildings and their setting are safeguarded and where appropriate, restored;
- utilise physical sustainability measures that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and waste including provision for recycling, and enabling renewable energy and energy conservation infrastructure;
- where possible, on-site renewable energy generation should also be incorporated;
- create safe and accessible environments, and that minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour by incorporating Secured by Design

- principles, and consider the incorporation of fire safety measures;
- ensuring designs can be easily adapted and accommodate new technologies to meet changing needs throughout the lifetime of the development; and
 - utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials;

All planning applications including material changes of use, will be expected to demonstrate how the above design and energy efficiency considerations have been factored into the proposal from the outset.

5.3.30 High quality design can significantly enhance the environment and amenity for new residents. Equally, the amenity and quality of life for existing residents can be adversely affected by insensitive, poorly considered design. To address this, buildings, extensions and spaces must be designed with regard to overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impacts. Additionally, ensuring that new development is compatible with the surrounding locality requires more than simply scale and aesthetic qualities, and includes consideration of the impacts of noise and artificial light, ground conditions and air quality.

5.3.31 All developments must demonstrate how they have been designed and how they have incorporated measures to make them resilient to climate change in respect of carbon reduction, water efficiency and flood risk. Carbon reduction should influence design from the outset by ensuring the fabric of the building is as energy efficient as possible, for example, attaining thermal efficiencies through construction that achieves low U values and fuel efficiencies through the use of services such as efficient boilers. Good site planning can also aid greater energy efficiency in new development, for example, by seeking to maximise solar gain.

5.3.32 Revisions to the Building Regulations are introducing progressive increases in the energy efficiency requirements for new buildings. In terms of energy conservation, developments in sustainable locations that achieve accredited standards of energy conservation which cover a range of sustainability criteria will be supported, particularly where the level achieved materially exceeds the relevant Building Regulations and other relevant standards in place at the time.

5.3.33 Large-scale developments should demonstrate how opportunities for on-site renewable energy generation and sustainable waste management have also been considered and addressed within the design of the scheme. Such details should include an appraisal of all suitable renewable energy technology. Other developments will also be encouraged to consider whether on-site renewable energy opportunities might be available. Alongside this, the council supports the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies within existing developments, subject to such proposals according with other policies of the Core Strategy.

5.3.34 The efficient use of land is encouraged in the design policy; however it does not specify minimum development densities; these are referenced in Policy SS2. It is recognised that in highly accessible locations development proposals may be more sustainable and viable if constructed to higher densities than usually found elsewhere in the county, provided there is no detrimental impact upon existing local amenity. However in most instances, appropriate density will primarily be informed by the local context as well as site opportunities and constraints.

5.3.35 Accessibility for all members of society is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and inclusive design, and must be carefully considered in all development proposals. Development layouts should be designed to provide a high degree of permeability particularly for sustainable modes of travel within the site, and provide safe connections to adjoining land uses and local community facilities.

5.3.36 Sustainable design principles can also contribute to reducing crime and the fear of crime. Developers should consider whether the location and form of their development should adopt the principles set out in the document 'Secured by Design 2010 (Association of Chief Police Officers)' incorporating design measures such as ensuring a high level of natural surveillance, sensitive consideration of boundary treatments and clear delineation of public and private spaces, in order to aid the creation of a safer and more inclusive environment. In addition, provision should be made to allow ease of access for emergency services.

5.3.37 Council Directive 96/82/EC (the Seveso II Directive) requires that the objectives of the prevention of major accidents involving hazardous substances and limiting their consequences for man and the environment are taken into account in land use planning. Within the county, certain industrial sites and associated infrastructure fall within the scope of hazardous substances controls by virtue of the nature and quantity of substances used or stored; in considering applications for development in the vicinity of such sites regard will also be had to the risks arising. It is important that the presence of hazardous substances is compatible with the existing and proposed uses of the site and of land in the vicinity. In particular, appropriate distances should be maintained between establishments where hazardous substances are present or proposed and existing or proposed residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest. Full account will be taken of advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency in dealing with applications for both hazardous substances consent and for development at or in the vicinity of land where such substances are present.

5.3.38 The age structure of the county is rapidly changing with an increasing elderly population. Increasing fuel prices is resulting in residents, particularly in rural areas, reviewing their home to work travel patterns, furthermore continual advances in technology means costly refurbishments of existing buildings is often required to meet modern requirements. It is therefore important that developments are flexibly designed to be adaptable to different and future occupational and technological needs and demands. This can include measures such as meeting lifetime homes and equivalent standards in residential design, providing infrastructure to meet the growth in demand for electric vehicles, providing adequate space for internal and external plant and facilitating home working and live/work opportunities.

5.3.39 Design guidance will be prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document to provide baseline standards across Herefordshire; expanding on the above design principles and to inform the preparation of masterplans, other Development Plan Documents, Neighbourhood Development Plans, parish plans, village design statements and planning applications.

Renewable and low carbon energy generation

5.3.40 An overarching principle of the planning system is to support the transition to a low carbon future. A significant means of achieving this goal is through the use of renewable energy sources. Renewable energy covers energy generated directly from natural sources, be it sun, wind or water, or indirect sources such as biomass and geothermal heat. The Climate Change Act makes the UK the first country in the world to have a long term legally binding commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The Act commits the UK to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80%, from a 1990 baseline, by 2050. The UK Renewable

Energy Strategy (2009) sets a target for 15% of the UK's energy to come from renewable resources by 2020, which represents a seven fold increase from 2008. In respect of wind energy, National Planning Policy Guidance indicates that in order to gain planning permission suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, Herefordshire Council will consider whether to identify suitable areas for wind energy through the preparation of the Rural Areas Site Allocation Development Plan Document or other appropriate development plan document. Neighbourhood Development Plans also have the ability to consider identifying suitable sites for wind energy development.

5.3.41 Herefordshire is predominantly a rural county which benefits from the presence of many international and national designations, alongside highly valued local landscapes. While these designations limit the potential for strategic renewable and low carbon energy generation, opportunities are present in Herefordshire to support such measures and the exceptional circumstance for such provision needs to be recognised. For example, farm diversification schemes can provide opportunities for the implementation of renewable or low carbon energy projects. Neighbourhood Development Plans promoting community-led micro-generation schemes will be supported where they are in accordance with policy SD2 and other relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

Policy SD2 – Renewable and low carbon energy generation

Development proposals that seek to deliver renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

1. the proposal does not adversely impact upon international or national designated natural and heritage assets;
2. the proposal does not adversely affect residential amenity;
3. the proposal does not result in any significant detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape and the built or historic environment and
4. the proposal can be connected efficiently to existing national grid infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that energy generation would be used on-site to meet the needs of a specific end user.

In the case of energy generation through wind power developments, permission will only be granted for such proposals where:

- the proposed site is identified in a Neighbourhood Development Plan or other Development Plan Document as a suitable site for wind energy generation; and
- following consultation with local residents, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified can be fully addressed, and therefore the proposal has the backing of the local community.

Sustainable water management

5.3.42 Sustainable water management means minimising our impact on the healthy functioning of the water cycle. Changes occurring to the climate mean that we are likely to experience an increase in the intensity, severity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods, which could dramatically impact on the way we need to manage water in the development of sustainable communities. There is a finite capacity within the environment, and it cannot simply provide more and more water as a result of increased consumption rates or overall demand. Equally there is a limit to the amount of waste water that can be safely returned to rivers without having a detrimental effect.

5.3.43 The issue of water management is especially important in Herefordshire with a number of watercourses benefiting from different levels of protection. The entire lengths of the River Wye and River Lugg are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, while the Wye and the Lugg from Hampton Court Bridge to its confluence are designated as a Special Area of Conservation under European legislation. Alongside this, all watercourses and groundwater, are covered by the European Water Framework Directive and are recognised as providing significant biodiversity, health and recreational benefits. Delivery of the Water Framework Directive is proposed through a “Catchment Based Approach” and the Local Plan should play a part in achieving its objectives.

5.3.44 Changes in rainfall patterns, land management and land use, combined with more frequent occurrence of extreme weather events will present increased flood risk. Although flooding cannot be wholly prevented, its impacts can be avoided or reduced through good planning and land management. To this end the susceptibility of land to flooding and surface water management are material considerations when assessing planning applications. Accordingly Herefordshire Council will support development proposals that accord with the principles of the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009* (SFRA), as well as national technical guidance on the sequential test and the exception test, and ensure that surface water drainage is also properly managed. Where flood risk assessments are undertaken they should include all sources of flooding, including fluvial flooding from ditches and water courses across the site.

5.3.45 The SFRA aims to ensure that planning policies and development land allocations will not increase the risk of flooding both within the development and the surrounding area, and to identify and promote measures that will minimise flood-risk and/or enhance flood resilience. The SFRA for Herefordshire refines the county’s flood risk areas by taking into account other sources of flooding and other strategies, such as the Wye and Usk Catchment Flood Management Plan and the River Severn Catchment Flood Management Plan.

Policy SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources

Measures for sustainable water management will be required to be an integral element of new development in order to reduce flood risk; to avoid an adverse impact on water quantity; to protect and enhance groundwater resources and to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

1. development proposals are located in accordance with the Sequential Test and Exception Tests (where appropriate) and have regard to the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2009* for Herefordshire;
2. development is designed to be safe, taking into account the lifetime of the development and the need to adapt to climate change by setting appropriate floor levels, providing safe pedestrian and vehicular access, where appropriate, implementing a flood evacuation management plan and avoiding areas identified as being subject to Rapid Inundation from a breach of a Flood Defence;
3. where flooding is identified as an issue, new development should reduce flood risk through the inclusion of flood storage compensation measures, or provide similar betterment to enhance the local flood risk regime;
4. development will not result in the loss of open watercourse and culverts should be opened up where possible to improve drainage and flood flows. Proposals involving the creation of new culverts (unless essential to the provision of access) will not be permitted;

5. development includes appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water appropriate to the hydrological setting of the site. Development should not result in an increase in runoff and should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing runoff rate and volumes, where possible;
6. water conservation and efficiency measures are included in all new developments, specifically:
 - residential development should achieve Housing - Optional Technical Standards - Water efficiency standards At the time of adoption the published water efficiency standards were 110 litres/person/day; or
 - non-residential developments in excess of 1,000 sq.m gross floorspace to achieve the equivalent of BREEAM 3 credits for water consumption as a minimum;
7. the separation of foul and surface water on new developments is maximised;
8. development proposals do not lead to deterioration of EU Water Framework Directive water body status;
9. development should not cause an unacceptable risk to the availability or quality of water resources; and
10. in particular, proposals do not adversely affect water quality, either directly through unacceptable pollution of surface water or groundwater, or indirectly through overloading of Wastewater Treatment Works.

Development proposals should help to conserve and enhance watercourses and riverside habitats, where necessary through management and mitigation measures for the improvement and/or enhancement of water quality and habitat of the aquatic environment. Proposals which are specifically aimed at the sustainable management of the water environment will in particular be encouraged, including where they are required to support business needs such as for agriculture. Innovative measures such as water harvesting, winter water storage and active land use management will also be supported. In all instances it should be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse landscape, biodiversity or visual impact.

5.3.46 The 'Sequential Test' is set out in paragraphs 100-104 of the NPPF. This aims to ensure inappropriate development does not take place in areas at high risk of flooding by directing it away from areas at highest risk. Areas at risk of flooding are those falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as defined on the Environment Agency's website. Flood Zone 1 is the area of low probability of flooding and should generally be used in preference to land in other zones. However land in Flood Zone 1 may also have critical land drainage problems which can be ascertained through Herefordshire Council's Land Drainage team. Where no reasonable sites are available within Flood Zone 1 the 'Exception Test' may be applied. Where this test needs to be applied certain forms of development may be permitted in Flood Zones 2 and 3 depending upon their level of vulnerability. These are identified in Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.3.47 Policy SD3 also provides criteria for developers to consider when proposing development within areas identified as being at risk of flooding within the district. The policy identifies the need for development proposed within flood risk areas to take account of a number of measures to ensure that the development is safe and remains safe, in times of flood including:

- setting appropriate floor levels which should be above the 1% predicted plus climate change design flood level, incorporating an allowance for freeboard. Development should also consider in the design the risk from more extreme events. Where it is not feasible or practicable to set the floor levels, then other forms of flood resilience and resistance techniques may be considered as an alternative;
- where overnight accommodation is included, the development should include a safe pedestrian access route which would be available during a 1% plus climate change design flood event. In considering this, regard should be given to the evidence in the SFRA and for 'defended areas' including an assessment of Flood Defence breach/overtopping scenarios. Other development should consider this as a residual risk;
- consideration of safe vehicular access; and
- for developments implementing a flood evacuation management plan, where appropriate, to manage the risk to the development site itself and future users/occupiers during all flood events along with any remaining residual risks.

5.3.48 A key component to reducing the risk of flooding is the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all developments. Such systems can also assist in improving water quality. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduces the mandatory inclusion of SuDS within developments alongside the ability for the setting of national standards. Development proposals are to accord with these standards and where appropriate be accompanied by surface water management plans detailing the drainage proposals. Advice is contained within the SFRA.

5.3.49 Government legislation sets out the statutory introduction of Sustainable Urban Drainage Advisory Bodies (SABs). SABs are designed to appraise and grant approval or refusal on proposed sustainable urban drainage systems. Herefordshire Council will work in partnership with the SAB as well as the Environment Agency, to ensure that development proposals do not have adverse flood impacts.

5.3.50 With respect to water conservation and efficiency of use, Policy SD3 sets out targets for reduced consumption in association with new development, which in turn will result in decrease flow entering the sewer system. This approach will also help to reduce flows entering waste water treatment infrastructure, thereby assisting to manage the level of nutrients in the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (see Policy SD4). The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a 'water efficiency calculator' that applicants can use to demonstrate the water efficiency of proposed developments.

5.3.51 For employment development a standard of BREEAM 3 credits equivalent for water consumption is required. This equates to 40% reduction in water consumption over current building regulations. The Environment Agency has stated that all new non-residential development should meet the 'Good Practice' level of the AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) Water Standards. These measures will complement the measures set out in Policy SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality.

5.3.52 The availability of water resources to meet demand during the plan period has been examined and Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water's Water Resource Management Plan identifies that there are sufficient water resources available to meet demand during this plan period.

5.3.53 While agricultural water use lies largely outside planning control, it is a significant contributor to the water cycle conditions within Herefordshire and its impacts need to be taken into account in the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans. There is considerable potential for farmers to capture and store surplus water for future use thereby reducing the need to abstract water from other

sources, while enhancing biodiversity. However, reservoirs in particular will alter landscapes and habitats on a permanent basis and care on siting and design is essential.

5.3.54 Land management practices can also play a vital role in managing flood risk and water quality at a local level; for example, the creation and restoration of wetlands and woodlands can reduce the level of flooding, and in some cases remove the risk of local flooding altogether. These practices also improve water quality in addition to producing wider environmental benefits, including encouraging an increase in wildlife species and habitats and reducing carbon.

5.3.55 A Herefordshire Water Steering Group was established and attended by Herefordshire Council, Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England, in order to investigate how development might be accommodated within the limits set by the Habitats Regulations. It is expected that this group will be expanded in order to address issues arising from the preparation of a Nutrient Management Plan. One of the areas that it might consider is identifying best practice in the reduction of water use.

Wastewater treatment and river water quality

5.3.56 The water quality of Herefordshire's main rivers and their tributaries is of strategic importance and in particular, current unacceptable levels of nutrients along part of the rivers need to be addressed. This is important to the overall environmental objectives of the Core Strategy.

5.3.57 The Rivers Wye, Lugg, Teme and Clun are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), designated under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Furthermore, the River Wye, including part of the River Lugg (downstream from Hampton Court Bridge), part of the River Clun (downstream of Marlow, Shropshire) and Downton Gorge on the River Teme are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

5.3.58 Both levels of designation require efforts to be made to ensure the whole system, or catchment, achieves and then remains resilient in terms of supporting river habitats consistent with policy LD2 (Biodiversity and geodiversity). The Environment Agency has responsibility for water quality and ecological objectives set by European Directive 2000/60/EC, the 'Water Framework Directive,' which applies to surface waters and groundwater, and is preparing a River Basin Management Plan to deliver these. Natural England has responsibility for ensuring SSSIs and SACs achieve 'favourable condition.' Currently all parts of the river SSSIs are in unfavourable condition although some are recovering. All public bodies have a duty to contribute towards meeting these targets.

Policy SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality

Development should not undermine the achievement of water quality targets for rivers within the county, in particular through the treatment of wastewater.

In the first instance developments should seek to connect to the existing mains wastewater infrastructure network. Where this option would result in nutrient levels exceeding conservation objectives targets, in particular additional phosphate loading within a SAC designated river, then proposals will need to fully mitigate the adverse effects of wastewater discharges into rivers caused by the development. This may involve:

- incorporating measures to achieve water efficiency and/or a reduction in surface water discharge to the mains sewer network, minimising the capacity required to accommodate the proposal, in accordance with policy SD3;
- phasing or delaying development until further capacity is available;
- the use of developer contributions/community infrastructure levy funds to contribute to improvements to waste water treatment works or other appropriate measures to release capacity to accommodate new development;
- in the case of development which might lead to nutrient levels exceeding the limits for the target conservation objectives within a SAC river, planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in view of the site's conservation objectives; and
- where the nutrient levels set for conservation objectives are already exceeded, new development should not compromise the ability to reduce levels to those which are defined as favourable for the site.

Where evidence is submitted to the local planning authority to indicate connection to the wastewater infrastructure network is not practical, alternative foul drainage options should be considered in the following order:

- provision of or connection to a package sewage treatment works (discharging to watercourse or soakaway);
- septic tank (discharging to soakaway).

With either of these non-mains alternatives, proposals should be accompanied by the following:

- information to demonstrate there will be no likely significant effect on the water quality, in particular of designated national and European sites, especially the River Wye SAC and the River Clun SAC; or
- where there will be a likely significant effect upon a SAC river, information to enable the council, in its role as a competent authority, to ascertain that the development will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC;
- in relation to water courses with national or European nature conservation designations, the inclusion of measures achieving the highest standard of water quality discharge to the natural drainage system including provision for monitoring.

The use of cesspools will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that sufficient precautionary measures will ensure no adverse effect upon natural drainage water quality objectives.

5.3.59 There is a duty upon Herefordshire Council, so far as it is able, to further the conservation and enhancement of the river SSSIs within its area. Each SSSI has its own 'conservation objectives,' which include targets that form the baseline against which its

favourable condition is judged. The decisions the council takes can influence whether a site meets its targets or not. With respect to the river SSSI's, this includes decisions on foul and surface water drainage from development. Developers can assist by contributing to the resilience of ecological networks through their efforts to deliver green infrastructure under policy LD4. Maintaining a high quality environment will assist marketing of homes and the attraction of employment.

5.3.60 Herefordshire Council is a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012 and there is a duty upon it to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in exercising any of its functions. Furthermore, the LPA can only permit development which would have a likely significant effect (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) upon European sites after having undertaken an Appropriate Assessment. Subject to certain derogation tests, only development which can be shown to have no adverse effect on the integrity of European sites can be permitted.

5.3.61 In addition, there is also a duty on the council to help deliver Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives. It is imperative that proposals for growth do not adversely affect river water quality, and this includes that within associated watercourses flowing into the rivers and other 'controlled waters' (lakes, ponds and groundwater etc). Wastewater from most new development within the county will connect to sewage treatment works. Such treatment works are potentially point sources of pollution especially if they are unable to achieve acceptable standards of discharge, either directly or indirectly into rivers. Septic tanks and other activities such as agricultural practices form more diffuse sources of potential pollution.

5.3.62 The county's rivers have a finite capacity to accommodate discharges arising from development before their water quality is adversely affected, and improvements to the management of waste water will be required to ensure both the achievement of the watercourses conservation objectives and the ability to deliver the scale of growth set out in the Core Strategy.

5.3.63 The Environment Agency and Natural England have prepared a Nutrient Management Plan aimed to control and reduce phosphate within the River Wye SAC and in doing so seek to identify actions to enable additional development. The Core Strategy will play a vital role in delivering the requirements of the Nutrient Management Plan, along with other mechanisms and measures. The Nutrient Management Plan and associated Action Plan identifies the management actions required to achieve the conservation objectives target for phosphate by 2027. Planning guidance will be prepared where necessary to cover relevant measures included within the Nutrient Management Plan, or any revisions to it, comprising the need for planning advice, detailed phasing requirements, options that might be funded through developer contributions, water quality and ecological condition of stretches along the SAC rivers, and monitoring arrangements.

5.3.64 Sections of the River Wye SAC where the water quality targets are already exceeded will be subject to measures to reduce nutrients in line with the targets. New development must not compromise the ability of the Nutrient Management Plan to deliver the necessary overall reductions along these stretches.

5.3.65 Sections that are currently meeting their phosphate targets will be subject to measures to ensure that future inputs of nutrients will not lead to failures.

5.3.66 Figure 5.4 identifies river sub-catchment areas within Herefordshire, set by the Water Framework Directive. Development within these areas has the potential to detrimentally affect water quality standards. High levels of phosphates have been identified as particular problems with concentration levels exceeding targets.

5.3.67 Herefordshire Council will expect developments to connect to existing sewage infrastructure. However, when this would compromise the ability to achieve favourable condition, and potentially be contrary to the Habitats Regulations, mitigation measures would be required if the development is to proceed.

5.3.68 Local water companies are responsible for providing and maintaining sewage treatment works at a standard to meet permitted conditions. Their asset management programmes will set out capital works to ensure compliance with discharge licences. Should such works be required then it may be necessary to phase new development within timescales set by these programmes. However, there may be an additional requirement for developer contributions or community infrastructure levy funding to make further improvements.

5.3.69 Increases in flows to sewage treatment works lead to increases in nutrients in watercourses, as discharges have set nutrient concentrations. Reducing flows to sewage treatment works through measures referred to in Policy SD3 can therefore contribute to reducing nutrient levels in the receiving watercourses. The separation of foul and storm water will have similar benefits.

5.3.70 Development seeking to use non-mains drainage solutions will need to explain why this is necessary in the light of the Government advice on mains drainage and Herefordshire Council's planning application requirements in respect of non-mains drainage (see Herefordshire Council website). Herefordshire Council will wish to be assured that such proposals will not adversely affect the quality of water within watercourses and in particular, will have no negative effect upon SAC rivers and, in this regard, will undertake Habitat Regulation Assessments where necessary using information required from and provided by developers. Measures proposed to mitigate any effect will be rigorously scrutinised; and monitoring arrangements may need to be put in place to ensure the chosen system is effective. Sustainable forms of water treatment such as reed beds may be used as alternatives to or in combination with foul water treatment and disposal. Full details should be provided to show these will achieve the required standard of discharge into the natural drainage system. The sensitivity of Herefordshire's environment is such that the use of cesspools should be avoided, however if this is deemed to be the only option then a rigorous assessment of potential effects will be required.

5.3.71 A number of rivers have water quality problems arising from sedimentation. Where operations requiring planning permission may cause or add to the problem then mitigation works such as trenches, wetlands, retention ponds, buffers, swales and other forms of sediment traps may need to be considered as part of sustainable water practices under policy SD3.

Figure 5.4 - River sub catchments



Delivery and monitoring of the environmental quality policies

5.3.72 These policies will be delivered by:

- the Infrastructure Development Plan and developer contributions/community infrastructure levy
- the development management process
- other Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

Environmental quality monitoring indicators:

5.3.73 In addition to the indicators listed in previous sections, the following indicators will be used to measure the effectiveness of the general policies (some are aspirational):

- changes in the areas of designated nature conservation sites as a consequence of planning permission;
- proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has or is being implemented;
- number of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments on buildings at risk register (Historic England);
- net change in condition of SSSI's (Natural England);
- number of applications granted planning permission contrary to the advice of statutory agencies (e.g. English Heritage, Natural England or the Environment Agency);
- percentage of river length assessed as good biological or chemical quality (EA) in particular so far as they relate to the measures within the Nutrient Management Plan;
- phosphate levels within the River Wye SAC and adjoining tributaries that receive increased phosphates from Core Strategy growth;
- completed development that has resulted in loss/restoration/creation of Habitats of Principal Importance (Priority Habitats);
- percentage of total residential applications at below 30 dwellings per hectare;
- number of residential applications at less than 1.5 parking spaces per unit;
- the need for, frequency and outcomes of planning enforcement investigations/ planning appeals concerning the aspects of local loss of locally important buildings within a conservation area;
- number of developments meeting and surpassing national design standards;
- maintaining Herefordshire Council's County Site and Monuments Register; and
- summary of proposals contributing to the Green Infrastructure Strategy from the above and any other measures.