



Our plan –
Our future

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Residents Survey

April 2012

All residents aged 14 or above in Much Wenlock Parish are urged to complete this survey by Monday 30th April 2012. It would save our volunteers a great deal if you could provide your responses online at www.wenlockplan.org

Please enter your postcode: TF13 6

Your reference:

You will need your postcode and this reference to complete the survey.
This information is needed for validation purposes and will not be used to identify individuals.

Please return this booklet to your local Neighbourhood Plan Volunteer with the form or completed the survey online.

Please tell us how you have completed the survey
 On this form Online



An explanatory leaflet should have been handed to you with this survey. If you have not received one, please tell your Neighbourhood Plan Volunteer.



Proposed Objectives

September 2012

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www.wenlockplan.org

Introduction

When we launched the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan last November, we told you our goal is to create a Plan that will help shape the future of the town & parish. The Plan will steer development decisions according to your wishes and aspirations.

You told us what is important to you with your responses in our public meetings and community road shows. We used this to design a comprehensive Residents Survey. In April and May 2012, you gave us your views about housing needs, the local economy, our local environment, community facilities and how we might become a more sustainable community. In June and July we published the results of the survey. We also gave you the results of a survey of local businesses. All of this information and more can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan website, www.wenlockplan.org

Your answers have given us a good idea of your views and the hopes you have for our community. Our challenge as a steering group has been to interpret this information as fairly as possible and identify the Objectives that will form the core of the Neighbourhood Plan. We know that the Objectives themselves are not enough on their own. The Plan will need to be definite about its proposals for managing the type and location of any new development. We have suggested some key questions and some potential Options for how these Objectives can be delivered.

We have also gathered other evidence and held discussions with Shropshire Council and other organisations to form these Objectives. Shropshire Council's adopted Core Strategy is especially important in this respect as our Plan has to be broadly in line with the Core Strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan along with the Core Strategy will be jointly responsible for guiding development decisions in the future.

This booklet sets out the Objectives and Options we have developed. We look forward to hearing your views. We also look forward to answering any questions or concerns you might have. You can contact us at mail@wenlockplan.org or call the Town Clerk's office on 01952 727509.

Councillor Tim Pinches
Mayor of Much Wenlock

Our objective for the local economy and jobs

1

The Neighbourhood Plan will facilitate opportunities for new and existing businesses to create employment growth and it will do this through:

- **the designation of additional land**
- **the approval of new premises in appropriate location(s)**
- **allowing new mixed-use development so appropriate businesses can operate from homes and dwellings and**
- **by resisting the change of use of sites currently designated for employment purposes**



Why have we proposed this Objective?

The responses to both the Residents Survey and the Business Survey indicated strong community support for encouraging the local economy and local employment.

The responses to both surveys showed a clear preference for the types of site that should be allocated for employment purposes; the Plan should consider the use of quarries and existing buildings and employment land before greenfield sites.

The scale of employment development that the community wants is less certain but over 30% of respondents to the Residents Survey indicated that a family member might be seeking local employment opportunities within the next five years.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Locations:** The current designation (from the old Bridgnorth District Local Plan) of land for employment uses is at Stretton Road. Should the Plan confirm the site's designation? Does the Plan need to allocate another site or sites of a similar size?
2. **Quarries:** If the quarries could also be employment sites, should the Plan specifically support the proposals for tourism and recreation uses of the quarries being proposed by the National Trust? Should we aim to integrate new uses with these proposals and if so, how?
3. **Flexibility:** Should the Plan be flexible in allowing the change of use of some existing employment land provided it is offset by the creation of other land or premises?
4. **Types and Quality:** What quality of employment development should we be most concerned about? Are there uses we should resist? What conditions on the quality of development should we specify in the Plan to ensure it doesn't cause nuisance?
5. **Infrastructure:** What are the requirements needed to support new employment development? To allow mixed-use schemes, should we insist on improved broadband services being provided first?

Our objective for infrastructure for community well-being

2

The Plan will promote flood risk improvement measures along with minimising the pollution to the water courses in the parish of Much Wenlock.

It will do this through:

- **Designating and protecting from development, land as green flood attenuation areas**
- **Ensuring all developments in the 'bowl' of Much Wenlock and in Bourton lead to a reduction in the amount of water entering water courses and sewers compared to the current use of the land**
- **Requiring that all new homes connecting into combined sewers use less than 80 litres per person per day**
- **Supporting the use and/or enlargement of containment ponds downstream from the treatment works at Farley**



Why have we proposed this Objective?

The Residents Survey reflected the on-going concerns of many over the established risk of flooding in and around the town of Much Wenlock and Bourton. The community has previously expressed its view in Town Council policies and through a referendum that development should be restricted until solutions to the flooding are implemented.

Since the damaging floods in 2007, the community has worked closely with statutory agencies on understanding and finding solutions and much survey information is now available to inform our decisions. Shropshire Council is currently managing development through 'surface water interim guidance for developers' that aims to ensure any development does not worsen the situation and preferably improves it. Shropshire Council's Integrated Urban Drainage Management Plan sets out actions which may be implemented from 2014 (subject to the funding being available) and this will reduce the risk of flooding from around a 1 in 8 years event to approximately a 1 in 30 years event.

We think the Neighbourhood Plan needs to complement these flood prevention objectives and propose to do this in two ways. Protecting and designating flood attenuation green areas will help reduce the risk of surface water flooding further.



Limiting the discharge levels from new development according to higher standards (for sustainable homes) will reduce the strain on the combined sewers (foul and surface water) in the town.

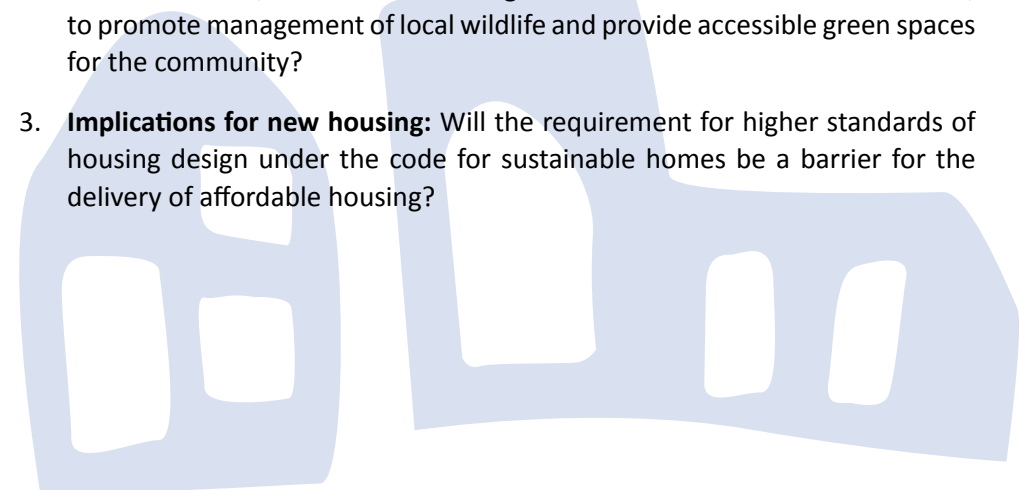
It is acknowledged that the current system of combined sewers and the sewage treatment works adjacent to the Farley Brook are inadequate.

Until such time as Severn Trent can reduce the levels of discharge into the Farley Brook – Much Wenlock's main watercourse - the Plan needs to support and encourage ways of reducing the amount of sewage. The Code for Sustainable Homes (Department of Communities & Local Government) sets out higher standards for water use that we think are relevant for Much Wenlock.



What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Land designations:** Is it clear from the survey work undertaken for Shropshire Council, how much land we could consider designating and protecting to improve flood alleviation within the parish? Which are the best sites?
2. **Encouraging other community uses:** In protecting potential green areas for flood alleviation, can we link these together and make them multi-functional, to promote management of local wildlife and provide accessible green spaces for the community?
3. **Implications for new housing:** Will the requirement for higher standards of housing design under the code for sustainable homes be a barrier for the delivery of affordable housing?



3 Our objective for traffic management and community well-being

The Plan will facilitate measures for managing traffic in and around the town of Much Wenlock.

It will do this through:

- Encouraging measures leading to a reduction in traffic volumes and speeds which endanger pedestrians
- Ensuring sufficient on-site parking in new development to meet current and future car ownership and use
- Supporting parking areas close to the town centre for cycles

Why have we proposed this Objective?

The Residents Survey showed strong community concern towards traffic management and the risk to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. The survey highlighted areas of town worst affected by traffic issues and brought forward ideas for improvement.

Secure parking for cycles was identified as one of the ways that cycling could be encouraged along with better management of the traffic. This would complement the need for better pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre.

We must acknowledge that the Neighbourhood Plan is limited in what it can do to manage traffic and public transport. The Plan can help steer the future levels and type of traffic generated from *within* the parish through its policies on land designations and the nature of development. Whilst it cannot directly steer highways and public transport works, the Plan can set out the nature of improvements we think are required if development takes place.



Shropshire Council's 'Place Plan' for Much Wenlock will also be the appropriate document for setting out the community's suggestions for public transport and traffic management and other possible infrastructure investments – which are outside of the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan - that is needed for the town and parish.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Clarity about priorities:** Which specific schemes would best help in managing traffic and improving safe access for pedestrians (including disabled people) and cyclists? How much cycle parking is needed?
2. **Public transport:** If we are to reduce our carbon emissions, what nature of improvements – new bus or coach parking, bus stops etc - might the Plan promote?

4 Our objective for community facilities

The Plan will support the provision of facilities considered important for a vibrant community and its many visitors.

It will do this through:

- Facilitating the provision of facilities for the elderly, those with families and young people
- Promoting those facilities associated with a positive visitor experience
- Protecting those facilities already in place
- Promoting appropriate numbers of public toilet facilities needed to adequately cater for all visitors.



Why have we proposed this Objective?

There was considerable support for facilities for young people in the Residents Survey, with a wide range of ideas as to how this could be achieved.

The survey also showed that there was a desire to improve community services and that a significant number of residents were concerned with a lack of community facilities.

The provision of public toilets is regarded as an important service for tourists and visitors to Much Wenlock. The Plan may be able to influence the number and location but not the management of these facilities. Shropshire Council is looking to get rid of its responsibilities for providing public toilets when its current management contract ends in 2013. If new facilities are provided there might be a requirement for the local Council Tax payer to fund on-going management.



What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Protecting existing community facilities:** Are we clear on which existing facilities are regarded as important to the community? Should the Plan list these as key community assets?
2. **Priorities for new facilities:** What new facilities should the Plan encourage for the benefit of the community as well visitors.
3. **Toilets:** If these are seen as crucial to the community and visitors, can we agree on the number and location of public toilets that the Plan should specify?

5 Our objective for meeting local housing needs

The Plan will provide for a limited amount of housing to meet local needs. It will do this through

- Allowing small scale mixed developments to include houses for sale on the open market, affordable social rented dwellings, and sheltered housing
- Ensuring that developments will include a range of house types; including a mix of two and three bedroom homes with a significant percentage of single story homes on level sites suited to older residents

Why have we proposed this Objective?

The responses to the Residents Survey demonstrated that the community has aspirations towards home ownership on an affordable level which suits the needs of an aging population, first time buyers and young families. The consultation also showed a need to increase the social rented housing stock to provide homes for lower income families.

The Residents Survey showed that large scale development was not acceptable to most people and that there is an overwhelming desire to maintain the scale, style and setting of the town. The community supports development, both within and outside the town boundary and in the outlying hamlets, provided it is at an appropriate scale. The sense of the appropriate scale of development for the town is that the Plan should identify sites that will not exceed around 25 houses per development scheme and in overall terms the Plan would limit the scale of development so that no more than 100 houses will be built between now (2012) and 2026.



As well as the views of local residents, the Plan must be mindful of the requirements of Shropshire Council's Core Strategy for levels of development. The Core Strategy (policy CS3) sets the level of housing development for Much Wenlock at 'less than 500 dwellings' between 2006 and 2026. The scale of development since 2006 is such that over 80 dwellings have already been permitted and/or built in the town, mostly on 'windfall' sites that were not designated. For the purposes of meeting the strategic housing targets in the Core Strategy, the Plan does not need to allocate any further housing sites. In drafting the Neighbourhood Plan objective, the Steering Group has recognised the importance of addressing unmet local housing needs. We have also assumed that residents' responses on the total numbers of new houses have started from the basis of what the town looks like now rather than the technical starting point of 2006.

The housing needs section of the Residents Survey indicated that some 9 people would be looking for affordable homes rented from a housing provider. It also identified an aspiration towards home ownership by those who will be seeking housing over the next five years; half of the respondents wanted to buy whilst half wanted to rent. Two bedroom dwellings are most sought after.

Further information on housing needs and supply has also come from some of the Housing Associations and Shropshire Council with property holdings in Much Wenlock and in the parish. The HAs have historically not bought sites and built homes, expanding their stock through acquisitions within market development sites. Shropshire Council would favour the development of exception sites (small sites for one or two dwellings) for affordable housing and this might be very relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan given the limited amount of development envisaged.

The current affordable housing stock in Much Wenlock is 192 dwellings, of which, on average, 7 are re-allocated each year. This means that the current housing stock, if allocated only to those with a 'local connection', would meet the current local needs. Further housing data is on the Plan web site.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

Defining local needs: The steering group's view of this is that we will need to explore further with Shropshire Council and social housing providers to define local needs requirements and, also with them and land owners, to agree how we can deliver the objectives.

1. **Scale of development:** Is the objective right in saying the Plan will allow further housing development of up to 100 more houses to meet local needs?

2. **Size of sites for the town:** Should the Plan identify four or five bigger sites and if so, where? Or, should it simply allow a greater number of smaller ones to come forward as 'affordable housing exceptions' or windfall sites? Would this provide enough?



3. **Villages and hamlets:** For Bourton and other small settlements in the parish, should the Plan confirm that it will rely on 'affordable housing exceptions sites' to meet local needs?

4. **Meeting local needs:** How should the Plan ensure that housing that is developed really meets local needs? Should it make changes to the Shropshire Council allocation policy for affordable homes to give exclusive rights to applicants with local connections? Or should it continue with the present policy which gives priority to those 'in housing need' rather than exclusive rights to applicants with local connections?

5. **Percentage of affordable homes on market sites:** Given the generally higher prices of housing in Much Wenlock, should the Plan make the case for a higher percentage rate of affordable homes within market-led development sites?



6 Our objective for helping to achieve a more sustainable community and address climate change

The Plan will encourage a move towards a low- carbon economy which includes local food production and the generation of renewable energy. We will do this through:

- Permitting the allocation of land within the parish to support food production that meets local needs and the local market
- Responding positively to proposals for sites for hydro-electricity, anaerobic digestion or wood fuel projects and encourage their use in the local community

Why have we proposed this Objective?

The Plan can help Much Wenlock become more sustainable by aiming to provide local housing and local employment opportunities which will reduce the need for people to travel. It can also aim specifically to permit more uses of land that will lead to a more sustainable lifestyle for its residents. The results of the Residents Survey demonstrate that there is strong support in the Much Wenlock area to



address the issues of how we use finite natural resources and make a greater use of renewable resources. In turn this objective will help us contribute to national and Shropshire-wide targets.

In particular, there is strong support for more local food production, which can meet people's local needs and local markets and reduces food miles. The success of the recent additional supply of allotment spaces demonstrates demand. Of course, the Plan cannot and should not steer types of crops or agricultural practices but it can influence changes of use of land which may be needed to encourage new local food production enterprises. There may also be consequent economic opportunities for food processing locally.

The Residents Survey asked people for their views on a list of possible renewable energy sources. Some, such as wind power, were not well supported but others received positive backing. The Plan seeks to support schemes that might come forward from developers or landowners.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Scale of development:** In supporting local food or energy production should the Plan limit schemes to relatively small scale activity and be clear that the intent is to reduce the community's impact on the local and global environment?
2. **Location:** Should the Plan steer larger scale economic activity in food processing or renewable energy to any employment sites that are designated?

For further information take a look at our website – www.wenlockplan.org



7 Our objective for protecting our local environment through well-designed development

The Plan will ensure that all future development in the Much Wenlock area

- respects the scale, style and setting of the historic townscape of Much Wenlock (in particular the unique characteristics of the 'bowl' setting) and Bourton;
- respects the quality of the local environment by employing the use of building materials in sympathy with those used in the Conservation Areas of Much Wenlock and Bourton
- is of the highest quality design, referring to the existing traditional styles and proportions of the settlements, avoiding frontages that are visually dominated by garages and tarmac drives and which prioritise the amenity of residents

Why have we proposed this Objective?

The Residents Survey showed that the local community feel very strongly that future development should be in keeping with the town's character. Bourton and Much Wenlock Conservation Areas already benefit from protection due to their designated status and the Plan does not need to repeat this protection.



However, there are numerous historic examples of development which people refer to as being of poor quality. This objective aims to provide a clear statement that high quality development will be the norm within the parish. It especially aims to protect the unique setting of Much Wenlock within its natural landscape bowl.



The Plan can also make a strong reference to the 'Much Wenlock Design Statement (2000)' given it has already been adopted as supplementary planning guidance for the design of new development in the town.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Encouraging exciting modern designs:** Good modern design can add to the quality of townscapes, so should the Plan also explicitly encourage modern designs alongside traditional types?
2. **Strength of policies:** Should the Plan set out any specific types of design of residential and other development that we would wish to encourage or avoid?
3. **Much Wenlock Design Statement:** Is it still fit for purpose for the town? Do we need to refresh this document in the light of our experience over the last 12 years? Should we insist on all proposed development sites having a design brief before development comes forward? Do we need a design statement for Bourton?

8 Our objective for protecting and improving local green and open spaces

The Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that

- existing areas of open and green spaces within the parish are retained and their quality is improved
- additional areas of open and green spaces are created within new developments
- the provision of accessible open space meets or exceeds [Shropshire Council] standards for green and play spaces and allotments
- new developments will include gardens of appropriate scale to the property

Why have we proposed this Objective?

In the Residents Survey, 70% of respondents felt that it was important to protect existing areas of green space within the town and half believed that the provision of green space should be increased. There was also strong support for positive management to aid local wildlife.

Open space, which includes gardens, allotments, recreation areas, informal areas of grassland/woodland and green pathways is important to all of us. Open space improves landscape quality and personal well-being and contributes to a high quality natural environment and greater opportunities for wildlife. Currently the only area of open space in Much Wenlock designated for recreational purposes is the Gaskell Recreation Ground which does not lie within the required walk time of existing development in the south of the town.

Shropshire Council's standards for amenity green space 0.33ha per 1000 population within a 10 minute walk time, provision for children 0.075ha per



1000 population within a 10 minute walk time and allotments 0.21ha per 1000 population within a 10 minute drive time, will form the minimum baseline for the Plan.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Designation of a new Local Green Space:** National planning policy allows us to designate new areas of land which are important for the community as green space for local use. Should we do this? Which land should we choose?
2. **Protecting open spaces in the town:** Should the Plan be clear that we expect all existing areas of open space within Much Wenlock to be protected from development because of their value in the townscape?
3. **Specifying important sites:** Should the Plan list or map those sites which are already recognised as special for their visual or historic characteristics, such as the Gaskell Field or Windmill Hill, so we re-affirm their protection?

9 Our objective for improving and protecting the local landscape and wildlife

The Neighbourhood Plan will encourage sympathetic management of the countryside around Much Wenlock to enhance the high quality landscape, improve local biodiversity and other benefits to the community as part of our 'green infrastructure'

Why have we proposed this Objective?

A very high proportion of respondents to the Residents Survey wanted to see enhanced protection of local natural features and their positive management for wildlife.

Much Wenlock is situated in an area of high landscape quality. Part of the Neighbourhood Plan area (including Homer but excluding the settlements of



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Bourton & Much Wenlock) lie within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); this is a national designation with the principal purpose of 'conserving and enhance natural beauty'. The AONB is also of national importance for its wildlife and geology with 140ha designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

These environmental assets, alongside the attractive and historic environments of our town and villages, are an important economic asset as well as a source of community pride. Much work has been done in recent months to improve the local footpath network as part of the preparation for 2012 and the town now has 'Walkers are Welcome' status.

The Plan can have an influence on development that is proposed both within and outside of the designated AONB. This objective is included to signal that we want to ensure the quality of the landscape and wildlife is managed and improved and continues to provide benefits to local people and visitors.

Our objective on flooding recognises the importance of protecting local green spaces as possible solutions for flood attenuation and government guidance is encouraging the designation of locally important green spaces. It will be important to also ensure that wildlife sites are linked and do not become fragmented. We have the opportunity in the Plan to identify the kind of 'green infrastructure' that we think the town and parish needs.

What issues and options should the Plan consider now?

1. **Ecological value of the Wenlock Edge quarries:** How do we reconcile the desire to restore disused quarries for wildlife and recreation with the suggestion that new industry should be located in disused quarries?
2. **Creating a network of green spaces:** What would a map of our local 'green infrastructure' look like? What opportunities are there to combine access to the natural environment with biodiversity, flood alleviation, the production of wood fuel?



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