

Introduction

10.1 Tenbury Wells is a small town in the north west of Malvern Hills District, situated on the River Teme, which defines the district and county boundary with Shropshire. It has a strong physical and functional relationship with Burford which is situated on the north side of the Teme, in Shropshire. The two settlements are linked by the Teme River Bridge, at the junction of the A456 and the A4112. It has a population of 2,300 (2009 Mid-Term Population Estimates).

Reasoned Justification

10.2 Tenbury is surrounded by a mainly rural hinterland, with open countryside and small settlements and farmsteads, meaning that the town provides an important service function for the wider rural area.

10.3 The key characteristics of the town are its historic setting, on the River Teme, its commercial heart with many historic buildings which are reflected in the Conservation Area status of the town centre, and its landscape setting, rising from the flood plain of the river, and climbing upwards to the south of the town. This higher land gives long distance views northwards to the Shropshire and Cleve Hills.

10.4 The town's location within the flood plain has meant that it has been subject to serious flooding over the centuries, with the most recent severe floods in the summer of 2007, causing considerable damage to properties, especially in the town centre.

10.5 The town contains shopping and commercial outlets, centred on Teme Street and Market Street, consisting of mainly independent stores and offices. It also has a primary school, and a secondary school that serves the wider area. The community hospital is in Burford, as is the main industrial area, north of the Teme bridge, although Tenbury Business Centre is located in the south east of the Town. The town has a sports centre and swimming pool, and is an important tourist centre within the Teme Valley. It is renowned for its Christmas mistletoe market. The main livestock market

Tenbury Pump Rooms



is closed and currently vacant, creating an open site near the river bridge and main centre that would benefit from redevelopment, although a major constraint is its location within the floodplain.

10.6 Tenbury Wells has strong links with Worcester in terms of post 16 years education at the University of Worcester and employment. Outside of Worcestershire Tenbury looks towards Shropshire and Herefordshire for employment opportunities and services, to places such as Ludlow, Leominster and Bromyard.

Teme Street, Tenbury Wells



10.7 Under the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, the area was part of the much wider Rural Regeneration Zone, with potential additional funding and advice to help rural employment opportunities. This policy will no longer be relevant with the eventual demise of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy. The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership will take over the economic role in Worcestershire and will address rural regeneration issues.

10.8 Tenbury Wells, like many parts of rural Worcestershire has an ageing population, with 31.5% of the population of 60 or over, compared to 21.7% for Worcestershire (2001 census). Thus this brings particular challenges for specialist housing and healthcare. Nevertheless the town still needs to retain its importance as an employment and service centre, and maintain the population for the schools, and some housing growth and town centre regeneration is therefore considered important. There is also a need for more affordable housing for those who cannot afford to buy or rent properties on the open market.

10.9 Because of the low lying nature of the main area of the town within the River Teme floodplain, the urban capacity of the main centre to deliver new housing is limited. Sites outside of the floodplain have therefore been assessed, but these are often constrained by topography and access.

Town Centre Regeneration Allocation

10.10 The former Cattle Market site at the northern end of the town, adjacent to the Teme, is vacant. It is partly within the Conservation Area, and within the main shopping street, and its redevelopment would support the regeneration of this part of the town. The use as a cattle market has gone and alternative uses are therefore

considered appropriate. Because the site is entirely within the floodplain, it would not be appropriate for residential use, but could support commercial premises, such as retail, offices or recreational, community and leisure uses. The site also provides the opportunity to upgrade the riverside frontage to provide better public access here.

10.11 Key issues will therefore be

- Resolution of any flood risk issues including a Flood Risk Assessment to the meet the requirements of the Environment Agency
- The design of any development in relation to the Conservation area and listed buildings in the vicinity, and in particular attention to the quality and scale of development on the Teme Street frontage,
- Opportunities to enhance pedestrian and /or cycle access to the river front and links through the site to the town centre

10.1 Tenbury Wells Urban Capacity

10.12 A detailed site assessment has been undertaken to inform the capacity of Tenbury Wells to accommodate the housing growth in accordance with the Development Strategy. Policy SWDP 20 sets out the sites which will be brought forward for development.

10.1.1 SWDP 20: Tenbury Wells Sites

Policy SWDP 20: Tenbury Wells and Allocations

As the main urban settlement in the north west part of Malvern Hills District, Tenbury Wells will be the focus for some new housing and commercial growth, in accordance with policy SWDP1. New development will enhance the economic role of the town, and contribute in part to affordable housing needs and services. Regeneration of the town centre will help support the retail and tourist economy, and provide employment opportunities.

Development at Tenbury Wells is likely to be limited due to floodplain, landscape and access issues. The former cattle market site, Teme Street will be considered for regeneration, for uses that will complement and enhance the economic viability of the town centre including retail vitality. Any development must be appropriate in scale to the location and the town centre. Residential development will not be acceptable because of flood risk constraints. Opportunities should be taken to enhance public access along the river frontage.

The following sites are allocated on the Proposals Map to accommodate future development during the plan period.

Table 16 Tenbury Wells Allocations

Policy Reference	Site	Employment / Commercial	Indicative Number of Dwellings
SWDP20/1	Land opposite Morningside		30
SWDP20/2	Former Cattle Market Site, Teme Street	0.88ha	

Employment development at Tenbury Wells will be limited to meeting local needs and no specific allocations are put forward, although the continued implementation of the Tenbury Business Park is supported. Redevelopment or alternative use of site SWDP20/2 will focus on retail, commercial, recreation, leisure and community uses, either singly or as mixed use proposals.

Links to the Objectives

10.13 The Preferred Option policy for Tenbury Wells supports the following objectives:

- Economic success that is shared by all objectives 1, 2 and 4;
- Stronger communities objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;
- A better environment for today and tomorrow objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5;
- Improving health and well-being objective 2;
- Communities that are safe and feel safe objectives 1 and 2.

Alternative Options Considered

10.14 No housing allocation and rely on Windfall. Because of the severe flood constraints in the town, it was considered that this would bring forward very little housing to meet the needs of the town over the next 20 years. Housing needs surveys have shown a requirement for additional housing in the short term, especially for affordable housing. The town is also one of the most sustainable settlements in the District because of its wide range of shopping, education and community facilities, and its closeness to health and employment services in Burford. Therefore to support housing need and existing facilities some growth is required. The Town Council is also supportive of some housing growth for Tenbury Wells. A housing exception site for 34 affordable dwellings has recently been approved on land adjacent to the

settlement boundary at Oldwood Road, which if implemented will go towards meeting the affordable housing needs, but it is considered that further market housing is also required.

10.15 Any housing growth will be accommodated across the River Teme, to the north in Burford. Cross boundary discussions have taken place, and it is considered that some housing will be likely to be developed in Burford. Furthermore possible housing at Burford will have an undeniable relationship with the Tenbury Housing Market Area which is distinct from the Kidderminster and Worcester Housing Market Areas to the east and south. However it is felt opportunities still need to be considered to the south of the river in Malvern Hills District, where the main part of the population reside, and where the schools and main shopping and leisure services are located.

River Teme, Tenbury Wells



10.16 Employment land allocations. Suitable sites are difficult to find, because of the flood constraints, and the fairly narrow roads within the town. The Tenbury Business Park has some capacity consequently and is reconfirmed for employment uses on the Proposals Map. However the bulk of the available employment land is in Burford, so no specific employment allocations are suggested in or adjacent to Tenbury Wells itself. However, the current Local Plan allocation for the redevelopment of the cattle market site is retained as it is considered this will help regenerate the town centre, with subsequent improvements to the town's economy and the creation of jobs.

10.17 The bridge over the River Teme to the north of the town. Its continued operation and suitability for vehicular traffic, including commercial vehicles is imperative to the future of the Town.