1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 A Structure Plan is a long term planning document covering a time period of at least 15 years which establishes a strategic policy framework for development and land-use planning over a County area. County Councils have a legal duty to produce, monitor and keep under review a Structure Plan for their area.

1.2 The Structure Plan, together with District Local Plans and the Minerals Local Plan comprise the development plan for Worcestershire. The Government is committed to the plan-led system, given statutory force by section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, section 54A requires that an application for planning permission or an appeal shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**Content of the Structure Plan**

1.3 The Structure Plan for Worcestershire covers the period 1996-2011 and has had regard to and interpreted National and Regional Planning Guidance. The Plan provides a statement of the overall strategy for development and the use of land in Worcestershire and in so doing indicates how the balance between development and conservation has been struck. The Structure Plan does not provide guidance for non-land use matters. It does however consider the land use aspects of key strategic areas and includes policies on:

- Housing, including figures for new housing provision in each District;
- Green Belts and conservation of the natural and built environment;
- The rural economy;
- The urban economy, including major industrial, business, retail and other employment-generating and wealth-creating development;
- Strategic transport and highway facilities, and other infrastructure requirements;
- Mineral working (including disposal of mineral waste) and protection of mineral resources;
- Waste treatment and disposal, land reclamation and reuse;
- Tourism, leisure and recreation; and
- Energy generation, including renewable energy.
1.4 The Structure Plan was subject to the consultation process shown in the following programme. The Plan was formally adopted by the County Council on 4th June 2001.

### Programme of Structure Plan Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March – June 1998</td>
<td>“Shaping the New Worcestershire” Consultation Exercise on Options for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1999</td>
<td>Approval of the Consultation Draft Structure Plan by County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May – July 1999 (10 weeks)</td>
<td>Public Consultation on the Consultation Draft Structure Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1999</td>
<td>Approval of Deposit Draft Structure Plan by County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2000</td>
<td>Deposit Draft Structure Plan on public deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2000</td>
<td>Examination in Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2001</td>
<td>Proposed Modifications to Deposit Draft Structure Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td>County Council adoption of the Structure Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **CONTEXT OF THE PLAN**

2.1 In recent years significant changes have occurred worldwide in relation to environmental policy and the concept of sustainability or sustainable development. The planning system has been increasingly seen as an essential and legitimate vehicle through which to influence and secure, by land-use development and change, the wider aims and objectives of sustainable development. Some background to this is essential in helping to understand the Structure Plan, which has been founded on the principles of sustainable development and has sustainability at its core.

2.2 The Structure Plan has similarly been influenced in its content and approach by National and Regional Planning Guidance generally, which has itself become increasingly centred on the achievement of sustainable development. Additionally the County Council has in the course of preparing the Plan undertaken several studies (some in conjunction with other authorities), and prepared several reports to inform the Plan strategy and content (see paragraph 2.29).

### International Context

2.3 The concept of sustainable development started to be more widely acknowledged with the publication in 1987 of the Brundtland Commission report. This set out the most commonly used definition of sustainable development:

> “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

2.4 It was however the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992, commonly known as the ‘Earth Summit’, which heralded the most significant step forward. At the Summit, many countries signed up to a commitment to Agenda 21, a process which seeks to enhance the working together of the community, (including Local Authorities, business, voluntary groups and the public), in achieving an integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues.

2.5 The UK Government committed its Local Authorities to facilitating the Agenda 21 process and in July 1994 the former Hereford and Worcester County Council signed up to the declaration on sustainable development. It convened a Local Agenda 21 Forum, and worked with the community, District Councils, agencies and organisations to produce a Local Agenda 21 Action Plan. The Action Plan endorsed the County Council’s aims to achieve sustainable development and the Action Plan has been subsequently endorsed in principle by Worcestershire County Council. The development of the Action Plan has had a direct influence on the approach to, and content of, the emerging Structure Plan and in helping to develop the Plan’s guiding principles.

### National Context

2.6 In 1994 the Government published ‘Sustainable Development – the UK Strategy’, which set out the future agenda in securing sustainable development for Government, organisations, business and individuals. Since then successive Governments have made clear their intentions to ensure that development and growth are sustainable and have developed policies which are consistent with the concept of sustainable development. In this respect the planning system is seen as playing a major role. This includes policies within development plans such as the Structure Plan.

2.7 In early 1998 the Government published a Paper entitled ‘Opportunities for Change’. This was a consultation paper on a revised UK Strategy for Sustainable Development reflecting changes that had taken place since 1994. The Paper set out the
Government’s vision of sustainable development and what it is doing to put it into practice; explored further action which might be taken to achieve sustainable development; and asked questions on how to proceed in a variety of areas. The consultation led to “a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom” entitled A Better Quality of Life (Cm 4345) published in May 1999. The strategy set out four objectives for achieving sustainable development:

- social progress which recognises the need of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

2.8 In addition to the drive for sustainable development, the Government is equally committed to ensuring that the communities are as free from crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour as possible. This is demonstrated by the introduction of the ‘Crime and Disorder Act’ in 1998 which places a statutory responsibility on all tiers of local government to participate in the reduction of crime and disorder in their area.

Section 17 of the Act states:

“Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.”

2.9 The national context for land use planning is provided by Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Circulars, White Papers, and Ministerial Statements. In recent years several PPGs have been revised to make explicit reference to the need to secure sustainable development and to specify particular approaches which are considered to be appropriate to the achievement of sustainable development and crime reduction.

2.10 PPG1 General Policy and Principles (February 1997) sets out a sustainable planning framework, stating that it should:

- provide for the nation’s needs for commercial and industrial development, food production, minerals extraction, new homes and other buildings, while respecting environmental objectives;
- use already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work;
- conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources (including wildlife, landscape, water, soil and air quality) taking particular care to safeguard designations of national and international importance;
- shape new development patterns in a way which minimises the need to travel; and
- when considering the design of proposed new development, take into account the advice contained in DoE Circular 5/94, ‘Planning Out Crime’. In doing so, the approach adopted should be sufficiently flexible to allow solutions to remain sensitive to local circumstances.

2.11 PPG3 Housing (March 2000) requires local planning authorities to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of affordable and special housing needs. In so doing priority should be given to promoting more sustainable patterns of development by concentrating additional housing development within urban areas, by making more efficient use of land through the reuse of previously developed land, by adopting a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing and by managing the release of land. Additionally sustainable patterns of development should exploit and deliver accessibility by public transport to jobs, education and health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services. Authorities should seek to promote good design in new
housing development in order to create attractive, high-quality living environments in which people will choose to live. Essentially the PPG reinforces and sets out in more detail the Government’s approach to the creation of sustainable patterns of development first brought forward in ‘Planning for Communities of the Future’ (see paragraph 2.17).

2.12 PPG6 Town Centres and Retail Development (June 1996) places emphasis on a plan-led approach to promoting development in town centres, on a sequential approach (i.e. a preference for development first in town centres, then edge of centre and only then in out-of-centre locations) to selecting sites for development for retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses, on the promotion of mixed-use development and on the importance of a coherent town centre parking strategy in maintaining urban vitality.

2.13 PPG10 Planning and Waste Management (September 1999) provides advice on how the land use planning system should contribute to sustainable waste management through the establishment of a planning framework which enables adequate provision to be made for waste management facilities to meet the needs of society.

2.14 PPG12 Development Plans (December 1999) re-states the Government’s approach to sustainable development set out in “A better quality of life, a strategy for sustainable development in the UK (1999)” (see paragraph 2.7 above) and confirms that development plans in particular can make a major contribution to the achievement of the Government’s objectives for sustainable development. The PPG stresses the importance of integrating sustainable development and transport and land use policies in development plans.

2.15 PPG13 Transport (March 2001) provides advice on the integration of transport and land-use planning, with the specific aim of reducing growth in the length and number of motorised journeys, encouraging alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact, and hence help reduce reliance on the private car.

2.16 The Government White Paper ‘A New Deal for Transport’ (July 1998) sets out new policy initiatives which seek to create a better, more integrated transport system which is sustainable in the long term and achievable through a range of measures which aim to maximise accessibility by alternatives to the car.

2.17 The Government Policy statement ‘Planning for the Communities of the Future’ (Command 3885 February 1998) sets out the Government’s preferred approach to the creation of sustainable patterns of development. This includes:

- making existing urban areas more sustainable or by creating sustainable patterns of new development;
- using opportunities to relocate uses that attract a lot of people; and
- locating more homes in places that are more accessible to public transport, jobs and services.

2.18 In order to specify the most appropriate forms of development, Local Planning Authorities are expected to explore the order of preference for the location of development and the sequence in which development should take place. That is, adopt a sequential approach to development.

2.19 The Government White Paper ‘Our Towns and Cities: The Future Delivering an Urban Renaissance’ (November 2000) sets out policy initiatives for urban areas. Those with land use planning implications include better planning and design and bringing brownfield land and empty buildings back into constructive use.

Regional Context

2.21 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands covering the period 1991-2011 was first issued in September 1995. At the time, however, the Secretary of State requested that the Local Authorities reconsider the housing figures in the light of the 1992-based household projections and submit advice to him on whether any alterations to Guidance were required. Following receipt of this advice the Secretary of State re-issued Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) in April 1998. Substantial changes were made to the section on Housing, including a change in relation to the possible role of new settlements in helping to meet the housing needs of the region.

2.22 RPG11 sets out that development and regeneration are essential to achieve economic growth which generates the wealth and resources which are a key factor in maintaining and protecting the quality of the Region’s environment. It reinforces the need for the planning system at all levels to ensure that development is sustainable.

2.23 RPG11 is founded on four development principles (paragraph 3.3):

1. The promotion of economic growth through maximising economic potential within a sustainable development framework; adopting policies which allow a flexible and efficient response to the needs of the market; and the use of energy-efficient modes of transport and the maintenance and improvement of inter and intra-regional communications;

2. Support for urban and rural regeneration by maximising the use of sites within the urban fabric which are derelict or no longer used (previously developed) and releasing greenfield sites only where there is no alternative; promoting a healthy rural economy whilst integrating the development which is necessary to sustain that economy with protection of the countryside; ensuring the vitality and viability of town centres; and aiming to provide adequate housing to an acceptable standard for all;

3. The promotion of a sustainable pattern of development by siting development at locations highly accessible by public transport; moving towards a better balance between employment and population; encouraging mixed-use within settlements; and conserving natural resources;

4. Maintenance and enhancement of the environment by ensuring development is carried out in an environmentally sensitive manner; promotion of a high quality of design in town and country; protection and creation of valuable open space; and ensuring a strong, effective and permanent Green Belt.

2.24 RPG11 sets out specific guidance in relation to the key strategic areas which the Plan has to address. In particular it provides guidance on the number of dwellings to be provided within Worcestershire during the period 1991-2011 (41,300 dwellings) and establishes a locational framework for development. The cornerstones of the locational framework which have had a major influence on the development strategy set out in this Plan are:

- Development Plans should recognise the importance of integrating transport and development with locations for new development chosen so that they will help to reduce the number and length of journeys to work, shops, leisure and recreation, education and other facilities especially by car (paragraph 3.6);

- Development Plans should ensure that the capacities of existing urban areas are maximised in so far as is consistent with securing quality of the living environment. Development within the existing urban fabric contributes to a pattern of sustainable development by helping to reduce the need to travel; minimising the loss of greenfield sites;
and maximising the use of existing infrastructure. Opportunities for the reusing of vacant and derelict sites within the urban fabric should therefore be taken unless the retention or creation of open spaces is important to the quality of the environment (paragraph 3.8);

- the siting of new development near public transport centres or at selected locations along corridors well-served by public transport could make a helpful contribution to providing people with a choice of transport (paragraph 3.16). This corridor approach may be applicable across the Region, but will be of particular relevance in those areas which have close links, in respect of journey-to-work and other factors, to the Metropolitan Area (paragraph 3.17);

- the Metropolitan Area is surrounded by a ring of towns which are important centres in their own right, but which (with their surrounding areas) have close economic, social and commuting links with that area (paragraph 4.4.1). The zone of influence is termed the “Central Crescent” and in Worcestershire extends to, and beyond, Worcester City and Kidderminster/Stourport. It includes Redditch, Droitwich and Bromsgrove;

- many members of migrant households from the Metropolitan Area to the Shire Counties will continue to work in the Metropolitan Area and should thus be accommodated in the Central Crescent in order to keep commuting distances at a minimum. A significant proportion of indigenous households will also require ready access to the Metropolitan Area for work and other purposes and provision for indigenous growth should therefore also largely be met in, rather than beyond, the Central Crescent (paragraph 4.4.2);

- employment provision in the Central Crescent should not be at a level, or of a type, which will undermine regeneration of the Metropolitan Area. However, if carefully matched to the employment needs of the area, it can contribute to a better balance between housing and employment and therefore help reduce commuting;

- outside the Central Crescent part of the County (i.e. south and west Worcestershire) housing growth should be largely confined to that for local needs; whereas employment growth could make a useful contribution to local job opportunities. Such employment growth should generally be small in scale in order that it is largely in keeping with its rural surrounds and does not lead to an increase in demand for housing. In the rural parts of the County the emphasis should be on the diversification of employment opportunities.

2.25 When RPG11 was originally issued in September 1995 it also stated that:

“Large new settlements can provide a sustainable form of development which is preferable to development in the Green Belt or the incremental growth of small settlements. This is an option that may well be appropriate in the particular circumstances of the West Midlands, and the strategic authorities should consider the case for such a form of development against the criteria in paragraph 33 of PPG3 and guidance in PPG13 (paragraph 3.2), as well as the context of the corridor studies …” [Paragraph 3.15]

2.26 The advice clearly indicated that the possibility of accommodating development through a new settlement should be evaluated before considering taking land out of the Green Belt to accommodate development.

2.27 However when RPG11 was re-issued in April 1998 the advice had changed and it no longer states that new settlements are a form of development which is “preferable to
development in the Green Belt”. However it is important to note that PPG2 Green Belts only allows for housing in limited circumstances in the Green Belt (primarily infilling). Other major housing development can only be justified therefore in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that it cannot be accommodated outside the Green Belt in the first instance.

2.28 Additionally the conclusion of the Panel who conducted the Examination in Public of the Plan was that there was no need for a new settlement in the Plan period on the basis of the housing growth figures, and that new settlements should be excluded from consideration (paragraphs 1.60 – 1.61 EIP Panel Report October 2000).

Worcestershire County Council Studies and Reports

2.29 At various stages in preparation of the Plan the County Council has undertaken several studies and prepared reports to inform the Plan strategy and content. These have been undertaken in the context of the wider national and regional guidance set out above and have considered specific aspects which the Plan has been required to address. Separate reports on each of the Studies are available. Studies undertaken include:

- Transport Corridors Study
- Urban Capacity Study
- New Settlements Study
- Major Investment Sites Study
- Sustainability Appraisal of Development Options

Background Reports were also produced on:

- Housing
- Employment Methodology
3. **V**ISION AND **O**BJECTIVES

**Introduction**

3.1 The way in which Worcestershire develops between 1996-2011 will be influenced by the international, national and regional context. This context, however, provides the backcloth against which decisions in relation to more local issues and concerns can be taken. To give direction to these decisions it is important to have a vision of what kind of Worcestershire we want in the 21st Century. The Plan and other policies and plans can work towards the achievement of this vision. As part of the consultation exercise “Shaping the New Worcestershire” an outline of a vision for Worcestershire was set out and views invited. The views received were broadly supportive and have been taken into account in setting out the following vision for the County.

**A Vision for Worcestershire**

3.2 The vision for Worcestershire incorporates a desire to enhance quality of life, not only for today’s generation but also for future generations. This, in essence, is sustainability. The achievement of this requires us to be concerned for the well-being of future generations, to recognise that our future well-being is dependent on maintaining the health and integrity of the natural environment, to recognise that quality of life is different from standard of living and to recognise that there still exists a need for development. It should be made clear that it is not a question of no development, rather a question of how that development is undertaken and secured. The vision also encompasses economic, environmental and social factors which it is considered are most likely to be of concern to residents in meeting their aspirations and desires. These are for social equity, environmental protection, economic security and for a viable and competitive economy.

3.3 It is also important to remember that Worcestershire does not exist in a vacuum. Worcestershire is part of the wider West Midlands Region and is influenced by issues of regional significance. The region itself comprises sub-regions of distinctive character whose specialisms, excellence and dynamic contribute to the diversity and vitality of the region as a whole. The regional vision looks to these distinctive and diverse characteristics being recognised and valued.

3.4 Overall the shared regional vision as set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (RPG11) includes achieving economic prosperity and a more competitive position for the region in European and World markets and building on the region’s success as an advanced manufacturing region. The Metropolitan Area, with Birmingham as the international city at its heart, provides the focus and core of the region with strong linkages to Worcestershire for employment, business, housing, shopping and recreational activities. The well-being of the Conurbation is therefore important for the well-being of Worcestershire, as well as the region as a whole. The regional vision also looks towards the regeneration of both the older urban and the rural areas of the region to make them places where people wish to live, work and invest, and aims to provide a high quality of life and choice of opportunity for everyone.

3.5 A vision for Worcestershire must build upon and sit comfortably with the main themes of the regional vision. Any vision for the County should utilise the region’s strengths and attributes to the benefit of the County’s inhabitants and Worcestershire’s rightful role in the future development of the wider region.

3.6 The vision is therefore of a County: **which is environmentally conscious.** Where the residents will want to be part of a society which respects and protects its environment and which strives to meet its own needs, both urban and rural, without jeopardising that environment. They will wish to minimise waste and conserve resources through a sustainable approach.
to manufacturing and the consumption of natural resources, in particular energy. This requires a County where individuals, organisations and businesses acknowledge and act upon their environmental responsibilities, and where they recognise and acknowledge the importance of the area’s diverse characteristics and wider environmental, nature conservation, landscape, townscape and historically distinctive features.

- **which is prosperous.** Where the link between residents and businesses in the creation of prosperity is acknowledged as inextricable and self-supporting. From a business viewpoint the County should be looking towards urban and rural areas which are economically attractive, vibrant and invigorated. From a resident viewpoint the County should be looking to satisfy the overriding need for job security, the payment of adequate wages and the generation of wealth within our communities. Opportunity to participate in the economic life and prosperity of Worcestershire will be essential. In this respect it will be particularly important to consider and address the needs of the least well-off in our society and to address the causes of poverty.

- **where the residents are healthy and safe.** Where people will all have access to the basic needs of food, water, and energy at a fair cost. Where they can feel part of a safe society, living free from crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. The aim should be for a good, pollution-free and stimulating environment, with clear air, clean water and pollution-free rivers, lakes and land.

- **where the people are treated fairly and afforded opportunity.** Where access to education and training will be of prime importance and people will have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations. There should be opportunity for all residents in the County to have access to housing of their choice. Local communities should be capable of and allowed to identify and address their own needs. People should be given the opportunity of access to essential facilities irrespective of wealth, mobility and disability.

### A Vision for Worcester City

3.7 Worcester City is the principal urban area in Worcestershire, the traditional County town and the primary administrative retail and employment centre for the County. It is an important sub-regional shopping centre at the top of the County’s retail hierarchy, and its shopping centre provides both variety and quality of shopping for its wide catchment.

3.8 It is unique in all of the urban areas in the County in that its sub-regional role as a major employment centre ensures that it attracts a significantly greater number of commuters into the City than it has residents commuting out.

3.9 The City accommodates a range of social and community facilities and it is also the centre of governance and law and order. The City is well served by public transport with two rail stations and a third, Worcester Parkway, under investigation and a frequent bus service to and from the new bus station in the City Centre servicing the outlying urban and rural areas.

3.10 The City with its centralised, social, cultural and retail facilities well served by public transport meets the aims of sustainability.

3.11 The City’s sub-regional role would be enhanced if there were improvements to some of its facilities for example for major office employers such as those who have located in other sub-regional towns and cities such as Cheltenham and Gloucester.

3.12 The vision for Worcester is therefore for it to retain its sub-regional role as the traditional County town, offering a range of opportunities for work, shopping and leisure.
to its inhabitants and those within its sub-region. It is also to seek to provide those facilities and opportunities which will enhance its sub-regional role.

3.13 The policies in the County Structure Plan support this vision, particularly the levels of housing and employment development and transport policies aimed at improving public transport.

3.14 It is important that the policies in the Local Plan also seek to ensure that Worcester’s sub-regional role is retained and enhanced.

3.15 Future development must ensure that the City’s heritage is retained and that new housing is of a mix in terms of size and tenure. The City’s place in the County’s retail hierarchy must also be maintained by ensuring that the quality and variety of shops in the City Centre is retained and enhanced. Future policies for the City Centre should seek to widen the City’s employment and cultural base.

The Role of the Structure Plan

3.16 It is necessary to clarify which aspects and requirements of the vision for Worcestershire are capable of being influenced through land-use policy. A series of principles have been developed to guide strategy and policy in a way which ensures consistency with both the vision, and the broad guidance and advice set out in national and regional policy planning guidance.

3.17 These guiding principles are set out below and form the objectives of the Plan. They have guided the formulation of the Plan’s development strategy and policies and were used in a draft form to structure the development options in the “Shaping the New Worcestershire” consultation process. They have subsequently been used to undertake appraisals of all development options and to appraise at the formulation stage the policies set out in the individual chapters of the Plan. In this way the principles of sustainability have been woven into the fabric of the Plan from its inception, ensuring that the achievement of development in a sustainable way is at its core and enabling an appropriate balance to be struck between environmental, social and economic aspirations.

Objectives of the Worcestershire Structure Plan

- Encourage and promote land use activities which will lead to an improvement in the quality of air, water and land.

- Seek a reduction in the consumption of energy and finite resources through the more efficient use of resources, recycling, the use of renewable sources and the reduction in the amount of waste produced.

- Protect from damaging development and land use activity, and enhance, biodiversity and diverse and important environmental, landscape, townscape and historic features and characteristics.

- Ensure the integration of development within the landscape in order to protect and enhance essential landscape characteristics and features.

- Protect and expand amenity areas and open spaces, and access to them, in both town and country.

- Meet the housing requirements of the population of the new County through the provision of an adequate range of housing including general market, affordable and social housing in a way which protects the environment and makes the most effective use of the existing settlement pattern.

- Work towards a better balance between housing, employment, social and community facilities within settlements.
CHAPTER THREE

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- Enhance the role of settlements as centres for service provision.

- Encourage development which will help retain and enhance the identity, character and vitality of settlements.

- Promote energy efficient construction, design and development patterns.

- Seek the location of development in areas which will minimise the need to travel and reduce the distances required to be travelled (energy efficient locations).

- Guide new development to locations which can be served by a choice of transport modes for both the movement of people and freight.

- Support and facilitate the development of alternative modes of travel to the car.

- Facilitate the strengthening and diversification of the economic base of the Region and of Worcestershire by the provision of a mixed portfolio of development locations and sites and by the enhancement and management of an attractive County environment.

- Encourage urban and rural regeneration.

- Support the enhancement, development and integration of, and access to, a range of recreation facilities both within and around settlements.

- Seek to reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour by introducing crime prevention as a material consideration into the land-use and development planning process.
The matrix below cross-refers Sustainable Development Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure Plan Policy</th>
<th>Links to other policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD.1 Prudent Use of Natural Resources</td>
<td>SD.3, SD.4, SD.7, D.4, D.5, D.6, D.7, D.8, D.9, D.10, EN.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD.2 Care for the Environment</td>
<td>SD.9, All CTC policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD.3 Use of Previously Developed Land</td>
<td>SD.6, SD.7, D.3, D.5, D.11, D.20</td>
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<td>SD.4 Minimising the Need to Travel</td>
<td>SD.6, SD.7, SD.8, T.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD.5 Achieving Balanced Communities</td>
<td>SD.6, SD.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD.6 Location of Development in Urban Areas</td>
<td>SD.4, SD.5, SD.7, RST.11, T.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD.7 A Sequential Approach to the Location of Development</td>
<td>SD.3, SD.4, SD.6, RST.11, T.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD.8 Development in Sustainable Rural Settlements</td>
<td>SD.5, D.27, D.28, RST.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD.9 Promotion of Town Centres</td>
<td>D.26, D.32</td>
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4. **A Sustainable Development Framework**

**Introduction**

4.1 The vision and objectives of the Structure Plan are aimed at moving the County towards more sustainable patterns of development. Sustainable development lies at the heart of the Plan and to make clear what this means for development of land in the County up to 2011, it is appropriate to set out first the Sustainable Development Framework for the Plan.

4.2 The first part of this Chapter under the heading ‘Sustainable Development Principles’ sets out the principles of sustainability which underpin the development strategy and all other policies in the Structure Plan. The second part under the heading ‘The Development Strategy’ establishes the strategy which puts those principles into effect. The strategy is founded on four key elements for the accommodation of all development:

- to accommodate development in accordance with the sequential approach to the location of development (see Policy SD.7);

- as far as possible meet the housing requirements generated by the expected natural increase in the population during the Structure Plan period in the Districts where it arises;

- enable Worcester City as the largest urban area and the main service and employment centre in the County to retain and develop its sub-regional role through an appropriate level of growth; and

- to ensure the majority of the housing needs of the County during the Structure Plan period are met within the Central Crescent in accordance with RPG11 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (April 1998).

**Policies**

**Sustainable Development Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prudent Use of Natural Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy SD.1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposals for development should demonstrate how the use of natural resources will be minimised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wherever possible, development proposals and associated operations which can lead to the pollution of resources should be avoided. Proposals which are likely to have an adverse impact should demonstrate how likely levels of pollution will, through design and location, be minimised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The energy implications of development proposals will be assessed with the aim of minimising energy consumption.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanatory Memorandum**

4.3 A key aspect of sustainability is that careful use is made of resources in order to conserve them for future generations. It is important to ensure that development proposals examine closely the level of resource use required for their implementation (in particular those resources which are finite), and the likely longer term impact of the development on resource use, especially in relation to energy needs and location. The more efficient use of resources such as secondary aggregates will help to protect finite resources as well as contributing towards other sustainability objectives such as the reduction in waste production and pollution. The former Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) defined secondary aggregates as other materials usable as aggregate, which are the by-products of quarrying and mining and
industrial processes. In Worcestershire, these include demolition and construction wastes such as road planings.

4.4 In a land use plan it is important to have regard to land and built resources and to seek to use buildings and land in the most efficient and effective way. The starting point for any development proposals should therefore always be to examine the possible improved or increased use or reuse of existing buildings and land particularly within existing settlements before considering the option of completely new development. The reuse of buildings in the open countryside for housing purposes would not generally be considered to be sustainable.

4.5 In considering proposals for development, Local Planning Authorities should recognise that it will still be necessary for the transportation and re-distribution of aggregates and waste materials away from proposed development sites.

4.6 Where relevant, proposals will be subject to environmental assessment in accordance with the appropriate and prevailing legislation and the requirements of the relevant Local Planning Authority and/or the Environment Agency.

4.7 Environmental assessments are required for major development proposals, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. For developments not requiring statutory environmental assessments under the Regulations, Local Planning Authorities should encourage the provision of environmental information and informal assessments as best practice in promoting sustainable development. Assessment of the pollution of resources will be for the relevant Local Planning Authority and/or the Environment Agency to undertake.

4.8 It can be argued that any development can lead to some form of pollution of one or more of the primary resources if the full life cycle of the development itself or the products it uses are examined. The intention of Policy SD.1 however is not to preclude development per se but to ensure that due regard is given to the likely impact of the development itself and its associated operations on land, air and water, and to limit any potentially polluting impacts to acceptable levels.

4.9 Currently there are separate, but complementary, planning and pollution control systems designed to protect the environment from the potential harm caused by development and operations. The planning system is intended to complement pollution control policies by regulating the location of development and the control of operations in order to avoid or minimise adverse effects on the use of land and on the environment; and to ensure land is adequately restored after the development or use ceases. Development proposals will be assessed in the context of this role by the Local Planning Authorities in accordance with their duties and responsibilities at the time of any proposal being brought forward. Proposals will also be assessed in accordance with any pollution control requirements by the Environment Agency.

4.10 The land use planning system also has an integral role to play in improving air quality and in contributing to the achievement of national air quality objectives. This can best be secured through the proper integration of land use policies, in particular those relating to the location of development and transport. Reference should be made to Circular No. LAQM.G4 (97): Air Quality and Land Use Planning when considering the role land use planning can play through development proposals.

4.11 There is a primary need to reduce energy use wherever possible. Total energy use associated with a development can be influenced by a range of factors, beginning with its design, choice of materials and construction method, through to how its location, orientation and integration with other land uses affects energy consumption (for example, by using passive heating and ensuring the ease of access by alternative modes of transport). Policy SD.1 is intended to ensure that the likely implications for the consumption of energy are given full consideration in determining proposals for development.
Care for the Environment

Policy SD.2

Development proposals should seek to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the County’s environmental assets or landscape character. Proposals should seek to retain and enhance environmental assets, and the distinctiveness of the local environment and should integrate fully with the landscape. Proposals which may cause damage to or lead to an erosion of the County’s environmental assets and/or important landscape features or character will be required to demonstrate why the proposal is of sufficient importance to justify such erosion or damage taking place.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.12 The County contains a wealth of environmental assets, both built and natural, which need to be protected wherever possible. Certain of these assets are critical in so far as their contribution cannot be replaced by compensatory action and their loss would be serious. The County’s landscape is similarly distinctive and renowned for its high value and variety. It is a valuable asset in its own right and needs to be maintained and enhanced. The Supplementary Policy Guidance “Draft Landscape Character Assessment” identifies the landscape character of the County and the components that contribute towards the different areas within it.

4.13 Proposals which are likely to lead to an erosion of the County’s environmental or landscape assets or which are out of keeping with local character or distinctiveness will therefore have to demonstrate why the proposal’s benefits outweigh the likely environmental or other loss or damage. At the same time development proposals should seek to enhance the County’s assets and contribute towards local distinctiveness.

4.14 Where proposals for development are permitted under Policy SD.2, potential adverse effects should be mitigated by careful siting, design, quality and appropriate landscaping.

Use of Previously Developed Land

Policy SD.3

The reuse and regeneration of previously developed urban land will be encouraged in preference to the use of greenfield sites, subject to safeguarding environmental quality within the urban environment.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.15 Encouraging development on previously developed urban land will allow the maximum use to be made of vacant and previously developed sites, will assist urban regeneration and will help reduce the pressure for development on greenfield sites, particularly in the open countryside. It will also allow maximum use to be made of existing infrastructure including public transport facilities (see also Policy SD.4) and will help to maintain the viability and vitality of settlements. It is important however that development should not be allowed where it would have an adverse effect on the environmental quality of the urban area.

Minimising the Need to Travel

Policy SD.4

Proposals for development will normally only be allowed where they are located so as to minimise the need to travel, and where the development provides for access by different modes. In this respect development should generally be located in or adjacent to urban areas at nodes on transport corridors, particularly rail-based corridors, where frequent and attractive services are available or there is a realistic prospect that they will be available when development takes place.
Explanatory Memorandum

4.16 The urban locations referred to in Policy SD.4 are those which provide a significant scale and mix of development and provide a balance of employment, homes, educational, retail and community facilities situated on nodes on public transport corridors. The nodes are where public transport services are concentrated, principally where there is a rail station and interchange between rail and bus services.

4.17 The urban areas should preferably be on rail lines but can also be on road-based public transport routes. In all cases the locations should be at nodes on public transport corridors which provide a frequent and attractive rail and or bus service or where there is a realistic prospect that these services will be available when development takes place.

4.18 The rail and/or bus service should be at such a frequency and time of day or night which ensures that access is attractive and frequently available by public transport from home to other centres for work, retail, educational and community facilities.

4.19 In respect of where there is a realistic prospect that these services will be available when development takes place, development should only be located in or adjacent to these urban areas when improvements to the public transport services in respect of frequency and attractiveness will be made within the Structure Plan period.

4.20 The development in or adjacent to the urban areas at nodes on public transport routes are those locations which should generally be within five minutes drive time to an existing or proposed rail station or within fifteen minutes walking or cycling distance to an existing or proposed rail station or bus station. These locations are considered to provide the greatest potential for residents who need to travel to work or for educational, retail, cultural or other purposes to be able to do so by public transport.

4.21 The rail corridors are:

(a) Birmingham (New Street and Snow Hill)/Stourbridge/Kidderminster/ Droitwich/Worcester/Malvern/Colwall;

(b) Birmingham (New Street)/Northfield/Bromsgrove/Droitwich/Worcester/Malvern/Colwall;

(c) Birmingham (New Street)/Northfield/Redditch;

(d) Worcester/Pershore/Evesham/Honeybourne;

(e) The part of the North Warwickshire line which runs through the County at Wythall.

4.22 Supplementary Planning Guidance will be produced in consultation with District Councils and other interested parties setting out what constitutes frequent and attractive services to inform the implementation of Policy SD.4. The SPG will recognise that rural settlements will not have the same level of accessibility as urban areas. Full regard should be had to Policy SD.7 in applying Policy SD.4.

Achieving Balanced Communities

Policy SD.5

Development proposals should help to sustain and improve the balance of housing, employment, community and social facilities in settlements, should maximise the use of existing infrastructure and self-containment and the building of communities.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.23 A major objective of the Structure Plan is to deliver sustainable patterns of development which allow accessibility to jobs, education, health, shopping, leisure and other local services. The locations which provide the greatest opportunity to achieve this objective are the main urban areas in the County.
4.24 The optimum sustainable pattern of
development is where all the needs of the urban
areas, housing, employment and social needs
are met within that urban area, i.e. self-
contained.

4.25 Worcester City, the principal urban
area in the County which has a wide range of
retail, social and community facilities and
employment opportunities, is considered to be
the most self-contained urban area in the
County. The degree of self-containment is
dependent on the employment opportunities and
facilities available for local residents, the greater
the employment opportunities and range of
retail, social and community facilities, the higher
the degree of self-containment.

4.26 In the urban areas of the County new
housing development should therefore be
accompanied by development to meet the
employment, community and social needs
associated with the housing development where
they are not currently provided. This 'balanced'
development in urban areas which already have
a wide range of jobs, education, health,
shopping, leisure and other local services will
help sustain and improve the balance of
housing, employment, community and social
facilities in them.

4.27 Housing development without
associated development to meet the
employment, social and community needs
means an absence of those facilities which
support communities and which will encourage
community access to services. The provision
of employment, social and community facilities
accompanying the housing development will
provide the necessary facilities to support the
community. The development will also maximise
the opportunity for self-containment of the urban
areas.

4.28 The principal urban areas named in
Policy SD.6 are considered to be those areas
which have the greatest opportunity for self-
containment and to help sustain and improve
the balance of housing, employment and
community and social facilities in these areas.
There are however other urban areas in the
County where development would be
considered appropriate if the following criteria
were satisfied:

Development in urban areas should be in
sustainable locations and should be located in
or adjacent to the urban areas where
development:

- will help sustain and improve the balance
  of housing, employment, community and
  social facilities;

- assist in sustaining an appropriate level
  of local services and facilities;

- make best use of the existing
  infrastructure including educational,
  medical, cultural services and public
  transport; and

- there is frequent accessibility to jobs,
  education, health, shopping, leisure and
  local services, and the location accords
  with Policy SD.4. The Supplementary
  Planning Guidance to be prepared on
  frequent and attractive services in
  relation to Policy SD.4 will be equally
  relevant to Policy SD.5

4.29 It will be for District Councils to
determine the settlements to which Policy SD.5
applies in Reviews of District Local Plans having
regard to this Explanatory Memorandum.

The Development Strategy

Location of Development in
Urban Areas

Policy SD.6

The majority of the outstanding
development needs of the County to be
met within the Structure Plan period will
take place within or adjacent to the
principal urban areas within the Central
Crescent, namely Bromsgrove, Droitwich,
Kidderminster, Stourport, Redditch and
Worcester. Elsewhere in the Central
Crescent development would be
CHAPTER FOUR  
A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

appropriate at other urban settlements if the criteria in Policies SD.4 and SD.5 can be satisfied. Outside the Central Crescent, development should be concentrated at the urban settlements of Malvern, Evesham and Pershore.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.30 If the objectives of the Structure Plan are to be met and the County is to move forward in a sustainable way to 2011, it is important to have clear strategic guidance on how development requirements should be met: i.e. the housing and employment needs to 2011. Policy SD.6 makes it clear that the majority of the development required during the Structure Plan period should be located within or adjacent to certain key urban areas which it is considered provide the best opportunity to accommodate development in a sustainable way in accordance with PPG3 Housing (March 2000), other Government guidance and the objectives of the Structure Plan.

4.31 The Central Crescent is described in RPG11 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands Region (April 1998) as an area around the West Midlands Metropolitan Area which has close economic, social and commuting links with that area. RPG11 does not identify the Central Crescent on a map and, in common with the Structure Plans of the adjoining Counties of Staffordshire and Warwickshire, the Central Crescent is not defined on the Key Diagram. However, to aid understanding the broad extent of the Central Crescent in the County is described below.

4.32 Reflecting advice in RPG11, the Central Crescent in Worcestershire comprises the Districts of Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcester City, and that part of Wychavon District within the Worcester – Droitwich rail corridor and immediately surrounding the Worcester City boundary to the east and south. The area of Malvern Hills District within the Central Crescent is limited to the immediate surrounds of Worcester City.

4.33 In accordance with RPG11 and given the distribution of housing provision, the majority of the housing needs of the County during the Structure Plan period will be met within the named principal urban areas in the Central Crescent as described and therefore it is not necessary to show the area on the Key Diagram.

4.34 Outside the Central Crescent, development should be located within or adjacent to the urban settlements of Malvern, Evesham and Pershore. There is currently an imbalance of employment and housing in the south of Wychavon District and housing development at Evesham and Pershore will help address this. However, public transport accessibility to the two settlements is relatively limited. Therefore, the scale of development proposed at Evesham and Pershore in the Review of the Wychavon District Local Plan should reflect their lower level of public transport accessibility.

4.35 For the purposes of applying Policy SD.6 the word ‘concentrated’ should be interpreted as meaning ‘within or adjacent’.

A Sequential Approach to the Location of Development

Policy SD.7

In the settlements covered by Policy SD.6 there will be a sequential approach to the location of all development in the following order:

(i) consideration of locations within the urban area on previously developed (brownfield) land which avoids damaging the quality of the environment;

(ii) consideration of locations within the urban areas on greenfield land which avoids damaging the quality of the environment;

(iii) consideration of locations adjacent to the urban area outside the Green Belt and adjacent to the urban area in Areas of Development Restraint;
 CHAPTER FOUR

A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

(iv) in exceptional circumstances, when all the options for locating development set out above, in sustainable locations, have been exhausted and where there exists a clear development need, consideration of locations adjacent to the urban area on land currently designated as Green Belt, where the purposes for which Green Belts were designated would not be compromised.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.36 ‘Planning for the Communities of the Future’ states that when identifying options for development, consideration should be given to the order of preference of locations and the sequence in which development should take place. PPG3 Housing (March 2000) reinforces this and sets out in more detail the Government’s approach to the creation of sustainable patterns of development. Policy SD.7 reflects this guidance. In consideration of the location of new housing in particular, the Government’s clear objective is for it to be accommodated principally in existing towns and cities where it can contribute to improving the quality of urban life and make a significant contribution to urban renaissance.

4.37 It is important to ensure that in accommodating development within those settlements covered by Policy SD.6, every attempt is made to make the best use of land, reducing the need to take greenfield land wherever possible. It is considered that a significant amount of the development needs of the County to 2011 can be accommodated on previously developed land.

4.38 In general terms, urban sites are the most sustainable locations for development (see Policy SD.6) not least because of links with existing communities. This is reflected in the sequential approach. District Planning Authorities should make judgements about relative sustainability when assessing sites, taking into account other relevant Structure Plan policies.

4.39 After development within sustainable urban areas has been considered, locations around sustainable urban areas (i.e. peripheral locations) outside the Green Belt are preferable to development which requires land to be removed from the Green Belt. In this respect, development adjacent to sustainable urban areas on greenfield sites in areas with no Green Belt designation and sustainable sites already removed from the Green Belt by District Local Plans for long term development needs (Areas of Development Restraint) are considered to be of equal status in terms of their general suitability for development under Policy SD.6. In applying Policy SD.7 Areas of Development Restraint identified in adopted local plans should be reviewed in accordance with Policy D.41.

4.40 For the purposes of Policy SD.7, examples of greenfield sites within urban areas may include garden nurseries and disused allotments.

4.41 In considering sites in sustainable settlements, regard should be had to the overall quality of the urban environment, taking into account Government guidance set out in PPG1 General Policy and Principles (February 1997), PPG3 Housing (March 2000) and PPG17 Sport and Recreation (September 1991).

4.42 In exceptional circumstances, there may be a case for reviewing Green Belt boundaries and planning for development where this would be the most sustainable option. Paragraph 68 of PPG3 Housing (March 2000), acknowledges that a Green Belt location may be preferable to a less sustainable location outside the Green Belt but that this would be by exception and must not compromise the purposes for which Green Belts were designated. For example, it is important to avoid coalescence of settlements. Given this guidance, it is considered therefore that the removal of land from the Green Belt in sustainable locations, in exceptional circumstances, should be only considered when alternative locations in categories higher in the sequence have been exhausted.

4.43 In respect of the provision of land for employment uses regard should be had in the application of the sequential approach to the
Development in Sustainable Rural Settlements

Policy SD.8

In settlements outside urban areas development will be permitted within or adjacent to the boundary of the settlement at a level appropriate to meet local housing needs or employment and/or other local needs in order to support local services and to help achieve an improved balance of facilities. In all instances the development should be of an appropriate scale to the location, and a choice of modes of travel should be regularly available.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.44 PPG3 Housing (March 2000) indicates that there should be adequate housing provision in rural areas to meet the needs of local people and that Local Planning Authorities should therefore make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing villages to enable these local requirements to be met. Policy SD.8 reflects this advice and broadens it to include employment, and/or other local needs such as community and social facilities, for the reasons stated in the policy. In rural settlements which meet the requirements of Policy SD.8, development for local needs only should be permitted during the Structure Plan period. This local housing need should be capable of being met through existing allocations and windfall allowances already allowed for in the Structure Plan (see Policy D.11) in accordance with Local Plan policies. It is not anticipated that there will be a need to allocate additional sites for local needs housing purposes, in locations outside the urban areas referred to in Policy SD.6, to help meet the housing requirements of the County up to 2011. However additional housing allocations through the Local Plan process may be necessary where District Planning Authorities demonstrate that local housing needs cannot be met through existing allocations and windfall planning permissions. Any development in a sustainable rural settlement must be in accordance with relevant Structure Plan policies.

4.45 Development which helps to achieve a better balance of facilities, particularly between housing and employment, and to provide for other local needs such that it will reduce the need to travel is to be encouraged, for example community and social facilities. Employment development at locations other than the urban areas listed in Policy SD.6, should be at a scale in keeping with the size of the town or village, and will not be a justification for the release of additional land for housing purposes. Such employment development should be in accordance with other policies in the Structure Plan, in particular Policies D.27 and D.28.

4.46 In rural settlements outside of the urban areas listed in Policy SD.6 or other urban settlements identified by District Planning Authorities, it will be for the relevant Authority to assess local housing needs. District Planning Authorities should undertake this assessment in accordance with paragraphs 12 and 13 of PPG3 Housing.

4.47 Policy SD.8 seeks development in rural settlements where choices of modes of travel are regularly available. However, in applying the policy Local Planning Authorities should not expect sustainable rural settlements to have the same level of accessibility as exists in the urban areas listed in Policy SD.6. The County Council will issue advice in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance to assist District Planning Authorities in determining what constitutes regular public transport services for the purposes of implementing Policy SD.8.
4.48 It will be for District Planning Authorities to identify settlements which accord with Policy SD.8 in Local Plan Reviews and where an allocation for development is appropriate, the sequential approach set out in Policy SD.7 will apply.

4.49 The policy refers to development being permitted within or adjacent to settlements. Where settlement boundaries are drawn in District Local Plan Reviews, it will be for District Planning Authorities to interpret the phrase ‘adjacent to’, having regard to the requirements of the policy, in the context of the rural settlement.

Promotion of Town Centres

Policy SD.9

Town centres will be promoted as the foci for key uses which attract a lot of people including commercial, office, entertainment and leisure uses as well as retail uses. Mixed use development including housing will be encouraged.

Development proposals in out of centre locations should not undermine the vitality and viability of a town centre.

Explanatory Memorandum

4.50 A key element of sustainability is to ensure that town centres within the County are not undermined by development proposals elsewhere. Policy SD.9 is intended to ensure that the likely impact of development proposals on existing town centres (as defined in PPG6 Town Centres and Retail Development, June 1996) is examined and to ensure that they will at least sustain, but hopefully enhance, the vitality and viability of those centres. In this respect, diversity of uses in town centres and their accessibility to people living and working in the area are seen as making an important contribution to their vitality and viability. Policy SD.9 is therefore also intended to encourage diversification of uses in town centres as a whole. It is also recognised that town centres are the appropriate locations in which to focus development which attracts a lot of people and trips where a choice of travel, particularly by public transport, is readily available. Town centre locations should therefore be encouraged as locations for development from a travel as well as a vitality and viability point of view.

4.51 It is recognised that not all development proposals are appropriate in town centres, for example some sports facilities, and that their impact on town centres should be a consideration in determining whether their out of centre location is appropriate.
POLICY LINKAGES

The matrix below cross-refers Conservation of Town and Country Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONSERVATION OF TOWN AND COUNTRY

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5. **CONSERVATION OF TOWN AND COUNTRY**

**Introduction**

5.1 A main objective of the Plan is to protect from damaging development the important and diverse environmental, landscape, townscape and historic features and characteristics of the County and, wherever possible, to enhance them.

5.2 Worcestershire has a renowned built and natural landscape and many sites of varying importance from a nature conservation standpoint. A cornerstone of the Vision for the County is to maintain the health and integrity of this overall resource whilst allowing for the development which is necessary for the County’s existing and future population to fulfil its social and economic aspirations. The following policies provide the basis on which development in the County can be achieved in balance with the County’s valued assets, for which we have a duty to ensure they endure beyond the plan period for the benefit of the next and future generations.

5.3 It is important that the Plan recognises the inter-linkages between the environment and economic and social considerations in rural areas. Key issues include rural regeneration, positive stewardship of land, partnerships with landowners to maintain the countryside, and economic and social regeneration from the regeneration of the historic environment.

5.4 The Conservation of Town and Country Chapter of the Plan is divided into three sections – landscape; natural environment; and cultural heritage. Together the three sections provide the strategic policy base for ensuring the objectives of the Plan, with regard to the protection and conservation of the County’s environment, are achieved.

**Landscape**

5.5 Landscape conservation has, for a long time, been solely concerned with the safeguarding of designated areas of high quality. The bulk of the countryside, particularly that of the lowlands, has thus remained outside the remit of protective policies yet it is very often these landscapes that the majority of the population has most contact with – the landscapes in which we live and work.

5.6 PPG7 “The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development” states “The Government’s policy is that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake, the priority now being to find new ways of enriching the quality of the whole countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development”. The previous Structure Plan recognised that all landscapes are important and it is now becoming increasingly recognised that it is the differences in character between different landscapes, the contrasts, for example, in settlement patterns, building materials, tree cover, topography and land use, that provide the interest to those who visit, and the sense of belonging to those who live there.

5.7 PPG7 recognises the importance of maintaining and enhancing the character of the landscape, safeguarding the distinctiveness of its countryside, as an integral part of sustainable development. The appearance of the landscape and the vitality of the countryside is central to its economic prosperity.

5.8 The need to identify what contributes to the landscape character of a particular place and what needs to be done to conserve or enhance it should be an integral element of decision making relating to land use. New development should have regard to the opportunities to contribute particularly to these objectives, avoiding elements of visual intrusion, and seeking ways to integrate with the local landscape character of the area. A positive landscape identity benefits the economy of an
area, it attracts investment and tourism, it becomes a sought after place in which to live and work. It can also promote pride and a sense of stewardship towards its well-being amongst those who live there.

5.9 Whilst the concept of landscape character is now widely recognised, there has in the past been little work undertaken to define or categorise the areas of different landscape character in the County. The Landscape Character Assessment of Worcestershire, a project undertaken by the County Council in partnership with the Countryside Agency, District Councils, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and CPRE, identifies the range of landscapes that are found within the County and defines the components that contribute towards the character of these different areas. The study also embraces the concept of landscape sensitivity, identifying those areas that are least tolerant to change.

5.10 The outputs from this study will be used as Supplementary Planning Guidance to aid the delivery of Policy CTC.1, and subsequent Reviews of Local Plans.

Policies

Landscape Character

Policy CTC.1

Proposals for development, and associated land use change or land management, must demonstrate that they are informed by, and sympathetic to, the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed to take place.

In considering development proposals, the Local Planning Authority shall take every opportunity to safeguard, restore or enhance, as appropriate, the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed.

The implications of development proposals relating to the landscape will be assessed having regard to the degree to which they would:

(i) be appropriate to, and integrate with, the landscape character of the area;

(ii) safeguard or strengthen the features and patterns that contribute to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area with particular attention being paid to both the scale, layout, design and detailing of existing buildings and other man-made features; and to the semi-natural vegetation characteristic of that area; and

(iii) relate to the sensitivity of the particular landscape, and location, and to accommodate change.

Development, or associated land use change or land management, which would adversely affect the landscape character of an area will not normally be allowed.
Explanatory Memorandum

5.11 Landscapes are characterised by combinations of key features which provide their particular identity and local distinctiveness. It is important that when proposals for development in a particular area are brought forward that they are compatible with and sympathetic to the landscape character of the area. This character has been assessed through the Landscape Character Assessment. It must be ensured that the development proposals or associated land use changes or management practices do not have an adverse impact on any particular feature or combination of features to such an extent that the character of the landscape of the area is unacceptably compromised. Policy CTC.1 will only be applied to land management practices where they come within the scope of planning controls.

5.12 Development should be informed by and be sympathetic to:

(i) the pattern and composition of woodland, hedgerow and streamside trees together with other components of tree cover including orchards;

(ii) the pattern and composition of field boundaries;

(iii) the pattern of settlement and roads;

(iv) the scale, layout, design and detailing of existing buildings and other man-made features;

(v) the type and distribution of wildlife habitats;

(vi) the presence and pattern of historic landscapes, including parks and gardens, commons and patterns of ridge and furrow;

(vii) natural patterns of drainage; and

(viii) the sensitivity of a particular landscape to tolerate change.

5.13 The assessment of landscape character has to date been confined to the evaluation of the rural landscape, but it is recognised that the inherent character of the urban landscape is equally important. It is intended to seek to develop the methodology for landscape character assessment to relate to the urban environment during the period of this Plan. Landscape character incorporates historic landscapes and historic features. This policy needs to be considered in conjunction with Policy CTC.19. It is intended that during the period of this Plan, further work at a finer detail, relating to local distinctiveness, will be undertaken, which will provide information at a more site specific level, and which will have relevance to the policies in this chapter. The concept of local distinctiveness recognises local differences in character between different areas. It incorporates issues of landscape, wildlife, built and historic environment, and cultural identity.

5.14 In considering development proposals, the Local Planning Authority shall take every opportunity to safeguard, restore or enhance, as appropriate, the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed. These opportunities should be guided by the following principles:

(i) where the key features are well represented, the policy should primarily be one of conservation, safeguarding those features that are present;

(ii) where the key features are still apparent, but have become fragmented, the approach should be one of restoration, strengthening the inherent character of the landscape; and

(iii) where the key features are either lost or significantly weakened, the approach should primarily be one of enhancement. This should be achieved by strengthening, and where possible, reintroducing, those features that are both appropriate to the inherent landscape character and compatible with the current land uses. Emphasising certain key features at the expense of others can lead to the creation of “new”
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Landscapes whilst still, however, retaining the association with the inherent character of the particular area. A good example of how landscape features can be protected and strengthened is provided by the linkage of ancient woodlands and the expansion of woodland into adjacent areas.

Skylines and Hill Features

Policy CTC.2

Development proposals should, where relevant, demonstrate that they will not have an adverse effect on skylines and hill features, including prominent views of such features. Where development will have a significant adverse impact they will not normally be allowed.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.15 Skylines and hill features and prominent views of such features, contribute to local landscape character and as such should be protected from development. The County Landscape Character Assessment has identified areas of raised topography that will be clearly visible from the surrounding area. It is important that views of these features are maintained and where possible enhanced.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Policy CTC.3

Within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), priority will be given to the conservation and protection of the landscape. Development will not normally be allowed except where it has no adverse effect on the landscape, and particularly the key landscape characteristics, of the AONB, and where it is for:

(i) small-scale development located within or adjacent to an existing settlement; or

(ii) small-scale recreation and tourism facilities, including farm diversification; or

(iii) the purposes of agriculture or forestry practices.

Exceptionally, major industrial or commercial development will be allowed where there is no alternative site suitable for the purpose and it can be demonstrated to be essential to the overriding national interest. Such development will be subject to the most rigorous examination.

In assessing development proposals, Local Planning Authorities will need to have regard to the likely impact on the economic and social well-being of the area.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.16 Within Worcestershire there are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills, which are recognised as nationally important landscapes of equal status to National Parks. Their management is promoted nationally by the Countryside Agency and carried out by local authorities and other organisations working in partnership, with the priority being one of conserving and enhancing their natural beauty. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 gave local authorities statutory duties to have regard to the purposes of AONB.

5.17 The Cotswolds AONB is the largest in Britain and straddles the administrative areas of 17 local authorities. The authorities and other partners have come together to form the Cotswold AONB Partnership to implement the Management Strategy for the AONB, which was published in 1996. This outlines proposals for the AONB as a whole and for particular zones. Local authorities, as partners in the project, will be able to implement some of the
recommendations through development control and the implementation of projects. Under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, consideration is to be given to the setting up of a statutory Conservation Board for the Cotswolds AONB.

5.18 The Malvern Hills AONB is partly in Worcestershire and partly in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. A Joint Advisory Committee has been formed and a Management Plan was agreed and published in 1996. The Plan outlines a series of proposals for the AONB and local authorities should be able to assist with their implementation through development control and the implementation of projects.

5.19 The above Management Strategy and Management Plan should be used as supplementary planning guidance and will be material considerations in any decisions on proposed developments affecting these areas. Both will be replaced by 2004 by statutory management plans required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

5.20 In the case of exceptions to this policy, judgements on localised impact will be made by reference to the descriptions and guidelines outlined in the Landscape Character Assessment. Developments must not impact on the key characteristics of the AONB and would normally be expected to be of small scale and thus not have a detrimental visual impact beyond the boundaries of the development site. In such cases, the developer will be required to assess the landscape impacts and to incorporate mitigation measures as appropriate.

5.21 Major development proposals such as waste management sites, mineral workings or new roads will be considered as inconsistent with AONB designation unless it can be shown that the development is in the overriding national interest and that no alternative site is available. Additionally proposals for mineral extraction and associated development will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Such developments will often be subject to an Environmental Assessment and this should address the detrimental effect that any proposal may have on the environment and the landscape, and if appropriate, assess the extent to which impacts should be moderated. Within the AONBs particular attention should be paid to the differences in landscape character between areas. The County Council is carrying out a Landscape Character Assessment, which identifies landscape types and their key characteristics, together with aims and guidance for their management.

Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)

Policy CTC.4

Within the Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) priority will be given to the conservation and protection of the key landscape characteristics which comprise the areas, in particular visual sensitivity. Development in these areas will be subjected to close scrutiny and will be required to demonstrate that protection and enhancement of the landscape have been fully considered and that the development will not have significant adverse effects.

Where development will have adverse effects it will exceptionally be allowed where it is demonstrated to be necessary to meet local community needs.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.22 Areas of Great Landscape Value are areas identified as being of regional importance for their landscape. They tend to be areas of high land which are particularly sensitive to landscape change, and are also important areas of working countryside. Their sensitivity to change is to be assessed, along with the rest of the County, as part of the Landscape Character Assessment.

5.23 It is intended that the concept of Areas of Great Landscape Value will be replaced by a concern for the protection and enhancement of the character of the landscape throughout the County as outlined in Policy CTC.1. This is in line with PPG7 (The
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Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development). The County Council is currently preparing the Landscape Character Assessment as supplementary planning guidance for consultation in due course. AGLV designation is to be retained as an interim measure and it is anticipated that there will be a need for an early review of Policy CTC.4. The new guidance should be reflected in the Local Plan review process.

Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Policy CTC.5

Existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows of nature conservation, amenity or landscape value should be retained and their appropriate management encouraged. The importance of ancient semi-natural woodlands is recognised and particular emphasis should be placed on their conservation. Proposals to conserve and increase the indigenous broadleaved cover in both urban and rural areas are to be encouraged providing these are in keeping with the landscape character of the area and achieve successful integration with the landform. Proposals will be particularly encouraged where these would lead to:

(i) the establishment of native woodlands in appropriate places, that expand and link ancient semi-natural woodland remnants;

(ii) the restoration to native woodland of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites in priority locations;

(iii) the introduction of management proposals to conserve and enhance trees and woodlands in urban areas and on the urban fringe;

(iv) multi-purpose tree planting for nature conservation, amenity, landscape improvement, and timber production; and

(v) the conservation of veteran trees.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.24 Ancient semi-natural woodlands are the natural vegetation that once covered most of Britain. Areas of woodland have now become fragmented, reducing the nature conservation value of the woodland itself and the ability of wildlife to move between different areas of woodland. Hedgerows provide some of the links between woodlands as well as being important features in their own right.

5.25 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are important in the landscape and provide patterns of features which give areas local distinctiveness. They are highly valued by local communities and woodlands are often used for informal recreation. Trees and woodland are important in urban as well as rural areas. Many of these features are of historic value also, and the policy should be read in conjunction with Policy CTC.19.

5.26 If native species of flora and fauna are to be retained in Britain, it is essential that indigenous species of trees are protected and managed sympathetically. Landscaping proposals associated with new developments in the County should seek to maximise woodland planting, wherever appropriate using indigenous species, and should aim to complement or enhance the landscape character of the particular area (as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment). There may, however, be some areas of the County where new tree and shrub planting is inappropriate to the existing landscape or habitat type.

5.27 Priority will be given to the protection and improved management of ancient semi-natural woodlands and the establishment of new woodlands should be targeted to complement existing woodland cover. The development of multi-purpose and community woodlands will
enhance the environment as well as provide public benefit, including recreation opportunities and an increase in wood production and markets, so helping to stimulate the local rural economy.

5.28 The priorities for the conservation of woodlands and hedgerows in the County are being identified through the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan. The relevant detailed Habitat Action Plans are those relating to ancient/species-rich hedgerows, woodland, wet woodland, lowland wood pasture and veteran trees. Species Action Plans have also been produced for nationally important species associated with these habitats. Priorities for these Action Plans should be incorporated into any proposals for development and land use changes.

5.29 Particular attention should be given to the conservation of veteran trees, whether within a woodland, parkland or hedgerow as they represent an irreplaceable ecological resource. These trees are of conservation value even if they are dead or dying.

5.30 The Hedgerow Regulation 1997 (Statutory Instrument No. 1160) provides planning authorities in England and Wales with a means of protecting important hedgerows, as defined by the statutory criteria, which includes ecological factors. Good site planning and design, and the appropriate use of planning conditions and agreements can be used to conserve and enhance the linear hedgerow resource of urban and rural areas.

5.31 Woodland can make a major contribution to the local economy and sustainable development principles. Examples of this are the sustainable production and marketing of timber for local usage and increased levels of public access and provision of recreational facilities.

5.32 The England Forestry Strategy “A New Focus for England’s Woodlands” (1998) has identified ‘Environment and Conservation’ and ‘Rural Development’ as two of the four priorities for woodlands and forestry in England. The contents of this strategy together with any revision of Circular 36/78 should be used as supplementary guidance to inform decisions on land use issues and realising benefits from forestry.

Green Open Spaces and Corridors

Policy CTC.6

Both within and on the periphery of settlements the creation and conservation of green open spaces and green corridors, including watercourses, appropriate to the landscape character of the area will be encouraged. Where possible these should be continuous and linked to the open countryside in order to maximise their ecological, recreational and landscape potential.

Green open spaces and corridors should be identified in District Local Plans as part of Local Plan review process.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.33 Green spaces including watercourses within and on the periphery of settlements serve a number of purposes. They can provide recreational open space for local residents, maintain a diversity of wildlife habitats and provide important features in the urban landscape. For maximum benefits to be gained they need to be provided in a strategic manner and a variety of features need to be protected or created.

5.34 Green spaces will, wherever possible, be expected to link with open countryside and to form wildlife corridors to facilitate the movement of wildlife within urban areas. Where possible existing features should be retained and enhanced to help to maintain landscape character and avoid fragmentation of habitats.

5.35 Opportunities should be taken to create new landscapes and open spaces as part of any new developments, particularly on housing, commercial and industrial sites, and
these should pay particular attention to the landscape character of the area. Comprehensive development proposals can also provide a means for improving public access to, and preserving, open spaces.

Agricultural Land

Policy CTC.7

For all proposed development affecting agricultural land the agricultural value of land will be assessed along with its value to the landscape, wildlife and habitats, recreational amenity and historic and cultural heritage to determine its overall value. This value will be used in deciding on appropriate locations for development.

Development of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development needs on previously developed sites, on land within the boundaries of existing developed areas, and on poorer quality farmland.

Any development on agricultural land should not prejudice the viability of farming operations on the remaining agricultural land.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.36 The principle of sustainable development needs to be applied to agricultural land, and this will require the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land for future generations, whilst recognising the environmental, economic and social needs of rural areas. This land is defined as grades 1, 2 and 3a. Protection of this land is considered to be in the national interest and therefore development should be restricted.

5.37 The Rural White Paper, ‘Our Countryside: The Future’ proposes that assessments should be made to the overall value of land in reaching decisions on areas appropriate for development. Decisions on these matters will be entirely the responsibility of local authorities.

5.38 Development on best and most versatile land should be considered to be exceptional, in cases where there is an overriding need for the development, and either sufficient land in lower grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value recognised by a statutory landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation.

5.39 Where land in grades 1, 2 or 3a does need to be developed, and there is a choice between the different grades, it should be directed towards land of the lowest grade, unless this is considered to be of particular environmental value.

5.40 Agriculture in the County is currently undergoing major change. The England Rural Development Programme (October 2000) recognises the importance of rural areas and the issues related to them. It sets out measures to protect and improve the countryside and to encourage sustainable enterprise and thriving rural communities. The programme underpins the implementation of the Government’s New Direction for Agriculture by helping farmers and foresters to respond better to consumer requirements and become more diverse, competitive and environmentally responsible as an integral part of the rural and wider community. The social and economic benefits of rural regeneration need to be balanced with the needs of the local environment.

Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

Policy CTC.8

Development will not normally be allowed where:

(i) it is within a floodplain or other area identified by the Environment Agency as being at risk of flooding;
(ii) it will increase the risk of flooding or cause new flooding problems either at the site or elsewhere;
(iii) it will jeopardise existing flood defences, flood volumes or the ability to carry out essential maintenance work.

Any development in areas subject to flood risk will need to demonstrate that adequate flood protection has been incorporated and that effects elsewhere have been fully assessed.

Development should, wherever possible, incorporate sustainable drainage systems to help to retain water at its source, helping to prevent flooding, recharging groundwater resources, treating water pollution and enhancing the environment.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.41 There are a number of rivers in the County that are of strategic importance in reducing the risk of flooding. Of particular concern are the Rivers Severn, Avon and Teme. Detailed attention will be needed in Local Plans to identify specific areas at risk of flooding. Strategic advice on river and water issues is available from the Environment Agency, who have a duty to oversee all matters relating to flood defence.

5.42 Flooding is becoming a more common feature of the County’s rivers and future predictions of climate change suggest it may become even more common in the future. Therefore development within these areas has to be restricted or redesigned to cope with the risk of flooding in the future. Policy CTC.8 seeks to ensure that any development that takes place does not increase the risk of flooding or lead to the loss of flood storage volumes unless adequate compensation is provided.

5.43 Sustainable drainage systems can be used to dispose of surface water at source rather than allowing it to use sewers and watercourses. The aim should be that the discharge of water from a developed site should be no more than from the site before development. As well as helping to prevent flooding these systems can help to improve the environment as a whole by, for example, recharging groundwater resources, treating water pollution, creating wetlands and improving the landscape. A number of techniques, such as ponds, swales, storage areas and permeable surfaces are available. Advice on these techniques is available from the Environment Agency.

5.44 Should new flood defence measures be considered to be the only option for specific developments, they will be expected to be provided and paid for by developers.

5.45 The Environment Agency have powers to carry out maintenance works on designated ‘main rivers’ and will continue to require access along both banks of a watercourse for this purpose.

5.46 The culverting of watercourses can lead to increased flood risk as well as being detrimental to the natural environment. Local plans should incorporate policies to improve and enhance watercourses.

Impact on Watercourses and Aquifers

Policy CTC.9

Any development proposal will be required to demonstrate that it will not cause pollution of surface water or groundwater, it will not have an adverse effect on groundwater resources, and it will not cause detriment to the existing regime of a watercourse or its environment.

Development will be expected to incorporate, where appropriate, water treatment to clean the water prior to any discharge.
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5.47 Policy CTC.9 seeks to ensure that in determining planning applications account is taken of their possible impacts on surface water and ground water.

5.48 Where necessary development will be expected to incorporate measures to prevent the pollution of watercourses and aquifers. Surface water and groundwater quality are regulated by the Environment Agency under separate legislation. The Agency can offer advice to developers on likely impacts and appropriate mitigation measures.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

5.49 The 1990 White Paper ‘This Common Inheritance’ made plain the UK Government’s commitment to conserving Britain’s natural heritage. Following the Rio Summit in 1992, the Government signed the Convention on Biological Diversity and in 1994 published ‘Biodiversity – the UK Action Plan’, which incorporates expectations that local authorities will play a key role in the conservation of biodiversity. The Government established a steering group to progress the UK Action Plan and in 1995 produced ‘Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report’ which identifies a series of ‘key’ habitats and species which are nationally under threat and in need of protection and enhancement. This now forms the basis for the action on biodiversity protection at national and local level. The Rural White Paper, ‘Our Countryside: the Future’ and the Urban White Paper, ‘Our Towns and Cities: the Future’ in 2000, further committed the UK Government to environmental protection in accordance with sustainable development principles.

5.50 A key action of the Local Agenda 21 Action Plan for Hereford and Worcester (1996) was the production of a strategic Biodiversity Action Plan for each of the two new authorities being formed in April 1998. To start this process, the former Hereford and Worcester County Council with English Nature and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust produced, in March 1997, ‘Biodiversity Challenge – Worcestershire’, which provided the blueprint for producing the ‘Biodiversity Action Plan for Worcestershire’. The Biodiversity Action Plan, published in 1999, translates the national key targets into more focused local ones and also identifies habitats and species characteristic of Worcestershire. These will be taken down to District level in a series of Action Programmes which, together with the County Plan, will provide the focus for prioritising much of the future action to protect key habitats and species.

5.51 At the same time PPG9 Nature Conservation clearly emphasises the importance that must be attached to nature conservation when local authorities exercise functions relating to land under any enactment (highlighting Section 11 of the Countryside Act 1968). The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 required Structure Plans to include policies in respect of the conservation of natural beauty. The Habitats Directive – The Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 extends the definition of conservation of natural beauty and amenity of the land to include “encouraging the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna”. The Directive also identifies priority habitats and species which are of importance at the European level. Local Authorities are expected to make provision for protecting the specific sites identified and also the priority species where they occur outside these sites.

5.52 In accordance with the need to clearly express the importance of the natural environment within the planning process the following policies, together with the broader sustainable development policy SD.2, address:

(i) general nature conservation concerns;
(ii) the protection of important ecological sites;
(iii) the protection of important nature conservation features in the landscape; and
(iv) opportunities for enhancing biodiversity.
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CONSERVATION OF TOWN AND COUNTRY

Policies

Site Protection Policies

5.53 PPG9 divides wildlife sites into three categories ranked according to importance:

(i) internationally important;

(ii) nationally important; and

(iii) regionally/locally important.

5.54 All of these sites contribute to the wildlife wealth of the County and paragraph 18 of PPG9 indicates that the policies applied to these sites should reflect their relative importance. Sites proposed or identified for designation or listing will be considered in the same way as existing or designated sites.

Sites of International Wildlife Importance

Policy CTC.10

Proposals for development or land-use which may affect a European site, a proposed European site or a proposed/ listed Ramsar site will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Development or land-use change not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site and which is likely to have adverse effects on the site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) will not be allowed unless it can be demonstrated that:

(i) there is no alternative solution; and

(ii) there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development or land-use change.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, development or land-use change will not be allowed unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or for beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

Planning Authority is satisfied that it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or for beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.

Where such development does proceed, all appropriate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected will be secured, using conditions and planning obligations where necessary.

Explanatory Memorandum


5.56 The Government’s commitment to meeting its international responsibilities and obligations for nature conservation are laid out in PPG9 (Nature Conservation). Certain key sites in a European context have been put forward as candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) or proposed as SACs under the Habitats Directive, or identified as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive (although there are currently no SPAs in the County). The SACs are part of a European network of protected sites called Natura 2000.

5.57 Species and habitats of European importance are listed in the Habitats Directive; priority species and habitats are asterisked in the Annex. Currently there is a single cSAC in the County (Bredon Hill), although more may be designated in future. Priority habitats and species warrant, and are given, greater protection in the policy in so far as development can only be allowed in cases of public health or safety or for nature conservation reasons.
Sites of National Wildlife Importance

Policy CTC.11

Proposals for development, or land use change, in or likely to affect, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Where such development may have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly on the SSSI, it will not be allowed unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting that development need and the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the national network of such sites.

Where the site concerned is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) or a site identified under the Nature Conservation Review (NCR) or Geological Conservation Review (GCR) particular regard will be paid to the individual site’s national importance.

In all cases where development or land-use change is permitted:

(i) any damage to the nature conservation and/or geological value of the site will be kept to a minimum; and

(ii) adequate and appropriate protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation and/or geological interest will be secured, and where necessary, appropriate and adequate compensatory measures will be provided, using conditions and/or planning obligations where necessary.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.58 The concept of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), important for their wildlife, geological or physiographical (landform) features was introduced in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The protection of SSSIs was greatly increased by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985. The Nature Conservation Review and Geological Conservation Review were the results of studies carried out to identify sites of national importance.

5.59 Currently there are 111 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the County. These sites cover a range of habitats, including wetlands, open waters, rivers, woodlands, grasslands, heathlands and parklands. In addition, Worcestershire’s unimproved neutral grasslands are of particular national importance, with over 25% of Britain’s resource of this grassland type, characterised by crested dog’s-tail grass and common knapweed, being found in the County.

5.60 Even if development is some distance from a site of national importance, it may still have an adverse effect by, for example, polluting a watercourse or water catchment area, and account should be taken of this in applying Policy CTC.11.

Sites of Regional or Local Wildlife Importance

Policy CTC.12

The nature conservation value of Local Nature Reserves, Special Wildlife Sites, Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites and sites of wildlife importance subject to a Section 39 Agreement under the Wildlife and Countryside Act found within the County, ranges from that of local to national significance. Development or land-use change, likely to have an adverse effect on such sites will not be allowed unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need and it can be clearly demonstrated that the reasons for the development or land-use change outweigh the intrinsic nature conservation and/or geological value of the site which may be affected by the development.
In all cases where development or land-use change is permitted:

(i) any damage to the nature conservation and/or geological value of the site will be kept to a minimum; and

(ii) adequate and appropriate protection and enhancement of the site’s nature conservation and/or geological interest will be secured, and where necessary, appropriate and adequate compensatory measures will be provided, using conditions and/or planning obligations where necessary.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.61 Local Nature Reserves are declared by Local Authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and are statutorily protected sites. PPG9 (Nature Conservation) also stresses the importance for nature conservation of sites with no statutory designation. This includes Special Wildlife Sites (SWS), which have been identified by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust as being of substantive nature conservation value, and Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological (RIGS) sites which have been identified by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire RIGS group, and which are also given protection by the policy.

5.62 The former Hereford and Worcester County Council and the current Worcestershire County Council have entered into agreements with landowners under Section 39 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in order to secure the appropriate management of sites for the benefit of nature conservation, in particular unimproved grassland and wetland sites. Proposals which would affect such Section 39 sites should be discussed at an early stage with the County Council.

5.63 In assessing development proposals affecting these sites, local planning authorities will have to take into account the level of importance of the proposed development or land use change viz a viz the level of conservation importance of the site that is likely to be affected by the proposal.

5.64 Even if development is some distance from the sites specified in Policy CTC.12 it may still have an adverse effect by, for example, polluting a watercourse or water catchment area, and account should be taken of this in applying Policy CTC.12.

Protection of Species

Policy CTC.13

Sites, including buildings, supporting species which are protected by law will be safeguarded from development proposals which would destroy or adversely affect them. Planning permission for the development of such sites will not normally be granted unless there is an overriding need for the development. If development is allowed, planning conditions and/or obligations will be imposed, where appropriate, to:

(i) facilitate the survival of individual members of the species;

(ii) reduce disturbance to a minimum; and

(iii) provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of population.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.65 As detailed in PPG9 (Nature Conservation), protected species often occur outside protected sites and a specific policy is necessary to protect key areas for these species. For example, buildings and other structures may well contain statutorily protected species such as bats and barn owls. Proposals must include surveys for statutorily protected species. Species are protected under the Habitats Directive and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedules 5 and 8).
Features in the Landscape of Nature Conservation Importance

Policy CTC.14

Management appropriate to maintain or enhance the nature conservation value of features in, or areas of, the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna is to be encouraged. Where development is to take place which may affect, or effect changes in, such features or areas, planning conditions, planning obligations or management agreements should be used to help in the retention or enhancement of the intrinsic value of the feature or area.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.66  Paragraph 23 of PPG9 (Nature Conservation) establishes the obligation on Local Planning Authorities to include policies in their plans for the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna. This is in order to comply with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and Regulation 37 of the Conservation (Natural habitats and c.) Regulations 1994. Paragraph 16 of PPG9 explains the particular features of the landscape to which such policies should relate. These include those which by virtue of their linear or continuous structure, such as rivers, field boundaries, and hedgerows or their function as wildlife corridors such as watercourses or woods, are essential for the migration and movement of wild species. There may be other features of equal importance which require consideration, for example road side verges, and established parks and gardens. Management to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance, the particular nature conservation value of such features should be pursued. Positive partnerships with County landowners are the key to the management and enhancement of these features.

5.67  At the same time it is a feature of the countryside that biological interest can be concentrated in particular areas, such that certain parts of the County can have intrinsically higher interest for wildlife than others (for example the Malvern and Bredon Hills; the Wyre Forest area; heathlands and wetlands around Kidderminster). Work on these areas by the relevant conservation bodies is ongoing to identify and define “Prime Biodiversity Areas”. The importance of these areas should be recognised and appropriate management pursued to maintain the biological resource of such areas and to prevent fragmentation. In the preparation of District-wide Local Plans District Councils should consult with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and other relevant conservation bodies on the most appropriate management policies to include in their plans for those areas within their District.

Biodiversity Action Plan

Policy CTC.15

When considering development proposals, opportunities should be taken to enhance biodiversity, with particular emphasis placed on the retention and management, and the creation and enhancement of habitats and populations of species identified as priorities in both the Biodiversity Action Plan for Worcestershire and District-wide Biodiversity Action Plans.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.68  The ‘Biodiversity Action Plan for Worcestershire’ has translated the Government’s ‘Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan’ and the ‘Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans’ into an agenda for nature conservation in the County. The County Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), published in 1999, should be a key reference when assessing both potential impacts on biodiversity and the possible opportunity for improving biodiversity in the County. The habitat action plans and species action plans in the document identify priorities within the County and particular attention should be paid to these by both planning authorities and developers when considering the impact of development proposals. Some District-wide
Biodiversity Action Plans will be produced during the period of this Plan. Where these have been produced they will provide a finer level of detail which will be particularly useful for the preparation of Local Plans.

Cultural Heritage

5.69 The cultural heritage of the County includes archaeological remains, the historic built environment and significant historic landscapes. These include individual finds and sites surviving from many different ages, historic settlements and important battlefield sites. The sites comprise the principal physical resource which identifies and explains the cultural history of the County, including evidence of agricultural activity and industrial developments.

5.70 Over 15,000 known archaeological sites are currently recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record, maintained by the County Archaeological Service. This total is likely to rise substantially over the next ten years as enhancement to the record focuses on those areas where there are evident blanks and as the information gathered for each individual development site is synthesised and used to better inform planning advice on neighbouring sites or areas. Of these sites, 235 have been designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) as nationally important Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). It is likely that this number will also increase through the re-survey work currently underway by the Monuments Protection Programme of English Heritage.

5.71 6,800 buildings in the County have been Listed as being of architectural or historic significance. Many other buildings contain fragments of structure that are of similar interest and are worthy of preservation and/or recording. Such buildings are of interest in themselves and may also overlie other buried archaeological remains.

5.72 It is increasingly recognised that archaeological sites and historic buildings need to be considered within their surrounding landscape. This provides the original setting of the site or building and may also contain evidence as to the use of that site or building. The nature of the landscape can also be of significance in itself in defining the character of a locality, County or region.

5.73 A Landscape Character Assessment of the County is being carried out by the County Council and it is expected that an Historic Landscape Assessment will be undertaken. Together, these surveys will provide important background information for the assessment of any development proposal.

5.74 It is fundamental to the Government’s and County Council’s policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the archaeological and historic environment. The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake and as a central part of our cultural identity and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable asset which contributes to our understanding of both the present and past and their presence adds to the quality of our lives by enhancing the local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness. The historic environment can also have a positive role in promoting economic prosperity, providing a catalyst for regeneration.

5.75 PPG15 ‘Planning and the Historic Environment’ and PPG16 ‘Archaeology and Planning’ together provide a full statement of the Government’s policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and other elements of the historic environment. A critical element in both PPGs is the ability for Local Authorities to require archaeological assessments and evaluations and building surveys prior to a planning application being determined, and for a programme of archaeological work or building survey to be incorporated as a planning condition.
Policies

Archaeological Sites of National Importance

Policy CTC.16

There will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in situ of internationally or nationally important archaeological remains, their settings and amenity value. Development which would adversely affect internationally or nationally important archaeological remains, their settings or amenity value will not be allowed.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.76 Many of the more important monuments are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the effect of development on ancient monuments is a legitimate concern in determining planning applications (PPG16 Archaeology and Planning, paragraph 18). This includes monuments and sites which are not scheduled under the 1979 Act (as these may well be an important element of international, or national heritage), and the setting of monuments and sites. Where development would seriously jeopardise the site or the use of sites for educational, tourism and leisure purposes, it should not be allowed.

5.77 The basis of knowledge on ancient monuments and archaeological sites is the County Sites and Monuments Record. This is a register of all known sites and should be the first stage of consultation on development proposals.

Archaeological Sites of Regional or Local Importance

Policy CTC.17

Development proposals which affect regionally or locally important archaeological remains and their settings should take account of their relative importance. Where the remains are identified as being particularly worthy of preservation any development which may damage the archaeological importance of the remains or its setting will not normally be allowed.

Where development proposals affect regionally or locally important remains every effort should be made to preserve them intact. Where preservation in situ cannot be justified, arrangements should be made to record those parts of the site that may be destroyed or altered.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.78 The principal aim in managing the archaeological heritage is to preserve important sites and their settings including those of regional and of local importance which are considered worthy of protection (PPG16 Archaeology and Planning, paragraph 16). Where a development proposal affects a site and setting of archaeological interest, an evaluation, by or on behalf of the applicant, which assesses in detail the effect on that site, should be provided. Wherever practicable, mitigation strategies should be sought to reduce the degree of damage to significant archaeological deposits. In circumstances where significant archaeological deposits are unavoidably affected by proposed development, appropriate provision for a suitable level of archaeological recording by or on behalf of the applicant should always be agreed before planning permission is granted.

5.79 It is often the case that a planning application cannot be fully considered, as the effect on archaeological deposits or their setting cannot be assessed from existing information. In such circumstances the planning authority will require additional information (PPG16 Archaeology and Planning, paragraphs 21 and 22) which may involve small-scale evaluation excavations undertaken by archaeologists.

5.80 The County Sites and Monuments Record should be the first stage of consultation on development proposals.
Enhancement and Management of Archaeological Sites

Policy CTC.18

The management, understanding and enhancement of archaeological sites is to be encouraged and where relevant should be taken into account by the Local Planning Authority when considering development proposals. To assist in this District Planning Authorities should set out appropriate policies for their area within Local Plans.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.81 English Heritage, in advice to local authorities on the preparation of Structure Plans (Development Policies for Archaeology 1992), state that detailed policies relating to the management of archaeological sites will normally be set out in local plans. However it is also recommended that there is a need for a broadly-framed policy within the Structure Plan.

Areas and Features of Historic and Architectural Significance

Policy CTC.19

Any development which would adversely affect those features and areas of historic and/or architectural significance which contribute to the character of the urban or rural parts of the County will not normally be allowed. Such features and areas should be retained and their appropriate management encouraged. Features and areas include:

(i) listed buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas and their settings;
(ii) significant historic landscapes; and
(iii) significant buildings or features of local historic and/or architectural interest.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.82 Buildings and other artefacts listed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as being of special historic or architectural interest, besides having their own intrinsic architectural value, contribute significantly to the high quality of the landscape of the County. It is therefore necessary to protect them not only for their own sake but their settings also as a contributor to the quality of the wider landscape. To maintain their value sites need to be appropriately managed to ensure that their important features are retained and where possible enhanced for future generations. Management of this resource should be incorporated into proposals for development or changes of use.

5.83 The preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas is a well established planning policy.

5.84 As set out in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment paragraph 6.40) the whole of the landscape, to varying degrees and in different ways, is an archaeological and historic artefact, the product of complex historic processes and past land use. There are however features or areas within the County which are of particular significance for reasons such as their formation, design or past uses. These include:

- Parks and gardens
- Commons
- Village Greens
- Relic agricultural landscapes
- Areas of archaeological sites and monuments
- Industrial landscapes
- Battlefields
- Historic settlements and their environs
- The settings of both individual monuments and historic settlements in the wider landscape
- Orchard areas
- Ponds
- Localised features such as walls, boundary treatments and street furniture
CHAPTER FIVE

CONSERVATION OF TOWN AND COUNTRY

5.85 District-wide Local Plans should give consideration to the existence of such features/areas and the appropriate level of protection they should receive. Information on the features/areas set out above is available in the first instance from the County Archaeological Service.

5.86 PPG15 also sets out that it is open to planning authorities to draw up lists of locally important buildings that do not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing, and to formulate local plan policies for the protection through normal development control procedures.

Explanatory Memorandum

5.87 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposed a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of buildings in conservation areas and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all aspects of character or appearance that define an area’s special interest.

5.88 Proposals to demolish buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of a Conservation Area and proposals to demolish listed buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria, as set out in PPG15.

5.89 In many cases new development and investment are necessary to ensure the well-being of a settlement or landscape feature. The purpose of Conservation Area designation should therefore be seen as a reflection of special character which is to be respected in development control decisions and is an area for focusing positive conservation and enhancement resources, not simply a vehicle for preservation and the stifling of development.

5.90 Traditionally, Conservation Area status has been awarded to settlements or parts of settlements of special character and/or where there is a particular concentration of listed buildings. However there is no statutory restriction on the designation of historic parks and gardens or indeed other historic landscapes including the settings of settlements.

5.91 The policy emphasises the need to integrate new development but not exclude it, and also deals with the possibility of extending Conservation Areas to include the setting of features or settlements of architectural or historic interest. Assessments of impact will need to be carried out prior to planning permission being granted.

5.92 In integrating development the importance of open space to the integrity of the Conservation Area should be recognised and not seen just as a potential infill location.
Similarly open spaces should be enhanced where necessary, recognising that in some circumstances enhancement may not always be required or desirable.

**Reuse and Conversion of Buildings**

**Policy CTC.21**

In considering alternative uses which assist in the retention of buildings of special architectural and/or local architectural or historic interest, the primary concern will be the retention of the architectural and/or historic interest that relates to that building. Alternative uses will be supported provided that the building and the proposed uses are compatible and appropriate to the special or local architectural and/or historic character, setting and the environmental character of the area.

Conversions to residential or other use of listed buildings which adversely affect the special character and/or historic character of the listed building will not normally be allowed.

Where alterations or conversions do take place consideration should be given to the need for the recording of changes, as appropriate.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

5.93 New uses can often be the key to a building’s preservation. So long as the proposed use is compatible with the building’s special architectural or historic character, and is appropriate to the building’s setting and the character of the area, proposals should generally be supported. This policy relates to both listed buildings and buildings of significant local or historic interest. An assessment should be made, by the applicant, of the significance of the building and the impact of proposed changes prior to a planning permission being considered. It is important to ensure however that any conversion or change of use of the building does not militate against the special or local, interest of the building. Proposals should also include surveys for protected species such as bats and barn owls and, if present, habitat and appropriate structures for these should be incorporated into the conversion. When alterations to buildings are to take place the Local Planning Authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to make it a condition of any consent to undertake the works that a suitable programme is instigated to facilitate the recording of features that may be lost or altered. In considering the reuse of buildings reference should be made to Policy D.29.
**Policy Linkages**

The matrix below cross-references Development Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

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<th>Links to other policies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Structure Plan Policy</td>
<td>Links to other policies</td>
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<td>D.27 New Building for Business Uses Outside the Green Belt</td>
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<td>D.28 New Building for Business Purposes in the Green Belt</td>
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<td>D.29 Change of Use of Buildings in Rural Areas for Employment Purposes</td>
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<td>D.34 Retail Development in District and Local Centres</td>
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<td>D.35 Retailing in Rural Settlements</td>
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<td>D.36 Farm Shops</td>
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<td>D.37 Shops in Community Buildings in Rural Settlements</td>
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<td>D.43 Crime Prevention and Community Safety</td>
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<td>D.44 Telecommunications</td>
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6. DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

6.1 The Vision for the County to 2011 recognises that whilst we need to be concerned for the well-being of future generations and that this is dependent on maintaining the health and integrity of the natural environment, there will still exist a need for development. Indeed the Vision acknowledges that certain quality of life aspirations can only be met through development. What is important though is not solely the nature of the development but how that development is undertaken and secured. In this respect the objectives of the Plan are intended to ensure that the development requirements of the County can be achieved in a way which is moving towards sustainability over the plan period.

6.2 This Chapter deals with the following specific aspects of development and the control of development which require strategic policy guidance: Housing; Employment; Shopping; Green Belt; the Reuse of Major Developed Sites in the Countryside; Crime Prevention and Community Safety; and Telecommunications.

Housing

6.3 A main objective of the Plan is to meet the housing requirements of the population of Worcestershire through the provision of an adequate range of housing, including affordable and social housing, in a way which protects the environment and makes the most effective use of the existing settlement pattern. It is also an objective of the Plan to work towards a better balance between housing, employment, social and community facilities within settlements.

6.4 The policies below, set out in the context of the development strategy described in Chapter Four, show how it is intended that the Plan’s housing requirements should be met in a sustainable way.

Policies

Overall Level of Provision

Policy D.1

Sufficient land will be provided in the County to enable the construction of 28,100 dwellings between April 1996 and March 2011.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.5 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11 April 1998) proposes that 41,300 dwellings should be constructed in Worcestershire between April 1991 and March 2011. Between 1991 and 1996 about 13,200 dwellings were completed in the County, leaving a balance to be provided of 28,100 dwellings between 1996 and 2011. This provision forms part of the 335,000 dwellings to be provided in the West Midlands Region between 1991 and 2011 as indicated in RPG11.

6.6 41,300 dwellings are to be provided in the County between 1991 and 2011 to accommodate the needs of the natural growth in the households in Worcestershire; migrant households from the rest of the West Midlands Region; migrant households from elsewhere; and makes an allowance for existing unmet need, demolitions and vacancies.

Phasing the Release of Land

Policy D.2

Local Plans will include appropriate phasing policies. Prior to the adoption of Local Plans the overall provision of dwellings in the County to 2011 will be phased according to the following table which gives indicative amounts for each District.
result in an overprovision in the period 1996-2006, its release should be delayed until post 2006. Conversely if an under-provision is anticipated in the first period, additional releases of land may be necessary. The release of land for housing in the second period should not result in an overall overprovision in relation to the Structure Plan housing provision.

6.10 Policy D.2 will apply prior to the adoption of the reviews of district local plans for the Structure Plan period to 2011. Its successful implementation (and that of superseding local plan policies on phasing) will depend upon annual monitoring of planning applications for housing and housing completions. District Councils should refer to Government good practice guidance in Planning to Deliver – The Managed Release of Housing Sites: Towards Better Practice (July 2001) for advice on how to manage the release of sites over phased periods of time.

### New Housing Provision

**Policy D.3**

In identifying sites for housing in accordance with the development strategy, District Planning Authorities should maximise the contribution to the overall housing provision set out in Policy D.1 made by:

(i) the reuse of previously developed land and buildings in accordance with Policy D.5; and

(ii) mixed-use development in accordance with Policy D.13.

### Explanatory Memorandum

6.7 In order to help ensure that the levels of housing development in Policy D.1 are achieved, Policy D.2 seeks to phase the release of land for housing in each district until local plan policies are in place. The policy recognises that phasing is a matter for local plans to address in accordance with PPG3 (Housing), in order to ensure the managed release of housing sites, over their plan periods, which control the pattern and speed of housing growth, ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development and delivers the authority’s recycling target.

6.8 Indicative amounts are set out in Policy D.2 for each district on the following basis. In the period 1996-2006 the amount of dwellings to be provided comprise: housing completions 1996-1998; estimated windfalls 1998-2001, planning permissions as at 1998, and one half of the remaining District housing requirement for the Plan period. In the period 2006-2011, the figures represent one half of the remaining District housing requirement at 2006. It is expected that phasing policies in local plans will be broadly in line with the indicative amounts set out in Policy D.2.

6.9 Decisions on the release of allocated land for housing, and on granting planning permissions for housing on windfall sites, should be made by District Councils taking into account their contribution to meeting the phasing requirements of the development plan. Should suitable land for housing come forward towards the end of the first period of phasing which would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bromsgrove</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>3,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyre Forest</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redditch</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>4,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>4,150</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>5,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malvern Hills</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wychavon</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>7,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,950</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,150</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.12 Moreover, where such land is located within town centres it will contribute to their vitality and viability.

6.13 In allocating new sites for housing in reviews of District Local Plans in line with this policy, due regard will need to be given to the need to safeguard the quality of life in urban areas.

Distribution of Housing Provision

Policy D.4

The overall housing provision in the County of 28,100 dwellings between April 1996 and March 2011 will be distributed within the County as follows:

- about 3,950 in Bromsgrove District;
- about 3,000 in Wyre Forest District;
- about 4,550 in Redditch District;
- about 5,250 in Worcester City District;
- about 3,900 in Malvern Hills District; and
- about 7,450 in Wychavon District.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.14 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) proposes that 41,300 dwellings should be constructed in Worcestershire between April 1991 and March 2011. In the period 1991-1996 13,200 dwellings were constructed in the County, leaving a balance to be provided of 28,100 dwellings between 1996-2011. Completions 1996-99 and commitments at 1999 (local plan allocations and planning permissions), and an allowance for windfalls and replacements totalled 21,650 dwellings. The residual housing requirement of 6,450 dwellings has been allocated to the Districts in accordance with the development strategy for the County set out in paragraph 6.17.

6.15 The distribution of the overall housing provision of 28,100 dwellings for the County and the balance of sites to be found at April 1999 is set out in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bromsgrove</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2,695</td>
<td>3,950</td>
<td>1,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyre Forest</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>1,152</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2,403</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redditch</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3,112</td>
<td>4,550</td>
<td>1,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>1,891</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3,906</td>
<td>5,250</td>
<td>1,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malvern Hills</td>
<td>1,175</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>1,379</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3,358</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wychavon</td>
<td>2,152</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>1,816</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>6,176</td>
<td>7,450</td>
<td>1,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,568</td>
<td>8,011</td>
<td>5,367</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>21,650</td>
<td>28,100</td>
<td>6,450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.16 In accordance with the Examination in Public's Panels view a lapse rate of 2% has been applied to the commitments totals in the above table and a lapse rate of 5% has been applied to the windfalls allowances, which exclude the final year of the plan period to allow for those permissions that are not built during the life of the Plan.

6.17 The distribution of the overall housing provision set out in Policy D.4 reflects the following elements underpinning the development strategy for the County for the accommodation of the outstanding housing needs:

- to accommodate development in accordance with the sequential approach outlined above;
- as far as possible meet the housing requirements generated by the expected natural increase in population during the plan period in the districts where it arises;
- enable Worcester City as the largest urban area and the main service and employment centre in the County to retain and develop its sub-regional role through an appropriate level of growth; and
- to ensure the majority of the housing needs of the County during the plan period are met within the Central Crescent, in accordance with Regional Planning Guidance.

6.18 Housing outside the Central Crescent will primarily be to meet local needs arising in the area, and some migration to the County and will allow for some outward movement of population from the Central Crescent as a result of migration into the Central Crescent from the Metropolitan Area. (Known as the ‘ripple’ effect).

### The Contribution of Previously Developed Land to Meeting the Housing Provision

#### Policy D.5

District Councils will make provision for the development of housing on previously developed land.

Indicative targets for the proportion of overall housing provision between April 1996 and March 2011 to be made on previously developed land in each District are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Housing Provision</th>
<th>Indicative % on Previously Developed Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bromsgrove</td>
<td>3,950</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyre Forest</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redditch</td>
<td>4,550</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>5,250</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malvern Hills</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wychavon</td>
<td>7,450</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The indicative targets shown above will be subject to individual assessments of sites suitable for housing development by District Councils.

### Explanatory Memorandum

6.19 As part of its commitment to sustainable development policies the Government is committed to preferring the development of land within urban areas, particularly on previously developed sites, provided that this creates or maintains a good living environment, before considering the development of greenfield sites. Making the best possible use of previously developed land and existing buildings will contribute to the regeneration of urban areas, by reusing derelict
and disused sites; it will avoid the unnecessary loss of countryside; and it will help reduce the need to travel.

6.20 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11) indicates that each development plan should indicate the number of additional dwellings to be provided within urban areas from previously developed land and conversions as part of the overall dwellings provision.

6.21 The Plan’s objectives and development strategy encapsulate the above advice. In accordance with them, Policy D.5 provides indicative targets for each District based upon preliminary assessments by the County Council and the District Councils of previously developed land within urban areas of the County with the potential for reuse for housing. RPG11 indicates that regionally the target for housing on land previously built on should maintain and, if possible, improve on the 61% of the total completions achieved on such sites in the region between 1991 and 1995. Within the County during the first 2 years of the plan period (1996-1998) about 36% of housing development took place on previously developed land.

6.22 The indicative percentages in Policy D.5 vary between the Districts, reflecting the varying scope within the urban settlements for contributions by previously developed land to the overall housing provisions. The percentages are necessarily indicative and will be subject to detailed assessments of individual sites by the relevant District Councils. By the completion of the Plan in 2011 it is anticipated that the percentage of housing development on previously developed land will have increased to almost 50%.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.23 Government policy indicates that a community’s need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing is a material consideration which should be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in deciding planning applications involving housing (PPG3, Housing). The provision of affordable housing helps encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities.

6.24 Regional Planning Guidance indicates that Structure Plans provide a link between regional analysis and proposals in local plans by setting down clear planning guidelines for the provision of affordable housing. Each District local plan should make proposals in the plan for the provision of affordable housing, taking into account Government policy, regional estimates of housing need and the results of any local studies, including local needs surveys.

6.25 The policy should be applied to all suitable sites, including proposals for the conversion of buildings and for the reuse of

for affordable housing which will be provided within the District during the Structure Plan period.

This provision should be based upon District Councils’ assessments of the affordable housing needs arising from both local and migrant households.

The level, range and type of provision to be achieved on individual sites, including suitable windfall sites, should be agreed through negotiation with developers at the planning application stage. Local Plans should set indicative targets for the level of affordable housing to be provided on suitable individual sites to inform this process.

Planning conditions or planning obligations may be used to control the occupancy of affordable dwellings to ensure the benefit of such dwellings accrue to both the initial and any subsequent occupiers.

‘Affordable’ Housing Needs

Policy D.6

As part of the overall housing provision in each District as set out in Policy D.4, District Planning Authorities should make adequate provision in their Local Plans
previously developed land. Affordable housing comprises both low-cost market housing and subsidised “social” housing. Reference should be made to the glossary for a fuller definition. For the purpose of applying Policy D.6, the term should be defined in detail by District Councils in the context of the individual District Council areas.

6.26 Reference should be made to national planning policy guidance on assessing affordable housing contained in PPG3 Housing (March 2000), and DETR Circular 6/98 for advice on: assessing the need for affordable housing; the criteria for assessing the suitability of sites where an element of affordable housing may be sought; and securing the occupancy of affordable housing. In order to ensure a consistent approach to assessments across the County and to assist District Councils in assessing the affordable housing needs of migrant households, the County Council will issue guidelines in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance drawn up in conjunction with District Council Housing and Planning Officers.

‘Affordable’ Housing for Local Needs in Rural Areas

Policy D.8

Exceptionally in rural areas planning permission may be granted for affordable housing on land that would not normally be released for general housing development, provided that:

(i) the scheme would meet a genuine local need for housing that otherwise would not be met;

(ii) the site is within or adjacent to an existing rural settlement; and

(iii) arrangements are in place through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations to ensure that the housing will be reserved for subsequent occupiers as well as the initial occupiers.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.27 DETR Circular 6/98 sets out site size thresholds below which it is considered that it would be inappropriate to seek affordable housing. These are below sites of 1 hectare or with a capacity of 25 dwellings. However it recognises that in settlements in rural areas with populations of 3,000 or fewer there may be justification for lower thresholds based on local authorities’ local needs assessments and the available supply of land for housing and adopted

through the local plan process. In view of the rural settlement pattern of much of Worcestershire, Policy D.7 allows District Councils this flexibility. This should help to ensure the provision of affordable housing during the Plan period, particularly in Malvern Hills District where historically many housing sites are very small.

6.28 In accordance with Circular 6/98 it may also be appropriate for local authorities to seek to generally adopt a lower threshold than sites of 1 hectare or with a capacity of 25 dwellings, where exceptional local constraints can be demonstrated, through the reviews of District Local Plans.
controlling development. It will be for the district planning authority to make a judgement on whether the case for allowing development under Policy D.8 has been shown and to identify existing rural settlements for the purposes of applying Policy D.8. These settlements need not be restricted to those identified under Policy SD.8.

6.30 Any provision for affordable housing made under Policy D.8 cannot be predicted and therefore an allowance should not be made for such housing to be provided under Policy D.8. Affordable housing completions arising from Policy D.8 however should be counted towards meeting the Structure Plan dwellings requirements.

6.31 Reference should be made to Annex B of PPG3 (Housing) for further advice on ‘exceptions’ housing sites.

Density of Housing Development

Policy D.9

In order to make efficient use of land, District Planning Authorities in carrying out their planning functions will be expected to discourage low density housing development, of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net, unless there are local circumstances including the character of the surrounding area which indicate otherwise. Sites within or adjacent to urban areas or rural settlements should be developed at densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net. Within town and local centres where there is good public transport accessibility and around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors, densities of about 70 dwellings per hectare net should be achieved.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.32 National planning policy (PPG1: General Policy and Principles) indicates that a key objective for the location of development is to make effective use of land within urban areas by allocating the maximum amount of housing to previously developed sites within existing larger urban areas which have access to a range of transport and other facilities, whilst protecting open space, playing fields and green spaces in cities and towns. Seeking increased densities on such sites will contribute to this objective and help to promote a more sustainable pattern of development. PPG3 Housing also promotes an increase in densities compared with past developments to help make the best use of land.

6.33 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands amplifies this approach by advising that in planning new residential development, authorities should pay particular attention to the density of development and that local planning authorities should consider the use of minimum density policies which encourage developers to raise the density of low-density housing schemes, especially on greenfield sites.

6.34 Policy D.9 reflects the approaches in RPG11 and PPG3 by setting densities for new development which are related to the location of the proposed development.

6.35 Policy D.9 has a strategic role in that it will influence decisions on local plan allocations for housing and ensures a degree of consistency throughout the County. It helps to make more efficient use of land. The policy also contributes to implementing the development strategy of the plan which seeks to meet outstanding development needs within or adjacent to the principal urban areas and helps to sustain local services and public transport. Increasing residential densities will also help to secure a mix of size and types of development to help meet the needs of different types of households. It is important to the successful achievement of the aims of this policy that higher density schemes are of good design which will prove attractive to occupiers. This may require acceptance by District Planning Authorities of a more creative approach to the design of schemes. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions’ publication “Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice” states that “Determining density standards is a matter for Local Plans and UDPs; but structure plans provide an opportunity to promote the use of standards, bring some
uniformity of standards across districts; and to set minimum standards to discourage low-density development". Policy D.9 recognises that it may not be appropriate to seek the densities set out in the policy in locations where development could lead to an unacceptable change detrimental to the overall character of the area.

6.36 The densities set out in Policy D.9 are net site densities as described in Appendix C of PPG3 and exclude areas such as major distributor roads and open spaces serving a wider area than the planning application.

6.37 For the purpose of applying Policy D.9, town and local centres comprise city, town and district centres (see Glossary). Reference should be made to the explanatory memoranda to Policies T.1 and SD.4 for further guidance on good public transport accessibility.

6.38 Policy D.9 will also apply to the development of mixed-use schemes which include housing.

6.39 Overall it is important that the density levels set out in Policy D.9 are adhered to by District Councils for the development strategy of the Plan to be successfully achieved. Also of importance to the successful implementation of the policy is the need for them to examine critically the standards applied to new development, for example those concerning highways layouts and design standards.

### Housing in the Open Countryside Outside the Green Belt

**Policy D.10**

**Housing in the open countryside outside the Green Belt will not be permitted except where it is:**

(i) clearly necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry and cannot be sited in a settlement; or

(ii) it is a necessary accompaniment to the establishment and success of an existing or new enterprise which itself needs to be located outside a settlement; or

(iii) an environmentally acceptable reuse (in the terms of Policy D.16) of a rural building of a substantial and permanent construction, where it is capable of reuse without major or complete reconstruction and where the applicant can demonstrate that the building cannot be reused for suitable business use or where residential use is subordinate to the reuse of the building for business use; or

(iv) a replacement of, and comparable in size with, an existing building with established residential use rights; or

(v) an extension to an existing dwelling which is in scale with the original dwelling and does not become the dominant feature; or

(vi) in accordance with the ‘rural exceptions policy’ Policy D.8.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

6.40 The protection of the countryside for its own sake and the prevention of a dispersed development pattern are both key to the achievement of the sustainable development objectives of the Plan. Policy D.10 is accordingly intended to ensure that isolated development does not occur in the open countryside whilst recognising that in certain circumstances housing may still need to be allowed, for example where it is either necessary to support the economic viability of a business or will enable the continued use of existing built development. Where permission is granted for housing for the purpose of agriculture or forestry, arrangements should be made to ensure that the dwelling
remains for agricultural or forestry use. Wherever possible, dwellings for agricultural and/or forestry purposes should be sited within the agricultural or forestry complex.

6.41 For the purposes of Policy D.10 an ‘enterprise’ comprises farm diversification businesses or other businesses where a location outside a settlement is essential to their successful operation.

6.42 In the context of criterion (iv) of Policy D.10, “size” means the volume, scale, and height of a building.

### Unidentified Sites (Windfall Sites)

#### Policy D.11

In providing for the overall number of dwellings set out in Policy D.1, an allowance will be made for the contribution that it is reasonable to expect will be found by way of ‘windfall’ sites. Any proposed development of such sites will be judged against the development strategy of the Structure Plan as well as the need to maintain the character of residential areas, where relevant, in addition to other relevant policies in the Structure Plan.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

6.43 Each year a considerable number of sites become available for housing development in the County as a result of planning permissions on sites which have not been identified in Local Plans. These are known as “windfall” sites. By definition the precise location of such sites cannot be known but an overall estimate of the scale of their contribution to the overall housing provisions can be made based on past trends, adjusted to take account, where appropriate, of changes in planning strategies and policies. Policy D.11 allows for windfalls contributions to meeting the housing provision of the Structure Plan provided their location is appropriate.

6.44 For the purposes of Policy D.11, windfall sites may be brownfield or greenfield. Although PPG3 states that windfall sites comprise previously developed sites (i.e. brownfield sites) only, the Panel who conducted the Examination in Public into the County Structure Plan accepted that there are particular local circumstances in Worcestershire that warrant a different line being taken on greenfield windfalls to that in Government guidance. Windfall sites are those with a threshold of 10 dwellings (5 dwellings in Malvern Hills District in recognition that many housing sites in the District are very small). Sites with a threshold greater than 10 dwellings should generally be brought forward in the context of reviews of local plans, and in urban areas particularly, through urban capacity studies.

### Housing in the Green Belt

#### Policy D.12

Housing in the Green Belt will only be allowed in those circumstances detailed in national planning guidance, currently PPG2. Where housing proposals are such that in the terms of PPG2 they constitute inappropriate development this will only be allowed where very special circumstances can be demonstrated which outweigh their inappropriateness. Housing permitted under this policy will be for local needs only in accordance with the development strategy of the Structure Plan. Proposals for housing development on major developed sites in the Green Belt are acceptable where they accord with this policy and PPG2, Annex C.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

6.45 There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but this does not preclude all forms of housing development. PPG2 (Green Belts) 1995, details those circumstances when new housing development may not be inappropriate and may be acceptable, primarily in relation to agricultural and forestry needs, limited extensions, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, limited infilling in existing villages and the reuse of
buildings. The appropriateness of housing proposals will be assessed against the guidance set out in PPG2 or any subsequent replacement. The policy makes clear that major developed sites in the Green Belt may be suitable for housing.

6.46 Policy D.12 applies to new dwellings. Proposals for the redevelopment of existing dwellings do not have to demonstrate local need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed-Use Developments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy D.13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision will be made in Local Plans for mixed-use developments. In identifying suitable sites, and in determining appropriate uses for the sites, District Planning Authorities should have regard to the contribution they could make to the development strategy of the Structure Plan and to Policies D.4 to D.6 where housing forms an element of a scheme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Particular consideration should be given to the scope for locating mixed-use developments which include community services close to public transport nodes.

Planning conditions and/or planning obligations may be used to secure an appropriate mixture of uses or to ensure that certain parts of the scheme are implemented as proposed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory Memorandum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.47 National planning policy guidance (PPG1: General Policy and Principles), PPG3 (Housing) and RPG11 (Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands) encourage mixed-use development on appropriate sites. In addition Regional Planning Guidance advises that authorities should make provision for housing development which contributes to mixed-use developments in urban areas and on suitable sites in suitable rural settlements. Mixed-use developments can contribute to promoting sustainable patterns of development and help create and maintain vitality and diversity in settlements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.48 Policy D.13 seeks the identification of suitable sites for mixed-use developments through the local planning process. Particular benefit in terms of minimising the need to travel may accrue from locating mixed-use developments close to public transport nodes and this should be a consideration in identifying potential sites for mixed-use development.

6.49 PPG1 advises that plans should indicate whether planning conditions and planning obligations are likely to be used in determining planning applications. Policy D.13 makes clear that this will be the case in mixed-use developments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Development in Rural Settlements Beyond, and Excluded from, the Green Belt</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy D.14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing development in existing rural settlements beyond, and excluded from, the Green Belt will be restricted to development within or adjacent to the boundary of the settlements that accord with the provisions of Policy SD.8.</td>
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<th>Explanatory Memorandum</th>
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<tr>
<td>6.50 RPG11 (Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands) indicates that in the rural parts of the Region some development in existing rural settlements can help sustain local services and employment. However in many smaller settlements it will be appropriate to limit housing development to that for local needs only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.51 The rural settlements to which Policy D.14 applies, and the definition of the boundaries of such settlements, will be determined in District Local Plans, but will include some of the County’s larger settlements such as Tenbury and Upton. Much of the local need within the rural areas of the County is likely to be met by existing allocations in Local Plans and “windfall” development during the plan period. Any additional allocations will need to be in accordance with the application of Policy SD.8. |
6.52 National Planning Guidance in PPG3 (Housing) advises that Local Planning Authorities should make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing villages to enable local housing needs to be met. Policy D.14 reflects this advice in respect of the suitable locations for housing land in rural settlements. The policy cross-refers to Policy SD.8 which sets out the factors to be taken into account in determining the appropriate sustainable rural settlements in which local housing needs should be met. It will be for District Planning Authorities to interpret the phrase “adjacent to” in Policy D.14 having regard to the requirements of the policy, in the context of the rural settlement.

### Reappraisal of Planning Permissions and Local Plan Allocations

**Policy D.15**

In making provision for dwelling requirements set out in Policy D.4, District Councils will re-examine the appropriateness of Local Plan housing allocations where planning permission has not been granted and of approving applications for the renewal of outstanding planning permissions against the development strategy of the Structure Plan.

### Explanatory Memorandum

6.53 PPG3 (Housing) indicates that issues of sustainability mean that local planning authorities should review thoroughly all applications to renew planning permissions and may, as a result, determine that some existing planning permissions no longer meet the requirements of current policy guidance and should not be renewed. Policy D.15 reflects this guidance and extends it to existing local plan allocations. The re-examination of applications to renew planning applications should take place when such applications are made. The re-examination of local plan housing allocations where planning permission has not been granted should take place in the context of local plan reviews. In both cases assessments should be made against the development strategy of the Structure Plan. When renewal of planning permission is appropriate, consideration should be given to revising planning conditions relating, for example, to the reduction in car parking provisions and to increasing the density of development.

#### Reuse and Conversion of Buildings

**Policy D.16**

Proposals for the conversion of buildings in rural areas to other uses will be judged against the following criteria:

(i) whether the building is of a permanent and substantial construction;

(ii) the extent to which the form, bulk and general design of the converted building is in keeping with its surroundings;

(iii) the potential impact on town or village vitality;

(iv) if located in the Green Belt, whether the proposal constitutes appropriate development within the Green Belt in terms of PPG2; and

(v) the effect of the proposal on the character of the building and its setting.

Proposals for conversion to residential use will be examined with particular care to ensure that they will not have an adverse impact on local economic activity and where this is likely they will not normally be permitted.

Conversions to other uses will only be allowed where they can be achieved without extensive or damaging alteration and/or extension or rebuilding.
Explanatory Memorandum

6.54 PPG7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development) makes it clear that the reuse and adaptation of all existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. Reuse and conversion can reduce the demand for new building in the countryside and should be seen as being acceptable in principle. However care needs to be exercised to ensure that reuse is acceptable in terms of scale and impact, that it does not undermine the sustainability objectives of the Plan, beneficial or harmful effects on town and village vitality are considered, and that it does not undermine the rural economy. In respect of the latter point particular attention will need to be paid to the likely impact of proposals for the conversion of industrial or commercial buildings for residential purposes. Reference should also be made to Policy D.29 which deals with the change of use of buildings in rural areas for employment purposes. Proposals should include the consideration of the presence of protected species, in accordance with Policy CTC.13.

Residential Mobile Homes

Policy D.17

The use of caravans for full-time homes is discouraged although temporary permission may be granted for sites from time to time to meet special needs which may arise. In such circumstances residential caravans and sites will be subject to the same locational requirements as permanent housing development.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.55 PPG3 (Housing) indicates that local planning authorities’ assessments of housing needs should include housing to help meet the needs of specific groups including occupiers of mobile homes. Nonetheless, it is considered that mobile homes are not an adequate substitute for affordable traditional bricks and mortar housing and as such should only be considered as a short-term solution to meet special circumstances. In such circumstances they should only be permitted if they meet the same locational requirements as normal housing development.

Gypsy Sites

Policy D.18

The development of gypsy caravan sites by any agency with a genuine desire to help gypsies, or gypsies themselves, will be encouraged provided that the sites are in a satisfactory location and meet required standards.

The location of sites should minimise any adverse environmental effects, in particular in relation to the County landscape, conservation, and archaeological and historical assets. In general terms sites should:

(i) be reasonably close to or easily accessible from a main traffic route;
(ii) be within reasonable distance of a settlement;
(iii) be already screened or capable of being screened;
(iv) have essential services available or capable of being made available; and
(v) be of a size to enable them to be assimilated within the local community.

It may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to accept the establishment of sites in designated areas of restraint.
Explanatory Memorandum

6.56 Government Circular 1/94 Gypsy Sites and Planning makes clear the expectation that gypsies should be encouraged and supported in providing their own sites. The Circular also makes it clear that Structure Plans should set out broad strategic policies and provide a general framework for site provision, whilst Local Plans should provide detailed policies. In this respect it will be for District Planning Authorities to set out the standards required on proposed sites. Policy D.18 is intended to encourage, where acceptable, sites to accommodate gypsies and to give guidance at a strategic level on site location. It should be acknowledged that gypsy sites are not regarded as being among uses of land which are normally appropriate in the Green Belt. As such very special circumstances would need to be proven to outweigh their “inappropriateness” and for permission to be granted in a Green Belt location.

Employment

6.57 Ensuring that sufficient land is available for employment creation is an essential part of the development planning process, both in terms of the amount likely to be needed for business uses over the plan period, and its quality and general distribution in the County. Although it is difficult to quantify the link between the amount of land developed for employment use and the number of jobs created on it, it is important to ensure that the lack of suitable land for economic development does not act as a constraint to job creation and that the land identified for development is attractive to prospective occupiers. About 405 hectares of land for employment is considered to be necessary to provide a balance between new homes and jobs.

6.58 The characteristics of the urban settlements of the County vary, both in terms of the composition of their employment structure and also in terms of their relative self-containment. In all cases however a common objective is to seek to widen the economic base by attracting new businesses and encouraging the expansion of existing businesses. In this regard, although employment in manufacturing has been declining in the County the provision of land for manufacturing industries continues to be important in order to ensure that the County plays its part in building upon the West Midlands success as an advanced manufacturing region, a part of the vision for the Region as set out in Regional Planning Guidance.

6.59 In the rural parts of the County agriculture underpins the economy although the decline in numbers employed in the industry and falling farm incomes has been well documented. It is recognised that many rural residents look to the urban areas for employment, however the workforce in the rural areas is expected to increase by over 5000 people up to 2011. The strategy in the superseded Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan to help rural economic diversification and to encourage the provision of local employment opportunities will be continued in the current Structure Plan.

6.60 In drawing up policies on economic development regard has been given to both national planning policy and Regional Planning Guidance, including sub-regional strategies described in Chapter Two.

6.61 The economic development strategy to be supported in the Plan will be to maximise the opportunities for growth and development by local businesses and quality inward investment to meet County rather than regional or sub-regional needs, including tourism related development. Development will be within a sustainable environment, the context of Regional Planning Guidance, the Plan’s objectives and the development strategy for the County. In particular:

- The Plan will seek to provide a District-wide portfolio of employment sites in the County which are attractive to differing businesses in order to facilitate job creation and widen the County’s economic base.
- Employment land will be identified at a level which will work towards a better balance between housing and employment in the main settlements in the County.
Public/private sector speculative development of economic infrastructure on employment sites will be encouraged.

Within the rural areas the diversification of the rural economy will be sought. Encouragement of local employment opportunities will help reduce commuting to work to the larger settlements in the County and beyond.

6.62 The strategy is consistent with the land use elements of the priorities for action as set out in the County Council’s Economic Development Plan.

### Employment Land Requirements

**Policy D.19**

The amounts of land to be provided for employment uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 in each District in the County between April 1996 and March 2011 are as follows:

- about 55 hectares in Bromsgrove District, not including that required to meet some of the needs of Redditch District;
- about 45 hectares in Wyre Forest District;
- about 65 hectares to meet the needs of Redditch District, some of which is to be provided in Bromsgrove District;
- about 75 hectares in Worcester City District;
- about 55 hectares in Malvern Hills District; and
- about 110 hectares in Wychavon District.

### Explanatory Memorandum

6.63 There is no universally accepted method for calculating the amount of land that may be required for employment use. Criticism was made of the methodology used in the now replaced Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan, which was based upon projecting past rates of take up of employment land, on the grounds that there was no relationship between the provision for housing and the provision for employment in the Plan. This criticism is accepted and therefore this approach has been rejected in the current Plan. A different methodology has been used by other strategic authorities, based upon estimating the amount of land that may be required by those seeking work during the plan period, but is not considered to be sufficiently robust due to the number of assumptions that would have to be made to calculate the land requirements; for example in relation to the types of jobs expected to be created and expected job densities (jobs per hectare).

6.64 The methodology used in the Plan attempts to link the provisions of land for new housing and new employment uses. The amounts of land to be provided in each District are set at a level which work towards achieving a better balance between housing and employment in the larger settlements in the County in accordance with national and Regional Planning Guidance and the Plan’s objectives.

6.65 In order to ensure consistency with the housing requirements in each District which are expressed as ‘about’, given the inter-relationship between housing and employment land provision, the employment land requirements are also expressed as ‘about’.

6.66 The provision of about 65 hectares to meet the needs of Redditch District will include the existing employment land at Ravensbank Business Park in Bromsgrove District which has already been allocated to help meet the employment needs of Redditch. The same allocation at Ravensbank should not be included as part of the employment provision of about 55 hectares in Bromsgrove District. No additional land over and above that already allocated as employment land at Ravensbank Business Park is required in Bromsgrove District to meet the needs of Redditch set out in Policy D.19.
CHAPTER SIX

Development

Employment Land Portfolio

Policy D.20

The employment land to be provided in each District under Policy D.19 will comprise a portfolio of sites in terms of size, location and quality, including the redevelopment and reuse, where appropriate, of previously developed land.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.67 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11) indicates that strategic authorities should develop a portfolio of sites as part of the Structure Plan process. Policy D.20 accords with this by making provision for a range of sites in each District in order to meet the differing requirements of new and existing businesses, both local and potential inward investors. The policy seeks to ensure that previously developed land in urban areas is brought back into productive use for employment, where this is a suitable use of the site, in order to encourage urban regeneration, help reduce the need to travel and make the best use of existing infrastructure. There should be a reasonable expectation that land identified in accordance with this policy will be readily capable of being developed during the plan period in order that a genuine contribution is made to the achievement of the economic strategy.

6.68 In determining the appropriate portfolio of sites, local planning authorities may consider the need for quality greenfield sites. Reference should be made to the Explanatory Memorandum to Policy SD.7 which makes provision for their consideration. In assessing the appropriate employment land portfolio, District Councils should have regard to local employment needs, particularly in rural areas.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.69 In order to implement the development strategy of the Plan, the allocation of land for economic development in local plans should accord with Policy SD.6, which concentrates outstanding development needs within or adjacent to named settlements, and with the sequential approach to development set out in Policy SD.7. There should be a reasonable expectation that land identified in accordance with Policy D.21 will be readily capable of being developed in order that a genuine contribution is made to the achievement of the economic strategy.

6.70 Consideration should be given to whether land and buildings formerly occupied by Class B uses should be recycled for employment use (and therefore count towards meeting the requirements of Policies D.19 and D.20) or re-allocated for other uses.

6.71 All sites should be readily accessible by means other than the private car in order to provide the opportunity to minimise harmful vehicle emissions and reduce road congestion.

Criteria for Additional Employment Allocations

Policy D.22

District Councils may provide for additional releases of employment land where:

(i) there are clear and justifiable reasons why a balanced portfolio of sites in accordance with Policy D.20 cannot be achieved without the allocation of additional land; or
(ii) as part of the review of Local Plans it is shown that existing employment commitments are not all in the correct location to balance new housing growth; or

(iii) it is shown to be essential to ensure a continuing supply of readily available land during the Structure Plan period taking into account take-up rates since the beginning of the Structure Plan period.

Review of Existing Employment Commitments

**Policy D.23**

District Councils should review existing employment land allocations and planning permissions for employment use proposed for renewal in order to comply with Policy D.20 and to avoid over provision where additional allocations are made in accordance with Policy D.22.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.72 Policy D.22 allows flexibility in the provision of employment land to take account of the possibility that, whilst sufficient land may have been identified to meet the requirements of Policy D.19, the range of such sites may fail to provide a suitable employment land portfolio required under Policy D.20. Policy D.22 also allows District Councils to identify additional employment land allocations in those circumstances where, through the process of reviewing local plans, existing commitments are considered not to be suitably located to help achieve a better balance of new housing and employment, which is one of the objectives of the Structure Plan. The third criterion in Policy D.22 seeks to ensure that a lack of readily available land for employment does not inhibit job creation. It will be for District Councils to make a judgement on whether such a situation exists, taking into account rates of employment land development during the Structure Plan period to help inform their decisions. Local planning authorities must be satisfied that the development of sites in the existing employment land portfolio is genuinely constrained in implementing criterion (iii) of Policy D.22.

6.73 Annual monitoring of employment land in all Districts will be required for the successful operation of Policy D.22.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.74 In implementing Policy D.23, the review of existing employment land allocations in local plans should take place in the context of local plan reviews. Existing allocations which are considered to have little prospect of development in the Plan period or which are in inappropriate locations having regard to the development strategy of the Structure Plan should not be carried forward. Reviews of applications to renew planning permissions against Policy D.23 should be carried out when such applications are made.

6.75 In reviewing existing employment land commitments, land and buildings occupied by Class B uses at the time of the local plan review should not be included unless the local planning authority are satisfied that the land and buildings will become vacant and is not expected to be reoccupied during the local plan period.

Location of Employment Uses in Class B8

**Policy D.24**

The location of new wholesale warehouse and distribution centre development within Class B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) will be such that access to railways and/or waterway termini is maximised. Any change in navigation status of rivers will be subject to the requirements of the Environment Agency.
Explanatory Memorandum

6.76 Warehouse and distribution development within Class B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) often requires major land take and generates significant vehicle movement, in particular heavy goods vehicles. In order to reduce the impact of this on urban areas and to reduce the need to transport goods by road haulage, such uses should be located where alternatives to road transport can be utilised, including sites with access to railways and/or waterway termini. Reference should be made to Policies T.1 and T.15 in the Plan which set out additional factors to be taken into account when considering the location of industrial development, in particular the accessibility profile of proposed locations and development type, and the transference of freight from roads to other forms of transport.

6.77 Where it is proposed to make use of rivers for the movement of freight which would lead to an increase in the present length of navigable rivers or which would require the development of marinas it will be necessary to take account of the requirements of the Environment Agency. This will include undertaking an assessment of both the environmental consequences and the effects on other river users.

Use of Employment Land for Specific Uses Within Class B

Policy D.25

In order to ensure that a range of employment opportunities are encouraged and that the full employment potential of individual sites are realised, the development of suitable individual sites may be restricted to a specific use within Class B of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended).

Explanatory Memorandum

6.78 The allocation of sites for employment use in Local Plans generally allow development within Class B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended). To help ensure that a portfolio of employment sites is provided to meet the needs of different users, Policy D.25 allows District Planning Authorities to restrict the development of suitable individual sites to uses within Class B of the amended Use Classes Order. For example the most appropriate use of a site may be for Class B1 (office, high technology and light industry) in order to achieve greater job creation than its use for warehousing.

Office Development (Class A2 and Class B1)

Policy D.26

The preferred location for new office development within Classes A2 and B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) in the County will be within the town centres of the following urban areas in the County: Worcester, Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Malvern, Droitwich, Stourport, Evesham, Pershore, Bewdley, Tenbury and Upton.

Where a suitable site is not available in the town centre, the following sequential approach will be adopted to identifying whether a suitable alternative location exists: in an edge-of-centre site, a district or local centre, and only then out-of-centre locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

It will be for the developer in proposing a site to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority that the above approach has been followed.

District Councils should follow the above approach in identifying sites in Local Plans for office uses.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.79 Office developments can attract a large number of trips, often of considerable distances, both by employees and visitors. In order to minimise the number and length of
vehicular trips made and to provide reasonable access by alternative modes of transport to the private car, office developments within Classes A2 and B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) will generally be located in town centres where major public transport facilities are to be found and where they can contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres. It is recognised however that suitable sites may not always be available for office developments in town centres. In such circumstances it may be appropriate to permit office uses on the edge of the town centre where access by public transport is an attractive alternative to the car and where access may also be gained by walking or cycling. Only in those cases where neither town centre nor edge-of-town locations are suitable should office development in out-of-centre locations be favourably considered. For the purposes of Policy D.26 a town centre location comprises the main centre of the urban area, and not district or local centres, which provide a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfil the function as a focus for the community and for public transport. “Edge-of-centre” locations are those outside the town centre but within reasonable walking distance of it. “Out-of-centre” is a location that is clearly separate from the town centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

6.80 It will be for District Councils in their Local Plans to interpret Policy D.26 in the light of the local characteristics of settlements and the scale and type of office proposed.

6.81 The policy enables the application of the sequential approach to identifying suitable sites for commercial and public offices which attract a lot of people in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (Town Centres and Retail Development). The suitability of a site for development should be judged in particular in terms of its size, parking, traffic generation, servicing arrangements and effect on the urban character of the surrounding area as well as against other policies in the Plan.

### New Building for Business Uses Outside the Green Belt

#### Policy D.27

Proposals for the development of new buildings for business purposes or for the expansion of existing businesses outside the Green Belt will be permitted in or adjacent to rural settlements where proposals are in accordance with other policies in the Structure Plan, in particular Policy SD.8.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

6.82 National planning policy (PPG7) indicates that development plans should encourage employment opportunities suitable in scale in rural centres and should indicate the circumstances in which new development will be allowed within or adjacent to villages and country towns.

6.83 Policy D.27 helps to promote economic diversification in rural areas by encouraging employment opportunities in sustainable rural settlements that accord with Policy SD.8. It also seeks to improve the economic viability of existing rural settlements in order to support their role as foci for local communities. Moreover by providing for local employment opportunities in rural settlements, it is hoped that commuting to larger settlements will be minimised.

6.84 The level of new employment development should be appropriate to meet the local needs generated by the local population.

### New Building for Business Purposes in the Green Belt

#### Policy D.28

Proposals for the development of new buildings for business purposes or for the expansion of existing businesses in the Green Belt will only be permitted in those settlements identified in Local Plans where infilling is acceptable, and should be of a scale appropriate to the location.
Explanatory Memorandum

6.85 The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is generally inappropriate development. However national planning guidance contained in PPG2 allows for a limited number of exceptions including development in those villages identified in local plans where limited infilling is acceptable. Policy D.28 seeks to encourage local employment opportunities in villages “washed over” with Green Belt notation in local plans whilst at the same time safeguarding the purposes of the Green Belt and the amenity of the settlements. This will help promote viable rural communities and reduce the need to commute to work elsewhere.

6.86 Whilst Policy D.28 sets out Structure Plan policy in respect of building for business uses in the Green Belt, it is acknowledged that proposals for business uses on major developed sites in the Green Belt is the subject of Government policy guidance in Annex C of PPG2 (Green Belts). This will be a material consideration in assessing proposals in such locations.

Change of Use of Buildings in Rural Areas for Employment Purposes

Policy D.29

When considering a proposal for the change of use of a building in a rural area, priority will be given to the change of use for employment purposes and will be permitted provided that:

(i) the building proposed to be reused is permanent and substantial and can be converted without major or complete reconstruction;

(ii) where the proposal is in the Green Belt, the effect on the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in PPG2 is no greater than that of the existing development; and

(iii) the proposal will not generate trips by heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable roads.

Proposals for the expansion of reused buildings will be considered against the same criteria. Proposals for expansion of reused buildings in the Green Belt will be refused where they conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.87 Policy D.29 seeks to ensure that economic diversification in rural areas, including the Green Belt, is maximised by prioritising change of use proposals for employment purposes in suitable locations while at the same time protecting the rural environment generally and the Green Belt from inappropriate development. The policy also allows for suitable existing built resources to be brought back into productive use. Proposals which are likely to result in a significant increase in numbers and length of journeys to work by car are unlikely to be acceptable since they would conflict with the aim of moving towards a sustainable pattern of development.

6.88 Examples of buildings which may be suitable for conversion under Policy D.29 include barns and other farm buildings. The policy will contribute to rural regeneration through diversification of the economy. The policy also supports the role of countryside stewardship by the farming community.

6.89 In order to promote road safety and protect local amenity no planning permission will be granted under Policy D.29 which would result in the use of heavy goods vehicles on unsuitable roads.

Farm Diversification

Policy D.30

Proposals for the diversification of agricultural units will be supported where they meet the requirements of other
Explanatory Memorandum

6.90 Many farmers are diversifying beyond the traditional agricultural industry in order to supplement their incomes and maintain the viability of the farm and consequently benefit the local community. Policy D.30 is supportive of these initiatives subject to the protection of the rural environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

6.91 PPG7 states that it is usually preferable for farm diversification schemes to reuse good quality existing buildings and put them to a new business use, rather than build new buildings in the countryside. However, the nature of some activities may be such that new building will be required and sometimes necessarily in locations where the activity arises or is undertaken. Where possible, new buildings should be located within the farm complex (main group of farm buildings) so as to minimise the impact on the landscape and contain access needs to one area.

Retailing

6.92 Shopping is an essential need which is increasingly being undertaken as a leisure activity as personal incomes and personal mobility increase. The retail industry forms a major part of Worcestershire’s economy, employing about 15,000 people directly and with more jobs indirectly dependent on retailing in the related distribution sector. The retail industry has undergone rapid change over the last 20 years and this has resulted, amongst other things, in many out-of-town shopping developments which can sometimes be contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

6.93 In urban areas, the long standing trend among the retailing industry towards locating large new shops outside town centres, where free car parking can be provided and access by car is often easier than to the town centre, has resulted in concern about the continuing strength of town centres’ shopping facilities.

6.94 In rural areas, the trend towards one-stop shopping for food in superstores in and around towns and the increase in car based personal mobility which allows this to take place, have contributed to making many traditional village shops unviable. In Worcestershire the number of parishes without a shop increased from 33% to 48% between 1981 and 1997. A similar decline has occurred in the number of post offices, the number of parishes without such a facility increasing from 35% to 52% during the same period. This decline in retail outlets has resulted in increased car travel over longer distances for the purchase of even the smallest number of items. In addition local residents without access to a car or who are unable to drive are disadvantaged. National Planning Guidance PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Developments), recognises that village shops play a vital economic and social role in rural areas.

6.95 It is important therefore that up-to-date land use policies are in place which recognise the role of retailing in society, its importance in underpinning the health of town centres and rural communities, and the contribution it can make to achieving a sustainable pattern of development.

6.96 A key aspect of the guidance in PPG6 is the introduction of the sequential approach to the identification of suitable sites for retail development. The preferred location for retail development is the town centre, then edge-of-centre, district centre, and only then out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport. The guidance also advises on the key considerations that should be applied to considering proposals for retail development in out-of-centre locations.

6.97 The Government’s objective is to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and to ensure the availability of a wide range of shops to which people have easy access. The guidance encourages employment, entertainment and leisure facilities as well as
shops in town centres by applying the above sequential approach to their location and makes clear that easy access to town centres should be by a choice of means of transport, not only by car. Mixed use development in town centres and the retention of key town centre uses are to be encouraged. Government policy also seeks to support local centres in both urban and rural areas.

6.98 In February 1999 the Government issued a clarification to PPG6 in respect of retail proposals which, in essence, required applicants to demonstrate both the need for additional facilities and that a sequential approach has been applied in selecting the location or the site, where the site proposed is at an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location. This guidance should be applied equally to proposals for extending existing edge-of-centre and out-of-centre development.

6.99 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) reflects national guidance on town centres and retailing and indicates that the emphasis in PPG6, that town centres will be the preferred location for new retail development, is appropriate throughout the Region.

6.100 In accordance with this national and regional guidance and to help achieve the Plan’s objectives of enhancing the role of settlements as centres of service provision, and encouraging development which will help retain and enhance the vitality of settlements, the following retail strategy will be pursued in the Plan: the preferred location for retail developments that attract many trips will be town centres; new retail developments which cannot be accommodated in town centres will be expected to locate in an edge-of-centre location; and only then in out-of-centre locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

### Policies

#### Retail Hierarchy

**Policy D.31**

Retail proposals in the following centres should be of a scale which is appropriately related to the roles of those centres and should retain and reinforce the following retail hierarchy:

- Worcester City Sub-Regional centre;
- Kidderminster Major County centre;
- Redditch Major County centre;
- Evesham Minor County centre;
- Bromsgrove Minor County centre;
- Malvern District centre;
- Droitwich District centre;
- Pershore Minor District centre;
- Stourport Minor District centre.

#### Explanatory Memorandum

6.101 Government policy guidance (PPG6) advises that Structure Plans should provide a clear strategy for town centres and retail development within the County. Policy D.31 reflects this advice by setting out the retail hierarchy in the County.

6.102 The retail hierarchy set out in the policy was derived having regard to the classifications in Management Horizons UK Shopping Index and the retail spheres of influence of the County’s towns, and adapting the descriptions in the Shopping Index to Worcestershire’s context.

6.103 The scale and variety of shopping facilities in Worcester City contributes to its sub-regional role, the retention and
development of which is a main element of the Plan’s development strategy. Policy D.31 helps ensure that this role is maintained during the Plan period. Kidderminster and Redditch both have dominant shopping functions in Wyre Forest and Redditch Districts respectively and are described in Policy D.31 as major County Centres. Evesham and Bromsgrove both perform important retail roles and serve wide catchment areas and are described as minor County Centres. The towns of Malvern and Droitwich also contain a range of shopping facilities but serve more limited catchment areas and are described as District Centres. Stourport and Pershore generally serve more local needs and are described as minor District centres.

6.104 Policy D.31 does not prevent the introduction of new retail floorspace in the named settlements provided that the level of development does not threaten the retail hierarchy set out in the policy.

### Preferred Locations for Large Scale Development

**Policy D.32**

The preferred location for new large scale retail developments that attract many trips in the County will be within town centres.

Where a suitable site is not available, or cannot be made available, in the town centre, the following sequential approach will be adopted to establish whether a suitable alternative location exists: in an edge-of-centre location, and only then an out-of-centre site that is accessible by a choice of means of transport. Where an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre site is proposed, whether for new development or an extension to existing development, the need for the development must be demonstrated.

It will be for a developer in proposing a site to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority that the above approach has been followed.

District Councils should also follow the above approach in identifying sites in Local Plans where the need or capacity warrants it.

### Explanatory Memorandum

6.105 Policy D.32 seeks to ensure that town centres are safeguarded and where possible strengthened as the principal locations for both convenience and comparison shopping so that they continue their role as foci for the community; the best use is made of existing built resources and infrastructure; and, because town centres are highly accessible by public transport, help reduce the need to travel by private car (shops are major attractors of travel demand). For the purposes of this policy a ‘town centre’ is defined as a city or town centre or traditional suburban centre which provide a wide range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus for both the community and for public transport.

6.106 It will be for District Councils in their Local Plans to identify town centres, and to determine whether a location is town centre or edge-of-centre in the light of local circumstances. In this respect an edge-of-centre location will be one which allows easy access to and from the main town centre by foot. In the circumstances where no suitable sites are available, or can be made available, in the town centre for developments that attract many trips, a site on the edge of the town centre will be the preferred alternative. The most recent Government guidance (Parliamentary Answer – 11th February 1999) establishes the requirement that the need for new or extended facilities is demonstrated and a sequential approach applied to the site selection in the case of proposals which would be located at an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location. Only where no suitable sites are found in town centre or edge-of-centre locations following the sequential approach will out-of-centre locations be considered where easy access is possible by public transport.

6.107 In considering the suitability of alternative sites, their viability and availability should also be assessed. Applicants should where necessary accept the need for flexibility
on format, design, scale of development and car parking in applying Policy D.32.

6.108 An impact assessment will be required for proposals over 2,500 square metres gross floorspace in line with Government guidance in PPG6. District Councils should also consider whether assessments are necessary for smaller developments, depending on the relative size and nature of the development in relation to the shopping centre.

Retailing in Out-of-Centre Locations

Policy D.33

Proposals for retail development that attract many trips in out-of-centre locations will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that a need exists and no suitable site is available in a town centre or edge-of-centre location.

Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable site is available, and a need has been demonstrated, development in out-of-centre locations should:

(i) not adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing town centres. Where relevant cumulative effects of any recently completed developments and any outstanding retail planning permissions in the catchment area of the town centre should be considered in assessing the effect on vitality and viability;

(ii) be easily accessible, or capable of being made easily accessible, by a choice of means of transport. This may require developer contributions to improve public transport accessibility;

(iii) where possible be in close proximity to existing major out-of-centre developments which attract vehicular trips; and

(iv) not normally be allowed on land allocated for other uses in an approved development plan, especially on land allocated for industry, employment and housing, where retail development can be shown to have the effect of limiting the range and quality of sites that would be available for such uses.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.109 In line with national planning policy, town centres will be the preferred location for retail developments that attract many trips. Clarification of PPG6 (Parliamentary Answer – 11th February 1999) indicates that proposals for out-of-centre locations should demonstrate the need for additional new or extensions to existing facilities. A sequential approach will be applied in selecting the location in accordance with PPG6.

6.110 Where suitable sites in town centres or edge-of-town centres are not available, Policy D.33 seeks to ensure that out-of-centre retail developments are located as far as possible in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and that they do not have an unacceptable impact on town centres. The policy applies to both new development and extensions to existing development.

6.111 Reference should be made to PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Development) for useful indicators for measuring vitality and viability.

6.112 Where there is no town centre or edge-of-centre site available, locating out-of-centre retail developments close to existing major out-of-centre developments such as office complexes where possible will allow the opportunity for multi-purpose trips by car and encourage the use of public transport.
Retail Developments in District and Local Centres

Policy D.34

The preferred location for retail developments primarily to meet day-to-day needs will be District and Local centres. Proposals for such development should be consistent with the scale and function of the centre and should accord with other policies in the Structure Plan.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.113 Policy D.34 seeks the location of shops which cater generally for day-to-day needs within district and local centres in order to provide the opportunity for, and to encourage, people to shop locally and so help minimise the need to travel, particularly by car.

6.114 In line with PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Development) district centres are defined as groups of shops separate from a town centre usually containing a supermarket or superstore and non-retail service such as banks, building societies and restaurants. A local centre is a small grouping of shops of a local nature, usually comprising a newsagent, general grocery store and sub-post office.

6.115 In determining planning applications District Councils should interpret Policy D.34 in relation to the characteristics, scale and function of shopping centres within their areas.

Retailing in Rural Settlements

Policy D.35

The preferred location for retail development to meet day-to-day needs in rural areas, including conversions and extensions to shops, will be in rural settlements provided it meets the requirements of other policies in the Structure Plan.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.116 Shops in rural settlements can play a significant role in the social and economic life of rural communities. They also contribute to the aim of reducing the need to travel by providing for day-to-day shopping needs locally. Policy D.35 establishes rural settlements as preferred locations for shops and seeks to ensure their continued presence in rural settlements, subject to their being in accordance with other relevant Structure Plan policies.

6.117 Combining facilities such as shops and post offices may be appropriate under Policy D.35.

Farm Shops

Policy D.36

Proposals for retail development on farm holdings will be permitted provided:

(i) the development involves the reuse of an existing rural building and is ancillary to the farming use of the land. Where no suitable existing building is available new building may be acceptable; and

(ii) the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the viability of any nearby shops in a rural settlement by ensuring that non-local produce does not comprise the predominant element of the retail offer.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.118 Farm shops can provide a significant contribution to farm incomes and also provide rural employment opportunities. Generally such development is acceptable provided any associated environmental concerns are
adequately addressed. Normally farm shops tend to be less accessible, particularly by public transport, than shops located in rural settlements. Farm shops are usually set up primarily for the sale of fresh or processed local produce. Whilst it is recognised that the range of products sold may need to be sufficiently broad to overcome problems of seasonality, non-local produce should not be the predominant element of the retail offer to ensure that the viability of any nearby village shop is not threatened. Planning conditions limiting the range of goods sold may be appropriate in such circumstances.

Shops in Community Buildings in Rural Settlements

Policy D.37

Proposals for shops in community buildings and/or managed by the local community will be permitted provided the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the viability of a nearby shop in a rural settlement.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.119 Opportunities can exist in rural settlements to provide a community shop and/or Post Office within a village hall or other building funded and/or managed by the local community.

6.120 Even where such facilities provide a limited range of goods and are subject to restricted hours of opening, they can provide a valuable local service which can reduce the need to travel by car and reinforce the building’s use as a focus for the local community.

6.121 Planning permission may not be required for the use of community buildings as shops provided the hours of opening are limited and the use is not one of the primary functions of the building. Shopping facilities in community buildings should not threaten the continued operation of any shop in a rural settlement, the closure of which could result in an overall reduction in the range of products sold locally.

Green Belt

6.122 The environmental character of the northern part of Worcestershire is in large measure due to the presence of a Green Belt in the area. Strict control of development in the Green Belt has prevented the expansion of the West Midlands Conurbation into the County, restricted the expansion of the larger towns of Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch and of villages and prevented development in the open countryside. This in turn has helped to ensure that people living in towns have easy access to nearby open countryside and outdoor recreation areas as well as playing a part in conserving areas of landscape and agricultural value.

6.123 Although proposals for a Green Belt in Worcestershire formed part of the West Midlands Plan in 1948, it was not until 1975 that the then Secretary of State for the Environment approved an amendment to the County Development Plan to include a Green Belt in Worcestershire (as part of the wider Green Belt area in the West Midlands surrounding the Birmingham Conurbation and Coventry). Later that year the Worcestershire County Structure Plan was approved which included a Green Belt notation on the Key Diagram (superseding the amendment to the County Development Plan) and policies for its protection. The extent of the Green Belt in the County has remained broadly the same since then. Most of the boundaries of the Green Belt have subsequently been defined in detail in Local Plans.

6.124 The main aims of the Green Belt in the County of preventing the sprawl of the West Midlands Conurbation and preventing the coalescence of settlements have generally been achieved. These aims continue to be relevant in view of the continuing pressure for development in the Green Belt.

6.125 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11 paragraph 11.2) notes that the Green Belt has served its purpose well and will continue to do so, and hence one of its objectives, to be included in development plans in the region, is to maintain and enhance the environment by ensuring a strong, effective and permanent Green Belt. RPG11 indicates that
there is no case for a fundamental review of the Green Belts in the Region. It also advises that the Green Belt boundaries should be altered only exceptionally to accommodate development. In order to achieve sustainable development objectives, authorities may exceptionally need to review the boundaries of settlements excluded from and on the edge of the Green Belt and the criteria against which any boundary re-definition should be considered should be clearly set out in structure plans and taken forward in local plans. This guidance is reflected in the sequential approach to the location of development (Policy SD.7).

**Explanatory Memorandum**

6.126 The settlement pattern in the north of the County is characterised by several large towns and a number of large villages in relatively close proximity to each other and to the periphery of the West Midlands Conurbation. Strong economic and social links exist between these settlements supported by good road and rail networks. As a consequence of these links pressure for development on the periphery of settlements and in the open countryside has been long standing. Without the special protection of the Green Belt, within which there is a presumption against inappropriate development, there is little doubt that the continued openness of the countryside and separateness of the settlements in the north of Worcestershire would be threatened.

6.127 Pressure for development in the north of Worcestershire is expected to persist and therefore Policy D.38 seeks to maintain the general extent of the Green Belt as identified in previous structure plans. This reflects the view of Regional Planning Guidance that there is no case for a fundamental review of Green Belts in the West Midlands.

**General Extent and Purposes of the Green Belt**

**Policy D.38**

A Green Belt will be maintained in the north-east of Worcestershire, with the purposes being to:

(i) check the unrestricted sprawl of the West Midlands conurbation;

(ii) prevent neighbouring towns and villages from merging into one another;

(iii) assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

(iv) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

(v) assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The general extent of the Green Belt (shown on the Key Diagram) will cover the area to the south-west of the West Midlands Conurbation between the County boundary with Warwickshire to the east and the River Severn to the west, extended to the south of Redditch and including land between Droitwich and Worcester.

**Control of Development in the Green Belt**

**Policy D.39**

There will be a presumption against allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt as described in national planning guidance currently PPG2. Where proposals constitute inappropriate development in the terms of this guidance they will only be allowed where very special circumstances exist which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. PPG2 gives details of exceptions to the general prevention of inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It will be for the applicant to show why permission should be granted.

Development permitted in the Green Belt must also satisfy other relevant policies in the development plan.
Explanatory Memorandum

6.128 Within land designated as Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development in order to achieve the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Policy D.38. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. The intention of Policy D.39 is not to replicate National Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (1995) to which reference should be made. PPG2 indicates the types of development which are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In summary these are: new buildings for the purposes of agriculture and forestry; to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and for other uses which preserve the openness of the Green Belt; limited extension alteration or replacement of existing dwellings; limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing for local community needs; limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in adopted local plans; mineral extraction and other development which maintain the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the proposals of including land in the Green Belt.

6.129 It is important that reference is made to PPG2 for detailed advice regarding the appropriateness of the above types of development.

Green Belt Boundary Definition

Policy D.40

Where Green Belt boundaries have still to be defined in Local Plans that definition will be completed. In defining boundaries District Councils should have regard to the purposes of the Green Belt set out in Policy D.38 and the need to safeguard land for longer term development needs.

Areas of Development Restraint

Policy D.41

As part of the reviews of District Local Plans, District Planning Authorities will review the Areas of Development Restraint (ADR) identified in adopted Local Plans against the sustainability criteria set out in Policies SD.4 and SD.5. Those ADRs that fail to meet the sustainability criteria should not be considered for development against Policy SD.7 within the Structure Plan period.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.130 Government policy set out in PPG2 states that where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined, it is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure. They should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt may have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development. If boundaries are drawn excessively tightly around existing built-up areas it may not be possible to maintain the degree of permanence that Green Belts should have. This would devalue the concept of the Green Belt and reduce the value of local plans in making proper provision for necessary development in the future.

6.131 PPG2 also states that when Local Planning Authorities prepare new or revised Structure and Local Plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time-scale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the Plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period. In order to ensure protection of Green Belts within this longer time-scale, this will in some cases mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term development needs.

6.132 The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt have still to be defined in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, which has yet to be adopted. Policy D.40 seeks compliance with the above aspects of PPG2 in respect of the definition of the Green Belt boundaries in Bromsgrove District.
As part of the re-assessment of ADRs, District Councils should consider whether limited adjustments to Green Belt boundaries are necessary in order to identify new ADRs which meet the sustainability criteria in the Structure Plan for possible development needs beyond 2011.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.133 Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs) to meet possible development needs beyond 2001 are identified in adopted District Local Plans for Wyre Forest, Redditch and Wychavon Districts and in the Hagley/Clent Local Plan in Bromsgrove District. Policy D.41 requires the review of these ADRs against Structure Plan policies SD.4 and SD.5 to ensure that only those which satisfy the sustainability criteria in these policies are considered for development in the Structure Plan period to 2011 following the sequential approach to development set out in Policy SD.7.

6.134 The Green Belt boundary should not be redefined to include those ADRs that fail to meet the sustainability criteria in local plan reviews because their original identification as ADRs indicates that the land does not serve the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as set out in PPG2.

6.135 Although there is no need for a general review of Green Belt boundaries to meet development requirements in the period up to 2011, Policy D.41 recognises that the Green Belt may be too tightly drawn around some settlements to enable sustainable patterns of development to be pursued. The policy therefore requires District Councils to consider the need to identify new ADRs to meet possible longer term development needs beyond 2011. The sustainability criteria in Policies SD.4 and SD.5 together with Policy D.38 should inform this consideration.

Reuse of Major Developed Sites in the Countryside Outside the Green Belt

Policy D.42

Proposals for the reuse of major developed sites in the countryside outside the Green Belt will be determined against the relevant Sustainable Development policies and Policy D.20 and should be brought forward through the development plan process. Proposals for retail use will not be permitted.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.136 Within the County, outside the Green Belt, there are several major developed sites in the countryside such as military establishments, hospitals and facilities which are no longer required for their original use. These represent a resource, the reuse of which could, in some instances and locations, make a contribution to meeting the housing and employment provisions in the Structure Plan. Their reuse can also result in environmental improvements to ‘brownfield’ sites whilst at the same time protecting the natural and built environment. However proposals may also conflict with the aim of moving towards a sustainable pattern of development in terms of ensuring accessibility by means other than the private car and minimising the need to travel.

6.137 In view of the scale of development possible on major developed sites, it is important that proposals for such sites should come forward through the development plan process to ensure that they are compatible with the development plan strategy. Particular attention should be paid to how well the proposals sit with the principles of sustainable development but also the intentions of Policy D.20 which requires a portfolio of employment land for each District.

6.138 Proposals that are not in accordance with the development plan will not be allowed unless other material considerations justify granting planning permission.
Crime Prevention and Community Safety

Policy D.43

When considering development proposals Local Planning Authorities should give due regard to those factors, in particular in relation to design, which have the ability to impact upon crime or the fear of crime. The prevention of crime should always be seen as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.139 The prevention of crime and the safety of people and their property is an important aspect of the quality of life, and is one of four key elements of the County’s vision.

6.140 Circular 5/94 established crime prevention as a material consideration in the planning process, and therefore should be given due regard in the development plan. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places a statutory function on local authorities to consider the implications for crime and disorder when exercising their functions, such as planning.

6.141 Development can be designed and located so as to maximise natural surveillance and the perception of safety, and to minimise the anonymity of public spaces and the opportunity for crime and disorder. The intention of Policy D.43 is to ensure that crime prevention and community safety are duly considered in the planning process.

Telecommunications

Policy D.44

Development proposals for telecommunication systems should normally be allowed where they satisfy the requirements of other policies in the Structure Plan.

Consideration should be given in the first instance to the opportunity for using existing structures and all applications for new structures will be required to demonstrate why the use of existing structures or buildings, including sharing existing masts, cannot satisfy their requirements. In all cases installations should be removed when no longer required.

Explanatory Memorandum

6.144 The aim of national telecommunications policy, as set out in PPG8: (Telecommunications) is to ensure that people have a choice as to who provides their telecommunications service, a wider range of services from which to choose and equitable access to the latest technologies as they become available. The Government’s general policy is of facilitating the growth of new and existing systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. PPG8 states that planning authorities are encouraged to respond positively to telecommunications development proposals, and they should take account of the advice on the protection of urban and rural areas in other PPGs.

6.145 Where proposals for the development of telecommunication systems are in accordance with other Plan policies, especially

Fast, reliable and cost-effective communications can attract business to an area, can enrich life at home, and offer new choices in education, entertainment, shopping and banking. Modern telecommunications can also benefit the environment by reducing the need to travel.
those concerning the protection of the County environment, they should normally be allowed. Consideration should be given to whether existing structures and, where appropriate, existing telecommunication pylons, rather than new structures, can be used to facilitate the development of telecommunication systems. It will be necessary for all applicants for new structures to demonstrate why existing structures and pylons cannot be used. Where existing telecommunication pylons or installations are no longer required for operational use, they should be removed in the interests of amenity.
The matrix below cross-refers Transport Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

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7. **TRANSPORT**

Introduction

7.1 Transport is central to the daily life of most people. People and goods need to travel from one place to another, and over centuries transport systems have developed increasingly complex ways to achieve this. With the advent of mass car ownership, mobility has grown significantly; the majority of households in Worcestershire own one or more cars. Mobility has come to be equated with car travel, as transport systems have become increasingly dominated by, and cater for, private motorised transport. Consequently the location of homes, jobs, leisure facilities, shops and schools have often been determined with little regard to their accessibility by other modes of transport. As a result people travel further and further distances between their homes and daily/weekly needs such as shopping, employment and education. However, the relationship between land use and transport has come under increasing scrutiny as traffic congestion and local air pollution worsen beyond what is acceptable. Transport is a major contributor to a range of emissions, including carbon dioxide, some of which is generally agreed contribute to global warming and all of which can lead to a deterioration of air quality with resulting impacts on the natural environment and human beings. Traffic congestion and increased use of the car has resulted in worsening health and fitness, associated increased cost to businesses and isolation of those without access to a car.

7.2 Despite these escalating problems, the expectation of being able to travel wherever and whenever by car prevails. Government recognises that building more road capacity for the predicted growth in traffic is unacceptable for economic, social and environmental reasons. Nevertheless the need to maintain the safe and efficient transport of goods and people remains.

7.3 The White Paper, ‘A New Deal for Transport’, sets out new policy initiatives which seek to create a better, more integrated transport system which is sustainable in the long term. This is to be achieved through a range of measures which aim to maximise accessibility by alternatives to the car. In terms of improving the alternatives available, greater emphasis is given to public transport, cyclist and pedestrian accessibility with initiatives such as Safer Routes to School, Green Transport Plans and Quality Partnerships between the local authority and private operators.

7.4 Local authorities are to be given the power to introduce tolling on roads and levy parking charges on workplace parking. This would permit local authorities new means of tackling traffic congestion and pollution and would provide new sources of funding for local transport schemes. Such measures are dependent upon the necessary legislation being in place, whereupon a number of pilot schemes will be developed with local authorities. Many of these measures are to be implemented locally. Local Transport Plans (LTP) with a five-year strategy for the implementation (including funding), of local transport measures. The main aims of the Local Transport Plans are to deliver local transport needs in a co-ordinated way, with the full benefit of wide public consultation. Local Transport Plans are required to be consistent with the Structure Plan, ensuring that consistent transport proposals are co-ordinated to maximise accessibility and the wider move towards achieving sustainable development.

7.5 In addition, the White Paper introduces a greater emphasis on regional transport strategies as a component of regional planning guidance, to provide a framework for strategies at a more local level. A strategic rail authority will supervise the train operating companies and assist local authorities in promoting schemes which encourage the use of rail. Monitoring of the Government’s aims with this policy guidance will be the responsibility of the Commission for Integrated Transport.

7.6 The United Kingdom National Air Quality Strategy (March 1997) makes clear the link between air quality and transport emissions and the contribution that transport needs to make towards achieving the targets and objectives of the Air Quality Strategy. Changes
in transport and planning policies which will reduce the need to travel and reliance on the car are key principles the Government wishes to follow to secure reductions in air pollution. The Structure Plan supports the Air Quality Strategy by the inclusion of policies designed to prevent development that will unduly impact on air quality.

7.7 National Policy Guidance is set out in PPG13 (Transport) and has the objectives of integrating planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to: promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight; promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and; reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

7.8 PPG13 acknowledges that development plans and policies play an important role in contributing to the reduction of travel by car as they represent the opportunity to promote accessible patterns of new development, and to plan for transport needs in an integrated way. A key element of the guidance is that land use policies should promote development within urban areas at locations highly accessible by means other than the private car.

7.9 Regional Planning Guidance RPG11 commends the transport corridor approach to the location of development as discussed in Chapter Four. It states the particular need for development plans to take account of the interaction between transport and land use, and to provide a framework for development that will help reduce the numbers and length of journeys made by car. RPG11 recognises the need for development to offer the potential for alternative modes of travel for journeys that will continue to take place. It states that development plans should seek to locate new development near public transport centres or at selected locations along corridors well-served by public transport and should incorporate three key factors in developing this locational framework: maximising the use of existing urban areas; minimising the development of greenfield sites, and maximising the use of existing infrastructure. The guidance seeks both the assessment of the scope for development in all transport corridors as part of the preparation of Structure Plans and an assessment of the scope for modal change (e.g. car to rail) to serve existing development and any opportunities for the improvement of public transport. The results of the Transport Corridors Study provided an input into the transport policies in the Plan.

7.10 At the regional level, the Integrated Transport Action Plan for the West Midlands Region seeks to create a network of integrated transport facilities and services, serving the accessibility and mobility needs of the Region in a framework of sustainable development. The Plan’s main objectives are to enhance urban and rural regeneration, maintain and develop strategic transport links, co-ordinate travel awareness activities, and reduce traffic pollution and car travel. Sub-regional policy for towns and rural areas within the Central Crescent is to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, by providing better public transport services, traffic management, restraining car parking provision and in rural areas, a range of community transport schemes.

7.11 The former Hereford and Worcester County Council also published a transport policy statement in 1995 entitled, “Moving Towards a Sustainable Transport Policy”. The document was produced in consultation with District Councils, transport operators and providers, and a number of voluntary and user groups with a transport interest. Fifteen policies are underpinned by strategic environmental objectives similar to the objectives of the Plan, relating to raising awareness, minimising the need to travel, encouraging and providing for the use of other transport modes, and making the most efficient use of existing transport infrastructure without causing adverse effects on the environment. A balance is sought between the social, economic and environmental considerations of transport. This work has been taken into account in formulating the transport policies of this Plan.
Transport Strategy

7.12 Accessibility in its broadest sense underpins the vision for Worcestershire: accessibility to employment and education, shelter, food, recreation and energy at a fair cost irrespective of wealth, mobility or disability.

7.13 A key aim of the Plan is to coordinate the planning of development and transport in a comprehensive way so as to achieve less travel whilst maintaining accessibility without undermining quality of life, or causing harm to the environment. A further aim is to contribute towards the achievement of national air quality objectives. The key objectives of the transport strategy reflect the objectives of the Plan as a whole and aim to maximise accessibility, to seek to ensure equality of access, and promote choice for transport users, whilst ensuring the effective use of resources within a context of sustainability.

7.14 The transport strategy in the Plan is based upon:

- the integration of transport facilities and land uses;
- minimising the need to travel and the distances that people travel;
- minimising the proportion of journeys made by car;
- maximising the choice of transport available; and
- facilitating the effective movement of people and goods.

7.15 The strategy seeks to secure accessibility by the means of transport most suitable for the journey and to achieve more sustainable development and transport patterns based upon concentrating new development in or adjacent to the urban areas of the County.

7.16 In rural areas of the County the challenge of achieving accessibility is greater because practical alternatives to the car are less readily available due to the scattered pattern of small-scale settlements. The strategy for rural Worcestershire reflects these characteristics and is complemented by other policies in the Plan which aim to influence the locations of new development taking into account accessibility to local employment opportunities, education, retail and leisure facilities.

7.17 The transport systems should provide a choice of transport for people of all ages and mobility, in both urban and rural areas, and enable alternatives to the private car to be convenient and safe.

7.18 New development will be located and designed to enable people to walk, cycle, or use public transport as easily, if not more easily than private motor vehicles. Development will be guided to locations that most suit its accessibility needs, maximising transport choice and making the most appropriate use of the road hierarchy.

7.19 The balance of priority in the planning and management of road space and capacity should move towards less environmentally damaging forms of transport (walking, cycling and public transport) in a safe and convenient manner. Road capacity and travel demand should be managed more effectively and in ways that discourage the unnecessary use of the car. Equality of access for each mode should be sought when planning for new, and maintaining existing infrastructure.

7.20 The strategy seeks high levels of safety in the provision of all modes of transport. Where no alternative solution is found, selective road improvements which improve safety and the quality of life of communities will be considered.

Policies

Location of Development

Policy T.1

The majority of new development will be located within or adjacent to urban areas in accordance with Policy SD.6 at locations which minimise the need for
travel and provide for access by different modes. In this respect development should generally be located at nodes on public transport corridors in accordance with Policy SD.4.

Development proposals should include transport assessments and should be designed to maximise access by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport providers.

Any additional traffic generated by the proposals will need to be shown to be capable of accommodation safely on the road system without undue environmental consequences.

In considering development proposals, Local Planning Authorities will have regard to the appropriate mobility profile of the development and accessibility profile of the proposed location.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

7.21 In the past much development has resulted in housing and employment uses in locations which are often at considerable distances from each other. Many settlements have grown considerably as a result of residential development, but this has not been matched by a comparable growth in local employment opportunities, or facilities providing for the daily needs of the community. Together with the lack of infrastructure to make other transport modes more convenient and attractive to use, this imbalance in the location of housing and employment has fuelled car-based commuting between homes, services and jobs.

7.22 By planning for new dwellings to be more closely located to existing and new employment opportunities, and in proportions that provide a choice of local work, distances are reduced and the choice of travel by bicycle or foot may be more realistic. A similar logic is applicable to the provision of other daily needs, especially education.

7.23 In locating new development regard should be had to the type of development in terms of movement associated with it (people and goods) and the accessibility of the location proposed. Matching the development (in terms of movement) to the right location (in terms of accessibility) can be an effective traffic management tool and make the best use of the existing transport network.

7.24 This approach is similar to the Dutch ABC approach. Development locations are given an A, B, or C accessibility profile depending on their relationship to the public transport network. Uses are categorised as having an A, B or C mobility profile based on the activities undertaken. Therefore people intensive developments such as offices should be directed to locations with high public transport accessibility in a bid to reduce commuting by car. Capital intensive developments such as heavy industry and distribution facilities are guided to major highway and motorway junctions to remove heavy goods vehicles from settlement centres and making the most efficient use of the Strategic Highway Network.

7.25 Some modern residential developments are designed in such a way that bus accessibility is poor. Distances from homes to the bus stops may be lengthy or circuitous routing may be necessary. This can be a major discouragement to the use and provision of public transport in modern developments. Development should therefore be designed in order to maximise accessibility by buses and provide residents with services that are easy and more convenient to use. Coupled with more and convenient pedestrian and cycling routes permeating new developments, this will encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the car.

7.26 Where developments will have significant transport implications, transport assessments should be prepared and submitted alongside the planning application. Reference should be made to PPG13 (Transport) for further advice on transport assessments.

7.27 Reference should be made to Government guidance in Design Bulletin 32 – Residential Roads and Footpaths and to Places, Streets and Movement – A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32 (DETR 1998) for advice on the main considerations that should be taken
into account in the design of residential road and footpath layouts. The County Council are currently reviewing County Design Guidance to reflect the above and revised PPG13.

7.28 The West Midlands Multi-Modal Study outline recommendations (July 2001) have significant implications on the County. These, and the Regional Transport Study (due for publication Autumn 2001) must be taken into consideration when undertaking transport assessments. Additionally developers must liaise with the County Council as Highway Authority in ensuring Transport Assessments integrate with studies undertaken through the Local Transport Plan period. Examples of these include the Stourport Transport Study, the Bromsgrove Phase II Study and the Vale of Evesham Study.

7.29 Employers’ Travel Plans have a part to play in reducing car use by promoting the use of alternative modes of travel for regular trips to work and education centres. Reference should be made to the Local Transport Plan for details on such plans.

Resources

Policy T.2

In accordance with Policy IMP.1, developer contributions to help fund integrated transport facilities and/or to secure public transport improvement and infrastructure, will be required where appropriate in new development proposals, with the aim of maximising access within and to these developments by foot, cycle and public transport.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.30 In many developments little attention has been given to how people could gain access other than by car. The provision of public transport services and access for cyclists and pedestrians has often been neglected because of limited local authority resources. Even where such facilities are provided they may lag behind the completion of the development and after travel patterns by car to the new development have become well established and difficult to alter. Appropriate contributions from developers for access to new developments by road may also be required.

7.31 Government policy allows local authorities to enter into planning obligations with developers, including those concerned with transport-related matters, to enable proposals to proceed. In doing so, local planning authorities should have regard to the provisions of Circular 1/97. Public transport improvements and infrastructure may be secured, where appropriate, by means of developer contributions through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). It will be important that local planning authorities ensure that facilities, for example cycleways and bus services, are provided at an early stage of the development so that travel patterns and alternative modes of transport to the car are encouraged from the outset of the development. In considering developer contributions regard should be had to the incremental demands of phased development upon the transport system and other related infrastructure.

7.32 Reference should also be made to Policy IMP.1. With respect to development affecting a trunk road, the Highways Agency should be consulted. Where Highways Agency funding is not available, the full funding of schemes will be required in accordance with Policy IMP1.

Managing Car Use

Policy T.3

Demand management measures will be implemented in order to limit the use of cars and to encourage an overall shift to the use of public transport, walking and cycling in accordance with the roads hierarchy. These measures will be concentrated in the urban areas and will include bus lanes, park and ride (in accordance with Policy T.7) and reductions in non-residential off-street parking, together with greater priority for walking and cycling. They may include the pricing of road use and parking charges.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Transport

Explanatory Memorandum

7.33 The concept of demand management of traffic stems from the need to use existing transport infrastructure more effectively and as a tool to establish clear priorities for access by different means of transport to the car, for example by allocating more road space to buses, cycles and pedestrians. Re-allocating space for cycling and walking also contributes towards making them safer and more convenient options and is in accordance with Policy T.10. Coupled with other safety and promotional measures, they provide the “carrot” measures to encourage people away from their cars.

7.34 Reducing road space alone will not necessarily result in a significant reduction in demand for car use or discourage motorists. Other demand management tools to discourage car use are now being explored nationally. For example, pricing mechanisms are currently being piloted across the country, concentrating on road pricing and raising parking charges for private non-residential purposes as a way of redressing the balance of advantage in the perceived cost of motoring as against public transport use.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.35 Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands refers to the importance of parking policy within the effective traffic management of urban centres. As the availability, location and cost of parking have a major influence on how individuals decide to travel into town centres, there is a need for policies to take account of the following factors:

- Consistency of policies between neighbouring centres to avoid parking being a major factor in competition between centres;
- Using parking charges and restrictions in direct relation to the level of accessibility of a development/urban area by other modes of transport; and
- The parking needs of different users, e.g. long and short stay visitors.

7.36 Reducing the availability and length of stay of car parking in town and city centres where alternative modes of transport are available, notably at public transport nodes, is known to discourage the use of the car for commuting to work, (when that car is not required during the day for work purposes). However, any parking strategy needs to take account of other parking needs, such as those of disabled people, delivery vehicles and possibly short term parking for activities such as shopping.

7.37 Any conflict between the parking needs of residents and commuters seeking free on-road parking should also be addressed at the local level. A more detailed strategy will be contained in the Local Transport Plan and will be translated further through the District Local Plan.

Car Parking

Policy T.4

Demand management measures to discourage travel by car will include the introduction of appropriate car parking policies. These will be broadly based upon:

(i) limiting long stay car parking in favour of short stay facilities;
(ii) maintaining accessibility by car for the mobility impaired and delivery vehicles;
(iii) car parking standards for new development which vary to reflect use, location (in particular proximity to public transport nodes) and accessibility by non-car modes; and
(iv) car parking standards which are expressed in terms of maximum provision.
7.38 A particular concern in the County is the effect of any reduction in the level of car parking on the relative attractiveness of an urban centre to shoppers. A consistent approach to parking between neighbouring authorities in the region and with the South West Region is necessary if parking as a major factor in competition between centres is to be avoided. In respect of the West Midlands this will be best achieved by the consideration and pursuance of policies and standards in line with the Regional Parking Strategy. The implementation of other measures to enhance access to town centres by other modes will complement such policies.

7.39 It will also be important to review parking standards in light of the need to reduce the availability of parking. One view is that development proposed for central urban locations with good public transport access can operate successfully with fewer parking spaces due to higher accessibility by other modes of transport. This will clearly need to influence the amount of private residential and non-residential off-street parking available in urban centres in the longer term.

7.40 The development strategy of the Structure Plan underpins the preparation of the Local Transport Plan for Worcestershire. It includes strategic policies which enable the implementation of those policies and proposals in the LTP which involve the use of land. In turn the LTP complements the land use strategy in the Structure Plan by defining a five year transport strategy for transport provision in the County.

7.41 The County Council’s Design Guidance is being reviewed and will address car parking standards.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.42 Bus priority measures on main corridors (the Strategic Highway Network, SHN), such as bus lanes and signal transponders, assist buses in avoiding the congestion caused by cars and in some cases improve access to the services, thus making bus usage more attractive to the public. Additional high quality infrastructure, such as shelters and timetable information, also assists with passenger perception of the service. In addition to the priority measures outlined quality bus partnerships will be sought with operators (as identified in the Local Transport Plan) to encourage the provision of quality vehicles and services on main corridors. The overall aim is to make the bus service an attractive alternative to the private car, thus encouraging car users to change mode as a matter of choice.

Rail Facilities

Policy T.6

Measures to improve the attractiveness of rail transport will be undertaken. Rail operators are to be encouraged to provide improved rail station facilities, including access for pedestrians, cyclists, people with mobility difficulties, public transport and, where appropriate, improved arrangements for car parking.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.43 As well as increasing the choice of transport mode for medium and long distance journeys, rail transport also offers benefits to the environment over the private car, primarily causing less pollution. Whilst access onto the rail network is the most important factor in realising the potential of rail, facilities provided at rail stations play an important part in establishing the passenger’s perception of the...
service provided and rail operators are to be encouraged to improve their image and facilities. Waiting, information and booking facilities should be of the highest quality. Access by pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired should be given priority over access by private car, whilst the ability to access railway stations by public transport is also important in promoting the use of rail transport as an integrated system. The provision of good parking facilities at selected stations can encourage rail park and ride and will be undertaken through the Local Transport Plan and in partnership with rail operators and Railtrack.

**Interchange Facilities**

**Policy T.7**

The provision of quality interchange facilities, including Bus and Rail Park and Ride services, will be undertaken in order to help develop an integrated public transport system and secure increased use of public transport facilities. Proposals should have regard to the impact on:

(i) the environment;
(ii) safety;
(iii) the economy;
(iv) accessibility; and
(v) integration.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

7.44 Providing quality interchange facilities between different modes of transport is recognised in the White Paper as being essential in encouraging the use of alternative modes to the car for all or part of the journey. Such facilities are beneficial for both local and longer-distance commuting and may include easily understood timetable information, the provision of waiting facilities and, where possible, the ability to directly change between different modes of transport, such as bus and rail, in conjunction with through ticketing and the co-ordination of services. Park and Ride facilities and services, both bus and rail, form an essential part of this and will be provided as detailed in the Integrated Transport Strategy set out in the Local Transport Plan. Other complementary facilities such as the co-ordination of services, through ticketing and those set out in Policies T.5 and T.6 will be necessary to ensure the success of park and ride facilities. The Government's White Paper “A New Deal for Transport” (July 1998) has led to the publication of various “daughter” documents. These have further led to publication of good practice guides. The developer must take account of the appropriate Government guidance in relation to the proposal. For instance a new development, for example for housing, that might otherwise generate car journeys should be so laid out as to facilitate and encourage trips to be made by public transport, walking or cycling. For example trips from home by walking or cycling to bus stops or rail station and onward trips by walking or cycling to the destination.

**Interchange Facilities in the Green Belt**

**Policy T.8**

Proposals for interchange facilities such as Park and Ride (Bus and Rail) in the Green Belt will be subject to Policy D.39, and will only be allowed where they can demonstrate that there is a need for the proposal and that there are no suitable alternative sites outside of the Green Belt.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

7.45 Annex E to PPG13 (Transport) amends PPG2 (Green Belts) in respect of park and ride sites. It indicates that park and ride development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided that criteria for assessing the suitability of the site are met, including establishing that the proposed Green Belt site is the most sustainable option taking account of all relevant factors including travel impacts and the scheme will not seriously compromise the purposes of including land in Green Belts. Policy T.8 reflects this guidance. Any proposals should be included in the Local Transport Plan and based on a thorough assessment of travel impacts.
Rural Transport

Policy T.9

Support will be given to measures to encourage the use of alternatives to private transport in rural areas, to increase the mobility of those without access to suitable transport in all areas and to assist in reducing congestion in towns.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.46 The dispersed population in rural areas make the provision of commercial public transport services extremely difficult. Those in such areas without private transport are, therefore, extremely limited in their accessibility. Local facilities have disappeared in many communities, with the centralisation of employment, shopping, medical and many other services. Although improved cycle and pedestrian infrastructure may assist, the distances are often too great for many to use such modes of transport. Where resources exist, (from the County Council and elsewhere), support will be given to help maintain public transport service levels wherever possible and to encourage innovative transport schemes for journeys not otherwise possible. Community transport schemes and pilots for other innovative schemes already exist and will be supported where possible.

7.47 Encouraging the use of public transport in such areas can also assist in reducing traffic congestion problems which currently exist in some market towns.

7.48 There are also a significant number of people with mobility problems for whom walking, cycling and public transport are not possible options. Although the gradual improvement of public transport will assist, there will remain a need for community transport facilities in these areas, which will supported where possible.

Cycling and Walking

Policy T.10

Safe and convenient routes for cycling and walking will be required in the design of new development and promoted in and around existing development, to encourage access by other means than the private car. Measures will be implemented on existing and new routes to enable their safe and convenient use by bicycle and on foot.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.49 The declining numbers of journeys made by cycle and foot is attributed in part to the perceived danger posed by the volume and speed of vehicular traffic. In certain areas, this has resulted in communities becoming relatively isolated in terms of accessibility by cycle and foot. Strategies to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians have relied in the main on personal measures such as cycle helmets, proficiency tests and awareness campaigns. The majority of roads and residential areas have little provision for cyclists or pedestrians in the way of segregated routes, allocated highway capacity or physical measures to prioritise access for cyclists and pedestrians. Policy T.10 seeks to rectify this situation.

7.50 A County-wide Cycling Strategy has been developed in association with District Councils and other interested parties which considers the implications of the measures that can make cycling a more convenient and safe mode of transport. The Strategy aims to implement viable alternatives to the car over short distances in both urban and rural areas, including measures for maintaining and developing the cycle network, increasing travel awareness and improving the integration between cycling and public transport. Reference should also be made to the review of County Council Design Guidance and Places, Streets and Movement (DETR 1998).

7.51 The County Council have developed a Walking Strategy to promote walking within the County which will address both urban and
rural pedestrian issues. Priority areas for action will include providing more direct, convenient and safe routes and integration between walking and other transport modes.

7.52 Both the Cycling and Walking Strategies form part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). A further initiative which is also included in the LTP to increase the attractiveness of cycling and walking is the Safer Routes to School campaign which seeks to identify routes for children to walk and cycle to/from school with minimal risk from road traffic and other sources.

7.53 Where such measures can be designed into new and existing developments, more people will be encouraged to travel by foot and cycle for a variety of journeys. Treating different modes of transport equally in planning developments will add considerably to the potential for increasing travel by foot and cycle.

Assessment of New Roads

Policy T.11

New roads will only be considered where it is the most appropriate solution. Proposals will be assessed against the Government criteria in relation to:

(i) the environment;
(ii) safety;
(iii) the economy;
(iv) accessibility; and
(v) integration.

Roads will not be provided to increase capacity to satisfy projected demand in private motor vehicle usage.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.54 Improvements to existing highways and the provision of new roads may be necessary during the plan period. Policy T.11 indicates the circumstances in which they may be justified. It is generally accepted that the provision of increased road capacity encourages additional journeys by car. No road improvements will be allowed where the sole intention is to increase road capacity to accommodate traffic growth, increase the convenience of the private car users at the expense of the environment, or form part of a long distance high speed route.

7.55 The recently published Government roads review (A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England July 1998) establishes a new roads appraisal technique which summarises the key consequences of each scheme against the five criteria of the environment, safety, the economy, accessibility and integration.

7.56 Every reasonable alternative must be considered before a solution based on increased road capacity is pursued except where the increase in capacity is for the sole use of alternative forms of transport to the car. Bus only links may be necessary to assist bus access to developments without circuitous journeys.

Road Schemes

Policy T.12

The lines of the following new road schemes will be protected:

- Wyre Piddle and Upper Moor Bypass;
- Chadbury – Twyford Link;
- Stourport Relief Road;
- Bordesley Bypass;
- Kidderminster-Blakedown-Hagley Bypass;
- Studley Bypass;
- Alcester Highway Extension; and
- Kidderminster Southern Bypass

and their provision will be reviewed against the criteria set out in Policy T.11 prior to implementation.
Explanatory Memorandum

7.57 New road infrastructure to relieve communities of heavy traffic has often been controversial, with arguments being made strongly for and against it. Undoubtedly, they do provide significant benefits for people living in bypassed communities, in the form of less through traffic, less noise and air pollution and improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists. However disbenefits include the impact that road infrastructure can have on the wider environment for example through the loss of greenfield land, and ecologically valuable sites, impact on the landscape as well as encouraging car travel, and being costly to construct. Other modes of transport may however provide a better, more cost-effective and less environmentally damaging solution which must always be considered on an equal basis to road infrastructure for private motor vehicles.

7.58 There is a definite role for some new road infrastructure for private motor vehicles, where it can contribute to the achievement of improvements in the criteria contained in Policy T.11. It is considered that there is justification for the road schemes identified. The Kidderminster-Blakedown-Hagley Bypass and the Kidderminster Southern Bypass are being considered in the West Midlands Area Study which is looking comprehensively at the best transport solution for the West Midlands. The Stourport Relief Road is being considered in a County Council study which is looking at the best transport solution for Stourport-on-Severn. Funding has been awarded through the Local Transport Plan for Wyre Piddle and the Upper Moor Bypass and construction is programmed to be completed by the end of 2002. It is intended to carry out a feasibility study in 2002 to identify route options and scheme costs for potential inclusion of the Chadbury-Twyford Link in the Local Transport Plan. The position of Bordesley Bypass will be reviewed in the context of major development proposals in the Redditch area.

Motorway Service Areas

Policy T.13

Proposals for Motorway Service Area (MSA) facilities will be determined against the following criteria:

(i) the need for the facility in the light of existing and proposed facilities;

(ii) the impact on the environment including visual intrusion, noise and vehicle emissions;

(iii) the impact on the road network; and

(iv) appropriate policies in the Structure Plan particularly those relating to sustainable development, conservation and development in open countryside.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.59 The provision of Motorway Service Areas (MSAs) was deregulated in the early nineties, allowing developers and operators some freedom in deciding what services to offer over and above basic standards set out by the then Department of Transport.

7.60 Policy T.13 sets out the criteria for assessing proposals for MSAs. MSAs will be subject to the same restraint policies in sensitive areas as other major developments. It is acknowledged that MSAs, as a form of transport infrastructure, can induce land use pressures and should not provide such facilities that cause it to become a destination in its own right.

7.61 On the basis of advice from the Government (MSA Policy Statement 31 July 1998) the minimum gap between any two MSAs should normally be 30 miles and there is, therefore, no current need for any further facilities in the County.
CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSPORT

Road Hierarchy

Policy T.14

The road hierarchy is to be reviewed in the Local Transport Plan and managed to maximise the safety and efficiency of movement for public transport, cycles and pedestrians. In considering development proposals, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to the revised road hierarchy, and the impact that development would have on it.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.62 The road hierarchy is established to give guidance as to how different roads should be used by traffic and to apply differing safety and maintenance standards. The hierarchy can also be used to establish which routes are the best ones (in safety terms) for pedestrians and cyclists to use. To control the movement of traffic in order to achieve the greatest safety and efficiency in the system, a number of other measures are needed. For example traffic calming and traffic restriction orders on roads can complement the road hierarchy by directing the right traffic to the appropriate roads, and improving safety by restricting speeds along access roads.

7.63 Recent Government publications, including the White Paper on Integrated Transport and the National Roads Review, propose that selected Trunk Roads are detrunked as it is believed that they would be more appropriately managed by the local highway authority. This will enable decisions concerning these roads to be taken locally and to be integrated with local transport and land-use planning issues. In so doing, it will be possible to give greater consideration to public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Freight/Goods Transfer

Policy T.15

The transfer of freight, waste, aggregates and minerals from roads to other forms of transport such as rail, water and pipeline will be promoted. In order to reduce the impact on the highway network and the environment:

(i) the location of new industrial and warehouse development will be sited such that access to railways and/or waterways and pipe termini is maximised; and

(ii) where freight is required to be transported by road, it will be concentrated on the Lorry Route Network except where access is required.

Explanatory Memorandum

7.64 Road transport accounts for ten times more freight movement than rail. The environmental impacts associated with freight traffic are not only general, e.g. pollution, noise and safety concerns, but also local, through structural damage caused by vehicles using inappropriate routes. The primary reason for the amount of freight being carried by road transport is the relative expense, time and inflexibility of rail and water transport. This, in part, is due to the heavy investment in roads for economic reasons, and the relative lack of investment in other forms of transport infrastructure. Road transport for freight has therefore become more flexible, quicker and cheaper.

7.65 However, in more recent years the amount of freight moved by rail has shown a marked increase and has been predicted to increase in the future. The land-use planning system can help create the right conditions for rail and water borne freight through locating new industrial and warehouse development close to existing rail and water facilities. District planning authorities should consider allocating land for employment-generating uses, particularly distribution and warehousing, including rail freight facilities close to railway sidings which have the potential for freight movement.

7.66 Where it is still necessary to transport freight by road, Policy T.15 requires that use should be made of the Lorry Route
Network as identified on the Key Diagram. By directing heavy goods vehicles to the appropriate roads, some of the problems created by the road freight can be reduced.

7.67 The Highways Agency should be consulted on any proposals arising from Policy T.15 that may affect the trunk road network.

### Accident Reduction

#### Policy T.16

Traffic reduction measures, highway improvements and traffic management schemes will be undertaken as appropriate in order to reduce accidents in the County.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

7.68 In 2000, the Government set a target to reduce by 40% the numbers of people killed or seriously injured by 2010 compared with the average for 1994-1998.

7.69 By implementing traffic reduction measures, highway improvements and traffic management measures, it is possible to have beneficial effects in terms of helping to achieve a reduction in the number of accidents. Improving the existing highway at specific locations where a high accident rate has been identified can reduce the level of accidents occurring. Traffic management measures including traffic calming, and traffic reduction measures can have positive impacts through decreasing traffic levels on certain routes, and controlling it through calming measures in other instances. Specific areas requiring attention are identified and addressed in the Road Safety Section in the Local Transport Plan.

#### Retention of Rail Property

#### Policy T.17

District Planning Authorities shall include policies in the review of their Local Plans to secure the retention of rail property for future rail related uses, including potential passenger and freight services and/or improved rail facilities. Where, following discussions with relevant bodies, it is concluded that the land is clearly no longer required for rail purposes, the land may be used for alternative purposes where such use accords with other Structure Plan policies.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

7.70 The need to retain rail property such as track bed, sidings and buildings including land owned by Railtrack, British Rail and others has been identified in the White Paper as being very important in view of the potential value to future passenger and freight services. Policy T.17 seeks to protect such land from development in order that, should the opportunity arise, suitable land is available for the expansion of the rail network. In the instance that, following consultation with the Strategic Rail Authority, Railtrack and the relevant train and freight operating companies, it is clear that the land is no longer needed or suitable for operational purposes, the land may be released in the first instance for alternative transport related issues such as cycle tracks.

7.71 In order to ensure that redundant rail property is put to beneficial use, consideration may also be given to use of land for alternative purposes including commercial and residential use, where the land is not required for rail related uses.

#### River Severn

#### Policy T.18

The improvement of the River Severn up to Worcester for freight transport, where it is environmentally and ecologically acceptable, will be supported.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

7.72 The principle of the improvement of the River Severn up to Worcester for freight transport is supported so long as it can be
achieved without unacceptable consequences for the general environment of the river and is environmentally acceptable in terms of transhipment of freight onto the local highway network. Any proposals for improvement must accord with other policies in the Plan and any requirements of the Environment Agency. Proposals for development should also have regard to how they can help in the implementation of Policy T.15.

Local Planning Authorities should consult DTLR’s Airports Policy Division on draft development plan policies and proposals relating to airports and airfields.

7.74 The Highways Agency should be consulted on any proposals arising from Policy T.19 that may affect the trunk road network.

### Airfields

#### Policy T.19

Proposals for the establishment of flying sites for all types of aviation activity, or changes to existing sites, will be assessed against:

(i) environmental impacts including the effect of noise and emissions;

(ii) the potential economic and employment benefits;

(iii) transport and access considerations;

(iv) the potential for broadening the range of recreation provision;

(v) the potential benefit to the local services including public utilities; and

(vi) local demand for the services to be provided.

### Explanatory Memorandum

7.73 Whilst it is unlikely that airfield development of a regional scale will be proposed in Worcestershire, small scale aviation proposals may come forward and will be favourably considered, provided the environmental concerns such as noise impact on nearby residential areas have been taken into account and adequately mitigated. In accordance with Annex B of PPG13 Transport,
# POLICY LINKAGES

The matrix below cross-refers Recreation, Sport and Tourism Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

REcreation, Sport AND TourisM

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Introduction

8.1 Recreation, sport and tourism all make an important contribution to the quality of life of both residents and visitors, to economic growth and to the diversification of employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas. An appropriate provision of facilities, particularly for daily recreational and sporting activities, within and close by the urban areas, towns and larger villages in the County can also help provide a better balance of facilities and contribute towards a reduction in the need to travel, hence securing benefits in terms of sustainability.

8.2 This Chapter is divided into two sections, the first setting out strategic policies for the provision of facilities for informal and formal recreation and sporting facilities and the second setting out strategic policies for the development of tourism within the County.

Recreation and Sport

8.3 The degree to which particular activities necessitate “development” varies greatly, with the more formal and sporting activities tending to be urban and site-based, while the informal ones tend to be countryside-based. However, there is considerable overlap. Recreation contributes to quality of life by offering a safety valve for social pressures, assisting the local economy and tourism, promoting better health, and even reducing anti-social behaviour. The policies set out below deal essentially with matters of recreational land use or development, or matters of recreational management which impinge significantly on land use or development.

8.4 Recreational facilities are provided by both public authorities and private operators. The former are generally managed through Recreation or Leisure Strategies prepared by County or District Councils and apply to all providers, although other public agencies such as Forest Enterprise and Environment Agency are also involved in direct provision, operating within their own strategies.

8.5 Recreation resources in the County provide for a wide range of activities, with urban parks, rivers and the general countryside being major attractions for informal recreation. For formal recreation, the venues are predominantly urban centres and have often developed in association with sports facilities for schools and colleges.

8.6 The emphasis of Planning Policy Guidance is on encouraging recreation to meet recognised demand where it is environmentally sustainable, ensuring good accessibility by all modes of transport, and protecting open space in settlements. PPG17 (Sport and Recreation) supports the development of sport and recreation in the widest sense, and stresses the role of the planning system in delivering the physical resources to accommodate the diverse activities.

8.7 Policies in this section of the Chapter cover:

- the promotion of recreational opportunities and facilities in general
- the sustainable use of physical resources for recreational activities
- criteria for the location, design and development of acceptable recreational facilities
- provision for specific recreational and sporting activities.

Policies

Criteria for the Development of Recreation and Sport Facilities

Policy RST.1

Proposals to provide facilities for recreation and sport to serve the needs
of local residents and visitors will be encouraged. In particular an assessment will be made of:

(i) the impact on landscape character and features;
(ii) the impact on AONB or AGLV;
(iii) the impact on nature conservation interests;
(iv) the impact on the built and archaeological heritage;
(v) the ability to access the proposed development by alternative modes of transport to the private car and the impact that additional traffic will have on the area; and
(vi) the provision of ancillary facilities (toilets, refreshments, picnic areas, information points etc.) appropriate to the anticipated level of usage of the facility.

Proposals for recreational developments should be located close to the main areas of demand. In particular proposals for major recreational development should not be located in AONB or other environmentally-sensitive areas. Major proposals which would cause unacceptable environmental and social impacts on settlements will not normally be permitted.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

8.8 As with all forms of development, recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on the need for facilities for recreational, leisure and sporting activities to be accommodated within the criteria of environmental sustainability.

8.9 In the case of informal countryside recreation, facilities are generally of such a low key nature that the environmental impacts are usually minimal and often beneficial. However, recreational development can have environmental repercussions which are unintentional such as encouraging increased road traffic in rural areas. Increased visitor access to attractive landscapes may also generate conflicts with conservation of landscape, built heritage, flora and fauna, water resources, etc. The Countryside Access Strategy (for the former County of Herefordshire and Worcestershire) provides the strategic management framework to achieve these multiple objectives.

8.10 Development of formal recreational facilities - ranging from urban sports centres to golf courses and theme parks on historic sites - tends to raise greater environmental issues than informal countryside recreation, and needs to be addressed in separate strategic policies. These aspects, including the need for the facility, should be covered in leisure/recreation strategies produced by District Councils at the local level.

8.11 While development criteria for recreation should be applicable to all parts of the County, an overlay of extra protection is needed for designated areas such as AONBs, and statutorily designated Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Other areas/sites where specific problems are recognised, such as visitor honeypots (see Policies RST.7 and 8), should also receive extra protection. Specific recreation proposals will also need to be assessed against criteria from the County Landscape Character Assessment embodied in policies in the Conservation of Town and Country Chapter of the Plan and other policies in that chapter dealing with the natural environment and heritage of the County.

**Location of Informal Countryside Recreation Developments**

**Policy RST.2**

Proposals for development of informal recreation facilities in the countryside should demonstrate positive contributions in respect of the following:
CHAPTER EIGHT

RECREATION, SPORT AND TOURISM

(i) providing environmentally-sensitive access to countryside resources, including common land, woodland, watercourses, archaeology and built heritage;

(ii) providing good connections to the local rights of way network and/or permissive recreational routes, Regional Routes, National Trails, cycle routes etc;

(iii) the ability to access the proposed development by alternative modes of transport to the private car and the likely impact that additional car traffic will have on the area;

(iv) close proximity to the main urban concentrations of population and rural settlements; and

(v) making use of redundant, derelict or otherwise unused or underused property.

New country parks and other sites will normally be supported where they can meet these criteria.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.12 Policy RST.2 sets out the positive contributions it is expected should be demonstrated by any proposals for informal recreation facilities in order to ensure that the widest possible benefits, particularly in relation to sustainability, can be achieved.

Public Rights of Way

Policy RST.3

The public rights of way network will be managed, maintained and developed to secure the optimum recreational benefits compatible with environmental policies. Development proposals which are judged to reduce the utility, convenience, recreational value, attractiveness or historic significance of a public right of way to the user will not be permitted unless an alternative route of at least equal value can be provided. Proposals for new rights of way, permissive links and other forms of access agreement, to improve the recreational utility of the network, will be encouraged where appropriate.

Parish rights of way networks will be promoted as a local resource for recreation and sustainable tourism.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.13 Public rights of way are the primary resource for informal countryside access. While they still serve a limited community role for pedestrians and horse-riders, they are now mostly a recreational resource. The County Council’s role in the maintenance and management of maintenance is a statutory obligation, whilst powers to extend and improve the public path network are optional. The Plan policies are therefore directed mainly at promoting and enhancing this role.

Recreational Walking Routes

Policy RST.4

The development of recreational walking routes will continue to be promoted, based on the three recognised categories of:

(i) National Trail (long-distance);

(ii) Regional Routes (medium-distance); and

(iii) local walks.

Promoted routes will mostly use the statutory public rights of way network and, where necessary, permissive links. Wherever possible, routes will be aligned along safe, attractive, corridors (‘greenways’) which can also be used by cyclists, horse-riders and the less able.
The proposed upgrading of the Cotswold Way Regional Route to National Trail status is supported and, if approved by the Secretary of State, should be assisted by the improvement of facilities and public transport access on the section through Worcestershire.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.14 Walking is the most popular recreational activity, particularly in the countryside. The main providers of walking opportunities are the local authorities - through management of the public rights of way resource, and through the promotion of access land and selected short and longer-distance routes. Worcestershire County Council has a number of ‘Milestones’ targets and commitments in relation to public paths. Other public agencies and private sector operators also provide walking opportunities, increasingly in partnership with local authorities. Policy needs to reflect this partnership approach and to work within the guidelines provided by the Government’s main advisory agency, the Countryside Agency. Permissive paths, requiring the permission of a third party, will only be used where absolutely necessary and will not be seen as an adequate replacement for a statutory right of way.

Recreational Cycling Routes

Policy RST.5

The development of cycle routes will be promoted for recreation and tourism in accordance with the County Cycling Strategy. Priority will be given to routes which access popular visitor areas where they contribute to the provision of sustainable access for visitors and routes which allow access from the railway network. Opportunities will be sought to align cycle routes with safe, attractive, off-road greenways such as disused railways, canal towpaths, forestry tracks and linear parks, combined with the use of quiet roads to create continuous links in a County network. Development and extension of the National Cycle Network will be supported.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.15 Cycling is an increasingly popular activity for recreation and tourism. The attractive Worcestershire countryside and its network of quiet roads and off-road access offers great potential for recreational and tourist cycling. While these resources are readily available without being managed or promoted by public agencies, such agencies are best placed to deal with issues such as ensuring continuous links in a County network, safety at major road intersections, development of off-road routes, and coherent marketing for cycle tourism. As with walking, the main providers and promoters of safe, attractive leisure cycle routes are the local authorities and other public agencies.

8.16 The public bridleway network is available for cycle use and key routes can be improved by appropriate surfacing using existing legal provisions. Certain open access areas are also available to cyclists. However, both these resources need to be managed to minimise impacts on the environment and other visitors. In particular the transport impact of accessing the cycle routes by car should be considered in developing routes, and every opportunity taken to develop those which offer access by rail. Most off-road cycle routes can also be used by walkers and disabled people, but use by horse-riders is not always compatible from both a safety and maintenance viewpoint.

8.17 A County Cycling Strategy has been prepared to provide a policy framework for the development of cycling facilities and the management of support services. Policy RST.5 needs to reflect the priorities in this document in relation to recreational routes.

Horse Riding Routes

Policy RST.6

The development of short and longer-distance horse-riding routes will be promoted through the combination of public bridleways, open access areas, quiet roads and, where necessary, permissive links on private land, to create
CHAPTER EIGHT

Recreation, Sport and Tourism

Explanatory Memorandum

8.18 The County’s disjointed public bridleway network is not conducive to the assembly of continuous, safe off-road riding routes. Only by using minor roads, byways, open access land and permissive rides on private land can routes of substantial length be created and promoted. Local authorities have co-operated with the British Horse Society’s “Arrow” Project to devise long-distance County-based horse-routes. Implementation has been hindered by a lack of resources to tackle the clearance backlog on bridleways and the need for expensive improvement works to bridges and drainage. However the policy should nevertheless continue to identify opportunities for promotion of routes for local recreational or wider tourism use. Dual use with cyclists should be an objective wherever the two uses are compatible and acceptable in order that maximum recreational benefit is achieved.

Recreation in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy RST.7

Within the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, conservation of the unique character and qualities of the landscape and of nature conservation interests will have precedence over the development of recreation facilities. Development for recreation should be in keeping with the inherent distinctiveness of the local landscape, small-scale, constructed from appropriate materials and make a positive contribution to the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB.

Where there are localised visitor management problems due to the popularity of the area, recreation developments should also make a positive contribution to easing the problems.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.19 The recreation policies in the Plan are all sensitive to the need to protect landscape and ecological heritage throughout the County, and to conserve local distinctiveness. With the development of the landscape character approach, additional criteria, set out in Policy CTC.1, should be applied over and above those in PPG17. However special consideration is still required for broader landscapes designated at the national level. Principal amongst these are the two AONBs which are national designations aimed primarily at landscape conservation, with recreation a secondary concern. However, given the intensity of recreation pressures on many parts of the AONBs, co-ordinated visitor management is an essential pre-requisite of effective conservation. Recreation policies in AONBs therefore need an extra dimension of environmental protection beyond that afforded the rest of the County.

8.20 Given the key aim of the Plan to secure sustainable development, the difference in policy strength on recreation matters between AONBs and the rest of the County is much less marked than previously. The main differences relate to protection of the quintessential character which has led to AONB designation, together with issues of the location, scale, layout and design of development which is considered appropriate in an AONB.

8.21 The main AONB areas where localised visitor management problems are experienced are on the Malvern Hills and around Broadway. Problems to be addressed may include erosion, congestion and parking.

8.22 In considering recreational proposals or activities in the two AONBs the relevant sections of adopted Management Plans should be used as supplementary planning guidance, as should the new statutory management plans once developed.
Chapter Eight

Recreation, Sport and Tourism

Recreation in Areas Under Visitor Pressure

Policy RST.8

In areas where recreational pressures are concentrated, recreational provision should be co-ordinated through local countryside management strategies. Where appropriate, the countryside management approach may be used to provide a more integrated approach to address land use, management, nature conservation, recreation, cultural heritage and tourism issues in the countryside.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.23 This policy seeks to promote countryside management strategies and countryside management to guide land use change. Such co-ordinated working is considered essential to deliver recreation, conservation and landscape policy.

8.24 Certain areas of the County experience concentrated visitor management problems as a consequence of either their inherent attractiveness or their proximity to major urban populations. Parts of the AONBs fall into both these categories as do some areas which have no major protective designation. Especially vulnerable are the fringes of the principal towns which, with some exceptions, are not surrounded by high quality landscape. These areas are usually subject to environmental pressures on farmland, woodland, water resources etc., as well as the impacts of unmanaged recreation. Such problems need to be dealt with at both planning and countryside management levels, and must involve working closely with landowners. In such cases it is best practice to develop a local countryside management strategy to ensure all partners are working towards the same ends. Once these strategies are in place they should be used to aid decisions on applications for recreation development in their areas.

8.25 The North Worcestershire “Countryside Action” Project (NWCAP) was a countryside management partnership between the County Council and its District Council partners, which was in operation for some fifteen years. It worked with local communities to encourage small scale environmental improvements, and with its partners and other agencies, to implement strategically based environmental initiatives that benefit local people and visitors to the north of the County. Its focus was on addressing some of the pressing landscape, nature conservation and recreational issues typically found in this important, highly attractive and well used area of the County on the fringes of the West Midlands Conurbation.

8.26 This successful partnership approach has now been expanded by the County Council to cover the whole of the County, working where appropriate with District Councils, agencies and other organisations to provide for a more integrated approach to addressing the complex range of issues facing the Worcestershire countryside.

8.27 Policies in the previous Structure Plan were aimed at redistributing visitor pressure away from “honeypots” in AONBs and elsewhere have been recognised as having only a marginal effect on the problems, and have therefore been deleted in favour of co-ordinated overall management in such areas.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.23 This policy seeks to promote countryside management strategies and countryside management to guide land use change. Such co-ordinated working is considered essential to deliver recreation, conservation and landscape policy.

8.24 Certain areas of the County experience concentrated visitor management problems as a consequence of either their inherent attractiveness or their proximity to major urban populations. Parts of the AONBs fall into both these categories as do some areas which have no major protective designation. Especially vulnerable are the fringes of the principal towns which, with some exceptions, are not surrounded by high quality landscape. These areas are usually subject to environmental pressures on farmland, woodland, water resources etc., as well as the impacts of unmanaged recreation. Such problems need to be dealt with at both planning and countryside management levels, and must involve working closely with landowners. In such cases it is best practice to develop a local countryside management strategy to ensure all partners are working towards the same ends. Once these strategies are in place they should be used to aid decisions on applications for recreation development in their areas.

8.25 The North Worcestershire “Countryside Action” Project (NWCAP) was a countryside management partnership between the County Council and its District Council partners, which was in operation for some fifteen years. It worked with local communities to encourage small scale environmental improvements, and with its partners and other agencies, to implement strategically based environmental initiatives that benefit local people and visitors to the north of the County. Its focus was on addressing some of the pressing landscape, nature conservation and recreational issues typically found in this important, highly attractive and well used area of the County on the fringes of the West Midlands Conurbation.

8.26 This successful partnership approach has now been expanded by the County Council to cover the whole of the County, working where appropriate with District Councils, agencies and other organisations to provide for a more integrated approach to addressing the complex range of issues facing the Worcestershire countryside.

8.27 Policies in the previous Structure Plan were aimed at redistributing visitor pressure away from “honeypots” in AONBs and elsewhere have been recognised as having only a marginal effect on the problems, and have therefore been deleted in favour of co-ordinated overall management in such areas.

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Waterways and Open Water Areas

Policy RST.9

Priority will be given to securing improved access to waterways and open water areas, where there is no conflict with other Structure Plan policies. Specific exceptions to this policy will occur where:

(i) recreational over-use or conflicting uses cannot be resolved;

(ii) there is an unacceptable conflict with water supply or commercial uses;

(iii) any unacceptable pollution would arise;
(iv) there are overriding problems with public safety; and
(v) where adverse environmental impact would result.

The alignments of the Droitwich and Droitwich Junction Canals will be protected against development likely to obstruct restoration or adversely affect associated operational and historic structures and where obstructive development has already occurred or is unavoidable, an alternative alignment will be identified and protected. Where appropriate, the towpaths will be progressively incorporated in the County network of recreational facilities as the canal restoration proceeds, and made available for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and disabled people.

Support will be given for enhanced access to existing canals and canal sides for low-key informal recreation.

On navigable rivers and operational canals, development involving permanent moorings in a linear form, other than overnight stays, will not normally be permitted. The majority of permanent moorings will be located in basins or marinas, generally in urban locations or sites used historically for this function.

Opportunities for the recreational use of new water areas which become available as a result of mineral extraction, or the creation of reservoirs or amenity lakes, will be supported in so far as they accord with the Structure Plan’s policies, serve a recognised demand and have regard to the needs of all potential users. Priority will be given to the identification of one new water area of sufficient size to support water sports facilities.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.28 The County is blessed with attractive rivers and canals, but lacks substantial areas of open water. Informal public access to all these resources is surprisingly scarce, with waterside recreation routes being notably absent. Policy RST.9 is therefore aimed at increasing opportunities for waterside access and, where environmentally acceptable, supporting the restoration of former waterways and the creation of new water areas for leisure and amenity uses. In considering development priority should be given to improving new or existing access in assessing potential conflicts with other elements of the proposal.

8.29 In applying this policy a balance needs to be struck between protecting countryside resources and encouraging development which can bring benefits to rural areas. Policy RST.9 should be cross-referenced with rural policies in the Development Chapter (D.8, D.27, D.29, D.30, D.35 and D.42).

Outdoor Sports in the Countryside

Policy RST.10

Proposals for the provision of facilities for outdoor sports which have a legitimate need to use countryside resources will be supported, where they conform with other policies in the Structure Plan.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.30 Many types of informal and formal outdoor sports make use of countryside resources with varying degrees of impact on the environment and land use. This policy seeks to ensure that only those uses appropriate to the countryside and their location should be encouraged. Some occur as a result of private agreements between user groups and landholders, others as the result of specific provision by public agencies. Some are regulated by the 14-days a year rule, others necessitate full planning permission for permanent or more frequent use, particularly if development of buildings, courses or tracks is required. Policy RST.10 is a general policy to facilitate and control provision and its aims can be achieved by a variety of means, and not
solely secured by legal agreement. The detail of provision is likely to be a matter for Local Plan policies and Recreation/Leisure Strategies.

**Major Sports Facilities**

**Policy RST.11**

The development of purpose-built facilities for sports and formal recreation catering for regional and sub-regional needs will only be allowed in accordance with Policies SD.6, SD.7 and SD.8 and where access by public transport can be maximised. Major sports field developments will also need to be assessed against strict environmental criteria covering noise, lighting and hours of operation.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

8.31 Purpose-built sport facilities likely to attract substantial numbers of people will be required to be developed in accordance with the overall development strategy of the Plan (i.e. within the urban areas). This will ensure that they are developed in the most sustainable locations within the County and will contribute to the objective of reducing the need to travel and will help towards achieving a balance of facilities within urban areas.

8.32 It will be necessary to ensure that proposals for major sports field development are assessed at the local level to ensure that issues of visual and aural pollution, particularly from floodlit activities during evening hours, do not arise.

**Recreational Provision in Settlements**

**Policy RST.12**

The creation and conservation of informal and formal open spaces (or networks of open spaces) in settlements, will be encouraged to meet regional and local recreation needs. Priority for active promotion will be given to:

(i) proposals to link open spaces in settlements to the wider countryside;

(ii) areas with inadequate current provision;

(iii) facilities catering for a wider range of user types including joint uses; and

(iv) facilities that are accessible by other modes of transport, particularly public transport.

District Planning Authorities will determine the appropriate open space standards in the review of Local Plans.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

8.33 In accordance with the Plan’s objectives of protecting and expanding open spaces, Policy RST.12 is aimed at trying to secure adequate provision of informal and formal open spaces in settlements. It is also intended to ensure that where open spaces and playing fields already exist that they are not lost to other forms of development such that an adequate level of provision in the settlement cannot be maintained.

8.34 National standards for open space as set out by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) do not adequately reflect variations in local circumstances and needs or in fact, changes in social needs for recreational open space as the standards were set in 1925. Therefore, while NPFA standards can be used as a base, Local Planning Authorities will determine their own standards.

**Golf Courses**

**Policy RST.13**

Proposals for the development of golf courses should preferably be adjacent to
the urban areas and main settlements in the County. Proposals should be sympathetic to and compatible with the landscape character of the area in which they are proposed and accord with other relevant policies in the Structure Plan.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.35 Golf courses can have a significant impact on the countryside. They should be located and designed to ensure harmony with the surrounding countryside and the natural environment. Locations closer to the main areas of population in the County are to be preferred as they will help to minimise the need to travel and distances to be travelled. Specific consideration should be given to the requirements of Policy CTC.1, which is intended to ensure development is compatible with the landscape character of an area.

Tourism

8.36 The value of the tourism industry to Worcestershire has long been acknowledged and the previous Structure Plan for Hereford and Worcester County encouraged tourism development for both the wealth and employment generation associated with it and for the contribution it can make to the economic and social well-being of the County. There is no reason why this approach should not continue in the future. Tourism development should however not be at any price, and within the County any development should be in line with the concept of “sustainable tourism”. To achieve this, the promotion of tourism in the County should fully embrace the Plan’s objectives, particularly those in relation to conservation of resources, impact on the County environment, impact on communities, and pollution of the environment, such as by trip generation by private car.

8.37 The most important tourism resource which the County possesses is its high quality natural and built landscape. At the same time the County is generally easily accessible, in particular to the Metropolitan Area, and equally accessible therefore to a wider tourist market via air links through Birmingham Airport. A main tourism issue is, however, how to access the various attractive locations and facilities around the County without detrimental effects to the overall County environment and in ways which accord with sustainable transport.

8.38 As with all policies in the Plan, the tourism policies must be read in conjunction with all other policies. However, it is particularly important that they are considered in the light of the policies set out in respect of Sustainable Development, Transport and Conservation of Town and Country, as well as the Recreation and Sport policies elsewhere in this Chapter. This is in accordance with PPG21 “Tourism” which states that “the planning process can assist tourism development, but only in ways that take full account of other related policies” (para. 2.7).

Policies

Tourism Development

Policy RST.14

The development of the tourism industry throughout the County will be encouraged with the twofold aim of generating wealth and employment and of contributing to the economic and social well-being of the residents of the County thereby enhancing quality of life.

Proposals for tourism-related development will be assessed against other policies in the Structure Plan. In particular an assessment will be made of:

(i) the impact on landscape character and features;
(ii) the impact on AONB or AGLV;
(iii) the impact on nature conservation interests;
(iv) the impact on the built and archaeological heritage;
(v) the existing or potential accessibility by modes other than the car; and
(vi) the scale of the development and ancillary facilities in relation to its location.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

**8.39** Policy RST.14 makes it clear that, in view of the benefits it can bring, tourism is to be encouraged in the County, but that care needs to be taken to ensure that in so doing, unacceptable damage is not caused to the County's natural and built assets. Particular attention also needs to be paid to trying to ensure that facilities can be accessed, as far as possible, by means other than by car, so contributing to the sustainable transport objectives of the Plan.

**Development of Tourism Potential**

**Policy RST.15**

Proposals which seek to develop the tourist potential of the County's rural areas, urban areas, towns, villages and industrial, archaeological and historical heritage will be promoted where they are acceptable in relation to Policy RST.14. Proposals which help to conserve historic buildings, or features of importance, are to be particularly encouraged, as are the development of facilities for holidays on inland waterways or facilities which contribute to the local distinctiveness of an area.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

8.40 It is important to encourage tourism development throughout the whole County so long as it is acceptable in terms of Policy RST.14. The development of facilities in non-traditional destinations will help spread the benefits to be gained from tourism throughout the County, whilst at the same time helping to reduce pressures on the most popular parts of the County. Facilities can play an important role in conserving features and in contributing to the local distinctiveness of different areas of the County.

**Tourist Accommodation**

**Policy RST.16**

The development of tourist accommodation (in particular serviced and self-catering) in or attached to existing buildings and the development of new accommodation where it is in accordance with Policy RST.14 will be encouraged. Development could include:

(i) new or additional accommodation at country inns;
(ii) the renovation of suitable buildings for self-catering holidays;
(iii) the use of larger houses as hotels, guest houses or self-catering flats; and
(iv) new hotels and conference facilities.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

8.41 The intention of Policy RST.16 is to encourage the provision of adequate levels of tourist accommodation throughout the County, to cater for differing needs. The development types listed are examples of accommodation and the list is not intended to preclude other forms of accommodation.

**Holiday Chalets**

**Policy RST.17**

Proposals for the development of new holiday chalets will be assessed against Policy RST.14. Where District Planning Authorities are mindful to grant planning permission for holiday chalets they will
make arrangements to ensure that the chalets remain solely for holiday use. The development of new chalets for residential purposes will not be allowed.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.42 Chalet development can be an acceptable form of accommodation to meet specific tourist demands, although care must be taken to ensure that any development does not have adverse impacts on the surrounding countryside or special features within it. It is also important to note that arrangements must be made when granting permission to ensure that they are for holiday use only and cannot acquire residential use rights.

Holiday Caravan Sites

Policy RST.18

Proposals for new static holiday caravans will be assessed against Policy RST.14. Development of new sites will not normally be allowed in AONB and AGLV or in other locations where they will be harmful to the landscape character of the area.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.43 Proposals for static holiday caravan sites will have to be assessed against Policy RST.14. The policy is intended to make it clear that in particular it is considered unlikely that sites will be allowed in the more sensitive and protected landscape areas of the County or where they are unlikely to be able to fit within the particular landscape character of an area in accordance with Policy CTC.1.

Touring Caravan Sites

Policy RST.19

The provision of sites for touring caravans and camping will be acceptable in locations which conform with Policy RST.14.

Explanatory Memorandum

8.44 Touring caravan and camping sites accommodate a legitimate tourist need and will be acceptable in locations which accord with Policy RST.14. In this respect locations which allow onward tourism activity to take place by modes of transport other than the private car (e.g. walking, cycling holidays or public transport services) are to be encouraged.
### Policy Linkages

The matrix below cross-refers Minerals Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

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9. **MINERALS**

**Introduction**

9.1 Worcestershire is not a large producer of minerals. Construction aggregates make up most of the mineral output of the County (about 1 million tonnes per annum). Cut stone is produced at one hard rock quarry and some brick clay is also extracted.

9.2 The working of minerals is a temporary use of land but it can last a long time, and, whilst in progress, it can cause disruption to communities and the environment, and may permanently alter the landscape of the local area in which it occurs. Quarrying is however essential to support development and it does have its benefits. It creates jobs, and it helps diversify the local economy by generating markets for goods and services. This can benefit rural areas where jobs are scarce and may help to retain local facilities such as shops, post offices and schools. Furthermore mineral working can provide opportunities to create new wildlife habitats, open up sites of geological interest and provide new areas for recreation use.

9.3 The Government has issued guidance in MPG6 “Guidelines for Aggregate Provision in England” 1994, about the level of aggregate production for which provision should be made in Development Plans. For the West Midlands Region the levels are 180 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 150 million tonnes of crushed rock over the period 1992-2006. The West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party has apportioned this between the constituent authorities and Worcestershire’s share is 15.3 million tonnes of sand and gravel (8.5% of Regional production) and 2.7 million tonnes of crushed rock (1.8% of Regional production) over this period, an average of 1.1 and 0.2 million tonnes per annum respectively. The approved Minerals Local Plan, inter alia, details preferred areas for extraction for the period up to 2003 to enable these requirements to be met. New guidelines will be produced by the Government during the currency of this Plan. Provision for mineral working beyond 2003 will be reviewed when the new Local Plan is prepared.

9.4 The main sand and gravel resources in the County occur in solid deposits in north Worcestershire, terrace deposits along the Rivers Severn and Avon and fan deposits to the south and east of Bredon Hill, close to the County boundary with Gloucestershire. The Abberley/Suckley/Malvern Hills, the edge of the Cotswolds near Broadway, and Bredon Hill contain the hard rock resources of the County, whereas brick clay is found near Hartlebury.

9.5 There is a difficult balance to be maintained between meeting the need for minerals and ensuring no significant harm is caused to the environment. Aggregates and bricks are essential components of much new development and the proposals for new houses, shops, schools, offices, factories and roads during the Structure Plan period will help create a demand for construction materials and unless alternatives are available, brick clay and primary aggregates will continue to be won and worked to meet this need. If minerals extraction in Worcestershire is to be sustainable and in accordance with the objectives of the Structure Plan, it will be necessary to ensure that:

- land is not made available for mineral extraction in excess of identified need so as to conserve the resources for as long as possible whilst still ensuring an adequate supply for present day use;
- extraction and transportation of the mineral is carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner;
- used construction/demolition materials are recycled to produce alternatives to primary aggregates and then used wherever practicable;
9.6 The following policies set out the overall parameters for the extraction of minerals in the County. They should be read in conjunction with the adopted Minerals Local Plan for Hereford and Worcester County which covers the period 1994-2003, which has been endorsed by Worcestershire County Council. A new Minerals Local Plan will be prepared during the currency of this Structure Plan.

### Policies

#### Regional Production

**Policy M.1**

Worcestershire’s share of the regional production of aggregates should be met through the allocation of sufficient land and the maintenance of a land bank of permitted reserves in accordance with current national policy guidance and regional guidelines, subject always to the taking into account of relevant development plan policies.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

9.7 The County Council accepts that a certain level of aggregates production is necessary to meet the development needs of the Region. Policy M.1 makes clear the Council’s commitment to its role as a Mineral Planning Authority within the West Midlands Region and its intention to adhere to national and regional policy guidelines.

#### Safeguarding of Deposits

**Policy M.2**

Known mineral deposits will be safeguarded as far as possible. Proposals for development which would sterilise them or prevent them being worked will be resisted unless:

1. it can be demonstrated that no workable deposit exists; or
2. the mineral is extracted prior to the commencement of the proposed development; or
3. extraction is not possible without unacceptable effects on the environment.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

9.8 All identified deposits could be required in the future and Policy M.2 seeks to avoid sterilising or prejudicing their future working. Ideally development should not take place over, or very close to, identified deposits to ensure that the potential to extract the underlying mineral is not lost.

9.9 As part of the Minerals Local Plan process, maps of Mineral Consultation Areas (MCAs) which correspond to the identified deposits, have been prepared. These enable the District Planning Authorities to consult the Mineral Planning Authority on development proposals in these areas which would be likely to affect, or be affected by, the winning and working of minerals and to have regard to the implications of this.

#### Mineral Extraction

**Policy M.3**

Mineral extraction, processing or associated development will normally only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the best and most versatile agricultural land, local
amenities, landscape character or features of landscape, historic and nature conservation importance will not be unacceptably affected, and safe access can be provided. Proposals in AONB or affecting SSSI or designated sites of international importance will be subject to the most rigorous examination.

Explanatory Memorandum

9.10 The County Council places a high value on the conservation and enhancement where possible, of the natural environment and landscape assets and as a consequence will seek to avoid damage to them. In so doing, particular attention will be paid to proposals in AONB or those affecting SSSI or designated sites of international importance which will be subject to a most rigorous examination of the possible impacts of the proposal on these designated areas. This stance is compatible with the concept of sustainable development as expressed in national policy guidelines set out in MPG1 “General Considerations and the Development Plan System” July 1996. These environmental constraints are further elaborated in the Minerals Local Plan for the County and applications for minerals extraction will be considered against the policies in that Plan.

9.11 Where relevant, proposals will be subject to environmental assessment in accordance with the appropriate and prevailing legislation.

Restoration and Aftercare

Policy M.4

All mineral extraction operations shall be carried out in accordance with approved schemes for working, restoration and aftercare. The approved restoration and aftercare plan should provide for an after-use and landscape/landform acceptable to the Minerals Planning Authority, enhancing the landscape and ecological quality where appropriate. Where ecological quality is to be enhanced BAP target habitats should be created. Where it is necessary to ensure that proper management of a restored site continues beyond the five-year aftercare period, the necessary provisions to cover this will need to be in place prior to planning permission being issued.

Explanatory Memorandum

9.12 Where permission for minerals extraction is granted, conditions will be imposed to ensure that long term benefit is achieved after the development has ceased. Land used for mineral working should be restored as soon as possible and not allowed to become derelict. One or more uses following extraction can represent a sustainable use, avoiding the need to develop on greenfield sites e.g. extraction followed by waste disposal followed by a recreational use.

9.13 In order to ensure that sites are reclaimed to as high a standard as is practicable, restoration and aftercare schemes will be required to be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that the proposals can be achieved. In some cases (for example, proposals to restore nature conservation or water uses), legal agreements will be necessary to ensure that proposals are fully realised. Where the proposed afteruse is for amenity or nature conservation, specific management will usually be required for longer than the statutory five-year period. In such cases, the Mineral Planning Authority will ensure that the necessary binding agreements or other provisions are in place prior to granting planning permission.

9.14 The approved restoration and aftercare plan should provide for an afteruse and landscape/landform acceptable to the Mineral Planning Authority, enhancing the landscape and ecological quality where appropriate. Where ecological quality is to be enhanced Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan target habitats should be created in accordance with Policy CTC.15.
Abberley and Malvern Hills

Policy M.5

Unless it can be shown that the need for the mineral overrides environmental considerations, no further planning permissions will be granted for aggregates mineral working in the Abberley Hills area apart from the possible modification of working, subject to environmental considerations, within the existing lateral limits of Woodbury and Shavers End quarries. No further planning permissions will be granted for the extraction of granite from the Malvern Hills.

Explanatory Memorandum

9.15 The County Council is particularly concerned about the visual impact of further quarrying in the Abberley Hills area and has decided to limit any future hard rock quarrying there to the areas worked under the terms of existing consents. It considers that the range of hills (area defined in the Minerals Local Plan as Inset Proposals Map AH) from Martley northwards through Great Witley and Abberley towards Dunley, is a very attractive and prominent landscape feature. Consequently the County Council considers that the area is of such importance that the landscape should be protected, and that quarrying should not be allowed to continue, or to be extended indefinitely, or become more widespread.

9.16 The Malvern Hills are visually dominant over a wide area of the Severn Valley and form a landscape feature of national importance that has been given recognition as an AONB. Quarrying of the granite ceased in this area in the late 1960s and the County Council has concluded, that in its view there are no circumstances in which the environmental considerations could be overcome, such that further extraction, with its potential to damage the shape and character of the Hills, would be justified.

Recycled Materials

Policy M.6

The production, processing, treatment, storage and use of materials suitable for use as alternatives to primary aggregates will be encouraged. Preference will be given to proposals in the following general locations, provided they conform with other development plan policies:

(i) existing or proposed industrial areas;

(ii) derelict or despoiled areas;

(iii) permanent facilities close to major sources of construction waste arisings and temporary facilities on or adjacent to demolition sites; or

(iv) working or worked out mineral or landfill sites.

Explanatory Memorandum

9.17 As part of the implementation of a sustainable minerals strategy it is important that every effort is made to reduce the need for primary aggregate production. In particular, the County Council considers that demolition and construction wastes should be utilised to produce materials that can be used in place of primary aggregates in development projects. Policy M.6 is in line with the national guidelines for waste and those stated in the Minerals Planning Guidance Notes. Facilities should, wherever possible, be in the vicinity of urban areas, including the West Midlands Conurbation, close to sources of demolition and construction wastes, and potential markets for the product, in order to help reduce the need to transport materials over long distances. It is anticipated that in some circumstances mineral extraction sites could also provide suitable locations with the potential to utilise the same machinery, where there is sufficient land for the storage of materials.
The matrix below cross-refers Waste Management Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

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Chapter Ten

Waste Management

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10. WASTE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

10.1 The County Council is seeking to ensure that the management of waste in Worcestershire conforms to the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) principles set out in Government’s Waste Strategy 2000 (May 2000) and in PPG10 Planning and Waste Management (September 1999). In determining the BPEO for a waste stream, the County Council will give consideration to the proximity principle, regional self-sufficiency and waste hierarchy. These are expanded upon throughout this chapter. The waste hierarchy provides a framework to the waste management options that should be considered when assessing the BPEO for a waste stream. These are:

- reduction;
- reuse;
- recycling, composting or energy recovery (recovering value);
- incineration without energy recovery or landfill (disposal, only to be done if none of the above are appropriate).

10.2 The controlled waste stream produced in Worcestershire consists of municipal, industrial and commercial waste. In 1998-99 about 250,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste was collected in Worcestershire, of which some 190,000 tonnes was household waste and 60,000 tonnes civic amenity waste. 559,000 tonnes was industrial waste and 252,000 tonnes was commercial waste.

10.3 About 84% of the municipal waste produced in Worcestershire was handled within Worcestershire by disposal to landfill. About 64% of industrial waste and 27% of commercial waste was either reused or recycled. About 63% of industrial and commercial waste was disposed of within Worcestershire.

10.4 In 1999 about 11.7 million cubic metres of licensed landfill void space was available within Worcestershire for biodegradable waste. This was equivalent to 10.4 years supply at current rates of input. However one of the key aims of the European Commission Landfill Directive is to divert a high proportion of municipal biodegradable waste away from landfill and this will reduce the amount of waste being landfilled in the future.

10.5 As the Waste Planning Authority for Worcestershire, the County Council is required to address in the Structure Plan, the strategic land use implications of managing and disposing of waste material within Worcestershire. The County Council seeks to ensure that the required facilities to treat and dispose of waste within Worcestershire are provided without causing harm to local amenity and the environment. The County Council’s objectives in achieving waste management accord with Government’s objectives set out in paragraph 5 of PPG10 Planning and Waste Management (September 1999). The County Council’s objectives are:

- to provide a waste strategy which enables adequate provision to be made for waste management facilities to meet the needs of the people of Worcestershire for the reuse, recovery and disposal of waste, taking account of the potential for waste minimisation and the particular needs in respect of special waste;
- to help meet the needs of business and encourage competitiveness in the County;
- to encourage sensitive waste management practices in order to preserve or enhance the overall quality of the County’s environment and avoid risks to human health;
- to have regard to the need to protect Worcestershire’s areas of designated landscape and nature conservation value from inappropriate development;
- to minimise adverse environmental impacts resulting from the handling,
processing, transport and disposal of waste;

- to consider what new facilities may be needed in the County, in light of wastes forecast to arise; and

- to ensure that opportunities for incorporating reuse/recycling facilities in new developments are properly considered.

10.6 As a Waste Disposal Authority, the County Council in conjunction with the County of Herefordshire District Council has entered into a 25 year Integrated Waste Management Contract covering all municipal waste arising within the area of the two Counties. The contract requires varying proportions of the waste to be recycled, composted or to have value recovered from it in line with the national Waste Strategy. Waste Strategy 2000 sets a target, by 2005, to reduce the volume of industrial and commercial waste landfilled to 85% of 1998 levels. Whilst household waste is a relatively small part of the overall waste stream, the Waste Strategy emphasises the importance of making progress towards managing it more sustainably. The Government has set targets to increase the recycling of municipal waste which are:

- To recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005.

- To recycle or compost at least 30% of household waste by 2010.

- To recycle or compost at least 33% of household waste by 2015.

Policies

### Waste Hierarchy

**Policy WD.1**

Proposals for the management of waste must have regard to the following key principles:

(i) the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO);

(ii) the proximity principle;

(iii) regional self-sufficiency; and

(iv) the waste hierarchy.

Those proposals which are at the upper end of the hierarchy, contribute towards the achievement of national targets for waste minimisation, recovery and recycling, and provide the most benefits or least damage to the environment as a whole, in the long term as well as in the short term, will be supported.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

10.7 The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BEPO) procedure establishes “for a given set of objectives, the option that provides the most benefits or the least damage to the environment, as a whole, at acceptable cost, in the long term as well as in the short term.” In determining the BPEO, paragraph 4.5 of the Waste Strategy 2000 expects those making decisions to take account of three key considerations, namely the waste hierarchy, the proximity principle and regional self-sufficiency.

10.8 The waste hierarchy provides a theoretical framework to be used as a guide to the waste management options which should be considered when assessing the BPEO for a waste stream. These are:

- reduction

- reuse

- recycling, composting or energy recovery (recovering value)

- incineration without energy recovery or landfill (disposal, only to be done if none of the above are appropriate).

10.9 It is national policy that most waste should be treated or disposed of within the region in which it is produced. Generally the
Waste Management

CHAPTER TEN

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste should be managed as near as possible to its place of production because transporting waste itself has an environmental impact.

10.10 The Highways Agency should be consulted on any proposals that may affect the trunk road network.

Location of Waste Handling and Treatment Facilities

Policy WD.2

Facilities for the handling and treatment of waste should be located as near to its place of origin as possible. They should not conflict with the aims and policies in the Structure Plan, and should preferably be located within buildings on existing or proposed industrial estates where the infrastructure and surrounding uses are appropriate. Where the design or operation of the facility makes this inappropriate, the following areas should be considered:

(i) derelict or despoiled areas;
(ii) areas close to arisings;
(iii) working or worked out mineral or landfill sites;
(iv) existing waste management sites; or
(v) sites located close to railways or water transport wharves or major junctions in the road network.

Explanatory Memorandum

10.11 The purpose of Policy WD.2 is to set out the criteria to be used in selecting suitable locations for facilities which handle and treat waste materials. The policy accords with Government’s proximity principle, which suggests that waste should generally be disposed of as near to its place of origin as possible. This is in part to ensure that problems are not exported to other regions or counties and also recognises that the transportation of waste materials can have a significant environmental impact.

10.12 The majority of waste arisings in the County originate in urban areas. Therefore, in line with the proximity principle, the majority of new waste handling and treatment facilities will be developed within or adjacent to urban areas in accordance with the Development Strategy of the Structure Plan (Policies SD.6, 7 and 8). In any event, proposals for such facilities should accord with Annex A of PPG10 Planning and Waste Management (September 1999).

10.13 By locating waste management facilities near to the main sources of waste arisings, the County Council is seeking to reduce the need to transport waste materials over long distances, thereby helping reduce congestion and pollution caused by traffic. It is important that the Waste Planning Authority also consider the mode of transport and not just the distance: a longer journey by river or rail may be environmentally preferable to a shorter road journey.

10.14 However, it is also recognised that some waste management facilities, such as composting, may require more extensive sites which are unlikely to be available on an industrial estate. The most appropriate locations for composting would generally be in rural areas.

Waste Management Facilities

Policy WD.3

Facilities involving the transfer, storage, bulking, separation, recycling, composting, incineration or other treatment of waste should be compatible with their surroundings; where safe access can be provided and the associated traffic does not adversely affect highway safety or have a significant adverse environmental impact along associated routes. Such facilities should not cause significant harm to local amenities, landscape character, features of landscape, historic or nature conservation importance, or best and
most versatile agricultural land and should not give rise to a significant risk of pollution. Any proposals in AONB or affecting SSSI will be subject to the most rigorous examination.

Provision for local community schemes to aid recycling, composting etc. should be considered as part of new proposals for residential and commercial development.

Explanatory Memorandum

10.15 In determining the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) for the disposal of a waste stream, paragraph 4.5 of the Waste Strategy 2000 expects the Waste Planning Authority to take account of the waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy is set out in paragraph 10.8 of the Structure Plan. The County Council is seeking to encourage the disposal of waste materials towards the upper end of the hierarchy when assessing the BPEO. This reflects the Government’s strategy to maximise the amount of value we recover from waste, through increased recycling, composting and energy recovery.

10.16 Policy WD.3 sets out the criteria to be taken into account when identifying sites for waste management facilities, other than sites for landfill (see Structure Plan Policy WD.4). In any event, proposals for such facilities should accord with other relevant Structure Plan policies and Annex A of PPG10 Planning and Waste Management (September 1999).

10.17 Policy WD.3 also encourages the provision of local community schemes to aid recycling, composting etc.

Landfill

Policy WD.4

In considering the suitability of sites for landfill, in addition to the criteria set out in Policy WD.3, the following criteria will also be taken into account:

(i) the cumulative impact of disposal facilities; and

(ii) the extent to which the deposit of waste materials could assist in the reclamation or improvement of land.

All landfill operations must be carried out in such a way that the land can be put to beneficial use on completion. The landfilling of materials suitable for reuse/recycling will be resisted.

Explanatory Memorandum

10.18 The Government’s Waste Strategy 2000 requires the amount of waste being sent to landfill to be substantially reduced. The County Council is committed to achieving this goal and this is reflected in the encouragement to adopt sustainable waste management options towards the upper end of the waste hierarchy in Structure Plan Policy WD.1. However, the County Council recognises that landfill may be the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) for the disposal of certain waste materials and has a valuable role to play in the reclamation of worked out mineral sites to achieve a beneficial after use.

10.19 Policy WD.4 sets out the criteria to be taken into account when identifying sites for the landfilling of waste materials. In any event, proposals for landfill facilities should accord with other relevant Structure Plan policies, in particular, the criteria set out in Policy WD.3, and with Annex A of PPG10 Planning and Waste Management (September 1999).
The matrix below cross-refer Energy Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure Plan Policy</th>
<th>Links to other policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EN.1 Renewable Energy Facilities</td>
<td>SD.1, SD.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN.2 Wind Turbines</td>
<td>CTC.1, CTC.10, CTC.12, CTC.13, CTC.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>EN.3 Waste to Energy</td>
<td>WD.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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11. Energy

Introduction

11.1 Major environmental problems are associated with the generation and consumption of energy. By far the most important of these is the emission of gases such as carbon dioxide caused by the burning of fossil fuels which contribute to global warming, acid rain, and ozone depletion. As well as their impact on air quality and climate, traditional energy sources are finite and there is a need to find renewable sources of energy that cause minimal harm to the environment and ideally are infinite.

11.2 PPG12 Development Plans (December 1999) advises that energy generation, including renewable energy, is a key issue for inclusion in development plans.

11.3 Policies for the location of new development can contribute to a reduction in energy use by influencing patterns of travel. These are set out elsewhere in this Structure Plan. Similarly, the siting and orientation of development can influence energy use and policies to encourage energy conservation by this means should be included in Local Plans in accordance with the broader Structure Plan policy framework and in particular those policies on Sustainable Development set out elsewhere in the Structure Plan.

11.4 The policies in this Chapter of the Structure Plan deal specifically with the conservation of finite energy sources (for example coal and oil) by the promotion of renewable energy sources in line with PPG22 Renewable Energy (February 1993).

11.5 The exploitation of renewable sources of energy clearly depend upon their presence in a particular area. For example, wind power will only be viable in areas exposed to high annual mean wind speeds. The acceptability of renewable energy projects must be judged in the light of their impact on the objectives of the Structure Plan and should always be assessed against the harm they may cause to the local environment.

11.6 There are a number of potential sources of renewable energy in Worcestershire which could supply local or sub-regional needs. On a local level, the most likely sources of renewable energy generation are solar, biogas, energy crops and wind power.

11.7 Solar energy is the conversion of sunshine/light into electricity (active solar energy) and the capture of heat and light from the sun around buildings (passive solar energy). It is likely that this form of energy generation will be viable in the County and should be encouraged in new and existing developments where it does not adversely harm other aspects of the environment.

11.8 Biogas is the by-product of composted horticultural/agricultural waste which can be used directly as a fuel, or converted to electricity. It is difficult to establish the exact potential of this source of energy which is dependent on agricultural policy and the availability/promotion of local processing facilities.

11.9 The feasibility of producing energy from farm crops such as straw, oil seed rape, and forest waste/short rotation coppicing, provides a theoretical capacity in a County with extensive rural areas such as Worcestershire, but the conditions to exploit this potential relies on both Government policy and agricultural policy and also the availability of processing facilities.

11.10 The existence of areas of high land around the County similarly, in theory, offers the opportunity to develop on a local scale renewable energy from wind turbines provided landscape intrusion is minimised.

11.11 The County Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Waste Local Plan, one of the aims of which will be to reduce the amount of waste production which will have numerous environmental benefits. However, waste production from domestic and commercial sources will continue to be substantial for the foreseeable future, and there is potential to
produce energy from the by-products of waste, either directly or through conversion to heat. At a County level, there is potential for substantial energy generation from the incineration of waste and electricity generation from landfill (methane). This already takes place at the Hill and Moor and Penny Hill waste disposal sites.

Policies

**Renewable Energy Facilities**

**Policy EN.1**

Proposals for the development of facilities to provide renewable energy will be supported subject to the other policies of the Structure Plan, particularly those relating to the local environmental effects of development.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

11.12 Development proposals for harnessing renewable energy sources including those for Combined Heat and Power (CHP) will generally be supported, and assessments of proposals should be carried out in the light of other policies contained in this Structure Plan to ensure that the same considerations are given to the location and development of renewable energy facilities as to other development. This applies in particular to an examination of the possible environmental implications of such proposals.

11.13 In addition to other Structure Plan policies, PPG22 Renewable Energy (February 1993) requires that reference should be made to the need to take account of local, regional and national requirements in terms of energy generation.

**Waste to Energy**

**Policy EN.3**

Proposals for facilities for the generation of energy from landfill waste or from the incineration of waste will be endorsed subject to other policies in the Structure Plan and if they provide the best practicable environmental option.

**Explanatory Memorandum**

11.15 There is potential within Worcestershire for energy generation from both methane gas from landfill waste and the incineration of waste. Whilst such proposals will be supported, they should conform to other Structure Plan policies on the general location of development, minimising the harm they may pose to the natural and built environment. Prior to the consideration of the incineration of waste every effort should be taken to minimise waste levels through the reuse, recycling and composting of materials which can be recovered from the waste stream.
11.16 Incineration of waste should normally include the generation of energy as a key element of the project and should form part of a sustainable plan for waste management. It is, however, acknowledged that there may be instances where there is need for the incineration of material and where the generation of energy is not a practical option (for example, chemical waste).
The matrix below cross-refers Implementation of Development Policies to other Structure Plan policies which are, or may be, of particular relevance. The Plan however should be read as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure Plan Policy</th>
<th>Links to other policies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMP.1 Implementation of Development</td>
<td>T.2</td>
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</table>
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Chapter Twelve

12. Implementation of Development

Introduction

12.1 The major objective of the Plan is to ensure that the County moves forward in a way which is in keeping with the principles of sustainability. All development will be expected to help achieve the sustainability objectives of the Plan and to ensure, through its implementation, that there is a general move towards rather than away from sustainability.

12.2 To help secure this objective Local Planning Authorities will use planning obligations where appropriate. Circular 1/97 “Planning Obligations” sets out that Development Plans should provide the basis for justifying the use of planning obligations and should indicate what will be expected from developers.

12.3 Planning obligations provide a valuable instrument to secure, inter alia, the better co-ordination of facilities to improve accessibility and to obviate the need to travel; to secure a high quality of design; to ensure the provision of an adequate element of affordable housing; to secure nature conservation benefits as a result of development which impacts upon a natural resource; and to enable the provision of essential community facilities such as education, open space and recreation or sporting facilities.

12.4 Planning obligations will only be sought where they are deemed to be necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed development; and fairly and reasonably related to the scale and nature of the proposed development. Within this context developers will be expected to finance the cost of provisions associated with the development or as a consequence of its impact on the wider environment.

12.5 In order to ensure the effective implementation of policies, it will be necessary to maintain up to date development plans throughout the County. Specifically, revised PPG12 (Development Plans) expects those local authorities which have not yet adopted their plans to fulfil their statutory responsibility without further delay, and progress their plan to adoption as quickly as possible.

Implementation of Development

Policy IMP.1

The design and provisions of new development will be expected to help achieve the sustainability objectives of the Structure Plan.

Where appropriate, developers will be required to make provision for related environmental works, infrastructure and community facilities and services. The more detailed requirements will be set out in Local Plans or development briefs after consultation between the appropriate Local Planning Authorities, other service providers and other relevant bodies, such as the regulatory authorities.

Developers will be required to finance the full cost of all such provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and its impact on the local environment.

These provisions will be the subject of planning obligations in accordance with the relevant legislation which will be secured prior to the issue of planning permission and will include:

(i) those within the development site that are necessary in the interests of comprehensive planning and sustainable development; and

(ii) those off-site that are necessary in order to serve the development or mitigate its impact.
Explanatory Memorandum

12.6 Policy IMP.1 is strategic in nature and provides a framework to ensure a consistency of approach to planning obligations, whilst incorporating an element of flexibility to allow the detailed issues and aspects of any development to be considered and negotiated at a local level. The policy is consistent with Government advice set out in Circular 1/97 on Planning Obligations and sets out in general terms what will be expected of developers in relation to the environmental impact of development, services, infrastructure and community facilities, so helping to avoid future uncertainty.
13. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

13.1 PPG12 Development Plans (December 1999) advises that development plans should be drawn up in such a way as to take environmental considerations into account. Over recent years, Government Guidance has become increasingly focused on sustainability issues rather than solely on environmental issues, with environmental concerns subsumed within the wider sustainability context.

13.2 Sustainability has been placed at the core of the Structure Plan in order to strike an appropriate balance between environmental, social and economic aspirations. The principles of sustainability have formed the objectives of the Structure Plan.

13.3 The various options for development were appraised against the guiding principles to provide an input into the formulation of the preferred Strategy of the Consultation Draft Structure Plan. The appraisal mechanism and findings are set out in a separate report to that Draft Structure Plan (Shaping the New Worcestershire, Sustainability Appraisal, May 1999).

13.4 The policies in the Consultation Draft Structure Plan were also formulated and appraised against the guiding principles. The mechanism and findings are contained in the same report mentioned above. The appraisal mechanism enabled each policy in the Structure Plan to be assessed in terms of whether it helps move the County towards or away from sustainability principles and the achievement of the County Vision. Taken together, the individual policy appraisals give an indication as to how successfully the objectives of the Structure Plan are likely to be met. The appraisal also makes transparent where policies in the Structure Plan which are necessary to meet wider Structure Plan objectives are less in keeping with the principles of sustainability. This helps to demonstrate where the trade-offs between the environmental, economic and social requirements have had to be made and the implications of particular courses of actions. The findings of that appraisal are also set out in the report mentioned above.

13.5 The sustainability appraisal of the Strategy and policies contained in the Consultation Draft Structure Plan were updated to take account of changes contained in the Deposit Draft Structure Plan. That appraisal mechanism and findings are contained in a separate report to that Deposit Draft Plan (Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011, Sustainability Appraisal, January 2000).

13.6 Furthermore, an independent audit of the sustainability appraisal of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan was undertaken by consultants. This was to ensure that the appraisal mechanism and findings of the sustainability appraisal were appropriate, consistent and comprehensive.

13.7 Following the deposit of, and the Examination in Public (EIP) into, the Deposit Draft Structure Plan, proposed modifications to the Structure Plan were published in February 2001. The EIP Panel recommended that the sustainability appraisal of the Strategy and policies contained in the Deposit Draft Structure Plan should be updated to take account of the most up to date Government advice on sustainability, in particular, the DETR publication, ‘A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK’ (1999). It was also necessary to review the sustainability appraisal to take on board the proposed modifications to the Deposit Draft Structure Plan.

13.8 Consultants again undertook an independent audit of the updated sustainability appraisal. This assessment reveals that the appraisal mechanism and findings of the sustainability appraisal are appropriate, consistent and comprehensive.
14. MONITORING

14.1 The Structure Plan is a long term document and is required by PPG12 (Development Plans) to be monitored on a regular basis to determine whether implementation of the Plan’s policies are achieving the Plan’s objectives. The Plan also needs to be monitored in order to identify where it may need adjusting to meet changing circumstances.

14.2 In order to successfully monitor the Plan, a series of indicators have been identified for each main policy area. This provides a consistent basis both for monitoring whether the Plan is meeting its objectives, and identifying where policies need to be strengthened, maintained, changed in some way or, in cases where with hindsight the policy has served no purpose, removed from the Plan.

14.3 The indicators have been formulated in order to ensure that, primarily, relevant information is readily accessible and available and secondly that the data being collected provides a true reflection of the objectives to be achieved. In so doing, co-operation will be sought with both various external bodies and internally within the County Council. At this stage the exact basis of the indicators set out for each objective must be viewed as a general expression of the core area it is intended to collect data on. The nature of the indicator may of necessity vary according to data availability when monitoring commences.

14.4 In drawing up the indicators regard has been had to Government advice set out in “Monitoring Provision of Housing through the Planning System – Towards Better Practice” (October 2000) and to the Monitoring Reports for West Midlands Regional Planning.

14.5 Throughout the plan period, it is intended to publish monitoring reports which will be taken into account in reviewing the Plan in future years. It is also the intention that monitoring of the Plan will be used to inform the review of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG11).

14.6 The indicators to be used to monitor the Plan are as follows:

**KEY**

**Chapters in the Structure Plan**

| SD | Sustainable Development |
| CTC | Conservation of Town and Country |
| D | Development |
| T | Transport |
| RST | Recreation, Sport and Tourism |
| M | Minerals |
| WD | Waste Disposal |

Source

W.C.C. Worcestershire County Council

D.C. District Councils

H.E.T.B. Heart of England Tourist Board

E.N. Environment Agency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage and promote land use activities which lead to an improvement in the quality of air, water and land.</td>
<td>Total number of applications</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of applications refused/modified on water/air/soil quality grounds.</td>
<td>SD, CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of applications allowed with conditions relating to air, water and land quality.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek a reduction in the consumption of energy and finite resources through the more efficient use of resources, recycling, the use of renewable sources and the reduction of waste.</td>
<td>Number and percentage of dwellings and buildings for employment purposes (B1-B8) on previously developed land.</td>
<td>SD, D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion of waste reused; recycled; used for energy production; landfilled.</td>
<td>WD</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect from damaging development and land use activity, and enhance biodiversity and diverse and important environmental townscape and historic features and characteristics.</td>
<td>Amount (hectares) of greenfield land released for development.</td>
<td>SD, D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of countryside management projects established.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of mineral applications refused on environmental grounds.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of mineral applications permitted/modified related to need/environmental factors/quality of restoration of aftercare.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of waste applications refused on environmental grounds.</td>
<td>WD</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of waste related applications permitted/modified related to need/environmental factors/quality of restoration of aftercare.</td>
<td>WD</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of Conservation Areas designated.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of new Conservation Areas designated.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount of grant aid given to Conservation Areas.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of landscape/town enhancement schemes.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss/damage to National Nature Reserves, SSSIs, Local Nature Reserves,</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>W.C.C./D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Wildlife Sites, or sites designated under the National Conservation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review or Geological Conservation Review (or number of sites designated).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of applications refused on design matters due to</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>adverse impacts on heritage and historic environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of applications modified or permitted with conditions</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>on design matters due to adverse impacts on heritage and historic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensure the integration of development within the landscape in order to</td>
<td>Total number of applications.</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>protect and enhance essential landscape characteristics and features.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td>Number of applications refused because of adverse impacts on landscape,</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>heritage and historic environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of applications adjusted or conditional on positive impact on</td>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>landscape, heritage and historic environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Protect and expand amenity areas and open spaces, and access to them,</td>
<td>Changes in number and area of amenity areas since 1996 (net gain/ loss)</td>
<td>RST</td>
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<td></td>
<td>in both town and country.</td>
<td>CTC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Changes in number and area of amenity areas since 1996 (net gain/ loss)</td>
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<td>Objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet the housing requirement of the population of the new County through the provision of an adequate range of general market, affordable and social housing in a way which respects the environmental capacity of the area and makes the most effective use of the existing settlement pattern.</td>
<td>Progress towards meeting 28,100 dwelling provision.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new dwellings provided, classified as affordable/social by existing stock and new build.</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td>Levels of Homelessness, by District.</td>
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<td>Number and percent of dwellings committed within or adjacent to the urban areas of Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn, Redditch, Worcester, Evesham, Malvern and Pershore.</td>
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<td>Number and percent of dwellings committed within or adjacent to other urban settlements.</td>
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<td>Number and percent of dwellings committed in sustainable rural settlements.</td>
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<td>Number and percent of dwellings committed outside urban and sustainable rural settlements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual District Housing completed and with permission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total District Housing completed and with permission since 1996 as a number and percentage of the District requirement for the period 1996-2006.</td>
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<td>Workforce age and origination by District.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work towards a better balance between housing, employment, social and</td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings built within or adjacent to the urban areas of Bromsgrove, Droitwich,</td>
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<td>D.C.</td>
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<td>Number and percent of dwellings committed within or adjacent to other urban settlements.</td>
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<td>Number and percent of dwellings committed in sustainable rural settlements.</td>
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<td>District requirement for the period 1996-2006.</td>
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<td>Amount of land for employment purposes (B1-B8) in or immediately adjacent to the urban areas of the</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County within transport corridors.</td>
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<td>Amount of land for employment purposes (B1-B8) in or immediately adjacent to the sustainable rural</td>
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<td></td>
<td>settlements.</td>
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<td>Progress towards meeting the amount of land needed within Classes B1, B2, and B8 of each District.</td>
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<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of retail/leisure community or entertainment developments applied for/allocated in settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Changes in commuting patterns to the Conurbation and urban areas within/outside the County.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<td>Objective</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance the role of settlements as centres for service provision.</td>
<td>Number of retail/leisure community or entertainment developments applied for/allocated in settlements.</td>
<td>D, RST</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of applications permitted/ refused for out-of-town retail developments.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gross Retail floorspace completions within town centres since 1996 as a percentage of overall completions.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gross Office floorspace completions within town centres since 1996 as a percentage of overall completions.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total floorspace in centres.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total turnover by centre.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employment levels by centre.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catchment Area changes by centre (on a 5 year basis).</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage development which will help retain and enhance the identity, character and vitality of settlements.</td>
<td>Number of entertainment/recreation facilities/retail outlets opened.</td>
<td>D, RST</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail/housing/business vacancy rates.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of applications amended due to impact on Conservation Areas.</td>
<td>D, CTC</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote energy efficient construction, design and development patterns.</td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment development (B1-B8) built/planned for within or adjacent to urban areas of Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn, Redditch, Worcester, Evesham, Malvern and Pershore.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment (B1-B8) built within or adjacent to other urban settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment (B1-B8) built in sustainable rural settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of new developments which feature energy conservation principles in construction, orientation, layout and design.</td>
<td>SD, D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek the location of development in areas which will minimise the need to travel and reduce the distances required to be travelled (energy efficient locations)</td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment development (B1-B8) built within or adjacent to the urban areas of Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Kidderminster, Stourport, Redditch, Worcester, Evesham and Pershore.</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment land (B1-B8) within or adjacent to other urban settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment (B1-B8) built in sustainable rural settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide new developments to locations which can be served by a choice of transport modes for both the movement of freight and people.</td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment (B1-B8) built within or adjacent to the urban areas of Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn, Redditch, Worcester, Evesham, Malvern and Pershore.</td>
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<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number and percent of dwellings and employment (B1-B8) built in sustainable rural settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of developments within Class B8 located with easy access to railheads and/or waterway termini.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support and facilitate the development of alternative modes of travel to the car.</td>
<td>Length and number of bus lanes provided.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of new Park and Ride facilities and parking spaces provided.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Annual use of Park and Ride facilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Length and number of walking routes.</td>
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<td>Length and number of cycling routes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate the strengthening and diversification of the economic base of</td>
<td>Progress towards meeting the provision of a portfolio of employment (B1-B8) land and sites in each District in terms of greenfield/brownfield/ location and size.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>the region and of Worcestershire by the provision of a portfolio of</td>
<td>Progress towards meeting the amount of land provided within Classes B1, B2 and B8 in each District (or employment land with current permission / commitments and completions).</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C./W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development locations and sites and by the enhancement and management of</td>
<td>Readily available land by sector (international down to local) on a County basis.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C./W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an attractive environment.</td>
<td>Readily available land for employment (B1-B8) purposes since 1996, completed and available (at date of monitor).</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D.C./W.C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment changes in terms of sector/full-time employees/part-time employees.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>W.C.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage urban and rural regeneration.</td>
<td>Number of dwellings or employment (B1-B8) development on previously developed land in urban areas and rural settlements.</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of employment (B1-B8) retail applications in rural areas.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of permissions for rural enterprises.</td>
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<td>Number of town enhancement schemes.</td>
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<td>Redevelopment and change of use of vacant/other land to B1 - B8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support the enhancement, development and integration of, and access to, a range of recreation facilities both within and around settlements.</td>
<td>Number of tourist facilities/hotel accommodation over a given period.</td>
<td>D, RST</td>
<td>W.C.C./H.E.T.B.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recreation/leisure facilities within settlements.</td>
<td>D, RST</td>
<td>W.C.C./H.E.T.B.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statistical measures of tourist numbers.</td>
<td>RST</td>
<td>W.C.C./H.E.T.B.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of open water areas or lengths of waterways with access for recreational use.</td>
<td>RST</td>
<td>W.C.C./E.N.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in the number and area of amenity areas; and green open spaces and corridors available to the public.</td>
<td>RST</td>
<td>D.C./WCC Countryside Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worcestershire Structure Plan

KEY DIAGRAM

- Principal Urban Areas / Urban Settlements (Policy SD6)
- Other Settlements

Strategic Highway Network
- Motorways
  - Motorway Junction
- Roads
- Other Principal Roads
- Lorry Routes
- Railways
  - Rail Stations
- Major Rivers
- Canals
- Worcestershire County Boundary
- District Boundary
- Green Belt
- Area of Great Landscape Value
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

KEY TO POLICIES
D4 - Distribution of Housing Provision
D5 - Housing on Previously Developed Land
D12 - Housing in the Green Belt
D14 - Housing Development in Rural Settlements
D19 - Employment Land Requirements
D40 - Green Belt Boundary Definition
D41 - Areas of Development Restraint
SD8 - Development in Sustainable Rural Settlements
T12 - Protection of Road Lines
CTC3 - Development in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CTC4 - Development in Areas of Great Landscape Value
RST7 - Recreation in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
M5 - Mineral Extraction in the Malvern and Abberley Hills

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Glossary

Accessibility
A measure of the ability to travel and engage in activities and services.

Accessibility Profile
A rating given to particular locations based on the ease to which they can be accessed.

Aftercare
Measures taken to bring restored sites to a standard suitable for future use.

Affordable Housing
For the purposes of this Plan, the West Midlands Local Government Association definition of affordable housing has been adopted and is categorised into two types:

- Housing provided by an organisation - such as a registered social landlord or local authority allocating on the basis of need. While such dwellings will normally be made available for rent, they may also include subsidised home ownership, such as shared ownership, where a registered social landlord or local authority retains a continuing interest; and
- Low-cost market housing, helping to meet the needs of first time buyers, single people, the elderly and other low income households, who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market.

Area of Development Restraint (ADR)
An area of land excluded from the Green Belt by Local Plans for consideration for possible longer term development needs.

Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)
Area identified as being of regional importance for its landscape value, which tends to be high land of particular sensitivity to visual landscape change.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
An area designated by the Countryside Agency for its particularly attractive landscape and unspoilt character, which should be protected and enhanced as part of the national heritage.

Aquifer
Permeable rocks that can hold or retain ground water, such as chalk or limestone.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
Land which should be protected as a national resource for future generations and is defined as grades 1, 2 and 3a of the MAFF Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system.

Biodiversity Action Plan
An agenda for nature conservation in the County, based on the Government’s UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brownfield</td>
<td>See previously developed land.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus Priority</td>
<td>Highway measures designed to give buses priority over other traffic at junctions and on congested stretches of road.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Crescent</td>
<td>The zone surrounding the Metropolitan Area which has close social, economical and commuting links with that area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitments</td>
<td>The number of residential or employment planning permissions and allocations for such use in Local Plans but which have not yet been completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completions</td>
<td>The number of residential or employment planning permissions which have been approved and constructed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Area</td>
<td>An area of special architectural or historic interest whose character and appearance, it is desirable to preserve or enhance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand Management</td>
<td>A transportation planning tool in which the provision of transport infrastructure and services are determined by the travel needs and objectives of an area, rather than solely by the demand for travel expected to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Plan</td>
<td>Documents which set out local planning authorities' policies and proposals for the development and use of land within their areas. In Worcestershire the Development Plan comprises the Structure Plan, District Local Plans, the Minerals Local Plan and the Waste Local Plan when completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Centre</td>
<td>As defined by PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Development) district centres consist of groups of shops separate from a town centre usually containing a supermarket or superstore and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge-of-Centre</td>
<td>A location which allows easy access to and from the main town centre by foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Land Portfolio</td>
<td>A range of sites for employment purposes in terms of size, location and quality, including the redevelopment or reuse of previously developed land and prestigious greenfield sites within or immediately adjacent to the urban areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen Day Rule</td>
<td>Restriction imposed on the use of land for a maximum of 14 days for certain uses by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glossary Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geological Conservation Review</td>
<td>The identification, assessment and description of British geological and geomorphological areas where conservation is essential for education and research in earth sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Belt</td>
<td>An area of land designated in Development Plans, the purposes of which are: to restrict urban sprawl; prevent the coalescence of neighbouring settlements; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting of historic towns; and assist in urban regeneration by encouraging recycling of urban land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Commuter Plan</td>
<td>A tool used by employers to encourage employees to minimise the level of car commuting to work, whilst promoting alternative forms of transport and the use of car sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield Land</td>
<td>Land that has not been previously developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gases</td>
<td>The naturally occurring gases of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone which, because of human activity, have increased at a greater rate than the Earth's capacity to absorb them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenways</td>
<td>Networks of largely car-free off-road routes for shared use by people of all abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Recreation</td>
<td>Unstructured recreational activity, including walking, cycling and horse riding along public rights of way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>The system of communications and utility services required to serve development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interchange Facilities</td>
<td>Infrastructure enabling transfer between different modes of transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Diagram</td>
<td>A diagram, forming part of the Structure Plan, illustrating in non-site specific terms the Plan's general policies and proposals for the development and use of land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Character Assessment</td>
<td>A study conducted throughout the County by the County Council in partnership with the Countryside Agency, District Councils, Forestry Authority, Environment Agency and CPRE to identify particular types of landscapes, from which a local distinctiveness report is to be produced which will contain guidelines on future landscape management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Building</td>
<td>A building of special historic or architectural interest or of close historical association with nationally important people or events or of group value (e.g. in a square).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glossary Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Agenda 21</td>
<td>A process, established by the Earth Summit in 1992, to enhance the working together of the community, including Local Authorities, business, voluntary groups and the public, in identifying their ideas and programmes for improving the local environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Centre</td>
<td>As defined by PPG6 (Town Centres and Retail Developments) local centres consist of a small grouping of shops of a local nature, usually comprising a newsagent, general grocery store and sub-post office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Distinctiveness</td>
<td>A study to identify particular elements which characterise the County including incentives to encourage community participation, and promote awareness of and respect for the County’s environment and countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Housing Needs</td>
<td>Need arising generated by the housing requirements of a local population (not for migrants from the Metropolitan Area). This will usually include an element of affordable/social housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Plan</td>
<td>A plan which sets out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land. A detailed land-use plan for a local area or specific topic concerned with the detailed implementation of the policies of a Structure Plan (PPG12 para. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Transport Plan</td>
<td>A document (submitted to the Government), setting out the County Council’s aims and objectives in terms of transport; the means by which they will be achieved; and the Government funding required to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorry Route Network</td>
<td>The Lorry Route Network: shows roads which should be used within the County for the longer distance trips between towns; enables identification of roads not forming part of the network which should not be used by lorries except for local trips and access purposes; will assist in planning the location of new developments generating significant goods vehicle traffic and in planning facilities for lorries and drivers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Lorry Route Network is based on the Strategic Regional Highway Network.</td>
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<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Major Developed Site</strong></td>
<td>An existing developed large-scale site such as military establishment or hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Investment Site</strong></td>
<td>A site of not less than 50 hectares suitable for new industrial and commercial investment by a single large multi-national organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metropolitan Area</strong></td>
<td>The seven West Midlands Metropolitan Districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed Use Developments</strong></td>
<td>Developments that include a combination of land uses which may include housing, employment, leisure and community facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobility Profile</strong></td>
<td>A rating given to a particular landuse based upon the activities undertaken and the consequential demand for travel to and from that landuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature Conservation Review</strong></td>
<td>A comprehensive survey and review of biological sites of national and international importance published in 1977.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Nature Reserve</strong></td>
<td>An area of national and sometimes international importance which is owned or leased by English Nature or bodies approved by them and which has the primary characteristic of being used for nature conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natura 2000</strong></td>
<td>The European network of protected sites including Special Areas of Conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-Centre</strong></td>
<td>A location that is clearly separate from a town, district or local centre, but not necessarily outside an urban area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Park and Ride</strong></td>
<td>Facilities which seek to reduce urban congestion by encouraging motorists to leave their vehicles at parking facilities on the edge of towns and proceed into the centre by public transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)</strong></td>
<td>Documents issued by the Government, setting out policy guidance on different aspects of planning. Local planning authorities must take their content into account in preparing their Development Plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previously Developed Land</strong></td>
<td>As defined by draft PPG3, previously developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent (non agricultural) structure, and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously-developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. The definition includes defence buildings, and land used for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary Items</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Previously Developed Land (cont’d)</td>
<td>mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures. The definition excludes land and buildings that have been used for agricultural purposes, forest and woodland, and land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously (e.g. parks, recreation grounds, and allotments - even though these areas may contain certain urban features such as paths, pavilions and other buildings). Also excluded is land that was previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings), or has subsequently been put to an amenity use and cannot be regarded as requiring redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Partnerships</td>
<td>Agreement between local 'bus operators and the County Council in which increased patronage is sought through measures such as improved vehicle comfort and accessibility, service provision and 'bus priority measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet Roads</td>
<td>A Countryside Agency initiative to make minor rural roads safer and more attractive for those not in cars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsar Site</td>
<td>A Wetland Site of Special Scientific Interest which is designated under the Ramsar Convention as being of international importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>The collection or recovery of reusable materials from waste and the subsequent processing of the materials into reusable products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
<td>Energy forms that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, such as wind, solar and tidal power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Hierarchy</td>
<td>A system of classifying roads according to their primary use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer Routes to School</td>
<td>A recently introduced initiative designed to encourage more children to walk and cycle to school, hence reducing the numbers driven to school in the car. Measures to achieve this include improved safety, training and promotional measures together with traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential Approach</td>
<td>Order of preference, identified in Government guidance, of locations and the sequence in which development should take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Settlement</strong></td>
<td>A village or urban area which is not included as an urban area in Policy D.1, but has available as a minimum a basic level of service provision, examples of which would include Upton on Severn, Kempsey or Inkberrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Signal Transponder</strong></td>
<td>Part of a 'bus priority measure which detects approaching 'buses and subsequently allows priority for the vehicle through the traffic lights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)</strong></td>
<td>Designated areas under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of wild fauna and flora intended to protect the habitats of threatened species of wildlife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Protection Areas (SPAs)</strong></td>
<td>Areas classified under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of wild birds intended to protect the habitats of threatened species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Highway Network</strong></td>
<td>Network of main roads within the County that form part of important long distance routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</strong></td>
<td>Areas of land or water of national importance identified by English Nature on account of their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sterilisation</strong></td>
<td>Occurs where non-mineral development creates a conflicting use of land or other activity that prevents a potentially workable mineral deposit from being worked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Development</strong></td>
<td>Defined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission report as: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport Corridors Study</strong></td>
<td>A Study undertaken to identify: the feasibility of locating development in or close to the main urban areas and larger settlements within 4 public transport corridors in the County/Metropolitan Area; measures needed to improve the attractiveness of public transport and influence choice of transport mode; and priorities for transport investment within corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Capacity Study</strong></td>
<td>A study to identify the potential for locating new development within the main urban areas in Transport Corridors in the County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use Classes Order</strong></td>
<td>The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended prescribes groups of land uses within which changes of use are not considered as development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Waste to Energy</strong></td>
<td>The use of waste gases or of waste to create heat that can be used directly or indirectly to generate electricity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Midlands Conurbation</strong></td>
<td>The seven West Midlands Metropolitan Districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Windfall</strong></td>
<td>Development which is granted permission on a site not individually identified for development in Development Plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wind Farm</strong></td>
<td>A group of wind turbines for the harnessing of energy from wind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worcestershire Cycling and Walking Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Specific strategies designed to increase the number of journeys made by bicycle and on foot in the County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## OBJECTIVE/POLICY LINKAGES

Matrix showing the links between Structure Plan Objectives and Structure Plan Policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure Plan Objective</th>
<th>Structure Plan Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek a reduction in the consumption of energy and finite resources through the more efficient use of resources, recycling, the use of renewable sources and the reduction in the amount of waste produced.</td>
<td>SD.1, SD.3, SD.5, SD.7, CTC.21, D.3, D.5, D.9, D.10, D.16, D.20, D.29, D.36, D.37, D.42, T.2, T.3, T.5, RST.2, RST.16, M.6, WD.1, EN.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect from damaging development and land use activity, and enhance, biodiversity and diverse and important environmental, landscape, townscape, and historic features and characteristics.</td>
<td>SD.2, SD.3, CTC.1 - CTC.21, D.38, RST.7, RST.8, RST.14, RST.15, RST.16, RST.17, RST.18, RST.19, M.3, M.4, M.5, WD.3, EN.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the integration of development within the landscape in order to protect and enhance essential landscape characteristics and features.</td>
<td>CTC.1, CTC.2, CTC.3, CTC.4, CTC.6, CTC.14, D.16, RST.7, RST.8, RST.13, RST.14, RST.15, RST.16, RST.17, RST.18, RST.19, M.4, EN.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect and expand amenity areas and open spaces, and access to them, in both town and country.</td>
<td>CTC.1, CTC.2, CTC.3, CTC.4, CTC.6, CTC.7, D.38, D.39, RST.1, RST.2, RST.3, RST.4, RST.5, RST.6, RST.9, RST.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the housing requirements of the population of the new County through the provision of an adequate range of housing including general market, affordable and social housing in a way which protects the environment and makes the most effective use of the existing settlement pattern.</td>
<td>SD.3, SD.4, SD.6, SD.7, SD.8, D.1, D.2, D.3, D.4, D.5, D.6, D.7, D.8, D.9, D.10, D.11, D.12, D.13, D.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work towards a better balance between housing, employment, social and community facilities within settlements.</td>
<td>SD.5, SD.6, SD.8, D.14, D.20, D.22, D.23, D.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Plan Objective</td>
<td>Structure Plan Policy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek the location of development in areas which will minimise the need to travel and reduce the distances required to be travelled (energy efficient locations).</td>
<td>SD.4, SD.6, SD.7, SD.8, SD.9, D.13, D.14, D.15, D.21, D.23, D.26, D.27, D.28, D.31, D.32, D.34, D.35, D.37, T.1, RST.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide new development to locations which can be served by a choice of transport modes for both the movement of people and freight.</td>
<td>SD.4, SD.6, SD.7, SD.8, SD.9, D.21, D.26, D.27, D.28, D.31, D.32, D.33, D.34, T.1, RST.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and facilitate the development of alternative modes of travel to the car.</td>
<td>SD.4, T.1, T.2, T.3, T.4, T.5, T.6, T.7, T.8, T.9, T.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the strengthening and diversification of the economic base of the Region and of Worcestershire by the provision of a mixed portfolio of development locations and sites and by the enhancement and management of an attractive County environment.</td>
<td>SD.9, CTC.1, D.19, D.20, D.21, D.22, D.23, D.24, D.25, D.26, D.27, D.28, D.29, D.30, D.38, CTC.1 - CTC.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the enhancement, development and integration of, and access to, a range of recreation facilities both within and around settlements.</td>
<td>SD.9, CTC.6, RST.11, RST.12, RST.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek to reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour by introducing crime prevention as a material consideration into the land-use and development planning process.</td>
<td>D.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>