Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Telford and Wrekin Local Plan Review

PUBLICATION PLAN
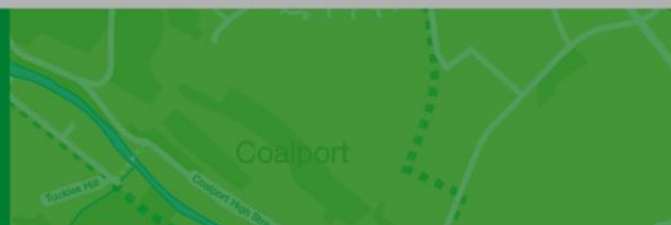Rural Technical Paper

2020 - 2040

March 2025

Contents

Rural Settlements Technical Paper

1 Introduction

1.1   This technical paper forms part of the evidence base to inform the Local Plan and to offers evidence on the relative level of services and facilities present in settlements within Telford and Wrekin. It will also provide evidence to justify the strategy for housing in the rural area of the borough.

1.2   The principal output of the paper is the identification of settlements where the Council considers the borough's future rural housing growth should be focused and to clarify the Council's intended approach to any new applications for housing it receives in the open countryside, set out in Policy S4, HO12 and HO13 of the Local Plan Review.

1.3   This paper was previously published in draft form in 2023 as evidence supporting the Regulation 18 consultation held between 25 October 2023 and 31 January 2024. It was previously stated that this paper would be reviewed and if necessary updated for Regulation 19 stage of plan making. Therefore, evidence within this technical paper, updates to the National Planning Framework (NPPF) and consultation responses have informed updates to this technical paper.

2 Review of the Rural Area of the Borough

Geography and Geology of the Rural Area

2.1   The borough has a diverse countryside ranging from the Shropshire Hills National Landscape (NL) to flat Strine Levels north of Telford.

2.2   Broadly, the rural area of the borough can be categorised into three distinct areas.

2.3   The north western part of the rural area forms part of the wider Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area (NCA)[1] which comprises most of the county of Cheshire, the northern half of Shropshire and large part of north west Staffordshire.

2.4   As a landscape that owes much of its character to glacial origins, it is relatively flat and contains some of the most fertile parts of the borough due to its water retaining clay soils. It is generally characterised as a flat landscape with strong field patterns and sparse woodland. It contains a diversity of sites of habitat value and rich archaeological heritage. The area is bounded to the south by the Shropshire Hills (NL)[2].

2.5   The rural area south east of Newport and Telford are identified within the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau NCA that is located in the central catchment of the Severn and lower Stour rivers and is a national watershed between the north-easterly flowing River Trent and south-westerly flowing River Severn.

2.6   This is an extensive sandstone plateau although it is punctuated by Lilleshall Mount, a prominent volcanic ridge. The sandstone plateau exemplifies the link between geodiversity, landscape and industrial heritage, in particular at the Ironbridge Gorge, a World Heritage Site of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), that is widely recognised at the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the area around the Severn Valley was recognised

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1   Historic England Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area 61.
     https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/8079/ShropshireCheshireandStaffordshirePlainWesternMixed#:~:text=It%20extends%20from%20the%20broadPotteries%2C%20Needwood%20and%20Cannock%20Chase
2   National Character Profile 61. Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6076647514046464

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as being rich with raw materials including: coal; iron ore; limestone to flux the slag in the blast furnaces; sand for moulding cast iron; clay to make tiles, bricks and refractory linings; and the finest clay used for the manufacture of porcelain at Coalport[3].

2.7   Rural areas within the Sandstone Plateau have been in active agricultural use for centuries, this can be seen today in the rich cluster of listed heritage in surrounding villages such as Wrockwardine, High Ercall, Longford, Tibberton and Edgmond and the spread of ancient monuments.

2.8   The south western part of the rural area of the borough forms part of the wider Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape flows into the neighbouring hills of Clun and North West Herefordshire Hills NCA to the south, but contrasts markedly with the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plan NCA to the north. To the east, the Shropshire Hills stands above and overlook a complementary landscape of rolling landform, intricate field patterns, and the parklands and numerous woodlands of the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau[4].

2.9   It has an upland and more rugged character compared with the rest of the rural area and is nationally recognised for its rich and complex geology. It has extensive areas of woodland and is well used for recreation. The historic town of Ludlow sits to the south, with the settlements of Craven Arms to the north west and Church Stretton in the centre of area. The Wrekin Hill (part of the very character of Telford) itself is a very prominent and regionally recognised landmark.

Description of Settlements in the Rural Area

2.10   A review of the Ordinance Survey covering the rural areas of the borough reveals over 60 recorded settlements. These vary in size from small isolated groups of houses to a number of larger services villages with schools, village shops and churches. The settlements pattern of the rural area can be described as scattered with no one village dominating. As a result, there is no one distinct rural centre and most of the physical and community infrastructure is dispersed too.

2.11   The settlement structure of the rural area will continue to alter over the next few years with current large planning applications in Allscott (470 new homes, primary school, employment floor space and local shopping centre) and Crudgington (110 new homes and employment floor space) now progressing into the latter stages of construction.

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3   National Character Profile 66. Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5001578805198848
4   National Character Profile 65. Shropshire Hills:
          http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/11515347#:~:text=The%20Shropshire%20Hills%20National%20Character,in%20intervening%20valleys%20and%20dales

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Figure 1: Rural Area Defined

Legend
- Rural Area
- Built Up Areas
- Telford and Wrekin Boundary

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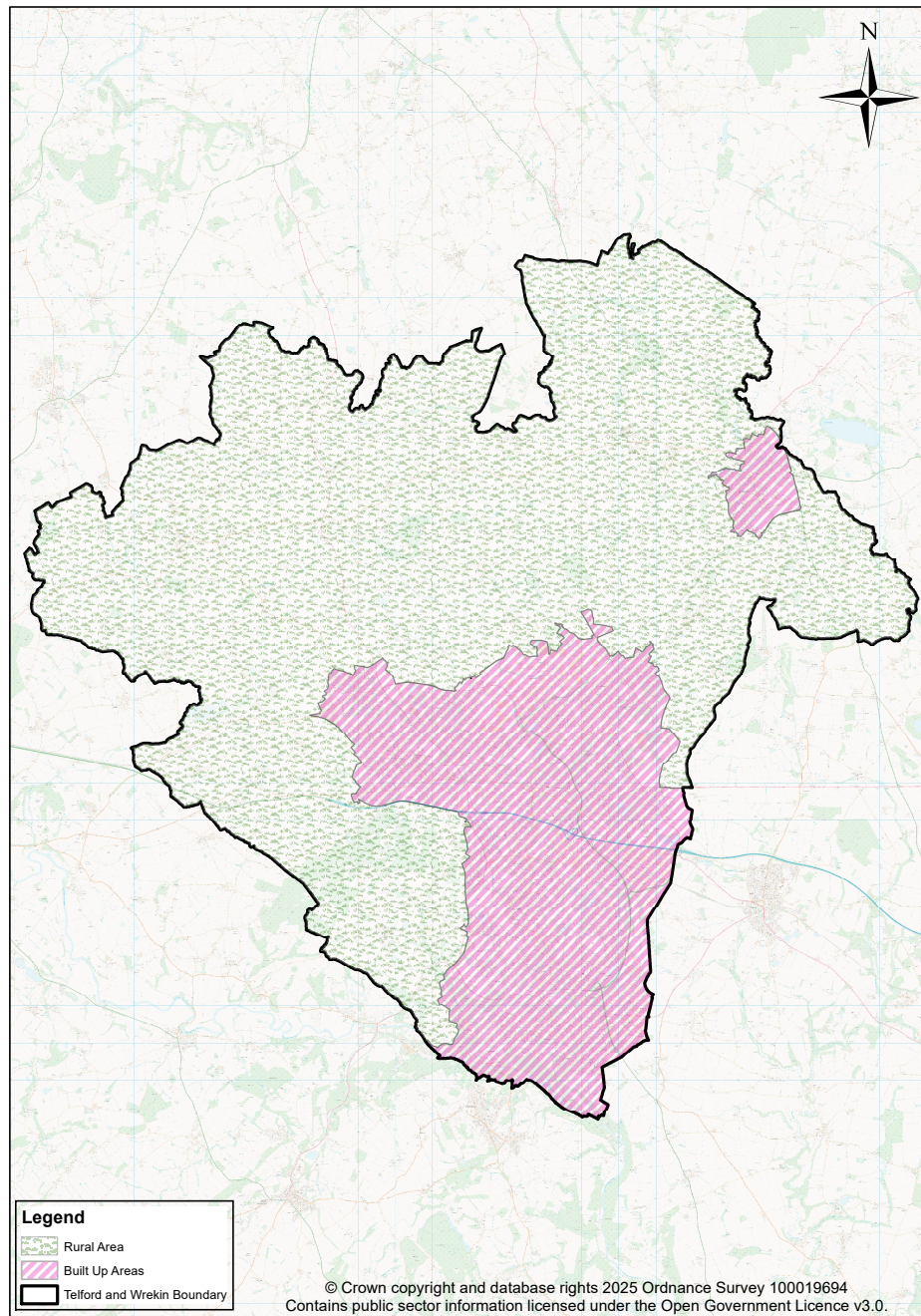
Population Profile of the Rural Area

2.12   While the majority of the borough is rural if measured by area, the borough population is focussed in the urban areas of Telford and Newport which from the 2011 Census comprised 93.7% of the borough's population. Away from these two urban settlements, the rural area can be said to comprise the non-urban parts of parishes: on the boundary of Telford and Newport and wholly rural parishes. The recorded population of the rural area in the 2011 Census was 10, 497 (6.3% of the borough) with 3, 887 households (5.8% of all households).

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2.13   As of the 2021 census data the population of Telford and Wrekin saw an increase by 11.4%, from around 166,600 in 2011 to 185,600 in 2021. In total the built up area of Telford accounted for 158, 464 people equating to 95.12% of the total population and a further 13,582 people living in Newport. Overall the built up area of Telford and Newport accounts to 172,046 equating to approximately 92.7% a decrease in 1% from 2011.

2.14   Recent statistics show that the general population has risen in the rural area by 11% and households by 15%. The rate of population and household growth has remained the same with 6% of all population and households within the rural areas of the borough.

2.15   For reference national population statistics from the 2021 census are shown below:

- 9.7 million people were estimated to live in Rural areas in England in 2020, compared with 46.9 million people in Urban areas (based on LSOA-level data); over the last decade, these population figured have increased by 6.0% and 6.6% respectively.
- In 2020, the Rural population had a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over at 25.4%, compared with the Urban population where 17.1% are aged 65 and over.
- The 'white ethnic' group accounted for 96.8% of the rural population in 2020, compared with 81.7% in urban areas.
- Since 2008/09 there has been an increase in the rate of net migration to predominantly rural areas.
- In 2019/20 within the overall net internal migration to predominantly rural areas of 97,500, there was net internal migration outwards of 17 to 20 years olds of 34,100.
- In 2020, 12.0 million people lived in a predominantly rural area – this is 21.3% of the England population.

2.16   The information below provides a further breakdown of 2021 Census data for the rural area.

Age breakdown of the rural population in Telford and Wrekin:

- According to the 2021 census data, on average 28% of Telford and Wrekin rural population are aged over 65, this is compared to 21.85% in 2011.

Economic Activity of the rural population in Telford and Wrekin:

- According to the 2021 census data, the rural population has a steady split of the population that are economically active (employed) and those that are economically inactive but not unemployed (retired or unable to work).

Housing Tenure of the rural population in Telford and Wrekin:

- According to the 2011 census data, most of the rural population in Telford and Wrekin owned their own home, either outright or with a mortgage. This figure has stayed steady in the 2021 census data with an average of 47.8% of the population owning their home outright and 32.30% owning their home with a mortgage. This is compared to 43.42% and 36.31% especially in 2011 census data.

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- Similarly, the amount of the population renting their property either socially or privately in 2021 census is in line with the data from 2011 with an average of 7% socially renting and 13.19% privately renting.
- Rodington has the highest percentage of the population out right owning their home in 2021 at 57.40% of the population. In comparison, Chetwynd Aston and Woodcote have the lowest percentage at 35.20%.

Agricultural holdings in Telford and Wrekin:

- Data provided by the Council's Development Management Service shows that, as of November 2023, the Borough has a total of 72 agricultural holdings including local farms.

Commercial buildings in rural settlements of Telford and Wrekin:

- Data provided by the Development Management Service shows that as of November 2023 there are 628 commercial buildings in the rural settlements of the council boundary. This includes a range of uses such as industrial, retail, educational facilities etc.

3 Review of National Policies Relevant to the Rural Area

3.1   There are two main planning policy documents at the national level that inform how local authorities should plan for their rural areas in compliance with their obligations under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Two of these - the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF); and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) – were prepared by the government.

3.2   Consideration also needs to be given to the recent changes to "permitted development" rights set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 because they contain reforms that promote more flexible use of land in the rural area including allowing some small agricultural buildings to be converted to dwellings.

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

3.3   The NPPF provides the framework which local authorities must use when planning for future population growth in both urban and rural areas. The paper sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF has since been updated and was published in December 2024.

3.4   A key priority of the NPPF is to allow the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving this means that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental), which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

3.5   Section 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes considers the implications of providing homes in the rural area. Para 82 states that '*planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect housing needs*'. It goes on to state that '*Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this*'.

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3.6   Para 83 continues to develop the promotion of sustainable development in rural area with housing being located in the most sustainable locations '*where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*'.

3.7   Para 84 states that 'Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside'. It then continues to set out the circumstances in which isolated homes can be located in the countryside, these include:

a.   *there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;*
b.   *the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;*
c.   *the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;*
d.   *the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or*
e.   *the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:*

   ○   *is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and*
   ○   *would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.*

3.8   Chapter 6. Building a strong, competitive economy, continues expand the policy guidance on the rural area, specifically supporting a prosperous rural economy. Para 88 considers that planning policies and decisions should enable:

a.   *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
b.   *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
c.   *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
d.   *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

3.9   Para 89 states that planning policy and decisions '*should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport*'. It goes on to state that in the circumstances, it will be important to ensure the following:

●   *ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings;*
●   *does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads; and*
●   *exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.*

3.10   Para 89 also considers that the use of previously developed land, and sites physically well-related to existing settlements, will also be encouraged.

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3.11   Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities considers that planning policy and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe communities. This is expanded upon in Para 98 which considers that social, recreational and cultural facilities should be provided to meet a community's needs. This includes that planning policy and guidance should:

a.   *plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*

b.   *take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*

c.   *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*

d.   *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*

e.   *ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

3.12   In the context of making effective use of land chapter 11 Para 125 considers that planning policies and decisions should:

a.   *encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*

b.   *recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;*

c.   *give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*

d.   *promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and*

e.   *support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.*

3.13   Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed places continues to develop the requirements for development and more specifically their design, para 135 considers that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a.   *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*

b.   *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

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c.   *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

d.   *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*

e.   *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

f.   *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

3.14   The Government's Planning Practice Guidance adds further context to the NPPF and brings together extensive technical guidance to support the Council's plan making functions. On rural housing, its guidance is as follows:

- *Strategic policies will need to be informed by an understanding of need and opportunities for housing supply and affordability especially where authorities in designated rural areas wish to demonstrate that it is appropriate to set lower thresholds for affordable housing than those which apply generally.*
- *The nature of rural housing needs can be reflected in the spatial strategy set out in relevant policies, including in the housing requirement figures for any designated rural areas.*
- *A wide range of settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas, so blanket policies restricting housing development in some types of settlement will need to be supported by robust evidence of their appropriateness. A neighbourhood plan can allocate additional sites to those identified in an adopted plan so long as the neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions.*
- *Local planning authorities can support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites by working proactively with landowners and potential delivery partners such as parish councils and community land trusts.*

Rural Proofing Report 2020

3.15   In 2019, the House of Lords' Select Committee on the rural economy made a series of recommendations to encourage new opportunities, release unfilled potential and enhance the contribution which rural England can make to the nation while retaining its distinct character.

3.16   An agenda was set out investing in the rural and coastal areas and giving them more control of how that investment is made.

3.17   This included a commitment to rolling out gigabit broadband; using additional police resources to tackle rural crime; investing in the bus network to improve infrequent or non-existent services in the countryside; combining strong employment growth with high employment standards; and ensuring that British farmers and fisherman are able to profit by producing food and fish.

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3.18   The Rural Proofing Report provides an opportunity for the Government to reiterate their commitments to rural England with each section covering the following:

- Strengthening the Rural Economy;
- Developing Rural Infrastructure
- Delivering Rural Services

3.19   Managing the Natural Environment.

Rural Proofing Report 2024

3.20   In March 2024 the government published a third report on rural proofing highlighting the progress made in the period from the previous report that was published in November 2022[5].

3.21   The report is structured around four key themes identified in Unleashing Rural Opportunity[6] published in June 2023. These are as follows:

- Growing the rural economy - Supporting rural areas so they can prosper, including by boosting opportunity through jobs and skills.
- Connectivity - Continuing to deliver gigabit broadband and mobile coverage in rural areas and increase access to public transport.
- Homes and energy - Facilitating the building of more homes for local people to buy where local communities want them, powered by secure and resilient energy supplies.

3.22   Communities - Wanting rural communities to continue to be places where people want to live and work. We will improve access to high quality health and social care and take further action to tackle rural crime

Localism

3.23   A consistent theme in national planning policy since 2010 has been the promotion of localism. As it relates to planning in the rural area, the thrust of government policy has been to give local communities the power to shape their own neighbourhoods.

3.24   There are three planning instruments that Parish Councils or other designated Neighbourhood Forums may use to shape their local areas.

3.25   First, they can make neighbourhood development plans (plans to help a parish shape where new housing and other uses could go); secondly, they are empowered to establish neighbourhood development orders, an instrument that effectively grants planning permission for specified developments in a neighbourhood area. Once established there would be no need for anyone to apply to the Council for planning permission if it is for the type of development covered by the order. Finally, they can apply for community right to build orders. These are similar to neighbourhood development orders but allow certain community organisations to bring forward small-scale development on a site without the need for planning permission. This gives communities the freedom to develop, for instance, small scale housing and other facilities they want.

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5   Rural Proofing Report https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6388a51bd3bf7f32848cbc3d/rural-proofing-guidance.pdf
6   Unleashing Rural Opportunity https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unleashing-rural-opportunity

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Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

3.26   This piece of secondary legislation (the GPDO) enacted in April 2015 has consolidated a number of recent changes to 'permitted development' rights which allows development to proceed as of right without the need for planning permission subject to submission of a "prior approval" request.

3.27   The legislation proves more flexibility around changes of use within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 that could potentially affect the planning of the rural area. The changes of most relevance to this study are as follows:

- Allowing replacement of some commercial buildings for residential use
- Permitted changes of use for pubs (Use Class A4) to other uses within the A Use classes such as shops;
- Allowing more flexible use of agricultural buildings to be converted to uses within Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service), Class B8 (storage or distribution), Class C1 (hotels) or Class D2 (assembly and leisure); and
- Allowing the conversion of some redundant former agricultural buildings to housing.
- Classes G, M, N, O, PA and Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 are all available for the Developer to utilise with the correct Prior Notification Application and remain the most viable method of converting a building into a dwelling.

3.28   In addition, to the general permitted development rights, the Localism Act 2011 and subsequent secondary legislation The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 also allows community interest groups to designate such sites as assets of community value which would give them the right to acquire the site if the owner wishes to sell it.

4 Review of Local Planning Policy Context

4.1   For the purposes of this review of local planning policy to inform the paper , at the time of writing the plan has gone through the Issues and Options stage and Regulation 18 having now progressed to Regulation 19.

Identifying Local Housing Need and the Future Demographic Profile

4.2   The Council has an obligation to plan for the borough's future housing needs. The Council commissioned an Economic and Housing Development Needs Assessment (EHDNA) and a subsequent housing requirement technical paper to test options for and help establish the level of housing growth[7] for the borough up to 2040. The Local Plan Review assumes a requirement of 20,200 dwellings over the 20-year plan period. This forms the basis of the revised Policy HO1 of the Local Plan. It is anticipated that the majority of housing will be located in Telford and Newport as it has been previously. However, there will be the need for some rural housing growth through a mix of existing supply and balance being met through new land allocations. The Council's proposed strategy for rural housing is expanded upon further within Policy HO12 Housing development in the rural area, contained in the Publication Local Plan document[8].

4.3   At the draft Local Plan stage the Council consulted on site options within the rural area and following the consultation considered responses received prior to determining which sites should be taken forward into the Publication Version (Regulation 19) of the plan. Where sites

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7   Evidence Base Information - Local Plan (telfordandwrekinlocalplan.co.uk)
8   Page 118.

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are taken forward the Council have done further detailed studies to refine the site allocations. It is likely that this work will result, in some cases, in a reduction in site areas to reflect local issues and sites constraints and a reduction in proposed levels of housing on some sites.

4.4 As is set out within the annex of the Rural Proofing Report 2020, the proportion of older people living in rural areas is higher, and growing faster, than in urban areas. Since 2001, the number of people aged 65 and over has increased by 50% in predominantly rural areas, compared to a 25% increase in predominantly urban areas. With higher education establishments more likely to be based in urban areas, many students from rural areas are likely to move away from home to study.

4.5 In addition, few people in rural areas live in the most deprived parts of the country as these tend to be in urban areas, with just 1% of the rural population living in the most deprived 10% of the country. Consequently this contributes to a lower percentage of affordable homes being available, however the government is committed to increasing this supply and are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in over a decade. On this basis Policy HO4 Affordable housing requirements continues to aim that 35% of developments of 10 or more dwellings or development areas over 0.5 hectares will need to provide affordable housing units.

4.6 It is also assumed that due to the increasing age of residents that there will be further pressure for housing options to allow older people to live at home or stay in villages they currently live in. The UK population, as reflected in Telford specifically, is ageing with wide consequences for society and the economy. Policy HO6 Supported and Specialist Housing highlights the opportunity to encourage the provision of different forms of accommodation that is aspirational to widen the local housing offer.

Delivering Services to Rural Communities

4.7 Access to services within the rural area is a challenge. Both the Council and the Government want to ensure that both urban and rural settlements retain a range of essential facilities and services such as social, health care, education, open space and recreation and that these are accessible to local people.

4.8 A number of challenges face the deliverability of services in the rural area. Firstly services are often more costly due to their sparsity, increased travel times and smaller economies in scale, in comparison to urban areas. In turn this also leads to accessibility challenges with limited public transport and potential challenges meeting staff requirements.

4.9 Policy EC8 Local Centres and Rural Services in the draft Local Plan supports development in the rural area which includes supporting proposals for multi-use buildings, community facilities and services to improve the wellbeing and cohesion of local communities. The policy has also adapted to changes in permitted development rights, looking to limit development resulting in a loss of floor space within Use Classes E and F in Local Centres.

4.10 Policy CI1 Community Facilities in the Local Plan[9] supports the retention, maintenance and enhancement of existing community facilities as well as the provision of new facilities for the benefit of existing local residents and new residents. The policy will help protect a range of

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existing rural facilities, including the proposed addition of public houses, to ensure where there is a proposed loss of a facility this has clearly been demonstrated or an alternative facility has been provided.

Public and Community Facilities in the Rural Area

4.11   As has been demonstrated above, rural services in the borough are sparser compared to the urban areas. Bus services are less frequent. There are a total of 57 primary school and 15 secondary schools, 7 special schools, 1 sixth form college, 1 university and 52 nurseries. 9% of Telford and Wrekin's schools are private. Of these 38 are state funded. 29 state funded schools in Telford and Wrekin follow the local authority's admissions criteria, while the remaining 9 set their own.

4.12   There are a several local authority or voluntary aided/controlled primary schools in the rural area including at High Ercall, Edgmond, Tibberton, Lilleshall, Crudgington and Preston upon the Weald Moors, with an additional primary school recently completed at Allscott (this is a DFE free school). The majority of existing primaries have either good or outstanding OFSTED reports and attract a catchment from outside their respective villages. The Council provides a free bus pass or other transport assistance for pupils attending their designated or nearest school which is more than three miles from their home address, or two miles if under the age of eight, measured using the shortest walking route.

4.13   However, all secondary schools provision is within the urban areas of Telford and Newport.

4.14   There are no GP facilities in the rural area. Although, the Council does contribute to the local bus services to help isolated residents access essential services in the market towns of Wellington and Newport.

4.15   Additionally, Gigabit Telford is part of the Council's digital strategy to create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all and encouraging more take-up and better access to information and services online.

4.16   Telford & Wrekin Council has partnered with Virgin Media O2 Business to deliver a multi-million pound boost to connectivity infrastructure. It will provide access to ultra-fast full fibre network connectivity to more than 200 public buildings, including schools, libraries and council offices making it easier for us to do business and easier for people to access our services online.

4.17   Work began on the first phase of the infrastructure rollout in late 2022, with the final phase, which includes connecting up schools, libraries, council offices and other public buildings, is expected to be completed by March 2025.

4.18   A home library service run by Telford & Wrekin Council's Library services, offers a regular delivery of books to homes. This is available to anyone who finds it difficult through age, disability or responsibility of caring for someone else to use their local library.

4.19   The Council and its partners manage a number of public parks and recreation grounds in the rural area as well as sports pitches including football (Edgmond), cricket pitches (Edgmond and Tibberton) and a ball court at Edgmond. Other sports facilities for local residents in the rural

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area are run by private and community groups including the High Ercall Tennis Club and Lilleshall Cricket Club. Lilleshall Hall Golf Club and National Sports Centre is located just over the borough boundary.

4.20   As of 2025 there are three post offices in the rural area, eighteen places of worship and nine village and community halls.

Parish Neighbourhood Development Plans

4.21   In the last few years Tibberton & Cherrington; Donnington & Muxton and Ercall Magna have completed and made Neighbourhood Development Plans. These parish and town council led plans, alongside the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan, form the overall development plan for the borough. The plans provided locally distinctive policies and are used to determine planning applications in their respective areas.

4.22   Other made Neighbourhood Development Plans include; Madeley (March 2015); Waters Upton (June 2016), Edgmond (May 2018), Newport (September 2018) and Lilleshall December 2018).

Figure 2: Neighbourhood Development Plans
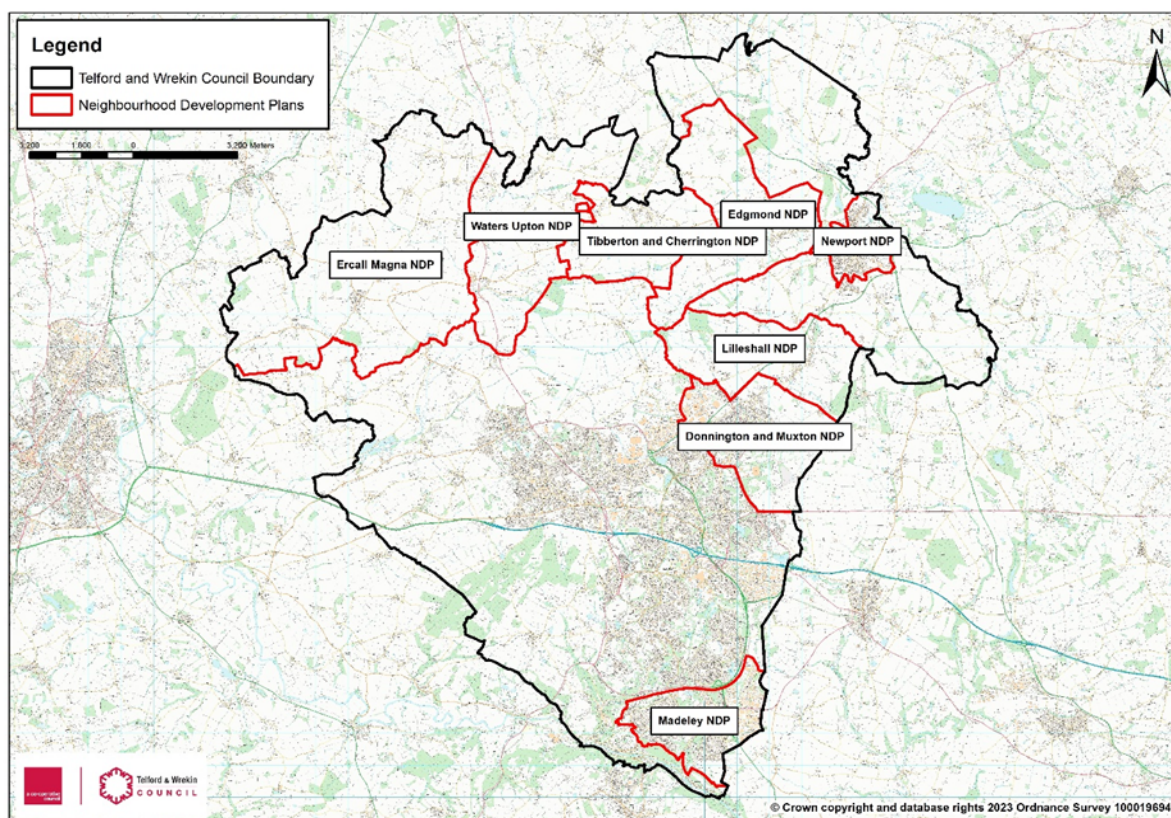
Implications arising from review of national and local policy

4.23   Arising out of this overview of national policy, recent legislation and other guidance, it can be concluded that, while national policy directs councils to boost significantly the supply of housing significantly, it is clear that this should be done on a sustainable basis. This means that new housing allocations in the Local Plan within the rural areas should, in the first place, be

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focused towards settlements with services or where new housing would help support or maintain local services and to take advantage and promote patronage of existing connections via public transport.

4.24   Additional conclusions can be drawn, including:

- Community infrastructure across the rural area demonstrates that services and facilities continue to be more widely distributed and more limited than its urban counterpart due to the nature of the rural area.
- Made Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to take account of government policy to boost significantly the supply of housing in how they contribute towards meeting the borough's housing requirement.
- The Council will also need to take account of an ageing population in planning for a mix of new housing types.
- There will be a balance to be struck between the need to support rural services and facilities whilst acknowledging that not all communities will have access to regular public transport services and as a consequence they will rely more on the private car for transport. This can in some cases be offset by the digital delivery of services such as, for example, the use of online banking, GP consultations and click and collect grocery services.

5 Methodology

5.1   The Rural Settlements Technical Paper has previously formed part of the evidence base for the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (last updated January 2016). The purpose of the report was to offer evidence on the relative level of services and facilities present in settlements within Telford and Wrekin. The paper provided detailed justification for policies SP3, HO10 and HO11 of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031) whilst taking into account national changes in planning policy and local factors.

5.2   As part of the Local Plan Review the Council is updating the Rural Settlements Paper. This draft paper has been developed to help inform policy proposals in the draft Local Plan document. Following consultation, updates to the NPPF and consideration of responses received this paper has been reviewed and updated.

5.3   This methodology looks to identify rural settlements that have a range of local services and facilities and rank them and draw conclusions on key settlements.

5.4   The methodology will form part of the updated Rural Settlements Technical Paper which will provide evidence to inform proposed planning policies, following adoption of the plan future planning applications, other council services, emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans and provide information for other agencies about the availability of rural services and facilities in the rural area.

5.5   This Rural Settlements Technical Paper will provide a basis of information on the extent of facilities and services in the rural area, but is not a policy document in itself, nor does it establish a strategy for the distribution of future development.

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Housing Requirement in the Rural Area

5.6   The Local Plan has identified a housing requirement of around 20,200, 57.5% of these homes have already been identified in the Council's housing supply, this includes homes completed, under construction, have planning permission or are included in an allowance for small sites (under 5 homes). This means 42.5% of the housing requirement will need to come through new housing site allocations.

5.7   The strategy for the rural area will see some housing growth in key settlements as well as some self-build/custom build housing in smaller settlements. The additional housing will help provide affordable homes for younger people who wish to stay within their community, options for elderly residents to down size as well as more accessible accommodation. It will also help support local services, bring new custom to local businesses and ensure that local children can access schools.

5.8   Over the course of the plan period the Council are planning for around 1,414 new homes in the rural area of this over 1313 homes have already been completed (since 2020), have planning permission (includes the remaining homes to be built out at Allscott and Crudgington sites) and this includes a small sites windfall (less than 5 homes) allowance. This means the Council are planning for around 101 net new homes up to 2040.

5.9   In order to deliver the additional net new homes required the Council need to consider the potential for allocated sites with or adjacent to the built form of villages..

Method for Identifying Sustainable Rural Settlements

5.10   The methodology is based on the previous Rural Settlements Paper updated in 2016. It should be noted that this paper has been written at a point in time, and as such the location and distribution of services, facilities and public transport networks may change between this draft paper and final paper.

5.11   In addition, following numerous changes to infrastructure and ways of living such as the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic as well as roll out of 5G, the scoring system has been adapted and improved to consider all areas. A breakdown of the scoring system is shown in Table 1. The methodology is split into three distinct stages these are as follows:

- **Stage 1 -** The initial stage involves identifying all the rural settlements in the borough and then ranking them based on their level of infrastructure. This is split between key and other services as well as other points, such as accessibility to town centres, and whether a settlement has an extensive area of previously developed land.

- **Stage 2 -** An assessment screening exercise that further analyses the settlements overall, with conclusions on which settlements have and haven't been included in the draft list of key settlements that have potential for either infill development or housing allocations.

- **Stage 3 -** Identifying a shorter list of settlements and considering their suitability to accommodate the balance indicated in the Local Plan having regard to a qualitative review of their capacity to accommodate growth.

5.1 Stage 1: Identifying All Rural Settlements in the Borough

5.12   A total of 67 settlements were identified based on the Ordinance Survey Map.

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5.13   In the previous paper it was determined that for the purpose of the study some of the settlements were considered to be scored as a single area where two villages were in reasonable proximity of each other. In this case Ellerdine/Ellerdine Heath and Crudgington/Crudgington Moor were considered to be within an acceptable walking distance of each other. However, to remain consistent in the scoring of settlements (in order to make comparisons from the previous paper), Cold Hatton Heath and Cold Hatton Heath Lanes have been kept separate.

5.14   Church Aston is identified locally as having a village community but it is within the built-up area of Newport and therefore has not been included within the assessment of rural facilities and services for the purposes of this paper.

5.15   In the 2016 study, the Harper Adams University campus was included as one of the rural settlements. On review it is not considered to be a rural settlement due to its majority student population.

5.16   All of the rural settlements identified in this process are set out below:

Table 1: Rural Settlements in the Borough

Adeney	**Ellerdine/Ellerdine Heath**	**Poynton**
Allscott	Eyton upon the Weald Moors	Poynton Green
Aston	Haygate	Preston upon the Weald Moors
Bolas Heath	Honnington	Puleston
Brockton	High Ercall	Roden
Brocton Leasows	Howle	Rodington/Rodington Heath
Calvington	Huntington	Rowton
Charlton	Edgmond Marsh	Overley
Cherrington	Isombridge	Rushmoor
Cheswell	Kynnersley	Sambrook
Chetwynd Aston	Leaton	Sleapford
Chetwynd Park	Lilleshall	Standford Bridge
Cluddley	Little Wenlock	Steeraway
Coal Moor	Longdon on Tern	Stockton
Cold Hatton Heath	Longford	Sugdon
Cold Hatton Heath Lanes	Lynn	Tibberton
Conquermoor Heath	Marsh Green	Walcot
Cotwall	Meeson/Meeson Heath	Walton

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Adeney	Ellerdine/Ellerdine Heath	Poynton
Crudgington/Crudgington Moor	Moortown	Wappenshall
Edgmond	New Works	Waters Upton
	Osbaston	Wrockwardine

Scoring Methodology

5.17   In the previous paper, the scoring methodology was based broadly on the Wychavon Rural Study[10] which sought to identify settlements for growth on the basis of infrastructure. The methodology has been adapted and adjusted to account for Telford & Wrekin's requirements and to take into account other relevant local factors (for example the absence of rail services in the rural area).

5.18   Whilst the previous survey was split between 'Primary' and 'Secondary' Services. It was not considered that this should be used this time round due to the subjective nature of what would be considered primary or secondary, or services that wouldn't qualify for either. Therefore, the scoring system has been revised to reflect the following:

- Key Services (a more familiar term which is easier to identify)
- Other Services
- Additional Points (see further detail in Table 2 below)

5.19   As is shown in Table 2 below facilities and services have been scored as follows:

- Key services (excluding bus services) = 8 points
- Other services = 4 points
- Not fully satisfied services = 2 points

5.20   Bus services have been scored as follows:

- 4 points have been awarded for a Regular Bus Service (+4 a day) and 2 points for less frequent bus service)

5.21   The presence of more than one type of service listed below (be this one of key and one of other) will attract no additional scores, for example a village with two Public Houses will only attract a score of one point.

5.22   It is also considered that some buildings may facilitate more than one facility or service, in this case a separate score for each has been accounted for as the purpose of the study is to quantify the number of services and facilities in a rural settlement not buildings by themselves.

5.23   Consideration was given to the types of services and facilities which should be assessed in combination to provide an indicator of the degree of access to transport, services and community facilities. Key services are those considered to be important to everyday life include:

- Community/parish/village hall
- Regular bus service

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10   Village Facilities and Rural Transport Study, South Worcestershire Development Plan
https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/swdp-review/swdp-review-evidence-base/village-facilities-and-rural-transport-study

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- Post office
- General store
- Primary school
- GP surgery/health centre

5.24   For the purposes of this study, an assumption has been made about anticipated services (where planning permission has been granted and construction has commenced) in new developments such as in Allscott Sugar Beat site and the Crudgington Dairy Crest site.

Table 2 : Services and Facilities

Service / Facility	Notes	Points
Key Services		
Bus Service	Bus service providing 30min or less journey to a town centre with the service starting after 7am and arriving by 9am	4
	Bus service providing 31min – 40 min journey to a town centre with the service starting after 7am and arriving by 9am.	2
	Bus service providing 30min or less journey from a town centre to settlement with the service starting after 5pm and arriving by 7pm	4
	Bus service providing 31min – 40 min journey from a town centre to settlement with the service starting after 5pm and arriving by 7pm	2
Post Office	Permanent	8
	Mobile Post Office	4
Infant or Primary School		8
General Store	Selling milk, bread etc.	8
GP/Health Centre		8
	A branch surgery with reduced hours	4
Community Centre/Parish Hall/Village Hall	Or if a shared facility (e.g. school hall only available after 6.30pm)	4
Other Services		
Banks		4
ATM	Not including ATMs within shops which would be in accessible out of hours.	4

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Service / Facility	Notes	Points
Chemist		4
Other Shops	Between 1 and 3 shops	4
	Between 4 and 6 shops	6
Supermarket	If one of the 'other shops' is a supermarket it scores an additional point	1
Garage/filling station		4
Leisure	Open Space	4
	Equipped Play	
	Bowling Green – not including mats in a village hall	
	Allotments	
Public House without food		4
Public House with food or restaurant		4
Church or Place of Worship		4
Additional Points		
University	Harper Adams University	4
Adult Learning Centre		4
Access to Telford / Newport Town Centres	If within 5km of either town centres.	4
Large employment areas	Large single employers or larger areas of commercial activity (industrial estates and town centres)	4
Brownfield Bonus	Included for both Allscott and Crudgington Moor, originally a 3 point bonus but has been altered slightly to fit this scoring system.	2
Access to 5G (this is based on Ofcom mobile availability[11])	Very high confidence of coverage	4
	High confidence of Coverage	2

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11   https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/mobile-coverage#pc=SY12BQ&uprn=100071368445&vw=map

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Accessibility

5.25   Some of the services set out in Table 2 were scored on the basis of their accessibility. The scoring criteria is further defined below below:

- Access to a bus service (a score of <u>four points</u> was given if the village is served by a regular commercial bus and a score of <u>two points</u> if the bus is served by the less frequent service)
- Proximity to Telford Centre or Newport (a score of <u>four points</u> was given if within five kilometres)
- Access to large employment areas (a score of <u>four points</u> was given if within five kilometres)

5.26   The assessment matrix (Appendix A) is considered to be correct as of 2023, however it should be recognised that any changes to facilities and services between plan drafts will need to be reflected in scoring.

Availability of extensive areas of previously developed land

5.27   Finally, each settlement was reviewed to consider whether there was an extensive area of previously developed land in excess of three hectares. The logic for three hectares was that it would potentially provide a yield of 100 homes and would be more likely to generate some additional community infrastructure or help maintain and support other villages' services consistent with paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework. A score of two points was given to each settlement with such a site or a site within walking distance of an existing settlement.

Research sources

5.28   The following sources of information were used to carry out the research.

- Telford and Wrekin Leisure Services records (open space, libraries)
- Telford and Wrekin list of polling stations
- Telford & Wrekin Council – Planning Application Search
- Telford & Wrekin Brownfield Land Register
- NHS Direct
- The Post Office
- Yell.co.uk
- Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Board – www.shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk
- Google including the Google Earth mapping facility
- Parish Council websites where available
- Travelinemidlands.co.uk – for bus services
- Telford & Wrekin Council's rural bus services - Public transport - Telford & Wrekin Council
- View mobile availability – Ofcom
- www.achurchnearyou.com/ - this identifies Church of England places of worship in the borough and other Ordnance Survey based reviews identified other places of worship which were then reviewed again either by means of a site visit or a further check on the internet to assess if the place was in active use.
- Officer site visits
- Census 2011
- Census 2021

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5.2 Stage 2: Infrastructure Screening Exercise

5.29   The review of infrastructure revealed the following scores by rank set out in Table 3 below.

5.30   Comparatively since the last study took place eight years ago, it was considered that a refresh is necessary in line with the council's updated priorities. The points system has been simplified to include three categories of scoring (eight, four and two) resulting in higher scoring system but with greater analyse into each of the rural settlements.

Table 3: Ranking of Settlements by Infrastructure

Settlement	Ranking	2023 Score
Edgmond	1	66
Lilleshall	2	54
High Ercall	3	52
Tibberton	4	40
Waters Upton	5	36
Allscott		36
Crudgington / Crudgington Moor	7	22
Rodington / Rodington Heath	8	20
Preston upon the Weald Moors	9	18
Little Wenlock		18
Chetwynd Park		18
Cold Hatton Heath		18
Wrockwardine	13	16
Sambrook		16
Sleapford	15	12
Brockton		12
Brockton Leasows	17	8
Ellerdine/Ellerdine Heath		8
Longdon on Tern		8
Chetwynd Aston		8
Stockton		8

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Settlement	Ranking	2023 Score
Roden		8
Cherrington		8
Coalmoor		8
Overley		8
Cotwall		8
Leaton		8
Longford		8
Wappenshall	29	6
Standford Bridge		6
Great Bolas		6
Walton		6
Puleston		6
Cold Hatton / Heath Lanes	34	4
Eyton upon the Weald Moors		4
Osbaston		4
Moortown		4
Honnington		4
Haygate		4
Kynnersley		4
Walcot		4
New Works		4
Rowton		4
Howle	44	2
Meeson / Meeson Heath		2
Poynton		2
Sugdon	47	0
Aston		0

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Settlement	Ranking	2023 Score
Bolas Heath		0
Calvington		0
Charlton		0
Cluddley		0
Isombridge		0
Huntington		0
Conquermoor Heath		0
Marsh Green		0
Steeraway		0
Adeney		0
Cheswell		0
Lynn		0
Poynton Green		0

5.31   The results show in Table 3 show that there were very few settlements that had an extensive amount of Key Services (scored 8 points) and hence why many settlements out of the 67 didn't score highly. High Ercall, Waters Upton and Edgmond are three of four settlements to have a general store in the village, the other Tibberton, relies on a community volunteer service to run the store. No Rural settlement has a secondary school, and therefore children of secondary school age are obliged to take public transport or be driven to school, nor do any of the settlements have access to fixed library services.

5.32   Although the scoring system has been updated, the hierarchy of settlements remains largely similar in their ranking of infrastructure. The top five performing settlements have remained as Edgmond, High Ercall, Lilleshall, Tibberton and Waters Upton with a further two settlements (Allscott and Crudgington) score above twenty points.

5.33   Of the top 7 settlements Waters Upton does not have a primary school, albeit Crudgington Primary school is situated between Waters Upton and Crudgington with walking footpath connection. All of top 7 settlements have a place of worship. Edgmond scored the highest with 66 points.

5.34   Crudgington scored relatively highly (22 points) because the primary school of the same name is identified as being in that settlement albeit it is approximately equidistant between Crudgington and Waters Upton (36 points) and is used by residents from both villages. Crudgington also has the now closed Dairy Crest operations which represents an extensive area of previously developed land, which are currently being built out. However, it does not have any shops. Some Crudgington residents are likely to use the shop in nearby Waters Upton. At the same time it enjoys both north to south bus services into Wellington as well as east to

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west bus services connecting the village with Newport and Shrewsbury. The point to note here is that when considering Crudgington, it is necessary to take account of its proximity to Waters Upton and vice versa given the good pedestrian connections.

5.35   Lilleshall continued to score well as it had done previously with good links to public transport and other facilities such as the National Sporting Centre just outside the borough boundary. It still remains one of the larger rural settlements but does not have a shop although it is within proximity to Muxton and Newport. There continues to be a number of community assets including extensive sporting provision, a primary school, village hall and place of worship.

5.36   A total of 16 settlements scored between above 10 points. One settlement Preston Upon the Weald Moors has a primary school. However collectively none of them have wide range of infrastructure, with only a small number having good access to public transport, and as such the majority of people will remain car dependent for most services.

5.37   Little Wenlock (identified for further assessment in 2016) scored comparatively lower than it had done previously with limited access to public transport and the lack of a primary school or shop accounting to a lower score overall.

5.38   Allscott (as was highlighted in the 2016) has a relatively low score, however the presence of an extensive area of previously developed land increases the score. Once this is built out, the settlement will have an extensive amount of new infrastructure, including a primary school, and this has therefore has been taken into account in the scoring of settlements.

5.39   Additionally, Chetwynd Aston, Huntington, Longford and Brockton Leasows scored significantly more due to their proximity to Newport.

5.40   15 settlements did not score any points for access to services and facilities.

UPDATE POST REGULATION 18

5.41   As part of the draft plan consultation a number of responses were received in relation to three proposed site allocations put forward at Regulation 18 (Sites 197, 200 and 202) raising issues with the lack of services and facilities within Rodington. The responses also raised the risk of coalesce between Rodington and the settlement of Summer Wood that might arise should two of the site be taken forward. The issues raised and the Councils consideration of them is addressed within the qualitative assessment for Rodington in Stage 3.

5.42   In addition, to responses to sites within Rodington several responses sought clarity on what a key settlement is defined as. Within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan, Policy HO12 identifies the key rural settlements based on the evidence set out within this report. The key rural settlements are defined within the Local Plan as follows:

- *A settlement that includes the highest concentration of services and facilities, such as village hall, shop, primary school, public house, post office facilities, play and recreation space. The settlement must also have some form of access via public transport and is conveniently accessible to the A or B road network.*

5.43   On review of the services and facilities shown in Stage 2, although Rodington scores highly with 20 points. In comparison to the other 7 key settlements (all of which score in the majority of categories in the matrix), Rodington does not have a primary school located in the village, benefit from 5G, have local retail facilities and is not conveniently accessible to an A or

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B road. Some of which (as defined in the Local Plan) are considered key for housing developments in a rural settlement. Based on this overview Rodington is not identified as a key settlement, this is explored further in Stage 3 of this assessment.

5.44   Therefore, the following settlements have been identified for further qualitative consideration.

- Edgmond
- Lilleshall
- High Ercall
- Tibberton
- Water Upton
- Allscott
- Crudgington
- Rodington (**at Regulation 18 only**)

5.3 Stage 3: Qualitative Assessment of Shortlisted Settlements

5.45   Each of the eight shortlisted settlements (as of Regulation 18) were assessed again in more detail with regard to their suitability to accommodate some additional housing.

Edgmond

5.46   Edgmond remains the largest of the settlements in the rural area which, when considering the close proximity of Harpers Adams, has over 500 residential properties. It has the most comprehensive range of infrastructure too including some employment opportunities at the nearby university.

5.47   The village has an historic core with a cluster of listed buildings and related spaces within a Conservation Area. It has expanded and evolved over time, particularly northwards with areas of later Victorian and 20th century development, the former tending to be more associated with the highways running through and therefore the settlement tends to be more linear in nature.

5.48   The settlement has its own Neighbourhood Plans which was adopted on 31st May 2018[(12)] which ensures future development makes a positive and sympathetic contribution to the character of the plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan also recognises the need to maintain the separation of built development between Harper Adams and Edgmond. It will also be important to protect Edgmond from coalescing with Newport in the future.

5.49   **Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) -** There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.50   This conclusion is unchanged Edgmond is confirmed as a key settlement.

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12   Edgmond Neighbourhood Plan Page -
       https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20683/completed_neighbourhood_development_plans/2236/edgmond_neighbourhood_plan

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Lilleshall

5.51 Lilleshall scored the second highest with regards to key and other infrastructure. Its score has increased slightly from previous exercise.

5.52 Lilleshall falling south west of Newport performs similarly to Edgmond which is just west of Newport. Large agricultural fields separate the settlement from the urban area of Telford to the south and Newport to the north, and similarly to Edgmond, it is important to protect this separation to preserve the distinction and identity of Lilleshall.

5.53 Lilleshall is characterised as a long liner settlements with over 400 homes. It has an historic core around the church, the Lilleshall Hill, and has been extensively extended to the north and south largely following the line of Limekiln Lane and Church Road. There are several narrow roads which lead of this central 'spine' containing small clusters (often linear in nature) of development.

5.54 The largely linear form means that the settlement has extensive boundaries with the surrounding countryside and this form and relationship is a distinctive feature of the village.

5.55 Lilleshall also has Neighbourhood Plan[13] which was adopted on 13th December 2018 that provides policy guidance on in fill development.

5.56 **Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) -** There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.57 This conclusion is unchanged Lilleshall if confirmed as a key settlement.

High Ercall

5.58 High Ercall scored the third highest with regards to primary infrastructure. Down from second previously. The provision of a GP service previously made it a suitable settlement to consider for a modest amount of growth especially to meet the needs of older people. However, this GP Practice has now been moved over to Shawbury, however High Ercall still remains within the catchment area.

5.59 The village is compact and there are clear boundaries with the surrounding countryside. Some of the village is covered by a Conservation Area which was designated in 1981 and further extended in 2008. The Parish contains 28 Listed Buildings and one Scheduled Monument/ Most of the countryside surrounding the settlements is high quality agricultural land, mainly Grade 2 and Grade3.

5.60 Ercall Magna (of which High Ercall falls within) now also has a Neighbourhood Plan[14] which was formally adopted on 18th October 2023. Within the plan there are specific policies on High Ercall where it has been identified as a location for limited infill housing.

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13 Lilleshall Neighbourhood Plan - https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20683/completed_neighbourhood_development_plans/1194/lilleshall_neighbourhood_plan
14 Ercall magna Neighbourhood Plan -
   https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20683/completed_neighbourhood_development_plans/545/ercall_magna_neighbourhood_plan

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5.61   Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) – There are limited opportunities for housing growth as no land was submitted for consideration in the Call for Sites process, therefore development is likely to be infill only.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.62   This conclusion is unchanged High Ercall is confirmed as a key settlement.

Tibberton

5.63   Tibberton does not have a post office but has a shop which also serves as a community run facility and operates on a part time basis. However, it does have a primary school.

5.64   The historic linear pattern of the village has evolved in the post war period into covering four roads around a central field and a school. There a number of small businesses, which provide employment to the local community. A recreation field, called simply "The Playing Fields", is used by both the School and outside teams for organised sport but it also caters for informal recreation by local residents. It has protection under the Telford & Wrekin Council's 'Green Guarantee' scheme and is further recognised as locally important green space in the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.65   Preserving the integrity of the character and scale of the village and being responsive to the constraints of the small highways which run through and beyond the could potentially restrict the number of new homes through housing allocations, following consultation on the draft Local Plan.

5.66   Tibberton has a Neighbourhood Plan[15] which was adopted on 2nd December 2021 for both Tibberton & Cherrington which have been accessed separated as part of this paper. The plan supports proposals for new housing development on suitable infill sites within the Tibberton Settlement Boundary which is identified in the plan. Development of this scale could be accommodated into the existing drainage systems.

5.67   Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) - There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Waters Upton

5.68   Waters Upton is a well-defined linear settlement with an historic core around the church and a spur road. It has a number of working farms within or close to the village including a farm shop. The settlement is significantly smaller than the settlements above.

5.69   Key services include a general store and post office hence the high scoring of the settlement. Other services also include a public house, church and village hall which justifies its position within the top rural settlements in the borough.

5.70   Due to its connectivity to Crudgington (which also classes in top scoring rural settlements) it is important to recognise the need to prevent coalescence between the two settlements. However, there is some room for infill housing and the potential for some allocated development.

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15   Tibberton & Cherrington Neighbourhood Plan -
https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20683/completed_neighbourhood_development_plans/3592/tibberton_and_cherrington_neighbourhood_plan

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5.71   The Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan**(16)** was formally adopted on 16th June 2016 and covers both Water Upton and Crudgington.

5.72   Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) - There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.73   This conclusion is unchanged Waters Upton is confirmed as a key settlement.

Crudgington

5.74   Crudgington is more clustered in its form than Waters Upton, occupying a corner of land between the A442 and the B5062. It contains a dispersed collection of dwellings of various ages including a group of mid-20th century housing in the north east corner of the settlement. It includes the former Dairy Crest site which lies immediately west of the main group of dwellings. This site is separated from the main village core as it is located to the west of the A442.

5.75   The bulk of the settlement's new housing should be delivered on the former Dairy Crest site which will deliver a proportion of affordable housing. Opportunities for new housing elsewhere should be restricted to small infill development.

5.76   The 2016 Rural Services Paper recognised that following completion of the Dairy Crest site that Crudgington would become a key settlement.

5.77   Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) - There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.78   This conclusion is unchanged Crudgington is confirmed as a key settlement.

Allscott

5.79   Allscott as has been mentioned throughout as an upcoming settlement with the construction of Allscott Meads progressing. In the 2016 previous paper this was not analysed, however following the grant of planning permission and the commencement of construction the site has been included within this paper.

5.80   A large number of homes are being provided in the area as well as associated infrastructure providing over 450 homes, a primary school (Allscott Meads Primary) as well as retail and business units. The former sugar beet factory left a large amount of space creating an opportunity to create a community with new infrastructure and it is considered that due to the progression of the project that these services and facilities should be taken into account in the scoring of settlements.

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16   Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan -
       https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20683/completed_neighbourhood_development_plans/544/waters_upton_neighbourhood_plan

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5.81   The 2016 Rural Services Paper recognised that following completion of the Allscott Sugar Beat site that Allscott would become a key settlement.

5.82   **Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) -** There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.83   This conclusion is unchanged Allscott is confirmed as a key settlement.

Rodington/Rodington Heath

5.84   Rodington is a small and largely compact settlement with some outlying areas of development with limited facilities in comparison to the other settlements. However, when scoring the settlement Rodington performed well due to its services, of a church, village hall, bus services and public house.

5.85   This settlement scored the lowest of the top eight settlements. The absence of a primary school could restrict levels of development, however, with no potential sites for allocation in High Ercall there is scope for places within High Ercall Primary from housing in Rodington.

5.86   **Conclusion (Pre Regulation 18) -** There could be opportunities for limited infill development within the village and also subject to the outcome of the draft Local Plan consultation some allocated development in the village given the level of services and facilities and site proposals current subject to consultation.

Update Post Regulation 18

5.87   Three sites (197, 200 and 202) were put forward at Regulation 18 Draft Plan stage. As is covered within the Council's Site Assessment Technical Paper. The Council took forward a larger set of sites than would have been required at the Regulation 18 stage to provide some broader choices for consultation with rural communities.

5.88   As stated within the conclusion of the draft Rural Settlements Technical Paper at Regulation 18 stage there could be an opportunity for some allocated development given the comparatively higher levels of services and facilities in the village of Rodington.. This draft position was reflected in the site assessments sheets which stated sites were taken forward as it was considered that they could potentially *"contribute towards the vitality and sustainability of the village community"*.

5.89   In response to the consultation a significant number of consultation responses were receieved objecting to the sites based on the negative impact on the character of the village, lack of services and facilities (shop and school), local infrastructure such as constrained highway network and poor drainage infrastructure. Comments were also received regarding the loss of agricultural land.

5.90   In addition, to the objections a highways report (submitted by a specialist transport planning consultancy) was provided to the Council outlining three reasons for the basis of objection. In summary this was based on 1) a lack of key facilities in the village including food store, schools, nurseries, health provision or significant employment opportunities; 2) not well

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served by public transport and cannot be accessed safely by sustainable travel modes; and 3) primary routes between the sites and wider strategic road network are severely constrained by narrow bridges, single track roads, without adequate passing places and prone to flooding restricting access to the village. Therefore additional major housing development would have a detrimental impact on the highway network, result in more trips on the network and result in unsafe and congested conditions on narrow village lanes.

5.91   In response the Council sought further advice from the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to provide in response to the report. This is shown below.

5.92   *Following a review of the information submitted in the representation it is clearly written to an agenda and is therefore negatively weighted in terms of the comments made that oppose development in the village.*

5.93   *However, the LHA must remain objective in its conclusions and therefore it is essential that comments continue to be objective and the LHA is in no way led or influenced from such a representation. With this in mind, I have taken a review of key points made by Egg Transport Planning to be loosely consistent with the tone of our highways comments made on the sites referred to.*

5.94   *The representation picks up a number of specific deficiencies in the geometric standard of the roads in and out of the settlement. I am not sure that the B5063 bridge narrowing issue highlighted is worthy of any clear objection. This section of road works on a priority give way system and in general terms the B road operates below its theoretical capacity and therefore presents no tangible issues regarding safety or severe impact. Another issue has been highlighted at a bridge to the south of Rodington but this is described as being in Walton, which is incorrect, the bridge is in Walcot, for the avoidance of any doubt. The bridge is narrow, single track and affords limited forward visibility to oncoming traffic. Therefore, I do support the current observation in the representation but I am confident the situation could receive proportionate offsite mitigation, if required, as a result of any new development having an identified impact.*

5.95   *The LHA's approach to the local highway network comments was to focus on the geometric merit of all minor routes to and from the B5063, to the east, and the B4394 to the south. It is these routes, as a whole, which can be considered substandard and unsuitable to support any sizeable future development. The example presented in the representation for Sugden Lane has merit and is consistent with many other locations on the surrounding rural lanes. The issue is compounded by many of these routes being poorly drained, receive minimal maintenance and are liable to flooding.*

5.96   *The representation makes clear reference to the NPPF transportation and sustainability tests and how in their opinion the site has demonstrable shortfalls in meeting these. Again, there is a lot of merit in what has been stated by Egg but these allocations do not benefit from comprehensive highways technical reports, as would be expected in any planning application, and therefore at this time I would refrain from the use of presenting any LHA comments in the form of evidence base objections focused on the NPPF tests and stick to higher level conclusions based on a first principles approach, local knowledge, experience and judgement. The application of NPPF para 35 I would suggest is a Policy duty and forms part of the strategic exercise of site allocation. Accordingly the LHA can state the following:*

1.   *The minor roads to and from Rodington are geometrically constrained in a number of places (such as narrow bridges, limited forward visibility on bends and single track roads with*

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limited and poorly located passing areas) with limited scope for mitigation. The issue is exacerbated by national speed limits in the area and the continuing poor condition of these routes also.

2. *The village in highway terms can be classed as highly unsustainable, where local amenities are limited resulting in a likely increased dependence on the car*

3. *The geometric inadequacies and unlit nature of the roads in and surrounding Rodington provide little scope for pedestrian and cycle improvement or the delivery of safe shared routes due to 3rd party land constraints*

4. *Public transport provision in the village is limited, again increasing car dependence but further development could increase viability of bus service and frequency. Merits of this conclusion are best sought from the transport team and service provider however.*

5.97   **Conclusion –** In summary as set out above, there are a number of issues that have been highlighted by consultees, the transport report during as part of the consultation and the further comments by the LHA. The Council has considered these issue in formulating producing an updated Rural Services Technical Paper. The relative lack of services and technical constraints raised l point to the unsuitability of allocating sites within Rodington area. It has also been concluded that Rodington does not offer a similar level of service provision to other identified key settlements in the Local Plan and should be removed from the list of key settlements set out in Policy HO12 Housing Development in the Rural Area.

6 Conclusion

6.1   Arising from this review, seven key settlements have been identified as appropriate for new housing. The Council strategy for the rural area will see some housing growth in key settlements through a mix of infill development and where appropriate some housing allocations. The delivery of housing through allocations will provide a robust approach to demonstrating that the Council can meet its need for housing in the rural area, thereby providing certainty to local residents and businesses.

6.2   The additional housing will help provide affordable homes for younger people who wish to stay within their community, options for elderly residents to down size as well as more accessible accommodation. It will also help support local services, bring new custom to local businesses and ensure that local children can access schools.

6.3   Some self-build / custom build housing in smaller settlements could also be an appropriate means of providing good quality well designed homes in keeping with the surrounding housing.

6.4   As is outlined in the Local Plan the Council are planning for around 101 net new homes in the rural area up to 2040.

6.5   Policies HO12 and HO13 within the Local Plan have been prepared on to support the above approach.

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Figure 3: Key Rural Settlements

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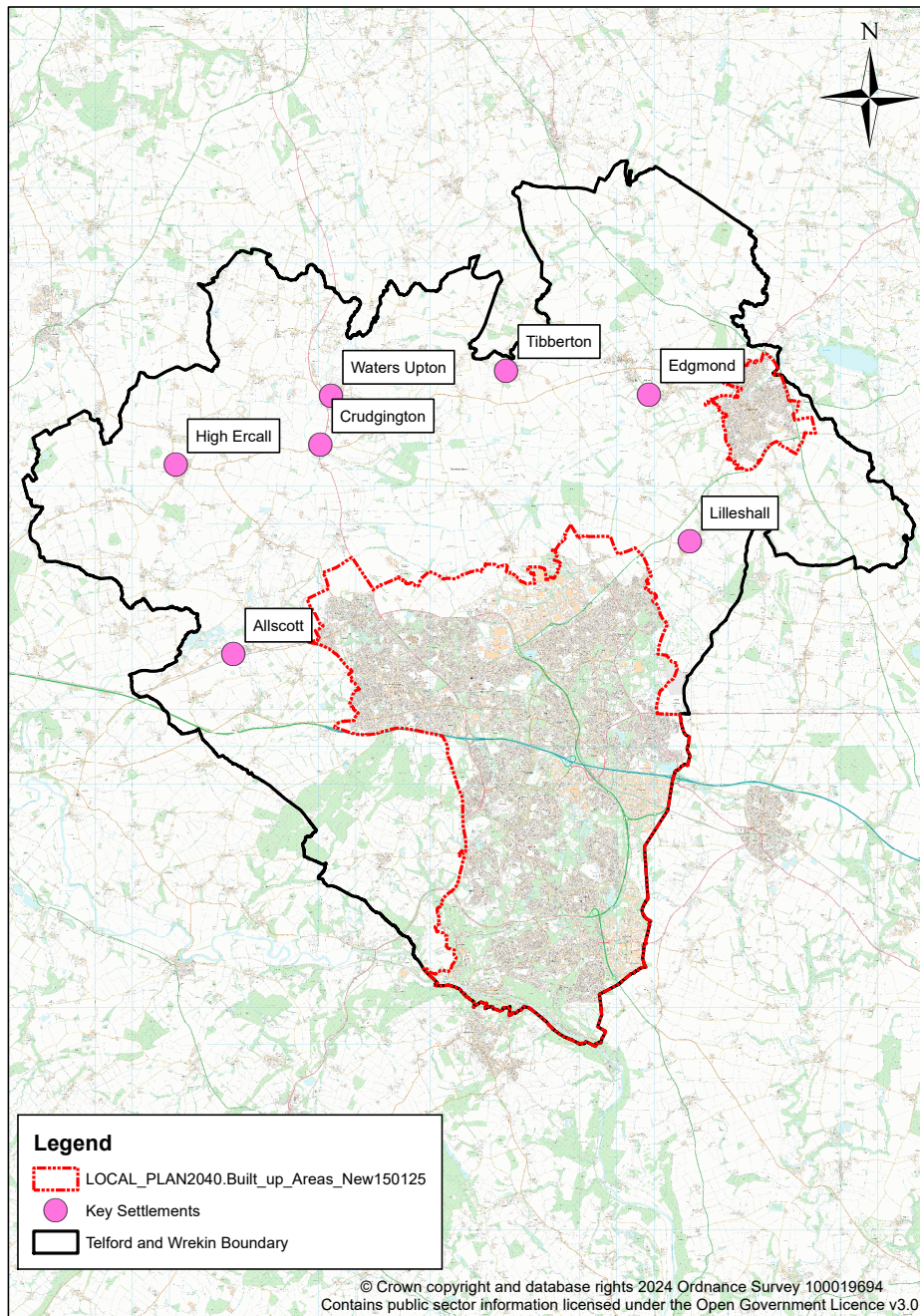
Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Five Villages identified in Local Plan 2018 Housing Policy HO 10					Crudgington / Crudgington Moor	Rodington / Rodington Heath
	High Ercall	Waters Upton	Lilleshall	Tibberton	Edgmond		
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G							
Primary School	8		8	8	8	8	
Nursery	8		8				
Access to 5G			2		2		
GP/Health Centre							
Health Centre			4				
COMMUNITY							
Public House / Restaurant		4	4	4	4		4
Takeaway							
Place of Worship	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Village/ Community Hall	4	4		4	4		4
LEISURE & RECREATION							
Leisure Centre	4		4		4		
Recreation/ Open Space			4	4	4	4	4
Restaurant/Takeway/Café			4		4		
RETAIL							
General Store	8	8		8	8		
Post Office	8	8			8		
Other Shops	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)					4		
TRANSPORT							
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)	4	4	4	4	4		4
Less frequent Bus Service							
Petrol Station							
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)			4		4		
EMPLOYMENT							
Large Employer							
SCORE	52	36	54	40	66	22	20
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus						2	

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Wrockwardine	Little Wenlock	Preston upon the Weald Moors	Sambrook	Brockton	Great Bolas	Longdon on Tern
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G							
Primary School			8				
Nursery							
Access to 5G					2		
GP/Health Centre							
Health Centre							
COMMUNITY							
Public House / Restaurant		4		4			
Takeaway							
Place of Worship	4	4	4	4		4	4
Village/ Community Hall	4	4		4			
LEISURE & RECREATION							
Leisure Centre				4			
Recreation/ Open Space	4	4					
Restaurant/Takeway/Café					4		
RETAIL							
General Store							
Post Office							
Other Shops							
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)							
TRANSPORT							
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)	4						4
Less frequent Bus Service		2	2		2	2	
Petrol Station							
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)					4		
EMPLOYMENT							
Large Employer			4				
SCORE	16	18	18	16	12	6	8
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus							

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Sleapford	Allscott	New Works	Roden	Stockton	Chetwynd Park	Cold Hatton	Cold Hatton/Heath Lanes
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G								
Primary School		8						
Nursery								
Access to 5G								
GP/Health Centre		8						
Health Centre								
COMMUNITY								
Public House / Restaurant	4	4						
Takeaway								
Place of Worship						4		
Village/ Community Hall								
LEISURE & RECREATION								
Leisure Centre		4						
Recreation/ Open Space		4	4			4		
Restaurant/Takeway/Café	4			4		4		
RETAIL								
General Store								
Post Office								
Other Shops		4		4	4	4	4	
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)								
TRANSPORT								
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)	4						4	4
Less frequent Bus Service		2				2		
Petrol Station								
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)					4			
EMPLOYMENT								
Large Employer								
SCORE	12	36	4	8	8	18	8	4
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus		2						

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Additional rural settlements identified							
	Kynnersley	Rowton	Cherrington	Coalmoor	Cotwall	Ellerdine/Ellerdine Heath	Honnington	Howle
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G								
Primary School								
Nursery								
Access to 5G								
GP/Health Centre								
Health Centre								
COMMUNITY								
Public House / Restaurant								
Takeaway								
Place of Worship	4	4				4		
Village/ Community Hall						4		
LEISURE & RECREATION								
Leisure Centre								
Recreation/ Open Space								
Restaurant/Takeway/Café								
RETAIL								
General Store								
Post Office								
Other Shops				4	4			
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)								
TRANSPORT								
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)				4	4	4	4	
Less frequent Bus Service								2
Petrol Station								
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)				4				
EMPLOYMENT								
Large Employer								
SCORE	4	4	8	8	8	8	4	2
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus								

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	in the Top 11 Settlements Ranked by Infrastructure								
	Meeson/Meeson Heath	Moortown	Poynton	Sugdon	Walcot	Puleston	Chetwynd Aston	Huntington	Leaton
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G									
Primary School									
Nursery									
Access to 5G						2			
GP/Health Centre									
Health Centre									
COMMUNITY									
Public House / Restaurant									
Takeaway									
Place of Worship									4
Village/ Community Hall									
LEISURE & RECREATION									
Leisure Centre									
Recreation/ Open Space		4							
Restaurant/Takeway/Café					4				
RETAIL									
General Store									
Post Office									
Other Shops							4		4
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)									
TRANSPORT									
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)									
Less frequent Bus Service	2		2						
Petrol Station									
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)						4	4		
EMPLOYMENT									
Large Employer									
SCORE	2	4	2	0	4	6	8	0	8
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus									

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Standford Bridge	Walton	Wappenshall	Aston	Bolas Heath	Calvington	Charlton	Cluddley	Conquermoor Heath
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G									
Primary School									
Nursery									
Access to 5G									
GP/Health Centre									
Health Centre									
COMMUNITY									
Public House / Restaurant									
Takeaway									
Place of Worship									
Village/ Community Hall									
LEISURE & RECREATION									
Leisure Centre									
Recreation/ Open Space			4						
Restaurant/Takeway/Café									
RETAIL									
General Store									
Post Office									
Other Shops	4	4							
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)									
TRANSPORT									
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)									
Less frequent Bus Service	2	2	2						
Petrol Station									
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)									
EMPLOYMENT									
Large Employer									
SCORE	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus									

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Eyton upon the Weald Moors	Haygate	Isombridge	Longford	Marsh Green	Steeraway	Adeney	Brockton Leasows
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G								
Primary School								
Nursery								
Access to 5G								
GP/Health Centre								
Health Centre								
COMMUNITY								
Public House / Restaurant	4							
Takeaway								
Place of Worship								
Village/ Community Hall								
LEISURE & RECREATION								
Leisure Centre								
Recreation/ Open Space				4				
Restaurant/Takeway/Café								
RETAIL								
General Store								
Post Office								
Other Shops								
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)								
TRANSPORT								
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)		4						4
Less frequent Bus Service								
Petrol Station								
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)				4				4
EMPLOYMENT								
Large Employer								
SCORE	4	4	0	8	0	0	0	8
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus								

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre	Cheswell	Lynn	Osbaston	Overley	Poynton Green
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G					
Primary School				8	
Nursery					
Access to 5G					
GP/Health Centre					
Health Centre					
COMMUNITY					
Public House / Restaurant					
Takeaway					
Place of Worship					
Village/ Community Hall					
LEISURE & RECREATION					
Leisure Centre					
Recreation/ Open Space					
Restaurant/Takeway/Café					
RETAIL					
General Store					
Post Office					
Other Shops			4		
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)					
TRANSPORT					
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)					
Less frequent Bus Service					
Petrol Station					
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)					
EMPLOYMENT					
Large Employer					
SCORE	0	0	4	8	0
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus					

Rural Settlements Technical Paper Scoring Matrix

Facilities/ Local Centre
EDUCATION/HEALTH/5G
Primary School
Nursery
Access to 5G
GP/Health Centre
Health Centre
COMMUNITY
Public House / Restaurant
Takeaway
Place of Worship
Village/ Community Hall
LEISURE & RECREATION
Leisure Centre
Recreation/ Open Space
Restaurant/Takeway/Café
RETAIL
General Store
Post Office
Other Shops
Bank/Building Society / ATM (external)
TRANSPORT
Regular Bus Service (4+ a day)
Less frequent Bus Service
Petrol Station
Access to Telford/Newport Town Centre (5km)
EMPLOYMENT
Large Employer
SCORE
Brownfield 3 Point Bonus