

## ***Local Government Reorganisation in Shropshire***

In July 2007 the Government announced that Shropshire would be one of a handful of areas where its local government structure would be changed, replacing the current two tier system with a unitary council. This will mean that as of April 2009 the six existing authorities of Shropshire County Council, Bridgnorth District Council, North Shropshire District Council, Oswestry Borough Council, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council and South Shropshire District Council will be merged to form a single Shropshire wide unitary council. All the services currently provided by these authorities, including the planning service, will be transferred to the new authority.

The move to a single council acting as the Local Planning Authority for Shropshire will mean that the number and type of planning documents produced across the county will be radically reduced but will have greater geographic reach. In the period before April 2009, by working together, the six existing councils have already begun to develop a joint planning policy, and work on a set of unitary planning policy documents is planned to begin this April.

### **1. Introduction**

#### **The Local Development Scheme**

1.1 Legislation introduced in 2004 requires the Council to prepare and maintain a 'Local Development Framework' (LDF). This LDF sets out, in the form of a 'portfolio', the Local Development Documents (LDD's) that collectively will deliver the spatial vision and objectives for the area over the next 10 to 15 years. It will seek to integrate and reflect proposals for physical development by the Council and its various partners. The Local Development Framework, along with the Regional Spatial Strategy prepared by the West Midlands Regional Assembly, will form the statutory 'Development Plan', which is the basis for all planning decisions. The previous Development Plan system concerned itself with planning and land use issues. Whilst the LDF will act as the land use and development delivery mechanism it has to take into account land use consequences of other strategies including the Community Strategy. This is likely to include regeneration, economic development, housing, health, biodiversity, recycling, protection of the environment, and transport.

1.2 Rather than one document in force for several years, the LDF comprises; a portfolio of different documents called Local Development Documents (LDDs) each with different objectives and policies. Individual documents may be reviewed as directed in regulations or when the Council sees fit dependent upon local circumstances and to a certain extent by local opinion through extensive consultation.

1.3 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the 'Project Plan' that explains the documents the Council will prepare as part of the LDF over the

forthcoming 3-year period. It also sets out the resources the Council will require and the timetable for each document. The Local Development Scheme will be kept up to date - considering the need to revise it on, at least, an annual basis.

1.4 This document represents the Council's draft revised Local Development Scheme from mid-2008. It will be submitted to the Secretary of State through the Government Office for the West Midlands for comment, and they then consult the Planning Inspectorate on the timescales for examination of the individual documents.

1.5 The Local Development Framework portfolio will contain:

- Development Plan Documents that are subject to community involvement as well as independent testing (by the Planning Inspectorate) and have 'Development Plan' status, and
- Supplementary Planning Documents that are subject to rigorous community involvement, but are not tested by the Planning Inspectorate and do not have 'Development Plan' status.

1.6 The stages of preparing a DPD comprise:

1.Pre-production	Evidence gathering stage to develop the evidence base to inform the preparation of a 'sound' DPD;
2. Production	Preparation of Issues and Options by involving the community and other stakeholders and consultation on these. A non-statutory 'Preferred Option' stage is included (on GOWM's recommendation) to increase stakeholder involvement. A Final draft version of the DPD is prepared for further consultation and then submitted to the Secretary of State in the light of the representations received. Formal representations are requested on the submitted DPD.
3. Examination	Independent examination by a Planning Inspector to consider the 'soundness' of the DPD;
4. Adoption	The Inspector prepares a report with recommendations which are binding on the local authority. The DPD is adopted and published as part of the LDF.

1.7 The process of preparing SPD's is shorter and does not involve independent examination:

1. Preparation of Draft SPD	Includes evidence gathering and the involvement of the community and stakeholders from an early stage;
2. Consultation on Draft SPD	Representations invited on a published draft;
3. Adoption	Council considers representations received and finalises SPD before adoption.

1.8 LDDs can deal with different issues or different geographical areas, but when taken as a whole they will detail how the Community Plan and other strategies for the area (including those of other agencies) will be integrated in a manner that will achieve sustainable development. The LDF will still allocate sites for development, but it will concentrate on the outcomes needed to tackle the area's major issues rather than set out a 'traditional' long list of policies for determining planning applications.

1.9 Accompanying the portfolio of policy documents which make up the proposed LDF, will be documents describing:

- the environmental and sustainability implications of the new documents (*Strategic Environmental Assessment* or SEA and *Sustainability Appraisal* or SA);
- the outcome of *appropriate assessment* for the implications of development for European sites in and adjoining the Plan Area;
- how it intends to achieve continuous and meaningful community involvement in the production of Local Development Documents that will build consensus in their content (called a *Statement of Community Involvement* or SCI)
- the results of annual monitoring (*Annual Monitoring Report* or AMR)

## **2 Purpose and content of the Local Development Scheme**

2.1 This document is the Council's Scheme for 2008 to 2011. Its main purposes are:

- to inform the community and other partners of the Local Development Documents (LDD's) that will make up the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the area and the timescales they can expect for their preparation and subsequent review, and
- to establish the Council's priorities for the preparation of the Local Development Documents and their associated work programmes, including in relation to budgeting and resources.

2.2 The Local Development Scheme sets out:

- the present Development Plan(s) for Shropshire and the existing policies that will be saved,.

- the Local Development Documents that are to be prepared over the forthcoming 3-year period to replace existing policies, and whether they are to be Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents,
- the subject matter and the geographical area to which each Local Development Document relates,
- which organisation is to lead the process of each Local Development Document preparation and, if any, are to be prepared jointly with other local planning authorities, and
- the arrangements for future monitoring of the Local Development Framework, including the timetable for the preparation and review of the Local Development Documents.

2.3 The Local Development Scheme also includes a ‘Supporting Statement’ explaining the Local Development Scheme approach, covering: the relationship to the Community Plan and other Council strategies; the arrangements for community involvement; the evidence base for the Local Development Documents; monitoring and review; sustainability appraisal and habitats regulation assessment; the project management arrangements for the Local Development Document’s preparation; the resources involved, and; an assessment of the risks involved in the Local Development Framework’s production.

### **3 Structure and Operation of the Shropshire Local Development Framework**

3.1 The Council intends to produce a folder of Documents, which, together, will form the new Local Development Framework, replacing current saved policies and adopted Local Plans. The relationship between the documents is illustrated in Figure 1, while the content and programme for production of the Documents are set out in the Schedule of Proposed Documents (Table 1) that follows this section and the Individual Document Profiles in Appendix 1



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The present Development Plan for Shropshire  
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

3.2 The RSS was approved in 2004 by the Secretary of State who supported the principles of the strategy but outlined further issues to be developed. These form the basis of a Partial Revision of the RSS comprising:

**Phase 1** developing a long term strategy for the Black Country (the examination in public for this begins on 9 January 2007);

**Phase 2** developing a range of choices under five main themes:

- Housing (including three Spatial Options);
- Waste Management;
- Employment;
- Strategic Centres (including retail and office development);
- Transport and Accessibility;

3.3 Following the options consultation, the WMRA developed its preferred option and submitted this to the Secretary of State in December 2007. There will be an Examination in Public in late 2008 with the final Phase 2 changes published in 2009.

**Phase 3** The scope of topic areas for discussion as part of the Phase 3 revision are based upon the issues identified by the Secretary of State in 2004 and from further analysis of a scoping study carried out by the WMRA in early 2007. Taking these into account the draft project plan proposes the following work streams for partial revision:

- Rural Renaissance – Critical Rural Services;
- Communities for the Future – Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-people;
- Culture, Sport and Tourism;
- Quality of the Environment; and,
- Minerals Policy

3.4 Following the options consultation on Phase 3 in late 2008, a Preferred Option will be developed during the first half of 2009 and submitted to the Secretary of State in autumn 2009. There will be an Examination in Public in late 2009/early 2010 with the final Phase 3 changes published in mid-2010.

3.5 Input to regional policy is required continuously. Both Phases 2 and 3 of RSS revision will require significant input from Shropshire, as they will shape our LDF as it emerges. It is essential that Shropshire speaks with a strong voice and makes timely inputs to emerging evidence, policies and the Examinations in Public. The County Council currently provides 'conformity' advice and is the policy lead for the region on Rural Renaissance and we are

expected to undertake a significant amount of work as part of this. The Council also contributes actively to the work of the Regional Technical Advisory Body on Waste (RTAB); the Regional Aggregates Working Party (RAWP); the regional conformity panel for minerals and waste; the Regional Environment Group (REG); and other regional policy groups. District Councils also participate in Regional activities such as housing policy.

3.6 The Council will maintain strong regional input as the current separate strategies for spatial, economic, transport and housing policy are due to be combined into a Single Integrated Regional Strategy by 2010. Regional policy work, therefore, will need to be conducted across the relevant Planning Policy work by a number of staff and maintained and adequately resourced alongside the LDF and other policy work.

### Saved Plans

3.7 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) contains transitional arrangements to enable the move between the old and new development plan system. The transitional arrangements enable policies and proposals in existing Structure and Local Plans to be 'saved' for a period of three years from commencement of the Act (September 2004) or, for a Local Plan still progressing to adoption under the old style system, from the date of its adoption.

3.8 In Shropshire's case this meant that the following plans were 'saved' in full until September 27<sup>th</sup> 2007:

- Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Structure Plan 1996-2011;
- Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Minerals Local Plan 1996-2006;
- Shropshire Waste Local Plan 2002-2014
- Oswestry Borough Local Plan
- Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Local Plan
- South Shropshire District (adopted April 2005)

3.9 In applying to extend the 'saved' period of policies in these plans, each policy had to be assessed against a strict criteria set by the Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG), and a reasoned argument prepared for each. In general, where it was considered that a policy continued to be necessary for development control decision making in Shropshire, and where these policies had not been superseded by higher level regional and national policy, the relevant local authority applied to extend their 'saved' period beyond September.

3.10 Whilst the Shropshire authorities with more recently adopted Local Plans:

- Bridgnorth District (adopted July 2006)
- North Shropshire District (adopted December 2005)

will undertake a similar exercise to save policies from these plans.

3.11 All such ‘saved’ policies will continue to form part of the ‘Development Plan’ for Shropshire until appropriate replacement policies in Local Development Frameworks and Regional Spatial Strategies are prepared and adopted, or until they are superseded by national policy changes.

#### Proposed Local Development Documents

##### Core Strategy

3.12 An immediate start would need to be made on the joint Core Strategy in order to achieve Adoption by the government’s PSA target of March 2011. It is likely that it would take 34 months to reach Adoption of the Core Strategy, in line with the timetable for a “complex” plan.

3.13 The Core Strategy should be strategic and concise. It will need to embody the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and other corporate strategies. To be “sound”, the Core Strategy should:

- Set out the broad community vision and spatial strategy;
- Identify key strategic sites for development;
- Set out a settlement strategy, with criteria-based policies to enable development to come forward – particularly to meet the PPS 3 requirement to set out a 5 year supply of housing sites;
- Provide strategic guidance for development management but not contain numerous development control policies;
- Set out an investment/implementation plan, including priorities and mechanisms for infrastructure delivery.

3.14 The legislation and government guidance (contained in the draft PPS12 Development Plans) strongly indicates the importance of linking the LDF Core Strategy to the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Shropshire Partnership is in the process of restructuring to create a new LSP Partnership Board and 3 Area Partnerships, with a view to reviewing the Community Strategy around the establishment of the new Unitary Council. Whilst an immediate start on the Core Strategy puts it ahead of the work on the Sustainable Community Strategy, which is not ideal, discussions with the Partnership Director have suggested that the two processes can link together at appropriate stages:-

- The comprehensive evidence base prepared for the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) provides a very valuable input to the evidence base required for the Core Strategy; the further technical work for the Core Strategy will, in turn, contribute to the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- Engagement with the Community during the early Issues and Options stage of the Core Strategy process will help to set the scene for the new LSP structure and may coincide with the formation of the 3 new Area Partnerships;

- The Community Engagement Structures and mechanisms to be established for the LSP and the emerging Unitary Council, such as the Citizens' Panel, will also be able to link with the Core Strategy engagement process.

### Site Allocations DPD

3.15 Whilst it is proposed to set out strategic site allocations in the Core Strategy, it will be necessary to ensure that sufficient land is allocated specifically to meet Shropshire's needs for housing employment, retail and services. In particular, it is imperative that we can meet housing needs arising from RSS and the government requirement to identify a 5 year supply of available housing land. Therefore, it is proposed to prepare a single Site Allocations DPD for Shropshire. It would not be the intention to identify every single site for development over the next 15-20 years, as criteria-based policies within the Core Strategy would provide a framework for additional sites to come forward.

3.16 The Site Allocations DPD would be programmed to follow closely behind the Core Strategy timetable and the background work on the preparation of the two plans would be seamless.

### Potential Joint Minerals Core Strategy

3.17 To be undertaken in parallel with Core Strategy and to same time table. It is intended to be prepared jointly with Borough of Telford and the Wrekin. It is a priority because the existing Minerals Local Plan is out of date although certain policies have been saved and will be able to take account of emerging sub-regional requirements from RSS Phase 3.

3.18 The minerals apportionment for the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin sub region is to be set out in RSS. As both local authorities need to prepare minerals policies, it is logical to work together. Accordingly, a joint study of minerals resources is currently underway. Lengthy discussions have been held between GOWM, CLG and the Borough of Telford and Wrekin on the best way forward and one approach is for both Councils is to prepare a joint Minerals Core Strategy - separate from each main Core Strategy. However this is not supported by GOWM.

3.19 Should this scenario be set aside, a safer course of action would be to prepare a Minerals DPD for Shropshire. This would also need to be included in the draft LDS, depending on the need for specific minerals related policies and the revised sub-regional mineral requirements emerging from RSS Phase 3 and other technical considerations.

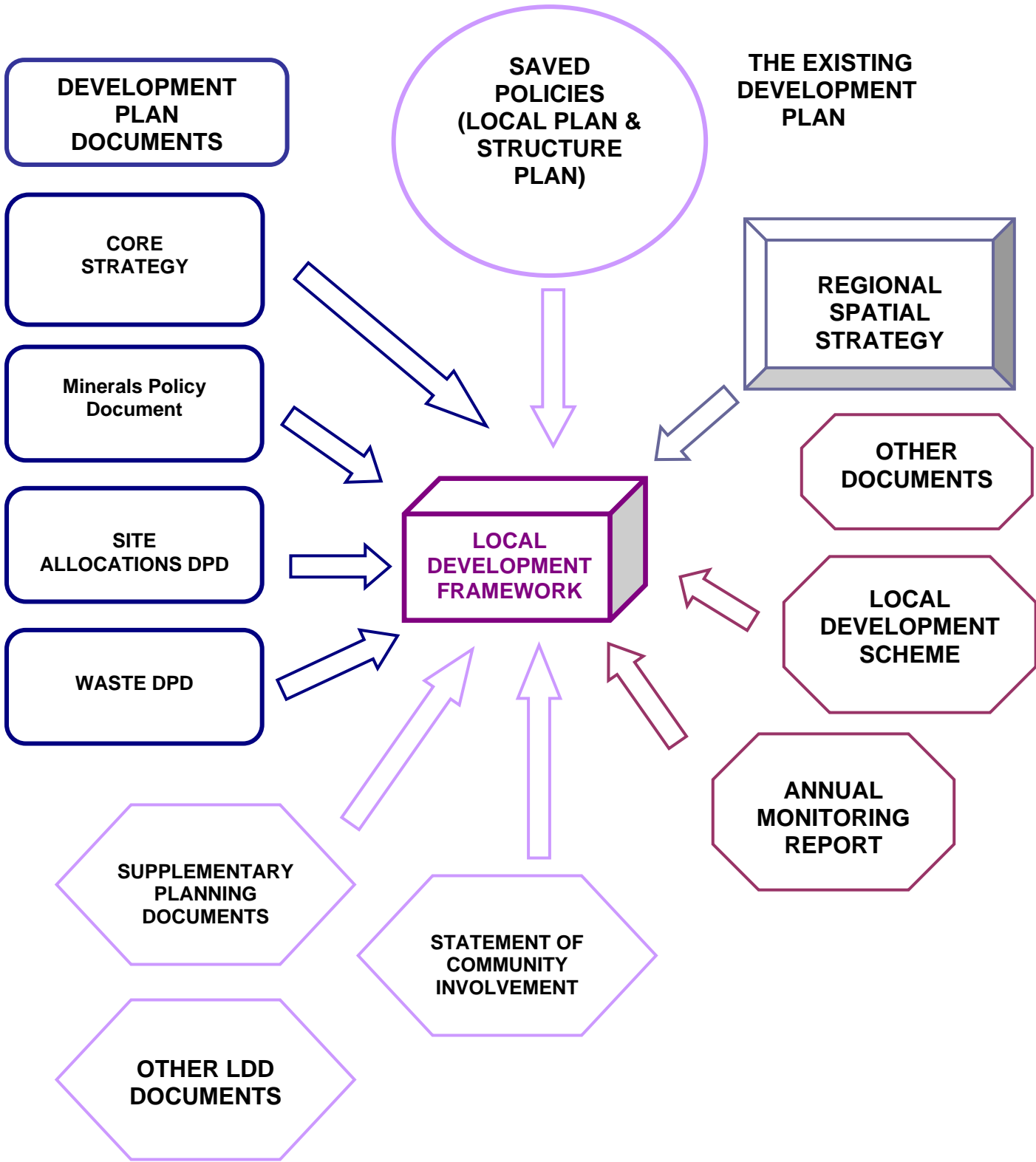
### Waste

3.20 There is no need to replace the Shropshire Waste Local Plan at this time as it is relatively up to date and most of its policies have been saved. However, it will probably be necessary to include a strategic waste policy in the new Core Strategy, taking care not to undermine the saved Waste Local Plan. There may also be a need, as the national picture is clarified, to produce a Waste DPD for Shropshire and this is shown later in the programme timetable.

### Supplementary Planning Documents

3.21 Despite the continuation as ‘saved policies’ of many of the policies in local plans previously in place across Shropshire, there are several topics that clearly require a more up to date and joint approach, particularly affordable housing, developer contributions and climate change/sustainable design. All of these topics are the subject of recent or forthcoming changes in national policy and will require a Shropshire-wide local policy to be produced. Some work has already commenced on each of these topics and it is suggested that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s) should be prepared for each.

**Figure 1 Relationship between documents**





## 4 Supporting Statement

### The Community Strategy and Integration with Other Strategies

4.1 Developing a clear and effective relationship between the policies and proposals of the LDF and other documents such as the Community Strategy and the Local Transport Plan is a key objective.

4.2 The Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy provides a strategic context for the county which the planning system needs to reflect and interact with. It is produced by the Shropshire Partnership, acting as the Shropshire Local Strategic Partnership, and is made up of representatives from regional, public and local agencies and the voluntary and community sector who meet on a regular basis.

4.3 The Local Strategic Partnership provides the forum for partners to work together to improve the quality of life in Shropshire. They identify and respond to the priorities and needs of residents based upon the findings of joint consultation, and report back to residents by way of an annual update on progress against the objectives and targets set out in the community strategy. A new Community Strategy for Shropshire was published in April 2006 and outlines the key strategic priorities for Shropshire over the next 10 years.

4.4 LDD's should give a spatial expression of the Community Strategy, and show how spatial planning can help to deliver the aims and outcomes of the plan. In turn, as it is updated, the Community Strategy will address issues that arise from those development requirements driven by Regional Spatial Strategy and the LDD's and ensure that partners have their plans in place to support development requirements.

4.5 The Shropshire Partnership will be producing a refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy in the move to the new unitary authority. In doing so three Local Area Partnerships will be established for the North, Central and South of the county, and new lines of communication are being developed in order to involve and consult the public on emerging community priorities. It is proposed that where appropriate these new community engagement methods will also be used to feed into the preparation of the new Local Development Framework. Paragraphs 4.10 to 4.16 provide more detail on specific community engagement methods.

4.6 The Shropshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 (LTP) sets out the Council's vision, strategy and implementation programme for all forms of local transport. The construction, maintenance and management of transport infrastructure has significant implications for the management of natural resources and the LDF will reflect the policies and proposals of the LTP.

4.7 In future, the 'Development Plan' for Shropshire will comprise the LDD's which the new Council prepares, together with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The role of the 'Development Plan' requires recognition of the interaction between Plans and policies at a local level and the achievement of more sustainable development requires recognition of the spatial implications of all types of land use and therefore recognition of, and linkages to, other strategies and plans in the County such as Economic Strategies, Tourism Strategies, Housing Strategies, Biodiversity Action Plan, Parish Plans, Market Towns Initiatives etc.

#### Shrewsbury New Growth Point

4.8 Shrewsbury urban area has been identified by the government as a New Growth Point (NGP) in recognition of its status as a sub regional centre that will be required to provide significant housing growth over the next 20 years. NGP designation brings with it government capital and revenue resources to help ensure that the town grows sustainably, with employment, services, community and environmental needs in balance with housing. The NGP must demonstrate that it has a dedicated planning and regeneration team and partnership mechanisms in place to deliver its Programme of Delivery.

4.9 The NGP work is about ensuring that all necessary studies and infrastructure are in place to implement the policies in the emerging LDF. In order to ensure that the allocated government capital and revenue funds are spent on time and outputs achieved, so that funds for future years are more likely to be provided, it is essential that a delivery structure is established immediately. The NGP is therefore closely linked to LDF work, particularly in the early stages.

#### Community Involvement

4.10 The Council aims for the LDF to be produced in a manner that enables the community to have the opportunity to become fully involved in its preparation. The Council is committed to enabling everyone to contribute to shaping the LDF.

4.11 All the Councils currently have approved SCI's covering engagement on the development plan and development control. GOWM supports the idea of preparing interim informal guidance on community engagement to provide certainty to the community and stakeholders about how and when they will be involved in the joint LDF process. The parts of the existing approved SCI's dealing with development control consultations would remain in force.

4.12 The Interim Community Involvement statement is a key component of the Local Development Framework, it sets out how local communities and other key stakeholders can expect to get involved in the production of new planning policy documents for Shropshire. The statement has been prepared in

response to the current process of local government reorganisation leading to a single unified planning service in the county.

4.13 In broad terms this interim statement provides important information on **who** we would like to be involved in the production of new unitary planning documents; **when** they would ideally become involved; and **what** methods we will use to encourage wider community involvement.

4.14 This Interim Community Involvement Statement will not repeat the requirements already in existing council's SCI's, but will build on and develop the approaches set out in the individual SCIs, setting out a range of guiding principles and proposed methods of community involvement for engaging with the public and specialist interest groups on new emerging planning documents.

4.15 The statement will refer solely to the production of new planning policy documents in Shropshire. Information on how communities can get involved on individual planning applications continues to be included in each council's Statement of Community Involvement. However, once the new unitary council has officially started in April 2009 further work will be carried out to prepare a wider Community Involvement Statement, incorporating proposed consultation and engagement methods for the whole planning service, including on planning applications.

4.16 As 'front loading' of engagement in the LDF is important, it is essential that the interim guidance is in place as soon as possible to enable an early start. This will also enable us to link with any community engagement initiatives to be undertaken around the corporate vision for the unitary council, the Sustainable Community Strategy or the LAA. Under the forthcoming planning legislation, it is likely that the requirement for a formal SCI will be replaced with a statutory duty requiring community engagement in Sustainable Community Strategies and corporate policy.

#### Evidence base

4.17 A key feature of the Local Development Framework is that its policies and proposals are soundly based on up-to-date, reliable evidence. This evidence base will also provide vital information for its subsequent monitoring and review. A comprehensive and up to date evidence base is absolutely essential to achieving not only a sound Core Strategy but to underpin all policies, including the sustainable Community Strategy.

4.18 The evidence base prepared for the new LAA provides a valuable input to the Core Strategy as it goes well beyond the traditional concerns of land use Planning. However, whilst considerable technical work is also required, we are fortunate that a great deal of it has already been carried out or is in

hand by the Shropshire Local Authorities, sometimes individually and sometimes jointly.

4.19 Supporta TerraQuest carried out a basic review of the existing evidence base and this has been taken further to produce a detailed review, with recommendations for further work. The main conclusions are that:-

- Some of the evidence base work is on-going, linked to annual monitoring requirements;
- Some work is more important and urgent than others;
- Some requirements would be best met by commissioning consultants because we either lack the expertise or the capacity within Shropshire;
- Some requirements can be met wholly in-house or by a combination of in-house resources working with consultants;
- Legal advice will be required to determine the most appropriate methods of procurement.

4.20 The highest priority additional pieces of work are:-

- To extend full strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments to cover the whole of Shropshire
- To extend the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment to the whole of Shropshire;
- To complete consistent studies of open space, sport, and recreation to meet PPG17 requirements across all of Shropshire;
- To develop and maintain data on Biodiversity across Shropshire, through the existing partnership agreement between the 6 Councils and Shropshire Wildlife Trust;
- To complete a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study for Oswestry Borough.

4.21 Councils in Shropshire already maintain a significant database of information about the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the county. This data has been assembled to provide a resource for the development of planning and environmental policy by local authorities and others and against which to assess the impact of development proposals which are subject of consultation.

4.22 Draft PPS12 says that councils should keep under review matters that inform the work of regional planning bodies. Councils are responsible for keeping under review, and making available to regional planning bodies, matters relating to, in summary: the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of their area; population data; communications, transport system and traffic for the area; and any other considerations which may be expected to affect those matters. The Council places a high priority on the continued collection and management of data which allows the accurate description of environmental, social and economic issues in the county.

Additional research will be undertaken as required, to improve data availability where a need is identified from annual monitoring.

### Annual Monitoring Report

4.23 An Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is a requirement of every planning authority and must be submitted in December of every year. The Council will monitor annually how effective its policies and proposals are in meeting the vision and objectives set out in the Core Strategy. It will prepare an Annual Monitoring Report before 31 December each year that will cover the previous financial year (1 April to 31 March). GOWM has agreed in principle that a joint Shropshire AMR should be submitted in December 2008 and this is built into our LDS work programme. The task of monitoring and producing the AMR will, in effect, become part of the process of maintaining an up to date evidence base for both the LDF and the Sustainable Community Strategy/LAA.

4.24 The AMR will include:

- a survey and review of the area's characteristics, including: published statistics that help paint a social, environmental, economic, physical and demographic background; national LDF core indicators and local indicators on particular local issues, concerns or policy objectives,
- whether the Council is meeting, or is on track to meet, the targets and milestones set out in the LDS, and if not the reasons why,
- an assessment of the extent to which policies in the LDD's are being implemented and, if not, the reasons why (to include the impact LDD policies are having on other targets set at national, regional or local level and whether any policies need to be replaced because they are not working as intended or they do not reflect changes in national or regional policy), and
- the actions required to address any identified issues (the AMR itself will not revise or amend policies, but it will set out the steps the Council will take to address those issues, e.g. bring forward a review).
- Indicate whether any new LDD's need to be prepared

### Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment (appropriate assessment)

4.25 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires LDD's to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, ensuring a better quality of life for all, both now and for future generations. To help ensure decisions are made which accord with the principles of sustainable development, all LDDs will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal.

4.26 Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic and iterative appraisal process which incorporates the requirements of the European Union Directive for

Strategic Environmental Assessment. Its main purpose is to inform decision making by providing information on the potential direct, indirect and cumulative social, environmental and economic impacts of future planning policies and proposals.

4.27 To be effective, Sustainability Appraisal needs to be fully integrated into the plan making process. It starts as soon as each new or revised LDD is considered and will provide an input at each stage of the preparation process up to and including Submission. The Council must demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

4.28 Plans must also be assessed against the requirements of the European Habitats Directive (Habitats Regulation Assessment or Appropriate Assessment). Although this process has key links to SA/SEA it is a distinct process requiring its own resources and is reported on separately. It applies to all LDD's likely to have an impact on Natura 2000 sites (in Shropshire's case Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar Sites).

4.29 These essential processes must be carried out rigorously but in proportion to the risks and issues present. Both Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment (see Table 3) should be carried out at every stage and involve the community. Whilst we have in-house skills and experience, it is likely that some external expert assistance will also be required.

**Table 3: Interaction between the DPD preparation, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation processes**

<b>SA Stage</b>	<b>Habitat Regulation Assessment Stage</b>	<b>DPD Stage</b>
1. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	1. Evidence Gathering on European Sites	1. Evidence gathering for DPD
2. Interim Sustainability Appraisal of Alternative Options	2. <i>Screening and scoping</i> of significant effects from DPD on European sites	2. 'Issues and Alternative Options' Report
3. Revised Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report	3. Full Appropriate Assessment of emerging 'Preferred Options'	3. Emerging 'Preferred Options' Report
4. Final Sustainability Appraisal Report	4. Full Habitat Regulations Assessment Report	4. Pre-Submission consultation
5. Revised Final Sustainability Appraisal Report	5. Revised Habitat Regulations Assessment Report	5. Submission of DPD to Secretary of State
<b>Independent examination and Inspector's binding report</b>		
6. SA Statement and Monitoring Procedures		6. DPD Adoption and Monitoring Procedures

### Council procedures and Reporting Protocol

4.30 Progress with the preparation of LDD's will be reported as described in the section on Programme Management. Initially, for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 for each DPD and SPD the procedure and political responsibility for decision making will be through the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee (members from the Implementation Executive from each authority) and the Implementation Executive ('shadow' cabinet).

### Programme Management (LDS timetable)

4.31 Table 2 sets the current timetable for LDD preparation. Initially for the year until April 2009 The Director (Economy & Strategy) has overall responsibility for programme, staff and resource management. Day to day responsibility for the work programme rests with the Chair of Shropshire Planning Officers Group (SPOG) and other members of the group.

4.32 For the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 progress on preparation of LDDs, in accordance with the Local Development Scheme, is discussed and overseen by the Director (Economy & Strategy) with the Chair of SPOG and reported to the Joint Implementation Team (JIT - Chief Executives of Shropshire authorities), Local Development Framework Sub-Committee and the Implementation Executive. In addition weekly progress reports are given to the Unitary Planning Project - Project Team (led by Chief Executive of North Shropshire DC from the JIT) by the Chair of SPOG.

### Resources

4.33 The Planning Policy staff resources of the individual local authorities are being collated through Shropshire Planning Officers Group (SPOG) to produce the early elements of the LDF in the year up to vesting day for the new unitary authority. Delivery of the new joint planning policy documents is balanced against remaining work commitments in the individual authorities.

4.34 Staff from the County Councils Sustainability Group and other services (e.g. Housing Strategy, Transport Policy) will contribute with background studies and policy formulation and with the preparation of specialist SPD's. Involving a wide range of in-house staff in the preparation of LDD's will provide some added flexibility in resources, but will also help ensure shared ownership of the LDF across the Council and its integration with other Council strategies and plans.

4.35 Consultants will be engaged on specific projects when there is a lack of specific expertise or capacity in-house. Further studies under way or identified so far include:

- Preparation of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, and
- Extending the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment to the whole of Shropshire.

4.36 The existing revenue budget for LDF production will be kept under review on an annual basis. Should additional resources be necessary, for example for abnormal, unforeseen consultancy expenditure or lengthy public examination, then the matter will be addressed at that time through the Council's normal budgetary processes. This will need to be set against a tightening budget and future cost efficiency gains.

4.37 In recent years Planning Delivery Grant (PDG), subject to the extent of its availability, has been used in each Council to fund internal and external assistance where it is helpful in achieving the Council's milestones, in particular on the completion of specialist studies.

4.38 It is likely that the future award received under the new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) regime will be far less than the cumulative PDG award to Shropshire authorities in recent years. The new authority will endeavour to maintain any future award within the Planning service.

### Risk Management

4.39 The Risk Management Log (Appendix 3) contains analysis of the areas of uncertainty and risk facing production of the LDF, with risks of a critical or significant potential impact and of a very high or high likelihood including for example: staff turnover and recruitment difficulties or receipt of large numbers of objections. The impact of Local Government Reorganisation is also noted.

4.40 There are significant risks that could impact upon delivery of the LDF to the schedules set out within this Local Development Scheme. In order to minimise possible impacts, risk management has been embedded in the LDF production processes in order that risk can be evaluated and where possible eliminated. Whilst proposed responses or mitigation measures have been set out, seeking where possible, to manage these risks, some areas of risk are outside the Council's control. In addition, financial pressures could curtail many of the proposed mitigation measures.

4.41 In conclusion, the risk assessment would suggest that the LDF programme remains extremely challenging. For example, where individual project production milestones are missed it could be difficult to get "back on track" without impacts on other elements of the overall programme. Given however, that the production of an LDF by March 2011 is a statutory requirement in order to provide local planning policy coverage and deliver housing land, these risks must be accepted by the Council. The most fundamental overall mitigation measure that can be made is to build-in

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realistic document production timescales into this LDS at the outset and ensure sufficient resources are available throughout the timescale of the LDS.

#### Publishing the LDF

4.42 Each Council already publishes its development plans and related material online. A One Council web site is being developed with pages for publishing work and progress on the LDD's , whilst each council already has a series of web pages devoted to the LDF and related documents and other information. An interactive 'proposals map' will also be available. While hard copies of LDDs will remain the definitive version, on-line versions of the LDS, LDDs and key background papers and reports will be available to view and download. The preparation of documents which are accessible to the public is a high priority. The LDF and related documents will be designed and formatted to make them as accessible as possible.

## Appendix 1: Document Profiles

<b>Core Strategy DPD</b>	
<b>Document Overview</b>	
<i>Role &amp; subject:</i>	Sets out the vision, objectives, targets and spatial strategy for the development of Shropshire together with core strategic policies.
<i>Geographical area:</i>	Shropshire
<i>Status:</i>	Statutory Development Plan Document
<i>Conformity:</i>	General conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy & PPS's. Other LDD's to be in conformity with Core Strategy
<b>Timetable</b>	
<i>Commence preparation</i>	April 2008
<i>Consultation on Issues &amp; Options</i>	December 2008
<i>Consultation on Preferred Options Draft</i>	April 2009
<i>Consultation on Final Plan</i>	December 2009
<i>Submission to S of S</i>	March 2010
<i>Examination in public</i>	July 2010
<i>Adoption.</i>	February 2011
<b>Arrangements for Production (pre 31/03/09)</b>	
<i>Lead for production process</i>	Director (Economy & Strategy)/Chair SPOG
<i>Political Management arrangements</i>	LDF Sub-Committee and Implementation Executive at all stages
<i>Resource requirements</i>	Planning Policy staff with input from wider Sustainability Group, Development Control staff and other departments and external agencies
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</i>	Combined SEA / SA and HRA carried out in-house
<i>Evidence Base</i>	Resource data held by Councils, WMRA, Government Agencies, statutory bodies, consultation responses
<i>Involvement of stakeholders &amp; the community</i>	See SCI - District Council's; Government Agencies; and other stakeholders and environmental interest groups
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	
<i>Monitoring requirements</i>	Monitored on an annual basis (AMR) and subject to review if the monitoring highlights a need.
<i>Review timescale</i>	The document will be formally reviewed at least once every three years or linked to the outcome of RSS review.

<b>Site Allocations DPD</b>	
<b>Document Overview</b>	
<i>Role &amp; subject:</i>	Document identifying sites proposed for development to meet the housing and employment land requirements and other objectives of the Core Strategy
<i>Geographical area:</i>	Shropshire
<i>Status:</i>	Statutory Development Plan Document
<i>Conformity:</i>	Core Strategy
<b>Timetable</b>	
<i>Commence preparation</i>	March 2009
<i>Consultation on Issues &amp; Options</i>	November 2009
<i>Consultation on Preferred Options Draft</i>	May 2010
<i>Consultation on Final Plan</i>	February 2011
<i>Submission to S of S</i>	June 2011
<i>Examination in public</i>	October 2011
<i>Adoption.</i>	May 2012
<b>Arrangements for Production (pre 31/03/09)</b>	
<i>Lead for production process</i>	Director (Economy & Strategy)/Chair SPOG
<i>Political Management arrangements</i>	LDF Sub-Committee and Implementation Executive at all stages
<i>Resource requirements</i>	Planning Policy staff with input from wider Sustainability Group, Development Control staff and other departments and external agencies
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</i>	Combined SEA / SA and HRA carried out in-house
<i>Evidence Base</i>	Resource data held by Councils, WMRA, Government Agencies, statutory bodies, consultation responses
<i>Involvement of stakeholders &amp; the community</i>	See SCI - District Council's; Government Agencies; and other stakeholders and environmental interest groups
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	
<i>Monitoring requirements</i>	Monitored on an annual basis (AMR) and subject to review if the monitoring highlights a need.
<i>Review timescale</i>	The document will be formally reviewed at least once every three years or linked to the outcome of RSS review.

<b>Possible Minerals – Joint Core Strategy (with BTW)</b>	
<b>Document Overview</b>	
<i>Role &amp; subject:</i>	Sets out the vision, objectives, targets and strategy for the development of minerals as part of the spatial development of the area.
<i>Geographical area:</i>	Shropshire
<i>Status:</i>	Statutory Development Plan Document
<i>Conformity:</i>	General conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy & PPS's. Potential Mineral Allocations DPD to be in conformity with the Mineral Core Strategy
<b>Timetable</b>	
<i>Commence preparation</i>	April 2008
<i>Consultation on Issues &amp; Options</i>	December 2008
<i>Consultation on Preferred Options Draft</i>	April 2009
<i>Consultation on Final Plan</i>	December 2009
<i>Submission to S of S</i>	March 2010
<i>Examination in public</i>	July 2010
<i>Adoption.</i>	February 2011
<b>Arrangements for Production (pre 31/03/09)</b>	
<i>Lead for production process</i>	Director (Economy & Strategy)/Chair SPOG
<i>Political Management arrangements</i>	LDF Sub-Committee and Implementation Executive at all stages
<i>Resource requirements</i>	Planning Policy staff with input from wider Sustainability Group, Development Control staff and other departments and external agencies
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</i>	Combined SEA / SA and HRA carried out in-house
<i>Evidence Base</i>	Resource data held by Councils, WMRA, Government Agencies, statutory bodies, consultation responses
<i>Involvement of stakeholders &amp; the community</i>	See SCI - District Council's; Government Agencies; and other stakeholders and environmental interest groups
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	
<i>Monitoring requirements</i>	Monitored on an annual basis (AMR) and subject to review if the monitoring highlights a need.
<i>Review timescale</i>	The document will be formally reviewed at least once every three years or linked to the outcome of RSS review.

<b>Possible Minerals DPD</b>	
<b>Document Overview</b>	
<i>Role &amp; subject:</i>	Sets out specific minerals policies and site allocations.
<i>Geographical area:</i>	Shropshire
<i>Status:</i>	Statutory Development Plan Document
<i>Conformity:</i>	Core Strategy
<b>Timetable</b>	
<i>Commence preparation</i>	March 2009
<i>Consultation on Issues &amp; Options</i>	November 2009
<i>Consultation on Preferred Options Draft</i>	May 2010
<i>Consultation on Final Plan</i>	February 2011
<i>Submission to S of S</i>	June 2011
<i>Examination in public</i>	October 2011
<i>Adoption.</i>	May 2012
<b>Arrangements for Production (pre 31/03/09)</b>	
<i>Lead for production process</i>	Director (Economy & Strategy)/Chair SPOG
<i>Political Management arrangements</i>	LDF Sub-Committee and Implementation Executive at all stages
<i>Resource requirements</i>	Planning Policy staff with input from wider Sustainability Group, Development Control staff and other departments and external agencies
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</i>	Combined SEA / SA and HRA carried out in-house
<i>Evidence Base</i>	Resource data held by Councils, WMRA, Government Agencies, statutory bodies, consultation responses
<i>Involvement of stakeholders &amp; the community</i>	See SCI - District Council's; Government Agencies; and other stakeholders and environmental interest groups
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	
<i>Monitoring requirements</i>	Monitored on an annual basis (AMR) and subject to review if the monitoring highlights a need.
<i>Review timescale</i>	The document will be formally reviewed at least once every three years or linked to the outcome of RSS review.

<b>Possible Waste DPD</b>	
<b>Document Overview</b>	
<i>Role &amp; subject:</i>	Sets out specific waste policies and site allocations.
<i>Geographical area:</i>	Shropshire
<i>Status:</i>	Statutory Development Plan Document
<i>Conformity:</i>	Core Strategy
<b>Timetable</b>	
<i>Commence preparation</i>	July 2010
<i>Consultation on Issues &amp; Options</i>	December 2010
<i>Consultation on Preferred Options Draft</i>	April 2011
<i>Consultation on Final Plan</i>	December 2011
<i>Submission to S of S</i>	March 2012
<i>Examination in public</i>	June 2012
<i>Adoption.</i>	December 2012
<b>Arrangements for Production (pre 31/03/09)</b>	
<i>Lead for production process</i>	Director (Economy & Strategy)/Chair SPOG
<i>Political Management arrangements</i>	LDF Sub-Committee and Implementation Executive at all stages
<i>Resource requirements</i>	Planning Policy staff with input from wider Sustainability Group, Development Control staff and other departments and external agencies
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</i>	Combined SEA / SA and HRA carried out in-house
<i>Evidence Base</i>	Resource data held by Councils, WMRA, Government Agencies, statutory bodies, consultation responses
<i>Involvement of stakeholders &amp; the community</i>	See SCI - District Council's; Government Agencies; and other stakeholders and environmental interest groups
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	
<i>Monitoring requirements</i>	Monitored on an annual basis (AMR) and subject to review if the monitoring highlights a need.
<i>Review timescale</i>	The document will be formally reviewed at least once every three years or linked to the outcome of RSS review.

## **Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms**

<b>Area Action Plan (AAP)</b>	DPD dealing with specific parts of a local authority area. They may be used to provide the planning framework for areas of significant change or where conservation is required.
<b>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)</b>	All authorities have to produce an AMR measuring progress and performance against targets set in DPDs. The AMR will indicate what action the authority may need to take if it is not on track or if policies need to be revised or replaced. Any changes will be brought forward through a revised LDS.
<b>Appropriate Assessment</b>	‘Appropriate Assessment’ has been introduced as a method of transposing the requirements of the European Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The purpose of an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ is to assess the impacts of a land use plan against the conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. It applies to all LDD’s likely to have an impact on Natura 2000 sites (in Shropshire’s case Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar Sites).
<b>Community Strategy (CS)</b>	Community Strategies are wide ranging strategies for sustainable development focussing on the needs, aspirations and priorities of local communities. The Government intends that LDFs will provide spatial expression to those elements of the Community Strategy which relate to the use and development of land.
<b>Development Plan</b>	Under the Act, the development plan for an area will comprise Regional Spatial Strategy and the DPDs contained in the LDF. The Act requires that decisions on planning applications for development or use of land should be made in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
<b>Development Plan Document (DPD)</b>	The spatial planning documents contained in the LDF which the local planning authority must prepare. They should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Strategy</li> <li>• Site specific allocations</li> <li>• Area Action Plans (if required)</li> <li>• Proposals Map</li> <li>• Policies for the control of development</li> </ul>
<b>Examination</b>	All DPDs are subject to independent examination before a Planning Inspector. The Inspector’s role is to consider the DPD as a whole and to determine its soundness. In doing so the Inspector will consider all representations made and any changes which may have been suggested.

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	Following the examination, the Inspector will produce a report which will be binding on the local authority.
<b>Local Development Framework (LDF)</b>	The portfolio of LDDs, which together, provide the framework to deliver the spatial planning strategy for the area.
<b>Local Development Document (LDD)</b>	Local Development Documents comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development Plan Documents (see above)</li><li>• Supplementary Planning Documents (see below)</li><li>• Statement of Community Involvement (see below)</li></ul>
<b>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</b>	The LDS sets out the LDDs the authority intends to prepare and the timetable for their preparation. The first LDS must be submitted to the Secretary Of State within six months of commencement of the Act.
<b>Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</b>	A forum of public, private and voluntary/community partner organisations that work together to improve the quality of life in Shropshire
<b>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004</b>	The piece of legislation that introduced the new development planning system, which at the local level, is based on Local Development Frameworks. The Act commenced in September 2004.
<b>Planning Policy Statement (PPS)</b>	Statements of national planning policy which must be taken into account by local authorities when preparing Local Development Documents. They will replace existing Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs)
<b>Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)</b>	Prepared by the Regional Planning Body, RSS provides a the regional spatial framework to inform the preparation of LDFs, Local Transport Plans and those regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes which have a bearing on the use of land.
<b>Spatial Planning</b>	The Government is seeking to promote greater integration between the various strategies produced by local authorities and other organisations and the land use planning system. The spatial approach towards planning goes beyond the grant or refusal of planning permission and will involve a wider range of policies than has normally been included in development plans.
<b>Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</b>	Statement of the Council's proposed standards and approach to involving stakeholders and the community in the preparation, alteration and review of all LDDs. The SCI is subject to independent examination.
<b>Strategic</b>	The European SEA Directive requires a formal environmental

**Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Local authorities are advised to take an integrated approach towards Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication and confusion. Together they will play an important part in testing the soundness of local development documents, ensuring that they contribute towards sustainable development objectives.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

SPDs can be prepared by local authorities to provide additional guidance to elaborate upon the policies of a development plan document. They are not subject to independent examination. SPDs included in the LDF will be material considerations which have significant weight in the process of making decisions on planning applications.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

All LDDs will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The Appraisal process is designed to inform decision making by providing information on the social, economic and environmental implications of policies and proposals. SA and SEA are integral aspects of LDF production.