

SUSTAINABLE SHROPSHIRE

SHROPSHIRE' LOCAL AGENDA 21 STRATEGY

Prepared for **Shropshire County Council**
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Sustainable Shropshire **SHROPSHIRE'S LOCAL AGENDA 21 STRATEGY**

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A VISION

Imagine a county that has some of the most beautiful countryside in England. That has wildlife including nightjars, goshawks, raft spiders and otters. That has attractive towns, rich in heritage and full of life. That has heating and lighting generated from a range of non-polluting, renewable energy sources such as wind power and water power. That has railways serving small communities, and bus services imaginatively linking remote villages. That has Safe Routes to Schools; and Green Travel Plans for businesses and other organisations. That has plans for new rail freight depots, and priority routes for cyclists. That has a growing proportion of its household waste being recycled through projects such as bottlebanks and green composting, and not going to the tip. That has neighbouring businesses co-operating with one another on waste and energy saving projects, and improving their surroundings. That has businesses producing environmentally friendly products for an expanding market. That has local communities getting together to sort out how they want their place to be in 10, 20, 30 years time. That has houses being built to the highest standards of energy and water conservation, drastically cutting costs. That encourages local consumption of locally-grown foods, and increasing organic farming. That promotes development, where appropriate, on land that has already been used. That has new housing whose occupants don't have to use a car to get to work, or school, or the shops. That has its own strong identity, with its own local traditions, foods, and ways of doing things - and is proud of it. That welcomes visitors, and makes it easy for them to enjoy the area in ways that don't harm the environment. That sees working in partnerships rather than isolation, as an effective way forward for service organisations like local councils.

Believe it or not, this county is Shropshire. All these things happen in Shropshire - somewhere, even if some of them are only just getting going, or are in only one or two places so far. They are a start, and show what can be done. They are important, as, taken together, they add up to a very sustainable way of doing things. They minimise harm to the environment, through protection of the good things, and reduction of waste, pollution and use of resources. They increase the strength of the local economy. They increase the sense that local things matter, and that people locally can make a positive difference, if the way is open to them. In all, they improve quality of life in Shropshire.

This is what LOCAL AGENDA 21 is all about.

INTRODUCTION

Local agenda 21 strategies have :

- *A vision of the future*
- *A programme of sustainable development*
- *Direct involvement of local communities*
- *A local focus*

A Vision for the 21st Century

- This report looks ahead to what the Shropshire of the 21st century might be like. Imagining something positive can help you get there.
- Local Agenda 21 provides a framework to imagine the future of local communities in a positive way.
- The idea came out of the Earth Summit of 1992 and has since been picked up by countries all around the world.
- Tony Blair has asked all UK local authorities, working with local organisations and communities, to produce a Local Agenda 21 for their area by the year 2000.
- This means local authorities, organisations and communities getting together to decide what is important to them locally, in terms of quality of life. Then drawing up an agenda to guide action in line with the principles of **sustainable development**.
- Sustainable development - making the best use and least waste of all our resources, physical and human - will never be outdated as an ethical principle by which to live. The challenge is to find ways of doing more, with less, particularly where resources are not endless.

Drawing the Threads Together

- In Shropshire, the Local Agenda 21 strategy has been drawn together from all sorts of sources. Many organisations, such as the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, already have sustainable development principles at the heart of their work, and have a well-developed sustainable development action programme.
- Much local authority work is based on sustainable development principles - waste reduction and recycling programmes, archaeological and building conservation work, and energy reduction programmes, for example.
- A number of community organisations promote sustainable development through their own initiatives - Women's Institute markets, for example.
- The Shropshire Local Agenda 21 reflects these initiatives and also makes the case for new initiatives and action, much of it in areas where a sustainable approach to actions is not yet commonplace, e.g. in economic development or health matters.
- The late 1990s have seen new ways of working together to make sure that strategies, partnerships, programmes of action, and community involvement, link up sensibly. Shropshire has shared in this, not least in its production of the Shropshire Regeneration Strategy - the work of fifteen key organisations in Shropshire.
- The Local Agenda 21 Strategy develops this work. Focusing on the four key themes of **a vision of the future, a programme of sustainable development, direct involvement of local communities, and a local focus**, "Sustainable Shropshire"

begins to pull all the threads together to give an overall picture of the sustainable health of the county, and to outline a suggested programme of key actions to improve this further.

What's in the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 Strategy

- The Shropshire Local Agenda 21 strategy looks at thirteen key subject areas:
 - Energy
 - Transport and Communications
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Wildlife and Biodiversity
 - Landscape and Buildings
 - Water, Minerals and Waste
 - Economic Development, Employment and Business
 - Food and Farming
 - Health and Social Care
 - Pollution
 - Development
 - Housing
 - Social Inclusion and Community Safety
- It does this under a series of headings :
 - *the current scene in Shropshire and a vision of what a Sustainable Shropshire might be like
 - *how each subject relates to everything else that's going on
 - *local sustainable community initiatives achieved or underway
 - *key policies and programmes - how much they already take account of sustainability principles, and what scope there may be for this to be strengthened
 - *key sustainable actions needed for Shropshire - continuing existing ones and introducing new ones
 - *targets and indicators for sustainability
- At the core of the strategy is the **sustainable action programme**, containing some 77 actions that will contribute towards a more sustainable future for Shropshire.

The Developing Local Agenda 21 Strategy

- It's important to realise that this is a **developing** programme of action. The first draft of the Strategy was the subject of extensive consultation (see separate report "Summary of Analysis of Responses to Public Consultation"). It has been revised to take on board suggested amendments, before being finally adopted by the County Council as Shropshire's first Local Agenda 21 Strategy.
- There are a number of areas where to date there has been little recognition of sustainable development principles. These are acknowledged as such in the text. In particular, the need for greater direct involvement of local communities in opinion forming and decision making, is recognised. There is also the need for local

communities to recognise and take on board their responsibilities for promoting sustainable attitudes and behaviour, and contributing to the process.

- It is important that these areas where real progress has yet to be made are recognised and acknowledged by the strategy.
- Local Agenda 21 is about the continuous improvement of sustainability standards and performance. It's about a way of seeing things and a way of working. It's about influencing existing programmes and structures rather than creating new ones unnecessarily. This document is about promoting that process.

How it's Different from Other Strategies and Plans

- Putting together a programme of sustainable development action involving local communities and organisations as widely as possible, is a very different brief to that of the Structure Plan Review or the Regeneration Partnership Strategy. Some of the aims are the same, but the focus is different. The Local Agenda 21 Strategy is concerned with all subjects that have a sustainability dimension, from farming to transport, to production techniques, to local democracy. It takes a very long term view of things besides promoting immediate action. Local solutions to problems, and developing community involvement in decision-making and action, are at its heart.
- "*Sustainable Shropshire*" takes other strategies and plans fully into account in drawing up its action programme. Plans like the Local Transport Plan for Shropshire and the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan, both strongly based on sustainability principles, in effect form part of the sustainability programme that "*Sustainable Shropshire*" is promoting. Local Agenda 21 is an overarching strategy, that picks up on all actual and potential sustainable development activity.
- Councils have a new duty to prepare a Community Strategy for their local area. The Strategy should aim to enhance the quality of life of local communities and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Shropshire County Council will commence production of its Community Strategy in 2001.

Other Local Agenda 21s in the Shropshire Area

- The Strategy is very much a reflection of the **County Council's** policies, priorities and proposed actions. But it takes on the key sustainability concerns of other major public service organisations such as the Environment Agency and the Health Authority, and refers to good practice by all kinds of organisations. Its concern is to look at the broad picture of life in the county and to be as helpful as possible in promoting sustainable behaviour. The Council is working to widen ownership and involvement in the developing Local Agenda 21 process.
- It acknowledges that most, if not all the District Councils and Telford & Wrekin Council are developing their own Local Agenda 21 strategies, operating at a more detailed level. With good joint working, these strategies should help to reinforce one another.

A Better Quality of Life

- The Government's strategy for sustainable development in the UK - "A Better Quality of Life", shows how sustainable thinking needs to be part of everyday life and not something that's switched on for special occasions. It needs to be at the heart of economic, social and environmental decision making, and in everyday behaviour.
- Sustainable development is about longer-term thinking when making decisions, and what we stand to lose if we persist in going for the short term expedient, in a world of finite resources.
- Sustainability doesn't tend to be an absolute thing. It's more a matter of degrees of "betterness". The aim - for us as individuals, and for organisations - is to perform better than we have, in sustainability terms, and to keep ratcheting up the standards.
- We are becoming more sophisticated in understanding the interlinkages between things, and the knock-on effect of certain actions and policies, and we should now be developing systematic ways of taking these effects into account when making decisions.
- Being aware of the sustainability implications of actions, will at least make clear the real costs to be incurred if we choose to go down the road of development that is harmful to our overall stock of resources. At best, it will convince us to act in a way that will increase the overall stock of resources and our quality of life.

Shropshire is Unique !

- Shropshire has many big advantages in its move towards sustainable development. It has a huge asset in the quality of its natural environment. It enjoys a strong, well-defined character, and a great variety of local distinctiveness, but is not fossilised. It has neither the physical legacy of the heavily industrialised areas of Britain, nor the scale of the economic problems.
- It does have its own problems, particularly social and economic ones associated with rural areas. But many of the county's partnerships and programmes are working to overcome the worst of these.
- The following pages analyse its qualities in more detail; as an area and as a network of communities, it has a great deal going for it !

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SHROPSHIRE

- Having looked at what sustainable development and Local Agenda 21 strategies are about in general, we need to consider the building of a Local Agenda 21 Strategy for Shropshire.
- The following pages outline, by looking at a series of key subjects in turn, how the Local Agenda 21 Strategy for Shropshire is being developed.
- Although each subject is considered separately, life isn't like that, and Local Agenda 21 strategies are particularly concerned with how things inter-relate. Actions in one area can have a big effect on life in another. One of the reasons for Local Agenda 21 being necessary at all, is society's failure to recognise the full cost of certain actions, before deciding to go ahead with them. Traditional short term accounting is very narrow in what it regards as relevant information, in building up a costs and benefits balance sheet.

Critical Links

- The Critical Links section of each chapter tries to look at these inter-relationships in a bit more detail. These linkages need to be understood in all decision-making areas, so that everyone is aware of the potential consequence of decisions. [The most significant links are highlighted for each subject, but are not necessarily repeated 'in reverse', in an attempt to stop this whole section becoming too unwieldy.]

How Sustainable are Existing Policies, Plans and Programmes?

- A vital part of the Local Agenda 21 Strategy is to assess the sustainability of key policies, plans and programmes currently guiding change in the county.
- The need for these assessments is identified in the following Chapters. It is a key responsibility of those preparing and implementing these policies, plans and programmes to see that sustainability considerations are built into the production process and strengthened where necessary, as part of the Local Agenda 21 Strategy.

Sustainable Actions

- The Chapters identify a programme of some 77 sustainable actions which together will make a significant contribution to a more sustainable future for Shropshire.
- These actions come from a whole variety of sources. Some form part of existing action programmes like the Local Transport Plan for Shropshire, or the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Others are a local version of a national commitment to action. Some form part of an organisation's work programme, but have no other status. And there are others which have been specifically formulated in response to this Local Agenda 21 work.
- This list is far from exhaustive. It could never encompass all possible action. But it covers a wide range of representative action on sustainable development in Shropshire. It provides a strong focus for keeping track of progress, and for improving sustainability performance.
- This Local Agenda 21 Strategy is significant in that it brings together for the first time, key actions in a wide range of subjects to form a programme of sustainable development for Shropshire.
- Each of these actions has a target attached to it, and a means of measuring whether progress is being made towards that target (an indicator.)

- The County Council is taking the lead in preparing this Strategy, in consultation with a wide range of other organisations and individuals, and so it's to be expected that the recommended actions include many over which the Council has some degree of influence. But some of the actions will be the responsibility of community groups, others are for individuals to act upon, and yet others will require a whole range of groups and organisations to act. Everyone is involved.

Shropshire County Council's Sustainability Indicators

- "Indicators of sustainability" for Shropshire are being developed by the County Council, alongside the Government's national sustainability indicators. They will help give a picture of the county's "sustainability health". This can be measured against records for the previous years, and against other areas of the country, so that a picture of progress can be built up. These will form part of the Local Agenda 21 Strategy for Shropshire.

1. ENERGY in Shropshire

Energy production and use is one of the most environmentally damaging activities, but it remains essential for societies throughout the world. The UK like many other developed countries, uses about twice as much energy per capita as the global average. Given the likely effect of climate change on both the local and global environment, it's essential that Shropshire, together with other areas of the UK, implements a programme to reduce emissions of climate change gases.

Energy is central to all three strands of sustainable development:

- Environmental - through climate change, pollution and ecological impact
- Social - through quality of life, maintaining good health, and eradicating fuel poverty
- Economic - through fuelling the economy and providing jobs

It is difficult to measure energy consumption accurately in Shropshire due to the diversity of energy supply companies and mechanisms. However, estimates produced by the Marches Energy Agency show that whilst energy consumption varies from year to year there has been a steady increase over time.

The only significant energy production facility in Shropshire is the 1000MWe coal-fired power station at Ironbridge. The plant consumed about 900 thousand tonnes of coal and 22 thousand tonnes of oil, and generated 1969GWh of electricity in 1999. There is currently no large scale coal production in Shropshire. The only other energy production facilities are relatively small scale heat and power plants attached to industrial premises and a few very small anaerobic digestion facilities on farms. Planning approval has been given for electricity from landfill gas plants at Betton Abbots, Shrewsbury (1.3 MW) and Barnsley Lane, Bridgnorth (0.9 MW). Construction is due to commence in the near future.

An assessment of the potential to generate electricity from renewable energy sources carried out by the Marches Energy Agency in 1997 indicated that the county has bio-mass, landfill gas, waste, small scale hydro and wind resources. Using presently available technology, these could generate approximately 6.5% of the county's electricity demand by 2025. However, it is considered unlikely that the resources in Shropshire will be exploited without changes in the mechanisms for supporting renewable energy systems.

Critical LINKS

Energy and Transport

Transport is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases contributing to climate change. Transport uses non-renewable energy (mainly oil). Current transport patterns within Shropshire and the rest of the UK use this energy relatively inefficiently.

Energy and Wildlife

Burning fossil fuels leads to emissions of global warming gases and acid rain. Both have an increasingly serious impact on the wildlife and biodiversity of Shropshire. Acid rain can have a significant effect on sensitive animals and plants over wide areas - for instance it may damage salmon spawning areas in the headwaters of the Severn which

could have a potential effect on the population of salmon and other fish in Shropshire.

Energy and Landscape and Buildings

Whilst the development of the county's renewable energy resources should be welcomed, inappropriate or insensitive development could have a detrimental effect on Shropshire's high quality landscape. These resources need to be sensitively developed and where possible benefit the landscape, for example by bringing unmanaged woodlands back into production.

Energy and Economic Development, Employment and Business

Energy is fundamental to business in Shropshire. The challenge is to reduce energy consumption, and to exploit new business opportunities in a locally - produced energy sector.

Energy and Health and Care

Energy use in the home contributes to a healthy environment. Where households don't have access to sufficient energy (through poverty, poor quality housing or inefficient heating systems), householders' health may suffer, particularly in the case of children or old people.

Energy and Pollution

The burning of fossil fuel in Shropshire in 1995 lead to estimated emissions of :-

1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide

19,500 tonnes of sulphur dioxide

15,900 tonnes of nitrogen oxide

3,000 tonnes of black smoke

34,500 tonnes of carbon monoxide

27,700 tonnes of methane

15,000 tonnes of volatile organic compounds

Whilst air quality in Shropshire is generally good, there could be problems associated with the busiest roads and major energy users. In addition, each summer the Government's own guidelines for ground level ozone, which is produced by the effects of sunlight on fumes from cars and other processes, are exceeded in parts of rural Shropshire.

Energy and Development

It is important that all new developments seek to maximise energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy whilst minimising travel and the use of fossil fuels for other purposes. In this way Shropshire will become more energy efficient and reduce its contribution to global warming and polluting gases.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Energy in Shropshire

- All new properties in Shropshire built to the highest standards of energy efficiency.
- Comprehensive improvement (through energy efficiency improvement programmes), of both public and privately owned housing.
- All people in Shropshire have access to affordable warmth through energy efficient buildings and appliances.
- Shropshire significantly reduces its impact on global climate change and its contribution to air pollution.
- Shropshire develops a thriving renewable energy industry which supplies both electricity and heat to displace imported fossil fuels.

Shropshire Energy INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Village Halls' Energy Efficiency Project

The second energy efficiency programme for Shropshire village halls has just been completed, with the Community Council of Shropshire assisted by Shropshire County Council. It completed energy audits and provided funding for heating and lighting improvements from MEB's energy efficiency support funds.

Marches Farm Energy Project

The Project, completed by ADAS in 1999, aimed to improve business performance and employment opportunities through energy conservation and the use of renewable energy in the farming industry. 22 businesses were assisted, and total energy savings of 1,825MWh were identified.

Energy for Sustainable Tourism

Energy audits were carried out on behalf of Bishop's Castle Tourism group in 15 tourist accommodation businesses, who received grant support for energy efficiency improvements to lighting, water and space heating.

Marches Solar Club

The Solar Club offers opportunities for householders to receive discounts, training, and ongoing technical support for the installation of solar water heaters in their homes. The Club is run by Marches Energy Agency in partnership with Telford Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council, and Telford & Wrekin Borough Council.

Schools' Caretaker Training

The project aimed to provide caretakers and premises managers with sufficient information to identify and implement no/ low-cost energy saving measures. 58 caretakers received training which was backed up by an energy audit of their premises. These identified potential annual savings of 587 MWh from electricity alone.

Shropshire Energy POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- *the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development and local community involvement.*

"Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Structure Plan Review" will provide a framework within which development in Shropshire should become more sustainable. It will need to include policies requiring serious energy efficiency targets for new and refurbished buildings and encourage development of Shropshire's renewable energy resources. These will need to be reflected in Local Plans.

Shropshire Waste Strategy is considering ways of reducing and disposing of the County's waste. Energy from waste plants can maximise use of energy within waste, through combined heat and power or heat-only applications. Electricity-only generating plants should be avoided as more than half the energy within the waste is "dumped" into the atmosphere as heat. All such plants should have high quality design and landscaping and should, as a matter of course, achieve the highest levels of pollution control possible.

Most County Council departmental policies already aim to achieve high levels of energy efficiency in the County Council's own buildings. All new-build projects should aim to set an example of high energy efficiency to others.

The Local Transport Plan aims to improve access and reduce unnecessary traffic in Shropshire. It also aims to reduce emissions of global warming gases.(See Chapter 2).

A renewable energy resource study, a wind energy strategy and a farm waste strategy have been completed for Shropshire. These provide an outline of resource opportunities within the county and identify barriers to their future development.

The Home Energy Conservation Act strategies produced by each District Council outline how energy efficiency can be improved in all housing. These can provide a framework within which future programmes and partnerships promote home energy efficiency and affordable warmth to disadvantaged groups.

Key Sustainable Energy ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Action 1.1 Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy use in Shropshire by Producing a Shropshire Energy Strategy

Target 1.1 Produce a Shropshire Energy Strategy by 2002.

Indicator 1.1 Production of this strategy within this timescale.

Cut down energy use by :

Action 1.2 Improving the energy efficiency of the County Council's building stock.

Target 1.2. All County Council buildings to have achieved DETR average energy performance standards by 2002 and 80% of County Council's buildings to achieve DETR good practice energy performance by 2007

Indicator 1.2 % of County Council buildings achieving the above targets on an annual basis.

Action 1.3 Promoting the development of super energy-efficient housing and business premises in Shropshire

Target 1.3 3 super energy efficient developments in Shropshire by 2005.

Indicator 1.3 Number of super energy efficient developments in Shropshire.

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 1.4 Improving the promotion and availability of energy-saving products

Target 1.4 Shropshire County Council to work in partnership to promote energy-saving products

Indicator 1.4 Number of partnership projects

Increase the proportion of energy produced by renewable means by :

Action 1.5 Promoting installation of solar thermal energy water heating in new and existing properties

Target 1.5 50 new solar thermal water heating units by 2005

Indicator 1.5 Number of solar thermal water heating units.

Action 1.6 Establishing a 100% renewable energy community in Shropshire.

Target 1.6 Establishing a 100% renewable energy community in Shropshire by 2010

Indicator 1.6 Completion of community

See also - Actions in the Transport Chapter (2), aimed at cutting energy use in transport.

2. TRANSPORT and COMMUNICATIONS in Shropshire

The impact of traffic on our lives seems to increase daily. Forecasts say there will be 52% more vehicles on our roads by 2025 if traffic reduction strategies don't work. Transport is one of the biggest users of energy and one of the fastest-growing sources of damaging greenhouse gases.

The Government is committed to reducing greenhouse gases (and the threat of global climate change), to 12.5% below 1990 levels, by 2012. It hopes to achieve this through cleaner vehicles, taxation incentives to encourage more responsible use of vehicles, and promotion of more sustainable kinds of transport.

Our current highly unsustainable transport habits also result in deaths and injuries, pollution and health damage, and damage to landscape, buildings and wildlife. Road traffic accidents in Shropshire in 1998, caused 35 deaths, 283 serious injuries, and 1250 slight injuries.

But it will take more than encouragement to change peoples' current travel and transport habits to any real effect. We need to reduce the *need* to travel, especially by car. Not to stop people doing things, but to make things more accessible by better locational policies, as well as encouraging alternative ways of getting there. Locating and designing new development so that the need to use a car is minimised, must be a key priority. Effective investment in information technology infrastructure can significantly reduce the need for physical travel. Electronic information and communications need to be considered in the development of any sustainable transport strategy.

The car as lifestyle image, and the poor image (and too often the reality !) of public transport - and even the cyclist and the pedestrian, have to be appreciated and worked upon, in any effort to reduce car-use.

A significant *46% of all our journeys are less than 2 miles*. Better facilities for walking and cycling, and public transport that's attractive and easy to use could help drastically reduce car use for these journeys.

The issue of moving towards more sustainable transport in a rural county like Shropshire, with such dispersed communities, presents considerable problems. The need to gradually reduce reliance on the car is recognised. But people still need and expect good access to facilities and services. The narrow streets and historic buildings of many of Shropshire's towns and villages, whilst giving the character that is a growing source of the county's wealth, present particular traffic problems.

Innovative solutions to the problem of inadequate public transport in rural Shropshire are needed. As well as accessibility within Shropshire, the links from Shropshire to the rest of the region and the country are important from an economic point of view.

Individuals and businesses can make a significant difference by their own actions, but sustainable transport development strategies, integrated public transport systems, air quality strategies, and traffic management schemes, provided through partnerships between central government, local councils and transport operators, are vital to solving the transport problem.

Effective investment in information technology infrastructure can significantly reduce the need for physical travel. Electronic information and communications need to be considered in the development of any sustainable transport strategy.

Critical LINKS

Transport and Energy

Transport is a key user of non-renewable energy (mainly oil), and producer of greenhouse gases. Switching to public transport, and cars with smaller, more efficient engines could make a big difference. Current energy reduction targets will not be met at the current rate of "progress".

Transport, Pollution and Health

Traffic produces pollution which can seriously damage our health. 20% of all children now suffer from asthma, with possible links to increasing levels of vehicle pollutants. Use of the car has drastically reduced levels of walking, with many adults and children now getting less exercise as a result.

Transport and Development

The critical relationship between transport and land use planning has been "rediscovered" since the need to reverse traffic growth has become a major issue. Changes in land use and new developments that minimise generation of new traffic are a key part of a sustainable development strategy. Walking, cycling and public transport strategies, need to be key determinants in influencing land use developments in principle, and in day to day practical detail.

The potential of rail to carry freight and service economic growth, needs to be seriously examined.

Transport and Tourism

The impact of tourism development and associated traffic generation can be detrimental, particularly in "quiet" rural areas. Public transport, cycling and walking initiatives can help reduce visitor car mileage, and concentration of attractions in relatively accessible locations can help protect the more vulnerable, remote areas that have a very limited "carrying" capacity.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Transport and Communications in Shropshire

- Everyday facilities accessible to everyone in Shropshire - services being located close to people, rather than people being expected to travel to services
- An integrated transport system serving the whole of Shropshire
- Shropshire in the lead in promoting environmentally sustainable transport
- Few deaths and injuries on the roads in Shropshire
- Minimal air pollution resulting from transportation in Shropshire
- Shropshire's transport infrastructure supporting sustainable economic growth in urban and rural areas
- Telecommunications have significantly reduced the need for car journeys - particularly for business and shopping trips

Shropshire Transport and Communications INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Shropshire has a good range of rural bus initiatives, which include Community Buses (e.g. the Corvedale Buzzard), Feeder Bus Systems (e.g. Clun-Ludlow), Dial-a-Ride, and the Long Mynd Shuttle.

Other community initiatives include Green Transport Plans, travel-awareness campaigns (e.g. Travelwise), Safe Routes to School, and Voluntary Car Schemes.

Initiatives being developed through local authorities include development of local cycle networks, and Quality Bus Partnerships.

Improvements being delivered by local rural rail operators include "real time" information being provided at unstaffed rural stations (e.g. Craven Arms), and station lighting powered by solar panels (e.g. Broome).

The Long Mynd Shuttle

The Long Mynd Shuttle offers a bus link between Church Stretton railway station, car parks in the Cardingmill Valley, and walks on the Long Mynd. Developed through a partnership of The National Trust and Railtrack, the Shuttle promotes access to the countryside without the attendant problems of fumes, congestion and erosion associated with car use.

Community Transport Initiatives

40 Voluntary Car Schemes currently operate at parish level in Shropshire, administered by the Community Council of Shropshire. In addition there are two Community Transport Schemes in Shrewsbury and Oswestry, two Community Transport buses in Bishop's Castle and Corvedale, a brokerage scheme in South Shropshire, a Rural Transport Partnership Scheme in Bridgnorth, and a county-wide Wheels-2-Work Scheme.

Shropshire Transport and Communications POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement.

The Local Transport Plan for Shropshire (LTP), is a bidding document, outlining Shropshire's unique transport needs to central Government. It supersedes the Transport Policies and Programme (TPP) documents that were drawn up each year. Key elements recognised in the LTP include the critical need for an integrated transport strategy for Shropshire; and the need for sustainable transport, safety, and transport for all, to be at the heart of any strategy. Local community consultation has been a notable feature in the development of the Shropshire LTP. This is in line with national advice, and with the principles of sustainable development.

The Shropshire Cycling Strategy, adopted in January 1997, is incorporated within the Local Transport Plan. The Shropshire Pedestrian Strategy, also a part of the LTP, will be reviewed when the National Walking Strategy is produced. Cycling and walking opportunities and needs are comprehensively reviewed and promoted in the Shropshire LTP and show a growing commitment to sustainable transport.

The Shropshire Road Safety Strategy and local road safety schemes programme also form part of the LTP.

The Highway Maintenance Plan for Shropshire is summarised in the LTP, as is the Bridge Strengthening Strategy, which has been developed in response to the Government's decision to allow 40 tonne lorries into Britain, as from January 1999.

Area Transport Plans (more detailed, area-based daughter documents), should be assessed from a sustainability point of view, when completed.

The Structure Plan Review acknowledges the critical role of transport in sustainable development planning. It also includes the 4 major highway improvement proposals identified as necessary to the county :- 3 village by-passes, and the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road. The Structure Plan's development principles and sustainability credentials are reviewed in the Development Chapter of this Report.

The the Shropshire District Councils' Local Plans, and the Shropshire Telematics Strategy have not yet been looked at in terms of sustainability, as part of the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 process.

Key Sustainable Transport and Communications ACTIONS needed for Shropshire
- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

The following are all taken from the Key Tasks identified in the Local Transport Plan for Shropshire (July 1999 submission). It has been impossible to reproduce all the key tasks here, so a number have been selected which are particularly important from a sustainability point of view, and which together, cover the different aspects of sustainable transport. The targets and indicators are in the main, also from the LTP.

Action 2.1 Make it easier to travel by bus, by **Developing a new Public Transport Information System for Shropshire**

Target 2.1 (1) The whole of the new system to be up and running by 2005
(2) An increase in bus passenger mileage across the county

Indicator 2.1 (1) Number of actions implemented to secure aspects of the new system
(2) Number of bus passengers and distance travelled

Action 2.2 Make it easier and more attractive to travel by rail, by **Developing Rail Passenger Partnership funding bids (and implementing if successful), for the Shrewsbury/Chester and Shrewsbury/Wolverhampton lines**

Target 2.2 To secure funding (1999/2000) for the two bids, and to action the 8 proposals listed under these bids in the LTP

Indicator 2.2 (1) Number of passengers before / after
(2) Number of actions implemented

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 2.3 Make it easier to travel by bus and rail by **Improving the co-ordination of bus/rail services and information**

Target 2.3 Increase the number of households in Shropshire who have public transport information delivered to their door, to 70% by 2002

Indicator 2.3 % of households with doorstep delivery of public transport information

Action 2.4 Get more people cycling by **Developing and implementing existing and new Cycle Network Action Plans throughout Shropshire**

Target 2.4 To increase the number of cycle trips in urban areas by 5% per annum, contributing towards the national target of doubling cycling trips

Indicator 2.4 (1) Number of cyclists at regularly monitored sites
(2) Number of journeys to work by cycle
(3) Number of journeys to school by cycle

Action 2.5 Make residential streets safer by **Developing a pilot Home Zone in Wem (to give greater priority to pedestrians), and extending to other areas**

Target 2.5 Consultation completed by end of 2000/2001; and implementation of pilot by end of 2001/2002

Indicator 2.5 (1) Average vehicle speed before / after
(2) Public attitude to implemented scheme

Action 2.6 Reduce children's dependency on car travel, by **Setting up a countywide programme of Safer Routes to Schools projects at identified priority schools / areas**

Target 2.6 10 projects to be set up by the end of 2001

Indicator 2.6 Monitoring % of children given a lift by car to school

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 2.7 Promote the use of telecommunications by **Exploring potential public / private partnerships to make new, affordable high-speed telecommunications technologies available to all businesses and citizens within Shropshire**

Target 2.7 A high speed telecommunications network implemented within Shropshire, with links to other regional networks, by 2005

Indicator 2.7 % of households and businesses with easy access to the high speed network

3. LIFELONG LEARNING in Shropshire

Education in sustainability matters is vital for the whole community, not only through the more obvious routes of courses and formal education, but in ways that are part of the everyday business of living. Telecommunications -TV, the Internet, are vital in breaking down traditional barriers to learning, and getting people to take on board new ways of seeing things and doing things.

Looking at schools and the more formal aspects of education, in April 1998 Shropshire was split into two authorities, with the creation of Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority beside that of Shropshire County Council. Joint arrangements were established between the two education authorities, and Shropshire continues to provide advisory support to Telford and Wrekin schools, while other services such as special education needs are jointly managed.

Shropshire county education authority is predominantly rural, with a large number of rural schools. This coupled with the effects of low pay and rural isolation of some households means that many children lack access to facilities and opportunities to extend their education. The large number of small schools means that unit costs are high, and transport use and costs are also high. There are challenges to schools in Shropshire in overcoming rural isolation by working together to disseminate good practice, to cluster schools to enhance professional development, and to maximise scarce resources. Education results are generally favourable, and many schools perform in the upper quartile of schools nationally.

The County Council is committed to raising the level of environmental understanding amongst school children through environmental education programmes and the Eco-Schools initiative. It is also committed to lifelong learning, to "work together with other parties to increase access to a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities". Shropshire's education advisor for geography also has responsibility for environmental education, and manages an annual in-service training programme for teachers. This includes an annual Environmental Education Conference and courses held at local teacher centres. School-based curriculum advice, and advice on the use and development of school grounds is provided. Currently, guidance is being provided to schools on "Education for Sustainable Development", one of the core themes underpinning the National Curriculum which will operate in schools from September 2000. This was also the theme of the 1999 Shropshire Environmental Education Conference.

Many schools have developed strong links with their local communities and with business through environmental projects and initiatives, and have been able to access funding from local or national sources. Much of this good practice is disseminated through a geography and environmental education bulletin and via meetings with school co-ordinators.

Critical LINKS

Clearly, education plays a very significant part in the life of every individual and every community. Two of the more critical links are discussed below:

Education and Economy, Employment and Business

A priority for Shropshire is “to continue to raise educational achievement in parallel with the movement of the economy, from one in which competitiveness is based on low wages to one based on high skills and added value products and services.”(Shropshire Regeneration Strategy).

Individuals' success in getting the kind of job they want, is heavily dependent on education and training. On the other side, the vitality and resilience of the economy is heavily dependent on the education, skills, and adaptability of the workforce. Life-long learning is a crucial part of this linkage, and one of the core challenges in Shropshire is to improve the key skills of communication, numeracy, and information technology.

Education and Social Inclusion

Poor education and training is one of the key factors contributing to social exclusion. Access to education and training opportunities - both in the physical sense of how people actually get to the education or training centre, and in the sense of whether financial or other kinds of support are available - is a serious issue in Shropshire, with its high proportion of people living in rural areas, and its low wage economy.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Lifelong Learning in Shropshire

- Creative opportunities for schools to make use of the environment to support children's knowledge, understanding, skills and values relating to sustainable development
- Active involvement of young people in action and decision-making to improve their environment
- All schools have a clear policy statement for “Environmental Education and Sustainability”, with a teacher co-ordinator and nominated governor for this
- All schools undertake regular environmental audits to reduce energy and water consumption and minimise waste

Shropshire Lifelong Learning and Sustainability INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Shropshire Annual Environmental Education Conference

Open to teachers and governors from all Shropshire schools and colleges and supported by the Environment Agency, the Conference focuses on teaching and learning through, for, and about the environment, and is held in October each year at the Shirehall in Shrewsbury. The 1999 Conference focused on “Education for Sustainable Development - the Implications for Schools”. An exhibition with contributions from various local and national organisations, and a series of practical workshops, run throughout the day.

Telford and Wrekin Local Agenda 21 Education Round Table.

Much of this forum's work influences Shropshire schools through the joint arrangements in place between the two authorities. Consisting of teachers, governors and local authority officers, the group has initiated projects including guidance to schools on policy and practice in environmental education. The group has produced a framework for a school environmental audit, policy and action plan.

Eco Schools in Shropshire

This is a European initiative organised in the UK by the Tidy Britain Group, with incremental awards for environmental action such as energy reduction and waste minimisation. The award scheme encourages a whole school and community approach to improvements. The scheme is being promoted in Shropshire, underpinned by a separate introductory Shropshire award to schools.

Perkins' Environmental Teamwork Award

Funded by Perkins Engines, this annual award operates in Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin. It is open to primary schools who involve pupils in improving the school environment, with schools being judged on teamwork, wildlife and educational value of their projects. The Award continues to act as a catalyst for environmental improvements in school grounds, and its emphasis on teamwork results in active participation by members of the community, as well as pupils.

Lacon Childe School Community Education Programme - "Think Globally Act Locally" evening classes

With the help of a Rural Action Grant, a 6 week series of evening classes with guided walks was organised in Cleobury Mortimer, to promote local environmental issues and encourage participation.

Sandpits Estate Greening

Children from Ludlow's primary schools have planted trees with residents around the Sandpits housing estate, as part of an estate greening initiative being run by the Residents Association and the Shropshire Hills Countryside Unit.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust Education Service

The Wildlife Trust offers an extensive environmental education service to schools, including advice on school grounds, visits to nature reserves, in-school curriculum development, and training for teachers and governors.

Shropshire Sustainability and Lifelong Learning POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement.

None of the following has yet been looked at in terms of sustainability, as part of the Local Agenda 21 process:

- Shropshire Education Development Plan
- Local Authority Adult Learning Plan
- Shropshire Lifelong Learning Partnership Learning Plan

Key Sustainability and Lifelong Learning ACTIONS needed for Shropshire
- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Help schools to be more active on environment and sustainability by :

Action 3.1 Giving all schools a model policy for Environmental Education and Sustainability

Target 3.1 All schools to have received a model policy, audit framework and action plan for environmental education and sustainability by the end of January 2000

Indicator 3.1 % of schools receiving the above

Action 3.2 Promoting the Eco schools initiative and the Shropshire introductory award

Target 3.2 At least 50% of Shropshire schools to have obtained the Shropshire introductory award to Eco Schools, or one of the Eco Schools Awards by July 2002

Indicator 3.2 % of schools receiving the introductory award

Action 3.3 Disseminating good practice in environmental education and education for sustainable development, and promoting sources of external funding for schools, to support the development of the school environment

Target 3.3 At least one annual bulletin sent to all Shropshire schools, outlining good practice in environmental education, and identifying potential sources of funding

Indicator 3.3 % of schools receiving the annual bulletin

Additional Actions as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 3.4 Encouraging all schools to appoint a Governor with specific responsibility for promoting education for sustainable development, and improved environmental performance by the school

Target 3.4 100% of Shropshire schools to have appointed a Sustainability Governor by 2003

Indicator 3.4 % of schools with Sustainability Governors

Promote lifelong learning in Shropshire by :

Action 3.5 Increasing access to lifelong learning opportunities in Shropshire

Target 3.5 To meet national Education Targets and proposed Library Standards

Indicator 3.5 Participation in learning, sport and cultural activities

Action 3.6 The County Council leading on the production of a Cultural Strategy for Shropshire

Target 3.6 Produce a Cultural Strategy by 2002

Indicator 3.6 Completion of the Strategy

Action 3.7 Providing the Shropshire element of the National Peoples Network (an initiative to connect all libraries in the UK, for free public Internet access)

Target 3.7 Access to advanced technical infrastructure for the delivery of information and lifelong learning (the Network), to be available to the public at all libraries in Shropshire by 2002

Indicator 3.7 Number of libraries networked

4. WILDLIFE and BIODIVERSITY in Shropshire

The richness of plant and animal life (biodiversity) in Shropshire reflects the wide range of geology and topography across the county, and its central location in Britain. Vegetation ranges from the Mediterranean to the Eurasian and Arctic / Alpine. This is reflected in the number and diversity of specially designated sites, e.g. 3 National Nature Reserves, 101 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and about 750 additional Sites of Biological Interest. Shropshire is noted in particular for its meres, mosses, and related wetlands.

But intensive agricultural practices and increasing industrial and domestic demands have resulted in loss of habitats and biodiversity, threats to water and air quality and low flows in rivers. Even the specially designated sites have suffered as a result of these pressures. Since 1976, 20% of Shropshire's most important habitats have been lost, producing a dramatic decline in once-common species such as cowslip and song thrush. The implications of this general decline are very serious.

Most people respond as individuals to wildlife, but in economic terms wildlife is a hostage to fortune, too often having to rely on charity, goodwill, or one-off efforts, to survive. Its value is not properly built in to the "system".

Many land use changes - housing or industrial development for example, have an irreversible effect on wildlife. But wildlife and habitat conservation can be effectively incorporated into development where there is a will.

Probably the most critical single factor affecting the future of wildlife habitats in this country and in Shropshire, is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its development over the next decade or so. Land management policy and finance need to recognise the value of wildlife-friendly farming, and so encourage landowners to manage their land sustainably.

There are special places for wildlife, but equally, ordinary places such as roadside verges in the countryside, and back gardens in towns are important for wildlife. The common or garden species are often more important to us in our daily lives, and shouldn't be forgotten.

Wildlife and its survival clearly illustrate how vital it is to have a sustainable approach to policies and actions. The extinction of species directly as a result of human activity, shows what can happen if we get this wrong.

Critical LINKS

Biodiversity and Farming

Farming has had a massive influence on biodiversity in the UK, particularly over the last 5 decades. The future directions of the European CAP and its interpretation by MAFF, the impact of GM foods on farming practices, and the push for a more organic and sustainable approach to farming all have the potential to alter the face of biodiversity in Shropshire - not only in the fields and hedgerows of the farmed areas, but also in the woods, wetlands, and heathlands of the non-farmed areas.

Biodiversity and Resources

Water plays a critical role in biodiversity, providing special habitats such as lowland wet grassland with its own particular range of plants, insects, birds etc., as well as being essential to all wildlife. Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) need to incorporate measures to reflect this, as do flood alleviation, water abstraction schemes and other

engineering works. Sympathetic management of water resources is essential to increasing biodiversity.

Biodiversity and Pollution

Water quality is critical for wildlife. In general, water quality in Shropshire watercourses is of a high standard.

Biodiversity and Development

The county's high quality environment is one of its greatest assets, attracting investors and residents, as well as visitors. Development has undoubtedly been responsible for losses of habitat and wildlife reduction in Shropshire, but habitats on development sites can be safeguarded if sufficient care is taken, and may even be enhanced through careful thought and design.

Biodiversity and Recreation

Recreation can cause damage and disturbance to wildlife, but this is generally not a big issue currently in Shropshire, because of the level of visitor numbers involved.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Biodiversity in Shropshire

- The lapwing is once again so common as to be an unremarkable sight in Shropshire - populations of Shropshire's endangered species have increased, and populations of the more common species are maintained
- A well-managed living network of hedges, ditches and verges links all sites of high biodiversity value, allowing colonisation of the wider countryside
- Towns and villages have sufficient high quality greenspace to make sure we all live with wildlife
- Major rivers and streams sustain a rich diversity of wildlife
- The internationally important Meres and Mosses and their surrounding catchments are under integrated management
- Public and other community areas, such as churchyards and parks are full of wildlife, without compromising their other uses
- Farm support payments recognise the importance of biodiversity, and are linked to the implementation of individual farm Biodiversity and Landscape Action Plans

Shropshire Biodiversity INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Shropshire communities have a vital role to play. As the Shropshire Biodiversity Challenge report states: "The challenge to conserve the biodiversity of Shropshire is open to everybody. No single organisation alone can achieve its conservation. The only way to reach our biodiversity targets is to gain the support and involvement of everyone: individuals and organisations."

Many Shropshire people already support the conservation work of voluntary bodies such as the RSPB, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, etc. and of their local authorities. Many farmers and landowners (and gardeners) are already undertaking invaluable initiatives often assisted by grant aid and technical advice.

Initiatives include Shropshire Hills and Dales, Hayton's Bent Dormouse Project, Shropshire Black Poplar Project, Shropshire Tree Wardens, Shrewsbury's Community Woodlands, Trees for Shropshire Initiative, Caring for God's Acre, Shropshire Hills Woodland Skills Training, Back to Purple, and many more.

Shropshire Black Poplar Project

Community involvement in celebrating this native and locally distinctive tree, as well as significant work on its genetic make-up and conservation. This year the Black Poplars Rasping Jaspers Roadshow has been on tour throughout Shropshire, with fun and information for all.

Back to Purple

This local project is designed to reverse the losses of Shropshire heathland. This is a scarce and vulnerable habitat nationally, and the purple of the heather flowers and bilberry fruits epitomise the heathland which the project is recreating. With community support, a 6 mile expanse of heathland along the Stiperstones is being restored over 4 years.

Marches Woodland Initiative

A major woodland project supported by a number of partners including the Forestry Commission and Shropshire County Council, this is of particular benefit to ancient semi-natural woodlands, farm woodlands, and woodland-related businesses. A further project, led by the Forestry Commission, is focused on the Clun area and aims to reverse the fragmentation of ancient woodlands.

Shropshire Biodiversity POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement.

Statutory Plans and Programmes are influenced by a wide range of national policies, with an increasing emphasis on sustainability, but biodiversity does not always have a strong platform, particularly at a local level when in "competition" with issues such as employment, housing or transport. Its underlying importance needs more weight at policy-making level.

However a number of influential documents and programmes are being developed, focused specifically on Shropshire biodiversity issues, including the Shropshire Site Alert programme, Shropshire Biodiversity Challenge and Action Plan, Shropshire Wildlife Surveys, and the County and District Councils' Countryside Units wildlife and ecology programmes. In addition, the important Local Environment Agency Plans (Environment Agency), Environmentally Sensitive Area programmes, various "agri-environment" schemes including Countryside Stewardship (MAFF), and some Forestry Authority schemes, give weight to local biodiversity concerns.

Key development strategy and programme documents need to give biodiversity issues a more central place - so that wildlife is not dealt with as an afterthought. Integrated land management plans are a crucial vehicle for promoting and securing enhanced biodiversity. The importance of biodiversity to Shropshire, needs to be underlined and promoted through better public information, monitoring and research.

Key Biodiversity ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Protect the county's valuable wildlife sites more strongly by :

Action 4.1 Revising and extending the community-based Site Alert system for environmental protection and enhancement, piloted in the Oswestry Uplands, and using it to inform all County Council policy and decision making

Target 4.1 Complete Site Alert coverage of Shropshire by 2002

Indicator 4.1 % of Shropshire covered by the Site Alert database

Action 4.2 Acting upon the key issues identified in the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan, relating to sites, habitats and species of conservation concern

Target 4.2 Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets for habitats and species, currently being prepared

Indicator 4.2 % of actions in the Habitat and Species Action Plans, implemented

Action 4.3 Better protect and manage the most important wildlife sites by Producing Integrated Management Plans for the most important wildlife sites e.g. Meres and Mosses, and the Severn / Vrynwy Confluence

Target 4.3 All these sites to have an Integrated Management Plan by 2005

Indicator 4.3 Number of Plans produced

Action 4.4 Reverse the decline in wildlife value of agricultural land by Working with farmers to ensure that Shropshire is well positioned to influence and take advantage of CAP reforms and new agri-environment initiatives

Target 4.4 90% of farmers to take up and implement existing and new agri-environment initiatives for which they are eligible by 2005

Indicator 4.4 % of eligible agricultural land covered by agri-environment initiatives

Action 4.5 Promote wildlife on public land such as parks and school grounds by Developing a programme of wildlife enhancement on public land, without compromising its main use

Target 4.5 80% of public land to be managed to maximise wildlife potential by 2005

Indicator 4.5 % of public land managed to maximise wildlife potential

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 4.6 Bring wildlife closer to people by Action to promote doorstep biodiversity and accessible natural greenscape

Target 4.6 Promote a different 'doorstep' theme each year (e.g. Year 1. Garden Butterflies; Year 2 'Doorstep' links to local footpaths)

Indicator 4.6 Number of promoted themes each year

5. LANDSCAPE and BUILDINGS in Shropshire

Shropshire has one of the most varied landscapes in the West Midlands. It is renowned for its geology, archaeology, landscape beauty, historic market towns and attractive villages. It includes the Shropshire Hills designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the south, the hill farming areas of the Oswestry borderland, the lowland plain areas of North Shropshire, and the Severn Valley running through the middle of it all.

Shropshire's landscape is a result of centuries of human activity. This valuable heritage is constantly under pressure, as much from innumerable small changes as from any single factor, although agricultural intensification has brought huge changes over the last 50 years. Standardised housing developments, the corporate uniformity of shop fronts, and the domination of the car have diluted the character and interest of many towns and villages.

Some of these changes cannot be reversed. Whilst there is no suggestion that Shropshire's towns, villages and countryside should be fossilised museum pieces, the need to hold on to Shropshire's unique quality and identity is critical. The historic environment is a sustainability issue. It is a finite, non-renewable and vulnerable environmental, social and economic resource.

Local distinctiveness will be an increasingly valuable asset in the 21st century, and Shropshire currently has it in good measure. Development on all fronts should be seriously considerate of the best aspects of Shropshire's character, and should add to its quality and identity.

In the face of these pressures, attempts have been made particularly over the last decade or so, to conserve and promote local heritage, through Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, archaeological protection measures, rescued gardens and landscape conservation initiatives.

Critical LINKS

Landscape and Wildlife and Farming

Landscape and wildlife are highly interconnected, and both are strongly influenced by farming practices. For example hedgerows are a distinctive landscape feature in many parts of Shropshire ; they also provide valuable wildlife corridors through agricultural land. However, they are still being grubbed out, and positive management needs to be encouraged if the decline in quality is to be reversed. The future of farming in Shropshire will have a critical bearing on its landscape, for the reasons outlined in the Wildlife Chapter.

Landscape, Buildings and Development

New development - whether a road, quarry, conifer plantation, or housing estate - can have a massive and detrimental impact on landscape and townscape.

A sustainable approach to development means that new building should be located as part of an existing settlement, with good public transport links, and on a "brownfield" site where possible. Its environmental impact should be positive. Unsympathetic repairs or alterations to existing buildings can easily downgrade the quality and character of buildings, villages, or towns.

Landscape, and Recreation and Tourism

One of Shropshire's greatest assets is the quality of its environment, and its strong local character. This forms the core attraction of the area's considerable tourism business.

One of the dangers of tourism over-exposure is that its side effects can kill or dilute the very characteristics generating tourism interest in the first place. Quality of environment

and local character are very vulnerable to visitor pressure, and firm controls and guidelines need to be respected.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Landscape and Buildings in Shropshire

- A "One Stop" Environmental Record is accessible to all, giving information on Shropshire's historic buildings, archaeology, landscape, wildlife conservation, etc.
- All owners and managers understand the significance and qualities of their properties, and act accordingly
- Adequate resources - principally expertise and grant aid - are freely available to promote good quality development and management of land and buildings.
- Shropshire has an enhanced reputation for beauty and diversity.

Shropshire Landscape and Buildings INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Many individuals and communities have a strong commitment to Shropshire's heritage and environment, demonstrated in many ways : by membership of bodies like the National Trust, by numbers of visits to places like Ludlow Castle and Cardingmill Valley, and by incalculable investment in conservation by thousands of individual property owners.

Many local environment and conservation projects have been established by community groups, in fact Shropshire seems to be particularly rich in this kind of self-help and grassroots action. Amongst the many are Newcastle, Ludlow, Rushbury and Shrawardine Millennium Greens; Community Landscaping around Village Halls; Village Design Statements at Hinstock, Wistanstow and Clun; Village Appraisals at Albrighton, Craven Arms and Cardington; Shropshire Local Jigsaw Project; Projects at Pulverbatch and Whittington Castle and Tankerville Mines; Archaeology Walks; The Secret Hills Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows. And :

Minsterley Parish Map Project

Following completion of the Parish Map, the Minsterley Parish Map Group worked to raise local awareness by producing leaflets and postcards publicising the Map, with open evenings to view the Map, and a dramatic presentation of the history of the village.

Snailbeach Leadmine Centre

The Shropshire Caving and Mining Club, and the Shropshire Mines Trust are working with the County and District Councils to preserve this nationally important mining landscape with its many Listed buildings. A derelict building is being restored as an Interpretation Centre, describing the history, wildlife and landscape of the area.

Shropshire Landscape and Buildings POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement.

Statutory Plans and Policies are influenced by a wide range of national policies, with an increasing emphasis on sustainability. Landscape, archaeology and building conservation have traditionally had a relatively high profile in Structure and Local Plans, in terms of both awareness, and protection policies. But of course these Plans have very little influence over changes or developments in farming or forestry practice, which so influence the landscape.

Area management plans such as the Environment Agency's LEAPs [Local Environment Agency Plans], the Shropshire Hills Advisory Plan (the AONB strategy), and the

Oswestry Hills Management Plan, are strong in their promotion of sustainable approaches to landscape conservation, whilst the Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the Countryside Stewardship programmes provide significant resources for landscape maintenance. However, most programmes and many policies are restricted to specific areas, and large parts of the county are neglected in this respect.

Key Sustainable Landscape and Buildings ACTIONS needed for Shropshire
- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Action 5.1 Better protect Shropshire's landscape from inappropriate development by **Completing the current county-wide Landscape Character Assessment exercise, and the Supplementary Planning Guidance derived from it.**

Target 5.1 To complete by March 2001

Indicator 5.1 Stages completed

Action 5.2 Help look after Shropshire's trees and woodlands better by **Publishing guidance on Care of Veteran Trees, Management of Hedgerows, and Planting New Woodlands.**

Target 5.2 To be included in the County Tree Strategy, produced by March 2003

Indicator 5.2 Stages completed

Action 5.3 Give guidance on the proper management of Shropshire's landscape by **Preparing Landscape Management Plans for those areas of the county outside the AONB**

Target 5.3 To have plans for the whole of the county completed by March 2002

Indicator 5.3 % area of county with completed Management Plans

Action 5.4 Help get new conservation and sustainable development projects going by **Securing new funding for projects, in particular**

- (1) Protecting the north Shropshire Meres and Mosses
- (2) Managing and enhancing the Montgomery Canal
- (3) Developing new farm, woodland and craft products

Target 5.4 £100,000 pa between 2000 and 2003

Indicator 5.4 % of funding secured

Action 5.5 Make sure property owners and managers are aware of the nature, significance and protection needs of the landscapes and buildings for which they are responsible, by **Preparing and implementing a development plan for Shropshire's Environmental Records, including disseminating information to property owners and managers**

Target 5.5 Prepare by March 2000 and implement by March 2003

Indicator 5.5 Stages completed

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 5.6 Help conserve Shropshire's history and archaeology by **Securing funds to promote and enhance understanding of historic sites, buildings and landscapes**

Target 5.6 Secure at least £100,000, by 2002

Indicator 5.6 Funding secured

6. WATER, MINERALS and WASTE in Shropshire

Everything in the world is a resource of some kind. This chapter considers relevant physical resources not covered elsewhere in the Strategy, i.e. water, and minerals. It also looks at waste - of all kinds.

Fundamental to a consideration of resources is the concept of "sustainable consumption". The principle of increasing consumption is basic to our current economy and way of life. It involves a high rate of consumption of physical resources including energy, and produces ever increasing amounts of waste. Significant changes can be made by each of us to reduce consumption and waste production, but there also needs to be a radical change in regulatory structures and incentives to really turn things round.

Water

Water as a resource has been generally taken for granted in Britain, until the droughts and water shortages of the '80s and '90s. A pure and constant water supply is a fundamental need shared by everyone. The possibility of diminishing water resources nationally as a result of climate change, coupled with increasing demands from additional households, and activities such as spray irrigation, mean that the burden on water resources could well increase significantly in the future. Development will need to be sustainable, promoting water conservation measures and winter abstraction and storage of water.

Water conservation is now high on the list of actions for a sustainable environment, with the Environment Agency, the water companies and individual users all having responsibilities in this direction.

The Government's proposed review of abstraction licensing legislation will help alleviate some of the existing non-sustainable sources of public water supplies.

Issues of water quality are dealt with in Chapter 10 of this Report, "Pollution"

Minerals

Minerals are essential raw materials for the construction industry and for power generation. Shropshire has extensive deposits of valuable minerals, in particular sand and gravel, various types of rock, coal and clay. These minerals have been worked here for centuries, and they are still needed to meet the increasing demand for houses, schools, roads and other types of construction. But mineral working can have a significant impact on the local environment and quality of life.

Minerals are a finite resource. In the interests of sustainability it is important to avoid wastage, maximise the use of secondary aggregates and other recycled materials, and minimise any permanent environmental damage.

Waste

The amount of waste generated every year in Shropshire has been steadily increasing. Shropshire - along with most of the UK, is heavily dependent on landfill for the way it disposes of its waste. Changes in legislation and taxation policies are having far-reaching consequences for the way we manage our waste. Waste management at local, national and international levels is being subject to ever tighter control. The cost of municipal waste management in Shropshire has risen dramatically over the past few years, largely due to the introduction of the landfill tax and more demanding environmental standards.

All 7 local authorities in Shropshire recognise the need for a more environment-friendly way of dealing with waste, and have formed a partnership to work towards an integrated, sustainable waste management system.

The key principles of waste management in order of general priority are :

Reduction

Re-Use

Recovery of value by:- recycling or composting
or recovering energy

Disposal

A critical issue is nationally, the need to tackle waste minimisation at the point of manufacture, and through the retail distribution chain.

Landfill tax money can be effectively used to support local environmental projects, but it can't be used by local authorities for practical waste minimisation programmes. Attempts are being made at national level, supported by Shropshire County Council, to reverse this approach.

Critical LINKS

Water

Water and Health, Food and Farming, and Development

Water is critical to all forms of life. Its most significant links in terms of human activities are with health, food and farming, and development. Key issues are purity of supply, and constancy of availability. Purity of drinking water has been compromised on a more than incidental basis in certain areas of Britain, e.g. lead pollution from water supply pipes, and nitrate pollution from agricultural fertilisers. (See Chapter 10).

Using water of appropriate quality could make a significant difference to demand, with drinking water used only when a high quality of water is required. Other grades of water (rainwater, greywater), could be far more widely used for cleaning etc.

Although development proposals are rarely inhibited by lack of water supply, increasingly costly and unsustainable measures such as long distance piping, and groundwater abstraction that severely lowers the water table, are becoming necessary to supply existing settlements in certain parts of Britain. Shropshire's River Worfe is now one of the top 40 low-flow rivers, nationally. Much of the problem of low flows in rivers is as a result of the unsustainable abstraction authorised in the past.

The tendency for some developments to have insufficient regard to sustainable drainage techniques which reduce environmental impacts, encroachment of development on to floodplains, and landowners' poor management of the local drainage system, are other areas of concern.

Water and Wildlife

Water is critical to wildlife, both in general terms, and as a key element in certain kinds of habitat. Wet meadowland, marshes and ponds and their plants and animals, are still disappearing in Shropshire as well as elsewhere, largely as a result of agricultural "improvement" (e.g. land drainage).

Minerals

Minerals and Transport

Minerals are bulky and their transport has significant implications for environment and energy costs. Mineral traffic can form a high proportion of total Heavy Goods Vehicles in certain rural areas. Rail links into quarries can substantially cut energy use, and the

impact of large vehicles on rural roads. Their feasibility needs to be fully investigated for every major mineral-working operation.

Minerals and Wildlife and Landscape

Mining and quarrying can have a significant impact on wildlife and the landscape. Deep stone quarries are difficult to restore, but riverside sand and gravel workings can provide new lakes and water areas for amenity, recreation and wildlife, once working has ceased. Effective conditions governing operations and restoration of workings are vital. It's a characteristic of mineral workings in general that there is often far more potential for minimising adverse environmental impact than is actually achieved.

Minerals and Development

Mineral working is a temporary activity, although particular sites may operate for many years. On completion of working, mineral sites can make a positive contribution to new land uses and / or improved landscapes. Worked-out sites can be re-profiled and / or tipped or flooded as part of their restoration, and re-used as appropriate, including nature reserves, forestry, agriculture, housing or industrial development etc.

Waste

Waste and Energy

The link between waste and energy can be positive, or can be negative. On the positive side, the heat generated from incinerated waste can be used to create electricity, and for district heating. On the negative side are the facts that energy has to be used to transport the waste from its point of origin to the point of recovery and/or disposal, and incineration is still perceived as being a relatively dirty technology.

Waste and Transport

In recent years, the search for suitable landfill sites has led to waste being transported increasing distances. New Government guidance on waste disposal PPG10 introduces the principles of "proximity" and "regional self-sufficiency" - in accordance with the principles of sustainability. This emphasises that waste should be disposed of, or otherwise managed in close proximity to the point at which it is generated. The National Waste Strategy makes the point that the mode of transport and not just the distance, must be considered. It may be that a longer journey by river or rail may be environmentally preferable to a shorter road journey.

Waste and Pollution

Waste facilities can have an adverse impact on the environment. They can emit noise, dust, smells, fumes and leachate. They can be unsightly. If not properly managed they can become a public health hazard. Landfill sites emit greenhouse gases, and can have an adverse effect on water quality. Incineration produces pollutants. However where properly controlled through planning and licensing conditions, these adverse impacts and pollution risks are substantially reduced.

Lack of appropriate recycling/disposal facilities can be a problem. The lack of a plastics recycling facility has been highlighted by the farming community.

Positive VISIONS for the future of Water, Minerals and Waste in Shropshire

Water

- Water use reduced to a minimum with the education of both the public and industry in water-saving initiatives.

- Water resources in Shropshire used and managed in an environmentally sustainable way, balancing abstraction needs with those of the environment.
- A locally robust and sustainable water resource strategy that is compatible with national strategy.
- Sustainable drainage techniques to be considered for all development.

Minerals

A minerals industry in Shropshire which promotes the efficient and careful use of minerals, minimises environmental impacts, and ensures efficient and sensitive working practices, restoration and aftercare of sites

Waste

- A minimum amount of waste produced in Shropshire, achieved by working with people and changing their attitude to waste, and the way they deal with it
- The best use being made of such waste that is produced by re-use, and recovery of materials
- An integrated network of facilities available across Shropshire, to manage waste in a sustainable way, with reduced reliance on landfill

Shropshire Water, Minerals and Waste INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Water

Water conservation initiatives in Shropshire involving local communities include the promotion and use of water butts; promotion and use of low water-use appliances; rainwater-harvesting on industrial and private estates (e.g. Telford); grey water recycling schemes; community restoration of village ponds; and refitting schools with low water-use appliances such as waterless urinals and dual-flush toilets.

Minerals

Local Liaison Committees

Several minerals and waste sites in Shropshire have their own local liaison committee to maintain regular contact and dialogue with representatives of local communities, review progress, and deal with problems.

Quarry Open Days

Several held in Shropshire, e.g. at Sharpstones Quarry (Tarmac), Bayston Hill, to enhance public understanding of mineral working, and provide an entertaining day out.

Local Conservation Groups

Many companies work closely with local groups on the design, operation and future management of mineral sites.

Waste

Kerbside Recycling Collections

Kerbside collections make sense in urban areas, but less so in the more sparsely populated rural areas because of the distance that collection vehicles have to travel. Kerbside collection will be available to 50% of Shropshire households by the end of 2000 and is still expanding.

Free Composters Scheme

1,700 home composters were supplied to householders in 3 Shropshire districts in 1997, and the promotion schemes with free or subsidised composters, are continuing.

Furniture Schemes, Recycling and Resource Centres

A number of these operate in Shropshire, some recycling furniture and some like the "Scrappies" project, providing a scrapstore and resource centre for distributing materials to playgroups, youthclubs, schools, drama, dance and arts groups.

Landfill Tax Funding

Landfill Tax funding has helped the Heart of Meole Brace public open space project, the Pitchford Village Hall Renovation project, and the work of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, amongst others.

Shropshire Water, Minerals and Waste POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

Water

The Environment Agency has developed policies regarding the availability of water resources for abstraction - both groundwater and surface water - in Shropshire. The Regional and National Water Resource Strategy and Drought Contingency Plans produced by the Environment Agency this year should help move practice in a more sustainable direction. The Agency is currently developing Abstraction Management Strategies for each catchment, in conjunction with an abstraction licensing review to ensure that abstraction is sustainable.

The Water Companies' Asset Management Plans, and the Drought Contingency Plans that the Environment Agency has asked them to produce, will contribute to a sustainable management of resources.

[Environment Agency policies and programmes are included in other Chapters, notably "Pollution" and "Development"]

Minerals

The Minerals Local Plan for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin was adopted in April 2000. It emphasises the importance of a sustainable approach to minerals policy. Its first General Policy (M1), comprises 6 sub-policies, each of which promotes an aspect of sustainability in relation to preferred planning practice. The problem comes in interpreting such phrases as "as far as possible" in relation to desired practice.

Waste

A Joint Household Waste Strategy is being prepared by a partnership of all the local authorities in Shropshire, and has sustainable development at the heart of its approach. The Strategy turns round the traditional approach to waste management, and its key objectives have a base in sustainable good practice. Waste reduction and recycling strategies are seen as the key to sustainable waste management. Public involvement as a key to good practice is heavily underlined.

The Shropshire Waste Local Plan, currently in preparation, will address land use issues, including the location of new facilities. Sustainable development principles are expected to strongly influence policy formulation.

Key Sustainable ACTIONS on Water, Minerals and Waste in Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

WATER

Action 6.1 Reduce per capita water consumption in Shropshire by **Educating the public and businesses about water-saving measures**

Target 6.1 To be set when data for the national sustainable development indicator for water is available

Indicator 6.1 Amount of water used per capita

Action 6.2 Improve availability of water for summer irrigation to meet crop needs by **Encouraging winter abstraction and storage of water, e.g. in the Rivers Worfe, Perry, Cound, Meese, Strine and Lonco.**

Target 6.2 Farmers' essential summer irrigation needs met

Indicator 6.2 Abstraction of water for agricultural spray irrigation, by season

Action 6.3 Conserve vulnerable wetland and river habitats by **Reducing groundwater abstraction from sensitive areas, and investigating short-term options to restore flows to affected river reaches.**

Target 6.3 Conservation of all valuable vulnerable wetland and river habitats

Indicator 6.3 (1) Groundwater abstraction from representative boreholes in sensitive areas

(2) % of groundwater aquifer surface area available for licences

(3) River flow at reference sites on affected reaches

MINERALS

Action 6.4 Reduce the amount of aggregate quarried by **Maximising the use of secondary rather than primary aggregate materials**

Target 6.4 Annual target figure of 0.5 million tonnes of secondary aggregate material production / use in Shropshire over the Minerals Plan period

Indicator 6.4 Sales of secondary and recycled aggregates

Action 6.5 Improve operating arrangements and standards of restoration where possible by **Reviewing and updating old mineral working permissions in Shropshire in accordance with modern environmental standards, and the requirements of the Environment Act 1995**

Target 6.5 Complete the review of old mineral working permissions, by the end of 2001

Indicator 6.5 Completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites

WASTE

Action 6.6 Work towards the minimisation of household waste arising, by **Influencing public behaviour through :**

(1) **Involving the public in drawing up a strategy and a programme of action**

(2) **Researching the best way to encourage participation in any scheme - such as new methods of collection**

(3) **Developing a communication strategy with the public**

Target 6.6 Stabilise the rate of household waste produced at population growth rate by 2005

Indicator 6.6 Household waste arising per annum

Action 6.7 Make the best use of waste produced in Shropshire by

- (1) Material recycling and composting of green waste**
- (2) Kerbside collection of organic wastes**
- (3) Using bring banks, dedicated skips, and civic amenity sites to further promote recycling_**
- (4) Developing an energy from waste facility to recover energy from materials which cannot be recycled**

(i.e. the key phases of the Shropshire Joint Strategy Framework for household waste management)

Targets 6.7 As per the National Waste Strategy :

- (1) Recover value from 45% of household waste by 2010, through recycling, composting, and the recovery of energy and heat through incineration
- (2) Recycle or compost 15% of household waste by 2003/4, and 30% of household waste by 2010

Indicators 6.7 % of household waste in Shropshire that is diverted from landfill by recycling, composting, or the recovery of energy and heat through incineration

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 6.8 Improve the economics of recycling by **Raising awareness of the availability of recycled products, and promoting recycling markets**

Target 6.8 Undertake a campaign to raise awareness of recycled products by 2002

Indicator 6.8 Campaign undertaken

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS in Shropshire

Shropshire's economy was once heavily dependent on agriculture and related industries. Whilst agriculture is still important, it no longer holds such a dominant position, and much of the industry is suffering a recession. The local economy is now dominated by the service sector, with niche sectors including food production and processing, tourism and related industries, and the care industry.

65% of the population (277,100) lives in Shrewsbury and the market towns. These are the key centres for employment and business development. Over a third of the county's business units and employment opportunities are based in Shrewsbury and the surrounding area.

As in many rural areas, the majority of businesses are small, employing less than 10 staff. Only 1% of businesses in Shropshire employ over 100 people. Levels of business start-up are higher than the West Midlands average, but the level of innovation amongst existing companies is poor.

Tourism is an important local industry helping to diversify the rural economy; but fragmentation and lack of infrastructure investment (including information technology support), make it difficult for Shropshire's rural areas to remain competitive. Tourism economies can suffer from poor quality job creation, excessive concentration geographically and seasonally, heavy traffic and other environmental damage. This needs to be avoided in Shropshire.

There is potential for promotion of green tourism, both in the kind of activities and holidays offered, and in the actual practices of the tourism industry - particularly given the nature of Shropshire's image.

Shropshire has a low wage, low skills economy, although unemployment is well below UK averages. There's a high level of lone self-employment, and above average dependence on part-time, seasonal employment.

Shropshire also has to face the problem of losing many of its young people to further education and jobs outside the county. This affects the vitality of the county as well as threatening the supply of labour for existing and potential employers.

The remaining population is getting older and living longer - a fact enhanced by the large number of people recognising the quality of life enjoyed in Shropshire, and retiring here. This has implications for the care sector of the local economy.

Shropshire County Council sees developing a sustainable local economy as "crucial for local businesses in Shropshire and for the way of life of Shropshire communities."

Critical LINKS

Economy, Employment and Business - and Energy

Industry and business are key users of energy - in manufacturing, in transport of goods and people, and in space heating and lighting. Energy conservation makes good business sense, and there will soon be serious financial incentives for energy-saving when business use of coal, gas and electricity is taxed from next April.

Economy, Employment and Business - and Transport

Localising supply chain links is a key element of sustainability, minimising transport requirements, and keeping money in the local community.

Getting to work in a rural county like Shropshire, can be a real problem, particularly for young people and part-time seasonal workers, because of lack of available transport,

and / or local job opportunities. The average journey-to-work distance in Shropshire is 9.5km, compared to 8.5 km in Britain as a whole.

Economy, Employment and Business - and Education and Skills Development

Shropshire has a low-skills economy, which could be improved with better access to open learning facilities, learning centres, and information technology. The county's lack of management skills needs to be better linked to graduate opportunities. Shropshire has a high proportion of professional retirees not engaged in economic activity.

Economy, Employment and Business - and Resources and Waste

Industry and business are significant users of resources and producers of waste. Waste minimisation has been pushed hard in industry over the last few years, helped by instruments such as the Landfill Tax. Eco-efficiency - i.e. doing more with less - is the current sustainable buzz word being promoted in the business world.

Economy, Employment and Business - and Housing

The continuing growth of net migration into Shropshire, and increasingly long commuting patterns, are a real challenge to sustainable development in Shropshire. Affordable housing for young people in local communities and links to local employment opportunities are critical issues, particularly in rural areas.

Economy, Employment and Business - and Development Planning

Where new economic development is to be located in relation to other land uses, and in particular whether it should be on a previously developed (brownfield) site, or a new (greenfield) site, is a critical issue for sustainable development.

Sympathetic planning and business support, particularly for local businesses to stay and develop in an area is crucial, but there is often conflict between local business expansion, and local communities.

Sustainable business practices amongst groups of neighbouring companies, whether in existing premises or on new sites, can be effectively promoted through the development planning process.

Retaining a fair proportion of wealth in the community where it has been generated is an important aspect of sustainability.

Changes in working practices including the development of e-commerce need to be understood, and development planning needs to make the most of any positive implications these have for sustainability.

Positive VISIONS for the future of Sustainable Economy, Employment and Business in Shropshire

- Shropshire's market towns as areas of opportunity, centres of local services and employment, and self-sustaining communities
- Sustainable, integrated tourism development, which recognises the value of Shropshire's distinctiveness, and the culture, heritage and landscape of local communities
- Effective innovation and local supply-chain links between rural businesses - in particular agriculture, food processing, crafts, tourism and transport
- High innovation and skills development between local business and young people (e.g. Young Enterprise, Young Entrepreneur, good links between Higher Education, Further Education and industry, and graduate placements)
- More balanced communities, with a mix of housing types, and employment opportunities
- Good employment opportunities available to all

- Eco-efficiency - producing more, with less resources and less pollution, through redesign, innovation in processes and techniques, rethinking whether it's a product or a service that's required.
- A sustainable business culture which encourages energy efficiency, waste minimisation, and eco-efficient products and labelling.
- A high proportion of businesses and services occupying "green buildings" - i.e. whose presence and operation impact least on the environment, and which offer a healthy and pleasant workplace

Shropshire Economy, Employment and Business INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

There are a number of sustainable economic development initiatives across Shropshire involving communities. These include support for businesses to improve environmental awareness and efficiency, support for local speciality food production and promotion of local food markets, support for local communities' tourism and distinctiveness projects, and the development of a Shropshire-wide Credit Union.

Projects to encourage environmental skills, combat unemployment and support volunteer groups include Volunteer Local Tourism Guides, Exploring Shropshire's Wild Side, Community Enterprise projects to support childcare facilities, Tourism Information Points in Village Shops, New Deal Environmental Task Force, and Real Furniture and Crafts Groups.

Marches Environmental Business Partnership

This partnership carried out an environmental survey of over 2,000 businesses in Shropshire and Herefordshire. From the responses a number of business-support projects have been developed including Waste Minimisation Training, Trading Estate Support, Club EMS (Environmental Management Systems), Supply Chain Support, and a Recycling Forum.

Village Shops Development Scheme

This project supports the development of local village shops anywhere in Shropshire, serving communities of under 3,000 people. Village shops are vital to the sustainability of local communities, and are supported by consultancy help and grants. The project is enhanced by the Tourism Information Points in Village Shops scheme.

Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme

Established by English Heritage, this provides partnership funding for conservation-led regeneration, promoting local economic activity, and helping local communities by expanding local employment opportunities and providing residential accommodation. Schemes are underway in Llanymynech and Oswestry.

Shropshire Economy, Employment and Business POLICIES and PROGRAMMES
- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

The County Council in its Corporate Performance Plan, recognises the importance of developing a sustainable approach through partnerships, and sees supporting the sustainable development of market towns, incorporating the principles of integrated transport into town centre development, developing rural regeneration programmes to meet local needs, and delivering key strategic sustainable projects, such as the Montgomery Canal Restoration Scheme, as critical in the move towards sustainable economic development.

The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Structure Plan has sustainable development as a key principle, reflected to an extent in the economic development and employment policies. The Sustainability Assessment published with the Deposit Draft of the Structure Plan gives an interesting appraisal of the Plan's sustainability credentials, and acknowledges that assessment of policies on an individual basis does not always get at the critical inter-relationships between policies. A somewhat compartmentalised approach to developing sustainable policies and practices is common throughout the country, particularly when looking at economic factors. Economic issues have a tendency to run in their own groove, and fundamental tensions between economic development and sustainability can be missed in this way.

Other documents with key references to economic development include:

- Local Plans
- Shropshire Regeneration Strategy and District Action Plans
- Local Authorities' Economic Development Statements
- Rural Development Programme Strategy
- Objective 5b Single Programming Document
- Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise Business Plan
- Shropshire Land and Workspace Study
- Shropshire Business Link Business Plan
- Advantage West Midlands' Regional Economic Strategy

Not surprisingly, there is little effective reference to sustainability and economic development principles and practices in many of these documents at this stage, although a number do address sustainability under the environment and social headings. However, many of these documents are now under review with changes of European, national and regional policy. This gives local partners the opportunity to raise greater awareness of sustainability issues, and start to develop local policies together. A draft Economic Strategy for Shropshire is being produced. It is important that the final document recognises and promotes the importance of sustainability in a robust approach to economic development.

Key Economy, Employment and Business ACTIONS needed for Shropshire
- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Action 7.1 Promote sustainable development by **Increasing the range and diversity of sustainable actions within Economic Development projects.**

Target 7.1 All Economic Development projects to include robust sustainable development criteria and actions by 2001

Indicator 7.1 Number of actions meeting the sustainable development criteria within Economic Development projects each year.

Action 7.2 Promote the growth of local businesses and supply chains by **Continuing to support and develop local supply chains and encouraging people to buy local services and products.**

Target 7.2 By 2001 develop and deliver clear supply chain links between agriculture, food production, tourists and consumers

Indicator 7.2 To deliver 3 projects a year in Shropshire, with partners

Action 7.3 Encourage businesses to invest in environmental good practice by **Increasing the level of support for environmental good practice in the business community.**

Target 7.3 Increase the % year on year of business support funds contributing to environmental good practice

Indicator 7.3 The % of support funds contributing to environmental good practice

Action 7.4 Increase the awareness that businesses have of their own environmental responsibilities by **Building Environmental Reviews into existing business support programmes and new business developments.**

Target 7.4 All business support programmes, by 2001 to offer the opportunity of an Environmental Review

Indicator 7.4 Number of Shropshire businesses completing an environmental audit / review, and % increase year on year

Additional Actions as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 7.5 Build upon a key feature of the area's economy by **Promoting the vitality and viability of market towns**

Target 7.5 Complete town centre improvement schemes for Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry and Shifnal by 2006

Indicator 7.5 Number of schemes completed

Action 7.6 Develop a locally-distinctive tourism industry by **Promoting sustainable tourism which respects and conserves the quality of Shropshire's environment**

Target 7.6 All tourism initiatives / projects supported by the public sector, to be given a sustainability health check

Indicator 7.6 % of projects / initiatives given a sustainability health check

8. FOOD and FARMING in Shropshire

Shropshire is one of the most agricultural counties in England. 81% of the land is in agricultural use, and 5.4% of the people are employed in agriculture, forestry or fishing, compared with 1.3% nationally.

Farm businesses and the farming community as a whole face a number of serious challenges with the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the continuing beef crisis, the difficulties facing hill farmers, and a dramatic drop in farm incomes.

Over one third of full-time farms are now involved in some form of farm diversification. The need for training in new skills, including IT and e-commerce, is an important issue. Initiatives to promote a strongly sustainable approach to land management are underway in many parts of the county, including the two Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and the Countryside Stewardship schemes.

The links between farming, food markets/retailing, and the rural landscape, need to be better understood by the public. Farmers operate in a world market and can find themselves unable to compete in price with imported produce. This is often a reflection of the UK production system demanded by consumers for environmental or welfare reasons.

As consumers, we have become used to year-round availability of produce. The National Farmers Union (NFU) is trying to educate the public on seasonal produce, with the aim of encouraging us to buy in-season foods from British producers, so supporting local growers.

Farmers Markets and alternative ways of selling locally, are expanding, and need to be encouraged. The production of local speciality foods and organic foods are expanding markets.

The issue of Genetically Modified (GM) foods could have a massive impact on farming and food production practices over the next decades.

Critical LINKS

Food and Health

The links between food and farming practices, and health have become critical in the last few decades. As food production standards and methods are increasingly dictated by the giant food retailers, intensive production methods relying on use of artificial fertilisers, other growth promoters, insecticides and herbicides continue to introduce additives to the food chain and our daily diet. The advent of GM foods could reduce personal choice over what we are actually eating even further.

Food and Transport

Food travels further and further between where it is grown and where it is eaten. The average vegetable in the UK travels 600 miles before it reaches your supermarket trolley! Rural producers only sell approximately 17% of their production direct to the public, and focus on national rather than local outlets. Food transport accounts for a considerable amount of lorry traffic on the roads - using non renewable energy, causing pollution with attendant health risks, and contributing to climate change, congestion, accidents, and environmental damage.

Farming, Landscape and Wildlife

Farming has shaped our landscapes for centuries. The quality of Shropshire's landscape is one of its greatest assets. During this century, the introduction of intensive farming practices has led to a drastic reduction in wildlife in Shropshire, and across the UK as a whole. The future of farming is critical to the future of Shropshire's landscape and

wildlife, and the maintenance of its high value environmental capital. Farmers cannot be expected to foot the bill for conservation, without support, particularly where holdings are only marginally viable. Agricultural support and the E.U.'s Common Agricultural Policy could be better targeted to conserve the county's natural resource base, in its widest sense. Reform of the CAP and Agenda 2000 should encourage this by cross-compliance within the England Rural Development Programme launched in Autumn 2000.

Farming, Recreation and Tourism

Farm tourism has become a significant part of the agricultural economy in Shropshire over the last 2 decades, as farmers diversify. Farm accommodation, eating out, speciality foods, farm shops, farm museums and visits, fishing and outdoor recreation contribute to a strong rural tourism, with wider diversification certain to come.

Positive VISIONS of the Future of Food and Farming in Shropshire

- a strong local sustainable food economy, with reduced food miles through local buying
- a strong local food identity and local food initiatives
- a reducing supply chain complexity
- an increase in organic farming
- a move towards more environmentally sustainable practices in conventional farming, reflected in European and central government funding programmes
- growth of alternative crops
- best practice in relation to Genetically Modified (GM) food issues - and their implications for health, individual rights and freedom of choice
- the spread of agriculture to the wider economy - e.g. agri-tourism

Shropshire Sustainable Food and Farming INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A number of promising sustainable initiatives are underway, including local food markets, local speciality food production, organic and/or local food production partnerships, and alternative local product development. These include Market Drayton's Taste of the Town, Bishop's Castle Real Ale and Food Week, Market Drayton's Damson Fayre, Ludlow Food and Drink Fair, W.I. Markets, Vegetable Box Schemes, Allotment Societies, Farmers Markets, Heart of England Fine Foods, Marches Quality Meat, Marches Farm Produce, Marches Alternative Protein Group, and Clun Valley Alder Charcoal Project.

Agriculture and Community Enterprise Initiative

This initiative in the Shropshire Hills is supporting projects that will help give a broader and more sustainable base to the local rural economy and will better integrate farming with environment and the wider community.

Shropshire Food and Farming POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

Whilst many of the plans and programmes in the county mention agriculture as an important industry, and highlight the need for agricultural diversification, sustainability is not seen as a key issue - except by the Shropshire Hills Advisory Plan (the AONB Strategy) and the Severn/Vyrnwy Project. The Shropshire Hills Plan includes key references to sustainable development in its approach to agriculture, diversification, landscape and wildlife conservation and management, and building conservation and development.

The Shropshire Rural Development Programme Strategy, Marches Objective 5b Programme, Marches Farm Enterprise Programme, and Shropshire Regeneration Partnership Strategy, refer only incidentally if at all, to sustainability in agriculture. However the food sector is a priority in the European Regeneration Development Programme, Advantage West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy and Rural Regeneration Zone

Key Sustainable Food and Farming ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Create a sustainable local food economy and raise awareness of food sustainability issues within Shropshire by :

Action 8.1 Increasing the local market dominance of locally produced foods

Target 8.1 Maximise market share of locally-produced foods

Indicator 8.1 Number and turnover of local food production and processing plants

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 8.2 Increase awareness of the link between food and the farmed landscape

Target 8.2 Produce agricultural landscape information leaflet by 2001

indicator 8.2 Production of leaflet

Action 8.3 Continue to support Shropshire's farm and food economy by Promoting local speciality foods

Target 8.3 Expand production and marketing of local speciality foods

Indicator 8.3 Number of "Heart of England Fine Food" members

Action 8.4 Promote sustainable farm practices by Producing a sustainability checklist for agricultural diversification projects

Target 8.4 Produce and make available by 2004

Indicator 8.4 Checklist produced

9. HEALTH and SOCIAL CARE in Shropshire

Provision of health care is undergoing big changes in the UK at the moment. Both the focus of services and the structures of delivery are being reoriented. There is increasing emphasis on community health and care for the individual in the community. A partnership approach to health care, highly targeted delivery programmes, and wide-ranging performance reviews and assessments are also characteristic of the current health service. The need to keep pace with health technology is also influencing the service .

The recently published NHS Plan requires both health and social care services to involve local people more fully in the planning of their future care. The County Council is required to assess the performance and future provision of all health related services. In the future there will be more integrated health and social care in line with patient needs. The Health Improvement Programme provides the overarching strategy for health and care in Shropshire. Its aim is to sustain good health by tackling the causes of poor health, supporting individuals and communities to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and developing appropriate health care services. The Programme will also address issues that are more particular to Shropshire, such as how to provide access to the full range of health services for people in the sparsely populated rural areas of the county.

An ageing population in Shropshire means that costs of medical health provision are growing at more than the general rate of inflation. The major issue in Shropshire is the relative under investment in Community Health Services whilst the general and acute medical services being funded at a level beyond that of inflation.

There is local concern, particularly in south east Shropshire, that despite an emphasis on local provision of services, acute hospital services continue to be centralised.

Voluntary services, such as Age Concern and the Red Cross, provide vital services to help support people at home. In particular, Shropshire Community Council has developed a major role in providing preventive services and care information points to support local people.

Critical LINKS

Health and Food

There has never been a more critical time in the link between food and health in terms of the potential impact of genetically modified foods on the future of the planet and on human health. This is one of the fundamental sustainability issues of our time. The cost if we "get it wrong", will be incalculable. The benefits, if developed and applied responsibly and in line with the principles of sustainability , could be enormous. The concern is that development of GM foods will not be along these lines; actions and statements to date do not generate confidence. This is an issue of world-wide concern, but it's also a matter for everyone in Shropshire.

Health and Pollution

Air pollution is an increasing problem nationally, principally resulting from traffic fumes. Respiratory diseases are on the increase : 20% of all children now suffer from asthma, with possible links to increasing levels of vehicle pollution. Being largely a rural county, Shropshire's air and water quality are generally good however ; it doesn't have the scale of problems the big cities have.

Health and Transport

Increasing use of the car means people are getting a lot less exercise. Exercise often has to be 'bolted on' as a special activity, rather than being an integral part of the day's ordinary tasks. Transport is a critical element in access to health care - for patient and visitor.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Health in Shropshire

Given the very substantial changes underway in the health world, a sustainable view of the future of health in Shropshire could include the following :

- Local health partnerships linking to Primary Care, Social care and other services working closely with local communities to improve health in a way that reflects local priorities.
- The provision of most health care, locally, through health centres, rather than through hospitals, which will tend to provide specialist treatment only.
- The development of electronic health and social care records which will enable information about individual records to be available to appropriate people at the touch of a button.

Shropshire Sustainable Health INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

There is a wide range of health initiatives underway in Shropshire, many tied in to national campaigns and priorities, and others reflecting local interests and needs.

Many are aimed and operate at the "individual" level. Individuals' health is obviously a critical sustainability concern, but a Local Agenda 21 Strategy is more about community health, and the local community's involvement in health issues.

Opportunities for exercise and recreation are obviously critical to any health-promotion programme.

The following are some of the more community-oriented health initiatives underway in Shropshire :

- Shropshire County Council's "Heartstart" initiative for employees, dealing with workplace smoking, management competencies, and stress relief
- Road Safety campaigns including drink driving and speeding
- "Safe Routes to School" and "TravelWise" - encouraging alternatives to the car
- Shropshire Health Promotion Service - working with individuals and a wide range of groups at local community level on ways of developing healthy lifestyles.
- Joint-use school sports facilities - supporting "Exercise on Prescription"
- County Sports Plan initiatives
- Parish welcome - walks in local areas

Shropshire Sustainable Health POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement.

Again, looking principally at community health and community involvement in programme development :

Health Improvement Programmes tend to be treatment and finance oriented : the way to get more individuals efficiently treated once they are in need of treatment. Shropshire County Council is developing a Health Strategy to look at how health can be better promoted through the every day services offered by each County Council department -

an attempt to treat health as a more holistic issue, where standards can be improved in more ways than through medical treatment i.e. a sustainable approach to the subject. "Vibrant, Safer, Healthier Communities" is one of the 4 key Strategic Aims of the Shropshire Regeneration Strategy. Its recommended actions reflect the concerns of the partners responsible for putting the programme together within the regeneration framework, but there is no specific reference to sustainability as a significant element in the approach to community health.

The following strategies and programmes have not yet been looked at in terms of sustainability, as part of the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 process:

- Primary Care Group programmes
- Healthy Alliance programmes
- Shropshire Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Smoke Free Shropshire Campaign
- Shropshire Accident Prevention Plan
- Shropshire Community Care Plan

Greater community involvement and consultation on health services should be key aspects of a sustainable approach to health, particularly in the development of health programmes and health initiatives. This has been the case country wide, with few exceptions. Although health has always been a key part of Local Agenda 21 in principle, in practice it has proved difficult to get on board compared with the more traditional sustainability concerns such as energy and transport.

Key Sustainable Health ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Action 9.1 Improve health promotion across Shropshire by **Developing and implementing the County Council's Health Strategy for all its services**

Target 9.1 April 2000

Indicator 9.1 Number of people affected by the County Council's actions to sustain or improve health

Action 9.2 Use schools as a focus for health promotion by **Developing a Shropshire Healthy Schools Scheme in partnership with schools, health and other agencies as proposed by Government**

Target 9.2 To gain accreditation for the scheme during 2000 / 2001

Indicator 9.2 Number of schools adopting the scheme

Make health advice and treatment available locally by

Action 9.3 **Developing local Healthy Living Centres**

Target 9.3 The north Shrewsbury HLC to be open from April 2000, as pilot for possible further centres

Indicator 9.3 % of expected County Council services linked into the centre

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 9.4 Providing mobile 'Healthy Living' displays to tour rural and urban communities

Target 9.4 Touring programme of "Healthy Living" displays to be developed and being implemented by 2002

Indicator 9.4 Programme developed and being implemented

Action 9.5 Enable vulnerable people to retain or improve their independence by Improving preventative support, support to carers, and rehabilitation service

Target 9.5 Implement new services under preventative grant and carers support grant and as specified in the Rehabilitation Strategy

Indicator 9.5 Number of people supported by new arrangements under these initiatives

There is a very large number of health indicators and targets already established and in use. These include the national targets from "Our Healthier Nation", which can be applied at local level ; the Performance Assessment Frameworks for Health and Social Services ; the Audit Commission Citizen Charter Performance Indicators ; and the new monitoring indicators for the Health Improvement Programme's Joint Investment Plan. The Local Agenda 21 Strategy needs to have regard to these.

10. POLLUTION in Shropshire

Pollution can affect air, water, and land, and can involve inappropriate light or noise levels. *"Pollutants can move between soil, air and water. Some are released as products are used: as car tyres wear out or as pesticides are applied. Such dispersed releases are especially important when pollutants build up in the environment, either because they accumulate in the bodies of people or animals, or in plants, or because they persist for long periods. We must not store up problems for the future...."* So warns the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development. Being a largely rural county, Shropshire's air and water quality are generally good, and levels of contaminated land, light and noise pollution are generally low. Some local areas are affected by industrial sources and major roads.

Nationally, air pollution resulting from traffic growth is increasing. Certain industries can be another major source of air pollution. In rural areas, high ozone levels which may affect human health, crops and vegetation, can be a problem.

The overall quality of Shropshire's watercourses has been steadily improving since the mid 1970s, although some watercourses are still failing to meet their quality targets. Main pressures on the quality of the water environment in Shropshire include point source and diffuse pollution from agriculture; urban development producing increased discharges of sewage effluent and higher rates of polluted urban runoff; contaminated land in parts of Shropshire; and threats from certain industrial sites.

There are 500 hectares of derelict and contaminated land in Shropshire. Besides presenting a potential pollution problem, this represents a wasted resource. Mining and other associated industries have resulted in significant problems in some areas (e.g. South Shropshire). The county was extensively used in wartime and there are a number of military sites which still require reclamation. Potentially contaminated sites include old landfill sites, former gasworks and industrial sites, some of which are located in environmentally sensitive locations, near rivers or aquifers. Local Authorities are generally responsible for identifying contaminated land and regulating its remediation, with the Environment Agency responsible for "Special Sites". Any remedial action has to take account of important archaeological or ecological features associated with the site.

Critical LINKS

Pollution is an effect rather than a commodity. Its critical linkages have been outlined above and in earlier chapters, i.e. the activities that are causing it to occur [energy use and in particular traffic and transport (see chapter 2), housing development, some mining and industrial activities, and some agricultural practices], and the effect it has on resources, including people's health.

Pollution and Wildlife

Many wildlife species depend on a limited range of environmental conditions in order to survive and thrive. Pollution can upset this delicate balance through catastrophic events such as serious river pollution incidents, and through more gradual change in conditions resulting from nutrient run-off from agricultural land, or acid deposition from air pollution. However, the harsh environmental conditions experienced on some contaminated land can provide ideal conditions for some rare species, and care should be taken to retain these species during any reclamation work.

Pollution and Landscape

Shropshire's landscape is one of its most precious resources. Pollution can reduce the value of landscapes, sometimes in the form of an obvious eyesore, but also as noise or light pollution, which can destroy the tranquillity of areas far away from the source.

Pollution and Health

Shropshire generally has low levels of pollution, but pollution of air, water or soils can have potentially serious health effects, particularly for the most vulnerable groups such as the young or the very old.

Pollution and Development

The emphasis in current policy on the development of "brownfield" sites, focuses new building on previously-used sites which may also be polluted. All new development and refurbishment of existing buildings needs to ensure that no new pollution takes place and that the legacy of old pollution is dealt with adequately.

Positive VISIONS of a Non-Polluted Shropshire

A.E. Housman wrote of Shropshire over 100 years ago - "*The pools and rivers wash so clean, The trees and clouds and air, The like on earth was never seen, And oh that I were there.*" * The vision is to achieve that quality again for Shropshire, with clean, unspoilt countryside and towns, and good quality air, rivers and water supplies.

Shropshire Pollution Initiatives and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Car Use Leaflet - Bishops Castle

Bishops Castle Friends of the Earth group produced and distributed a leaflet recognising the benefits of car transport in rural areas but drawing attention to effective ways in which car journeys could be reduced - both in number and in length, and so cut pollution.

Shropshire Pollution POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

There are 3 elements to pollution control - pollution prevention; pollution monitoring; and enforcement / legislation against pollution.

Responsibilities for pollution control are split between Local Authorities and the Environment Agency but many other organisations and individuals can influence pollution by their own actions. Pollution prevention is far better than cure, and is the key to success of all policies and programmes.

Policies for land reclamation are well-developed in Structure and Local Plans. They give regard to existing qualities of a site, and to after-uses appropriate to the area. (Structure Plan)

Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) - Middle Severn, Severn Uplands, Teme, (and small areas of the Dee and Weaver/ Dane) - include a 5-year action programme to resolve a range of pollution problems and other issues.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) identifies Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, which include policies to reduce nitrate pollution, in specified areas. These are mostly restricted to parts of east Shropshire.

MAFF contract the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS), to assist farmers to carry out their own Farm Waste Management Plans in selected catchments (on the basis of actual or potential impacts on water quality). The Environment Agency encourages the concept of FWMPs on every livestock farm.

Unitary authorities and District Councils are responsible for producing Local Air Quality Strategies and Air Quality Management Action Plans to meet national targets.

Key ACTIONS on Pollution needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Action 10.1 Work towards improving air quality in Shropshire by **Developing a Local Air Quality Strategy and Air Quality Management Action Plans**

Target 10.1 Complete Strategy and Management Action Plans by the year 2001. Meet National Air Quality Strategy targets by 2005

Indicator 10.1 Stages completed

Action 10.2 Remove the pollution potential of derelict and/or contaminated land in Shropshire by **Identifying, classifying, and where appropriate, treating contaminated land**

Target 10.2 (1) Identifying and classifying such land by 2001

(2) Treatment timetabled in accordance with local authority reclamation/remediation programmes

Indicator 10.2 (1) % of such land identified and classified

(2) Stages of programme completed

Action 10.3 Improve the quality of Shropshire's rivers by **Investigating water quality target failures, and achieving River Ecosystem (RE) targets in Shropshire rivers**

Target 10.3 Achieve the River Ecosystem (RE) targets identified in the LEAPs for the Morda at Oswestry, Perry at Gobowen, Cound Brook, Quinney Brook at Church Stretton, Minsterley Brook, Stoke Brook at Stoke Heath, and Tern at Market Drayton

Indicator 10.3 % of Shropshire's river stretches complying with their RE targets

* Quotation from A. E. Housman's "A Shropshire Lad", by kind permission of the Society of Authors, as the literary representative of the Estate of A. E. Housman

11. DEVELOPMENT in Shropshire

This chapter is a synthesis of many of the subjects in the preceding chapters. It is concerned with the key relationships between land uses, (in particular housing, and economic development uses) and transport, and their call on other facilities and resources. As such, it has an absolutely critical role to play in any move towards sustainability.

Just moving out from the wings and on to centre stage, e-commerce and IT are likely to have a fundamental impact on aspects of development and transport from now on. Appreciation of this potential needs to be built in to any long term analysis and planning.

Critical LINKS

Development is about changes in land uses, and the key links between those uses. Plans such as Structure Plans, Unitary Plans, and Local Plans provide a framework for development proposals, and help make sense of these links. (Other Chapters give details of these key links).

Positive VISIONS for the future of Development in Shropshire

- Shrewsbury and the market towns functioning as vibrant centres for main services and employment
- Development patterns allowing people maximum access to services whilst minimising travel
- Villages with good accessibility, services and facilities, supported by new development
- Sustainable communities offering a range and choice of housing and employment sites, in which homes and jobs are broadly in balance
- Mixed use areas, improving accessibility and reducing the need to travel
- Maximum use of previously developed land and existing buildings
- Development that makes a positive contribution to the environment and local distinctiveness, and which through its design and use of materials achieves maximum energy efficiency and minimises water use
- Network of open space in towns, protected from development, maintaining the character of an area, and providing links with urban fringe countryside

Shropshire Sustainable Development INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A significant number of Shropshire communities have been involved in considering the futures of their own settlements through a range of more or less formal means. Examples include Village Appraisals at Albrighton, Craven Arms, Clun and Cardington ; "Planning for Real" at Bishop's Castle ; and Village Design Statements at Clun, Hinstock, and Wistanstow.

Bishop's Castle into the Future

A large scale "Planning for Real" community consultation has been very successful in getting local people to express their opinions about their town and environment. This was a "Rural Action" funded partnership between South Shropshire District Council and Shropshire County Council. Issues thrown up are gradually being tackled by the community, including recycling, energy-saving projects, sustainable development, and landscape conservation.

Shropshire Sustainable Development POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

The “*Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Structure Plan Review*” has a fundamental responsibility in the move towards sustainable development. This is recognised in principle right at the start of the Draft Explanatory Memorandum.

At the heart of the Structure Plan are 4 principles of sustainable development : seeking to sustain global resources, improve quality of life, achieve sustainable patterns of development, and foster a prosperous economy within a pattern of sustainable development.

Its key strategy focuses on locating most new development in the towns and larger villages, providing more accessible homes, jobs, services and facilities for all sectors of the community, and improving accessibility from rural areas by public transport.

Regeneration of market towns is a vital part of the sustainable development strategy.

Housing and employment growth will be allocated to reduce the need to commute.

It sees telecommunications as a significant means of reducing the need to travel in rural areas, increasing accessibility to job choice and economic diversification and reducing social exclusion.

It sees *quality* of development as having a critical role to play in future development and recognises the importance of the West Midlands Green Belt in Bridgnorth District in benefiting urban regeneration in the West Midlands conurbation and Telford.

In addressing the “greenfield / brownfield development” debate, the Structure Plan recognises that outside Telford and Shrewsbury, there are very few brownfield sites in Shropshire. And that for a number of valid, sustainable reasons, brownfield site development might not always be the best bet. However, it is committed to using brownfield sites where appropriate, bringing derelict land into good use, and protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land.

It sees rural development as being limited to that necessary to sustain local services, support sustainable communities and secure regeneration of the rural economy.

It recognises the critical links between transport and development, the importance of existing transport corridors in locating development in sustainable locations, and sees Telford and Shrewsbury as the key centres for growth, while directing appropriate levels of development to the market towns to secure their individual roles as service and employment centres for the rural areas and to enhance their vitality and viability.

The Structure Plan recognises that new development *will* have a sustainability cost - environmental capacity studies and traffic implications of development help identify best locations for development, but additional road traffic, and loss of good quality agricultural land, and green wedges are amongst the likely costs of continuing growth.

One of the crucial conundrums of the sustainable development programme is how to translate the admirable principles lined up at the front of the Structure Plan, into everyday working practice ; to get sustainable development from rhetoric to actual behaviour, and to make sure that the targets will really make a difference if they are achieved. To date, too much is lost between excellent sentiments that cost very little, and the realities of new development, that has supposedly had the benefits of sustainable development thinking at its conception.

The Shropshire Local Transport Plan has substantial implications for sustainable development, and is reviewed in Chapter 2 of this draft Strategy.

The following strategies, plans and programmes have not yet been looked at in sustainability terms as part of the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 process:

- District Local Plans (which have equally important responsibilities for encouraging moves towards sustainable development)
- Rural Development Strategy
- Objective 5b Single Programming Document
- The 9 Shropshire Market Towns Enhancement Projects

Key Sustainable Development ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Action 11.1 Encourage development that doesn't involve new "greenfield" sites, by **Monitoring development on "brownfield" sites and use of existing buildings**

Target 11.1 40% of new housing on brownfield sites

Indicator 11.1 % of new housing on brownfield sites

Action 11.2 Ensure towns and town centres remain the key focus for services, employment and development in Shropshire by **Fostering the vitality of all town centres**

Target 11.2 All major appropriate development to be located in town centres or edge-of-centre sites

Indicator 11.2 % of appropriate development in town centre or edge-of-centre sites, as opposed to sites elsewhere

Action 11.3 Reduce the environmental impact of new development by **Encouraging new development and refurbishments to adopt best sustainability practice in siting, design, use of materials, etc. and maximising environmental efficiency***

Target 11.3 Produce a Sustainable Design Guide by 2002.

Indicator 11.3 *Production of Guide.*

Former Action 11.4 transferred to Housing Chapter (12)

Additional Action as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 11.4 Increase local ownership of local planning by **Encouraging the production of local design statements by local communities**

Target 11.4 20 communities to have produced local design statements by 2005

Indicator 11.4 Number of communities with a locally-produced design statement

* modified as a result of Public Consultation

12. HOUSING in Shropshire

Shropshire has a wide range of traditional and new houses in attractive towns and villages, but there is a lack of low cost housing to meet local needs. Young people are often unable to form new households, or have to leave Shropshire in order to do so. The issue of affordable housing in rural areas is particularly acute. The attractive appearance of Shropshire's towns and villages sometimes masks widespread and unexpected levels of social and economic isolation, hardship and poor housing condition. In considering sustainability, environmental criteria need to be balanced with social and economic criteria, in rural as well as urban areas.

An appropriate range of affordable housing and associated services is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development. The expected growth of housing provision during the next 20 years - as described in the Structure and Unitary Plans, and detailed in the Local and Unitary Plans - needs to be handled in a way which minimises impact on the environment (see Chapter 11), and maintains a balance of accommodation in appropriate locations, for all groups at local level.

Housing is responsible for almost a third of the UK's climate change emissions. Little is being done to make new housing more sustainable - houses built today will still be damaging the environment in 50 years time unless money is spent on upgrading them. But the cost of building houses that drastically cut climate change emissions and water use, is little different than the cost of a conventional house. Show homes across the country could do a great deal to convince homeowners and the development industry that sustainable housing is practicable, affordable and attractive.

Critical LINKS

Housing and Energy

Energy-conscious new housing design and siting, together with improvements to existing housing, could make a massive contribution to energy-saving in this country (see above), and be far cheaper for people to run.

Housing, Transport and Development

The most sustainable housing, is within easy reach (on foot if possible), of work, shops, and schools, and is well-served by public transport. The relationship between housing and transport is a crucial one, and a fundamental issue in development planning. (See chapters 2 and 11)

Housing, Social Inclusion and Community Safety

Adequate, affordable housing is a basic need and a right in a civilised society. But at the turn of the Millennium, not everyone in this country, or in Shropshire, enjoys this right. Housing is a big issue in the drive for social inclusion and community safety.

Positive VISIONS for the future of housing in Shropshire

- Adequate, affordable, attractive housing for all households, with a mix of tenure options
- Mixed-use development with employment, education and shopping opportunities and green space nearby.
- Zero-Energy (housing) Development [ZED], with energy from renewable sources.
- Recycled "grey" water to cut mains use.

- Designs for new housing and conversions in tune with the best of Shropshire's building traditions, including the new and exciting where appropriate, and promoting Shropshire's distinctiveness.
- Widely available support to help people live in their own homes

Shropshire Sustainable Housing INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ludlow Foyer Project

South Shropshire Housing Association in partnership with local organisations has converted a former Victorian grain mill in the centre of Ludlow to provide affordable accommodation linked to training and employment opportunities for local 16 - 25 year olds. It will include an IT suite, training and conference rooms, a cyber cafe, and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Shropshire Housing POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

The Joint Structure Plan Review Draft has to provide for the accommodation of 48,000 dwellings between 1991 and 2011 in accordance with the Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands issued by the Government in April 1998. The strategy to accommodate this new development emphasises the principles of using the present building stock to the full, to reduce demands for materials, and expects new developments to adopt energy-efficient layouts and high standards of insulation. The means of achieving these worthy aims are not detailed.

The Draft identifies 2 types of affordable housing: low cost market housing, and social housing (subsidised housing, rented from or part-owned with a managing body such as a Housing Association). A commitment is made to "play a reasonable and realistic role to meet social housing needs arising outside the area", in addition to meeting the area's own needs.

The following plans and programmes have not yet been looked at in sustainability terms as part of the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 process:

District Local Plans

Rural Development Programme Strategy

Housing Investment Plans - to be covered by single County Housing Strategy (SHOG)

Shropshire Housing and Community Care Plan

Key Sustainable Housing ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

See Actions 11.1 and 11.3 in the Development Chapter, as well as :

Action 12.1 Increase the amount of affordable, sustainable housing in Shropshire by **Making the case for continuing levels of funding from the Housing Corporation, and linking bids to the issue of sustainability**

Target 12.1 Build 200 new social housing units by 2005

Indicator 12.1 Number of new social housing units by 2005

Action 12.2 Encourage / enable people to remain in their own homes by **Developing additional "housing with support" schemes, and expanding community alarms**

Target 12.2 (1) Three new "housing with support" schemes during 2000

(2) Increase take-up of community alarms by 5%

Indicator 12.2 (1) Number of units in new housing with support" schemes

(2) (Increase in) number of community alarms

Action 12.3 Use all potential housing resources to the full by **Making good use of existing / redundant buildings for conversion to housing, in accordance with planning policies.**

Target 12.3 Identify all unfit stock in private and public sector, and create new housing units via conversion

Indicator 12.3 (Reduction in) number of unfit housing units, and (increase in) number of new housing units created via conversion

'New' Action 12.4 transferred from Development Chapter (11) :

Action 12.4 Meet "social housing" need in Shropshire by **Including realistic provision in targets for affordable housing**

Target 12.4 To meet local affordable housing need

Indicator 12.4 Number of affordable housing units built, and % of need satisfied

13. SOCIAL INCLUSION and COMMUNITY SAFETY in Shropshire

Social Inclusion

Social exclusion can be a result of geography, low income, low educational attainment, lack of training and /or employment opportunity, age, race, sex, physical ability, health or other factors.

Shropshire has a relatively low-wage economy, in which the proportion of population that is economically active is in decline, and which is ageing rapidly. There is a lack of affordable housing for local people in town and country, and problems of access and delivering services for dispersed communities in such a rural county as Shropshire, can be considerable. On the positive side however, community identity is strong in many parts of the county, and locally-generated action and initiatives are common, particularly in some of the more rural areas. A sense of identity, and commitment to community are crucial keys in overcoming social exclusion, and in promoting sustainability.

The Government's commitment to building sustainable communities is high on its agenda, and a key part of its concern is to foster and encourage social inclusion, by whatever means. This is picked up by many of the public service organisations in Shropshire, and highlighted in the Regeneration Strategy published by the Shropshire Regeneration Partnership. Shropshire County Council is working on a Strategy for Social Inclusion, through the Social Services department.

It is dealt with in this Local Agenda 21 Strategy not in detail, but with the recognition of its importance for sustainable development in Shropshire, and with the emphasis on community rather than individual aspects.

Local democracy and community involvement in local policymaking and practical implementation are a key part of the broad issue of social inclusion.

Recreation can be helpful in overcoming social exclusion. The availability, accessibility, and appropriateness of recreational facilities are key aspects of successful provision..

The lack of leisure and social facilities for teenagers can be a problem, particularly in the smaller towns and rural areas.

Community Safety

Shropshire has one of the lowest crime rates in the country, but the fear of crime far exceeds residents' experience of it. This fear can unnecessarily restrict peoples' activities, particularly with elderly people. Rates of crime and fear of crime are growing nationally.

Fear of crime and fear of harassment also feature significantly in the lives of many in the various minority ethnic groups in Shropshire.

There is a great deal of crime prevention work going on in the county, encouraged by the Crime and Disorder Act, promoting partnership working between the police, local authorities and local groups and organisations, to produce and implement crime reduction strategies.

There is also an extensive programme being pursued by the Drug Action Team and others to improve health and help reduce the harm caused by drugs.

Critical LINKS

Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Transport
Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Education
Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Economic Development
Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Health
Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Development
Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Housing

Information on these critical links will be included when the County Council's Strategy for Social Inclusion is formulated and the Community Safety Strategy is completed.

Positive VISIONS for the Future of Social Inclusion and Community Safety in Shropshire

- A high proportion of school leavers have high educational attainment levels
- The number of people living in poverty is lower than the national average
- Shropshire is the safest county in the country
- Local communities live in harmony and enjoy a strong community spirit

Shropshire Social Inclusion and Community Safety INITIATIVES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ask Young People

A pilot project set up in South Shropshire, surveying 1,000 young people between the age of 16 to 21 to find out what their job opportunity and needs are. The survey will use "participatory rural appraisal" techniques, and interviewees will then be directly involved in the analysis and follow-up action work.

Volunteer Bureaux

Local volunteer bureaux have recently been opened in each District to help local communities recruit and train volunteers, provide administrative resources for small groups of volunteers, and provide funding advice and general information about voluntary activity.

Racial Justice for the Millennium

A multi-agency working group is producing a pack to raise cultural awareness, together with a pack to help victims of racial incidents. To be launched April 2000.

Safer Schools

Safer schools is an accredited partnership scheme involving pupils, teachers, governors, caretakers, parents and local residents working together on a safety audit for their school, and developing solutions to problems identified. It is supported by Shropshire County Council and West Mercia police.

Shropshire Social Inclusion and Community Safety POLICIES and PROGRAMMES

- the degree to which key policies and programmes take account of sustainability, and the scope for stronger contributions to sustainable development, and local community involvement

Social Inclusion

Plans and programmes with a strong element of community regeneration, and with social inclusion as a high priority, include Local Action Plans, the Rural Development Programme Strategy, Leader II Business Plans, Local Authority Economic Development Statements, the Community Council Work Programme, and the Objective 5b Single Programming Document.

None of the above have yet been looked at in terms of actual sustainability performance, as part of the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 process.

The Anti-Poverty Strategy is specifically focused on poverty reduction and social inclusion, and work is underway on the development of a County Council Strategy for Social Inclusion.

Community Safety

The 5 Community Safety Partnerships in Shropshire have each published a Community Safety Strategy following an audit of their area (April 1999). Each of these is now to be implemented over the next 3 years. The Partnerships include local specialists.

The West Mercia Police Crime and Disorder Strategy aims to serve the public through partnership with local communities. It promotes more responsive, targeted policing based on local community safety and crime prevention partnerships.

Key Sustainable Social Inclusion and Community Safety ACTIONS needed for Shropshire

- continuation of existing sustainable elements and introduction of new, including key areas that need influencing

Social Inclusion

The following actions correspond with the 5 key issues identified by Social Services to be addressed through a County Council strategy for social inclusion :

Action 13.1 Act to reduce Health Inequality by the Primary Care Group setting local targets for health improvement

Target 13.1 As set each year by each Primary Care Group

Indicator 13.1 (1) % of PCG setting local targets
(2) % of local targets being met

Action 13.2 Act to overcome Child and Family Poverty by Improving data on poverty, and using it to influence the targeting of resources through initiatives such as improving parenting skills, improving opportunities for work

Target 13.2 (1) Increase in employers with family-friendly policies
(2) Increase in number of parents attending parenting skills initiatives

Indicator 13.2 Number of children / number of families coming out of poverty

Action 13.3 Act to increase resources in Multi-deprived Localities by **Agreeing a small number of target localities and resourcing agreed local plans of action**

Target 13.3 Year on year development of targets

Indicator 13.3 (1) Number of localities targeted

(2) Number of agreed local plans of action

(3) Increase in resources going to multi-deprived localities, resulting from this initiative

Action 13.4 Act to reduce Rural Exclusion by **Taking services out to rurally isolated individuals and groups, as well as improving access to transport**

Target 13.4 (1) Increase in use of public transport in rural areas

(2) Maintain current levels of service provision in rural areas

Indicator 13.4 (1) Usage figures

(2) Levels of activity by Social Services and others at District level

Action 13.5 Act to improve number and range of jobs available, particularly to the chronically unemployed, by **Developing the "intermediate labour market" to complement Welfare to Work proposals**

Target 13.5 Increase number of schemes and number of jobs created

Indicator 13.5 Number of unemployed gaining permanent employment through this means.

Additional Actions as a Result of Public Consultation

Action 13.6 Encourage action that strengthens local community networks and has direct personal benefits by **Promoting LETS (Local Exchange and Trading Schemes) throughout Shropshire**

Target 13.6 To increase membership of LETS schemes throughout Shropshire by 10% by 2002

Indicator 13.6 % increase in membership

Action 13.7 **Develop an action plan to build links with minority groups in Shropshire in partnership with other organisations.**

Target 13.7 Produce an action plan by 2001

Indicator 13.7 Production of an action plan

Community Safety

The 5 Community Safety Strategies each includes an action programme for its area. The following actions are highlighted here as particularly appropriate to Local Agenda 21.

Action 13.8 Help overcome the fear of crime by **Promoting positive reporting of "Good News" messages, and using statistical evidence to reduce the fear of crime**

Target 13.8 Reduce the fear of crime by 5%

Indicator 13.8 Crime audits and reviews

Action 13.9 Involve young people in problem-solving approaches to crime and community safety by **A series of initiatives, including creating youth councils, developing mentoring projects, improving information for young people.**

Target 13.9 12 projects throughout the county

Indicator 13.9 Number and extent of youth-involved initiatives underway

Action 13.10 Help reduce bullying in schools by **Developing and distributing an anti-bullying video made with young people, for use in secondary schools**

Target 13.10 Video to be produced by end 2000, and made available to all secondary schools in Shropshire

Indicator 13.10 (1) % of Shropshire secondary schools having screened the video
(2) *Increased reporting leading to evidence of reduced bullying in individual schools*

Action 13.11 Help to reduce violence in the community by **Developing an anti-violence project, with a local network of facilitators**

Target 13.11 Pilot scheme under development by Christmas 1999

Indicator 13.11 (1) Number of facilitators in the network
(2) Number of people benefiting from the workshops

INVOLVING THE WIDER COMMUNITY

1. INTRODUCTION

The first draft of "*Sustainable Shropshire*" was produced before consulting and involving the wider community, for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, it was thought important to look at what was already happening, from a sustainable development perspective, to see how well such existing elements might contribute to a Local Agenda 21 Strategy.

Secondly, given Tony Blair's completion deadline of the year 2000, it was thought more efficient to go out to local communities with the basis of a first draft strategy, and get responses to that, rather than to go out cold.

Thirdly, a whole series of public consultation exercises had recently been carried out by Shropshire County Council and others, leading to the danger of consultation fatigue - "Not another questionnaire.....!" It was thought useful to work up a draft to help make clear to people that this was a different kind of consultation.

The need for a very strong contribution to the Local Agenda 21 process by communities of all kinds is fully acknowledged by the County Council.

2. A POPULAR VERSION OF THE STRATEGY

This main report has been written as a reasonably full technical document. It has been used as the basis of technical consultations, but is not so appropriate for people or organisations with a much more general interest in the subject. A shorter, more popular version of the report was drawn up for consultation, focusing on the main actions, preceded by a 2-page introduction. Responses have been received both to the summary and to the main report.

3. CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT STRATEGY

1. Approach

A wide programme of public consultation on the draft strategy has been undertaken. The County Council has been careful to avoid overlap with other consultation exercises where this might be confusing, and has attempted to get in touch with the more 'difficult to reach' groups to receive their views.

The consultation process has had a number of strands :

- an analysis of responses to recent and on-going consultation exercises with particular relevance to Local Agenda 21 - such as the Local Transport Plan
- setting up Focus Groups for subjects where little information has been available, or where stakeholder groups are poorly developed
- consultation with disabled people through the Shropshire Disability Consortium's 'Feedback' project

- questions to the Shropshire Peoples Panel and analysis of responses to relevant questions submitted to the Panel by other organisations
- public meetings with local communities and other interest groups
- distribution of around 1500 copies of the Summary Strategy, and 300 copies of the full Strategy to individuals and organisations at local, regional, and national level

2. Responses

The public response to the first draft of Shropshire's Local Agenda 21 Strategy shows very considerable support for the way in which the document has 'got to grips with such a complex and wide-ranging subject', presenting it in an 'accessible and meaningful way' - particularly so in the Summary document.

A great deal of faith is shown in the County Council's ability to deliver a significant part of the Action programme. It is significant not only for the Local Agenda 21 programme, but in how the County Council approaches the development of its new Community Strategy, and how it proposes to deal with the delivery of sustainability through all the policies, plans and programmes over which it has influence.

A detailed review of consultation responses has been prepared and is available from the County Council.

3. Taking Responses on Board

As a result of this first stage consultation, 17 new actions have been taken on board the Action Programme, and 3 proposed actions have been substantially modified.

In addition, suggested changes to correct minor factual errors, give updates of progress, add further examples of good practice, and contribute further to the debate on sustainability and how to get there, have been taken on board, and the full Strategy document modified accordingly.

There are no fundamental changes to the Strategy, but it has evolved further and has a wider relevance as a result of consultation.

4. THE NEXT STAGE

This next stage is absolutely critical to the life of Local Agenda 21, and the promotion of sustainability in Shropshire. It is also critical in holding on to the good faith that has been generated through this process.

It is about ensuring at the very least, that the 77 Actions in the Action programme are put into practice, and that this is achieved in a way that involves local communities. The County Council has neither the powers, the skills, nor the resources to carry out all the proposed actions - nor is it appropriate that they should ! It is therefore important that organisations responsible for achieving each action are identified, with a timescale indicated. And this will be done, again via consultation, over the next few months, and the programme published.

Many of the individual actions are underway, but the sustainability programme needs to be promoted and rolled out as a whole, and the implications for other work areas kept constantly in view for Local Agenda 21 to be and to be seen to be effective.

Many of the respondents to the first draft exhorted the County Council to go further and wider in sustainable action commitments. But sustainable behaviour is a shared commitment and responsibility. A significant part of the next stage of Shropshire's Local Agenda 21 process will be to identify each consultee's potential contribution, together with ways of progressing Local Agenda 21 specifically within the local community - making clear how everyone can contribute and get involved.

The importance of developing a good dialogue with communities and the public over the next months and years cannot be over-emphasised. This Strategy is very much a start. Work on Local Agenda 21 is much more about developing a way of doing things, with a continuing stream of outcomes, than about a single finite product. It's also important to keep tying in to other structures and consultations in a way that is meaningful to Local Agenda 21 and sustainability issues.

THE PROGRAMME

Putting the *Local Agenda 21 Strategy* into practice involves a

PROGRAMME of 7 Key Elements

1. Making sure the **77 KEY SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS** identified in this Strategy Report are put into practice, and the targets and deadlines met.
2. Bringing **LOCAL COMMUNITIES** and the general public on board through a strong and ongoing programme to influence the way the Shropshire Local Agenda 21 Strategy is developing and to build sustainable ways of doing things into local action.
3. Making arrangements to see that sustainability considerations are built in to all key **POLICIES, PLANS, and PROGRAMMES** currently guiding change in the county.
4. Strengthening the **INTERNAL STRUCTURES and PRACTICES** within Shropshire County Council, to help deliver sustainable development.
5. Finding ways of promoting sustainable development in the work of **OTHER ORGANISATIONS and PARTNERSHIPS.**
6. Setting up a **MONITORING SYSTEM** to check on progress towards sustainable actions, and sustainable ways of working, in areas 1 - 5 listed above.
7. Making sure there is **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** both in the sustainability standards being set, and in performances to meet those standards.

It is the responsibility of everyone concerned with the future of Shropshire, to see that sustainability lies at the heart of the way we do things.

APPENDIX 1.

SUMMARY of the *SUSTAINABLE ACTION PROGRAMME* for SHROPSHIRE

1. ENERGY

Action 1.1

- Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy use in Shropshire by **Producing a Shropshire Energy Strategy**

Action 1.2

- Cut down energy use by **Improving the energy efficiency of the County Council's building stock**

Action 1.3

- Cut down energy use by **Promoting the development of super energy-efficient housing and business premises in Shropshire**

Action 1.4

- Cut down energy use by **Improving the promotion and availability of energy-saving products**

Action 1.5

- Increase the proportion of energy produced by renewable means by **Promoting installation of solar thermal energy water heating in new and existing properties**

Action 1.6

- Increase the proportion of energy produced by renewable means by **Establishing a 100% renewable energy community in Shropshire**

2. TRANSPORT

Action 2.1

- Make it easier to travel by bus, by **Developing a new Public Transport Information System for Shropshire**

Action 2.2

- Make it easier and more attractive to travel by rail, by **Developing Rail Passenger Partnership funding bids (and implementing if successful), for the Shrewsbury/Chester and Shrewsbury/Wolverhampton lines**

Action 2.3

- Make it easier to travel by bus and rail by **Improving the co-ordination of bus/rail services and information**

Action 2.4

- Get more people cycling, by **Developing and implementing existing and new Cycle Network Action Plans throughout Shropshire**

Action 2.5

- Make residential streets safer, by **Developing a pilot Home Zone in Wem and extending to other areas**

Action 2.6

- Reduce children's dependency on car travel, by **Setting up a countywide programme of Safe Routes to Schools projects at identified priority schools / areas**

Action 2.7

- Promote the use of telecommunications by **Exploring potential public/private partnerships to make new affordable high-speed telecommunications technologies available to all businesses and citizens within Shropshire**

3. LIFELONG LEARNING

Help schools to be more active on environment and sustainability, by:

Action 3.1

- **Giving all schools a model policy for Environmental Education and Sustainability**

Action 3.2

- **Promoting the Eco schools initiative and the Shropshire introductory award**

Action 3.3

- **Disseminating good practice in environmental education and education for sustainable development, and promoting sources of external funding for schools, to support the development of the school environment**

Action 3.4

- **Encouraging all schools to appoint a Governor with specific responsibility for promoting education for sustainable development, and improved environmental performance by the school**

Promote lifelong learning in Shropshire by :

Action 3.5

- **Increasing access to lifelong learning opportunities in Shropshire**

Action 3.6

- **The County Council leading on the production of a Cultural Strategy for Shropshire**

Action 3.7

- **Providing the Shropshire element of the National Peoples Network (an initiative to connect all libraries in the UK, for free public Internet access)**

4. WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY

Protect the county's valuable wildlife sites more strongly by :

Action 4.1

- **Revising and extending the community-based Site Alert system for environmental protection and enhancement, piloted in the Oswestry Uplands, and using it to inform all County Council policy and decision making**

Action 4.2

- **Acting upon the key issues identified in the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan, relating to sites, habitats and species of conservation concern**

Action 4.3

- Better protect and manage the most important wildlife sites by **Producing Integrated Management Plans for the most important wildlife sites e.g. Meres and Mosses, and the Severn / Vrynwy Confluence**

Action 4.4

- Reverse the decline in wildlife value of agricultural land by **Working with farmers to ensure that Shropshire is well positioned to influence and take advantage of CAP reforms and new agri-environment initiatives**

Action 4.5

- Promote wildlife on public land such as parks and school grounds by **Developing a programme of wildlife enhancement on public land, without compromising its main use**

Action 4.6

- Bring wildlife closer to people by **Action to promote doorstep biodiversity and accessible natural greenscape**

5. LANDSCAPE AND BUILDINGS

Action 5.1

- Better protect Shropshire's landscape from inappropriate development, by **Completing the current county-wide Landscape Character Assessment exercise, and the Supplementary Planning Guidance derived from it.**

Action 5.2

- Help look after Shropshire's trees and woodlands better, by **Publishing guidance on Care of Veteran Trees, Management of Hedgerows, and Planting New Woodlands.**

Action 5.3

- Give guidance on the proper management of Shropshire's landscape, by **Preparing Landscape Management Plans for those areas of the county outside the AONB**

Action 5.4

- Help get new conservation and sustainable development projects going, by **Securing new funding for projects, in particular**

- (1) **Protecting the north Shropshire Meres and Mosses**
- (2) **Managing and enhancing the Montgomery Canal**
- (3) **Developing new farm, woodland and craft products**

Action 5.5

- Make sure property owners and managers are aware of the nature, significance, and protection needs of the landscapes and buildings for which they are responsible, by **Preparing and implementing a development plan for Shropshire's Environmental Records, including disseminating information to property owners and managers**

Action 5.6

- Help conserve Shropshire's history and archaeology by **Securing funds to promote and enhance understanding of historic sites, buildings and landscapes**

6. WATER, MINERALS AND WASTE

WATER

Action 6.1

- Reduce per capita water consumption in Shropshire, by **Educating the public and businesses about water-saving measures**

Action 6.2

- Improve availability of water for summer irrigation to meet farmers needs, by **Encouraging winter abstraction and storage of water, e.g. in the Rivers Worfe, Perry and Cound**

Action 6.3

- Conserve vulnerable wetland and river habitats, by **Reducing groundwater abstraction from sensitive areas, and investigating short-term options to restore flows to affected river reaches**

MINERALS

Action 6.4

- Reduce the amount of aggregate quarried, by **Maximising the use of secondary rather than primary aggregate materials**

Action 6.5

- Improve operating arrangements and standards of restoration where possible, by **Reviewing and updating old mineral working permissions in Shropshire in accordance with modern environmental standards, and the requirements of the Environment Act 1995**

WASTE

Action 6.6

- Work towards the minimisation of household waste arising, by **Influencing public behaviour through :**
 - (1) **Involving the public in drawing up a strategy and a programme of action**
 - (2) **Researching the best way to encourage participation in any scheme - such as new methods of collection**
 - (3) **Developing a communication strategy with the public**

Action 6.7

- Make the best use of waste produced in Shropshire by
 - (1) **Materials recycling and composting of green waste**
 - (2) **Kerbside collection of organic wastes**
 - (3) **Using bring banks, dedicated skips, and civic amenity sites to further promote recycling**
 - (4) **Developing an energy from waste facility to recover energy from materials which cannot be recycled (i.e. the key phases of the Shropshire Joint Strategy Framework for household waste management)**

Action 6.8

- Improve the economics of recycling by **Raising awareness of the availability of recycled products, and promoting recycling markets**

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

Action 7.1

- Promote sustainable development by **Increasing the range and diversity of sustainable actions within Economic Development projects.**

Action 7.2

- Promote the growth of local businesses and supply chains by **Continuing to support and develop local supply chains and encouraging people to buy local services and products.**

Action 7.3

- Encourage businesses to invest in environmental good practice by **Increasing the level of support for environmental good practice in the business community.**

Action 7.4

- Increase the awareness that businesses have of their own environmental responsibilities by **Building Environmental Reviews into existing business support programmes and new business developments.**

Action 7.5

- Build upon a key feature of the area's economy by **Promoting the vitality and viability of market towns**

Action 7.6

- Develop a locally-distinctive tourism industry by **Promoting sustainable tourism which respects and conserves the quality of Shropshire's environment**

8. FOOD AND FARMING

Create a sustainable local food economy and raise awareness of food sustainability issues within Shropshire by :

Action 8.1

- **Increasing the local market dominance of locally produced foods**

Action 8.2

- **Increasing awareness of the links between food and the farmed landscape**

Action 8.3

- **Continue to support Shropshire's farm and food economy by Promoting local speciality foods**

Action 8.4

- **Promote sustainable farm practices by Producing a sustainability checklist for agricultural diversification projects**

9. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Action 9.1

- Improve health promotion across Shropshire by **Developing and implementing the County Council's Health Strategy for all its services**

Action 9.2

- Use schools as a focus for health promotion by **Developing a Shropshire Healthy Schools Scheme in partnership with schools, health and other agencies as proposed by Government**

Make health advice and treatment available locally by

Action 9.3

- **Developing local Healthy Living Centres**

Action 9.4

- **Providing mobile 'Healthy Living' displays to tour rural and urban communities**

Action 9.5

- Enable vulnerable people to retain or improve their independence by **Improving preventative support, support to carers, and rehabilitation service**

10. POLLUTION

Action 10.1

- Work towards improving air quality in Shropshire by **Developing a Local Air Quality Strategy and Air Quality Management Action Plans**

Action 10.2

- Remove the pollution potential of derelict and/or contaminated land in Shropshire by **Identifying, classifying, and where appropriate, treating contaminated land**

Action 10.3

- Improve the quality of Shropshire's rivers by **Investigating water quality target failures, and achieving River Ecosystem (RE) targets in Shropshire rivers**

11. DEVELOPMENT

Action 11.1

- Encourage development that doesn't involve new "greenfield" sites, by **Monitoring development on "brownfield" sites and use of existing buildings**

Action 11.2

- Ensure towns and town centres remain the key focus for services, employment and development in Shropshire by **Fostering the vitality of all town centres**

Action 11.3

- Reduce the environmental impact of new development by **Encouraging new development and refurbishments to adopt best sustainability practice in siting, design, use of materials, and maximising environmental efficiency**

Action 11.4

- Increase local ownership of local planning by **Encouraging the production of local design statements by local communities**

12. HOUSING

See Actions 11.1 and 11.3 in the Development Chapter, as well as :

Action 12.1

Increase the amount of affordable, sustainable housing in Shropshire by **Making the case for continuing levels of funding from the Housing Corporation, and linking bids to the issue of sustainability**

Action 12.2

- Encourage / enable people to remain in their own homes by **Developing additional “housing with support” schemes, and expanding community alarms**

Action 12.3

- Use all potential housing resources to the full by **Making good use of existing / redundant buildings for conversion to housing**

Action 12.4

- Meet “social housing” need in Shropshire by **Including realistic provision in housing targets for affordable housing**

13. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Action 13.1

- Act to reduce Health Inequality by the **Primary Care Group setting local targets for health improvement**

Action 13.2

- Act to overcome Child and Family Poverty by **Improving data on poverty, and using it to influence the targeting of resources through initiatives such as improving parenting skills, improving opportunities for work**

Action 13.3

- Act to increase resources in Multi-deprived Localities by **Agreeing a small number of target localities and resourcing agreed local plans of action**

Action 13.4

- Act to reduce Rural Exclusion by **Taking services out to rurally isolated individuals and groups, as well as improving access to transport**

Action 13.5

- Act to improve number and range of jobs available, particularly to the chronically unemployed, by **Developing the “intermediate labour market” to complement Welfare to Work proposals**

Action 13.6

- Encourage action that strengthens local community networks and has direct personal benefits by **Promoting LETS (Local Exchange and Trading Schemes) throughout Shropshire**

Action 13.7

Develop an action plan to build links with minority groups in Shropshire in partnership with other organisations.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Action 13.8

- Help overcome the fear of crime by **Promoting positive reporting of “Good News” messages, and using statistical evidence to reduce the fear of crime**

Action 13.9

- Involve young people in problem-solving approaches to crime and community safety by **A series of initiatives, including creating youth councils, developing mentoring projects, improving information for young people.**

Action 13.10

- Help reduce bullying in schools by **Developing and distributing an anti-bullying video made with young people, for use in secondary schools**

Action 13.11

- Help to reduce violence in the community by **Developing an anti-violence project, with a local network of facilitators**