

# **Shropshire Commuting Patterns and Travel to Work**

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## Introduction

Shropshire has close economic ties with neighbouring local authorities. Many Shropshire residents work outside their home county. Conversely the workplace population comprises not only those that live in Shropshire, but also those that commute in.

Increases in car ownership during the 1960s and 1970s meant that employment opportunities outside the immediate local area became much more accessible. This led to an increase in the number of people travelling further to work and an increase in cross local authority border traffic.

According to research commissioned by the Department for Transport, however, since the late 1980s there has been a decline in commuting journeys<sup>1</sup> for a number of reasons, including:

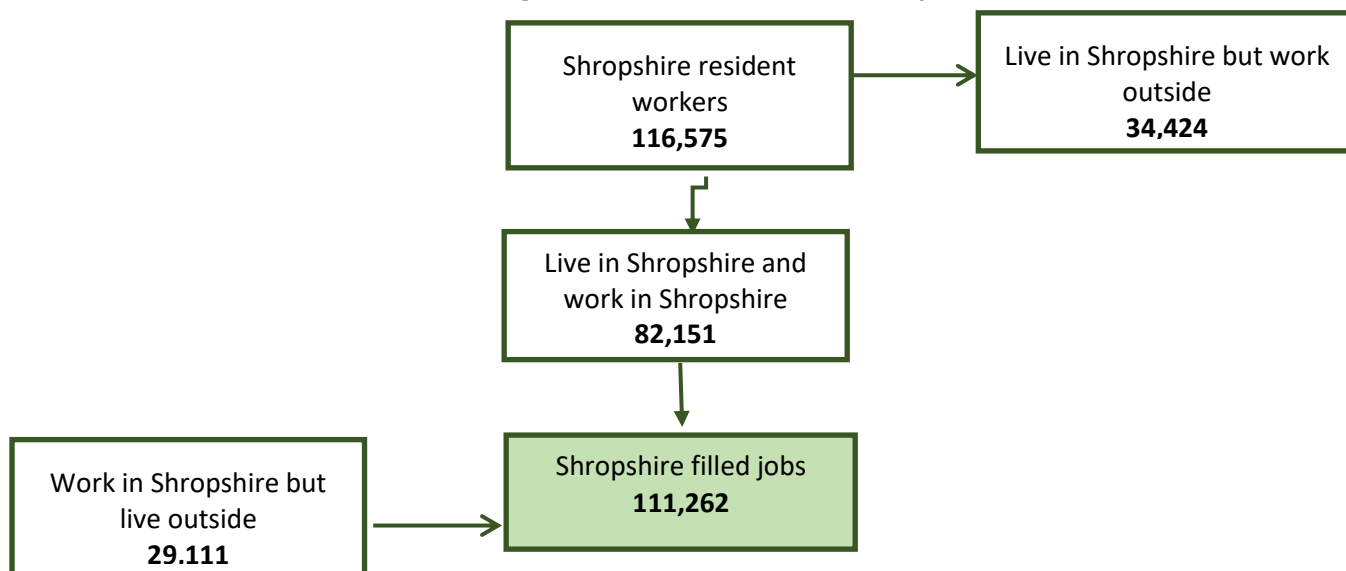
- Workers are commuting to work on fewer days of the week
- There has been a growth in “trip-chaining”, where people combine two or more trips of differing purposes (e.g. dropping children at school on route to work)
- A rise in the number of workers who do not have a fixed, usual workplace and as such are not officially classified as commuting when they travel to work
- An increase in the level of home working
- An increase in self-employment and part-time working.

Notwithstanding this, commuting journeys still account for approximately 16% of all personal journeys, and for 20% of all personal miles travelled. As these journeys tend to be concentrated at the same time, they can put pressure on road and rail infrastructure. An overall decline in commuting journeys does not necessarily reflect a decline in commuting across local authority borders.

Understanding commuting at a sub-national level is reliant on data generated from the Census by the Office for National Statistics. At the time of the 2011 Census, 111,262 people aged 16 and over had jobs in Shropshire; while 116,575 people aged 16 and over living in Shropshire were in employment. This means that the county has more workers than it has filled jobs. Net out-commuting stood at 5,313 in 2011.

Figure 1 provides a summary of the origin and destination of people living and working in Shropshire:

**Figure 1: Commuter<sup>2</sup> Flows in Shropshire**



Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright 2018

<sup>1</sup> Commuting defined as journeys direct from a workers home and usual workplace for the purposes of the National Travel Survey

<sup>2</sup> Commuting here defined as people crossing a local authority boundary to work, regardless of how many stops they might make on the way

## Commuting Trends

Levels of commuting have risen over the last two decades, with the number travelling into Shropshire to work rising by 16,181 people (+125%) between 1991 and 2011 to reach 29,111. The number commuting out of Shropshire has also risen, albeit less dramatically, from 23,710 people in 1991 to 34,424 people in 2011. This is the equivalent of an additional 10,714 in-commuters and constitutes growth of 45%. While out-commuting continues to surpass in-commuting, the gap has narrowed, with net commuting standing at -5,313 in 2011 compared with -10,780 in 1991.

**Figure 2: Commuting in and out of Shropshire, 1991-2011**

	1991	2001	2011	Change 1991- 2011	% Change 1991- 2011
In-Commuters	12,930	20,786	29,111	+16,181	+125.1%
Out-Commuters	23,710	33,011	34,424	+10,714	+45.2%
<i>Net Commuting</i>	<i>-10,780</i>	<i>-12,225</i>	<i>-5,313</i>	<i>-5,467</i>	<i>-50.7%</i>

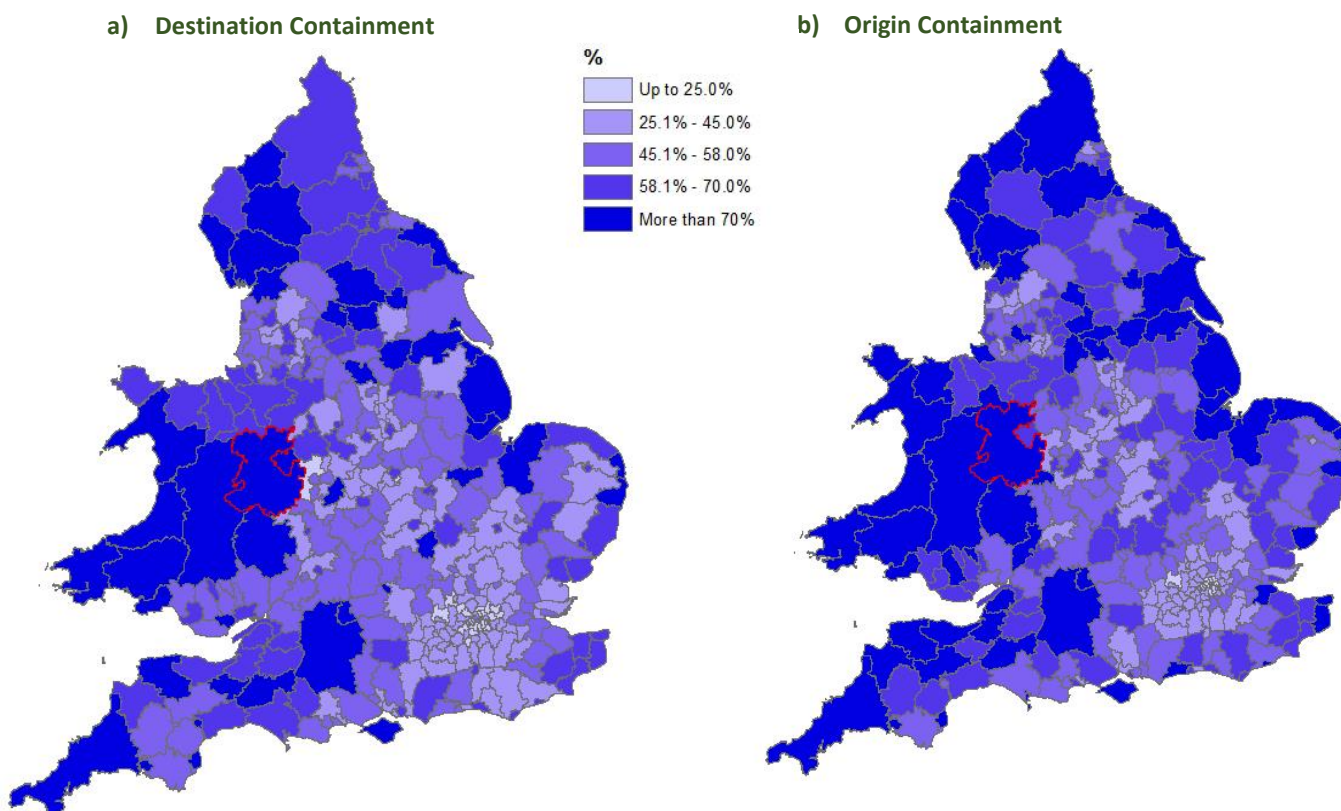
Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright 2018

## Self-Containment

A significant proportion of people both live and are employed in Shropshire (82,151 people), which means that 70.5% of Shropshire residents work within the county (origin containment). There is also a high level of job containment in Shropshire, with 73.8% of employee jobs in Shropshire filled by people who also live there (destination containment).

As illustrated in Figure 3, compared with much of England and Wales, this level of self-containment is high. Overall, Shropshire ranked 40<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 346 Unitary and District Authorities in terms of its level of destination and origin containment respectively in 2011.

**Figure 3: Levels of Self-Containment across England and Wales**

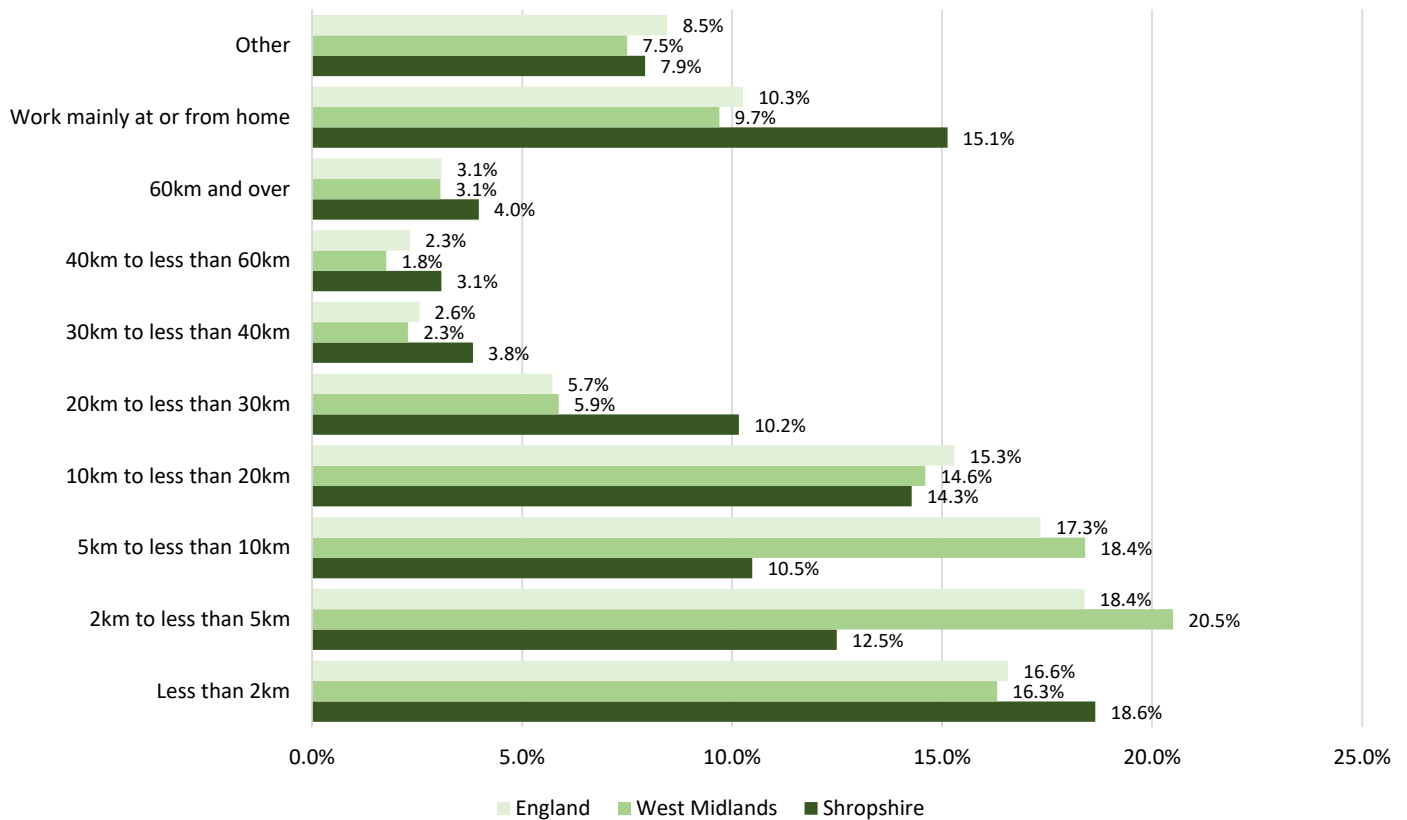


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

## Travelling to Work

High levels of out-commuting plus the large and rural nature of the county impacts how far residents travel to work. High numbers work mainly from home, but proportionally higher numbers also travel considerable distances to get to their workplace. 21% of Shropshire workers travel 20km or more to get to work compared to 13% and 13.7% in the West Midlands and England respectively. The average commute for Shropshire residents was 18.7km in 2011 against an average of 14.1km in the West Midlands and 14.9km in England.

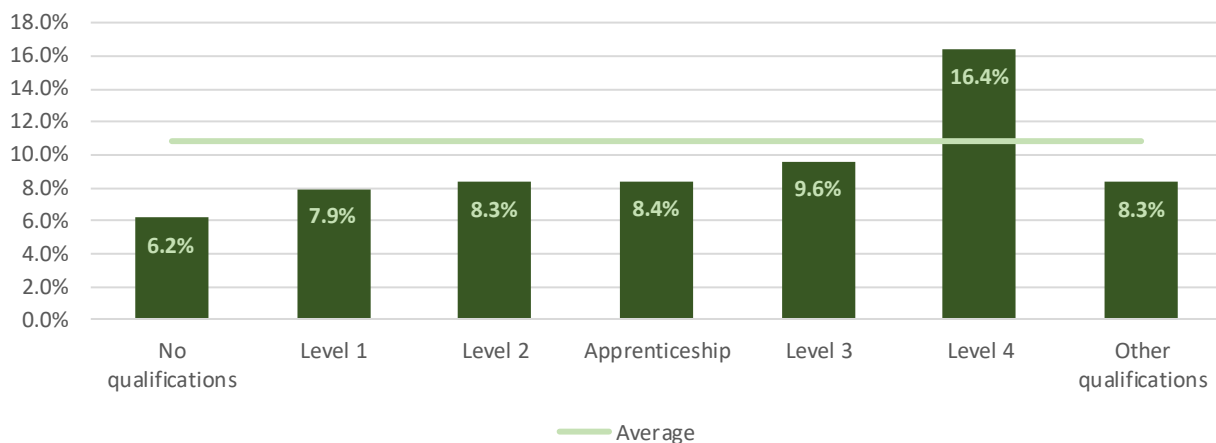
**Figure 4: Average Distances Travelled to Work, 2011**



Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

The higher qualified workers are, the more likely they are to travel longer distances to work. As displayed in the chart below, 16.4% of Shropshire working residents with at least NVQ level 4 qualifications travel 30km or further to work compared with an average of 10.8% for all workers.

**Figure 5: Percentage Travelling 30km+ to Work by Qualification Level, 2011**

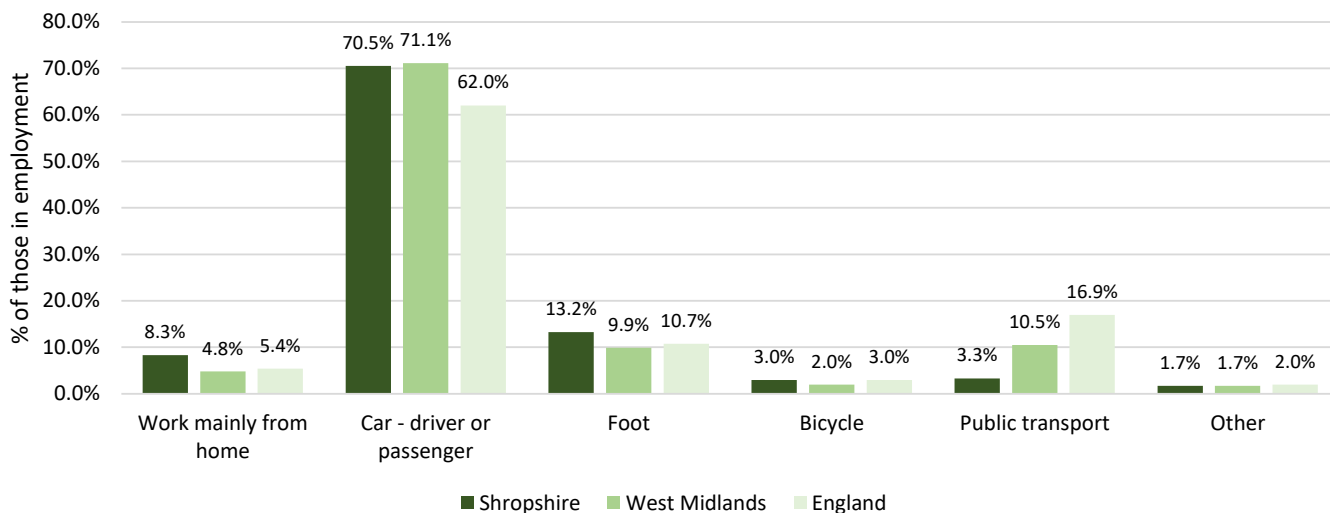


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

Shropshire’s rurality also means that car dependency is high. Just 15.8% of households in Shropshire do not have a car compared with just over a quarter of households (25.8%) nationally and just under a quarter (24.7%) in the West Midlands (2011 Census).

There is also a high reliance on cars as the principal means of travelling to work. In 2011, 70.5% of those working used a car (either as a driver or passenger) as their principal means of travelling to work compared with 62% nationally. Far fewer workers in Shropshire use public transport – just 3.3% in 2011 compared with 16.9% nationally.

**Figure 6: Main Means of Travelling to Work, 2011**



Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

Note: The number of people working mainly from home is calculated differently for different Census tables. For figure 6, Census respondents were specifically asked how they travel to work, with working mainly from home one of the given options. The distance travelled to work did not constitute a specific Census question; instead ONS statisticians calculated the distance based on home postcode and workplace postcode. This means that the number and proportion of the population who are reported to work primarily from home do not always correlate.

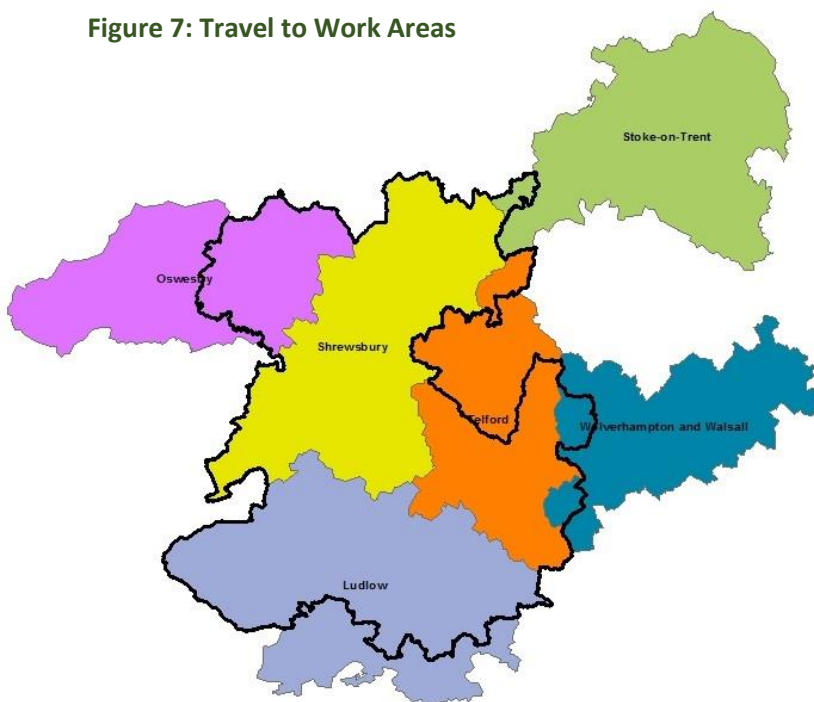
## Travel to Work Areas

Although, levels of self-containment are relatively high, in and out commuting is significant. Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) are a geography created by the Office for National Statistics to approximate labour market areas. In other words, they are derived to reflect self-contained areas in which most people both live and work. TTWAs vary considerably in terms of both size and population.

Six of these areas cover Shropshire, although two (Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton and Walsall) are on the periphery. As shown in the map opposite, the only TTWA that is completely contained within Shropshire is Shrewsbury.

Oswestry stretches into Wales to the East, Telford covers Telford & Wrekin unitary authority as well as most of south east Shropshire (covering the towns of Shifnal and Bridgnorth), while Ludlow covers the northern part of Herefordshire. Albrighton, in the far east of Shropshire, is contained within the Wolverhampton and Walsall TTWA. The Stoke-on-Trent TTWA contains the settlements Woore and Norton in Hales which are in the north east of Shropshire.

**Figure 7: Travel to Work Areas**



The following table shows the working age population of each of the TTWAs which cover Shropshire, and the number and percentage who are economically active. Economic activity rates are highest in Oswestry and Shrewsbury and lowest in Telford and Wolverhampton and Walsall. Job density is highest in Shrewsbury and Telford – in both cases, the number of jobs exceeds the number who are economically active in each area.

**Figure 8: Key Population and Labour Force Statistics by TTWA, 2017**

	16-64 Population	Number Economically Active	Economic Activity Rate	Number of Jobs	Job Density*
Ludlow	32,300	25,600	79.4%	23,000	0.70
Oswestry	36,800	31,100	84.5%	27,000	0.75
Shrewsbury	91,500	75,000	81.9%	86,000	0.88
Stoke-on-Trent	330,100	254,300	77.1%	242,000	0.72
Telford	139,900	107,100	76.6%	113,000	0.82
Wolverhampton and Walsall	458,300	349,300	76.2%	342,000	0.72

Source: Annual Population Survey, year ending December 2017/BRES

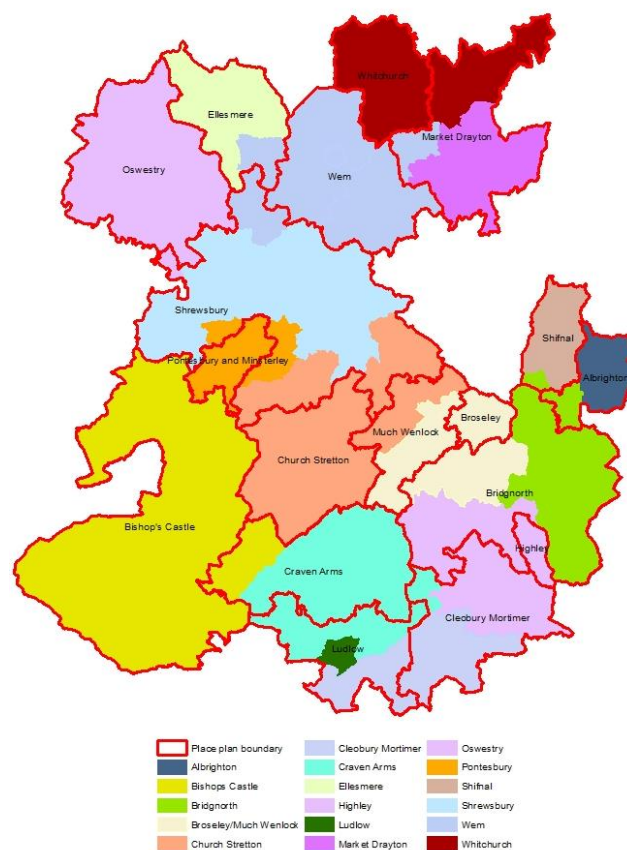
Note: \*Number of jobs per 16-64 population

### Self-Containment by Shropshire Place Plan Area

The smallest geography at which 2011 Census travel to work data is available is mid super output level, of which there are 39 which cover Shropshire. These have been matched to Shropshire Place Plan geographies on a best fit basis, as illustrated in Figure 9 below. This allows a more detailed view of levels of self-containment across Shropshire than shown by TTWAs.

Note: MSOA to Place Plan best fit using ONS population weighted centroids.

**Figure 9: MSOA to Place Plan Best Fit**

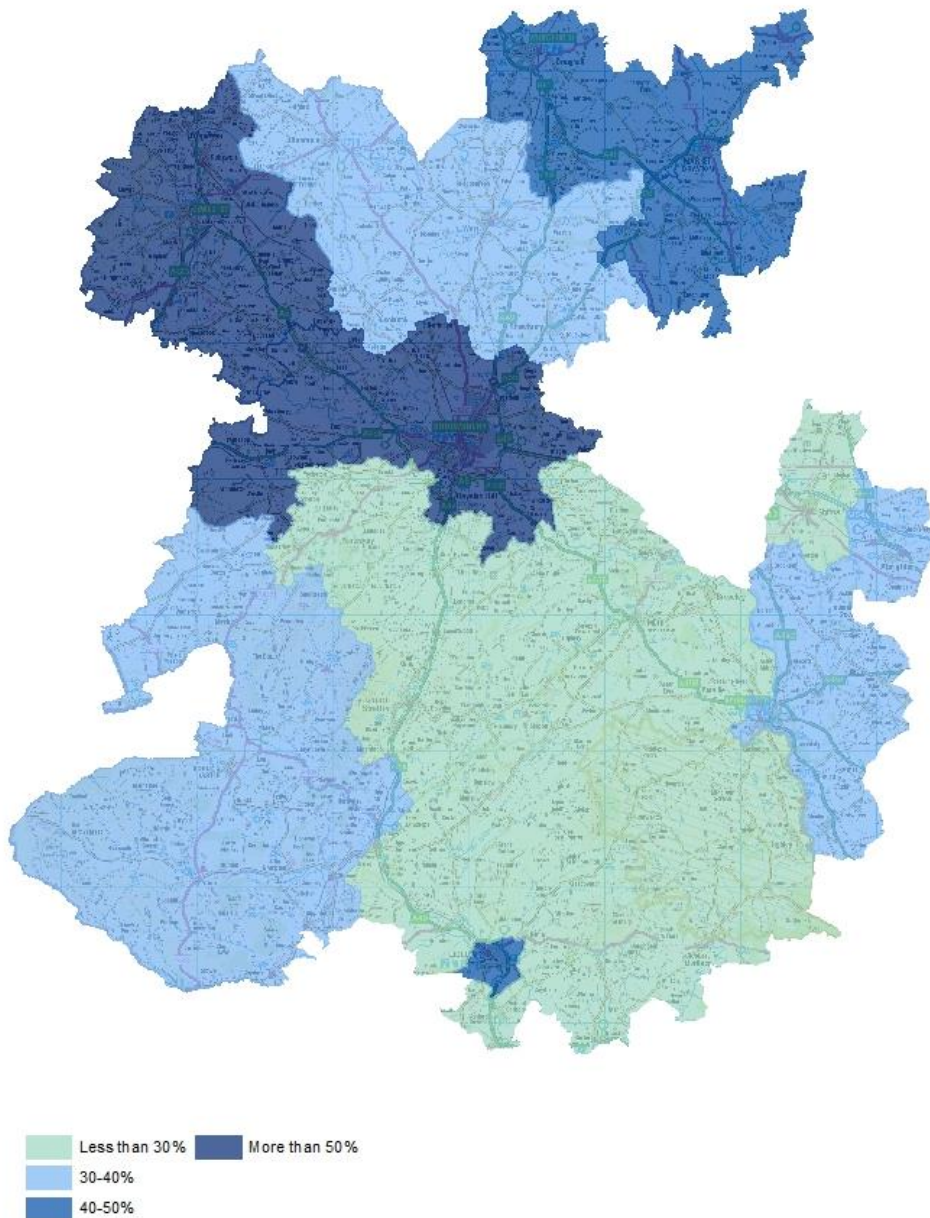


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The level of self-containment varies across different parts of Shropshire. Typically, employment is concentrated in Shrewsbury and the major market towns, and in the main, these place plan areas support the highest levels of self-containment.

Lower levels of self-containment are in evidence in the east of the county, where access to the main employment centres in the West Midlands is comparatively straightforward and in more rural localities, where there are fewer employment opportunities.

**Figure 10: Levels of Self-Containment by Place Plan Area, 2011**



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Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018  
 Note: Overall Self-Containment

The table below shows that Shifnal is the least self-contained of Shropshire’s place plan areas, while Shrewsbury and Oswestry are the most self-contained. The greatest differential between destination self-containment (the proportion of local jobs filled by local residents) and origin self-containment (the proportion of local residents that are employed locally) is greatest in Highley and Broseley/Much Wenlock. In both cases, low numbers of jobs mean that a comparatively high proportion of jobs that are available are filled by local residents. However, a high proportion of the resident working population travel further afield for employment.

In contrast, the differential between destination and origin self-containment is minimal in Ellesmere, Bridgnorth and Market Drayton, meaning that similar numbers travel in and out of the area to work.

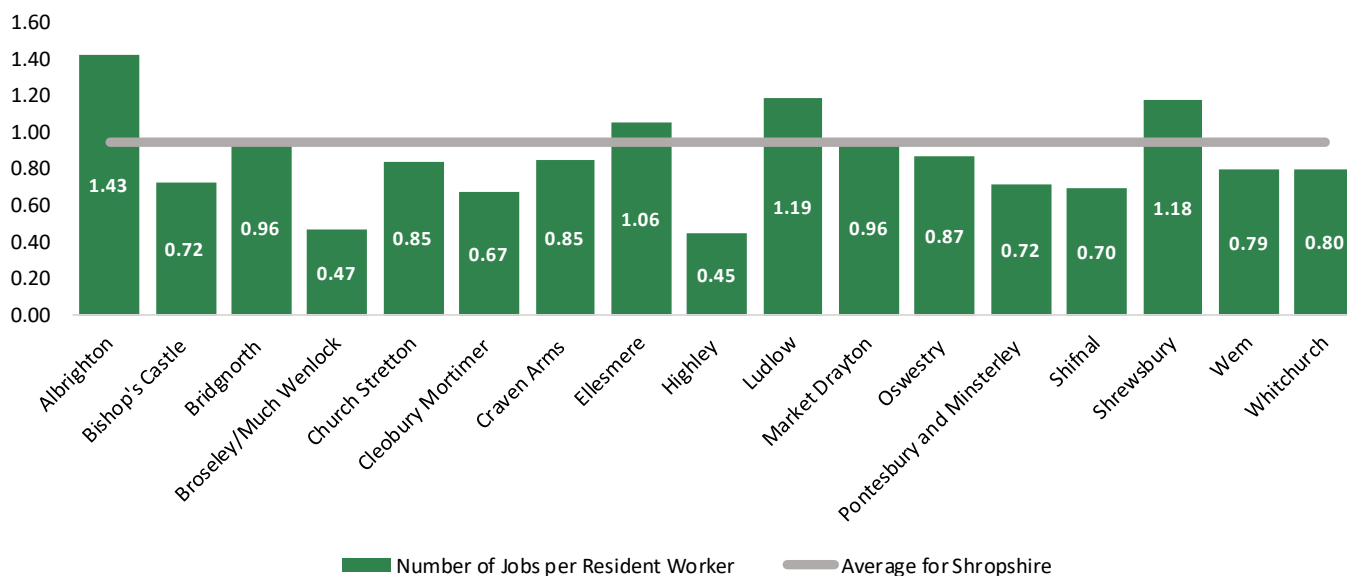
**Figure 11: Levels of Destination and Origin Self-Containment by Place Plan Area**

	Destination Self-Containment %	Origin Self-Containment %	Overall Self-Containment %
Shifnal	24.6%	17.2%	20.2%
Pontesbury and Minsterley	27.2%	19.6%	22.8%
Highley	37.2%	16.8%	23.1%
Broseley/Much Wenlock	39.0%	18.2%	24.8%
Clebury Mortimer	33.3%	22.4%	26.8%
Church Stretton	30.9%	26.1%	28.3%
Craven Arms	31.7%	27.0%	29.1%
Bishop's Castle	37.8%	27.4%	31.8%
Ellesmere	32.0%	33.8%	32.9%
Albrighton	29.1%	41.6%	34.2%
Wem	39.3%	31.2%	34.8%
Bridgnorth	39.6%	38.2%	38.9%
Whitchurch	46.6%	37.5%	41.6%
Market Drayton	47.5%	45.5%	46.5%
Ludlow	44.2%	52.4%	47.9%
Oswestry	63.0%	55.0%	58.7%
Shrewsbury	57.6%	67.9%	62.3%

Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

Across Shropshire, there are fewer jobs than resident workers, which results in net out-commuting. The average number of jobs per resident worker is 0.95. The only place plan areas where there are more jobs than resident workers are Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Albrighton and Ellesmere.

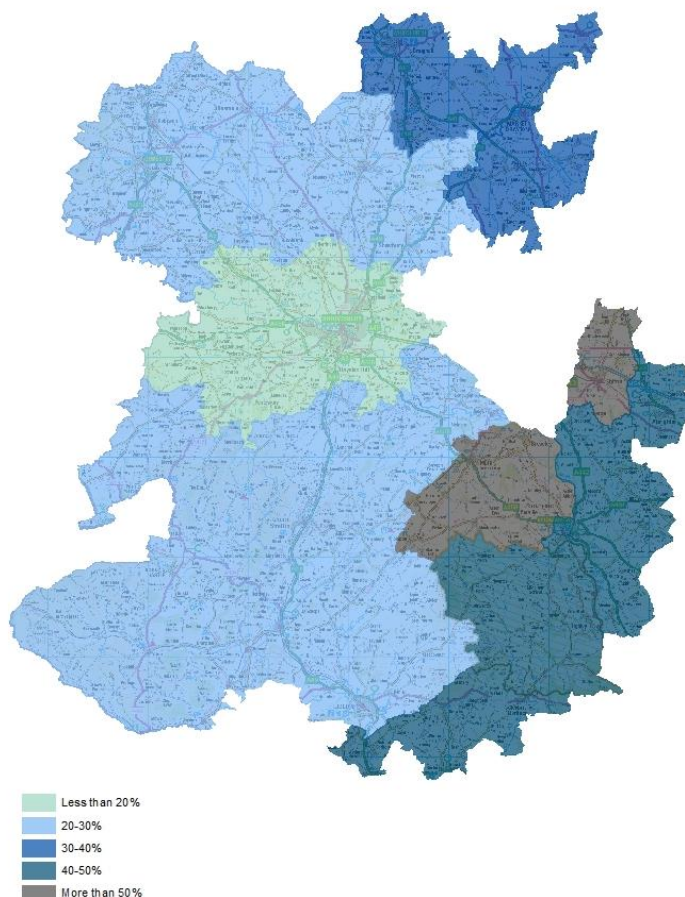
**Figure 12: Number of Jobs per Resident Worker by Place Plan Area**



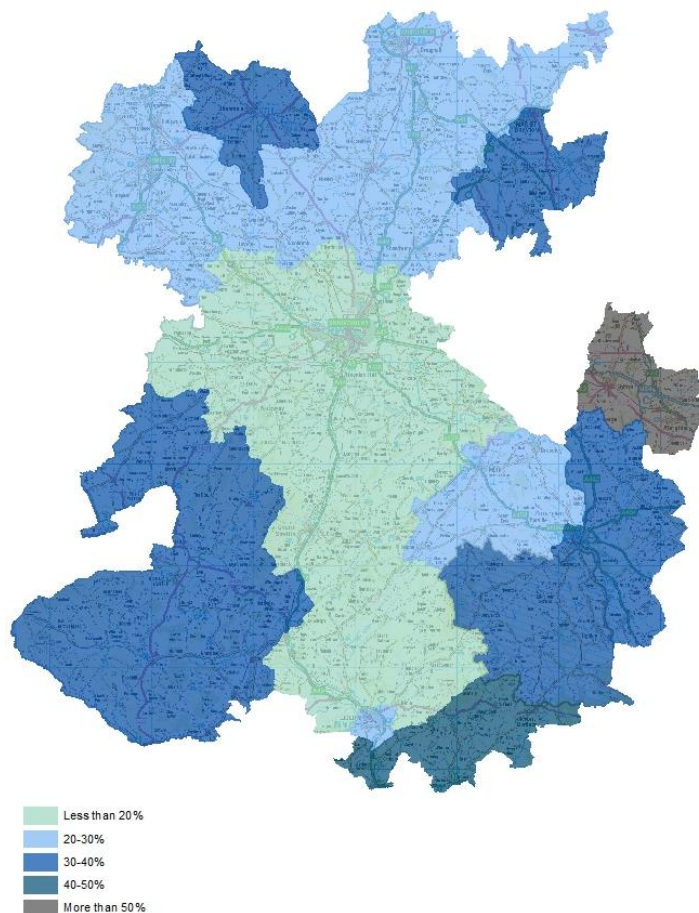
Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

The following maps show the proportion of residents in each place plan area which is employed outside Shropshire (Figure 12) and the proportion of jobs which are filled by non-Shropshire residents (Figure 13). It is evident that central areas within the County are more likely to provide employment for local residents and have lower reliance on out-of-county workers. In contrast, the eastern tranche of Shropshire supports much greater levels of cross commuting, with higher numbers of residents commuting out as well as higher numbers of non-residents commuting in.

**Figure 13: Percentage of Resident Workers Employed Out-of-County**



**Figure 14: Percentage of Jobs Filled by Out-of-County Workers**



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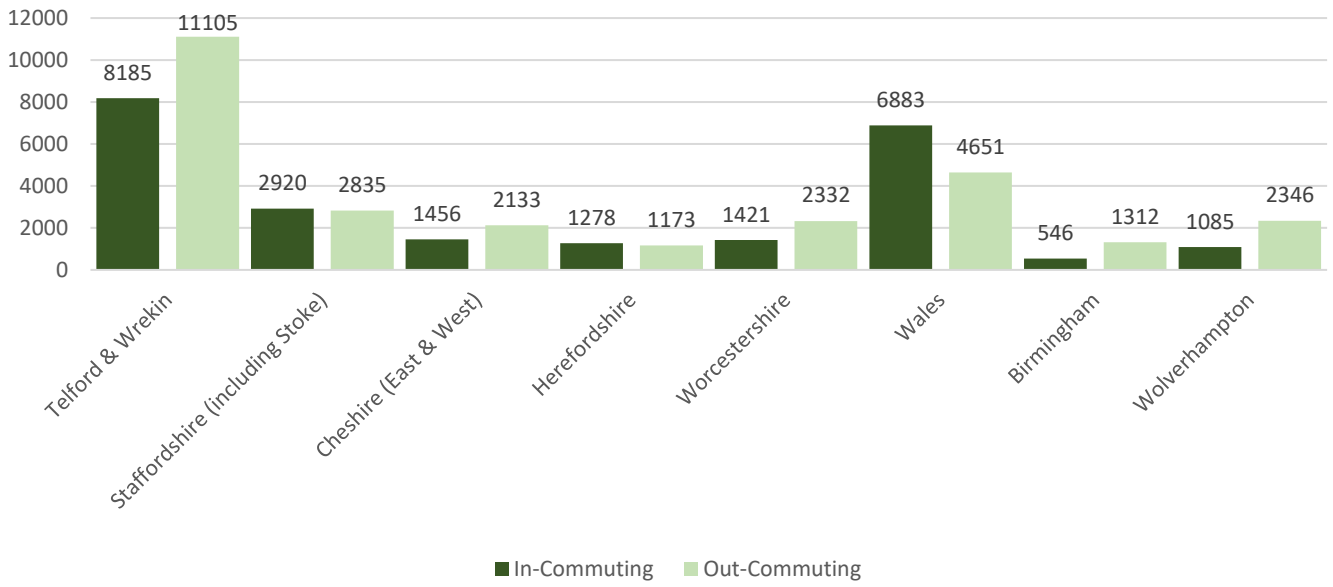
Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

## Main Origins and Destinations of Commuters

Figure 15 shows the main origins and destinations of cross-boundary commuting to and from Shropshire. The largest flows, both into and out of Shropshire, are with Telford and Wrekin, with 19,290 people commuting between the two Local Authorities at the time of the 2011 Census.

The top five District or Unitary Authority destinations for Shropshire residents commuting out of the County are Telford; Wolverhampton; Wrexham; Powys; and Birmingham. The top five District or Unitary Authority origins of workers commuting into Shropshire are Telford; Powys; Wrexham; Herefordshire; and Wolverhampton.

**Figure 15: Cross-Boundary Commuting to and from Shropshire, 2011**

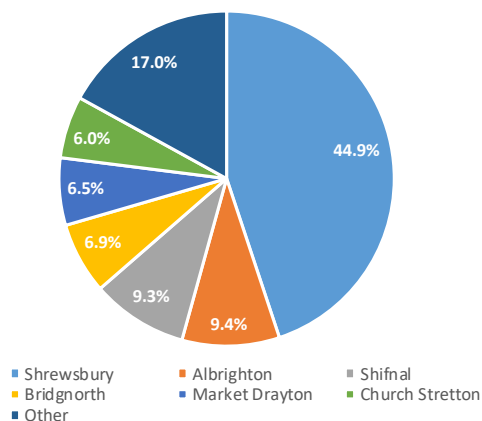


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

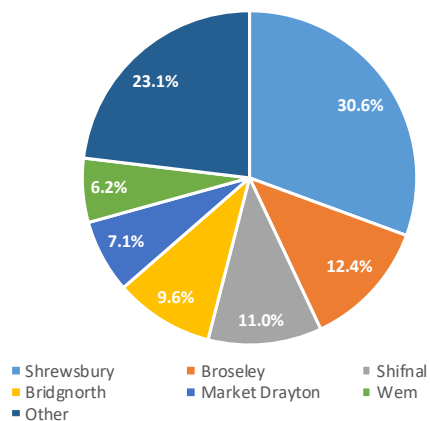
## Telford & Wrekin

Telford & Wrekin supplies a higher number of in-commuters to Shropshire than any other local authority, and also absorbs the highest number of out-commuters. 44.9% of all those travelling in to Shropshire to work have employment in Shrewsbury, with Albrighton, Shifnal, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton and Church Stretton also significant destinations for Telford in-commuters. Shrewsbury also supplies the highest proportion of out-commuters, with Broseley/Much Wenlock, Shifnal, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton and Wem also significant origins of labour working in Telford. Commuting between Telford & Wrekin and the most westerly and southern parts of Shropshire is much less common place.

**Figure 16: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Telford & Wrekin**

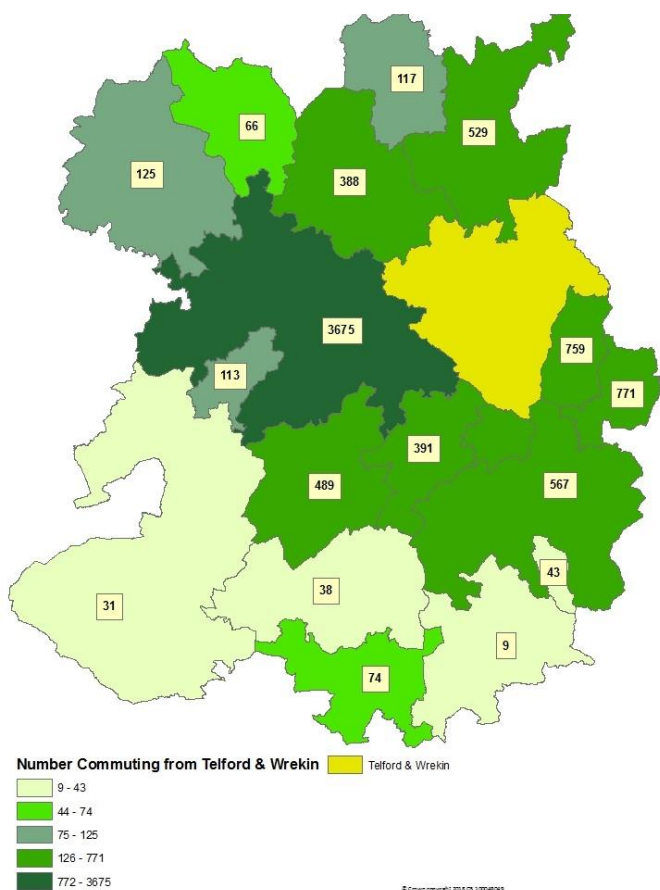


**Figure 17: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Telford & Wrekin**

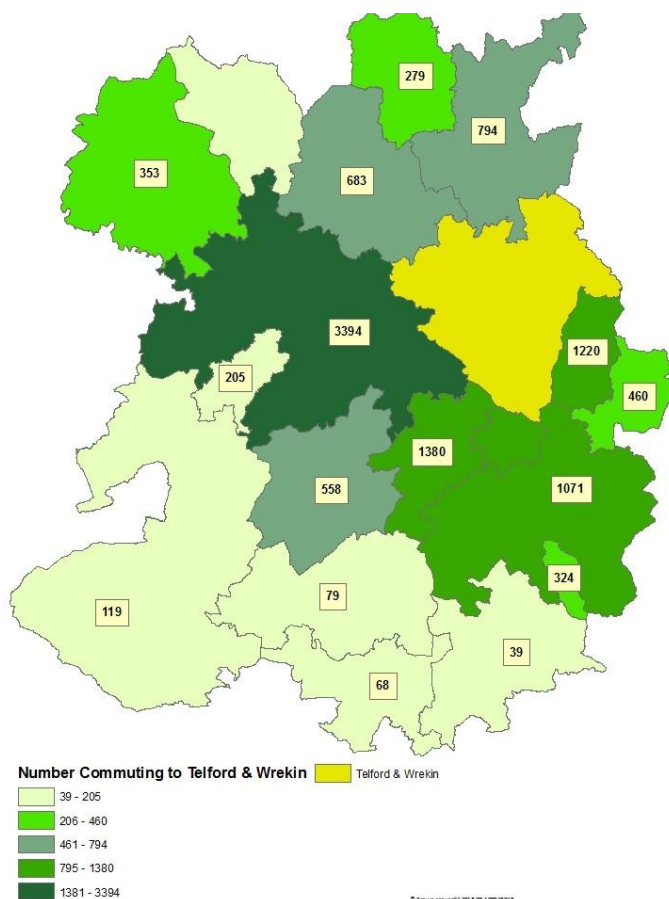


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 18: In-Commuting from Telford & Wrekin**



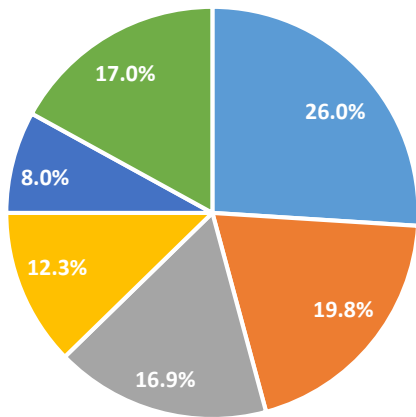
**Figure 19: Out-Commuting to Telford & Wrekin**



## Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

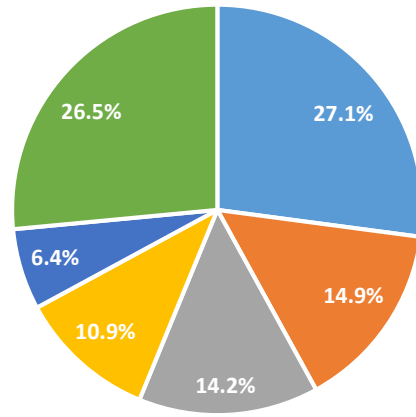
5,755 people commute between Shropshire and Staffordshire (including Stoke), with similar numbers travelling in both directions (2,920 people commuting into Shropshire and 2,835 commuting out). Commuting between the two areas is concentrated in the most easterly Shropshire place plan areas. Market Drayton absorbs the highest proportion of in-commuters and also supplies the highest proportion of out-commuters. Albrighton, Shrewsbury and, to a lesser extent, Bridgnorth all supply more workers than they absorb. The reverse is true for Whitchurch.

**Figure 20: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Staffordshire**



■ Market Drayton ■ Shrewsbury ■ Albrighton  
 ■ Bridgnorth ■ Whitchurch ■ Other

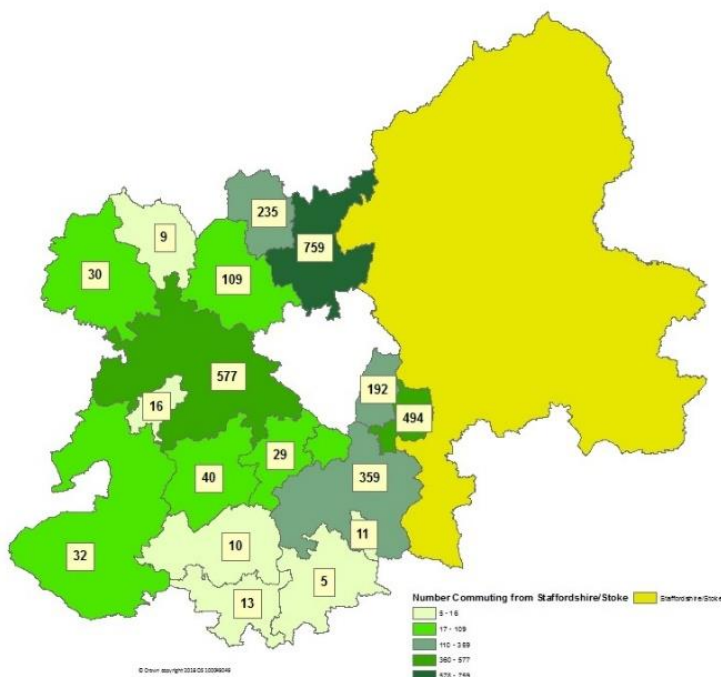
**Figure 21: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Staffordshire**



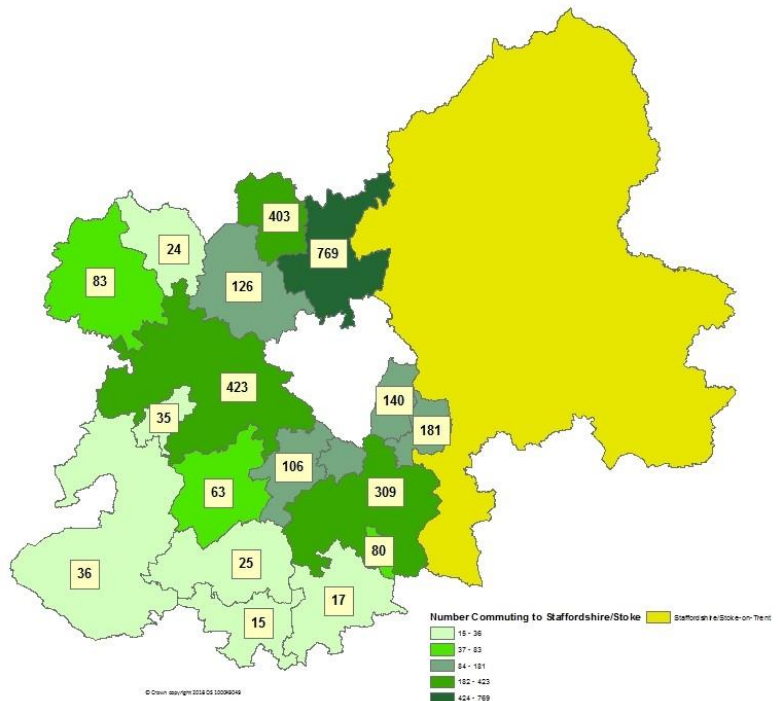
■ Market Drayton ■ Shrewsbury ■ Whitchurch  
 ■ Bridgnorth ■ Albrighton ■ Other

Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 22: In-Commuting from Staffordshire**



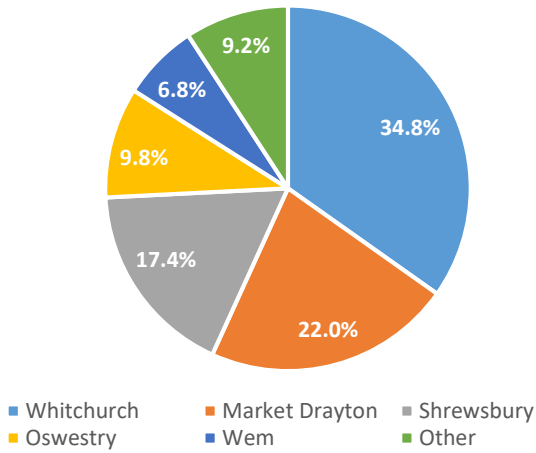
**Figure 23: Out-Commuting from Staffordshire**



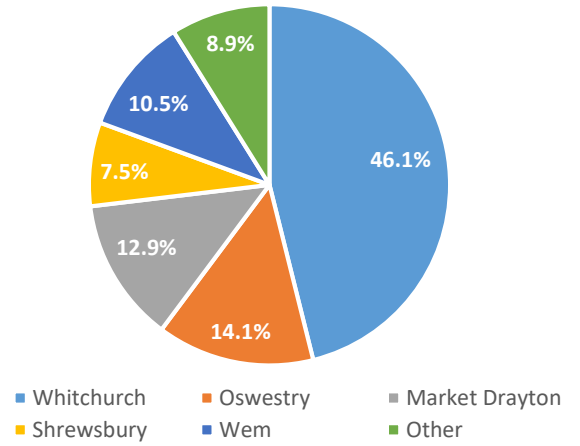
## Cheshire (East and West)

1,456 people commuted into Shropshire from Cheshire in 2011, while 2,133 travelled in the opposite direction. More than half of those commuting in are employed in either the Whitchurch or Market Drayton place plan areas. 46% of those commuting out of Shropshire reside in Whitchurch. There is minimal commuting between Cheshire and the more southerly parts of Shropshire.

**Figure 24: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Cheshire**

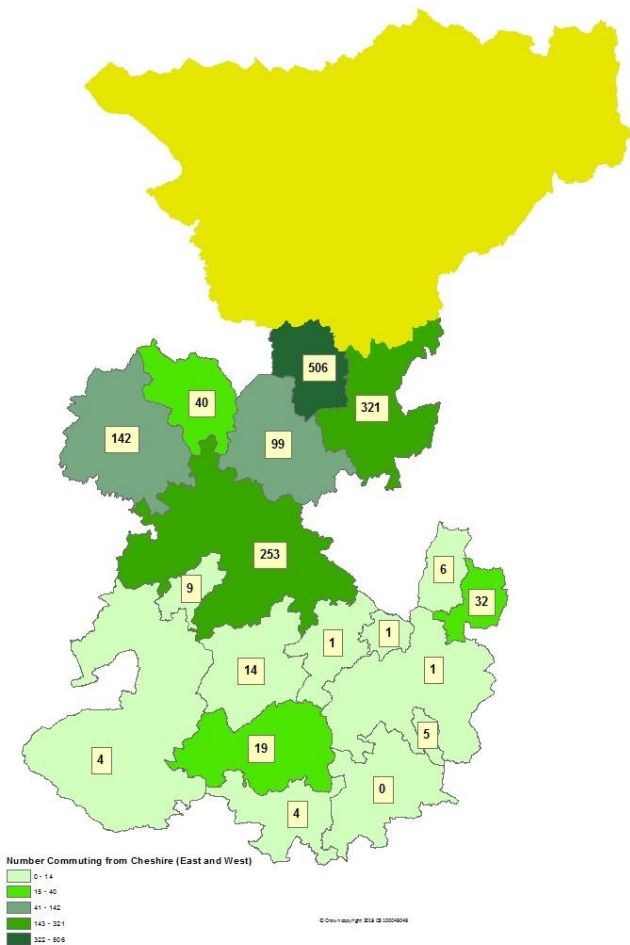


**Figure 25: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Cheshire**

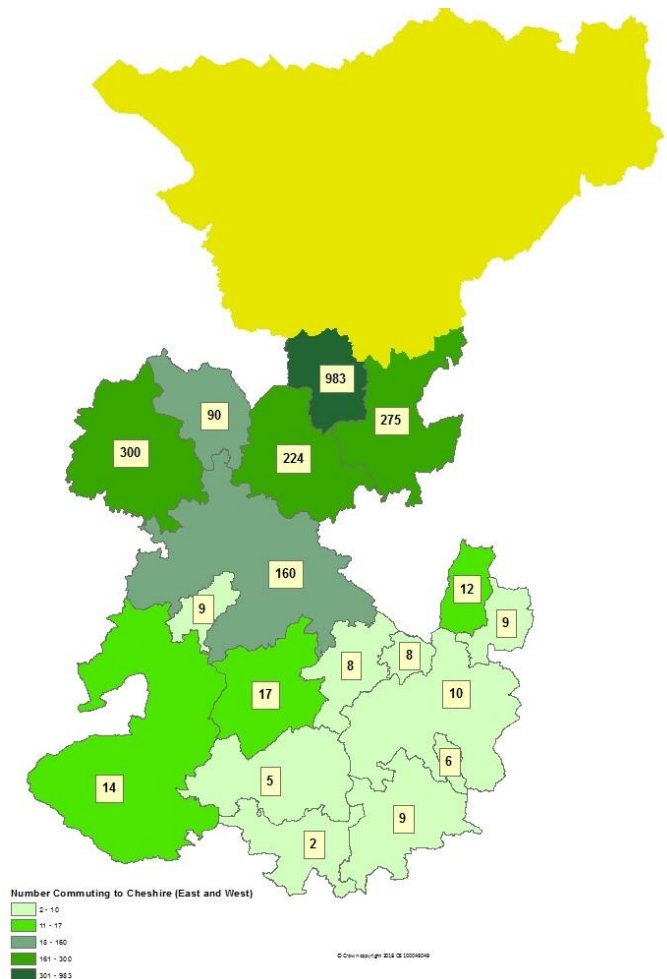


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 26: In-Commuting from Cheshire**



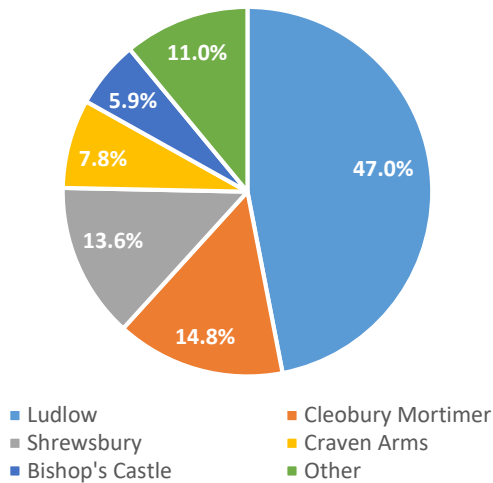
**Figure 27: Out-Commuting to Cheshire**



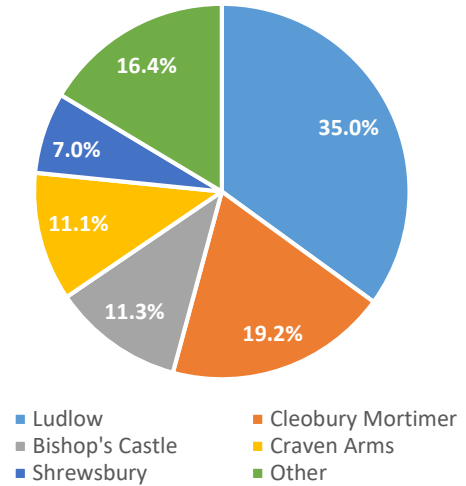
## Herefordshire

2451 people commute between Herefordshire and Shropshire, with slightly more commuting in (1,278 people) than commute out (1,173). Ludlow is the principal supplier of out-commuters and absorbs the highest share of in-commuters. Cleobury Mortimer and Shrewsbury are also important destinations for workers commuting in while Bishop's Castle and Craven Arms, as well as Cleobury Mortimer and Ludlow, supply notable numbers of workers to Herefordshire.

**Figure 28: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Herefordshire**

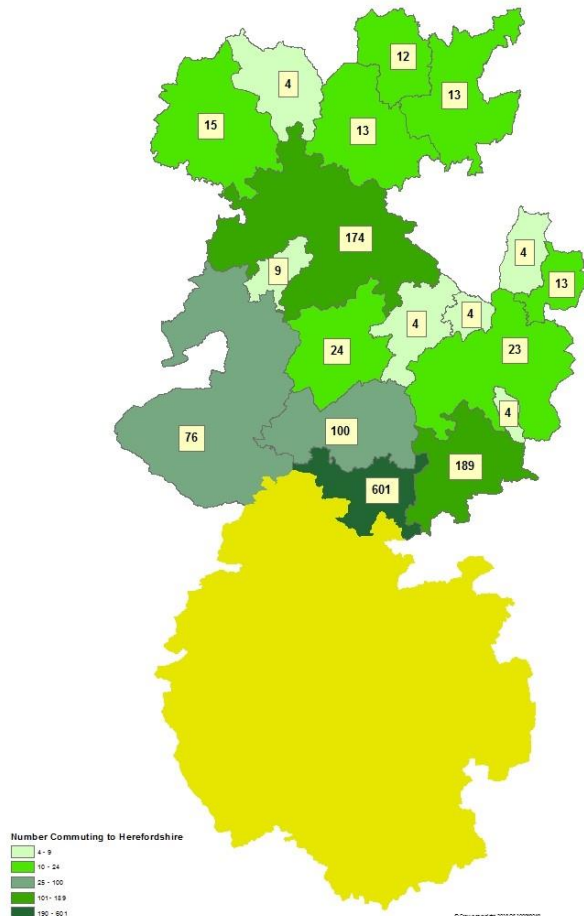


**Figure 29: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Herefordshire**

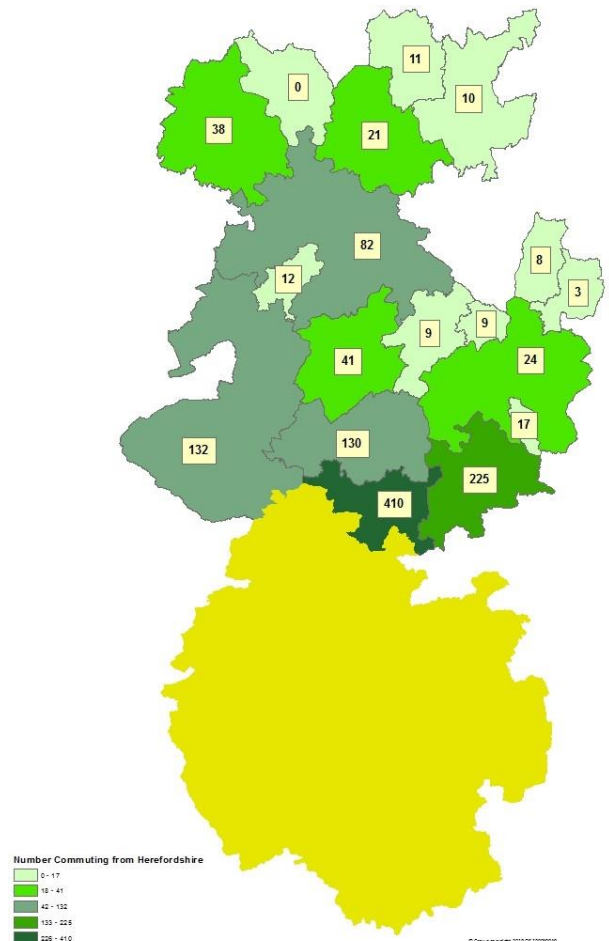


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 30: In-Commuting from Herefordshire**



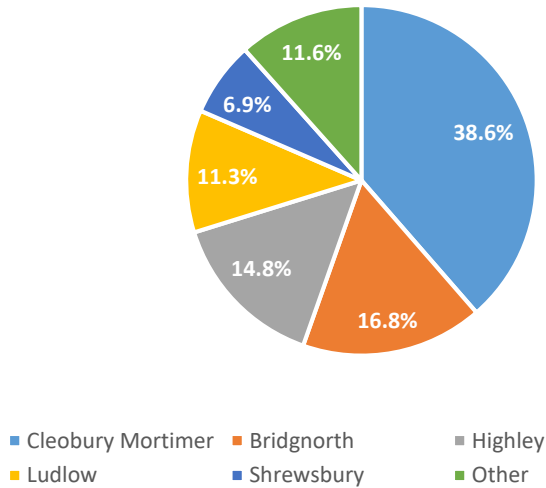
**Figure 31: Out-Commuting to Herefordshire**



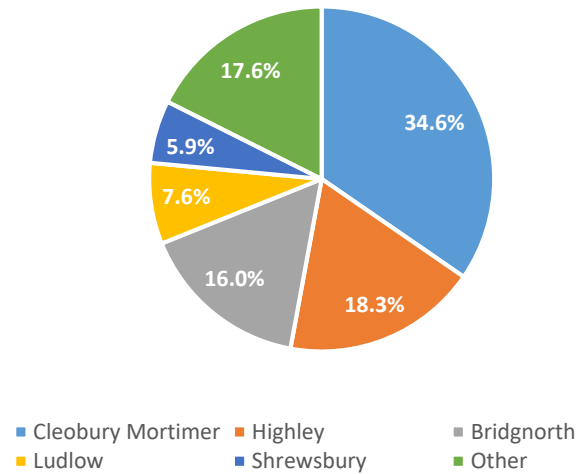
## Worcestershire

1,421 Worcestershire residents travelled in to Shropshire for work in 2011, while 2,332 travelled from Shropshire to Worcestershire. More than a third of in and out commuters travel to/from Cleobury Mortimer. Bridgnorth and Highley are also significant commuting partners with Worcestershire. There is minimal commuting between the most northerly Shropshire place plan areas and Worcestershire.

**Figure 32: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Worcestershire**

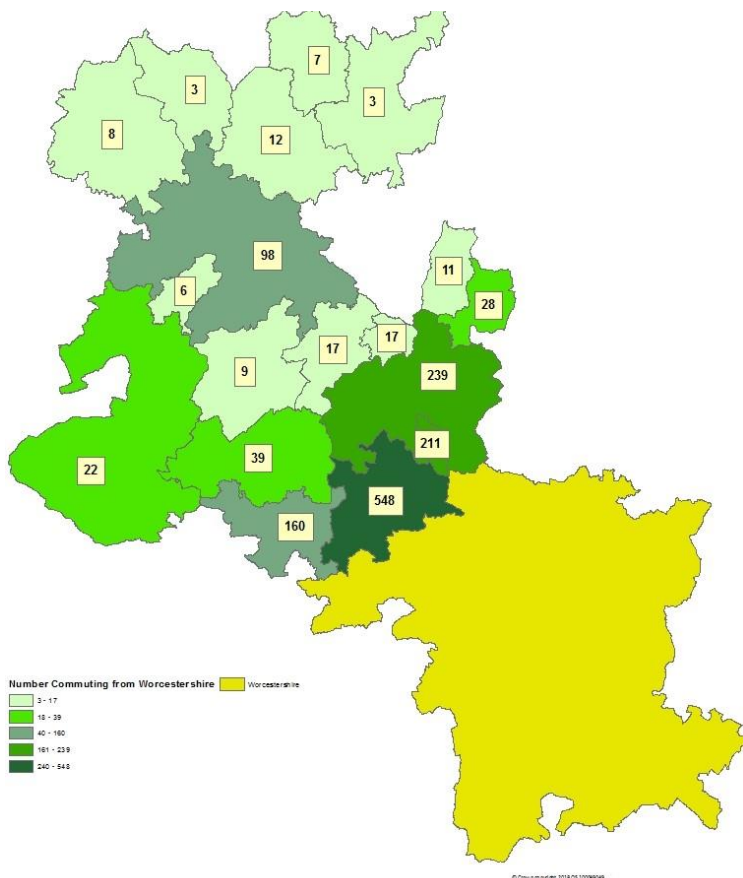


**Figure 33: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Worcestershire**

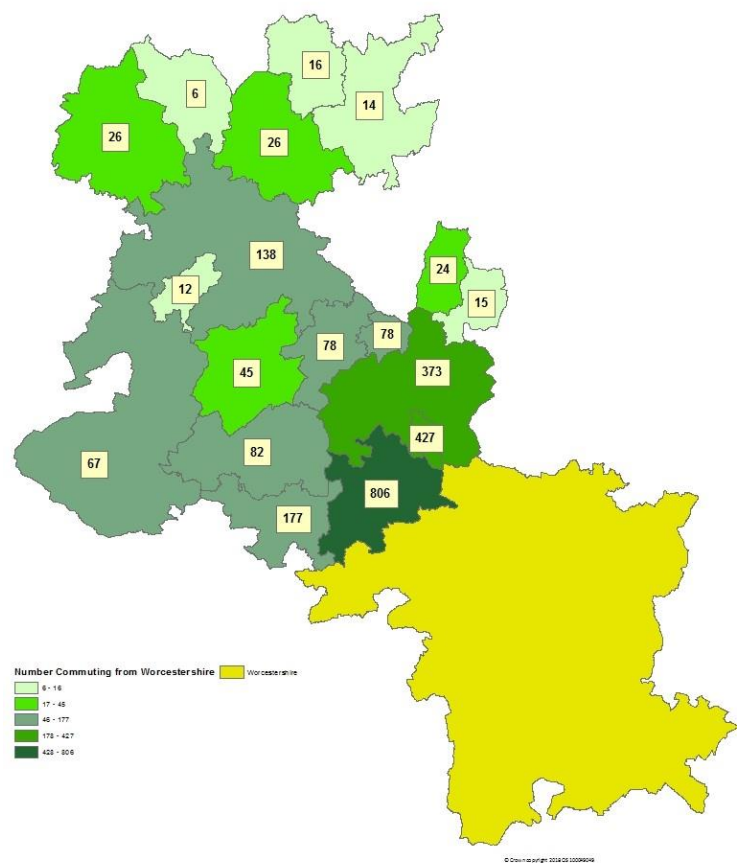


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 34: In-Commuting from Worcestershire**



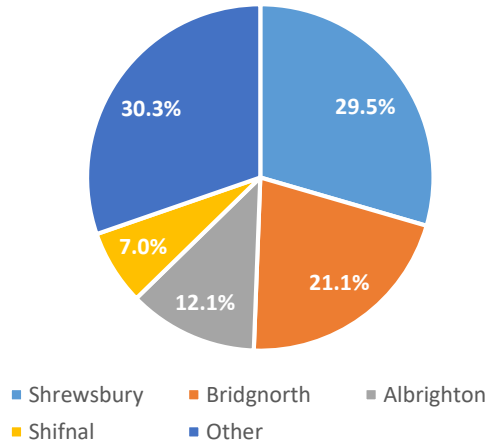
**Figure 35: Out-Commuting to Worcestershire**



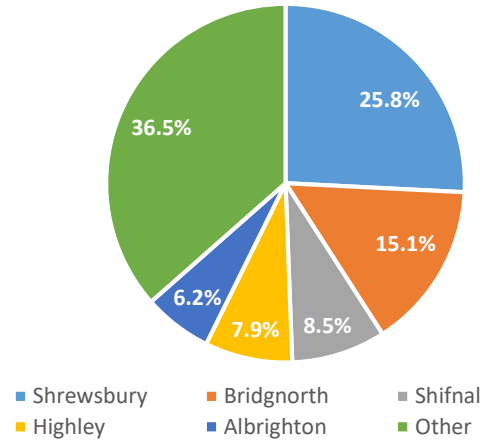
# Birmingham

Significantly more people commute out to Birmingham than commute in, at 1,312 compared with 546. Those that do commute in are most likely to be employed in Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth or Albrighton place plan areas. Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth supply the greatest number of workers to Birmingham.

**Figure 36: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Birmingham**

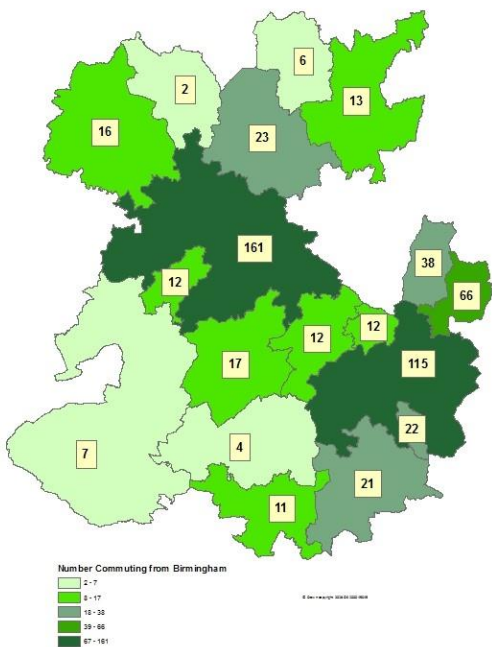


**Figure 37: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Birmingham**

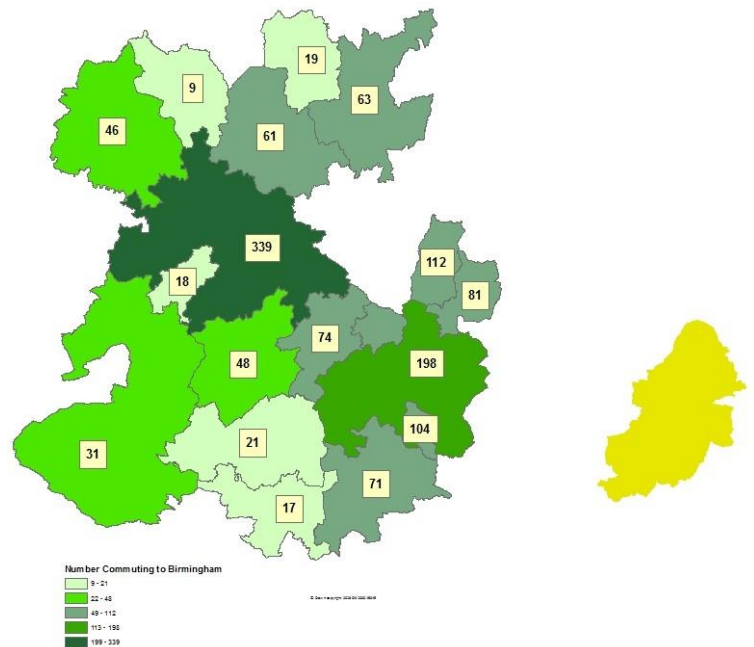


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 38: In-Commuting from Birmingham**



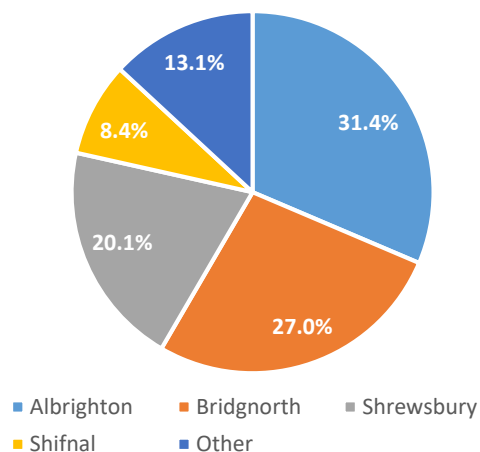
**Figure 39: Out-Commuting to Birmingham**



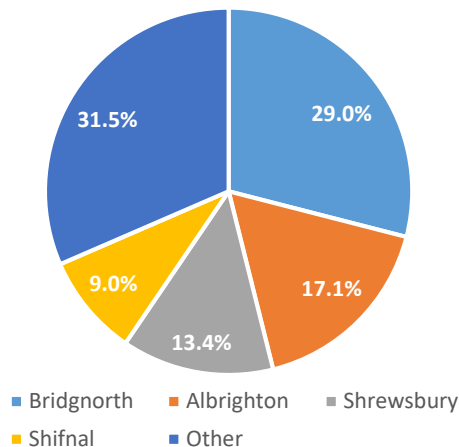
## Wolverhampton

1,085 Wolverhampton residents travelled in to Shropshire for work in 2011, while 2,346 travelled from Shropshire to Wolverhampton. More than three-quarters travelling into Shropshire are employed in Albrighton, Bridgnorth or Shrewsbury. The residential location of commuters into Wolverhampton is more spread across Shropshire, although these three place plan areas account for the highest shares.

**Figure 40: Main Place Plan Destinations for In-Commuters from Wolverhampton**

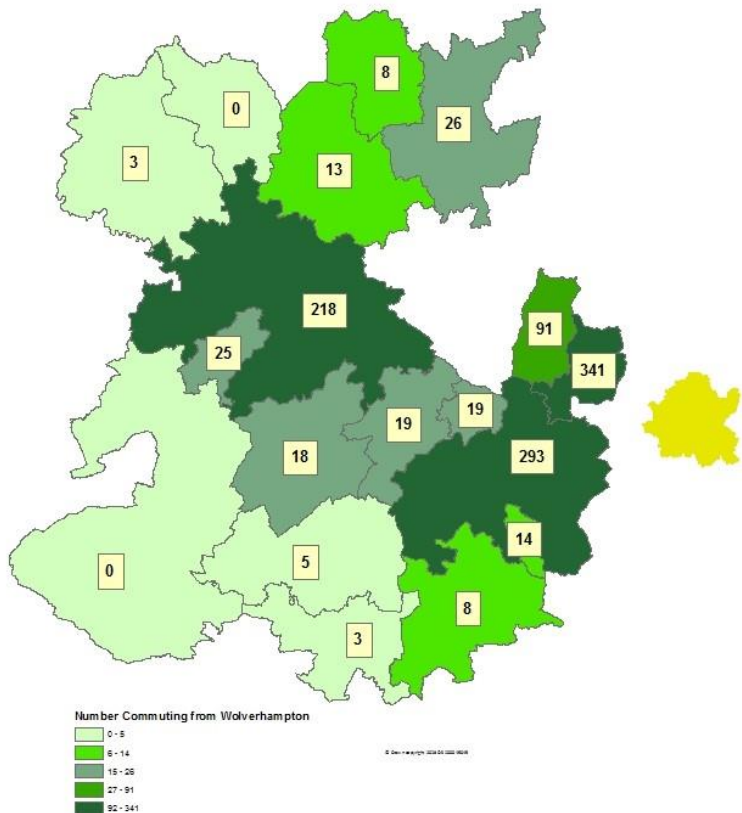


**Figure 41: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Wolverhampton**

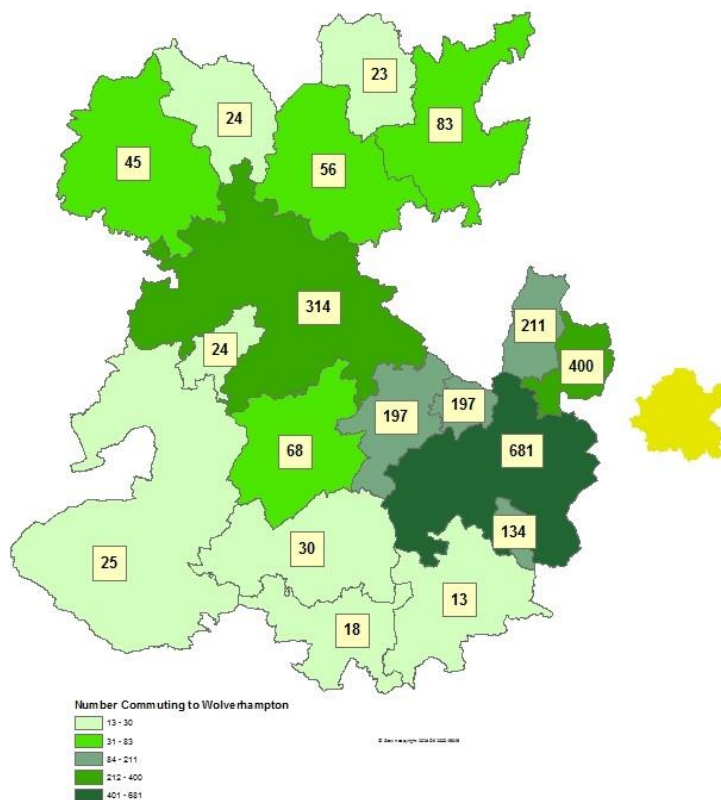


Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

**Figure 42: In-Commuting from Wolverhampton**



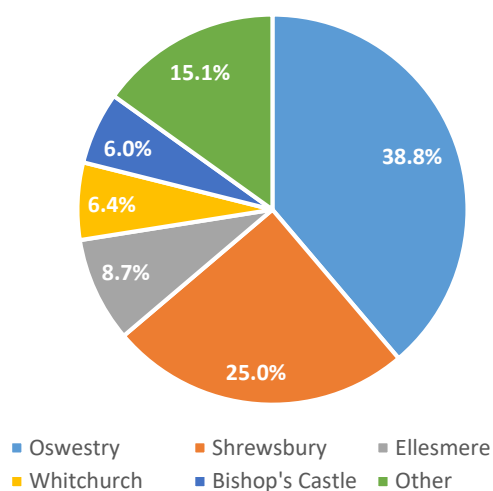
**Figure 43: Out-Commuting to Wolverhampton**



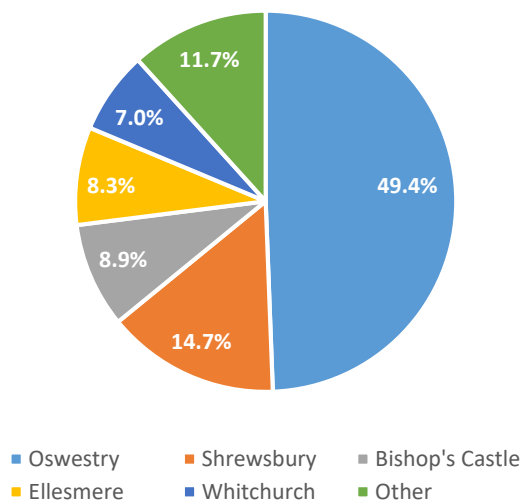
## Wales

Significant numbers cross the Welsh border to travel to work, with 6,883 people commuting into Shropshire, and 4,651 travelling from Shropshire into Wales. The highest proportion travel from and to Oswestry, with in-commuters to this place plan area accounting for 39% of the total. Around half of Shropshire residents who work in Wales live in the Oswestry place plan area. Unsurprisingly, there is limited commuting in either direction between Wales and the more easterly parts of Shropshire.

**Figure 44: Main Place Plan Destinations in Shropshire for In-Commuters from Wales**



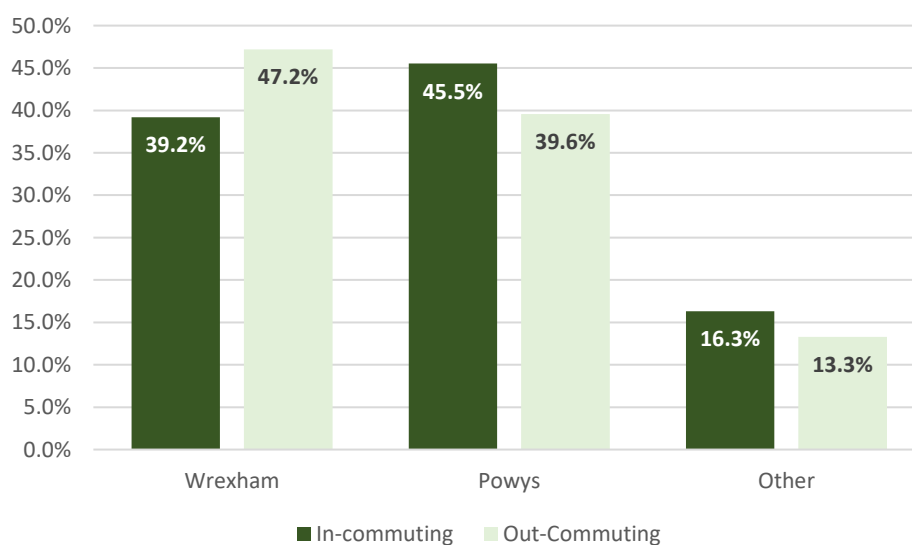
**Figure 45: Main Place Plan Origins of Out-Commuters to Wales**



Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

The majority of Welsh residents who travel to Shropshire to work reside in Wrexham or Powys, and similarly the majority of Shropshire residents who are employed in Wales commute to Wrexham or Powys. While Wrexham supplies the larger share of in-commuters to Shropshire, Powys absorbs the largest share of out-commuters.

**Figure 46: Main Origins/Destinations in Wales**



Source: ONS (2011), Census, Crown Copyright – 2018

Figure 47: In-Commuting from Wales

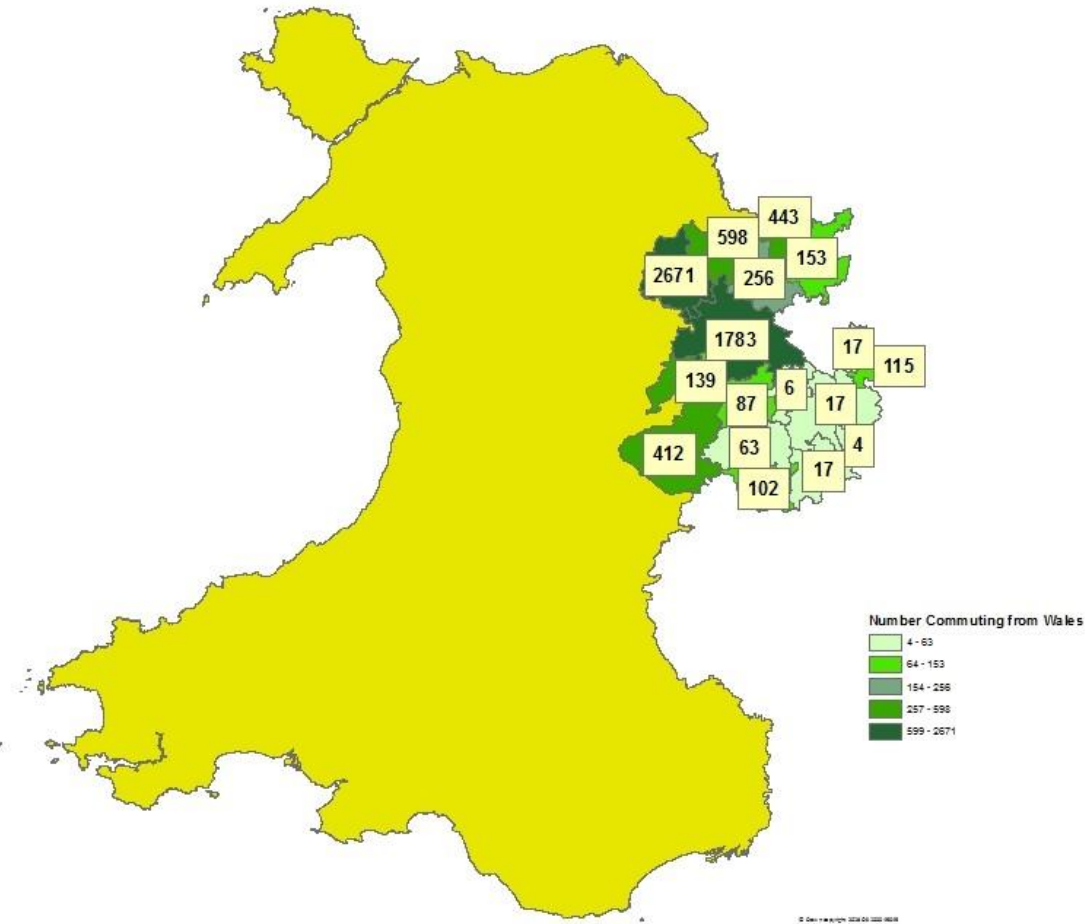


Figure 48: Out-Commuting to Wales

