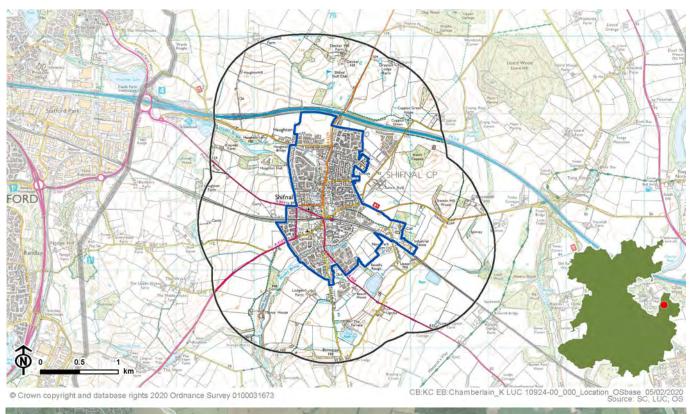
# **Key Centre – Shifnal**

## Location





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### **Summary of Settlement Study Area and Location**

#### Introduction

The market town of Shifnal is Shropshire's largest key centre as identified in the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020). The study area boundary as defined within this Green Infrastructure Strategy is a 1km offset from the settlement limits. The identified study area is approximately 1km north west from the study limits of RAF Cosford Strategic Site.

The settlement is located within eastern Shropshire, 5km east of Telford and 20km west of Wolverhampton. The settlement is surrounded completely by designated Green Belt land. Shifnal's transport links have contributed to the growth of the town. Historically the settlement presented a stopping point for travel between London and Holyhead. The Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton rail line, and the M54 corridor form prominent transport corridors. In 2016, Shifnal had a population of nearly 7,000 people<sup>1</sup>, and is the 7<sup>th</sup> most populous town in Shropshire.

#### **Development context**

Existing development allocations in the town are set out in the SAMDev (2015)2, however the Shropshire Local Plan is currently being reviewed. The Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites proposes other sites, which are not yet adopted. The sites currently allocated and those being proposed are set out below.

Existing Housing allocations within the town (SAMDev Sites, 2015<sup>3</sup>):

- Site SHI004/a: Land south of Aston Road, Shifnal. Site provision: 115 dwellings
- Site SHI004/b: Land between Lawton Road and Stanton Road, Shifnal. Site provision: 100 dwellings
- Site SHI006-a: Land north of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal. Site provision: 250 dwellings

Existing Employment land allocations (SAMDev Sites, 2015):

- Site SHI004/c: Land between Lawton Road and Lamledge Lane, Shifnal. Provision: 2 ha
- Site ELR021: Land at J.N. Bentley Ltd off Lamledge Lane, Shifnal. Provision 2 ha

The Proposed Housing Allocations included within the Shropshire Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) are:

- Site SHF013: Land adjoining Meadow Drive: Site Area 2.6ha. Site capacity 65 dwellings
- Sites SHF015 & SHF029 land adjoining Beech House. Size: 4ha. Capacity 65 dwellings
- Site SHF022 and part SHF023: Land Windmill View and The Monument on A464, Shifnal (south east). Site Area: 4ha. Site capacity: Approx 100 dwellings.

The Proposed Employment Land Allocation included within the Shropshire Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) is:

Site SHF018b and SHF018d: East of Shifnal Industrial Estate, Upton lane, Shifnal (east). Site Area: 39ha. Site capacity: Approx 15ha of employment land.

Preferred Land Safeguarded for Future Development Beyond 2036

Ref: SHF019 (10ha) South East Shifnal, Ref: P15bWest (3ha) South East Shifnal, Ref: P16a (22ha) South Shifnal, Ref: SHF017 south / SHF017 north (36ha) South West/West Shifnal, Ref: P17a (3ha) West Shifnal, Ref: SHF018a (4.5ha) East Shifnal, Ref: P14 (10ha) East Shifnal

Shifnal is proposed to accommodate an additional 1,500 dwellings and 41 hectares of employment land between 2016 and 2038. The proposed allocations are located to the south and the east of the settlement edge. In addition, there is a significant amount of safeguarded land for future development, to the southwest of the settlement edge, and a smaller area between the proposed eastern employment allocation. Allocation of the sites and proposed safeguarded land set out in the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) will require release of Green Belt land.

Shropshire Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites, 2018.

Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015

Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015



Grade I listed St Andrews Church



Accessible open space at Wheatley Drive Recreation Ground

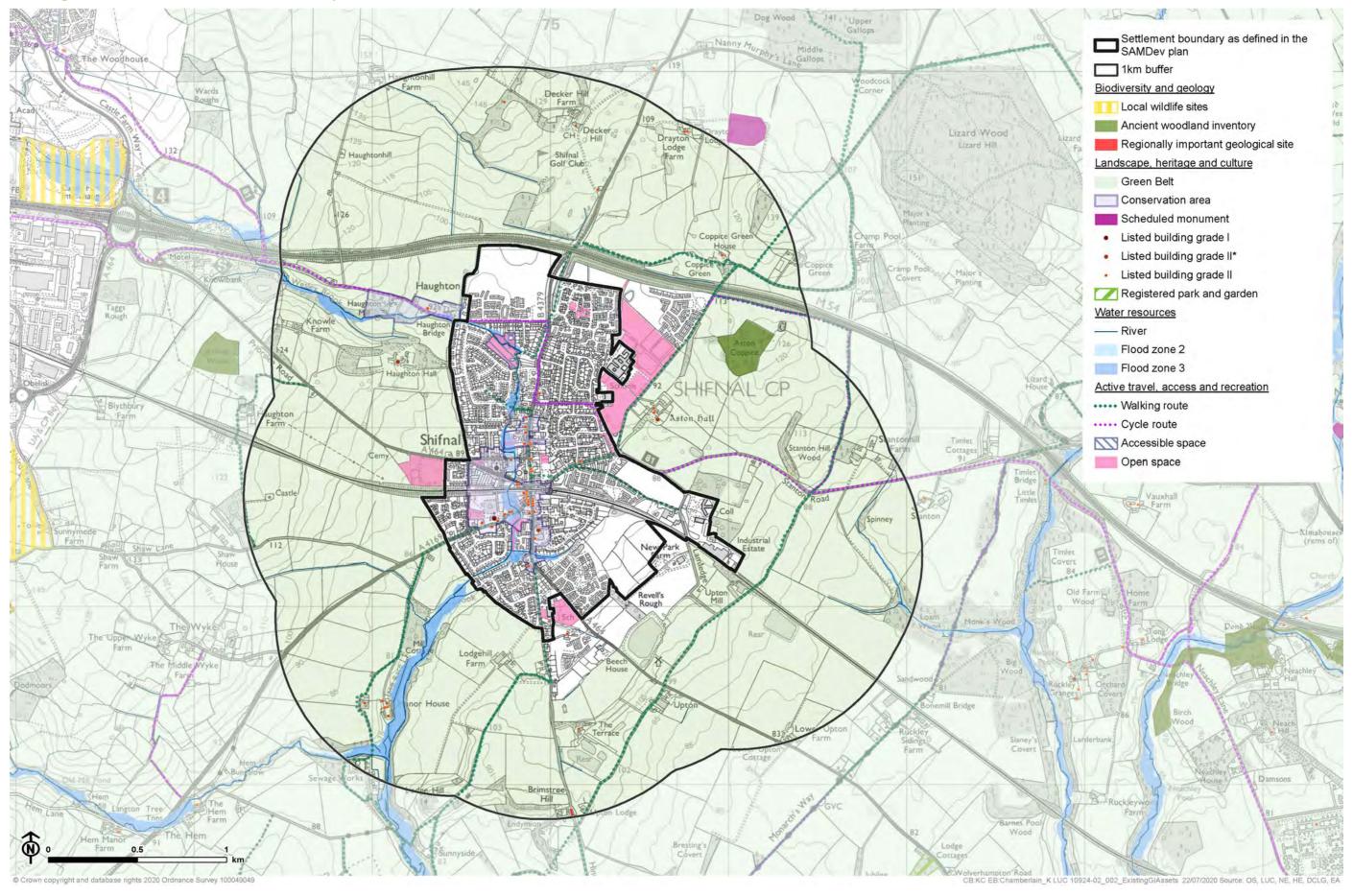


The Right of Way 0141/12/1and promoted work Shifnal P3



Recreational fishing pond at Haughton Hall

## **Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Key Constraints**



## **Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Constraints**

### **Theme**

#### **Existing Green Infrastructure Assets / Constraints**

## **Biodiversity**

#### **Designated Sites**

- There are no local or national ecological designations within the study area.
- There are two SSSI impact risk zones which run through the site, however these are for air pollution reasons only and are unlikely to apply to residential developments.

## **Notable and Priority Habitats**

- Existing green infrastructure assets with a biodiversity focus in Shifnal are dominated by woodlands and trees.
  - Linear tracts of deciduous woodland are present within the settlement and its surroundings, for example around Haughton Hall and the M54 underpass with the B4379. These features are noted in the Priority Habitat Inventory.
  - Of particular note is the Ancient Replanted Woodland at Aston Coppice, and the Semi Natural Ancient Woodland at Knowl Wood, just outside the study area. These ancient woodlands are also documented as Core Areas in the Shropshire Environmental Network.

#### Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology



- At the northern edge of the study area, near Decker Hall Farm there is a good quality, semiimproved natural grassland, noted in the Priority Habitat Inventory.
- Natural verges border many of the major transport routes through the settlement, for example along the A4619, A464 and B4379, although the M54 lacks these.
- Wesley Brook, the railway line and Shifnal Golf Club are a Key Corridors within the town, which are highlighted in the Shropshire Environmental Network.
- There are no restoration / creation areas in the Shropshire Environment Network in the study area.
- There are also no Natural England Habitat Mapping areas.

#### **Species**

- There are a number of records of protected and priority amphibian and invertebrate species south east of the settlement. These records, include Great Crested Newt, found in fields and woodlands on the edge of Shifnal and close to the fishing ponds to the southwest of the town.
- Within Wesley Brook there are records of the protected species White-Clawed Crayfish alongside invasive Signal Crayfish.
- Bats have been recorded both within the town and in farm buildings in the surrounding countryside. Please note, species records only reflect what was present when the surveyor was on site and may not be exhaustive of the true species and geographic spread within the study area.

#### Geology

There are no RIGs within this study area.

#### Landscape

- The landscape surrounding Shifnal is predominantly characterised as Sandstone Estatelands, with Estate Farmlands present further afield4. These medium and large-scale landscapes include clustered settlements, and parklands associated with country houses.
- Surrounding Wesley Brook, south west of Shifnal, the character area is Incised Sandstone Valleys, which is on a smaller scale, incorporated shallow, steep sided valleys and linear tree belts.
- In general, the landscape immediately surrounding the settlement has a lower sensitivity to development, and the most eastern part of the study area is more sensitive to development than the western edge.

#### Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture





- There are a number of Grade II and Grade II\* listed buildings within and surrounding Shifnal including:
  - Grade II\* listed building at Haughton Hall
  - Several Grade II listed building alongside Wesley Brook at Keepers Cottage
  - St Andrews Church within Shifnal is Grade I listed.
- There is a Scheduled Monument just outside the northern buffer by Drayton Lodge Farm
- There are three conservation areas within the settlement and its surroundings:
  - Shifnal Conservation Area around the town centre around St Andrews Church and Market Place
  - Shifnal Broadway Conservation Area along B4379 and around
  - Haughton Conservation Area which borders Shifnal to the north east

#### **Fresh Water Assets**

- Wesley Brook, a tributary of the River Worfe, runs through the town, from the west around the hamlet of Haughton and travelling south towards Bridgnorth.
- There several ponds located on the north western edge of the study area east of the M54 Jct 4 Services. These are most probably associated with the development of the motorway.
- There are two fishing ponds to the southeast of the town, south of Lamledge lane, and an additional open water area to the east of these to the immediate south of the railway line.

## **Flooding**

## Key Theme 3: Water Resources



- Shifnal lies across the rising land in the catchment of the River Worfe fed by the Wesley Brook lying on the south-west edge of the town. The extent of the Flood Zones is fairly well confined due to the topography of the surrounding areas; however, properties that back onto the Wesley Brook through the town, south of Haughton Road to where the Brook leave Shifnal are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Due to the relationship of the built settlement with the River Worfe and Wesley Book, flooding is considered to be a significant issue in Shifnal. Two flood defence schemes are proposed as 'Priority A' projects in the Shifnal Place Plan, one to protect 87 properties from flooding related to the Wesley Brook (to be complete by 2021) and another to protect approximately 50 properties post 2021. A feasibility study into channel widening of the Wesley Brook is also included in the Shifnal Place Plan.
- The strategic flood risk assessment<sup>5</sup> sets out that there are small, isolated areas of surface water flooding in the 30-year event, notably along Curriers Lane and Barn Road with no notable overland flow routes towards the Wesley Brook. This is similar for the 100-year event, with notable ponding along Aston Road. Overland flow routes are more predominant in the 1,000- year event, with notable overland flow routes being along the B4379 and Victoria Road.
- The Shifnal Surface Water Management Plan (2013) sets out approximately 20% of Shifnal may be affected by Surface Water flooding. It sets out that a scheme to attenuate surface water flows from the north of Shifnal could reduce flood risk in the town. However, the location earmarked in this

The Shropshire Landscape Typology, 2006

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2018

document is allocated in the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016) for a new health centre.

#### **Pollution**

Diffuse agricultural pollution affects land to the south and east of the settlement, impacting riparian biodiversity and natural habitats, The entire study area lies within the Surface Water River Worfe (Wesley Book to River Severn) NVZ.

#### Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)

■ The Shropshire Outline Water Cycle Study (2020) sets out that with in relation to SUDs, infiltration approaches are likely to suitable but these must consider presence of SPZ 2 in the east of the settlement.

#### **Transport context**

■ Traffic volumes at two strategic junctions including 'Five Ways' to the west (A464 / A4169 / B4379) and the town centre junction of Victoria Road (A464) with Bradford Street/Broadway (B4379) and Aston Street/Stanton Road (A41 / M54 Junction 3 link), place them in need of improvement and the Shifnal Integrated Transport Scheme is expected to propose a regeneration scheme for the highway junction in the town centre, which will improve the environment for walking and cycling.

#### **Active Travel**

#### Walking

- PRoW are evident throughout the study area, although these are mostly short distance and poorly connected.
- Coppice Green and Lodge Hill & Wesley Brook Circular Walks connect some of the PRoW at Coppice Green House to the north and Manor House and Lodge Hill to the south. These promoted walks start in the centre of Shifnal, adjacent the train station.
- Several potential 'Walkway Routes' were identified by Shifnal Forward Transport Action Group within Shifnal itself in order to improve active travel and connect key features within the town<sup>6</sup>.
- The consultation on the Shifnal transport and movement strategy (2016)<sup>7</sup> identifies a vision for a Shifnal Town Centre enhancement which would form a linear park along Broadway, Bradford Street and Market Place. This is envisaged to be incorporate planting and other ecological enhancements.
- The Shifnal Place Plan identifies specific opportunities for Enhancements to school zones in Curriers Lane, Park Lane and potentially adjacent streets to reduce vehicle speeds in both parishes.

#### Cycling

- National Cycle Route 81 runs through the northern part of Shifnal, connecting the settlement to Telford in the east and Albrighton in the west.
- There is one bridleway within the study area, which runs north of Stanton Road and west along the M54. This bridleway is part of the Sabrina Way, a long-distance route developed for the British Horse Society. The Sabrina Way runs through the eastern part of the study area.

#### **Access and Recreation**

- Open spaces in and around Shifnal are dominated by outdoor sports provision, including a football club, cricket club, recreation ground and school grounds.
- Shifnal Golf Club is located to the north of the settlement.
- RH Fisheries provide a further recreational amenity to the south east of Shifnal, adjacent the A464.
- The Shifnal Place Plan identifies a project to increase recreation access to Manor Wood, to the south-west of the town, and another to expand leisure and recreation facilities in Wheatfield Drive, Jubilee Park, and Curriers Lane Park.

#### Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation



<sup>6</sup> Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan, 2016

https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/2359/shifnal-exhibition-information.pdf

#### Health

■ The Shifnal Place Plan identifies the replacement of the existing GP surgery as its highest priority, with a new site allocated in the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016) at the corner of Haughton Road and Newport Road, in the north of the town.

#### **Health Deprivation**

Indices of Health Deprivation identify an area in the northeast of Shifnal, between Greenfields Crescent and Drayton Road which falls within the 3<sup>rd</sup> decile of deprivation (the 1<sup>st</sup> decile is the most deprived). The remainder of the study area is within the 7<sup>th</sup> decile and less deprived.

#### Childhood obesity

In comparison to other areas of Shropshire, there are not significant levels of childhood obesity or excess weight in the study area.

#### Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing



## Air Quality

There are no recorded AQMA within the study area.

#### Wellbeing

#### **Accessible Open Space**

- Accessible Open Space: 0.13ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). Analysis shows that over half the town falls within 400m of such provision, however the south-eastern and north western areas do not.
- Allotments: 0.04ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base).
- Provision for Children and Teenagers: 3 spaces in total. Analysis shows that the whole of the town falls within 800m of such provision.
- See the Open Space Assessment appended to the GI Strategy Report for more details.

#### **Road Noise**

Road noise related to the M54 affects the settlement, with most of Shifnal being exposed to noise levels of 55dB L<sub>den</sub><sup>3</sup> or more over 24 hours.

#### Tree cover

## Key Theme 6: Climate Change



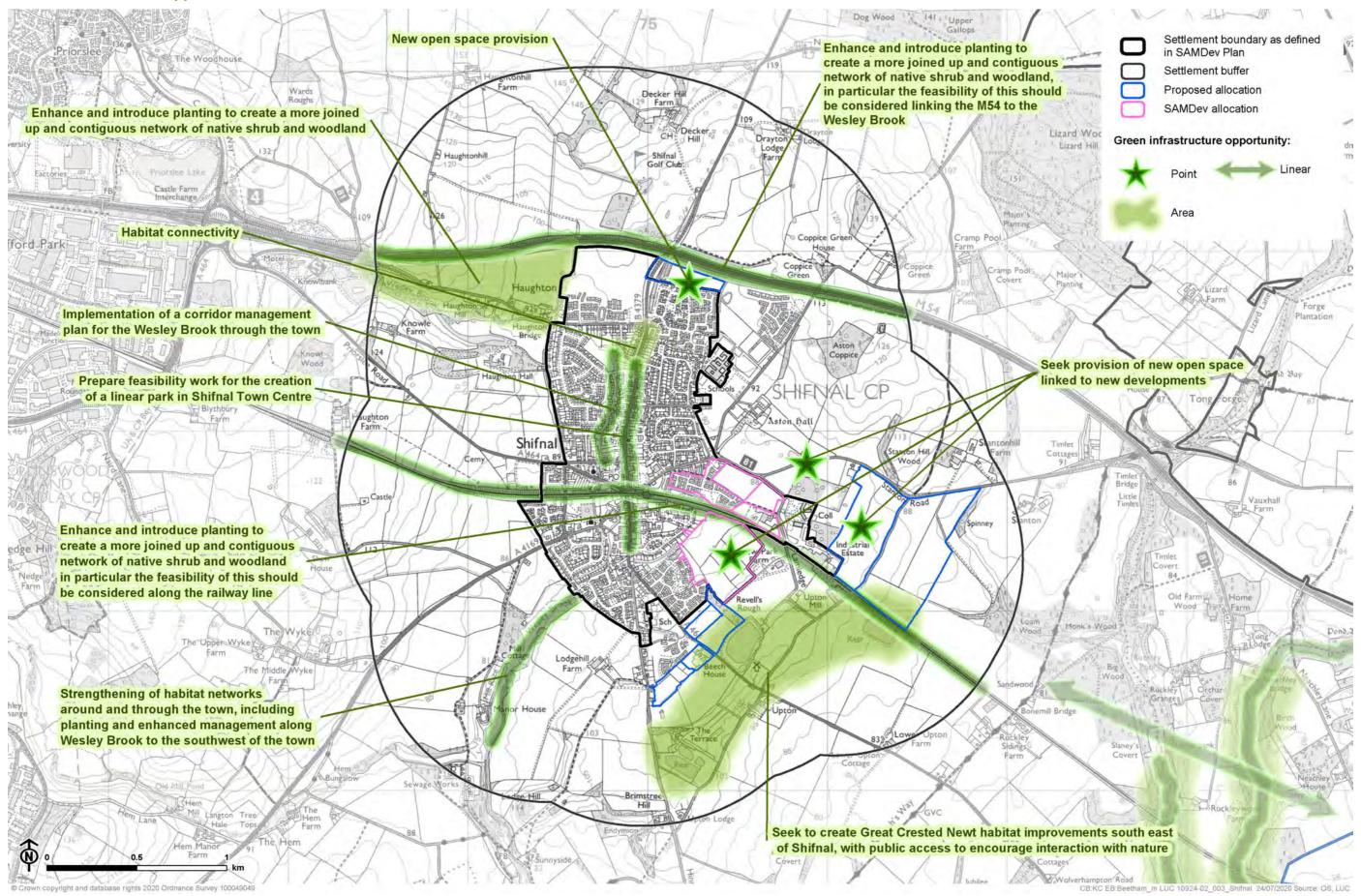
- There are scattered tree belts and woodland blocks within the study area, composed of broadleaved or mixed, mainly broad-leaved trees which afford natural shading (National Forest Inventory)
- Tree blocks are concentrated around the urban fringe of Shifnal and form multiple Green Wedges. They are predominantly linked to estates or grounds, including schools.

#### Climate change allowance flood risk modelling

■ The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>10</sup> sets out that according to the 'central upper' climate change modelling, flood risk areas are likely to be focussed on the existing flood zones, although this is likely to increase in certain areas, which may increase risk to property in the town.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2018

## **Green Infrastructure Opportunities**



## **Key Green Infrastructure Opportunities**

Theme	Green Infrastructure Opportunities				
Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology	The Shropshire Environmental Network and Natural England Habitat Network within the study area should be managed to ensure that they are enhanced in order to support wildlife populations.				
	In particular, a corridor management plan for the Wesley Brook through the town is recommended this should consider the opportunities for enhanced management of vegetation and species with and alongside the brook, and could be combined with other opportunities, such as active travel a flood relief, to provide multifunctional benefits.				
	Limited records of both the native white-clawed crayfish and the invasive signal crayfish have been reported on Wesley Brook. Work with local and national bodies could be explored to further examine findings and if necessary manage invasive species in order to promote protected species and enhance river health as part of the aforementioned management plan.				
	The opportunity to join the fragmented deciduous woodland to create a more contiguous and resilient network. In particular, an opportunity to create a continuous tree canopy link from the M52 south along Newport Road to Wesley Brook near Woolpack Close should be investigated.				
	Habitat creation south east of Shifnal should be considered where there are several records of Great Crested Newts (GCN). Protection and enhancement of the pond network and provision of linkages between these would promote ecological resilience. This habitat provision could be linked with new developments at the proposed allocations south east of Shifnal, and provision of access to this area would help to encourage interaction with nature.				
	■ The management of the semi-improved natural grassland near Decker Hall Farm, which is currently under Higher Level Environmental Stewardship, should be continued. This habitat can be supported by positive management of, and introduction of new, native species rich hedgerows and grass verges to increase connectivity to the grassland and wider area.				
Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture	The landscape setting around Haughton Hall could be enhanced, with improvements to the tree framework and boundaries to reflect the estate farmlands landscape character.				
	A corridor management plan for Wesley Brook should be considered. This would need to consider				
	the potential to reduce flood risk in addition to access improvements and enhanced vegetation management.				
Key Theme 3: Water Resources	The Shifnal Surface Water Management Plan (2013) set out a proposed attenuation area to catch surface water from the north. However, this area is allocated in the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016) for a medical centre. The design of the landscaping associated with this centre could seek to incorporate surface water attenuation to help reduce surface water flood risk in this area of the town.				
	Nature based solutions including ditch restoration and appropriate planting around Knowl Bank Farm and north of the M54 would help reduce flood risk whilst providing multi-functional GI benefits including biodiversity and climate change resilience.				
	Opportunities to engage with local landowners and farmers in order to reduce agricultural nitrate pollution into surrounding landscape should be investigated. Native buffer planting adjacent key waterways would reduce surface water nitrate content entering waterways.				

## Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation



- There is an opportunity to link the various walking and cycling routes more effectively to create longer routes for active recreation. The 'Promoted Walks' set out in the Shifnal Neighbourhood plan (2016) should be enhanced, reflecting Policy TM2 of the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016).
- There are also further opportunities for the creation of off-road routes and improving key access points to existing routes. For example, the creation of a new PRoW connecting footpath 0141/12/1 with Stafford Avenue would be beneficial. The feasibility of providing access alongside a greater part of the Wesley Brook, between Beech Drive and Shrewsbury Road, should also be considered as part of a holistic corridor management plan.
- The proposals for a new Town Centre Linear Park along Broadway, Bradford Street and Market Place should be investigated through the commissioning of further feasibility and design work for this project. This should incorporate an improved walking and cycling environment, the extension of National Cycle Route 81 into the town centre, cycle parking at key points including the train station, reflecting Policies TM3 and TM4 of the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016).
- The condition of existing PRoW could be improved to enhance accessibility for all users, particularly at settlement edges to encourage local level access to recreational facilities.
- There is currently better access to open space within the north of the settlement, therefore any new designation for Accessible Open Space would be more appropriately located to the south of Shifnal. Recognising that development is proposed to the east, open space provision to the southeast, linked with new development, should be considered.

The northern part of the settlement is more deprived than the south. Although there are existing accessible open spaces in this part of Shifnal there is an opportunity to improve interaction with these spaces for example through improved quality and accessibility and additional facilities. Improvements to the provision at Wheatfield Recreation Ground are recommended. New open spaces should also be included within the proposed development allocation on the northern edge of

### Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing



Shifnal, to reduce pressure on existing spaces. All new open spaces should provide opportunities for food growing as well as provision for children and teenagers.
Opportunities to provide new good quality semi-natural open spaces should be investigated. This could be in the form of opening up the Wesley Brook in the town, as part of a holistic corridor management plan. In addition, access improvements alongside Wesley Brook to the south west of Shifnal, increasing accessibility to the waterway and incorporating new habitats would allow for

greater interaction with nature. New development should also provide well designed open space

- Opportunities for Enhancements to school zones in Curriers Lane, Park Lane and potentially adjacent streets to reduce vehicle speeds in both parishes (as identified in the place plan) should be designed in ways that include street planting, to improve the environment and reduce the noise and pollution effects of traffic.
- Improving the quality and density of roadside vegetation along the southern side of the M54 are recommended to provide a buffer between the motorway and the northern part of Shifnal, helping to reduce the perception of road noise. Such an intervention would also have multi-functional benefits including reductions in air pollution and provision of habitat connectivity. Visual and aural screening of the M54 to the new developments north of the settlement should be considered with strategic trees and hedgerows included within development here.

## Key Theme 6: Climate Change



- Where practicable, urban street trees and vegetation can be implemented within the urban form of Shifnal and within new developments associated with the town, particularly in the town centre and near schools.
- All new planting should provide climate resilient species.

which provides connectivity for people and nature.

- A corridor management plan for the Wesley Brook in the town should consider options to alleviate flood risk.
- The promotion of and improvement to walking and cycling routes within Shifnal could reduce reliance on cars.

Summary of key opportunities				(1)		
Prepare feasibility work for the creation of a linear park in Shifnal Town Centre, providing walking and cycling improvements including an extension to NCN81, cycle parking and street planting to encourage engagement with nature and reduce noise and air pollution associated with traffic.	<b>√</b>		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
Implementation of a corridor management plan for the Wesley Brook through the town, considering vegetation management, control of invasive species, providing access enhancements and seeking ways to reduce flood risk.	<b>√</b>		<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>~</b>
Promotion of Walkway Routes within Shifnal as required by the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan (2016) and extend the PRoW network by introducing an additional connection from footpath 0141/12/1 with Stafford Avenue.				<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>~</b>
Strengthening of habitat networks around and through the town, including planting and enhanced management along Wesley Brook to the southwest of the town (with access improvements) and continued management and enhancement of environmental corridors and semi-improved grassland near Decker Hall Farm.	<b>✓</b>	<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>			<b>√</b>
Enhance and introduce planting to create a more joined up and contiguous network of native shrub and woodland, in particular the feasibility of this should be considered along the railway line, south of the M54 and linking the M54 to the Wesley Brook.	<b>√</b>				<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
Seek to create Great Crested Newt habitat improvements south east of Shifnal, with public access to encourage interaction with nature.	<b>√</b>		<b>√</b>			
Seek provision of new open space linked to new developments, particularly focussed to the south of the town, and seek improvements to existing open spaces, in particular the facilities at Wheatfield Recreation Ground.				<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>	
Engage with local landowners and support them in reducing surface water pollution, particularly in relation to nitrates.	<b>√</b>		✓		✓	<b>√</b>
Enhancement and creation of open spaces as part of new developments north and south east of Shifnal.						