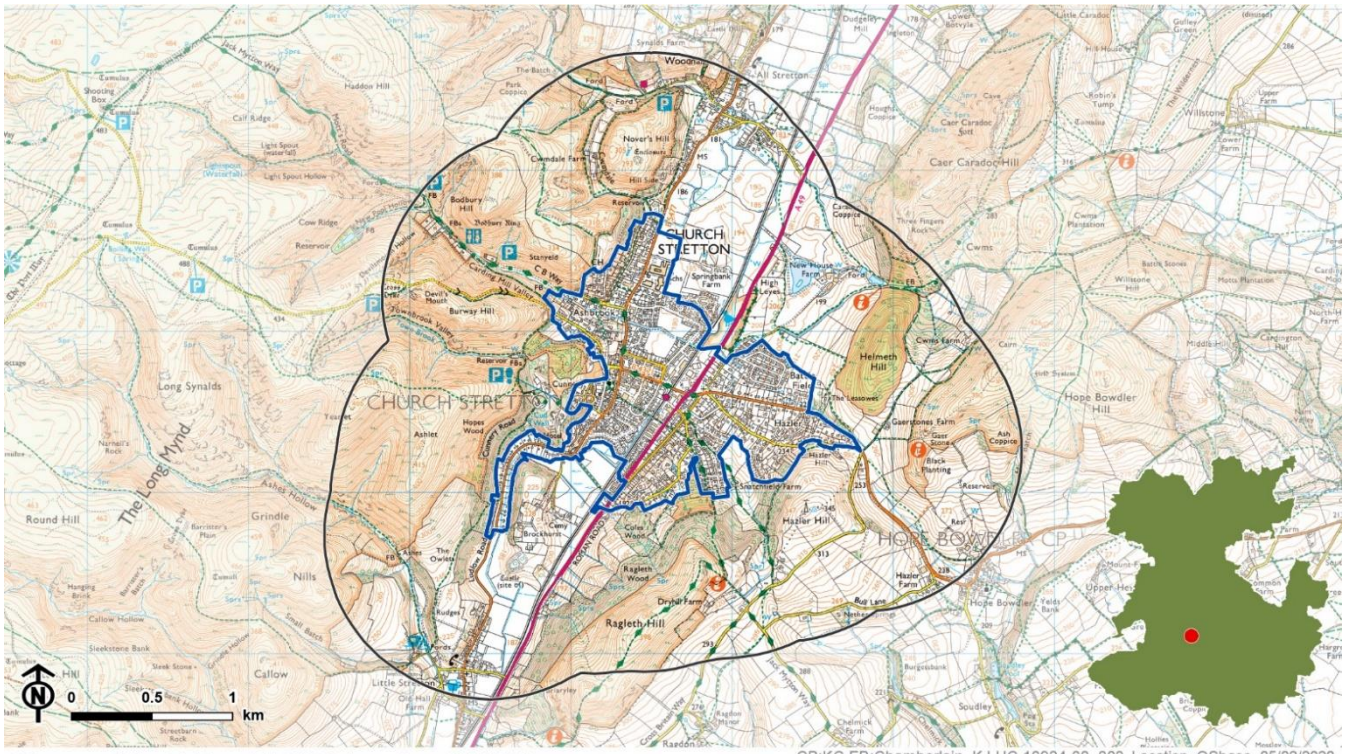


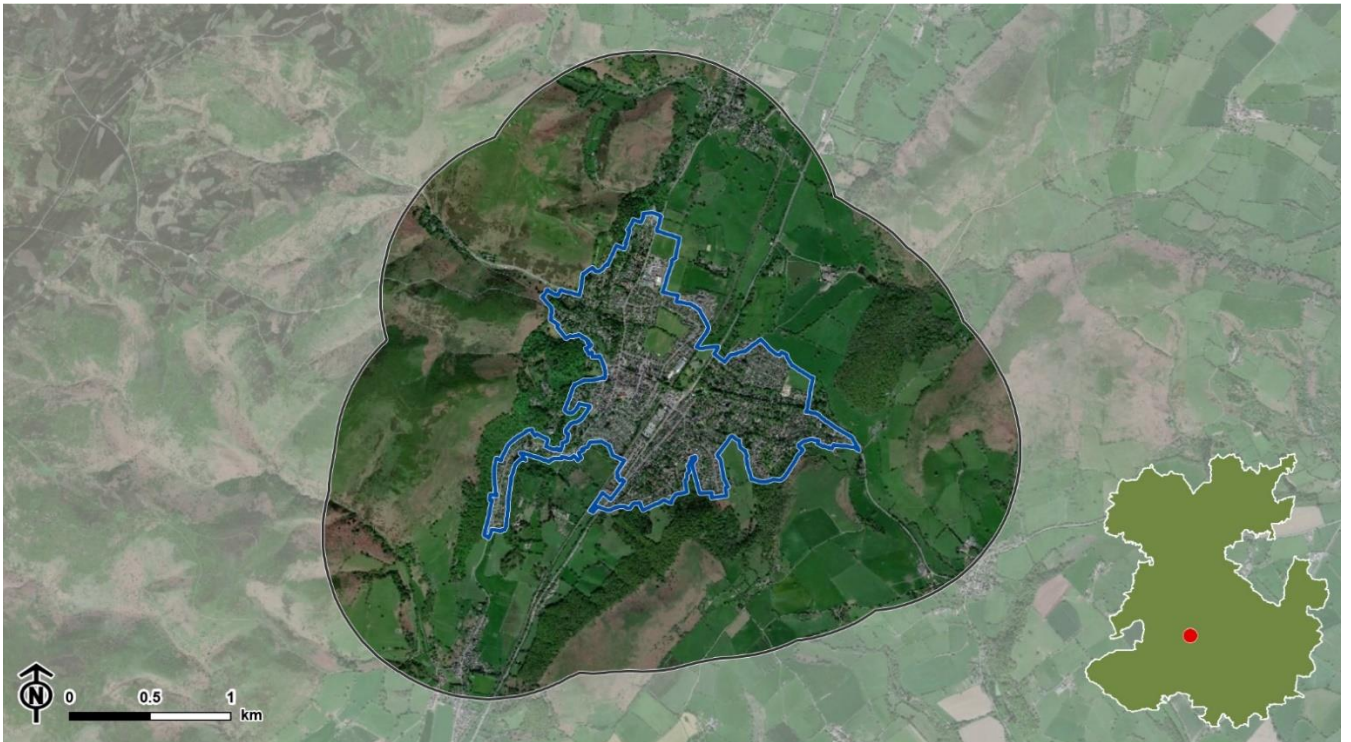
Key Centre – Church Stretton

Location



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CB:KC EB:Chamberlain_K LUC 10924-00_000_Location_OSbase 05/02/2020 Source: SC, LUC, OS



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CB:KC EB:Chamberlain_K LUC 10924-00_001_Location_Aerial 05/02/2020 Source: SC, LUC, OS

Summary of Settlement Study Area and Location

Introduction

The town of Church Stretton has been identified as a Key Centre within the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020). This Green Infrastructure Strategy has defined the study area as a 1km buffer around Church Stretton. This Green Infrastructure Strategy has defined the study area as a 1km buffer around this settlement.

Church Stretton is the only town within the Shropshire Hills Area AONB and the whole study area is located within this designation. It is located roughly halfway between Shrewsbury and Ludlow, developing along the Roman Road that ran through the narrow valley of the Stretton Gap. Today the town benefits from good transport links, with a station on the Crewe to Cardiff railway line. In 2016, the population of the town was nearly 4,000 and contained almost 2,000 dwellings. As Church Stretton is a popular retirement destination, it has the lowest proportion of working aged people within Shropshire. Tourism is an important employment sector within the settlement.

There are number of environmental factors that influence development proposals in the town, these include that the valley floor to the north and south of the town centre is prone to flooding and numerous heritage and national and local biodiversity designations within the town.

Development context

Existing development allocations in the town are set out in the SAMDev (2015)¹, however the Shropshire Local Plan is currently being reviewed. The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) 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, 2015²):

- Site CSTR018: School Playing Fields, Church Stretton. Site provision: Up to 50 dwellings
- Site CSTR019: Battlefield to rear of Oaks Road/Alison Road. Site provision: 50 dwellings

Existing Employment land allocations (SAMDev Sites, 2015):

- Site ELR078: Springbank Farm. Provision: 1.27ha

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

- Site CST021: Snatchfield Farm, Church Stretton (south). Site Area 4.29ha. Site capacity: Approx 70 dwellings

The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) sets out that one new housing site is proposed, providing 70 units at Snatchfield Farm, which is in the southwestern part of the site. This is in addition to 50 dwellings allocated in the SAMDev which do not have planning permission, and 50 dwellings at the rear of Oaks Road / Alison Road, which has planning permission.

¹ Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015

² Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan 2015



Grazing at National Trust's Carding Mill on the Long Mynd SSSI



Deciduous woodland at Rectory Wood and Field

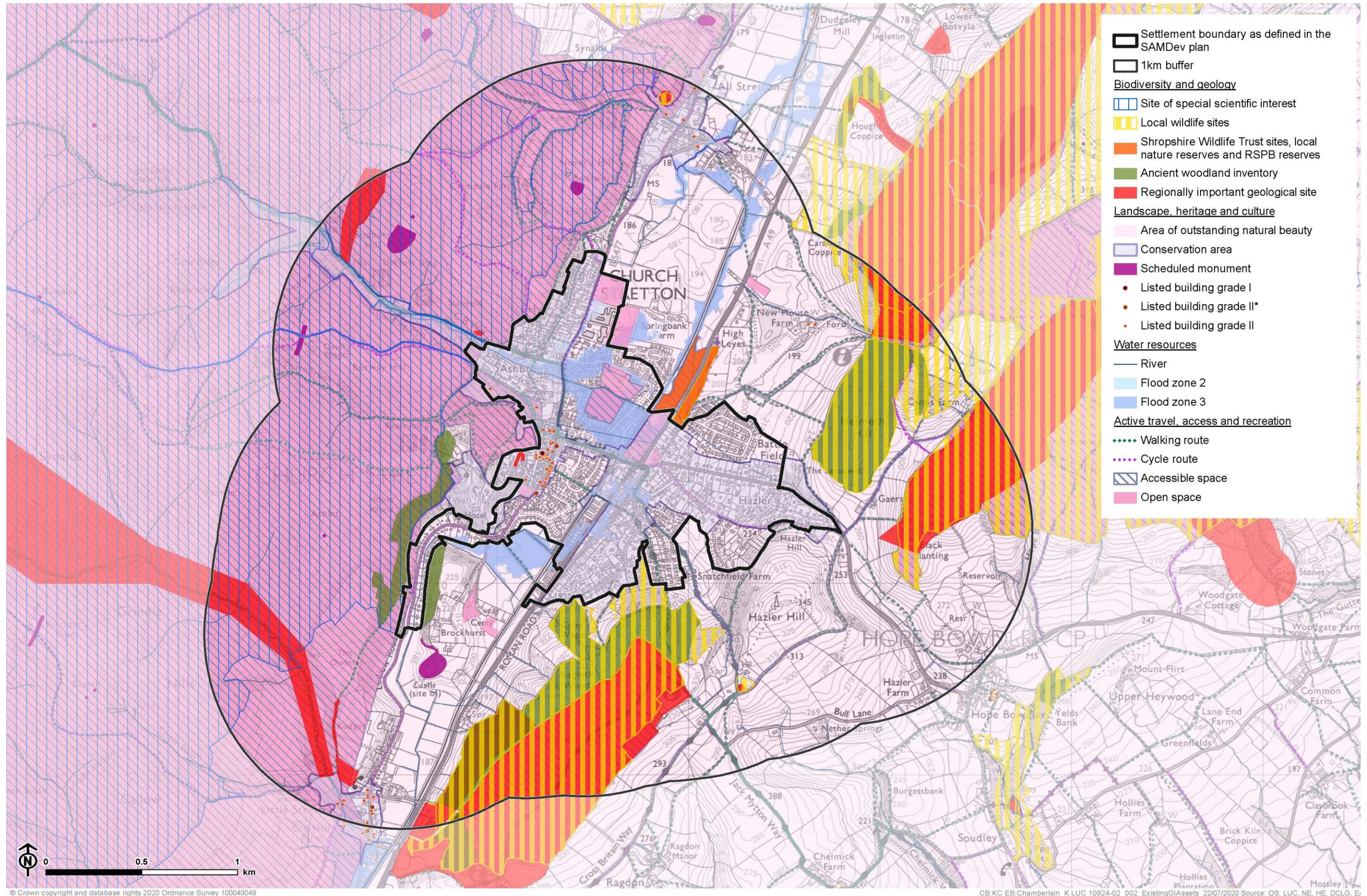


Grade 1 listed Church of St Lawrence




Hazler Quarry RIGS at Windy Ridge

Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Key Constraints






Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Constraints

Theme	Existing Green Infrastructure Assets / Constraints
<p>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</p> 	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Designated Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Long Mynd SSSI covers the western part of the study area. This is a large SSSI covering over 2000ha. This is in an unfavourable, recovering condition. In most cases the unfavourable score is due to overgrazing and a high level of bracken cover³. The impact risk zone from this SSSI extends across the whole of the study area. ■ Coppice Leasowes Local Nature Reserve is located immediately north of the settlement of Church Stretton, alongside the railway line and bisected by the A49. The reserve includes a mosaic of habitats including streams, wetlands, meadows and deciduous, semi natural woodland⁴ noted in the Priority Habitat Inventory. <p>Notable and Priority habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are a variety of Priority Habits within the study area. To the west, on The Long Mynd, this is dominated by Upland Heathland and grass moorland. Closer to the western edge of Church Stretton this connects to deciduous woodland. East of the settlement, priority habitats are much more fragmented. Deciduous woodland, grass moorland and good quality semi-improved grassland is present around Ragleth Wood and Ragleth Hill. Further north there is deciduous woodland and lowland dry acid grassland near Helmeth Hill with the areas surrounding these included in Network Enhancement Zone 1. ■ There are several tracts of ancient semi-natural woodland within the study area, including linear tracts along Ludlow Road near Cunnergy, at Ragleth Wood and on Helmeth Hill. Helmeth Hill and Ragleth wood are also parts of larger Local Wildlife Sites noted as coppiced oak woods. ■ There are a number of other Local Wildlife Sites which are in the north east corner of the study area. This includes Cwms Common and Hop Bowdler Hill which both include acid grassland and flushes. ■ The Shropshire Environmental Network highlights the railway line, brooks and vegetation surrounding the B5477 south of the settlement as key corridors between the core areas on Ragleth and Helmeth Hill and the Long Mynd. ■ Natural England Habitat Network mapping identifies areas in along the western boundary of the settlement as being within Network Enhancement Zone 2. ■ Natural verges are continuous along the length of the A49, except in the centre of the settlement. Verges are not present of very fragmented on the B5477. <p>Species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are a large number of records for Priority Invertebrates, particularly butterflies, which are predominantly focused around the ditches and streams within the study area. ■ There are also priority flowering plants, with a high density of these records around Townbrook, where species such as bog pimpernel and lustrous bog-moss grow. ■ Protected bird species within the study area include buzzards which have been recorded, which are confirmed as breeding within all grids within the study area covers, in most cases this includes confirmed breeding. Please not 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.



³ Natural England <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportUnitCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1004080&ReportTitle=Long%20Mynd%20SSSI>

⁴ https://www.churchstretton.co.uk/assets/councildocs/Coppice%20Leasowes%20Leaflet_2.pdf




	<p>Geology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are a number of RIGs within the study area, including natural outcrops along the brook at Ashes Hollow which showcases the upward coarsening of the Precambrian Stretton Series and Ragleth Hill which was key to determining the evolution from volcanic to sedimentary environments during the Precambrian.
<p>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</p> 	<p>Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The landscape surrounding Church Stretton is varied and therefore the study area incorporates a large number of Landscape Character Types. ■ High open Moorlands dominate west of the settlement on the Long Mynd. These are generally unenclosed and with a large-scale open character. This area also has a very high sensitivity to development. ■ Around Ragleth Wood, Helmeth Hill and the surrounding lower land, the landscape character is defined as Wooded Hills and Farmlands which are moderately grazed and include large ancient character and ancient hedged fields. This is a medium-scaled landscape with framed views and has a high sensitivity to development. ■ The higher land around Ragleth Hill and north and east of Helmeth Hill are characterised as High Volcanic Hills, which are unenclosed, sheep grazed, steep sloped hills. This Precambrian geology gives Ragleth Hill and Caer Caradoc and Hope Bowdler Hill, just outside the north-eastern boundary of this study area, their prominent appearances. This landscape is highly sensitive to development. ■ Other landscape character types include Pasture Hills, Principal Settlement Farmlands, Settled pastoral Farmlands and Timbered Plateau Farmlands. These have lower sensitivities to development. <p>Designations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The entire study area is within the Shropshire Hills AONB. ■ The land to the west of Church Stretton on The Long Mynd is National Trust Open Land. ■ There is no Green Belt within the study area. ■ There are a number of Environmental Stewardships in place within study area, notable within The Long Mynd, in Ragleth Wood & Hill and around Helmeth Hill. These areas are classified as Grade 4 and 5 agricultural land. <p>Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are Grade II listed buildings within the study area, these are predominantly focused around the High Street within the east of the settlement near Cunnergy and around Little Stretton in the south of the parcel. ■ There is one grade I listed building within the study area, the Church of St Lawrence within Church Stretton. ■ There are some Scheduled Monuments within the study area including the tower keep of Brockhurst Castle, south of the settlement, and Bodbury ring, a univallate hillfort on Bodbury Hill with The Long Mynd. ■ Much of the settlement of Church Stretton is within the Church Stretton Conservation area, which also extends along Carding Mill Valley. To the south there is an additional conservation area at Little Stretton, and to the north one at All Stretton.




<p>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</p> 	<p>Freshwater Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Church Stretton is located on a local watershed, with brooks in the northern half of the settlement flowing north towards Cound Brook and those in the south flowing south to Quinny Brook. <p>Flood Risk</p> <p>There are a number of water courses within the study area, which run from the higher land, particularly in The Long Mynd, towards the settlement of Church Stretton. Thus, a significant area of Church Stretton is located in flood zone 3. In particular, this focusses on sections of Churchill Road, Lutwhyche Road and Essex Road and to the north of this, in the Ashbrook area around the stream . There is also Flood Zone 3 identified at the south of the settlement around Worldsend, where several small brooks originating on Ragleth Hill run into the brook in the settlement. Within the town itself many of these brooks are culverted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are particular issues at the storm drain near the police station along Sandford Road. ■ Environment Agency surface water floodrisk mapping identifies high and medium areas of floodrisk, focussed along the A49 and area south of Ludlow Road. <p>Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no Nitrate Vulnerable Zones within the study area. <p>Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Permeability across the study area is hugely variable and there is an source protection zone 1 in the western part of the settlement which is relevant to drainage design. As such the design of drainage solutions will vary across the settlement⁵.
<p>Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation</p> 	<p>Transport context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The A49 passes through the centre of Church Stretton connecting to Shrewsbury in the north and to Hereford in the south. The B4371 enters the town from the east and the B5477 runs north to south through the town. ■ Church Stretton has a train station owing to it's position on the Crewe to Cardiff Railway Line. <p>Active Travel</p> <p>Walking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is an extensive and linked network of PRow within the study area of footpaths and bridleways. ■ A number of long-distance walks cross the study area. Of particular note is the Shropshire Way which runs east to west, with Church Stretton being the start/finish point between route 7 and route 8. ■ The promoted walks also include shorter walks such as Family Friendly Rectory Wood and Field immediately around Old Rectory Wood and Wagoner's wander which has a short and long version. <p>Cycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are two Shropshire Cycle Routes within the study area, one running north to south along Ludlow Road and Shrewsbury Road and one east to west on Bur Way and Hazler Road. The cross in the centre of Church Stretton. ■ These connect to the wider Shropshire cycle network to offer longer circular routes and links to other settlements. ■ There are several promoted cycle routes that pass through the town including Ride UK Acton Scott Ride







⁵ Shropshire Outline Water Cycle Study (2010)

	<p>Rail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Church Stretton railway station is located in the centre of the town. <p>Access and Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are numerous open spaces within the study area which include a range of typologies. Natural and semi-natural open space and outdoor sports provision dominates, including Old Rectory Wood and the Local Nature Reserve and playing fields at Brooksbury Road and Church Stretton primary School. ■ The Shropshire Open Space Needs assessment identifies a total provision of 5.4Ha per 1000 persons compared to a Shropshire Average of 8.03ha per 1000 persons.
<p>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> 	<p>Health</p> <p>Health Deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The indices of deprivation for health shows that health deprivation in Church Stretton is generally low, with the settlement itself being identified in an area which is within the 70-80% least deprived for health. <p>Childhood Obesity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public Health England data shows that child obesity and excess weight levels are generally low throughout the study area <p>Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no recorded AQMA within Church Stretton. <p>Wellbeing</p> <p>Accessible Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Open Space Assessment undertaken by LUC to inform this GI Strategy identified the following baseline provision of open space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accessible Open Space: 2.19ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). Analysis shows that most of the town falls within 400m of such provision, however much of the the south eastern side of the settlement does not. – Allotments: 0ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). There is allotment provision alongside the A49, south west of the settlement. – Provision for Children and Teenagers:1 spaces in total. The southern part of the town falls outside a 800m distance of this space. ■ See the Open Space Assessment appended to the GI Strategy Report for more details. <p>Road Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Road noise related to Crossways / the A49 which runs down the centre of Church Stretton, exposes the adjacent land to noise levels of 55dB L_{den}³ or more over 24 hours.
<p>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</p> 	<p>Tree cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The majority of the tree cover within the study area is broadleaved which creates shading and sequesters carbon. ■ In particular there is urban tree cover along Ludlow Road and in the south west of Church Stretton. <p>Flooding Climate Change Allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Modelling which takes account of climate change suggests land with a 5% chance of flooding will exceed the current flood zone 3 in a few locations. In particular this may affect the allocation off Shrewsbury Road.

Key Green Infrastructure Opportunities

Theme	Green Infrastructure Opportunities
<p>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. ■ It is recommended that habitat networks across the valley are strengthened to provide connectivity between the upland peaks of the Long Mynd to the west and hilltops to the east. This could be achieved through urban greening along Sandford Avenue, and amending management practices at open space / sport provision in the town, such as at Brooksbury, to allow rougher grassland and scrub along the edges of the space. This would enhance the corridor within the Shropshire Environmental Network and improve east-west connectivity for species through the valley. ■ Introduction of woodland to provide connectivity between the semi natural ancient woodlands of Ragleth Wood and alongside Ludlow Road, providing contiguous canopy cover across the valley is recommended. ■ Planting strategic hedgerow and tree belt links between the priority habitats is recommended to create a habitat mosaic. In particular this could go along the railway line which is an environmental corridor. ■ Within the proposed allocation at Snatchfield Farm, green infrastructure provision should reflect the outcome of the habitats regulations assessment in relation to the potential impacts on the Stiperstones and Hollies. In addition, Damper grassland and channels should be retained along the eastern boundary and linked to the Environmental Network to the south west and south east. Mature trees along the site's eastern and northern boundaries should be retained and given an adequate buffer. Links between these and the woodland to the south of the site boundary should be maintained and the off-site woodland buffered through landscaping. The line of the Jack Mytton Way through the site must be retained and buffered through sympathetic landscaping through the site. Mature trees and hedgerows should be retained and again integrated into the green links through the site. ■ Coordination with National Trust staff working on the Long Mynd to ensure biodiversity improvements within the settlement complement their management of the SSSI.
<p>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whilst no specific benefits to the landscape, culture and heritage have been identified, it is important to ensure that other benefits do not compromise the large scale, open character of the Long Mynd.
<p>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nature based solutions and Natural Flood Management improvements to the upland brooks should be introduced to slow the flow of water reaching the settlement during high rainfall events. This will be particularly relevant near Carding Mill Brook. ■ Ensure continued management of water resources. As Church Stretton is at the top of the catchment any impacts on water quality could have an effect on all the downstream catchment. ■ All developments should provide sustainable urban drainage solutions and should be designed to reduce flood risk associated with surface water within the town.
<p>Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cycle parking and cycle routes linking to the National Cycle route along Shrewsbury Road should be included in the development of the SAMDev employment allocations in the north of Church Stretton.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve the path network in natural and semi-natural open spaces such as Coppice Leosowes Local Nature Reserve / Sandford Park with an all access path to ensure everyone within the community can access some natural spaces and in line with the Place Plan, creation of formalised access to Sandford Park from A49 to allow public access by vehicle. ■ In the very south of the study area, in line with the Place Plan, the installation of 50m of pavement on the B5477 Ludlow Road, north of Little Stretton is recommended to encourage and allow active travel. ■ All new developments should include cycle friendly design and be linked via cycle improvements on the highway network to the town centre.
<p>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are existing green infrastructure assets in the study area so opportunities focus on engaging the community further with these, for example through increased voluntary opportunities to manage natural areas, for example management of bracken in the SSSI (noted in Theme 1). ■ Council owned land in the south of church Stretton near Worldsend could be utilised as public open space to provide open space for residences in the south of the settlement and include play equipment for children with disabilities, a need noted in the Place Plan. ■ Include open space provision in all of the SAMDev and proposed residential allocation, these should offer opportunities for food growing, to address the deficiency identified in the Open Space Needs Assessment.
<p>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include street trees within the centre of Church Stretton to increase urban shading and absorb carbon dioxide. Natural flood management and green surfaces should be included within the SAMDev housing allocation off Shrewsbury Road to take account of the slight increase to flood risk due to climate change. ■ All new planting should provide climate resilient species.

Summary of key opportunities						
Coordination with National Trust staff working on the Long Mynd to ensure GI improvements within the settlement complement their management of the SSSI.	✓	✓	✓			✓
Strengthen and create habitat networks east to west across the valley to improve connectivity between the protected habitats and ancient woodland either side of the settlement. In particular this could be south of the settlement between Ragleth Wood.Stre	✓					✓
Urban greening along Sandford avenue to increase biodiversity connectivity across the valley.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Provision of new open space on land immediately south of Stretton Farm Road at Worldsend, including small-scale SUDs benefits and play equipment for children, suitable for those with disabilities.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Link new developments to the town centre / national cycle network to promote active travel and reduce reliance on cars.				✓	✓	✓
Improve access to and around Sandford Park / Coppice Leosowes Local Nature Reserve.				✓	✓	
Include provision of open space within all new developments allocated in the SAMDev and within the proposed allocation, linking these to surrounding habitat networks and providing food growing opportunities.				✓	✓	