

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Cleobury Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan

Environmental Report

April 2022

Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Cleobury Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan (CMNDP).

SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the CMNDP is a legal requirement.¹

The CMNDP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework, and the emerging Local Plan Review. Once 'made' the CMNDP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, alongside the current Shropshire Local Plan.

The SEA Environmental Report, including this NTS, accompanies the latest version of the draft CMNDP in Regulation 14 consultation. This is a re-run of Regulation 14 consultation, which was originally undertaken in summer 2020 without an accompanying SEA.

Structure of the Environmental Report/ this NTS

SEA reporting essentially involves answering the following questions in turn:

- 1) What has plan-making / SEA involved **up to this point?**
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
- 2) What are the SEA findings **at this stage?**
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
- 3) What happens **next?**

Each of these questions is answered in turn within a discrete 'part' of the Environmental Report and summarised within this NTS. However, firstly there is a need to set the scene further by answering the questions 'What is the Plan seeking to achieve?' and 'What's the scope of the SEA?'

What is the Plan seeking to achieve?

The following vision has been established for the CMNDP:

"In 2038, our vision for Cleobury Mortimer is that it will be a place where:

- *Any future building development is done in location(s) and a manner, which protects public safety.*

¹ Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The CMNDP was screened in as requiring SEA by Shropshire Council in 2020.

- *The natural space in which we live is protected, green spaces are improved, and enhanced, and local trees of importance are protected.*
- *Development will be sympathetic to the living environment.*
- *People of all ages can live happily and enjoy a strong sense of community and the security that this brings and where there are sufficient opportunities for the whole community to come together to meet and celebrate.*
- *The age profile of the community will be balanced because suitable housing will be available for people and families in all phases of their lives.*
- *There is a well-connected public transport system that allows people of all ages and mobility to travel on foot or by bus on safe, convenient, and direct routes.*
- *Access to the beautiful countryside is available for all with good connections between rural and urban areas.*
- *There is a prosperous local economy that meets the needs of the town and surrounding villages and that also provides well-paid local jobs, including working from home due to high-speed internet connectivity for businesses and those working from home.*
- *Mental and physical health is good for all members of the community because there are ample opportunities to exercise, meet others, and obtain specialist support when it is required.*
- *There is energy self-sufficiency and the opportunity to benefit from renewable sources of energy and cleaner energy including vehicle charging points; and*
- *Tourists will visit and contribute to the local economy.”*

What is the scope of the SEA?

The scope of the SEA is reflected in a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions, which, taken together indicate the parameters of the SEA and provide a methodological ‘framework’ for assessment. A summary framework is presented here, and a full framework which includes assessment questions is provided within the main Environmental Report (**Table 3.1**).

SEA theme	SEA objective
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area
	Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the AONB and its setting.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.
	Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.

SEA theme	SEA objective
Population and communities	Ensure growth in the town is aligned with the needs of all residents and capacity of the settlement and social infrastructure, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.

Plan-making/ SEA up to this point

An important element of the required SEA process involves assessing 'reasonable alternatives' in time to inform development of the draft proposals, and then publishing information on reasonable alternatives for consultation alongside the draft proposals.

As such, Part 1 of the Environmental Report explains how work was undertaken to develop and assess a 'reasonable' range of alternative approaches for the CMNDP.

Specifically, Part 1 of the report –

1. Explains the process of establishing the reasonable alternatives.
2. Presents the outcomes of assessing the reasonable alternatives; and
3. Explains reasons for developing a preferred option, considering the assessment.

Establishing the reasonable alternatives

Part 1 of the Environmental Report explores both the strategic parameters provided by the Local Plan and the available site options to establish alternatives to the preferred approach for both housing and employment development. Seven alternative site options are established for housing development and taken forward for assessment. The housing options are:

- **Site CMO004 Land to the north of Station Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes.
- **Site CMO005 North East of Catherton Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes.
- **Site CMO020 Land off Tenbury Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 350 homes.
- **Ludlow Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes incorporating a cemetery extension and an additional 1ha of open space. This is the revised and extended submission of Site CMO009.
- **Redthorne Farm.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 60 homes incorporating new green space. This is the revised and extended submission of Site CMO019.
- **North of the A4117.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 350 homes.
- **South of the A4117.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 220 dwellings with new green infrastructure.

Two employment land alternatives are also established which compares the preferred strategy as presented in the previous Regulation 14 draft Plan with an alternative option north of Tenbury Road. The employment options are:

- **Site CMO018** to deliver up to 1.3ha of B Class employment land; and
- **Site CMO020** to deliver up to 1.3ha of B Class employment use in the south-eastern extent of the site.

Assessing the reasonable alternatives

The full assessment of the options for housing and employment are presented in Part 1 of the Environmental Report. The summary findings for these options are presented below.

Summary findings for housing

SEA theme		Site CMO004: Station Rd	Site CMO005: Catherton Rd	Site CMO020: Tenbury Rd	Ludlow Road	Redthorne Farm	North of the A4117	South of the A4117
Biodiversity	Likely effect	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive
	Rank	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
Climate change	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Landscape	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Significant negative	Significant negative
	Rank	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Historic environment	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Significant negative	Uncertain	Significant negative
	Rank	1	1	1	1	3	2	3
Land, soil, and water resources	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
Population and communities	Likely effect	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive
	Rank	2	2	2	1	3	3	3
Health and wellbeing	Likely effect	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive
	Rank	3	2	2	1	2	3	3
Transportation	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	1	1	1	1	1	2	2

Summary findings for employment

SEA theme		Site CMO018	Site CMO020
Biodiversity	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	-	-
Climate change	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	-	-
Landscape	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	1	2
Historic environment	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	-	-
Land, soil and water resources	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	-	-
Population and communities	Likely effect	Significant positive	Significant positive
	Rank	-	-
Health and wellbeing	Likely effect	Minor positive	Minor positive
	Rank	-	-
Transportation	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	1	2

Developing the preferred approach

The CMNDP Steering Group's reasons for developing the preferred approach in light of the alternatives assessment are identified below:

"Taking the findings of the environmental and the site allocations report, the Ludlow Road site is preferable over other alternatives.

- *Sites CMO004 Station Road, CMO005 Catherton Road, and CMO020 Tenbury Road perform relatively well through the assessment process. However, the Ludlow Road site is preferred given its connection with the existing cemetery, facilitating a logical expansion area and delivering additional cemetery space.*
- *Redthorn Farm was only proposed for 60 houses and therefore, the site was too small to be used alone. The January call for sites set out in criterion 1 that the site should accommodate 120 dwellings.*
- *The sites North and South of the A4117 were likely to be within the view corridor of Mawley Hall, a Grade 1 listed building and do not connect well with the existing settlement area. In addition, the Policy Manager at Shropshire Council indicated concern that the sites would also have high landscape sensitivity as both identified as of high sensitivity within the landscape assessment supporting the SAMDev Plan. Development at these site would extend the settlement area beyond the river, changing the settlement pattern.*

The Ludlow Road site provides a better cemetery extension than any other site option as it lies adjacent to the existing cemetery. It is also the flattest site (and therefore most suitable for housing) and has the capacity to put into place a valuable wildlife corridor linking Ludlow Road to Catherton Road and the QE11 Park beyond."

Assessment findings at this stage

Part 2 of the Environmental Report presents an assessment of the draft CMNDP. Assessment findings are presented as a series of narratives under the 'SEA framework' theme headings. The following overall conclusions are reached:

Overall, the delivery of up to 120 new homes and additional employment land, alongside the cemetery expansion and a new community recreation place is predicted to deliver predominately positive effects overall in relation to the SEA objectives.

Significant long-term positive effects are anticipated in relation to population and communities and health and wellbeing, respectively, through supporting sustainable growth of the community and healthy lifestyles. The CMNDP seeks to deliver housing, employment, and community infrastructure to meet local needs; and provides support for increasing levels of accessibility and self-containment. Further to this the CMNDP supports the vitality and viability of the parish through the protection and enhancement of the valued green infrastructure network, and improvements to the public realm including through meeting local infrastructure needs to sustainably manage growth.

Minor positive effects are anticipated in relation to the biodiversity and climate change SEA themes through the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure assets in the Plan area which is inclusive of active travel routes. Further positive effects can also be anticipated in relation to climate change, through the draft Plan's support for the use of renewable and low/ zero carbon energy sources and materials in the design of new developments, to deliver the most energy efficient homes possible.

Support for active travel uptake and improvements to the PRow network also contribute positively towards meeting transport objectives, however given the existing congestion issues and likely continued reliance on the private vehicle for travel, no significant deviation from the baseline is expected and **neutral effects** are concluded against the Transport SEA theme.

Neutral effects are also predicted in relation to the historic environment SEA theme. This is given that that Neighbourhood Plan, sufficiently protects the local historic environment.

Minor long-term negative effects are considered inevitable against the landscape SEA theme because of the loss of greenfield land at the settlement edge. It is however recognised that the wider policy provisions of the CMNDP will likely provide long-term protection of landscape character and key landscape features, as well as the wider countryside setting.

Significant long-term negative effects are anticipated in relation to the land, soil, and water resources SEA theme due to the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, these effects are considered largely unavoidable (given the presence of high-quality agricultural land surrounding the settlement and the lack of brownfield alternatives) and the Plan is recognised for its efforts to minimise the future loss of agricultural land resources, protect intrinsic rural values, and promote water efficiency and improved water quality.

No recommendations are made at this stage.

Next steps

Part 3 of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

Following consultation, the draft CMNDP will be finalised for submission to Shropshire Council. Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Shropshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the CMNDP will become part of the Development Plan for Shropshire, covering the defined Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Monitoring

The SEA regulations require "*measures envisaged concerning monitoring*" to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.

It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Shropshire Council, as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the CMNDP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Shropshire Council.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Cleobury Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan (CMNDP). The CMNDP is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in the context of the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework, and the emerging Shropshire Local Plan. Once 'made' the CMNDP will have material weight when deciding on planning applications, alongside the current Shropshire Local Plan.
- 1.2 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. SEA of the CMNDP is a legal requirement.²

SEA explained

- 1.3 It is a requirement that SEA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 1.4 In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the **Environmental Report**) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that "*identifies, describes and evaluates*" the likely significant effects of implementing "*the plan, and reasonable alternatives*".³ The report must then be considered, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.5 More specifically, the Report must answer the following three questions:
 1. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
 2. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan.
 3. What happens next?
- 1.6 This report is the Environmental Report for the CMNDP. It is published for consultation alongside the Draft CMNDP, under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended). This is a second round of Regulation 14 consultation, presenting an updated draft CMNDP and accompanying SEA.

² Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012, as amended) requires that each Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Authority alongside either: A) an environmental report; or, B) a statement of reasons why SEA is not required, prepared following a 'screening' process completed in accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations ('the SEA Regulations'). The CMNDP was screened in as requiring SEA by Shropshire Council in 2020.

³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

- 1.7 This report essentially answers questions 1, 2 and 3 in turn (previous page), to provide the required information.⁴ Each question is answered within a discrete 'part' of the report. However, before answering Q1, two initial questions are answered in the introductory section to further set the scene; what is the CMNDP seeking to achieve? And what is the scope of the SEA?

⁴ See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the Environmental Report, and a 'checklist' explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

2. What is the CMNDP seeking to achieve?

Introduction

2.1 This section considers the strategic planning policy context provided by the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework and the emerging Shropshire Local Plan, before then presenting the CMNDP vision and objectives. **Figure 2.1** below presents the neighbourhood area.

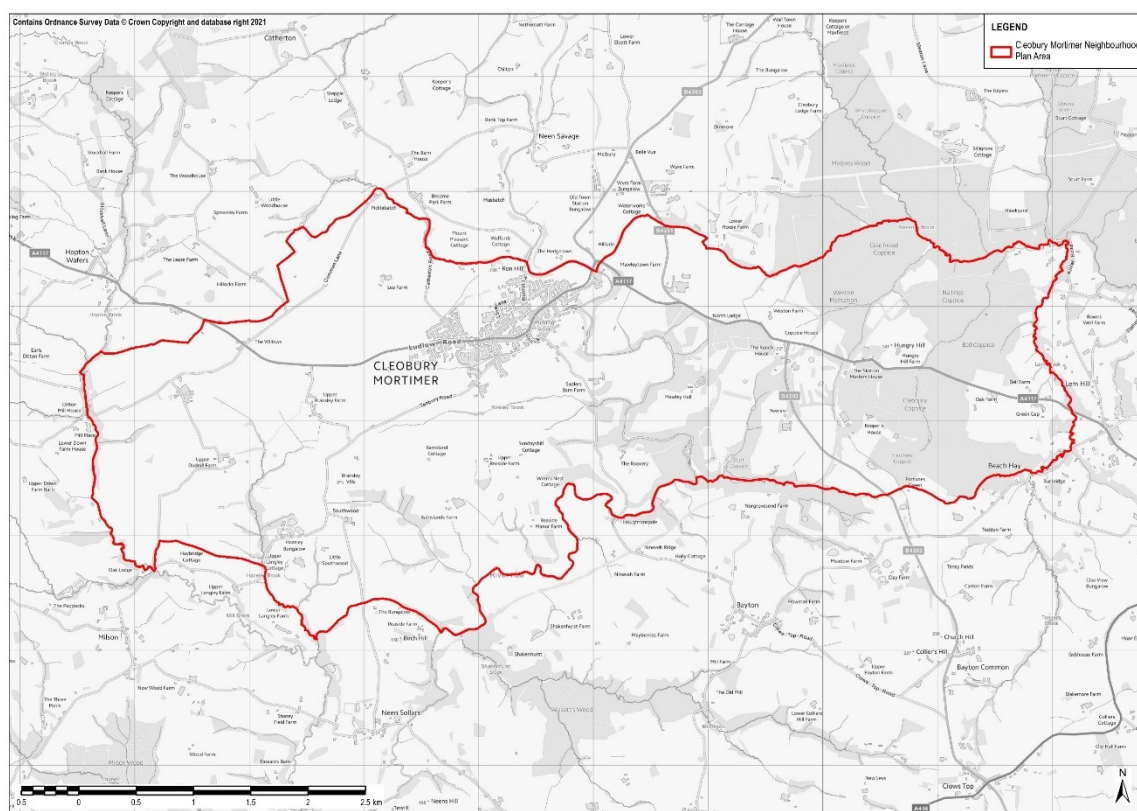


Figure 2.1: Cleobury Mortimer neighbourhood area

Strategic planning policy context

2.2 The CMNDP is being prepared in the context of the adopted Shropshire Local Development Framework and the emerging replacement Shropshire Local Plan (2016 – 2038). The adopted Local Development Framework comprises the following key documents:

- Shropshire Core Strategy (2011); and the
- Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015).

2.3 The adopted Core Strategy plans for the period up to 2026, and the SAMDev Plan has identified sites to deliver against this strategy (including sites within Cleobury Mortimer). Once adopted, the emerging Shropshire Local Plan will provide a framework for development to 2038 and will replace the policies and proposals of the adopted Core Strategy and the SAMDev Plan.

- 2.4 The CMNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan, as per footnote 18 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021). However, NPPF Para 48 states that “*local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans*” according to set criteria which includes its stage of preparation. The emerging Shropshire Local Plan is at a later plan stage, having been submitted for examination in September 2021. Considering this, alongside the proposed plan period for the CMNDP which seeks to align with the emerging Shropshire Local Plan, greater focus is paid to the strategic context provided by this plan.
- 2.5 Cleobury Mortimer is identified in the submitted Shropshire Local Plan as being a 'Key Centre' at Tier 3 of the settlement hierarchy. Emerging Settlement Policy S6 (Cleobury Mortimer Plan Area) highlights that a Neighbourhood Plan is being progressed for the Cleobury Mortimer Parish area, and states that “*the Neighbourhood Plan will include the strategy for achieving the housing and employment guidelines for the Key Centre of Cleobury Mortimer.*”
- 2.6 Policy S6 sets out a proposed development target for the settlement of “*around 200 dwellings and around 2ha of employment development over the plan period.*” Development proposals will be expected to “*positively respond to policies and guidelines identified within the Cleobury Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan, any other relevant community-led plans, and masterplans that are adopted by Shropshire Council.*”
- 2.7 Appendix 5 further identifies a total of 80 dwellings which have been completed or committed since 2016 and which contribute to the identified need for 200 homes. This leaves a residual need to identify land to accommodate an additional 120 dwellings over the plan period.
- 2.8 Appendix 6 identifies that 0.2ha of employment development land has been completed or committed since 2016, and the saved allocation at New House Farm adjacent to the Cleobury Mortimer Industrial Estate off Tenbury Road (from the SAMDev Plan) will provide an additional 0.5ha of land. This equates to a total of 0.7ha of employment land currently contributing to the identified need for 2ha, leaving a residual need to identify an additional 1.3ha of employment land.

CMNDP vision and objectives

- 2.9 In planning for growth, the following vision has been established for the CMNDP:

“In 2038, our vision for Cleobury Mortimer is that it will be a place where:

- *Any future building development is done in location(s) and a manner, which protects public safety.*
- *The natural space in which we live is protected, green spaces are improved, and enhanced, and local trees of importance are protected.*
- *Development will be sympathetic to the living environment.*
- *People of all ages can live happily and enjoy a strong sense of community and the security that this brings and where there are sufficient opportunities for the whole community to come together to meet and celebrate.*

- *The age profile of the community will be balanced because suitable housing will be available for people and families in all phases of their lives.*
- *There is a well-connected public transport system that allows people of all ages and mobility to travel on foot or by bus on safe, convenient, and direct routes.*
- *Access to the beautiful countryside is available for all with good connections between rural and urban areas.*
- *There is a prosperous local economy that meets the needs of the town and surrounding villages and that also provides well-paid local jobs, including working from home due to high-speed internet connectivity for businesses and those working from home.*
- *Mental and physical health is good for all members of the community because there are ample opportunities to exercise, meet others, and obtain specialist support when it is required.*
- *There is energy self-sufficiency and the opportunity to benefit from renewable sources of energy and cleaner energy including vehicle charging points; and*
- *Tourists will visit and contribute to the local economy.”*

2.10 To achieve this vision the following objectives have been identified:

- Ensure any future building development is done in location(s) and a manner, which protects public safety.
- Provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home.
- Minimise the impact of new development on the surrounding countryside, landscape, and ecosystems.
- Reduce harm to the environment by seeking, where achievable, for new development to be carbon neutral.
- Ensure that town community spirit is preserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- Ensure road traffic risks to public safety are assessed and minimized.
- Ensure that opportunities for local businesses and associated employment are maximized.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Introduction

- 3.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e., the key issues, sustainability themes, and objectives that should be a focus of the assessment of the plan and reasonable alternatives. The baseline information and policy review that has informed the identification of key issues and development of SEA objectives is presented in **Appendix B**.

Consultation

- 3.2 The SEA Regulations require that “*when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England.⁵ As such, these authorities were consulted in February 2021. The responses received are detailed in **Appendix B** and have been considered in the updated scoping information provided alongside.

Key issues

- 3.3 The key issues identified for each SEA theme are detailed below.

Biodiversity

- The Neighbourhood Plan area partially falls within the nationally designated Wyre Valley SSSI/ NNR, which should be protected as part of any development. It is important that any works within or near the SSSI, particularly within its associated SSSI IRZ, considers the unfavourable condition status given by Natural England to a significant proportion of the units. Development proposals should mitigate any potentially harmful impacts and maximise enhancement measures.
- Local habitats (notably trees) within the Neighbourhood Plan area are recognised for their contribution to biodiversity and value as wildlife corridors, supporting connectivity within and outside the Neighbourhood Plan area. These areas should be retained and enhanced in development.
- New development provides opportunities to enhance ecological connections in the Plan area and deliver demonstrable biodiversity net gains.

Climate change

- The plan area is partially affected by fluvial and surface water flood risk. High risk areas follow the course of the River Rea and its tributaries.
- CO2 emissions for Shropshire have steadily declined over the period of 2005- 2018, in line with regional and national statistics, but at a slightly slower rate. Given that the transport sector is the largest contributor to emissions in Shropshire, any development in the Neighbourhood Plan area

⁵ These consultation bodies were selected “*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes*” (SEA Directive, Article 6(3)).

should consider the need to provide access to sustainable or low carbon travel options, that meet the needs of consumers and improves mobility, whilst also reducing emissions.

- Shropshire Council has recently declared a climate emergency and has resolved to support local authorities (and, by extension, Neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to maximise opportunities to support Council actions in tackling climate change. This could include measures to encourage renewable energy technologies in small-scale developments in the Parish. This could focus on solar PV given that PV energy generation is by far the greatest source of renewable energy in Shropshire.

Landscapes

- The Parish is rural in nature, with an ancient semi-natural character to the east, connecting with Wyre Valley Forest. Inappropriate development has the potential to erode the existing settlement pattern, and impact upon the key features of the Parish. Key sensitivities that could be affected by future development include river valleys, scattered hedgerow trees, small blocks of woodland and countryside which contribute to the overall rural feel of the area. Unique landscape features may require further safeguarding in development, including historic character areas.
- The Parish is the wider setting of the Shropshire Hills AONB. While it is not considered that development in the settlement boundary would lead to adverse effects of significance; any development, notably rural development to the west of the parish, should consider the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape here. Consideration should be given to the AONB Management Plan 2019.

Historic environment

- The parish is rich in heritage assets, notably Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area extends throughout the town centre. There are also two Scheduled Monuments and 76 listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Plan area; two of which are Grade I listed and three of which are Grade II* listed. Development within the plan area requires the preservation and maintenance of these assets and their settings, subject to detailed matters of design and layout. Consideration should also be given to the Conservation Area Appraisal (2012).
- Assets acknowledged for their local heritage value could benefit from additional policy protections and provisions within the Cleobury Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan.

Land, soil, and water resources

- The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset indicates that areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area are underlain by land classified as the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land (Grade 2 and possibly Grade 3a (current unknown if 3a or 3b)). Future development should seek to avoid loss of BMV land wherever possible.

- Shropshire is important for its mineral resource. There are large areas of coal to the north of the parish and small areas of clay to the south of the parish, along the County boundary. Non-mineral development in these areas or near protected rail freight sites will be expected to avoid sterilising or unduly restricting the working of proven mineral resources, or the operation of mineral transport facilities, consistent with the requirements of national and regional policy.
- Cleobury Mortimer parish is located within the Severn River Basin District, however it falls between two operational/management catchments. Potential effects of new development are unlikely in the Severn Middle Worcestershire Management Catchment and Severn River Worcestershire Operational Catchment area given this catchment area covers the eastern extent of the parish only, distant from the built-up town centre. The presence of the Lem Brook waterbody is however noted in this area, particularly given the ecological and chemical classification of the water body is deteriorating.
- The classification of the River Rea, which extends through the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan area, is also deteriorating. New development in the parish has the potential to impact upon the ecological and chemical status of the watercourse, however it is recognised that the reasons for deterioration relate primarily to agricultural practices.
- The Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) covering the neighbourhood area states that the Strategic Grid Water Resource Zones (WRZs) show the greatest supply/demand deficit within the supply area. The WRMP has outlined measures required to address predicted shortfalls and investment priorities over the Plan period, and development in the Plan area should not undermine these measures.

Population and communities

- The town has a growing and slightly ageing population. New development should acknowledge the specialist needs of older residents with regards to their accessibility to key community services, such as recreational areas and shops. As the population of Cleobury Mortimer continues to grow, it is also important that development supports low levels of deprivation by targeting higher levels of deprivation in the town centre. While it is recognised that sustainable transport is limited, new development can seek to be positively integrated with the community, linking to employment and other key services with the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- A large proportion of residents hold no qualifications (24.3%), higher than comparative figures for Shropshire and England. New development could aid accessibility to educational services by ensuring accessibility to the rich educational offer within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Broadband levels vary across the parish, and it will be important to ensure that all residents have suitable connectivity to support high levels of working from home. It is noted that the emerging Local Plan contains detailed policies on broadband and electronic access which will cover the Neighbourhood Plan area, and therefore further policy is unlikely to be required through the CMNP.

Health and wellbeing

- Most residents consider themselves healthy, with a low percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited a lot by disability – compared to other parameters. New development has the potential to continue this trend, delivering sustainable growth that is positively integrated; supporting healthy, engaged communities.
- The Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment indicated that Cleobury Mortimer has a 4.4 ha open space deficit.⁶ New development should utilise opportunities to deliver new open green space and provide green infrastructure improvements, recreational opportunities, and countryside access to meet local needs.
- Considering the rural nature of the Parish, planning should seek to support high levels of local accessibility by ensuring appropriate access to key health services, safer roads, and connectivity with the PRow network within and surrounding the Plan area.

Transportation

- Additional traffic from new homes has the potential to add to existing congestion and road safety problems. In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the Plan area is likely to continue prevalent trends in which residents' favour private vehicles as the transport mode of choice/ necessity. It will therefore be important to locate any additional growth in areas which maximise pedestrian and cycle route connections within the settlement and beyond and support higher levels of self-containment.
- A high percentage of residents in the neighbourhood area work from home, and this trend is forecast to become more prevalent (and long-term) when considering the Coronavirus pandemic. Opportunities to capitalise on this positive trend should be maximised.
- Public transport is variable. Bus services are few and infrequent, and there are no train stations within the neighbourhood area. Future development could ensure appropriate connections to existing infrastructure and deliver continued/ improved access to the highly utilised PRow network, encouraging active travel where possible.

⁶ Red Kite (2018) Shropshire Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment [online] available at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/11407/shropshire-open-space-needs-assesment.pdf>

SEA framework

3.4 The SEA scope is summarised in a list of themes, objectives, and assessment questions, known as the SEA framework. **Table 3.1** presents the SEA framework as broadly agreed in 2021.

Table 3.1: SEA framework

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance nationally and locally designated sites? • Protect and enhance priority habitats and species and the areas that support them, such as ancient woodland? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made by polluting vehicles? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?
	Support the resilience of the neighbourhood area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water runoff, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the neighbourhood area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape, including the AONB and its setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the setting of the AONB? • Preserve the integrity of the local landscape character areas covering the neighbourhood area? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and character? • Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to the sense of place and the visual amenity of the neighbourhood area?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and enhance landscape features that contribute to the rural setting, including areas of forest, trees and hedgerow.
Historic environment	Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of locally important features and their settings? Support the integrity of the historic setting of key monuments of cultural heritage interest as listed on the Suffolk HER? Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment? Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies?
Land, soil and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land resources? Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of, or hindering of access to mineral resources in the Plan area? Promote the use of previously developed land, vacant & derelict brownfield land opportunities?
	Protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support improvements to water quality? Ensure the timely provision of wastewater infrastructure? Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside development? Protect groundwater and surface water resources from pollution? Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/ or water recycling?
Population and communities	Ensure growth in the town is aligned with the needs of all residents and capacity of the settlement and social infrastructure, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, and affordable housing? Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? Minimise fuel poverty? Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of land for allotments and cemeteries? • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Provide and enhance community access to open green spaces? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel, including active travel networks? • Improve access to the countryside for recreational use? • Avoiding any negative impacts to the quality and extent of existing recreational assets, such as formal or informal footpaths?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the key objectives within the Shropshire Local Transport Plan to encourage more sustainable transport? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Ensure sufficient road capacity to accommodate new development? • Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate on-going high levels of home and remote working? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network? • Improve parking facilities?

Part 1: What has plan-making/ SEA involved to this point?

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

Overview

- 4.1 Whilst work on the CMNDP has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives. More specifically, this part of the report presents information on the consideration given to reasonable alternative approaches to addressing a particular issue that is of central importance to the Plan, namely the allocation of land for housing and employment, or alternative sites.
- 4.2 The Local Plan residual requirement for Cleobury Mortimer is 120 dwellings and 1.3ha of employment land in the period up to 2038. The reasonable alternatives work undertaken through the SEA has therefore considered different options for delivering these requirements.
- 4.3 A draft CMNDP was presented to the public in 2020, which proposed the allocation of two sites at Tenbury Road and Ludlow Road to deliver against the need for 120 new homes. However, new site evidence has emerged since this consultation, which has resulted in changes to the proposed spatial strategy (site allocations) for the CMNDP. Regulation 14 consultation is now being re-run to provide interested parties with a chance to comment on the updated CMNDP and the accompanying SEA which has sought to identify, present, and appraise alternatives to the preferred approach.

Why focus on sites?

- 4.4 The decision was taken to develop and assess reasonable alternatives in relation to the matter of allocating land for housing and employment development, given the following considerations:
- CMNDP objectives which seek to influence both the location and design of new residential development and maximise any opportunities associated with employment development.
 - Housing and employment growth are known to be matters of key interest amongst residents and other stakeholders; and
 - The delivery of new homes and employment land is most likely to have a significant effect compared to other proposals within the Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that SEA should focus on matters likely to give rise to significant effects.

Structure of this part of the report

- 4.5 This part of the report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 5** - explains the process of establishing reasonable alternatives.
 - **Chapter 6** - presents the outcomes of appraising reasonable alternatives; and
 - **Chapter 7** - explains reasons for selecting the preferred option, considering the appraisal.

5. Establishing reasonable alternatives

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim here is to explain the process that led to the establishment of alternative sites and thereby present “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*”.⁷
- 5.2 Specifically, there is a need to explain the strategic parameters that have a bearing on the establishment of options (in relation to the level and distribution of growth) and the work that has been undertaken to date to examine the site options (i.e., sites potentially in contention for allocation in the CMNDP). These parameters are then drawn together in order to arrive at ‘reasonable alternatives’. In the context of the CMNDP, alternatives are being explored for both housing development and employment development.

Strategic parameters

- 5.3 The emerging Shropshire Local Plan provides the strategic context for the Plan period up to 2038, and as identified previously, emerging Policy S6 sets out a proposed housing target for the CMNDP of around 200 dwellings and around 2ha of employment development. Appendix 5 identifies a total of 80 dwellings which have either been completed or committed since 2016 and which contribute to the identified need for 200 homes. This leaves a **residual need for an additional 120 dwellings**.
- 5.4 With regards to employment land, as identified previously, Appendix 6 of the emerging Shropshire Local Plan identifies that 0.2ha of employment development land has been completed or committed since 2016, and the saved allocation at New House Farm adjacent to the Cleobury Mortimer Industrial Estate off Tenbury Road (from the SAMDev Plan) will provide an additional 0.5ha of land. This equates to a total of 0.7ha of employment land currently contributing to the identified need for 2ha, leaving a **residual need to identify an additional 1.3ha of employment land**.
- 5.5 Considering the strategic context provided by the emerging Shropshire Local Plan, the CMNDP Steering Group recognise that planning to meet the residual housing needs through the CMNDP can support the delivery of additional development benefits for the local community where possible. This includes the identified local aspirations for **additional cemetery space**, and opportunities to address identified deficits in **open space provision**. It will also reduce the risk of housing needs being unmet at the end of the Plan period.

⁷ Schedule 2(8) of the SEA Regulations.

Site options (housing development)

- 5.6 To begin this section, an overview is provided in relation to the current circumstance and key issues for the CMNDP, which is preparing for a second round of Regulation 14 consultation.
- 5.7 Evidence gathering in relation to site options has been an evolving process since 2017, informed by work undertaken by both the CMNDP Steering Group and Shropshire Council. A total of 3 'call for sites' have been conducted in the period up to April 2022 (in 2017, 2021, and 2022) to identify all potential options for development in the neighbourhood area.
- 5.8 Prior to being screened in for SEA, Regulation 14 consultation was held on a draft CMNDP in 2020, which presented a proposed spatial strategy formed of two sites (at Ludlow Road and Tenbury Road) which combined would deliver against the residual need for 120 homes.
- 5.9 SEA commenced in 2021 and began by comparing the preferred option with available alternatives. Notably, in 2021, the landowner of the site at Ludlow Road, which was consulted upon in 2020, withdrew the site. The Ludlow Road site is now no longer available for development over the plan period.
- 5.10 At this stage in 2022, reflecting the above circumstances, a new spatial strategy is being sought to deliver against the residual need for 120 homes.
- 5.11 To explore the alternatives at this stage of plan-making, an overview of the housing development options available to the CMNDP since the start of plan-making is provided.

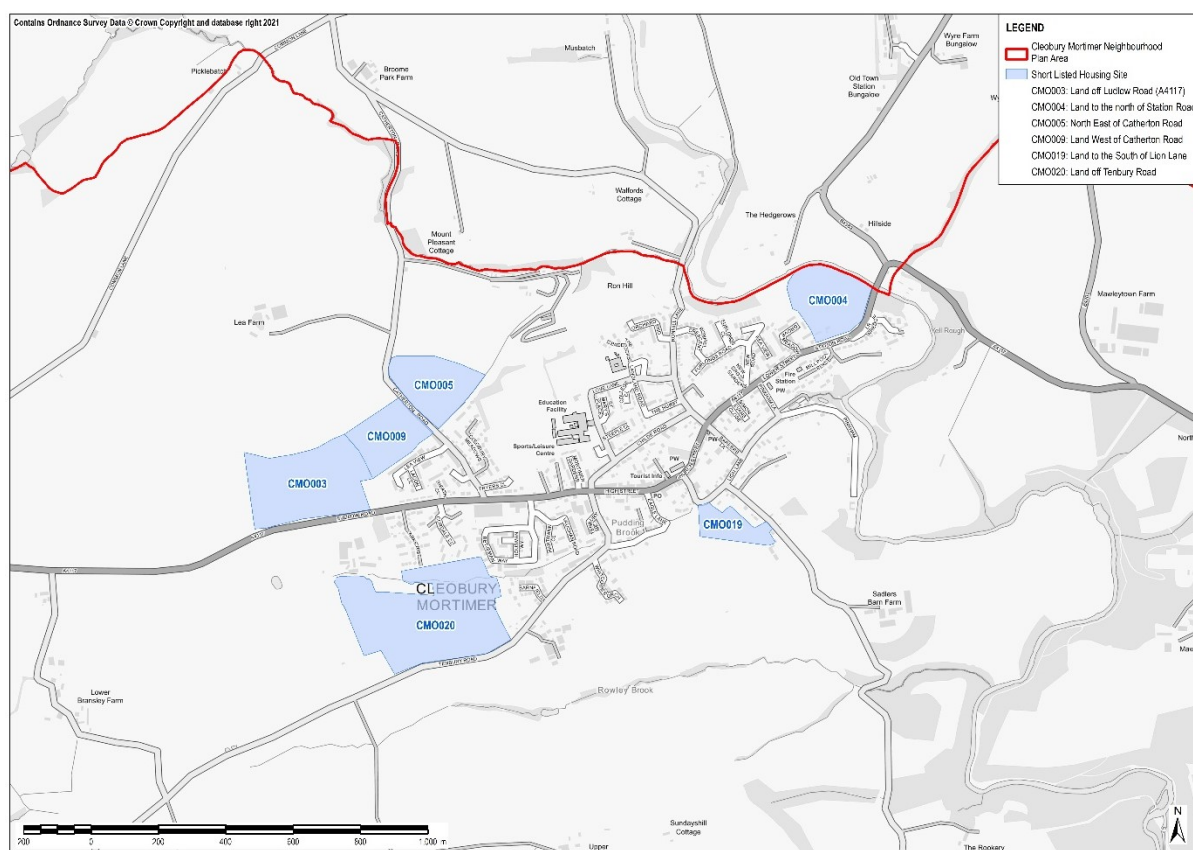
Available sites for housing development

- 5.12 As a starting point in understanding available sites in the neighbourhood area, Shropshire Council undertook a staged site assessment process, integrating the findings of the Council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). A total of 10 sites were identified in Cleobury Mortimer (see **Table 5.1**), four of which were rejected (shaded in **Table 5.1**). Site CMO017 was rejected as a landlocked site without a road frontage. Sites CMO002, CMO006, and CMO018 were also rejected as the availability for housing development over the plan period could not be confirmed. The six short-listed sites are depicted in **Figure 5.1**.

Table 5.1: SLAA sites identified in Cleobury Mortimer

Site reference	Site name	Site size (ha)*
CMO002	Curdale Farm, Ludlow Road	8.73
CMO003	Land off Ludlow Road (A4117)	7.24
CMO004	Land to the north of Station Road	4.01
CMO005	North East of Catherton Road	3.91
CMO006	Land to the east of Fryers Close	0.55
CMO009	Land West of Catherton Road	3.25
CMO017	Rear of Manor House	0.35
CMO018	Land South of Tenbury Road	1.33
CMO019	Land to the South of Lion Lane	1.78
CMO020	Land off Tenbury Road	11.75

(*Figures are rounded)

**Figure 5.1: Short-listed housing sites in Cleobury Mortimer**

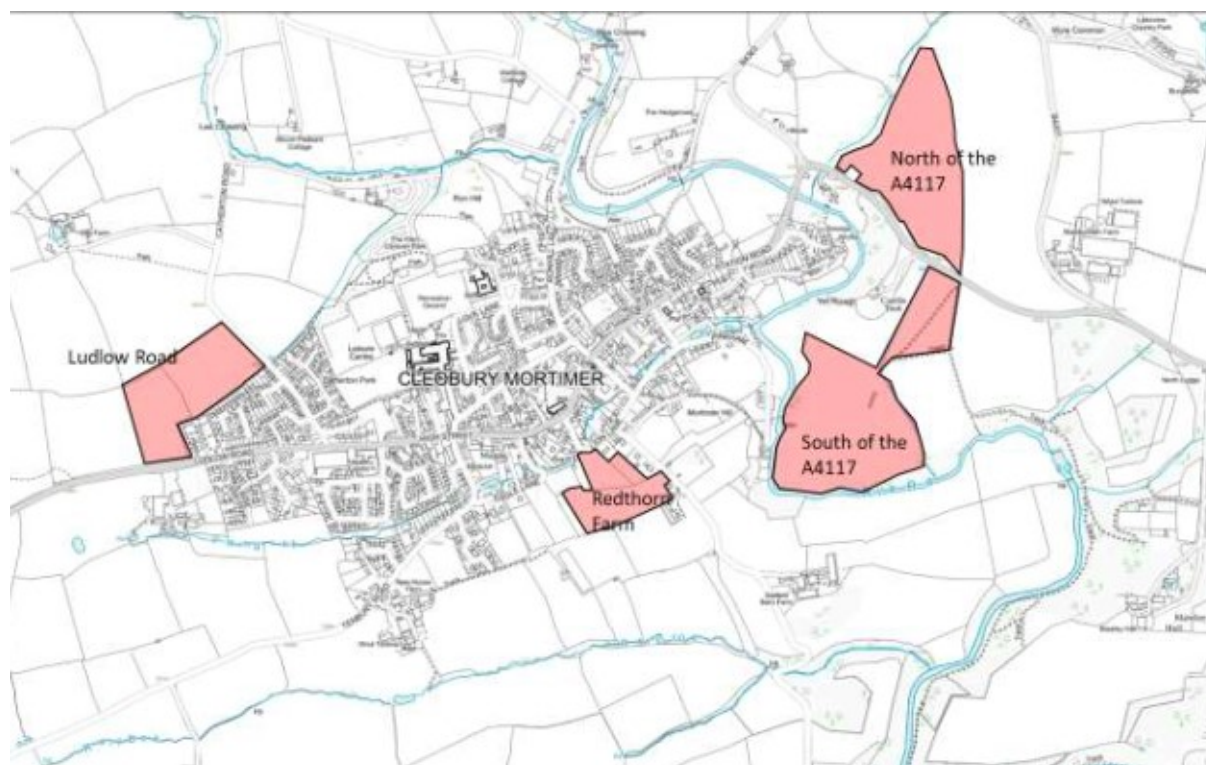
5.14 The CMNDP Steering Group have sought to assess these six sites against locally identified criteria, these criteria include:

1. Extent of the site's contribution to the total need for 120 new homes.
2. Potential for the site to deliver new open space.
3. Potential for the site to provide for new cemetery space.
4. The extent of access improvements required at the site.
5. Potential for wildlife improvements on site; and
6. The sites acceptability to the community.

5.15 Site allocation preferences did emerge from this work, and a preferred option for development two sites (CMO003 and CMO020) delivering 60 dwellings each was presented to public and progressed through to 2021. However, in 2021, the landowner of the Ludlow Road site (Site CMO003) withdrew the site, making it no longer available for development over the plan period.

5.16 Considering this, the CMNDP proposed and undertook a 'call for sites' in 2021, and again in 2022, working closely with Shropshire Council. **Figure 5.2** identifies the site submissions emerging from the latest calls for sites.

Figure 5.2: Sites emerging from 2021 and 2022 call for sites



5.17 The Ludlow Road site is a revised and extended submission of Site CMO009 (Land West of Catherton Road). The Redthorne Farm site is a revised and extended submission of Site CMO019 (Land to the South of Lion Lane).

Establishing alternatives (housing)

5.18 From the six short-listed sites emerging from Shropshire Council's evidence base, site CMO003 is no longer available and is not progressed on this basis. Sites CMO009 and CMO019 have been revised and present available options. Sites CMO004, CMO005, CMO020 also remain in contention as a potential CMNDP allocation. Additionally, two new sites are now available via the most recent 'call for sites' (North of the A4117 and South of the A4117).

5.19 These seven sites present the available options or reasonable alternatives for the purposes of SEA:

- **Site CMO004 Land to the north of Station Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes.
- **Site CMO005 North East of Catherton Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes.
- **Site CMO020 Land off Tenbury Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 350 homes.
- **Ludlow Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes incorporating a cemetery extension and an additional 1ha of open space. This is the revised and extended submission of Site CMO009.
- **Redthorne Farm.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 60 homes incorporating new green space. This is the revised and extended submission of Site CMO019.
- **North of the A4117.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 350 homes.
- **South of the A4117.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 220 dwellings with new green infrastructure.

Site options (employment development)

5.20 Shropshire Council's SLAA identified nine sites with the long-term potential to deliver against housing and employment needs subject to further detailed assessment. However, the CMNDP recognises the community preference (established through Neighbourhood Plan consultation to date) for delivering future employment land in areas adjacent to, or as near as possible to the existing employment area off Tenbury Road. This site is already set to expand with the existing employment allocation and further development can support enhanced accessibility whilst minimising its impact on neighbouring land uses.

5.21 On this basis, Sites CMO018 and CMO020 are the only options lying close to the existing employment area off Tenbury Road; with Site CMO018 being the preferred allocation site presented to the community in the previous Regulation 14 draft CMNDP to deliver 1.3ha of additional employment land. Whilst the availability of CMO018 was unknown for housing development in Shropshire Council's SLAA, it is known to be available for employment development. The sites are depicted in **Figure 5.2** below.

6. Appraising reasonable alternatives

- 6.1 This chapter provides the appraisal of the seven alternative options for housing and the two alternative options for employment identified in the previous chapter.

Methodology

- 6.2 For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability themes and objectives identified through scoping (see **Table 3.1**) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Minor effects are also identified, with **light green** indicating minor positive effects and **amber** indicating minor negative effects. Where appropriate neutral effects, or uncertainty will also be noted. Uncertainty is noted with **grey** shading.
- 6.3 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 6.4 Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects based on reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate **a rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. Numbers are used to highlight the option or options that are preferred from an SEA perspective with 1 performing the best.
- 6.5 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted considering the criteria presented within Regulations.⁸ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects.

⁸ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Reasonable alternatives for housing

6.6 The seven options identified for housing are:

- **Site CMO004 Land to the north of Station Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes.
- **Site CMO005 North East of Catherton Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes.
- **Site CMO020 Land off Tenbury Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 350 homes.
- **Ludlow Road.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 120 homes incorporating a cemetery extension and an additional 1ha of open space. This is the revised and extended submission of Site CMO009.
- **Redthorne Farm.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 60 homes incorporating new green space. This is the revised and extended submission of Site CMO019.
- **North of the A4117.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 350 homes.
- **South of the A4117.** This site has an indicative capacity for up to 220 dwellings with new green infrastructure.

SEA theme		Site CMO004: Station Rd	Site CMO005: Catherton Rd	Site CMO020: Tenbury Rd	Ludlow Road	Redthorne Farm	North of the A4117	South of the A4117
Biodiversity	Likely effect	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive
	Rank	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
Climate change	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Landscape	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Significant negative	Significant negative
	Rank	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Historic environment	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Significant negative	Uncertain	Significant negative
	Rank	1	1	1	1	3	2	3
Land, soil, and water resources	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
Population and communities	Likely effect	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive	Significant positive
	Rank	2	2	2	1	3	3	3
Health and wellbeing	Likely effect	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive	Minor positive
	Rank	3	2	2	1	2	3	3
Transportation	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	1	1	1	1	1	2	2

Biodiversity

- 6.7 All sites located relatively distant from designated biodiversity sites, such that housing development is not captured as a potential impact within the identified Impact Risk Zones surrounding nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Recreational disturbance impacts at Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR) and habitats in the east, as well as habitats within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the west, are likely to be common across all options though minor in nature with the delivery of housing in line with that planned for through the emerging Shropshire Local Plan.
- 6.8 Woodland Priority Habitats largely follow the course of the River Rea intersecting the boundaries of sites in the east (CMO004, North of the A4117, and South of the A4117). Traditional orchard habitats identified within the settlement area are avoided. Pudding Brook also traverses site CMO020 which is an identified wildlife corridor and the Ludlow Road site lies adjacent to the new Workhouse Wildlife Corridor extension along the southern border of the site adjoining Lea View gardens. On-site biodiversity net gains should be directed towards supporting the intersecting habitats at these sites.
- 6.9 All sites fall within the Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) buffer zones. The buffer zones surround core areas, restoration areas, 'stepping-stones' and ecological corridors. Development in these areas should seek to protect the integrity and role of buffer zones, in retaining and enhancing ecological connectivity. Within the Plan area these buffers largely surround the watercourses and are in line with the National Habitat Network identified 'Network Enhancement Zones' and 'Network Expansion Zones'.
- 6.10 None of the options are considered likely to lead to significant effects in relation to this theme. There is potential for development to deliver on-site biodiversity net-gains, particularly at sites which connect with established ecological corridors, and deliver **minor positive effects** in this respect. These opportunities are available at all sites and no significant differences between the options are drawn in relation to this theme. All options are thus judged to rank on par with each other.

Climate change

- 6.11 In relation to climate change mitigation, all options have equal potential to support mitigation measures that increase long-term resilience, including on-site renewables, water recycling measures, and green infrastructure provisions. Accessibility of the sites is explored under the 'population and communities' and 'transportation' themes, and in this respect Sites CMO005, CMO020, the Ludlow Road site, and Redthorne Farm are located with better access to the High Street. Redthorne Farm provides good access via Lion Lane, connecting well with existing bus stops. Sites in the east of the settlement are further removed from the High Street, and the sites north and south of the A4117 are further removed from existing infrastructure, including bus stops.
- 6.12 In terms of climate change adaptation, fluvial flood risk is contained to the corridor of the River Rea and does not significantly affect development at any of the sites. Two sites in the east of the settlement (CMO004 and South of the

A4117) intersect the River Rea at their borders and appropriate drainage strategies will need to be considered.

- 6.13 Surface water flood risk similarly follows the route of the River Rea, but also extends to surround Pudding Brook intersecting Site CMO020 at Tenbury Road. In the north, a tributary of the River Rea presents areas of high surface water flood risk at the Ludlow Road site in its eastern extent where it joins Catherton Road. Appropriate drainage strategies are likely to ensure significant effects are avoided, and any opportunities to improve surface water drainage at these sites should be explored.
- 6.14 Overall, none of the options are considered likely to lead to any significant effects in relation to this SEA theme. With no significant deviations from the baseline forecasted, broadly **neutral effects** are concluded. The sites north and south of the A4117 are further removed from the settlement, with reduced accessibility. Development at these sites is less likely to promote active travel in local journeys and are thus ranked less favourably than the remaining sites.

Landscape

- 6.15 Located near the edge of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Cleobury Mortimer sits in the valley side of the River Rea. Development at the sites North and South of the A4117 would extend the settlement area beyond the River Rea, largely incongruous with the current settlement form and pattern. Given the extent of these sites, a potential for **negative effects of significance** is identified at this stage.
- 6.16 Development in the west would need to consider the rising topography at Ludlow Road, and views into and out of the settlement. Both Sites CMO020 and the Ludlow Road site in the west would also need to consider their role as a 'gateway' location, framing views into the town from the south-western approach from Tenbury Road, or the western approach from Ludlow Road.
- 6.17 Whilst the overall effects will ultimately be dependent on the design, layout and massing of development, the potential for **minor long-term negative effects** is considered, given greenfield development extending the settlement area at Sites CMO004, CMO005, CMO020, Ludlow Road, and Redthorne Farm. Whilst the sites North and South of the A4117 rank least favourably given their location beyond the River Rea, there is little to differentiate between the remaining options, which all require high-quality and responsive design to minimise the impacts of development.

Historic environment

- 6.18 In relation to designated assets, two sites stand out as particularly constrained sites. Redthorne Farm adjoins the Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area in the south and would develop the open countryside setting in this area.
- 6.19 The site South of the A4117 also lies adjacent to the Castle Toot motte castle Scheduled Monument, where it could be assumed that archaeological interest may extend this area potentially into the development site. This may also apply to the site North of the A4117 though notably the A4117 lies between the site and the designated asset.

- 6.20 Considering the above, the potential for **negative effects of significance** is recognised at both Redthorne Farm and the site South of the A4117, whilst **uncertain effects** are noted at the site North of the A4117. These options are also ranked least favourably accordingly.
- 6.21 The remaining sites are largely free from constraints in relation to designated assets, though it is noted that there is an abundance of non-designated assets throughout the neighbourhood area which are also sensitive to development. Non-designated farm buildings and settings (such as Curdale Farm) will need to be considered through design proposals at Site CMO020 and the Ludlow Road site, notably open space provisions could be designed to minimise impacts in this respect.
- 6.22 Development at Sites CMO004, North of the A4117, and South of the A4117 would also need to consider the historic landscape setting of the River Rea and its contribution to the historic setting of Cleobury.
- 6.23 Whilst it is recognised that an element of mitigation is required through high-quality, sensitive design, it is likely overall that **broadly neutral effects** could be achieved at sites CMO004, CMO005, CMO020, and Ludlow Road. These options are ranked most favourably accordingly.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.24 All sites are greenfield land options, the loss of which has the potential for minor long-term negative effects with regards to soil resources. However, it is recognised that these effects are likely to be consistent under any options, given the lack of available brownfield alternatives.
- 6.25 In terms of the location of best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken in all parts of the Plan area. As such, there is a need to rely on the Pre-1988 Agricultural Land Classification to provide indicative qualities. In this respect, most of the Plan area in the west of the town is identified as Grade 2 best and most versatile agricultural land along with parts of the north and north-east. The remaining land surrounding the settlement is thought to be Grade 3, but no sub-grade is identified. Sites thought more likely to contain higher quality agricultural land include Sites CMO004, CMO005, CMO020, Ludlow Road, and North of the A4117. Redthorne Farm and South of the A4117 may be lower-quality agricultural land, though detailed land surveys would be required to confirm this.
- 6.26 Development at any of the sites is considered likely to avoid any negative effects in relation to mineral resources which are located further north and south of the settlement area.
- 6.27 Given neither option significantly exceeds the level of growth planned for in the Local Plan, no significant effects are considered likely in relation to water resources. Sustainable drainage systems will be required at Sites CMO004, CMO020, Redthorne Farm, North of the A4117 and South of the A4117 to avoid negative effects arising in relation to water quality at the River Rea/ Pudding Brook.
- 6.28 Overall, **minor permanent negative effects** are considered likely under both options, and no significant differences between the options can be identified in relation to this SEA theme. Redthorne Farm and South of the A4117 are

ranked marginally better than the remaining options reflecting a potential for lower quality agricultural land at these sites.

Population and communities

- 6.29 All options would contribute to meeting housing needs and **significant positive effects** are considered likely in this respect. Redthorne Farm is the only site that would be unable to meet the full need for 120 homes on-site and would need to be considered in combination with another site. For this reason, Redthorne Farm is ranked least favourably.
- 6.30 Except for the sites north and south of the A4117, the remaining sites are all settlement edge locations providing broadly good access the existing provisions within the town. Furthermore, all options could deliver new open space that will contribute to meeting the recreational needs of new residents and enhance access for existing residents in the town. Further positive effects are anticipated in this respect. The Ludlow Road site also has good potential to connect with the existing cemetery and provide the additional cemetery space sought locally. For this reason, the Ludlow Road site is ranked most favourably overall.
- 6.31 The sites north and south of the A4117 are further removed from the High Street and settlement offer, though these options do connect well with the road network and facilities and open space in the east of the settlement. Given that these sites are further removed from the settlement area, they are also ranked least favourably, alongside Redthorne Farm.

Health and wellbeing

- 6.32 All sites provide relatively good access to Cleobury Mortimer Medical Centre, though sites in the east (CMO004, North of the A4117, and South of the A4117) are slightly further removed. Whilst this makes these options rank slightly less preferably, it is recognised that the differences between the options are marginal.
- 6.33 All options can deliver new open space that will contribute to meeting the recreational needs of new residents, as well as enhance access for existing residents in the town. **Minor long-term positive effects** are anticipated in this respect. The additional cemetery space opportunity associated with the Ludlow Road site will also enhance positive effects in relation to health, and as a result, the Ludlow Road site is considered to rank most favourably overall.
- 6.34 It is assumed that development under any option will ensure safe road access/ egress and ensure appropriate buffers/ boundary treatment to minimise roadside air pollution effects for future residents.

Transportation

- 6.35 All sites adjoin the existing road network where road access is likely to be obtained. With a target of 120 homes the overall level of traffic generation is likely to be broadly similar across any option progressed (unless the target figure is exceeded in any case).

- 6.36 Notably, the sites North and South of the A4117 are further removed from the settlement area and existing bus connections. Residents may be less inclined to increase the uptake of sustainable transport modes and active travel options in this respect. Whilst no significant effects are anticipated, these options are ranked least favourably accordingly. The remaining sites are located closer to existing infrastructure.
- 6.37 Catherton Road is also noted as a rural road with points of single lane traffic and blind bends. Road safety and appropriate mitigation should be considered in development at Site CMO005 and the Ludlow Road site in this respect.
- 6.38 Development under any option should seek to enhance footpath connections with different opportunities associated with each site in this respect. Notably, development at Site CMO004, CMO020, and South of the A4117 provide opportunities to build upon scenic routes associated with the River Rea and Pudding Brook.
- 6.39 Recognising the need for mitigation under any option to reduce the impacts of increased traffic generation, provide safe access and egress, and improve active travel connections, **minor negative effects** are noted for all options at this stage.

Summary findings (housing)

- 6.40 Overall, a range of effects against the different SEA themes have been identified through the assessment. Of note, **significant positive effects** are anticipated under all options in relation to the population and communities SEA theme, through the potential to deliver against local housing needs in full, and support growth with improved access to open space and community infrastructure. However, the potential for **significant negative effects** has also been identified for sites North and South of the A4117 in relation to landscape, and for Redthorne Farm and South of the A4117 in relation to the historic environment. **Uncertain effects** are also noted in relation to the historic environment for development North of the A4117. There are key sensitivities associated with these sites that need consideration and potentially further investigation prior to any progression as an allocation.
- 6.41 **Minor negative effects** are considered likely under all options in relation to transportation, and land, soil, and water resources, and for the remaining sites in relation to landscape. This predominantly reflects the loss of greenfield land and potentially high-quality agricultural land, as well as inevitable traffic generation.
- 6.42 Broadly **neutral effects** are considered likely in relation to climate change under all options. Furthermore, it is considered likely that broadly neutral effects in relation to the historic environment could be achieved in development at sites CMO004, CMO005, CMO020, and Ludlow Road.
- 6.43 **Minor positive effects** are considered likely under all options in relation to biodiversity and health and wellbeing, with all options providing opportunities to support enhanced ecological connectivity and delivering new open space to meet the recreational needs of new residents or enhance access for existing residents in the town.

Reasonable alternatives for employment

6.44 The two alternative options identified for employment are:

- **Site CMO018** to deliver up to 1.3ha of B Class employment land; and
- **Site CMO020** to deliver up to 1.3ha of B Class employment use in the south-eastern extent of the site.

SEA theme		Site CMO018	Site CMO020
Biodiversity	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	-	-
Climate change	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	-	-
Landscape	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	1	2
Historic environment	Likely effect	Neutral	Neutral
	Rank	-	-
Land, soil and water resources	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	-	-
Population and communities	Likely effect	Significant positive	Significant positive
	Rank	-	-
Health and wellbeing	Likely effect	Minor positive	Minor positive
	Rank	-	-
Transportation	Likely effect	Minor negative	Minor negative
	Rank	1	2

Biodiversity

6.45 Both options are located relatively distant from designated biodiversity sites, such that employment development is not captured as a potential impact within the identified Impact Risk Zones surrounding nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Neither sites are known to contain any Priority Habitats, however Site CMO020 contains a wildlife corridor (along Pudding Brook) and Site CMO018 lies just north of the Rowley Brook wildlife corridor.

6.46 Both options fall within the Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) buffer zones. The buffer zones surround core areas, restoration areas, 'stepping-stones' and ecological corridors. Development in these areas should seek to protect the integrity and role of buffer zones, in retaining and enhancing ecological connectivity. Within the Plan area these buffers largely surround the watercourses and are in line with the National Habitat Network identified 'Network Enhancement Zones' and 'Network Expansion Zones'.

6.47 It is anticipated that any employment development at Site CMO020 (Option E-B) would be focused to the south of the site, to adjoin the existing employment area off Tenbury Road. As such, development is likely to avoid negative effects

arising in relation to the wildlife corridor on site. Similarly, given the distance from Rowley Brook, no significant effects are anticipated at Site CMO018 (Option E-A).

- 6.48 Overall, broadly **neutral effects** are anticipated under both options, and no significant differences between the options can be identified in relation to biodiversity.

Climate change

- 6.49 In relation to climate change mitigation, both options have equal potential to support mitigation measures that increase long-term resilience, including on-site renewables, water recycling measures, and green infrastructure provisions. No distinct differences between the options can thus be identified in respect of mitigation.
- 6.50 In terms of climate change adaptation, Site CMO020 (Option E-B) is intersected by areas of high and medium surface water flood risk coinciding with Pudding Brook. However, with employment development focused in the south of the site, it is anticipated that negative impacts are likely to be avoided. Site CMO018 (under Option E-A) avoids any areas of flood risk.
- 6.51 No significant deviations from the baseline are anticipated under either option, and broadly **neutral effects** are considered likely overall. Furthermore, no substantial differences between the options can be identified in relation to climate change.

Landscape

- 6.52 Both sites are greenfield edge of settlement locations, where development is likely to affect landscape character to some degree and expand the settlement into the surrounding countryside. Whilst negative effects are anticipated in this respect, these effects are considered inevitable given the lack of alternative brownfield options or sites within the built-up area.
- 6.53 Of note at both locations, development would need to consider its role as a 'gateway' location, framing views into the town from the south-western approach from Tenbury Road. Whilst the overall effects will ultimately be dependent on the design, layout and massing of development, the potential for **minor long-term negative effects** is considered under both options at this stage.
- 6.54 However, in this respect, Site CMO018 (Option E-A) is considered for its potential to better integrate with the existing employment area off Tenbury Road and manage landscape impacts in this respect. With the potential to support high-quality design and spark further regeneration/ inward investment opportunities which support an improved public realm. This is compared to Site CMO020 (Option E-B) which would expand employment development in this area to the opposite side of Tenbury Road and enclose the existing homes to the east to some degree. As a result, Option E-A is considered to perform marginally better than Option E-B in relation to this SEA theme.

Historic environment

6.55 Neither of the sites contain any designated heritage assets or lie within the setting of designated assets. As a result, no significant effects are anticipated under either option. Furthermore, neither of the sites are known to contain or lie near to any non-designated assets or archaeological finds (with employment development focused in the south of Site CMO020 (Option E-B)). Overall **neutral effects** are considered likely under both options, and no clear distinctions between the options are identified.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 6.56 Both sites are greenfield land options, the loss of which has the potential for minor long-term negative effects with regards to soil resources. However, it is recognised that these effects are likely to be consistent under any options, given the lack of available brownfield alternatives.
- 6.57 In terms of the location of best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken in all parts of the Plan area. As such, there is a need to rely on the Pre-1988 Agricultural Land Classification to provide indicative qualities. In this respect, most of the Plan area in the west of the town is identified as Grade 2 best and most versatile agricultural land. As such it is considered likely that development under either option will lead to the permanent loss of high-quality agricultural land, and permanent negative effects in relation to soil resources.
- 6.58 With both sites located in the west of the town, development is considered likely to avoid any negative effects in relation to mineral resources which are located north and south of the settlement area.
- 6.59 Given neither option exceeds the level of growth planned for in the Local Plan, no significant effects are considered likely in relation to water resources. Employment development under Option E-B would be focused in the south of the site (off Tenbury Road) and is likely to avoid negative effects arising in relation to water quality at Pudding Brook. Similarly, given the distance between Site CMO018 (Under Option E-A) and Rowley Brook, development is likely to avoid negative effects arising in relation to water quality in this area.
- 6.60 Overall, **minor permanent negative effects** are considered likely under both options in relation to soil resources, and no significant differences between the options can be identified in relation to this SEA theme.

Population and communities

6.61 Both options seek to deliver the required employment development needs in full and **significant positive effects** for local communities are anticipated in this respect. As edge of settlement locations adjoining an existing and established employment area, each site is considered relatively accessible for existing and new residents (with housing and employment growth focused in the west of the settlement). No clear differences between the options are identified in relation to this SEA theme.

Health and wellbeing

6.62 The sites are both located within areas which can support local and walkable access to employment areas, with both options lying adjacent to an existing and established employment area. Both sites provide the opportunity to improve access to employment opportunities and reduce deprivation (in relation to certain indices of deprivation such as income, employment, and training indices). Furthermore, both sites provide relatively good access to existing open space which is likely to be supplemented with new provisions in this area anticipated alongside housing growth. As a result, **minor long-term positive effects** are anticipated under both options, and no distinct differences between the options are identified at this stage.

Transportation

6.63 Both options adjoin the existing road network where road access either exists or can be provided. With the same level of growth anticipated under each option, broadly similar **minor long-term negative effects** are considered likely in terms of traffic generation.

6.64 It is noted that there is limited footpath provision at Tenbury Road, and Site CMO018 (under Option E-A) offers greater potential to connect with existing footpaths and improve footpath provisions in and around the existing and established employment area. On this basis, Option E-A is considered to perform marginally better than Option E-B overall.

Summary findings (employment)

6.65 Overall, a range of effects have been identified through the assessment against the different SEA themes. Most of the identified effects are common to both options and only marginal differences between the options are identified in relation to the SEA themes of landscape and transportation. Whilst **minor long-term negative effects** are anticipated in relation to these themes for both options, Option E-A is recognised for its greater potential to integrate with the existing and established employment area off Tenbury Road when compared to Option E-B. Furthermore, Option E-A is better located to facilitate new and improved footpath connections in both new development and the existing employment area.

6.66 **Significant positive effects** are anticipated under both options by way of their potential to deliver in full against the identified need for employment land. Increasing local access to employment opportunities is also recognised for community benefits, including reducing deprivation and improving health outcomes in this respect. **Minor long-term positive effects** are anticipated in relation to health and wellbeing as a result.

6.67 **Minor negative effects** are anticipated under both options in relation to land, soil, and water resources, given the inevitable loss of greenfield, and likely high-quality agricultural land resources at either site.

6.68 Broadly **neutral effects** are anticipated under both options in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change and historic environment. This reflects the likelihood that development will not lead to any significant deviation from the baseline.

7. Developing the preferred approach

7.1 The CMNDP Steering Group's reasons for developing the preferred approach (Ludlow Road) in light of the alternatives assessment are identified below:

"Taking the findings of the environmental and the site allocations report, the Ludlow Road site is preferable over other alternatives.

- *Sites CMO004 Station Road, CMO005 Catherton Road, and CMO020 Tenbury Road perform relatively well through the assessment process. However, the Ludlow Road site is preferred given its connection with the existing cemetery, facilitating a logical expansion area and delivering additional cemetery space.*
- *Redthorn Farm was only proposed for 60 houses and therefore, the site was too small to be used alone. The January call for sites set out in criterion 1 that the site should accommodate 120 dwellings.*
- *The sites North and South of the A4117 were likely to be within the view corridor of Mawley Hall, a Grade 1 listed building and do not connect well with the existing settlement area. In addition, the Policy Manager at Shropshire Council indicated concern that the sites would also have high landscape sensitivity as both identified as of high sensitivity within the landscape assessment supporting the SAMDev Plan. Development at these site would extend the settlement area beyond the river, changing the settlement pattern.*

The Ludlow Road site provides a better cemetery extension than any other site option as it lies adjacent to the existing cemetery. It is also the flattest site (and therefore most suitable for housing) and has the capacity to put into place a valuable wildlife corridor linking Ludlow Road to Catherton Road and the QE11 Park beyond."

Part 2: What are the SEA findings at this stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 2)

8.1 The aim of this section is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current draft of the CMNDP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version of the CMNDP under the eight SEA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage and recommendations for the next stage of plan-making.

Appraisal method

8.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA and that are linked to the SEA objectives, see **Table 3.1**.

8.3 For each theme 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered, i.e., the potential for the CMNDP to impact an aspect of the baseline when implemented alongside other plans, programmes, and projects. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

8.4 Every effort is made to identify/ evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

CMNDP policies

8.5 To support the implementation of the vision for the CMNDP, discussed in Chapter 2, the current version of the plan puts forward seven policies to guide development in the neighbourhood area.

8.6 The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are set out in **Table 8.1** (overleaf).

Table 8.1 CMNDP policies

Policy reference	Policy name
Policy CM1	Catherton Road Residential Allocation
Policy CM2	Cleobury Mortimer Cemetery Extension
Policy CM3	Extension at Tenbury Road Employment Site
Policy CM4	Cleobury Mortimer Development Boundary
Policy CM5	Housing Mix
Policy CM6	Housing Design
Policy CM7	Environment and Biodiversity Net Gain

9. Appraisal of the CMNDP

Biodiversity

- 9.1 There are no internationally designated nature conservation sites within, or close to the neighbourhood area. However, areas of ancient woodland to the east of the parish, including sections of Coachroad Coppice, Cleobury Coppice, and Bell Coppice, fall within the nationally designated Wyre Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is noted that part of the Wyre Forest which falls within the parish to the east (distant from the main settlement and CMNDP site allocations) is also designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) (Bell Coppice).
- 9.2 The parish is rich in biodiversity, notably there is an abundance of trees and woodland in the area; a recent survey carried out in 2020 indicates over 3,000 trees are over 130 years old. Many of these fall within the community's identified wildlife corridors, which the CMNDP seeks to protect and enhance through Policy CM7 – Environment and biodiversity net gain. These natural lines of vegetation are interconnected throughout the plan area and greatly valued locally, with many coinciding with the River Rea.
- 9.3 In accordance with Policy CM7, *“all development should demonstrate conformity with the Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles”*. Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles for the plan area have been developed by the steering group to ensure the protection of the local environment and the delivery of biodiversity net gain, in line with the principles of the Environment Bill 2020. This includes protecting existing trees and planting new trees (preferably native species), protecting existing hedgerows and planting new hedgerows, linking green corridors, and applying natural management. The implementation of Policy CM7 and Cleobury Mortimer's environmental principles will lead to positive effects in the long term, towards meeting the CMNDP objective to *“minimise the impact of new development on the surrounding countryside, landscape, and ecosystems”*.
- 9.4 In terms of the housing allocation site, the Ludlow Road site has the potential to support biodiversity; with acid, calcareous, neutral grassland covering the southwestern half of the site, improved grassland covering the northeastern half and arable and horticultural land along the northern corner. Additionally, there are hedgerows on the boundaries adjacent to Catherton Road and Ludlow Road. Policy CM1 – Ludlow Road residential allocation further states the scheme will deliver a minimum overall biodiversity net gain of 10%, that an accessible wildlife corridor will be created to link Ludlow Road and Catherton Road and a tree planning strategy will be implemented in line with Policy CM7.
- 9.5 In terms of the employment area extension allocation discussed in CM3 – Extension at Tenbury Road employment area, the site off Tenbury Road is mostly arable and horticultural land with urban built-up areas and gardens. Policy CM3 states that *“all development will deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain”*. Therefore, this site allocation and policy has the potential to support biodiversity.
- 9.6 It is considered that the requirements for biodiversity net gain are set out in individual policies CM1, CM3, and CM7. For all other development, a net gain

will be sought for individual proposals, in line with Policy CM7 and the environmental principles as aforementioned.

9.7 More broadly, biodiversity assets are protected and enhanced through the Policy CM6 – Housing design. This policy seeks to ensure the steering group’s ‘good design principles’ are implemented. The proposed principles state that good residential design will:

- *“maintain existing hedges where possible, and no hedge-netting will be allowed; this may mean that building work has to be timetabled to avoid disturbing nesting birds”.*
- *Ensure “environmental surveys... take account of all wildlife including nocturnal species and, if between November and April, hibernating species”; and*
- *“make provision for small animals to move freely through boundaries and hedges”.*

9.8 Overall, the CMNDP is predicted to have a minor positive effect on biodiversity. The CMNDP policies will ensure that ecological sensitivities are appropriately considered by development proposals and supporting wider net gains where possible. Furthermore, the CMNDP sets out a range of provisions which will support and enhance valued habitats, species and ecological networks in the neighbourhood area.

Climate change

9.9 The Cleobury Mortimer community strongly supports development that will address the challenges of climate change. To this end, policies, principles and guidance within the CMNDP emphasise the importance of mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis, seeking to embed environmentally sustainable practices in response to the challenges faced.

9.10 Notably, the ‘good design principles’ identify sustainable development opportunities to be capitalised upon within the parish. The proposed principles contribute positively towards climate change mitigation efforts, encouraging energy efficient homes that have a zero-carbon impact on the environment, wastewater management that incorporates sustainable drainage and water capture, and maximising the use of renewable energy opportunities. It is recognised that the emerging Local Plan will contain robust policies on energy savings, generation and carbon neutrality which will further supplement CMNDP policies in this respect.

9.11 The good design principles also include the requirement of proposals to *“provide access to local facilities and public transport links via convenient, direct paths”*, which will aid in limiting the need to travel to local facilities via private transport (and subsequently reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions). Furthermore, Policy CM6 specifically requires that:

- *“Provision is made for on-plot parking for all vehicles related to the development, including for visitors and deliveries electric vehicle charging points”; and*
- *“Provision is made for electric vehicle charging points”.*

- 9.12 In terms of the site allocations, the development of 120 new homes will lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area, however these are an inevitable aspect of the future baseline. Regarding per capita emissions, the proposed site at Ludlow Road is located on the edge of the town and allows fairly easy travel to the settlement centre and its associated features via Catherton Road. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, whilst the proposed housing site allocation is located within Flood Zone 1, the northern boundary is at high, medium, and low risk of surface water flooding. It is anticipated that the provisions of the NPPF 2021 and emerging Local Plan, which seek to deliver sustainable drainage systems in development, will help to ensure that no significant effects arise. Moreover, Policy CM1 makes establishes the role of sustainable drainage systems and natural flood management to increase attenuation rates and reduce flood risk in the long-term at the site.
- 9.13 In terms of the extension of the employment area, this will also lead to increases in greenhouse gases; again, these are an inevitable aspect of the future baseline. Regarding per capita emissions, the proposed site extension is on the edge of the town and allows fairly easy travel to the settlement centre and its associated features via Tenbury Road. In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the proposed site allocation is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of surface water flooding. Policy CM3 establishes the emphasis on climate-friendly practice, stating that *“commercial development will be expected to reach ‘good’ BREEAM status or equivalent status within an alternative assessment endorsed by Shropshire Council, for water efficiency as a minimum, unless it can be demonstrated that this would make the development unviable”, “where necessary, sustainable urban drainage systems should use natural water management techniques to manage all surface water risks”, “proposals for renewable and low carbon infrastructure will be supported where these do not cause harm to local amenity and character” and “where changes to existing buildings, including extensions and alterations, are being undertaken, maximising opportunities to increase fabric energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and integrate on-site renewable energy technologies”*.
- 9.14 Additionally, protecting and enhancing green features and habitats within the neighbourhood area through CM7 and the proposed environmental principles will safeguard natural carbon sequesters located within the landscape (for example, trees and hedgerows). Notably, Policy CM7 indicates that *“major development will ensure that tree planting and management of existing trees will result in 20% tree canopy coverage of the development site 15 years after completion. Existing trees should be retained and where this is not possible, replaced with a native species tree”*. This will positively respond to the potential effects of climate change (particularly from extreme weather events) through providing summer shading and reducing surface water run-off.
- 9.15 Overall, it is recognised that climate change is a global issue, and that the scale of the development proposed through the CMNDP is not anticipated to lead to significant effects. Nonetheless, the CMNDP policy framework is considered to support local and national climate change targets and is therefore predicted to have a residual minor positive effect on climate change.

Landscape

- 9.16 Cleobury Mortimer lies nestled in undulating hills with scattered woodland and individual mature trees. Tree-cover therefore provides an essential element of the local character and is a key priority for residents; reflected through the CMNDP objective of “*minimising the impact of new development on the surrounding countryside, landscape, and ecosystem*”. To meet this objective, Policy CM7 requires that “*all development should demonstrate conformity with the Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles*”, and “*major development will ensure that tree planting and management of existing trees will result in 20% canopy coverage of the development site 15 years after completion. Existing trees should be retained and where this is not possible, replaced with a native species tree*”. Minor long-term positive effects can be anticipated as a result.
- 9.17 Policy CM6 sets similar requirements to that of Policy CM7, stating that “*masterplanning and detailed design of schemes demonstrates conformity with the Cleobury Mortimer Good Design Principles*”, which includes “*aim to prevent light pollution and maintain the rural nature of the town*” and “*allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars*”. This is considered likely to support long-term positive effects in relation to landscape.
- 9.18 In terms of the housing site allocation, the site is greenfield and located on the edge of the main settlement, with the potential to lead to further growth into the open landscape, west of the town. The CMNDP recognises that housing development may affect settlement pattern and local views, with concern raised for the privacy of adjacent residential properties. The environmental principles call for landscape buffers to be implement to “*provide screening at all times of the year*”. This buffer is intended to mitigate loss of privacy and amenity for existing residents.
- 9.19 Additionally, the employment extension site is located on the edge of the main settlement; there was a strong consensus in the community that this was the best location for additional employment land and there would be the provision of improvements to the highways infrastructure to accommodate increased travel. CM3 states that “*new development, or modifications of existing development, will not lead to a deterioration of the amenity of neighbouring properties*”.
- 9.20 Considering the above, overall minor long-term negative effects are considered inevitable/ unavoidable because of the loss of greenfield land at the settlement edge. It is however recognised that the wider policy provisions of the CMNDP will likely provide long-term protection of landscape character and key landscape features, as well as the wider countryside setting.

Historic environment

- 9.21 Cleobury Mortimer is a historic town containing listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and a designated conservation area; all of which are sensitive to the effects of development and growth. In relation to the proposed housing development site in the CMNDP, the site is located north of Curdale Farm, containing non-designated heritage assets (the farmhouse and traditional farm buildings). CM1 states that whilst Curdale Farm is a non-designated historic asset, it should be preserved and enhanced – therefore additional planting and

tree screening as required through the environmental principles is likely to ensure negative effects are avoided.

- 9.22 In terms of the wider plan area, the CMNDP states that *“there have been many houses built in Cleobury Mortimer under the adopted Development Plan policies which are attractive and well designed. Therefore, the CMNDP will not contain specific policies on design”*. Nonetheless, it is considered that the implementation of the good design principles and Policy CM6 will likely contribute positively towards protecting important features and characteristics of the town and conservation area and improving the public realm. For example, good residential design will *“have designed streets in a way that encourages low vehicle speeds and allows them to function as social spaces”* and *“allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars”*.
- 9.23 Overall, it is considered that the CMNDP provides additional policy protections which are considered likely to positively contribute to the fabric and setting of heritage assets, and broadly neutral effects can be anticipated.

Land, soil, and water resources

- 9.24 Development at the proposed housing allocation site under Policy CM1 will result in the combined loss of 5.7ha of greenfield land. The employment land extension allocation will result in the loss of 1.3ha of land. Negative effects are therefore considered likely in relation to land and soil resources as a result.
- 9.25 Although a detailed agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken for most of the parish, the Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset indicates the proposed sites are wholly within Grade 2 Very Good (Best and Most Versatile (BMV)) land. New development is therefore highly likely to result in the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land at this location, resulting in significant long term negative effects. With high quality agricultural land surrounding the settlement area, and a lack of brownfield alternatives, these effects are however recognised are largely unavoidable.
- 9.26 The CMNDP does however propose Policy CM4 – Cleobury Mortimer development boundary, which, by defining a settlement boundary and restricting development outside of this, provides indirect support for the long-term retention of the surrounding countryside and agricultural land resources here.
- 9.27 In terms of water resources, Severn Trent Water (STW) serves South Shropshire, including Cleobury Mortimer parish. The whole of STW’s supply area is shown as an area of ‘moderate’ water stress, and the parish falls within the ‘Strategic Grid’ Water Resource Zone (WRZ), which has the greatest supply/demand deficit within STW’s supply area. However, it is recognised that the allocation of the CMNDP meets the level of growth planned for in the emerging Shropshire Local Plan and is therefore anticipated to be accommodated by STW.
- 9.28 Nonetheless, Policy CM6 seeks to supplement higher level policy provisions, requiring that schemes for development comply with the good design principles. This includes requiring that proposals *“promote wastewater management both*

in respect of sustainable drainage and water capture (for use in activities such as gardening, car washing)”, which allows for increased resource efficiency.

- 9.29 Similarly, the Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles seek to protect water quality, requiring that proposals include *“The creation of new water features or the improvement of banks of existing water features that rely upon natural process of water management not on chemical treatment.”* This supplements the National Design Guide (2021) which identifies well designed places as those which *“integrate existing natural features into a network that supports biodiversity and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience”*.⁹
- 9.30 Overall, taking the above into consideration, whilst largely unavoidable significant negative effects are anticipated in relation to this SEA theme due to the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, the plan is recognised for its efforts to minimise the future loss of agricultural land resources, protect intrinsic rural values, and promote water efficiency and improved water quality.

Population and communities

- 9.31 In relation to housing provision in the neighbourhood area, Policy CM1 allocates one site for housing development, in accordance with the requirement set out in the emerging Shropshire Local Plan Review. The allocation provides for 120 new homes, considering completions and commitments since 2016, which will lead to significant long term positive effects through meeting the identified housing need for the area, and meeting the plan objective to *“provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home”*.
- 9.32 The neighbourhood plan also has a close focus on delivering housing of a type and tenure which meets the requirements of the local community, recognising that the town has a growing and slightly ageing population. In this context Policy CM5 – Housing mix will also contribute positively towards meeting the above plan objective through *“affordable housing will be provided at 20% of the total number and include a mix of 1, 2, and 3-bedroom properties”*.
- 9.33 The quality of housing will be further supported by the neighbourhood plan’s focus on delivering energy efficient housing. In this respect the Cleobury Mortimer good design principles include a range of provisions on energy savings, generation, and carbon neutrality, supporting the delivery of *“the most energy efficient homes possible that use materials, design, orientation and technology to seek to have a “zero carbon” impact”*. The requirement for development to conform with these principles through Policy CM6 will help deliver high quality and energy efficient housing, lower energy costs, and help reduce issues such as fuel poverty.
- 9.34 For a community of around 3,400¹⁰, Cleobury Mortimer is well served with community and recreational facilities, although local consultation (the Big Cleobury Survey) did identify some gaps in the local service offer. In light of consultation and supporting evidence, the CMNDP steering group determined that existing open space and recreational provisions would be insufficient to meet the growing community needs and aspirations. Policy CM1 therefore

⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) ‘National Design Guide’ can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰ Shropshire Council 2015.

requires that an accessible green space is put forward to “*make provision for play and recreation in a scheme agreed with the Town Council*”.

- 9.35 Policy CM3 details employment opportunities in the area. The policy states that smaller start-up units will be supported, and new development will be of a high standard to attract new and local businesses to improve the industrial area.
- 9.36 It is considered that the delivery of such new community facilities described above through the CMNDP will promote the vitality of the town and provide opportunity for the Plan area to thrive. The CMNDP will therefore lead to positive effects against the population and community SEA theme, providing for local needs arising from forthcoming developments, in addition to addressing existing infrastructure deficiencies within the town.
- 9.37 It is further noted that proposed Policy CM4 defines a settlement boundary within which housing development will be predominantly located. This will support social cohesion and accessible development in terms of local connections, with the potential for minor long-term positive effects for communities.
- 9.38 In relation to the proposed allocations taken forward through the neighbourhood plan, the site is located on the edge of the town, with reasonable access to the town centre. Policy CM1 seeks to improve accessibility of sites, requiring a “*segregated walking and cycling route*”.
- 9.39 The location of the proposed development area has limited access to public transport links, except for proposed footway and cycleway provision. Highway infrastructure requirements and potential increased reliance on private transportation has been discussed in more detail under the ‘Transportation’ SEA theme below.
- 9.40 The CMNDP recognises that the town needs more employment land, with almost half of residents travelling outside of the town for work likely as a result of limited high value employment opportunities. To reduce the number of commuters and to encourage employment in the town, Policy CM3 – Extension at Tenbury Road employment site allocates 1.3ha of employment land at Tenbury Road, attached to the Newhouse Farm Industrial Site. Requirements include ensuring that new development is of “*a high standard to attract new and local businesses and should seek to add to the overall improvement of the industrial area*”. It is considered that this may attract growing businesses and may also in turn provide high paid employment locally, supporting higher levels of self-containment in the town.
- 9.41 In addition to encouraging new and improved employment land opportunities, the CMNDP seeks to enable self-employment and homeworking through better infrastructure such as superfast broadband and high-quality mobile coverage. This is addressed through the Local Plan policy framework and the CMNDP does not seek to repeat this, however requirements within the specific site allocation policy CM1 and CM3 include ensuring that “*broadband and mobile phone provision will be required*” and “*superfast broadband should be connected to all premises where possible*”. This will positively supplement the Local Plan policy framework, supporting the self-employed, emerging small businesses, and growing number of residents working from home in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

9.42 Overall, the CMNDP is predicted to have a significant long-term positive effect on the population and local community. This is through the combined delivery of new housing, new community infrastructure, and extension of existing employment, and promotion of high quality, sustainable and inclusive neighbourhoods.

Health and wellbeing

9.43 In relation to the proposed housing allocation being taken forward through the neighbourhood plan, the housing site is located on the edge of the town, within reasonable walking distance to existing services and facilities in Cleobury Mortimer. This includes health services such as the medical centre and attached pharmacy. The location of the employment extension site also has the potential to be connected to key footpaths, which Policy CM3 seeks to capitalise upon – stating that proposals will be supported where *“a footway will be provided along the full length of the Tenbury Road site boundary on Tenbury Road to allow safe pedestrian access to the remainder of the settlement”*.

9.44 The wider neighbourhood area is served by an extensive public footpath network, which is utilised by residents and visitors alike. Notably, owing to the rural location of the town there is an active ‘Footpath Association’, and a ‘Walkers are Welcome’ designation, both of which bring many walkers into the area to walk on well-cared for footpaths and prepared walking routes. The CMNDP seeks to maintain and enhance this amenity value of the parish, as reflected through the Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles. Notably these include:

- *“Creating better access for people to the countryside and to observe (but not disturb) natural habitats”*; and
- *“Natural management and planting of public areas and verges, for instance by replacing lawns with wildflower and varied grass species, will be supported”*.

9.45 Policy CM7 requires that all development proposals *“demonstrate conformity with the Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles”*, providing a level of protection to the town’s high-quality environment and public realm.

9.46 The need for open space provision in the town has been evidenced through the Shropshire Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment (2018), which indicated that Cleobury Mortimer has a 4.4ha open space deficit. To address this deficit and meet community infrastructure needs and aspirations, community open space will be delivered through CM1, which will provide *“an accessible green space that will make provision for play and recreation in a scheme agreed with the Town Council”*, *“a segregated walking and cycling route that will complement but not disturb the newly created wildlife corridor”* and *“improvements to the pond near Catherton Road”*. The delivery of open space and recreational facilities within the town, and subsequent improved access to the wider countryside, is important to both promoting healthy lifestyles and retaining the parish’s rural setting.

9.47 The provision of high-quality green infrastructure can often make neighbourhoods more attractive, which in turn can improve the ‘walkability’ of places, supporting active travel. Notably, Policy CM7 states that all new development *“should demonstrate conformity with the Cleobury Mortimer*

environmental principles". Environmental principles for the plan area include safeguarding the primary habitats closely associated with wildlife corridors, stepping-stones, register of trees, rivers, and streams, as well as parkland and woodland, and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration and creation. Maintaining and enhancing the attractiveness of the neighbourhood area will positively affect residents' quality of life and overall well-being in the long-term.

- 9.48 The CMNDP will support health indicators relating to housing by providing high-quality new homes that meet identified local housing needs. Policy CM5 supports the delivery of new housing of differing types and tenures, ensuring access to decent and affordable homes. Additionally, it is considered that the cemetery extension (Policy CM2 – Cleobury Mortimer cemetery extension) will promote healthy living in the village.
- 9.49 Overall, it is considered that the CMNDP will deliver significant long-term positive effects with regards to health and wellbeing. The delivery of new housing and community facilities through Policies CM1-4, in addition to the wider policy framework is considered to maintain and enhance quality of life in the town, allowing continued benefits to physical and mental wellbeing.

Transportation

- 9.50 Cleobury Mortimer has developed along the A4117 which is a key travel route from Birmingham to the east through to Wales in the west. The road is busy throughout the day with congestion heightened at peak times. Traffic congestion is generated because of the significant role that the town plays to many smaller villages and communities in the area, such as for the school and Medical Centre; and the A4117 being a major travel route for HGVs, agricultural vehicles, commuters and the school 'drop-off' (notably almost 90% of residents travel by private vehicle to work).
- 9.51 The delivery of 120 new homes in the town will lead to inevitable increases in vehicle use in the neighbourhood area and potentially affect congestion on local roads. Necessary improvements to the High Street Tenbury Road Junction are further set out through Policy CM3 recognising the need to address the inevitable increase in vehicular use and exacerbation of existing traffic issues.
- 9.52 While there is limited sustainable transport infrastructure within the town, the CMNDP also seeks to tackle congestion problems through providing improvements to the sustainable transport network, notably the town's highly utilised PRow network. In accordance with Policy CM1, a footway and cycleway will be required. Additionally, more general improvements are supported through the wider policy framework. Notably this includes the following good design principle:
- *"Good residential design will provide access to local facilities and public transport links via convenient, direct paths suitable for those pushing a pushchair, in a wheelchair, walking with a stick or walking frame or using a mobility scooter".*
- 9.53 The CMNDP recognises the role of footpath and cycle routes as part of the town's green infrastructure network, setting out support for new hedges, footpaths, wildlife corridors, river improvements, and tree planting. Notably,

through the Cleobury Mortimer environmental principles, development is expected to contribute positive to strengthening these networks and supporting active travel where possible. Principles include:

- *“Provision of linking green corridors that allow fauna to travel freely between habitats and micro habitats”;*
- *“Creating better access for people to the countryside and to observe (but not disturb) natural habitats”;* and
- *“Natural management and planting of public areas and verges”.*

9.54 Strengthening the role of active travel routes through improvements to green infrastructure is anticipated to lead to minor positive effects.

9.55 Overall, while there is likely to be a continued reliance on the private vehicle for travel, it is considered that the CMNDP performs positively in terms of addressing local congestion issues, supporting the PRow network, and encouraging modal shift. With no significant deviation from the baseline anticipated, neutral effects are considered likely.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

- 10.1 Overall, the delivery of up to 120 new homes and additional employment land, alongside the cemetery expansion and a new community recreation place is predicted to deliver predominately positive effects overall in relation to the SEA objectives.
- 10.2 **Significant long-term positive effects** are anticipated in relation to population and communities and health and wellbeing, respectively, through supporting sustainable growth of the community and healthy lifestyles. The CMNDP seeks to deliver housing, employment, and community infrastructure to meet local needs; and provides support for increasing levels of accessibility and self-containment. Further to this the CMNDP supports the vitality and viability of the parish through the protection and enhancement of the valued green infrastructure network, and improvements to the public realm including through meeting local infrastructure needs to sustainably manage growth.
- 10.3 **Minor positive effects** are anticipated in relation to the biodiversity and climate change SEA themes through the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure assets in the Plan area which is inclusive of active travel routes. Further positive effects can also be anticipated in relation to climate change, through the draft Plan's support for the use of renewable and low/zero carbon energy sources and materials in the design of new developments, to deliver the most energy efficient homes possible.
- 10.4 Support for active travel uptake and improvements to the PRoW network also contribute positively towards meeting transport objectives, however given the existing congestion issues and likely continued reliance on the private vehicle for travel, no significant deviation from the baseline is expected and **neutral effects** are concluded against the Transport SEA theme.
- 10.5 **Neutral effects** are also predicted in relation to the historic environment SEA theme. This is given that that Neighbourhood Plan, sufficiently protects the local historic environment.
- 10.6 **Minor long-term negative effects** are considered inevitable against the landscape SEA theme because of the loss of greenfield land at the settlement edge. It is however recognised that the wider policy provisions of the CMNDP will likely provide long-term protection of landscape character and key landscape features, as well as the wider countryside setting.
- 10.7 **Significant long-term negative effects** are anticipated in relation to the land, soil, and water resources SEA theme due to the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, these effects are considered largely unavoidable (given the presence of high-quality agricultural land surrounding the settlement and the lack of brownfield alternatives) and the Plan is recognised for its efforts to minimise the future loss of agricultural land resources, protect intrinsic rural values, and promote water efficiency and improved water quality.
- 10.8 **No recommendations are made at this stage.**

Cumulative effects

- 10.9 Cumulatively the CMNDP seeks to complement the growth strategy of the emerging Local Plan. Planning to meet residual housing needs through the CMNDP will reduce the risk of residual unmet need at the end of the Plan period, while also enabling additional development benefits to be delivered for the local community. Notably this includes new cemetery space.
- 10.10 Identifying and planning for new business and residential development in conjunction with the emerging Local Plan will ensure that growth is delivered sustainably, and that opportunities for wider social, economic, and environmental improvements can be realised.
- 10.11 Positive cumulative effects could also be anticipated through the support for sustainable drainage and green infrastructure development that holds multiple benefits in relation to the SEA themes of biodiversity, climate change, landscape, land, soil and water resources, population and communities and health and wellbeing.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

11. Next steps and monitoring

- 11.1 This part of the report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of plan-making and SEA.

Plan finalisation

- 11.2 Following consultation, the draft CMNDP will be finalised for submission to Shropshire Council. Following submission, the plan and supporting evidence will be published for further consultation, and then subjected to Independent Examination. At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 11.3 If the examination leads to a favourable outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Shropshire Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once 'made', the CMNDP will become part of the Development Plan for Shropshire, covering the defined neighbourhood area.

Monitoring

- 11.4 The SEA regulations require "*measures envisaged concerning monitoring*" to be outlined in this report. This refers to the monitoring of likely significant effects of the Neighbourhood Plan to identify any unforeseen effects early and take remedial action as appropriate.
- 11.5 It is anticipated that monitoring of effects of the Neighbourhood Plan will be undertaken by Shropshire Council, as part of the process of preparing its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). No significant negative effects are considered likely in the implementation of the CMNDP that would warrant more stringent monitoring over and above that already undertaken by Shropshire Council.

Appendices

Appendix A Regulatory requirements

As discussed in **Chapter 1** above, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Table AA.1** overleaf links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst **Table AA.2** explains this interpretation. **Table AA.3** identifies how and where within the Environmental Report the regulatory requirements have/ will be met.

Table AA.1: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

		Questions answered	As per regulations... the Environmental Report must include...
Introduction		What's the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the SEA scope?	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
		What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan 	
Part 2	What are the SEA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan 	
Part 3	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the monitoring measures envisaged 	

Table AA.2: Questions answered by this Environmental Report, in-line with regulatory requirements

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>	
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>	
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;		
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach)	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]
	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]

Table AA.3: ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SEA process) and where (within this report) regulatory requirements have been, are and will be met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the Environmental Report	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 2 (‘What is the plan seeking to achieve’) presents this information.
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters have been considered in detail through scoping work, which has involved dedicated consultation on a Scoping Report. The ‘SEA framework’ – the outcome of scoping – is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA?’). More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix B of this Environmental Report.
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix B of this Environmental Report.
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	More detailed messages, established through a context and baseline review are also presented in Appendix B of this Environmental Report.
5. The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The SEA framework is presented within Chapter 3 (‘What is the scope of the SEA’). Also, Appendix B presents key messages from the context review. With regards to explaining “ <i>how...considerations have been taken into account</i> ”, Chapter 7 explains the Steering Group’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e. explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in light of alternatives appraisal.
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapter 6 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to housing and employment growth, which is a ‘stand-out’ plan policy area). Chapters 9 presents an appraisal of the plan. With regards to assessment methodology, Chapter 8 explains the role of the SEA framework/scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions, e.g. timescale.
7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	The assessment seeks to highlight where certain tensions between competing objectives may exist, which might potentially be actioned by the Examiner, when finalising the plan. Three specific recommendations are made in Chapter 10.
8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 4 and 5 deal with ‘reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’, in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 7 explains the Town Council’s ‘reasons for selecting the preferred option’ (in-light of alternatives assessment).

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
9. Description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is provided at the beginning of this Environmental Report.
The Environmental Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations	
authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	At the current time, this Environmental Report is published alongside the draft CMNDP, with a view to informing Regulation 14 consultation.
The SEA must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	Assessment findings presented within this Environmental Report, and consultation responses received, have been fed back to the Steering Group and have informed plan finalisation.

Appendix B Scoping information

This appendix presents the baseline information and policy review that has informed the identification of key issues and SEA objectives as presented in Chapter 3 of the Environmental Report.

It was established at scoping that for the purposes of this SEA, the air quality theme has been scoped out of the proposed framework.

Scoping consultation was undertaken during the period Friday 19th February to Friday 26th March 2021. The responses received are identified in **Table AB.1** below.

Table AB.1 Scoping consultation responses

Scoping consultation response	SEA update/ response
Natural England	
Victoria Kirkham, Consultations Team	
Natural England has no specific comments to make on this neighbourhood plan SEA scoping. However, we refer you to the advice in the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.	Noted with thanks.
Historic England	
Peter Boland, Historic Places Advisor	
Thank you for your consultation and the invitation to comment on the SEA Scoping Document for the above Neighbourhood Plan. Historic England have no substantive concerns as to the contents of the document and consider the evidence base for the SEA, the identified key issues and the proposed SEA framework to be well thought out and fit for purpose.	Noted, with thanks.
Environment Agency	
Graeme Irwin, Senior Planning Advisor	
We have reviewed the SEA Scoping Report, dated February 2021, and wish to provide the following brief comments for your consideration at this stage.	Noted, with thanks.
<p>We note that Cleobury Mortimer is identified in the Shropshire Local Plan (pre-submission) as being a 'Key Centre' at Tier 3 of the settlement hierarchy. The Settlement Policy S6 (Cleobury Mortimer Plan Area) states that "the Neighbourhood Plan will include the strategy for achieving the housing and employment guidelines for the Key Centre of Cleobury Mortimer." This will comprise approximately 200 dwellings and around 2ha of employment development" over the plan period.</p> <p>It is important that the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan (NP) offers robust confirmation that development is not impacted by flooding and that there is sufficient waste water infrastructure in place to accommodate growth for the duration of the plan period.</p>	
Environmental Themes: The themes presented appear to incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive and appear reasonable to reflect the purpose of this report and its potential environmental effects. The themes	Noted, with thanks.

Scoping consultation response**SEA update/ response**

include Air Quality, Biodiversity, Climate Change (including Flood Risk) and Land, Soil and Water Resources.

To assist Shropshire Council going forward we have previously provided general advice in line with our Neighbourhood Plan pro-forma in relation to any additional housing allocations being brought forward within the plan. I have attached a copy of our pro-forma for reference and consideration of the Cleobury Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan team. We have also produced Climate Change Guidance for our local area. This is attached for your consideration / reference.

Noted, with thanks.

Biodiversity: We understand that you have consulted Natural England (NE) for comments and as the lead on SSSI/SAC area; they will offer you some advice on the options to protect and enhance such designations etc.

Noted, with thanks.

The SEA objectives and questions appear reasonable to help create, enhance and connect habitats, species and/or sites of biodiversity interest. We welcome reference to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and recognition of the embedding 'net gain' principles as key to environmental considerations.

Noted, with thanks.

Flood Risk: In this instance, having checked the environmental constraints within the NP area, our main points below relates to fluvial flood risk (flooding from rivers and sea). Figure 4.4 of the Scoping Report provides information on fluvial flood risk in the NP area which is derived from the River Rea (designated Main River) and its tributaries.

Noted, with thanks.

Based on our indicative Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea), the NP area is shown to be predominantly located in Flood Zone 1, and therefore has a low fluvial flood risk potential. However, we note there are a number of smaller ordinary watercourses crossing the NP area.

Noted, with thanks, in line with the identified baseline.

Our Flood Map primarily show flooding from Main Rivers, not ordinary watercourses, or un-modelled rivers, with a catchment of less than 3km². As such it should not be assumed that these ordinary watercourses do not have floodplains and there may be slightly more of the site affected by flood risk than is immediately expected just from reference to the Flood Zone Mapping. Therefore, some assessment of flood risk associated with these unmodelled watercourses may be necessary as part of any supporting evidence base carried out for the Plan area if development is proposed in such locations. This should be scoped into the SEA to ensure no flood risk impact and opportunities for flood risk reduction.

Noted, with thanks. This has been considered through the subsequent assessment.

This is to confirm that the site is developable, has safe occupation and that there will be no impact on third parties. We would also expect opportunities be sought for enhancement and/flood risk improvements.

Noted, with thanks.

It should be noted that the Flood Map provides an indication of 'fluvial' flood risk only. You are advised to discuss matters relating to surface water (pluvial) flooding with the Flood and Water Team at Shropshire Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

Noted, with thanks. Surface water flood risk has been explored as part of the baseline.

With regards any additional housing allocations proposed within the NP, going forward we would only make substantive further comments if the Plan was seeking to allocate sites for

Noted, with thanks.

Scoping consultation response**SEA update/ response**

development in Flood Zones 3 and/or 2 (the latter being used as the 1% climate change extent), or as identified within any Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

Water Quality/Water Resources: The Environmental Bill (2020) policy statement states that the new bill aspires to secure long term, resilient water and wastewater services, making for a greener and more resilient country for the next generation within its 25 year environmental plan. Key elements to help reform the 25-year plan including trying to reform waterbodies to as close to their natural state.

Noted, with thanks.

With reference to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) we would expect Shropshire Council to continue to help address WFD failures through its role as planner, issuing ordinary watercourse consents and as land manager. All watercourses in the Plan area (and UK) are duty bound to reach Good Ecological Status or Potential (GES/GEP) by 2027. It is essential that WFD is fully integrated into the Local Plan process and that all future development helps to address the issues that currently prevent the watercourse from achieving GES/GEP. Similarly, at the NP level, we welcome reference to the need to 'protect and enhance water quality and use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner' and the assessment questions associated with this.

Noted, with thanks. The WFD has been considered through the baseline and subsequent assessment.

I trust the above is of assistance at this time. Please can you also copy in any future correspondence to my team email address at westmidsplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

Many thanks.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹¹ include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to “protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment” including by “improving biodiversity”;
- Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape across local authority boundaries;
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and
 - Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity;
- Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity; and
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site... unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)¹² sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It was in part a response to the UK’s failure to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity by 2010, and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting

¹¹ GOV.UK (2021) ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ can be accessed [here](#).

¹² HM Gov (2011) ‘The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature’ can be accessed [here](#).

a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other, and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halve biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services¹³ aims to 'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

The 25 Year Environment Plan¹⁴ sets out the Government's environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation, improving social justice through tackling pollution and promoting the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:

- Using and managing land sustainably;
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- Protecting and improving the global environment

In this context, Goal 3 'Thriving plants and wildlife' and the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Chapter 5 'Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans' directly relate to the Biodiversity SEA theme.

Launched in 2002, the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP) provided a detailed outline of the work necessary for the conservation of 34 species and 15 habitats.¹⁵ The plan was updated in 2005/6 and was updated regularly until about 2009. The plans for species and habitats are now considerably out of date but are available for reference purposes.

¹³ Defra (2011) 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁴ HM Gov (2018) 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁵ Shropshire Council (2009) 'Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan' can be accessed [here](#).

The Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) maps areas of high biodiversity value and the areas that act as connective 'corridors and stepping-stones' between them.¹⁶

The following policies within the Core Strategy 2016-2038¹⁷ directly relate to the biodiversity theme:

- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

The emerging Local Plan 2016-2038¹⁸ proposes the following policies which provide further support for biodiversity across the authority area:

- Policy SP2: Strategic Approach
- Policy SP3: Climate Change
- Policy SP5: High -Quality Design
- Policy SP15: Whole Estate Plans
- Policy DP12: The Natural Environment
- Policy DP14: Green Infrastructure

Baseline summary

European and nationally designated sites

There are no internationally designated nature conservation sites within, or close to the neighbourhood area. However, areas of Ancient Woodland to the east of the parish, including sections of Coachroad Coppice, Cleobury Coppice and Bell Coppice, fall within the nationally designated Wyre Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is noted that part of the Wyre Forest that falls within the Parish is also designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) (Bell Coppice).

The Wyre Forest SSSI was notified in 1998 and is 1,751ha in size. Based on the most recent condition assessment the SSSI is classed as:

- 23.29% favourable
- 73.60% unfavourable recovering
- 2.92% unfavourable declining
- 0.10% partially destroyed
- 0.09% destroyed

The SSSI citation sets out the following reasons for notification¹⁹:

- Wyre forest is the largest ancient woodlands in England, being one of only 14 sites with more than 300ha of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW). It is the most extensive area in England of lowland coppice oak comprised

¹⁶ Shropshire Council (2018) 'Shropshire Environment Network' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁷ Shropshire Council (2011) 'Core strategy 2006-2026' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁸ Shropshire Council (2021) 'Shropshire Local Plan 2016-2038' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁹ Natural England (2014) 'Designated Sites View: Wyre Forest SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

of the pedunculate oak-bracken-bramble and oak-birch-wavy hair grass woodland types.

- The SSSI is the focus of an area of high value biodiversity within the Midlands Plateau Natural Area. The ASNW is abutted by a substantial area of conifer plantation which is important for the associated species interest and has a functional interdependence with the semi-natural woodland.
- The site also contains a major scattered resource of unimproved neutral grassland of the common knapweed-crested dog's-tail type, a nationally uncommon and threatened habitat.
- The invertebrate assemblage is exceptionally rich and of national importance, with one of the largest populations of pearl-bordered fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) in England.
- The woodland breeding bird assemblage is also of special interest, with a typical western element to the avifauna.

The east of the parish falls within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the SSSI where residential development of 100 units or more, or rural residential development of 50 dwellings or more will require further consultation with Natural England. However, it is noted that the main settlement area and its close surrounds does not fall within an IRZ for any level of residential development.

Local biodiversity resource

There are no locally designated sites within the parish, however the Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN) identifies green 'buffers' within the Plan area²⁰. The guidance note prepared for SEN users states that *"Buffer zones' surround core areas, restoration areas, "stepping stones' and ecological corridors and protect them from adverse impacts from the wider environment. Buffer zones vary in width depending on the type of site and the habitats it contains."* Figure AB.1 below shows that a significant proportion of the neighbourhood area falls within this 'buffer zone', coinciding with the Wyre Valley SSSI/NNR 'core area' to the east of the parish.

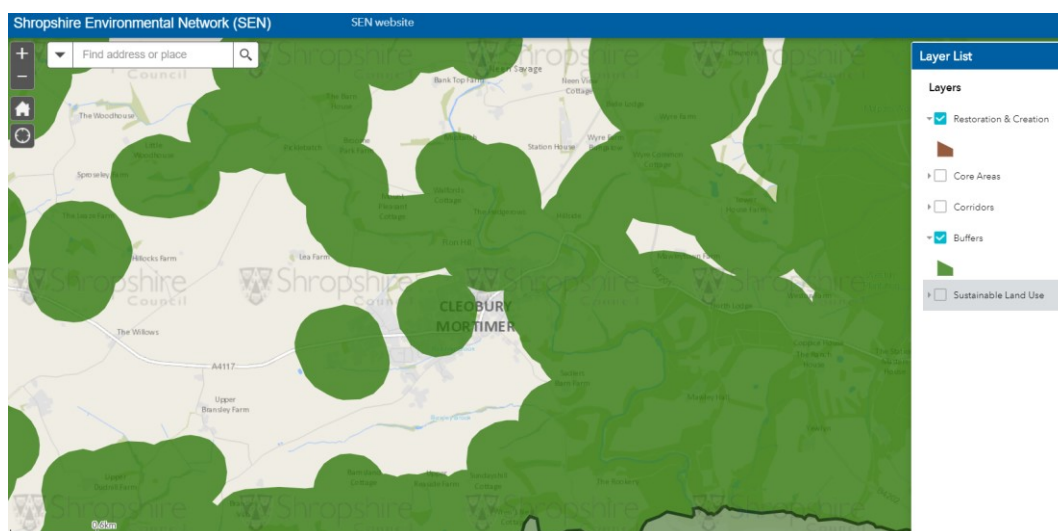


Figure AB.1 Shropshire Environment Network – Buffer zones²¹

²⁰ Shropshire Council (2016) 'Shropshire Environmental Network (SEN)' can be accessed [here](#).

²¹ Shropshire Council (2013) 'Shropshire Council Natural Environment Guidance Note 11 – Environmental Networks' can be accessed [here](#).

Natural lines of vegetation in and around the town with high biodiversity value have been named, mapped and are well known by the community. These include: Workhouse, School, Pudding Brook, Tenbury Road, Hobsons Rowely Brook, and River Rea (see Figure AB.2 overleaf). The total length of these areas is approximately 7.5km, and all are interconnected, mostly joining with the River Rea. These corridors offer shelter, security, feeding and breeding grounds for wide biodiversity as well as having easy access for walkers.



Figure AB.2 Locally identified wildlife corridors

It is also noted, in terms of the local biodiversity resource, that through the Big Cleobury Survey, over 80% of respondents said that the development of wildlife corridors, and encouragement of biodiversity was 'important' or 'very important'. Management is therefore ongoing in the parish; notably the manorial estate Mawley Hall are currently undertaking a substantial program of habitat improvements within the parish. Programmes include river restoration, native tree planting, rare old English breed sheep grazing, red deer park and other aspects of wildlife development.

Alongside the designated biodiversity sites, the parish contains numerous Priority Habitats; notably significant areas of Ancient Woodland (as discussed above). The parish also contains a considerable area of Woodpasture and Parkland to the south east of the main settlement, Deciduous Woodland, Blanket Bog, as well as smaller areas of Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland, Lowland Heathland and Lowland Meadows.

Trees

Tree cover in the neighbourhood area is vast. Notably, the Town Council owns and has responsibility for three areas and their trees: the graveyard of St. Mary's Church in the town, The Skate Park, and the active Cemetery to the west of the town. There is an ongoing commitment to the maintenance and management of the trees on these sites.

The CMNP Steering Group is committed to working in partnership with key stakeholders overseeing important initiatives for tree management within the parish. Many landowners have been managing their trees and planting new ones mostly under the Farm Stewardship Scheme, although it is recognized that this may change as the EU subsidies are replaced by UK schemes.

A Desktop Survey of the Parish Tree Population was carried out in September 2020 using Google Earth Mapping to estimate the total number of trees and their age profile in that part of the Parish to the west of the River Rea. It showed that there are over 8,500 trees older than 10 years of which 3500 are older than 130 years²². The Survey revealed that over the last 50-100 years, an imbalance in the age profile of the trees has developed. Over 1,000 acorns have subsequently been harvested by a group of volunteers under the banner of “Plant a Tree in 23” and are being sown in support of developing a tree replacement program.²³

A similar desk top survey in October 2020 established a data base recording the importance of the trees within the parish’s seven Wildlife Corridors. Wildlife Corridors are not only just avenues/alleyways that join up areas of high biodiversity, they are also safeguarded areas of high biodiversity and habitat in their own right. A mature oak can provide habitats for over 1,000 species of fauna and flora according to the Woodland Trust and RSPB. The table in Table AB.1 below shows that there are over 600 such trees in these Wildlife Corridors.

Table AB.1 Table showing age of trees in each Cleobury Mortimer wildlife corridor

Wildlife Corridor	Length in metres	Trees >10 years old	Trees >130 years old
Workhouse	1.4 Km	144	28
School	1.2Km	67	18
Pudding Brook	1.8Km	325	29
Tenbury Road	0.45 KM	20	4
Hobsons	0.75KM	29	10
Rowley Brook	1.75Km	134	15
River Rea	>8Km	7500	500
Total Trees		8219	604

Figure AB.3 overleaf identifies the designated biodiversity in the neighbourhood area and displays a relatively high level of ecological connectivity across the parish and beyond.

²² Cleobury Mortimer Town Council (2022): ‘Neighbourhood Plan Consultation’ can be accessed [here](#).

²³ Ibid.

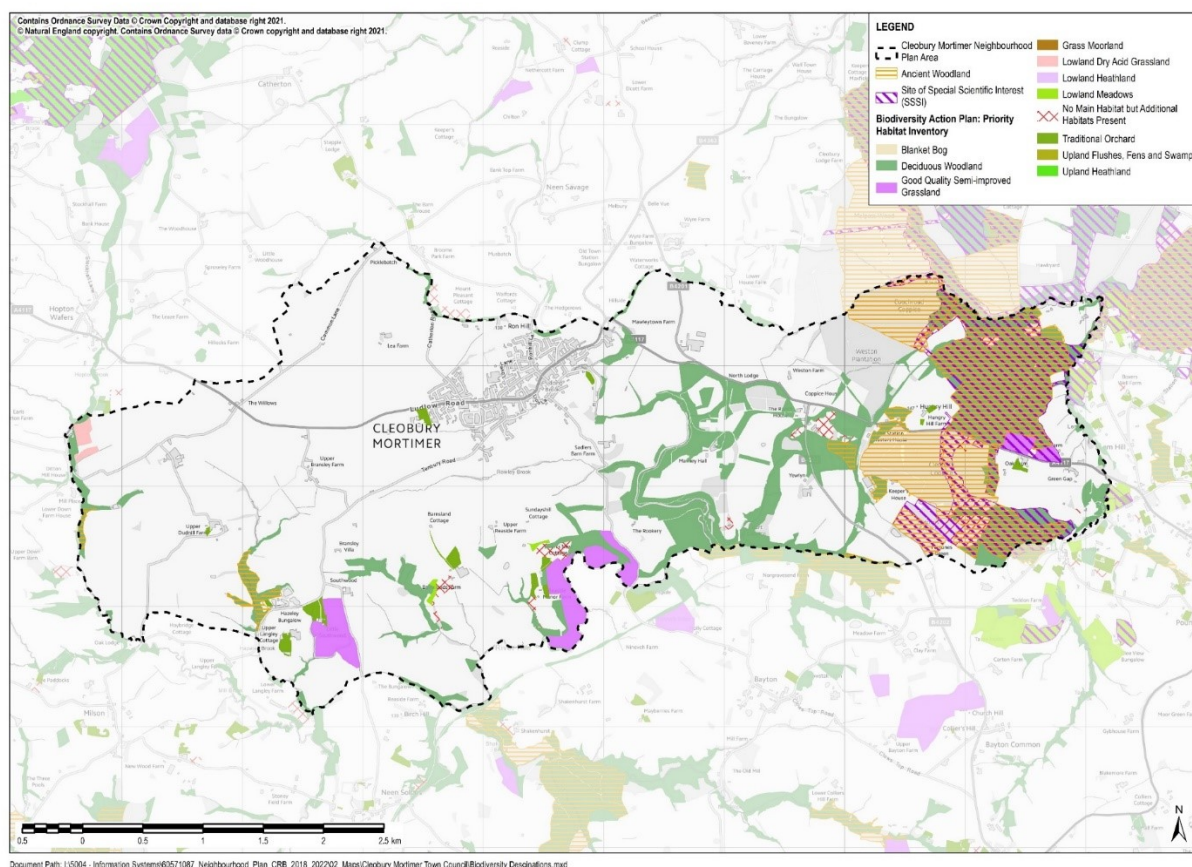


Figure AB.3 Designated biodiversity

Future baseline

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, with the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

Nationally important habitats, in addition to locally identified buffers and wildlife corridors present within the parish have the potential to be impacted by new development. This can lead to negative effects in the long-term, for example removing the connection between habitats for species such as birds. The local biodiversity resource can also be impacted by poor air quality and water quality, and factors such as noise and lighting can disturb vulnerable species.

The Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats (notably trees), species and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect priority habitats but to enhance the connections between them; utilising opportunities for net-gain where possible. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised, both within the neighbourhood area and in the surrounding areas.

Climate change

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework²⁴ (NPPF) include:

- Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure;
- Inappropriate development in areas at high risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk (whether existing or future);
- Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources;
- Plans should take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, considering a range of factors including flooding. Plans should adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure; and
- Plans should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbate the impacts of physical changes to the coast.

One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment including by “mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”. Furthermore, the policy states “the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”.

The Flood and Water Management Act (2010)²⁵ sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding, not just rivers and seas, are managed more effectively. This includes: incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

The UK Climate Change Act²⁶ was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ HM Government (2010) ‘Flood and Water Management Act’ can be accessed [here](#).

²⁶ HM Government (2008) ‘Climate Change Act’ can be accessed [here](#).

role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- Commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. This includes reducing emissions from the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), which currently account for about 20% of the UK's emissions. The 100% target was based on advice from the CCC's 2019 report, 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming' and introduced into law through the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.
- The Act requires the Government to set legally binding 'carbon budgets'. A carbon budget is a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK's long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Act requires the Government to assess the risks and opportunities from climate change for the UK, and to prepare for them. The Committee on Climate Change's Adaptation Sub-Committee advises on these climate change risks and assesses progress towards tackling them. The associated National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then to develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report ²⁷ containing six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and

²⁷ Defra (2017) UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017 can be accessed [here](#).

- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals

Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)²⁸ sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

In February 2020, the government announced a new £5 billion 5-year funding package to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.²⁹ This builds on the Government's determination to make buses work better for their passengers. The details of these programmes will be announced in the upcoming National Bus Strategy and follows the allocation of £170 million to support more electric buses, increase rural mobility and trial new 'Superbus' services.

Cycle routes will also see a major boost across the country with over 250 miles of new, high-quality separated cycle routes and safe junctions in towns and cities to be constructed across England, as part of the multibillion package announced.

Shropshire's Climate Change Strategy 'Towards Zero Carbon' (2019) assembles policies and actions to help mitigate and adapt to climate change, ensuring a sustainable future for the county. The strategy has three main objectives as a route map to zero carbon:

- Mitigate the causes of climate change through carbon reduction of our services
- Adapt services and their delivery to respond to changes in the climate
- Promote sustainable practices via all services

The Core Strategy³⁰ outlines policies aimed at mitigating carbon emissions, including:

- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS7: Communications and Transport
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment

The emerging Local Plan³¹ proposes the following policies which provide further support for addressing climate change across the authority area:

- Policy SP3: Climate Change
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy SP13: Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth and Enterprise

²⁸ Department for Transport (2020) 'Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge' can be accessed [online] available at: [here](#).

²⁹ Department for Transport (2020) 'Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

- Policy DP11: Minimising Carbon Emissions
- Policy DP26: Strategic, Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

Baseline summary

Climate change mitigation

As shown in Figure AB.4 (below) the largest contributing sector of CO₂ emissions in Shropshire in 2018 was the Transport sector (41.62% of total). This has only been the case since 2016, as in previous years industry and commercial has been the largest contributing sector.

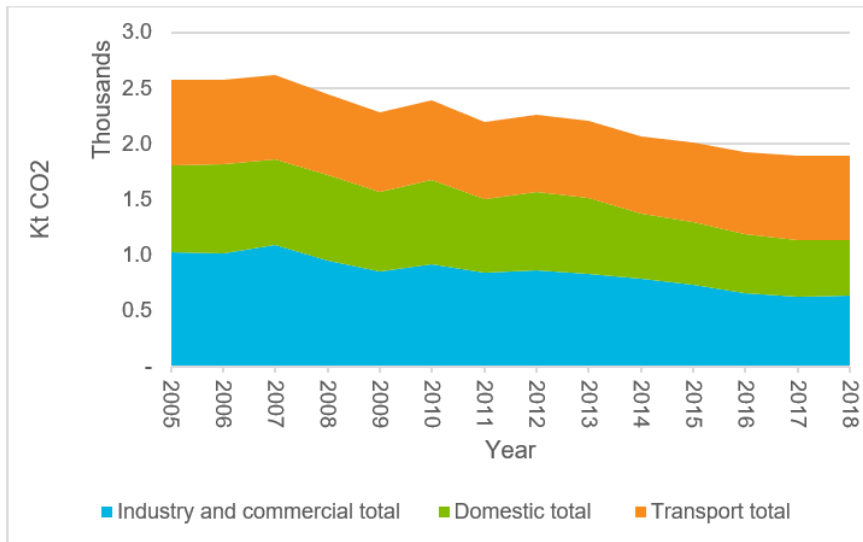


Figure AB.4 CO₂ emissions (kt) per sector (2005- 2018) in Shropshire

Figure AB.5 (overleaf) presents data over the period 2005- 2018 relating to per capita CO₂ emissions.³² In this regard, CO₂ emissions in Shropshire are higher than comparative figures for the West Midlands and England as a whole. Additionally, CO₂ levels have decreased at a slower rate between 2015- 2018 in Shropshire (- 8.1%) in comparison to regional (-11.9%) and national figures (-12.3%).

³² Department of Energy and Climate Change (2019) '2005 to 2017 UK local and regional CO₂ emissions – data tables' can be accessed [here](#).

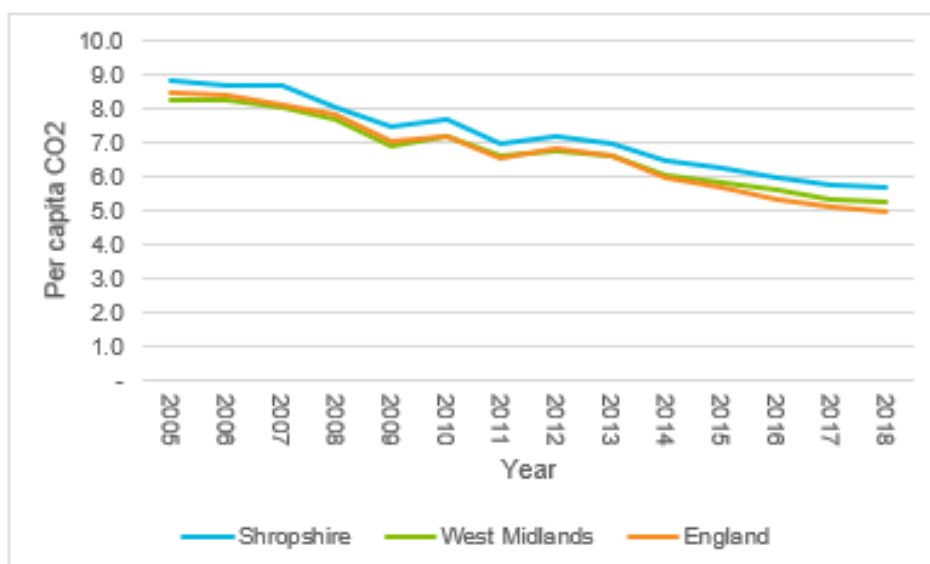


Figure AB.5 Per capita CO2 emissions (t) 2005 – 2018

With regards to transport emissions, the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport's 'Road to Zero' report (2018), it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade and therefore aside from HGVs, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030.

Electric vehicles (EVs) do not burn fuel and create almost no noise. They are battery powered and have the potential to be 'zero-emission vehicles' (ZEVs) if powered by renewable electricity. The government's Rapid Charging Fund was announced in the March 2020 Budget as part of a £500 million commitment for EV charging infrastructure.³³ The purpose of this fund, alongside the 'Government vision for the rapid chargepoint network in England' 2020 paper, will be to ensure that there is a rapid-charging network ready to meet the long-term consumer demand for electric vehicle chargepoints ahead of need.³⁴

In terms of the neighbourhood area, Figure AB.6 overleaf shows that there is one fast chargepoint within Cleobury Mortimer. It also shows numerous 'rapid' chargepoints in larger settlements Kidderminster, Stourbridge, Dudley and Droitwich Spa. There is also a 'rapid' chargepoint in Ludlow.

³³ Department for Transport and Office for Low Emission Vehicles (2020) 'Consulting on ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁴ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; Department for Transport; Office for Low Emission Vehicles; and Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (2020) 'Government vision for the rapid chargepoint network in England' can be accessed [here](#).

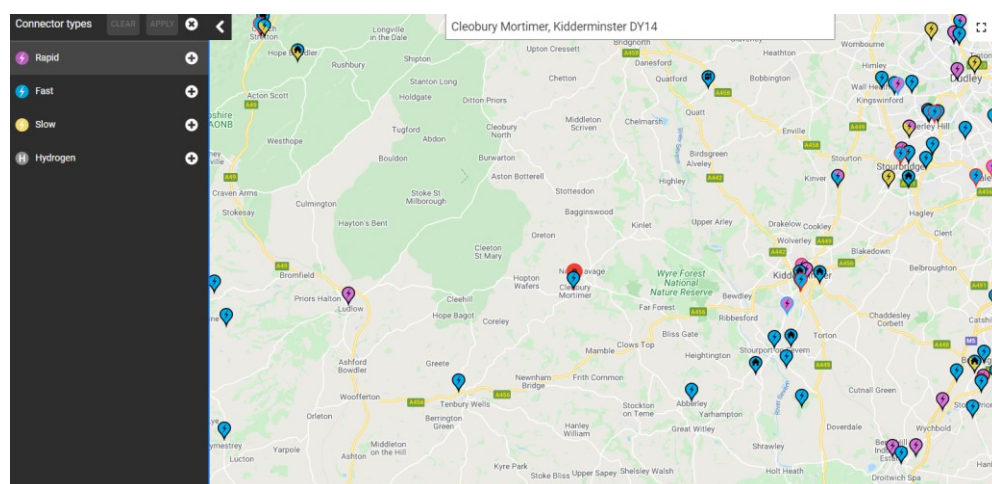


Figure AB.6 EV charge-points

Reducing greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions is widely acknowledged as a key element of climate change mitigation. CO₂ emissions in particular are associated with a changing climate and will become an area of even greater focus for mitigating climate change following Shropshire Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, and ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Renewable energy

In Shropshire, households generate more energy from photovoltaic and micro combined heat and power than non-domestic sources do.³⁵ However, more energy is generated from wind, hydro and anaerobic generation commercially than domestically. Photovoltaic energy generation is by far the greatest source of renewable energy in Shropshire as it is in the West Midlands and England.³⁶ More energy is produced from the wind in Shropshire than in the West Midlands, but this is less than is produced nationally. Notably two wind turbines are present in Cleobury Mortimer, which power local businesses.

Climate change adaptation

Research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2018 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) team. UKCP18 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50th percentile and RCP6) for the West Midlands during the period 2020-2039 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows³⁷:

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 0°C and 1°C; and
- A central estimate of change in mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and 0 to -20% in summer.

³⁵ Shropshire Council (2016) 'Shropshire Council Local Plan Review 2016 – 2036 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Met Office (no date) 'Land Projection Maps: Probabilistic Projections' can be accessed [here](#).

During the period 2040-2059 this is estimated further as³⁸:

- A central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 1°C and 2°C; and
- A central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of 0 to +10% in winter and -10% to -20% in summer.

Due to these changes, a range of risks may exist for the neighbourhood area, including³⁹:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100-year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

Flood risk

As shown in Figure AB.7 overleaf, fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area follows the River Rea and its tributaries.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

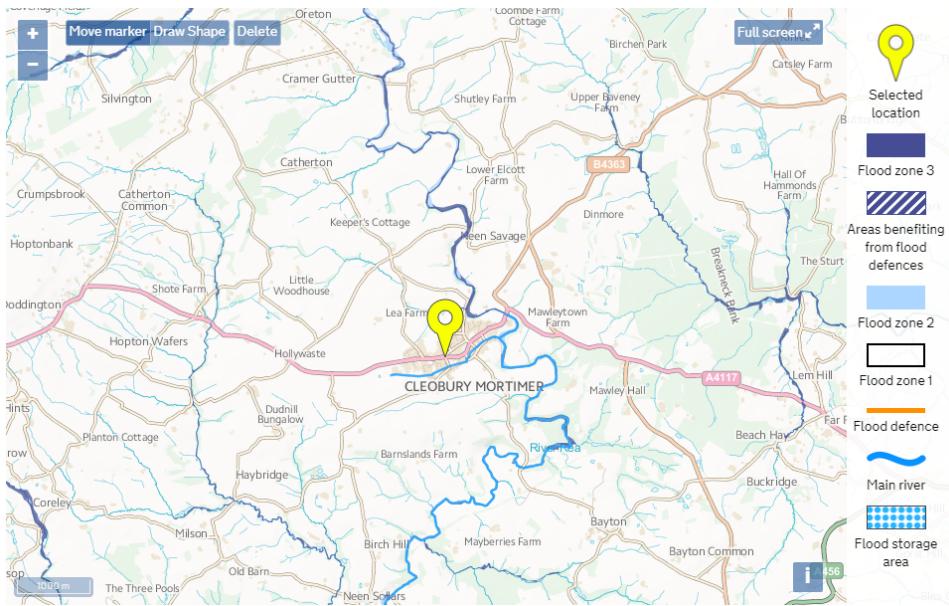


Figure AB.7 Fluvial flood risk in the neighbourhood area

Figure AB.8 overleaf shows surface water flood risk following a similar pattern; predominately aligning with the River Rea and its tributaries.

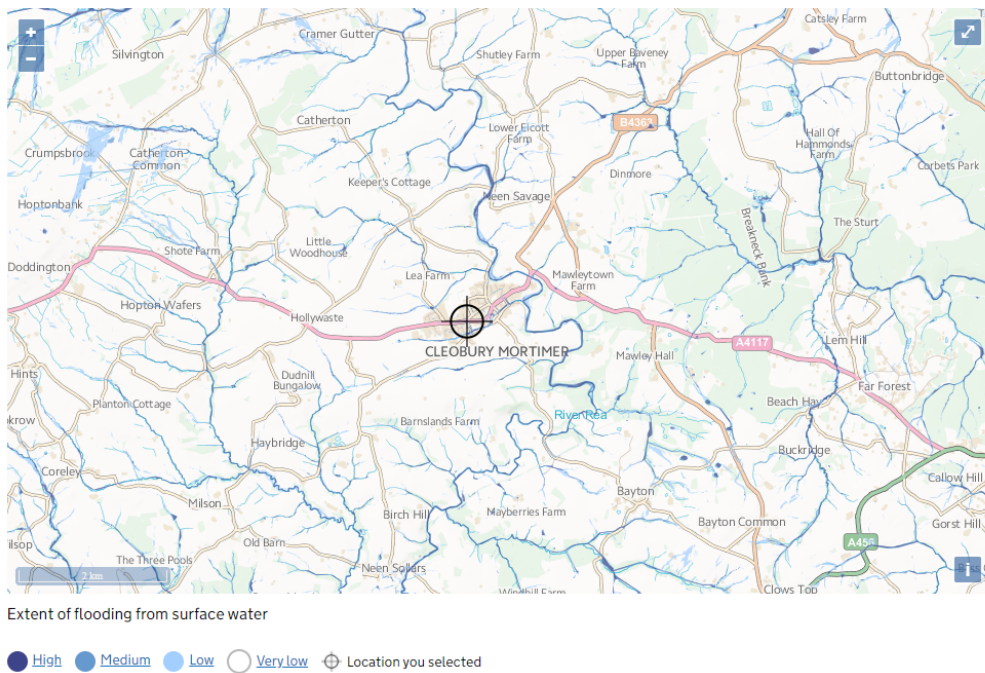


Figure AB.8 Surface water flood risk in the neighbourhood area

Future baseline

In line with UK trends and national commitments, emissions are likely to continue to fall as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy take-up and new technologies, such as EVs and solar PV, become more widely adopted. Notably, the Government has consulted on changes to England’s Building Regulations introducing a ‘Future Homes Standard’ and the Department for Transport recently published ‘Decarbonising Transport; setting the challenge’ a first step towards publishing a full transport decarbonisation plan.

In the future, new development could have the potential to increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk. It is further recognised that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events such as enhanced precipitation, which can increase surface water runoff, for example from the River Rea. This has the potential to put residents, property and development at a high risk of flood exposure.

However, in line with the NPPF (2019) sequential testing is likely to ensure that development within areas at highest risk of flooding is largely avoided, and development is likely to deliver mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Landscape

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁴⁰ (NPPF) include:

- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ‘are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
 - remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, whose fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The general extent of Green Belts is established and can only be

⁴⁰ Ibid.

altered in exceptional circumstances through preparation or review of a Local Plan.

The National Design Guide⁴¹ sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set out at the local level.

National Character Area (NCA) profiles are published by Natural England and divide England in 159 distinct natural areas based on their landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic, cultural and economic characteristics⁴². NCAs follow natural features in the landscape and are not aligned with administrative boundaries. NCA profiles describe the features which shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character.

The Shropshire Landscape Assessment was published in 2006 and has not been updated since⁴³. The assessment includes information about the six components that define landscape character: geology, landform and soils relate to physical character; whilst settlement pattern, tree cover and land use set out the cultural dimensions of landscape. The assessment sets out 27 different landscape types within the County. A description is set out for each landscape type which sets out the key characteristics and the broad character of the type, defines its distribution within the county, and provides a visual example of what they look like 'on the ground'. An interactive version of the map accompanying the Shropshire Landscape Assessment is also available⁴⁴.

The nationally designated landscape of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 23% of the county in the south. The 2019-24 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan sets out policies of the local authorities, and proposed actions for a wide variety of partners⁴⁵. Based on local partnership and consensus, the Plan seeks to guide and inspire action to meet the purposes of designation and apply local solutions to local challenges. It was approved by Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council in June 2019. The Plan is prepared by the AONB Partnership on behalf of Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council and is reviewed every five years.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy⁴⁶ relate to the landscape theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

The following policies in the emerging Local Plan⁴⁷ are also relevant here:

⁴¹ GOV UK (2021) 'National Design Guide' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴² GOV UK (2014) 'National Character Area profiles' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴³ Shropshire Council (2006) 'Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) Shropshire AONB Management Plan can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy DP12: The Natural Environment
- Policy DP14: Green Infrastructure
- Policy DP15: Open Space and Recreation
- Policy DP16: Landscaping of New Development
- Policy DP17: Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Policy DP24: Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Baseline summary

Cleobury Mortimer sits within rolling south Shropshire countryside between the Wyre Forest and Clee Hill. The parish is set deep in the Shropshire countryside alongside the meandering River Rea on the sides of the Clee Hills - Titterstone Clee and Brown Clee, which has the highest summit south of the Pennines. The centre has retained its attractive historic character, lying with a Conservation Area and the crooked spire of the Grade I listed St Mary's Church is a feature of the landscape.

Physical constraints to development include the River Rea and its tributaries, and the town's setting in the wider landscape⁴⁸.

The wider landscape includes the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), located approximately 2.5km west of the parish boundary, and 4.5km from the town's settlement boundary. For development affecting the Shropshire Hills AONB, particular regard should be paid to the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan (2019)⁴⁹.

The parish is not characteristic of any National Character Area (NCA), being located along the boundary of two NCAs and extending into a third. The settlement of Cleobury Mortimer lies on the southeastern boundary of the Shropshire Hills NCA, and the north eastern boundary of Teme Valley NCA. The eastern extent of the parish extends into the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau NCA⁵⁰.

The landscape within the parish is more appropriately defined by the Shropshire Landscape Assessment (2006), which includes information about the six components that define landscape character within Shropshire. The Assessment divides the County into 27 Landscape Description Units (LDUs), which can be seen in detail via the accompanying online Natural Environment and Ecology mapping service⁵¹.

Figure AB.9 overleaf has been extracted from the Council's Natural Environment map, and shows the parish falling within four Landscape Description Units (LDUs). The eastern extent of the parish falls within the 'Forest Smallholdings' LDU, which is joined to the west by the 'Wooded Forest' LDU which includes Coachroad Coppice, Cleobury Coppice, Bell Coppice, and further dense forest areas to the east of the parish. The 'Timbered Plateau Farmlands' LDU covers the majority of the

⁴⁸ Shropshire Council (2011) 'Shropshire Core Strategy' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Natural England (various dates) 'Natural England National Character Areas' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵¹ Ibid.

neighbourhood area, including the main settlement area. Finally, a small area of the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' LDU extends along the south of the parish.

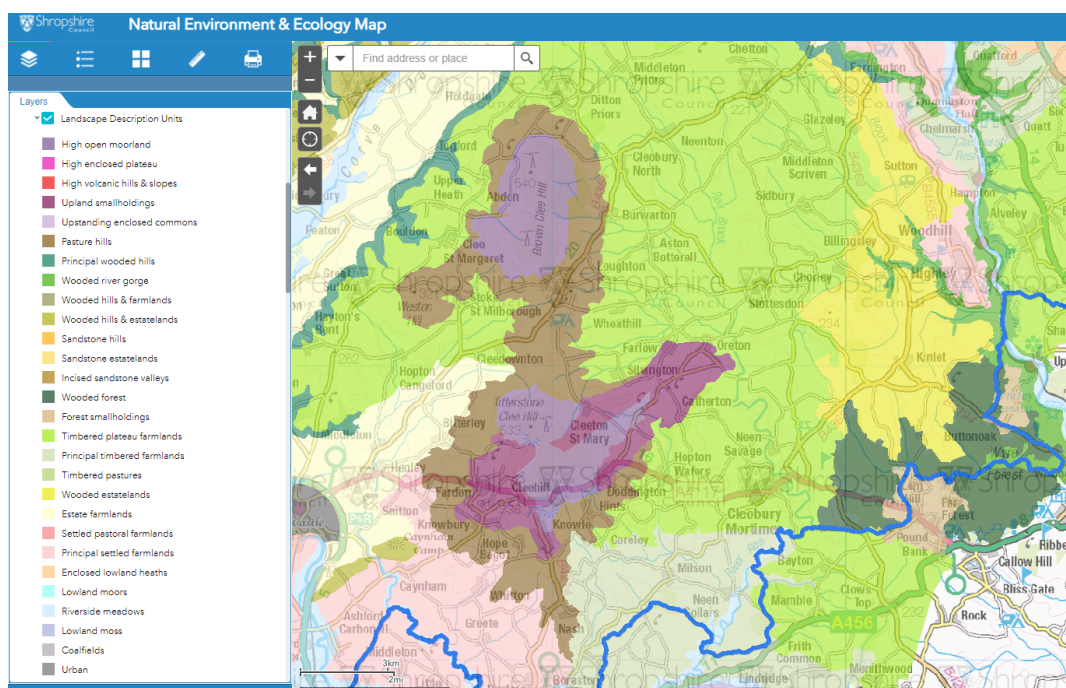


Figure AB.9 Landscape Description Units covering Clebury Mortimer⁵²

Key characteristics and a brief description of each LDU falling within the neighbourhood area are set out in Table AB.2 below.

Table AB.2 Clebury Mortimer Landscape Description Units

Landscape Description Unit (LDU)	Description	Key characteristics
Forest Smallholdings	<p>Within Shropshire, limited areas of Forest Smallholding landscapes occur in two locations around the edge of the Wyre Forest, on the county boundary with Worcestershire. Small pastoral fields with tall mixed species hedgerows are particularly characteristic of these landscapes. They nestle into a closely worked pattern of small farms and wayside cottages, with associated smallholdings, and narrow winding lanes. Scattered hedgerow trees, small blocks of woodland and significant numbers of garden trees impart a wooded feel. These elements combine to form small scale, intimate landscapes, with views that are framed by hedges and woodland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small pastoral fields with hedged boundaries • Scattered hedgerow and garden trees • Small blocks of woodland • Dense pattern of wayside cottages and small farms • Small scale landscapes with framed views
Wooded Forest	<p>In Shropshire this landscape type occurs solely in relation to the Wyre Forest, on the south-eastern county boundary. This landscape is dominated by dense woodland, of ancient character, typically associated with species such as Bluebell, Dogs Mercury, Ramsons and Sanicle. This gives rise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near continuous woodland cover • Woodland of ancient character • Unsettled landscape of small, intimate scale.

⁵² Ibid.

to very limited framed views and creates and a small, intimate scale. It remains largely unsettled, with a very sparse scatter of farms and wayside cottages that are associated with small pastoral, 'assart' type, fields. These factors impart a sense of remoteness to this landscape.

<p>Timbered Plateau Farmlands</p>	<p>This landscape type occurs widely in the Shropshire Hills. The upstanding, rolling topography increases the visual prominence of the hedgerows and woods, and creates a range of different vistas; from open views on plateau tops to framed views within the valleys. The woodlands essentially have an ancient semi-natural character, although much has been replanted. They vary in size, with wooded stream valleys being particularly characteristic of this landscape type. Additional tree cover is provided by scattered hedgerow trees.</p> <p>The settlement pattern consists primarily of dispersed farms, wayside cottages and hamlets, although small villages are present in some areas creating a more clustered pattern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upstanding plateau with rolling relief, dissected by valleys • Linear ancient woodlands in valleys and dingles • Mixed farming landuse • Ancient pattern of irregular hedged fields • Medium scale landscape
<p>Principal Timbered Farmlands</p>	<p>This landscape type occurs throughout much of Shropshire, with notable concentrations along the northern boundary with Cheshire, and to the south of Shrewsbury. They are predominantly rolling lowland landscapes, with occasional steeply undulating valley sides, and are characterised by a mosaic of agricultural land. Tree cover, in the form of dense stands of streamside trees, scattered hedgerow trees, and small to medium sized woodlands play an important role in structuring these landscapes, creating a small to medium scale and filtered views. Much of the woodland has an ancient character, although some woods have been replanted with conifers. Oak and Ash represent the main hedgerow tree species, whilst alder and willow dominate along watercourses.</p> <p>The settlement pattern typically comprises of a medium to high density dispersal of farms and wayside cottages, with occasional hamlets and small villages. Much of the agricultural land within this type was gradually enclosed from extensive tracts of woodland and 'waste' (common rough pasture) during the medieval and early modern periods. This has produced an intricate countryside, characterised by a network of winding lanes, scattered farmsteads, and small irregular fields. Examples include the areas around Buttonbridge, on the edge of the Wyre Forest, and Coptiviney, to the north-west of Ellesmere.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling lowland with occasional steep sided hills • Relic ancient woodland • Hedged fields with scattered hedgerow trees • Predominantly dispersed settlement pattern • Small to medium scale landscapes with filtered views

Future baseline

New development, including infrastructure development, has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape quality in and around the neighbourhood area. In the absence of the Neighbourhood Plan more speculative development may come

forward within the open countryside or countryside setting, which could place increased pressure on local settings. This may negatively impact upon the landscape features which contribute to the Parish's distinctive character, including the wider setting of the Shropshire Hills AONB.

However, locally distinctive landscape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed and enhanced through the Neighbourhood Plan. New development that is appropriately designed/ masterplanned, and landscape-led, has the potential to support the area's inherent landscape character and quality. This may, for example, include regeneration and brownfield development that improves the village setting, delivering green infrastructure improvements and/ or new recreational opportunities and enhanced framing of key views.

Historic environment

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁵³ (NPPF) include:

- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, taking account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss of less than substantial harm to its significance.

These messages are supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁵⁴ which itself includes the key message that local authorities should set out in their Local Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment which recognises that conservation is not a passive exercise and that identifies specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ GOV UK (2021) 'Planning Practice Guidance' can be accessed [here](#).

The National Design Guide⁵⁵ sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Specific, detailed and measurable criteria for good design are most appropriately set out at the local level.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'⁵⁶ directly relates to the Historic Environment.

Historic England is the statutory body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. Guidance and advice notes provide essential information for local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other interested parties on historic environment considerations, and are regularly reviewed and updated in light of legislative changes. The following guidance and advice notes are particularly relevant and should be read in conjunction with the others.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2019)⁵⁷ outlines ways to manage change that conserves and enhances historic areas in order to positively contribute to sustainable development and provides information on the relationship with local and neighbourhood plans and policies. Principally, the advice note emphasises the importance of:

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin the designations; and
- Recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plan which positively contribute to the significance and value of Conservation Areas.
- Clearly identifying those issues that threaten the area's character or appearance and that merit the introduction of management measures.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): Historic England Advice Note 8 (December 2016)⁵⁸ provides support to all stakeholders involved in assessing the effects of certain plans and programmes on the historic environment. It offers advice on heritage considerations during each stage of the SA/SEA process and helps to establish the basis for robust and comprehensive assessments.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) (December 2017)⁵⁹ provides general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views can contribute to setting. Specifically, Part 2 of the advice note outlines a five stepped approach to conducting a broad assessment of setting:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Historic England (2019) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Advice Note 1' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁸ Historic England (2016) 'SA and SEA: Advice Note 8' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁹ Historic England (2017) 'Setting of Heritage Assets: 2nd Edition' can be accessed [here](#).

- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings contribute to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 11 (October 2018)⁶⁰ outlines the importance of considering the historic environment whilst preparing the plan (section 1), which culminates in a checklist of relevant issues to consider, followed by an overview of what this means in terms of evidence gathering (section 2). Sections 3 to 5 of the advice note focus on how to translate evidence into policy, understand the SEA process and Historic England's role in neighbourhood planning.

The Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area Appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest of the Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area to clarify why it merits 'designation'. The appraisal also identifies the character of the area, and features which should be enhanced or conserved.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy⁶¹ indirectly relate to the historic environment theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

The following policies in the emerging Local Plan⁶² are also relevant here:

- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy DP12: The Natural Environment
- Policy DP14: Green Infrastructure
- Policy DP23: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Baseline summary

The history of Cleobury Mortimer

As set out in the Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area Appraisal, it is believed that the name derives from the contraction of the old English 'clifu' meaning a steep place and 'bury' meaning fortified settlement. However, the town is included in the Domesday Book (1086) and is described as 'Claiberie', with 45 households under the head of the Manor, including 20 villagers, eight smallholders, 14 slaves, one priest, two riders and a mill. The Lord and Tenant-in-chief in 1086 was Ralph of

⁶⁰ Historic England (2022): 'Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Mortimer. The town was granted its town market charter in 1253 and regular farmers markets continue to be held.

Heritage assets

Within the neighbourhood area, much of the town centre lies within Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings present including two which are Grade I Listed, and the parish also includes two Scheduled Monuments. These are discussed further below.

Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. Designated heritage assets are depicted in Figure AB.10 (overleaf), which shows that within the Plan area, there are 76 listed buildings within the Plan area, including two Grade I Listed and three Grade II* Listed:

- Mawley Hall (Grade I)
- Church of St Mary (Grade I)
- Reaside Manor Farmhouse (Grade II*)
- The Vicarage (Grade II*)
- Manor House (Grade II*)

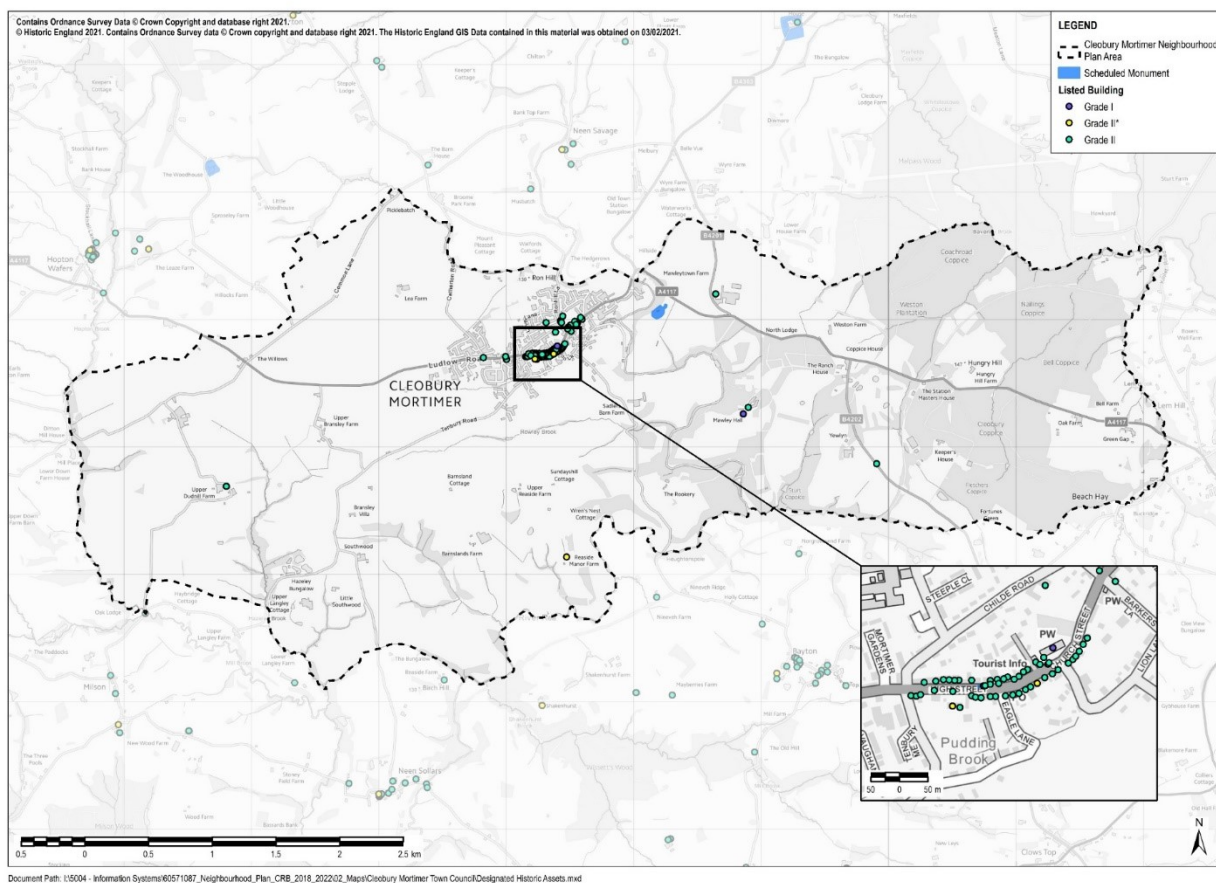


Figure AB.10 Designated heritage assets

The parish also contains two designated Scheduled Monuments. Castle Toot motte castle Scheduled Monument is located 450m from Mawleytown, to the east of the main settlement; while Wayside cross on High Street Scheduled Monument, is 140m south west of St Mary's Church, within the designated Conservation Area.

The Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area is shown in Figure AB.11 (overleaf). The Conservation Area was designated in 1972 and covers a significant proportion of the town centre.

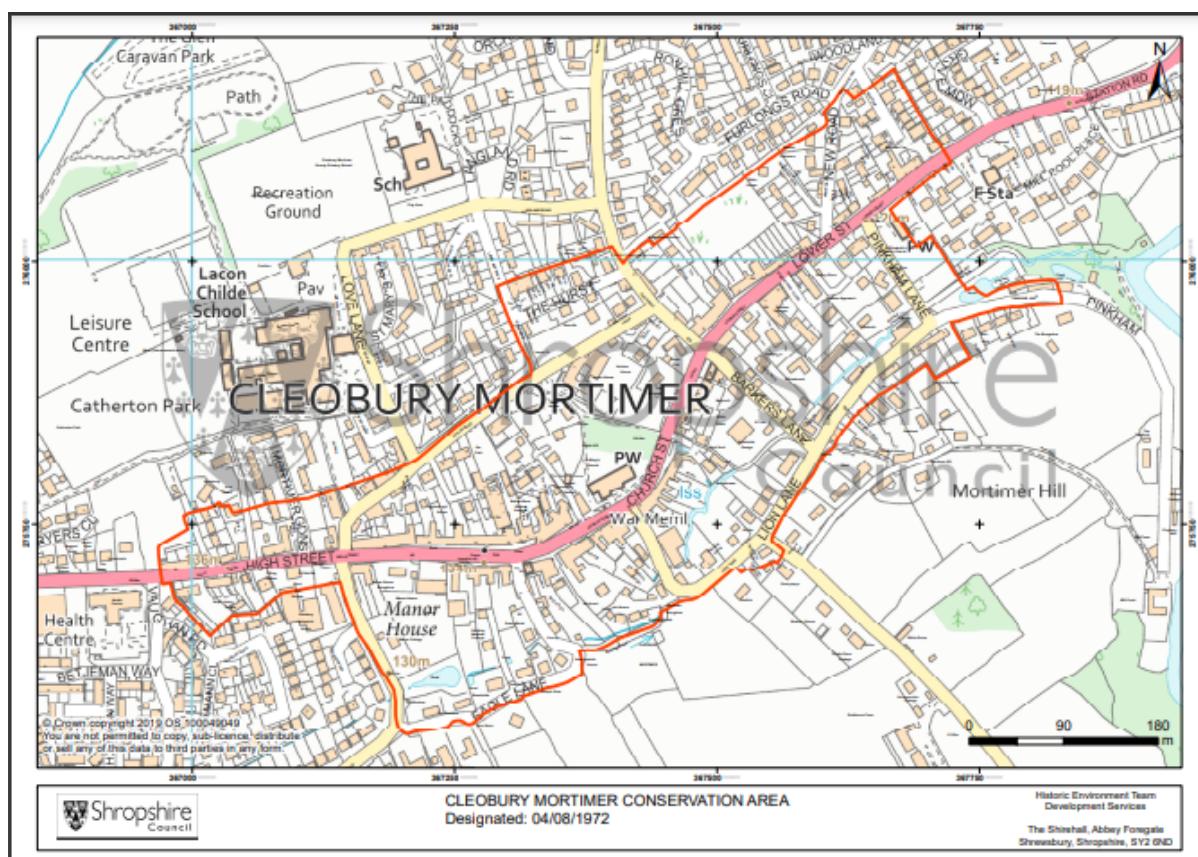


Figure AB.11 Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area⁶³

A character appraisal of Cleobury Mortimer has been carried out (updated 2012) and the main findings are summarised below:

- Architectural and historic quality:
 - The town retains some of its medieval planned form with a central High Street and long, narrow burgrave plots leading off from this; around the perimeter are back lanes. The curved shape of the High Street is unusual. The mix of redbrick Georgian and older timbered buildings include a number of small shops and businesses, amongst them two bakeries, two butchers, a newsagent, a traditional ironmongers and a secondhand bookstore.
 - The traditional building materials used in Cleobury Mortimer include stone, red brick and timber framing.
- Trees
 - The importance of trees within Conservation Areas was recognised by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which made special provision for trees in Conservation Areas that aren't already protected by a tree preservation order. The law requires that anyone proposing to cut down or carry out any work on any tree with a stem diameter of more than 75 mm, when measured at 1.5 metres height above ground level, in a conservation area must give the council 6 weeks' notice of their intentions. Work may only be undertaken either when permission has been given or the six weeks has expired.
 - A tree warden and two deputies have been appointed by Cleobury Mortimer Town Council and are very active in the parish. A tree register of veteran

⁶³ Shropshire Council (2015) 'Cleobury Mortimer Conservation Area' can be accessed [here](#).

trees has been established and target spaces within the town identified for a tree planting program run by uniformed children's groups.

- Key buildings
 - St Mary's Church: Grade I Listed St. Mary's Church is renowned for its twisted spire, which forms a very distinctive landmark and has become the main focus in general references to Cleobury Mortimer. It is an Anglican church within the Ludlow Deanery and the twisted spire can be seen from miles around. The tower is 12th to 13th Century. and when it was built the octagonal wooden spire was placed on the tower without any ties or flashing. As a result, the wet got in on the weather side rotting the timbers, which caused the soft local stone to crumble, and the tower developed a tilt to the southwest. The warping of the timbers caused the twist in the spire. Although the spire is now firmly tied to the tower the familiar shape has been preserved. John Betjeman observed about St Mary's Church: *"The whole church seems to have slipped out of shape. Inside there isn't a straight arch or doorway."*
 - The Manor House: The Grade I Listed Manor House in High Street has never been the house of the Lord of the Manor and has no claim to that name. It is a late 17th or early 18th Century 2-storey with attic and cellar building of brick construction with moulded brick storey bands and a moulded brick capped plinth.
 - The Old Vicarage: The oldest part of The Old Vicarage in Church Street dates from the 1570 – 1580 period and the façade of local stone hides a timber frame. Probably a wool merchant's house in its early days, it was used as a vicarage from the late 17th Century until 1990. It is a 2-storey, attic and cellar building of ashlar and stone rubble construction with moulded stone eaves, is set on a stone plinth with chamfered ashlar capping and has a plain-tile roof.
 - The Talbot Hotel: The Talbot Hotel in High Street is a prominent black and white building with parts of the building dating back to 1561. The Coat of Arms belongs to Sir John Talbot who was the Earl of Shrewsbury.
 - The Kings Arms: The Kings Arms in Church Street is one of Cleobury Mortimer's oldest alehouses having provided hospitality for over 200 years. It stands on the site of an earlier hostelry and is a late 18th Century remodelling of the 17th Century core and is reputed to date from 1530. The first recorded landlady called Jane Hobday was serving ale around 1788.
 - Lacon Childe School Old Wing: Lacon Childe School Old Wing in Childe Road developed over two centuries around a fine Georgian house that was the original Lacon Childe School. This was built with money left by Sir Lacon William Childe, the Lord Mayor, who in his will in 1714 provided money for the education of the poor children of Cleobury Mortimer. The site of the building is adjacent to the motte of the Norman castle and could possibly lie inside the original bailey. The school was opened in 1740, and has c1890 extensions, with further additions being made c1900.

Heritage at risk

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register which highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation

areas deemed to be 'at risk'. It is noted that there are currently no buildings within the neighbourhood area identified on the Heritage at Risk list⁶⁴.

Local designations

It should be noted that not all the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important by local communities. For example, open spaces and key distinctive buildings in the area are likely to be of value.

The Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER)⁶⁵ identifies 291 monument records which lie either wholly or partially within the neighbourhood area.

Future baseline

Cleobury Mortimer has a rich diversity of heritage assets, which make an important contribution to the County's character and local distinctiveness. However important assets and views are potentially susceptible to insensitive design and layout from the development of new housing, employment and infrastructure which may affect historic landscapes and historic landscape features. Designated and undesignated heritage assets within the neighbourhood area have the potential to receive notable harm from development due to insensitive design, layout or massing.

New development offers valuable opportunities to enhance the historic environment, including by achieving the aspirations set out within the Neighbourhood Plan. This could include opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of an asset, or public realm improvements that contribute to the quality of place, including within the Conservation Area. Future development should seek to provide beneficial enhancement of heritage assets or their settings within the Plan area, particularly through public realm and access improvements or opportunities to better reveal the significance of an asset. Furthermore, increasing the connectivity between assets in line with emerging Local Plan Policy DP14 (Green Infrastructure) can provide benefits to both the natural and historic environment.

Land, soil, and water resources

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁶⁶ (NPPF) include:

- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils;
 - Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the

⁶⁴ Historic England (2021) 'Heritage at Risk Register 2021 – Midlands' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁵ Heritage Gateway (2012) 'Cleobury Mortimer search results' can be accessed [here](#). Open the link, change the tab from 'map' to 'admin location' and type Cleobury Mortimer into the administrative location search bar and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

- Prevent new or existing development from being adversely affected by the presence of unacceptable levels of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate;
- Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or brownfield land;
- Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains;
- Planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings;
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply;
- Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution; and
- Ensure that, wherever possible, development helps to improve local environmental conditions including water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

Since July 2017 the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requires Local Planning Authorities to publish a Brownfield Land Register, and review it at least once a year, in order to identify all previously developed sites with potential for delivering new development. This is to help achieve maximum planning value and efficiency from available land, whilst avoiding unnecessary land take at greenfield sites⁶⁷. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality⁶⁸.

Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England⁶⁹ sets out a vision for soil use in England which includes better protection for agricultural soils, protecting stores of soil carbon, improving the resilience of soils to climate change and preventing soil pollution. The essential message in relation to development is that pressure on soils is likely to increase in line with development pressure and the planning system should seek to mitigate this.

The Water Framework Directive⁷⁰ (2000) requires a management plan to be prepared for water catchment areas to inform planning and help meet objectives and

⁶⁷ GOV UK (2017) 'Guidance: Brownfield land registers' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Defra (2009) 'Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁰ European Union (2000) 'Directive 2000/60/EC' (Water Framework Directive) can be accessed [here](#).

obligations in areas such as water efficiency and sustainable drainage. In 2017 the UK produced The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) following the exit from the EU⁷¹

The Water White Paper 2011⁷² sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

The Government's Water Strategy for England⁷³ (2008) provides strategy for the water sector up until 2030, which aims to sustainably deliver secure water supplies and an improved and protected water environment. It sets out actions within the following areas:

- Water demand;
- Water supply;
- Water quality;
- Surface water drainage;
- River and coastal flooding;
- Greenhouse gas emissions;
- Charging for water; and
- Regulatory framework, competition and innovation.

Water for Life⁷⁴ (2011) sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

The National Waste Management Plan⁷⁵ provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England and evaluates how it will support the implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised Waste Framework Directive⁷⁶. This includes an assessment of the need for new collection schemes, additional waste infrastructure and investment channels, as well as providing general or strategic waste management policies.

The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)⁷⁷ requires member states to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. These areas are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and as such are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member states are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination.

The Shropshire Council Water Cycle Study (2020) assesses the potential issues relating to future development within Shropshire and the impacts on water supply, wastewater collection and treatment and water quality.⁷⁸ The Water Cycle Study

⁷¹ UK Gov (2017) 'The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) 2017' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷² Defra (2011) 'Water for Life' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷³ Defra (2011) 'Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Defra (2013) 'Waste Management Plan for England' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁶ European Union (2008) 'Directive 2008/98/EC' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁷ European Union (1991) 'Directive 91/676/EEC' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁸ JBA Consulting (2020) 'Shropshire Council Water Cycle Study' can be accessed [here](#).

assesses the constraints and requirements that will arise from potential growth on the water infrastructure. The Water Cycle Study has been carried out in co-operation with Severn Trent Water (STW), United Utilities (UU), Welsh Water (WW), the Environment Agency and the neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).

The River Severn Basin Management Plan (2015)⁷⁹ sets out the current state and pressures on the environment, environmental objectives, programmes of measures and progress since 2009 plan.

The Severn Trent Water (STW) Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) (2019)⁸⁰ is a technical document written primarily for regulators, as well as other technical stakeholders, following principles set out in the Water Resources Planning Guideline. The 2019 WRMP sets out STW's long term strategy:

"We will use demand management measures to reduce the amount of water we need to put into supply by:

- *Reducing leakage on our network;*
- *Helping customers to use less water through water efficiency activities and education; and*
- *Increasing the coverage of water meters across our network to further reduce consumption and to improve our understanding of water demand patterns.*

While making the best use of our sustainable sources of supply by:

- *Reducing abstraction from those water sources that have a detrimental impact on the environment;*
- *Making sure our future water abstractions do not pose a risk of environmental deterioration, as required by the Water Framework Directive;*
- *Increasing the flexibility and resilience of our supply system;*
- *Increasing or optimising deployable output from existing, sustainable sources where possible;*
- *Using catchment restoration techniques to improve habitats and ecological resilience to low flows;*
- *Using catchment management measures to protect our sources of drinking water supply from pollution risks; and*
- *Exploring trades in and out of our region to optimise national use of resources."*

A number of policies within the Core Strategy⁸¹ indirectly relate to the land, soil and water resources theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision

⁷⁹ Defra; Welsh Government; Natural Resource Wales, and the Environment Agency (2015) 'Water for life and livelihoods Part 1: Severn river basin district River basin management plan' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁰ Severn Trent Water (2019) 'Water Resource Management Plan 2019' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸¹ Ibid.

- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS10: Managed Release of Housing Land
- Policy CS14: Managed Release of Employment Land
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks
- Policy CS18: Sustainable Water Management
- Policy CS19: Waste Management Infrastructure
- Policy CS20: Strategic Planning for Minerals

Further, the emerging Local Plan⁸² provides a number of policies which directly relates to this theme:

- Policy SP2. Strategic Approach
- Policy SP3. Climate Change
- Policy SP4. Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High Quality Design
- Policy DP19. Water Resources and Water Quality
- Policy DP20. Water Efficiency
- Policy DP29. Mineral Safeguarding
- Policy DP30. Sites for Sand and Gravel Working
- Policy DP31. Managing Development and Operation of Mineral Sites
- Policy DP32. Waste Management Facilities
- Policy DP33. Landfill and Landraising Sites

Baseline summary

Soil resources

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus ‘non-agricultural’ and ‘urban’), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the ‘best and most versatile’ land (BMV) and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been carried out for the parish. The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset is therefore relied upon, which shows the parish to be covered by a range of grade classifications. It is however important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the neighbourhood area.

Indicatively, the dataset shows Grade 2 (Best and Most Versatile (BMV)) land along the western extent of the parish, Grade 3 to the west of the town centre and along the eastern boundary, non-agricultural covers the built form of the town, and there is an area of Grade 4 to the east of the town centre. It is noted that without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the Grade 3 agricultural land present is BMV.

⁸² Ibid.

Mineral resources

Shropshire is an important area for mineral resources. Minerals are finite resources and so their conservation and waste minimisation are important planning considerations. In order to conserve mineral resources, every effort will be made to ensure that, where practicable, known mineral resources are not sterilised by other forms of development⁸³. The British Geological Survey was commissioned in 2008 by Shropshire Council to define the broad extent of Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in Figure AB.13 overleaf using criteria consistent with national good practice guidance.

Non-mineral development in these areas or near protected railfreight sites will be expected to avoid sterilising or unduly restricting the working of proven mineral resources, or the operation of mineral transport facilities, consistent with the requirements of national and regional policy⁸⁴. In relation to the neighbourhood area, Figure AB.13 shows that there are large areas of coal to the north of the parish and small areas of clay to the south of the parish, along the County boundary.

⁸³ Shropshire Council (2011) 'Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

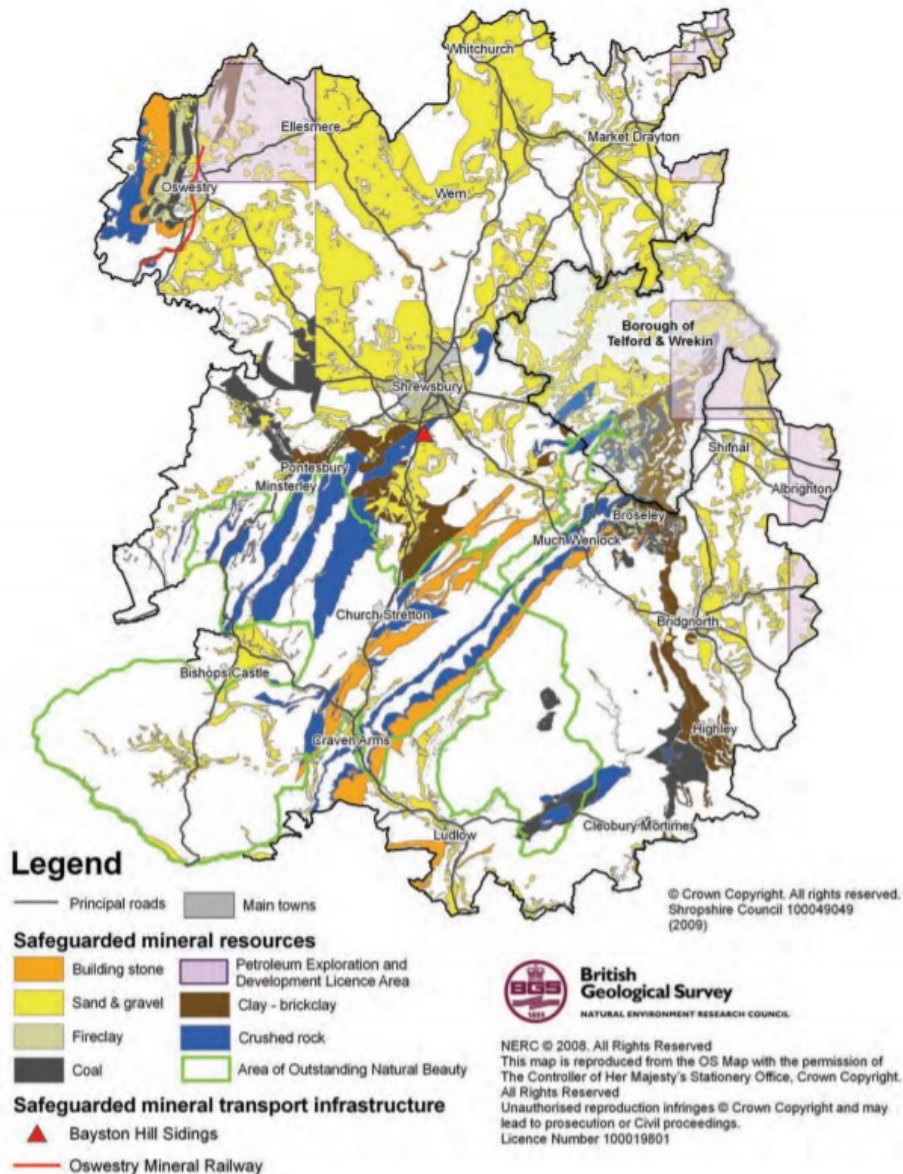


Figure AB.13 Mineral Safeguarding Areas in Shropshire⁸⁵

Water quality

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) drives a catchment-based approach to water management with a view to improving the overall water quality of watercourses in any given catchment. Cleobury Mortimer parish is located within the Severn River Basin District, however, it falls between the Teme Management Catchment and Teme Upper Operational Catchment (Figure AB.14 overleaf); and the Severn Middle Worcestershire Management Catchment and Severn River Worcestershire Operational Catchment (Figure AB.14 overleaf).

⁸⁵ British Geological Society (2008) Mineral Safeguarding Areas in Shropshire.

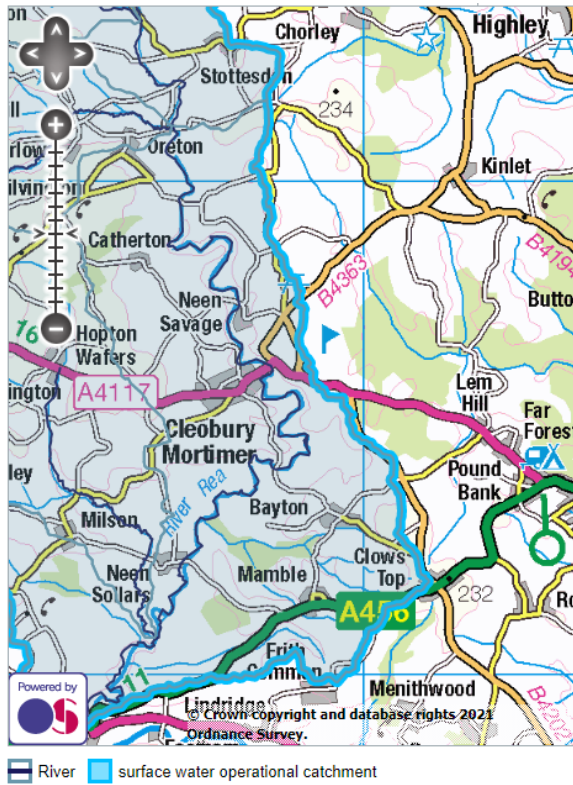


Figure AB.14 Teme Upper Operational Catchment⁸⁶

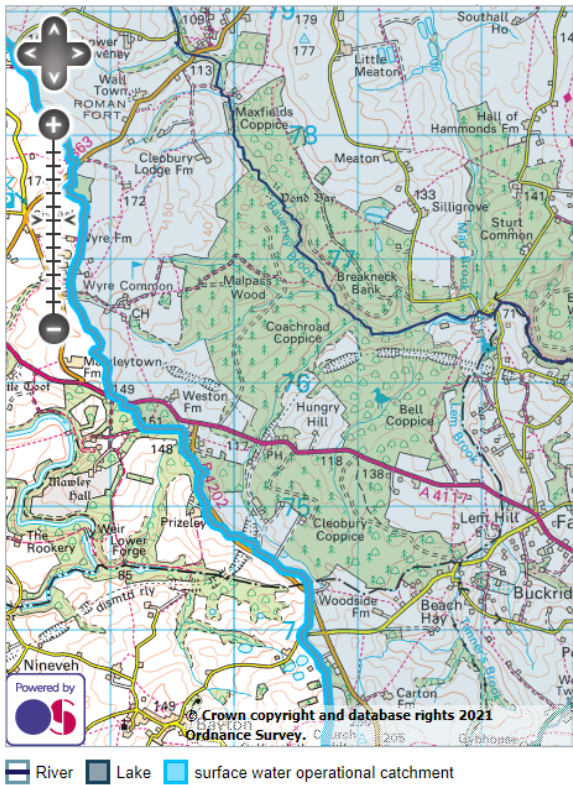


Figure AB.14 Severn River Worcestershire Operational Catchment⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Environment Agency (2022) 'Teme Upper Operational Catchment' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁷ Environment Agency (2022) 'Severn River Worcestershire Operational Catchment' can be accessed [here](#).

The Teme Management Catchment and Teme Upper Operational Catchment waterbody 'River Rea - conf Farlow Brook to conf River Teme' extends through the centre of the parish, north to south. Additionally, the Severn River Worcestershire Operational Catchment contains the 'Dowles Brook - source to conf River Severn' waterbody, which connects to Lem Brook, extending along the eastern parish boundary. It is however noted that Lem Brook is considerably distant from the built up settlement and surrounded by dense forest.

The ecological and chemical classification of the water bodies falling with the neighbourhood area are shown in Table AB.3 below.

Table AB.3 Ecological and chemical classification for waterbodies within the neighbourhood area⁸⁸

Waterbody	Classification Item	2013	2014	2015	2016	2019
Dowles Brook - source to conf River Severn	Overall Water Body	Good	Good	Good	Moderate	Moderate
	<i>Ecological</i>	Good	Good	Good	Moderate	Moderate
	<i>Chemical</i>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fail
River Rea - conf Farlow Brook to conf River Teme	Overall Water Body	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor	Bad
	<i>Ecological</i>	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor	Bad
	<i>Chemical</i>	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fail

The status of both waterbodies has deteriorated in recent years, significantly for the River Rea. The reason for deterioration of the Dowles Brook waterbody is poor nutrient management. The reasons for deterioration of the River Rea waterbody are:

- Sewage discharge (continuous)
- Riparian/ in-river activities (including bankside erosion)
- Poor nutrient management
- Poor livestock management
- Poor soil management

The River Rea is the main watercourse within the neighbourhood area. The River Rea skirts the eastern end of the town with Rowley Brook running to the south of the town and a further brook across the north. Pudding Brook⁸⁹ rises on the western approach to the town on Curdale Farm and runs through close to the western side of the main road and high street. It is breached and culverted by four roads before reaching the River Rea. Lem Brook also extends along the eastern boundary of the parish, although notably distant from the built up settlement.

Drinking Water Safeguard Zones have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect water sources that are used for public drinking water supply. Drinking water safeguard zones are designated areas in which the use of

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Perhaps originally "put-in-brook".

certain substances must be carefully managed to prevent the pollution of raw water sources that are used to provide drinking water⁹⁰.

Figure AB.15 below shows that the entire neighbourhood area falls within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone for surface water (SWSGZ2102). This zone is designated as 'at Risk from At risk from: Pesticides (2-4 D, Carbetamide, MCPA, Mecoprop, Metaldehyde, Propyzamide)'. An action plan is currently in place for this Safeguard Zone (reviewed 2016), which sets out measures and actions to protect water quality within the area⁹¹. Measures set out include *"when planning action, consider the risk from non-agricultural sources. Liaise with Water Companies and Partners on actions."*

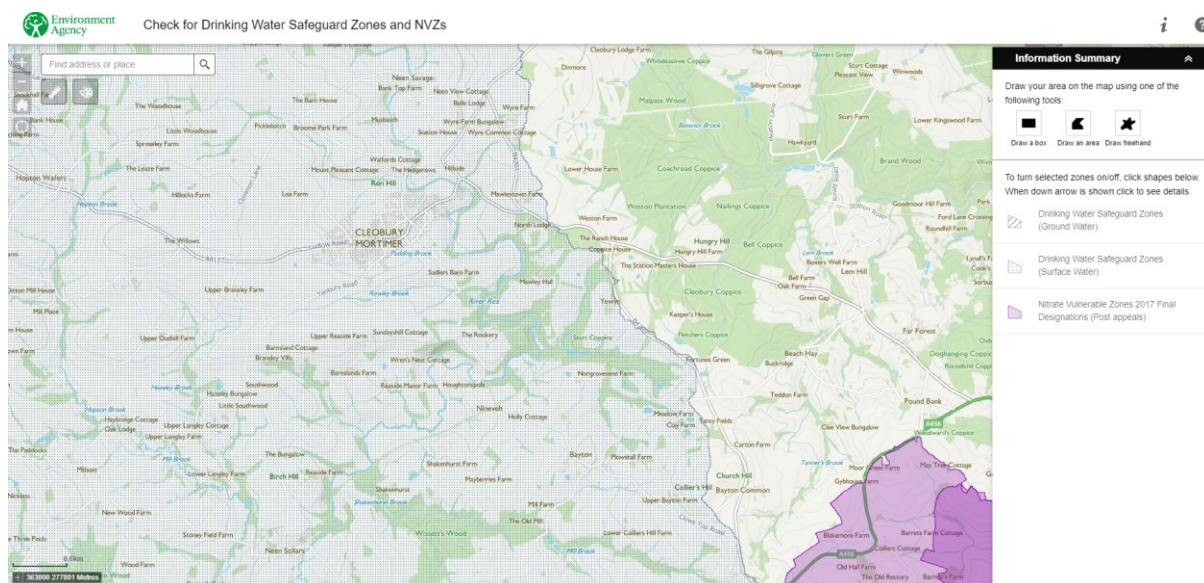


Figure AB.15 Drinking Water Safeguard Zones

Water resources

Severn Trent Water (STW) serves South Shropshire, including Cleobury Mortimer parish. The Environment Agency have published a document entitled 'Areas of Water Stress: final classification' which included a map of England, identifying areas of relative water stress. The whole of STW's supply area is shown as an area of 'Moderate' water stress, based upon the amount of water available per person both now and in the future.⁹²

Within their Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs) water companies refer to their Water Resource Zones (WRZs). A WRZ is the largest possible zone in which all resources, including external transfers, can be shared and hence the zone in which all customers experience the same risk of supply failure from a resource failure. The Parish falls within the 'Strategic Grid' WRZ. The Strategic Grid, Nottinghamshire and North Staffordshire WRZs show the greatest supply/demand deficit within STW's supply area. Strategic Grid shows a deficit of 16.24 MI/d by 2021-22, with a maximum potential deficit over the WMRP period of 244.50 MI/d in 2039-40. Key points outlined in the WRMP to target this deficit include new and enhancements to water treatment works and increases in reservoir capacity.

⁹⁰ GOV UK (2019) 'Drinking Water Protected Areas Safeguard Zones' can be accessed <http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/141891.aspx>

⁹¹ Environment Agency (2016) 'Surface Water Safeguard Zone Action Plan Summary – River Teme' can be accessed [here](#).

⁹² Environment Agency (no date) 'Areas of water stress: final classification' can be accessed [here](#).

Future baseline

Future development has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. It is considered that STW will seek to address any water supply and wastewater management issues over the plan period in line with the WRMP 2019; and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the Plan area and wider area. However, it will be important for new development to avoid impacts on water quality and to contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

Areas of the neighbourhood area have the potential to be BMV agricultural land, including areas of Grade 2 and Grade 3 land. Future development within the neighbourhood area could therefore lead to the loss of high-quality soil resource.

Population and communities

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework⁹³ (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship, whilst guarding against the unnecessary loss of community facilities and services.
- Retain and develop accessible local services and community facilities in rural areas.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Ensure that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' and taking a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)⁹⁴ identifies that:

- Local Planning Authorities should assess their development needs working with the other local authorities in the relevant housing market area or functional economic market area in line with the duty to cooperate. This is because such needs are rarely constrained precisely by local authority administrative boundaries.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

- Local planning authorities should secure design quality through the policies adopted in their local plans. Good design is indivisible from good planning and should be at the heart of the plan making process.
- A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old in. It is one which supports healthy behaviors and supports reductions in health inequalities. It should enhance the physical and mental health of the community.
- Green infrastructure is a network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Local Plans should identify the strategic location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks. Where appropriate, supplementary planning documents can set out how the planning, design and management components of the green infrastructure strategy for the area will be delivered.

The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report *Ready for Ageing?* (2013)⁹⁵ warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that *“longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises”*. The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.

The Strategic Economic Plan for the West Midlands⁹⁶, compiled by the West Midlands Combined Authority and provides the scale and capacity to respond to the opportunity of devolution and go further and faster in enabling economic growth for the wider region. It also enables the area to contribute to, and benefit from, the ambitious Midlands Engine programme with its focus on skills, innovation, transport and inward investment.

Shropshire Council’s Corporate Plan (2019-2022)⁹⁷ outlines a holistic approach to economic development in the County, prioritising *‘visibly demonstrating that (the council) understand that economic growth is unlikely to be achieved without support for (Shropshire’s) communities, including the right homes and schools and healthcare’*.

Policies within the Core Strategy⁹⁸ which directly relate to the population and communities’ theme include:

- Policy CS4: Community Hubs and Community Clusters
- Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment
- Policy CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure

⁹⁵ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) ‘Ready for Ageing?’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁶ West Midlands Combined Authority (no date) ‘Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁷ Shropshire County Council (2019) ‘Shropshire Council Corporate Plan’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁹⁸ Ibid

Further, the emerging Local Plan⁹⁹ provides policies which directly relate to this theme, including:

- Policy SP12: Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy
- Policy SP13: Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth and Enterprise
- Policy DP1: Residential Mix
- Policy DP8: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Policy DP10: Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- Policy S6: Cleobury Mortimer Plan Area (and policies S6.1 to S6.4)

Baseline summary

Population

Table AB.4 presents the approximate change in population between the period of 2011 – mid 2019 (estimate)¹⁰⁰ based on Census data¹⁰¹. The population of Cleobury Mortimer grew by 9.9%, greater than comparative figures for Shropshire, the West Midlands and England as a whole.

Table AB.4 Population change (2011- 2019)¹⁰²

Population	Cleobury Mortimer	Shropshire	West Midlands	England
2011	3,036	306,129	5,601,847	53,012,456
Mid-year population estimate (2019)	3,337	323,136	5,934,037	55,977,178
<i>Population change</i>	+9.9%	+5.6%	+5.6%	+5.6%

Age structure

Table AB.5 below shows the distribution of age groups in the Plan area. A comparatively large proportion of the population sits within the 60+ age group in Shropshire (27.9%), and this trend is reflected in Cleobury Mortimer (27.4%). Additionally, the population of residents under the age of 16 is noticeably larger in Cleobury Mortimer (20.1%), in comparison to Shropshire (17.4%), the West Midlands (19.5%) and England (18.9%) as a whole.

Table AB.5 Age structure¹⁰³

Age	Cleobury Mortimer	Shropshire	West Midlands	England
0-15	20.1%	17.4%	19.5%	18.9%
16-24	10.1%	10.3%	12.1%	11.9%
25-44	21.5%	23.2%	26.3%	27.5%
45-59	21.0%	21.2%	19.2%	19.4%

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Nomis (2019) 'Population estimates 2019' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰¹ Nomis (2011) 'Census 2011' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰² ONS (no date) Census 2011: Population Density 2011; Population Density 2001

¹⁰³ ONS (no date) Census 2011: Age Structure 2011

60+	27.4%	27.9%	22.8%	22.3%
Total population	3,036	306,129	5,601,847	53,012,456

Household deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health or has a long-term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

Based on Census information presented in Table AB.6, overall deprivation levels in the Plan Area are shown to be higher than comparative figures for Shropshire, the West Midlands and England as a whole. Of those areas which are deprived, the majority are deprived in 2 dimensions (15.5%).

Table AB.6 Household Deprivation¹⁰⁴

	Cleobury Mortimer	Shropshire	West Midlands	England
Household not deprived in any dimension	68.8%	69.2%	39.9%	42.5%
Deprived in 1 dimension	1.4%	0.7%	32.5%	32.7%
Deprived in 2 dimensions	15.5%	13.5%	21.4%	19.1%
Deprived in 3 dimensions	12.8%	14.9%	5.7%	5.1%
Deprived in 4 dimensions	1.4%	1.8%	0.5%	0.5%
Total deprivation	68.9%	69.2%	39.9%	57.4%

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.

¹⁰⁴ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Households by deprivation (QS119EW)

- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 - ‘Geographical Barriers’: relating to the physical proximity of local services
 - ‘Wider Barriers’: relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 - ‘Indoors Living Environment’ measures the quality of housing.
 - ‘Outdoors Living Environment’ measures air quality and road traffic accidents.
- Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:
 - **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
 - **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.

In this regard, the Plan area falls within the Shropshire 039E LSOA (covering the majority of the parish) and Shropshire 039F LSOA (covering the main built town centre) (see Figure AB.15). Deciles of deprivation shown in Figure AB.15 show that the Shropshire 039E LSOA is amongst the 20% least deprived LSOAs in the country, while the Shropshire 039F LSOA is amongst the 40% most deprived LSOAs in the country.

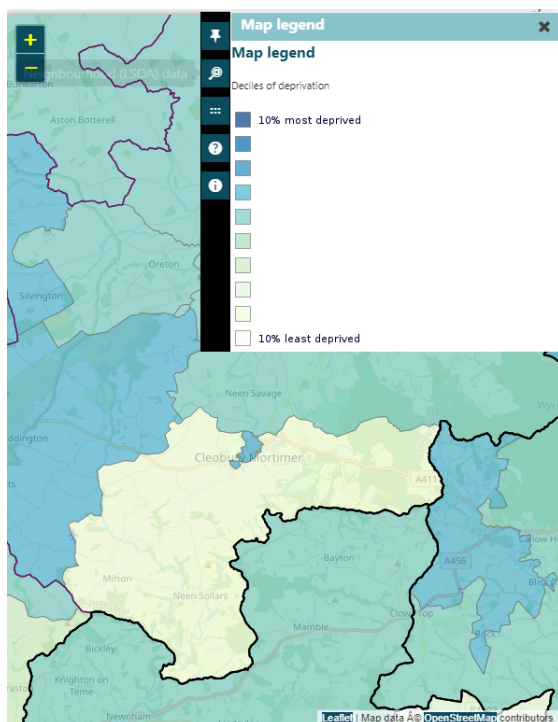


Figure AB.15 Indices of deprivation – Cleobury Mortimer¹⁰⁵

Deprivation varies across the neighbourhood area. The majority of the wider rural parish falls within the Shropshire 039E LSOA which is identified as having low levels of deprivation overall, while the main built up settlement of the Plan area is concentrated within the more deprived 039F LSOA. Rural areas tend to be less deprived than urban ones, where the proportion of the population is lower. Table AB.7 compares both LSOAs covering the Plan area, setting out the level of deprivation for individual domains.

Table AB.7 shows how the LSOAs differ and a notable exception is within the ‘Barriers to Housing and Services and Living Environment’ domain, where LSOA 039F is amongst the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country, compared to LSOA 039E which is amongst the 50% most deprived neighbourhood. This likely reflects greater access to housing needs in this area, as well as more accessible local services, facilities and amenities within the town centre.

Table AB.7 Level of deprivation by domain – Shropshire 039E and Shropshire 039F¹⁰⁶

LSOA Index	Level of deprivation	
	Shropshire 039E	Shropshire 039F
Overall IMD	20% least deprived	40% most deprived
Income Deprivation Domain	30% least deprived	40% most deprived
Employment Deprivation Domain	20% least deprived	40% most deprived

¹⁰⁵ UK Government (2019) ‘Indices of Deprivation 2019’ can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Education, Skills and Training Domain	30% least deprived	50% least deprived
Health Deprivation Domain	20% least deprived	20% least deprived
Crime Domain	30% least deprived	20% least deprived
Barriers to Housing and Services Domain	50% most deprived	20% least deprived
Living Environment Deprivation Domain	40% most deprived	10% most deprived
Income Deprivation affecting Children Index	40% least deprived	30% most deprived
Income Deprivation affecting Older People	30% least deprived	50% least deprived

Crime levels are very low, this is compared to the country as a whole and large parts of Shropshire¹⁰⁷. Low crime levels in the parish are supported by work undertaken by the community and local youth groups, supporting safe neighbourhoods.

It is noted that the census data presented above (Table AB.7) contradicts the 2019 IMD data, stating that a high percentage of residents are deprived in two of the four measured dimensions (employment, education, health and disability and housing); higher than all other comparators. This may reflect the date of the latest census (2011) which does not reflect the situation in the Plan area as accurately as the IMD data (2019). It is noted that the census data is due to be updated later in 2021¹⁰⁸.

Town services and facilities

Cleobury Mortimer has a range of shops and services available including a bank (limited hours), a Post Office, licenced restaurants, small supermarkets, Public Houses, fire station, tradespeople and local businesses. For access to wider services and facilities, residents would likely access the larger centres of Ludlow and Kidderminster.

Cleobury Mortimer is well served with community and recreational facilities. The town has a Market Hall, library, Parish Hall and a (former) Methodist Hall which is used by St Mary's Youth Project. There is a Leisure Centre and a Sports and Social Club alongside the sports field that is used for football, rugby and cricket. There is a large number of community clubs which run in the town (approximately 80) and the community is served by the 'Cleobury Clarion' monthly free newspaper. The sense of community is extremely important to local residents, as identified through the BCS. Figure AB.16 below shows some of the many clubs and community groups that use these facilities and others¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁷ Monthly crime statistics reviewed by our Council and its volunteer run Crime Reduction Group

¹⁰⁸ ONS (2022) 'Census news' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁰⁹ Cleobury Mortimer Town Council, 2020



Figure AB.16 Diagram of existing community groups in Cleobury Mortimer ¹¹⁰

Education

Figure AB.17 overleaf shows that a comparatively large proportion of residents in the Plan area hold no qualifications (24.3%). This is higher than comparative figures for Shropshire and England, though lower than regional averages (26.6%). Of those residents which do have qualifications, the majority have level 4 qualifications (25.6%), though this is lower than comparative figures for Shropshire and England.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

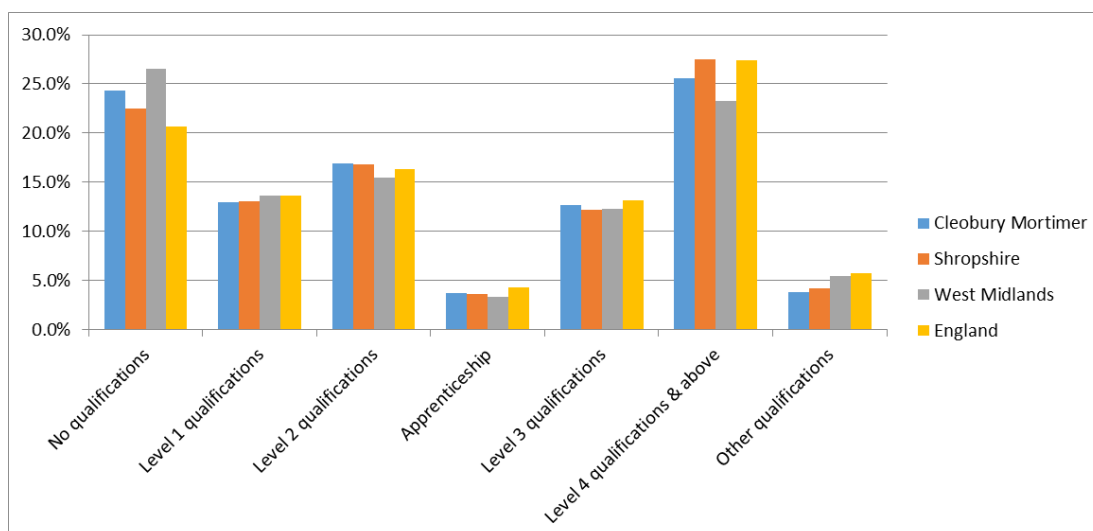


Figure AB.17 Highest Level of Qualification¹¹¹

There are a range of educational facilities present within the town, including a small number of pre-schools, nursery care, a primary school and a secondary school. Lacon Childe Secondary School and Cleobury Primary School serve approximately 750 pupils. Further education is delivered in several neighbouring towns, however access via sustainable transport is limited. The Secondary and Primary School are part of an Academy group with neighbouring Clee Hill and Stottesdon Primary Schools forming the Shropshire Gateway Academy Trust¹¹².

Mobile and broadband services

The broadband service in Cleobury Mortimer is of a reasonable standard, with the main town being served by fibre broadband (and access to superfast broadband through paid upgrades). However, good broadband is not available in all rural areas of the parish, with outlying properties and businesses suffering from poor speeds. There are offers available for improvement but local evidence suggests roll-out is still being reported as problematic¹¹³. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic and the global shift to home-working, this has the potential to be a significant issue for the parish in the longer-term if not addressed.

Employment

Results from the Big Cleobury Survey¹¹⁴ showed that 30% of respondents were retired, reflecting the ageing population present. Cleobury Mortimer supports a reasonably high level of self-containment given its size, with 44% of employed survey respondents working within the parish. Reasons for residents accessing employment outside of the parish are predominately twofold; an increase in new housing and limited employment opportunities of a higher value (see Figure AB.18 overleaf). It is also noted that a considerable proportion of residents work from home, reflecting the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as identified above.

¹¹¹ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest level of qualification (QS501EW)

¹¹² Cleobury Mortimer Town Council (2020): 'Neighbourhood Plan Consultation' can be accessed [here](#).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

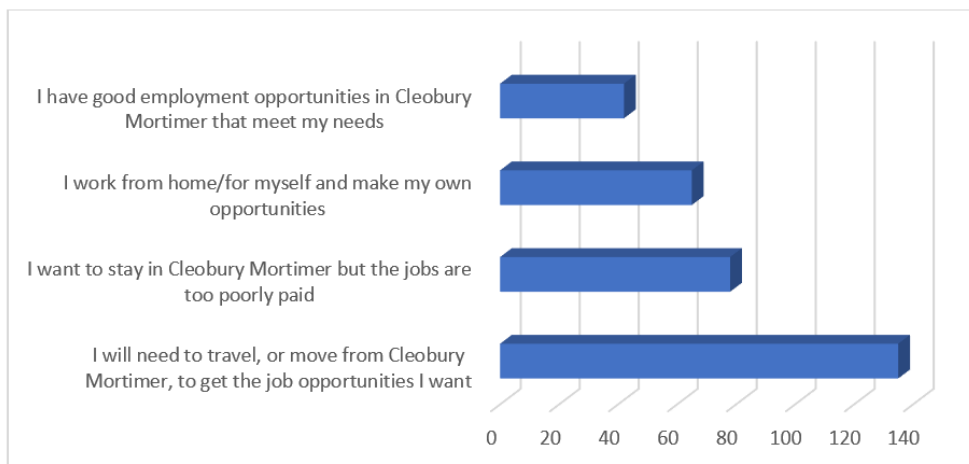


Figure AB.18 Big Cleobury Survey Q36 - employment trends

As shown in Figure AB.19 below, the local economy is very mixed in terms of occupation type. Notably the following occupational categories comprise 57.7% of the working population of Cleobury Mortimer:

- Managers, directors, senior officials (12.3%)
- Professional occupations (17.4%)
- Skilled trades occupations (15.9%)
- Elementary occupations (12.3%)

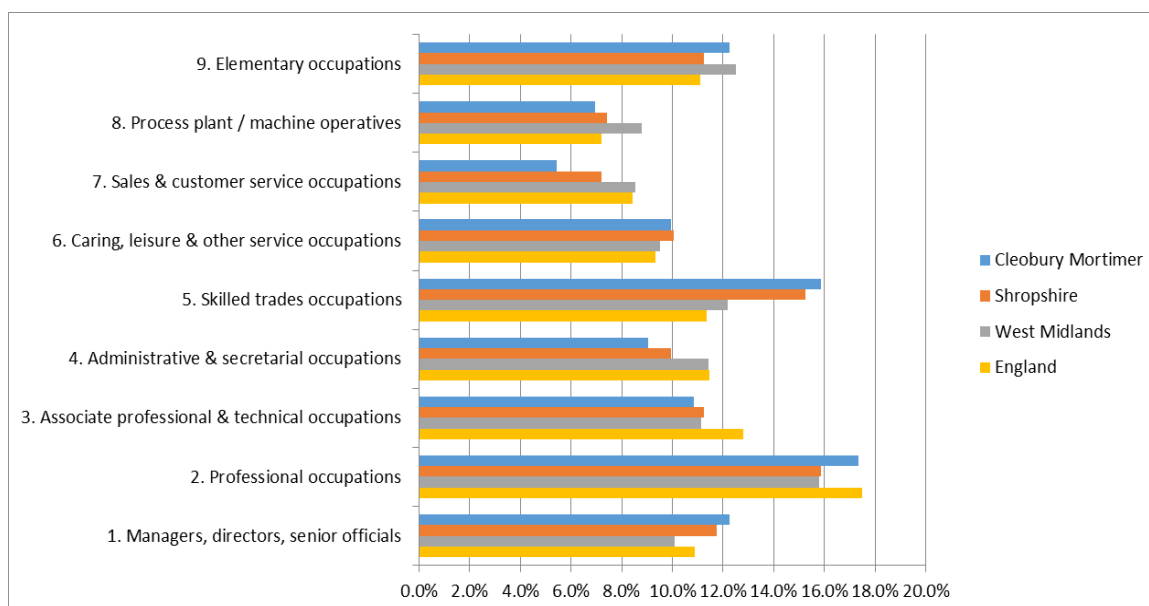


Figure AB.19 Occupational bands¹¹⁵

Schools are significant employers in the town, and there are also five medium sized businesses employing a reasonable proportion of residents (Kudos Blends (B2B Baking additives), Muller Engineering, Amodil (Steel), Hobsons Brewery and Capulet Care). Most local employment opportunities come from organisations of four employees or less. These businesses together with self-employment are mixed, but with a high proportion of builders and craftspeople as well as those working in healthcare.

¹¹⁵ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Workplace population analysis

Tourism

Tourism is an important factor in strengthening employment and earning potential in the town. As a gateway to the Shropshire Hills, Cleobury Mortimer provides a rural setting which is its greatest asset. The walking opportunities, local B&B's, Farm stays, pubs and tea rooms attract people from the Birmingham conurbation and some from as far away as London¹¹⁶.

Future baseline

The sense of community within the parish is highly valued by residents. However, as the population of the neighbourhood area continues to increase and age, this could potentially negatively impact upon the future vitality of the local community in the neighbourhood area, whilst also placing additional pressures to existing services and facilities. However, new development could also deliver improvements to the local community and infrastructure offer depending on the exact size, location, design and layout of development.

While the town holds a level of self-containment, it is considered that the future economy will likely require local people to travel outside the town. This is evidenced by the Big Cleobury Survey results and limited adequate sustainable transport options. In addition, employment land in the parish is relatively limited. New development should therefore promote the available employment land and new opportunities where possible, encouraging high paid, skilled opportunities to balance the local economy and the need for fewer people to travel for employment.

It will be important to ensure that future broadband provision in the town keeps pace with improvements to technology, and that rural parts of the parish are not omitted. Improving opportunities for an increased proportion of residents to work from home is likely to be significant for the village given the current COVID-19 pandemic and the global shift to home-working.

Health and wellbeing

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹¹⁷ (NPPF) include that planning policies should:

- Enable and support healthy lifestyles through provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Help deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity to contribute to the health and well-being of communities.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹¹⁸ identifies that local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

The Fair Society, Healthy Lives ('The Marmot Review')¹¹⁹ investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: "*overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities*".

Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On (2020) has been produced by the Institute of Health Equity and commissioned by the Health Foundation to mark 10 years on from the landmark study Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review).¹²⁰ The report highlights that:

- people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health;
- improvements to life expectancy have stalled, and declined for the poorest 10% of women;
- the health gap has grown between wealthy and deprived areas; and
- place matters – for example living in a deprived area of the North East is worse for your health than living in a similarly deprived area in London, to the extent that life expectancy is nearly five years less.

Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021 describes the key local health and care issues and explains what the Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Board is going to do to make improvements to these issues.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy¹²¹ indirectly relate to the health and wellbeing theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS4: Community Hubs and Community Clusters
- Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt
- Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Policy CS15: Town and Rural Centres
- Policy CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- Policy CS17: Environmental Networks

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ GOV UK (2010) 'Fair society, healthy lives: the Marmot Review: strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010' can be accessed [here](#).

¹²⁰ The Health Foundation (2020) 'Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years on' can be accessed [here](#).

¹²¹ Ibid.

Further, the emerging Local Plan¹²² provides a number of relevant policies:

- Policy SP2: Strategic Approach
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy SP5: High-Quality Design
- Policy SP6: Health and Wellbeing
- Policy DP9: Managing and Supporting Town Centres
- Policy DP10: Tourism, Culture and Leisure

Baseline summary

Health indicators

Life expectancy in Shropshire is higher than the national average. Life expectancy for births in Shropshire between 2013-15 are 80.3 for males and 83.8 for females. This compares to an average of 79.5 and 83.1 for England¹²³.

Census data shown within Figure AB.20 overleaf shows that 81.36% of residents within Cleobury Mortimer reported having very good or good health. This aligns with statistics for Shropshire (81.41%) and England as a whole (81.40%); and is slightly greater than figures for the West Midlands (79.85%).

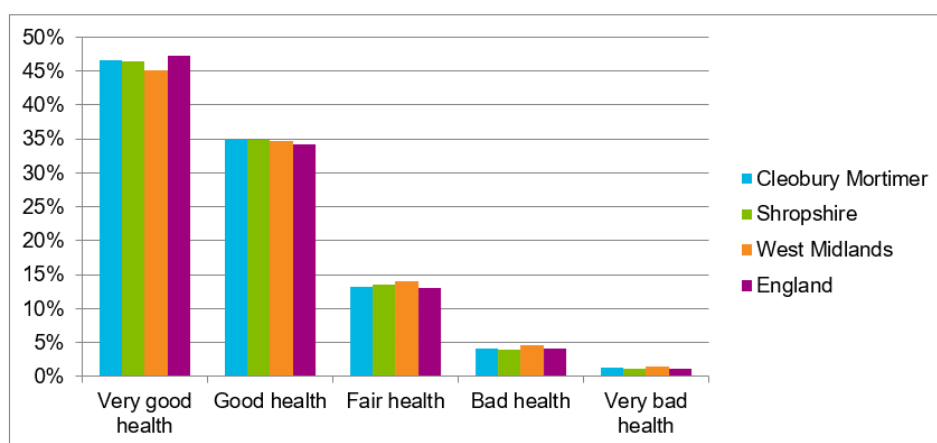


Figure AB.20 General health¹²⁴

It is recognised that more recent data has been gathered in this respect through the Big Cleobury Survey (BCS). Results from the BCS found that 86% of respondents stated that their health was good or very good (see Figure AB.21 overleaf). This is an increase from the 2011 census data (81.36%), although it is noted that the BCS and 2011 census data are not directly comparable.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Department of Communities and Local Government, Crown Copyright 2017

¹²⁴ ONS (no date) Census data 2011: 'General health' (Table QS302EW)



Figure AB.21 BCS results - general health of Cleobury Mortimer residents¹²⁵

In terms of level of disability in the plan area, census data presented in Figure AB.22 overleaf shows that the majority of residents with disabilities are not limited in their day-to-day activities (82.1%). The rate of people expressing that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot was 7.7% which is lower than the rate for Shropshire 8.4% and England 8.3%.

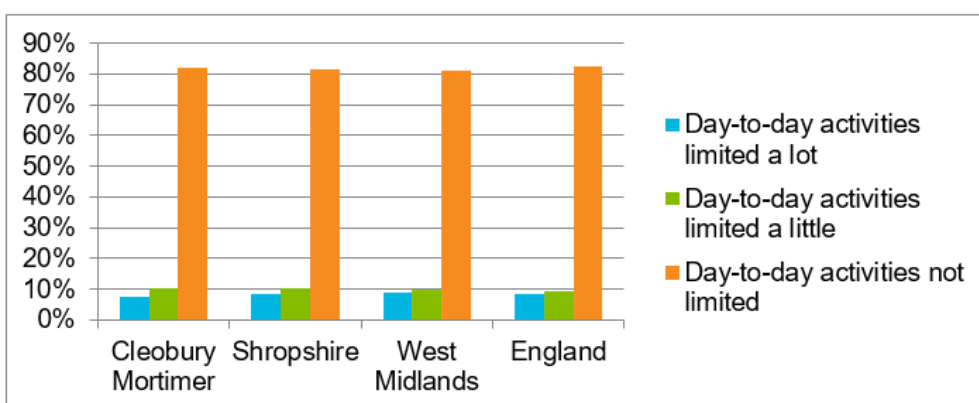


Figure AB.22 Disability Levels¹²⁶

The latest Shropshire Annual Report (2020) sets out wider patterns of health and wellbeing in the County.¹²⁷ Compared to England, Shropshire is doing better for:

- Male and female life expectancy at birth
- Teenage Pregnancy under 18 and under 18 conception rate
- Levels of obesity and obesity/ overweight children combined for children in year 6
- Emergency readmissions within 30 days of discharge from hospital

However, Shropshire is doing worse for:

- People killed and seriously injured on Shropshire's roads
- Statutory homelessness – eligible homeless people not in priority need

¹²⁵ Big Cleobury Survey

¹²⁶ Shropshire Council (2020) 'Shropshire Annual Report 2020' can be accessed [here](#).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

- Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese
- Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate for people aged 17+

The Quality and Outcome Framework (QOF) 2017/18 provides a snapshot of disease prevalence across Shropshire. Table AB.8 overleaf shows that South Shropshire has the highest rates for a range of diseases, including stroke, chronic kidney disease, dementia, and depression. Notably across Shropshire, hypertension is the disease which has the biggest prevalence in all ages at 16.5%. GP Practices in South Shropshire report a much higher prevalence of 20%.

Table AB.8 Disease prevalence across Shropshire¹²⁸

Disease Prevalence on QOF 2018/19	Population	Bridgnorth	North Shropshire	Oswestry	Shrewsbury & Atcham	South Shropshire	Shropshire
Cancer	All Ages	4.6%	3.7%	3.6%	3.6%	4.9%	4.0%
Hypertension	All Ages	16.5%	16.5%	16.7%	14.8%	20.0%	16.5%
Stroke	All Ages	2.8%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	3.0%	2.6%
CHD	All Ages	4.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%	4.3%	3.7%
CVD-PP	Age 30-74	1.0%	1.2%	1.6%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%
LVSD	All Ages	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%
Obesity	Age 18+	10.3%	12.2%	12.3%	11.3%	12.1%	11.5%
Depression	Age 18+	10.3%	10.2%	13.8%	12.5%	12.7%	11.8%
Osteoporosis	Age 50+	0.8%	0.3%	1.7%	0.8%	1.7%	1.0%
Diabetes	Age 17+	7.2%	7.2%	7.0%	6.5%	7.0%	6.9%
Palliative Care	All Ages	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%
Atrial Fibrillation	All Ages	4.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%	4.3%	3.7%
Heart Failure	All Ages	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.0%
Peripheral Arterial Disease	All Ages	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
Asthma	All Ages	6.5%	6.8%	6.7%	7.4%	7.2%	7.0%
Chronic Kidney Disease	Age 18+	5.5%	5.8%	5.3%	5.9%	7.9%	6.0%
Dementia	All Ages	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%
Epilepsy	Age 18+	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%
Learning Disabilities	All Ages	0.4%	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%
COPD	All Ages	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	1.7%	1.9%	1.9%
Rheumatoid Arthritis	All Ages	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%	0.9%
Mental Health	All Ages	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%
		Significance to Shropshire Avg		Higher	Similar	Lower	

Access to health services

Cleobury Mortimer is served by its own extended access Medical Centre with an attached pharmacy. The Medical Centre has available parking and is situated to the west of the town in a residential area, opposite a soon-to-be-opened care facility. The Medical Centre uses only part of the building they occupy, and it is recognised locally that the other part of the building could be occupied by additional medical/health services. This would further enhance the health service offer of the town.

There are hospital services available in Tenbury Wells (approximately 7.5 miles away and 15-minute journey by car), Ludlow (approximately 11 miles and 18-minute journey by car) and there is a minor injuries unit at Kidderminster Hospital (approximately 11 miles and 20-minute journey by car). The nearest Accident and Emergency departments are in Worcester, Telford and Dudley; all over 20 miles from the parish.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Cleobury Mortimer has its own NHS dentist and NHS optician services, as well as a number of other practitioners that offer other well-being services such as podiatry, chiropody, physiotherapy and osteopathy.

Green spaces

16.5% of Shropshire residents utilise outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons, compared to 17.9% of England overall¹²⁹. The Shropshire Wild Team initiative uses Shropshire's free and abundant natural environment to promote physical activity and wellbeing, and is underpinned by the growing research evidence suggesting positive health benefits for people engaging with the natural environment¹³⁰.

In terms of the neighbourhood area, the Shropshire Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment (2018) shows the quantity of Open Space is low compared with other settlements within Shropshire. As set out in Table AB.9, Cleobury Mortimer has the second lowest provision per 1000 population, after Albrighton.

Table AB.9 Quantity of open space within Shropshire 2018¹³¹

Place	Overall Provision (Ha)	Provision (Ha) per 1000 population
Albrighton	16.41	2.1038
Bishops Castle	46.72	4.4075
Bridgnorth	141.37	5.8417
Broseley	61.81	11.0375
Church Stretton	45.59	5.4927
Cleobury Mortimer	19.57	2.4772
Craven Arms	19.43	2.9892
Ellesmere	89.93	10.3367
Highley	58.43	14.2512
Ludlow	74.27	4.5564
Market Drayton	88.19	3.8012
Much Wenlock	21.32	4.351
Oswestry	328.90	7.9636
Pontesbury and Minsterley	40.49	8.098
Shifnal	22.99	2.8382
Shrewsbury	1094.68	11.2159
Wem	165.07	10.2527
Whitchurch	168.37	11.1503

The Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment further indicated that Cleobury Mortimer has a 4.4 ha open space deficit¹³².

Future baseline

The presence of accessible healthcare services, and potential for provision to increase within the Plan area, is likely to support sustainable growth of the town. It is

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Red Kite (2018) 'Shropshire Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment' can be accessed [here](#).

¹³² Ibid.

vital that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support the retention and improvement of wider community facilities within the Plan area, notably open space provision given the deficit identified. The importance of local accessibility has been highlighted during the course of the ongoing pandemic and can support healthy lifestyles in future years.

With ongoing advances in technology, healthcare and lifestyles, people are tending to live longer than before. Life expectancy in Shropshire is higher than the national average and it is likely that more housing aimed at older people will be required in the future. The overall health of residents in the Plan area is likely to remain positive if new development is sustainably located and supports the growth of the community. It will be important for proposals to recognise that people's health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors; and address any deficits where they exist.

Transportation

Policy context

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework¹³³ (NPPF) include:

- Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
 - The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
 - Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised;
 - Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
 - The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account; and
 - Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
- Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be considered in both plan-making and decision-making.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)¹³⁴ identifies that it is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

The Transport Investment Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead (2017)¹³⁵ sets out the Department for Transport's approach for future investment decisions and priorities. At the local level, the strategy relies on devolved decision-making where local communities have the power and will be backed by funding. Investment aims to achieve a transport network that is reliable, well-managed, safe, and works for everyone. The transport system should also provide smooth, fast and comfortable journeys, and have the right connections in the right places.

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2016)¹³⁶ sets out the objectives that the DfT are working towards to meet the following walking and cycling ambition for England:

"We want to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey"

The objectives and target set to measure progress towards the 2040 ambition are to:

- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of bicycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025;
- Reverse the decline in walking activity;
- Reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled, each year; and
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school.

Department for Transport (2020) Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge (2020)¹³⁷ sets out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

In February 2020, the government announced a new £5 billion 5-year funding package to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London¹³⁸. This builds on the Government's determination to make buses work better for their passengers. The details of these programmes will be announced in the upcoming National Bus Strategy, to be published later in 2020, and follows the allocation of £170 million to support more electric buses, increase rural mobility and trial new 'Superbus' services.

Cycle routes will also see a major boost across the country with over 250 miles of new, high-quality separated cycle routes and safe junctions in towns and cities to be constructed across England, as part of the multibillion package announced

Each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. The Shropshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 sets out proposed transport solutions for the County up to 2036, with a focus on

¹³⁵ GOV UK (2017) 'Transport investment strategy' can be accessed [here](#).

¹³⁶ Department for Transport (2016) 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' can be accessed [here](#).

¹³⁷ Department for Transport (2020) 'Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge' can be accessed [here](#).

¹³⁸ GOV UK (2020) 'Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport' can be accessed [here](#).

enabling sustainable growth¹³⁹. The Council's strategic approach seeks to maintain good access and improve reliability of journey times by car for commuting, shopping, tourism and business use; and good access for freight and deliveries; but to focus particularly on increasing the comparative advantage of more sustainable transport modes in locations and for journeys where these can become feasible alternatives.

A number of policies within the Core Strategy¹⁴⁰ indirectly relate to the transportation theme, including:

- Policy CS1: Strategic Approach
- Policy CS7: Communications and Transport
- Policy CS9: Infrastructure Contributions
- Policy CS15: Town and Rural Centres

Further, the emerging Local Plan¹⁴¹ provides a number of relevant policies:

- Policy SP2: Strategic Approach
- Policy SP4: Sustainable Development
- Policy DP25: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy DP26: Strategic, Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

Baseline summary

The town of Cleobury Mortimer is in south Shropshire. This area is relatively remote and self-contained, but also has significant links with Herefordshire¹⁴². Key issues for the County include its large and sparse nature with significant distances between significant settlements. Additionally, while the majority of the population live in towns such as Cleobury Mortimer (or larger villages), just over a third of the population are very sparsely distributed across a large rural area¹⁴³.

Local road network

Shropshire has a few key trunk and principal roads which provide links between the major settlements, predominantly in the form of single carriageway roads.¹⁴⁴

Cleobury Mortimer has developed along the A4117, the main road through the town, which provides links to the train stations and more significant amenities of Kidderminster, 12 miles to the east and Ludlow, 11 miles to the west. The smaller towns of Tenbury Wells (south) and Bridgnorth (north) are also within 14 miles.

The A4117 is a significant route from Birmingham to the east through to Wales in the west. It is a busy route, utilised heavily by lorries from the nearby quarry at all times of the day, lorries, motorbike groups, cyclists, bin lorries, school traffic and agricultural vehicles alongside the normal day-to-day traffic of a small, rural town. There is also parking along the entire route. Figure AB.23 overleaf has been taken by a resident and shows lorry traffic causing severance at 2.00 pm. Local knowledge

¹³⁹ Shropshire Council (2011) 'Shropshire Local Transport Plan Provisional LTP Strategy 2011-2026' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

suggests this level of congestion is exacerbated when school buses travel to and from the schools.



Figure AB.23 Lorry congestion in Cleobury Mortimer town centre

One of the key concerns of residents raised in the Big Cleobury Survey was traffic and congestion through the town. Traffic congestion is generated because of the significant role that the town plays to many smaller villages and communities in the surrounding area; including for access to education and health facilities. The A4117 is a key transport route and as such is also relied upon by large numbers of lorries and agricultural vehicles making their way through the town.

On-street parking in the town centre adds to congestion, and it is considered that the growth of housing further west in Ludlow (where in excess of 1,000 houses are planned), will lead to further through traffic. It is predicted that 20-25% of those residents will commute to the Black Country through Cleobury Mortimer.

The on-street parking and congestion can lead to parts of the town feeling unsafe for pedestrians and this has been reiterated through the Big Cleobury Survey results. The Big Cleobury Survey results show that the top five areas identified as unsafe for pedestrians were the Tenbury Road junction with the high street (Figure AB.24 overleaf), High Street, New Road, the Lion Lane junction with the high street and around the Primary School. Furthermore, roads deemed most congested were: High Street (90%), Lower Street, Tenbury Road junction with High Street and the Primary School.



Figure AB.24 Tenbury Road junction illustrating lack of pedestrian footways

Census data set out in Figure AB.25 below shows that car ownership in the neighbourhood area is comparatively higher than all other comparators. Equally, a low proportion of residents own no cars/vans (12.60%). Notably a higher percentage of residents own 4 or more cars/ vans (3.77%) than all other comparators, which is representative of the congestion issues discussed above.

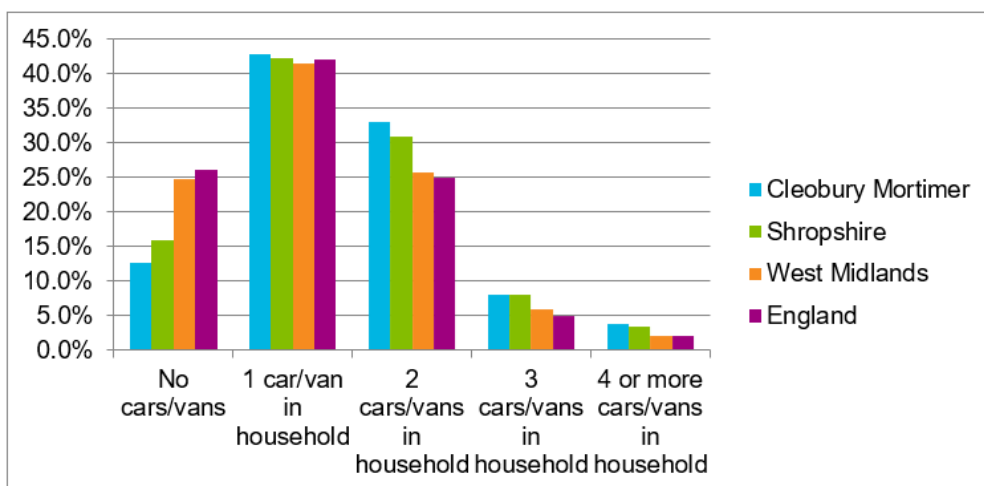


Figure AB.25 Car/van ownership

Sustainable travel

Access to train stations in Shropshire is limited¹⁴⁵. The nearest train stations to Cleobury Mortimer Parish are located in Kidderminster (12 miles to the east) and Ludlow (11 miles to the west). Kidderminster provides regular services to Worcester, Whitlocks End and Leamington Spa, while Ludlow provides regular services to Manchester Picadilly and Milford Haven.

The provision of a comprehensive bus service in Shropshire is challenging. Long distances in rural areas make services expensive to operate, and a small, sparse population with relatively high levels of car ownership lead to low levels of patronage. Most local bus services rely on financial support from the Council with only a small number of services run on a commercial basis; most of these being within the town of Shrewsbury¹⁴⁶. The current bus service available within Cleobury Mortimer connects the town with Ludlow and Kidderminster, however it is recognised locally that services are inadequate. Results of the Big Cleobury Survey showed that bus

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

services were not generally considered good or very good across a range of criteria such as customer service, days, value for money, routes and reliability.

Levels of walking and cycling are high in Shropshire¹⁴⁷. The Big Cleobury Survey results highlight that the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network within and around the parish is regularly used by residents (85% agree strongly or agree). The rural location of the town is an important asset with an active 'Footpath Association' and a 'Walkers are Welcome' designation bringing many walkers into the area to walk on well-cared for footpaths and prepared walking routes. Notably the Jack Myton Way Long Distance Path extends north of the parish from the town centre. From the northern edge of Wyre Forest, the Way follows a disused railway to Highley and the Severn Valley and goes across rolling farmland to Much Wenlock where it then follows the escarpment of Wenlock Edge, to cross Ape Dale and descend to Church Stretton¹⁴⁸.

Travel to work

The latest census data shown in Figure AB.26 below indicates that a large number of residents in the Plan area travel to work via car or van (44.45%). This is on par with the figure for Shropshire as a whole (44.0%), but noticeably greater than national figures (37.0%). Additionally, a comparatively high proportion of residents work mainly at or from home (6.3%).

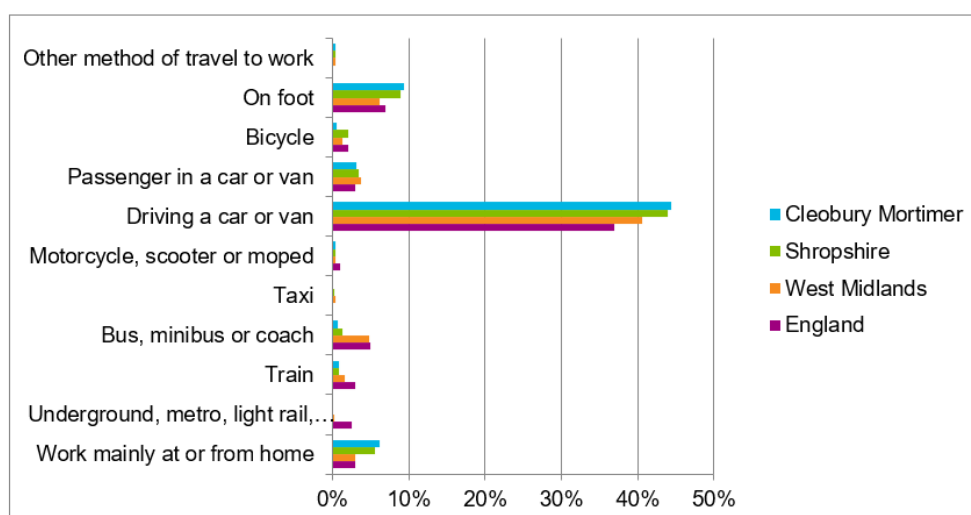


Figure AB.26 Travel to work¹⁴⁹

Results of the Big Cleobury Survey further reflects the trends shown through the latest census. As set out in Figure AB.27 overleaf, the Big Cleobury Survey showed that for respondents, the main form of transport to work is the car (89%) though around 9% walked to work. More people walked to leisure activities (19%) and 74% drove. There is an even split between those walking or being driven to school.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ The Long Distance Walkers Association (2020) 'Jack Myton Way' can be accessed [here](#).

¹⁴⁹ ONS (date unknown) Census data 2011: QS701EW (Method of Travel to work)

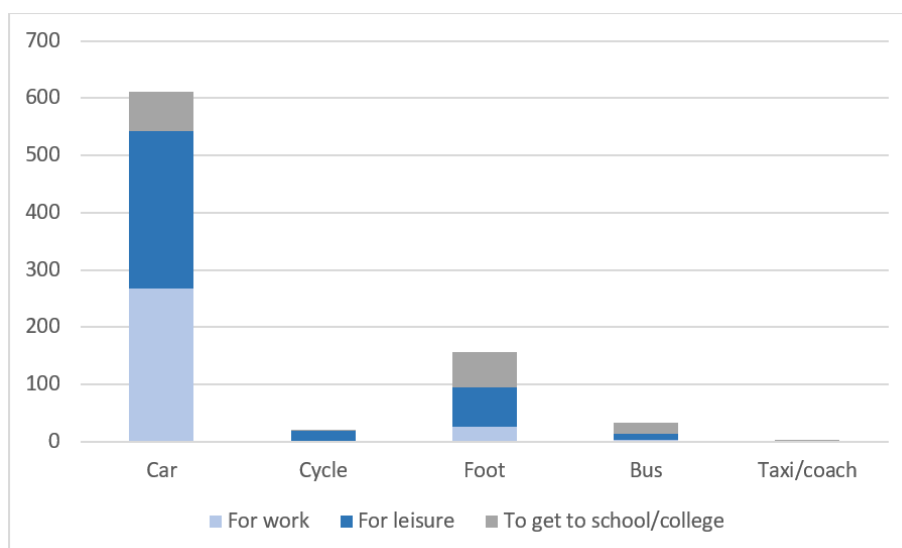


Figure AB.27 Cleobury Mortimer travel

It is further noted that Shropshire, particularly in the south, has one of the highest levels of home working in the country, reflecting both the traditional farming economy and the more recent growth in homebased enterprises. In 2011, 13% of all those employed in Shropshire worked at home. It is considered that this figure is likely to have increased considerably given the ongoing pandemic and global shift to homeworking.

Future baseline

In the absence of strategic transport interventions, growth in the neighbourhood area is likely to continue trends which favour the private vehicle as the primary mode of transport. New development therefore has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional localised congestion issues which in turn may reduce road safety. A key concern in this respect is the A4117 and the exacerbation of existing peak time congestion. Further to this, it is considered that public transport use is likely to remain low compared with private car use given the lack of accessible public transport options.

The Neighbourhood Plan can support small-scale infrastructure improvements and active travel opportunities that seeks to maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist movements. Additionally, given the high level of home working, which is predicted to more than double compared to pre-pandemic levels¹⁵⁰, it is important for planning to ensure sufficient infrastructure to enable suitable internet connectivity.

¹⁵⁰ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2020) 'Home working set to more than double compared to pre-pandemic levels once crisis is over' can be accessed [here](#).

