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Our future*

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# Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan 2024 to 2038



## Modification Proposal Statement

May 2025

Prepared by the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Steering  
Group on behalf of Much Wenlock Town Council

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. As a 'Qualifying Body', Much Wenlock Town Council ("the Town Council") proposes to modify the made Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan ("the Made Plan") of 25 July 2014. This Statement will be published as part of the Submission version of the proposed modified Neighbourhood Plan ("the Modified Plan") for examination alongside the Basic Conditions Statement and a Consultation Statement, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

1.2. Regulation 15(1)(f) of the amended 2012 Regulations requires that:

"in relation to a modification proposal, a statement setting out whether or not the qualifying body considers that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the qualifying body is of this opinion".

1.3. This Statement serves this purpose and notes the following additional requirements in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG):

- the qualifying body must state whether they believe that the modifications are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and give reasons
- the local planning authority must (when sending the modified plan to the independent examiner) state whether they believe that the modifications are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and give reasons. The local planning authority must also submit a copy of the original plan to the independent examiner
- the qualifying body must decide whether to proceed with the examination after the examiner has decided whether the modifications proposed change the nature of the plan

1.4. The Modified Plan is considered by the Town Council to be more than just a minor update and the proposals represent material modifications to the Made Plan.

1.5. In accordance with the requirements of the PPG as stated above, this statement therefore sets out the background reason for the modification, describes the modifications and explains why the Town Council as the Qualifying Body considers the modifications to be significant in nature. Some policies have been largely retained, some have been updated, some have been amalgamated and some new ones have been added.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The Made Plan covers the period 2013 – 2026 and contains 34 policies. The designated neighbourhood area covers the same area as the Town Council. On 25 July 2014 it was agreed by the District Council to ‘make’ the Neighbourhood Plan, following a successful referendum.
- 2.2. The Made Plan is reaching the end of its lifespan and in the period following its adoption by Shropshire Council, there have been significant changes to national planning policy as well as the backdrop of an emerging Local Plan. In addition, new issues and opportunities have arisen locally that need to be reflected in the document. Finally, there are some areas where new policies have been introduced that were not considered in the current document.
- 2.3. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion has been carried out, which is enclosed within the submission bundle. This has concluded that the Modified Plan is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. It has also been determined that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required.

## 3. The Proposed Modifications

- 3.1. The Plan has followed the same format to the previous plan in terms of sections to focus on. The vision was reviewed and has been retained. The objectives have also been reviewed and amended accordingly. Notably the original section and policies relating to sustainability and climate change has been removed as a standalone chapter. This is because the elements of sustainability are relevant to all of the policies and each policy has been carefully considered in terms of how it contributes to sustainability.
- 3.2. Additional community engagement and evidence gathering has revealed that whilst issues have not changed dramatically since the Plan was Made, new opportunities have arisen that could be considered through the planning system. This has led to a series of new policies being added and existing ones updated accordingly.
- 3.3. A new section listing out ‘non-policy’ projects and actions has been included. Sections relating to the implementation and review of the plan have also been added. Additional mapping has been added to support the modified suite of policies and a Policies Map is provided.
- 3.4. The proposed modifications to the Made Plan policies are summarised in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Overview of the modifications

Modified Plan - Policy Title	Relationship to 'Made' Plan	Commentary
POLICY MW1: SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Replaces (and amalgamates) Policies: H3, part of Policy H5	This is a new policy in the Plan which, in the absence of site allocations, sets out an overarching spatial strategy for the parish in terms of where development is most sustainable and should be directed to. It incorporates Policy H3, which supports the reuse of previously developed (brownfield) sites. It adds additional detail in terms of restricting coalescence, promoting connectivity and taking account of flood risk.
POLICY MW2: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS	Replaces (and amalgamates) Policies: H1, H2,	The policy sets out a more comprehensive approach to the mix of housing that should be supported in the parish to meet identified local housing needs. It is underpinned by a Much Wenlock Housing Needs Assessment and provides additional detail on matters such as specialist housing and housing for older and disabled people.
POLICY MW3: RURAL EXCEPTION SITES	Replaces Policy H5	The policy builds on existing Policy H5, amending it to reflect an uplift in the number of units that would be acceptable on a rural exception site.
POLICY MW4: INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND CONVERSIONS	Replaces Policy H4	The policy is an update to H4 but has not materially changed.

POLICY MW5: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Replaces/ amalgamates Policies EJ1, EJ2 and EJ3	The policy has been redrafted to amalgamate a series of existing policies. Notably, it is likely that the land at Stretton Road (Policy EJ1) may not be viable for employment use. This and other employment sites are sought to be protected for such uses, but the modified policy makes provision for how such sites should be considered, if they are demonstrably unviable purely as employment sites. This provides greater flexibility for the use of such sites in line with national policy, which supports mixed-use sites. The viability criteria have remained the same as the Made Plan.
POLICY MW6: PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE ROLE AND SETTING OF MUCH WENLOCK TOWN CENTRE	Replaces/ amalgamates Policies EJ4 and EJ5	The policy amalgamates Made Policies EJ4 and EJ5, updating references to Use Classes. It adds additional detail in relation to the public realm, the use of the upper floors of retail units as residential space and support for temporary uses. In this way, the original policies have been broadened to reflect the changing nature of town centres and local feedback.
POLICY MW7: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM	Replaces Policy EJ7	The policy adds additional detail to the existing policy in relation to the sorts of activities that would be supported and the criteria against which development proposals should be assessed. This strengthens the policy in terms of ensuring that impacts on the landscape (including national landscape and its setting) as well as heritage assets, is mitigated.
POLICY MW8: VISITOR ACCOMMODATION IN RURAL AREAS	New policy	This is a new policy which seeks to limit the development of owner-occupied second homes outside the development boundary. It relates to an issue that has arisen since the Plan was Made. It builds on a policy that would have been included in the new Shropshire Local Plan before it was withdrawn.

POLICY MW9: SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMEWORKING	New policy	This is a new policy that seeks to recognise the growing number of people who are working from home. This is an important cohort in Much Wenlock which has emerged significantly due to the changing nature of work, impacts and legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fact that the majority of non-home-based employment opportunities lie beyond the parish itself.
POLICY MW10: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE	Amalgamates Policies RF2, RF4, RF5 and RF6	The existing flood policies have been amalgamated into two policies, one relating largely to flood prevention and the other relating to sustainable drainage. The flood prevention policy has been amended fairly significantly to strengthen the clauses in light of the significant flooding issue within Much Wenlock. It seeks to ensure that development avoids adding to existing flooding problems and is future-proofed to take account of projected climate change data.
Policy MW11: SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT	Amalgamates Policies RF1	The sustainable drainage policy adds additional detail to the existing policy on this matter, building on further evidence that has been gathered by the community. It supports a range of interventions that would help to reduce the quantity and flow of surface water as it reaches the town.
POLICY MW12: IMPROVING WALKING, CYCLING AND EQUESTRIAN OPPORTUNITIES	New policy building on Policy GOS3	This is an important new policy in the plan, which has strong read across to Policy MW1. It seeks to ensure that any development proposals are well-connected to the 'movement' network, which will help to promote a shift to more active modes of travel for those willing and able. It is supported by a range of interventions to the movement network that would enhance such opportunities.
POLICY MW13: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE PARKING	Replaces Policy TM1	The policy provides additional detail to existing Policy TM1 in terms of where car parking would most usefully be introduced. It also includes a new clause in relation to the provision of infrastructure for electric vehicles and bikes.

POLICY MW14: MITIGATING VEHICULAR IMPACTS AT JUNCTIONS AND PINCHPOINTS	New policy	Traffic through Much Wenlock can be severe due to the lack of alternative public transport arrangements. This new policy sets out specific roads and junctions that have been identified as particular traffic hotspots, with a view to ensuring that development proposals assess these as part of their transport assessment/statements.
POLICY MW15: IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES, SPORT AND RECREATION	Amalgamates Policies CW1 and CW2	This policy effectively brings together the two existing policies relating to the provision of community facilities. The supporting text provides additional detail in terms of the sorts of facilities needed locally, be they upgrades to existing ones or the provision of new ones. It also includes a new clause specifically related to the provision of outdoor play space for children.
POLICY MW16: RESISTING THE LOSS OF PUBLIC HOUSES	New policy	This new policy has been included in light of the threat to public houses locally. These are important social hubs, and the community is keen to see them safeguarded where possible.
POLICY MW17: PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION	New policy	The policy supports the provision of adequate publicly accessible toilets to serve the town, an issue that was raised via the public engagement as important both for residents and visitors to the area.
POLICY MW18: CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	Amalgamates Policy H6, GQD1, GQD2, GQD3, GQD4	<p>The policy has been redrafted to amalgamate a series of existing policies relating to design. An updated Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Area Design Guidelines has been prepared, which forms an integral part of the plan. The former Design Guidelines were advisory.</p> <p>The policy underpins the need for landscape-led development and includes clause relating to issues such as local amenity, gateways to the parish and town and residential parking standards, which was formerly included in Policy H6.</p>



POLICY MW19: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DESIGN	New policy Incorporates Policy RF3 and replaces Policies SCC1	This policy sets out how development proposals can contribute to mitigating climate change in terms of their design and use of resources. The existing policy relating to this matter had become obsolete.
POLICY MW20: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS	New policy	This is a new policy which has identified non-designated heritage assets locally. 21 such assets are listed and justification for each is provided. The policy also includes detail on how proposals within the Conservation Areas should be considered.
POLICY MW21: LOCAL GREEN SPACE	New policy Replaces Policy GOS1	Policy GOS1 identified green and open spaces but did not designate them as local green space. This new policy has audited the list of spaces and others and seeks to designate eight local green spaces. Each owner has been contacted and has had the opportunity to contribute their views on the policy.
POLICY MW22: RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE AND PLAY SPACE	New policy building on Policy GOS2	This is a new policy which seeks to ensure that adequate provision of recreational open space is provided within development proposals as appropriate. This is an important issue that has arisen since the Plan was Made and evidence of a deficiency of such space is provided in the evidence base.
POLICY MW23: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN	New policy Incorporates Policy EJ6, LL1, LL2, LL3, LL4	<p>This is a new policy that has been included following the introduction of the Environment Act and the opportunities for encouraging biodiversity net gain locally. It is supported by a map showing opportunities that exist within the parish and how these link to the wider nature recovery network.</p> <p>The policy includes a clause on the reuse of former quarry sites, notably for biodiversity purposes. This was formerly set out in Policy EJ6 and Policy LL1.</p>

POLICY MW24: LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT	New policy replacing Policy LL3	The policy also sets out natural features of the parish that should be retained/added to and sets out criteria against which each should be considered. It includes specific clauses on trees and woodland and hedgerows as well as wildlife-friendly design.
POLICY MW25: DARK SKIES	New policy	Parts of Much Wenlock parish provide ideal locations from which to enjoy dark skies and stargazing. These dark skies also support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife. This policy seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of parish. It is not an issue that was considered in the Made Plan.
POLICY MW26: COMMUNITY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY	Replaces Policy SCC2	The renewed government emphasis on promoting renewable energy has led to the introduction of this more detailed policy, which sets out the criteria against which such schemes should be considered in order to help mitigate their impact on the landscape, notably the national landscape and its setting.

#### **4. Conclusion on Changing the Nature of the Plan**

- 4.1. The modified plan builds on the structure, vision and objectives of the Made Plan. It has reviewed the existing suite of policies and sought to streamline these into a set of new policies that conform to national and local planning authority policy, while addressing the issues and opportunities identified by the community consultation. This has led to a number of policies being redrafted to amalgamate elements of existing ones and add to these. In addition, a series of new policies have been added that were not in the Made Plan. This includes the designation of a series of local green spaces.
- 4.2. In light of this, whilst the overall scope of the plan remains similar, it is considered that the nature of the plan has changed significantly, most notably because of the new policies that have been added.