



*Our plan –  
Our future*

# Launch Events Guide

November 2011

[www.wenlockplan.org](http://www.wenlockplan.org)





## Introduction

This booklet aims to tell you about our neighbourhood plan, the opportunity it provides, the initial themes and issues that have been identified by the project's steering group and how you can get involved. More information is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website – [www.wenlockplan.org](http://www.wenlockplan.org).

Earlier this year Much Wenlock was chosen as one of seventeen communities to be front-runners in the Government's scheme to encourage planning at a local level. Neighbourhood planning is a new way for people to decide the future of the places where they live and work. Communities will be able to:

- Establish planning policies for the development and use of land**
- Choose where new homes, shops and offices should be built**
- Have their say on what those new buildings should look like**

Our Neighbourhood Plan will cover the parish of Much Wenlock and will run to 2026. However, the initiative cannot succeed without your involvement and approval. The plan will also need to be checked by an inspector to ensure that it is sound in planning terms. Once adopted, the plan will form part of the local planning framework and help guide and control development. The Town Council formed a steering group to drive the plan to its conclusion, which is likely to be towards the end of 2012. The steering group has organised the November launch events.

## Themes and issues

The steering group has identified the following themes that could be explored and developed during the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Sustainable community**
- Housing needs**
- Jobs and the local economy**
- Protecting our environment**
- Improving community services**

These themes are described in the following pages.



## Sustainable community

The Neighbourhood Plan gives local people the opportunity of deciding how we can move to a more sustainable community that reduces our reliance on the earth's dwindling natural resources.

Whilst Much Wenlock as a community may not be able to influence the global position, there are many options in our neighbourhood to start working towards a renewable energy-based, reuse/recycle local economy that meets the needs of society and protects our local environment.

The Neighbourhood Plan could be used to:

- Explore local options for energy use reduction and generation from renewable sources;
- Identify opportunities for improving the availability of local food products in shops and restaurants, thereby reducing food miles;
- Encourage reduced vehicle use and use of more fuel-efficient vehicles;
- Improve opportunities for waste and recycling initiatives.

Through the Neighbourhood Plan people in our parish can help to clarify:

- Which options for generation of renewable energy are suitable and desirable in our community e.g. wind power, solar PV, community wood fuel;
- What we can do as a community to improve home insulation, heating controls etc, to ensure we are not wasting energy;
- Whether we should demand a higher standard of energy efficiency in all new-build development in the neighbourhood;
- What our best options are for reducing vehicle use in our community e.g. better public transport/encouraging lift sharing/car clubs/fuel-efficient vehicles etc;
- How we can we make better use of local gardens, allotments, community orchards etc. to encourage local food production and help producers develop local food supply chains.



# Housing needs

The Neighbourhood Plan gives local people the opportunity to define the housing needs of the parish between now and 2026. Much Wenlock is one of the most expensive places in the county to buy a house. The situation is not better if you want to rent a home. The proportion of houses in the town owned by registered social landlords is much lower than the national, regional and Shropshire averages.

The Neighbourhood Plan could be used to:

- Establish planning policies for housing;
- Identify where any new housing should be built;
- Provide guidance on design and build quality.

Through the Neighbourhood Plan people in the parish can help to clarify:

- How many local people need housing in the plan period;
- What types of houses will be needed;
- What build quality should be demanded;
- Where new homes should be built;
- Whether new homes will result in an increased flood risk.

These are not easy questions to answer. Most of the houses built in the parish in the last decade have been unaffordable for many local people. The majority were sold on the open market and helped meet national and regional targets rather than local housing needs. However, without these open market houses even fewer houses might have been built for rent from social landlords.





## Jobs and the local economy

The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to re-balance the local economy and move towards a more sustainable community. Currently many residents commute to work outside the parish - to Telford, Shrewsbury, the West Midlands and even further afield. The absence of suitable premises and facilities restricts opportunities for businesses and enterprises to start up and expand in the parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan could be used to:

- Support the growth of existing businesses and enterprises;
- Foster new businesses and enterprises;
- Provide a wider range of employment opportunities;
- Help the community to become more prosperous and resilient;
- Facilitate business and employment-related education and training.

If these are the local community's aims then a number of questions need to be addressed:

- What types of employment and enterprise should we seek to promote and encourage?
- What premises and facilities are needed?
- Where should the premises and facilities be located?
- What is the current and future availability of premises and land?
- Who owns the premises and land?

### **Employment and enterprise types**

- Retail
- Financial, professional etc
- Catering
- Social enterprises
- Community services
- Assembly and leisure
- Workshops
- Industrial
- Farm diversification

### **Employment and enterprise sites**

- Brownfield sites
- Greenfield sites
- Urban and rural
- Former quarries
- Redundant farm buildings
- Building conversions



## Protecting our environment

The special character of the town, associated settlements and landscape depends to a large extent on the area's unique geology. This provides assets that may be developed in new ways within the period of the Neighbourhood Plan as we seek to move to a more sustainable future. The plan offers residents and landowners with a leading role in determining the nature of new development and ensuring that it complies with the highest standards of design, conservation and sustainability.

The Neighbourhood Plan should determine what elements of the existing environment the community values most highly. It can:

- Preserve and enhance the special character of the locality;
- Ensure that new development is compatible with the built and natural environments;
- Preserve historic features including green space and 'heritage' trees;
- Protect and enhance local landscapes (woodland, limestone grasslands and quarry areas) to ensure a sustainable future.

Key questions:

- What types of new housing design and street layout are appropriate?
- Should the Much Wenlock and Bourton conservation areas be extended and new conservation areas created in other settlements?
- Should we preserve green space within the town, including gardens?
- How should the margins of settlements, as they give way to open countryside, be treated? Should there be gradations in density, roof height etc?
- How can we link enhancement of the natural environment with addressing issues affecting the neighbourhood such as flooding? Should areas of woodland and lakes be recreated around settlements?





## Improving community services

Much Wenlock has a range of community services and facilities that support the health and well-being of the local community. We tend to think of these as including things like health, public transport, recreation and leisure facilities, footpaths, allotments, parks and other local 'green infrastructure'. It is obviously important that any improvements to these assets are planned and especially so when public finances are under pressure.

Shropshire Council has begun this process by producing a 'Place Plan'. Our Neighbourhood Plan provides a real opportunity to set out the community's views on the right investment in infrastructure and community facilities for the town and parish.

These community assets are provided by a wide range of public organisations and, through the planning decisions we make in the Neighbourhood Plan, they could be funded from what is called 'planning gain', delivered through s106 agreements and the new community infrastructure levy.

The current version of the Place Plan sets out a wide range of infrastructure and investment suggestions and can be found via our website. However, it is not yet complete and needs our input.

Some key questions about our community services might include;

- What do we think of Shropshire Council's 'Place Plan' and its list of priorities? Do we support these as our community's priorities?
- What is missing and what do we want to prioritise under 'now, sooner and later'?
- What level of provision do we want to achieve?
- Would we be willing to agree to levels of development over and above our local needs to help pay for improved facilities?
- What are the likely costs of providing all of our needs, what sources of funding are available, and what would our investment plan look like?
- Are there ways of delivering improved infrastructure and services that don't require development to pay for them?



## How you can get involved

The Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan provides a great opportunity for the whole parish. To be truly successful, we need the help and support of all sections of the community. We need people with a wide variety of skills and knowledge – and enthusiasm. The success of the 2006 Town and Parish Plan, which engaged many local residents, shows that we have the skills and enthusiasm within the parish to make neighbourhood planning a success.

We need your help to develop the plan. If you cannot attend one of the public meetings but want to contribute to the development of the plan please contact us.

### Contact us

By email: [mail@wenlockplan.org](mailto:mail@wenlockplan.org)

By telephone: 01952 727509

By post: Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan  
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You can get help to access the Neighbourhood Plan web page at Much Wenlock Library.



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