



*Our plan –
Our future*

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction – A message from Councillor Lesley Durbin, Mayor of Much Wenlock

Much Wenlock is leading the way by being one of the first communities in England to be chosen to develop its own neighbourhood plan.

Since the public launch of our Neighbourhood Plan in November 2011 a number of events have been held throughout the parish explaining how, for the first time, our community has the opportunity to:

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

Plenty of feedback has been received from residents and we have now reached the point where every resident aged 14 or over has the opportunity to give their more formal views on these issues. The Neighbourhood Plan will shape the way in which our community develops between now and 2026 so it is very important that you use this opportunity to have your say.

Please complete the survey and return it by 30th April. It's our plan – our future!

Lesley Durbin

On behalf of the community volunteers and the Town Council

A Residents Survey form should be handed to you with this leaflet

Background

In early 2011, the Department of Communities and Local Government invited local planning authorities in England to submit the names of volunteer local communities to become frontrunners for neighbourhood planning. People in these communities – a mix of cities, urban and rural areas – will be able to decide the types of development that will take place. Each of the chosen areas would receive £20,000 towards developing their plan.

The Town Council agreed to work with Shropshire Council and in April 2011, Much Wenlock was announced as being in the first seventeen communities in England and the first in Shropshire to develop its own neighbourhood plan.

The Town Council issued an appeal for volunteers and formed a steering group to drive the Plan to its conclusion, which is likely to be towards the end of 2012.

A number of well-attended events have been held around the parish since the beginning of November during which hundreds of residents have seized the opportunity to express their views on future development in the parish.

Please help us!

Completing the survey on-line will save volunteer time. Just go to www.wenlockplan.org and key in your postcode and the reference from your survey form.



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.

The purpose of the survey

The Neighbourhood Plan will be a statutory part of the planning system operated by Shropshire Council that will steer development decisions up until 2026. To develop the Plan we need to gather evidence about the parish and the views of residents on a range of planning-related matters - housing, employment, services, the environment and how we achieve a sustainable community

Who may complete a survey?

Any resident in the parish of Much Wenlock - which includes Atterley, Bourton, Callaughton, Farley, Homer, Presthope, Stretton Westwood and Wyke. With the Plan running until 2026 it is important to state that the views of young people are equally welcome.

How will I get hold of a survey form?

Volunteers have each been allocated an area of the parish. They will distribute the survey forms door to door and will endeavour to arrange a convenient time when the completed forms may be collected. If you know a resident who hasn't received a copy of the survey, please let us know and we will ensure that they receive a copy as soon as possible.

If you need additional paper copies of the survey you may download them from the website www.wenlockplan.org or obtain one from your Neighbourhood Plan volunteer. To ensure that your views are taken into account, please ensure that we have your completed survey, either on-line or paper copy, by 30th April 2012.

How do I return my survey form?

There are three ways of submitting your response to this survey. You may:

- Complete the survey on-line at www.wenlockplan.org
- Hand the completed survey form back to the Neighbourhood Plan volunteer who delivered it to you
- Return a completed survey form to the Town Clerk's office at the address shown on the back page

The deadline for returning your survey form is 30th April 2012.

The themes in the survey

Housing needs

Shropshire Council's Core Strategy says that up to 500 houses may be built in Much Wenlock between 2006 and 2026. About 80 houses have already been built or been given planning permission since 2006. Much Wenlock currently has about 1,250 existing homes in the parish and recent developments in the town include Hunters Gate (54 homes), Falcons Court (25) and Lady Forester Gardens (21). Has this been enough, too many or too few? Has it met the housing needs of local people? Do we need to provide additional affordable housing?

Our Neighbourhood Plan provides the opportunity to make an up-to-date assessment of the needs for additional housing in the parish and for local people to influence where any additional housing might be located between now and 2026. The Plan can set out planning policies for housing, determine the numbers and types of new housing to be built, and where such houses might be built. The Government is encouraging communities to agree to higher levels of development by allowing local communities to retain most of the cash sums gained from the Community Infrastructure Levy (*see box, next page*) on new housing development.

Do you think the Plan should encourage new housing development in the parish to increase this cash income and make up for the shortfall from other sources?

Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that is payable by developers on all residential developments. It contributes towards the cost of local infrastructure that either the council or the local community have identified as needed or desirable, such as parks, toilets, youth facilities or schools, community centres, etc.

In the town of Much Wenlock CIL is chargeable at a rate of £40 per sq metre floorspace for new residential dwellings. The rate in the rural areas is £80 per sq metre. Based on an average house size of about 100 sq metres in Much Wenlock the rate payable is £4,000 per new house.

Shropshire Council has agreed that 90% of the levy generated by future developments within the town will be available to the local community for local projects. The remaining 10% will be retained by Shropshire Council to pay for larger infrastructure projects with a county-wide impact.

For example, fifteen new houses of average size built in Much Wenlock town would fund a playground like that at the Gaskell Ground which was installed at a cost of £58,000.

Jobs and the local economy

We know that Much Wenlock provides employment for many people, but many residents commute to work outside the parish - to Telford, Shrewsbury, the West Midlands and further afield. Through the Plan we have an opportunity to help Much Wenlock remain a place where people can both live and work. For instance, at present 60% of working residents in the parish use a car to get to work whilst 15% work mainly at home.

Should we, and how can we, help local businesses start up, grow and provide a wider range of employment opportunities for people in the parish? We need to understand the possible demand for local jobs and to understand your views about whether you think the local economy should grow, in what way and what barriers may need to be overcome.

Protecting our environment

People tell us that the environment is an important consideration for the Plan. The special character of the settlements in the parish and its landscape depends to a large extent on the area's unique geography and geology. There are important local features, such as the town's green spaces, woodlands and protected trees. Some have also been recognised as nationally important in designations such as the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Conservation Areas in Much Wenlock and Bourton, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and nearly 100 Listed Buildings.

The Neighbourhood Plan gives us the opportunity for a leading role in protecting and enhancing these environmental assets for the future benefit of the community. More than that, the Plan can help in determining the location and quality of new development and setting standards of design and sustainability.

Improving community services

Much Wenlock parish has a range of services and facilities that support the well-being of the local community. These include such things as health, recreation and leisure facilities; footpaths, allotments, parks and public transport. Maintaining and improving these may all help to achieve a more sustainable community. Good access to green spaces, recreation and leisure facilities will, for example, help encourage active lifestyles and reduce health problems in the community.

The Plan also needs to address the thorny issue of how development will affect the risk of flooding; many people have already asked how the Plan will ensure that new development doesn't increase the risk and, better, will help to reduce the overall problem.

This section of the survey asks you to identify those services where you think the Neighbourhood Plan should promote improvements either directly, or through our local councils and agencies. This information will inform both the Neighbourhood Plan and the 'Much Wenlock Place Plan' which is the Shropshire Council document that identifies the priorities for investment and infrastructure within the local Much Wenlock area.

Creating a Sustainable Community

The Neighbourhood Plan is required by national planning policy to help achieve 'sustainable development'. What does this mean for our community and its future? What is our vision for what the Parish should be like in 2026? And what options might we consider?

Some of the key things might include combating climate change through actions which help reduce our use of fossil fuels, e.g. oil and gas. Creating a town where people can live and work, could be a major ambition. It might also be done by encouraging renewable energy schemes, allocating more land for local food production or better public transport facilities.



What next?

The Steering Group will gather the results of the survey, add it to other sources of information and, with help from volunteers, begin to draft some ideas and options for what the Plan will include. We will involve you in looking at these ideas and ask you to prioritise what you would like the Plan to say about future land use, where development should best be located and how development should be managed in future. We expect this consultation to take place through the spring and early summer 2012.