



Our plan – Our future

Much Wenlock Business Survey Literal Comments Analysis

A1 What types of employment should the Neighbourhood Plan encourage?

This is not the time to be fussy about creating jobs.

Not ticked transport/storage as road congestion is a concern.

It is really important not to try and restrict the sectors of employment, as this will simply constrain innovation and entrepreneurship. Much Wenlock is not a museum and needs to be able to grow and adapt, with young people given every encouragement to create or find employment of their choosing. The levels of youth unemployment are truly a national disgrace and we need to open every channel to improve the opportunities on offer for young people.

A3 Which types of site should be allocated for employment use?

Again, we should not be fussy about creating jobs, opportunities for small towns are few and far between. Greenfield should only be considered where quarries or brownfield are being returned to nature, so there is no net loss of employment land. Greenfield can make sites with convenient access to main roads - many brownfield sites are best for housing and not suitable for industrial, light commercial, retail etc.

All should be available, but sequentially, so the preference is for re-use of existing utilised land. However, Much Wenlock does not lack land, the question is one of design. Wherever development can be accommodated physically there is nearly always a design solution.

A4 Where should additional employment land be located? Please give details of any new sites that consider to be particularly suitable for employment.

the Shadwell Quarry should be turned into a leisure/wildlife area for local people to enjoy. A small cafe and toilets like the one at Haughmond Hill could be provided.

A5 Should existing employment sites be protected from change of use?

Definitely no more change of use from shops to houses - this has destroyed the whole feel of the town, as they will unlikely ever be changed back to shop usage. No strong feelings for other areas being changed for reasonable purposes.

Be very careful in preventing change of usage from commercial to residential, it can backfire. I have sadly turned down a business opportunity and cost a town jobs because the proposal was from a start-up business. As potential landlord I wanted to support the

business but the proposal involved converting residential property to commercial, for a nursery. Being new, there was a risk of business failure within a year or two. If it failed, I would have to pay the costs and risk refusal to convert back from commercial to residential. If conversion back to residential was easy and cheap for start-ups, we would have taken the risk, but planning policy presented us with an expensive dilemma if the business failed. In another change of use instance, this time on commercial land, I was surprised we had to get planning permission to change from selling one type of vehicle to another, and again to install a testing ramp inside our existing building. Even when we organically grow our business we have to consult planners and seek approval from residents. It takes months, is expensive for all concerned and of dubious benefit to residents but certain loss of competitive advantage to us. Short of usages which are a clear nuisance to neighbours (eg recycling) should planners be concerned with change of usage from one commercial type to another?

If employment sites are allowed to be ultimately permitted to be developed for houses when the economy is stronger, landowners will make little effort to market it for commercial uses. They will instead endeavour to demonstrate that there is no demand and then reap higher value from residential consent, thus making a mockery of the original zoning

If a piece of employment land would be better as residential land and there is a piece of land elsewhere which can be allocated to employment as a replacement, then sensible swaps should be arranged. The important thing is not to lose employment land.

A6 Should the Neighbourhood Plan include policies that encourage working from home?

Not sure what this entails

Being in a rural area working home should be encouraged, albeit working from home will work only for a limited number of people.

This is the time to be creating entrepreneurial spirit, which can so easily be deflated by bureaucracy. Again, the only test for objection should be measurable noise/smell/environmental pollution impacting neighbours. The standards for objection on the ground of traffic impacts need to be reasonable. One can understand objection to years of frequent 10T lorries, but no banning ice cream vans, delivery vans etc.

Would like to know what you actually mean by this

Public transport to and from Much Wenlock is poor and is unlikely to improve. Enabling and encouraging people to work from home keeps economic activity in the town and the surrounding hamlets. This can also encourage entrepreneurship at relatively modest outlay. Successful home businesses are the embryo of needing more space and the consequent

take-up of employment land. Anita Roddick's Body Shop and Laura Ashley are two examples of how modest beginnings on the kitchen table can give birth to successful (for some time) businesses.

Although, it is increasing significantly without any policy encouragement, so it is not clear what difference that would make.

A7 What would encourage businesses to locate in the Much Wenlock area? Please list up to five in priority order

Maintaining the existing appearance of the town To encourage existing local shops to stay open on a Wednesday & to keep regular hours

Loyal, comparably financially well-off local customer base Ease of parking and access for customers. Low rates Attractive town/environment to work in

Businesses locate where customers are accessible, land is affordable and supplier deliveries are not awkward. I am not sure a town can have a great impact on those variables, but a town should make subsequent processes easy: Promote that fact that the town wants jobs - and is willing to grant change of usage. Should the business fail, promise that usage back to residential can be granted, where the business used previously residential property. Tax breaks are always welcome for start-ups, especially on vacant commercial property. In the current climate, the fear of business rates being imposed on failed businesses is a significant dis-incentive to start-ups, landlords and investors, including banks.

Good working environment, suitable property, free parking, High speed internet service, good public transport.

More premises for business. More available land for business development. Better roads. More parking and cheaper. A regular street or outdoor market.

improved transport service

1). Availability of buildings, land and infrastructure 2). Help from Local Authority to overcome planning difficulties. 3). Support from Town and Council in overcoming 'NIMBY's' 4). A belief that they would be made welcome on a long term basis by Authorities

No doubt availability land would help.

Suitable sites, Fair rent/rates, Fair and relaxed restrictions, Wenlock being a busy and vibrant community, Made to feel welcome.

Improve Broadband services to Wenlock & surrounding area Maintain Wenlock as an historic town Encourage "up market" retailers to town centre Discourage early closing on a Wednesday and encourage shops to keep regular hours

Office Space Free Parking Fast Broadband

1. Better infrastructure (road network, resolution of flooding problem) 2. Grant aid 3. More support from Town Council

1. Flexible space. There are small offices and workshops dotted around, but expanding businesses cannot find space in Much Wenlock which would mean that they can develop locally. Why not develop the disused quarries? 2. Better car parking facilities - would encourage more shoppers 3. Faster broadband 4. Better mobile phone signal (currently non-existent in places)

free parking rate incentives better services

Faster broadband speeds; more parking spaces; A positive, proactive approach from the Town Council; more action on flood control & adequate drainage/drains

Retaining professional and businesses in the town, allocating land for new business locations and expansion of existing businesses and ensuring provision of good quality amenities, i.e., housing, schooling, etc..

retail

Reasonable housing, skilled people, road infrastructure, public transport, services

A8 What barriers or constraints prevent businesses moving to Much Wenlock area or existing business expanding in the Much Wenlock area? Please list up to five in priority order?

Lack of suitable premises or size of premises - eg retail Lack of parking

I am sure free staff parking is an issue for those seeking to employ staff in Wenlock town centre. Maybe a permit scheme for high street employees as well as residents. for us, change of usage is definitely slowing expansion we already have planned. We would certainly like to hire at least one additional person in town, but must await change of usage permission.

i don't know why

Lack of premises. Lack of available land for development. Poor transport links. Lack of cheap parking. "Not in my back yard" attitudes.

inadequate parking for workers and business owners

1). lack of all the above and in a time of economic restraint and uncertainty n intelligent businessman will always look at the cost of being away from the main commercial centres i.e Telford and Shrewsbury. How you overcome this is by all powers that be, whether it be

Council, Planning, Utility Companies, support 101% any proposals that would bring employment and prosperity to the area.

Remoteness from fast roads is presumably the major issue. Also a limited population/workforce.

Lack of suitable sites, Lack of trade.

Lack of office space Lack of free parking

1. Lack of skilled labour 2. Better industrial/commercial sites elsewhere 3

1. Absence of flexible business space at rents that can compete with what Telford etc is offering 2. Limited and costly car parking facilities - would encourage more shoppers

cheaper local alternatives

Congestion & nowhere to park; Slow Broadband; Flooding threats; Toilets - a lot of elderly people visit the town and need them! Most of these = access problems for employees/visitors to local businesses.

Nimbyism.

high rental

Public Transport. No designated industrial estates

A9 Should the current core retail area in Much Wenlock be extended?

Wenlock's selling point is that it is an historic market town, extending the current core retail area would have a detrimental effect.

Limited number of retail/business premises available, so expansion as a town centre is stifled. Shops along the High Street and opposite the Church have been converted to dwellings, which is crazy. The more reasons there are for people to shop at Wenlock the better, so the more varied the shops, the more reason for people to visit. Consideration should be given to pedestrianising the High Street, even if only at weekends, so that everyone can walk along the High Street without fear from being run over.

because it is well placed and of a workable size at present

need to maintain the character of the town. extension of retail area would open the possibility of one of the large chain supermarkets moving into the town

Out of town developments tend to cause traffic problems for an already congested road system. Danger of fragmenting the well defined shopping area

I would like to see a broader range of shops

I think its important to keep a concentrated retail centre in a defined area. the town will become untidy if its allowed to spread.

Existing shops are not thriving in many cases, i think,so extending the area does not seem logical.

Wenlock greatest selling point is that it is a beautiful small historic town if you take this away by increasing the current core retail area it will be an absolute crime. Wenlock should look at the town centre of Ludlow for inspiration NOT Bridgnorth.

All the main central roads in the town (High Street/Sheinton Street/Barrow Street)could be used, with change of use, to expand the core retail area, with the proviso that parking provision would need to be expanded, with more free parking for residents/business employees

A vibrant retail sector feeds off footfall. This needs to be in a single block.

a nucleated development boundary is urgently needed to rectify the existing disjointed layout

Enough shops already

Is there a demand for an extension? There are already gaps, hard to fill shops and turnover. wherever possible

This would impact on the existing centre too much

A10 Thinking of Much Wenlock as a location for trade, how would you like to see the town market itself?

As it is but maybe with more "up-market" retailers

Much better use of markets: many customers ask me about markets, which are few and far between (compared to say Bridgnorth). Use the Square (ie the centre of the town) for markets and do not hide them away under the guildhall or corn exchange where nobody can see them. It could then market itself as a true market town, combined with the tourist element.

Much Wenlock is the Ludlow of its area and much closer to Telford/Shrewsbury than Ludlow is. It has potential as a foodie/local produce centre. The recent food festival last September was very successful and such a marketing position could be bolstered by other concerns under Sustainable Wenlock's remit, such as carbon footprint reduction and renewable technologies. After-all, this is a town with a windmill!

Marketing is irrelevant. If the conditions are made right, trade will prosper without promotion.

visiting centre for tourists

Effectively

Its a busy local centre and should remain so. I'm not sure it needs to specifically 'market' itself

Location is good,ie close to Telford,Shrewsbury,W.Mids, Historic town-tourism,

As above. Look at Ludlow for inspiration and learn from the mistake that are so obviously illustrated in Bridgnorth. The town is unique and beyond the core providers such as the bakery & Ryans Wenlock should look to attract up market retails such as Twenty Twenty and Wenlock Books. Higher end tourism should be encouraged rather than coach parties who will only buy an ice cream, drop the wrapper and be off!

As it is at the moment

The emphasis should be on tourism, since Much Wenlock has little else to recommend it as a retail centre

Good specialist food shops selling local produce (without trying to compete with “foodie” towns e.g. Ludlow), specialist destination shops (e.g. Twenty Twenty, Wenlock Books), food production (either farming or processing) using the now world-famous Wenlock name

tidy;what a stupid question

Small regional centre with core facilities

It has a part to play.

a 'trip' out for shopping, eating and culture

Visitor attraction - welcoming. To socialise - eat/drink/entertain. Family centre for those living in built up area.

B1 What will help your business to develop and thrive during the plan period to 2026?

Maintaining Much Wenlock as it is and not developing the town centre or surrounding areas. The museum should be open every day from March to October. Keep the town centre clean & ensure everyone does their bit to make it a town worth visiting

More parking facilities in town would help, as would free parking. Lowering of VAT! Olympics every year in London would also help!

Just make change of usage less onerous, with some special terms for start-up businesses who want to convert residential to commercial. Should they fail, guarantee they can return to residential usage.

more development

My business is not greatly influenced by local factors. I have considered buying a storage warehouse of up to 5,000 square feet, or alternatively buying a site to build my own. This would not require utilities, merely space to unload articulated lorries. Within walking or cycling distance of Wenlock would be ideal. A grass roof on the shed could make it unobtrusive.

better broadband attract more visitors to the town provide increased and cheaper parking

A belief that Authorities are not going to obstruct me maintaining my success so far Small traders cannot compete on a level playing field against national companies, the threat of which makes expansion unlikely. A big national supermarket will effectively stifle what we already have and changes us from a street in which you can purchase your weekly requirements in, to one that caters for a very fickle tourist trade, look at Ironbridge .

Faster broadband Improved public transport service

For my business, theres nothing that the structure plan can specifically help with.

Just to keep the town vibrant and busy and to support business wherever possible.

My business will develop & thrive if Much Wenlock is protected from further development and preserved. There is room for improvement but this should be a priority rather than new development. I would like to see the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extended to include Bourton amongst other areas. More attention should be paid by planners to preserve Conservation Areas.

More office space Fast broadband Good transport links

Improve internet speed and services

Less regulation Lower national non-domestic rates Banks more willing to take risks on supporting enterprise rather than gambling on house-price inflation

rate incentives

Attention to the parking problem; At least one return bus (Shrewsbury/Bridgnorth & Telford) in the evenings

Positive attitude and cooperation all round.

PARKING and no more shops becoming offices

Good visitor centre. Places to stay/places to visit

B2 Are there any planning constraints or barriers that will or may prevent your business from developing in the plan period to 2026?

NO

Not that I am aware of

Just make change of usage less onerous, with some special terms for start-up businesses who want to convert residential to commercial. Should they fail, guarantee they can return to residential usage.

no

See above. Would I get permission?

not as yet

No comment

Not really.

Not that I am aware of.

No

Lack of office space

No

No

no

Don't know

Not that we can see at the moment.

No

B3 Please tell us if you will have any additional requirements not covered above

None

Not planning to expand premises

n/a

None

None of the above. It should have been possible to register 0 as an option above.

Parking

None

Not that we can see at the moment, but unforeseen growth is conceivable over such a long period.

Additional holiday lets

C1 To help us understand the range of existing businesses in the Much Wenlock area, please tick the box(es) that best describes the nature of your business.

Other, please specify

Packaging Merchant, mainly to industrial and food manufactures.

Publishing

William Brookes School

Retail

C2 If you have other comments about business activity in the Much Wenlock area, please write them here

Please keep us informed of the outcome of this survey.

The town should not be treated as a museum.

to protect the character of the high street and it's individual shops it is imperative (in our view) that a major supermarket should be prevented from coming to the town.

It is hard to see how any major expansion of commerce and manufacturing would not spoil the appearance of the town. Ideally it needs to be small scale and appropriate to the character of the town.

Half of our office live in wenlock and can walk/cycle which is FAB The other half have to drive in and need either free parking or an agreement with the council to get permits for the (currently empty) car parks in the town.

Please prevent householders from setting up "adult leisure" or "exercise" businesses from residential addresses.

for goodness sake provide the town with free and many more toilets: who closed the old bogs and provided smaller ones whose doors are permanently stuck open all night in winter?

An increasing amount of small/self employed businesses (as evidenced by advertising in the 'Wenlock Herald' - this should be encouraged.

Having a functional business community helps to keep the town alive. We must do all we can to continue to foster an active and diverse business community. Mobile Phone coverage is a problem, as much of Much Wenlock appears to be in a black hole. For us, Broadband is not a problem, as we have our own dedicated system, but if the public network is slow, then Telford will draw business away, due to its proximity and the abundance of cheap commercial and industrial premises.

Parking is ridiculous !