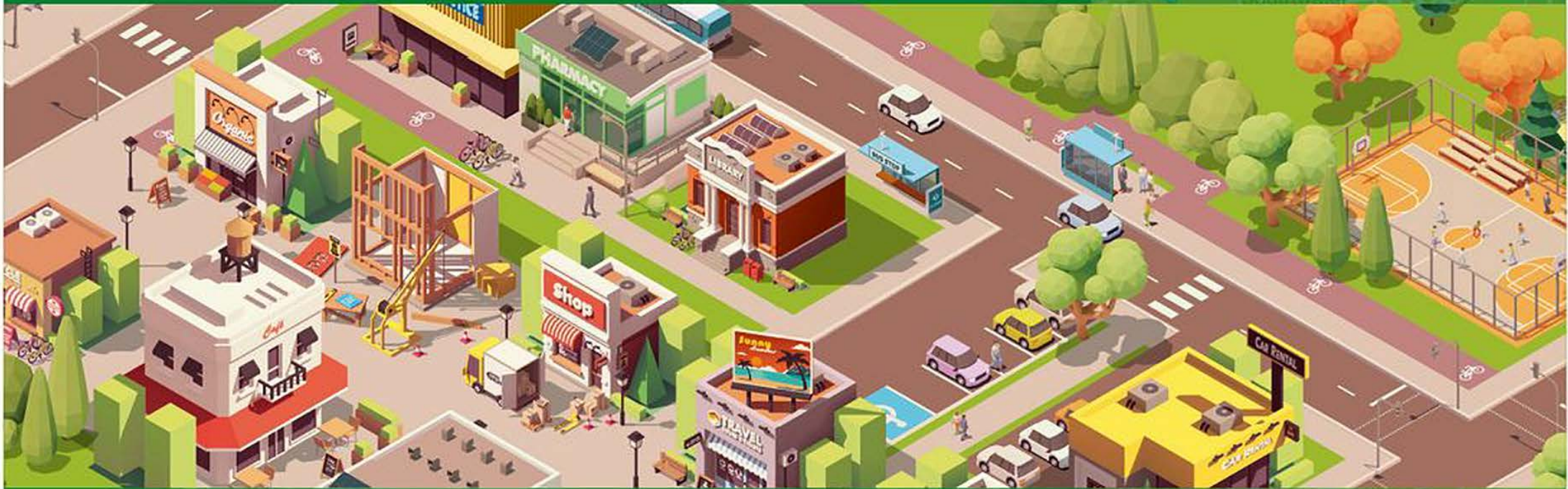


## Section 6

# Economy and centres



Halesfield  
Industrial Estate

## 6 Economy and centres

### 6 Economy and centres

**6.1** Telford and Wrekin is a borough of makers with a strong and diverse advanced manufacturing base spanning automotive, defence, food processing and agri technology. It is also an important logistics and distribution hub with a growing digital sector. For the last 50 years the borough has been incredibly successful attracting international manufacturers to the area. However, the economy is being impacted by a number of global factors to which the borough needs to respond including:

- **Climate change and Net Zero** – this includes the need to move towards cheaper greener energy
- **Tech-celeration** – the use of technology in the economy and its impact on the job market
- **Global Britain** – opportunities for exports through new global trading relations
- **Reshoring** – strategic opportunities to bring manufacturing back to the UK
- **Relocation and the ‘war for talent’** – benefits of flexible working to attract people with talent

**6.2** The council has a strong history of investing and delivering economic growth in the borough including through bringing public land to the market under the Telford Land Deal and latterly attracting over £52m funding from Government Towns Fund and Levelling Up Fund and the West Midlands Combined Authority Brownfield Land Funds. It also continues to invest directly into the borough through programmes including Pride in Our High Street supporting regeneration and resilience of key borough Towns as service and employment centres.

**Figure 17: The economy of the borough**



**6.3** The Local Plan supports new ways of working and encourages innovative thinking in relation to work space in centres such as live-work units and co-working to maintain footfall in centres and address decline in office demand to attract new talent and business opportunity.

**6.4** Policies support non-residential buildings to become more energy efficient and promote renewable energy generation seeking to drive down the costs of running businesses in the borough and increase climate resilience.

## 6 Economy and centres

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**6.5** The Local Plan supports all our centres of all sizes protecting important uses within them and encouraging diversification where appropriate to increase footfall and sustainability.

### Employment development in the urban area and strategic employment areas (SEAs)

**6.6** The delivery of new employment land and the protection of existing employment provision is critical to attracting inward investment and creation of jobs. SEA's are large commercial and industrial estates in the borough and include Halesfield, Stafford Park, Hortonwood/MOD Donnington and Donnington Wood.

**6.7** Policy EC1 sets out the approach to employment development in Strategic Employment Areas (SEAs), and to protecting against the loss of existing employment land across the borough.

### Policy EC1

#### Employment development in the urban area and SEAs

1. The SEAs, as identified on the Policies Map, will be the primary focus for employment development. The development strategy for proposals in the SEAs is as follows:
  - a. Development proposals for industrial, storage and distribution uses will be supported in SEAs, including existing allocations carried forward;
  - b. Development proposals for sui generis uses associated with B Use Class activity, such as waste management facilities, will be supported in SEAs where they are compatible with neighbouring uses;

- c. Economic activities including business uses (E(g)(i), E(g)(ii) and E(g)(iii)) will be supported in SEAs where:
    - They are ancillary to the industrial, storage and distribution uses and support the function of the SEA; and
    - They do not undermine the viability of existing employment uses in close proximity to the site.
  - d. Other uses outside of these criteria will generally not be supported in the SEAs without clear justification to how it would support the function of the SEA.
2. Outside the allocated sites and SEAs, employment development in the urban area will be supported where:
    - e. It is located:
      - In close proximity to a SEA;
      - On an existing established employment site and involves the expansion, intensification or redevelopment of an existing premises or site; or
      - Elsewhere in the urban area, where evidence has been presented that no suitable opportunities exist within or adjacent to strategic employment areas.
    - f. The development maintains and enhances sustainable access such as walking, wheeling and public transport;
    - g. The development is served by appropriate parking provision including for electric vehicles in accordance with Policy ST5;
    - h. It does not have a significantly adverse impact on adjacent uses;

## 6 Economy and centres

- i. It provides high quality, diverse landscaping and boundary treatment; and
  - j. In the case of greenfield sites, it is demonstrated that no appropriate previously development land is available in the built up areas of Telford or Newport.
3. Outside of SEAs the loss of existing employment land will only be supported where:
- j. Evidence is submitted that satisfactorily demonstrates that the site is no longer suitable, or viable, for employment uses including the current/last use of the site and alternative employment uses;
  - k. The proposed use would not conflict with neighbouring uses, especially where adjacent sites are in an employment use; and
  - l. The sustainability benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the loss of the employment land.

**6.8** Employment use includes classes B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage and distribution), Class E (where former B1 Business uses apply) and sui generis (i.e. uses associated with B use class activity such as waste management facilities).

**6.9** Existing employment allocations adopted in the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2018) that have not yet been built out will be carried forward as part of the Councils employment land supply.

**6.10** In order to protect the borough supply of employment land proposals for alternative employment uses within SEA areas must demonstrate it is ancillary and complementary to the primary function

of the SEA and should be restricted from any future changes of use without planning consent. This is important to ensure that retail and leisure uses continue to be directed to the hierarchy of centres identified in Policy EC4. Trade counters should be ancillary to an employment use on a strategic employment area.

**6.11** Where a loss of employment land is proposed, marketing information should be submitted to support an application. This should demonstrate that:

- The site has been marketed for a minimum of 12-18 months at an appropriate price (demonstrated by RICS valuation) and across a range of agents/websites;
- Show how the site has been marketed, where, and any offers made and why they were rejected and/or not continued with; and
- The Council has been engaged at the earliest opportunity to explore options for site retention, remediation and preparation for alternative employment uses.

**6.12** Examples of sustainability benefits which could be weighed in favour of a proposal for the loss of employment land could include zero carbon development, improved access to and investment in green space or the provision of supported and specialist accommodation.

**6.13** The council has Article 4 Directions in place across three SEAs in Telford (Halesfield, Hortonwood and Stafford Park) to control the loss of employment land to other non-employment uses. This approach reflects the form and pattern of development across the borough and reinforces the significance of SEAs and other sites as key locations for continued inward investment and business growth. These

## 6 Economy and centres

employment areas should continue to be protected for these purposes to support economic ambitions. Where necessary the council may identify further areas to protect by Article 4.

### Employment in the rural area

**6.14** The rural economy is an important contributor to the local economy and sustainability of rural communities. The Local Plan encourages the diversification of the rural economy and seeks to ensure good connectivity to broadband to support local businesses and increased working from home.

**6.15** Policy EC2 sets the context for a more diverse rural economy covering a broad range of uses, not solely the traditional Use Class B employment.

### Policy EC2

#### Employment in the Rural Area

1. Employment development in the rural area should be directed to:
  - a. The re-use/conversion of redundant buildings; or
  - b. The redevelopment of previously developed land; or
  - c. Sites which would form and enable the expansion/extension of an existing business/employment use.
2. The council will support new employment development in the rural area where:

- d. It is successfully demonstrated that the proposal would benefit from a rural location or it would assist the diversification of the rural economy;
- e. The proposal is supported by an appropriate business case which demonstrates the economic benefits to the local economy;
- f. There is no significant adverse impact on local highway capacity and safety, unless appropriate mitigation measures can be implemented; and
- g. It would not have a detrimental impact on the character and quality of the rural area and nearby uses.

3. Where a site/proposal does not meet any of the circumstances in point 1, and is for a new building on greenfield land, well-designed new development will be supported subject to the meeting the criteria at part 2 of this policy and the use, design and scale of the development is responsive to local context.
4. Development which would assist in the retention and/or development of accessible local services and community facilities would be supported where in accordance with Policy CI1.

**6.16** The rural areas of Telford and Wrekin provide various employment opportunities. Harper Adams University is a major employer that is world renowned for its education and research on sustainable food chains, agri-tech and the rural economy. The rural area also supports many SME businesses that provide vital local services such as shops, public houses and logistics businesses that provide local job opportunities.

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**6.17** A redundant building is considered to be a building where the original use, or last known use, no longer exists. The building should be capable and suitable for conversion to be considered under Policy EC2 1a. If the building is considered to provide an essential function, and the conversion of the building would lead to a need for a replacement building elsewhere on the site, then the conversion would not be covered under EC2 1a.

**6.18** Business cases for employment uses in the rural area are generally expected to include the following as a minimum. Further information may be sought if considered necessary in determining the planning application, including:

- Details of the proposed business use;
- Justification for the business being located in the rural area; and
- Details of how the business will positively contribute to the local rural economy.

**6.19** Generally the council will resist large areas of open storage in the countryside, unless located on previously developed land, due to the visual impact on the rural character. Where this use is accepted in the rural area, conditions will be required to control the impact and extent of the development.

### Waste management facilities

**6.20** Waste management is part of the circular economy and a positive approach to recycling and re-use falls in line with the council's Climate Change Action Plan. Waste management offers a range of employment opportunities, both skilled and non-skilled labour. Telford and Wrekin have a larger percentage of the working population in manufacturing, 15% compared to 10% across the West Midlands, and therefore we need to plan for waste management facilities as part of our employment mix.

**6.21** Policy EC3 identifies the most favourable areas for waste processing and recycling facilities on existing industrial estates and on previously developed land.

## 6 Economy and centres

### Policy EC3

#### Waste management facilities

1. The council will assess applications for and affecting waste management facilities against the following criteria:
  - a. Whether they add value to and help deliver on the principles of the circular waste economy (re-use, repair, recycle, compost and transfer of energy) by moving waste further up the waste hierarchy;
  - b. Applications for a change of use from waste management to other uses will need to demonstrate that the relevant waste capacity is no longer required;
  - c. Proposals for new and altered facilities should demonstrate that they have been designed to operate in a way that will help increase rates of recycling (and / or re-use of materials), create new employment opportunities, minimise the impact of the facility on the local environment and positively contribute to the local community;
  - d. General waste management facilities and developments associated with such facilities should be located in the Strategic Employment Areas as well as Tweedale. Exceptions to this include:
    - Where waste facilities meet specialised needs that could not be appropriately located in the above mentioned areas;
    - The need for specialised waste facilities; or
    - The use of previously developed sites that might not be suitable for residential developments or

commercial and industrial uses and facilities that can co-locate close to waste producers or users of treated materials;

2. New landfill (or land raise) sites or extensions to existing landfill sites will only be considered where there is an established need and provision will only be made for waste that cannot practicably be recycled, composted or recovered.
3. Where development proposals for any other use come forward in the vicinity of an existing waste site, proposals will need to clearly demonstrate that there will be no conflict with the operation of the existing waste site.

**6.22** Through a municipal waste contract the borough treats suitable residual household waste at Energy from Waste facilities in Shropshire and Staffordshire. The facilities have capacity to accommodate the borough's household waste needs throughout the plan period. Council contractors operate a large household recycling centre and waste transfer station at Hortonwood which provides strategic capacity to manage Local Authority Collected Waste in the borough.

**6.23** Policy EC3 provides the means to plan for and safeguard, where appropriate, new, existing and expanding waste infrastructure to meet local needs. Applications for a change of, of an existing waste site, use will need to demonstrate that a site has been marketed for a minimum 12 month period for a similar or alternative waste use.

## 6 Economy and centres

**6.24** The recycling and re-use of waste from industrial processes is a broad issue and can include, for example, the transfer of heat from one production process to another. This can broaden the scope of 'waste' infrastructure to include networks that facilitate the transfer of energy.

**6.25** Strategic employment areas are considered the most appropriate locations for new waste facilities due to their existing mix of uses and land availability. Tweedale also has a cluster of similar businesses. Due to the concentration of certain industrial sectors on the strategic employment areas, such as plastics and polymers and hi-tech, there will be a need for specialist waste facilities to meet the needs of new, expanding and existing businesses. These industrial areas are segregated from residential areas and benefit from excellent highway connections for waste transportation.

**6.26** The council, through the Waste Arising Study (2021), has identified potential waste capacity gap for organic treatment capacity which includes anaerobic digestion and composting facilities<sup>(13)</sup>.

**6.27** Consideration will be given to proposals that can demonstrate where they add value to the circular waste economy. Landfill will only be considered where evidence is provided for why a more sustainable option cannot be used.

**6.28** In order to minimise the impact of new and expanded waste facilities on the environment new site proposals for waste management should, at application stage, demonstrate:

- No adverse impact on water quality;
- Protection of water resources (all non-waste operational area such as roofs and roads should, where possible, be directed

towards a sustainable surface water outfall in accordance with the Drainage Hierarchy);

- Vehicle routing and site access is appropriate to the scale and nature of the development;
- The site is within reasonable proximity to the source of waste to be managed;
- No adverse impacts on the natural environment, open space or biodiversity;
- The location and operation of the site does not adversely impact the historic environment;
- Visual intrusion of/from the site is minimised;
- No potential land use conflicts in the local area;
- Air emissions, including dust are minimised;
- Odours are minimised;
- Measures are in place to prevent vermin and birds;
- Noise, light and vibration from the operation of the site are minimised;
- Measures to prevent the spread of litter originating from the operation of the site; and
- The site does not create conditions for land instability.

## 6 Economy and centres

### Hierarchy of centres

**6.29** The council strongly supports the protection, diversification and enhancement of the boroughs centres including through initiatives such as Pride in Our High Street. The council continue to invest into the borough centres including the launch of diversification grants to help businesses sustain themselves and increase sales; and the Revive and Thrive grants which reflect ongoing pressures facing all high streets and extra pressures such as the cost of living crisis.

**6.30** Policy EC4 establishes the boroughs hierarchy of centres to help direct types of development and secure the long term viability of the centres.

### Policy EC4

#### Hierarchy of centres

1. The council will maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centres, as shown on the Policies Map and in Appendix C. Retail, office and leisure developments and community facilities including the provision of entertainment and cultural activities (for example, health centres, education and social services, residential accommodation, religious buildings) will be focused in the hierarchy identified below:
  - a. **Principal Town Centre:** Telford Town Centre;
  - b. **Market Towns:** Newport and Wellington;

- c. **District centres:** Dawley, Donnington, Hadley, Ironbridge, Lawley, Madeley and Oakengates;
- d. **Local centres** (listed in Appendix C)

2. Proposals which will make a positive contribution to the diversity and vitality of these centres having regard to their role in the hierarchy will be encouraged and promoted.

**6.31** The borough has a number of retail centres ranging in size, character and provision. The hierarchy of retail centres set out Appendix C, and is shown on the Policies Map. A summary of the role of each type of centre is included below:

- **Principal Town Centre** – Telford Town Centre has an established economic, social and environmental role across the region. It is a regional attraction and has had recent investment into the Northern Quarter, Fashion Quarter and Station Quarter.
- **Market Towns** - Newport and Wellington offer a more localised roles, have a range of services and facilities and serve a wider catchment. Both centres have a strong leisure offer and vibrant night time economies.
- **District centres** - such as Madeley and Dawley, provide locally important shopping and community facilities to serve the general needs of residents. Oakengates is also home to the Telford Theatre.
- **Local centres** - such as Woodside and Lightmoor, should be on maintaining a level of services and shopping to serve local catchments.

## 6 Economy and centres

**6.32** Main town centre uses are defined in the NPPF and include retail, leisure, restaurants, bars and pubs, health and fitness centres, offices and arts, culture and tourism development. The council recognise that some residential development is appropriate in centres to aid regeneration.

**6.33** A recent example of investment into centres is the investment and planning consent for the remodelling and regeneration of Oakengates Theatre Quarter. The project will increase footfall and investment into the centre, provide new employment and housing opportunities as well as support the sustainability of the Telford Theatre which is a key asset to the town.

**6.34** The council acknowledge that out of centre retail parks such as those in Telford, Newport and Wellington contribute to meeting local shopping needs but does not seek to direct new development to these areas in the first instance so as to protect the vitality and viability of defined centres.

### **6.35 Telford Town Centre**

**6.36** The Local Plan supports the continued investment into enhancing the sustainability and role of Telford Town Centre. The Centre is undergoing change through the introduction of more leisure uses and the new Station Quarter development which will bring residential led mixed use development. It is important the Local Plan supports this transition to facilitate the regeneration of the Centre as well as ensuring the Centre maintains its primary role as the focus for main town centre uses.

**6.37** Policy EC5 sets out the vision for new development in Telford Town Centre to protect and enhance its role as a destination for shopping and leisure.

### **Policy EC5**

#### **Telford Town Centre**

1. The vitality and viability of Telford Town Centre and its role as a destination for retail and leisure activities will be supported by:
  - a. Encouraging the diversification of activities and services that complement main town centre uses;
  - b. Encouraging high-tech, research and development, Information Technology industries, knowledge based industries and complimentary education facilities to locate in the Town Centre;
  - c. Focusing the location of community facilities, leisure venues and education in the Town Centre; and
  - d. Creating, enhancing and improving the public realm and connectivity through high quality, legible and safe routes, streets and spaces.
  
2. Development in the Town Centre area, defined on the Policies Map, will be supported where it:
  - e. Positively contributes towards a healthy environment and does not have a significant adverse impact on public health and wellbeing;
  - f. Encourages active travel and use of sustainable modes of travel;
  - g. Does not have a significant adverse impact on access, movement and the availability of parking in the Town Centre;

## 6 Economy and centres

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- h. Enhances existing gateways into the Town Centre and improves interconnectivity in the Town Centre as a whole; and
  - i. Supports and enhances the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.
3. The retail and leisure function of the Town Centre will be maintained and enhanced by:
- j. Supporting retail and complementary leisure uses within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA)<sup>(14)</sup> where there are active frontages at ground floor level;
  - k. Supporting retail, leisure and sui generis uses in the PSA Secondary Frontage where they complement the primary retail function of the PSA, provide an active frontage at ground floor level and positively contribute to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre; and
  - l. Supporting the change of use from retail and leisure uses where the development would complement the retail and leisure function of the PSA and maintain an active frontage.
4. Residential development in Telford Town Centre will be supported where:
- m. The proposal is a major, comprehensive development appropriate to the location;
  - n. The mix and type of units are appropriate to, multi-generational town centre living;

- o. It encourages active travel, including improvements to the legibility and accessibility of walking and cycling routes and access to public transport;
  - p. If located in the PSA, an active frontage use appropriate to the PSA is provided at ground floor level. In all other areas active frontages are provided along strategic pedestrian routes; and
  - q. Appropriate parking provision is provided, including for electric vehicles and cycle storage, to meet the needs of the development and encourage sustainable town centre living.
5. Major new conference and exhibition business and ancillary uses will be directed to the Conference and Exhibition Area (as shown on the Policies Map and Map 3). Development should support active travel connections to the wider Town Centre area.
6. The council will continue to protect and enhance Telford Town Park's recreation and leisure uses together with its qualities and character. The impact of development on the setting of the Town Park will be considered.

**6.38** Telford Town Centre is a well-connected destination for shopping and leisure facilities. Policy EC5 supports the continued evolution of Telford Town Centre and its main shopping function whilst having the flexibility to allow complimentary uses which generate footfall and enhance the vitality and viability of the Centre. It is recognised that Town Centres need to diversify as a result of the change in shopping patterns and the trend toward working from home.

## 6 Economy and centres

**6.39** As such Policy EC5 supports mixed use development including residential, employment, education and leisure uses where it is well connected to and enhances the function and role of Telford Town Centre.

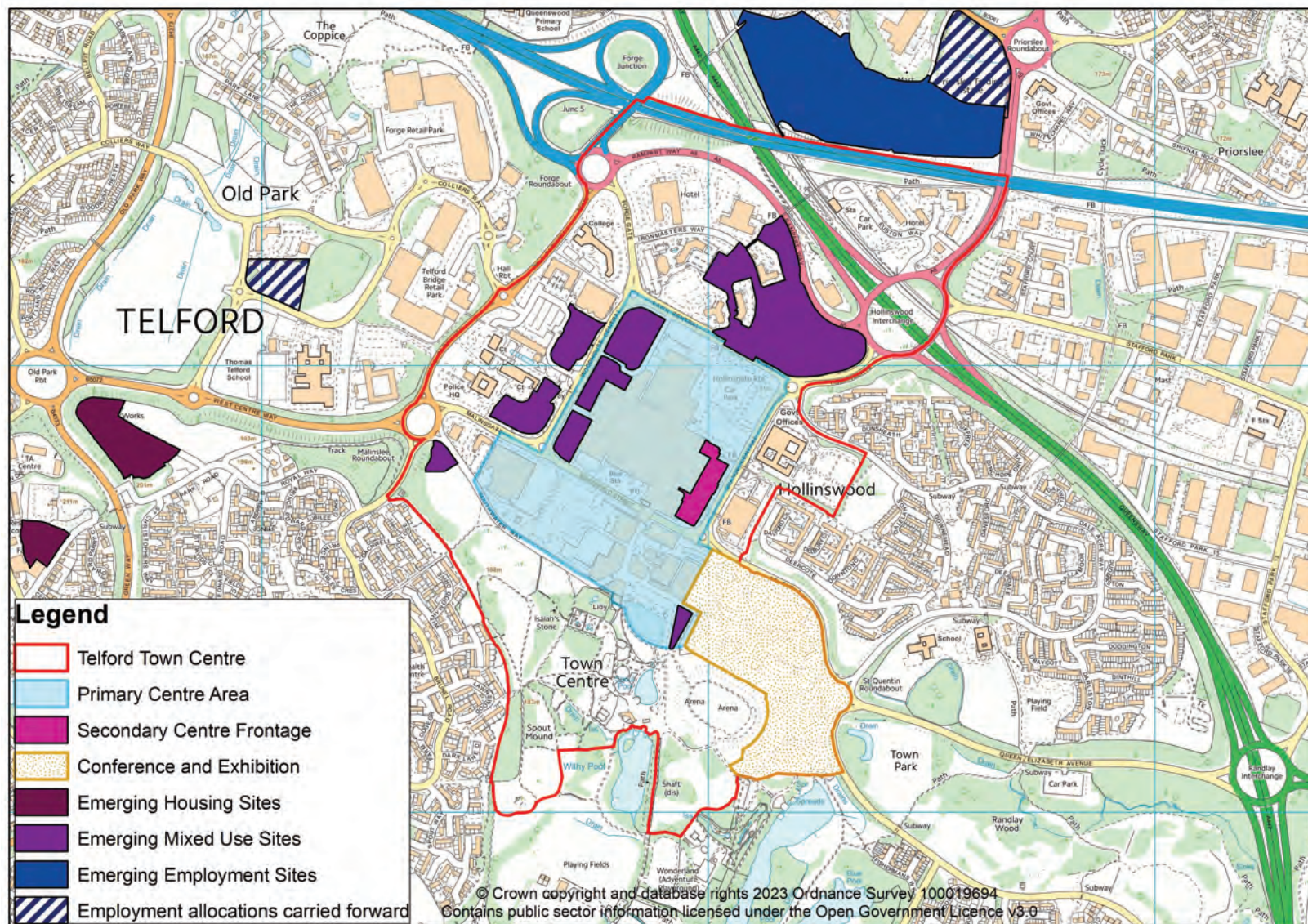
**6.40** The council are also seeking to encourage an 'eco-system' of knowledge based industries in the Centre and are facilitating this growth such as by providing a skills hub at the Station Quarter development.

**6.41** A Primary Shopping Area (PSA) is identified on the Policies Map and includes Southwater and the indoor shopping area where retail should remain the prominent use, alongside other complementary uses. Within the PSA Secondary Frontage, a wider range of uses will be supported at ground floor where they are complementary to the function of the Centre and have active frontages. Beyond the PSA and Secondary Frontage, development in the Town Centre will be expected to support main town centre uses at ground floor which are complementary to the Centre.

**6.42** The Town Centre is a highly sustainable location with good access to the open space of Telford Town Park, services and facilities and therefore can support residential development. However, a coordinated, at scale, approach needs to be taken to avoid small piecemeal development that is isolated from other residential schemes and local services. Well designed, higher density major mixed use development schemes that include residential development will be supported. The mix and type of housing should be appropriate to multi-generational town centre living and make efficient use of land, whilst promoting the regeneration and enhancing the vitality of the Town Centre. Whilst the densification of development in the Centre is generally supported, where this might impact existing parking provision, evidence will be required to be submitted with planning applications to ensure the development would not displace parking to surrounding areas.

# 6 Economy and centres

Figure 18: Emerging Sites and Town Centre



## 6 Economy and centres

**6.43** Telford Town Park provides a high quality outdoor leisure and recreation space. The council will protect and enhance the Park's recreation and leisure uses. The impact of development on the setting of the Town Park will be considered in determining planning applications. Maintaining and enhancing wildlife and habitat areas in the Town Park is supported. Connectivity and legibility between the Town Park and the Town Centre is very important.

### Market towns and district centres

**6.44** The Council has a strong record of supporting its markets and district centres including through purchasing and renovating property and providing grants to support businesses. The boroughs market and district centres have an important role supporting independent local businesses and commercial development. Each market town and district centre has its own distinctive character with key facilities, amenities and services such as the thriving indoor markets at Wellington and Newport and the Anstice Community Hall in Madeley.

**6.45** Policy EC6 seeks to encourage the diversification and regeneration of the borough's market towns and district centres while supporting new complementary uses to their retail functions.

### Policy EC6

#### Market Towns and district centres

1. Within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) of the borough's Market Towns and District Centres, as defined on the Policies Map, the council will support changes of use from Class E (Commercial, business and service uses) to other uses where the proposal would:

- a. Complement the shopping, leisure and commercial function of the centre and protecting the retail character of the Market Town or District Centre;
  - b. Not result in an over proliferation of non-Class E Uses particularly hot food takeaways, betting shops, vaping shops and off licences;
  - c. Not result in 3 or more adjacent units that have no active daytime frontage;
  - d. Have no significant adverse impact on surrounding amenity and health and wellbeing of the community (noise, odour, waste collection, highways and parking);
  - e. Where a conservation area is present be designed in accordance with policy HE4 (Conservation Areas); and
2. Proposals in the PSA that make use of outdoor space and which positively contribute to the vitality of centres will be encouraged, including:
    - f. Outdoor seating in support of a cafe, restaurant or public house, provided this:
      - Does not unduly restrict pedestrian movement
      - Is restricted to an appropriate area; and
      - Does not adversely impact nearby uses; or
    - g. Public events such as outdoor markets and entertainment.
  3. Proposals for residential development in the PSA of Market Towns and District Centres will be supported where:
    - h. There are non-residential uses maintaining an active frontage at street level;

## 6 Economy and centres

- i. The mix and type of development is appropriate for the centre setting and would not lead to conflict with surrounding business uses; and
  - j. The parking needs of residents can be appropriately addressed.
4. Outside of the PSA and within the Market Town and District Centre areas a change of use to Class E uses is supported. In addition, the following ground floor level uses will be supported subject to their size, design and overall impact on the vitality of the centre:
- k. Small scale business and service units conforming to complementarity of the centre;
  - l. Supported and specialist accommodation and hotels (Use Classes C1 and C2);
  - m. Residential proposals that are of a mix and type in keeping with the centre (Use Class C3);
  - n. Local leisure, community and education facilities (Use Class F);
  - o. Any retail and non-retail use subject to the provisions of Policy EC10; and
  - p. Restaurants and cafes (Use Class E-b) and public houses (Sui generis) subject to criteria 1(a), 1(d) and 1(f) above.

**6.46** The council strongly support the boroughs market and district centres and encourage development which will improve the sustainability of the centre and its function to the community. Opportunities for well-designed regeneration of the centre which will improve its function and sustainability will be supported.

**6.47** Within the Primary Shopping Areas in Market Towns and District Centres, commercial, business and service uses are supported. The over proliferation of similar uses such as hot food takeaways and betting shops, by reason of litter and odours, can negatively impact on health and wellbeing. Having regard to local amenity, planning decisions should take into account the following:

1. The level of traffic likely to be generated, with regard to the impact of on-street parking and waiting, waste collection, delivery times, trading hours and use of forecourts and rear areas
2. The effectiveness of measures to mitigate litter, odours, vibration and noise from the premises, including the satisfactory arrangement of flues; and
3. The likelihood of nuisance and anti-social behaviour including cumulative impacts arising from the density of other related uses in the area.

**6.48** Generally, more than 3 adjacent non E Class Uses will be considered an over proliferation, unless appropriate justification is provided and appropriate conditions secured to protect the vitality and viability of the Centre.

### Local centres and rural services

**6.49** Local centres and rural services are essential for the sustainability of the boroughs villages and urban area communities. These centres serve the local daily needs of residents and support vulnerable residents in not only their daily shopping needs but also provide opportunities for social interaction. Reducing the need to travel by car for day to day needs such as bread and milk positively contributes to the councils climate change objectives as well as providing small scale, local employment opportunities.

## 6 Economy and centres

**6.50** Policy EC7 seeks to protect and enhance the viability and vitality of local centres and rural services to support sustainable communities.

### Policy EC7

#### Local centres and rural services

1. The council will support proposals for multi-use buildings, community facilities and services to improve the sustainability, wellbeing and cohesion of local communities where supported by Policy CI1.
2. The council will not support development resulting in the loss of floor space within Use Classes E and F in Local Centres or in the rural area unless:
  - a. There is an equivalent alternative use or service nearby that meets residents' needs;
  - b. Robust marketing evidence is provided to demonstrate that over a minimum of 12-18 months has been undertaken and there has been no interest for the current use or any other use within Use Class E or F; or
  - c. The proposal will provide a community facility for which there is a demonstrable need.

**6.51** Development resulting in the loss of local retail and service provision will not be supported unless there is alternative equivalent provision within 400 metres, a reasonable walking distance. Provision will be considered equivalent where it provides a similar offer which meets the same day-to-day need, such as the need for fresh food.

**6.52** Marketing of a vacant unit should be undertaken through a commercial agent that genuinely reflects the market value based on its use, condition, quality and location of floor space. This should generally be undertaken for a minimum of 6 months, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

**6.53** A change of use from retail to a community facility such as a community centre will be supported where it can be demonstrated there is a need for such provision and having regard to Policy CI1. Demonstration of need should include evidence of consultation with service providers and the local community.

#### Out of centre and edge of centre development

**6.54** The council wants to support the boroughs centres by first directing main town centre uses development to the centres. To maintain a flexible approach the council may consider development outside of those centres, but only where strict conditions have been met in order to protect the boroughs centres.

**6.55** Policy EC8 sets out the approach for considering proposals for main town centre uses outside of the hierarchy of borough centres in policy EC4.

## 6 Economy and centres

### Policy EC8

#### Out of centre and edge of centre development

1. The council will only support proposals for main town centre uses (as defined in Policy EC4) outside or on the edge of Telford Town Centre, a Market Town, District or Local Centre where suitable sites within these centres cannot be identified through a sequential test.
2. Where a suitable a site cannot be identified through the sequential test, proposals for retail and leisure uses will require the submission of a Retail Impact Assessment where:
  - a. The proposal provides a floorspace greater than 500 square metres gross and is located within 500 metres of the boundary of Telford Town Centre; or
  - b. The proposal provides a floorspace greater than 300 square metres gross and is located within 500 metres of the boundary of a District Centre;
  - c. The proposal provides a floorspace greater than 200 square metres gross and is located within 500 metres of a Local Centre.
3. Retail Impact Assessments (RIA) should consider the impact of the development as well as the cumulative impact<sup>(15)</sup> in combination with other committed development proposals, where relevant. Development will be supported where an appropriate RIA demonstrates the proposal will not have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of a Centre.

4. If planning permission is granted for new retail development (within Class E) in an out of centre or edge of centre location, the range of goods sold may be restricted either through planning conditions or legal agreement.
5. Proposals outside or on the edge of a defined centre must demonstrate that:
  - d. They have been designed to a high standard and are in keeping with the local area;
  - e. There would be no significant adverse impact on highways or parking, or appropriate mitigation measures are proposed; and
  - f. There would be no significant impact on local amenity; and
  - g. The proposal accords with other Local and National policies including in relation to waste, landscaping, historic environment and climate change.

**6.56** Many town centre uses now fall within Class E (Commercial, Business and Service uses) and movement from one use to another within the same use class, does not require planning permission.

**6.57** A sequential approach to site selection will be applied to applications for main town centre uses (as defined in the NPPF) outside or on the edge of centres. Best efforts will need to be made to demonstrate that there are no other reasonable sites within or closer to town or district centres that could accommodate development proposals. This should include active engagement with land owners within and around town centres that may reasonably be deemed to

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have available sites. Where suitable and available sites cannot be identified proposals will require the submission of an impact assessment in accordance with the floor space thresholds in Policy EC8. These thresholds are proportionate to the hierarchy of centres.

### Evening and night time economy

**6.58** Night-time economies are an important part of towns and cities across the UK and are estimated to bring in over £60billion to the economy every year. However, these uses can also pose challenges and are often associated with noise, crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety problems. Mitigating the impact of these issues is critical to a successful and sustainable economy.

**6.59** The purpose of EC 9 is to ensure that new evening and night-time economy uses in Telford and Wrekin are appropriate to their location and appeal to a wide range of age and social groups.

### Policy EC9

#### Evening and night time economy

1. The council will support evening and night time uses if they are located within the borough's hierarchy of centres identified in Policy EC4, subject to the following criteria:
  - a. Their likely impact, including the cumulative impact of new and existing night time uses on the character and function of the centre in accordance with policy EC6;
  - b. Their impact on the living conditions of nearby residents, with particular reference to the impacts for health and wellbeing of more vulnerable residents;

- c. Whether they would result in adverse public health impacts, anti-social behaviour, extra litter, noise and crime, including security issues raised by crowded places;
- d. Whether the centre can accommodate movements associated with late night visitors including public transport provision, the location of safe taxi/private car pick up / drop off points;
- e. Their overall impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres throughout the day including how a proposal interconnects with other uses.
- f. They help protect and support existing evening and night-time cultural venues such as pubs, night clubs, theatres, cinemas, music and other arts venues; and
- g. They diversify the range of night-time activities, including extending the opening hours of existing daytime facilities such as shops, cafés, markets galleries and museums.

**6.60** The evening and night time economy includes retail, leisure, entertainment and arts, culture and tourism development. The council's preferred locations for evening and night time economy uses are Southwater and Central Square in Telford Town Centre, the Market Towns of Wellington and Newport and the District Centre of Oakengates. Other centres could accommodate some extra evening economy uses at a scale that is appropriate to the centre.

**6.61** The council are generally supportive of proposals that seek to expand operations beyond the usual daytime economy into evening/night-time economic opportunities. Careful consideration must be given to the appropriateness of certain uses and opening

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hours. It is important that cumulatively, such development does not harm the character and function of a centre, disorder and noise that would impact on those living and working in the area.

**6.62** Public health and the needs of vulnerable residents should be considered and any unacceptable impacts should be treated in balance against a proposal. Vulnerable residents could include; elderly, less able-bodied, those at risk of substance abuse and young people.

**6.63** Measures to minimise environmental and visual impacts should be provided. The applicant should be required to provide suitable mitigation before development has been completed (and similarly for proposals that could affect existing businesses and facilities). The cumulative impact of proposals must not unreasonably harm the living conditions of nearby residents, including noise and disturbance from users, smell, litter, light pollution or unneighbourly opening hours. The impact of development on the vitality and viability of centres includes proposals that would result in blank or inactive frontages onto streets and public spaces during daytime hours and how the proposal would integrate with other uses, for example lighting arrangements.

### **6.64 Shop Front and advertisement design**

**6.65** Attractive shopfronts and signage contributes towards the high quality design of centres and plays a key role in creating attractive and vibrant areas.

**6.66** Policy EC 10 sets out the issues to consider in designing shopfronts and advertisements.

**Figure 19: Community Event in Southwater**



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### Policy EC10

#### Shopfront and advertisement design

1. The council will support proposals for new shopfronts and alterations to existing shopfronts provided that:
  - a. High quality design which complements adjoining properties and the building of which it forms part;
  - b. The use of high quality and durable materials that are compatible or complementary in colour and texture to the surrounding area;
  - c. Historic shop fronts with traditional facades should be retained and repaired;
  - d. The use of blinds, canopies or shutters are appropriate to the character of the shopfront;
  - e. Signage and illumination is sited and designed in a way that does not:
    - Prejudice highway safety; or
    - Causes visual intrusion from light pollution to adjoining or nearby residential properties; and
  - f. Signage should:
    - Be limited to the facade above the main shopfront
    - Not encroach on upper storeys

- Not have more than one projecting sign; and
- Not result in a proliferation of adverts in the area.

- g. Proposals are designed in accordance with the Shop Fronts, Signage and Design Guidance in Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document.
2. Internally illuminated signage will not be supported in the WHS, conservation areas or on listed buildings and local interest buildings other than in exceptional instances appropriate to the age and design of the host building
3. The council will support forecourt trading where it does not cause obstruction to pedestrians, vehicles, prams, or people with disabilities nor result in an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the area in which it is to be located.

**6.67** A carefully designed and visually appealing shopfront is good for business and can make a positive contribution to the character of the street and the vitality of retail centres. Conversely, a poorly designed shop front can be visually intrusive and harm the retail centres.

**6.68** Shopfront design should be considered with creating rhythm and harmony in mind, whilst also avoiding monotony. Existing character, architectural and historic merit of the building and its shop front, including details and materials should be respected, particularly in heritage and conservation areas which are addressed through the Shop Fronts, Signage and Design Guidance in Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document.

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**6.69** Development in conservation areas should also refer to Policy HE4. The council has produced an SPD on shopfronts and advertisements within conservation areas and listed buildings.

**Figure 20: Southwater**

