

SHIFNAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – draft Policy Proposals

Vision for Shifnal

In consultation with the community, the established vision for Shifnal is as follows:

'In 2026, Shifnal is still a pleasant place to live. It has grown considerably in size, but good planning which has taken account of the concerns and policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan has meant that its long-established character as a bustling town with an attractive built environment, a distinctive town centre with a range of independent shops and good community facilities has not changed. It has enhanced its role and sustainability as one of Shropshire's historic small market towns.

Shifnal has successfully addressed its two key issues. First, a new medical centre with the latest facilities meets the health needs of residents including newcomers to the town and has reduced the need to travel to local hospitals.

Secondly, there have been great improvements in traffic management and pedestrian safety. The improvements to bus service infrastructure and the development of walkways and cycle paths into and around the town centre have encouraged people to leave their cars at home. This has reduced congestion and the pressure on the town's car parks, and so has improved the town centre as a place to stop and walk around, and its shops and businesses are thriving in both daytime and evening. This has led to increasing job opportunities for local people.

The protection of the character of the town centre, including the actions taken with regard to former derelict and empty shops and buildings, has led to an increase in the number of visitors and tourists coming to the town. Shifnal has become a destination, where people come to walk or cycle in the surrounding attractive countryside and then return to enjoy a drink or meal in the town.

Better leisure facilities have been developed, and those green spaces listed in the Neighbourhood Plan because of their recreational and informal leisure value have been retained and improved to meet the needs of all sections of the population, and new green spaces including a Town Park have been provided as part of recent housing developments. Community effort backed by public and private funding has led to the Wesley Brook becoming an attractive feature. The greenbelt and the agricultural land around the town have not been built upon.

Some small-scale housing development has taken place on infill sites, but in accordance with the policies in the Plan it has matched the size, scale and character of the existing built environment and has met only local housing needs. This has meant that neither younger nor older people need now to move away to find affordable or suitable housing.

There has been an increase in local employment opportunities due to the implementation of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, thereby reducing the need to travel out of the town to work.

A strong community spirit continues to exist and new residents have successfully integrated into the town, and this has given everyone the opportunity to participate in and live a healthy, safe and satisfying life.'

Green Belt and the Shifnal Settlement Boundary

- A significant amount of the safeguarded land identified in the Core Strategy and SAMDev around Shifnal has been granted permission for permanent residential development despite this national policy presumption against such development.
- The Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to ensure that there is no further release of safeguarded land for permanent development within the plan period.

Objectives

- The existing Green Belt around the town should continue to be protected
- The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to protect the existing market town character of the town from additional greenfield development

POLICY SL1: GREEN BELT

The settlement boundary of Shifnal Town is shown on the Proposals Map. Development or redevelopment will be permitted within the settlement boundary subject to the other policies in this plan and those in the Shropshire Local Plan.

Outside the settlement boundary within the Safeguarded Land, no permanent development or redevelopment will be permitted with the exception of those sites already granted planning permission.

The only general exceptions shall be uses that are considered appropriate for the Green Belt.

Housing

Design of residential development

- Infill development must be designed so that it sits appropriately within its surroundings.
- This is particularly important in terms of building heights, mix of frontages and materials.
- This should not stifle innovation in design.

Objective

- The design and scale of any new housing in Shifnal town should be in keeping with its character as a historic market town

POLICY HG1: RESIDENTIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Any proposals for residential development on infill sites within the settlement boundary, including redevelopments, will be permitted provided that all the following criteria are met:

- it is of a scale and height in keeping with the local character of neighbouring buildings and the town generally;
- it does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring uses through loss of privacy, loss of daylight or visual intrusion;
- the traffic generation and parking impact created by the proposal does not result in an unacceptable direct or cumulative impact on congestion or road and pedestrian safety.

Developments which seek to use materials common to the buildings in the immediate surrounding area will be encouraged, particularly on street frontages. However, this should not stifle innovation in the overall design of buildings.

Transport and Movement

Highway improvements

- There are significant concerns within the community of Shifnal in respect of the increased traffic on the highway network resulting from all the planned developments. There is a particular concern about the impact on the town centre highways. The speed of traffic was also an issue that was highlighted by many residents during the consultation.
- The provision of improvements to movement at the junctions around Market Place/Bradford Street/Aston Street/Victoria Road/Shrewsbury Road is seen as a key requirement.
- While the Town Centre is a priority, the emerging Transport Strategy for Shifnal must be completed by Shropshire Council and implemented, in consultation with the community, in order to address the highways issues raised by the increased numbers of households and consequently traffic across the whole of the town.

Objective

- The road network should be improved to accommodate the extra local traffic generated by the new housing developments as well as through traffic

POLICY TM1: HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Proposals to improve the flow of traffic and pedestrian safety on highways and at key junctions in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be strongly supported, subject to there having been positive engagement with the community at the earliest stage. This is particularly the case in respect of highways and junctions serving Shifnal Town Centre.

New development that results in an increase in traffic generation will need to demonstrate that they do not have a severe adverse impact on the free and safe flow of traffic and the safety of pedestrians and cycle users.

The Shifnal Transport Strategy will identify a series of actions addressing wider movement issues across the Neighbourhood Plan area. Proposals to address these action points, either as part of planned developments or individually, will be strongly supported subject to there having been positive engagement with the community at the earliest stage.

Car parking

- For many people there is a lack of car parking space serving Shifnal town centre.
- Provision of new car parking requires significant amounts of land and in a historic town centre such as Shifnal, this is not possible.
- The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is therefore on retaining but also improving and managing the car parking that serves the town centre.

Objective

- Adequate public car parking should be provided in the town centre

POLICY TM2: CAR PARKING IN SHIFNAL TOWN CENTRE

There will be a presumption against the loss of publicly accessible car parking in Shifnal Town Centre. Any proposals that would result in the loss of existing publicly available car parking spaces must provide at least an equivalent number of spaces in an equivalent location that serves the town centre.

Walking and cycling

- The increase in population from planned developments increases the importance of providing a range of ways for people to move around Shifnal.
- Walking and cycling provides many benefits, including improvements to health and the environment.
- Access on foot into and around Shifnal town centre and to key facilities such as local schools and Shifnal Railway Station requires improvement to walkways.
- A series of Primary Walkway Routes will be established. The first of these will link the Thomas Beddoes housing development Phases 1 and 2 through the railway tunnel into the new Aston Fields development and from there to the new roundabout on Aston Street.

Objective

- Encourage and support the provision of and improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes into and around the town to create a more sustainable environment and healthier life style options

POLICY TM3: PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND PRIMARY WALKWAY ROUTES

To ensure that residents can walk safely to public transport facilities, schools and other important facilities serving Shifnal town, all new developments must provide safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways that, in turn, directly serve the Primary Walkway Route 1 shown on the Proposals Map or any other Primary Walkway Routes subsequently identified.

Proposals to enhance the identified Primary Walkway Route 1 and any other Primary Walkway Routes that are subsequently identified will be strongly supported.

Development will be expected to:

- make contributions toward the enhancement of these Primary Walkway Routes; and
 - not have an unacceptable impact on Primary Walkway Routes, in particular through the creation of significant additional traffic movements which would have a detrimental impact on the safety or flow of pedestrian access.
- National Cycle Network Route 81 goes through the north end of the town. Sustrans (the responsible body) have been requested to consider re-routing or extending this route

through the town centre, along the Wolverhampton Road and turn into Upton Lane to re-join the main route on Stanton Road. This would help support businesses in the town centre.

- To support this, appropriate bicycle parking facilities need to be provided in the town centre.

POLICY TM4: CYCLE ROUTES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals to extend National Cycle Network Route 81 into Shifnal Town Centre, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be supported.

The provision of cycle parking in Shifnal Town Centre will be supported.

Bus and Rail services provision

- Improvements to bus services are needed but unless commercially viable they are very expensive to subsidise from public resources.
- New bus shelters for passengers and better service information have been identified as needed.
- The Town Council and the Shifnal Forward Transport Action Group is committed to lobbying for better and more frequent train services.
- The increase in population will require provision at the station for cyclists and also, if possible, additional parking.
- Improvements need to be made to disabled access at Shifnal Railway Station.

Objective

- Improve the provision of bus and rail services and infrastructure in order to increase public transport movements

POLICY TM5: BUS SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals to improve and extend existing commercial and community-operated bus services will be supported especially to serve new development sites permitted. In respect of community-operated bus services, these should improve linkages with key areas and services, including the medical centre, the town centre and the railway station.

Proposals to provide new bus shelters and service information along existing bus routes will be supported.

POLICY TM6: IMPROVEMENTS TO SHIFNAL RAILWAY STATION

The provision of additional cycle and car parking to directly serve Shifnal Railway Station will be strongly supported.

As part of any improvements to Shifnal Railway Station, the provision of improved disabled access will be strongly supported

Character and Conservation

- The central area of the town is designated as a conservation area within which there are a number of historic buildings, many of which are listed buildings. The conservation area and the number of older buildings, contribute to the character of the town and give a focus to the town centre.
- There are some sites and buildings where their existing poor, derelict or vacant condition, detracts from the appearance of the area.
- The Plan seeks to encourage owners of such sites and buildings to bring them into use, to improve their appearance for the benefit of the area as a whole and so enhance the attraction of the town to tourists and visitors.

Objectives

- Any new development should not adversely affect the market town character of Shifnal
- Encourage and support re-use or redevelopment of derelict, unused and vacant sites and buildings to protect and enhance the character of the town

POLICY CH1: DERELICT/EMPTY BUILDINGS AND VACANT SITES

Proposals for re-use or re-development of derelict or empty buildings and vacant sites in the settlement boundary of Shifnal Town will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- the character of the conservation area is not harmed by the proposed development; and
- the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbours, including the impact of increased on-street parking.

Outside the settlement boundary of Shifnal Town, Policy SL1 will apply.

Health, Education and Leisure

Health provision

- A new primary healthcare centre is required to support the increasing population in Shifnal. The current health centre on Shrewsbury Road is unable to expand in its current location.
- It is proposed to be delivered as part of the outline planning permission for 400 dwellings at Haughton Road - on land at the corner of Haughton Road and Newport Road.
- If this site is not secured then another site will need to be identified.

Objective

- A new medical centre should be provided to meet the health needs of existing residents and the new households coming to live in the town

POLICY HL1: NEW MEDICAL FACILITY, LAND AT CORNER OF HAUGHTON ROAD/NEWPORT ROAD

As shown on the Proposals Map, land at Haughton Road/Newport Road is allocated for the provision of a medical centre.

Education provision

- Education provision for primary and secondary school aged children is addressed by Shropshire Council. However, the one area of education provision that is lacking in Shifnal is adult education.
- Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot provide any adult education services, it can enable the opportunity for new buildings to be delivered or converted to serve as an education establishment.

Objective

- Improved education facilities and services should be provided for everyone in the community including adults

POLICY ED1: NEW EDUCATION PROVISION

The provision within the Shifnal Town settlement boundary of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings to serve as education facilities, particularly for adult education, will be supported.

Leisure provision

- There will be considerable additional demand for leisure activities as a result of planned growth.
- It is considered essential to ensure that existing facilities are retained for sporting and recreational use.

Objective

- Better opportunities for leisure should be provided for everyone in the community

POLICY LE1: EXISTING LEISURE USES

Proposals that would result in the loss of leisure facilities will only be permitted if alternative and equivalent leisure facilities are provided.

Alternative leisure provision will be required to meet the following criteria:

- the scale of the alternative provision must be of an equivalent scale to the existing provision; and
- the quality of the alternative site must be of equivalent standard in terms of layout to the existing provision; and
- the location of the alternative provision must be generally accessible by foot and within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of Shifnal Town. On safeguarded land outside the settlement boundary (or if in exceptional cases in the Green Belt), then only uses suitable in the Green Belt will be permitted.

This policy does not apply to leisure uses identified in Policy EN1.

- It is also considered vital to support new leisure facilities on suitable sites.

POLICY LE2: PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL LEISURE USES

Proposals to provide new leisure facilities to serve the community of Shifnal town will be strongly supported. These proposals must be of a scale commensurate with the site and its surroundings, particularly in terms of the built form, traffic generation and parking.

- You told us that a town park should be provided and negotiations are progressing for the provision of such a facility as part of new development in the east of the town.

POLICY LE3: SHIFNAL TOWN PARK

Land beyond the new Thomas Beddoes housing development and sited either side of the railway line (linked through the railway tunnel) is allocated for the provision of a town park. It is expected that such provision will address the following:

- the provision of a range of access points for pedestrians and cyclists, with routes through the park; and
- the potential to create a nature reserve as part of the park; and
- play facilities for children.

Environment

Local Green Spaces

- Under the National Planning Policy Framework, neighbourhood plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the local community. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances.

Objective

- Existing parks, play areas, playing fields and open spaces should be retained and additional open space areas provided

POLICY EN1: PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following areas and as shown on the Proposals Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- Wheatfield Drive recreation area
- Jubilee Park
- Curriers Lane play area
- Cricket ground, Priorslee Road, and football fields, Coppice Green Lane

Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless:

- the proposal is of a limited nature and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of an identified Local Green Space; or
- the proposal would result in the development of local community infrastructure.

Loss of public open space

- There are public open spaces which break up the urban fabric and give Shifnal a green 'feel' within the settlement boundary.
- It is important that such spaces are retained, particularly given the increase in population within the town that will be using such spaces.

Objective

- Existing parks, play areas, playing fields and open spaces should be retained and additional open space areas provided

POLICY EN2: LOSS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Proposals that would result in the loss of public open space will not be permitted unless alternative and equivalent public open space is provided.

Alternative public open space provision proposed as part of such development proposals will be required to meet the following criteria:

- the scale of the alternative provision must be of an equivalent scale to the existing public open space provision; and
- the quality of the alternative site must be of at least an equivalent standard in terms of layout to the existing public open space provision; and
- the location of the alternative provision must be generally accessible by foot and within or adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Shifnal Town.

Outside the settlement boundary of Shifnal Town, Policy SL1 will apply.

Flooding and drainage

- Whilst there are no areas proposed for development which are likely to be at risk from flooding, this does not mean that new development cannot create localised flooding impacts.
- The Shifnal Flood Partnership Group has secured £500,000 towards new flood defences to serve the town but more funding is needed to deliver the necessary projects.
- It is therefore vital that new development contributes, where appropriate, to this provision and does not worsen the position such that the flood defence solutions become more costly.

Objective

- Any new development should not adversely affect drainage and flooding in the town

POLICY EN3: MINIMISING THE IMPACT OF FLOODING FROM DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals will be expected to:

- be designed and constructed to minimise the overall level of flood risk within the parish; and
- provide appropriate surface water drainage; and
- open existing culverts where practicable.

Development will not be permitted in flood attenuation areas where that development would reduce the ability of these areas to alleviate flooding.

Proposals that would create new culverts (unless essential to the provision of access to water systems) will not be permitted.

Proposals that would result in the loss of open watercourses will not be permitted.

Any new development must have adequate receiving surface water drainage, i.e. drains, culverts and definable water courses, under Environment Agency and Local Authority control.

Town Centre and Economy

Shifnal Town Centre

- The Town Centre is a vital asset to the community of Shifnal. A thriving centre ensures that Shifnal thrives as a place.
- The focus is on protecting and promoting uses that are most appropriately located within a town centre.

Objectives

- Existing employment land should be retained and new employment opportunities encouraged within the town
- Provide for and enhance existing facilities and support initiatives to attract and retain visitors and tourists to the town

• **POLICY EC1: SHIFNAL TOWN CENTRE**

- Development within the area of Shifnal Town Centre shown on the Proposals Map will be expected to comply with the requirements of Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS15 (Town and Rural Centres) and SAMDev Policy MD10a (Managing Town Centre Development).

Primary shopping area

- The retail area within Shifnal town is a vital part of the local economy.
- Whilst the planning system cannot prevent shops from closing, it can ensure that if this happens then they are replaced by new businesses which are appropriate for the retail core of a town centre.
- The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to expand the current Primary Shopping Area to include retail premises on both sides of Victoria Road, Market Place and Church Street, thereby giving them greater protection to remain as shops.

POLICY EC2: PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA

In the Primary Shopping Area of Shifnal town centre, as defined on the Proposals Map, there will be a presumption in favour of retail proposals and a presumption against changes of use away from use classes A1 (shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) and A4 (Drinking Establishments). This relates to proposals that sit outside of permitted development rights.

This reinforces the protection provided by Policy MD10 in the SAMDev Development Management DPD and assists in ensuring that non-Class A uses would not dominate or detract from the core objective of providing retail outlets for the shopper.

Shopfront design

- One particular issue residents of all age groups raised was the quality of signage of the shops in the primary shopping area.

POLICY EC3: SHOPFRONT SIGNAGE WITHIN THE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA

Proposals for shopfront signage within the primary shopping area should be in sympathy with the upper storeys of the building and adjoining facades.

The use of traditional materials such as timber with sign-written titles rather than plastic, externally illuminated signs will be required.

Flush-fitted signs (as opposed to those mounted at a 90-degree angle) will be preferred.

Protection of existing commercial premises or land

- The community of Shifnal – both residents and existing businesses – consider that the local economy of Shifnal is very important and should not be neglected.
- The danger of Shifnal becoming simply a commuter town is clear – currently over half the working population leaves Shifnal every morning to work elsewhere.
- Shifnal has a small but significant business base and it is important that this is protected.
- The Neighbourhood Plan considers that it is important to protect the stock of existing commercial property in the parish. To do so, it is necessary to restrict the redevelopment or conversion of existing commercial premises for non-commercial purposes.

Objective

- Existing employment land should be retained and new employment opportunities encouraged within the town

POLICY EC4: PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMERCIAL PREMISES OR LAND

There will be a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land which provides employment or future potential employment opportunities. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- the commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months; and
- the commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.

New employment opportunities

- The Shropshire SAMDev has already allocated land for new employment opportunities in Shifnal, at the Lamledge Lane Employment Zone. This creates the focus and opportunity for development of traditional employment opportunities over the plan period.
- However, at present the market for such uses is considered to be weak in Shifnal.
- It is therefore considered that a more flexible approach is taken to encouraging employment-generation uses on allocated employment land. Uses that create jobs which are appropriate for a location on the edge of the settlement will be encouraged.
- Uses such as retail warehouses would not be considered to be appropriate.

Objective

- Existing employment land should be retained and new employment opportunities encouraged within the town

POLICY EC5: EMPLOYMENT-GENERATING USES

Within the settlement boundary of Shifnal Town, development proposals to provide employment-generating uses on B-class employment allocations will be supported, subject to the following criteria:

- the land in question has no potential for development for B-class employment uses as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months; and
- it is clearly demonstrated that the alternative use of the site will create jobs; and
- the proposals do not provide retail floorspace, other than as an ancillary element to a larger employment-generating development.

- In order to grow medium and larger-sized businesses, then it is necessary to nurture business start-ups.
- For small start-up businesses, the ability to access workspace on flexible, 'easy-in, easy-out' terms helps to provide the foundation to grow a business.
- Support is given to the creation of small-scale businesses premises, ideally for incubator/start-up businesses and ideally on flexible rental terms.

POLICY EC6: SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals to provide small-scale B-class employment opportunities will be supported. This could either be through the following:

- conversion of existing buildings across the Neighbourhood Plan area, subject to the impact of provision on the highway network and parking and subject to it being an appropriate use within the Green Belt (where applicable); or
- provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings within the settlement boundary of Shifnal Town.

Strong support will be given if such provision is made for incubator/start-up businesses on flexible terms.

Rural economy

- There is a significant rural economy in the rural hinterland of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Agricultural activities on the farmland in the area creates significant value for the local economy as well as providing a valuable source of food supply.
- Continued support for these rural farming activities is given, provided they do not conflict with the purposes of the green belt.

Objective

- Rural farming activities should be protected and encouraged

POLICY EC7: RURAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND AGRICULTURAL LAND

Support will be given for proposals that strengthen the rural economy. It is important that any such proposals represent appropriate development in the countryside and do not conflict with the purposes of the green belt.

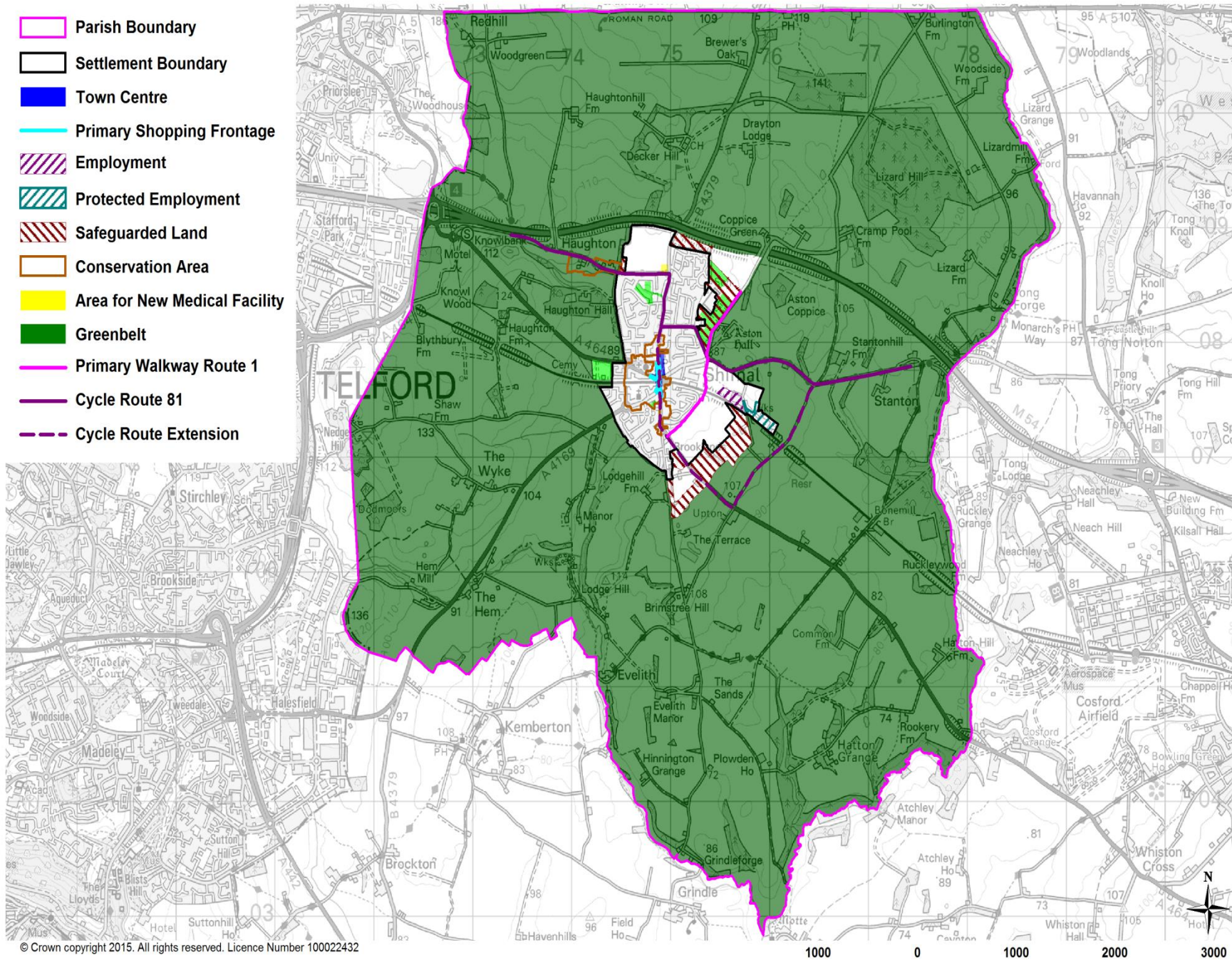
Planning permission will be refused for development on grade 1 and grade 2 agricultural land unless:

- it is for the purpose of improving the agricultural activities already being undertaken on the land; and
- it represents a small scale development that is required for the continuation of agricultural activities.

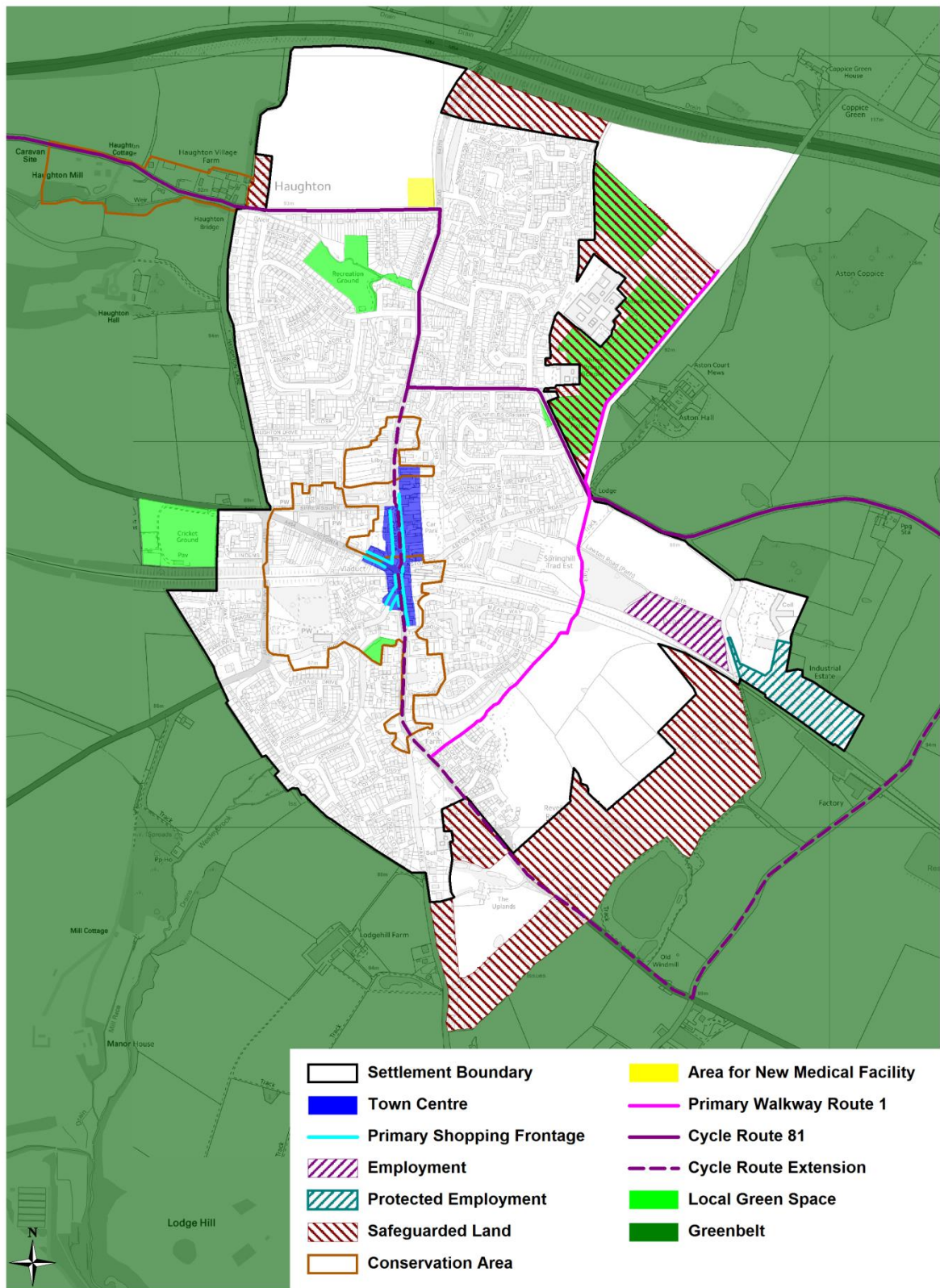
PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO SEE THE 3 POLICY PROPOSAL MAPS BELOW.

Proposals map – Neighbourhood Plan area (the parish)

-  Parish Boundary
-  Settlement Boundary
-  Town Centre
-  Primary Shopping Frontage
-  Employment
-  Protected Employment
-  Safeguarded Land
-  Conservation Area
-  Area for New Medical Facility
-  Greenbelt
-  Primary Walkway Route 1
-  Cycle Route 81
-  Cycle Route Extension



Proposals Map – Shifnal Town and surrounds



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Metres

Proposals Map – Shifnal Town Centre

