

Shipston on Stour Neighbourhood Plan

Infrastructure and Flooding Audit and Issues Report

The Infrastructure Topic Group

August 2015

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1 Background

1.1 Scope and purpose of the audit

1.1.1 This document summarises the up-to-date position regarding infrastructure as of February 2015 in the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan. An addendum has been included in August 2015 for open spaces, recreation and sports facilities. The confirmed facts are presented, with a commentary on the adequacy or otherwise in meeting the current and prospective development of the town. An overall conclusion is provided, and the key issues and opportunities to be considered per se and by the three other plan-making topic groups – economy, housing and environment - are stated.

1.1.2 The Infrastructure Topic Group comprised the following individuals: Richard Taylor; Paul Kelly; Bernie Spratt; and Andrew Colby. There was support from Martin Ferrier, the Shipston on Stour Town Council [STC] lead on sustainability and planning. Two team workshops were held to agree the scope of the enquiries and collate the gathered information.

1.1.3 The authors have made a considerable and sincere effort to research and assess the facts. It may well be that some aspects of the town's infrastructure have been missed or not given enough attention. We apologise if this is so, and trust that those individuals and organisations who may wish to add or modify will do so in good part.

1.2 Producing a Neighbourhood Plan

1.2.1 The decision by STC to sponsor the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan was made in November 2012. This followed in-depth soundings of the local community to gauge the appetite for such a project, whether substantial help would be volunteered, and what local people thought were important issues for the future of the town. A summary of this early stage of the plan-making process is in a comprehensive Scoping Report¹ prepared for STC in November 2012. This document was the basis of a formal STC decision to proceed, starting with a submission to the Stratford-on-Avon District Council [SDC] for their authorisation to commence the project. That authorisation was given on 08 April 2013.

1.2.2 In May 2013, as part of the ongoing community engagement, notably at the yearly Wool Fair, STC sought community volunteers to form an independent project team to take forward the work. The proposed plan-making process utilised the publications from Locality², one of the national advisors hired by the Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] to promote interest and provide ongoing support. Assistance from Locality had been secured for the launch of the process, and this continued through 2013/4. It was decided to sub-divide the plan-making work into four categories: economy; housing; environment; and infrastructure. Volunteers were appointed to these topic groups. Their initial task was to research and collate the important information such that the main issues were properly understood. When the facts and implications were known there would be discussion within and between the topic groups, and the resulting 'evidence' would be taken forward into emerging options for the future of the town. It should be noted that from the outset, through the community engagement mentioned in S1.2.1, a number of key concerns had been identified, refer to the Scoping Report Section 4.3. These included a) better social and welfare facilities; and b) improved infrastructure particularly highways and traffic management, and flood defences. This feedback gave some focus to the work of the infrastructure topic group. The recognised overall thinking was that the town had some shortcomings in terms of infrastructure to meet current needs, and with further growth of the population in prospect, with more housing on the way and a need to boost the local economy and employment after a spate of factory closures, the capacity and adequacy - or otherwise - of what was present had to be accurately checked out.

1.3 Planning policy context

1.3.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It will likely contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, and possibly the allocation of key sites for specific types of development. The Neighbourhood Plan will include 'site allocations' further to a decision taken in July 2014 in conjunction with SDC. It may deal with a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues or may focus on a few pertinent matters. As described the Shipston-on-Stour plan is looking across a wide range of issues, as guided by the launch-stage community engagement. When completed and adopted such a plan will be part of the statutory

¹ Producing a Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Report issued by STC November 2012

² Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide: Locality 2012

development plan for the area. This statutory status provides far more weight when planning decisions are made than do other informal local documents such as parish plans and village/town design statements.

1.3.2 A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with European and national legislation, and must have appropriate regards to national policy and be in general conformity with existing strategic local planning policy. It should be noted that at the time of writing this report the examination-in-public of the SDC draft Core Strategy³ had recently concluded, and SDC published a summary of prospective changes⁴. Most likely over the course of the next few months the examining Inspector will respond, and after some final modifications are agreed the Core Strategy will be adopted. It will then set the top-down policy and proposals agenda. Importantly a Neighbourhood Plan should not promote less development than that identified in the local development plan. It can allow greater growth levels. It can, importantly, specify policies and guidance on how new development should be designed, oriented and located. Given the potential scope of such a plan the importance of getting the right types and capacities of infrastructure and community services is self-evident.

1.3.3 One important component of the emerging Core Strategy that is of key interest is a supplement⁵ about infrastructure requirements phased during the plan period. This puts the markers down for investment projects by the various public sector agencies up to 2031, including projects that will be funded via the Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] process. For Shipston on Stour [a Main Rural Centre] it is recorded that investment in the following infrastructure and community facilities is scheduled to happen:

- Primary School
- High School sixth form academy provision
- Green infrastructure to implement Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- Open space and sports provision [parks, gardens and amenity green space; provision for children and young people; accessible natural and semi-natural green space; allotments and community orchards]
- Possible addition of a sports hall at the Leisure Centre.

1.4 The plan area and setting

1.4.1 The designated Neighbourhood Plan area is the Parish of Shipston-on-Stour.

1.4.2 Without recounting some old history it should be appreciated that the literal Parish boundary is unusual, in that the eastern boundary is the River Stour, and the town is only on the west bank. There are on Brailes Road and Fell Mill Lane beyond the river a few nearby outlying houses, a small industrial estate, and importantly the local recycling and waste disposal facility. Functionally these are part of the town, and figure in the appraisal of facilities, though strictly they are outside the plan boundary.

1.4.3 It should also be noted that the town is a local services centre for a wide area of the Stour Valley and surroundings, including some settlements in neighbouring Gloucestershire. For example the Medical Centre has twice as many registered patients as live in the town. Such wider-area use of town facilities needs to be considered when taking views on the adequacy or otherwise of what is present.

³ SDC Proposed Submission Core Strategy submitted to Secretary of State 30 September 2014

⁴ SDC Consolidated Hearing Modifications Volumes 1 & 2 27/29 January 2015

⁵ SDC PSCS Appendix 1 Schedule of Infrastructure Projects September 2014

1.5 Categories of infrastructure

1.5.1 It was important to have a sound classification and listing of infrastructure and local services to ensure nothing was missed or misunderstood. To this end the listing in the 2009 Planning Advisory Service publication⁶ 'A Steps approach to Infrastructure Planning and Delivery' was used. It was noted this had been successfully used by some other teams producing Neighbourhood Plans.

1.5.2 The main categories as used [minor modification of the list to meet local circumstances] are:

Transport [road; rail; bus; taxi; cycling; pedestrians; car parking]

Energy [gas; electricity; renewable sources]

Drainage and water supply and flood risk management [water supply; waste water; land drainage; flood risk]

Waste [collection and disposal; recycling]

Telecommunications [broadband; landlines; mobile networks]

Education [nursery and pre-school; primary; secondary]

Healthcare [hospitals; GPs; care homes]

Community facilities [library; community halls; post office; police station; fire station; places of worship; sports and leisure facilities; museum, arts and entertainment].

2. Methodology

2.1 Guidance and precedents

2.1.1 The topic group has applied the guidance in the published Locality Roadmap Guide, in particular Worksheet 3 therein⁷ 'Building the Evidence Base'. This gives sound advice on the need for a robust approach, and the sources of evidence. Of particular note has been the published evidence base supporting the emerging Core Strategy. Several more advanced Neighbourhood Plans were reviewed to assess how they had tackled infrastructure as a topic, the Morpeth plan⁸ proved particularly worthwhile as an exemplar, they had hired the University of Newcastle to produce an infrastructure audit.

2.1.2 The adopted definition of infrastructure was taken from the National Planning Policy Framework⁹ paragraph 162. This listing was expanded by reference to the above mentioned Planning Advisory Service publication.

2.1.3 The method used was a sequential approach. Having agreed the definition and categories the Core Strategy evidence base was reviewed in respect of infrastructure. A component document of the Submission Stage Draft Core Strategy published in September 2104 had listed and phased the supporting infrastructure categories where investment will be required up to year 2031, this was taken as the top-down guidelines for the Neighbourhood Plan [see S1.3.3]. The agreed infrastructure list was sub-divided between the topic group team and enquiries were made of the various services providers, owners and operators. Shipston Town Council publishes a helpful Town Guide¹⁰ that lists the majority of those who had to be contacted. Local knowledge was used to supplement that published list. The findings of fact were collated by Richard Taylor. Two workshop sessions were held

⁶ Planning Advisory Service: 'A Steps approach to Infrastructure Planning and Delivery', 2009

⁷ Locality 'Neighbourhood Planning Worksheet 5 Building the Evidence Base' 2012

⁸ Morpeth's Neighbourhood Plan 'Infrastructure Audit' by Newcastle University January 2013

⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government 'National Planning Policy Framework' March 2012

¹⁰ Shipston-on-Stour Town Council 'Town Guide 2014'

by the topic group: the first one was to agree the list and allocate the enquiries; the second was to review the findings and identify key issues and matters that should be referred to other topic groups as there was shared interest.

3. Audit findings

3.1 Transport

3.1.1 Highways

3.1.1.1 Overall the highways position is good, with the town benefitting from a main through road A3400 that was formerly a trunk road and proximity to the A429 Fosse Way. Along with the B4035 Banbury to Evesham road this network puts several main towns within a 30 minutes' drive time. The town centre has the main road adjacent but not directly through it, another good feature. The only noted weakness is the old, narrow road bridge taking the B4035 across the river on the east side of the town, this raises safety issues for pedestrians.

3.1.1.2 Warwickshire County Council [WCC] consulted residents and businesses in 2010 to get opinions on changes to the Market Place and High Street area of the town centre. The basic idea was that a one-way traffic flow plus a revised parking layout might work better for businesses and shoppers. The consultation was inconclusive, a balance between those favouring changes and those opposed. This issue was raised in the 2012 launch consultations about a Neighbourhood Plan. There has been discussion about such a project at the monthly open meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan team. Consequently the WCC work has been retrieved and re-visited, and the suggestion is that the potential for better traffic management is further looked at, that the previously identified options [including 'do nothing'] are considered, not least as many of the traders who commented in 2010 have been replaced. The potential impact on businesses is certainly a big consideration, but it may be that a workable all-round improvement can be identified that assists with town centre vitality and improves the visitor experience.

3.1.2 Rail

3.1.2.1 There is no railway in the town, but public transport connexions to the First Great Western services at Moreton-in-Marsh, London Midland and Chiltern at Stratford-on-Avon, and Chiltern at Banbury are a consideration. There was until recently a twice-daily Johnson's bus service which operated at times not helpful for commuters, perhaps the reason it was not much used. Whether there is scope for a bus shuttle to Moreton-in-Marsh such as operates from Chipping Norton to Kingham Station is something that might be considered, perhaps in conjunction with the operator of the Shipston Link service. The Stagecoach routes as noted below end near to but not at Banbury and Stratford-on-Avon stations.

3.1.3 Buses and taxis

3.1.3.1 Bus services include regular if infrequent day time Stagecoach 50 and 50A connections to Stratford-on-Avon, Banbury and Chipping Norton [with onward connexions to Oxford]. The main issue is the absence of evening services. Commuting by 'bus is really only an option if you work in Stratford, and even then the evening return service is limited. The above mentioned Shipston Link is a charity minibus service [with disabled access] run by volunteers, this provides weekday and Saturday shuttle services from and to local villages, plus an in-town service on Tuesdays. Private hire

is also possible. The scope for extending services might be looked at, though the availability of volunteers is no doubt a consideration.

3.1.1.5 There are several local taxi operators based in the town and nearby.

3.1.4 Cycling and walking

3.1.4.1 Cycling has been carefully considered from two points of view. There is plenty of scope to promote this mode of transport, though views have differed as to the value of the current cycle lanes and the adequacy of existing secure bays in the town centre. Given the fairly level topography and the linear built form of the town, a more cyclist-friendly approach might well bring benefits. The second aspect is leisure cycling, with scope to make the town more of a destination and stop-over point. This would be consistent with tourism development.

3.1.4.2 Whilst walking to the town centre shops and community facilities is commonplace, so too is the tendency to get in the car. Measures to offer and improve footpaths and connexions can be considered. This is particularly so in the parts of the town developed since 1970, with very little effort made to connect, sign and maintain footpaths between new estates, such that pedestrians have to take the long way round. Looking into ways to retro-fit and improve the footpath network is thought to be worthwhile. This might encompass safe routes for mobility scooters, of which there are growing numbers in line with the ageing population.

3.1.5 Car parking

3.1.5.1 Car parking capacity has figured in community feedback, though not specific issues. A survey was done by the topic group in November 2014. There are marked public spaces for 299 cars and vans. The designated 'long stay' parking amounts to 62 spaces in Mill Street plus 35 in the 'Scout Hut' parking plus 24 in West Street, a total long stay provision of 121 or 40% the total. Based on the observations when the survey was done there seems little scope for significant additional parking spaces in or near the town centre. The view formed is that what exists is not exactly an over-provision, that on occasions it gets full.

3.1.5.2 There seem little scope to modify the existing car parks to create more spaces or improved access. What might be looked at is the charging policy, 20p for up to an hour is modest. Also the proportion of long stay to short stay might be considered. This review will require an input from SDC.

3.2 Energy

3.2.1 Gas and electricity supplies as provided through the national grid are both confirmed as adequate by the suppliers, and can be readily increased to meet future increases in demand.

3.2.2 The supply companies, and planning policies and building regulations applicable to new development, all encourage energy efficiency and the use of appropriate renewable energy technologies.

3.3 Drainage and water supply and flood risk management

3.3.1 Severn Trent Water [STW] have confirmed that there are no constraints to meeting the water demands of existing and planned additional development. There is an expectation that water conservation measures will be designed and built into new development.

3.3.2 STW have also confirmed that waste water disposal capacity for existing and planned development is and will be adequate. The treatment works at Fell Mill currently has the required capacity to receive and treat waste water and meet the required water standards for effluent

discharge to the river. If there are additional demands there is land for an extension of the works so subject to funding it seems the works is reasonably 'future proofed'.

3.3.3 Dealing better with flooding events is an urgent and complex matter. Serious events in recent years have impacted badly on residents and businesses near the river. There has been and continues to be research into realistic and affordable long term solutions, plus some interim works to the river channel and bankside vegetation. Of especial note is the ongoing action by local residents – in the town and nearby riverside villages – through Shipston Area Flooding Action Group [SAFAG]. This group is working with the agencies responsible for better managing flood risk by delivering some long term changes. Dealing with such problems without unreasonably shifting the flooding downstream requires a wider area approach that looks upstream at modifications to the catchment and within the town at ways the flow and channel can be amended. The ongoing interim works under and near the Brailes Road bridge should bring near term benefits. The long term aim is to find ways to modify the way the catchment works such that excess surface water is attenuated and released gradually at a rate that the downstream channel and tributaries can accommodate.

3.3.4 An issue that has emerged from looking for flood mitigation measures is that the surface water sewerage network is not of consistent adequacy or performance. As previously noted the town is nearly all on the west bank of the river. As development occurred upslope and away from the river a network of ditches, drains and culverts was created to shift surface water from the developed areas and the fields above the town. There is evidence that in recent times this sewerage has not been functioning well in some locations, not least when 'bank full' river conditions flood the outfalls. This is a complex issue, much of the sewerage is under private land with owners having discharge rights and a lack of clarity about maintenance liabilities and responsibilities. Further, it is not clear that upslope developments over the last 30 or so years have adequately engineered surface water management measures. Certainly in recent times a mandatory sustainable drainage approach applies, but the cumulative effect of an inadequate legacy will have to be addressed as part of a comprehensive flood risk management solution.

3.4 Telecommunications

3.4.1 Both fixed and mobile telecommunications and broadband are adequate rather than outstanding, but are basically fit-for-purpose.

3.5 Education

3.5.1 There have been meetings with the High School's Head Teacher in November/December 2014. The 'official' maximum capacity is 388 students, the reality is 462 students in the current academic year, so there is a considerable strain on the capacity. There is a phased development plan for the school. Phase 1 is under way, the construction of six additional classrooms for completion in late 2015. This will create enough space to allow the numbers to catch-up, nothing for the longer term. So a further 3 proposed development phases will occur, subject to funding: Phase 2 upgrading the sports facilities; Phase 3 further additional classrooms; and Phase 4 an all-weather sports pitch. Whilst there is available land at the campus a problem is the sloping site and buildings on several different levels, which is not good for the effective use of the available space, and certainly not good in terms of meeting access requirements. The ongoing Phase 1 development is dealing with the site levels factor. The big issue to note is the need to safeguard land at the High School campus so that the development plan can be delivered subject to the funding coming through. It should be noted that with the enhanced sports facilities and an all-weather pitch, plus the adjacent existing leisure

centre, this area of the town will be well-provided-for with modern and relevant sports and leisure facilities.

3.5.2 A meeting was held in December 2014 with the primary School Head Teacher. In the current academic year there are 420 pupils. The school is full to capacity. There are some temporary classrooms. The aim is to expand the capacity to meet a prospective increase in demand as the town population grows. Expanding upwards on the existing structure and footprint is a non-starter. The possibilities that are being considered are, subject to an adjacent BT facility becoming vacant, to integrate that land and build; or to seek a new site, ideally nearby. With the recent closure and ongoing de-commissioning of the nearby Turbine Blading site, and subject to commercial considerations and public procurement protocols, a possibility might be identified.

3.5.3 Pre-school facilities for the 2 to 5 age range are provided by two operators. It is understood the nursery run at the Primary School is presently near capacity, but that subject to additional funding more children might be accommodated. The separate Greenfields facility accommodates about 130 children, plus 40 children who attend after the primary School has closed. The capacity overall is about 170 children, so additional demand would likely involve further investment in facilities and staff.

3.6 Healthcare

3.6.1 A meeting was held with the manager of Shipston Medical Centre. This is a substantial general practice, employing around 50 staff, with about 11000 registered patients, of whom roughly 50% live in the town and 50% in the surrounding area. It is widely known that the practice is seeking to relocate to a new facility and is actively looking for a suitably located and sized site. The problem is that the current site and buildings do not meet the space and configuration requirements of the practice and patients. Reconfiguring what is there is unrealistic, the site is simply too constrained. The various medical and pharmacy facilities are shoe-horned into a two storey building, with limited on-site car parking space. The recognised priority is to find an alternative site with enough space, sensibly located for easy access by patients.

3.6.2 The Ellen Badger Hospital is a much valued facility providing three types of service: a minor injuries unit; a testing and physiotherapy unit; and care for older in-patients. Periodically there are reports that this facility might be scaled-back, lately with reduced hours for the minor injuries unit. What does seem clear is that the services provided are well-used and much valued by the town and wider community, and that locally having 'outreach' services for larger hospitals reduces the need to travel.

3.6.3 Residential care home accommodation is provided by Low Furlong, operated by Runwood Homes. This facility can accommodate 44 residents, and provides long term residential care, including secure facilities for those with dementia; short stay residential respite care; and day care. Planning permission has been granted to extend the facility to accommodate 63 residents.

3.6.4 'Extra care' housing takes various forms, essentially it is residential accommodation with communal areas for those aged 60+, with on-site usually 24/7 support services including some elements of personal care as opposed to nursing. There are three such facilities in the town. Rainbow Fields provides 30 self-contained flats and 6 bungalows, it is co-managed by Orbit and Heart of England. Stour Court managed by Orbit provides 37 bungalows and communal areas. Horse Fair is managed by Anchor and provides 19 units.

3.6.5 A slightly different category is the recently built Rosemount in Stratford Road, this is operated by Mencap, and contains 10 independent units plus a communal area, offering supported living for people with learning difficulties.

3.7 Community facilities

3.7.1 The public library also hosts 'one-stop-shop' local access to Warwickshire County Council services, plus the local police and Safer Neighbourhood Team, and provides tourism information. Wi-fi and computer terminals and basic office equipment is available for public use.

3.7.2 There are several community halls.

3.7.2.1 The Townsend Hall has three rooms for venue hire, the largest can in theatre format accommodate up to 400 people. There has been investment in the modernisation and upkeep. This facility is used for social, business and recreational events, and a wide variety of public and private events takes place from concerts, plays, business conventions, to fitness activities and formal dinners. There is a strong demand and the central location with public parking nearby is valued.

3.7.2.2 The Sheldon Bosley Hub evolved from being the private 'Norgren Club' when the IMI Norgren manufacturing business was operating. Access is somewhat indirect through a residential estate off Campden Road. The facilities in this two storey 1960s building include various venue rooms for hire, a kitchen, smaller meeting rooms, a large car park, and the related high quality bowling green. A wide range of events is held, from charity sales, caravan rallies, fitness training, to concerts. This is flexible accommodation meeting a variety of needs. The venture is a registered social enterprise, and it is understood the freehold of the site remains with IMI plc [which was the Norgren parent company]. The lease will be due for renewal a few years from now.

3.7.2.3 Other venues to note include the Scout Hut in New Street, this was rebuilt recently, and hosts Scout and Guide meetings, and is hired by other groups such as the Mothers and Toddlers. Next to this is the 'Band Hall' as it is known, where the town band meets for practice. Both these facilities benefit from on-site public car parking, and with the adjacent public open space and allotments creates a pleasant 'community hub' feeling and look to this overall area, which is owned by STC.

3.7.2.4 The sports and social club building in London Road hosts various public and private members events, such as a 'beer festival', an annual bonfire night party, and occasional concerts.

3.7.2.5 Other venues for hire include the St. Edmunds Church Hall, and meeting rooms in The George, and serviced business meeting rooms at the Stour Enterprise Centre. The Youth Club uses accommodation at the High School.

3.7.3 The post office in High Street has recently been modernised as an adjunct of the Co-operative store next door. A full range of counter and financial services is provided.

3.7.4 Whilst a conventional police station no longer exists [the surplus building was bought and converted by the Town Council] the force retains a real presence with an operations office and car park for local patrols, and services accessible via the public library [see 3.7.1].

3.7.5 A volunteer fire and rescue station is in Telegraph Street with one appliance to meet local requirements with back-up from nearby larger facilities.

3.7.6 There are four places of worship: churches for Church of England; Methodist; and Catholic congregations. Baptists use the High School hall for their services.

3.7.7 Sports and leisure facilities

3.7.7.1 A survey of local sports clubs and facilities was conducted by the topic group. The overall conclusion was that the town hosts many enthusiastic and successful clubs covering most sports and leisure activities. There does not seem to be a constraining shortage of adequate facilities, both pitches and club rooms. The only club that does not have a local pitch is the hockey club and they are content to use facilities in nearby towns.

3.7.7.2 The Sports and Social Club in London Road [freehold owned by the Town Council] has a pavilion and facilities for cricket, football, tennis, and although run as a separate club there is a bowling green and clubhouse. Demand can be high, and on occasions the on-site car parking lacks capacity. Adjacent but otherwise owned land until recently provided a junior football pitch. The lease was terminated, and then offered back as a planning gain in relation to a nearby housing development proposal by Orbit Homes. The application for that proposal was refused in November 2014, so the junior pitch land is 'in limbo'.

3.7.7.3 The District Council's leisure centre in Darlingscott Road contains a 25 metres swimming pool and a fitness gym and lounge area. As noted in S1.3.3 the addition of a sports hall is included in the list of infrastructure to meet growing demand from town and wider area residents. Presumably such an addition would be planned in conjunction with the adjacent High School such that integrated facilities resulted.

3.7.8 A small privately owned and run museum with exhibits about the history of the town and Stour Valley area is located off the Telegraph Street car park. The museum has limited opening hours.

3.7.9 The section above on community halls has covered arts and entertainment venues. As noted there is a good range of venues to meet a diverse demand. Additionally some of the public houses and places of worship provide performance venues, notably when the annual music festival takes place in the summer. The important role of the High Street and Market Place open space should also be noted as this is regularly given over by temporary closure to traffic to such events as the annual Wool Fair, the Victorian Evening, the Mop Fair, and occasional speciality street markets. In section 3.1.1.2 comments were made about possibly modifying the traffic management and parking in this part of the town centre, and the venue use as described is a consideration.

3.8 Waste management

3.8.1 A household waste disposal and recycling centre is operated by Warwickshire County Council at a facility in Brailes Road. There is an on-site charity shop for the resale of donated items. The facility is open seven days a week, and it is well-used by town and wider area residents.

3.8.2 Household waste collections, including 'green bin' garden waste, are operated by the District Council on a weekly basis [alternating black bins one week and blue recycling and green garden and compostable waste bins the next week].

3.8.3 There are no public waste disposal points [for example in public car parks] other than those at the Brailes Road centre.

4. Development scenarios and implications

4.1 Development projections

4.1.1 As noted the examination-in-public of the draft Core Strategy has lately concluded and the Inspector is aiming to revert with his conclusions to the District Council in March 2015. It is therefore premature to have a definitive position on the additional development planned 2011 -2031 for the town. A robust debate about housing needs and housing land supply took place, and some of the proposed locations and amounts of new housing are controversial. What is clear in relation to Shipston, however, is that the new dwellings allocation in the draft Core Strategy as examined has already been exceeded by what has recently been built or is 'in the pipeline' from planning permissions already granted. There are further applications and appeals pending decisions. Further, one of the examination outcomes does seem to be an increased housing allocation for the 'main rural centres' including Shipston, and although subject to a full appraisal of whether this is locally appropriate and sustainable on planning grounds this might well raise the overall 2011 – 2031 period 'allocation' to perhaps 400 - 450 new dwellings. That is the quantum as currently estimated, and we do stress it is subject to the findings and report of the Inspector and consequent work on modifications should those be required.

4.1.2 It should also be noted that the draft Core Strategy contains many aims, policies and proposals for community well-being and development *other than housing*. Thus the infrastructure audit needs to be considered against those intentions, which based on the examination proceedings are mostly uncontroversial – certainly compared to future housing requirements. So matters such as sustaining the town centre's vitality, increasing local employment in growing sectors of the economy, and ensuring greenspace and heritage assets are provided and protected, will all remain major good intentions. So in summary the development scenario which infrastructure should be compared against is one of the town perhaps growing in population by 10% -15% over the next 25 years, re-balancing and vitalising the local economy and creating more local jobs, and therefore a need for infrastructure and community facilities and services to make up any shortfall now and meet this considerable and diverse additional demand.

4.2 Infrastructure capacities, constraints and opportunities

The audit has confirmed four main things:

- the pressing need for infrastructure including community facilities to 'catch-up' with meeting current needs and requirements in a few key overstretched areas: schools, healthcare, living accommodation for those requiring support and care, and better protection from flooding risks;
- potential physical changes that might improve the functionality and vibrancy of the town: a better town centre space in the High Street and Market Place area; more car parking; more, better and safer pedestrian and cycle routes;
- that intervention via a Neighbourhood Plan might help to secure valued community assets such as Sheldon Bosley Hub, the removed junior football pitch at the London Road sports club, land for the needed development of the High School and Primary School, a new site for the Medical Centre; and
- when infrastructure capacity *has* caught-up, to then plan and provide for substantial additional demands, and to do this by using sustainable technologies and good practice.

5. Matters for the other Topic Groups

5.1 There needs to be consideration by the three other topic groups of this report such that a) the findings are acknowledged and accepted; and b) so that cross-topic issues and opportunities are carefully considered and potential proposals and projects are identified.

5.2 It is most important that 'green infrastructure' [see S1.3.3 for a list of what is included in this category] is researched, appraised and reported, to sit alongside this report. This task should be completed as soon as possible by the Environment Group.

5.3 Priority issues and opportunities

5.3.1 Without pre-empting a cross-topic group discussion several issues have been identified that merit consideration. Intervention through suitable policies and proposals should be considered, with the option of making site allocations as a basis for future projects.

5.3.2 A most pressing subject for consideration is flood risk management and land drainage. The excellent ongoing work by the dedicated community group and relevant agencies might well be supported and strengthened by strong policies about the volume and performance of new development not compounding this key issue and offsetting any emerging solutions. This cuts across the local economy, the built and green environment, and housing land supply and future numbers and locations. The interest in creating a riverside walk has been noted, this should be at the centre of considerations.

5.3.3 The need for an updated and improved medical centre has been identified. Finding a suitable site with the required capacity and location is a priority. The neighbourhood plan might assist this process with suitable policies and if realistic prospects of sites becoming available can be confirmed including one or more as 'site allocations'. There should be consideration across the economy, infrastructure and housing topic groups.

5.3.4 A similar comment to that in 5.3.3 applies to finding land for a new primary school. In particular the proximity of a substantial vacant [de-commissioning is understood to be in progress] nearby employment site has been noted, potentially available for re-use. The adjacent BT telecoms facility may be worth investigating. There should be consideration across the economy, infrastructure and housing topic groups.

5.3.5 The planned and proposed developments at the High School have been noted, this might also include a sports hall at the nearby leisure centre. How best the Neighbourhood Plan might safeguard and support these aims, possibly by a land designation within 'site allocations', should be considered principally by the infrastructure group but with inputs from the others as this approach merits cross-topic thinking.

5.3.6 Although the very good current range and capacities of community facilities, especially community halls, has been identified the future of the Sheldon Bosley Hub might be considered. With the lease soon up for renewal, and additional new housing in this area of the town, some clarity on the appropriate future of the facility from a wider community point of view would be timely. This will involve cross topic discussion between the infrastructure, economy and housing groups. Early dialogue with the operators of the facility should take place to ensure their aims and any commercial or planning constraints are appreciated.

5.3.7 Making the Market Place and High Street function better in traffic and pedestrian terms has emerged as a potentially controversial opportunity. Certainly care is needed as to how this aim might best be achieved as there have been notable successes and failures in other locations. The

starting point is a total cross topic consideration as all bear on the issue, especially economy and [built] environment. This assessment might also include car parking capacity.

5.3.8 More, better and safer pedestrian and cyclist connexions to and within the town centre has emerged as an opportunity. This is mainly for the infrastructure group to take forward, though reference to the consideration of the town centre functionality will be essential.

5.4 Sustainability appraisal

5.4.1 A final and generic issue for all topic groups is how most effectively to guide and embed energy efficiency and sustainable development¹¹. This bears on all of the mentioned infrastructure and related topics. A very good starting point is for the topic groups to decide how they will use 'sustainability appraisal' as a policy formulation tool. This methodology will figure in the plan-making by ensuring that the draft plan as a minimum is consistent with the other existing and emerging plans produced by the District Council. The point is that sustainability appraisal is a very helpful tool¹² well worth doing and not just because a 'box has to be ticked'. An early discussion across the topic groups should look at the application of the tool and get it moving before in-depth consideration of issues leads to emerging possible policies and proposals. An input from the District Council is required to ensure their approach is understood and they will 'buy-in' to what is done locally.

6. Addendum notes on open spaces, recreation and sports facilities

6.1 This addendum takes on board a September 2014 updated report to SDC by consultant Arup¹³, published by SDC in May 2015. This was an update of a 2011 report, part of the emerging Core Strategy evidence base. Arup had been instructed to assess across the District, including individual main rural centres such as Shipston on Stour, the then current and projected additional requirements for 'green infrastructure', which includes various types of public open spaces, sports and recreational facilities, and such as allotments and community orchards. The purpose of the study was to identify shortfalls and surpluses in the categories of provision such that what was identified as a requirement within the Core Strategy plan period to 2031 was listed in the related Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

6.2 The method used by Arup was to research the then current 2011 availability of the various categories, and compare what then existed with what published national standards indicated should be available. For the plan period to 2031 the additional demand due to anticipated population growth was calculated and added to the 2011 recorded deficit or surplus by category. A summary statement was made by category. So for Shipston on Stour the report provides a detailed listing of what was needed to meet projected local demands.

6.3 What has **not been done** is to compare the additional demand from Arup's assumed population growth to the probable population growth due to the considerable number of new dwelling granted planning permission over the last two or so years. As has been noted, particularly in the Housing topic audit and issues report, about many more new dwellings are likely to be built than was

¹¹ Definition: an approach to development that aims to allow economic growth without damaging the environment or natural resources so compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Locality Roadmap Guide Glossary of Terms 2012.

¹² Levett-Therivel 'DIY SA: Sustainability Appraisal of Neighbourhood Plans' August 2011

¹³ Arup: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment Update September 2014

assumed in the then emerging Core Strategy in 2014 when Arup reported. The point is that whilst the methodology applied by Arup was conventional and sound, the outcome very likely significantly under-represents actual needs for open spaces, recreation and sports assets in the town up to 2031.

6.4 The categories of 'open spaces' as researched by Arup are:

Parks and gardens;
Amenity green spaces;
Provision for children and young people;
Outdoors sports facilities;
Indoor sports facilities;
Natural and semi-natural accessible green spaces;
Allotments and community orchards; and
Other open spaces such as churchyards and cemeteries.

It should be noted that the Environment topic audit and issues report looked in section 3.3 therein at public open space and countryside access. There is some overlap and duplication. When the team considers cross-topic issues this overlap will no doubt be picked up.

The summary position for the town as recorded by Arup for the above categories is as follows:

- A significant more than 2 ha. deficit of parks, gardens and amenity green spaces, including formal provision for children and young people such as play areas; though the good access to what does exist was noted;
- A significant deficit of natural and semi-natural green space, about 4 ha. less than should be available;
- A very good existing amount of outdoors sports provision, with no need for more;
- Somewhat less than is required for indoor sports, with additional capacity recommended to meet the needs of the town and surrounding villages;
- A shortfall in allotments and community orchards provision with an extra 1 ha. needed; and
- Roughly what is needed in the 'other open spaces' category exists.

So the picture that emerges from the Arup analysis is that to meet the future needs of the town and surrounding villages quite a lot of additional open spaces, additional recreational spaces and some indoor sports capacity is required. Refer to the published Infrastructure Delivery Plan¹⁴ component of the draft Core Strategy¹⁵ for the full details. The published requirement from Arup is, as stated above, based on the then 2014 assumed additional population growth and new dwellings. When the consented new dwelling numbers are factored in this will arguably add further and substantially to demand up to 2031.

Of particular note is that the Arup analysis took no account of the quality and fitness-for-purpose of what was identified. That was not part of their brief. But perhaps the neighbourhood plan team might look at this aspect as well as the probable undershoot of recommended provision when considering the implications.

¹⁴ See Arup report as footnote 13 'Input to Infrastructure Delivery Plan' at pages 100 – 106 therein

¹⁵ Latest SDC publication is 'Interim Adopted Core Strategy Proposed Modifications' June 2015

7. Supplementary Note about Shipston on Stour flooding local circumstances and the SDC Core Strategy

Policies CS.4 and AS.6 address the risk of flooding within the District however it is considered that the circumstances in Shipston demand that the Flood Policy FLD 1 within Neighbourhood Plan has greater ambition than simply meeting NPPF guidelines which broadly are for new developments to achieve 'Flood Risk Neutrality' for surface water run-off.

The circumstances that 'drive' this decision are largely geological but also recognise that the Environment Agency are already reviewing the need for a stronger policy than the current 1 in 100 yr plus 30% climate change requirement.

The Stour Catchment lying upstream of Shipston is approx. 187 sq km and principally comprises 3 ordinary watercourses flowing from high ground in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire into the main river in Warwickshire. In spate, the main river is incapable of accommodating the flows from these watercourses and regularly sees out of bank flows. These culminate at Shipston Bridge which is a bottleneck for such flows which then overtop the roadway and can flood the town. This has happened in 1998 and 2007 and has come close in 2012 and 2015 when closure of the Brailes road was forced.

Additionally Shipston is in a bowl and during heavy rainfall water run-off from this results in the overtopping of road drains down the Campden Rd from the west and over road water flows down towards and into the town. This happens every year but is a particular problem to the western end of Queens Ave and to the Oldbutt Rd junction with Campden Rd.

The combination of these 2 factors results in Shipston specifically being at significant risk of flooding and a local flood group (SAFAG) have been working with The Environment Agency, Warwickshire CC, Shipston Town Council and other agencies to develop Natural Flood Management schemes upstream of Shipston to 'Slow the Flow' of water from all sources during heavy rainfall events to reduce peak river flows and spread them over a longer period.

To complement this they have also been discussing and agreeing SuDS systems which exceed NPPF requirements and which can achieve 'betterment' compared with previous land use with developers. This has met with considerable success and as most of these developments are taking place or are planned to be built within the Campden Rd 'bowl' above and to the west of the town such 'betterment' will assist in reducing flood risk from surface water 'run-off'.

Hence FLD 1 is a contributing policy entirely consistent with the aims that the town has for flood alleviation.

Phil Wragg,
Flooding Topic Lead,
26 September 2017.

