

# Stratford Neighbourhood Plan

## Housing

Stratford-upon-Avon is a wonderful place to live, set in attractive countryside. As a result people chose to settle here which creates demand for housing. Over the last few years this has resulted in a lot of development creating urban sprawl and problems with infrastructure. The age profile of Stratford is also different from the Country as a whole, with a shortage of residents in the 18-35 age range.

The role of a Neighbourhood Plan is not to prevent future development. The district Council will decide how many houses will be built in Stratford during the plan period but this Neighbourhood Plan is a mechanism for Townspeople to influence where development should go and to set design priorities.

We are suggesting that new homes should be built on “brownfield” land which has already been developed (eg: by regenerating the canal area) instead of building on greenfield sites.

## Jobs

Stratford upon Avon currently enjoys relatively high levels of employment. We would like this to continue as the town grows. The NP focus is therefore on retaining existing employers in the town as well as attracting additional high value-added employment.

The Employment Land Study in 2011 recommended that there is a need for additional employment land in the form of a business park in Stratford-upon-Avon. One solution would be for the development of a business park close to the A46 and the new railway station. This would be an opportunity to remove unneighbourly or poorly sited uses from current industrial estates near the town centre and relocate them to a more sustainable location. It would also allow lorries to access these businesses directly from the A46 without passing through town.

## Town Centre

Stratford has an historic town centre with a rich past. Its heritage comes from being a market town as well as being the place of Shakespeare’s birth. In many ways the town centre works and is successful. It remains popular with its residents, its tourists and theatre lovers.

The Neighbourhood Plan needs to ensure that future development is conducted in a coordinated manner to support retail, protect the town’s heritage and encourage tourism without being dominated by it; a town that residents and visitors can access, move about in and enjoy.

## Environment, Sustainability and Open Spaces

Stratford’s green spaces are the single most important thing that people like about the town. We are therefore suggesting that existing green and open spaces need to be protected and improved, with measures to safeguard and enhance the town’s biodiversity and natural environment - in particular the River Avon corridor and the town’s trees.

This Plan also needs to look ahead to likely changes in future years – such as the implications of climate change, possible flooding and drainage problems, energy efficiency and sustainable construction.

## **Infrastructure**

Stratford's road system dates from the middle ages and the town suffers from congestion. It has a partial ring road where the A46 carries traffic to the north-west of the town, but all traffic from the south and east has to pass through the town centre. Further improvements to town centre junctions are needed, and the weight of through traffic through the town needs to be addressed.

Bus services within the town are generally good, but the lack of a bus station leads to vehicles lying over in the main streets of the town centre. It is also important that there are good inter-changes between different modes of transport – in particular at the town's railway stations.

House building in Stratford has not been matched by the provision of school places. With more housing development planned, it is important that school provision keeps pace with the changes in population.

## **Leisure and Wellbeing and Community**

Stratford upon Avon, as a major tourist destination, has theatres, restaurants, and cafes in the town centre. It has, however, fewer facilities for young people and families. Stratford's recent dramatic expansion in housing has also created a deficit in community and leisure facilities.

Stratford's population age profile is above the national average. This places a strain on the budgets for health care.

## **Heritage**

Stratford-upon-Avon is probably the best known heritage market towns in the country. A number of heritage considerations have been addressed in the sections above. However, further considerations, which do not fall into the above categories, have been identified during the course of consultation.