Shropshire Local Transport Plan 3

Evidence Base

Part 1: Travel and Transport Provision and Trends

February 2011

Introduction

This report sets out the evidence base for developing the new Local Transport Plan for Shropshire. The new plan will cover the period 2011 to 2026. The information in this report will be used to help develop the most effective policies for the new plan and to prioritise our investment in order to best achieve our transport goals and wider economic, social and environmental benefits.

The report has been broken into six parts; each part identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Shropshire's transport goals.

Part 1: Travel provision and trends
Provides a simple portrait of Shropshire; sets out the current transport provision, including roads, public transport, walking and cycling facilities and provides a picture of how the infrastructure and services are utilised

Part 2: Consultation report
Outlines the results of consultation undertaken with local residents, LTP stakeholders, businesses and young people. Consultation identifies Shropshire's main transport issues and priorities to be included in the Local Transport Plan.

Part 3: Economy and growth
Provides a portrait of Shropshire's economy; identifies the main business sectors and the levels and types of employment and areas where growth is anticipated. Gives a short summary of Shropshire's economic development strategy and indentifies areas economy-related transport issues.

Part 4: Traffic, carbon reduction and environment
Outlines patterns of recent and predicted traffic growth in Shropshire and the implications of this growth. Sets out levels of carbon emissions in Shropshire, targets for their reduction and projections for carbon growth. Provides a portrait Shropshire's environment and possible transport impacts on it.

Part 5: Accessibility and health
Outlines areas where there are issues and concerns about accessibility and provides a portrait of current and future levels of health in Shropshire.

Part 6: Safety and security
Provides a portrait of road traffic accident and casualty rates and trends across all modes of transport in Shropshire. Analyses Shropshire residents' perception of safety and security.

1. Shropshire portrait

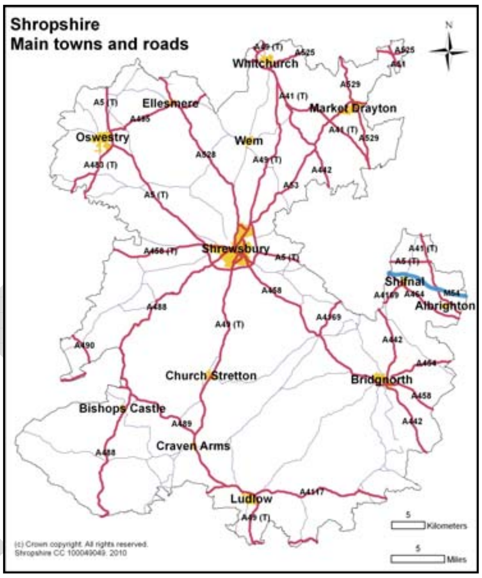
Spatial layout

With a total population of 292,800 (2008) and only 0.9 persons per hectare, Shropshire is one of the most sparsely populated counties in England.

Shrewsbury is the historic county town and the largest settlement, containing about a quarter of the total population. It is the main commercial, cultural and administrative centre for Shropshire, with a catchment that extends into mid Wales.

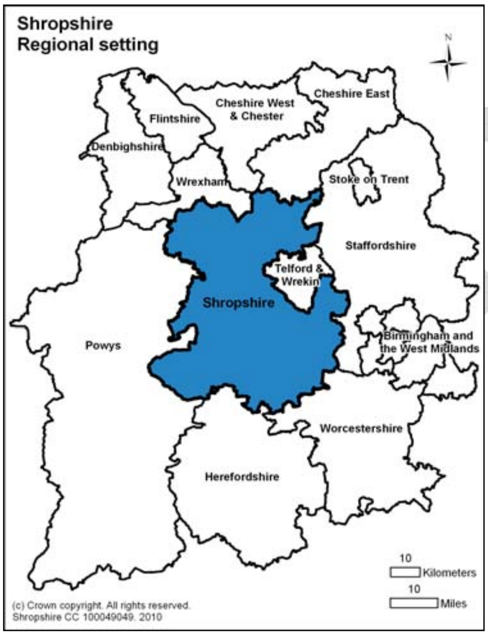
The main market towns of Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Ludlow and Whitchurch are much smaller and together contain about 20% of the total population. They provide a range of facilities and services for their resident communities and surrounding rural hinterlands. There are a further 13 smaller market towns and key centres, home to a further 19% of the population.

Figure 1.1 Main towns and roads in Shropshire



Outside the market towns and key centres, the population is spread widely and sparsely with many small settlements, hamlets and dispersed dwellings within the countryside. Overall, around 36% of the population live in rural areas.

Figure 1.2 Shropshire in a regional setting



Links to other areas

Shropshire has strong links with the neighbouring unitary council, Telford & Wrekin. The eastern parts of Shropshire also have strong connections with the West Midlands conurbation. Parts of north Shropshire have strong links with the Potteries and with towns in south Cheshire, and are also influenced by Merseyside and Manchester. Oswestry, the second largest town in Shropshire, has strong links with Wrexham and adjacent areas within Wales. The southern and western parts of the county are generally more remote and self contained, but also have links with Powys, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Economic overview

Shropshire has a predominantly small business economy, with 87% of businesses employing 10 or fewer staff. The service sector accounts for over three quarters (77.9%) of all jobs.

Employment in agriculture (3.6%) and construction (6.3%) is higher than national and regional averages. Manufacturing employs 11.5% of workers and there are a small number of major employers in manufacturing and food processing. 25.6% of workers work in distribution, hotels and restaurants whilst the public sector is the largest sector with 28.5% of jobs in health, education and local government.

Unemployment rates in Shropshire are relatively low; the unemployment rate in 2006 was 1.3% compared to the GB average of 2.6%. However on average workers in Shropshire have significantly lower wages than those in other areas. Average weekly wages in 2007 were £410 in Shropshire and £478 in the UK. Wages in Shropshire rank 15th lowest out of 149 county and unitary authority areas.

Demographics

The 2008 mid year population estimate for Shropshire is 292,800. Between 1991 and 2008 Shropshire's population grew by 8.2% (24,100 people) due to immigration, mainly from neighbouring areas. The population is projected to grow by a further 36,800 (12.6%) to 329,600 by 2026.

There are 122,800 households in Shropshire (2006). The number of households is projected to increase by 24% to 152,300 by 2026, contributing to the need to provide additional housing.

The total Shropshire population stood at 292,800 in 2008, of which 144,600 (49.4%) were men and 148,300 (50.6%) were women.

Table 1.1 Population by age group in Shropshire, 2008.

Age	Total Population		Male		Females	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
0-4	14,800	5.0%	7,500	5.2%	7,300	4.9%
5-10	19,000	6.4%	9,600	6.5%	9,400	6.4%
11-15	18,500	6.3%	9,800	6.7%	8,800	5.9%
16-29	43,300	14.8%	22,900	16.3%	19,800	13.4%
30-44	55,200	18.9%	27,200	18.8%	28,100	18.9%
45-Retirement Age	71,900	25.6%	41,000	28.3%	31,000	20.9%
Retirement Age-74	42,300	14.4%	14,900	10.3%	27,300	18.4%
75+	47,900	9.5%	11,200	7.8%	16,700	11.2%
All ages	292,800	100%	144,600	100%	148,300	100%

Source: 2008 Mid-Year Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright 2008

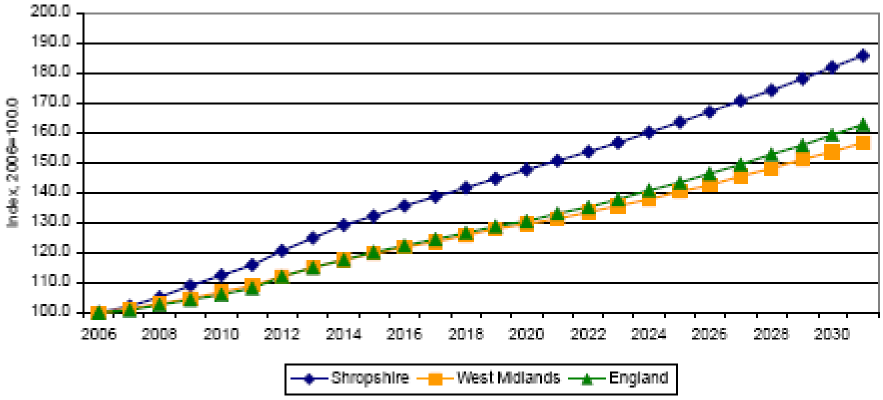
Shropshire has a rapidly ageing population, caused by longer life expectancies, the net in-migration of people of retirement age and the higher than average out-migration of young people. Almost 20% of Shropshire residents are aged 65 and over compared to 16% nationally[1]. Most migration is from neighbouring areas. The south of the county in particular supports a very high retirement age population, with 22.4% aged 65 and over.

The population of Shropshire is projected to grow by 16% by 2031[2], increasing from 289,300 to 338,000 an increase of 48,700 people. Most of this increase will be seen in the older age groups, with an additional 48,100 people aged over 65. This will increase the proportion of the population over this age to 31%. The number of people aged over 75 is projected to double, so that by 2031 nearly one in every 6 people will be aged over 75.

A population comprising above average numbers of older people impacts on the local economy and puts pressure on public services. It has significant impacts on transport particularly as people become less able to drive, and become more reliant upon public transport services.

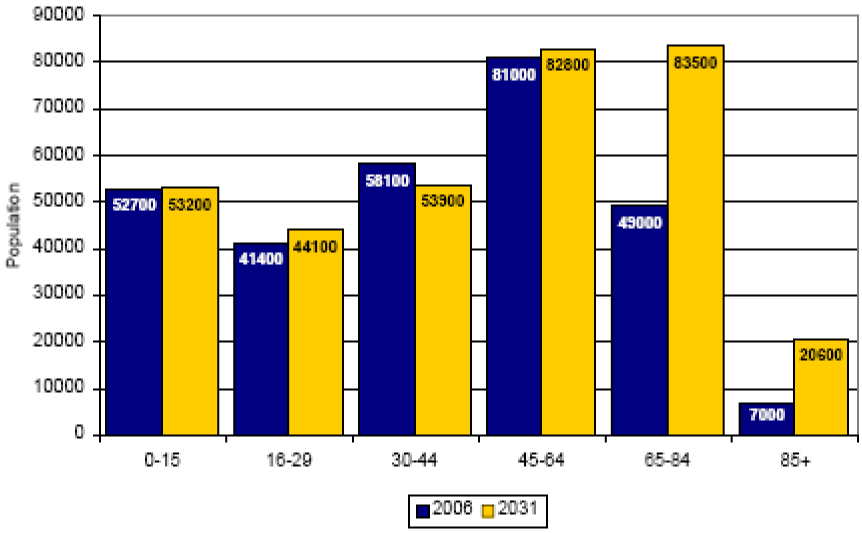
[1] ***2008 mid year population estimates***
[2] **Based on 2006 data, ONS data**

Figure 1.3 Projected population growth aged 65 and over, 2006-31



Source: Mid-year population estimates 1991-2006 and 2006 based sub-national projections, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Crown Copyright

Figure 1.4 Breakdown of the Shropshire population, 2006-31



Source: Mid-year population estimates 1991-2006 and 2006 based sub-national projections, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Crown Copyright 2010

Figure 1.5 Ageing population: Shropshire in comparison with its statistical neighbours, 2011

	% 65 and over	% 85 and over
Dorset	34.8	7.1
Herefordshire	32.9	6.6
Shropshire	**30.8**	**6.1**
Somerset	28.9	5.7
Devon	27.9	5.5
Lincolnshire	29.1	5.4
Norfolk	28.0	5.4
Worcestershire	27.1	5.4
Wiltshire	26.5	5.2
Gloucestershire	26.6	5.2
Suffolk	26.7	5.0

Source: Mid-year population estimates 1991-2006 and 2006 based sub-national projections, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Crown Copyright 2010

New development

There are 122,800 households in Shropshire (2006). The number of households is projected to increase to 152,300 by 2026, an increase of 24%. This is due to the projected population increase and the trend towards smaller households.

Shropshire's new Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2026) plans to provide a total of 27,500 new homes (22% increase) to help meet this additional housing demand. It plans for a third (9,000) to be "affordable housing" to address the significant housing affordability issue. It also plans for up to 290 hectares of employment land and premises. It will be important for new employment to be delivered alongside housing development to prevent a significant increase in employment related out-commuting

The distribution of housing will be very much in line with current population distribution, with 25% in the Shrewsbury 'growth point', 40% in market towns to help encourage self containment and enhance their traditional role of providing local services. 35% of new housing would be in rural areas, focused upon community hubs and community clusters with the aim of attracting associated employment opportunities, affordable housing and local services and facilities in these areas to enhance rural sustainability.

Whilst the distribution of housing allocations are still in the process of being determined, initial indications are that of the larger towns Whitchurch and Oswestry could see the most significant growth.

Shropshire is also likely to be increasingly influenced by Telford which is expected to grow its population, housing and employment at even more rapid rates than Shropshire. Telford and Wrekin council are planning for an additional 26,500 houses by 2026, 25,000 will be in Telford, an increase of 46%.

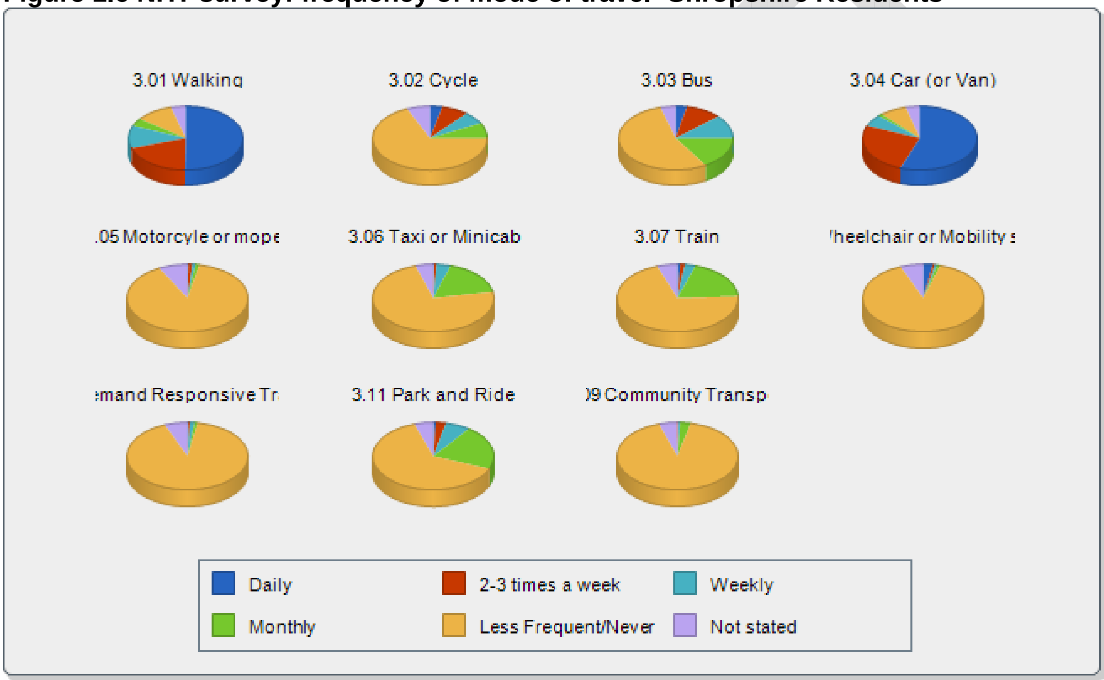
2. Travel patterns

Travel mode use

An indication of Shropshire residents' use of different travel modes can be obtained from the 2009 NHT public satisfaction survey. The survey asked the 1,061 respondents from across the county about their travel habits.

The responses show car use and walking to be the predominant modes, with around 55% using a car and half walking on a daily basis. Around a quarter of respondents used a bus and 20% used a cycle on a weekly or more frequent basis. Regular use of other modes was much lower; although over a quarter used park and ride at least monthly, and just under a quarter used the train or a taxi on a monthly basis.

Figure 1.6 NHT survey: frequency of mode of travel- Shropshire Residents



Travel to work

The most detailed set of travel data available is data on journeys to work collected as part of the 2001 census.

Journeys to work represent around 15% of all journeys, and almost 19% of the average distance covered by all trips. Journeys to work are an important element of overall travel providing an important link in the working of the county's economy. Understanding work journey is particularly important as they contribute significantly to congestion because they tend to be concentrated at peak periods.

Modal split

In 2001 13% of all those employed in Shropshire worked at home, this is substantially higher than the national average.

Of those who travelled to work, the majority travelled by car or van, 68% driving and 7% as passengers. These levels are similar to other rural areas of England. 15% or Shropshire workers walked to work and 4% cycled, both rates are higher than the national average. Only 3% used the bus and 1% used the train, lower than nationally.

Figure 1.7 Usual travel to work mode for people living in Shropshire in employment (aged 16-74), 2011 Census

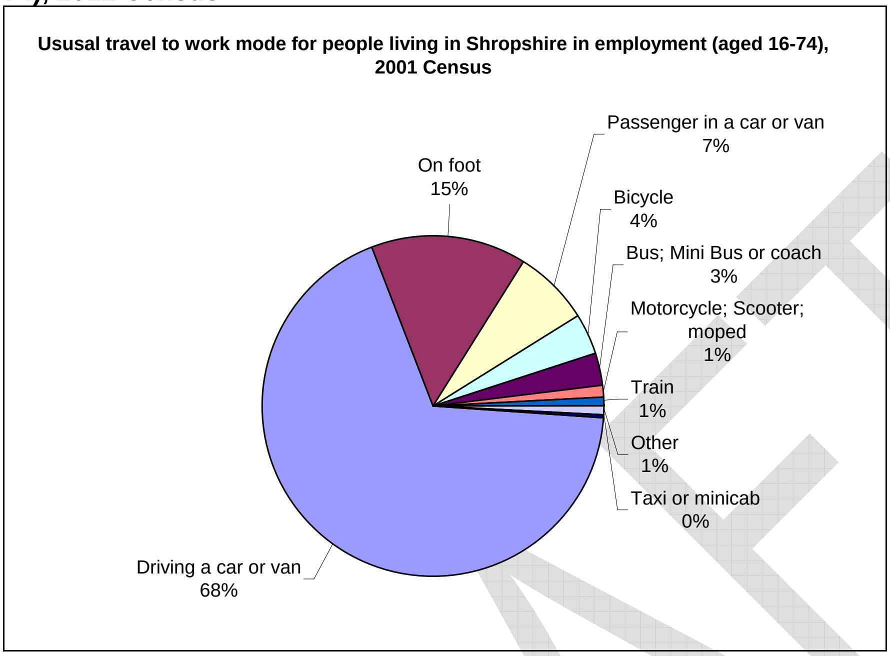
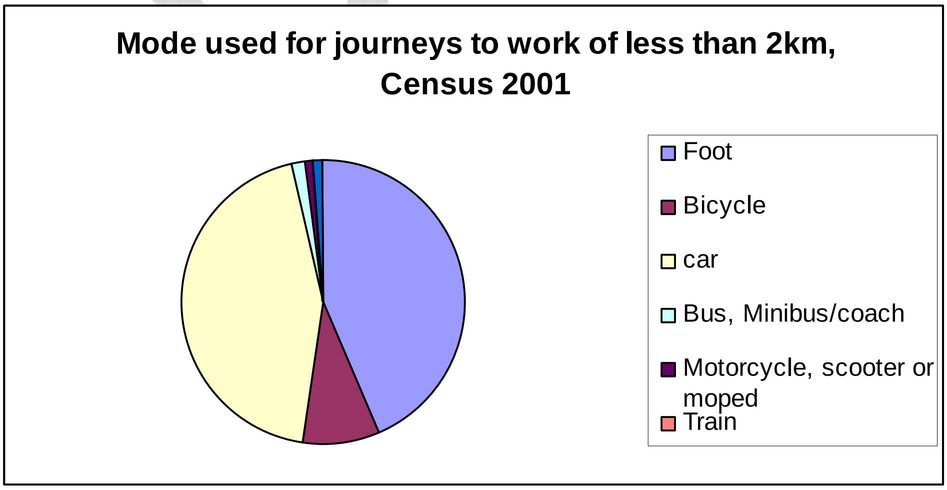


Table 1.2 Usual travel to work mode for people living in employment (aged 16-74), 2011 Census

	Driving a car or van	On foot	Passenger in a car or van	Bicycle	Bus; Mini Bus or coach	Train	Motorcycle; Scooter; moped	Other	Taxi or minicab
Shropshire	68.1	14.6	7.3	4.0	3.0	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.4
All England rural counties	67.5	11.1	7.0	3.5	4.5	3.8	1.2	1.0	0.4

Even for very short journeys there are high levels of car use. 28% of work journeys are less than 2km. Over half of journeys of this distance are made by foot or bicycle; however 44% are made by car.

Figure 1.8 Mode used for journeys to work of less than 2km, Census 2001



Distance travelled

In 2001 Shropshire residents travelled a total distance of 1,525,000 km to work each day, an average of 15.88km per person.

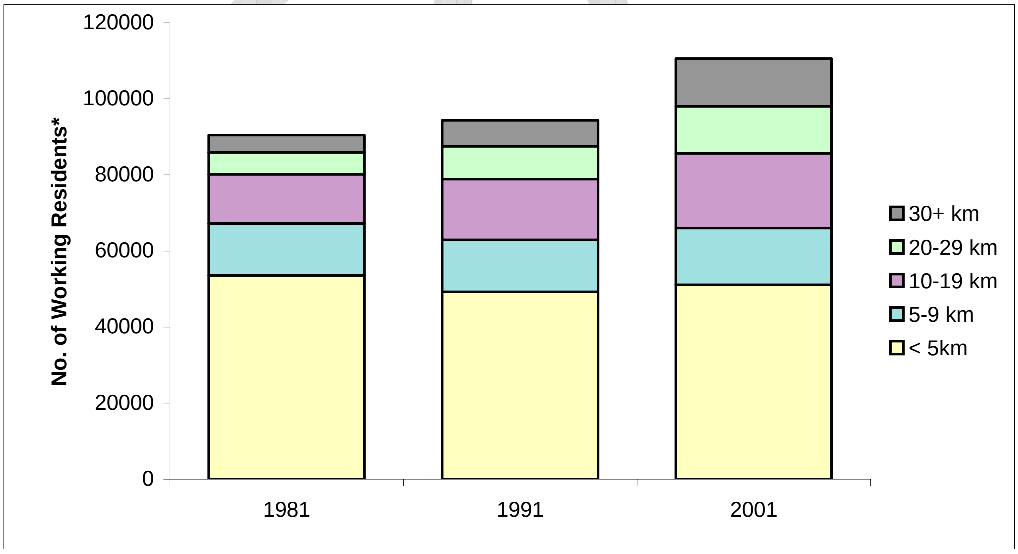
Many people, however, travel relatively short distances to work. In 2001 over a quarter of work journeys were less than 2km (1.2miles), and over half were less than 10km (6.25miles) only 11% of workers travelled more than 30km (18.75miles) to get to work.

Table 1.3 Distances travelled to work, Census 2001

Distance travelled to work (KM)	% of all journeys this distance	Cumulative %
Less than 2	28	28
2 to 5	15	44
5 to 10	13	56
10 to 20	17	73
20 to 30	10	84
30 to 40	4	87
40 to 60	3	90
60+	4	94
Other	5	100

However the trend over the past few decades is for an increase in longer distance commuters. Comparing 1981 and 2001 while there has been only a small drop in the number of workers making short journeys, there has also been a significant increase in the overall workforce and a corresponding increase in workers who travel longer distances to work.

Figure 1.9 Distance travelled to work by Shropshire residents, 1981 to 2001



Source: 1981 and 1991 Census Special Workplace Statistics, 2001 Standard Tables. Crown Copyright 2005.* Excludes those working at home or outside the UK, or with no fixed work place.

Commuting and employment self-containment

Local economies which have a greater propensity for self-containment tend to be more robust as they are less likely to experience significant levels of retail expenditure leakage and are more likely to supply appropriate infrastructure and housing to satisfy the demands of the local workforce.

Overall Shropshire has a relatively high level of self containment with 76% of residents who work working within the county. However there is significant variation across the county. Shrewsbury is the most self contained with 70% of workers living in Shrewsbury working there, and 76% of workers within the old borough area working there. Ludlow is also quite self-contained. Bridgnorth is the least self contained.

As mobility has increased since 1971 levels of self containment have fallen in all areas, However, rates are still higher than in less remote parts of England, for example self containment rates for Leicestershire districts range between 44% and 62%.

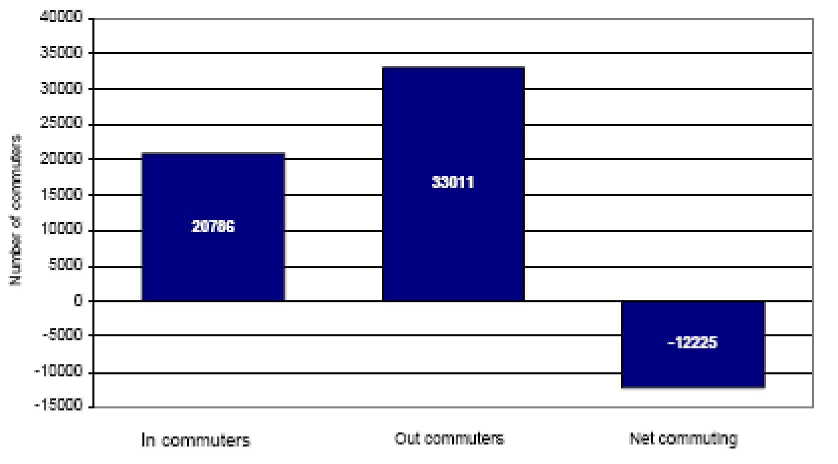
Table 1.4 % of resident workers working in area of residence

District	1971	1981	1991	2001
Bridgnorth	67%	62%	58%	55%
North Shropshire	78%	73%	69%	63%
Oswestry	78%	78%	79%	68%
Shrewsbury and Atcham	90%	87%	83%	76%
South Shropshire	81%	80%	74%	68%
Shropshire	N/A	N/A	81%	76%

Source: National Statistics, 1971, 1981 and 1991 Census Special Workplace Statistics (SWS), 2001 SWS Table 107, © Crown Copyright 2005.

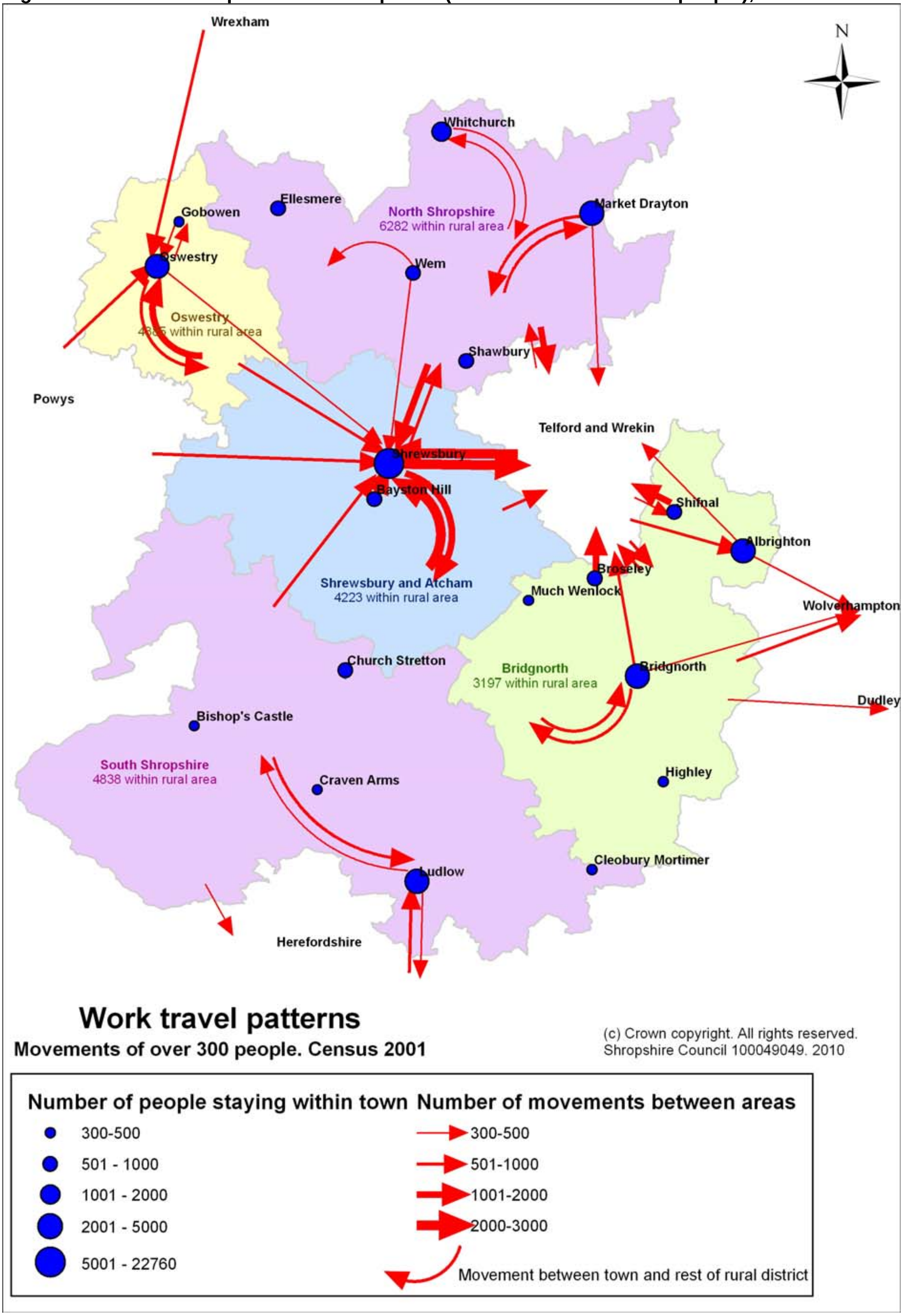
In 2001, 53,797 workers commuted into or out of Shropshire, of which 20,786 travelled into the county and 33,011 travelled out of the county; net commuting therefore stood -12,225 in this year. Consequently, Shropshire is heavily reliant on jobs outside the county to support the resident workforce, with almost a quarter of resident workers (24.4%) employed outside the county. Meanwhile, 16.9% of county jobs were occupied by non-county residents in this year. It should be noted that the only reliable data available on commuting patterns and self-containment relates to the last census (2001) and that patterns may have changed over the last decade and especially since the economic downturn as local residents have been forced to travel further to access employment.

Figure 1.10 Levels of commuting in Shropshire 2001



Source: 2001 Census Special Workplace Statistics (SWS207). Crown Copyright. 2010

Figure 1.11 Work travel patterns in Shropshire (movements of over 300 people), Census 2001



Levels of commuting vary considerably across the county, with Bridgnorth in particular supporting especially high numbers of out-commuters. The proximity and influence of the West Midlands' conurbation mean that significant numbers of Bridgnorth residents work in the Black County, particularly in Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell. The numbers travelling to Telford, Shrewsbury, Wyre Forest (Kidderminster) and South Staffordshire are also sizeable.

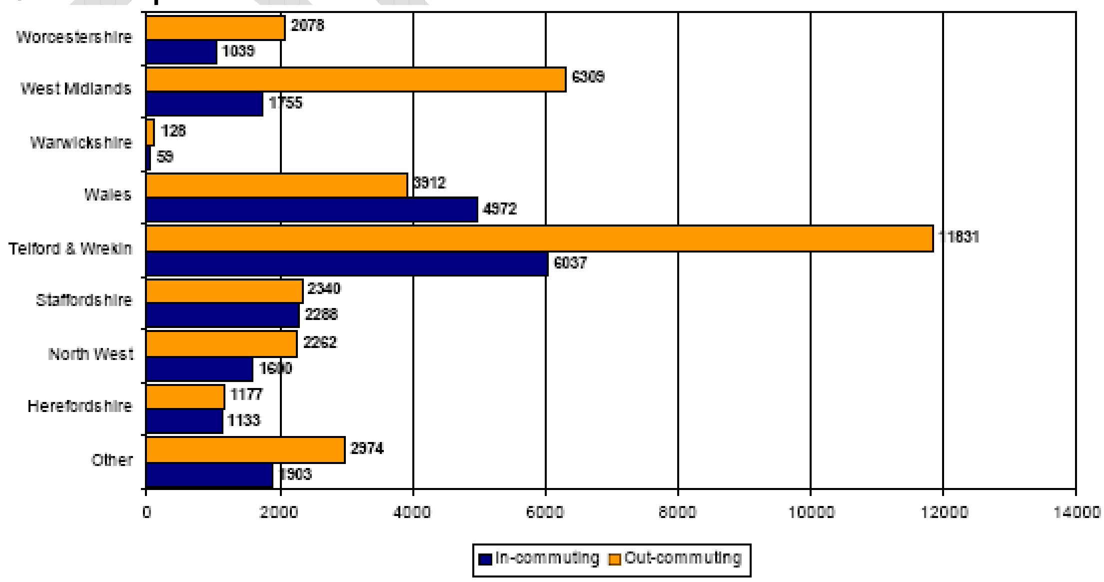
Reasons for low levels of self-containment in Bridgnorth are twofold – firstly, a lack of local jobs means that residents are forced to seek employment further a field. Secondly, the high quality of life on offer in Shropshire means that many people offered jobs outside the county prefer to reside in Shropshire and commute out rather than live closer to their place of employment. Bridgnorth is ideally located for this.

Levels of commuting in the south of Shropshire are lower, although cross border commuting between Herefordshire and Shropshire is in evidence. A high level of employment in agriculture as well as significant levels of home working in the south of the county boosts levels of self-containment. However, it should be noted that accessibility and job opportunities may also influence the level of home working in more rural locations.

The following graph shows the important relationship between Shropshire and several of its neighbours. The links between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin are self-evident, with 17,868 people travelling between the two destinations for work purposes in 2001. Although Telford is undoubtedly a very important source of jobs for Shropshire residents, more Telford residents work in Shropshire than residents in any of the other neighbouring counties.

Naturally the links between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin are most acute in Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury and are much weaker in Oswestry and the extreme south of the county. Links with Wales are important, both in terms of in-commuting and out-commuting, especially with Oswestry and the Welsh border areas in the west and south of the county. More workers commute from Shropshire to the West Midlands, Worcestershire and the North West than vice versa, with Herefordshire and Staffordshire both supplying and receiving roughly equal numbers of in and out commuters.

Figure 1.12 In-commuting by place of residence and out-commuting by area of workplace to/from Shropshire 2001



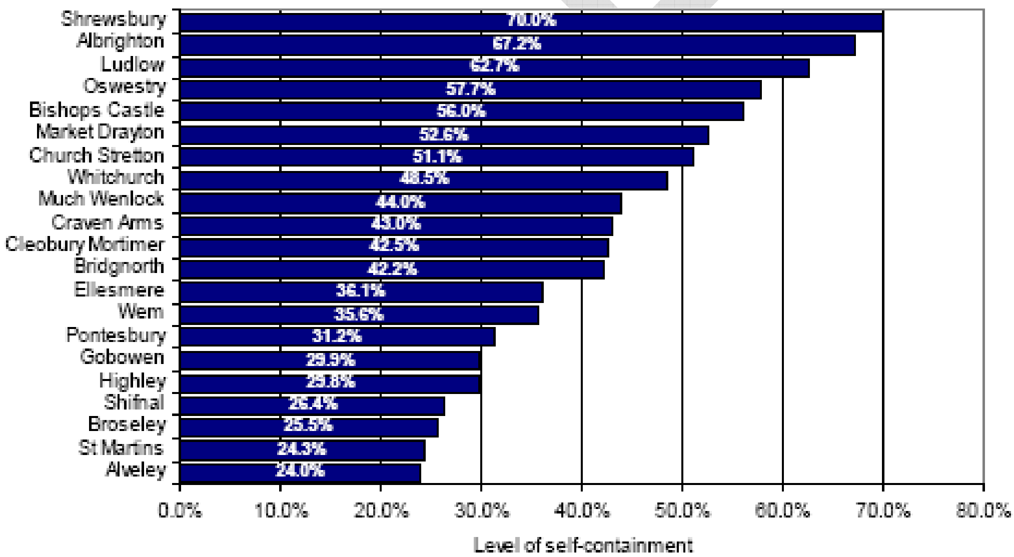
Source: 2001 Census Special Workplace Statistics (SWS207). Crown Copyright. 2010

In 2001, 33,011 Shropshire residents worked outside the county, 24.4% of the working population. For Shropshire's out-commuters the most popular workplaces were Telford & Wrekin, where 36% (11,831) worked and the West Midlands conurbation, where 19% (6,309) worked.

20,786 people from outside worked in the county, 16.9% of those working in Shropshire. The highest numbers lived in Telford & Wrekin (6,037) followed by Powys (2,425) and Wrexham (1,819).

Looking specifically at levels of self-containment in Shrewsbury and Shropshire's key market towns and service centres, it is clear that some settlements are significantly less self-contained than others. Naturally, larger towns tend to offer a broader range of job opportunities and as such, self-containment is higher. Shrewsbury, with its relatively wide range and availability of jobs, is the most self contained town in the county (70% of resident workers working in the town in 2001), with Albrighton – including the RAF base at Cosford - (67.2%) and Ludlow (62.7%) having the next highest levels of self containment. In contrast, in the smaller settlements of Alveley and St Martins less than a quarter of resident workers are employed locally.

Figure 1.13 Levels of self-containment by town, 2001



Source: 2001 Census Special Workplace Statistics (SWS207). Crown Copyright. 2010

Diminishing levels of self-containment could have serious implications for the future viability of towns where the number of residents employed locally is falling. In particular towns located towards the county's borders, and especially those in the east of Shropshire, are in danger of becoming dormitories.

Commuting patterns tend to be very different for different occupational groups. Lower grade jobs are generally filled by more local workers, although the proximity to the county borders of most of Shropshire's market towns means that the largest employers located in these towns rely on out-of-county workers to meet their labour force requirements.

Those employed in managerial of professional occupations are generally prepared to travel much further to access appropriate employment, with journey times of an hour or more not unusual.

Retail and leisure travel patterns

In terms of access to convenience retail opportunities, Shropshire is relatively well served; as a rural county, much of the population has to travel further than their more urban counterpart to their nearest supermarket, but notwithstanding this, 61.2% of the population is within 2km of a supermarket (compared with 87% of the population in England). 6% of the population is more than 10km from a supermarket. Much of the population lives much further from major shopping centres which offer a wide range of comparison goods. This (in addition to high levels of out-commuting) perhaps means that retail expenditure leakage is comparatively high.

Figure 1.14 2007 retail centre rankings

Ranking	Town	Comparison Spend £ million
1	Birmingham Central	1,417
2	Merry Hill	841
3	Stoke-on-Trent	646
4	Coventry	645
5	Wolverhampton	569
6	Walsall	492
7	Solihull	450
8	Worcester	440
9	Shrewsbury	399
10	Burton-upon-Trent	373

Source: Experian, 2007

Shrewsbury is nonetheless a strongly performing retail and service centre serving not only Shropshire but parts of Telford and Wrekin and Mid-Wales. According to Experian data, Shrewsbury is one of the top 10 retail centres in the West Midlands. Conversely, Telford town centre is also an important shopping destination for Shropshire residents and is the main beneficiary of leaked retail spend. Whilst Shrewsbury has a reputation for independent retailers, Telford shopping centre comprises predominantly chain stores and as such the two locations act as complementary shopping destinations.

The largest towns in the north of the county are Oswestry, Whitchurch and Market Drayton. Oswestry acts as a commercial and administrative centre, serving a much wider area extending into Wales. South Shropshire, however, has extremely strong links with Herefordshire for retail.

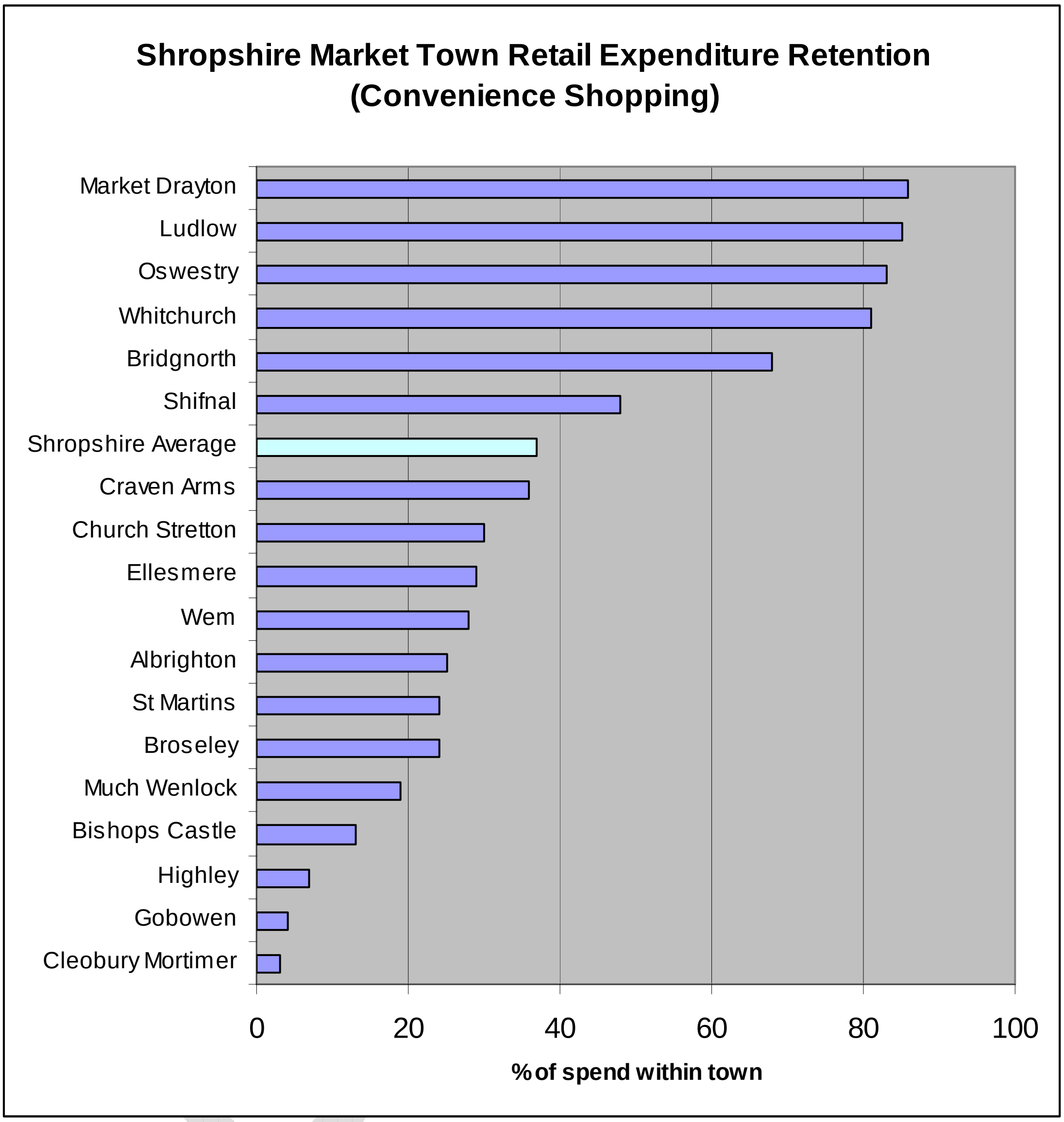
In terms of the night-time and leisure economy, Shrewsbury is the major hub for Shropshire, with a concentration of pubs and restaurants, a cinema complex, bowling centre and nightclubs attracting people from across the county.

Restaurants and public houses are found across the county, with 87.8% of the population living within 2km of a public house; however, a significant number of pubs have closed in Shropshire in the recent past as they have elsewhere in the country meaning that rural residents are becoming increasingly dependent on towns for social activities.

Bridgnorth is less self-contained than other Shropshire market towns in respect of the retail and leisure market, and has extremely strong links with both Telford and Wolverhampton, with the latter in particular representing an important entertainment and leisure centre for Bridgnorth residents.

The proportion of convenience (grocery) shopping expenditure retained within each of Shropshire's market towns is shown in fig 1.15. Retention is largely related to size of settlement and presence of major supermarkets; however it can be seen that Bridgnorth retains considerably less expenditure than comparably sized market towns. Conversely Shifnal has a relatively high level of retention, despite no major supermarket chain and relative proximity to Telford.

Figure1.15 Shropshire market town retail expenditure retention (convenience shopping)

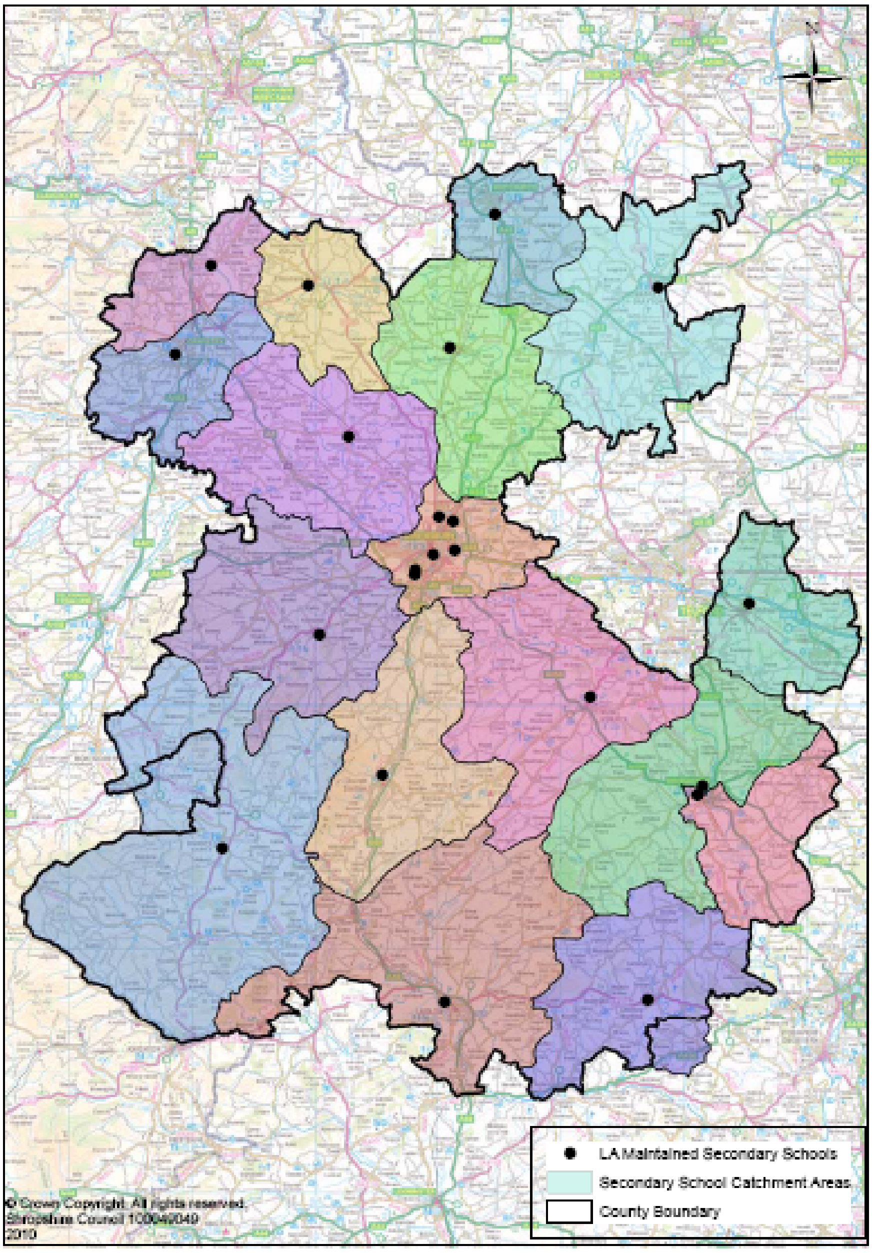


Education travel

Nationally 12% of all journeys are those made for education purposes; including journeys to escort children to school. School journeys are also particularly important because they are undertaken at peak travel times (particularly in the morning) and also influence travel mode for some work journeys.

88% of Shropshire households live within 2km of a primary school, while only 56% of households live within 2km of a secondary school. In some parts of the county, especially in the rural south, pupils have to travel a considerable distance for secondary education.

Figure 1.16 Secondary school catchment areas in Shropshire

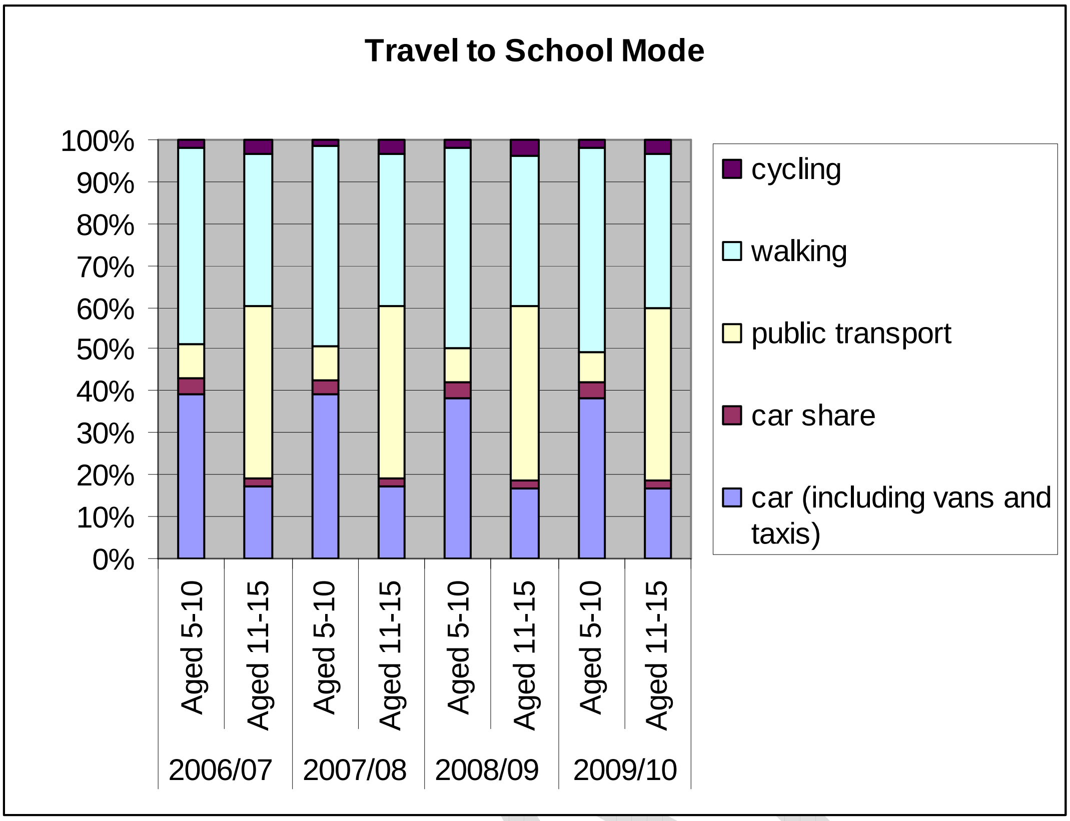


Students have to travel further distances to reach post 16 education; and there is considerable cross border travel. 21% of year 11 students studied out of county in 2009, and 18% of those accessing Further Education in Shropshire travelled form outside of Shropshire. Ludlow and Walford & North Shropshire Colleges both import a substantial 29% of their learners.

Shropshire does not benefit directly from the presence of a university; local students do attend nearby HE colleges (including Harper Adams and the University of Wolverhampton) although even more move away from home to study elsewhere.

The mode of travel for the school journey is shown below:

Figure 1.17 Mode of travel to school



88% of Shropshire households are within 2km of a primary school, however only 51% travel by foot or cycle, 42% of primary level pupils travel by car. 10% travel by car and live within half a mile of their school and 19% live within a mile but travel by car. However, a significant proportion of car users are from the 29% of primary pupils who do not attend their local catchment school.

Distances to secondary schools are much greater with only 56% of households within 2km of a secondary school. However 19% of secondary pupils do not attend their catchment school. 40% of secondary pupils travel by public transport (predominately bus) and 40% walk or cycle, with 19% travelling by car. Only 4% travel by car and live within a mile of their school.

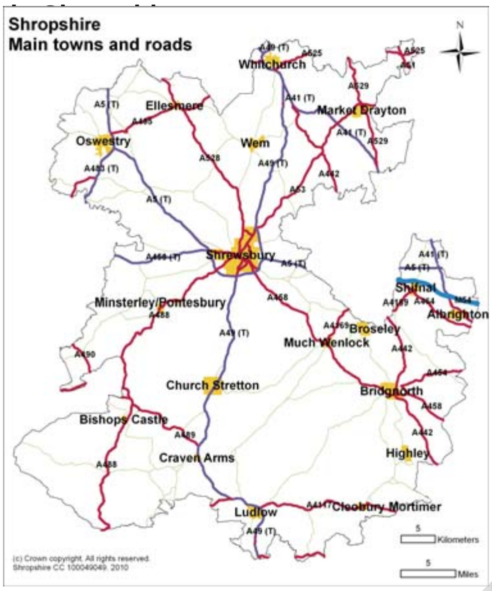
Travel mode is often related to school choice. Pupils who choose out of catchments schools, for which they are not entitled to free transport, can often be reliant on the car.

Considerable work has been undertaken in recent years in encouraging more sustainable and healthy travel patterns on the school journey. 100% of Shropshire LEA maintained schools and some independent schools now have a school travel plan.

3. Transport Provision and Use

Roads

Figure 1.18 Main towns and roads



Shropshire has a few key trunk and principal roads which provide links between the major settlements, mostly in the form of single carriageway roads. The county also has a vast network of country lanes.

Shropshire is crossed by two key ‘spine’ trunk roads. The M54/ A5 which links the West Midlands to north Wales and has been identified to be part of the Trans European Network. The A49 south of Shrewsbury; part of a strategic north-south route through the Marches linking South Wales to North Wales and Merseyside.

Other strategic routes managed by the Highways Agency are the A483 which links from the A5 at Oswestry through to Welshpool and mid-Wales and the A458 which links from Shrewsbury to Welshpool and the mid-Wales coast.

In addition to these trunk roads Shropshire Council manages 440 km of principal roads, 4,600 km of other roads, 1,100 bridges and other highway structures and 15,600 lighting columns.

The great majority of Shropshire roads have evolved from ancient rights of way and have not been designed or constructed to modern design standards, whilst in towns historic street patterns still predominate.

The condition of Shropshire’s roads, particularly rural roads is a concern of Shropshire residents. Comparing Shropshire roads with those in other authorities it can be seen that there have been significant improvements in recent years and that now the condition of Classified (A, B and C roads) is slightly better than the national average, but the condition of unclassified roads is slightly worse than average.

Table 1.5 The % of the network where maintenance should be considered[3]

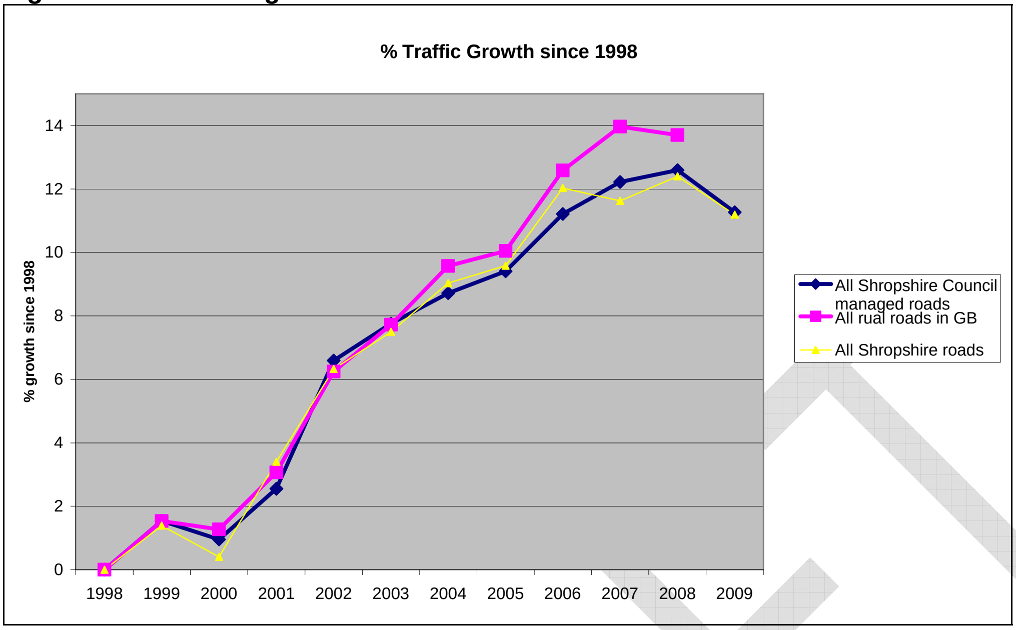
	2006/07			2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
Road type	*A*	*B&C*	*U*	*A*	*B &C*	*U*	*A*	*B &C*	*U*	*A*	*B &C*	*U*
Shropshire	8	12	34	6	12	22	4	8	17	5	8	17
All county councils*	6	8	17	4	8	16	4	8	15			
England*	7	8	16	5	8	15	5	9	15			

*weighted by road length

[3] Road conditions in England 2009, Transport Statistics Bulletin, DfT

Traffic growth

Figure 1.19 % traffic growth since 1998



In 2009 a total of 3,041 million vehicle km were driven on roads in Shropshire. In the ten years from 1998 to 2008 traffic on roads in Shropshire grew by 11.2 % this was lower than growth on all rural roads[4] in Great Britain which increased by 13.7% over the same period.

The rate of growth in the second half of the 2000's has been significantly slower than the first part of the decade. In our second LTP we set a target to constrain traffic growth on Shropshire managed roads to less than 1.5% per annum (or 9% from 2004-2010). The total growth on Shropshire roads 2004-2009 was 2.3%; hence we are well on track to achieve this target.

Car parking

There are 8,315 local authority controlled public car park spaces in Shropshire; this figure includes 1,894 park and ride site spaces. There are additional publicly available parking spaces in other privately owned car parks e.g. at supermarkets, rail stations, hospitals and health centres, private town centre car parks; as well as private non-residential parking provided at places of work. Parking is also available on-street in most town centres, and in residential areas.

The availability, convenience and cost of parking are some of the key determinants of travel mode.

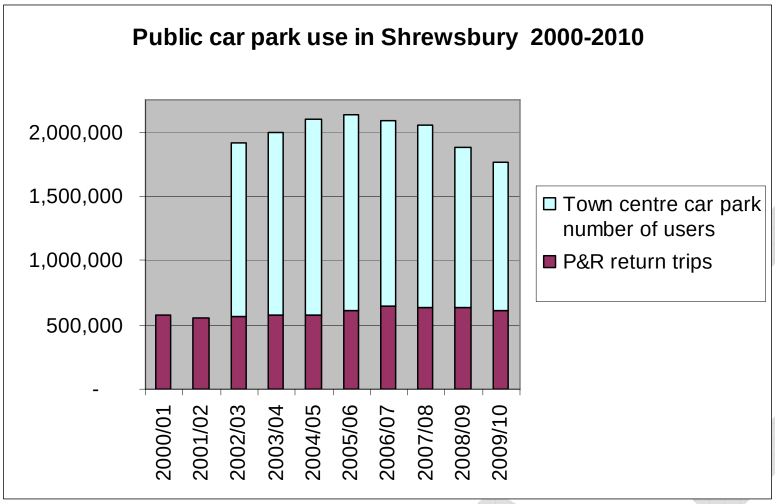
Shropshire Council is currently undertaking a detailed review of their car parking management arrangements, with the aim of creating a coherent approach across the county, as there were very different arrangements between the previous district authorities. The new Parking Strategy will form part of the Local Transport Plan.

Parking use in Shrewsbury

[4] Rural roads are those classed as being outside of a urban area of more than 10,000 population

The most detailed figures available for car park use are for Shrewsbury town. Considering the period 2002 to 2010 it can be seen that overall car park use peaked in 2005/06 and since then has been declining; probably reflecting the general down turn in the economy. Use could also have been affected by road works in the town centre, more businesses moving out to new edge of town sites, and in early 2010 the town centre explosion and very cold weather.

Figure 1.20 Public car park use in Shrewsbury 2000-10



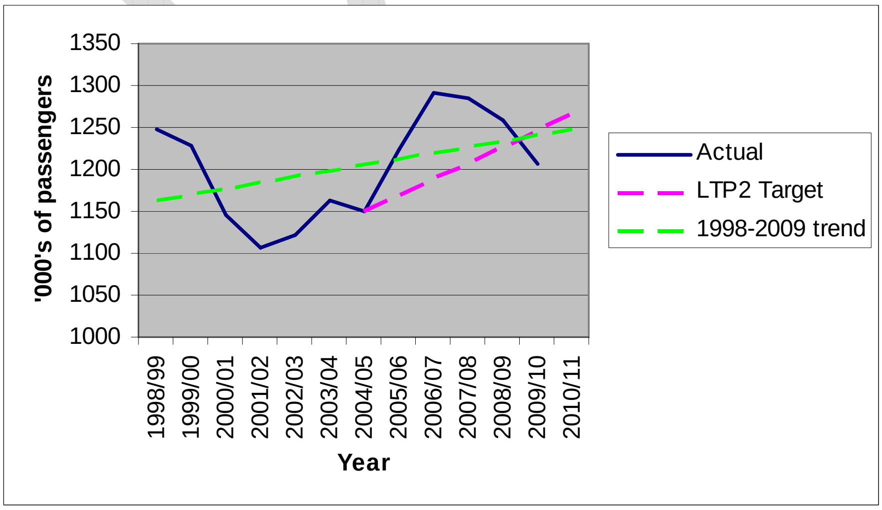
Park and Ride

Shropshire has four park and ride sites, three in Shrewsbury – Meole Brace (659 spaces) Oxon (490 spaces) and Harlescott (677 spaces), and a small site in Ludlow. Car parking is not charged but charges are made for bus use.

Park and ride use

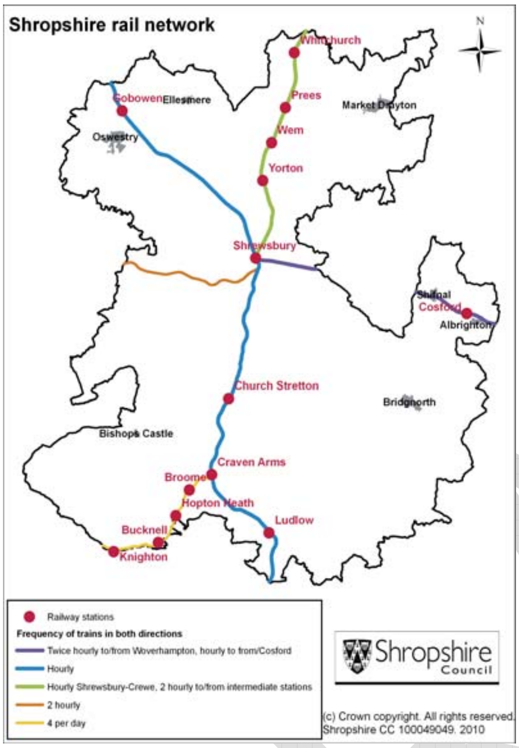
Park and ride use dipped in the early 2000's then increased significantly in 2006/07, as a result of improved promotion and the introduction of concessionary fares. However in the last 2 years use has fallen again, due to general decrease in travel to Shrewsbury town centre.

Figure 1.21 Shrewsbury park and ride patronage 1998/9-2009/10 (number of trips)



While the recent decline in park and ride use means that the LTP2 target is unlikely to be met, this is due to a decrease in travel to Shrewsbury town centre, rather than simply a decrease in park and ride use. The actual proportion of all car based Shrewsbury town centre trips using park and ride has actually increased from 27% in 2004/05 to 35% in 2009/10.

Figure 1.22 Shropshire rail network



Rail

Shropshire is relatively well served by rail with Shrewsbury acting as a rail hub. Lines from Aberystwyth, Chester, Crewe, Wolverhampton, Cardiff and Swansea converge in the town. There are a total of 16 stations in the county. Rail is a feasible option for some local journeys within Shropshire, as well as for longer distance journeys.

Rail use

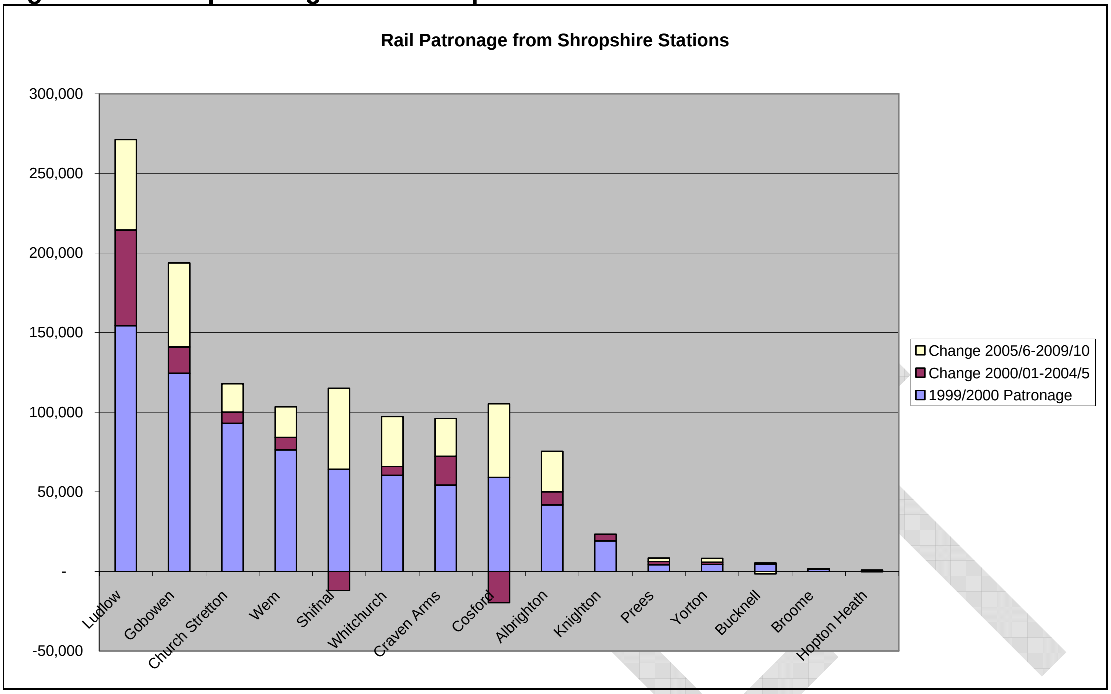
Since 2005 rail services have improved with the increased frequencies on key routes and the introduction of standard pattern timetables. In 2008 the new Wrexham, Shropshire and Marylebone Railway Company started operating a direct rail service to London with stops at Gobowen, Shrewsbury and Cosford. However, this service ended in January 2011, as it failed to make a profit. Therefore Shropshire again is without a direct service to London.

Rail use has increased very significantly in recent years with a 27% increase in patronage over the LTP2 period since 2004/05. Shrewsbury station has by far the highest level of use in the county, patronage at this station increased by 20%. However, at many other stations in the county levels of use increased more rapidly.

There have been particularly significant increases in use at other stations on the Shrewsbury to Birmingham line, i.e. Cosford, Shifnal and Albrighton, with an average patronage increase of 87% over 5 years; this probably reflects the improved standard timetable and reliability of services on this line, and the direct London service that was available from Cosford.

There are low levels of patronage on the rural Heart of Wales line reflecting the limited train service of four trains per day.

Figure 1.23 Rail patronage from Shropshire stations



Buses

The provision of a comprehensive bus service in Shropshire is challenging. Long distances in rural areas make services expensive to operate, and a small, sparse population with relatively high levels of car ownership lead to low levels of patronage. Most local bus services rely on financial support from the local authority with only a limited number of services run on a commercial basis; many being within the town of Shrewsbury.

The bus network in Shropshire currently consists of three types of service.

Local town services – Shrewsbury and the larger market towns have local town services which generally run at 30 minute frequencies. Many Shrewsbury services are more frequent. Only Shrewsbury has evening and Sunday bus services.

Inter-urban services - These link together the larger market towns with Shrewsbury and provide links to other nearby centres including Telford, Wrexham, Kidderminster and Wolverhampton. Services generally have a 30 minute, hourly or two-hourly frequency and operate day time only. There are two-hourly Sunday services on some routes.

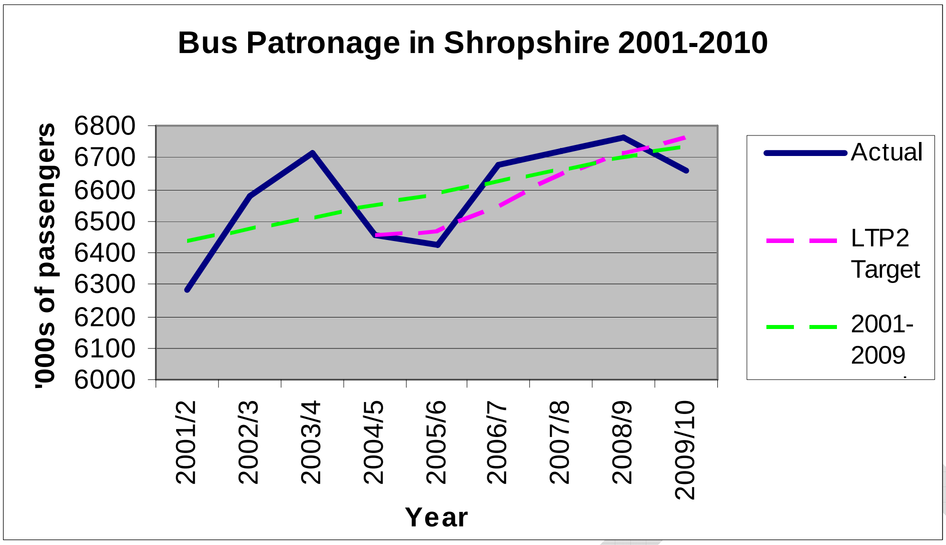
ShropshireLink – In 2006 a network of untenable market day only rural bus services were replaced with ShropshireLink, a new demand responsive bus service. The service provides all rural households with access to there nearest market town or a connection to a high frequency bus or rail service stop. The high quality service uses new, small, low floor, easily accessible vehicles and has dedicated well paid drivers. The service offers a door to door service with passengers with limited mobility or living in isolated rural areas. Services are offered on a minimum of two days per week in all rural areas on a pre- book basis.

Concessionary fares

The national concessionary fares scheme was introduced in April 2006; this allows people aged over 60 and those with disabilities to travel for free on local bus services.

Bus use

Figure 1.24 Bus patronage in Shropshire 2001-10



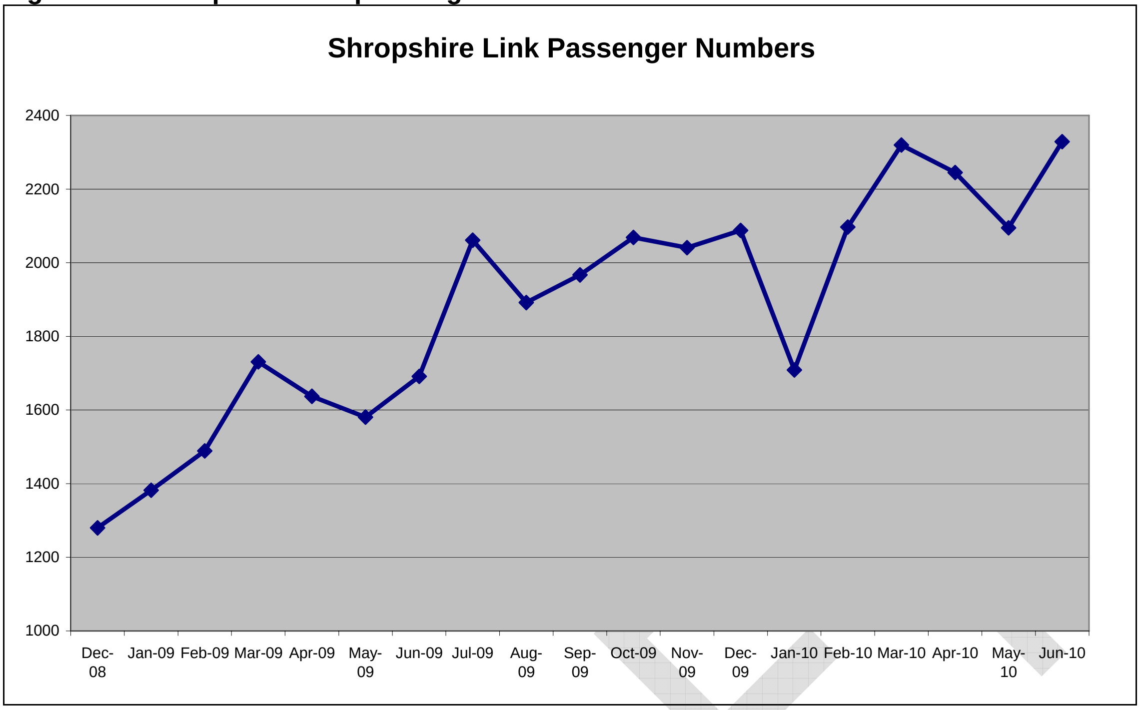
Bus use in Shropshire has increased by 5.9% since 2001/2 and by 3.1% in the LTP2 period since 2004/05. The increased patronage in the early part of the decade was as a result of increased investment in new vehicles and improved services funded through additional grants from DfT and Countryside Agency. These rural bus grants were withdrawn in 2004/05 and hence some services were reduced and patronage fell. Bus patronage has increased significantly in 2006 due the introduction of concessionary fares, further increases were seen to 2008/09 influenced by local service improvements; however patronage fell again in 2009/10, probably reflecting the overall reduction in travel due to the recession, and also influenced by the very cold winter weather and Shrewsbury town centre explosion.

The level of growth achieved to 2008/09 meant that the LTP2 target was achieved; however use has dipped below the target level in 2009/10.

Shropshire Link use

Since the start of it operation in late 2008 use of the Shropshire Link service has steadily increased month on month (despite a decreased in January 2010 due to the exceptional winter weather) use has increased by 82% since the service was launched and by 133% compared to the previous fixed route bus services. Overall in 2009/10 there were 23,153 passengers using Shropshire Link. The six month review showed that 89% of passengers were satisfied with the service overall and 93% were very satisfied with the new low floor vehicles. Service improvements have continued to be made.

Figure 1.25 ShropshireLink passenger numbers



Community transport

In addition to conventional public transport and Shropshire Link the Council supports a number of voluntary and community transport schemes across the county.

Community car scheme – this scheme uses volunteer drivers to provide for essential journeys, the council subsidies half of the mileage cost.

Dial a ride/Community bus services – these services are run by volunteers and operate demand responsive services within defined areas, they are generally available to people unable to use or without a conventional bus service.

Wheels to Work – this scheme operated by the Community Council for Shropshire assists people to access work and training through provision of tailored travel advice, a moped or bicycle loan or subsidised driving lessons.

Taxis and PHV

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) play an important role in enhancing accessibility for enabling people without access to a car to get to places not served by public transport. There is a general shortage of taxis and PHVs in Shropshire and the availability of taxis can be particularly poor in rural areas.

Taxis and PHV are widely used to transport small numbers of entitled school pupils and social services clients where they prove more economical than deploying a bus. Taxis are also important for disabled people, younger people and for providing evening transport.

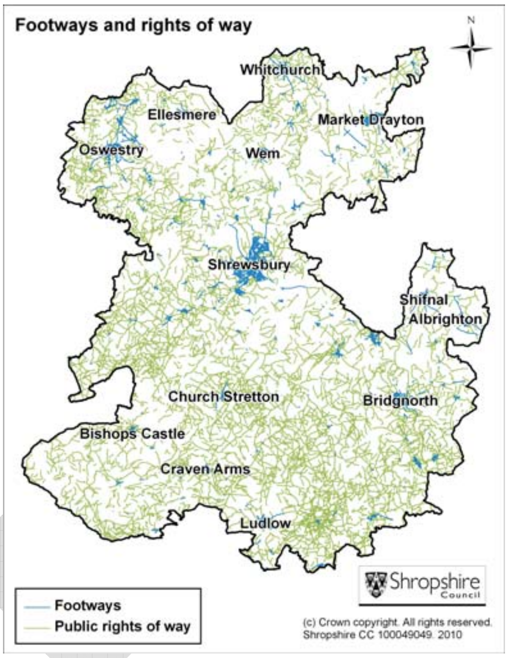
Walking

Shropshire has 1,185km of footways alongside roads and a vast network of 5,600km of rights of way incorporating footpaths, bridleways, roads used as a public path (RUPP) and by-ways open to all traffic (BOATs). The county also has numerous signalised and unsignalised crossing points for pedestrian crossings.

Shropshire's urban areas have a fairly comprehensive network of pedestrian facilities, including footways, footpaths and road crossings. Most rural roads and lanes in Shropshire do not have segregated pedestrian facilities.

Rights of way provide an important resource not only for recreation and exercise; but also for access, by foot and cycle, to local facilities such as shops and schools.

Figure 1.26 Shropshire footways and rights of way



Levels of walking

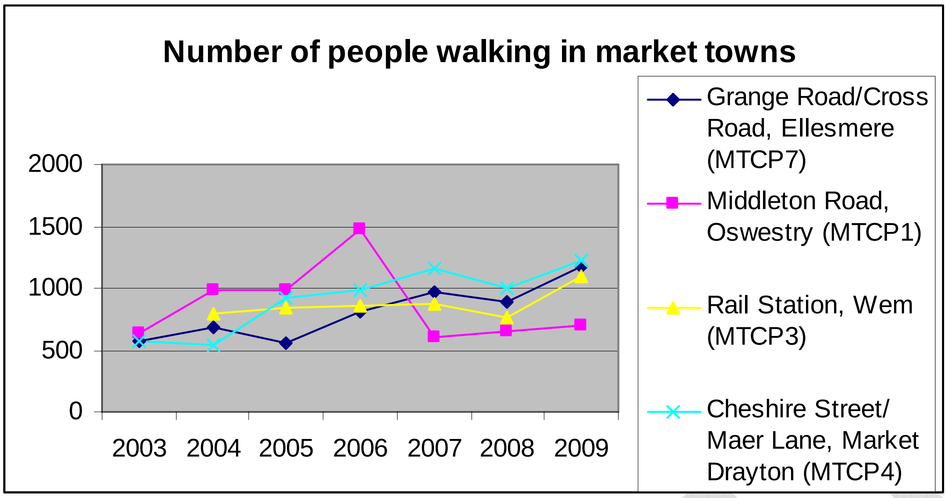
There is limited data collected on walking levels, the data available for walking on the highway is based on one day manual counts. This data can fluctuate due to the weather on the collection day. However, data since 2004/5 does show a general upward trend.

In Shrewsbury count sites form a cordon around the town centre. There has been a general trend of increasing walking levels at these sites, with a significant increase in 2008.

Figure 1.27 Number of people walking into Shrewsbury Town Centre 2003-09

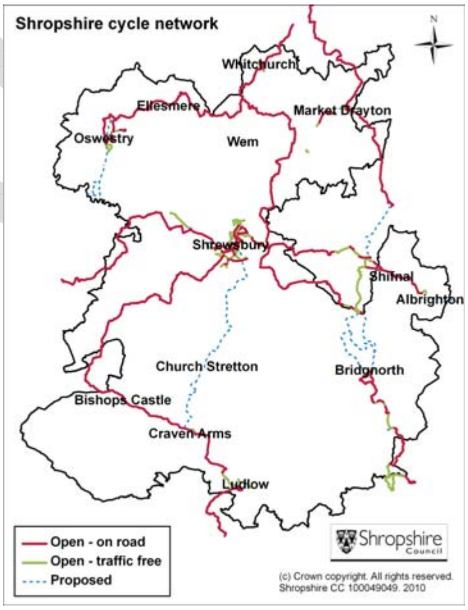
Counts are also undertaken annually in October at sites in four market towns. Since 2003 the sites in Market Drayton, Ellesmere and Wem have all shown a trend of increasing walking levels; the Oswestry site showed an increase to 2006, then a significant drop which is likely to due to very local factors. Taking these four sites overall the average increase in walking from 2004 to 2009 was 28%.

Figure 1.28 Number of people walking in market towns



Cycling

Figure 1.29 Shropshire cycle network



Whilst cyclists can use the whole road network, strategic urban and rural cycle route networks are also being developed to provide safer, more convenient and attractive routes for cyclists. The networks are complemented with cycle parking at key destinations.

In Shrewsbury ongoing investment since 1994 has resulted in a fairly extensive cycle network, this has been bolstered since 2008 by the Cycle Shrewsbury project.

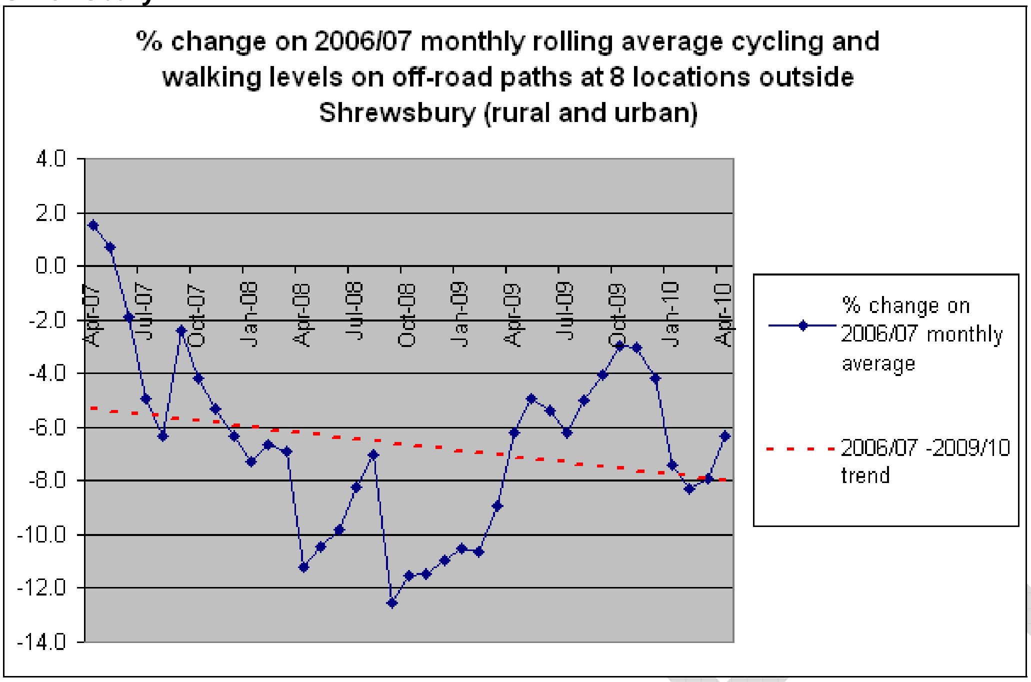
Many of the quieter roads in market towns do not require specific cycle facilities, but work has been undertaken in recent years to improve safety at junctions and introduce a few strategic cycle routes e.g. Hatton Way in Whitchurch, route to Mullers in Market Drayton, routes in Eastern Oswestry.

Cycle use in rural areas is generally low primarily due to the longer journey lengths. Emphasis in recent years has been on the development of the National and Regional Cycle Network Routes which cater mainly for leisure trips.

Levels of cycling

Monitoring cycle use accurately is difficult without incurring disproportionate expense. Across Shropshire there is limited data from a small number of automatic cycle counters at 8 sites, 5 of which are on NCN route 45 south of Bridgnorth. The data shows that compared to 2006/07 cycle use in 2007, 2008 and 2009 have been slightly lower. This may simply reflect the peak use of cycle route 45 in the period after it opened. Use in 2009 showed a significant increase compared to 2007 and 2008.

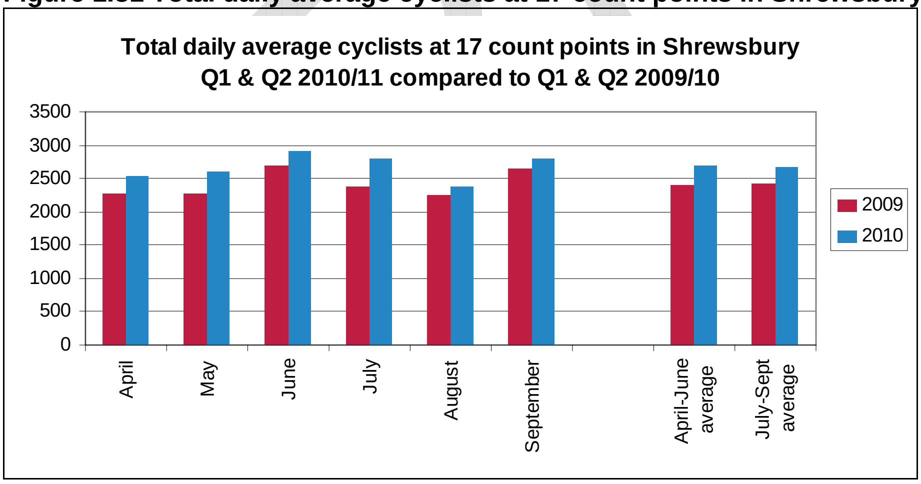
Figure 1.30 % change on 2006/07 monthly rolling average cycling and walking levels outside Shrewsbury



Cycling trend in Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury has higher levels of cycling than many other areas of the county and country. The recent investment in cycling in Shrewsbury is starting to show some results. Comparing spring 2010 to spring 2009 there has been an 11% increase in cycling levels in the town.

Figure 1.31 Total daily average cyclists at 17 count points in Shrewsbury



Air Travel

The main airports that serve Shropshire are Manchester and Birmingham International. Other airports close to Shropshire include Liverpool John Lennon Airport and East Midlands Airport.

Rail access to Birmingham international has been significantly improved since 2008 with the extension of the Shrewsbury to Birmingham trains to serve Birmingham International station.

Waterways

There are a very limited number of navigable waterways in Shropshire that could be used for transport purposes. Only canals in north, very small section of Shrewsbury and Newport canal and small 2 mile section of River Tern between Shrewsbury and Wellington are officially navigable

However towpaths and paths adjacent to some waterways offer the potential for enhancing the walking and cycling networks.

Figure 1.32 Shropshire waterways

4. Swot analysis

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Relatively low rates of unemployment. • High levels of self containment in parts of the county. • Slowing trend of traffic growth in second part of 2000's. • Shropshire Link increasing accessibility for people in rural areas. Growing patronage. • Recent investment in Cycle Shrewsbury project has improved cycle infrastructure in Shrewsbury and early results suggest increase in cycling levels.	• Very rural, sparse population – high reliance on private vehicle, difficult to provide sustainable alternatives. • High % of population aged over 65, places pressure on public transport system, health care provision and working population to support retired population. • Reliance on out-commuting and jobs outside county, particularly in Bridgnorth area. • Roads evolved to from historic RoW patterns; not constructed to modern design standards. • Shortage of taxis and PHVs.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Growing population means that new housing is required. Opportunity through LDF to encourage new housing to be built in a location and style which encourages more use of sustainable transport modes. • High reliance on car for short journeys – opportunity to reduce car use through targeting these journeys. • Recent investment in Cycle Shrewsbury project has provided good foundation for promoting cycling across the county. • Shropshire link provides the bases of a flexible transport service for rural areas, with a model that could be expanded if funding was available	• Aging population trend placing increasing pressure on economy and public transport systems. • Increasing trend for travelling longer distances to access services/ employment. Could lead to more out-migration and less self-containment. • Greater reliance on private vehicle leading to loss of local services and poorer accessibility for people without access to a car. Rural residents becoming increasingly reliant on towns for services. • Removal of rural bus grant in 2006 and further bus subsidies in 2011 leading to fewer public transport services in rural areas and on evenings and Sundays.